Bibliometric analysis of Organisational Behaviour: an approach under the merit perspective with a time frame of 2015 to 2021

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate the theoretical contributions on organisational behaviour and meritocracy. The methodology used involved exploratory analysis, based on bibliometric research. The data were extracted from the Scopus and Web of Science journal databases, accessed through the journals portal of the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (CAPES) and through the restricted access of the Federated Academic Community (Café) of the Instituto Federal Goiano (IF Goiano). The result obtained indicated the combination of the search terms, "organisational behaviour and merit". (Scopus and Web of Science). It was used as technical support, a set of open source solutions, R software, with techniques for filtering duplicate and non-pertinent publications, totaling 63 articles, ranging from the years 2015 to June 2021. It is clear that there is a concentration of terms reporting on public educational organisations, which focus on issues about performance and the positive effects of human behaviour. Finally, it was identified that the term merit is closer to contexts involving perspectives, gender, and market, while meritocracy subsidizes studies that address organisational social inequality and human resource management.

Keywords: Bibliometric; Measurable; Information; Meritocracy; Organisational Behaviour.

1. Introduction

In the technological era, there is an exponential and competitive growth in organisational environments, in which organisational behaviour and meritocracy are evaluative attributes and provide information for the decision-making process, constituting a dynamic of action and research in organisations (López-Robles *et al*., 2019).

Several studies have been carried out on organisational behaviour (Yogatama & Nugrohoseno, 2021; Balaniuk & Borges-Andrade, 2020; Lu & Hsu, 2018), providing scientific evidence and consolidating that it is a field of knowledge that evaluates the systematic research on the behaviour of individuals in organisations, which are part of structures that result from the confluence of knowledge from different disciplinary areas that influenced the consolidation of the field, such as psychology, sociology, anthropology, political science and economics (De Azevedo Sobral & Mansur, 2013).

As a supplementary factor to organisational behaviour, meritocracy can be inserted, which according to Souza & Vasconcelos (2021, p. 2) is "a set of values that requires the individual in society to obtain his position according to the merit of his individual actions, that is, the public recognition of their qualitative capacity for self-fulfillment". Although both are extremely controversial themes, they have contrasting issues in contemporary management theory, both in public service and in the private sector, since meritocracy is a system linked to individual merit, excluding factors such as wealth, gender, social representation and color (Bilhim, 2017) and organisational behaviour, it actually deals with human behaviour at work.

Merit is a form of prerogative to the individual, granting him the equal capacity of professional fulfillment through his performance, also observed by (Souza *et al*., 2021; Maulidan *et al*., 2020; Polastri, 2017; Castilla, 2016; Matei & Campeanu, 2015; Walton *et al*., 2013), with the understanding that an egalitarian society is achieved with equal rights and guarantees, which enable professional advancement regardless of factors related to class, gender and social occupation. It is not an easy topic to discuss, as it involves a series of factors that are related to organisational structure, culture, spheres, etc.

This article postulated a descriptive and quantitative approach, carried out with bibliometric variables, with results and discussions based on measurable information provided from scientific literature, so that similar studies can be considered as a reference in Secinaro *et al.* (2021); Peters *et al.*(2020); Ribeiro *et al.*, (2020); Dynako *et al.* (2020); Valderrama, 2019; Albort-Morant *et al.* (2017) and Nane *et al.* (2017).

Through the R software, and the use of filtering techniques, it was possible to analyse the data (Howison *et al*., 2015), and generate information, as can be seen in similar studies examined by Borgman; Wallis & Mayernik, 2012. Academic software has benefited from the use of bibliometrics through the application of statistical methods, among others (Diodato & Gellatly, 2013; Thompson & Walker, 2015). Furthermore, this typology of analysis allowed for the evaluation of research results (Ball, 2017). In this context, it is essential to use software aimed at bibliometric studies, an instrument that enabled the extraction of the most relevant variables (in this study, the terms) in the time period proposed in this study, as well as verifying how they are grouped to outline investigations in the organisational behaviour and meritocracy line of research.

3. Materials and method

For the systematic mapping of the state of the art, the Web of Science – Clarivate Analytics and Scopus – Elsevier databases were used, through the application of bibliometric techniques (Hood & Wilson, 2001). In order to design the evolution of meritocratic organisational behaviour, it was necessary to locate the empirical research that supports this proposal, applying technological bibliometric tools to meet the

scientific demand of the authors. The Scopus and Web of Science (WoS) databases are considered coherent and assertive as a strategy, due to the relevance of their journals to clarify possible controversies, based on quality and reference studies (Galvão & Pereira, 2014).

The Scopus database has multidisciplinary journals covering the areas of Science, Technology, Medicine, Social Sciences and Arts and Humanities, with a collection of more than 21,000 titles, 5.5 million event texts and over 370 book series (SEABD, 2017). The Web of Science is a base that covers the areas of Applied Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities. Its main resource is the "Web of Science Core Collection" and includes more than 20,000 high quality peer-reviewed academic journals with approximately 190,000 conference processes (CAPES, 2020). Evaluating these characteristics, the importance of merging these databases is perceived because, even though WoS is a database with expertise in applied social sciences, the additional use of Scorpus is important for the high quality of its journals, and in this way, they complement each other (Meho & Yang, 2007).

The methodological design of the research was based on bibliometric techniques, aiming to statistically analyse the articles (Hood & Wilson, 2001). Steps and action criteria that characterize them build the mapping of the state of the art by bibliometric method. In this study, the authors adopted and adapted the bibliometric approach method by Zupic & Ater (2014) as a reference. As for the research question, which is important to guide the investigation actions, the authors developed the following: What are the main variables that occur from the keywords and in which publications highlight them during the studied period?

The approach of bibliometric data in this review were: source name, year of publication, paper title, keywords and country of research. The structure of parameters for data collection followed the methodological design that culminated in an assertive framework to guide the execution of the work to be developed, following the essential criteria established by the authors.

METHODOLOGICAL DESIGN

(1st Phase)

BOOLEAN SEARCH

Period: 2015 to 1/2021

Selection Procedures

"*and*", "*or*"

KEYWORD MATCHING

"organisational behaviour"

And

"merit" ***or*** *"meritocracy"*

WoS: Topics

SCOPUS: Title**,** Abstract**,** Keywords

CATEGORIES: Management or Business or Public Administration or Industrial Relations Labour (Web of Science Categories)

PORTFOLIO OF SELECTED ARTICLES

(**2st Phase**)

RESEARCHED BASES	
Scopus **Document Types**: Articles	**Web of Science** **Document Types:** Articles
Collected number: 12	Collected number: 76
TOTAL ITEMS AFTER PORTFOLIO FILTERING: 63	

Table 1 – Bibliometric portfolio selection process

Source: The authors (2021)

The portfolio of articles was filtered considering the terms for the composition of the search criteria (title, keywords and abstract) and the elaboration of the string required for exploratory research (Table 1). The theme "organisational behaviour" and "merit" was addressed, with the following excluded: productions with the theme or context outside the organisational aspect, repeated productions, and any other type of production that does not meet the inclusion criteria. Through this methodological design, the study can be characterized as theoretical and illustrative, because it uses a structured process for the selection of the bibliographic portfolio, which represents the "state of the art" in publications, as shown in Table 1 (Ensslin *et al*., 2014).

3.1 Description of the software tool used for analysis

The use of two relevant and recognised databases for the scientific literature in general and, mainly, for studies on organisations (Scopus and Web of Science) is the pillar of data extraction and conversion into information. The construction of applied knowledge was used as technical support, a set of open source solutions, R software – Windows platform, version 4.1.0, using the graphical interface Rstudio version 1.4.1717, configured with the Bibliometrix R package (Developers version is published on GITHUB repository).

The bibliometrix package is a tool applied to the R programming language, with the usability for scientific mapping analysis and construction of data matrices for cocitation, coupling, scientific collaboration analysis and coword analysis, widely used for bibliometric analysis studies that support the Scopus and Web of Science databases. The Bibliometrix R package currently provides several routines for importing bibliographic data, serving Scopus databases – Elsevier, Clarivate Analytics 'Web of Science', PubMed, Digital Science Dimensions and Cochrane databases (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017; Bibliometrix, 2018; Biblioshiny, 2021).

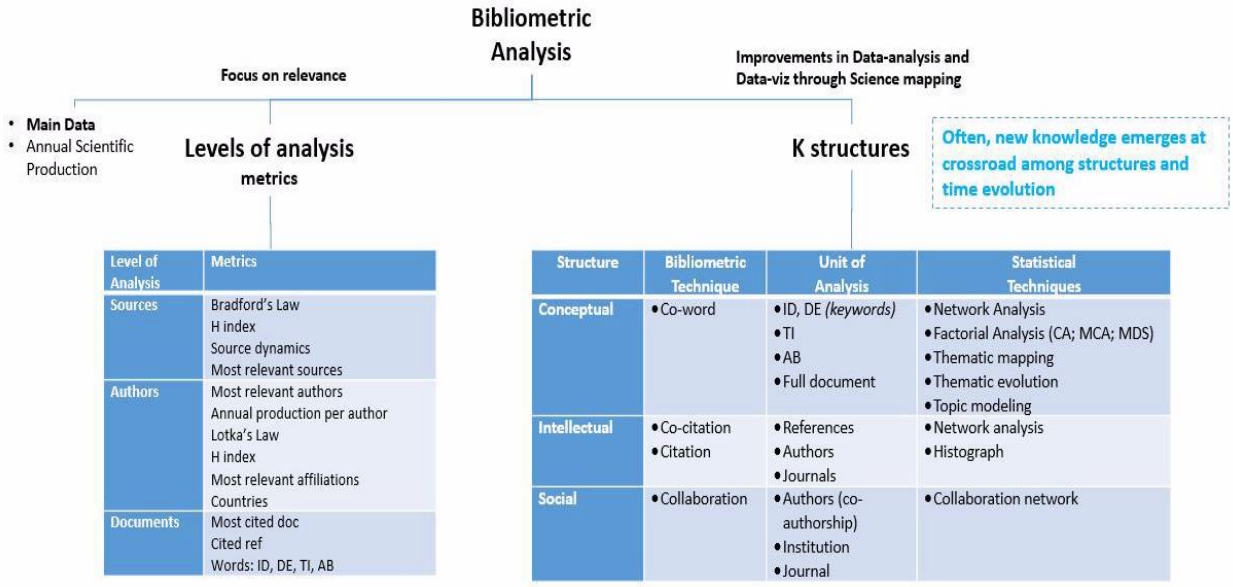

Figure 1. Bibliometrix analysis functions
Source: Bibliometrix (2018); Biblioshiny (2021)

The practical activity in this study was to carry out the conversion and import of data for mapping, filtering and later running the application according to research questions:

a) Creation of an algorithm in R language for the conversion and merging of files from the bases for treatment in Bibliometrix;
b) Analytics and plots, and metrics for three different levels: sources, authors and documents;
c) The analysis of three knowledge structures (K-structures): conceptual structure, intellectual structure and social structure.

The excellence of the process depends on concatenated factors developed in the research. An important factor was the adoption of the R programming language solutions, the Biblometrix R package and the Biblioshiny application, which met these premises, allowing the authors to concentrate efforts on the output analysis.

Data analysis was performed from the pre-configured parameters of the software, following the path shown. Bibliometrix has five sections divided into:

a) Descriptive analysis: sources, authors and documents);
b) Conceptual structure: analysis of co-words by keywords and direct matches (Biblioshiny, 2021).

4. Results and discussion

The extraction of results was based on the Scopus and Web of Science journals, accessed through the journal portal of the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (CAPES), through the restricted access of the Federated Academic Community (Café) of the Instituto Federal Goiano (IF Goiano). Data exploration was obtained by importing the unified databases through the Biblioshiny application, after the filtering process with the elimination of duplicate and non-relevant publications, totaling 63 articles; since conference materials, papers in press, books and included chapters were excluded,

with the time frame relating to the period from 2015 to June 2021. Figure 2 shows, in a synthetic way, the 10 main scientific journals in order of relevance according to the number of citations of their articles (Appendix 1):

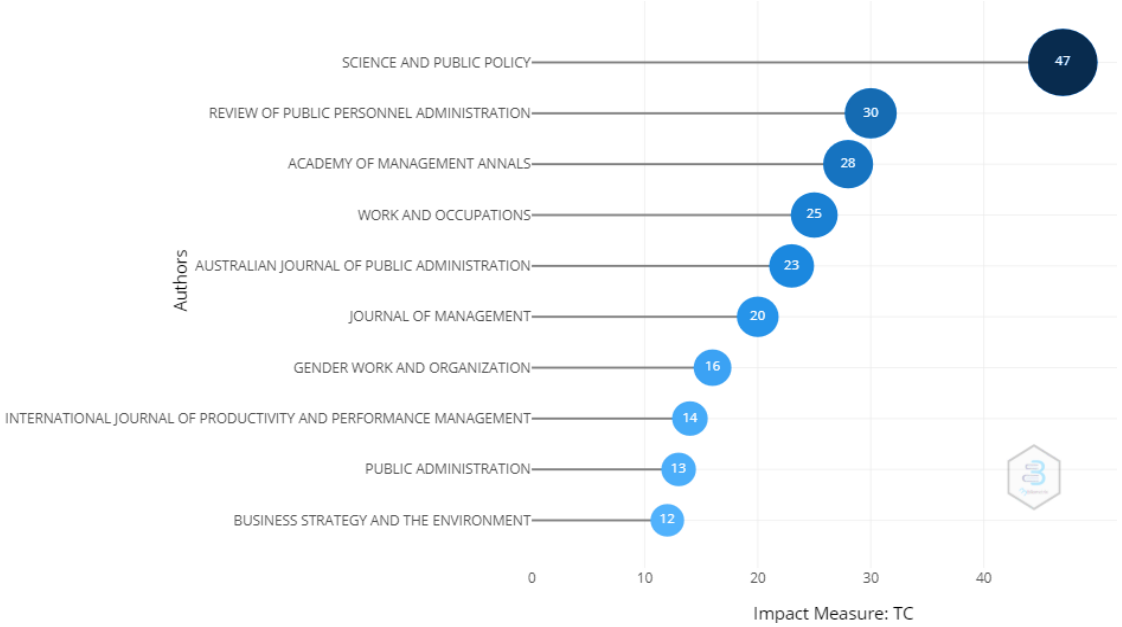

Figure 2. Main journals that published MOB in the period studied

Source: The authors (2021)

Science and Public Policy, created in 1974 and published ten times a year, carried out by Oxford University Press, highlighted the impact in relation to the total citations of articles by scientific journals, firstly. It is an international journal with scope on public policy for science, technology and innovation, covering all types of science and technology in developed and developing countries. The *Review of Public Personnel Administration* has been in publication since 1980 and is currently published quarterly by the journal SAGE, with the scope of human resources management in public service organisations, including traditional and emerging topics, being considered by the authors for the dissemination of papers that deal with the analysis of the effects of specific Human Resources (HR) procedures or programs in the management function and evaluation of the impact of HR management in the broader areas of public policy and administration.

In bibliometric analysis, researchers use bibliometric parameters to assess academic productivity in general. These parameters aim to evaluate authors based on publication count indicators, citation count, *h*-index, among others, and journals through impact factor, Eigenfactor, article influence score, journal classification in SCImago, normalized impact of the source by article and others (Choudhri *et al.,* 2015).

In recent years, there has been a significant increase in the number of bibliometric parameters, and the exact meaning and proper use cannot always be classified as controversial. Figure 3 presents some parameters extracted with the help of Bibliometrix R, which it starts to explore a better understand the path of science in relation to the studied topic within the considered time period.

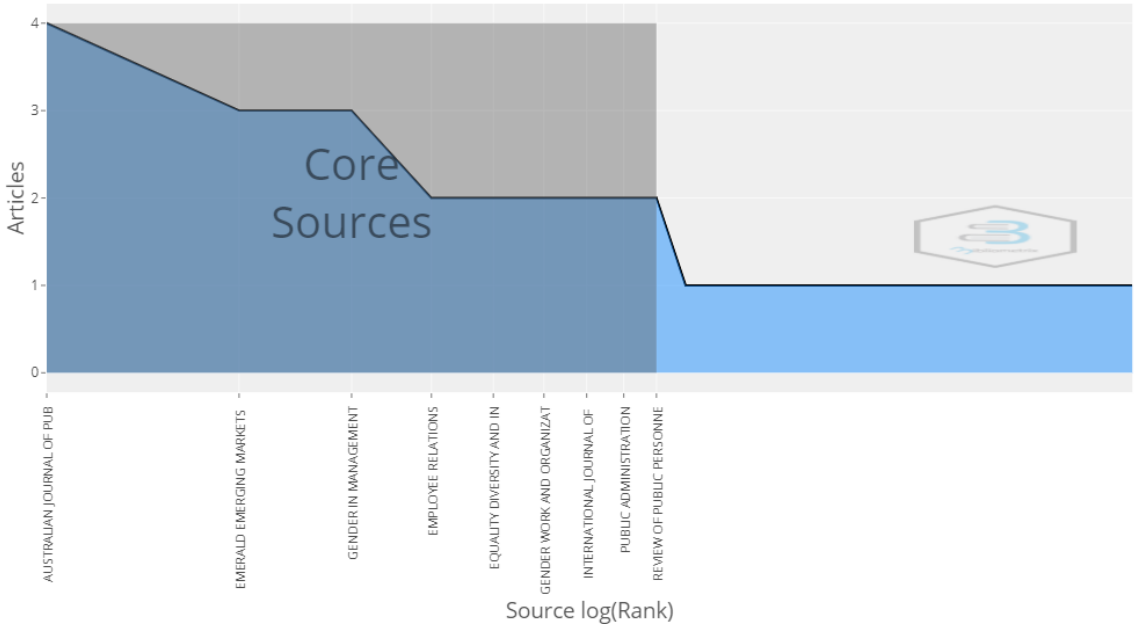

Figure 3. Source by Bradford Law Zones

Source: The authors (2021)

The effective use of existing and emerging bibliometric tools helps to analyse academic productivity, as suggested by Choudhri *et al*. (2015), and familiarity with bibliometric parameters also helps in the effective implementation of the review of the state of the art of a given topic, maximizing the effectiveness of the bibliometric evaluation (Choudhri *et al*., 2015). Figure 3 shows a graph coordinated by Bradford's Law, which performs a decreasing order of productivity of articles in scientific journals, enabling the establishment of exponentially divided groupings; in this case, it is the shaded area of the graph. Bradford's law formulation was developed to create specific citation density zones and identify leading journals for each subspeciality (Venable *et al*., 2016).

To carry out the conceptual analysis of COM, keywords from the bibliographic collection were used, in order to map the framework structure using the co-occurrence of words in publications. As options for this type of analysis, they can be performed using dimensionality reduction techniques, such as Correspondence Analysis (CA) or Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA) or Multidimensional Scaling (MDS) (Cuccurullo, Aria & Sarto, 2016).

Figure 4 demonstrates that this research was chosen by MCA to draw the conceptual structure of COM, in which the dendrogram revealed the K-means grouping, identifying two clusters of words with co-occurrence that express common factors in the publications surveyed. It is important to point out that Bibliometrix R may also execute natural language processing (NLP) routines in parallel for extracting terms from titles and abstracts. In this way, it is possible to implement Porter's stemming algorithm to reduce inflected or derived words to their root (Cuccurullo, Aria & Sarto, 2016).

Observing the dendrogram (Figure 4), it can be seen in cluster 1 a clear concentration of terms that refer to public education organisations that focus on issues about performance and the positive effects of human behaviour. In cluster 2, there is a heterogeneous formation of terms with the main lines of research in the field such as diversity, gender, social position and merit-based management.

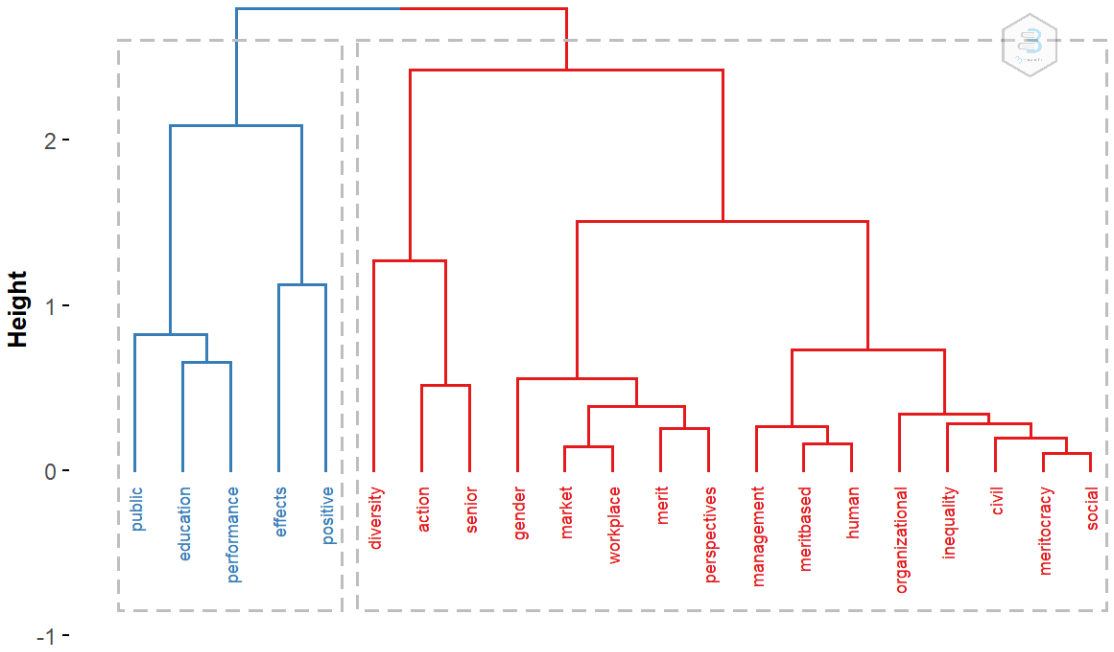

Figure 4. Dendrogram of organisational behaviour and merit terms
Source: The authors (2021)

The bibliometrix R also allowed us to use the conceptual structure function to perform the MCA in order to design clusters with keywords that express common concepts. This multivariate exploratory technique enabled the graphical and numerical analysis of multivariate categorical data by homogeneity of an indicator matrix to obtain a low-dimensional Euclidean representation of the original data (Cuccurullo, Aria & Sarto, 2016). The results are interpreted based on the relative positions of the points and their distribution along the dimensions; the words are more similar in distribution, the closer they are represented on the map (Figure 5).

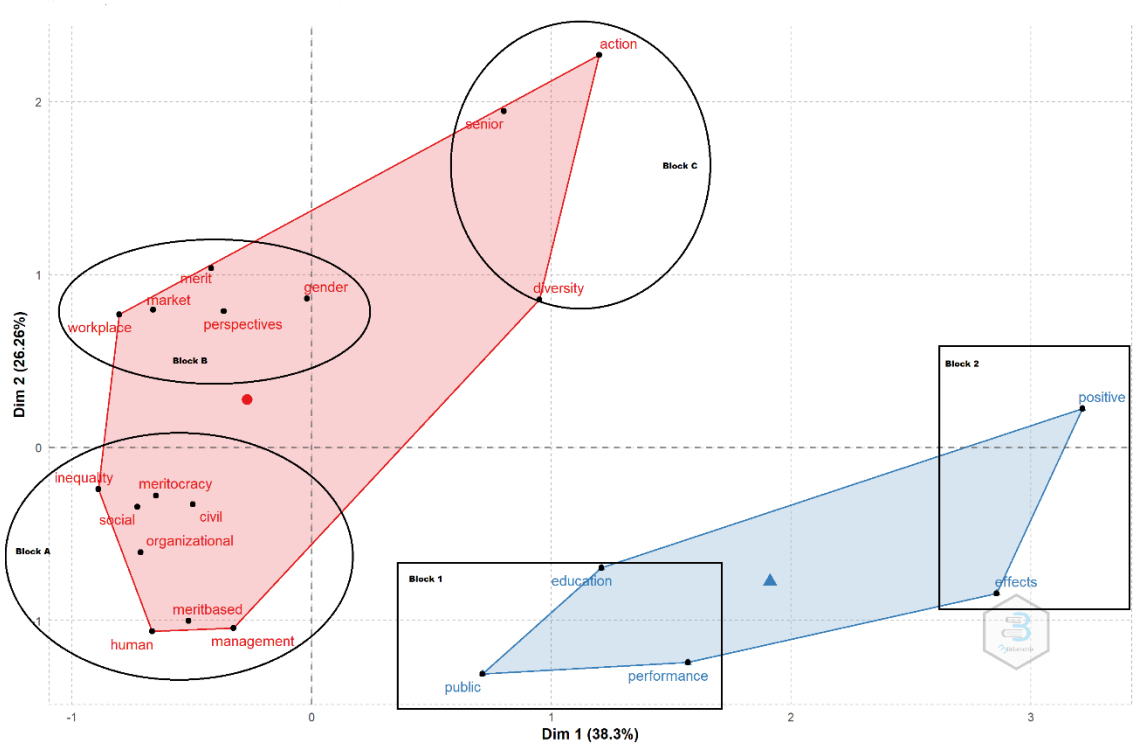

Figure 5. Conceptual structure map, method MCA

Source: The authors (2021)

In Figure 5, the graph shows the 2 clusters plotted after MCA treatment, and in cluster 1, formed by the keywords “public, education, performance, effects and positive”, although they are correlated, they are mostly dispersed in the area corresponding to Dimension 1. The first three can be considered less dispersed, forming a block (within the grouping) and the last two keywords form another, even though they are a little more dispersed (Abdi & Valentin, 2007). It is also noticed that in this cluster all terms are in the positive zone, which means that they have the same behaviour tendency, that is, they are positively correlated variables (r=1).

Cluster 2 has a greater density of identified variables, with formation of three blocks depending on distances: Block A (management, merit-based, human, organisational, social, meritocracy, civil and inequality); Block B (workplace, market, merit, perspectives and gender); and Block C (diversity, senior and action). Cluster 2 has a smaller dispersion and a peculiarity, in which the variables in Block A are negatively correlated with the variables in Blocks B and C. Thus, there is a negative correlation between these blocks, indicating that they move in opposite ways, considering that the strength of the association or proximity index indicates a bibliographic coupling, of the co-occurrence matrix of the keywords (Abdi & Valentin, 2007; Cuccurullo, Aria & Sarto, 2016). From the point of view of centrality and density, the variable “action” can be considered an outlier, despite having been significant (MCA algorithm), its correlation is the most distant in relation to the other members of its cluster.

5. Conclusion

During the time period studied, there was a quantitative increase in citations and co-occurrences of

terms linked to the MOB, with its concentration mapped using the Bradford Zone Law technique, giving exposure to the main journals and papers on the subject. Such findings, combined with the identification of term clusters, build important research trails at the international level on MOB. These relations contribute to the understanding that there are lines of research that are more consolidated than others, but it is also clear that this is an incipient field of study and open to new contributions in view of the new challenges that organisations face today. The term merit is closer to a context involving perspectives, gender and market, while meritocracy supports studies that deal with organisational social inequality and human resource management.

6. Acknowledgement

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Appendix

Appendix 1. Main Authors and papers published MOB in the period studied

Paper	DOI	Total Citations	Normalized TC
NIELSEN M. W., 2016, SCI PUBL POLICY	10.1093/scipol/scv052	47	4.796
KIM T., 2016, REV PUBLIC PERS ADM	10.1177/0734371X14549673	30	3.061
AMIS J. M., 2020, ACAD MANAG ANN	10.5465/annals.2017.0033	28	7.396
SERON C., 2018, WORK OCCUPATION	10.1177/0730888418759774	25	2.451
TREVINO L. J., 2018, J MANAGE	10.1177/0149206315599216	20	1.961
POWELL S., 2018, GENDER WORK ORGAN	10.1111/gwao.12204	15	1.471
CHOI E., 2018, J ORGAN BEHAV MANAGE	10.1080/01608061.2017.1423151	12	1.176
KOBAYASHI K., 2018, BUS STRATEG ENVIRON	10.1002/bse.2032	12	1.176
FOLEY M., 2019, PUBLIC ADMIN REV	10.1111/puar.12955	12	4.714
SHAIKH M., 2017, INFORM ORGAN-UK	10.1016/j.infoandorg.2017.04.001	11	1.93
LESLIE L. M., 2020, J APPL PSYCHOL	10.1037/apl0000446	9	2.377
MA L., 2015, AUST J PUBL ADMIN	10.1111/1467-8500.12147	9	2
LAUX C., 2017, INT J PRODUCT PERFOR	10.1108/IJPPM-09-2016-0194	9	1.579
MANFREDI S., 2017, ADM SCI	10.3390/admsci7020019	8	1.404
SCHUSTER C., 2017, PUBLIC ADMIN	10.1111/padm.12334	8	1.404
VINKENBURG C. J., 2017, J APPL BEHAV SCI	10.1177/0021886317703292	7	1.228
DESMICHEL P., 2020, ORGAN BEHAV HUM DEC	10.1016/j.obhdp.2020.01.002	7	1.849
ZHANG Z. B., 2015, AUST J PUBL ADMIN.	10.1111/1467-8500.12146	6	1.333

SO B. W. Y., 2015, AUST J PUBL ADMIN	10.1111/1467-8500.12139	6	1.333
BAILEY J., 2016, J IND RELAT	10.1177/0022185616639308	6	0.612

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