

Motivation as the Catalyst: Enabling Knowledge Sharing and Talent Management in Organizational Contexts

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Abstract. *The paper explores the complex relationship between motivation, knowledge sharing, and talent management within organizational contexts. Motivation acts as driver that determine individuals to embrace knowledge sharing behaviors, improves performance and enhances goal achievement. At the same time, motivation supports effective talent management, by contributing to attract, develop and retain high-potential employees, leveraging organizational performance and innovative behavior. Knowledge sharing is closely interconnected to talent management, enabling employee development and innovation, supporting organizations to develop their pipeline of talents, by driving continuous learning behaviors and improving employee engagement and retention. The paper analyzes the relations that authors found between the concepts of interest for our research (motivation, knowledge sharing, talent management), by using the scientific papers approaching these concepts in order to perform multiple bibliometric analyzes. We used documents indexed in both Web of Science and Scopus. Supported by the analyzed literature, the paper investigates the mechanism through which motivation influences knowledge sharing and how it influences talent management. The semantic connections found after performing the bibliometric analyses, along with the intensity of the links found between the analyzed topics and other related concepts, supports the conclusion that analyzed topics present strong interrelations and also that they are closely interconnected with: performance, trust, innovation, employee engagement, job satisfaction and turnover intention.*

Keywords: motivation, knowledge sharing, talent management, performance, trust, employee engagement, job satisfaction.

Introduction

In knowledge economy, knowledge became a key asset and, at the same time, a more and more valuable product. In these conditions, the role of talent management became even more critical for organizations, by supporting them in increasing their performance and innovative spirit, in order to insure their competitive advantage and sustainability. The role of talent management increased in the last years, view that the gap between talent offer and talent need increased, that knowledge became obsolete over-night and that new skills and abilities are imposed by digital transformation and sustainable development of the organizations. Embracing this new reality, organizations are obliged to use talents both from the external talent-pools and from their own employees with high proven or expected potential. In those conditions, effective talent management practices can't be implemented without the support of knowledge management and, especially, of knowledge sharing. Motivation serves as the driving force both for knowledge sharing and talent management implementation. On the whole, employees hesitate to share their knowledge by their own will and it is the role of the organization to enhance employees' willingness to share knowledge with colleagues, by motivating them to do so. Knowledge sharing is important not only because it sustains permanent learning and innovation, but also because is enhancing job satisfaction and

employee's engagement. Moreover, motivation represent the driving force for employees' willingness to use all their knowledge, abilities and skills, their perseverance and efforts in order to leverage their performance, their innovative capacity, to accomplish their tasks and to fulfill the organizational objectives. Based on the above remarks, we consider that it presents a real interest to explore the interplay between motivation, knowledge sharing and talent management.

The paper aims, by analyzing the literature with the help of bibliometric analysis, to identify the relationships between motivation (employee motivation), knowledge sharing and talent management. Determining these relationships could support organizations in effectively implementing talent management and, in particular, in adopting the appropriate talent management style.

Literature review

1. Motivation

Shanks, N. (2007, p.24), considers that motivation is "the act or process of providing a motive that causes a person to take some action". In the same vein, Certo, S.C. & Certo, S.T. (2016, p.320) defined motivation as "the inner state that causes an individual to behave in a way that ensures the accomplishment of some goal" and Amstrong, M. (2010, p.20) considers motivation to be "the force that energizes, directs and sustains behavior". Adair, J. (2006, p.89) mentioned that not only positive causes (money, promotion, recognition) can determine a certain action of people, but also negative ones (fear).

Locke, E.A. & Latham, G.P. (2004, p. 388) presented a more complex definition of motivation, which, in the authors' conception, is based on both the factors that impel action (the internal ones) and the factors that can stimulate the action (the external ones). The authors also considered that: "the three aspects of action that motivation can affect are: direction (choice), intensity (effort) and duration (persistence)" (Locke, E.A. & Latham, G.P., 2004, p. 388). Robbins, S.P. & Timothy, A.J. (2017, p. 247) defined motivation as the processes that justifies the intensity, direction, and persistence of the effort that a person is willing to put into achieving an objective, as well as Kanfer, R. (1998, p. 330) which considers that the study of motivation has the role of explaining and anticipating the objectives to be pursued by a person, representing the direction of action, as well as the intensity and the duration of the effort that the person is willing to allocate to achieve the proposed objective, especially in cases where, along the way, certain problems arise (intensity and duration of the action). Seo, M-G (2004, p.1) concludes, based on psychological and neurobiological theories of affective experience, that direction, intensity and perseverance are influenced, both directly and indirectly, by affective feelings at work.

Summarizing the previous definitions, Kispal-Vitai, Z. (2016, p. 2) considers that motivation is about how we can determine a person to start carrying out an activity and to continue it until its completion, so that the person reaches his goal.

In an attempt to show how motivation works at the level of organizations, Martin L. (2015, p. 3) shows that motivation determines employees to make the necessary effort to fulfill the tasks set by the employer, this effort being determined both by the task itself (intrinsic motivation) and by personal uncertainties and fears regarding the ability to perform certain activities in which employees desire to perform in order to earn self-esteem (introjected regulation), as well as the fact that they share the same values and objectives with the employer (identified regulation or due to rewards (external regulations)).

Yudhvir, M. & Sunita, M. (2012, p. 57) believes that employees work not only for financial rewards, but also for the goals they want to achieve, and achieving these goals sometimes matters

more than financial rewards, employer, work environment, working conditions, as well as products or services performed by the employer being also important factors for employees. The authors concluded that managers can boost motivation for higher performance, since the skills and experience of an unmotivated person are useless (Yudhvir, M. & Sunita, M., 2012, 62). The same idea can be found in the article written by Locke, E.A. & Latham, G.P. (2004, p. 388), who showed that motivation affects both the acquisition of people's abilities and skills, but also the extent to which they are willing to use them for performing their tasks. In the same vein, Rybníček, R., Berger, S. & Gutschelhofer, A. (2017, p. 444) considers that it is in the interest of companies to motivate their employees, since they represent a key factor in the competition between organizations, by generating superior performance, this being due to the fact that motivated employees are more attached to their work, assume the achievement of harder goals, the level of quality generated by them is higher, they are more willing to share knowledge and engage in training (Rybníček, R., Berger, S. & Gutschelhofer, A., 2017, 445).

Bratianu, C. (2021) considers that knowledge sharing results are better as there are higher motivational and trust levels, because knowledge sharing process is based both on the need of the user for new knowledge and on the willingness of the source to share those knowledge (Bratianu, C. & Garcia-Perez, A., 2023, p. 141). The willingness to provide knowledge, to listen and to absorb knowledge are increasing when a relation of trust exists between the source and the user in the opinion of a large number of authors (Bakker, M. et al., 2006, p.598).

2. Knowledge sharing

In this literature review we intend to analyze only intra-organizational knowledge sharing, without references to inter-organizational knowledge sharing. Bratianu, C. (2013) considers that knowledge sharing process, together with knowledge creation, acquisition, deployment, dissemination and transfer contribute to the management of the intellectual capital.

Knowledge sharing is considered to be one of the most important components of knowledge management. This idea can also be found in Zheng, T.T. (2017), the author considering that knowledge sharing represents that strategic resource which can lead to sustainable competitive advantage of organizations. Referring to the importance of knowledge sharing in the knowledge economy, Ahmad, F. (2017) highlighted that, besides the ability of this process to increase the competitive advantage of organizations, to decisively influence organizational learning and innovation capacity, knowledge sharing can also contribute to the creation of new knowledge, while helping employees strengthen their position within the organization. At the same time, Ahmad, F. & Karim, M. (2019, p. 213) present some impacts of knowledge sharing, from which we retain those that present interest for our research: increase task accomplishment and problem-solving efficiency, innovative work behavior, knowledge creation, absorptive capacity, innovative work behavior, trust, job satisfaction, attitude toward diversity and decrease intention to leave.

Bratianu, C. & Orzea, I. (2012) emphasizes the importance of knowledge sharing which, along with intergenerational knowledge transfer, contributes to the employees' knowledge retention within the organization when, for various reasons, they leave it.

Given the importance of knowledge sharing within organizations, improving knowledge sharing between employees and between them and the organization, motivating employees for knowledge sharing should be considered as priorities (Salehi, M. & Alanbari, S.A.S., 2023). This idea can also be found in Abdelwhab Ali, A. et al. (2019), the authors emphasizing that it is the role of organizations to find the motivational factors that determine employees to share knowledge

and create a culture of knowledge sharing. One of the factors that influence knowledge sharing (Malik, S., 2021, p.619) is emotional intelligence, which has a stronger influence on tacit knowledge sharing than on explicit knowledge sharing. The author also concludes that the relation between emotional intelligence and tacit knowledge sharing is stronger for persons with a longer work experience (Malik, S., 2021, p.629).

The importance of knowledge sharing is underlined by Bratianu, C., & Andriessen, D. (2008) which considers it to be a core competency in knowledge economy and defines it as “a voluntary process of an individual to transfer some of his experience and expertise to other people aiming at helping them to solve problems and increase their level of knowing”, being based “on trust and a certain perception of usefulness” (Bratianu, C., 2023, p. 103). Khawaldeha, K. & Alzghoulb, A. (2024, p. 1366) refers to “the different approaches and endeavors that facilitate the interchange of information, expertise, and profound understandings among individuals within an organization” and Okah, J., Teye, V. & Shoniregun, C. (2011, p.546) considers it necessary that knowledge sharing provide knowledge to all actors in an organization who need it, in a format useful to them. A similar definition can be found at Ipe, M. (2003) who consider knowledge sharing is “the act of making knowledge available to others within the organization”.

It should be mentioned that knowledge sharing contributes only to increasing the average level of organizational knowledge, without influencing the level of total quantity of knowledge (Bratianu, C., Agapie, A and Orzea, I., 2011, 239), representing an important process for management and organizational learning (Bratianu, C., 2010). Withal, in knowledge sharing the composition rule does not apply. So, if employer X detain only obsolete knowledge and employee Y has also the newest knowledge, it doesn't mean that together they have the newest knowledge (Bratianu, C., 2009, p. 419). This is the reason for which knowledge sharing is so important and it is very critical for organizations to try to attract or develop as many talents as possible, so that shared knowledge is as valuable as possible.

3. Talent management

We consider that the most complex and relevant definition of talent from the point of view of talent management implementation was given by Glen, C. (2007), who defines a talent as the sum of ability (education, training, experience, competence, skills, adaptability, flexibility, trainability), motivation (engagement, satisfaction, morale, stake, challenge, wellness, change) and opportunity (role, promoting prospects, learning opportunities, succession opportunities, stretch opportunities, system of identification, system of assessment, mentorship) (Glen, C., 2007, p.4).

The most used definition of talent management is that given by talent management Collings, D. G., & Mellahi, K. (2009). Authors defined strategic talent management as “activities and processes that involve the systematic identification of key positions which differentially contribute to the organization's sustainable competitive advantage, the development of a talent pool of high potential and high performing incumbents to fill these roles, and the development of a differentiated human resource architecture to facilitate filling these positions with competent incumbents and to ensure their continued commitment to the organization (Collings, D. G., & Mellahi, K., 2009, p. 304).

Other authors define talent management more on its HRM functions. Islam, S. (2019, p. 82) considers talent management as “a conscious and purposeful approach undertaken to attract, develop and retain people with the aptitude and abilities to meet current and future organizational needs” and Valverde, M., Scullion, H. & Ryan, G. (2013, p.1834) consider that talent management “includes all organizational activities for the purpose of identifying, selecting, developing and

retaining the best employees for the most strategic positions (those positions which contribute to sustainable competitive advantage”.

It is worth mentioning that Vardi, S. & Collings, D.G. (2023, p.661) state that although approaching an unified definition of talent management might seem attractive, it may not be the best way to advance research, as it may be a risk of missing the “valuable opportunities it suggests for an appreciation of diversity and the integration and synergy that comes with such an appreciation”. Therefore, the authors believe that emphasis should be placed on studying different aspects of talent, rather than seeking to find “best practice” or “contingent definition”.

Valverde, M., Scullion, H. & Ryan, G. (2013, p. 1833-1834) identified four trends to approach talent management in the literature (p. 1833-1834):

- The first trend can be considered as an attempt to replace the term HR by that of talent management, because it focuses on HRM functions, respectively recruiting, selecting and retaining of talents, developing leaders and succession planning;
- The second current is similar to that of succession management and HR planning (HR functions) and focuses on employee flows within organizations;
- The third approach is based on attributing quality of talent. The inclusive (egalitarian) approach considers that each employee should be considered as a potential talent, while the second approach believes that a distinction should be made between high and poor performers (exclusive or elite approach);
- The fourth approach states that the focus should not be on "A-performers" but on "key-positions", respectively those positions that are essential for the organization to be able to implement its development strategies.

More recent approaches relate talent management more than a mindset than as a series of practices, while other authors emphasize the importance of alignment of talent management to corporate culture and business strategy (Thunnissen, M., Boselie, P. & Fruytie, B., 2013, p.1834).

Son, J., Park, O., Bae, J. & Ok, C. (2018, p.1-2) notes the advantages of implementing talent management. Thus, certain works present the contribution of talent management to increasing innovation power and competitive advantage. Other papers present the positive contribution of talent management in terms of improving the results of organizations, among which: company attractiveness, business goal achievement, customer satisfaction, corporate profit, employee motivation and employee attitude. In terms of employee turnover, an organization that implements talent management correctly must go beyond the percentage calculations generally made at the level of human resources. Lowering annual turnover is not necessarily a good thing, if many of those who have left the organization are key employees or handle key positions within the organization. On the other hand, it is possible that the turnover reduction is based on a lack of jobs on the labor market and within the organization remains disengaged employee or even actively disengaged employees.

Methodology

The research aimed to investigate, by using the bibliometric analysis, if the specialized literature supports our research hypothesis:

H1 - there are strong interconnections between motivation, knowledge sharing and talent management;

H2 - either motivation, knowledge sharing and talent management are influenced directly by each other or by the intermediate of job attitudes.

At the same time, we investigate the influence that this interplay has on the personal and organizational outcomes.

We performed four bibliometric analyses, conducted on papers indexed both in Web of Science and in Scopus, databases considered to be two of the most comprehensive and valuable worldwide, using VOSviewer. The search for documents indexed in Web of Science was made using “All fields” and “Article title, Abstract, Keywords” was used for documents indexed in Scopus”. The export was made using “Full Record” for the papers indexed in Web of Science and “Citation information”, “Bibliographical information”, “Abstract & keywords” and “Include reference” from “Other information” for the papers indexed in Scopus. For both databases “Co-occurrence” was used as “Type of analysis” and “All keywords” as “Unit of analysis”.

Using “Motivation” as searched concept we found 455.216 documents in Scopus. View the huge number of documents indexed in Scopus on this topic, we used the following query, which returns a number of 19.881 documents:

“TITLE-ABS-KEY ("motivation") AND PUBYEAR > 2018 AND PUBYEAR < 2025 AND (LIMIT-TO (SUBJAREA, "BUSI") OR LIMIT-TO (SUBJAREA, "ECON") OR LIMIT-TO (SUBJAREA, "DECI")) AND (LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE, "ar") OR LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE, "cp") OR LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE, "ch") OR LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE, "bk")) AND (LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE, "English") OR LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE, "French"))”

We performed the bibliometric analysis, using VOSviewer. After using the option “Thesaurus”, we obtained, from a total number of 44.706 keywords a number of 241 keywords which met the threshold of minimum number of 30 occurrences of a keyword. We eliminate the keywords without interest for our research and we obtained a number of 150 keywords.

Using “Employee motivation” as searched topic we found 2.146 documents indexed in Scopus. We performed the bibliometric analysis, using VOSviewer, based on the exported documents and a number of 467 keywords which met the threshold of minimum number of 5 occurrences of a keyword were found from a total number of 6.781 keywords. After using the option “Thesaurus” and after we eliminate the keywords without interest for our research and we obtained a number of 231 keywords.

In order to validate the results with of the bibliometric analysis performed with documents exported from Scopus, we performed three bibliometric analyses using the documents obtained after performing the following queries:

- “Motivation” AND “Knowledge sharing” AND “Talent management” – 2 documents were obtained (we performed no bibliometric analysis);

- “Motivation” AND “Knowledge sharing” - 1.194 documents were obtained. After applying filters regarding document types, Web of Science categories and languages, we obtained a refined result containing 574 documents. We obtained, after using the option “Thesaurus” and after we eliminate the keywords without interest for our research, a number of 134 keywords which met the threshold of minimum number of 5 occurrences of a keyword, keywords used in our research.

- “Motivation” AND “Talent management” - 191 documents were obtained. After applying filters regarding document types, Web of Science categories and languages, we obtained a refined result containing 136 documents. We obtained, after using the option “Thesaurus” and after we eliminate the keywords without interest for our research, a number of 28 keywords which met the threshold of minimum number of 5 occurrences of a keyword, keywords used in our research.

1. Determining the relationships between motivation and talent management, by analyzing the specialized literature - Bibliometric analysis using articles indexed in Scopus

Source: Authors' own research.

The following link strengths were found between talent management, motivation and related topics.

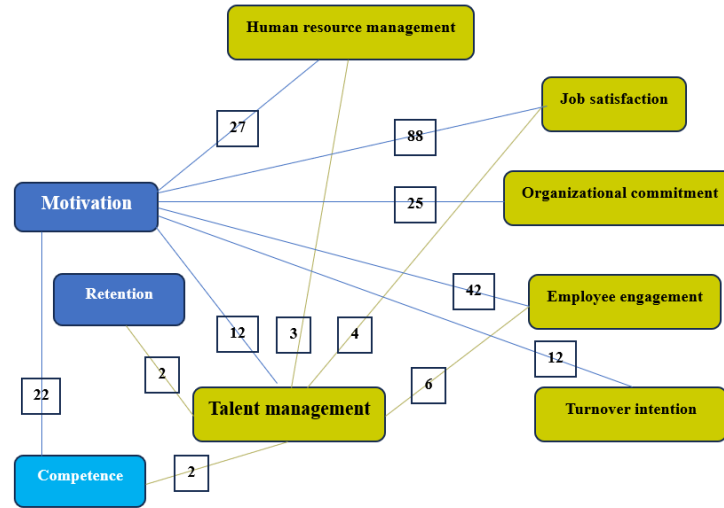


Figure 2. Link strengths between motivation/talent management and related concepts

Source: Authors' own research.

We found also strong link strength between motivation and performance (87), employee performance (36), job performance (29), innovation and knowledge sharing (40).

2. Determining the relationships between employee motivation and talent management, by analyzing the specialized literature - Bibliometric analysis using articles indexed in Scopus

We selected the area of interest for our research from the obtained network visualization.

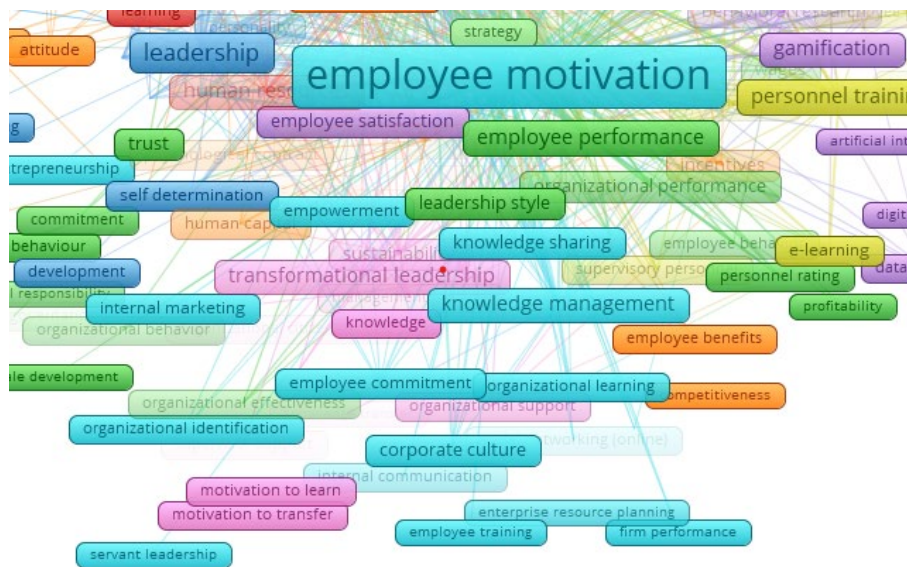


Figure 3. Employee motivation - Network visualization by VOSviewer

Source: Authors' own research.

Cluster number 6 (light blue) demonstrate the relationships between employee motivation and other concepts of interest for our research (knowledge sharing, knowledge management and

organizational learning), even if the link strengths with these topics are relatively low: 12 for knowledge management and 6 for knowledge sharing. In this cluster we found also concepts which are strongly connected to talent management: employee engagement, employee commitment and employee training.

Job satisfaction, another concept closely connected to talent management, demonstrates strong link strengths with employee motivation - 47. Strong link strength was found also between employee motivation and employee performance (39) and a relatively strong link strengths was obtained between employee motivation and performance (18).

3. *Determining the relationships between motivation, knowledge sharing and talent management, by analyzing the specialized literature - Bibliometric analysis using articles indexed in Web of Science*

We selected from the obtained network visualizations only the areas which are of interest for our research.

In cluster 2 (green) we can find, indicating the existence of semantic connections, together with motivation and knowledge sharing other concepts related to knowledge: knowledge creation, knowledge management, organizational knowledge, tacit knowledge. At the same time, in this cluster we can find other topics which support or are supported by motivation, knowledge sharing and talent management: innovation, organizational culture, trust. Strong link strengths were obtained between knowledge sharing and: performance (104), intrinsic motivation (63), innovation (42) (Figure 4).

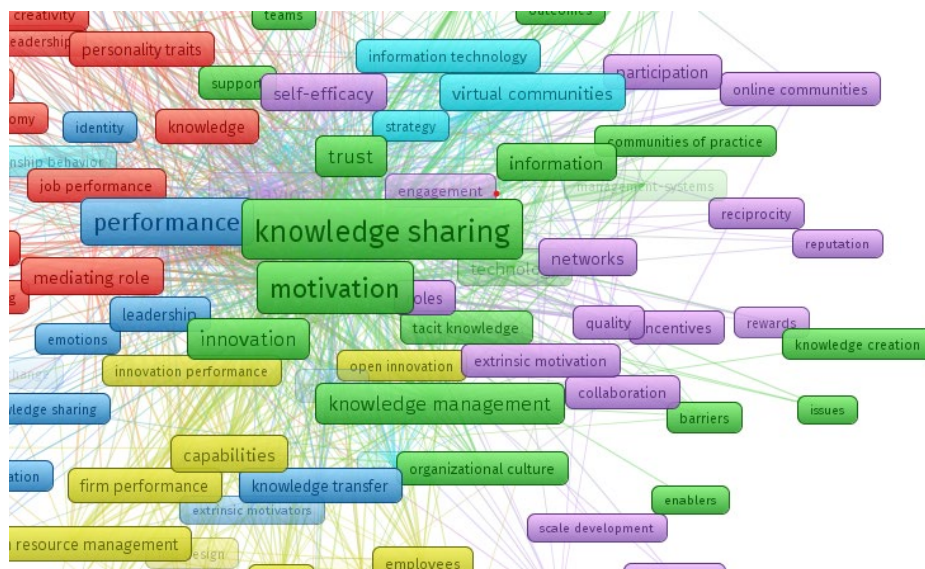


Figure 4. “Motivation” AND “Knowledge sharing” - Network visualization by VOSviewer

Source: Authors’ own research.

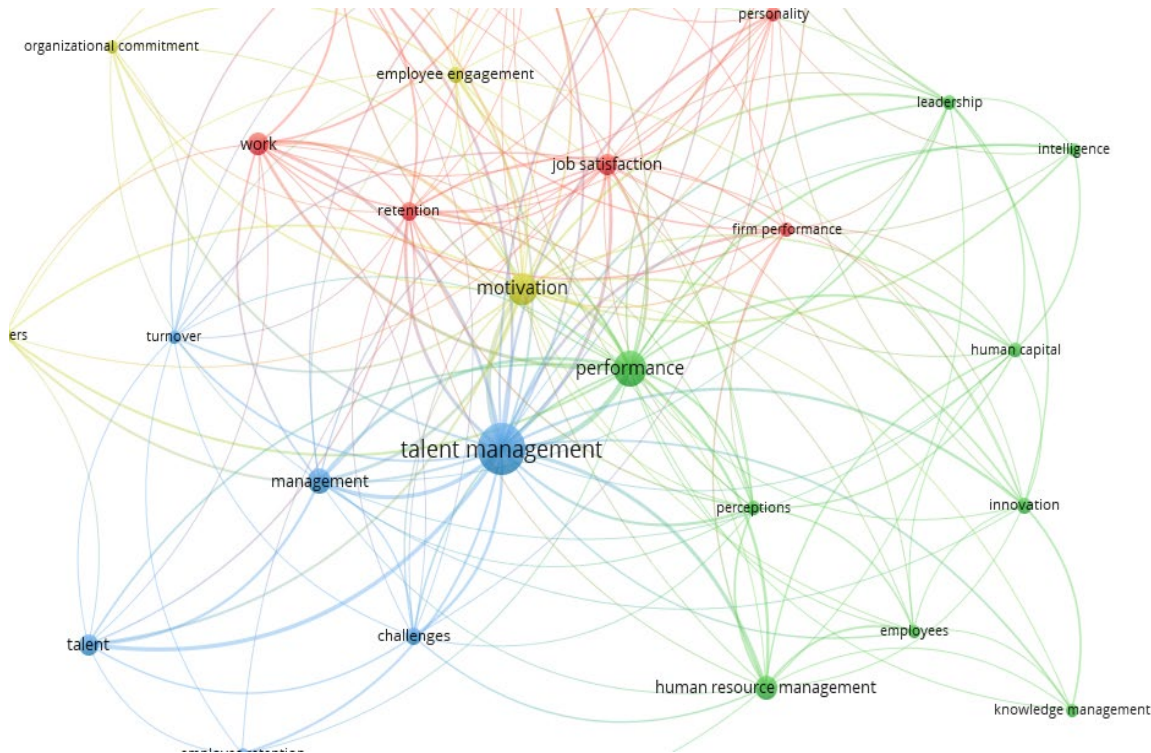


Figure 5. “Motivation” AND “Talent management” - Network visualization by VOSviewer

Source: Authors’ own research.

In cluster 4 (yellow) we can find, indicating the existence of semantic connections, together with motivation two concepts related to talent management: employee engagement and organizational commitment. In cluster 1 (red) we can find job satisfaction, another concept close related both with talent management and motivation and firm performance. Knowledge sharing was not found in any cluster, but in cluster 2 (green) knowledge management is found next to performance. Strong link strengths were obtained between performance and both motivation (10) and talent management (19) (Figure 5).

The bibliometric analysis performed on the documents obtained with the query “Knowledge sharing” AND “Talent management” (Figure 6) returned only three keywords. The network visualization identified relationships between talent management/knowledge sharing and performance.

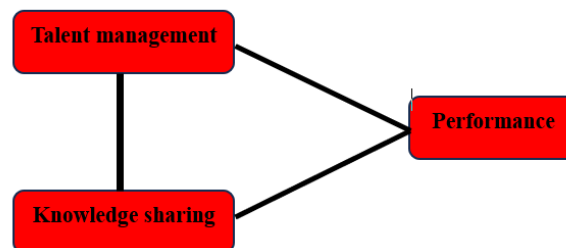


Figure 6. “Knowledge sharing” AND “Talent management” - Network visualization by VOSviewer

Source: Authors’ own research.

Performed bibliometric analyses have identified a small number of papers in which the authors analyzed the existing link between motivation (employee motivation) and talent management. On the other hand, bibliometric analyses have identified strong links between motivation and a number of job attitudes. The strongest link strength was identified between motivation and job satisfaction, between motivation and employee engagement and weaker link strengths between motivation and organizational commitment were identified. Previous literature reviews allowed us to identify significant relationships between talent management and job attitudes listed above, which leads us to affirm that employee motivation is a factor that organizations must take into account for an effective talent management implementation.

The fact that only a low link strength between motivation and turnover intention was identified can be explained by the fact that the latter concept was analyzed especially in relation to job satisfaction and organizational commitment. A low level of intention turnover allows organizations to retain their most valuable employees, which further demonstrates the interdependence between motivation and talent management.

Bibliometric analyses identified strong link strengths between motivation and performance, employee performance, job performance. Performance is an important factor that allows organizations to attract and retain valuable employees. At the same time, an effective talent management implementation supports performance.

An innovative workspace and knowledge sharing enable organizations to attract and retain talents and our research identified relatively strong link strengths between motivation and innovation/knowledge sharing.

Conclusion

The paper tried to attain two objectives: (1) to analyze the specialized literature in order to try to understand the concepts of motivation, knowledge sharing and talent management; (2) to perform bibliometric analysis in order to underline the interest paid by the researchers to the interplay between the analyzed topics and the influence produced on organizational practices and outcomes.

In order to achieve the first objective, we analyzed in order to identify the definitions given over time, for a better understanding of the terms. The paper also highlighted the antecedents of the analyzed topics and the importance that they present for the organizational practices.

Regarding the second objective, we can mention that the results proved the expectations we had after analyzing the specialized literature. We obtained evidences that between the researched topics exist interdependences and also that these concepts influence organizational outcomes like innovation and performance and jobs attitudes like job satisfaction, employee engagement and organizational commitment.

The obtained results advocate for further researches of motivation, knowledge sharing and talent management, view that their implementation in organizational practices contribute to the increase of competitive advantage, supports innovation, talent attraction, development and reduce turnover intention.

A limitation of the research could be considered that, given the very large number of published papers on motivation, only papers published in recent years (after 2018) were included in the research. On the other hand, this could be considered an advantage, the paper presenting the most recent opinions on the analyzed concepts, thus offering the possibility of future research. Further research could be done on the relationship between talent management and employee motivation, especially in terms of the adopted talent management style: exclusive or inclusive.

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