

Human Resource Management: A Bibliometric Review of Conceptual Foundations and Research Growth

Loso Judijanto¹, Gopur²

¹IPOSS Jakarta

² Universitas Panca Sakti Bekasi

Article Info

Article history:

Received March, 2026

Revised March, 2026

Accepted March, 2026

Keywords:

Human Resource Management;
Bibliometric Analysis; Research
Trends; VOSviewer

ABSTRACT

This study aims to map the conceptual foundations and research growth of Human Resource Management (HRM) through a comprehensive bibliometric analysis. Data were collected from the Scopus database using relevant keywords related to HRM and its associated domains. The dataset was analyzed using VOSviewer to examine publication trends, keyword co-occurrence, co-authorship networks, and thematic evolution. The findings reveal that HRM research has developed into a highly interdisciplinary field, integrating perspectives from organizational behavior, psychology, healthcare, and information systems. Core themes such as decision making, organizational management, and employee-related outcomes remain dominant, while emerging topics including digital HRM, machine learning, and sustainable development indicate a shift toward technology-driven and sustainability-oriented research. Additionally, the results highlight strong global collaboration patterns and an increasing emphasis on systematic reviews, reflecting the growing maturity of the field. This study contributes to the literature by providing a structured overview of HRM research and identifying future directions, particularly in the areas of digital transformation, sustainability integration, and cross-sector applications.

This is an open access article under the [CC BY-SA](#) license.



Corresponding Author:

Name: Loso Judijanto

Institution Address: IPOSS Jakarta, Indonesia

e-mail: losojudijantobumn@gmail.com

1. INTRODUCTION

Human Resource Management (HRM) has become one of the most important strategic functions in modern organizations, as it focuses on the effective management of people to achieve organizational goals and sustain competitive advantage [1]. In contemporary organizations, human resources are no longer

perceived merely as operational labor but as strategic assets that contribute to organizational performance, innovation, and long-term sustainability. As globalization and technological transformation reshape organizational environments, the role of HRM has expanded beyond traditional administrative functions toward strategic decision-making, talent development, and

organizational transformation. This transformation highlights the increasing need to understand the conceptual foundations and intellectual evolution of HRM research. Scholars have continuously explored HRM from multiple perspectives, including strategic management, organizational behavior, and human capital theory, resulting in a diverse and rapidly growing body of literature [2], [3].

Over the past few decades, academic interest in HRM has increased significantly due to the growing recognition of the relationship between human resource practices and organizational performance. Numerous studies emphasize that HRM practices such as recruitment, training, employee engagement, and performance management play a crucial role in improving productivity and fostering innovation within organizations. The expansion of HRM research has also been influenced by emerging global challenges such as digital transformation, workforce diversity, sustainability, and remote working systems. These developments have encouraged scholars to investigate new themes within HRM, including digital human resource management, HR analytics, and sustainable HRM practices. Consequently, the HRM research landscape has become more complex and interdisciplinary, integrating insights from information systems, sustainability studies, and data analytics [3], [4].

The rapid growth of HRM research has generated a vast amount of academic publications across journals, disciplines, and geographic regions. Studies mapping the evolution of HRM literature demonstrate a significant increase in the number of publications and research themes over time, indicating that the field continues to expand and diversify. For example, bibliometric studies have revealed that HRM research spans multiple thematic clusters, including organizational performance, employee well-being, innovation, sustainability, and digital transformation. These clusters illustrate how HRM research has evolved from focusing

primarily on personnel management to addressing broader organizational and societal challenges. Moreover, the increasing collaboration among researchers and institutions has contributed to the formation of complex knowledge networks within the HRM field, reflecting the dynamic development of the discipline [5], [6].

Despite the substantial growth of HRM research, the expanding volume of literature creates challenges for scholars attempting to understand the overall structure and direction of the field. As new concepts, frameworks, and theoretical perspectives continue to emerge, it becomes increasingly difficult to identify the foundational theories and dominant research trends that shape HRM scholarship. In addition, the interdisciplinary nature of HRM has resulted in diverse research approaches and conceptual frameworks, making it essential to systematically organize and synthesize existing studies. Bibliometric analysis has therefore emerged as a valuable method for mapping scientific knowledge, identifying influential publications and authors, and analyzing the intellectual structure of a research field. Through quantitative analysis of academic publications, bibliometric methods enable researchers to visualize research networks, detect emerging topics, and examine the evolution of scholarly discourse over time.

In recent years, bibliometric studies have increasingly been applied to various HRM subfields such as HR analytics, digital HRM, and green HRM. These studies highlight the importance of bibliometric approaches in revealing research trends, collaboration patterns, and knowledge gaps within the discipline. For instance, research analyzing digital HRM literature has identified significant growth in publications and a strong emphasis on technological integration in workforce management. Similarly, studies focusing on HR analytics demonstrate the increasing importance of data-driven decision making in modern HR practices. These findings suggest that HRM research is evolving in response to

technological innovation and changing organizational needs. However, while several bibliometric studies focus on specific HRM topics, comprehensive studies that examine the broader conceptual foundations and research growth of HRM remain limited.

Therefore, a bibliometric review of HRM research is necessary to provide a systematic overview of the intellectual development of the field. Such an analysis can help identify the most influential studies, key authors, prominent journals, and emerging research themes that shape the discipline. By mapping the evolution of HRM scholarship, researchers can better understand how the field has developed over time and identify areas that require further investigation. Furthermore, a comprehensive bibliometric review can contribute to strengthening the theoretical foundations of HRM and guiding future research directions. This approach is particularly relevant in the current academic landscape, where the rapid growth of scientific publications requires systematic tools to synthesize and interpret knowledge effectively.

Although the literature on Human Resource Management has expanded significantly over the past decades, the rapid growth and diversification of research topics have created fragmentation within the field. Numerous studies have explored specific aspects of HRM, such as digital HRM, sustainability, or HR analytics, yet relatively few studies provide a comprehensive overview of the conceptual foundations and overall research growth of HRM as a discipline. As a result, scholars may face difficulties in identifying the intellectual structure, dominant research themes, and emerging trends that shape HRM scholarship. Without a systematic synthesis of the existing literature, it becomes challenging to understand how HRM research has evolved, which theories have influenced its development, and where future research opportunities lie. Therefore, there is a need for a bibliometric review that systematically analyzes the development, patterns, and

conceptual structure of HRM research in order to provide a clearer understanding of the field. The objective of this study is to conduct a bibliometric review of Human Resource Management research in order to examine its conceptual foundations and research growth.

2. METHODS

This study employed a bibliometric review approach to analyze the conceptual foundations and research growth of Human Resource Management (HRM). Bibliometric analysis is a quantitative research method used to evaluate academic literature by examining publication patterns, citation structures, and relationships among scholarly works. This method enables researchers to identify influential studies, authors, and journals, as well as to explore the intellectual structure and development of a research field. In the context of HRM research, bibliometric analysis provides a systematic way to map the evolution of scholarly publications and uncover dominant themes and emerging trends within the discipline. By applying bibliometric techniques, this study aims to generate an objective overview of the growth and conceptual landscape of HRM literature.

The data for this study were collected from a reputable academic database that indexes peer-reviewed journals and scholarly publications. The search process was conducted using relevant keywords related to "Human Resource Management," including variations and related terms commonly used in HRM research. The search was limited to journal articles published in English within a specified time frame to ensure consistency and relevance of the dataset. After the initial search results were obtained, a screening process was carried out to remove duplicates, irrelevant documents, and non-research publications such as editorials or book reviews. The final dataset consisted of selected journal articles that met the inclusion criteria and were considered relevant to the study of HRM conceptual development and research growth.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Citation Analysis

Table 1. Top Cited Literature

Citations	Authors and year	Title	Source
13,723	[7]	The cBio Cancer Genomics Portal: An open platform for exploring multidimensional cancer genomics data	Cancer Discovery, 2(5), pp. 401–404
10,724	[8]	Global consequences of land use	Science, 309(5734), pp. 570–574
9,517	[9]	Adapting a clinical comorbidity index for use with ICD-9-CM administrative databases	Journal of Clinical Epidemiology, 45(6), pp. 613–619
9,472	[10]	Food security: The challenge of feeding 9 billion people	Science, 327(5967), pp. 812–818
8,819	[11]	The Job Demands–Resources model: State of the art	Journal of Managerial Psychology, 22(3), pp. 309–328
7,483	[12]	Human domination of Earth's ecosystems	Science, 277(5325), pp. 494–499
7,277	[13]	Epidemiology of severe sepsis in the United States: Analysis of incidence, outcome, and associated costs of care	Critical Care Medicine, 29(7), pp. 1303–1310
6,412	[14]	A general framework for analyzing sustainability of social-ecological systems	Science, 325(5939), pp. 419–422
6,365	[15]	Effects of biodiversity on ecosystem functioning: A consensus of current knowledge	Ecological Monographs, 75(1), pp. 3–35
6,176	[16]	Freshwater biodiversity: Importance, threats, status and conservation challenges	Biological Reviews, 81(2), pp. 163–182

Source: Scopus Database

planning and service delivery in public health sectors. This interdisciplinary linkage highlights the role of HRM in supporting complex, human-centered systems beyond corporate environments.

The blue cluster reflects a methodological and organizational perspective, with keywords such as “organization and management,” “qualitative research,” “psychology,” and “questionnaire.” This cluster emphasizes the research approaches and theoretical foundations used in HRM studies. The strong presence of psychological and behavioral elements indicates that HRM research heavily draws from organizational behavior and human psychology to understand

employee attitudes, motivation, and performance. Additionally, the prominence of qualitative and survey-based methods suggests a continued reliance on empirical and perception-based studies in exploring HR phenomena.

The yellow cluster, which includes terms such as “review,” “systematic review,” and “public health,” acts as a bridging cluster that connects different domains within the network. This indicates the growing importance of evidence synthesis and integrative research approaches in HRM. The central positioning of terms like “procedures” and “economics” suggests that operational and policy-oriented aspects are also gaining attention.

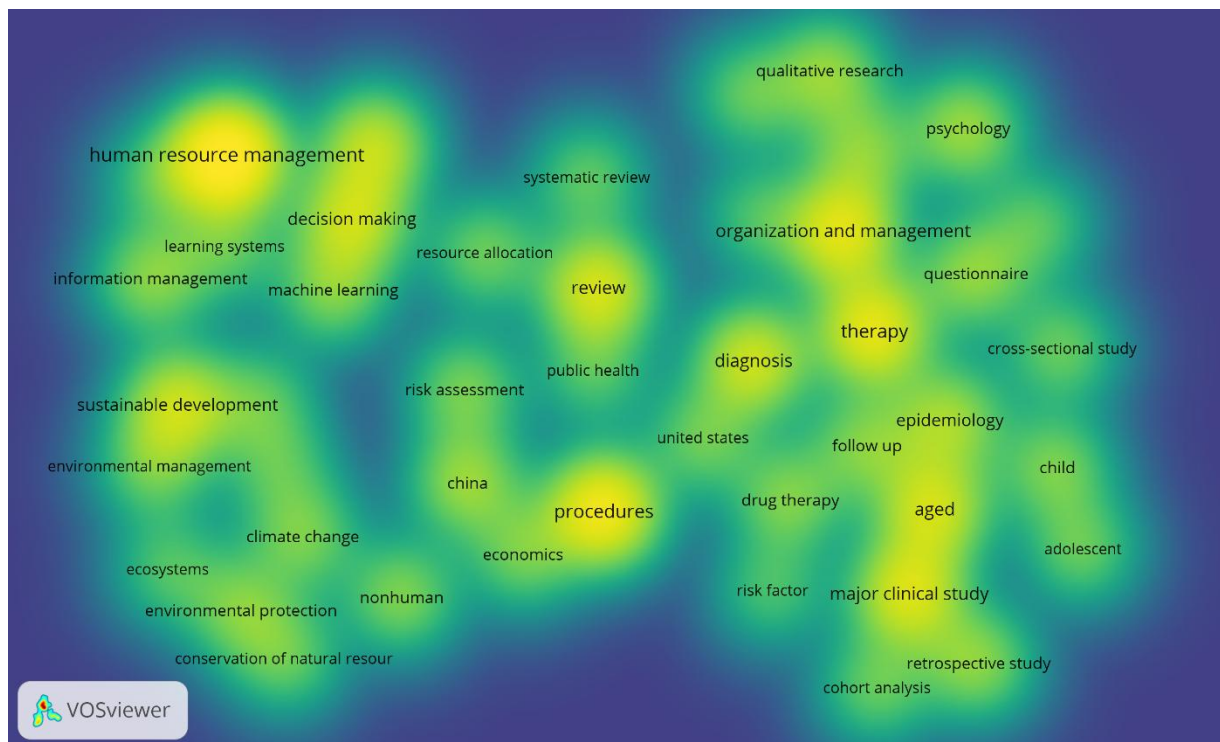


Figure 2. Density Visualization

Source: Data Analysis

Figure 2 highlights the most intensively studied areas within the Human Resource Management (HRM) research landscape, where brighter yellow regions indicate higher concentration and frequency of keyword

occurrences. The most prominent hotspot appears around “human resource management,” “decision making,” and “review,” suggesting that foundational HRM concepts and integrative review studies

dominate the literature. Additionally, strong density around “organization and management,” “psychology,” and “therapy” indicates that HRM research is deeply intertwined with organizational behavior and human-centered approaches. This reflects the continued importance of understanding employee behavior, decision processes, and managerial practices as central themes in HRM scholarship.

At the same time, other high-density areas such as “procedures,” “diagnosis,” “epidemiology,” and “major clinical study” reveal a significant overlap between HRM and healthcare-related research domains. This suggests that HRM principles are increasingly applied in complex sectors like public health, where workforce management and decision-making are critical. Meanwhile, emerging but slightly less dense areas such as “machine learning,” “sustainable development,” and “environmental management” indicate growing interest in digital transformation and sustainability within HRM.

Discussion

The findings of this bibliometric analysis reveal that Human Resource Management (HRM) research has evolved into a highly interdisciplinary and strategically significant field. The dominance of core keywords such as “human resource management,” “decision making,” and “organization and management” confirms that the field remains anchored in its traditional role of optimizing organizational performance through effective people management. However, the dense interconnections observed in the network visualization suggest that HRM is no longer an isolated discipline. Instead, it increasingly integrates perspectives from psychology, information systems, and strategic management, reinforcing the argument that HRM functions as a central mechanism for aligning human capital with organizational objectives.

One of the most notable developments identified in this study is the integration of technological dimensions into HRM research.

The presence of keywords such as “machine learning,” “information management,” and “learning systems” indicates a growing emphasis on digital HRM and data-driven decision-making. This aligns with recent trends in HR analytics and artificial intelligence, where organizations leverage technology to enhance recruitment, performance evaluation, and workforce planning. The integration of these technologies not only improves efficiency but also transforms the strategic role of HRM into a more predictive and analytical function. Consequently, future HRM research is likely to further explore the implications of digital transformation on employee experience and organizational performance.

In addition to technological advancements, the results also highlight the increasing importance of sustainability within HRM research. Keywords such as “sustainable development,” “environmental management,” and “climate change” indicate that HRM is expanding its focus toward supporting organizational sustainability goals. This shift reflects the emergence of Sustainable HRM, which emphasizes the alignment of HR practices with environmental and social responsibility. The integration of sustainability into HRM suggests that organizations are recognizing the role of human capital in driving long-term value creation beyond financial performance. Therefore, HRM is positioned as a critical enabler of sustainable organizational strategies.

Another important insight from this study is the strong linkage between HRM and healthcare-related research domains. The prominence of keywords such as “epidemiology,” “therapy,” “diagnosis,” and “clinical study” suggests that HRM principles are increasingly applied in public health and medical contexts. This interdisciplinary connection highlights the role of HRM in

managing complex, human-centered systems where workforce efficiency directly impacts service quality and outcomes. In healthcare settings, effective HRM practices are essential for addressing challenges such as workforce shortages, employee burnout, and quality of care. This finding underscores the versatility of HRM as a discipline that extends beyond traditional corporate environments.

4. CONCLUSION

This bibliometric study demonstrates that Human Resource Management (HRM) research has evolved into a dynamic, interdisciplinary field characterized by strong conceptual foundations and expanding thematic diversity. While traditional areas such

as decision making, organizational management, and employee behavior remain central, the field is increasingly shaped by emerging trends in digital transformation, sustainability, and cross-sector applications, particularly in healthcare and public systems. The analysis also highlights growing methodological maturity through the prominence of review-based studies and evidence synthesis. Overall, HRM is no longer confined to administrative or operational functions but has become a strategic and integrative discipline that plays a critical role in addressing complex organizational and societal challenges, thereby offering substantial opportunities for future research and innovation.

REFERENCES

- [1] N. Alnaser, O. S. Shaban, and Z. Al-Zubi, "The effect of effective corporate governance structure in improving investors' confidence in the public financial information," *Int. J. Acad. Res. Bus. Soc. Sci.*, vol. 4, no. 1, p. 556, 2014.
- [2] D. A. Handayani, "Feasibility Analysis of Business 'Amalia Boutique' Ptwarni Warni Amalia As Muslimah Fashionin South Jakarta," *JRMSI - J. Ris. Manaj. Sains Indones.*, vol. 7, no. 1, pp. 41–55, 2016, doi: 10.21009/jrmsi.007.1.03.
- [3] A. H. A. Mohamed, B. C. Menezes, and T. AL-Ansari, "Interplaying of food supply chain resilience, industry 4.0 and sustainability in the poultry market," in *Computer Aided Chemical Engineering*, Division of Engineering Management and Decision Sciences, College of Science and Engineering, Hamad Bin Khalifa University, Doha, Qatar Foundation, Qatar: Elsevier B.V., 2021, pp. 1815–1820. doi: 10.1016/B978-0-323-88506-5.50281-3.
- [4] A. O. Boakye, R. Dei Mensah, M. Bartrop-Sackey, and P. Muah, "Juggling between work, studies and motherhood: The role of social support systems for the attainment of work–life balance," *SA J. Hum. Resour. Manag.*, vol. 19, p. 10, 2021.
- [5] A. Singh and S. Singh, "RELEVANCE OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES TO MEET CHALLENGES OF RECENT BUSINESS SCENARIO: A REVIEW OF INDIAN MSME," *EPRA Int. J. Econ. Bus. Rev.*, vol. 11, no. 2, pp. 36–42, 2023.
- [6] M. Guerci and M. Pedrini, "The consensus between Italian HR and sustainability managers on HR management for sustainability-driven change–towards a 'strong'HR management system," *Int. J. Hum. Resour. Manag.*, vol. 25, no. 13, pp. 1787–1814, 2014.
- [7] E. Cerami *et al.*, "The cBio cancer genomics portal: an open platform for exploring multidimensional cancer genomics data," *Cancer Discov.*, vol. 2, no. 5, pp. 401–404, 2012.
- [8] J. A. Foley *et al.*, "Global consequences of land use," *Science (80-.)*, vol. 309, no. 5734, pp. 570–574, 2005.
- [9] R. A. Deyo, D. C. Cherkin, and M. A. Ciol, "Adapting a clinical comorbidity index for use with ICD-9-CM administrative databases," *J. Clin. Epidemiol.*, vol. 45, no. 6, pp. 613–619, 1992.
- [10] H. C. J. Godfray *et al.*, "Food security: the challenge of feeding 9 billion people," *Science (80-.)*, vol. 327, no. 5967, pp. 812–818, 2010.
- [11] A. B. Bakker and E. Demerouti, "The job demands-resources model: State of the art," *J. Manag. Psychol.*, vol. 22, no. 3, pp. 309–328, 2007.
- [12] P. M. Vitousek, H. A. Mooney, J. Lubchenco, and J. M. Melillo, "Human domination of Earth's ecosystems," *Science (80-.)*, vol. 277, no. 5325, pp. 494–499, 1997.

- [13] D. C. Angus, W. T. Linde-Zwirble, J. Lidicker, G. Clermont, J. Carcillo, and M. R. Pinsky, "Epidemiology of severe sepsis in the United States: analysis of incidence, outcome, and associated costs of care," *Crit. Care Med.*, vol. 29, no. 7, pp. 1303–1310, 2001.
- [14] E. Ostrom, "A general framework for analyzing sustainability of social-ecological systems," *Science (80-.)*, vol. 325, no. 5939, pp. 419–422, 2009.
- [15] D. U. Hooper *et al.*, "Effects of biodiversity on ecosystem functioning: a consensus of current knowledge," *Ecol. Monogr.*, vol. 75, no. 1, pp. 3–35, 2005.
- [16] D. Dudgeon *et al.*, "Freshwater biodiversity: importance, threats, status and conservation challenges," *Biol. Rev.*, vol. 81, no. 2, pp. 163–182, 2006.