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Talent Management Practices and Employee Performance in Oman's Oil and Gas Supply Chain: The Moderating Role of In-Country Value

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Abstract. The sustainability of Oman's oil and gas sector depends on localising talent and reducing reliance on expatriate workers amid economic diversification and declining hydrocarbon revenue. This study examines how talent management practices, specifically talent attraction, talent development, talent retention, and succession planning, influence employee performance, and how In-Country Value, a national local content policy, moderates these relationships. Grounded in the Resource-Based View and Institutional Theory, this quantitative study uses a PLS-SEM approach to analyse responses from 166 senior managers in Oman's oil and gas firms. Findings indicate that all four talent management practices significantly and positively influence employee performance, with succession planning and talent development showing the strongest effects. However, In-Country Value significantly moderates only the relationship between talent development and employee performance. These findings suggest uneven operationalisation of In-Country Value across human capital dimensions, calling for a more holistic, integrated approach to fully leverage talent management as a driver of national workforce performance. They also urge firms to move beyond compliance towards long-term capability-building. Future studies should explore how In-Country Value evolves over time and across industries.

Keywords: employee performance, in-country value, talent management practices

1. Introduction

The global oil and gas industry is experiencing a turbulent era marked by price volatility, shifting energy diversification demands, mounting climate-related regulations, and a post-pandemic economic landscape (Guo et al., 2023; Hafner et al., 2023; Hajiyev et al., 2024). Oman, as a resource-dependent economy, has pivoted towards sustainable economic resilience through economic diversification and localisation policies (Abdel-Gadir & Mohammed, 2025). Oman strives to maintain the competitiveness of the oil and gas sector and localise benefits for Omanis through the Omanisation policy, while reducing expatriate dependency amid economic turmoil and rising unemployment (Alsayegh, 2025; International Labour Organisation, 2022; Lagger, 2024). Intentional investment in talent management (TM) practices that sustain high employee performance to meet the industry's high standards for safety, productivity and innovation is imperative (Alshehri et al., 2024; Khalifa et al., 2025; Masoud et al., 2025). At the macro level, evidence from Oman indicates that good governance and effective fiscal policy are closely linked to sustainable economic growth, reinforcing the importance of institutional quality for sectoral development and localisation agendas (Al-Saadi & Khudari, 2024). In addition, foreign investment and capital formation are sensitive to political stability and macroeconomic fundamentals, further elevating the strategic relevance of national capability-building initiatives in resource-dependent economies (Khudari et al., 2023).

As a response, the In-Country Value (ICV) framework was implemented to retain economic benefits locally through employment, supplier development, and knowledge transfer (Ministry of Energy and Minerals, 2025). Although ICV has been widely examined in terms of procurement and supply-chain linkages (Al Sawai, 2025; Tabti & Troug, 2025), its integration into human resource management (HRM) remains grossly underexplored. This gap is significant because TM practices are central to building a high-performing national workforce envisioned in Oman's Vision 2040.

Further to that, existing research in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries has primarily examined TM in relation to retention, leadership development and employee satisfaction (Alanazi, 2022; Qasim & Hamed, 2025; Sleiman et al., 2025) while studies on localisation have largely focused on policy design and compliance reporting (Al-Asfour et al., 2022). Empirical evidence on how national localisation policies such as ICV shape the effectiveness of TM practices in driving employee performance remain scarce (Darwish et al., 2023). This gap is particularly significant in Oman, where workforce localisation is both an economic necessity as well as a strategic policy priority. Without empirical evidence, policymakers and industry leaders lack the insights needed to align human capital strategies with national competitiveness goals.

From a theoretical perspective, the Resource-Based View (RBV) and Institutional Theory underpin this study. RBV positions human capital as a strategic asset whose value, rarity, inimitability, and organisational (VRIO) embeddedness can drive sustained competitive advantage (Barney, 1991; Komakech et al., 2025). On the other hand, Institutional Theory emphasises how regulatory mandates, nationalisation policies, and socio-cultural pressures shape organisational behaviour (Al-Asfour et al., 2022; Ayentimi et al., 2022; Budhwar et al., 2019; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). The synergy of RBV and Institutional Theory allows a dual perspective, but little is known about where these perspectives converge or diverge in resource-dependent economies, implying a knowledge gap.

To address the gap, this study investigates the influence of four TM practices; talent attraction, talent development, talent retention, and succession planning on employee performance in Oman's oil and gas sector and examines the moderating role of ICV. Figure 1 presents the research model guiding the investigation on the relationship between TM practices, with employee performance, moderated by ICV in Oman's oil and gas sector.

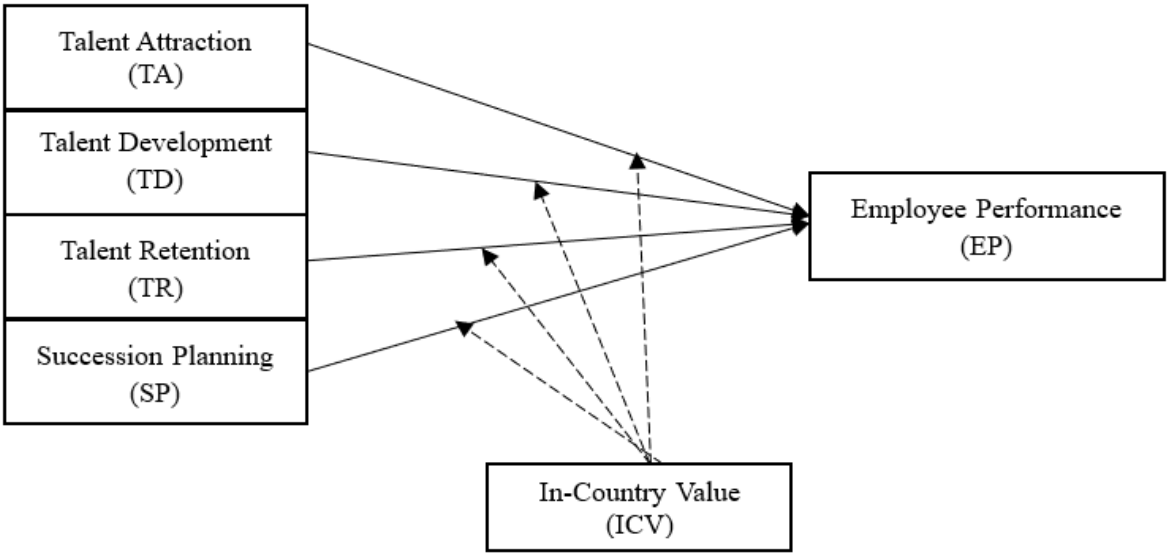

Figure 1. The Research Model

2. Literature Review

2.1. Employee Performance

Employee performance is widely recognised as a multidimensional construct encompassing both task-related outputs, such as efficiency, quality, and productivity, and contextual behaviours, such as collaboration, initiative, and adaptability (Ariani et al., 2025; Bol et al., 2025; Hasinat et al., 2024). In high-stakes sectors such as oil and gas, performance extends beyond technical competencies to include compliance with safety standards, responsiveness to change, and resilience under operational pressure (Hammond et al., 2023; Jahidi et al., 2024). Thus, this study adopts a three-dimensional approach that incorporates task performance, contextual performance, and counterproductive work behaviours (Koopmans et al., 2011).

Task and contextual behaviours include efficiency, precision, and teamwork, which are critical in technically demanding work environments (Zia-ur-Rehman, 2020). By contrast, counterproductive behaviours, such as absenteeism, negligence, or resistance to policies, can directly undermine safety culture, team cohesion, and the successful onboarding of national talent (Sayapina & Botone, 2021).
This study, however, deliberately excludes adaptive performance, as many Omani recruits entering the oil and gas sector through ICV policies are at early stages of competence, often operating in hierarchical, compliance-oriented environments that prioritise procedural adherence over agility and innovation (Al Shezawi & Khan, 2018; Al Jabri et al., 2024). Hence, adaptive behaviour may provide a misleading measure of employee performance, as it is more relevant in environments that emphasise autonomy, experimentation, or innovation (Steegh et al., 2025). Framing this as a boundary condition strengthens the theoretical contribution by illustrating that localisation policies may elevate compliance and procedural reliability but do not necessarily cultivate adaptive performance.

By focusing on task, contextual, and counterproductive work behaviours, this study aligns the performance measure with the operational and cultural realities of Oman's oil and gas firms. This conceptualisation not only ensures relevance to the sector but also enables a sharper examination of how TM practices, reinforced or constrained by ICV, shape the performance outcomes most critical for localisation success and organisational resilience.

2.2. Talent Management Practices

Effective talent management encompasses deliberate practices for identifying gaps, attracting high-fit candidates, developing capabilities, retaining commitment, and ensuring leadership continuity through succession planning (Akter et al., 2022; Kumar, 2022; Dawwas, 2022; Musakuro, 2022; Siambi, 2022), whereby each of which can differentially translate into performance in high-risk industries such as oil and gas.

In this study, talent management is operationalised through four complementary components—talent attraction, talent development, talent retention, and succession planning—because together they form an integrated system for building and sustaining human capital value. Strategic talent management emphasises aligning these practices with pivotal roles and capability needs that drive organisational outcomes (Collings & Mellahi, 2009; Sparrow & Makram, 2015). Talent attraction centres on employer value propositions and selection practices that improve person–organisation fit and accelerate role readiness, thereby supporting stronger task and contextual performance (Jiang et al., 2012). Talent development focuses on systematic upskilling, learning, and leadership preparation; robust evidence shows that training and development deliver benefits for individuals and organisations, including performance improvements (Aguinis & Kraiger, 2009). Talent retention reduces avoidable turnover and protects continuity of experience and tacit knowledge, which the turnover literature consistently associates with performance and stability outcomes (Hom et al., 2017). Finally, succession planning institutionalises leadership continuity and reduces disruption risk by formalising transition processes and internal pipelines (Schepker et al., 2018). Collectively, these components are expected to reinforce employee performance by strengthening capability, motivation, and continuity in high-reliability operational contexts.

2.2.1. Talent Attraction

Talent attraction extends beyond recruitment volume to the strategic curation of a talent pool that aligns with market dynamics, generational shifts, and organisational identity (Alhaider et al., 2025; Alzuod, 2024; Armstrong, 2025). In Oman's oil and gas sector, attracting young talent is necessary to reduce reliance on expatriates (Dudija & Apriliansyah, 2023; Dwidienawati et al., 2025; Lagger, 2023). However, it should not be merely a headcount but must also address social support, flexibility, and work-life balance (Dudija & Apriliansyah, 2023; Blom et al., 2025), while strengthening institutional excellence through branding, culture, and reputation (Rozman et al., 2023; Van Woerkom et al., 2024; Septiadi & Ramdani, 2024). Building on evidence linking attraction strategies to productivity and engagement (Lynn et al., 2023; Nguyen et al., 2021; Zaki et al., 2020), this study posits that:

H1: Talent attraction has a significant and positive influence on employee performance

2.2.2.Talent Development

Talent development is a capacity-building engine that creates a highly skilled and adaptable workforce, critically needed in high-stakes sectors such as oil and gas (Al Aina & Atan, 2020; Lagger, 2023; Siriwardena & Morais, 2019; Zhang & Wang, 2023). Within Oman's localisation agenda, talent development also serves as a strategic bridge, transforming raw potential into high-performing national professionals (Alwaely et al., 2025; Dewi et al., 2025; Lee, 2024). Training for instance, multiplies capabilities when it is integrated with real-time upskilling, job rotation, and leadership grooming (Asiedu & Tenakwah, 2025; Galanti & Fantinelli, 2025; Kwong et al., 2021; Li, 2024; Min et al., 2025). Through strategic talent development initiatives, it accelerates performance, drives continuous improvement, and creates value across the organisation (Alkafrini & Al Shawabkeh, 2025; Menezes et al., 2025; Miebaka & Vivian, 2020; Nurmala & Hermina, 2024; Rožman et al., 2023; Sanchez & Pascual, 2025). Therefore, the following hypothesis is posited. This capability-building logic is consistent with supply chain logistics research, which shows that disruption mitigation and resilience depend heavily on organisational preparedness and human capabilities developed through training and learning routines (Al-Qasimi et al., 2024a).

H2: Talent development has a significant and positive influence on employee performance

2.2.3. Talent Retention

Oman's oil and gas industry, being high-stakes, experiences deeper organisational and psychological contract issues, leading to employee turnover and attrition (Al Harrasi et al., 2024; Lagger, 2023; Soomro et al., 2024). Turnover disrupts operational continuity, safety routines, knowledge transfer and teamwork, and causes organisational knowledge loss, while attrition costs threaten firm sustainability (Ispiryan et al., 2024; Syafri & Rasyid, 2025). On the other hand, talent retention builds commitment, engagement and career alignment (Datu-Ramos & Bautista, 2025). Employing holistic retention strategies that integrate extrinsic factors such as pay and rewards (Shinde, 2025; Suriati et al., 2024) with intrinsic factors, emphasising purpose-driven work, autonomy, empowerment and growth (Karim et al., 2025; Shahzad et al., 2024), ensures talent quality, not just bodies (Diab, 2025; Porkodi et al., 2025). Empirical studies (Adeosun & Ohiani, 2020; Al Kurdi et al., 2020) showing the positive impact of talent retention factors on employee performance support the following hypothesis:

H3: Talent retention has a significant and positive influence on employee performance.

2.2.4. Succession Planning

Succession planning contributes to continuity and resilience, and it affirms employee loyalty (Agba, 2024; Al Rubaii & Matriano, 2025). Rather than being reactive, it is a forward-looking leadership system grounded in RBV that leverages internal resources to boost performance (Aigbedion et al., 2025; Azmi et al., 2025; Siambi, 2022). However, Oman's hierarchical culture leads to promotions based on affiliation and seniority (Akuffo & Kivipold, 2020; Al Harrasi et al., 2024; Matriano, 2024; Shah et al., 2025), which could undermine succession planning and hinder the retention of talented, high-performing leaders. Prior research (Ali & Mehreen, 2019; Abdullahi et al., 2020; Johnson et al., 2018) highlights its impact on employee engagement, productivity, and career satisfaction, making it a vital contributor to performance. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed. Such continuity-oriented systems are also emphasised in resilience research, where retaining and transferring critical know-how is central to sustaining performance under disruption (Al-Qasimi et al., 2024a).

H4: Succession planning has a significant and positive influence on employee performance.

2.3. In-Country Value

ICV, introduced in 2013, is a flagship localisation initiative designed to maximise socio-economic returns from the oil and gas sector. ICV emphasises retaining value domestically through employment, supplier development, and skill transfer (Rabboua et al., 2024; Ryan & Macdonald, 2020). It creates coercive and normative pressures that compel firms to align talent management with national priorities (Olawuyi, 2019; Östensson, 2017). Beyond employment and supplier development, ICV aligns with Oman's ambition to strengthen national logistics and supply chain capabilities; recent evidence-based assessments of Oman's Logistics Performance Index highlight priority areas for improvement in customs, infrastructure, logistics competence, and tracking and tracing (Al-Qasimi et al., 2024b).

In this study, ICV serves as a moderator, strengthening the relationship between TM practices and employee performance (Alhajri, 2021; Al-Hinai et al., 2024; Al Sawai, 2025). In practice, Petroleum Development Oman (2020) reported that more than 55,000 direct employment and training opportunities have been created since its adoption. Hence, ICV offers a structured pathway for local workforce development, encouraging firms to invest meaningfully in future-ready, high-performing national talent (Glaister et al., 2019). Local content policies in Nigeria (Adedeji et al., 2016), Tanzania (Chuwa & Perfect-Mrema, 2023), Ghana (Suleman & Zaato, 2021), and Uganda (Amana & Abu Amana, 2022) showed increased firm capabilities and greater participation of small and medium enterprises. However, the success of local content policy is undermined by regulatory enforcement, availability of qualified local talent, institutional readiness, and strategic alignment among government, industry, and training institutions (Eicke, 2025; Ministry of Natural Resources, 2021; Onwuka, 2021; Phagoo, 2023).

As a policy mechanism, ICV creates institutional pressure for firms to prioritise localisation through structured employment, training, and procurement strategies (Al-Alawi et al., 2022; Al Shezawi & Khan, 2018). Its moderating role in this study examines whether ICV moderates the effects of TM practices on employee performance in the oil and gas context. From a service operations and logistics perspective, ICV-driven investments in workforce capability can be interpreted as enabling resilience-enhancing routines that support continuity and recovery during disruptions (Al-Qasimi et al., 2024a).

Hence, the following research hypotheses are posited:

H5: In-Country Value strengthens the relationship between talent attraction and employee performance

H6: In-Country Value strengthens the relationship between talent development and employee performance

H7: In-Country Value strengthens the relationship between talent retention and employee performance

H8: In-Country Value strengthens the relationship between succession planning and employee performance

3. Materials and Methods

This study employed a cross-sectional, quantitative survey design to examine the effects of talent management practices on employee performance and the moderating role of In-Country Value (ICV) within Oman's oil and gas sector.

The target population comprised managers and supervisors working in oil and gas organisations in Oman who were directly involved in talent-related decisions (e.g., recruitment, development, retention initiatives, or succession planning) and who had responsibility for evaluating employee performance. A purposive sampling approach was used to ensure respondents had relevant decision-making and appraisal exposure (Saunders et al., 2023). Potential participants were identified through organisational HR units and professional networks and invited via email/online link. The G*Power 3.1 tool was used to determine the minimum required sample size based on nine predictors (k = 9, comprising 4 main predictors, 1 moderator, and 4 interaction terms), a significance level (α) of 0.05, a medium effect size (f^2) of 0.15, and a target power of 0.80, yielding a minimum sample size of 126 (Hair et al., 2024). In total, 435 invitations were distributed; 185 responses were received; after screening for eligibility and completeness, 166 questionnaires were retained for analysis.

All constructs were measured using multi-item scales adapted from prior empirical studies to fit the Oman oil and gas context. Items were assessed on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). The questionnaire comprised (i) talent attraction, talent development, talent retention, and succession planning; (ii) ICV; and (iii) employee performance. Employee performance was modelled as a higher-order construct captured through task performance, contextual performance, and counterproductive work behaviour. Prior to full deployment, the instrument was reviewed by 10 domain experts and piloted with five managers to assess clarity and contextual appropriateness; minor wording adjustments were made.

Participation was voluntary and anonymous. Respondents were informed that there were no right or wrong answers and that responses would be used only for research purposes, thereby reducing evaluation apprehension. Items were presented in conceptually distinct sections, with standardised instructions to minimise common-method bias.

Hypotheses were tested using partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) in SmartPLS 4. The PLS algorithm was run using the path weighting scheme, with a maximum of 300 iterations and a stop criterion of 1.0×10^{-7}. Statistical significance of direct and moderation effects was assessed via bootstrapping with 5,000 subsamples, two-tailed tests, and 95% bias-corrected confidence intervals. Measurement quality was evaluated through indicator loadings (≥0.70), composite reliability

(≥0.70), average variance extracted (≥0.50), and discriminant validity using the HTMT criterion (≤0.85/0.90) (Hair et al., 2024; Memon et al., 2020). Collinearity was assessed via VIF (<5). Structural model evaluation included R^2, effect sizes (f^2), and predictive relevance (Q^2), and PLSpredict with 10 folds and 10 repetitions, reporting Q^2_predict and prediction error metrics (RMSE/MAE) versus benchmark models.

Employee performance was modelled as a higher-order construct using the disjoint two-stage approach recommended for PLS-SEM. Conceptually, employee performance is captured through distinct dimensions (task performance, contextual performance, and counterproductive work behaviour) that jointly define overall performance; therefore, the higher-order construct was specified as reflective–formative (lower-order constructs measured reflectively; higher-order construct formed by the lower-order dimensions). In Stage 1, the lower-order constructs were estimated, yielding latent variable scores. In Stage 2, the lower-order scores were used as indicators of the higher-order construct, and the full structural model was re-estimated. Evaluation of the higher-order formative specification focused on the significance and relevance of the lower-order weights (bootstrapping) and collinearity among lower-order dimensions (VIF).

The moderating role of In-Country Value (ICV) was tested by specifying interaction terms using SmartPLS's two-stage moderation procedure, which uses latent variable scores from the main-effects model to create the interaction construct and then estimates the moderation model in the second stage. Interaction effects were interpreted using SmartPLS simple-slope plots and conditional effects to clarify the direction and practical meaning of significant interactions.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Model Specification and Analytical Approach

This study used a two-stage disjoint PLS-SEM approach, with TM practices and ICV treated as first-order reflective constructs, and employee performance as a second-order reflective construct represented by task, contextual, and counterproductive behaviours. This approach reduces estimation bias and enables parsimonious model assessment (Borman & Motowidlo, 1993; Koopmans et al., 2011; Ringle, 2024).

4.2. Measurement Model Assessment

The measurement model assessment includes convergent validity, discriminant validity, and collinearity statistics for all first-order constructs and the second-order construct, using a disjointed two-stage approach. The measurement model confirmed validity and reliability. Table 1 shows all outer loadings (> 0.70), Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability (rho_a and rho_c) (> 0.70) and average variance extracted (AVE) (> 0.50), confirming convergent validity for both first-order and second-order constructs. Besides that, discriminant validity was also satisfied as evident from the Hetero-trait Mono-trait (HTMT) ratios (< 0.850) for the first-order constructs in Table 2 and second-order constructs in Table 3. There was also no collinearity issues based on Variance Inflated Factor (VIF < 5.0), as shown in Table 4.

Table 1. Convergent Validity of the Measurement Models

Construct	Indicators	Outer Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability		Average Variance Extracted
				(Rho_a)	(Rho_c)	
Talent Attraction	TA1	0.839	0.954	0.956	0.960	0.729
	TA2	0.872				
	TA3	0.849				
	TA4	0.833				
	TA5	0.845				
	TA6	0.870				

	TA7	0.847				
	TA8	0.879				
	TA9	0.849				
Talent Development	TD1	0.810				
	TD2	0.865				
	TD3	0.877				
	TD4	0.884				
	TD5	0.859	0.953	0.956	0.960	0.727
	TD6	0.851				
	TD7	0.839				
	TD8	0.859				
	TD9	0.829				
Talent Retention	TR1	0.810				
	TR2	0.872				
	TR3	0.884				
	TR4	0.886				
	TR5	0.906				
	TR6	0.916	0.971	0.972	0.975	0.777
	TR7	0.880				
	TR8	0.895				
	TR9	0.859				
	TR10	0.920				
	TR11	0.863				
Succession Planning	SP1	0.888				
	SP2	0.889				
	SP3	0.903				
	SP4	0.904	0.961	0.962	0.968	0.811
	SP5	0.904				
	SP6	0.908				
	SP7	0.910				
ICV	ICV1	0.728				
	ICV2	0.890				
	ICV3	0.890				
	ICV4	0.881	0.943	0.944	0.954	0.748
	ICV5	0.890				
	ICV6	0.887				
	ICV7	0.875				
Task Performance	PTP1	0.676				
	PTP2	0.801	0.778	0.773	0.856	0.600
	PTP3	0.810				
	PTP4	0.802				
Contextual Performance	PCP1	0.804				
	PCP2	0.796				
	PCP3	0.834				
	PCP4	0.838	0.928	0.931	0.942	0.699
	PCP5	0.885				
	PCP6	0.874				
	PCP7	0.818				
Counterproductive Work Behaviour	PPP1	0.896				
	PPP2	0.908	0.929	0.930	0.946	0.779
	PPP3	0.828				
	PPP4	0.870				
Employee Performance (Second-Order)	TP	0.793				
	PCP	0.843	0.794	0.801	0.879	0.709
	CPPP	0.887				

Table 2. HTMT Ratio of All First-Order Constructs

	TA	TD	TR	SP	ICV	PTP	PCP	PPP
Talent Attraction (TA)								
Talent Development (TD)	0.400							
Talent Retention (TR)	0.507	0.458						
Succession Planning (SP)	0.428	0.459	0.571					
In-Country Value (ICV)	0.481	0.544	0.658	0.628				
Task Performance (PTP)	0.530	0.570	0.695	0.731	0.794			
Contextual Performance (PCP)	0.468	0.622	0.581	0.653	0.616	0.611		
Counterproductive Work Behaviour (CPPP)	0.545	0.619	0.653	0.662	0.635	0.744	0.687	

Table 3. HTMT Ratio with Employee Performance as Second-Order Constructs

	TA	TD	TR	SP	ICV	EP
Talent Attraction (TA)						
Talent Development (TD)	0.400					
Talent Retention (TR)	0.507	0.458				
Succession Planning (SP)	0.428	0.459	0.571			
In-Country Value (ICV)	0.481	0.544	0.658	0.628		
Employee Performance (EP)	0.616	0.735	0.760	0.836	0.773	

Table 4. Collinearity Statistics of First-Order Constructs and Second-Order Construct

	Task Performance	Contextual Performance	Counterproductive Work Behaviour	Employee Performance (Second-Order)
Talent Attraction	1.633	1.633	1.633	1.638
Talent Development	1.753	1.753	1.753	1.758
Talent Retention	2.106	2.106	2.106	2.108
Succession Planning	1.904	1.904	1.904	1.914
In-Country Value	2.287	2.287	2.287	2.322

4.3. Structural Model Assessment

Figure 4 shows the bootstrapping output of the direct and indirect paths assessment in the structural model.

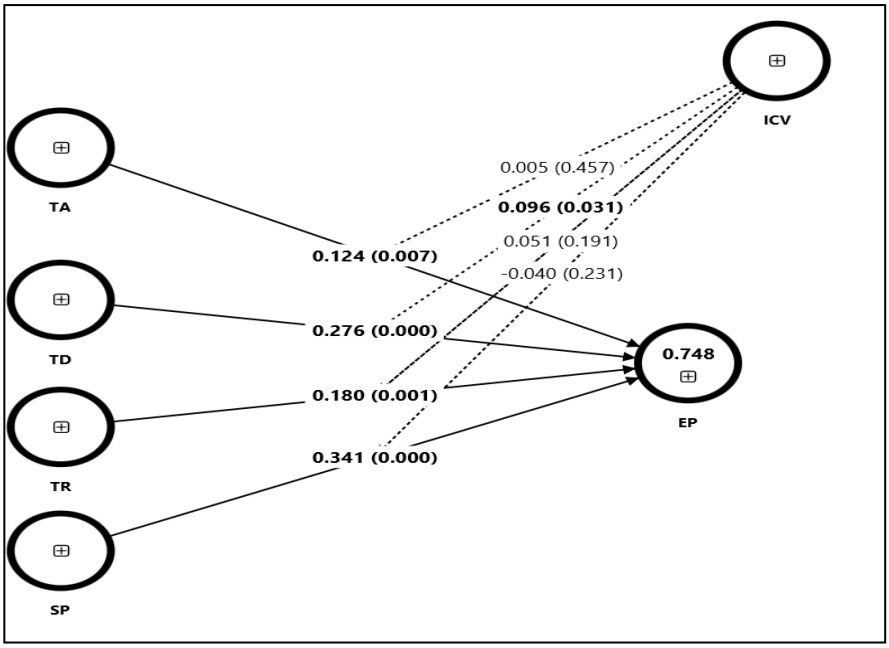

Fig.4: Bootstrapping Output

4.3.1 TMP and Employee Performance

Table 5 shows that talent attraction (β = 0.124, T = 2.477, p < 0.05), talent development (β = 0.276, T = 4.600, p < 0.05), talent retention (β = 0.180, T = 3.031, p < 0.05), and succession planning (β = 0.341, T = 5.675, p < 0.05) have significant and positive relationships with employee performance. All research hypotheses, H1, H2, H3, and H4 are supported.

Table 5. Direct Path Analysis Outcomes

Hypotheses	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P values	Result
H1: TA → EP	0.124	0.122	0.050	2.477	0.007	Supported
H2: TD → EP	0.276	0.279	0.060	4.600	0.000	Supported
H3: TR → EP	0.180	0.185	0.059	3.031	0.001	Supported
H4: SP → EP	0.341	0.343	0.060	5.675	0.000	Supported

The findings confirm that talent attraction, talent development, talent retention, and succession planning positively influence employee performance in Oman's oil and gas sector. Succession planning emerged as the most influential driver of performance, reinforcing the critical importance of proactive leadership pipelines and structured career progression in industries where technical and safety demands are crucial. This resonates with the RBV, which positions internally nurtured leadership capabilities as an inimitable resource for sustaining a firm's competitive advantage.

Talent development was the second-strongest predictor, confirming its role as a strategic performance accelerator. This finding is particularly significant for Oman's localisation agency, as it affirms that investments in learning ecosystems and skill-building initiatives yield tangible performance outcomes among Omanis. By contrast, talent attraction and talent retention were also statistically significant but with comparatively smaller effect sizes. This suggests that attracting and retaining the right talent are essential, yet continuous talent development exerts a more sustained influence on performance. Taken together, the predictive accuracy of 0.748 substantiates the relevance of these four TM practices in shaping employee performance in Oman's oil and gas sector.

4.3.2 Moderation by ICV

Table 6 presents the outcomes of the indirect path analysis. The moderation of ICV on talent attraction (β = 0.005, T = 0.108, p > 0.05), talent retention (β = 0.051, T = 0.874, p > 0.05), and succession planning (β = -0.040, T = 0.737, p > 0.05) with employees is not significant. In contrast, the moderation of ICV on talent development (β = 0.096, T = 1.974, p < 0.05) is significant. The three research hypotheses (H5, H7, and H8) are not supported, whereas H6 is supported.

Table 6. Indirect Path Analysis Outcomes

Hypotheses	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P values	Result
H5: TA*ICV → EP	0.005	0.006	0.044	0.108	0.457	Not Supported
H6: TD*ICV → EP	0.096	0.095	0.051	1.974	0.031	Supported
H7: TR*ICV → EP	0.051	0.048	0.058	0.874	0.191	Not Supported
H8: SP*ICV → EP	-0.040	-0.043	0.054	0.737	0.231	Not Supported

The moderation of ICV on the relationship between training development and employee performance is further illustrated by a simple-slope analysis in Figure 5. The gradient of the moderation line (ICV at +1 SD) is steeper as it progresses from low to higher levels of training development, indicating that ICV amplifies the effect of training development on employee performance. By comparison, the gradient of the moderation line (ICV at -1 SD) is flatter, indicating a lesser impact of training development on employee performance in the absence of ICV.

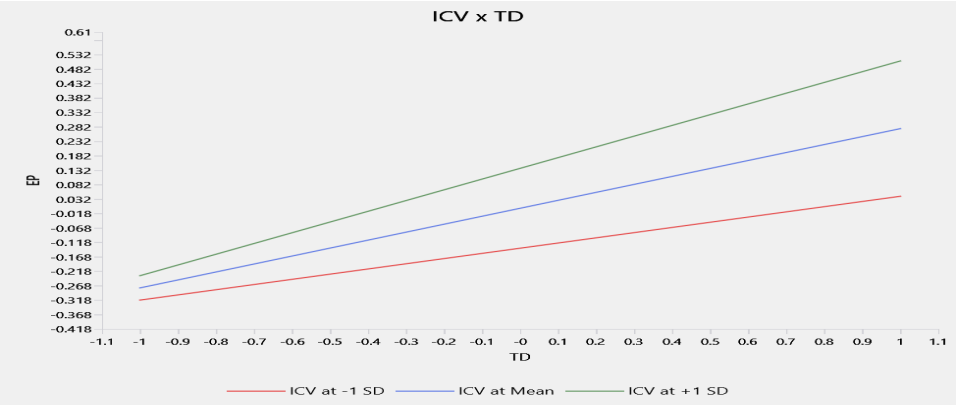

Fig.5: Simple Slope Analysis for TD*ICV

Contrary to expectations, ICV strengthened only the talent development-employee performance relationship, while its moderating effect on talent attraction, talent retention and succession planning was not significant. This asymmetry is theoretically revealing, suggesting that, though coercive, institutional pressures do not uniformly amplify all talent management practices. Instead, ICV exerts a selective reinforcement effect, magnifying practices already aligned with measurable compliance indicators (training hours, certification programmes, Omanisation quotas). This extends the RBV-Institutional Theory integration by specifying a boundary condition: policy instruments are most effective when they align with firm-internal capability-building, but less so when practices depend on cultural, relational, or structural transformations. In other words, ICV policies are meaningfully operationalised through investment in local upskilling, structured training, and career pathways.

Meanwhile, the lack of moderation in talent attraction, talent retention and succession planning

highlights persistent institutional and organisational frictions. Symbolic compliance may explain the gap, in which firms adopt ICV broadly but have not embedded it deeply in their talent-attraction or retention mechanisms. In addition, job design limitations could hinder ICV integration with TM practices, as local hires under the ICV policy may not be assigned meaningful roles, limiting the effectiveness of attraction and retention initiatives. Furthermore, hierarchical rigidity in Oman's corporate culture also poses a hindrance, as most oil and gas firms still favour affiliation and seniority over meritocracy. These dynamics illustrate a broader policy-practice disconnect, suggesting that ICV is effective at enforcing measurable inputs but less effective at reshaping entrenched organisational logics. The inconsistent influence of ICV on TM practices suggests that its implementation remains superficial or uneven, highlighting the policy's broad scope and a greater focus on macroeconomic objectives than on targeted talent management strategies.

Meanwhile, in Figure 6, the effect sizes (f^2) and predictive accuracy (R^2) of the impact of TM practices on employee performance are shown. The output indicates that succession planning ($f^2 = 0.240$) and talent development ($f^2 = 0.171$) have moderate effect sizes, while talent attraction ($f^2 = 0.037$) and talent retention ($f^2 = 0.061$) have small effect sizes. ICV's moderation effect on the relationship between talent attraction ($f^2 = 0.000$) with employee performance is negligible, while for talent retention ($f^2 = 0.004$) and succession planning ($f^2 = 0.004$), the moderation effects are very small. As for talent development ($f^2 = 0.022$), the moderation effect is small. The predictive accuracy ($R^2 = 0.748$) of the structural model implies that the combined effects of talent management practice can explain 74.8 percent of the variance in employee performance. This suggests that the structural model has substantial predictive accuracy.

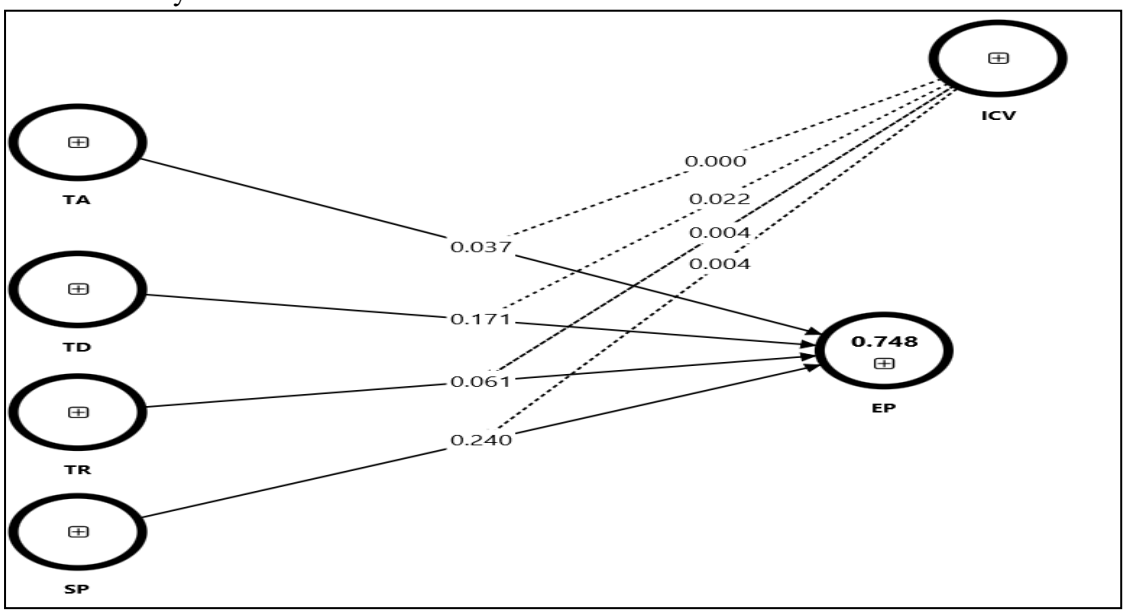

Fig.6: Effect Sizes and Predictive Accuracy of the Structural Model

PLSpredict enables comparison of the structural model in this study (PLS-SEM) with benchmark models, such as the linear model (LM) and the indicator-average (IA) model. The comparison is based on root mean square error (RMSE) and mean absolute error (MAE). Lower values of RMSE and MAE indicate a better model with strong predictive power. As shown in the PLSpredict output in Table 7, all RMSE and MAE values are lower than those for LM and IA, suggesting that the research model has strong predictive power. This is further confirmed by the output in Table 8, which presents the Cross-Validated Predictive Ability Test (CVPAT) evaluating how well the PLS-SEM model predicts new data compared with the LM and IA models. The results show negative loss differences with t values and p values less than 0.05, thereby confirming that the structural model in this study is a better predictor of

employee performance in new research settings than the LM and IA models.

Table 7. PLS Predict Manifested Variables Summary

	Q^2predict	**PLS-SEM RMSE**	**PLS-SEM MAE**	**LM RMSE**	**LM MAE**	**IA RMSE**	**IA MAE**
Task Performance	0.413	0.772	0.597	0.862	0.673	1.008	0.796
Contextual Performance	0.520	0.698	0.507	0.800	0.607	1.007	0.843
Counterproductive Work Behaviour	0.575	0.657	0.519	0.757	0.600	1.008	0.836

Table 8. CVPAT Latent Variables Summary

		IA Model				Linear Model			
	PLS loss	**IA loss**	**Average loss difference**	**t value**	**p value**	**LM loss**	**Average loss difference**	**t value**	**p value**
EP	0.505	1.015	-0.51	9.572	0.000	0.652	-0.147	4.415	0.000
Overall	0.505	1.015	-0.51	9.572	0.000	0.652	-0.147	4.415	0.000

5. Conclusion

This study affirms that all practices significantly contribute to employee performance, with succession planning and talent development emerging as the most impactful drivers. However, ICV was found to significantly moderate only the relationship of talent development with performance, suggesting that its influence is not fully embedded across the entire spectrum of TM practices. These outcomes reveal a critical gap between policy design and actual implementation.

The implications of these findings are both theoretical and practical. Theoretically, they refined the integration of RBV and Institutional Theory by demonstrating that coercive institutional pressures do not uniformly generate capability gains but rather produce selective amplification based on organisational alignment. This insight prompts localisation policies to deviate from compliance-versus-noncompliance dichotomies and move toward critically viewing where institutional pressure succeed and where they falter. Practically, these findings call for a recalibration of Oman's localisation strategy. This study shows that talent development has benefited from ICV intervention, but over-reliance on this single dimension risks building skills in silos without ensuring long-term career progression or stable leadership pipelines. It is imperative that policymakers design ICV-linked performance indicators that incentivise firms not only to train but also to embed meaningful roles, create transparent career pathways, and install merit-based succession systems. This may require firms to shift from a compliance mindset to a capability-integration mindset, where attraction, development, retention, and succession planning are treated as interdependent levers rather than in isolation.

For researchers and scholars, the findings urge further research into the selective reinforcement role of institutions, particularly through cross-country comparisons of local content policies. Meanwhile, policymakers and practitioners should acknowledge the fact that sustained performance outcomes cannot rely on symbolic localisation, but consider the strategic integration of talent attraction, development, retention, and succession planning under a coherent policy framework.

Based on the findings, several key recommendations are proposed for policymakers, industry

leaders, and human resource practitioners in Oman's oil and gas sector. Firstly, the inconsistent moderation of ICV on TMP, suggests that there could be a fragmented implementation of ICV within the human capital strategies. Therefore, policymakers should expand the operationalisation of ICV to cover the entire talent lifecycle. This can be attained by adopting ICV-linked performance indicators that incentivise organisations to invest not only in training but in employer branding, retention frameworks, and leadership development programs as well. This shift would address the current gap between policy intent and actual organisational practice, thus ensuring localisation is not symbolic but capability-generative.

Secondly, a more balanced talent management approach is necessary. Emphasis on training and development, while lacking focus on talent attraction, retention, and succession planning, could lead to the "skills-in-isolation" effect, where competencies are developed yet fail to be sustained (Hendrawan et al., 2024). Firms should refine their attraction strategies to resonate with evolving Omani professionals, with an emphasis on meaningful roles, progression pathways, and the establishment of merit-based succession frameworks.

Thirdly, succession planning must move beyond symbolic roles or affiliation-based advancement. Firms should embed merit-based progression frameworks and provide clear, structured career pathways to encourage local employees to remain engaged and envision a long-term career in the sector (Farah et al., 2020).

Lastly, given that ICV is expected to expand into the non-oil sector as part of the diversification agenda in Oman, it is recommended that a harmonised ICV-talent strategy framework be developed across sectors. Lessons learned from the oil and gas sector should inform a national roadmap for localisation policies that are adaptable, talent-driven, and outcome-oriented. This would ensure that ICV functions as a long-term human capital enabler across sectors, not merely as a compliance mechanism.

This study opens several avenues for future inquiry. First, longitudinal research is recommended to evaluate the effectiveness of ICV over time and its impact on long-term employee performance and retention among national talent. Second, future research should also conduct cross-sectoral and cross-country comparisons, which can provide insights into how institutional pressures interact with RBV-driven practices across different contexts. Finally, qualitative research exploring employees' real experiences of ICV-driven initiatives could provide valuable context to complement quantitative findings and enrich policy recommendations.

Looking ahead, Oman's ICV journey offers broader lessons to other resource-dependent economies. Localisation policies can become powerful enablers of national competitiveness, localising not only jobs but also excellence. This calls for a renewed commitment to embed talent management strategies at the heart of ICV, not merely as compliance but as a national movement to build resilient, future-ready workforces. For oil and gas firms, the path ahead demands a bold shift from procedural fulfilment to purposeful implementation, where every policy is a level for transformation, and every local talent is viewed as a strategic investment in the nation's prosperity.

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