

Employee Engagement in HRM: A Bibliometric Study

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the development and intellectual structure of employee engagement research within the field of human resource management through a bibliometric approach. Using data retrieved from a major academic database, the analysis covers publications over a defined period and applies performance analysis and science mapping techniques. The findings show that human resource management remains the central foundation of the literature, closely linked with performance, productivity, and organizational outcomes. The mapping also reveals distinct yet interconnected research streams, including employee-centered outcomes such as work engagement and leadership, sustainability-oriented approaches such as green human resource management, and emerging technology-driven themes such as artificial intelligence and predictive analytics. Over time, the field has shifted from a primary focus on behavioral and performance aspects toward more integrative perspectives that incorporate sustainability and digital transformation. These patterns indicate that employee engagement is increasingly understood within a broader system that connects human, organizational, and technological dimensions. This study provides a structured overview of the field and highlights potential directions for future research, particularly in exploring the intersection between digital human resource management, sustainability practices, and employee engagement.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Employee engagement has emerged as a central theme within the field of Human Resource Management (HRM), reflecting a growing recognition of the importance of employees' emotional, cognitive, and behavioral involvement in organizational activities. Over the past two decades, organizations have shifted from traditional personnel management approaches toward more strategic frameworks that emphasize the role of human capital in achieving

competitive advantage. In this context, employee engagement is no longer viewed as a supplementary concept but rather as a critical driver of organizational performance, innovation, and sustainability [1], [2].

The increasing complexity of modern workplaces—characterized by globalization, digital transformation, and evolving workforce expectations—has further intensified the need to understand and enhance employee engagement. Employees today seek more than just financial compensation; they value meaningful work,

supportive leadership, opportunities for growth, and a sense of belonging. Organizations that successfully foster engagement tend to experience lower turnover rates, higher productivity, and improved organizational citizenship behaviors. Consequently, HRM practices such as performance management, training and development, and internal communication have increasingly been aligned with engagement strategies [3].

Despite the extensive attention given to employee engagement, the field remains fragmented, with diverse definitions, theoretical frameworks, and measurement approaches. Some scholars conceptualize engagement as a psychological state, while others view it as a behavioral outcome or a combination of both. This diversity has led to a proliferation of studies across disciplines, including psychology, management, and organizational behavior. As a result, it becomes challenging for researchers and practitioners to synthesize existing knowledge and identify dominant trends, influential authors, and emerging research themes [4].

Bibliometric analysis offers a systematic and quantitative approach to mapping the intellectual structure of a research field. By analyzing publication patterns, citation networks, and keyword co-occurrences, bibliometric studies can provide valuable insights into the evolution of academic discourse. In the context of employee engagement in HRM, such an approach enables the identification of key research clusters, collaboration networks, and gaps in the literature. This method is particularly useful in consolidating a rapidly expanding body of knowledge and guiding future research directions [5].

Given the strategic importance of employee engagement and the growing volume of scholarly work in this area, there is a need for a comprehensive bibliometric study that captures the development and current state of research within HRM. Such a study not only contributes to academic understanding but also supports practitioners in designing evidence-based engagement

strategies. By examining trends over time, influential publications, and thematic developments, this research seeks to provide a structured overview of how employee engagement has been studied and how it continues to evolve within the HRM domain.

Although employee engagement has been widely studied, the existing literature is dispersed across various journals, disciplines, and theoretical perspectives, making it difficult to obtain a cohesive understanding of the field. There is a lack of comprehensive synthesis that systematically maps the intellectual structure, research trends, and key contributors within the domain of employee engagement in HRM. Furthermore, inconsistencies in definitions and methodologies create challenges in comparing findings and identifying research gaps. Without a structured bibliometric analysis, both researchers and practitioners may struggle to navigate the vast body of literature and to determine future research directions effectively.

The primary objective of this study is to conduct a bibliometric analysis of employee engagement research within the field of Human Resource Management. Specifically, this study aims to identify publication trends, influential authors, leading journals, and key thematic areas that have shaped the development of the field. Additionally, it seeks to uncover research gaps and emerging topics that can guide future investigations. By providing a comprehensive overview of the intellectual landscape, this study intends to contribute to both academic scholarship and practical applications in enhancing employee engagement strategies within organizations. GDP growth and poverty alleviation in both developed and emerging economies.

2. METHODS

This study employs a bibliometric research design to systematically analyze the body of literature on employee engagement within the field of Human Resource Management (HRM). Bibliometric analysis is a quantitative method used to evaluate and map scientific publications through statistical

intelligence, machine learning, and predictive analytics. This cluster suggests a growing scholarly interest in how digital transformation reshapes HR practices, especially in areas like decision-making, efficiency, and resource allocation. The proximity between AI-related terms and HRM indicates that technology is no longer treated as a separate domain but is increasingly embedded within HR systems and strategies.

The green cluster centers on employee-focused outcomes, with key terms such as work engagement, job performance, leadership, and productivity. This cluster aligns closely with your study focus, showing that employee engagement is positioned as an outcome influenced by HR practices. The

connections between leadership, HRM practices, and engagement imply that relational and behavioral aspects of HRM remain critical in shaping employee attitudes and performance, even in a rapidly evolving organizational context.

Meanwhile, the blue cluster reflects the integration of sustainability and green HRM into the broader HRM discourse. Terms such as sustainable development, green HRM, and environmental sustainability indicate a shift toward aligning HR practices with environmental and social goals. This suggests that HRM is increasingly being viewed not only as a driver of organizational performance but also as a contributor to long-term sustainability agendas, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

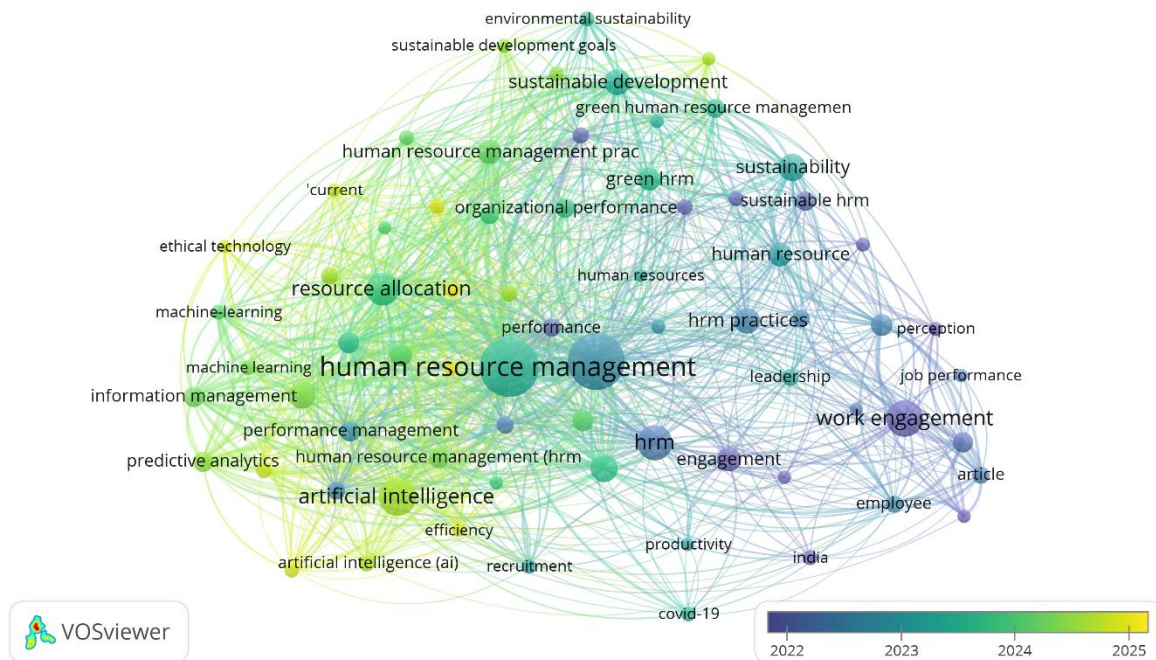


Figure 2. Overlay Visualization

Source: Data Analysis Result, 2026

Figure 2 shows the temporal evolution of research on employee engagement within human resource management (HRM), with colors indicating the average publication year (from older in blue to more recent in yellow). The central position of human resource management remains consistent, but the color gradient reveals how the field has gradually shifted focus. Earlier studies (blue tones) are

concentrated around core constructs such as work engagement, job performance, employee behavior, and leadership, suggesting that initial research primarily emphasized individual and organizational outcomes of HR practices.

Moving toward the middle spectrum (green tones), the field begins to expand into broader organizational and strategic domains. Topics such as organizational performance,

HRM practices, sustainability, and green HRM appear more prominently, indicating a transition from purely behavioral perspectives to more integrative and system-level approaches. This phase reflects how HRM research started to connect employee engagement with long-term organizational goals, including sustainability and strategic human resource management.

The most recent developments (yellow tones) highlight a clear shift toward

technology-driven and data-oriented HRM, with keywords such as artificial intelligence, machine learning, predictive analytics, and resource allocation becoming more visible. This suggests that current research is increasingly concerned with how digital technologies reshape HR functions and influence employee engagement indirectly through efficiency, decision-making, and resource optimization.

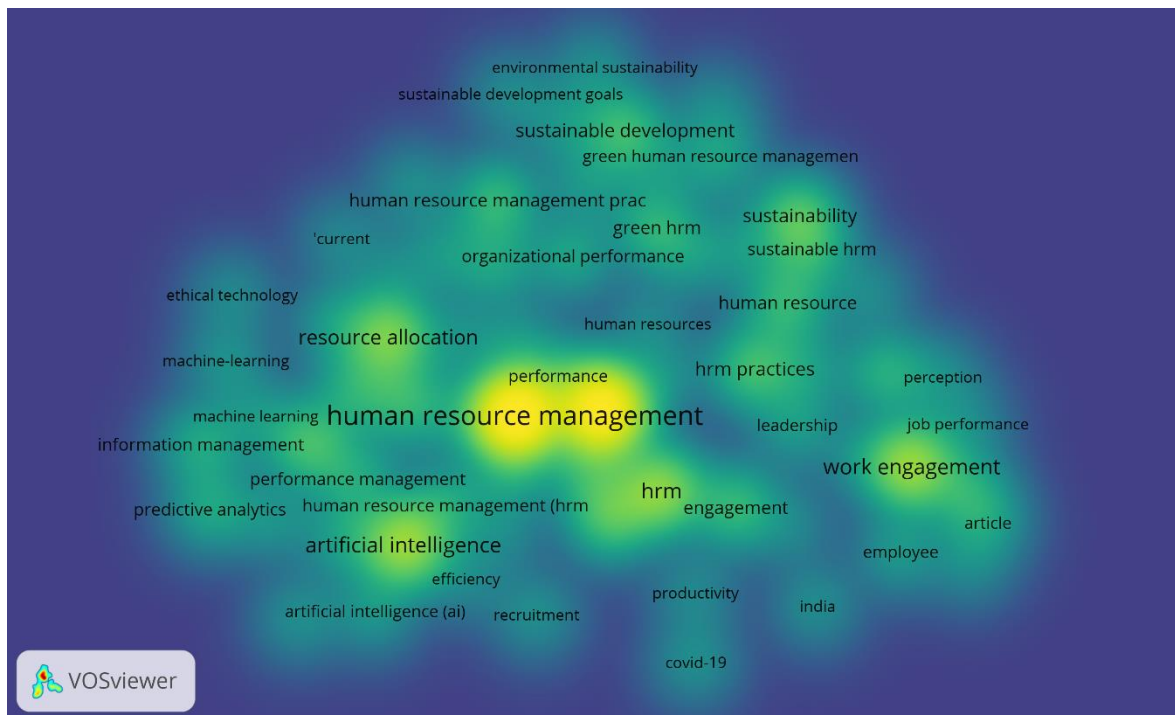


Figure 3. Density Visualization

Source: Data Analysis Result, 2026

Figure 3 highlights the core concentration of research activity within the HRM–employee engagement domain. The brightest (yellow) area is centered on human resource management, indicating that it remains the primary anchor of the literature. Surrounding this core are closely connected high-density terms such as performance, HRM, engagement, and resource allocation, suggesting that the field heavily emphasizes the relationship between HR practices and organizational as well as individual performance outcomes. This central density reflects a well-established research stream where HRM is consistently examined as a

driver of productivity and employee-related results.

Beyond the core, the density gradually decreases toward emerging and more specialized themes. Areas such as work engagement, leadership, and job performance appear moderately dense, showing their continued relevance but slightly more focused scope. Meanwhile, topics like artificial intelligence, machine learning, and sustainability are present but less dense, indicating that they are newer or still developing streams within the literature. This pattern suggests that while traditional HRM–performance relationships dominate the field, there is a visible shift toward integrating

digital technologies and sustainability perspectives, offering opportunities for future

research to connect these emerging themes more directly with employee engagement.

3.3 Citation Analysis

Table 1. Top Cited Research

Citations	Authors and year	Title
574	[6]	Employee engagement, human resource management practices and competitive advantage: An integrated approach
543	[7]	The link between perceived human resource management practices, engagement and employee behaviour: A moderated mediation model
345	[8]	Progressing in the change journey towards sustainability in healthcare: The role of 'Green' HRM
321	[9]	Talent management: A strategy for improving employee recruitment, retention and engagement within hospitality organizations
315	[10]	The effect of green HRM on employee green behaviors in higher education: the mediating mechanism of green work engagement
302	[11]	The relationship between line manager behavior, perceived HRM practices, and individual performance: Examining the mediating role of engagement
286	[12]	How Do Developmental and Accommodative HRM Enhance Employee Engagement and Commitment? The Role of Psychological Contract and SOC Strategies
278	[13]	How do green HRM practices affect employees' green behaviors? The role of employee engagement and personality attributes
267	[14]	Green human resource management: A comparative qualitative case study of a United States multinational corporation
251	[15]	Sustainable human resource management practices, employee resilience, and employee outcomes: Toward common good values

Source: Scopus, 2026

Discussion

The findings of this bibliometric study show that research on employee engagement in human resource management (HRM) is anchored in a well-established core that links HR practices with performance outcomes. Across all visualizations, human resource management consistently appears as the central node, closely connected with constructs such as performance, productivity, and engagement. This pattern suggests that the literature has long treated employee engagement not as an isolated concept, but as part of a broader performance-oriented HRM system. The density of these relationships reflects a dominant perspective in which HRM serves as a mechanism to align employee attitudes with organizational goals.

At the same time, the clustering structure reveals that employee engagement

occupies a distinct yet interconnected space within the HRM domain. The green cluster, which groups engagement with leadership, job performance, and employee-related variables, indicates that engagement is frequently examined as a behavioral and relational outcome shaped by managerial practices. The proximity between leadership and engagement reinforces the view that leadership styles continue to play a central role in fostering employee involvement and motivation. This suggests that, despite the expansion of HRM into more strategic and technological areas, interpersonal dynamics remain a critical pathway through which engagement is developed.

The temporal overlay further shows a gradual broadening of the field from traditional HRM-performance linkages toward more integrative and system-level

perspectives. Earlier studies focused heavily on core constructs such as job performance and employee behavior, while more recent work incorporates sustainability and organizational performance into the discussion. The emergence of themes such as green HRM and sustainable development indicates that employee engagement is increasingly positioned within a wider organizational and societal context. This shift reflects a growing recognition that engagement is not only about enhancing productivity but also about aligning employees with long-term organizational values and responsibilities.

Another notable development is the increasing presence of technology-related themes, particularly artificial intelligence, machine learning, and predictive analytics. Although these topics are not yet as dense as traditional HRM constructs, their position in the network suggests a growing integration with HRM research. This trend points to a changing landscape in which digital tools influence how HR practices are designed and

implemented, potentially reshaping how employee engagement is understood and managed. Rather than replacing human-centered approaches, these technologies appear to complement them by enabling more data-driven and adaptive HR strategies.

4. CONCLUSION

This bibliometric study shows that research on employee engagement in human resource management has developed from a strong focus on performance-oriented HR practices into a more integrated and multidimensional field. Human resource management remains the central foundation, consistently linked with engagement, productivity, and organizational outcomes, while newer themes such as sustainability and digital technologies are gradually gaining prominence. The mapping reveals that employee engagement is shaped not only by traditional managerial and relational factors, but also by broader organizational contexts and technological advancements.

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