

The Influence of Talent Management on Performance of Local Employees in Oil and Gas Companies in Abu Dhabi

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Abstract

Purpose –The purpose of this study is to develop a model to understand the influence of talent management on job performance among local employees of Oil and Gas Company in the UAE. Specifically, this paper seeks to explore the mediating effects of satisfaction and engagement of the employees on the influence of talent management on job performance.

Design/method/approach – A survey research to verify the talent management model was designed. Data collected through questionnaire from 321 local employees from Abu Dhabi National Company (ADNOC) using systematic random sampling were considered for the survey. Partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) was used to validate the measurement model and structural model.

Findings – The results of the study revealed that both TM Mindset and TM Strategies have positive and significant relationship with satisfaction, engagement and performance. Similarly, engagement and satisfaction has significant and positive relationship with job performance. Both satisfaction and engagement mediates the relationship of TM Mindset and Talent Management Strategies on performance of local employees in the oil and gas companies in the UAE.

Practical Implications - This study would benefit the leaders of O&G companies and human resource practitioners to understand the relationship between TM and job performance, which will reduce the turnover rate among local employees.

Originality/value – This study contributes to the knowledge on talent management by proposing a model of talent management influencing performance of local employees in oil and gas companies..

Keywords: Talent Management Mindset, Talent Management Strategy, Satisfaction, Engagement, Employee Performance

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Introduction

The increasing complexity and volatile environment of the current business context due to globalization, advancement in technology and changes in workforce demographics have increased the need for organisations to identify, recruit and retain their talented employees (Bani-Hani, 2021; Gallardo-Gallardo, Thunnissen, & Scullion, 2020). Organizations constantly struggle to preserve the quantity and quality of people necessary to carry out their strategic plans (Vaiman, Collings & Scullion, 2017).

Numerous studies have recognized the importance of TM in helping businesses attain a long-term competitive edge (Al Ariss, Cascio & Paauwe, 2014; Anlesinya, Dartey-Baah & Amponsah-Tawiah, 2019). In this case, Farndale et al. (2010) view that TM plays significant contributions to achieving an organization's strategic goals rather than just identifying and selecting suitable employees to fill the positions in the organization. According to Schreuder & Noorman (2018), TM ought to be a critical and well-targeted expenditure that benefits the whole organization because it provides a unique strategy to managing human resources to optimize organizational performance (Joyce & Slocum, 2012), mitigate worker turnover (Ballinger et al., 2011), and acquire long-term competitive edge (Iles, 2013). It also contributes to the removal of wastes in organizations, supports employees' self-improvement (Karatop, Kubat & Uygun, 2015) and forecasts the need for suitable employees to meet business desires, planning and managing employees' needs as well as planning the employees' career development (Cascio & Boudreau, 2016).

Drawn from the challenge to ensure the productivity of Oil and Gas (O&G) companies, the main economic contributor of the UAE, employees' job performance in the O&G companies becomes a priority. According to Pegram, Falcone & Kolios (2018), job localization has become crucial in the oil and gas industry. However, employee performance still forms a major problem. Barties (2020) asserted that local employees experience difficulties, such as the lack of appropriate education, expertise, and experience; large remuneration perceptions and profession understanding, hence affecting employees' job performance. In this case, many scholars opined that employee engagement and satisfaction are significant determiners for organizational success. Specifically, engaged and satisfied employee perform better and provide better results for the organization (Luna-Arocas & Morley, 2015; Mensah et al., 2018; Pandita & Ray 2019; Sopiah et al., 2020; Barkhuizen & Gumede, 2021). Considering the importance of job performance of local employees that contribute to the performance of the companies, it is crucial to investigate the ways in which TM, engagement and satisfaction influence job performance.

Although there are various perspectives to be adopted in the TM research, this present research focuses TM from the perspective of human resource management. Specifically, it is motivated to adopt a hybrid perspective, which is the combination of both exclusive and inclusive, to bridge the gap between exclusive and inclusive approaches, hence addressing the issue of biasness and justice that results in the concentration on selected categories of employees only. This hybrid perspective is consistent with the conceptualization of TM proposed by Luna-Arocas & Morley, 2015; Mensah et al., 2018; Pandita & Ray 2019; Sopiah et al., 2020). that aims to address the weaknesses of the exclusive approach. Furthermore, contextualized within a specific socio-cultural context, this present study also advocates a context-dependent view, in which talent management is influenced by the country's specific

organizational environment and socio-cultural context (Connor and Crowley-Henry, 2019), namely the ADNOC of UAE.

In the subsequent section, the conceptual model of the present study is reviewed in terms of construct, The review is followed by a description of methodology and the section thereafter provides an analysis of the data. A discussion of the findings and implications of the study is presented in the final section.

Literature review

Talent Management and Job Performance

This study advocated that talent management is a multi-faceted construct consisting of talent management mindset and talent management strategies as proposed by Mahfoozi et al. (2018). The talent management mindset consists of four main components, namely talent attraction, talent identification, talent development and positive talent relation, while talent management strategies consists of three main constructs, which are talent engagement, talent retention and talent work-related competencies. The conceptual framework of this study is as presented in Figure 1.

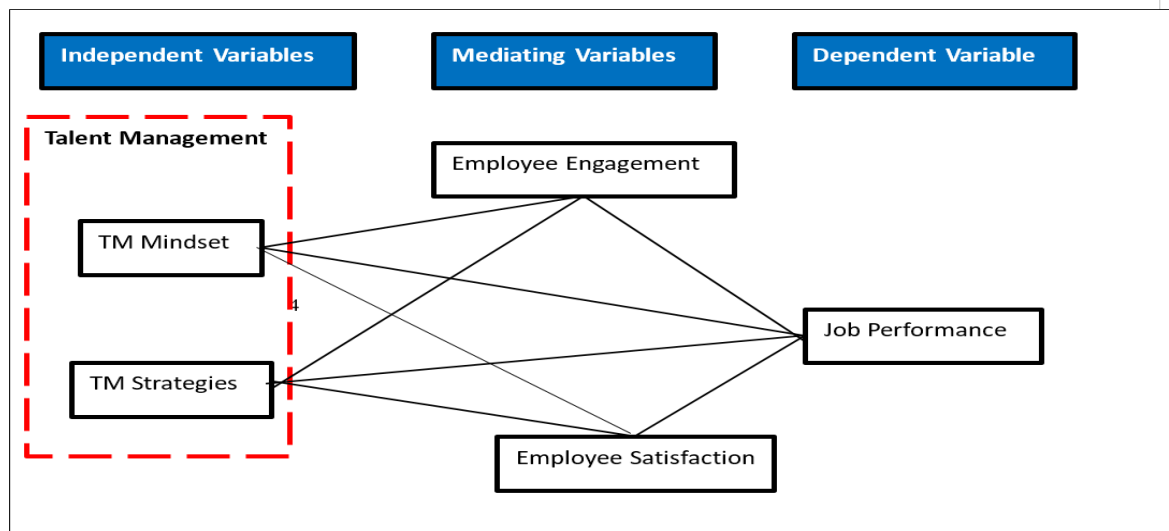


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

A variety of theories have been adopted to gain an understanding of the influence of TM on performance. Among the theories adopted by researchers are such as resource-based view, social-exchange theory (SET), human capital theory, equity theory, and job-resource demand. SET provides a useful framework for comprehending the mechanism through which skilled employees perceive and react to TM activities. According to SET, employees often react to their companies with extra-role activities when they believe their companies are investing in them (Narayanan, Rajithakumar & Menon, 2019). It is also used to demonstrate the attitudes and interaction behavior of individuals (Twenge et al., 2008. Mar (2019) contends that SET provides a ‘meaningful theoretical basis for understanding and studying employee engagement, as SET helps explain why, when employees perceive that their relationship with their employer is fair and just, they will reciprocate in kind, such as with positive behaviors (Narayanan et al., 2019).

TM has a beneficial influence on job performance, according to empirical research Luna-Arocas & Morley (2015), Mensah (2016), Bibi (2018), Dang et al. (2020) and Sopiah et al. (2020). As such, this present research hypothesized that:

- H1: TM Mindset has a positive significant relationship with Job Performance among local employees.
- H2: TM Strategies have a positive significant relationship with Job Performance among local employees

There has been extensive research that indicates the importance of TM practices in enhancing employee engagement that contributes to organizational success. Specifically, Pandita & Ray (2018) suggest that effective adoption of TM improve employee engagement and reduce turnover, resulting in improved talent retention and employee performance. Besides that, Mensah (2015) claims that employee engagement has been recognized as the outcome of TM practices such as attracting, retaining and turnover. Furthermore, Mahfoozi et al. (2018) emphasized the necessity of a TM strategy that contribute to employee engagement. Ismail, Iqbal and Nasr (2019) investigate the link between employee engagement and job performance in Lebanon based on the engagement score adapted from Schaufeli et al. (2019), who legalized the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale and they found that there is a positive relationship between employee engagement and job performance. As such, this research formulates that:

- H3: TM Mindset has a significant positive relationship with Employee Engagement.
- H4: TM Strategies have a positive significant relationship with Employee Engagement.
- H5: Employee Engagement has a significant positive relationship with Job Performance among local employees.

Previous research (Collings & Mellahi, 2009; Mensah, 2015; Luna-Arocas & Morley, 2015; Mensah & Bawole, 2017) has indicated that TM practices enhance employee satisfaction which then improves employee performance (Luna-Arocas & Morley, 2015). In this respect, this research suggests the following hypotheses:

- 6: TM Mindset has a significant positive relationship with Employee Satisfaction.
- 7: TM Strategies have a positive significant relationship with Employee Satisfaction.
- 8: Employee Satisfaction has a significant positive relationship with Job Performance among local employees.

Mediating role of satisfaction and engagement

Drawn from SET that advocates the norm of reciprocity (if an individual receives something positive, they are obliged to reciprocate), it can be concluded that employees may reciprocate with job performance if the organization invests in developing their talent. Researchers (such as Azeem & Yasmine, 2015; Pawirosumarto et al., 2017) show that employee engagement leads to employee job performance. As a consequence, the following hypotheses are formulated in this research:

Employee Engagement mediates the relationship between TM Mindset and Job
9: Performance among local employees.

Employee Engagement mediates the relationship between
10: TM Strategies and Job Performance among local employees.

The role of employee satisfaction as a mediator between the relationship of high-performance work and employees' performance has been studied by some researchers (Mensah et al., 2018; Wickramaaratchi & Perera, 2020), but conflicting results have been obtained between the variables due to different HR practices (Whitener, 2001). Vatankhah, Javid,& Raofi (2017) have investigated the mediating effect of employee satisfaction on the relationship between High-Performance Work Practices (HPWP) and turnover. Still, the findings on the relationships among the variables have been conflicting, owing to the varying sets of HR practises that have been taken into account. Accordingly, the following hypotheses are formulated:

Employee Satisfaction mediates the relationship between TM Mindset and Job
11: Performance among local employees.

Employee Satisfaction mediates the relationship between TM Strategies and Job
12: Performance among local employees.

Methodology

This study adopted correlation driven by the quantitative approach, consistent with its purpose and objectives.

Population and Sampling

The unit of analysis in this study is the local employees in the operation department because the majority of employees are working in operation. The list of local employees was provided by the company, and a systematic random selection was adopted. This approach allows the researcher to add a degree of system or process into the random selection of subjects (Sekaran & Bougie, 2009). Table 1 illustrates the respondents demographic information. Of the 420 distributed questionnaire, 321 were complete and useable for the data analysis, producing a 76.4 % response rate, hence adequate for statistical analysis, as recommended by Hair et al. (2020).

Table 1: Demographic profile of respondents

Demographic Variables		Frequency	Valid (%)
Gender	Male	247	77%
	Female	74	23%
	<i>Total</i>	<i>321</i>	<i>100%</i>
Age group	25-35	228	71%
	36-45	67	21%
	46-55	26	8%
	>55	0	0%
	<i>Total</i>	<i>321</i>	<i>100%</i>
Experience	0-5 Years	218	68%

	6-10 Years	75	23%
	11-15 Years	28	9%
	15 and Above	0	0%
	<i>Total</i>	<i>321</i>	<i>100%</i>

Based on Table1, the majority of respondents were male (77%) local employees with the age group range from 25-35 years old (71%). The majority of them have less than 6 years working experience (68%).

Questionnaire development

The questionnaire was categorised into six sections prefaced by a cover letter offering a brief overview of the study. The first section (Section A) focuses on acquiring the demographic information of the respondents. Meanwhile, the other five sections (Section B-F) focus on acquiring respondents' responses on the five constructs (TM mindset, TM strategies, employee engagement, employee satisfaction and job satisfaction). Measurement for the TM mindset and TM strategies were adopted from Mahfoozi et al. (2018), Collings & Melahi, (2009)). Employee engagement were adopted from studies by Sekhar et al. (2018), Bailey et al. (2017), and Macey & Schneider (2008). Employee satisfaction is measured using nine items adapted from Lei, Basit, & Hassan (2018). Job performance were was measured through eight items adapted from Kianto et al.(2019), Luna-Arocas & Morley, (2015) and Palvalin et al. (2015)adapted from Luna-Arocas & Morley (2015).These items were constructed based on a five-point Likert scale from 1- strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree.

Statistical techniques

Data were analysed using the partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) approach. PLS-SEM is an iterative process that “provides successive approximations for the estimates, subset by subset, of loadings and structural parameters” (Fornell and Cha, 1994, p. 62). Scholars, including Hair et al. (2020) and Sarstedt et al. (2019) acknowledged that there is no requirement for normally distributed data in the PLS-SEM approach. Moreover, they noted that the PLS-SEM technique can be applied in research with low sample size, as well as in exploratory research. Hence, the rationale to apply this approach was that the aim of the study is to predict rather than to confirm the influence of talent management on job performance of local employees in oil and gas companies of the UAE.

Data analysis

Partial least square structural equation modelling

As recommended by Anderson & Gerbing (1988), this study applied a two-stage PLS-SEM analytical process, which involves a measurement model assessment and a structural model assessment.

Measurement model

As for the measurement model, a number of analyses, such as reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity were conducted. The convergent validity of the measures was

examined in terms of the standardized item loadings, composite reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE). As shown in Table 2, the data analysis test indicate that the measurement model is valid and can be used to analyse the structural model's parameters. The value of each of the five constructs item is reliable (Cronbach's alpha values were more than 0.7; CR values were more than 0.8) and valid (convergent validity: AVE values were more than 0.5; discriminat validity: met the Fornell-Larker criterion as shwon in Table 3).

Table 2.Measurement model: Reliability and Validity of the constructs

Variables	Cronbach's alpha	CR	AVE
Satisfaction	0.933	0.944	0.652
Engagement	0.917	0.929	0.505
Performance	0.890	0.913	0.652
TM Strategies	0.950	0.955	0.568
TM Mindset	0.961	0.964	0.521

*CR= composite reliability; AVE average variance extracted

Table 3. Fornell-Larcker Criterion

	Satisfaction	Engagement	Performance	TM Strategies	TM Mindset
Satisfaction	0.807				
Engagement	0.612	0.711			
Performance	0.621	0.670	0.754		
TM Strategies	0.643	0.676	0.635	0.722	
TM Mindset	0.592	0.690	0.636	0.701	0.712

Structural model

Table 4 shows the R^2 values of the variables. Satisfaction had an R^2 value of 0.453, indicating that 45.3% of the variance in the satisfaction is driven by TM strategies and TM mindset, while, R^2 value of engagement was 0.549, implying 55% of changes in engagement is caused by TM Mindset and TM Strategies. Likewise, R^2 value of performance was 0.588, showing a 59% of variance in performance is produced by TM Mindset and TM Strategies. This result indicated thatthe changes in the endogenous variables of satisfaction, engagement and performance are caused by the exogenous variables of TM strategies and TM mindset.

Data were analyzed to test direct relationships among the constructs through eight hypotheses. The results of the hypotheses are presented in Table 5. Firstly, for H1 was supported as the coefficient value was 0.187, t-values = 2.79, implying that performance among local employees was affected by TM Mindset. Second, H2 proposed that TM Strategies have a positive impact on performance of local employees. The coefficient value was 0.158 and the t-value was 0.071, showing H2 to be significant. This finding infers that TM Strategies affect the performance of local employees in the oil and gas companies. H3 hypothesises that TM Mindset has a positive impact on engagement, while H4 hypothesises that TM Strategies has a positive impact on engagement. For testing H3, the coefficient values was 0.425 and t-values was 0.054, while H4 has coefficient values of 0.378 and t-values of 0.055. Therefore, H3 and H4 were supported, indicating that both TM Mindset and TM Strategies have significant and positive influence on engagement. Next, the results of testing H5 show the coefficient value was 0.294 and t-values was 0.066, indicating that H5

was supported in which the engagement has significant influence on performance. H6 and H7 test the significant relationship between TM Mindset and TM Strategies with satisfaction respectively. The coefficient values and t-test values for H6 were 0.277 and 0.068 respectively, and the coefficient values and t-test for H7 were 0.449 and 0.064 respectively. The results of these hypotheses imply that both the TM Mindset and TM Strategies have significant and positive effect on satisfaction. Finally, H8 was supported since the coefficient values was 0.228 and t-values was 0.050, indicating that satisfaction has positive and significant influence on performance.

Table 5: Direct relationship between the exogeneous and endogenous variables

H	Relationship	Path Coefficient	Standard Error	t-Value	p-Value	Decision
H1	MT → (P)	0.187	0.067	2.793	0.005	Supported
H2	MS → (P)	0.158	0.071	2.233	0.026	Supported
H3	MT → (E)	0.425	0.054	7.848	0.000	Supported
H4	MS → (E)	0.378	0.055	6.842	0.000	Supported
H5	(E) → (P)	0.294	0.066	4.459	0.000	Supported
H6	MT → (S)	0.277	0.068	4.102	0.000	Supported
H7	MS → (S)	0.449	0.064	7.029	0.000	Supported
H8	(S) → (P)	0.228	0.050	4.544	0.000	Supported

** MT-TM Mindset; MS-TM Strategies, P-Performance, E-Engagement, S-Satisfaction*

The data were also analyzed for the mediating role of satisfaction and engagement in the relationship between TM Mindset and TM Strategies with performance based on four hypotheses (H9-H12). H9 tested the mediating effect of engagement on the relationship of TM Mindset and performance, while H10 tested the mediating effect of engagement on the relationship of TM Mindset and performance. It was found that engagement partially mediated the relationship between TM Strategies and performance with the coefficient value of the indirect effect= 0.305 and t-values=6.755. Similarly, engagement partially mediate the relationship between TM Mindset and performance, with the coefficient value of the indirect effect= 0.298 and t-values=6.458. The mediating effect of engagement on the relationship between TM Mindset and TM Strategies on performance was tested through H11 and H12. The results of the hypotheses testing show that satisfaction partially mediated the relationship between TM Mindset and performance as the indirect effect has the coefficient values of 0.224 and t-values of 6.545. Similarly, satisfaction also partially mediated the relationship between TM Strategies and performance as the indirect effect has the coefficient values of 0.234 and t-values of 6.366. The structural model of the relationship between TM Mindset and TM Strategies on Performance, mediated by engagement and satisfaction is shown in Figure2.

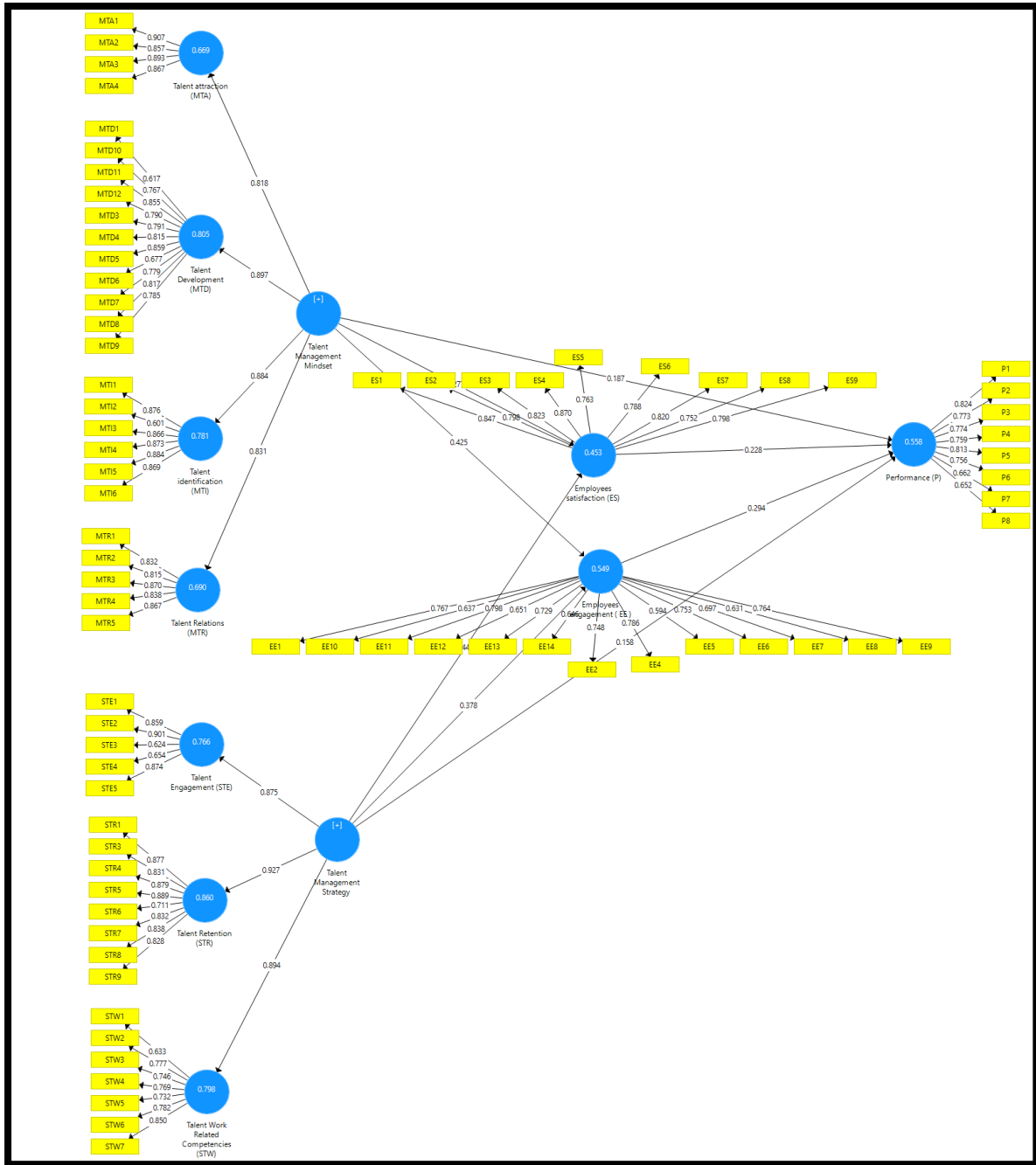


Figure 2: Structural model of the relationship between TM Mindset and TM Strategies on Performance

Discussion

The study examined the relationship of TM Mindset and TM Strategies on job performance among local employees of Oil and Gas companies in the UAE. In study, the role of engagement and satisfaction as the mediating the relationship between TM Mindset and TM Strategies on performance was also investigated. Empirical results obtained via PLS-SEM revealed that the direct relationships between the exogenous variables (TM Mindset and TM Strategies) and endogenous variables (engagement, satisfaction and performance) were significantly positive and that the H1-H8 were supported. These findings were consistent

with those previous studies (Luna-Arocas & Morley, 2015; Mensah, 2016; Bibi, 2018; Dang et al., 2020; Sopiiah et al., 2020). These findings reflected that all the exogenous variables (TM Mindset, TM Strategies, Engagement and Satisfaction) have some levels of influence on performance of the local employees. Interestingly, it was found that engagement has the strongest relationship with performance, which is followed by satisfaction. In this case, engagement is the strongest determiner for performance in comparison to Talent Management. Additionally, TM mindset has stronger influence than TM strategies on performance. Thus, it can be concluded that engagement is crucial for job performance in comparison to satisfaction. An engaged employee is a highly performed employee.

In addition, support was found to be for the mediating effects of engagement and satisfaction towards performance among local employees. Both the mediation variables partially mediated the relationship between TM mindset and TM strategies as supported by Vatankhah, Javid, & Raoofi (2017) and Mediating role. The results of H9 and H10 are consistent with studies conducted by Kontoghiorghes, (2016) and Abdullah et al. (2020) that indicate employee engagement mediates the relationship between talent management and performance. Similarly, the results of H11 and H12 are consistent with the study conducted by Mensah et al. (2016) who discovered that employee satisfaction moderately mediates the relationship between job performance and talent management, and Wickramaaratchi and Perera (2020) who conclude that job satisfaction mediates talent management, which boosts employee job performance by enhancing their commitment to the job. In relation to this, it is essential to identify what kind of person best represents the abilities required for growth and what type of environment or culture best supports the objectives or vision on a continual basis. According to the findings, effective employee engagement initiatives are essential to organizational performance. Leaders who start on such a plan must establish excellent listening techniques, be fair, have and show respect, create trust, and understand their workers' concerns. In relation to this, leaders in the oil and gas companies can offer useful feedback to increase employee engagement by monitoring the common reasons for employees to become disengaged.

Theoretically, the use of SET enhances the existing literature by providing an enhanced empirical input on the significant predictors of employee performance in the oil and gas companies. Drawn from SET that advocates the norm of reciprocity (if an individual receives something positive, they are obliged to reciprocate), it can be concluded that employees may reciprocate with job performance if the organization invests in developing their talent. In this case, it can be rationalized that higher levels of employee engagement and employee satisfaction exist when organizations provide sufficient supports and resources.

Conclusion

Talent management has been recognized as important management strategies for organizations to retain their highly talented employees for the purpose of achieving competitive advantage. In this respect, scholars and practitioners have suggested various TM approaches, resulting in the existence of varieties of talent management approaches. Emphasizing the importance of context-specific talent management appropriate to the specific organizational culture and environment, this research focuses on talent management approach for local employees in oil and gas companies of the UAE. It can be concluded that talent management

can be conceptualized as consisting of talent mindset and talent strategies. While talent mindset refers to the psychological or mental attitude relating to attracting potential talent, identifying individual talent, developing talent and maintaining positive relation, TM strategies focus on managing the talents to ensure that they are engaged and retained in the organization as well as providing employees with the work-related competencies. It can also be concluded that the implementation of both TM mindset and TM strategies influence the job performance, especially the local employees in the oil and gas companies. Additionally, engagement and satisfaction partially mediate the influence of talent management on job performance among the local employees. Therefore, implementing talent management is crucial for enhancing job performance.

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