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TALENT MANAGEMENT AND FDI INTENTIONS: THE MEDIATING ROLES OF KNOWLEDGE AND INNOVATION CAPABILITIES IN AN EMERGING ECONOMY

GESTÃO DE TALENTOS E INTENÇÕES DE INVESTIMENTO ESTRANGEIRO DIRETO: OS PAPÉIS MEDIADORES DO CONHECIMENTO E DAS CAPACIDADES DE INOVAÇÃO EM UMA ECONOMIA EMERGENTE

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Abstract
This study investigates how talent management influences foreign direct investment (FDI) intentions through the mediating roles of knowledge acquisition and innovation capabilities in an emerging economy. Using survey data from 383 managers operating in high-tech parks and applying partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM), the findings indicate that talent management significantly enhances firms' knowledge acquisition, which in turn strengthens innovation

Resumo
Este estudo investiga como a gestão de talentos influencia as intenções de investimento estrangeiro direto (IED) por meio dos papéis mediadores da aquisição de conhecimento e das capacidades de inovação em uma economia emergente. Utilizando dados de pesquisa com 383 gestores que atuam em parques de alta tecnologia e aplicando a modelagem de equações estruturais por mínimos quadrados parciais (PLS-SEM), os resultados indicam que a gestão de talentos aumenta significativamente

capabilities. Innovation capabilities subsequently exert a positive effect on FDI intentions. The results support a sequential mediation mechanism linking talent management to FDI intentions via capability development. This study contributes to international business research by clarifying how internal capability-building processes shape firms' international investment orientations in emerging economies. The findings also provide practical implications for managers and policymakers seeking to foster innovation-driven investment environments through strategic talent management.

Keywords: Talent Management. Fdi Intentions. Knowledge Acquisition. Innovation Capability.

a aquisição de conhecimento pelas empresas, o que, por sua vez, fortalece as capacidades de inovação. As capacidades de inovação, por sua vez, exercem um efeito positivo sobre as intenções de IED. Os resultados apoiam um mecanismo de mediação sequencial que vincula a gestão de talentos às intenções de IED por meio do desenvolvimento de capacidades. Este estudo contribui para a pesquisa em negócios internacionais ao esclarecer como os processos internos de desenvolvimento de capacidades moldam as orientações de investimento internacional das empresas em economias emergentes. Os resultados também oferecem implicações práticas para gestores e formuladores de políticas que buscam fomentar ambientes de investimento orientados para a inovação por meio da gestão estratégica de talentos.

Palavras-chave: *Gestão de Talentos. Intenções de Ied. Aquisição de Conhecimento. Capacidade De Inovação.*

1 INTRODUCTION

High-tech parks have become central policy instruments for technological upgrading and industrial transformation in emerging economies. Rather than functioning merely as spatial agglomerations. contemporary high-tech parks increasingly operate as institutional ecosystems that foster knowledge spillovers. entrepreneurial growth. and innovation-driven competitiveness (Cadorin *et al*.. 2021). Empirical evidence from China illustrates this transformation. For instance. Zhongguancun Science and Technology Park and Zhangjiang Hi-Tech Park have evolved into globally recognized innovation hubs. contributing significantly to national output in information technology and integrated circuits (Wang *et al*.. 2022; Wang *et al*.. 2022). These cases highlight the importance of capability development within high-tech environments in shaping firms' competitiveness and international investment dynamics.

In Vietnam. however. the development trajectory of high-tech parks remains comparatively nascent. Although several parks—such as Hoa Lac. Da Nang. and Ho Chi Minh City—have been established. occupancy rates and innovation performance vary considerably (Pham & Do. 2023) Institutional inconsistencies. regulatory ambiguity. and

uneven planning coordination continue to constrain their effectiveness (Nguyen. 2024). In this context. foreign direct investment (FDI) is widely regarded as a critical mechanism for technological upgrading and knowledge diffusion. FDI inflows introduce advanced technologies. managerial practices. and global networks that facilitate local firms' innovation and competitiveness (Dang & Phan. 2022; Medve-Bálint. 2024). Accordingly. understanding the drivers of FDI in high-tech environments is of both theoretical and practical significance.

Despite extensive research on FDI determinants. the dominant explanations in international business have traditionally emphasized macro- and location-level factors. including infrastructure quality. labor costs. and fiscal incentives (Izzularab *et al*.. 2023). While such determinants remain relevant. they provide limited insight into firm-level capability-building processes that shape FDI intentions within innovation-oriented ecosystems. Emerging evidence suggests that human capital and skilled labor constitute critical strategic assets in high-technology industries (Cadorin *et al*.. 2017; Löfsten *et al*.. 2020). In particular. talent attraction and collaboration with academic institutions may enhance firms' knowledge acquisition and innovation capabilities. thereby strengthening their competitive positioning (Le *et al*.. 2023; Qingxiong & McElroy. 2010). However. the mechanisms through which talent management translates into FDI intentions remain underexplored.

Drawing on a capability-based perspective. this study argues that talent management represents a strategic internal driver of FDI intentions. Specifically. we propose a sequential mediation mechanism whereby talent management enhances firms' knowledge acquisition. which subsequently strengthens innovation capabilities and ultimately increases FDI intentions. By empirically testing this framework using survey data from 383 managers operating in Vietnam's high-tech parks and applying partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM). this study advances international business research in three ways. First. it shifts the analytical focus from traditional location-centered determinants toward firm-level capability development. Second. it clarifies the mediating roles of knowledge acquisition and innovation capabilities in shaping FDI intentions. Third. it provides evidence from an emerging economy context. thereby enriching the understanding of capability-driven investment dynamics beyond advanced economies.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

2.1 Conventional theories on attracting FDI

The literature on foreign direct investment (FDI) has developed several influential theoretical frameworks to explain firms' international investment behavior. Among these. the Eclectic Paradigm (OLI). Internalization Theory. and Product Life Cycle Theory remain the most foundational and widely applied perspectives in international business research.

The Eclectic Paradigm (Ownership–Location–Internalization). introduced by Dunning (1977). provides a comprehensive framework for explaining why firms engage in FDI by emphasizing three sets of advantages: ownership-specific. location-specific. and internalization advantages. Ownership advantages refer to firm-specific assets such as technology. brand reputation. and managerial capabilities that enable firms to compete abroad. For instance. Zhang *et al*. (2024) demonstrate that cities with better digital infrastructure attract more FDI by strengthening firms' ability to exploit ownership-specific technological assets. In less developed regions. Bothner's (2024) highlights how natural resource endowment and institutional quality shape FDI attraction through location-specific advantages that reduce uncertainty and enhance profitability. Internalization advantages concern firms' decisions to internalize cross-border transactions to mitigate market imperfections. Aluko *et al*. (2024) show that informal institutions. such as corruption. influence multinational enterprises' (MNEs) internalization strategies. thereby shaping operational structures in different institutional environments.

Internalization Theory (Buckley & Casson. 1976) further elaborates on the rationale for multinational expansion by arguing that firms internalize activities to reduce transaction costs and safeguard proprietary knowledge under imperfect market conditions. This perspective places particular emphasis on governance efficiency and the strategic coordination of cross-border activities. Casson (2022) contends that integrating international management with business strategy strengthens the explanatory power of Internalization Theory in analyzing contemporary MNE operations. Building on this perspective. Rygh and Benito (2023) examine subsidiary capital structure as an internal

governance mechanism within MNE networks. Additionally. Gokh and Filippaios (2021) introduce the concept of footloose behavior. describing how MNEs repeatedly divest and relocate investments in response to changing country-specific advantages and the recombination of firm-specific assets.

The Product Life Cycle Theory (Vernon. 1966) explains how firms' FDI strategies evolve as products move from innovation to maturity. According to this view. production is initially concentrated in advanced economies during the innovation stage and later shifts to developing countries as products become standardized and cost competition intensifies. Chang *et al*.'s (2021) illustrate this dynamic by showing that Chinese outward FDI in Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) countries increasingly targets resource-rich and low-cost markets during product maturity. Similarly. Bricongne *et al*. (2023) find that the relationship between FDI and exports varies across product types and demand conditions: substitution effects dominate for core products in high-demand markets during early stages. whereas complementarity prevails for non-core products in developing economies. reflecting mature-stage FDI driven by vertical production linkages.

Collectively. these conventional theories emphasize macro-level determinants. location advantages. and governance efficiency in explaining FDI behavior. However. they provide limited insight into how firm-level capability development—particularly in knowledge-intensive environments such as high-tech parks—may shape FDI intentions. This limitation motivates the need to extend the discussion toward capability-based explanations. as developed in the following section.

2.2 Theoretical background: talent management perspective in attracting FDI

Recent research suggests that talent management is crucial to the success of tenants in high-tech parks (Cadorin *et al*.. 2021; Löfsten *et al*.. 2020). Beyond its operational function. talent management is increasingly conceptualized as a strategic capability that enables firms to build. integrate. and reconfigure knowledge-based resources in dynamic environments. The ability to recruit and retain skilled employees. particularly from knowledge-intensive sectors. is viewed as a strategic priority for firms operating in innovation-driven clusters (Cadorin *et al*.. 2017). High-tech parks. which are designed to foster technological development and entrepreneurial growth. require a

workforce equipped with specialized expertise to sustain innovation and competitive advantage.

Universities and research institutions play a pivotal role in this process. serving not only as sources of skilled labor but also as knowledge partners that facilitate learning and capability development (Cadorin *et al*.. 2019; Le *et al*.. 2023). Through academic collaboration. firms gain access to new knowledge. research networks. and absorptive capacity-enhancing mechanisms. which strengthen their innovation potential. Consequently. talent attraction in high-tech parks extends beyond recruitment activities and becomes embedded within broader knowledge ecosystems.

The talent management framework in high-tech parks is therefore not limited to hiring skilled workers; it encompasses the development of structured collaboration mechanisms between firms and universities to sustain a continuous talent pipeline (Löfsten *et al*.. 2020). Such mechanisms contribute to knowledge acquisition processes that enhance firms' innovation capabilities and long-term competitiveness. The integration of talent attraction strategies into the broader business ecosystem enables firms to respond more effectively to technological change and competitive pressures (Cadorin *et al*.. 2021). From an international business perspective. these capability-enhancing processes may influence firms' strategic orientations toward foreign direct investment by strengthening their readiness to compete in global markets.

Accordingly. this study positions talent management as an internal capability-building driver that indirectly shapes FDI intentions through knowledge acquisition and innovation capabilities. thereby extending conventional FDI theories toward a firm-level capability perspective.

2.3 Hypothesis development

Academic networking refers to the establishment and maintenance of structured relationships between firms and universities or research institutions for the purpose of knowledge exchange and joint value creation (Le *et al*.. 2023; Löfsten *et al*.. 2020). From a capability-based perspective. academic networking represents an external knowledge-sourcing mechanism that enhances firms' absorptive capacity and facilitates access to heterogeneous knowledge resources. Partnerships with universities enable firms to recruit

highly skilled graduates. stay informed about scientific advancements. and participate in collaborative R&D activities (Le *et al*.. 2023; Pan *et al*.. 2019). Löfsten *et al*. (2020) argue that science parks foster knowledge-rich environments through dense academic networks. thereby improving firms' knowledge absorption and performance outcomes.

In addition to formal R&D contracts. informal interactions—such as seminars. workshops. and joint conferences—further stimulate knowledge diffusion and interactive learning (Löfsten & Lindelöf. 2002). Such repeated interactions strengthen firms' ability to identify. assimilate. and exploit external knowledge. which constitutes a core dimension of knowledge acquisition. Therefore. academic networking is expected to enhance tenants' knowledge acquisition processes.

H1: Academic networking positively influences knowledge acquisition.

Beyond knowledge acquisition. academic networking may also contribute directly to innovation capability. Pan *et al*. (2019) emphasize that strong academic networks enable high-tech firms to access cutting-edge knowledge and technological resources. Le *et al*.'s (2023) study highlights that firm-university partnerships in science parks provide continuous access to skilled talent and innovative ideas. By embedding firms within research-oriented networks. academic networking facilitates the recombination of internal and external knowledge. thereby strengthening innovation capability. Strong institutional ties with universities also enhance talent recruitment and technological upgrading (Cadorin *et al*.. 2019; Cadorin *et al*.. 2021). Accordingly. we propose:

H2: Academic networking positively influences innovation capability.

From a talent management perspective. talent attraction constitutes another strategic driver of capability development. Pan *et al*.'s (2019) study highlights that attracting skilled talent is a key factor in improving a firm's ability to absorb and apply new knowledge. which is crucial for technological innovation. In high-tech parks. this attraction facilitates access to expertise and resources. enabling firms to stay competitive and innovative. Attracting talent provides firms with access to the latest research and technologies (Le *et al*.. 2023). Talent attraction not only supplements firms' human capital base but also strengthens their capacity to recognize and assimilate valuable external knowledge. Network-based recruiting practices enhance recruitment efficiency and help firms attract competent talent (Han & Han. 2013). Cadorin *et al*. (2021)

underscore that talent attraction is closely tied to knowledge acquisition. as it brings in cutting-edge expertise. These arguments support the following hypothesis:

H3: Talent attraction positively influences knowledge acquisition.

As mentioned. talent attraction enables high-tech park tenants to access specialized knowledge and foster collaboration. thereby enhancing their innovation capabilities. Pan *et al*. (2019) argue that attracting skilled professionals improves a firm's ability to absorb external knowledge and drive innovation. These individuals bring fresh ideas and expertise that help firms stay competitive (Mellander & Florida. 2011). Le *et al*. (2023) emphasize that firm-university partnerships in high-tech parks provide ongoing access to research and technologies. further boosting innovation. Han & Han (2009) suggest that network-based recruiting improves efficiency and attracts competent talent. supporting innovation. Similarly. Cadorin *et al*. (2017) stress that attracting the right talent creates a dynamic environment for the continuous flow of knowledge and innovation. Thus. we hypothesize as follows:

H4: Talent attraction positively influences innovation capability.

H5: Knowledge acquisition positively influences innovation capability.

Extending the argument to the domain of international business. innovation capability and knowledge acquisition may influence firms' FDI intentions. Conventional FDI theories emphasize location and ownership advantages; however. firms' internally developed capabilities may shape their strategic orientation toward foreign investment by enhancing competitiveness and reducing uncertainty in international markets. Research shows that collaboration with universities and research institutions enhances a firm's innovation capacity. which is crucial for attracting FDI. particularly in high-tech sectors (Cadorin *et al*.. 2017; Cadorin *et al*.. 2021). This collaboration strengthens innovation. thus fostering a competitive advantage that attracts foreign investors (Le *et al*.. 2023). Technological learning and innovation performance are essential for improving a firm's ability to adapt and perform in competitive environments (Pan *et al*.. 2019). High-tech parks possessing strong innovation capabilities signal technological sophistication and growth potential. thereby increasing their likelihood of attracting foreign investment. Therefore. we hypothesize:

H6: Knowledge acquisition positively influences FDI intention.

H7: Innovation capability positively influences FDI intention.

Collectively. these hypotheses articulate a sequential capability-building mechanism in which talent management (academic networking and talent attraction) enhances knowledge acquisition. which subsequently strengthens innovation capability and ultimately increases FDI intention. This framework extends conventional FDI theories by incorporating firm-level capability development as a central explanatory pathway.

3 METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a quantitative research design to examine the proposed relationships using survey data collected from managers and senior executives of high-tech firms. The data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS. which is appropriate for predictive research and mediation models. Following Hair *et al*. (2011). which recommend that the number of participants for Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) analysis should be at least ten times the number of observed variables. With 21 observed variables. the minimum required sample size was 210 respondents. The final sample comprised 382 valid responses. thereby ensuring adequate statistical power. reliability. and robustness of the empirical results.

To operationalize the constructs in the proposed research model. measurement items were adapted from established scales in prior studies and assessed using a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree). The use of previously validated instruments enhances construct validity and ensures comparability with existing international business research. The selected items were carefully reviewed to ensure conceptual consistency with the present study's context. Minor wording modifications were made to improve clarity and contextual relevance to high-tech parks in Vietnam. while preserving the original conceptual meaning of each construct. Specifically. Academic Networking was adopted from Löfsten *et al*.'s (2020) study. Talent Attraction and Innovation Capacity were adopted from Le *et al*. (2023). Knowledge Acquisition was measured using four items from Pan *et al*. (2019). For FDI Intentions. the measure was adapted from Aliedan *et al*. (2023) and Izzularab *et al*. (2023). Prior to the main survey. the questionnaire was pre-tested with a small group of managers and academic experts to

assess content validity and item clarity. Feedback from the pilot test was incorporated into the final instrument. Reliability and validity of the constructs were subsequently assessed through internal consistency measures (Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability). convergent validity (average variance extracted). and discriminant validity using following recommended PLS-SEM guidelines.

The study sample consists of FDI enterprises exploring or operating investment projects in Vietnam's high-tech parks. The unit of analysis is the firm. and the key informants were senior managers directly involved in investment-related strategic decision-making to ensure informed and reliable responses. Potential participants were identified through business directories and high-tech park administrative lists. Data were collected through a combination of direct distribution and an online survey (Google Forms). Of the 600 invitations distributed. 401 responses were received. representing a response rate of 66.8%. To enhance data quality. responses were screened for completeness. consistency. and potential response bias. After applying validity checks. 382 valid responses were retained for analysis. Regarding demographic characteristics. 57% of respondents were male and 43% female. The age distribution was as follows: 2% under 29. 29% aged 30–34. 36% aged 35–39. 30% aged 40–44. and 3% aged 45 or older. In terms of educational attainment. 19% held a bachelor's degree. 47% a master's degree. 25% a PhD. and 9% other qualifications. With respect to professional experience. 3% had nine years or less of experience. 74% had 10–15 years. and 23% had more than 15 years. The relatively high levels of education and managerial experience suggest that respondents possessed sufficient expertise to evaluate issues related to talent management. capability development. and FDI intentions.

4 RESULTS

4.1 Structural model evaluation

To assess the reliability and validity of the measurement model. Cronbach's alpha (α). composite reliability (CR). standardized outer loadings. and variance inflation factors (VIF) were examined. Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability were used to evaluate internal consistency reliability. with CR considered more appropriate in PLS-SEM due to

its ability to account for differing indicator loadings. Standardized outer loadings were assessed to determine the strength of the relationship between observed indicators and their respective latent constructs. Convergent validity was further evaluated using the average variance extracted (AVE). VIF values were calculated to assess potential multicollinearity among indicators. According to Hair *et al*. (2017). standard loadings with values above 0.7 indicate strong relationships. and VIF values above 5 or 10 suggest problematic correlation. Specifically. all indicator loadings were above 0.70. CR values exceeded 0.80. AVE values were above 0.50. and VIF values remained below the critical threshold. confirming the robustness of the measurement model.

The Fornell-Larcker criterion is used to assess discriminant validity in PLS-SEM models. This index reflects the extent to which a latent construct in the measurement model is distinctly different from other constructs. ensuring no overlap in their measurements. According to Fornell and Larcker (1981). discriminant validity is established when the square root of AVE for a latent variable is greater than its correlations with any other latent variables in the model. The results in Table 1 indicate that the square roots of the AVE values are greater than the correlation values between constructs. thereby satisfying the criteria for discriminant validity. For instance. the square root of the AVE for TA is 0.831. which is higher than the correlations between TA and the other constructs ranging from 0.788 to 0.828.

Table 1

Results of confirmatory factor analysis

	TA	**AN**	**IC**	**KA**	**FI**
Talent attraction (TA)	**0.831**				
Academic networking (AN)	0.804	**0.915**			
Innovation capability (IC)	0.828	0.724	**0.853**		
Knowledge acquisition (KA)	0.802	0.767	0.775	**0.848**	
FDI intention (FI)	0.788	0.648	0.755	0.722	**0.899**

Note: The square root values of AVE were in bold.

In addition. the SRMR. R^2. and Q^2 indices are important criteria for assessing model fit. An SRMR less than 0.08. a Q^2 greater than 0. and a high R^2 indicate a good model fit. If any of these indices do not meet the required thresholds. researchers should

consider adjusting the model to improve its fit. The calculations yield SRMR = 0.046. Q^2 = 0.505. and R^2 = 0.630. indicating a good model fit.

4.2 Test of hypotheses

After verifying measurement reliability and model fit. the author proceeded to test the research hypotheses using SEM analysis. The path coefficient was employed to quantify the impact of the direct relationships hypothesized in this study. The results are presented in Table 2 and Figure 1.

Table 2

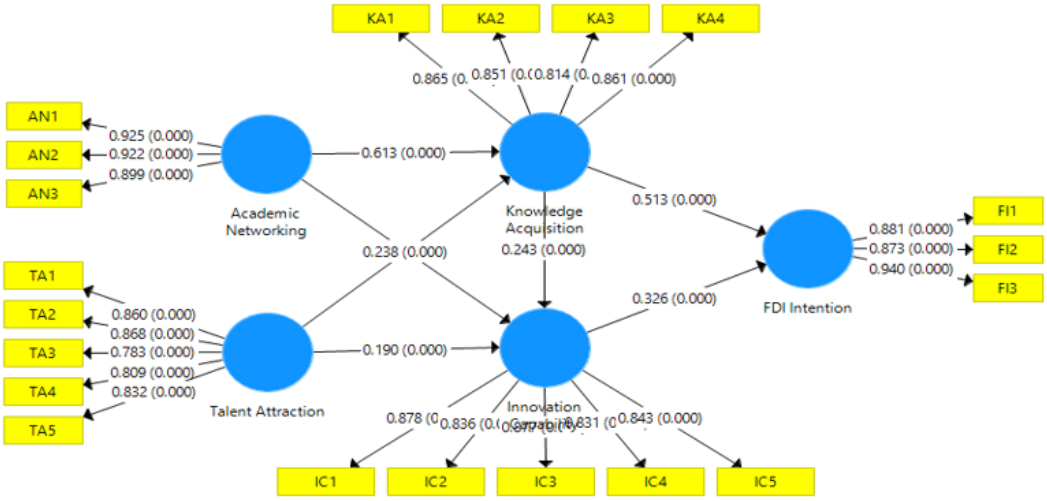
Results of testing the structural paths

Effects	Estimated	P_value	Results
H1: Academic networking -> Knowledge acquisition	0.613	0.001	Accepted
H2: Academic networking -> Innovation capability	0.493	0.001	Accepted
H3: Talent attraction -> Knowledge acquisition	0.238	0.001	Accepted
H4: Talent attraction -> Innovation capability	0.190	0.01	Accepted
H5: Knowledge acquisition -> Innovation capability	0.243	0.001	Accepted
H6: Knowledge acquisition -> FDI intention	0.513	0.001	Accepted
H7: Innovation capability -> FDI intention	0.326	0.001	Accepted

The results indicate that academic networking was significantly associated with both knowledge acquisition ($\beta = 0.613$. $p < 0.001$) and innovation capability ($\beta = 0.493$. $p < 0.001$). Therefore. the research hypotheses H1 and H2 were supported. Talent attraction was significantly associated with both knowledge acquisition ($\beta = 0.238$. $p < 0.001$) and innovation capability ($\beta = 0.190$. $p < 0.01$). confirming H3 and H4. In addition. knowledge acquisition had a significant positive impact on innovation capability ($\beta = 0.243$. $p < 0.001$). verifying H5. Finally. both knowledge acquisition and innovation capability had significant positive impacts on FDI intention ($\beta = 0.513$. $p < 0.001$; and $\beta = 0.326$. $p < 0.001$. respectively). Thus. H6 and H7 were supported by the study data.

Figure 1

Structural model for FDI intention



5 DISCUSSION

5.1 Theoretical implications

This study advances the international business literature by examining FDI intentions in high-tech parks from a talent management perspective. The empirical results indicate that academic networking and talent attraction significantly enhance firms' knowledge acquisition and innovation capability. which in turn stimulate FDI intention. These findings suggest that human capital–driven capability development constitutes a strategic pathway through which firms strengthen their international investment orientation.

First. this study contributes to FDI theory by extending beyond conventional frameworks such as the OLI Theory. Internalization Theory. and Product Life Cycle Theory primarily focus on location. ownership. and market maturity (Bothner. 2024; Casson. 2022; Chang *et al*.. 2021). The talent management perspective. however. emphasizes the importance of ensuring a skilled workforce. which can create a competitive advantage for tenants in high-tech parks (Cadorin *et al*.. 2021; Le *et al*.. 2023). This suggests that talent management can be a valuable lens for examining the

drivers of FDI in this environment. From this viewpoint. the current study identifies academic networking and talent attraction as key factors influencing FDI intentions in high-tech parks. This finding aligns with previous research. which demonstrates that academic networking and talent attraction are effective policies for ensuring a skilled workforce for high-tech park tenants (Le *et al*.. 2023; Löfsten *et al*.. 2020). yet extends it by explicitly linking such capability formation to FDI intention.

Second. the study empirically validates a sequential mediation mechanism in which talent management practices enhance knowledge acquisition. which subsequently strengthens innovation capability and ultimately increases FDI intention. Consistent with prior studies (Cadorin *et al*.. 2021; Le *et al*.. 2023; Löfsten *et al*.. 2020). the results confirm that academic networking and talent attraction foster knowledge accumulation and innovation development. Importantly. knowledge acquisition and innovation capability function not merely as performance outcomes but as strategic mechanisms that translate human capital advantages into international investment orientation. This integrated framework clarifies how capability accumulation operates as a micro-foundation of FDI intention. thereby enriching capability-based interpretations of firm-specific advantages within international business research.

Third. this study expands the understanding of FDI dynamics in high-tech parks within developing economies. While high-tech parks are well established in advanced economies. many developing countries are still in the early stages of ecosystem formation (Nguyen & Nguyen. 2024; Sandoval Hamón *et al*.. 2024). The findings demonstrate that even in emerging contexts. firms can leverage talent management to construct innovation-driven ecosystems that enhance their attractiveness to foreign investors. By integrating human capital development into the analysis of FDI intention. the study adds a critical dimension to the literature on high-tech park development and underscores the strategic importance of talent management in building sustainable and competitive innovation clusters in developing economies (Le *et al*.. 2023).

5.2 Practical implications

The findings provide important practical implications for policymakers. high-tech park administrators. and firm-level managers seeking to enhance innovation-driven FDI

dynamics. particularly in developing economies. The empirical evidence underscores that talent management strategies—specifically academic networking and talent attraction—serve as critical drivers of knowledge acquisition and innovation capability. which ultimately strengthen FDI intention. Therefore. attracting FDI to high-tech parks should not rely solely on fiscal incentives or infrastructure provision but must prioritize the systematic development of human capital and knowledge ecosystems (Guo *et al*.. 2022; Le *et al*.. 2023).

For high-tech park administrators. the strong impact of academic networking suggests the need to institutionalize structured university–industry collaboration mechanisms. Establishing joint research programs. technology transfer offices. and talent mobility schemes can facilitate sustained knowledge exchange and capability formation (Cadorin *et al*.. 2019; Le *et al*.. 2023). Creating formal talent pipelines between universities and resident firms can enhance firms' absorptive capacity and innovation performance. thereby reinforcing the competitive positioning of the park as an innovation hub.

At the policy level. the results indicate that high-tech parks should be viewed as strategic innovation ecosystems rather than merely physical clusters. In developing countries. where capability gaps often constrain competitiveness. leveraging talent management as a core development strategy can help build sustainable innovation-driven growth (Ullah *et al*.. 2023). Policymakers should therefore prioritize investment in research and development activities within high-tech parks. support entrepreneurship. and design institutional frameworks that facilitate collaboration between FDI firms and local talent pools. By strengthening human capital foundations. high-tech parks can signal technological dynamism and long-term growth potential. thereby enhancing their attractiveness to both domestic and foreign investors.

5.3 Limitations and directions for future research

This study is subject to several limitations that suggest directions for further inquiry. First. the cross-sectional and single-informant design may raise concerns regarding common method variance and causal inference (Podsakoff *et al*.. 2003). Although statistical remedies were applied. future research should employ longitudinal

designs and multi-source data—such as archival FDI records or objective innovation indicators—to strengthen causal claims and empirical robustness.

Second. the empirical context is limited to high-tech parks in Vietnam. While this setting offers valuable insights into capability-driven FDI dynamics in an emerging economy. institutional conditions may moderate the observed relationships. Comparative cross-country studies are needed to assess the generalizability of the sequential mechanism linking talent management. knowledge acquisition. innovation capability. and FDI intention across diverse regulatory and technological environments.

Third. this study focuses on academic networking and talent attraction as core dimensions of talent management. Future research could extend the framework by incorporating additional human capital mechanisms—such as talent retention. leadership development. and international talent integration (Kontoghiorghes. 2016; Luna-Arocas *et al*.. 2020)—to further refine capability-based explanations of FDI behavior. Longitudinal analyses may also explore potential reciprocal effects between innovation capability and actual FDI engagement.

6 CONCLUSION

This study repositions the discussion of foreign direct investment by demonstrating that FDI intention in high-tech ecosystems is not merely a function of location-specific advantages. but the outcome of systematic capability accumulation rooted in strategic talent management. By empirically validating a sequential mechanism—where academic networking and talent attraction foster knowledge acquisition. which strengthens innovation capability and ultimately shapes FDI intention—the study offers a micro-foundational explanation of how ownership advantages are constructed rather than assumed. In doing so. it extends conventional FDI theories toward a dynamic capability-based perspective that foregrounds human capital as a central driver of international investment orientation. Evidence from Vietnam's high-tech parks further illustrates how emerging economies can leverage talent-based innovation ecosystems to enhance their global investment positioning. Ultimately. sustainable FDI attraction depends less on static incentives and more on the deliberate cultivation of knowledge and innovation capabilities.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The authors confirm that the research adhered to ethical standards. All participants provided informed consent before participating in the study. Data were collected and analyzed with strict regard for privacy and confidentiality. ensuring no personal identifiers were disclosed without explicit consent.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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Authors' Contribution

All authors contributed equally to the development of this article.

Data availability

All datasets relevant to this study's findings are fully available within the article.

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