

## **Impact Factors of the Omani Oil and Gas Companies on Sustainable and Qualified Omani Workforce as Part of the “In-Country Value Strategy”**

Muna Hamad Al-Alawi, Muhammad Khairul Islam, Mohamed Khudari

College of Graduate Studies, Universiti Tenaga Nasional (UNITEN), Selangor, Malaysia

*khudari@uniten.edu.my*

**Abstract.** This research paper aims to assess the impact of an In-Country Value (ICV) strategy on Omanisation and the training and development of the Omani workforce. The study examines how ICV contributes to enhancing human resources development among the local population and facilitating their employment opportunities. By adopting a descriptive research design and collecting data from 65 purposively sampled respondents through a questionnaire, the study employs descriptive statistics to analyze the data. The findings demonstrate the significant role played by ICV in creating numerous job opportunities in Oman. Additionally, ICV supports talent management by increasing employment prospects for Omanis and enabling their participation in vocational/professional training programs. Successful training initiatives in the oil and gas sector, aligned with the ICV framework, have been implemented. The study establishes a positive relationship between the acceptance of training and development initiatives, such as In-Job Training, the Omanisation Plan, and the ICV strategy, thereby contributing to the overall enhancement of Omanisation and the training and development of the Omani workforce. These results affirm the effectiveness of implementing ICV strategies in fostering workforce development and aligning with the objectives of the country's value strategy. The research provides valuable insights for policymakers, industry practitioners, and researchers interested in ICV and human resources development within the context of Oman.

**Keywords:** Local Content, In-Country Value (ICV), Talent, Omanisation, In-Job Training, Training and Development

## **1. Introduction**

The Gulf countries depend mostly on massive oil and natural gas production for economic progress and development. Oman is one country where the largest part of the gross domestic product is natural gas and oil. According to Al Hakmani and Bashir (2014), oil and gas contribute 40 percent of Oman's gross domestic product. Weiss, (2016) claimed that to pursue targets like industrial development, job creation, value addition, linkage creation, and better value chain incorporation the policymakers design the local content policies. The popularity of the use of local content has increased since the economic crisis of 2008 despite the highly controversial debate in the literature about their success or failure (Weiss, 2016). In 2013, the Omani government developed the local content and called it "The In-Country Value (ICV)" strategic plan to share natural gas and oil benefits among all Oman citizens. The main objectives of the ICV strategic plan aligned with Oman Vision 2020 and now continue to cover the Oman Vision 2040 are to improve business development, focus on human capability development, and improve productivity in Oman's economy. The goals of developing human capability focus on improving the talent management of Oman's citizens to boost economic growth. The aim is to depend on skilled and talented citizens to run major economic sectors rather than the current scenario where foreigners run major government work and economic sectors. Since implementing the ICV strategy, both the public and private sectors have benefited from improved skills and talent from Oman citizens.

The Omani government faces one major problem: promoting local employment through local skills development and upgrading despite its high gross domestic product from natural resources such as natural gas and oil. The lack of programs and initiatives to promote the local workforce through education and training has affected Oman's economic development to depend on foreigners in the labor force. According to Al Hadhrami (2016), the natural gas and oil sectors only employ twenty-two thousand Omani citizens compared to the total workforce of more than fifty-five thousand employees.

This study aims to investigate the In-Job Training (IJT) in Omani companies and its effect on Improvement of Omanisation, to analyze the Omanization Program (OP) and examine the effect of the ICV Strategy on the Improvement of Omanisation

## **2. Literature Review**

This section included the training in oil and gas companies in Oman, the Omanisation program plan, ICV strategy, and the impact of ICV on Omanisation and the training and development of Employees.

### **2.1. Training in Oil and Gas Companies in Oman**

In recent years, training and developing workers has become the main job of businesses all over the world (James & Khan, 2013). Most organizations that are successful depend on the fact that they need skilled workers to reach their goals (Sung & Choi, 2016). Management scholars have said that an organization's "sustained competitive advantage" can come from its "accumulation of high-quality human resources" (Shaw et al., 2013, Salas et al., 2008, Salas et al., 2012, Kazbour and Kazbour, 2013). It was also said that companies believe that training and development programs help them compete, innovate, produce, serve, and improve their employees' knowledge, skills, and attitudes, so they put a lot of money into them. Additionally, Shaw et al. (2013) said that T&D helps companies get valuable and unique resources by making workers more connected and co-specialized in their skills.

In 2018, Al-Mughairi said, "Motivated employees should be given the tools they need to do their jobs so they can be more productive; in other words, they need to get the right training and grow." Herzberg's (1968) theory of motivation said that for an employee to go from being unhappy to being happy, they need motivators like praise and growth, as well as the chance to be in charge of their own work. Habsi et al. (2021) say that good human resource management leads to workplace loyalty, which in turn increases an organization's output to a whole new level. According to Hendry and Pettigrew (1986), human resource management is what an organization's leaders do to make the workplace better and give workers a competitive edge so that the company can be much more productive and make more

money. Jacobson (2010) also said that human resources planning (HRP) is the core process that helps an organization plan for its present and future needs and make sure that the right people are in the right place at the right time.

## **2.2. Omanisation Program Plan**

The countries in the Gulf Cooperation Council have now strongly established localization (nationalization) plans to deal with current and possible unemployment issues (Forstenlecher, 2010; Girgis, 2002; Harry, 2007). Additionally, a lot of studies (Swaiels et al. 2012; Zerovec, M., & Bontenbal, M. 2011; Waxin & Bateman, 2016; Alison J. et al. 2019) point out that the Gulf States started localization as a way to boost their economies and get skilled local workers to replace foreign workers. According to Kubursi (1984), the wealth that oil creates messes up national economies and their plans for growth. For a long-term plan to meet the need for local jobs, the government and businesses worked together to make sure their goals were aligned. According to the Omanization program, for example, the goal is to give local people the skills and knowledge they need to become better industrial workers in Oman by 2020. It also aimed to improve the skills of more than 50,000 Omanis who later joined the work force. Studies (EIU, 2009a, MNE, 2010) say that as part of Oman's economic strategy since the start of Vision 2020 in 1996, diversification, privatization, and making the economy more like Oman's have all been important. The Omanization plan was put in place in 1988 to replace expatriate workers with Omani workers so that the government would not have to rely so much on them. The PDO Sustainability Report for 2020 says that the company had 8,943 employees, with 7,687 being Omanis. This means that the rate of Omanization went up from 84% to 86%, and there are now 1,061 Omanis on staff instead of 1,173 women. The government and private sector worked together to create the ICV strategy. Its main goals are to improve the development of the local workforce, the supply chain, and the development of local suppliers so that the economy can be supported by the resources and labor provided by the local vendor. The creation of the ICV plan was in line with Oman's Vision 2020 and Vision 2040, which set a number of goals for improving talent management (Al-Mawali et al., 2016; Glaister, Al Amri, & Spicer 2021).

## **2.3. In-Country Value Strategy**

It is called "In-Country Value" when it comes to developing local material in Oman and other Gulf countries. This plan for growth began in Oman in 2013 and was later taken up by other Gulf countries. The goal of this plan is to keep all the money that comes in from oil and gas in the country. This will help businesses grow, improve people's skills, and make goods and services more productive. Al Ruqaishi (2016) says that "In-Country Value" (ICV) is "the total amount spent in-country by companies, whether they are local or international, that have contracts in Oman. The (ICV) represents the amount spent by these companies to develop local businesses, help local people get jobs and training, and boost productivity in the national economy." The goal of the ICV plan is to find the local skills, chances, and resources that can help the national economy and the growth of nearby communities more quickly (Al-Alawi et al., 2021).

The ICV strategy targets increasing investment in international oil and gas standard accreditation and vocational training institutions to increase the local employment level of skilled, qualified, and competent Omanis. The program analyses more than 200 skills prioritized in the labor force and high market demand for low Omanisation levels. The ICV strategy implementation team worked with experts, training institutions, prospective employers, and national objective training program management to effectively target the right talent management areas. The ICV ensures all the education and training stakeholders and shareholders work together in developing a strategic plan to improve the skills and competencies of the local people.

For Oman to achieve balanced development, it requires a labor market that is highly effective in integrating national capabilities and the effectiveness of the education and training sector in the domestic labor market. The implementation of the ICV strategy focuses on achieving these goals in the

labor market to attract both skilled and technical labor to improve the labor market. The ICV strategic plan has successfully developed an administrative and organizational framework to improve the local skills and competencies in the private sector to manage the evolving labor market.

The implementation of the ICV program has led to changes in the Oman education system, leading Oman youth to acquire relevant skills in the market. For instance, the ICV led the Omani government to start teaching English as one of the main languages from Grade 1 rather than Grade 4 (Al Hadhrami, 2016). The ICV and government find it vital to equip Oman youths with the necessary skills at a young age to prepare them for higher education learning where English is used in all aspects of teaching other subjects that have a major impact on the job market.

Companies have embraced the ICV standards and policies in improving the talent management of Oman citizens rather than supporting foreign workers in the private sector. Petrogas is one of the organizations that have shown the positive impact of the ICV in improving the skills and competencies of the Omanis (UES Oman, 2018). The company changes its human resources process to maximize the opportunities for the ICV strategic plan in sustainable economic development by developing a talent management program and new opportunities for the local employees. The Petrogas Company has also impacted the youth through sponsorship of Omani's youths in their education journey and improves the number of Omanis in the workforce in the future (UES Oman, 2018). Also, the company employees are provided with multiple leadership and management training and development programs, including attending leadership seminars to continuously improve employee skills and competencies (UES Oman, 2018). It has led to improved employee retention and created succession planning to incorporate the sponsored student into the organizational management and leadership through the internship program.

#### **2.4. Impact of ICV on Omanisation and Training and Development of Employees**

The ICV has two key strategies: developing and increasing the local Omanis skills and in-country spending on locals' services and goods. Furthermore, one of the seven elements outlined by the ICV blueprint is "Training of Omanis". An institution such as the Petroleum Development of Oman (PDO) has implemented various training programs to equip the local Omanis with technical skills ranging from scaffolding to welding to mechanical. Knott (2016) notes that employee training and development is a strategy used by many organisations to improve overall employee performance and engagement. The training of employees will help employees bridge the gap between unskilled and skilled labor as they can gain the required competence, experience, and skills necessary to accomplish various tasks. In most cases, training and development will help an organization identify the various factors that can hinder employee retention, leading to the overall growth of employee performance.

In most cases, employees who feel they do not have the right skills to work in a given environment will seek employment elsewhere. However, if they are equipped with the skills, they will continue working at the organization. This is a strategy that the ICV has sought to explore by training Omanis in technical skills and offering them employment. In addition, given that the role of Omanisation is to offer employment to locals, the ICV strategy employed by PDO has seen it train over 200 Omanis who have attained the 6G standard considered the highest recognized welding certification in the country while more than 30,000 jobs, training and re-deployment opportunities for Omanis since 2011. With the oil and gas companies offering training-for-employment opportunities, they are bound to lead to high rates of employee attraction. This is evident from the 30,000 trained Omanis by the PDO, where the company has employed most on various projects. Knott (2016) defines succession planning as being a process of preparing and identifying highly qualified employees who will be used in replacing key employees when their term expires; PDO has offered the 200 young Omani employment opportunities in various PDO projects where they work with contractors. Most of the jobs were occupied by foreigners, but since the ICV seeks to implement Omanisation, it has sought to use the trained Omanis for its oil and gas sector success plans. Moreover, Knott (2016) notes that succession planning is a very important element of talent management and can improve employee retention.

### 3. Proposed Model and Hypotheses Development

This section involved two sections, the proposed model and development hypothesis as follows.

#### 3.1. Proposed Model

Taking into account the things that have been said that could affect the training and growth of the Omani workforce, as well as the process of "Omanization." A researcher came up with an idea for this study, which is called "Training and Development of Omani Workforce under the implementation of In Country Value Strategy: A case study in some of the oil and gas companies in Oman." So, this part goes into more detail about the model's parts (Fig. 1).

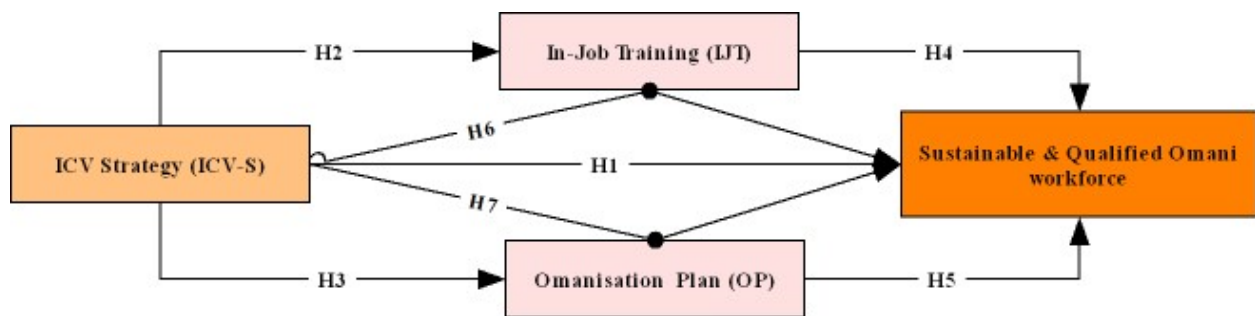


Fig. 1: Proposed Model

#### 3.2. Hypothesis Development

Based on the literature review and what we've talked about so far, the researcher came up with six (6) hypotheses that will be tried in this study. These are the hypotheses:

**H1:** ICV strategy has a statistically significant direct effect on Omanisation and the Qualified workforce.

**H2:** ICV strategy direct effect has a statistically significant direct effect on In-Job Training.

**H3:** ICV strategy has a statistically significant direct effect on Omanisation Plan.

**H4:** In-Job Training has a statistically significant direct effect on the Qualified & Omanisation workforce.

**H5:** Omanisation Plan has a statistically significant direct effect on the Qualified & Omanisation workforce.

**H6:** ICV strategy has an indirect impact on the Qualified & Omanisation workforce through In-Job Training

**H7:** ICV strategy has an indirect impact on Omanisation and Qualified workforce plan.

### 4. Methodology

This part talked about the research design, the group that the study was aimed at, the sample and how it was chosen, as well as ethical issues.

#### 4.1. Research Design

The study design shows how the relationship between the independent and dependent variables will be tested. The type of research used in this study was descriptive. Researchers can use descriptive study designs to talk about the traits of a person or group. Doyle et al. (2019) say that using a descriptive method will reveal the answer to the study's goals and objectives, which will then affect the selection, collection, and analysis of data. The study aims to find out what effect an In-Country Value strategy has on managing talent in the private sector in Oman, so this type of research method fits well with

those goals.

#### **4.2. Target Population**

A population is described as "an aggregate of elements about which a researcher aims to make inferences" (Krishnaswami & Satyaprasad, 2010). In this study, the target population was the oil and gas companies in Oman. Different participants from four oil and gas companies participated in the questionnaire. These companies are Petroleum Development Oman (PDO), Daleel, Occidental Oman (Oxy) and Tecnicas Reunidas Daewoo (TRD).

#### **4.3. Sample and Sampling Technique**

The group that the sample comes from is called the sample frame (Cooper & Schindler, 2014). Thompson (2012) said that you need to use a sampling method to get a sample from a study group. In the study, a method known as "purposeful sampling" is used. Bernard (2002) and Lewis & Sheppard (2006) say that judgment sampling is another name for the intended sampling method. This method of choice is not random and doesn't require a certain number of people to take part or any underlying ideas. The researcher only has to choose who the participants will be and what they need to know. Then, they have to find people who are ready to share information based on what they know or have experienced. Campbell, Steve, et al. (2020) said that random sampling is used to make sure that the group is a better fit for the goals and aims. This makes the study stronger, and you can trust the data and findings more. Purposive sampling is used to make sure that the end sample for the study has certain kinds of answers from people who are eligible to be in it. Another name for purposeful sampling is judgmental, selected, or subjective sampling. It is not based on chance. A lot of studies, including Mason (2002), Robinson (2014), and Trost (1986), agreed that the reasons for using a purposive strategy rely on the goals of the study and the need for samples to include people who might have different thoughts on the ideas and topics being studied. There were only 34 people in the group.

**Data collection.** The study relied on primary data. Primary data is also referred to as first-hand information as it has not undergone any form of tabulation or manipulation (Krishnaswami & Satyaprasad, 2010). The primary data was gathered using questionnaires distributed online through social media to the sample population. Questionnaires are used in gathering descriptive information related to the attitudes and opinions of the participants. The questionnaire had close-ended questions. The closed-ended questions were based on a 5-point Likert scale whereby the participants stated their degree of disagreement or agreement.

#### **4.4. Method of Data Analysis**

Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the gathered data. Descriptive statistics involve using percentages, and frequencies were used to show the relationship between the dependent and independent variables. The data was presented in a tabular format, the survey questions were covered and categorized with the associated keywords.

### **5. Results and Discussion**

There was a total of 100 questionnaires sent out to the respondents. Out of this, 65 questionnaires were selected, representing 65% of the total sample. The study sample's demographical information is highlighted in the Table 1. Analyzing the responses regarding the education level, 16.9% a high school, 64.6% a college degree, and 18.5 % graduate degree.

Table 1: Profile of respondents (N=65)

<b>Measure</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Gender	Males	41	63.1%
	Females	24	36.9%

Age	Under 30 years	25	38.5%
	30-35 years	17	26.1%
	36-40 years	8	12.3%
	Over 41 years	15	23.1%
Educational Background	High School	11	16.9%
	College degree	42	64.6%
	Graduate degree	12	18.5%

The partial least squares (PLS) method is a two-step process that reduces the number of different variables to a smaller set. Samples that are not very big can use the PLS method (Kapiszewski, Andrzej 2006). If there are formative constructs for the sample size for PLS, each item needs to have 10 answers. This requirement was put forward by Kazbour and Kazbour (2013). It is also necessary to check the items' reliability, internal consistency, and discriminant validity in order to decide if the model measurement is acceptable (Kazbour and Kazbour, 2013). Smart PLS Software was used to test the 40 items that were used in this study. These items cover five categories. You can see the information in Table 1. Additionally, the item loadings were chosen to find out how reliable each item is, and it is important that the item loading has enough value or it will be taken out of its own build. In this case, Knott (2016) said that the items should have a loading value of at least 0.3 in order to be considered important.

So, things with a loading value of 0.4 were thought to be important, and things with a loading value greater than 0.5 were thought to be very important.

Table 2: Result of variables analysis

Variables	Dimensions	Factor loading (FL)	Mean±SD	Composite Reliability (CR)	Cronbach's Alpha	Average variance extracted (AVE)
In-Job Training	IJT1	0.758	3.755±0.936	0.874	0.717	0.632
	IJT 2	0.738	3.776±0.834			
	IJT 3	0.878	3.753±0.723			
	IJT 4	0.796	3.741±1.083			
	IJT 5	0.856	3.753±0.723			
	IJT 6	0.876	3.742±1.078			
	IJT 7	0.874	3.732±1.054			
Omanisation Plan	OP 1	0.738	3.767±1.071	0.865	0.858	0.653
	OP2	0.753	3.763±1.041			
	OP3	0.738	3.767±1.029			
ICV strategy	ICVS1	0.753	3.797±1.021	0.768	0.766	0.672

and its impact on training	ICVS2	0.796	3.752±1.081	0.727	0.958	0.841
	ICVS 3	0.874	3.734±1.031			
	ICVS4	0.833	3.875±0.981			
	ICVS5	0.742	3.744±0.764			
	ICVS6	0.776	3.872±0.854			
Omanisation, Training and development of Omani workforce	OTD1	0.821	3.754±0.754	0.862	0.858	0.766
	OTD2	0.853	3.872±0.874			
	OTD3	0.723	3.738±1.026			

For this study, a number of 0.4 was used as a cutoff for items to be accepted for the given dimensions. For this study, the model got loading values above 0.4 for all things, no matter what size or shape they were. Since the t-value for each item was above 2.58, they were all thought to be significant with their designs. The minimum number for consistency is 0.7, and the latent variables' internal consistency was checked (Kazbour and Kazbour 2013). The thresholds were also cleared, as shown by the Composite Reliability (CR) and Cronbach's Alpha results. Last but not least, all hidden variables had an AVE value greater than 0.5, which shows that they were reliable (Table 2).

Based on what Krishnaswamy and Satyaprasad (2010) said, this study checked the hidden variables' discriminant validity. The other factors must have correlations that are less than the square roots of AVE in this case. The connections are shown by the numbers that are not on the diagonal of the matrix. The diagonal numbers in the table are shown by the square root of AVE. In this case, the values of the relationships must be less than the square roots of AVE (Kazbour & Kazbour, 2013). The results show that each hidden variable is valid and separate as a concept.

The results of the descriptive analysis displayed in Table 3 denote the general situation of the educational institutions in countries in the Middle East. The mean, minimum and maximum, standard deviation (S.td) of the variables are shown in the Table, and there are three different categories in the interpretation of the 5-point Likert Scale as follows: score of 2.33 and less (lowest rate 1) is interpreted as weak, the score of 3.67 and higher (Higher rate 5) is interpreted as strong, while scores in between are interpreted as moderate (Knott 2016 and Krishnaswamy, & Satyaprasad 2010).

Table 3: Descriptive statistics analysis, reliability factors ( $\alpha$ ) and correlations (N= 34)

Constructs	M	SD	1	2	3	A
IJT	3.785	3.533	0.78	0.66**	0.66**	0.74
OP	3.784	3.544		0.58**	0.65**	0.78
ICVS	3.766	3.786			0.33**	0.82
OTD	3.786	3.735				0.74

Table 4 shows the direct and indirect effects of discrete independent factors on Behavioral Intention. As you can see, all hypotheses were supported except for H4 and H5. For more information, see Table 3. The model suggested in this study explained 73% of the variation in Personal Innovativeness, 62% of the variation in Perceived Security Risk, and 70% of the variation in Behavioral Intention (Lewis & Sheppard 2006; Mason 2002 & Matriano & Suguku 2015) (Table 5).



Concerning the analysis, it can be construed for H1 that In-Job Training (IJT) directly affected Omanisation, Training and development of the Omani workforce (OTD), while for H2, the result shows that Omanisation Plan (OP) affected Improvement Omanisation, Training and development of Omani workforce over Gender.

Table 4: Results of the hypotheses' tests (direct effects Behavioral Intention)

Hypothesis	Relationship	Path coefficient	Standard error	t-value	Supported
H1	There is a positive relationship between ICV strategy and the Qualified & Omanisation workforce with developing their workforce as part of the country's value strategy.	1.364***	.137	2.874	Yes
H2	There is a positive relationship between ICV strategy and In-Job Training with developing their workforce as part of the country's value strategy.	.346**	.0987	.164	Yes
H3	There is a positive relationship between ICV strategy and the Omanisation Plan with developing their workforce as part of the country's value strategy.	.579**	.0654	1.762	Yes
H4	There is a positive relationship between In-Job Training and Qualified & Omanisation workforce with develop their workforce as part of the country's value strategy	.452***	.0645	1.726	Yes
H5	There is a positive relationship between Omanisation and Qualified & Omanisation workforce with develop their workforce as part of the country's value strategy	.564***	.0.642	1.641	Yes
H6	There is a positive relationship between ICV strategy for Qualified & Omanisation workforce through In-Job Training	.432**	.0634	1.634	Yes
H7	There is a positive relationship between ICV strategy and the Qualified & Omanisation workforce through Omanisation Plan.	.512*	.0647	1.671	Yes

Note: a. \*: The coefficient is significant at the 0.05 level of significance.  
 b. \*\*: The coefficient is significant at the 0.01 level of significance.  
 c. \*: The effect is significant at the 0.05 level of significance

The result for H3 shows that ICV strategy and its impact on training directly affected the Omanisation, Training and development of the Omani workforce (OTD).

The theoretical contribution of this study is evidenced by its connection to the issues impacting the level of In-Job Training (IJT) on Improvement Omanisation, Training and development of Omani workforce for oil and gas companies in Oman. this study also is evidenced by its connection to the issues impacting the level of the Omanisation Plan (OP) on the Improvement of Omanisation, Training and development of the Omani workforce for oil and gas companies in Oman. and this study is evidenced by its connection to the issues impacting the level of ICV strategy (ICVS) on Improvement Omanisation, Training and development of Omani workforce for oil and gas companies in Oman.

## **6. Conclusions and Recommendations**

The implementation of the ICV strategic plan by the Omani government has positively impacted the private sector by encouraging the Omanis in taking employment opportunities and innovating businesses in the private sector. Oman has depended on oil and natural gas production to improve its economic growth for decades, which attracted more foreign workers than local citizens. The Omani government focuses on diversifying its economic strategy from oil and gas to a more sustainable economic system that depends on local resources, local employees, and local supply, leading to more emphasis on the ICV program to improve the local economy in line with Vision 2040. The ICV strategy was based on the Omanisation goals and objectives that focus on increasing the number of Omanis in the workforce by developing strategies and policies that encourage young people to acquire the right skills needed in the labor force. The primary objective of ICV is to improve the human resources development of the local people to empower them in occupying employment opportunities and investing in private businesses. The ICV strategic plan has led to the improvement of talent management in the private sector through changing the education system and curriculum to encourage more Omanis to learn the basic skills required in the job market. The private sector also integrates the ICV program with the latest technology to offer Omanis current skills to increase their competitive advantage and profitability. The ICV also incorporates the private sector on the board to incorporate the private sector's needs in implementing training and development programs. The incorporation of the ICV strategy with the private sector has attracted more Omanis in the private sector. Multiple companies such as PDO, Oxy and Oman Gas Company have shown the impact of ICV in the private sector and the community in areas of human resources management. It shows that the ICV strategy can be implemented in other economic sectors to improve talent management. There is a lack of theoretical analysis in the field of the impact of In- Country Value strategy on training and development plans, though this paper aims,

The suggestion for future studies is to evaluate all variables of Improvement Omanisation, Training and development of Omani workforce for oil and gas companies in Oman. This study found a lack of understanding of the major impacting factors in the implementation of Omanisation, Training and development in oil and gas companies in Oman to present evidence on how the ICV strategies can drive organizations to combine aspects of training and development sustainability plans into their organizations' plans.

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