International Research Journal of Multidisciplinary Scope (IRJMS), 2025; 6(3):1466-1480

Review Article | ISSN (O): 2582-631X DOI: 10.47857/irjms.2025.v06i03.04621

Mapping Three Decades of Performance Management Trends

Muddapu Raja, TNVRL Swamy*

VIT Business School, VIT University, Vellore, Tamil Nadu, India. *Corresponding Author's Email: swamy.t@vit.ac.in

Abstract

Performance management is crucial for the organization and plays a vital role in improving employee performance and achieving overall organizational success. This research aims to explore trends in performance management to provide valuable insights for future researchers. To accomplish this, metadata from 6,401 publications spanning the period from 1996 to 2025 were retrieved from Scopus. The data were then systematically analyzed using tools such as RStudio, VOSviewer, and MS Office. The findings indicate that performance management continues to attract researchers interest, and the literature published from 1996 to 2005 shows a strong impact in this field. Additionally, the study reveals that articles and conference papers dominate the field, accounting for 69% and 16.9% of the total, respectively, while reviews and book chapters are underrepresented. Since these categories are essential for knowledge sharing in academic research, it is suggested that future researchers focus more on them. The research also found that journals typically take up to five years to publish accepted works, and it recommends that journals expedite the publication process to support the career advancement of research. Furthermore, the study identified keywords such as artificial intelligence, performance management, and competitive advantage and suggested that future researchers focus on identifying obstacles faced by firms while integrating artificial intelligence in performance management to boost employee productivity, gain competitive advantage, and achieve overall organizational success.

Keywords: Annual Scientific Production, Citation Analysis, Co-Occurrence Analysis, Performance Management, Term Analysis, Trending Topic Analysis.

Introduction

In recent years, the rapid advancement of technology and the evolving business environment have made performance management a crucial organizational activity. It allows managers to effectively oversee their workforce and achieve strategic objectives (1). Performance management (PM) is an ongoing process that aligns an organization's goals by identifying, measuring, and improving individual and team performance (2, 3). This process involves planning, reviewing objectives and performance, providing appraisals and counseling, and enhancing individual and organizational outcomes (4). PM is essential in increasing productivity, setting performance goals, offering feedback, and supporting decision-making (5). It also helps refine processes, motivates employees, and monitors ongoing activities (6). Performance management integrates qualitative and quantitative data into decision-making, making it an essential tool for organizations (7). It enhances employee performance (8), accountability, control, and cooperation (9). Recently, some organizations have used layoffs to improve employee performance. Research shows that after layoffs, the operational performance of the remaining employees improved (5). This indicates that employees tend to perform better to avoid termination, which relies heavily on an effective performance management system (8). However, the performance management activities are different in public and private organizations in different aspects like performance evaluation design, implementation, use and revision which further acts as a barrier to implement management techniques from private organization to public organization. Thus considering each sector characteristics before adopting any techniques can provide better results. Given the importance and benefits of effective performance management in improving employee performance and reducing layoffs, this study aims to examine trends in performance management to offer insights for future research. Furthermore, a study notes that organizational performance management has long been a critical focus for experts and scholars (10), making it the ideal subject for this study, which narrows its scope to organizations. A bibliometric analysis a quantitative method that outlines the

(Received 24th March 2025; Accepted 29th June 2025; Published 30th July 2025)

relationships between authors from different institutions and identifies trends and clusters in specific fields (11). Although bibliometric analysis began in the 1950s, its importance has grown due to advancements in bibliometric software like VOSviewer, biblioshiny, Leximancer, and Gephi, as well as the evolution of scientific databases like Scopus and Web of Science (12). Bibliometric analysis is a statistical tool that helps map a research field using citation and trend analysis (13). The authors reviewed three decades of bibliometric analysis papers on performance management to identify the potential research gap for the study. This article focused on factors such as the aims of the studies, the period covered, the databases used, the language of publications, document categories, and the types of reviews conducted.

Performance Management Research Gap Analysis

The research gaps found in performance management during the past few years are shown in Table 1 and it identifies essential gaps in existing research and offers prospects for future research and insights into understudied regions. The analysis highlights these deficiencies, which also highlights the need for more inventive approaches, valuable applications, and all-encompassing frameworks to improve performance management across various organizations.

Table 1: Research Gap Analysis in Performance Management

Year	Focus	Coverage	Type of Analysis Performed	Ref.
2023	To identify emerging research trends in performance management of public sector by conducting content analysis	Time: 1990 to 2023 Database: Scopus (considered literature above B ranking from ABDC) Language: English focused article category: Article Type of review conducted: Bibliometric	Annual scientific production and citation analysis, author publication and citations, Most contributing universities, countries and journals cited publications	(14)
2023	Evaluating the performance of different types of Chinese incubators archetypes	Time: 2015-2021 Database: web of science, Sage publications and CNKI (Chinese database) Language: English and mandarin Focused article category: Article Type of review conducted: Bibliometric with SLR	Articles published by journals	(15)
2023	A performance management framework for circular economy with balance scorecard	Time period: 2012-2022 Database: Web of science	Co-citation of journals, Research filed analysis, Co-occurrence of terms,	(16)
2023	To relate performance management with construction	Time period: 2019-2023 Database: Web of science and Scopus focused document type: Article Type of review conducted: bibliometric and SLR.	Annual scientific production, three field plot, Countries collaboration, Countries and keyword relation, Keyword co-occurrence analysis, Keyword density analysis, Thematic map	(17)

			and Thematic evaluation	
2019	Identify new trends and evaluation performance management in construction	Time period: 2000-2021 Database: Scopus and web of science Type of review conducted: Bibliometric analysis	Annual scientific production and citation analysis, Author keyword co-occurrence analysis,	(18)

Table 1 consists of publication year, aim of the research, coverage (scope) of the literature reviewed, type of analysis performed, and reference. Upon examining the aims of each study, most research efforts focused on identifying trends or exploring performance management in specific contexts such as construction, the public sector, and others. However, it was noted that a limited number of studies address performance management in a broader organizational context. This observation supports the current study's aim to identify trends in organizational performance management. Afterwards, a scope or coverage of previous literature revealed that a study conducted in 2023 spanned more of the period than other literature (14). However, due to stricter filtration criteria, it covers limited sources. In contrast, the current study aims to cover three decades, from 1996 to 2025, representing 55% of the total literature. Additionally, while several previous studies focused only on articles, this research broadens the scope to include articles and other document categories such as reviews, book chapters, and conference papers, addressing a gap in the existing literature. Lastly, the type of analysis performed highlights the variety of analyses carried out by the previous studies to identify trends. In this study, the authors conducted annual scientific production and citation analysis, document category, publication stage, co-occurrence of author and indexed keywords, text mining, trending topic, and thematic map analysis.

Methodology

Scopus and Web of Science are two prominent databases for research. However, the authors selected the Scopus database for literature collection in this study due to its broader availability and accessibility of relevant materials. When the authors searched both databases using the keywords ("Performance management" or "Performance handling" AND "Organization" or "firm" or "institution" or "sector" or "Industry" or "Company" or "corporation"), they found that Scopus contained 7,676 literatures (as of June 20, 2025), more than 72% of literature (4457) available in Web of Science. It reinforced their decision to use Scopus as the primary database for the research. Figure 1 was drawn by utilizing the previous research which displayed the detailed process of literature filtration (19).

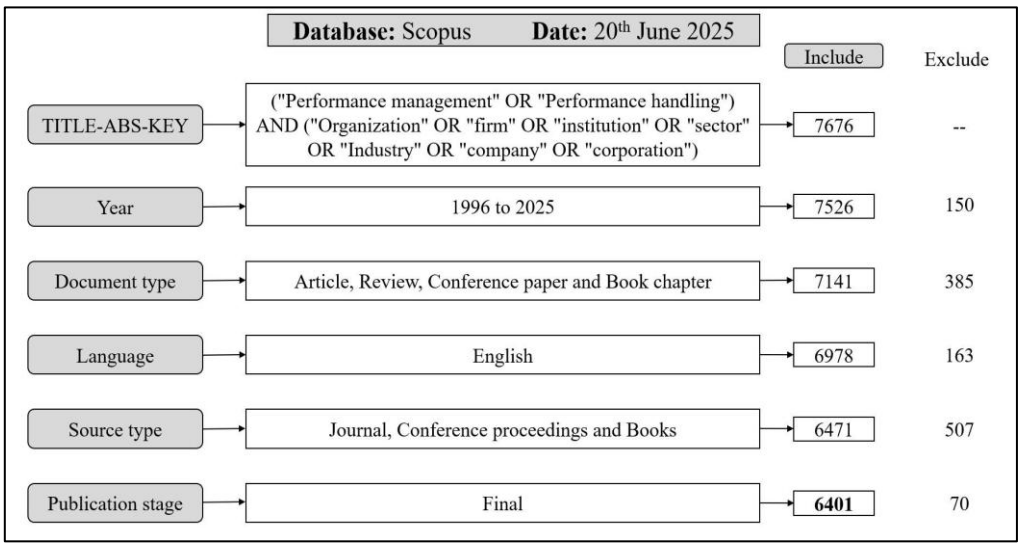

Figure 1: Protocol of the Study

Before finalizing the keywords, the authors initially entered the term "performance management" into the Scopus database, yielding approximately 13,674 sources dating back to 1967. After including "performance handling," the number of studies increased to 13843. Finally, additional terms related to organizations were incorporated, resulting in the final keyword set. Detailed information about the study protocol is shown in Figure 1.

After finalizing the keywords, the authors decided to conduct a bibliometric analysis spanning three decades (20) from 1996 to 2025, it leads to selection of 55% of literature. Afterwards, document type filter applied where articles, review, conference papers and book chapters were selected and excluded other types of documents due to their less impact that leads to exclusion of 385 documents. Following this, the language filtration initiated with the inclusion of 6978 publications and excluded documents in other languages to avoid translation errors. Similarly, authors selected source type options where journals, conference proceedings and books were selected results in 6471 documents. Lastly under publication stage, authors opted for published documents that provided 6401 documents and excluded 70 unpublished literatures (Article in press).

Once the resulting articles were finalized, the authors downloaded .csv and .bib files from the Scopus database to perform bibliometric analysis. Current research conducted mainly two types of analysis, performance analysis and scientific mapping analysis. The performance analysis is a process that provides a general view of field using various bibliometric indicators based on publication and citations. While scientific mapping analysis provides a network visualization of relationship between various scientific items leads to mapping of relevant scientific literature (21). In performance analysis, current research conducted annual scientific production and citation analysis, category of document and publication stage analysis. Similarly, in scientific mapping analysis, the researchers carried co-occurrence of author and indexed keywords, text mining, trending topic analysis. Furthermore, based on the above information, current study drawn a framework shown in Figure 2.

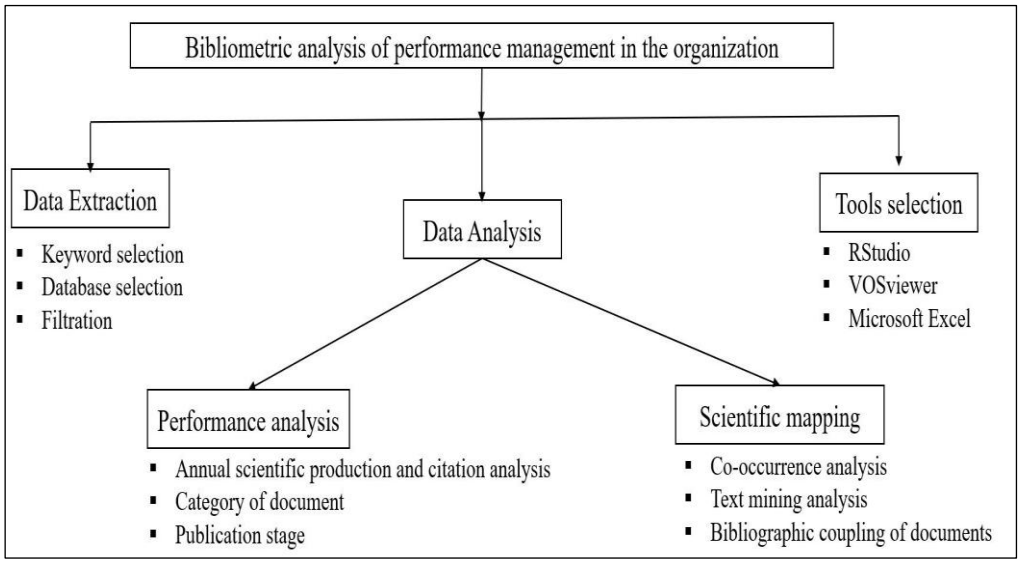

Figure 2: Research Framework

Results and Discussion

Performance Analysis of Documents and Citations

The performance analysis of literature is a process of observing bibliometric indicators created based on publications and citations, which provides an overall view of a specific field. It also includes citation analysis to evaluate literature effectiveness (22). As the current study aims to explore trends in performance management in organizations to provide valuable insights and potential future directions, it is essential to understand the general view and impact of the current field. In this scenario, Table 2 is provided with year-wise articles and citation information and average citations.

Table 2: Annual Scientific Production and Citations

Year	Articles	Citations	Citation Per Document	Year	Articles	Citation	Citation Per Document
1996	22	877	40	2011	264	9323	35
1997	35	305	9	2012	268	7652	29
1998	26	362	14	2013	326	9226	28
1999	30	1401	47	2014	266	5551	21
2000	45	1262	28	2015	271	4891	18
2001	54	1462	27	2016	272	6598	24
2002	75	2778	37	2017	316	5407	17
2003	91	4315	47	2018	310	5926	19
2004	122	5666	46	2019	336	6531	19
2005	172	7051	41	2020	321	7144	22
2006	152	3961	26	2021	365	4425	12
2007	187	6258	33	2022	362	4332	12
2008	249	6341	25	2023	379	2634	7
2009	251	8863	35	2024	395	919	2
2010	286	8464	30	2025	153	113	1
Grade total					**6401**	**140038**	

Table 2 showcases that the number of publications gradually increased from an initial 22 pieces of literature in 1996 to a peak of 395 in 2024. This upward trend of publication quantity reflects the growing researcher's interest in performance management. Additionally, there is a fluctuation in citations that correlates with the number of documents. Moreover, it also depends on the year of publication, as newer publications gain fewer citations than older publications due to the time advantage. The citations of 2011, 2013, 2009, and 2010 suggest the availability of highly cited literature or the availability of landmark papers. Furthermore, the literature from 1996 to 2005 gained a significant number of citations per document even though fewer publications were there. This observation proposes the availability of foundational papers on performance management. So future studies can use this literature while performing systematic, conceptual, or thematic reviews to observe the themes that attracted researchers' interest and also can gain more insights related to performance management in the organization. For better understanding related to growth pattern, this researcher also provided Figure 3 which displays the publications and quantity of documents along with the moving average of the trend line.

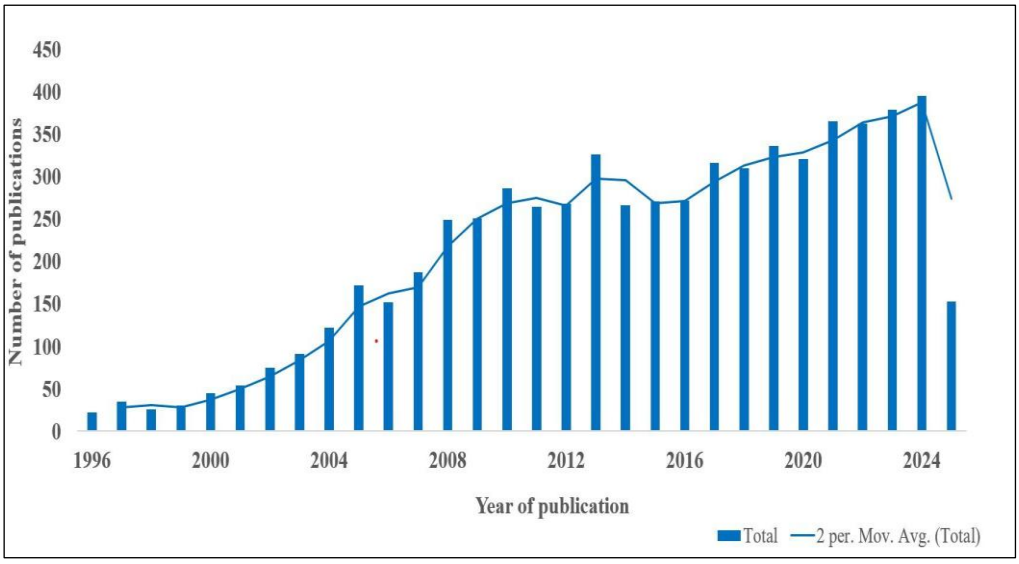

Figure 3: Moving Average Trend Line of Publications from 1996 to 2025

Figure 3 also confirmed the rapid growth of studies in performance management with the help of a moving average trend line. The calculation of moving average will reduce high fluctuations and show the clear picture of the growth pattern of a field.

Category of Publication

The categorization of publications is an analytical approach that aids researchers in comprehending the many forms of available publications and offers insights pertinent to the research they're trying to undertake. Analysis of Figure 3 reveals that empirical research mostly concentrates on the management of organizational performance. This information can aid researchers in determining whether to persist with their current study trajectory or reassess their methodology at an early stage.

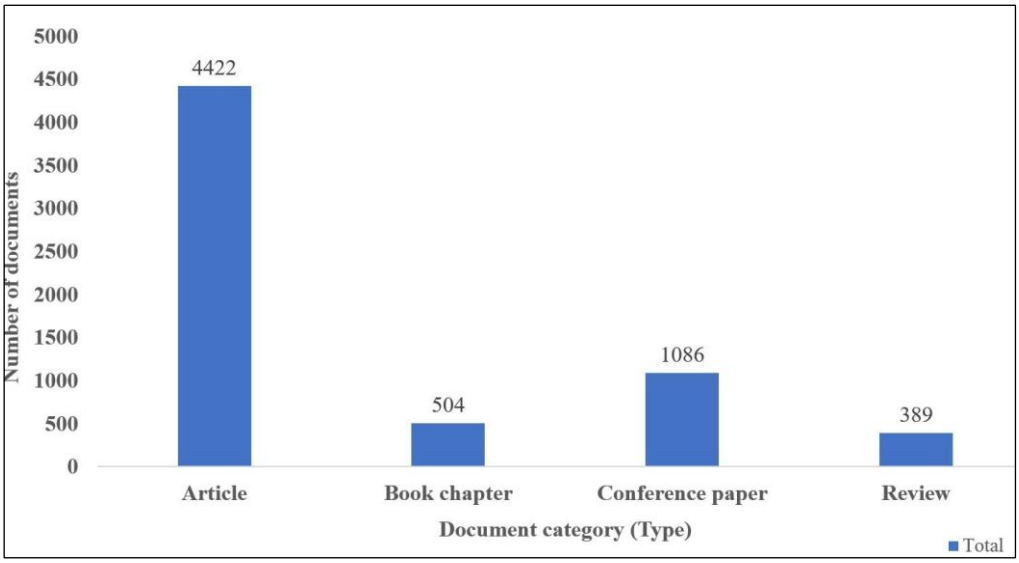

Figure 4: Category of Documents

With the help of a bar chart, the authors note that articles rank first, followed by conference papers and book chapters in second and third place, respectively, while reviews rank last. For clarity, Table 3 presents the percentage distribution of these document types.

Table 3: Categories of Documents

Category of Document	Number of Documents	% of Documents
Article	4422	69.1
Book chapter	504	7.9
Conference paper	1086	17.0
Review	389	6.1
Grand Total	**6401**	

Both Table 3 and Figure 4 clearly illustrate the differences in document categories and their respective contributions to the field. However, the researchers of this study also considered it essential to examine recent contributions. Thus, Figure 4 highlights the distribution of document categories over the last five years.

Figure 5 uses four distinct colors to represent each category, with the color key at the bottom. This visualization clearly shows the dominance of articles in this area of research. After articles, researchers are shown interest in conference papers due to their importance in the research community.

Similarly, book chapters occupied third place, followed by reviews. By observing overall statistics of categories of publications, even though the current year is incomplete, the growth of review-type literature is clearly visible. It shows that researchers' interest slightly shifted towards review-based studies. Thus, the current study suggests future research to divert their efforts to publish more review-based studies to fill theoretical or conceptual research gaps.

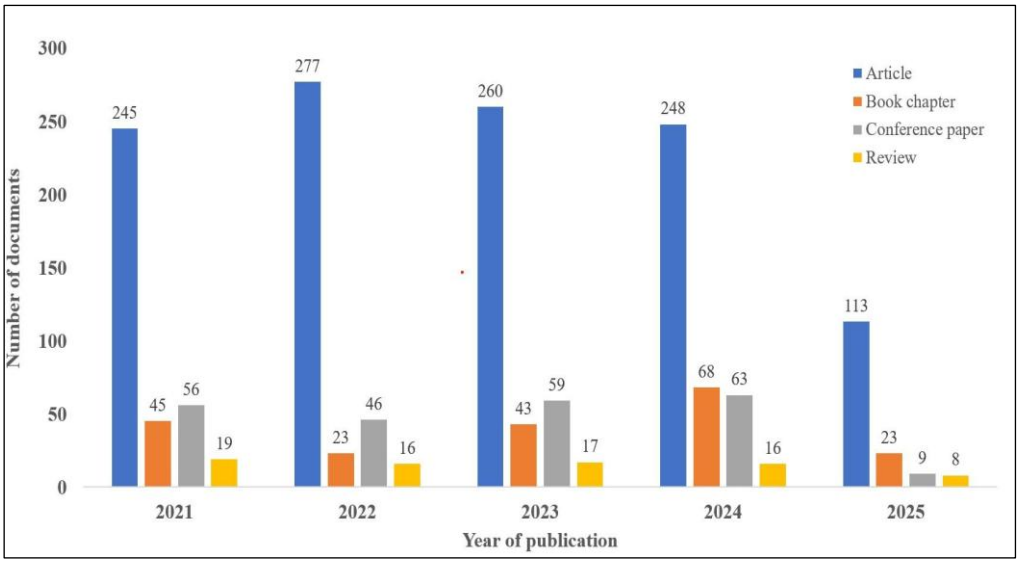

Figure 5: Last Five Years Categories of Documents

Publishing Stage Analysis

The publication stage in the Scopus database is accessible through the filtration panel and is categorized into two phases: "final" and "article in press." An "article in press" refers to literature accepted by a journal but awaiting publication, while "final" refers to literature that has already been published. Typically, journals take a certain amount of time to publish scientific literature. The authors aimed to determine the maximum time a journal takes to publish an article. To address this issue, the researchers extracted 70 articles in press that were excluded in the filtration process (as shown in Figure 1). Later, this literature's information is analyzed with Microsoft Excel. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Publishing Stage Analysis

Year	Articles in Press
2021	1
2022	4
2023	5
2024	26
2025	34
Grand Total	**70**

Table 4 illustrates that some journals are taking nearly five years to publish accepted literature, which can hinder a researcher's career progression and delay the completion of doctoral education for scholars. Therefore, this study recommends that journals reduce the time required for publication. It also encourages future researchers to explore individual perceptions regarding the length of the publication process.

Content Co-occurrence Analysis

A content co-occurrence analysis examines the information within publications, including topic areas (e.g., title and abstract) and metadata (e.g., keywords). Simply put, it involves extracting words and analyzing how frequently they appear alongside other words. This method helps identify and analyze theories, contributions, methods, themes, trends, and other relevant information in research. In a visualization map, the distance between words or terms indicates their co-occurrence; a shorter distance signifies more frequent co-occurrence, and vice versa (23). These words also serve as proxies to measure research advancement (24). Motivated by these insights, this study conducts three analyses: author keyword analysis, indexed keyword analysis, and text mining analysis (term analysis).

Authors' keywords are subjective terms to represent their literature (25). These keywords are considered central elements that summarize and reflect the content of the literature. They are also helpful for both human and automated indexing systems in organizing information and valuable resources (26). In contrast, indexed

keywords (IK) are standardized terms the publisher or supplier provides and makes available to everyone (26). While author keywords are specific to the study, indexed keywords are selected based on their relevance and include synonyms, plural forms, and variations in spelling (27). From this understanding, this study concludes that author keywords are more specific, whereas indexed keywords are more general. For the purpose of gaining author keywords, the researchers used VOSviewer software, where the co-occurrence and author keywords selected under unit and type of analysis options lead to the obtaining of 11,015 author keywords. From these keywords, 138 were extracted with the selection of minimum occurrence as 20. Then, the network visualization map was generated, shown as Figure 6, which has 7 clusters, 2317 links, and 6673 link strength. The links are the connections, and total link strength represents the number of publications in which two keywords or items occurred together (28).

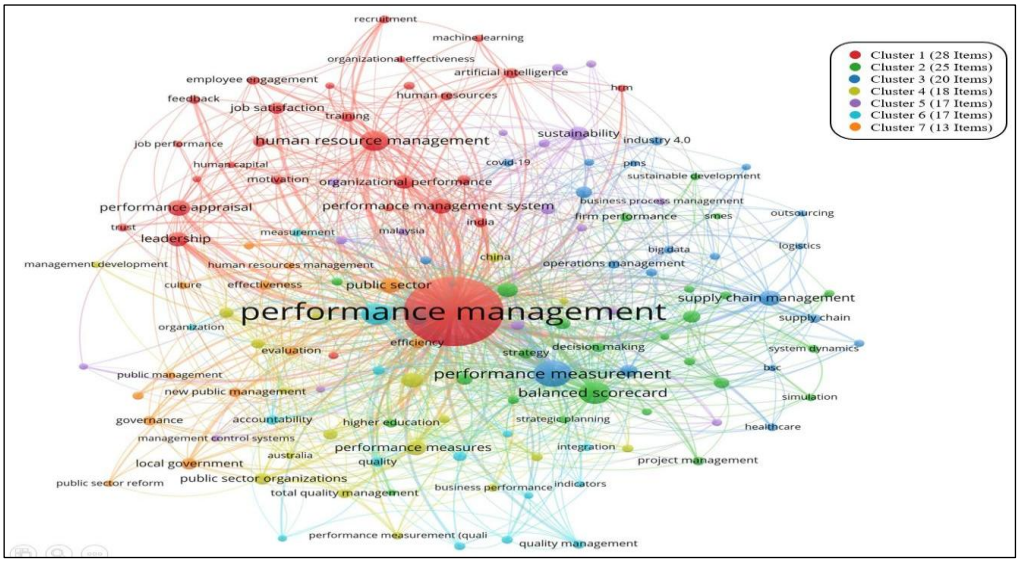

Figure 6: Network Visualization of Author Keywords

From Figure 6, cluster 1 has 28 items focusing on artificial intelligence, performance management, and competitive advantage, reflecting the integration of artificial intelligence in performance management activities to achieve competitive advantage. This observation advised future researchers to focus on identifying obstacles faced by firms while integrating artificial intelligence in performance management. Overcoming these challenges boosts employee productivity, wins competitive advantage, and achieves organizational success. Afterwards, the second cluster has 25 items focusing on key performance indicators (KPI). Strategic management and sustainable development. These keywords underline the involvement of KPIs in strategic management and sustainable development. So future research might study the models of policymakers and government that push firms to adopt sustainability-based KPIs into their strategic management. Furthermore, cluster 3 comprises 20 items centered on Covid-19, operations management, and healthcare, highlighting the issues faced by the healthcare business at the time of the pandemic and also the psychological elements of healthcare staff. So future studies can analyze the impact of psychological components on the performance of staff in healthcare in case of emergency scenarios.

Similarly, cluster 4 comprises 18 components that reflected on public sector organization, total quality management, and business performance, indicating the necessity of quality management strategies in public sector organizational performance. So future research can focus on how government policies and employee perception influence the deployment of quality management practices in public sector businesses, especially in developing nations. Furthermore, cluster 5 contains 17 items, including corporate social responsibility, green human resource management, and information technology, showcasing that the organizations embedded in green and social responsibility practices in their core business and human capital strategies through information technology suggest future

researchers find the role of information technology in enabling, monitoring, and reporting corporate social responsibility and green HRM practices.

Cluster 6 consists of 17 elements that focused on quality improvement, performance indicators, and health services, illustrating how structural performance measurement systems improve healthcare sector outcomes. generating trustworthy and relevant performance indicators to analyze service efficiency and operational procedures in the healthcare industry. Lastly, cluster 7 comprises 13 items, encompassing culture, human resource management, and the public sector, illustrating how organizational culture influences the design, implementation, and success of HRM techniques in public sector firms. Future studies can study how HRM methods in the public sector can match with increasing cultural norms, political pressure, and social demand.

After author keyword analysis, indexed keyword

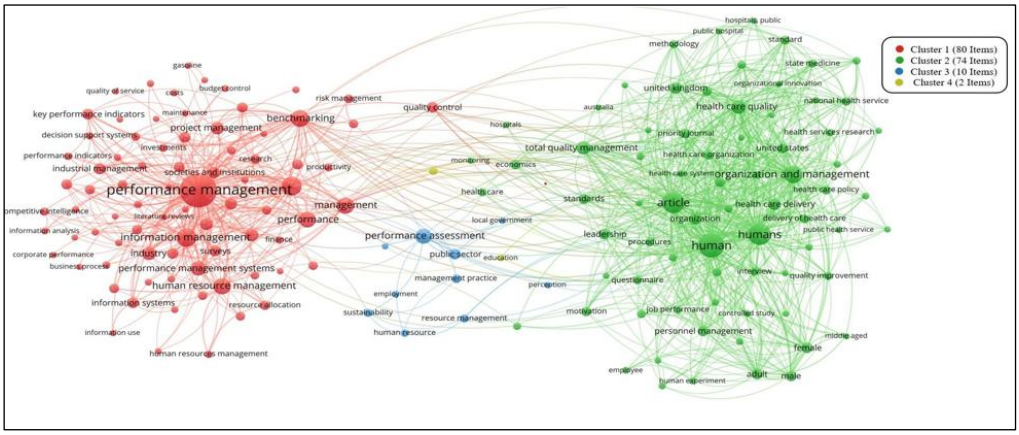

Figure 7: Network Visualization of Indexed Keywords

analysis was carried out, comprising 10808 keywords. With the application of a minimum occurrence of keywords as 30, the investigation obtained 166 keywords. These keywords were used to construct network visualization mapping, which has 4 clusters, 7536 links, and 45008 total link strength, displayed above as Figure 7. Among the 4 clusters, first cluster contains 80 items including Big data, information analytics and key performance indicate the integration of big data into HR analytics in defining standard performance indicators. So researchers might focus on impediments that influence the big data to unleash its full possibilities in HR analytics to obtain better organizational outcomes. The second cluster comprises 70 items focused on healthcare management, leadership, and work happiness, showing the impact of successful leadership style on employee job satisfaction and on healthcare organizations. Thus, future research needs to focus on the type of leadership style that drives employees to attain higher performance in the healthcare industry. Similarly, cluster 3 has 10 components, including local government, resource management, and sustainability, representing how a decentralized government structure contributes towards the sustainable management of resources at the community and regional levels. So future research should emphasize the strategic and intellectual issues encountered by local government in balancing economic development, environmental conservation, and social equity aims. Finally, cluster 4 has only 2 components which covers education and performance management system displaying the application of performance management system in monitoring, evaluating and improving individual and institutional performance. Future research should focus on establishing and validating educational specific performance indicators that go beyond quantitative outcome and include qualitative measurements of student satisfaction, faculty involvement and more.

Term Analysis

Term analysis differs from author and indexed keyword analysis, where authors select keywords based on their opinions or the similarity of items provided by the journal or publisher (29). In contrast, term analysis is generated through text mining of abstracts and titles from the literature. The analysis was carried out with VOSviewer; the process begins by selecting the "Create" option and choosing "Create a map based on text data." Next, when the new dialogue box appears, select "Read

data from the bibliographic data file," which allows the user to upload the relevant CSV file. In this research, the authors extracted data from Scopus in CSV format. The third step involves uploading the CSV file. In the fourth step, the user is presented with a new dialogue box containing options for "Title," "Abstract," and "Title and abstract." For this research, the authors selected the "Title and abstract" option to focus on terms related to the literature titles and abstracts.

In the fifth step, a counting menu will open, choosing between binary and full counting. The researchers selected full counting, which counts the overall occurrence of terms, leading to the extraction of 92,069 items. In the sixth step, VOSviewer allows users to set a minimum number of occurrences for an item to avoid less significant words. In this study, the authors chose a minimum occurrence of 210, which resulted in the extraction of 195 items, improving the network visualization. In the eighth step, VOSviewer generates a relevance score to identify the most critical items, suggesting 117 items in total. Finally, the network visualization diagram is displayed as Figure 7 that contains, and the tabular data can be exported as a text file, as shown below.

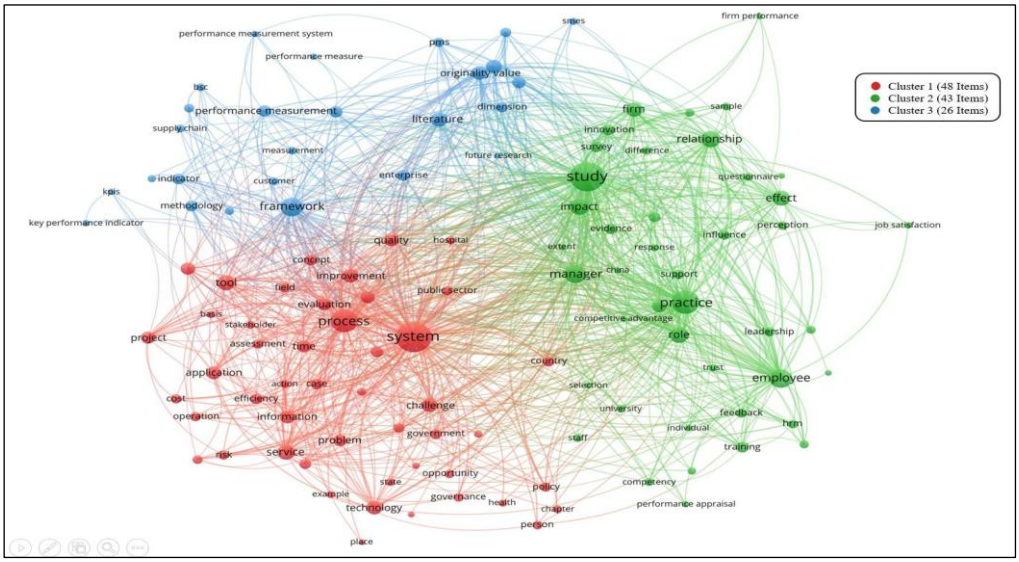

Figure 8: Network Visualization of Term Analysis

From Figure 8, cluster 1 consists of 48 items, including decision-making, stakeholders, and risk, reflecting increased emphasis on the need to include stakeholders' perspectives and risk consideration in strategic and operational decision-making processes. In this context, future studies can focus on establishing a holistic decision-making model that accounts for performance results, stakeholder expectations, and organizational risk exposure. Similarly, cluster 2 has 43 questions relating to performance appraisal, motivation, and organizational performance, indicating the effect of performance appraisal on employee incentive to achieve organizational performance. Future studies can focus on how AI-driven feedback systems, digital assessment tools, and virtual performance management platforms modify traditional appraisal processes, especially remote and hybrid working models. Finally, cluster 4 comprises 26 items connected to customers, supply chain, and key performance indicators, demonstrating increased interest related to the integration of customer-centric strategies and supply chain management with key performance indicators in organizational performance. It advises future academics to study how consumer happiness, supply chain efficiency, and operational efficiency are interrelated and measured using standardized KPIs.

Trending Topic

The trending topics help identify the periods during which specific keywords are used in research, providing insight into current themes and potential future areas of study. It can be a promising research avenue for future scholars (30). To explore these areas, the present study utilized "biblioshiny" through RStudio for trend analysis. The analysis contains keywords plus, author keywords, title, and abstract terms. Author keywords were explicitly selected, with irrelevant

terms related to performance management filtered out using text-editing options. The minimum frequency and words per year parameters were set to their default values of 5 and 3, respectively.

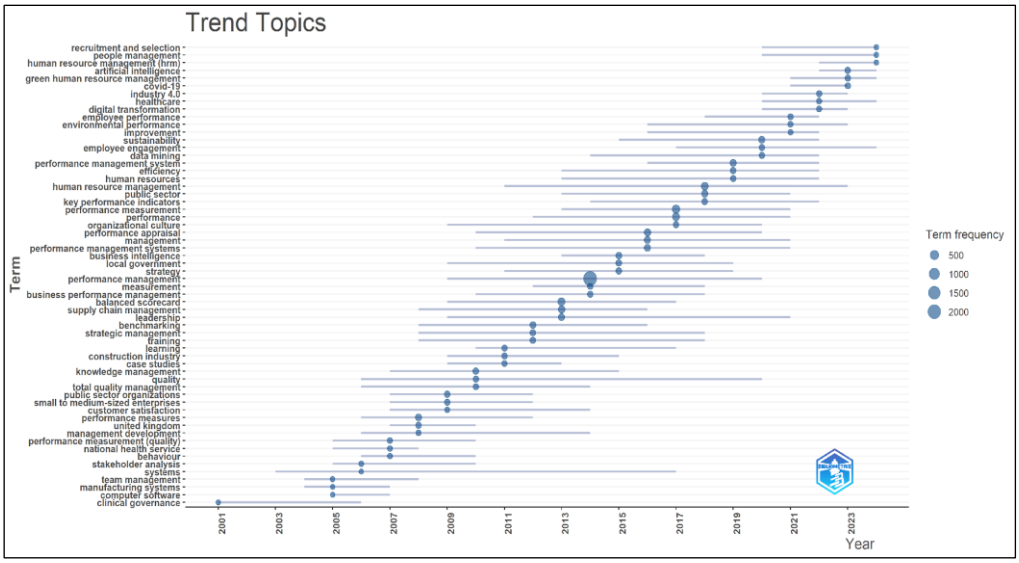

Figure 9: Trending Topic Analysis

Figure 9 depicts a timeline on the x-axis, terms on the y-axis, and lines with varied colored circles reflecting keyword occurrences. These lines reflect the length a phrase was used in the study, while the colorful circles depict the frequency of use, as indicated in the legend. The analysis gave obvious insights connected to the thematic progress of research on performance management. The fundamental phase starts from 2001 to 2009, with the indication of keywords like "management audit," "medical audit," "national healthcare services," "state medicine," and "industrial management" revolving around operational control and audit methods. These keywords represent monitoring and audit performance. Later, the mid-phase can be considered the rise of structural performance management, which started from 2010 to 2015. It contains terms like "performance management," "performance management systems," "benchmarking," "performance assessment system," and "information systems," indicating the shift from foundational towards performance management systems formalization and strategic analysis tools, which highlight systemization of organizational performance processes. Furthermore, the presence of terminology like "project management," "organization and management," and "management and decision-making" shows the rising attention towards crucial areas of performance improvement, including organizational leadership and decision support systems. Lastly, the current phase related to technology-driven performance management started from 2016 to 2025, which contains terms like artificial intelligence, machine learning, risk assessment, and management practices reflecting the significance of advanced technologies in performance management and risk consideration. Similarly, phrases like "human resource management," "resource management," "empowerment of personnel," and "employee and talent management" indicate a growing emphasis on employee-based performance techniques and management. Moreover, the introduction of terminology like "sustainability," "sustainable development," and "resource allocation" illustrates the integration of environmental and resource-related performance indicators in organizational evaluation.

Thematic Map Evaluation

The thematic map illustrates the structure and flow of the performance management scientific field. Its two axes partition the map into four quadrants: one for a theme's centrality (level of relevance, shown on the x-axis) and the other for its density (degree of progress, shown on the y-axis). Following this dimension, themes can be clustered in four groups: emerging/declining themes, niche themes, motor themes, and basic themes. Current research generated a thematic map using RStudio, which is shown as Figure 10.

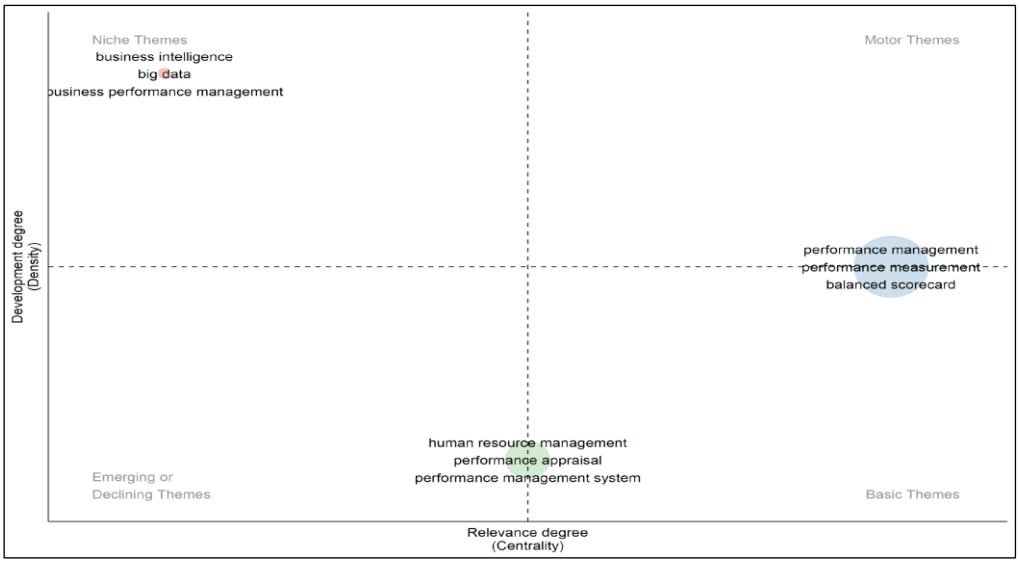

Figure 10: Thematic Map Analysis

The Figure 10 showcasing majorly relevant and expanded themes addressed under Motor Themes (top right quadrant). This includes "balanced scorecard," "performance management," and "performance measurement." These topics are very basic in the area, so they have been widely investigated. And given their density, we can assume that these fields are the focus of ongoing intellectual debate and realize particular conceptual frameworks. These are mentioned as fields of study, and they are having an academic discussion.

Niche Themes Business intelligence, big data, and business performance management are popularly used in the upper left quadrant. Despite their marginal degree of centrality, these subjects are highly developed. This is to say that, while research on these topics is vast and deep, it has not yet fully permeated the broader discourse on performance management. These could represent narrow areas with high auto-reference, providing opportunities for further integration toward higher-level concepts.

The common themes "human resource management," "performance appraisal," and "performance management system" are in the lower right quadrant. These are significant but underdeveloped topics: significant, meaning large for the field, and underdeveloped, meaning small in the literature. They are the nodes of a performance research network, but they need additional theoretical scaffolding and real-world pressure to make them stronger and more coherent.

It's curious that the lower left quadrant, which typically represents the types of trends where most of the researchers lookout for—emerging or declining themes—appears for the most part empty here. This may mean that the field is stable and has few topics at the frontiers of development and centrality. On the other hand, it might mean new themes aren't popular enough yet to register on the map.

Conclusion

This study aims to conduct a bibliometric analysis of scientific literature on organizational performance management from 1996 to 2025. By comparing publications within this timeframe, the research seeks to identify and evaluate trends in performance management and gain further insights. First, the annual scientific production and citation analysis presents a broad overview of yearly publications and citation trends, revealing that organizational performance management is a rapidly growing field. This observation encourages future researchers to carry out more studies on performance management. Furthermore, the literature from 1996 to 2005 shows a significant impact on the current field, so studies can use this literature to conduct systematic or thematic or other types of reviews to gain further fundamental insights into performance management. Second, the analysis of publication types, which includes articles, conference papers, book chapters, and reviews, shows the dominance of articles and conference papers at 69% and 16.9%, respectively. This finding suggests that reviews and book

chapters are underrepresented despite their importance in sharing theoretical and conceptual knowledge.

Third, the publication stage analysis reveals that journals typically take up to five years to process articles from acceptance to publication. This research suggests that journals and publishing houses should minimize delays, benefiting both authors and the academic community. Timely publication is crucial for advancing knowledge in this rapidly evolving field. Fourth, the co-occurrence analysis provided author and indexed keywords. In the author keywords, the researchers identified keywords like "artificial intelligence," "performance management," and "competitive advantage" and suggested that future researchers focus on identifying obstacles faced by firms while integrating artificial intelligence in performance management. Overcoming these challenges boosts employee productivity, wins competitive advantage, and achieves organizational success. Additionally, the indication of keywords like key performance indicators (KPI). Strategic management and sustainable development underline the involvement of KPIs in strategic management and sustainable development. So future research might study the models of policymakers and government that push firms to adopt sustainability-based KPIs into their strategic management. In the indexed keywords, "big data," "information analytics," and "key performance term" indicate the integration of big data into HR analytics in defining standard performance indicators. So researchers might focus on impediments that influence the big data to unleash its full possibilities in HR analytics to obtain better organizational outcomes. Similarly, terms like "healthcare management," "leadership," and "work happiness" show the impact of successful leadership style on employee job satisfaction and on healthcare organizations. Thus, future research needs to focus on the type of leadership style that drives employees to attain higher performance in the healthcare industry.

Fifth, the authors performed text mining analysis that extracted terms from the title and abstract. It helps in the identification of keywords like decision-making, stakeholders, and risk, reflecting increased emphasis on the need to include stakeholders' perspectives and risk consideration in strategic and operational decision-making processes. In this context, future studies can focus on establishing a holistic decision-making model that accounts for performance results, stakeholder expectations, and organizational risk exposure. Additionally, the identification of the terms "performance appraisal," "motivation," and "organizational performance" indicates the effect of performance appraisal on employee incentive to achieve organizational performance. Future studies can focus on how AI-driven feedback systems, digital assessment tools, and virtual performance management platforms modify traditional appraisal processes, especially remote and hybrid working models. Sixth, the trending topic provided the evaluation of performance management from 2001 to 2025 in three phases, namely, foundation, systemization, and integration of performance management. Seventh, the thematic map analysis identified niche themes the broader discourse on performance management. Moreover, the common themes "human resource management," "performance appraisal," and "performance management system" indicate their significance but lack of full development due to the field's vastness. So future studies can perform more theoretical studies to make them stronger and more coherent.

This study offers several theoretical and practical implications. It identifies the ongoing growth in performance management research, emphasizes the dominance of empirical studies, and highlights the importance of keyword selection for maximizing research impact. Journals can use this study to address time delays in publication. At the same time, organizations can leverage the findings to understand the significance of performance management and identify areas for future research and development.

Finally, the study acknowledges certain limitations. First, it relies solely on bibliometric analysis, and future researchers are encouraged to combine bibliometric and systematic literature reviews for a more comprehensive understanding like finding the challenges that influence integration of technologies into performance management activities, managers and employees role change over time period and more. Second, the study performed few bibliometric analysis, future studies can perform other analysis such as bibliographic coupling, co-citation analysis to identify core literature or to get clusters of similar

literatures. Third, current research spans three decades, from 1996 to 2025, covering 46.8% of relevant articles. Future studies should consider extending the period to five or six decades for deeper insights. Lastly, this study focuses on a limited range of publication types, and future research could include additional categories, such as conference reviews and books, to provide a more complete picture of performance management research. Furthermore, future investigations into the impact of publication delays on individual career advancement could offer valuable empirical evidence.

Abbreviations

PM: Performance management.

Acknowledgement

There is no special acknowledgement.

Author Contributions

Muddapu Raja: conceptualization, literature search, data curation, software tools, methodology, formal analysis, writing original draft, T N V R L Swamy: review, editing, supervision, validation.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Ethics Approval

Not Applicable.

Funding

The researchers do not receive funding from any source for this research.

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