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MAPPING PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND SUCCESSION PLANNING: A BIBLIOMETRIC REVIEW WITH INSIGHTS ON COGNITIVE BIAS

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Abstract:

This study maps the scholarly landscape of performance management practices and succession planning with particular attention to the emerging role of cognitive bias in organizational decision-making. Despite the growing importance of structured talent development and performance evaluation systems, research in this domain remains fragmented across multiple disciplines. This includes limited integration of cognitive bias perspectives that may influence managerial judgments and succession decisions. Consequently, this fragmentation poses a challenge for scholars and practitioners in understanding the field's intellectual structure and evolution. To address this gap, this study employs a bibliometric analysis approach to systematically examine global research trends. Data were retrieved from the Scopus database using advanced search strings combining two core keyword clusters: "succession planning" and "performance." The dataset comprises 1,346 publications spanning the period from 1970 to May 2026. The analysis was conducted using Scopus Analyzer for preliminary descriptive statistics, OpenRefine for data cleaning and standardization, and VOSviewer for science mapping and visualization

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of co-authorship, co-citation, and keyword co-occurrence networks. The results indicate steady and accelerating growth in publications over time, particularly after 2010, reflecting increasing scholarly attention to strategic talent management and the quality of decision-making in organizations. Keyword co-occurrence analysis reveals dominant thematic clusters around leadership development, employee performance evaluation, and decision-making processes, while emerging connections highlight the integration of behavioral perspectives, including cognitive bias. Co-authorship patterns reveal strong contributions from the United States (US), the United Kingdom (UK), and selected Asian countries, indicating a geographically diverse but unevenly distributed research network. Overall, the study concludes that while performance management and succession planning are well-established fields, incorporating cognitive bias remains underexplored yet increasingly significant. Moreover, these findings provide a comprehensive intellectual structure of the field and offer directions for future research integrating behavioral science into talent management systems.

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Keywords:

Succession Planning, Performance Management, Cognitive Bias



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Introduction

Performance management and succession planning are two core human resource practices that shape organizational performance and leadership continuity. Recent research highlights the technical and strategic dimensions of these systems and how cognitive biases in decision-making can distort both. Mapping these domains together clarifies how organizations can better identify, develop, and promote talent while minimizing biased judgments. Correspondingly, this extended introduction and literature review situates performance management and succession planning within current empirical and conceptual work. It also demonstrates why insights from cognitive bias research are increasingly indispensable.

Performance management practices are consistently linked to organizational effectiveness, but the exact mechanisms and measures vary across studies. Reviews emphasized that clear role definitions, goal clarity, and periodic performance reviews are central to converting individual performance into organizational outcomes. Nevertheless, scholars use diverse metrics for both practices and effectiveness, leaving conceptual gaps (Nduati, 2022). Competency-based performance management, especially when anchored in leadership competency models, is associated with higher productivity, adaptability, and flexibility. This suggests that focusing on measurable competencies strengthens the link between individual superior performance and overall effectiveness (Shet et al., 2019). At the same time, performance is shaped by

complementary factors such as leadership, culture, engagement, and training, which interact with formal appraisal systems (Nduati, 2022; Shet et al., 2019). Collectively, these findings position performance management as both a measurement and development tool that feeds directly into decisions about promotion and succession.

Succession planning, in turn, is framed as a strategic process to ensure leadership continuity, mitigate risk, and sustain performance over time. Empirical work in Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), banking, and hospitals indicates that succession practices, talent management, career development, compensation systems, and structured leadership pipelines are positively associated with organizational performance, efficiency, and stability (Groves, 2017; Kumari & Agnihotri, 2024; M & Archana, 2024; Tarimo et al., 2024). Furthermore, succession planning supports a “steady pipeline” of capable leaders, enhances employee retention, and reduces disruption during leadership transitions (Kumari & Agnihotri, 2024; M & Archana, 2024; Qazi et al., 2025). In addition, studies highlight practices such as systematic identification of high-potential employees, skills and competency gap analysis, coaching, and internal mobility as core elements of effective succession systems (Kumari & Agnihotri, 2024; Qazi et al., 2025; Tarimo et al., 2024). National-level hospital work links robust succession management practices to patient satisfaction and cost performance, underscoring that succession is not merely an HR concern. Rather, it is a driver of critical outcome metrics (Groves, 2017). Conceptually, succession is increasingly framed as part of a broader talent management architecture that integrates performance data, development pathways, and cultural alignment (Aina & Atan, 2020; Padma Dr. Satuluri, 2024; Qazi et al., 2025).

Despite their significance, both performance management and succession planning are vulnerable to cognitive biases in how information is processed and decisions are made. Classical appraisal research already depicts performance evaluation as a dual-process system in which automatic categorization of employees and prototypes shapes recall, information search, and the emergence of halo, leniency/stringency, and social biases (Feldman, 1981). Experimental work on performance evaluations reports that judgments are often driven by intuitive thinking rather than rational comparison to standards, calling into question the assumption that ratings directly reflect true performance (Andersen & Hjortskov, 2016). Likewise, more recent studies extend this to AI-assisted appraisal, demonstrating strong anchoring and adjustment effects: managers’ ratings shift systematically toward initial recommendations, and the impact of a high or low anchor depends on whether the source is AI or human (Carter & Liu, 2025). This implies that performance data feeding talent and succession decisions may be systematically skewed by both human and algorithmic anchors, independent of actual behavior (Andersen & Hjortskov, 2016; Carter & Liu, 2025; Feldman, 1981).

Broader reviews of cognitive biases in professional and strategic decision-making further illuminate how such distortions can permeate HR systems. Across management and other professions, multiple biases, including overconfidence, confirmation, anchoring, and framing, affect high-stakes decisions, with overconfidence particularly pervasive (Abatecola et al., 2018; Berthet, 2020; Purnamawati, 2024; Rau & Bromiley, 2025). In strategic contexts, systematic biases such as overconfidence, escalation of commitment, and loss aversion, as well as idiosyncratic biases rooted in prior experience, shape investment, diversification, innovation, and risk-taking (Acciarini et al., 2020; Rau & Bromiley, 2025). Evidence reveals mixed yet often strong effects of loss aversion on risk-related outcomes, as well as negative links between overconfidence and longer-term performance and forecasting accuracy (Rau &

Bromiley, 2025). While reviews focused on principals and senior leaders indicate that biases can distort strategic planning, risk assessment, and organizational performance, structured decision frameworks and awareness training offer promising avenues for mitigation (Purnamawati, 2024). Within performance management specifically, interviews with experienced managers reveal recurring cognitive biases during the early, strategic phases of implementation. This advocates for “behavioral strategy” roadmaps that integrate insights from cognitive psychology and practical debiasing measures (Hristov et al., 2022). At the same time, integrative work on bias mitigation distinguishes between debiasing (changing how individuals think) and choice architecture (changing how options and information are presented). This proposes multi-level frameworks to match interventions to decision types and organizational contexts (Fasolo et al., 2024).

Together, this body of research suggests that mapping performance management and succession planning without accounting for cognitive bias risks overestimating the objectivity of talent decisions. Performance systems provide the data backbone for succession planning, while succession decisions, in turn, rely on complex, often intuitive judgments about potential, readiness, and fit (Groves, 2017; Kumari & Agnihotri, 2024; Nduati, 2022; Padma Dr. Satuluri, 2024; Qazi et al., 2025; Shet et al., 2019). At each stage (goal setting, appraisal, talent identification, leadership selection), cognitive biases can shape how information is attended to, interpreted, and integrated (Abatecola et al., 2018; Acciarini et al., 2020; Andersen & Hjortskov, 2016; Berthet, 2020; Feldman, 1981; Hristov et al., 2022; Purnamawati, 2024; Rau & Bromiley, 2025). In line with this, anchors from prior ratings or AI scores, prototypes of the “ideal leader,” overconfidence in existing pipelines, and loss aversion regarding leadership change can all distort the mapping between current performance, perceived potential, and future roles (Acciarini et al., 2020; Andersen & Hjortskov, 2016; Carter & Liu, 2025; Feldman, 1981; Rau & Bromiley, 2025). Emerging frameworks for bias mitigation, therefore, offer a crucial complement. They underscore the need for explicit debiasing strategies (such as “consider-the-opposite” procedures) and careful design of appraisal and succession processes to reduce the influence of intuitive, error-prone judgments (Abatecola et al., 2018; Carter & Liu, 2025; Fasolo et al., 2024; Purnamawati, 2024). In conclusion, the literature converges on the view that effective performance management and succession planning are technical, strategic, and cognitive systems. Thus, integrating insights from cognitive bias research, both in diagnosing distortions and in designing interventions, appears essential. This ensures that performance data truly reflect contribution, that succession pipelines are genuinely merit-based, and that organizations realize the full potential of these practices for long-term effectiveness and sustainability (Fasolo et al., 2024; Groves, 2017; Hristov et al., 2022; Kumari & Agnihotri, 2024; M & Archana, 2024; Nduati, 2022; Qazi et al., 2025; Shet et al., 2019; Tarimo et al., 2024).

Research Question

1. How has the volume and growth trend of scholarly publications on succession planning and performance management evolved from 1970 to May 2026?
2. What are the top 10 most cited scholarly articles on succession planning and performance management, and what key insights and contributions do they offer to the field?
3. What are the dominant research themes and intellectual structures identified through keyword co-occurrence analysis in succession planning and performance management literature?

4. To what extent do country-level co-authorship networks reveal global research collaboration patterns and disparities in succession planning and performance management literature?

Methodology

Bibliometric analysis involves the systematic retrieval, organization, and quantitative examination of bibliographic data derived from scholarly publications (Alves et al., 2021; Assyakur & Rosa, 2022; Verbeek et al., 2002). Beyond descriptive metrics such as publication sources, temporal distribution, and leading contributors (Wu & Wu, 2017), bibliometric approaches include advanced techniques, such as document co-citation analysis, to uncover the intellectual structure of a research field. A rigorous literature review is inherently iterative and methodical, requiring careful keyword delineation, comprehensive database querying, and in-depth analytical assessment. Accordingly, this structured process facilitates the construction of a robust and reliable evidence base (Fahimnia et al., 2015). Building on this, the present study prioritizes high-impact publications, given their critical role in shaping the domain's theoretical and conceptual foundations. To ensure data accuracy and consistency, Scopus was employed as the primary source for data retrieval (Al-Khoury et al., 2022; di Stefano et al., 2010; Khiste & Paithankar, 2017). In maintaining scholarly rigor, only peer-reviewed journal articles were included, while other sources, such as books and lecture notes, were excluded (Gu et al., 2019). Drawing on Elsevier's Scopus database, widely acknowledged for its comprehensive coverage, relevant publications spanning 1970 to May 2026 were systematically collected for subsequent analysis.

Data Search Strategy

The bibliographic dataset for this study was systematically retrieved from Scopus using a structured and replicable search strategy. As presented in Table 1, the search string was designed to capture the intersection between succession-related constructs (i.e., "succession planning," "succession management," "leadership development," and "talent management") and performance-related outcomes (i.e., "performance," "organizational performance," "employee performance," and "workforce performance") within the TITLE-ABS-KEY fields. To enhance the relevance and disciplinary focus of the dataset, additional filters were applied, restricting the subject areas to Business, Management, and Accounting (BUSI) and Social Sciences (SOCI), document type to peer-reviewed journal articles, and language to English. Ultimately, this comprehensive query yielded an initial dataset of 1,346 publications, ensuring broad yet targeted coverage of the research domain.

Subsequently, a rigorous screening process was conducted to refine the dataset in accordance with predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria, as detailed in Table 2. The screening ensured that only publications aligned with the study's scope were retained, specifically those written in English and situated within the SOCI and BUSI domains. However, it excludes non-English publications and studies outside the specified subject areas. This step was critical in enhancing the consistency, comparability, and academic rigor of the dataset. Hence, by systematically applying these criteria, the study ensures a high-quality corpus of literature suitable for subsequent bibliometric mapping and analysis.

Table 1: The Search String

Scopus	TITLE-ABS-KEY (("succession planning" OR "succession management" OR "leadership development" OR "talent management") AND (performance OR "organizational performance" OR "employee performance" OR "workforce performance")) AND (LIMIT-TO (SUBJAREA , "BUSI") OR LIMIT-TO (SUBJAREA , "SOCI")) AND (LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE , "ar")) AND (LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE , "English"))
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Table 2: The Search Selection Criteria

Criterion	Inclusion	Exclusion
Language	English	Non-English
Subject	Social Sciences, Business, Management and Accounting	

Data Analysis

VOSviewer is a widely adopted and user-friendly tool for bibliometric analysis, developed by Nees Jan van Eck and Ludo Waltman at Leiden University (van Eck & Waltman, 2010, 2017). The software is specifically designed to support the visualization and quantitative analysis of scientific literature, offering advanced functionalities for constructing network maps, clustering related entities, and generating density visualizations. Its analytical flexibility enables the examination of diverse bibliometric relationships, including co-authorship, co-citation, and keyword co-occurrence networks, thereby facilitating a comprehensive mapping of research landscapes. Supported by an interactive interface and continuous updates, VOSviewer enables efficient, scalable analysis of large bibliometric datasets while allowing customization of visual outputs and integration of data from multiple sources.

A key strength of VOSviewer lies in its ability to transform complex bibliometric structures into clear, interpretable visual representations. The software is particularly effective for network-based analyses, including clustering related items, identifying keyword co-occurrence patterns, and generating density maps. In addition, its intuitive design supports both novice and advanced users in navigating and interpreting research trends with precision. Continuous development further ensures that VOSviewer remains methodologically robust and adaptable across various data types, including authorship, citation, and collaboration networks.

In this study, bibliographic datasets comprising publication year, article title, author names, source journals, citation counts, and keywords were retrieved in PlainText format from Scopus, covering the period from 1970 to May 2026. The data were subsequently analyzed using VOSviewer version 1.6.20. By applying VOS mapping and clustering techniques, the software facilitated the construction and interpretation of bibliometric networks. As an alternative to Multidimensional Scaling (MDS), VOSviewer employs a mapping approach that positions items in a low-dimensional space to ensure that the distance between items reflects their degree of relatedness (van Eck & Waltman, 2010). Although conceptually aligned with MDS (Appio et al., 2014), the VOS technique differs methodologically by incorporating normalization

procedures tailored to co-occurrence data, notably the Association Strength (AS_{ij}), calculated as follows (Van Eck & Waltman, 2007):

$$AS_{ij} = \frac{C_{ij}}{W_i W_j},$$

which is defined as being proportional to the ratio between the observed frequency of co-occurrence of items i and j and the expected frequency of their co-occurrence under the assumption of statistical independence (Van Eck & Waltman, 2007).

Result and Discussion

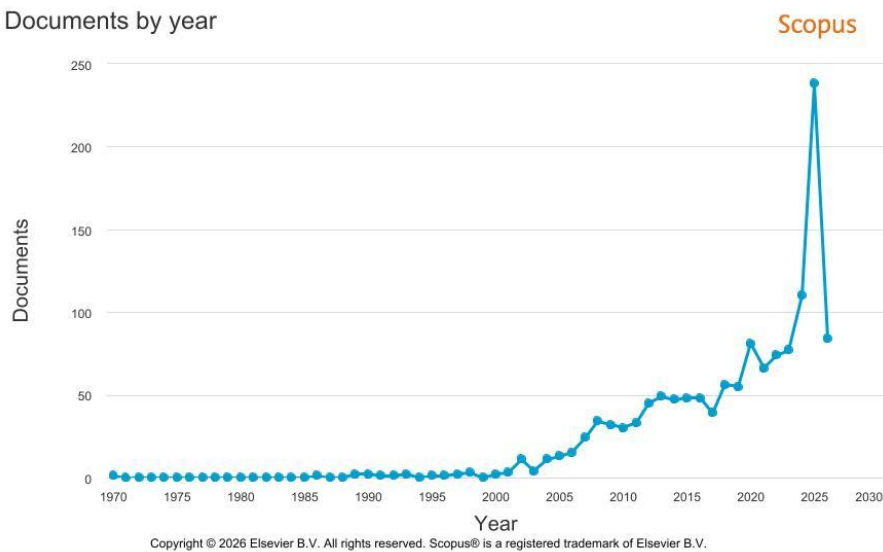
Four research questions are discussed in this section.

RQ1: How Has the Volume and Growth Trend of Scholarly Publications on Succession Planning and Performance Management Evolved From 1970 To May 2026?

As presented in Figure 1 and Table 3, the annual publication trend from 1970 to 2026 reveals a highly uneven yet clearly accelerating research trajectory in performance management practices and succession planning, with emerging attention to cognitive bias. The early period (1970-1999) presents extremely limited scholarly output, with several years recording zero publications and only sporadic single-digit outputs. This indicates that the field was still in its conceptual infancy, with performance management and succession planning largely treated as separate Human Resources (HR) functions rather than as integrated strategic mechanisms. The absence of sustained growth during this period suggests limited theoretical convergence and low academic prioritization. This is likely due to the dominance of traditional personnel management paradigms and the lack of advanced analytical tools or organizational data systems to study these constructs in depth.

A pronounced shift begins after 2000, with gradual yet consistent growth accelerating significantly after 2010, culminating in a sharp surge in recent years. Notably, Table 3 highlights a peak in 2025 with 238 publications (17.68%), followed by strong output in 2024 (110 publications) and 2026 (84 publications already recorded), indicating sustained scholarly momentum. This rapid expansion can be attributed to increasing organizational complexity, digital HR transformation, and heightened interest in talent analytics, which collectively position succession planning as a critical extension of performance management systems. Furthermore, integrating cognitive bias perspectives reflects a more recent interdisciplinary shift toward behavioral decision-making in HR practices, particularly in addressing fairness, promotion bias, and leadership selection errors. Overall, the trend in Table 3 indicates a transition from exploratory, fragmented research to a mature, rapidly expanding field. It is driven by technological advancements and the growing need for evidence-based, bias-aware talent management systems.

Documents by year

**Figure 1: Trend****Table 3: Number of Publications by Author**

Year	Number of Publications	Percentage (%)
2026	84	6.24%
2025	238	17.68%
2024	110	8.17%
2023	77	5.72%
2022	74	5.50%
2021	66	4.90%
2020	81	6.02%
2019	55	4.09%
2018	56	4.16%
2017	39	2.90%
2016	48	3.57%
2015	48	3.57%
2014	47	3.49%
2013	49	3.64%
2012	45	3.34%
2011	33	2.45%
2010	30	2.23%
2009	32	2.38%
2008	34	2.53%
2007	24	1.78%
2006	15	1.11%
2005	13	0.97%
2004	11	0.82%

2003	4	0.30%
2002	11	0.82%
2001	3	0.22%
2000	2	0.15%
1998	3	0.22%
1997	2	0.15%
1996	1	0.07%
1995	1	0.07%
1993	2	0.15%
1992	1	0.07%
1991	1	0.07%
1990	2	0.15%
1989	2	0.15%
1986	1	0.07%
1970	1	0.07%

RQ2: What Are the Top 10 Most Cited Scholarly Articles on Succession Planning and Performance Management, And What Key Insights and Contributions Do They Offer to the Field?

Table 4 presents the top 10 most cited articles, clearly indicating that the intellectual foundation of performance management practices, succession planning, and related leadership development is heavily shaped by leadership theory and strategic talent management. The most cited articles are Walumbwa et al. (2008) on authentic leadership (2,216 citations), followed by Gardner et al. (2005) (1,421 citations), and Liden et al. (2008) on servant leadership (1,359 citations). These studies demonstrate that leadership identity, authenticity, and ethical influence are central constructs driving research in this field. These highly cited works, together with Lord and Hall (2005) on leadership skill development (599 citations), confirmed that succession planning research is deeply rooted in understanding how leaders are developed, assessed, and sustained within organizations. In addition, Collings and Mellahi (2009) (1,255 citations) and Ng et al. (2009) (458 citations) further strengthen the argument that talent management and global leadership capabilities are key pillars linking succession planning with broader organizational strategy, as presented in Table 4.

Beyond leadership-centric theories, Table 4 also reflects a gradual shift toward evidence-based HR practices and contemporary workforce challenges. Edvinsson (1997) (911 citations) laid an early foundation for intellectual capital, underscoring the significance of intangible assets for organizational performance, which indirectly supports modern succession planning frameworks. Following this, Gruman and Saks (2011) (556 citations) extended this by linking performance management to employee engagement and highlighting the behavioral outcomes of HR systems. More recent contributions, such as Marler and Boudreau (2017) (595 citations), emphasize HR analytics as a critical methodological advancement that enables data-driven decision-making in talent management. Finally, Schroth (2019) (383 citations) introduced generational workforce considerations, specifically Gen Z readiness, implying the field's expansion toward future workforce adaptability. Collectively, the citation distribution in Table

4 illustrates a clear progression from foundational leadership and intellectual capital theories toward integrated, analytics-driven, and future-oriented HR and succession planning research.

Table 4: Most Cited Author

No	Authors	Title	Year	Source title	Cited by
1	Walumbwa et al. (2008)	Authentic leadership: Development and validation of a theory-based measure	2008	Journal of Management	2216
2	Gardner et al. (2005)	"Can you see the real me?" A self-based model of authentic leader and follower development	2005	Leadership Quarterly	1421
3	Liden et al. (2008)	Servant leadership: Development of a multidimensional measure and multi-level assessment	2008	Leadership Quarterly	1359
4	Collings & Mellahi (2009)	Strategic talent management: A review and research agenda	2009	Human Resource Management Review	1255
5	Edvinsson (1997)	Developing intellectual capital at Skandia	1997	Long Range Planning	911
6	Lord & Hall (2005)	Identity, deep structure and the development of leadership skill	2005	Leadership Quarterly	599
7	Marler & Boudreau (2017)	An evidence-based review of HR Analytics	2017	International Journal of Human Resource Management	595
8	Gruman & Saks (2011)	Performance management and employee engagement	2011	Human Resource Management Review	556
9	Ng et al. (2009)	From experience to experiential learning: Cultural intelligence as a learning capability for global leader development	2009	Academy of Management Learning and Education	458
10	Schroth (2019)	Are you ready for gen Z in the workplace?	2019	California Management Review	383

RQ3: What Are the Dominant Research Themes and Intellectual Structures Identified Through Keyword Co-Occurrence Analysis in Succession Planning and Performance Management Literature?

Figure 2 reveals a highly centralized keyword network dominated by “talent management,” which records the highest occurrences (326) and Total Link Strength (TLS, 892), indicating its

role as the intellectual core of the field. This strong centrality suggests that contemporary research increasingly positions talent management as a strategic driver that integrates multiple HR and organizational domains. Closely connected to this core are “organizational performance,” “leadership development,” and “performance,” all of which exhibit high link strengths (670, 481, and 478, respectively). At the same time, this pattern reflects a well-established argument in the literature that effective talent management systems are directly linked to improved organizational outcomes. These are often mediated by leadership capabilities and performance mechanisms. The prominence of “leadership,” “human resource management,” and “transformational leadership” further reinforces the idea that leadership-oriented frameworks are central in translating talent strategies into measurable performance gains, suggesting a strong theoretical anchoring in leadership and HRM integration.

At the same time, Figure 2 also highlights several emerging and peripheral clusters that indicate the evolution of the field. Keywords such as “succession planning” (66 occurrences, TLS 182), “employee engagement,” “sustainability,” and “knowledge management” demonstrate moderate connectivity, suggesting they function as bridging themes rather than core drivers. Meanwhile, the relatively lower occurrence and link strength of succession planning, despite its conceptual importance, imply that it is often studied as a supporting mechanism within broader talent management frameworks rather than as a standalone focus. Additionally, the appearance of newer themes like “artificial intelligence,” “digital transformation,” and “workplace well-being” with lower link strengths indicates an emerging shift toward digitalization and employee-centric perspectives. This dispersion of newer keywords across the network suggests that the field is expanding into interdisciplinary areas but has not yet fully consolidated these themes into the core structure. In essence, this highlights opportunities for future research to integrate technological and well-being dimensions more cohesively into the discourse on talent and performance management.

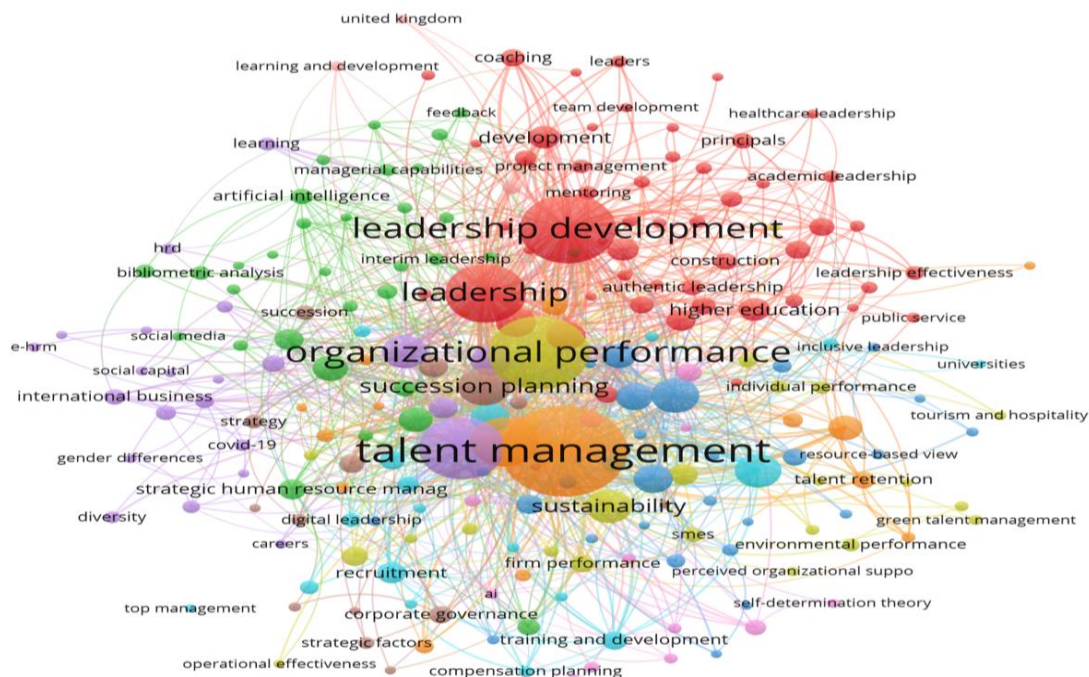


Figure 2: Network Visualization Map of Keywords' Co-Occurrence

RQ4: To What Extent Do Country-Level Co-Authorship Networks Reveal Global Research Collaboration Patterns and Disparities in Succession Planning and Performance Management Literature?

Figure 3 displays a highly asymmetrical country-level co-authorship network, with the United States (US) clearly dominating in both productivity (317 publications) and TLS (16,356), indicating its central role as the primary global collaboration hub. This dominance can be justified by the country's strong research infrastructure, extensive funding mechanisms, and leading universities that actively promote international collaboration. On the other hand, the United Kingdom (UK), despite having fewer publications (160), records a notably high number of collaboration links (93). This suggests that it plays a more globally connected, partnership-oriented role than output-driven countries. Likewise, this indicates that the UK acts as a bridging node in the network, facilitating cross-border knowledge exchange. Similarly, countries such as Australia, Germany, and China demonstrate balanced contributions between publication output and link strength. This reflects their dual role as both knowledge producers and active collaborators. Moreover, the relatively high citation and linkage performance of countries such as Canada and Ireland, despite moderate publication counts, further suggests that research quality and international collaboration intensity can outweigh sheer volume in influencing network centrality.

In contrast, Figure 3 also highlights the growing participation of emerging economies such as India, Malaysia, and Indonesia, which present respectable publication outputs (118, 76, and 70, respectively) yet comparatively lower TLS. This disparity suggests that while these countries are increasingly contributing to the literature, their international collaboration networks remain less dense and possibly more regionally concentrated. For instance, Malaysia's position reflects its active role in regional research and development, despite its lower linkage intensity compared to Western countries, suggesting potential limitations in global integration. Similarly, countries like Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates exhibit moderate collaboration links relative to their output, likely driven by strategic investments in research internationalization. On the other hand, several countries (e.g., Iran, Peru, and Ethiopia) exhibit weak link strength, suggesting limited participation in global co-authorship networks. Overall, this uneven distribution underscores a core-periphery structure in the global research landscape. Accordingly, developed nations dominate collaboration networks, while developing countries are still expanding their international research connectivity, highlighting opportunities for more inclusive and diversified global partnerships.

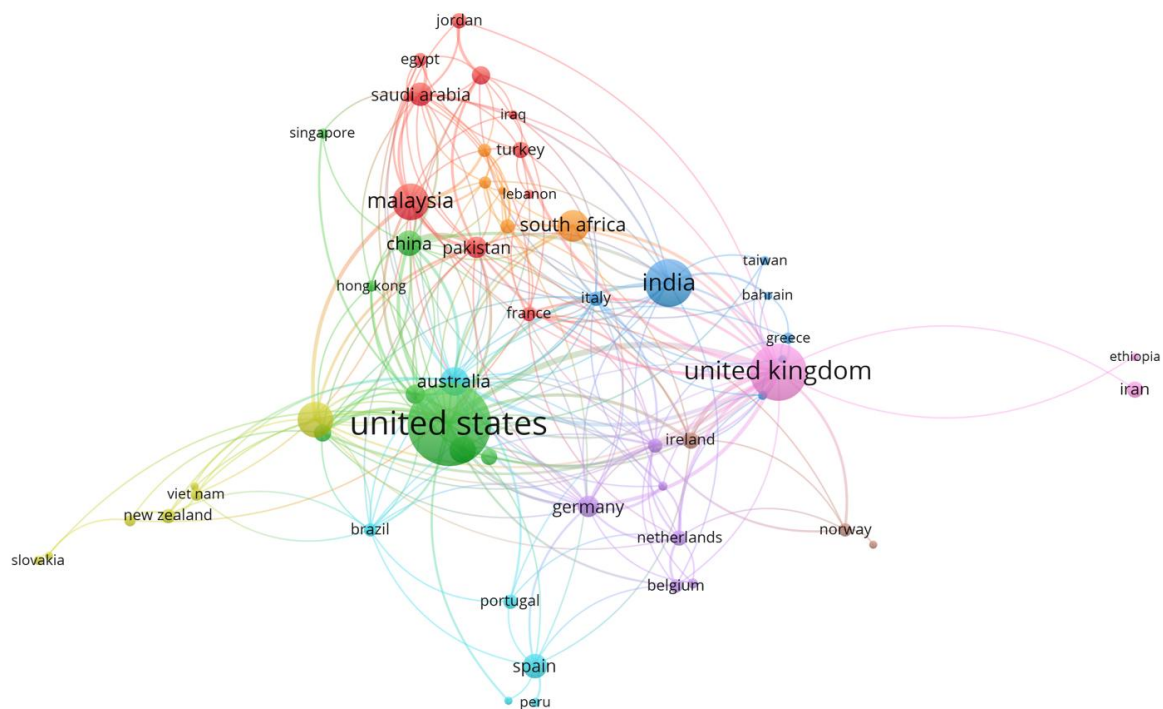


Figure 3: Trend by Countries

Conclusion

The present bibliometric study systematically mapped the intellectual structure and developmental trajectory of research on performance management practices and succession planning, while incorporating the emerging perspective on cognitive bias in decision-making. In particular, the central aim of this analysis was to understand how scholarly work in this field has evolved over an extended period from 1970 to May 2026. This includes identifying dominant themes, influential publications, and collaboration structures that shape the global research landscape. In addition, the study sought to clarify how performance management and succession planning are conceptually interconnected within organizational studies and whether behavioral dimensions, such as cognitive bias, are gaining visibility in academic discourse. By applying bibliometric techniques, the study provides a structured overview of knowledge production patterns, thematic evolution, and research connectivity within this multidisciplinary area.

The findings derived from a dataset of 1,346 publications reveal several important patterns. First, there is a clear upward trajectory in publication output, with a noticeable acceleration after 2010. This indicates increasing academic and practitioner interest in structured talent management systems and evidence-based human resource practices. Second, keyword co-occurrence analysis indicates that the research field is primarily focused on core themes, including performance appraisal systems, leadership development, talent identification, and organizational effectiveness. Succession planning is often discussed within broader strategic human resource management, while performance management remains a central pillar of organizational performance evaluation frameworks. Importantly, cognitive bias is an emerging yet underdeveloped thematic cluster, often indirectly linked to decision-making, leadership judgment, and evaluation accuracy. Third, co-authorship network analysis indicates that research contributions are globally distributed, with strong dominance from developed

economies such as the US and the UK, alongside growing participation from Asian countries, including India, Malaysia, and Indonesia. Nonetheless, collaboration intensity across regions remains uneven, suggesting fragmented research communities rather than a fully integrated global network.

In terms of scholarly contribution, this study offers several meaningful advancements to the field of human resource management and organizational studies. First, it provides a consolidated intellectual map of two closely related but often separately examined domains: performance management and succession planning. By integrating these areas within a single bibliometric framework, the study highlights their conceptual overlap and interdependence in shaping organizational capability and leadership continuity. Second, the inclusion of cognitive bias as an analytical lens introduces a behavioral dimension that enriches the understanding of how managerial decisions are influenced by psychological and cognitive factors. Although this element is still emerging within the literature, its presence in co-word networks indicates a gradual shift toward more human-centered interpretations of performance evaluation and talent decisions. Third, the visualization of keyword clusters and citation patterns helps identify influential research streams and the intellectual foundations that underpin the field, thereby offering a structured reference point for future academic inquiry and theory development.

From a practical perspective, the findings of this study carry several implications for organizational policy and human resource practice. The increasing emphasis on performance management and succession planning suggests that organizations are progressively recognizing the importance of structured systems for identifying, developing, and retaining talent. However, the presence of cognitive bias in decision-making processes signals a critical risk factor that may affect fairness, accuracy, and performance in evaluations and succession decisions. Awareness of such biases can support the design of more objective assessment tools, improved calibration processes, and enhanced leadership training programs. Furthermore, the identified geographical disparities in research collaboration imply that knowledge transfer between regions may be limited. This underscores the need for greater international cooperation and cross-cultural studies to develop universally applicable frameworks. Despite its contributions, this study is subject to certain limitations, including reliance on a single database. Thus, it may exclude relevant publications indexed elsewhere, as well as the inherent constraints of bibliometric methods, which focus on quantitative patterns rather than deep qualitative interpretation. In response, future research may extend this work by incorporating multiple databases, applying longitudinal qualitative synthesis, or exploring more detailed behavioral mechanisms underlying cognitive bias in organizational decision-making. Overall, the study concludes that bibliometric analysis serves as a valuable methodological approach for understanding the evolution and structure of research domains. It also reinforces the importance of integrating behavioral insights into performance management and succession planning scholarship to better reflect complex organizational realities.

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