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Article

Human resource management practices in Oman: a systematic review and synthesis for future research

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Human resource management practices in Oman: a systematic review and synthesis for future research

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ABSTRACT

This study is a systematic review of literature related to human resource management (HRM) practices in the Sultanate of Oman. The study aimed to advance research and practice related to HRM practices in the context of Oman. The study evaluates the effectiveness of HRM practices in enhancing organisational performance and relationships with other variables. The study analyses and synthesis 117 relevant publications. The findings reveal that Out of the 117 relevant publications that were analysed, 85.4% comprised empirical studies, with the majority using quantitative research methods. The primary industry from where the data were collected was education, and Sultan Qaboos University contributed the highest percentage of studies. The study found that HRM practices such as compensation management, training and development, and localisation policy face significant challenges and, therefore, require further research. Moreover, demographic factors such as gender diversity should be considered when designing HRM practices. Effective HRM practices positively impact organisational performance, employee satisfaction, and retention. This study provide implications for theory, practices and future research in the field of HRM practices in Oman.

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Introductory Work/
Organizational Psychology;
Leadership; Personality and
Identity at Work; Stress and
Emotion in the Workplace;
Work and Leisure; Work
Motivation; Industrial/
Organization Psychology
Tests and Assessments

1. Introduction

Even since personnel management was rebranded as human resource management (HRM) in 1980, it has been widely debated and redefined. The most popular and meaningful definitions were provided by Armstrong (2016) and Boxall and Purcell (2016). According to Armstrong (2016), HRM is concerned with an organisation's employment, employee well-being, and employee development through a strategic, coherent, and integrated approach. On the other hand, Boxall and Purcell (2016) suggested that HRM focuses on building the needed workforce for organisations through a systematic process of creating performances. HRM involves various practices that aim towards sustainably achieving organisational objectives (Elshaer et al., 2023). These practices include recruitment and selection, human resources planning, training and development, compensation management, performance management, employee relations, health and safety, and many other practices that influence the behaviour, performance, and attitudes of employees (Saifalislam et al., 2014). In 1990, it was felt that there was a greater need of aligning HRM with the organisation's strategy to link and match the organisation's interest with the HR policies and practices. This led to the creation of new terms such as 'strategic HR' and 'HR business partner' (Joanna, 2017).

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The significance of HRM increased because globalisation and technological developments forced organisations to consider new strategies for employing and managing people. Besides, good HRM practices lead to the enhancement of organisational productivity (Kooli, 2023; Kooli et al., 2022), which was proven by the majority of research conducted in this area by demonstrating the contribution of HRM practices to staff motivation and commitment (Joanna, 2017). Further, there is a growing body of literature that recognises the importance of HRM practices in improving organisational performance (e.g. Andrić et al., 2023; Burma, 2014; Dogra & Priyashantha, 2023; Gould-Williams, 2003; Indermun, 2014; Liu et al., 2020 Scheible & Bastos, 2012). However, many organisations are suffering from the deficiency of HRM practices. For instance, employee engagement and retention have a significant impact on an organisation's annual revenue growth. The 2017 statistics show that organisations with formal employee engagement have 26% higher annual revenue growth than those without. Additionally, high-retention-risk employees tend to leave their current organisations to advance their careers. As regards recruitment and selection, poor performance and temperament issues are the main reasons why 22% of new hires leave their organisations within 45 days, while 46% leave within 18 months. Furthermore, performance management is another major concern for organisations, as statistics show that 30% of performance appraisals end up in reduced employee performance, and 92% of all organisations are distrustful of their performance management practices for driving business value (HR Statistics for Human Resource Management, 2017). Thus, it is now well-established that HRM practices can impair organisational performance.

In Oman, several attempts have been made to evaluate HRM practices. It indicates several challenges and issues that impact various aspects of the labour market. One of the significant aspects of concern is challenges faced by women workers in Oman. Belwal and Belwal (2017) highlights the importance of work-life balance (WLB) issues in Oman, particularly focusing on women, WLB, and related policies, shedding light on the unique challenges faced by women in the Omani workforce. Additionally, the implementation of family-friendly policies and adherence to the Omani Labor Law are relatively new areas in human resource management in Oman, especially in the private sector (Belwal et al., 2019). Furthermore, Habsi et al. (2021) studies the current HRM practices in the oil and gas sector in Oman and explores strategies to retain human resources within these industries, shedding light on sector-specific challenges and practices. Moreover, the assessment of human resource management practices and employee loyalty in the Omani logistics sector reveals insights into the relationship between HRM practices and employee loyalty (Saiari et al., 2020). Thus, there is an urgent need to address the effectiveness of HRM practices and provide an overview of the gap existing in HRM practices in Oman. This urgently due the fact of high employee turnover which reached 16% by 2022 as well as the repaid growth of Oman's economic (Ministry of Manpower, 2023; The World Bank, 2023). This study aimed to advance research and practice related to HRM by carrying out a systematic review of relevant literature to describe and analyse HRM practices in Oman, along with their effectiveness and relationships with other variables to enhance organisational performance.

This review sought to shed light on the HRM practices in Oman and their effectiveness in enhancing organisational performance. The following objectives were designed for this review: (1) Analyze the practise of HR professionals in various functions of HRM in the context of Oman and, (2) identify the research gap in the field of HRM in the context of Oman. The study adopted a systematic review methodology of relevant literature to address the effectiveness of HRM practices in Oman and its contribution to enhancing organisational performance. The analysis and synthesis identified 117 relevant publications. This review makes four main contributions. First, it advances the understanding of characteristics of the studies that have been published on the subject of HRM in the context of Oman. Second, it provides a comprehensive understanding of how HR professionals practicese the various functions of HRM in the context of Oman. Third, it highlights the research gap in this area in the context of Oman, which needs to be addressed in the future research.

The study is organised as follows: [Section 1](#) explicates and defines the key terms and introduces the specific questions that guide the systematic review, [Section 2](#) presents the review methodology and data employment, and [Section 3](#) provides the discussion and data synthesis before concluding and providing recommendations for future research.

2. Materials and methods

Content analysis is one of the primary methods used by researchers when conducting a systematic literature review as it is useful in evaluating the content as well as methodological choices. This review was designed based on previous reviews carried out on HRM and management research followed Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines (e.g. Andrić et al., 2023; Dogra & Priyashantha, 2023; Priyashantha et al., 2022). Table 1 summarize the process of his review which drew upon studies on HRM in the context of Oman published between 2000 and 2022 to identify the trends and developments of HRM practices in Oman, along with their effectiveness in enhancing organisational performance throughout these two decades. For the year 2022, the review included all published studies at the time of review (i.e. June 2022). Further, the reviews included all studies related to the field of HRM practices.

2.1. Study selection process and methods

The review begins by identifying the key features of each study to present an overview of the reviewed studies. Table 1 shows the features that were considered for this included research areas across the years, year of publication, type of study, number of authors, affiliation, and gender of the first author. Afterwards, content analysis was performed to provide an overview of the type of empirical research conducted in the field of HRM in Oman. The analysis focused on the topic of the study, theoretical framework, industry, sector of data collection, private and/or public sector, and research design. These selection criteria helped in capturing the state of HRM practices in Oman over the last 22 years. Later, a search string related to HRM practices in Oman was developed, which included terms such as HRM, training and development, performance management, talent management, leadership, localisation, recruitment and selection, employee performance, employee productivity, employee engagement, motivation, compensation, payment, working culture, working environment, job satisfaction, turnover, retirement, commitment, empowerment work-life balance, and burnout. The search was conducted on electronic academic databases such as Google Scholar, ResearchGate, Academia.edu, and Masader. The searches resulted in 214 potentially relevant studies, which included peer-reviewed articles, conference papers, and dissertations.

The aforementioned features were applied in the reviewing process and the full-text evaluation as illustrated in Figure 1. This leads to the exclusion of studies that did not meet determined criteria which are relevance to the research objectives, methodological quality, and publication type. This is resulting in identifying 117 relevant documents at the end.

3. Results and discussions

3.1. Characteristics of articles

Figure 2 shows the research areas studied in the context of Oman between the years 2000 and 2022. Human resource effectiveness and job satisfaction were the most studied, with 17 studies for each,

Table 1. Review protocol.

Article selection method	PRISMA guidelines
Search terms	'HRM in Oman' 'training in Oman' 'training and development in Oman' 'performance management in Oman' 'talent management in Oman' 'leadership in Oman' 'localisation in Oman' 'Omanization' 'recruitment in Oman' 'Recruitment and selection in Oman' 'employee performance in Oman' 'employee productivity in Oman' 'employee engagement in Oman' 'motivation in Oman' 'compensation in Oman' 'payment in Oman' 'working culture in Oman' 'working environment in Oman' 'job satisfaction in Oman' 'turnover in Oman' 'retirement in Oman' 'commitment in Oman' 'empowerment in Oman' 'work-life balance in Oman' 'burnout in Oman'
Year range	2000–2022
Language of article	English
Key words	HRM, training and development, performance management, talent management, leadership, localisation, recruitment and selection, employee performance, employee productivity, employee engagement, motivation, compensation, payment, working culture, working environment, job satisfaction, turnover, retirement, commitment, empowerment work-life balance, burnout
Publication source type	Peer-reviewed articles, conference papers, dissertations
Type of the study	Empirical articles, Qualitative, Review
Analysis Methods	PRISMA guidelines

Table by Authors.

followed by performance management (15 studies), training and development (12 studies), leadership (10 studies), and organisational behaviour (9 studies). The remaining research areas yielded between two and six studies. Further, strategic human resource yielded the lowest number of studies, as only one study on it was carried out in Oman. For a more detailed analysis, the period between 2000 and 2022 was divided into five periods. During the periods of 2000–2005 and 2006–2010, the number of studies published was four each (3.4%). However, in the periods of 2011–2015 and 2016–2020, the number of studies on HRM in Oman increased dramatically, going from 4 to 30 (25.6%) and 61 (52.1%), respectively. The first published studies (in the year 2000) in the context of Oman focused on training and development (Al-Lamki, 2000; Budhwar et al., 2022) and employee commitment (Albelushi, 2004; Kuehn & Al-Busaidi, 2002). Further, the earliest studies on HRM in the context of Oman covered most HRM-related concepts, including the recent phenomena of strategic HRM.

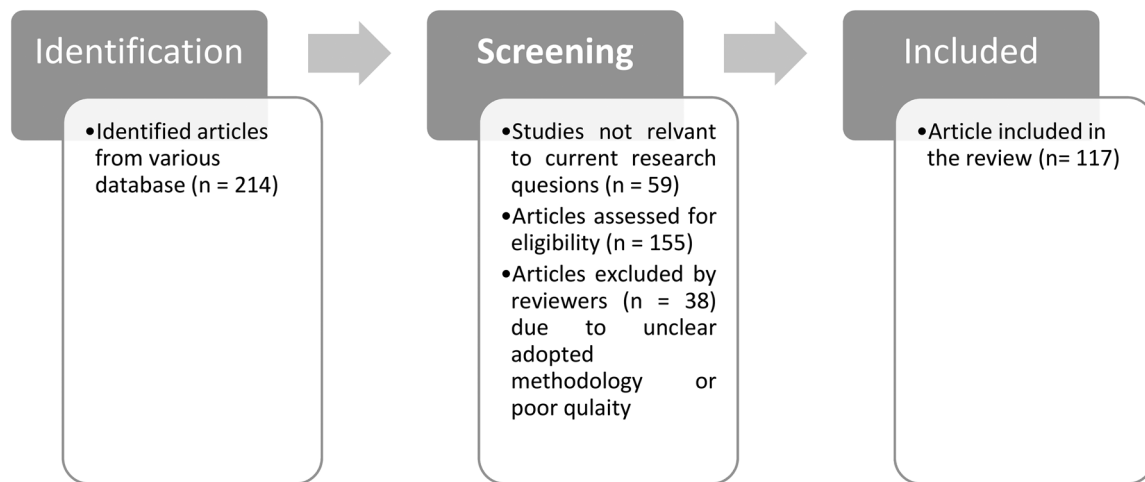


Figure 1. PRISMA article selection flow diagram (figure by authors).

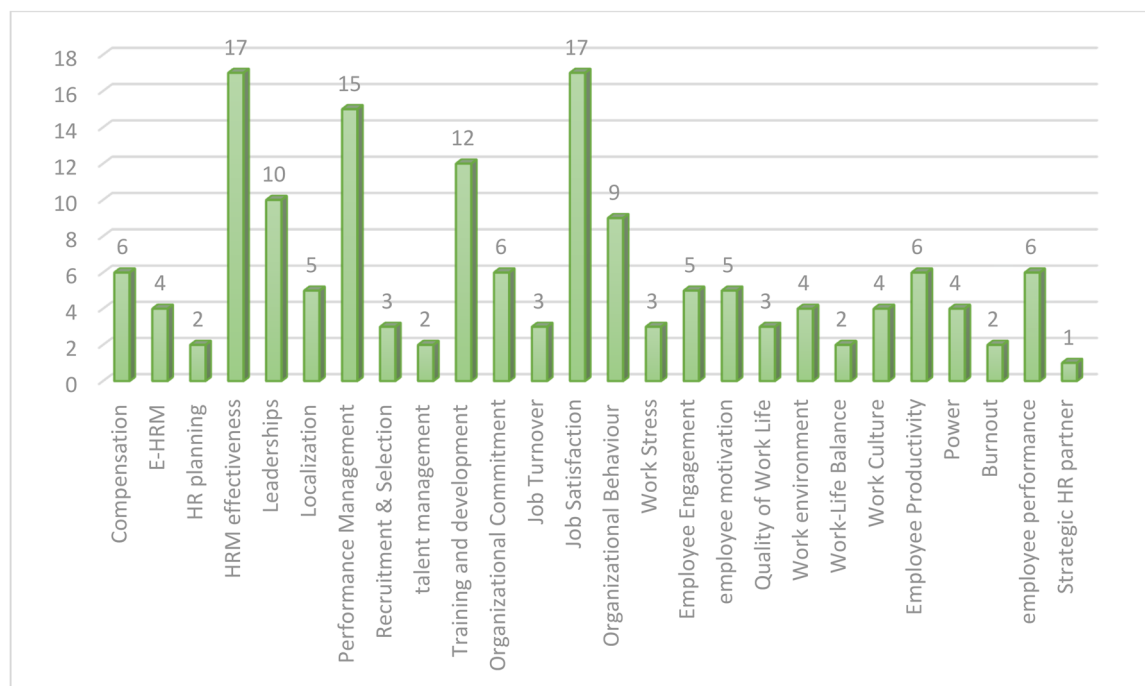


Figure 2. Research areas of HRM studies conducted in the context of Oman (figure by authors).

Figure 3 presents the trend related to HRM studies in the context of Oman published between 2000 and 2022, which indicates that the number of studies on HRM has increased over the period. In summary, since 2000, the body of knowledge in the field of HRM in Oman has increased dramatically.

Figure 4 shows the number of studies published over the aforementioned periods according to the gender of the authors. It was observed that studies authored by women increased significantly over time, going from 2 studies between 2000 and 2010 to 6 and 14 studies in the periods of 2011–2015 and 2016–2020, respectively. The first study with a female first author was published by Al-Lamki (2000) and focused on HRM and training in Oman, while the second study with a female first author was published by Albelushi (2004) and focused on career choice and commitment in Oman. However, no studies on HRM in the context of Oman were published by female authors between 2005 and 2010. In comparison, male authors' contributions to HRM studies were greater than those of female authors across the years, i.e. 100% in 2005–2010, 79% in 2011–2015, and 77% in 2016–2020.

The analysis of gender in authorship is important due to the interesting findings of Thelwall et al. (2018), who found that female authors focused more on 'people', whereas male authors focused more on

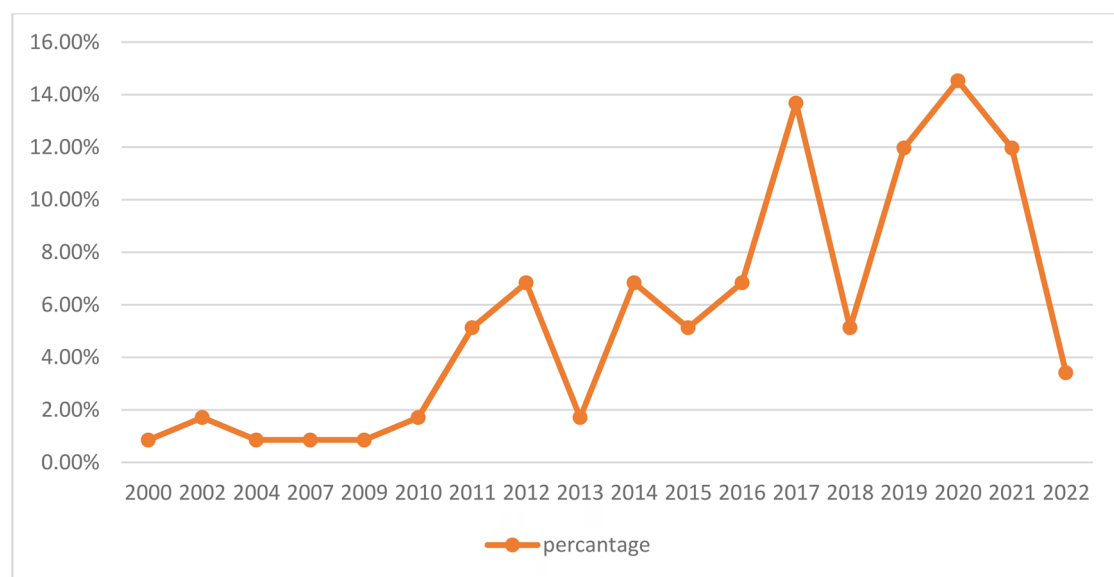


Figure 3. Trend of HRM studies (figure by authors).

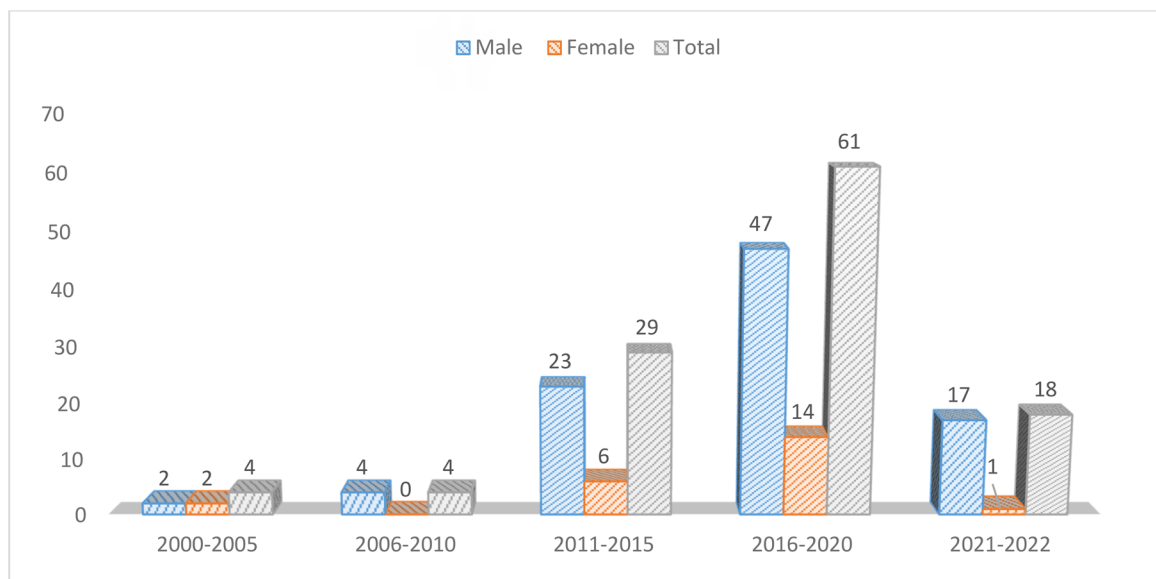


Figure 4. Studies published by male and female authors (figure by authors).

'things'. Moreover, they found that male researchers were more likely to use quantitative methods, whereas female researchers were more likely to use exploratory and qualitative methods (Sanders & Cieri, 2020). In our analysis, we found that male first authors published more reviews (16.1%) than female first authors (9%), although female first authors published more empirical studies (91%) than male first authors (83.8%). In contrast, no significant difference was observed between males and females in relation to research methodology (i.e. whether qualitative or quantitative methods were employed). These results are consistent with the finding of Sanders and Cieri (2020).

Figure 5 presents the results in terms of author affiliations. These results indicate that authors were affiliated with international organisations more than domestic organisations in the first two periods (i.e. 2000–2005 and 2006–2010), while a dramatical increase was noticed in the next two periods (i.e. 2011–2015 and 2016–2020), where authors affiliated with domestic organisations became double the number of those affiliated with international organisations (15 studies in 2011–2015 and 40 studies in 2016–2020). In total, the authors of 65 studies were affiliated with domestic organisations, and those of 38 articles were affiliated with international organisations. Meanwhile, the authors of 13 studies were not affiliated with any organisation. In the last period (i.e. 2021–2022), eight and seven studies were authored by those affiliated with domestic and international organisations, respectively. In this review, the first examined study was by Al-Lamki (2000), who is an author affiliated with Sultan Qaboos University, a domestic organisation. The following affiliations were Carrdif Business School and the American University of Sharjah, both in 2002. Additionally, it was found that authors affiliated with Sultan Qaboos University occupied the highest percentage of reviewed studies (21.5%), followed by those affiliated with Dhofar University (9.2%), Sohar University (9.2%), and Waljat College of Applied Sciences (9.2%), while those affiliated with the remaining organisations were between 1% and 5%. Notably, the analysis did not recognise significant differences between the research areas in terms of affiliation.

The average number of authors for each study across the five periods demonstrated an increase, going from an average of 1.75 in the first two periods to an average of 2.62 in 2011–2015 and 2.22 in 2021–2022. This is consistent with the findings of Sanders and Cieri (2020), according to whom team publishing is more common in the field of psychology. It can be observed that the body of knowledge regarding the field of HRM in the context of Oman has increased significantly over time. Moreover, the number of studies published by female authors has also increased significantly over time, going from 2 studies between 2000 and 2010 to 6 and 14 in the periods of 2011–2015 and 2016–2020, respectively. Finally, it was found that more authors were affiliated with international organisations than domestic organisations in the first two periods (i.e. 2000–2005 and 2006–2010), while a dramatical increase was noticed in the next two periods (i.e. 2011–2015 and 2016–2020), where the number of authors affiliated

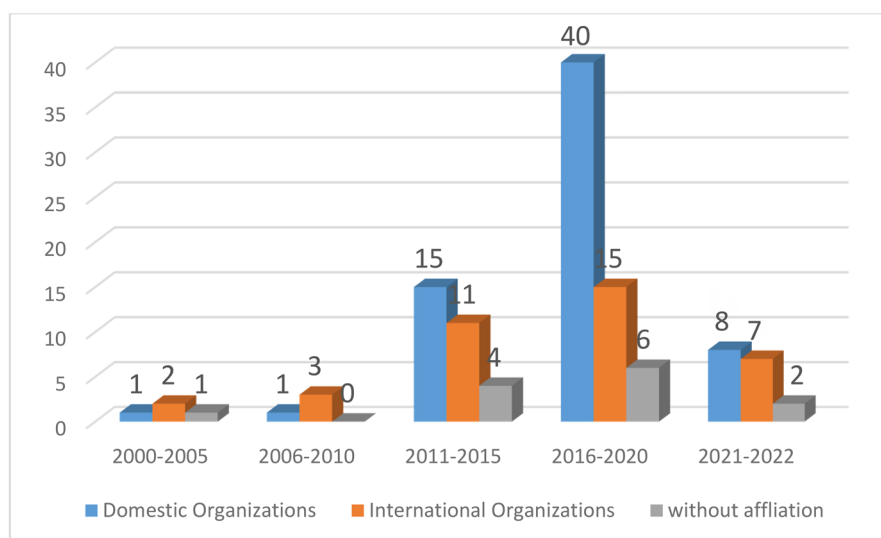


Figure 5. Authors' affiliation (figure by authors).

with domestic organisations became the double of those affiliated with international organisations (15 and 40, respectively).

The trend regarding the type of studies published in the field of HRM in the context of Oman over the last 22 years shows that a higher percentage of empirical studies (85.4%) were published compared to review/conceptual articles (14.5%). In the early years, only two review/conceptual articles were published. However, the number started to increase, with five studies being published between 2011 and 2015 and nine between 2016 and 2020. On the other hand, empirical studies were dominant in Oman. It was found that the percentage of empirical studies increased significantly over time, going from 3 between 2000 and 2005 to 25 between 2011 and 2015 and then to 52 between 2016 and 2020. The present review analysed the choice of methodology in 100 empirical studies and found that 75% of them used the quantitative approach, 23% used the qualitative approach, and 2% used a mixed approach. Moreover, while comparing the data source (i.e. public vs. private sectors) and choice of methodology, the analysis did not show any significant differences, as both quantitative and qualitative approaches were used almost equally. Furthermore, it was observed that most empirical studies on HRM collected data from the education sector (29.9%), followed by the services (10.2%), oil and gas (6.8%), healthcare (5.1%), and other sectors (19.6%). However, 28.2% of the studies did not mention the sector they collected the data from. In summary, studies on HRM in Oman are more common in quantitative research.

3.2. Results of the articles

To answer this question ‘How do HR Professionals Practise the Various Functions of HRM in Oman?’, the present study classified the various HRM practices into the following categories: (1) performance management, (2) training and development, (3) compensation management, (4) localisation, and (5) organisational behaviour (including leadership, commitment, turnover, satisfaction, work stress, engagement, motivation, quality of work life, work-life balance, working environment and culture, employee performance and productivity, power, and burnout). The last category includes many practices due to the low number of published articles on them. There are e-HRM, recruitment and selection, HR planning, talent management, and strategic HRM.

3.2.1. Performance management

The first study on performance management in the context of Oman was by Al-Ghanabousi and Idris (2010), who evaluated the performance appraisal practice of school principals. They analysed the data collected from principals of government schools and found that all governmental schools followed the same practices due to centralisation. They utilised two models in the evaluation process: the performance evaluation model of Brent (2007) and the instructional leadership model by Alig-Mielcarek’s (2003). Their study highlighted the effect of centralised educational authority in setting goals, monitoring instruction, and providing feedback. Additionally, the study highlighted many other variables as hindrances to effective performance appraisal, such as insufficient time as well as lack of training regarding evaluation techniques and methods (Al-Ghanabousi & Idris, 2010). A study conducted by Alyahmadi (2012) collected data from government school teachers and found that teachers were sceptical of the effectiveness of performance appraisal in enhancing and developing their careers due to factors such as centralisation, lack of time, confidentiality, and lack of incentives (Alyahmadi, 2012). Al Hijji and Cox (2012) investigated the method of performance appraisal in academic libraries in Oman and found that these libraries performed internal and external evaluation of staff performance. Internally, they utilised a standard form for conducting performance appraisal, along with using surveys, reports, KPIs, statistics, and interviews. Externally, the staff was assessed by a national institution (the Oman Arbitration Centre) and many other international bodies. However, their study focused on investigating the methods used in evaluating the overall performance of libraries in Oman, and performance appraisal was only one of them.

Al Fazari and Khan (2016) evaluated the accuracy of performance appraisal results in Majan Electricity Company by collecting data from 106 of its employees. They found that, according to the staff, the results of the performance appraisal were not accurate and rater errors were the main factors affecting their accuracy. Further, the majority of the staff members reported not being motivated by the

performance appraisal. Similarly, Idowu (2017) measured the effectiveness of performance appraisal on employee motivation by collecting data from employees working in the telecommunications sector. The study revealed that performance appraisal contributed to employee motivation and, therefore, can be considered a tool of motivation. Additionally, the study also found that organisations use several methods of performance appraisal, such as the 360-degree feedback system, the behaviourally anchored rating scale, and the graphical rating scale. It was found that the 360-degree feedback system was the best method of providing a comprehensive appraisal.

Alhassan and Holi Ali (2019) investigated the performance appraisal adopted for English-as-a-foreign-language (EFL) teachers and found that teachers doubted the validity of the high weightage given to students while evaluating student performance, along with the criteria used in assigning peer appraisers. Moreover, the study highlighted the lack of training and communication between both appraisers and appraisees.

Pasha et al. (2017) evaluated the self-appraisal method adopted by Oman Medical College to identify its procedure and determine its effectiveness, finding that the method is structured through a well-designed format that helped the institution in addressing its weaknesses and strengths. The mechanism has three sections, which are self-profile, activity profile, and other input feedback. They concluded their study by recommending this method as the output of self-appraisal helps in formulating the annual plan model and improving the quality of education.

Overall, there is a dearth of studies on performance management practices in the context of Oman. According to the aforementioned studies, the results were limited to a few sectors such as education, electricity, telecommunications, and retail, which left out many sectors such as oil and gas, manufacturing, public services, logistics, tourism, and food and beverage. These sectors also require the efforts of HR professionals and researchers to investigate the effectiveness of the performance management method applied to them. Further, the reviewed studies demonstrated that Oman has utilised several methods of conducting performance appraisals, which are the 360-degree feedback system, the behaviourally anchored rating scale, the graphical rating scale, surveys, reports, KPIs, statistics, and interviews. The 360-degree feedback system and self-appraisal are the only methods that were empirically proven to have a positive effect on employees. However, the findings indicate that employees believe that performance appraisal does not yield accurate results, does not contribute to employee development, and has high rater errors due to barriers such as centralisation, insufficient time, lack of training for both appraisers and appraisees, and lack of communication.

3.2.2. Training and development

The study conducted by Al-Lamki (2000) demonstrated the gap existing in training and development research due to localisation policy. The study pointed to the negative impact of localisation in pushing the private sector to hire Omani applicants. There was a noticeable mismatch between employee competencies and job requirements, which made the training and development costly to organisations. Al Rawahi (2011), in a study examining the vocational education and training challenges in Oman, identified challenges such as social culture, lack of guidance, counselling, and awareness of vocational training. Al Jardani (2012) investigated the effectiveness of primary school teachers' training courses and identified several issues related to training need assessments and training content design. Notably, training need assessments were conducted by Belwal et al. (2014) with regard to fishermen in Oman, who identified various training needs related to technical and behavioural skills by using the concept mapping technique. Further, Yapar (2022) assessed the effectiveness of online training offered by two English language teaching institutions in Oman, which pointed to a lack of training needs analysis by the institutions as the trainees requested to attend the training sessions regardless of whether they needed them.

Al-Harthy et al. (2017) examined the National Training Programme (NTP) initiated by the Ministry of Manpower in 2003 to develop the local workforce. They addressed the perception of training institutions, employers, and trainees in relation to policy implementation and found that there was a lack of awareness among training institutions and trainees regarding the aim of NTP. Conversely, the aim of NTP was clear to the employers, although the details related to quality assessment were not. The employers also commented on the learning outcomes of the training courses, as they were missing aspects such as 'the culture of job respect' and a 'love of work in the private sector', which confirmed the lack of quality

assessment and training evaluation. Additionally, the trainees participated in the training courses only to fill the time gap between job searches. All this suggests a lack of identification of proper admission criteria for the training courses.

Al Shabibi and Silvennoinen (2018) described the challenges related to school teachers' professional development by carrying out a literature review, which found that male teachers needed improvement in their teaching skills to improve students' performance as well as attract teachers that were motivated and committed to the teaching profession. Al-Maashani et al. (2019) found a high level of awareness among Sultan Qaboos University students, revealing that the HRM programmes at higher education institutions are covering training and development concept. Alwahaibi and Johari (2021) assessed the perceptions regarding the training quality of mathematics teachers at the Specialised Institute for Professional Training of Teachers (SIPTT) through structured interviews, which found that the performance of the teachers enrolled in this institution improved. Al-Balushi and Mat Saad (2021) examined the effectiveness of the classroom observation training course at the College of Technology, confirming the positive outcomes of the classroom observation process, which were the reduction of anxiety and the enhancement of teaching and learning practices among the college faculty. Al-Hosni et al. (2013) examined the training programme evaluation practices from the perception of educational supervisors of the Oman Ministry of Education, confirming the gap in the training programme evaluation practice in terms of evaluation planning as well as short-term and long-term evaluations.

Talent management was studied by Turner et al. (2016) in both the finance and energy sectors in the context of Oman. The study found that talent management practices were designed according to the business environment and strategy, although both sectors were practising talent management similarly. Glaister et al. (2020) examined the use of talent management in encouraging localisation (i.e. Omanisation) by addressing the perspective of managers in the petroleum and banking sectors. The study found that talent management measures were controlled by the punitive state logic.

In general, after considering the analyse, design, develop, implement, and evaluate (ADDIE) model of instructional system development while reviewing the training and development practices in Oman, major challenges related to needs analysis, design, development, implementation, and evaluation were identified. The literature argued that training and development in Oman is costly due to issues related to the labour market environment and the mismatch between employee competencies and job requirements. Moreover, the training needs analysis lacks accuracy related to training objectives, content, and trainees. Such a training analysis results in the enrolment of employees without considering their motivation, who end up attending either just to fill the time gap during job searches or as a task to be completed. Furthermore, studies reported issues related to training design, content suitability, proper admission criteria, and clear training outcomes. Additionally, the studies reported several issues related to training development implementation, where some trainees were not aware of the aim of the training and lacked guidance, counselling, and awareness regarding vocational training. However, some studies pointed to the effectiveness of some training courses, such as the one assessing the training quality of mathematics teachers' and the one assessing classroom observation training. With regard to training evaluation, many studies indicated issues related to evaluation planning, short-term and long-term evaluations, and lack of quality assessment, which constitutes a research gap.

Nevertheless, few studies discussed development practices in Oman. Two studies conducted in 2016 and 2021 confirmed that some organisations were practising talent management in Oman, although even these studies did not cover its impact and how it is processed. Thus, more effort from researchers is required to investigate talent management practices as a tool for employee development.

3.2.3. Compensation management

In this review, only three studies related to compensation management were identified. The first Al-Belushi and Khan (2017) examined the effect of monetary incentives on employee motivation at Shinas College of Technology through a sample of 130 academic and non-academic staff members, finding that in terms of the monetary incentive provided by the college, the employees were more motivated by salary and allowances than by other monetary incentives such as paid day-off, overtime, and travel expenses. Shamki (2021) studied the factors affecting employees' salaries at the Ministry of Social Development in

Oman. Among the different factors identified in the study, the employees believed that the performance appraisal was considered the main factor for salary increment rather than gender, age, and position. Alsaidi (2017) also investigated employee perception in relation to the effect of payment and promotion at Oman's Ministry of Health through a sample of 938 employees, who confirmed the importance of payment and promotion in improving employee motivation.

Overall, only three studies were found that focused on specific organisations or sectors. The sample sizes of the studies varied, and the findings highlighted the importance of factors such as salary and allowances, performance appraisal, and payment and promotion in improving employee motivation. However, compensation management would benefit from a more comparative analysis of the studies and a deeper exploration of the implications of their findings with regard to compensation practices in Oman. Additionally, it is important to acknowledge the limitations of the available research and the need for further studies on this topic.

3.2.4. Localisation

Zerovec and Bontenbal (2011) examined the effect of the Omanisation (or localisation) policy on women in the education and healthcare sectors. This empirical study found some changes related to the working conditions of women in jobs exclusive to Omani due to the Omanisation policy. The following three main differences were identified: (1) local women have greater access to the job market than expatriate women, (2) while searching for a job, Omani women focused more on finding a sense of accomplishment, whereas expatriate women focused more on well-paying positions and job security, and (3) Omani women tend to enter public sector jobs due to several advantages such as shorter working hours, good payment, job security, and fewer interactions with men. Moreover, Swailes et al. (2011) provided insights into the progress towards Omanisation by interviewing ministerial officials and private-sector employers. The study found that the Omanisation policy faces difficulties due to both the quality of local job seekers and the employers' preferences for expatriate employees. The study argued that there is a mismatch between the knowledge and skills possessed by the graduates and those needed by the market. On the other hand, employers in the private sector prefer hiring expatriate employees because they are believed to have a higher work ethic. Moideenkutty et al. (2015) investigated the relationship between Omanisation and financial performance through data collected from a survey of 73 companies listed in the Muscat Securities Market. The study found that there is a positive relationship between Omanisation and financial performance after controlling for company size, company type, the level of Omanisation in the company, and the average price-to-earnings ratio of the industry. The study assumed that a high level of local employees resulted in better financial performance. Furthermore, Belwal et al. (2019) found that Omani women do not prefer working in the private sector due to a labour policy that does not support work-life balance. Specifically, the study identified several relative benefits in the public sector, such as shorter and flexible working hours and work privacy. Alkathiri et al. (2021), in a study that identified successful predictors of Omanisation in the aviation industry, revealed that a firm's human resource development practices and performance predict successful Omanisation.

Glaister et al. (2020) found that the rate of local employees in the private sector decreased in 2018 compared to 2007 and 2018, with the rate of Omanisation going from 17% in 2007 to 13% in 2018 with regard to the total labour force working in the private sector. The study also identified several barriers related to the training of local employees, such as compensation, social security, employee development, and working hours.

After critically evaluating these studies, it becomes clear that the Omanisation policy has had varying degrees of success in different sectors. For instance, the studies by Zerovec and Bontenbal (2011) and Belwal et al. (2019) stated that the Omanisation policy has resulted in positive changes for Omani women in certain sectors but also revealed that labour policies in the private sector are not supportive of work-life balance. Moreover, Swailes et al. (2011) suggested that there is a mismatch between the knowledge and skills possessed by graduates and those needed by the market, while Glaister et al. (2020) indicated that there are several barriers related to local training, compensation, social security, employee development, and working hours that have prevented the successful implementation of the Omanisation policy. However, Moideenkutty et al. (2015) and Alkathiri et al. (2021) both provided evidence that high

levels of local employees can result in better financial performance by identifying successful predictors of Omanisation in certain industries. Overall, these studies provided valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities related to the Omanisation policy in the context of Oman.

3.2.5. Organisational behaviour

3.2.5.1. Employee motivation and engagement. In their study, Bin Abdullah and Islam (2012) identified the following six motivational factors for employees working in Oman and Malaysia: high salary, promotion, good working conditions, job security, development opportunity, and recognition and appreciation. Arshi and Rao (2019) explored the impact of employee engagement on innovation by considering the readiness for innovation as a mediator. They collected data from 400 organisations located in Oman and found that employee engagement was a significant predictor of innovation and the mediating role played by readiness of innovation resulted in higher predictability. Moreover, Mamari et al. (2020) compared the employee engagement between private and public companies in the oil and gas sector in Oman and found differences in the emotional and cognitive levels of employee engagement, although no differences were reported with regard to the behavioural level of employee engagement. Azeem (2010) investigated employee perceptions regarding the relationship between demographic, job satisfaction, and organisational commitment in Oman's service industry, finding a moderately positive relationship among them. The study also identified several predictive factors of organisational commitment, such as job tenure, age, pay, overall job satisfaction, and supervision. Sathya Narayanan et al. (2013), in a study conducted on Oman's institutions of higher education, examined the role of quality of work life in employees' behavioural dimensions. Their findings highlighted the impact of work-time pressure and job security in employee performance and satisfaction among the faculty working at public and private higher education institutions in Oman. Furthermore, evidence of the positive relationship between motivation and satisfaction was provided by Al-Shamli and Al'Mamari (2015), where the reward was found to mediate the relationship. For this study, the data were collected from non-profit sport organisations in Oman. Albelushi (2004) confirmed that Omani women teachers show a higher level of job commitment because, in their case, intrinsic factors function as motivators instead of extrinsic factors such as social norms and culture. Murthy and Varalakshmi (2012) assessed the job satisfaction of the employees of Salalah College of Technology in Oman, finding that the employees were satisfied with paid vacation, salary, insurance benefits, and working conditions. Conversely, they were dissatisfied with the work-life balance, promotion, job security, and recognition of accomplishments. Hans et al. (2017) reported that commitment was impacted negatively by factors such as the locus of control and self-efficacy. Their analysis was based on the data collected from 50 faculty members working in private colleges in Oman. Further, Hans et al. (2013), after collecting data from 25 organisations that represented eight sectors in Oman, reported low levels of job satisfaction among semi-government organisations in Oman. Their findings revealed that internal locus of control was the primary driver of middle-level managerial employees in these organisations. Additionally, Almawali et al. (2021) collected data from employees working in Oman's Ministry of Education to analyse the relationship between employee engagement, motivational factors, and job performance. Their findings highlighted the mediating role played by employee engagement in the relationship between motivational factors and job performance. They also observed a positive significant relationship between motivational factors, job performance, and employee engagement. Porkodi and Ghosal (2015) identified the following determinants of employee engagement in Oman's private sector: personal fulfilment, non-monetary incentives, compensation package, transparency, fairness, promotion, and growth.

Al-Hatmi (2009) examined the relationship between job satisfaction, organisational commitment, supervisory commitment, and job turnover among engineers working for the government sector in Oman. The study revealed that the engineers were content with their income, the nature of their work, and their supervision. Moreover, their intention to leave their job was strongly related to these three variables. Redman et al. (2011) assessed the expected consequences of particular relationships of trust on the attitudes and behaviours of Omani military employees, including their intentions to leave their jobs, level of job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and citizenship behaviours. The study found strong evidence of social exchange effects in the trustor-trustee relationships. Al-Sinawi et al. (2015) found training and performance appraisal to be reliable indicators of employees' service performance. Consequently, the results indicate that performance appraisal and training have a substantial impact on raising employees' service performance. In their study, Isa et al. (2016) assessed how organisational culture affects employee

performance in the public sector by using data collected from 250 employees across six departments of the Ministry of Education. They found that a supportive workplace culture significantly improves employee performance. Meanwhile, Agha et al. (2017), who aimed to better understand how work-life balance affects job satisfaction among university teachers in Oman, found that while work and personal life enhancement had a good association with job satisfaction, interference with personal life and personal life interference with work had a detrimental connection to job satisfaction. Thus, they called for organisations to integrate and balance employees' work and personal life through efforts targeting the work-life balance. Alrawahi et al. (2018) examined the factors that impact job satisfaction among medical senior and junior laboratory technologists working in an Oman university hospital. They found that workload, promotions, laboratory health and safety, relationships with leaders, professional status, and hospital policies such as appraisal were the factors that significantly impacted their job satisfaction, and additional factors that stood out as crucial were professionalism and autonomy. The study also indicated that medical laboratory technologists would suffer stress if these factors are not present. Al Qalhathi et al. (2020), who studied job satisfaction among teachers in Oman by surveying 1,000 teachers working in different schools all over the country, revealed that job satisfaction among the teachers varied according to factors such as gender, age, income, place of work, professional development opportunity, and reward system. Al Sabei et al. (2019) conducted a study to (a) evaluate factors associated with nurses' intentions to leave their jobs, burnout, and presumed quality of care in Oman and (b) investigate the potential moderating effect of job satisfaction on the association among work environment and nurses' intentions to leave their jobs. The study focused on 207 nurses working in a public hospital in Muscat, Oman, and found that the burnout among nurses and the perceived quality of treatment were predicted by involvement in hospital matters, a basis for the quality of care, and staffing sufficiency. The study also indicated that working in a pleasant setting was linked to a lower intention to quit – but just in situations where job satisfaction was high. Al Zadjali and Ibrahim (2021) developed a structured closed-ended questionnaire that was distributed to 150 National Bank of Oman employees of both genders with a range of job functions in order to discover the factors driving absenteeism in the banking sector in Oman. They found that workload and workplace stress were the main causes of employees' absence, and the other elements were found to be less significant in importance. Further, Alalawi et al. (2021) studied the impact of employee loyalty on job security in the oil and gas sector in Oman during the COVID-19 pandemic by conducting an online survey of 346 oil and gas sector employees, discovering that in Oman's oil and gas industry, there is a sizable positive association between employee loyalty and job security. Harris and Marks (2002) compared the level of commitment between local and expatriate employees in Oman's private and public sectors and found that there was no difference in the level of organisational commitment between local and expatriate employees in both sectors. However, the study revealed that local employees in the private sector reported higher levels of organisational commitment compared to expatriate employees.

Overall, the literature provided a comprehensive overview of the factors that influence employee motivation, engagement, job satisfaction, and commitment in the context of Oman. Further, the studies offered valuable insights into the drivers of employee performance, including the impact of pay, promotion, job security, recognition and appreciation, working conditions, and development opportunities. Additionally, the studies highlighted the importance of organisational culture, supervisory commitment, and training on employee performance. However, there were some limitations to these studies, such as small sample sizes, narrow geographic coverage, and potential biases in the data collection. Some of these limitations can be addressed in the future to improve academic rigour. Many of the reviewed studies cited were limited in their scope, focusing only on specific sectors or organisations in Oman. For instance, Mamari et al. (2020) compared employee engagement between private and public companies only in Oman's oil and gas sector, whereas Sathya Narayanan et al. (2013) examined the role of quality of work life in employees' behavioural dimensions at only the institutions of higher education in Oman. Therefore, the generalisability of their findings may be limited, and caution should be exercised when applying their results to other contexts. Besides, some studies also had a small sample size, which may limit the generalisability of their results. For example, Hans et al. (2017) analysed the data from only 50 faculty members working in private colleges in Oman to report that commitment was impacted negatively by factors such as the locus of control and self-efficacy. Although the study offered valuable insights, its findings may not be applicable to other sectors or organisations in Oman or beyond. Thus,

future studies could benefit from larger and more diverse samples, more rigorous data collection methods, and cross-cultural comparisons.

3.2.5.2. Job satisfaction and turnover. Van Dalluay et al. (2017) investigated the job satisfaction of employees working at Oman Air and its impact on employee turnover after collecting data from 100 employees through a questionnaire. They found that monetary compensation, work relation, and use of skills and abilities positively contributed towards job satisfaction, whereas work activities contributed negatively. Job satisfaction and turnover were also studied by Al-Neimi and Amzat (2012), who collected data from basic education schools in Oman. Their study revealed that issues related to compensation, workload, and responsibilities were the primary causes of turnover. In their study, Kuehn and Al-Busaidi (2002) measured disparities in the degrees of commitment made by national and expatriate employees in both private and public sector enterprises in Oman by using the three-component model of organisational commitment developed by Allen and Meyer (1990). They found no discernible difference in organisational commitment between nations working in the public and private sectors. Further, nationals working in the private sector reported higher levels of commitment than foreign workers, although foreign workers working in the public sector indicated similar levels of commitment overall. Bashir et al. (2014) explored the internal barriers that prevent productivity development initiatives in manufacturing businesses in developing nations, with particular focus on Oman. A questionnaire that was distributed to the production and operations managers of 51 manufacturing companies in Oman was used to gather the data needed for this investigation. The result of the study revealed that the 15-barrier dataset used can be boiled down to just three main barriers, namely, poor management practices, employee job dissatisfaction, and poor HRM. Hans et al. (2015) investigated the levels of job satisfaction and work-related stress among the headmasters of bilingual schools in Muscat, Oman, by using the simple random technique to choose a sample of 40 headmasters of bilingual schools in Muscat to take part in the survey. The findings of the study showed that headmasters of bilingual schools were more likely to feel stressed at work but were also very satisfied with their demanding jobs. Al-Sinawi et al. (2015) studied the variables affecting employees' service performance at Oman's Ministry of Education by investigating 514 employees working in the HRM department in the ministry. Valdez et al. (2019) employed Kanter's theory to analyse the extent to which nursing faculty members at the Oman College of Health Sciences were empowered at work, along with their relationships with burnout and job satisfaction. According to the findings of this study, higher levels of empowerment were linked to lower levels of burnout and higher levels of job satisfaction. Pauceanu et al. (2016), who performed an analysis of the variables influencing employee satisfaction in a large private enterprise in Salalah, Muscat, identified several variables that were found to have a beneficial influence on worker satisfaction levels, namely, the availability of equipment and resources, being encouraged to develop creative concepts at work, workplace diversity, clearly defined goals, a sense of accomplishment at work, the work environment, and chances to advance and career growth. Indeed, the study's findings demonstrated a considerable correlation between employee satisfaction and aspects of the quality of their work.

Thus, the reviewed studies demonstrated that HRM practices have a significant impact on job satisfaction and turnover. Specifically, these studies found that monetary compensation, work relations, and use of skills and abilities positively contribute to job satisfaction, while workload, responsibilities, and work activities negatively impact job satisfaction. Further, compensation, workload, and responsibilities emerged as significant causes behind turnover. Disparities in organisational commitment were observed between national and expatriate employees in both private and public sector enterprises in Oman, with national employees reporting higher levels of commitment than foreign workers in the private sector. Poor management practices, employee job dissatisfaction, and poor HRM were found to be significant barriers to productivity development initiatives in manufacturing businesses in Oman. Additionally, headmasters in bilingual schools were found to be more likely to experience work-related stress but were also very satisfied with their demanding jobs. Empowerment of nursing faculty members was found to be linked to lower levels of burnout and higher levels of job satisfaction. Finally, factors such as availability of equipment and resources, opportunities for creative development, workplace diversity, clearly defined goals, and chances for career growth were identified as significant contributors to employee satisfaction.

3.2.5.3. Work-Life balance and quality of work life. By interviewing those at the top managerial level, Belwal and Belwal (2014) investigated issues related to work-life balance, quality of work life, and family-friendly policies. Their findings indicated that women in Oman have problems with work-life balance, and both public and private sector confirmed a lack of policy for work-life balance. However, the study also

suggested that Oman's labour law contains some articles for the protection of employee interests. The interviewed employers also claimed that in their organisations, most benefits provided under family-friendly policies were provided informally through understanding, arguing that formal family-friendly policies would increase the cost in the short run. A study by Jalagat and Jalagat (2019) sought to rationalise the idea of remote work and its ramifications, as well as the problems and trends related to it, its benefits and drawbacks, and the degree to which it is used in Oman. The researchers discovered opposing viewpoints regarding the idea of remote work among people and businesses. Al Raisi et al. (2019), who examined the impact of cultural diversity on employee performance and productivity at Shell Oman Marketing Company (SAOG), concluded that having a diverse workforce has a good impact on employee performance, which would increase productivity and creativity thanks to variances in educational background, ethnicities, cultures, and other diverse backgrounds. Al-Zwamri and Hussain (2017), who conducted a study on the effects of smartphones in the workplace at the governmental departments, in Salalah, Oman, discovered that cell phones provide several advantages for the growth and facilitation of work, which may result in improved work performance in organisations. Al Zadjali and Ibrahim (2021) identified workload and work pressure as the primary causes of absenteeism in Oman's baking sector.

In future research, several critical points in relation to work-life balance and quality of work life in Oman should be considered. The literature review identified that both public- and private-sector employers in Oman lack formal policies regarding work-life balance and family-friendly practices. This highlights a need for organisations to formalise and implement policies to ensure that employees can maintain a healthy work-life balance. Further, the studies suggest that women in Oman face challenges in achieving work-life balance, which could be indicative of gender disparities in the workplace. Thus, HRM practices should aim to address gender inequalities and promote equal opportunities for all employees. Employers in Oman claimed that in their organisations, family-friendly benefits were provided informally through understanding rather than through formal policies. While this may be true to some extent, it is important for organisations to have formal policies in place to ensure that all employees are aware of the benefits available to them. HRM practices should also consider the benefits and drawbacks of remote work and develop policies that enable employees to work remotely while maintaining a healthy work-life balance. Additionally, HRM practices should aim to promote diversity and inclusion in the workplace to enhance organisational performance. Besides, HRM practices should reduce work pressure and workload to minimise absenteeism and ensure employee well-being.

3.2.5.4. Personality and team performance. Amir and Khan (2020) used the five-factor model of personality to examine the impact of personality on team performance among private higher education faculty members and administrative employees. The result indicated a positive and significant relationship between team performance and the four factors of personality model, namely, agreeableness, conscientiousness, extroversion, and openness to experience, whereas a negative relationship between team performance and neuroticism was observed. The study also highlighted the moderating role played by employee engagement on the relation between the five factors and team performance. In their study, Hans et al. (2015) reported that the quality of work life among management teachers in private higher educational institutions was negatively affected by occupational stress. Sanyal and Hisam (2018) conducted a study to explore the effects of teamwork on faculty members at Dhofar University, Oman, and their performances, as well as to investigate the aspects connected to the notion of teamwork in the workplace. They found a significant relationship between the independent variables of teamwork, an atmosphere of trust, leadership and structure, performance evaluation and rewards, and the productivity of the faculty members.

Overall, the reviewed studies provided valuable insights into the relationships between personality, team performance, occupational stress, and teamwork in the context of Oman. However, it is important to be aware of the limitations and context-specific nature of these findings when considering their broader implications. For instance, the five-factor model of personality used in the study by Amir and Khan (2020) to examine the impact of these factors on team performance is a well-established and valid approach in psychological research. However, it is important to note that the results of this study may not be valid for other populations as the sample consisted only of private higher education faculty members and administrative employees. Furthermore, a positive and significant relationship between team performance and agreeableness, conscientiousness, extroversion, and openness to experience is

consistent with previous research. However, it is important to note that the negative relationship between team performance and neuroticism is also consistent with previous research, although this does not necessarily mean that individuals high in neuroticism cannot contribute positively to a team. The consideration of employee engagement as a potential moderator of the relationship between personality and team performance is a useful addition to the study, as it suggests that individuals who are more engaged in their work may be more likely to utilise their personality traits effectively in a team setting, although the causal direction of this relationship is not clear from this study. The finding that occupational stress negatively affects the quality of work life among management teachers in private higher educational institutions is also consistent with previous research on occupational stress and its effects on workplace outcomes. Notably, the specific factors contributing to occupation stress among management teachers may be different from those in other professions, and, therefore, this study may not be generalisable to other populations. The emphasis on the effects of teamwork on faculty members and their performances is a valuable contribution to the literature on organisational behaviour and team dynamics, even though the specific context of Dhofar University, Oman, may limit the generalisability of these findings to other settings. Additionally, the specific aspects of teamwork that are relevant in this context may not be the same as those in other contexts.

3.2.5.5. Employee performance. Sawant and Pise (2021) examined the influence of high-performance work systems (HPWS) on service quality in the telecommunications industry in Oman by gathering data from 300 randomly selected customer-care executives employed by Oman's telecommunications carriers and 300 telecommunications users. They found that there was a positive relationship between HPWS and the level of service quality offered to clients in the Omani telecommunications sector. Khan and Mashikhi (2017) investigated how teamwork affects employee productivity in the banking industry. Following an investigation of 500 employees at one of the bank's main branches in Muscat, Oman, a regression analysis was performed, which revealed that teamwork had a strong impact on employee performance. In their study, Alobaidani and Kolluruo (2020) attempted to determine how cooperation affects employee performance at Orpic while also identifying the obstacles to collaboration there. The findings indicated that there were both beneficial and detrimental correlations between employee performance and teamwork. Moreover, Al Hakmani and Bashir (2014) investigated issues related to the productivity of employees in the oil and gas sector in Oman, discovering that employees in public organisations are significantly less satisfied with their employers than those in private companies, which explains the high turnover levels in state-owned organisations.

Overall, while these studies provided some useful insights into employee performance in Oman, they did not provide a complete picture of all the factors that could influence performance or the best strategies for improving it. For example, the study by Sawant and Pise (2021) focused only on one industry (i.e. telecommunications) and used a relatively small sample size of 300 customer-care executives and 300 telecommunications users. This could limit the generalisability of their findings to other industries and populations. Similarly, the study by Khan and Mashikhi (2017) only looked at teamwork as a factor influencing employee performance, which may not provide a comprehensive understanding of all the factors that could impact performance. Further, the study by Alobaidani and Kolluruo (2020) suggested that teamwork can have both beneficial and detrimental impact on employee performance, but it did not provide clear guidance regarding how organisations can maximise the benefits of teamwork while minimising the drawbacks. Finally, the study by Al Hakmani and Bashir (2014) focused on the differences between the job satisfaction and turnover rates of public and private organisations, but it did not explore other factors that could influence productivity or provide recommendations for improving it.

3.2.5.6. Human resources management. Many studies that were reviewed discussed HRM practices in the context of Oman. The present review of literature found that the number of published research increased dramatically after 2019. The first such study was by Budhwar et al. (2002), who investigated the Omani government's initiatives for human resource development (HRD). The study praised the top management's high level of awareness regarding HRD, but it indicated the low involvement of employees in the decision-making process. This was followed by a study conducted by Al-Hamadi et al. (2007), which examined the issues related to HRM and HRD in the state-owned enterprises of Oman. They found that international managers are implementing Western models without considering the local culture, economic

condition, political ideology, civil service laws, and religion (given that Islam has significant influence in Omani).

Then, for almost three years, no studies related to HRM in the context of Oman were published. Moideenkutty et al. (2011) conducted a study analysing the relationship between the highly involved HRM practices such as hiring, skills development, and motivation with the overall organisational performance in Oman. The findings indicated these practices had a positive impact on the subjective and quantitative measures of organisational performance. Khan (2011) examined the macro-level role of HRM in Oman, pointing to the lack of HR competency and knowledge that led to confusion while dealing with business challenges. However, Al-Kindi and Bailie (2013) explored the impact of cultural values on management styles and practices in organisations and argued that tribalism and traditions had a strong influence on Omani managers' performance, which led to a decreased role of the main managerial practices. Mamman and Al Kulaiby (2014) assessed the role of Ulrich's model (which emphasises the need for developing manpower and enhancing HR practices as a strategic partner, change leader, and expert in administrative function) in understanding HRM practices in the private and public sectors of Oman. Mamman and Al Kulaiby (2014) argued that fewer practices were performed by HR in the public sector than in the private due to the presence of more regulations.

In the same year, the researchers started involving demographic data in the analysis. For instance, Kemp and Madsen (2014) investigated the presence of women in the private sector of Oman and found that most companies prefer to hire more men than women, especially for managerial roles. Further, Al-Mahdy et al. (2016) investigated the impact of demographic differences on Omani school teachers' perception of their job satisfaction and the servant leadership style. The findings of the study showed the positive impact of school principals' servant leadership style on the perception and satisfaction of women and private school teachers.

Al Marhoobi and Atan (2018) also investigated the influence of HRM on the performance of governmental institutions in Oman, finding a strong relationship between HRM practices and organisational performance. The study also highlighted the positive influence of employee training, incentives, and job security on organisational performance, along with the negative influence of selective recruitment and decentralisation. Thumiki et al. (2019) assessed the role of HR practices during the economic crisis in Oman, finding the performance of the HR department during the crisis to be weak and recommending managers to rise employees' knowledge about management and communication activities instead of cost-cutting policies.

Altyar et al. (2020) examined the relationship between knowledge, HRM, and the economic growth of Arab countries, finding that the more knowledge was transferred from developed countries to Arab countries, the more effective the HR functions became, leading to higher levels of economic growth. Sulaiman et al. (2020) identified ways to overcome challenges faced by retail stores with regard to HRM during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study suggested implementing hygienic training, fair succession planning, and incentive planning at all levels to motivate employees during the crisis.

Al Habsi et al. (2021) evaluated the impact of HRM practices on employee retention in the oil and gas sector of Oman, praising the effective role of HR practices in retaining employees. Kooli and Abadli (2021) assessed the relationship between the accreditation of private institutions of higher education and their HRM performance. They found that HRM practices had no relation with the accreditation, and there was no improvement in the selected accredited institutions. Vicencio (2021), who described the predicted performance of HRM towards staff designation and residential status in private institutions of higher education in Oman, found that there was a high consideration of the staff's demographic profile in HRM practices. Al-Busaidi et al. (2021) evaluated the impact of HRM practices on employee performance in Oman's private sector, finding the impact to be positive. Aro-Gordon and Al-Raeesi (2022) explored the role of HRM practices in improving organisational excellence towards sustainability and reported that the impact of HRM practices on organisational development was weak.

It can be observed that, in the context of Oman, HRM has been a topic of interest for researchers in recent years. The reviewed studies examined various aspects of HRM practices, such as employee involvement, cultural values, gender diversity, job satisfaction, economic crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic, and employee retention. Moreover, the studies showed that HRM practices have a positive impact on organisational performance, job satisfaction, and employee retention. However, HRM also faces challenges in

Oman, such as a lack of HR competency and knowledge, selective recruitment, and decentralisation. Some studies pointed out the need for considering the local culture, economic condition, political ideology, civil service laws, and religion when implementing Western HRM models in Oman. Further, the studies also highlighted the importance of demographic factors such as gender diversity and staff profile in HRM practices. Their findings suggest that companies in Oman should focus on creating a more diverse workforce, especially in managerial roles, and consider demographic factors when designing HRM practices. Additionally, some studies addressed the impact of external factors such as economic crises and the COVID-19 pandemic on HRM practices, suggesting that organisations should focus on enhancing employees' knowledge regarding management and communication activities instead of cost-cutting policies during such crises. Overall, the present literature review provided a comprehensive understanding of HRM practices in Oman, emphasising the importance of developing HRM practices that are tailored to the local context and demographic factors. The reviewed studies suggested that effective HRM practices can have a positive impact on organisational performance, employee satisfaction, and retention. However, there are certain challenges that HRM faces in Oman that need to be addressed, such as a lack of HR competency and knowledge, selective recruitment, and decentralisation.

3.2.5.7. Leadership. Several reviewed studies on HRM began discussing the role of leadership in Oman after 2015. However, there was one study conducted in 2011 that assessed the barriers to leadership development in Oman (Common, 2011). This study stated that tribality and family interdependence are the main barriers to leadership development in Oman. Al-Mahdy et al. (2016) examined the impact of demographic differences on Omani school teachers' perceptions of their job satisfaction and the servant leadership style, finding that the school principals' servant leadership style had a positive impact on the perception and satisfaction of women and private school teachers. This was followed by a study conducted by Al Zefeiti (2017), which evaluated the influence of transformational leadership style on the performance of the government sector. The results of the study pointed to the importance of applying a transformational leadership style for enhancing employee performance. Hans et al. (2018) examined the impact of leadership style on managerial creativity in middle-level employees in selected public organisations, suggesting that the democratic leadership style (i.e. the preferred style) had a positive impact on managerial creativity, whereas, the autocratic style had a negative impact. In short, the applied leadership style in the selected organisations has a moderate impact on managerial creativity.

After 2019, the number of studies on HRM that focused on leadership rose to five. Al-Bahrri and Othmani (2019) explored the role of leadership style in enhancing employee motivation and productivity in Oman's water sector, finding that the leadership style had a strong impact on employee productivity. In addition, it indicated that the work environment and employment contracts were the most important drivers of high-level employees' productivity. Al Harrasi et al. (2020) evaluated the relationship between expert power and employee productivity in the public sector of Oman, illustrating that the more expert power is utilised, the higher the level of employee productivity will be. Thomas (2020) evaluated the influence of leadership styles on employee performance in the oil and gas sector of Oman, highlighting leaders' supportive strategies. However, it also pointed to the lack of employee engagement in the decision-making process.

Padmakumar and Dwivedi (2021) evaluated the impact of the transactional leadership style on employee performance in the private sector of Oman. They reported that the transactional leadership style had a negative impact on the performance of private-sector employees. Al Harrasi (2021) evaluated the impact of leaders' information power on employee productivity in the government sector of Oman, finding that the level of employee productivity was low due to the big gap between each employee and the organisational goals. Thus, the study emphasised the selected Muscat government organisations to review their leaders' competencies.

It appears that leadership in Oman has become a topic of interest in recent years, with a focus on exploring the impact of different leadership styles on employee performance and productivity.

The study by Common (2011) identified tribality and family interdependence as key barriers to leadership development in Oman, which suggests that cultural factors may play a significant role in shaping leadership practices in the country. Several studies (e.g. Al Zefeiti, Al-Mahdy et al., 2016; Hans et al., 2018) also explored the impact of leadership styles on employee performance and creativity in government and school settings, suggesting that transformational and democratic leadership styles are

generally more effective than the autocratic leadership style, although the impact may vary depending on the context and specific organisational goals. More recent studies (e.g. Al-Bahrri & Othmani, 2019; Padmakumar & Dwivedi, 2021; Thomas, 2020) focused on the private sector and highlighted the importance of leadership styles in motivating employees and improving productivity. However, some of these studies (e.g. Padmakumar & Dwivedi, 2021) also pointed out the potential negative effects of certain leadership styles, such as the transactional leadership style, on employee performance. Overall, these studies suggested that leadership in Oman is influenced by cultural and contextual factors and that effective leadership styles may vary depending on the organisational context and goals. The findings also highlight the importance of leaders' competencies in shaping employee performance and productivity.

4. Discussion

The present study aimed to advance research and practice related to HRM practices by carrying out a systematic review of the literature related to HRM to describe the HRM practices in the context of Oman, as well as their effectiveness in enhancing organisational performance and relationships with other variables. The study adopted a systematic review methodology, and the analysis and synthesis identified 117 relevant publications.

The study found that over the past 22 years, empirical studies (85.4%) dominated all HRM publications in Oman, while only 14.5% comprised review or conceptual articles. However, the number of review/conceptual articles increased from 2011 onwards. The majority of empirical studies employed the quantitative approach (75%), followed by qualitative (23%) and mixed approaches (2%). Education was the primary industry from where the data were collected (29.9%), followed by services (10.2%), oil and gas (6.8%), and healthcare (5.1%) sectors. Moreover, Sultan Qaboos University had the highest percentage of studies (21.5%), followed by Dhofar University (9.2%) and Sohar University (9.2%). The number of female authors increased significantly over the years, going from two studies between 2000 and 2010 to 14 studies between 2016 and 2020, although male scholars still contributed more to HRM publications than female scholars over the years. The average number of authors per study also increased over the years. Thus, it can be observed that HRM publications in Oman have contributed significantly to the body of knowledge in the field.

Performance management in Oman utilises various methods, but employee feedback indicates flaws in their accuracy and development. Therefore, further research is needed to explore the effectiveness of these methods in various sectors. Training and development in Oman also face challenges related to needs analysis, design, development, implementation, and evaluation. In the reviewed studies, issues such as the accuracy of training analysis, training design and content suitability, and lack of guidance and counselling were reported. Although the effectiveness of some training courses was reported as well, there is a research gap in the area of training evaluation. Compensation management in Oman requires more comparative analysis and a deeper exploration of relevant findings. Only three studies were found that highlighted the importance of factors such as salary, performance appraisal, and payment and promotion in improving employee motivation. Oman's localisation policy was found to have varying degrees of success in different sectors, with positive changes for Omani women in certain sectors but barriers related to local training, compensation, social security, employee development, and working hours in others. Successful predictors for Omanisation in certain industries were also identified, highlighting the challenges and opportunities for the Omanisation policy.

Employee motivation, engagement, job satisfaction, and commitment are influenced by factors such as pay, promotion, job security, recognition, working conditions, development opportunities, organisational culture, supervisory commitment, and training. HRM practices such as monetary compensation, work relations, and use of skills positively contribute to job satisfaction, while factors such as workload, responsibilities, and work activities negatively impact job satisfaction and lead to turnover. Furthermore, women in Oman face challenges in achieving work-life balance; therefore, organisations should address gender inequalities and promote equal opportunities for all employees. Personality traits such as agreeableness, conscientiousness, extroversion, and openness to experience were found to be positively related

to team performance, while neuroticism was reported to have a negative impact. However, some studies were found to have limitations, such as small sample sizes and narrow geographic coverage, which limit the generalisability of their findings. Thus, it is important to be aware of these limitations and the context-specific nature of these findings when considering their broader implications.

Therefore, Demographic factors such as gender diversity should also be considered when designing HRM practices, as effective HRM practices can have a positive impact on organisational performance, employee satisfaction, and retention. Moreover, challenges such as a lack of HR competency and knowledge as well as selective recruitment should be addressed. In Oman, HRM has been found to positively impact organisational performance, job satisfaction, and employee retention. Further, cultural and demographic factors should be considered when implementing Western HRM models in Oman, as HRM practices tailored to the local context and demographic factors are crucial. Leadership in Oman is also influenced by cultural and contextual factors. The reviewed studies suggested that transformational and democratic leadership styles are generally more effective than autocratic leadership styles, although their effectiveness may vary depending on the context and specific organisational goals. The competencies of leaders are crucial in shaping employee performance and productivity. Thus, the study provided a detailed implications for future research.

5. Conclusion

The study aims to contribute in the understanding of HRM practices in Oman through a systematic literature review, exploring their effectiveness in enhancing organizational performance and relationships with various variables.

Over the past 22 years, empirical studies have dominated HRM publications in Oman, with a noticeable increase in review/conceptual articles post-2011. Quantitative approaches are prevalent, followed by qualitative and mixed methods. Education emerges as the primary sector for data collection, and Sultan Qaboos University has the highest study percentage. While the number of female authors has increased, male scholars still contribute more to HRM publications.

The study identifies challenges in HRM practices, emphasizing the need for further research. Performance management exhibits flaws in accuracy and development, training and development face issues in analysis, design, and content suitability, creating a research gap in training evaluation. Compensation management requires more comparative analysis, and Oman's localization policy exhibits varying success, particularly impacting Omani women.

Employee motivation, engagement, and job satisfaction are influenced by various factors, including organizational culture and training. However, limitations in some studies, such as small sample sizes and narrow geographic coverage, impact generalizability. The study advocates considering demographic factors, addressing HR competency challenges, and tailoring Western HRM models to Oman's cultural context.

Despite the positive impact of HRM on organizational performance, job satisfaction, and retention in Oman, challenges persist. The study recommends addressing gender inequalities, promoting equal opportunities, and considering cultural and demographic factors in HRM practices. Leadership styles, influenced by cultural and contextual factors, are discussed, with a preference for transformational and democratic styles.

6. Implications to theory, practicality, and future research

The implication to theory from this systematic review, refers to the dominance of empirical studies, particularly quantitative approaches. It indicates the significance of empirical research in shaping HRM practices in Oman. The identification of key factors influencing employee motivation, engagement, and satisfaction contributes to the theoretical understanding of HRM dynamics in the Omani context. Moreover, the recognition of limitations in existing studies emphasizes the need for more strong research methodologies and broader geographic coverage to enhance the generalizability of findings.

Practically, this study highlights specific challenges and areas for improvement. Performance management, training and development, compensation management, and the effectiveness of Oman's localization policy emerge as critical focal points. Practitioners should pay attention to the reported flaws in

performance management methods and address challenges in training and development processes. The insights on compensation management call for a more comparative analysis to inform better practices. The nuanced success of localization in different sectors suggests the need for tailored approaches. Additionally, the study underscores the importance of considering demographic factors, such as gender diversity, when designing effective HRM practices in Oman.

The identified research gaps facilitate the way for future research. Areas such as training evaluation, comparative analysis in compensation management, and the impact of localization in different sectors offer rich avenues for further exploration. The study emphasizes the importance of addressing gender inequalities, understanding the impact of personality traits on team performance, and delving into the contextual factors influencing leadership styles. Future research should aim to overcome limitations, such as small sample sizes and narrow geographic coverage, to enhance the applicability of findings. Moreover, exploring the adaptability of Western HRM models to the Omani context and investigating the cultural and demographic factors shaping leadership effectiveness represent promising areas for future inquiry.

7. Limitation of the study

- The study recognizes a limitation concerning the small sample sizes and restricted geographic coverage present in some of the analyzed studies. This limitation raises concerns about the generalizability of findings to broader contexts beyond the specific samples and geographic locations included.
- The emphasis on the unique Omani context implies that certain HRM practices identified may be inherently tied to the specific cultural, economic, and social conditions of Oman. This contextual specificity limits the extrapolation of findings to dissimilar contexts. The study's outcomes should be viewed through the lens of their relevance primarily to the Omani business environment.

Disclosure statement

The authors of this research paper declare no conflicts of interest. The research conducted independently, and no financial support received or relationships with organizations that impact the objectivity or integrity of the research.

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