

Is performance appraisal to employee performance imperative? A bibliometric and systematic literature review

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Abstract: Performance appraisal assists employees in enhancing personal capabilities aligned with personal objectives and organisational goals. The paper aims to provide comprehensive guidelines to academicians, policymakers, and organisations for effectively utilising performance appraisal to align employee performance with organisational goals. The Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) framework was followed when synthesising existing studies investigating the linkage between performance appraisal and employee performance. The Scopus database was the primary source of journal articles. A holistic keyword search identified 6,675 articles, which were filtered through inclusion and exclusion criteria. As a result, 297 relevant articles were selected. Equity theory, expectancy theory, and social exchange theory were primarily employed in the reviewed articles. Quantitative methodologies were the most popular approach, followed by mixed methods. Statistical analysis techniques, such as structural equation modelling and regression, also gained popularity. Furthermore, the reviewed articles encompassed various populations, sectors, and sample sizes when assessing the general applicability of performance appraisal while elucidating sector-specific challenges. This review contributed to the existing literature and suggested future directions for understanding performance appraisal and employee performance. The study recommended employing customised approaches, incorporating green HRM practices, and utilising innovative technologies to develop a more effective employee performance appraisal framework.

Keywords: *Bibliometric and systematic literature review, Employee performance, Performance appraisal, Performance review, PRISMA, Scopus.*

1. Introduction

Employee performance is a crucial indicator across both public and private sectors to evaluate employee's achievements in fulfilling organisational goals by analysing committed time, cost, and efficiency [1]. Upper management also employs performance appraisal outcomes to determine organisational success [1]. Specifically, performance appraisal outcomes significantly impact human resource management (HRM) and decisions, including formulating relevant strategies to enhance employee performance and stipulating future growth directions by encouraging employees' commitment to pertinent initiatives [2, 3]. Moreover, according to Hee and Jing [4] performance appraisal aids in increasing employee productivity through different metrics, such as accomplished assignments, task completion efficiency, adherence degrees to work procedures, and personal attributes (passion, collaboration, initiative, and decision-making) [5]. Performance appraisal outcomes will also underscore specific organisational objectives to be achieved.

The current bibliometric and systematic literature review (SLR) aims to formulate pertinent

guidelines for academicians, policymakers, and organisations in utilising performance appraisal outcomes to achieve organisational goals and ensure success. The originality of the current study was derived from the unique incorporation of bibliometric analysis and the SLR via The Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines [6] which enabled a holistic investigation of the association between performance appraisal and employee performance in organisations to determine primary theoretical frameworks, research methodologies, statistical analysis technique, and emerging trends. Valuable perspectives were also contributed in terms of determining the most effective employee performance review processes to attain organisational missions and success. The current study conducted a bibliometric analysis before the SLR to answer the following research question (RQ):

1. What are the top nations, educational institutions, keywords, and annual distribution in researching performance appraisal and employee performance?

The SLR was guided by five RQs as follows:

1. Which theoretical frameworks have extensively been employed in researching performance appraisal and employee performance?

2. Which methodologies have widely been utilised in researching performance appraisal and employee performance?

3. Which statistical analysis techniques have extensively been employed in researching performance appraisal and employee performance?

4. Which sample analysis approaches have widely been utilised in researching performance appraisal and employee performance?

5. Which sectors have extensively been scrutinised in researching performance appraisal and employee performance?

2. Methodology

2.1. Study Design

The present study performed a bibliometric analysis before an SLR. A standardised approach was performed to scrutinise performance appraisal methods to determine prevalent conceptual models, approaches, statistical analysis techniques, samples, and industries. A holistic content analysis was also performed to methodologically determine and classify the aforementioned aspects by comprehensively reviewing various journal articles. All emerging trends and themes were also grouped based on respective occurrence frequencies and characteristics. Discovered insights through the thematic analysis could deepen the comprehension of the difficulties encountered in analysing existing performance appraisal approaches, which could serve as vital guidelines to future scholars and assist in implementing efficacious performance appraisal frameworks among organisations.

2.2. Search Strategy

The Scopus database was employed to conduct an extensive search of relevant journal articles on November 12, 2024. The initial search for the bibliometric analysis produced 6,675 articles, which were downloaded and mapped via the Visualization of Similarities (VOS) viewer software according to the relationships and occurrences. The two components, namely performance appraisal and employee performance, were scrutinised via data visualisation to demonstrate the top countries leading relevant research, including the United States of America (USA), India, and the United Kingdom (UK) (31%, 15%, and 11% respectively). The leading position of the USA was reflected through adequate financial resources and rigorous research initiatives. India and the UK comprised robust educational frameworks and profound governmental funding. Furthermore, the three Asian nations, namely Malaysia, Pakistan, and China, rigorously executed creative approaches and performed innovative research and applications. Canada Indonesia, South Africa, and the Netherlands also offered valuable contributions.

A sequence of keywords, such as “employee performance” and “performance appraisal”, was formulated to accurately determine relevant articles. Most used keywords in publications in the field were provided as sTITLE-ABS-KEY (performance AND appraisal AND employee AND performance), AND

(LIMIT-TO (EXACTKEYWORD , “Performance Appraisal”) OR LIMIT-TO (EXACTKEYWORD , “Employee Performance Appraisal”) OR LIMIT-TO (EXACTKEYWORD , “Employee Performance”) OR LIMIT-TO (EXACTKEYWORD , “Appraisal”) OR LIMIT-TO (EXACTKEYWORD , “Performance Evaluation”) OR LIMIT-TO (EXACTKEYWORD , “Performance Assessment”) OR LIMIT-TO (EXACTKEYWORD , “Performance Appraisals”) OR LIMIT-TO (EXACTKEYWORD , “Task Performance”) OR LIMIT-TO (EXACTKEYWORD , “Performance Appraisal Satisfaction”)) AND PUBYEAR > 2013 AND PUBYEAR < 2024 AND”. The search was solely for two domains, namely “Business, Management and Accountant and Social Science”, AND (LIMIT-TO (SUBJAREA, “BUSI”) OR LIMIT-TO (SUBJAREA, “SOCI”)). Only journal articles were analysed, namely “AND (LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE, “ar”))”.

2.3. Data Synthesis and Analysis

A content analysis was performed to identify and group emerging themes, discovered obstacles, and potential research avenues according to the nature and occurrence to guarantee a deep comprehension while suggesting potential directions.

2.4. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The reliability and quality of the gathered articles were assessed by referring to the established inclusion and exclusion criteria. The inclusion criteria were relevant keywords to the current topics and only English articles published between 2014 and 2024. A total of 116 articles were determined. The robust quality evaluation process also guaranteed high relevance and clarity of the RQs and hypotheses in the gathered articles. Employed conceptual models, sample sizes, and sectors were also investigated to guarantee representativeness. Moreover, the data collection approaches of the articles were evaluated to ensure high suitability with the research questions and the capability to generate holistic and unbiased findings. Simultaneously, the reliability and validity of the results were thoroughly investigated to identify how the data could efficaciously lead to logical and reasonable inferences. Resultantly, a final set of 25 high-quality articles was determined. The screening and selection procedures were carefully documented, with the analysis of each finalised article accessible in the Supplementary section. The inclusion and exclusion criteria are delineated in Table 1.

Table 1.

The inclusion and exclusion criteria.

Inclusion	Exclusion
Articles published between 2014 and 2024	Non-peer-reviewed articles, such as blog posts or news articles.
Articles published in English	Articles in other languages
Articles primarily concentrated on performance appraisal and employee performance.	Articles irrelevant to performance appraisal and employee performance

2.5. Critical Analysis and Discussion

The synthesised data were critically assessed and discussed to offer significant insights into the latest research trend by analysing key findings and implications while determining literature gaps.

2.6. Quality Assessment

The reliability of the included articles was systemically appraised to guarantee high quality. A total of 116 out of 297 articles were retained after applying the inclusion and exclusion criteria. Further evaluation according to the study design, data collection strategies, sample size, and the reliability and validity of the findings resulted in only 25 articles finalised for the SLR. Concurrently, supplementary materials were incorporated to offer a thorough analysis of the articles. The Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) function as comprehensive and structured guidelines for high accuracy and transparency in SLRs and meta-analyses, which can ensure high research rigour through significant insights (see Figure 1).

3. Findings

Both bibliometric analysis and an SLR were performed to gain detailed insights into the current topic by obtaining general perspectives via bibliometric analysis and granular insights through the SLR to achieve narrative coherence. In addition, the dual approach reinforced the logical flow of the results and guaranteed a holistic comprehension of the investigation topic. Cross-referencing was also utilised in this study to improve the incorporation of both bibliometric analysis and the SLR. Bibliometric analysis emphasised key advancements and themes while the SLR methodologically scrutinised the articles. Cross-referencing is imperative to consistently provide detailed and sufficient empirical evidence through the SLR to the broader themes revealed via bibliometric analysis, which ensures a cohesive and solid examination.

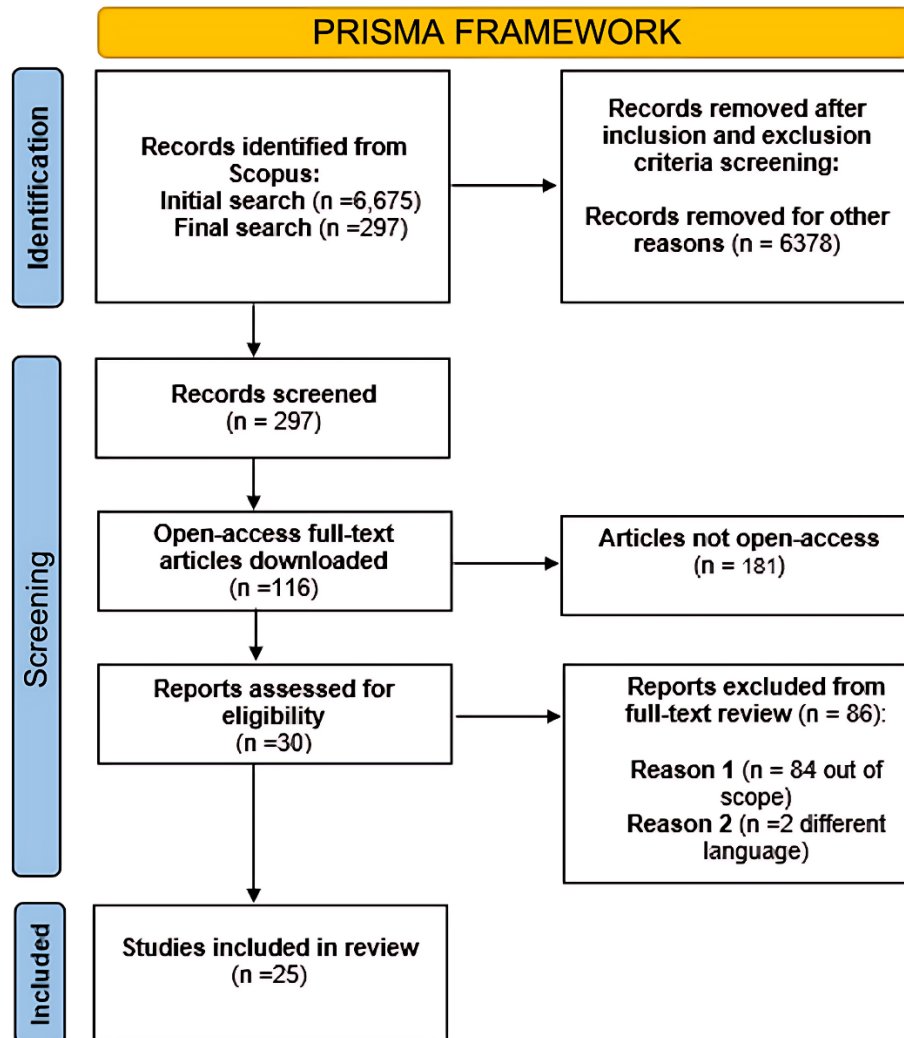


Figure 1.
PRISMA Framework.

3.1. The Initial Stage (Bibliometric Analysis)

A commercial context, which is highly turbulent, requires performance appraisal measures for continuous evolution. The evaluation process also consistently alters conventional evaluation approaches, in which firms, organisations, scholars, and human resource (HR) professionals constantly aim to develop

an in-depth comprehension of key influencers, emerging trends, and channels for conveying performance appraisal outcomes. Hence, bibliometric analysis functions as a critical instrument for academicians to appraise the current research trend.

3.1.1. The Top Annual Distribution of the Research on Performance Appraisal

The RQ for bibliometric analysis was answered by assessing the top annual distribution of publications from 2014 to 2023. Figure 2 depicts a fluctuating trend across the decade, wherein both growth and decline are observed instead of a linear trend. Specifically, 30 articles were published in both 2014 and 2015 respectively, which was higher than those in 2016 and 2017. A considerable increment was observed in 2019 and 2020, which was the highest distribution with 40 publications and indicated the highest interest potentially owing to the elevated traction contributed by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. The profound increase also posited increased awareness of the importance of performance appraisal during a crisis. Conversely, 2016 and 2017 manifested the lowest distribution, with only 10 published articles in 2016 and propounding relatively lower attention.

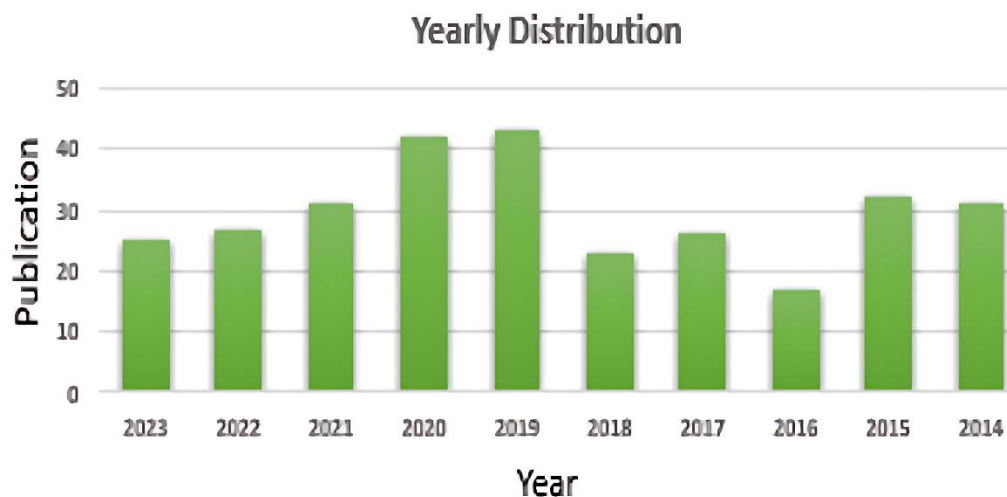


Figure 2.
The top annual distribution of studies on performance appraisal.

3.1.2. The Top Nations for the Research on Employee Performance Appraisal

The bibliometric analysis enables the mapping of performance appraisal and employee performance by appraising relevant published articles, citations, and academic collaboration trends. The VOS viewer software was employed to provide in-depth insights by discovering the nations leading the field. In Figure 3 the results revealed that the USA, India, and the UK significantly contributed to the field at 31%, 15%, and 11% respectively. The dominance of the USA was due to substantial funding, research endeavours, and a robust ecosystem that promoted rigorous innovation and investigations. India also demonstrated rapid advancements in academic investigations and extensive practical applications assisted by significant governmental funding. Simultaneously, the robust Indian educational framework and entrepreneurial ecosystem fostered research rigour on the current topic. While other Asian nations, such as Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan, and China contributed fewer articles, relevant efforts remain significant. The Netherlands, South Africa, and Canada also contributed distinctive insights and expertise to the current knowledge corpus.

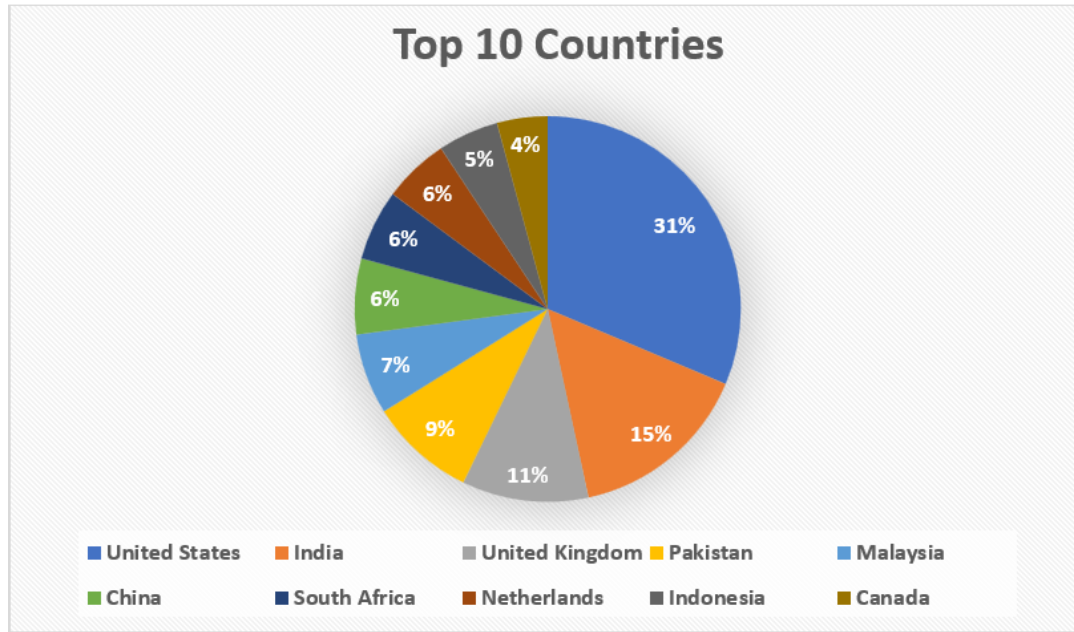


Figure 3.

The top 10 countries contributing to worldwide publications on performance appraisal.

3.1.3. The Top Educational Institutions for the Research on Performance Appraisal

The data provided to address the fourth research question — “What are the top educational institutions that have made the most notable contributions to the study of performance appraisal and employee performance?”—emphasised a number of such institutions. Table 2 and Figure 4 illustrate that Universiti Utara Malaysia was the top educational institution with the highest total publications (TP) by contributing 42 articles on performance appraisal and employee performance. The Bina Nusantara University in Indonesia was ranked second with 36 published articles, which underscored Indonesian educational dedication to progressive academic investigation. COMSATS University Islamabad in Pakistan was ranked third by contributing 33 TPs, which emphasised the commitment to impactful research. The international presence of the aforementioned educational institutions in various nations underscored the global research trend on performance appraisal and employee performance by employing diverse methodologies and incorporating unique perspectives. Resultantly, existing literature was enriched and a more holistic comprehension of the current topic under different educational and cultural settings was garnered.

Table 2.

The top educational institutions.

Educational Institution	*TP	Nation
Universiti Utara Malaysia	42	Malaysia
Bina Nusantara University	36	Indonesia
COMSATS University Islamabad	33	Pakistan
California State University, Fullerton	27	US
State University of New York System	27	US
University of South Africa	27	South Africa
Loyola University Chicago	27	US
Durban University of Technology	27	South Africa
Hannam University	27	South Korea
Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam	27	Netherlands

Note: *TP= Total Publication.

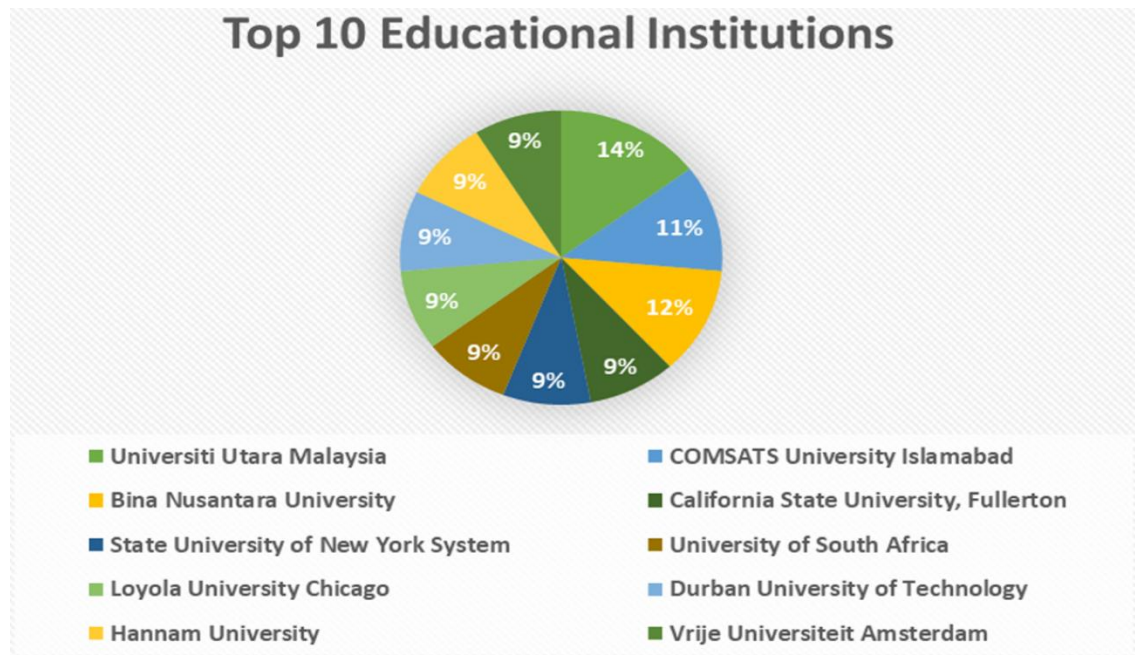


Figure 4.
Publication distribution by educational institutions.

3.1.4. The Top Keywords Employed in Research on Performance Appraisal

A comprehensive analysis of keywords demonstrates the terms or phrases with the highest impact. Figure 5 portrays the most frequently utilised terms, with “Performance Appraisal” emerging as the most popular term, followed by “Employee Performance”. Other terms, such as “Appraisal”, “Performance Evaluation”, “Performance Assessment”, and “Task Performance” also played a significant role in determining the research trend, which postulated research intricacies on performance appraisal and employee performance and the collective impact of the keywords on the currently growing literature.

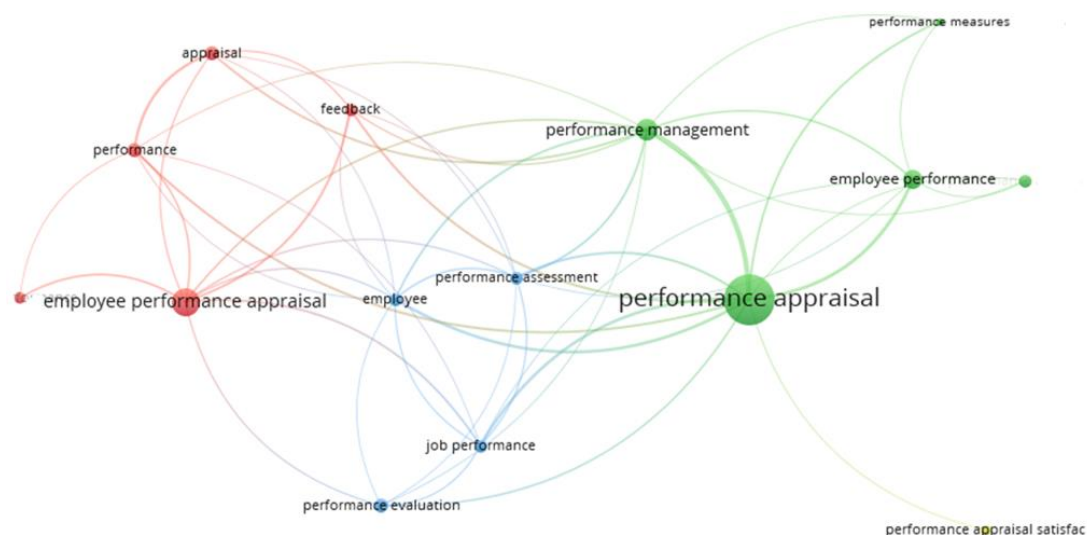


Figure 5.
The most frequently employed keywords in studies on performance appraisal and employee performance.

3.2. The Second Stage (SLR)

3.2.1. Theories Related to Performance Appraisal and Employee Performance

The SLR demonstrated that multiple conceptual models were incorporated by prior scholars when scrutinising performance appraisal and employee performance. Table 3 depicts that the expectancy theory is the most prominent conceptual model employed to analyse the current topic [7-11] followed by the social exchange theory (employed in least three studies) and the goal setting theory and equity theory (employed in two studies respectively). The results highlighted the significance of organisational justice, employee motivation, and reciprocal work relationships in employee performance review processes. The expectancy theory also postulated that job motivation would elevate if performance review results were considered fair and rewards were provided. Moreover, Mok Kim Man and Yie Yeen [8] and Al-Jedaia and Mehrez [10] emphasised that stipulated work anticipations and rewards substantially improved job performance.

Table 3.

Popular theoretical frameworks.

Theoretical Framework	Author	Number
Generalisability Theory	Paramesh, et al. [12]	1
Information Processing Theory	Paramesh, et al. [12]	1
Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory	Harbi, et al. [13]	1
Social Exchange Theory	Harbi, et al. [13]; Canet-Giner, et al. [14] and Al-Jedaia and Mehrez [10]	3
Theory-Based Application	Sylqa and Neziraj [15]	1
Expectancy Theory	Tomizh, et al. [7]; Mok Kim Man and Yie Yeen [8]; Worku [9]; Al-Jedaia and Mehrez [10] and Iqbal, et al. [11]	5
Achievement Theory	Tomizh, et al. [7]	1
Equity Theory	Mok Kim Man and Yie Yeen [8] and Al-Jedaia and Mehrez [10]	2
General Systems Theory	[23]	1
Goal Setting Theory	Worku [9] and Al-Jedaia and Mehrez [10]	2
Reinforcement Theory	Al-Jedaia and Mehrez [10]	1
Greenberg's Taxonomy	Iqbal, et al. [11]	1
Organisational Justice Theory	Mehreza and Alamirib [16]	1
The Dominance Theory	Ijadi Maghsoodi, et al. [17]	1
Information Theory	Ijadi Maghsoodi, et al. [17]	1
Agency Theory	Evans and Tourish [18]	1
Human Capital Theory	Kadiresan, et al. [19]	1

Equity theory posits the importance of organisational justice in job performance review processes. Employees' motivation will diminish and exhibit low productivity if performance review results are regarded as unfair. Harbi, et al. [13] and Paramesh, et al. [12] delineated that cultural and organisational biases could diminish the perceived justice of performance evaluation. Meanwhile, the social exchange theory underscores the reciprocal nature of performance evaluation, in which transparent and just evaluation processes will lead to higher employee satisfaction, trust, and innovation [14,15]. While existing conceptual models can elucidate performance evaluation outcomes through high relevance, investigations on emerging theoretical frameworks are limited. The latest perspectives on psychological safety or behavioural economics may contribute more valuable insights into the influence of performance appraisal outcomes on employee performance, especially in dynamic and hybrid work settings.

3.2.2. Most Frequently Employed Methodologies

As shown in Table 4 various methodologies, such as quantitative methods, qualitative approaches, and mixed methods, employed in past studies were evaluated. Particularly, most quantitative studies Paramesh, et al. [12]; Uddin, et al. [20] and Sylqa and Neziraj [15] conducted surveys to gather responses from employees through structured questionnaires to assess variables, including evaluation justice, employee satisfaction, and motivation. Meanwhile, only several academicians, including Harbi, et

al. [13] and Mtasigazya [21] implemented qualitative approaches encompassing interviews and thematic analyses to appraise the subjective experiences related to performance appraisal processes. Studies Dasanayaka, et al. [22] and Ijadi Maghsoodi, et al. [17] combined both quantitative and qualitative techniques to gain a more holistic understanding of employee performance review outcomes and how the outcomes impact job performance.

Table 4.

Study methodologies utilised to measure job performance review outcomes and employee performance.

Methodology	Number of Studies
Questionnaire	20
Interpretive Approach	1
Interview	5
Survey	1
Case Study	2
Documentary Review	1
Literature Review	1
Critical Analysis	1

3.2.3. Most Frequently Employed Statistical Analysis

Diverse statistical techniques were performed, with regression as the most popular method to determine causality between job performance review and employee performance [10–12, 20] conducted structural equation modelling (SEM) to scrutinise the linkage between performance review, job motivation, and employee performance. Elangovan and Rajendran [23] and Daniali, et al. [24] also leveraged descriptive statistics to summarise collected data and perform hypothesis testing through inferential techniques. Studies Worku [9] and Mashavira [25] conducted correlations and chi-square tests to identify significant associations. The utilisation of advanced statistical methods suggested a higher sophistication degree in measuring the intricate relationship between job performance review procedures, job motivation, and job performance.

3.2.4. Most Frequently Employed Sample Analysis

Various sample populations and sizes from both the private and public sectors were employed in past research, which ranged from below 100 respondents [22] to beyond 1,000 respondents [26]. Studies Mok Kim Man and Yie Yeen [8] and Jawabreh, et al. [27] appraised private hospital and hospitality workers respectively. In addition, Matookchund and Steyn [26]; Al-Jedaia and Mehrez [10] and Mtasigazya [21] evaluated public-sector staff while [22, 28] scrutinised the influence of performance review outcomes on employee satisfaction and organisational effectiveness in educational institutions. Cappelli and Conyon [29] investigated managers to comprehend how performance reviews impacted organisational commitment and innovation. The diversity of sample populations and sizes propounded the universality of performance reviews in different organisations.

3.2.5. Most Frequently Examined Sectors

The wide applicability of performance review methods was supported by the wide utilisation rate in various industries. Studies Tomizh, et al. [7] and Uddin, et al. [20] scrutinised the influence of performance appraisal on work demeanours in the banking sector while [22, 30] concentrated on educational institutions. Furthermore, Mok Kim Man and Yie Yeen [8] and Mehreza and Alamirib [16] investigated satisfaction towards performance appraisal and employee performance in hospitals, whereas [27] appraised service performance in the hospitality sector. Meanwhile, Iqbal, et al. [11] and Paramesh, et al. [12] analysed the function of performance appraisal in IT and telecommunications firms while [10, 21] assessed public-sector organisations to delineate and comprehend the unique dynamics of performance appraisal processes in governmental contexts. While performance appraisal practices were extensively applied, efficacies depended on the distinctive nature of a specific industry, organisational

culture, and employee demographics.

4. Discussion

The present SLR scrutinised the association between performance appraisal and employee performance and contributed valuable insights in expanding the comprehension of the fundamental HRM practice. The results revealed the prevalence of specific conceptual models, methodologies, statistical analyses, sampling, and variables across different industries, which provided a holistic picture of emerging research trends and literature gaps.

4.1. Conceptual Models

The first RQ concentrated on the underpinning theories in past research. Specifically, expectancy theory, social exchange theory, goal-setting theory, and equity theory served as fundamental models for thoroughly understanding how performance appraisal practices contributed to employee performance (EP). The theoretical components underscored the importance of goal congruence, equity, employee motivation, and social transactions on EP. The extensive usage of the four theoretical frameworks also highlighted the high relevance in delineating the association between performance appraisal and EP. Nonetheless, future scholars can employ or integrate alternative or emerging models to acquire a more comprehensive perspective as the emerging theories remain scarcely employed in the current knowledge corpus. The literature gap could be a motivation for future academicians to contribute further insights into performance appraisal and EP research.

4.2. Methodologies

The second RQ was related to methodologies utilised by prior academicians to accomplish study objectives. Particularly, quantitative approaches, especially structured questionnaires, were mostly employed, which could be owing to the high scalability and efficiency in obtaining large datasets. Nevertheless, other approaches could also be integrated to offer an in-depth comprehension. Only certain studies ($n = 7$) applied qualitative methods, such as interviews and case studies. Mixed methods were also utilised due to the ability to answer different RQs that could not be effectively fulfilled by either quantitative or qualitative methods through more nuanced and holistic findings. Hence, an enriched understanding was garnered via the breadth of quantitative data and the depth of qualitative findings. Future academicians can employ more mixed methods to complement the limitations inherent in quantitative or qualitative methods.

4.3. Statistical Analyses

The third RQ was to comprehend employed statistical analysis techniques in prior research. Particularly, chi-square tests, regression analysis, SEM, and discriminant analysis were popular techniques. Regression was the most frequently utilised technique to assess the impacts of various constructs on EP. Chi-square tests, SEM, and discriminant analysis also contributed to a more holistic analysis. The variability emphasised the intricacy of the association between performance appraisal and EP and the requirement for robust analysis techniques. Future researchers can also employ more innovative statistical tools, including machine learning, to reveal obscure trends and interactions within large and complex datasets.

4.4. Sampling Techniques and Sample Sizes

Convenience sampling was a ubiquitous and practical data collection method in specific industries, including IT, banking, and education. Nonetheless, bias could be injected and restrain the generalisability of the results. The wide range of sample sizes from small qualitative research to extensive quantitative studies underscored the diverse operationalisation settings of performance appraisal. Future scholars can also implement more robust sampling techniques, including random sampling, to elevate the generalisability and representativeness of the findings.

4.5. *The Most Frequently Investigated Industries Sectors*

Hospitality, healthcare, IT, banking, and educational sectors were the most frequently investigated industries sectors in the study related to performance appraisal and employee performance. Hence, sector-specific and customised performance appraisal practices can adequately fulfil the dynamic nature and unique requirements of different sectors. Future scholars can further examine industry-specific obstacles to formulate more efficacious performance appraisal methods.

4.6. *The Emerging Trends and Future Directions*

An evolving and multidimensional research landscape was discovered through several emerging research patterns and trends, which underscored the intricacy of the linkage between performance appraisal and employee performance and the imperativeness for continuous investigations to further elevate industrial and academic comprehension to ensure the most optimal HRM practices.

4.7. *Green HRM Practices*

Green HRM practices were incorporated into performance appraisal, which was discovered to be a significant emerging trend in the banking sector [20]. The trend propounded the higher emphasis on sustainability and environmental responsibility in organisational practices. Future scholars can appraise how green HRM practices can be efficaciously incorporated into performance appraisal to improve both organisational environmental responsibility and EP outcomes.

4.8. *Significance of Technological Advancements*

A higher emphasis was provided on incorporating technologies into performance appraisal processes. Numerous researchers utilised multiple software or pertinent instruments, including AMIS, SPSS, and Smart-PLS, for data analysis. The higher emphasis demonstrated a shift towards more sophisticated and automated EP review procedures. Future scholars can assess the long-term influence of technological advancements on EP appraisal efficacies and how the latest technologies can potentially streamline existing procedures while enhancing data precision.

4.9. *Higher Usage of Mixed Methods*

A higher tendency towards employing mixed methods was observed, wherein previous academicians incorporated quantitative surveys with semi-structured interviews or case studies to conduct a more holistic examination. The inclination also indicated higher academic traction towards existing constraints arising from utilising a sole technique and the significant advantages of combining different methods for more meaningful findings. Thus, future academicians can implement mixed methods to accurately and holistically record the nuances of EP evaluation processes.

4.10. *Exploration of Mediating and Moderating Variables*

A substantial emerging trend in examining various mediating and moderating variables was observed. Specifically, job satisfaction, motivation, and organisational effectiveness were frequently evaluated to determine the actual function in mediating or moderating the influences of performance appraisal on EP. The trend underscored the multifaceted nature of the association between performance appraisal and employee performance, which necessitated a comprehensive framework to thoroughly comprehend employee performance. Future academicians can proceed with pinpointing and discovering other mediating and moderating variables to elevate the comprehension of the present topic.

4.11. *Emphasis on Employee Satisfaction and Motivation*

Employee satisfaction and motivation were constantly emphasised in terms of respective influences on the efficacies of performance appraisal processes across various sectors, including real estate [23] healthcare [16] and public-sector entities [10]. The trend underscored the significance of encouraging performance and supportive evaluation procedures and postulated the importance of a dynamic

performance appraisal process in promoting employee engagement and satisfaction. Future researchers can investigate different innovative approaches to improve job satisfaction and motivation via dynamic performance appraisal processes.

4.12. Higher Traction on Governmental Performance Appraisal

Higher traction was observed in governmental performance appraisal processes in terms of distinctive opportunities and barriers in public-sector agencies [10] and educational institutions [19]. The higher interest indicated the imperativeness of more investigations to fulfil the unique requirements and barriers of performance appraisal processes in the public sector. Future scholars can constantly explore the dynamics of governmental EP review systems to achieve the most optimal practices.

4.13. Exploring Innovative Statistical Techniques

Innovative statistical techniques, including machine learning and data mining, were more frequently explored despite conventional approaches, such as regression and SEM, continuing to be predominant. The innovative methods could potentially reveal obscure data trends and contribute additional insights. Future scholars can continually explore different innovative statistical analysis techniques to increase research rigour and depth.

5. Contributions

The current SLR profoundly enriched the current literature on the intricate linkage between performance appraisal and employee performance. The innovative approach of incorporating bibliometric analysis with the SLR provided a dual perspective on macro-level academic trends and granular appraisals of individual studies. Specifically, prominent theoretical frameworks, including expectancy theory, equity theory, and social exchange theory, were extensively employed to elucidate EP evaluation results. The current topic was frequently scrutinised through quantitative methods, with mixed methods acquiring higher interest to offer nuanced and in-depth insights. Moreover, regression and SEM were popular statistical analysis techniques, with innovative approaches, such as machine learning, increasingly explored. The present topic was also widely assessed across multiple industries, including education, healthcare, and IT, which underscored the wide applicability of performance appraisal processes while emphasising the need to account for industry-specific obstacles. Therefore, customised approaches are crucial, in which green HRM practices and technological advancements can further enhance the effectiveness of EP review processes.

6. Limitations

The current SLR was only based on empirical research (journal articles) fulfilling the stipulated inclusion criteria. The data collected were also based only on the SCOPUS database, which could limit the scope of findings and perspectives and might necessitate additional databases to increase the validity and comprehensiveness of the insights. The inclusion criterion, namely peer-reviewed articles published in English, might omit significant insights provided by non-English articles when most articles were primarily derived from the USA or the UK, which could introduce geographical bias in the findings.

7. Future Directions

Future researchers can include additional renowned databases, including IEEE Xplore, PubMed, Web of Science (WoS), and Google Scholar, to resolve existing limitations due to employing a single database. The inclusion could widen the breadth of perspectives and guarantee more representative and holistic results. Employing different databases can also enable scholars to capture regional insights, diverse methodologies, and emerging trends potentially underrepresented in a single dataset. Furthermore, expanding the inclusion criteria to non-English articles could alleviate potential language bias, which can enable a comprehensive representation of unique cultural and organisational settings for

a more comprehensive comprehension. Particularly, collaboration with multilingual academicians or utilising translation software or instruments can enable the assessment of non-English studies for a more inclusive conclusion. Articles published in different nations, especially underrepresented regions in Latin America, Africa, and Asia, can be included to acquire a deeper comprehension of distinctive economic, cultural, and organisational factors contributing to performance appraisal and employee performance. Regional-specific keywords, consulting regional journals, and integrating databases comprising articles from various countries can be performed to ensure a diverse dataset. Resultantly, the inclusivity, comprehensiveness, and international relevance of future SLRs are improved and the applicability and robustness of results can be elevated.

8. Conclusion

The present study conducted a holistic SLR on the linkage between performance appraisal and EP and contributed valuable insights into multiple aspects. Specifically, expectancy theory, social exchange theory, goal-setting theory, and equity theory were prominent conceptual models applied by prior scholars as underpinning theories to thoroughly comprehend the dynamics of performance appraisal processes and relevant influences on employee performance. Quantitative approaches, especially structured questionnaires, were mostly utilised, with mixed methods increasingly adopted to derive a more nuanced perspective from qualitative findings. Regression was the most popular statistical analysis technique, with innovative methods, including machine learning, acquiring higher traction to boost the research rigour. In addition, industry-specific barriers, especially in the banking, healthcare, and educational sectors, required customised performance appraisal processes to fulfil the distinctive needs. Green HRM practices and technological advancements were also increasingly integrated into existing processes, which indicated an evolving landscape and required more examinations to explore different aspects. Meanwhile, several limitations existed in terms of the range of reviewed articles and the geographical constraints. Future academicians can implement a more inclusive method by utilising additional databases and including non-English articles. Summarily, the current SLR profoundly enriched the current literature by delineating the intricacies between performance appraisal and employee performance and recommended several future directions to further elevate the comprehension of the current topic while determining the most optimal performance appraisal methods.

Transparency:

The authors confirm that the manuscript is an honest, accurate, and transparent account of the study; that no vital features of the study have been omitted; and that any discrepancies from the study as planned have been explained. This study followed all ethical practices during writing.

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