

Bibliometric Analysis: Reward Systems in Enhancing Employee Performance, Motivation and Innovation

Dragoş Stelian BOTOACĂ

Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Bucharest, Romania

botoacadragos19@stud.ase.ro

Abstract. *This paper presents a quantitative vision of the study of total rewards, through a bibliometric analysis. The main goal is to determine if the Total Rewards is really a subject of increasing interest, and to identify the most productive and influential sources of its scientific research. Data were collected from Web of Science, one of the most complete and prestigious databases. The paper found that the USA is where total rewards is most studied. Regarding the temporal evolution of publications and citations, exponential growth was observed from 2017, which together with the low numbers of citations and publications, highlight the youth of total rewards as a subject of study, and the high potential it has for future research. Finally, a compilation of the most relevant articles was made in terms of the number of citations. This is the basis for starting new studies that delve deeper into the theme. With the shown results, any researcher interested in the object of study can easily analyze the most relevant articles, and find the studies of the authors, entities, and countries with the greatest influence on the subject.*

Keywords: Total Rewards, Motivation, Innovation, Creativity, Performance.

Introduction

Rewards are the key factors in making an employee motivated and create employee performance among the employees. Today's organizations are reimagining rewards as not just tools to provide money or monetary incentives, but as total motivational systems focusing as much in intrinsic needs, creativity and innovation as on money.

Total rewards programs that include both financial and nonfinancial rewards are more essential than ever in engaging employees, motivating them to higher levels and improving overall business performance. These systems encompass a wide variety of components that include compensation, benefits, career development, recognition and work-life balance to form an integrated approach to rewarding employees. That combination of intrinsic and extrinsic rewards, not only focusing on financial incentives, is where more recent research has been pointing, with a focus on personalization, values alignment and sustainability. (Ajmal, Bashir, Abrar, Khan, & Saqib, 2015)

Self-Determination Theory and Agency Theory propose that rewards should match employees' needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness, thereby maintaining the balance of affiliation and organizational goals. (Deci, Olafsen & Ryan, 2017).

The purpose of this paper is to examine the transformative role of total rewards systems in developing innovation, performance and motivation. It also explores what part they play in attracting and nurturing a talented and dedicated team. Additionally, the paper investigates whether organization nowadays still rely on traditional rewards systems that are centered only on salary or if they are adopting a total rewards approach that put emphasis both on financial and non-financial rewards. The next sections of the paper further introduce the theoretical background, methodology of research and analyse the results. A section of conclusions and implications of the research follows.

Literature review

Integrating Motivation Theories in Total Rewards: Aligning Employee Incentives with Organizational Innovation

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) emphasizes the role of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in shaping employee behavior, asserting that individuals achieve their goals by satisfying the psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Applying total rewards framework, SDT posits that intrinsic motivation rewards, including meaningful work, opportunities for professional growth, and recognition, contribute to creativity and innovation by enabling employees to seek new ideas. On the other hand, extrinsic rewards, such as performance bonuses, promotions and perks, can be reinforcing if tied in with intrinsic motivators and should moderate the curse of inflating the creative bubble. Research show that the organizations need to balance between the extrinsic motivation that moves a goal to be reached and an intrinsic reward that triggers for a long-term engagement, particularly for a knowledge-based, creative role or job (Herbiyanti, Rahmawati, & Hardjowikarto, 2024).

Agency Theory, through the study between principals (employers) and agents (employees), focuses on the use of incentives to align self-interests in the presence of potential conflicts (Jensen & Meckling, 1976). A properly planned reward system keeps employees motivated to work in the best interest of the organization without suffocating their creativity because the extrinsic motivators, such as performance-based pay, minimizes the potential for self-serving behaviors. However, badly designed reward systems can generate short-termism, where employees focus on immediate gains rather than long-term innovation. Including autonomy-based incentives, such as innovation projects flexibility, can direct employees' efforts toward creative tasks, but within a strategic framework. The theoretical combination of SDT and the Agency Theory in Total Rewards devices (mutual reinforcement between monetary and non-monetary incentives that encourage the emergence of innovative ideas) supports that the employees 'motivation is maintained standing and in accordance with the priorities of the organization.

Contemporary reward practices are focused more on tailoring rewards and recognition and incorporating non-financial rewards that are aligned to the organization's values reflecting a growing number of employee expectations. Research has shown that today's workers desire more personal and professional rewards, whether they be financial incentives, development opportunities, or work-life balance (Mercer, 2024)¹. Different frameworks incorporating compensation, benefits, and work-life balance have been shown to increase motivation and retention, particularly in competitive markets (Fulmer & Li, 2022; Branham, 2020). Moreover, the decrease in financial incentives have led organizations to prioritize non-monetary rewards, such as recognition programs and career progression opportunities, which contribute to intrinsic motivation and long-term commitment (Al Darmaki et al., 2019).

Technology progression has also reshaped reward systems where digital means ensure prompt and customized deployment of rewards. AI-enabled gamification tools deliver personalized rewards to employees according to personal performance and preferences, creating a more engaging and motivating workplace (Mdhlalose, 2024; Fulmer & Li, 2022). Moreover, rewards are being more closely linked to an organization's purpose and core values, further binding employees with companies in more impactful ways. Value-driven incentives increase engagement, teamwork,

¹ Mercer, 2024 *Global Talent Trends Report* (New York: Mercer, 2024), 15, <https://www.mercer.com/assets/global/en/shared-assets/local/attachments/pdf-2024-global-talent-trends-report-en.pdf>.

and creativity by building trust and a sense of common purpose in teams, research suggests (Branham, 2020; Al Darmaki et al., 2019).

In cooperative environments, the original emphasis on the reward of individuals has been replaced by rewards for the whole group in the rationale that this promotes group success and collaboration. Evidence shows that these modes of practice are highly efficient in the innovation-oriented organizations where the common incentives would stimulate collaborative creativity and avoid unhealthy competition (Al Darmaki et al., 2019; Mdhlalose, 2024). Also, ethics have been incorporated in the design of reward systems with a significant emphasis on notions of equity and fairness- a move aimed at countering bias and environmental concerns. Equitable allocation of rewards balanced with financial sustainability is a major challenge to organizations that need to balance employee satisfaction over the long term with operational viability (Furnham & Chamorro-Premuzic, 2013; Fulmer & Li, 2022).

As businesses adapt to a changing workplace landscape, the Total Rewards proposition should encompass intrinsic and extrinsic motivators to keep innovation and alignment with business goals at the core. Using SDT to meet psychological needs and Agency Theory to connect goals, organizations can construct reward systems for individual motivation as well as strategic performance. As rewards continue to evolve based on personalization, technology, and ethics - the change is part of a broader trend toward practices of sustainable and engagement-focused talent management.

Methodology

Research objectives

The paper goal is to examine the academic growth and influence of Total Rewards through bibliometric analysis, assessing publication volume and citation impact while identifying key contributors and research trends. The objectives are twofold: (1) to determine whether Total Rewards is an emerging and expanding field by analyzing the evolution of publications and citations, and (2) to identify the most productive authors, institutions, and countries shaping its development. The study also investigates the application of Total Rewards in innovative terms, motivation and retention, by synthesizing the findings of the relevant literature with industry reports, measuring the shift from traditional pay-based models to the integrated financial and non-financial components.

Research tool and data

This study employs a bibliometric analysis to assess the most active and influential research areas within the field of Total Rewards by examining both the volume of publications and the number of citations. According to Podsakoff et al. (2008), despite certain limitations, bibliometric analysis allows for the categorization of research productivity based on publication counts while also measuring academic influence through citation metrics.

The research objectives of this study are twofold. First, it seeks to assess whether Total Rewards is an incipient and expanding research area by exploring the publication and citation focus over time. Secondly, it aims to find the most prolific authors, institutions, and countries involved in this research, based on which a more in-depth study can be conducted. The research, in addition to being bibliometric in nature, reflects on how organizations are practicing Total Rewards and values of employee transition away from the traditional pay-only reward approach to a coherent set of financial and non-financial exchange designed to enhance performance and employee retention.

The bibliometric study follows a structured process, starting from defining the research subject, the time period which is considered, and the keyword selection which should cover as wide as possible the content area. The second step is a selection of an appropriate academic database (Web of Science, in this case, a storehouse of high-quality scientific literature). The papers recovered are then categorized and studied according to standard bibliometric techniques, thus providing an objective assessment of productivity/influence. The last step will be to synthesize the results to determine the main drivers, organizations and countries that have been leading the way in the study of the role of total rewards.

The study is complemented by practical application of Total Rewards in driving innovation, motivation, and employee retention. Although no primary data was gathered, the study crystallizes learning from available literature and industry reports to portray how companies operationalize a Total Rewards strategy to improve performance and engagement of the workforce. This secondary analysis indicates the move away from the classical reward paradigm, largely based upon salary towards Total Rewards which include financial as well as intrinsic rewards.

By integrating bibliometric analysis with a review of real-world applications, the method guarantees an in-depth knowledge of Total Rewards from theory to practice. This integration of perspectives provides important insight into the academic importance of the subject, and its relevance in modern organizational context.

Research method

The current study obtains raw data from the Web of Science (WOS) database, owned by Thomson and Reuters. It is one of the most recognized databases worldwide in terms of scientific publications, both in number of publications and in number of citations and impact indices. Giving a unit to each author, institution, journal and country, for each publication registered in the WOS, this paper aims to give an overview of the most productive and influential authors and institutions in our field of study.

Since this study focuses on Total Rewards, this will be the search criteria that will be used in the “Web of Science Core Collection” database included in the Web of Science. As for the time criterion, the entire range available from the beginning of time to the year 2024. The research provided 110 results using the string search “TITLE: “(total rewards)” in the Web of Science for the “Timespan: 1900-2024” and the Indexes = SCI-EXPANDED, SSCI, ESCI, CPCI-S, CPCI-SSH, BKCI-SSH).

The types of publication taken into account were Articles and Review Articles using the refine option “DOCUMENT TYPES: (ARTICLE OR REVIEW)”, a total of 79 results were thus obtained through R Studio / Bibliometrix.

Based on the reviewed literature and analyzed reports, I propose the following research assumptions:

A1: The volume of academic publications and citations on Total Rewards has grown significantly in recent years, indicating increasing academic interest and the evolving importance of this field in organizational studies.

A2: Organizations that design Total Rewards packages, integrating both financial and non-financial incentives, experience higher levels of employee motivation, innovation, and retention compared to those relying only on traditional salary-based compensation package.

A3: The United States and a select group of leading institutions and scholars contribute the most to Total Rewards research, thus driving the academic conversation and driving how it is ultimately disseminated through global organizations.

Results and Discussion

The results of the study of the most influential sources are presented, depending on the number of publications and the number of citations. The intention is to determine which are the most productive (articles, journals, authors, entities and countries) research focuses (with the largest number of publications) and influential (with the highest number of citations).

Analysing the Journals in which the topic “Total Rewards” was published and looking at the WOS statistical data on their publication count and citation count, Figure 1 was prepared. It is clear that “JOURNAL OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT” was the most productive journal in the area of “Total Rewards” until 2024, with a total of 9 publications.

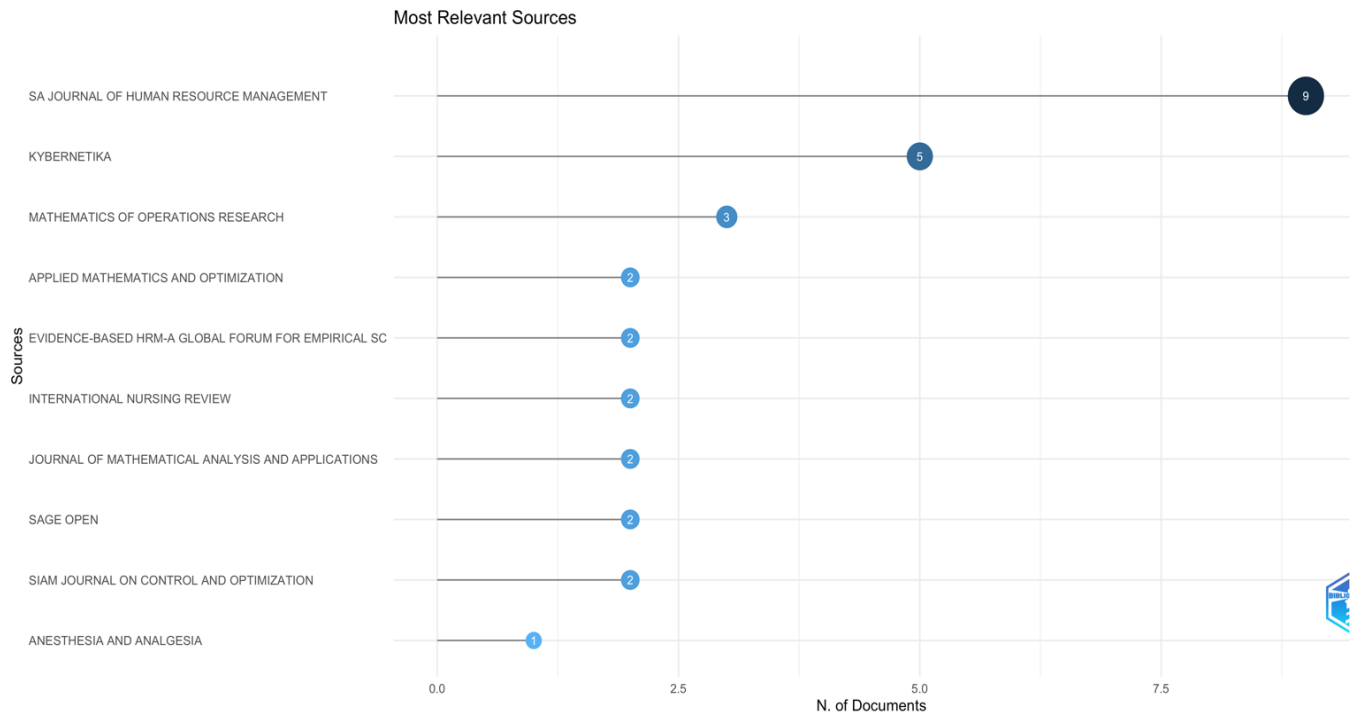


Figure 1. The 15 most Influential Journals on Total Rewards

Source: Own research, with analysis and visualization using *Bibliometrix* (version 3.2.0).

Upon examining the number of publications, it is evident that, in addition to the *Journal of Human Resource Management* with 9 publications, *Kybernetika* and *Mathematics of Operations Research* are also among the leading sources in terms of relevance.

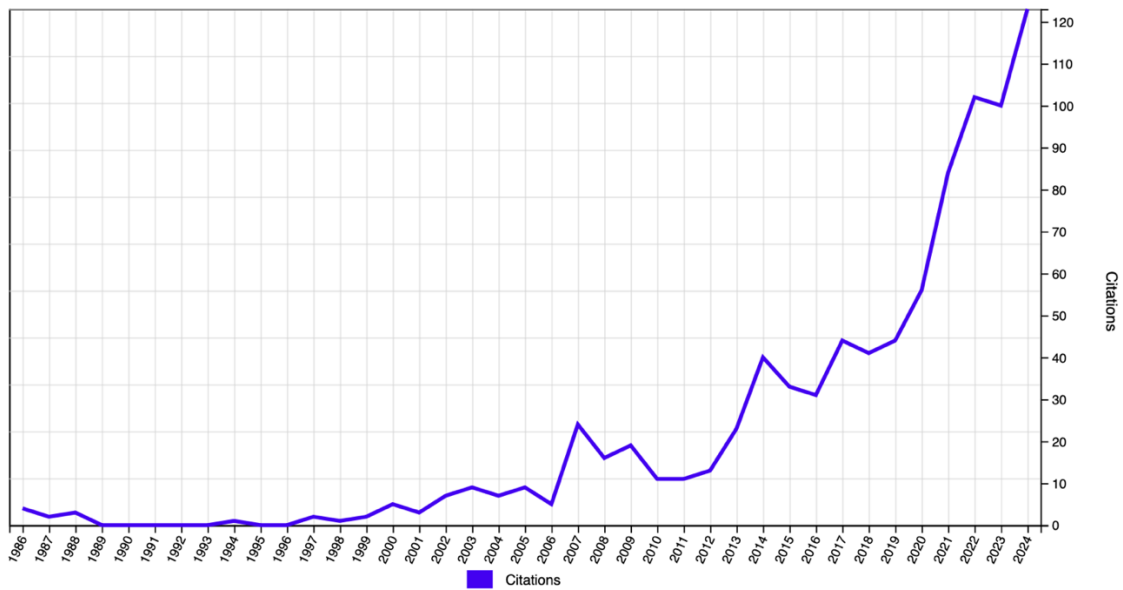


Figure 2. Number of annual citations in Total Rewards in Web of Science

Source: Citation Report Publications Table – Web of Science.

The sum of the Times Cited is 875 from the beginning until 2024. A graphic study was then elaborated to verify the temporal evolution of the publications and citations. In Fig. 2 we can see the annual number of citations on Total Rewards, and in Fig. 3 the annual number of publications.

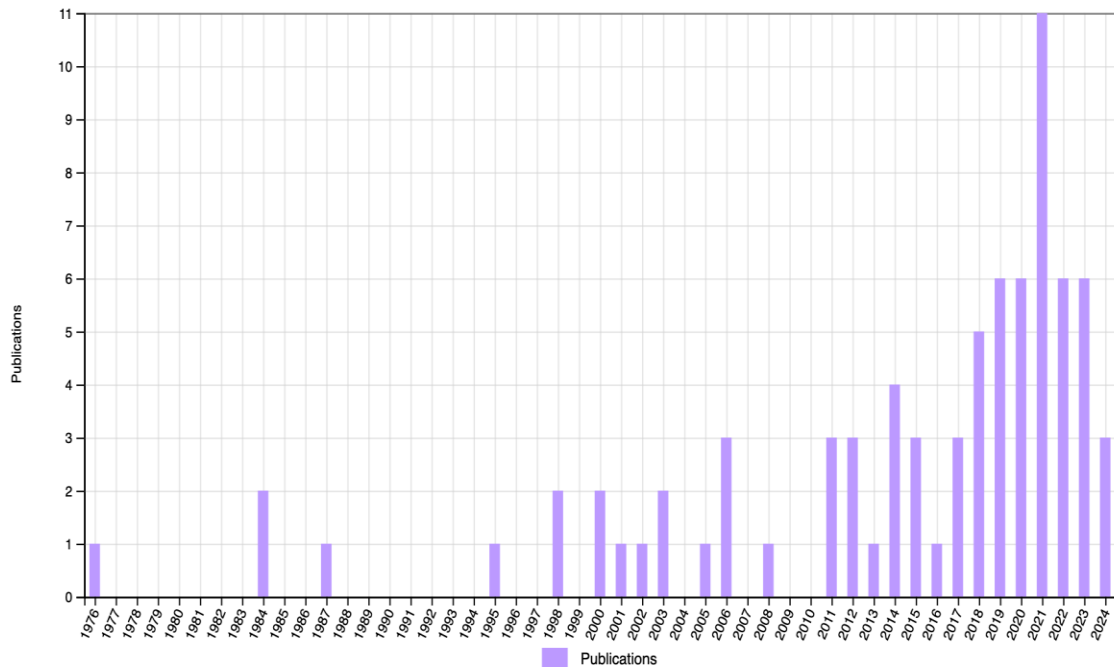


Figure 3. Number of annual publications about Total Rewards in Web of Science

Source: Citation Report Publications Table – Web of Science.

Following the initial analyses of journal productivity and influence within the field of Total Rewards, it becomes evident that both the number of publications and citations remain relatively low compared to bibliometric studies in other research domains. To study the growth of publications and citations over time, a graphic analysis was performed. The annual number of citations on Total Rewards is shown in *Figure 2*, and the annual number of publications is presented in *Figure 3*. In total, 79 publications were identified. The initial point of interest is that scholarly interest in Total Rewards has grown steadily since the time of its first known reference in 1986. A notable rise in citations began in 2007, with 24 citations that year, followed by exponential growth from 2017 onward, reaching 44 citations and peaking at 123 annual citations in 2024. Similarly, the trend in annual publications (*Figure 3*) reflects a growing interest in the field. The early period, up to 2006, was characterized by minimal activity, followed by a phase of gradual growth. A noticeable increase in the number of publications was observed from 2018, with five publications recorded, culminating in a significant surge in 2021, with 11 annual publications.

Both *Figures 2 and 3* illustrate the relative youth of the field. In both cases, a clear turning point is observed in 2017, marking the beginning of exponential growth in scholarly engagement. Prior to this period, contributions to the field were limited. This phenomenon accounts for why productivity and influence indicators of many of the tables shown throughout this research are below those in more mature research fields. To further point out, *Table 1* presents the temporal distribution of citations. *Table 1* reveals that most citations occurred between 2017 and 2024, with most publications receiving fewer than 20 citations. These results support the preliminary research hypothesis that *Total Rewards* remains an emerging research field, characterized by relatively few publications and citations when compared to more developed fields.

As a basis for further studies on Total Rewards, it is interesting to detect the most influential articles on the subject so far. For this reason, *Table 2* was constructed, where the articles with the most citations are ranked, also calculating the citations per year to have a relative indicator that allows us to compare the influence of the article regardless of the year it was published. The most cited Total Rewards paper was published in 1995 by Ittner et al., followed by another paper published in 2003 by Neumayer et al.. The early mentioned articles should therefore be considered the most influential Total Rewards studies.

It is interesting, to also consider the relative number of citations per year, as a relative measure of the influence of the papers, which means the most influential paper was published in 2022 by Tarigan et al., Followed again by the one published in 2018 by Gulyani et al., highlighting the growing interest in *Total Rewards* in recent years.

Table 1. General citation structure in Total Rewards research in WOS

Citations	All time		2017-2024	
	Numbers of papers	%Papers	Numbers of papers	%Papers
>100 citations	1	1,27%	0	0,00%
>50 citations	2	2,53%	0	0,00%
>20 citations	7	8,86%	2	4,35%
<=20 citations	69	87,34%	44	95,65%
Total	79	100,00%	46	100,00%

Source: Authors' own research

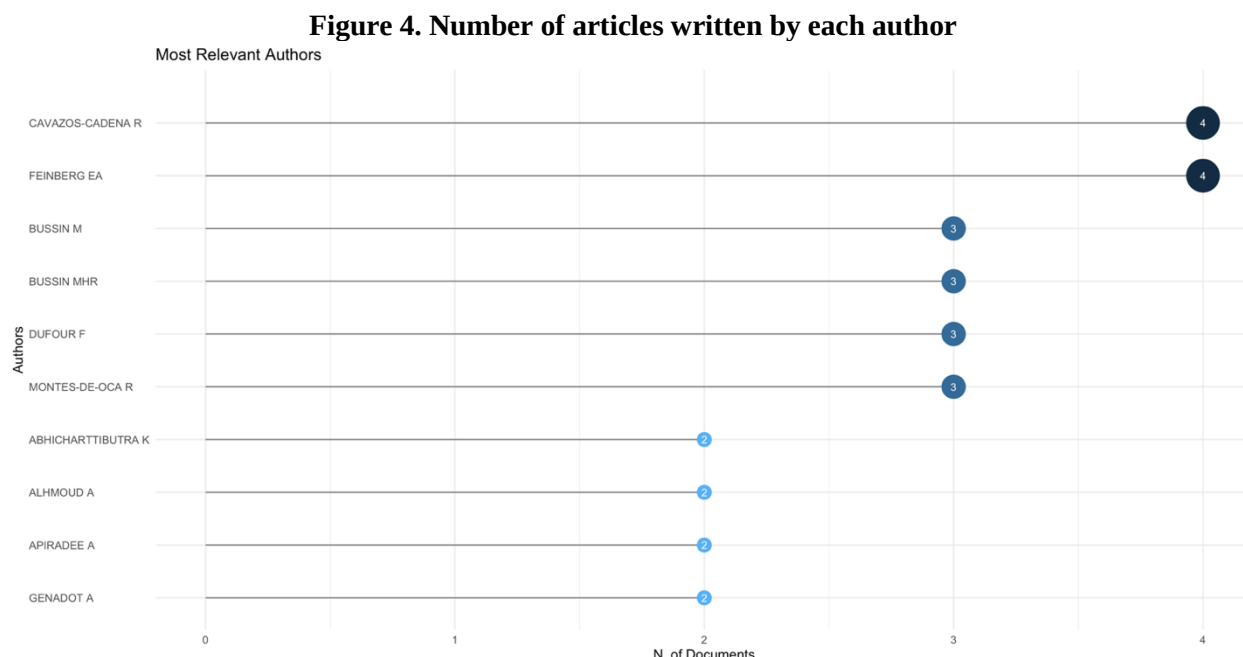
Table 2. The 30 most cited papers in Total Rewards

Journal	Title	Author/s	Year	TC	C/Y
Journal of Accounting Research	Total quality management and the choice of information and reward systems	Ittner, CD; Larcker, DF	1995	125	4,17
Human Rights Quarterly	Is respect for human rights rewarded? An analysis of total bilateral and multilateral aid flows	Neumayer, E	2003	61	2,77
Journal of Arthroplasty	Risk Versus Reward: Total Joint Arthroplasty Outcomes After Various Solid Organ Transplantations	Ledford, Cameron K.; Watters, Tyler Steven; Wellman, Samuel S.; Attarian, David E.; Bolognesi, Michael P.	2014	51	4,64
Journal of Organizational Change Management	The role of the reward system for a total quality management based strategy	Allen, RS; Kilmann, RH	2001	48	2
Cross Cultural Management-an International Journal	Fostering expatriate affective commitment: a total reward perspective	Tornikoski, Christelle	2011	35	2,5
Evidence-Based HRM-a Global Forum for Empirical Scholarship	Total rewards components and work happiness in new ventures The mediating role of work engagement	Gulyani, Gaatha; Sharma, Tanuja	2018	32	4,57
Mathematics of Operations Research	Splitting Randomized Stationary Policies in Total-Reward Markov Decision Processes	Feinberg, Eugene A.; Rothblum, Uriel G.	2012	28	2,15
Sa Journal of Human Resource Management	Total rewards: A study of artisan attraction and retention within a South African context	Schlechter, Anton; Faught, Charl; Bussin, Mark	2014	27	2,45
Research-Technology management	Total rewards: Good fit for tech workers	Rumpel, Steven; Medcof, John W.	2006	22	1,16
Sage Open	Total Rewards and Employee Retention in a Middle Eastern Context	Alhmoud, Ayman; Rjoub, Husam	2019	21	3,5
Evidence-Based Hrm-a Global Forum for Empirical Scholarship	Total rewards to enhance employees' intention to stay: does perception of justice play any role?	Rai, Alka; Ghosh, Piyali; Dutta, Tanusree	2019	20	3,33
Relations Industrielles-Industrial Relations	An Analysis of the Relation between Personality and the Attractiveness of Total Rewards Components	Vandenberghe, Christian; St-Onge, Sylvie; Robineau, Evelyne	2008	20	1,18
Sa Journal of Human Resource Management	Retention preferences and the relationship between total rewards, perceived organisational support and perceived supervisor support	Smit, Wilmien; Stanz, Karel; Bussin, Mark	2015	19	1,9
Or Spektrum	THE BAD MATCH - A TOTAL REWARD STOCHASTIC GAME	THUIJSMAN, F; VRIEZE, OJ	1987	19	0,5
Journal of Asia Business Studies	Total reward system, job satisfaction and employee productivity on company financial performance: evidence from Indonesian generation z workers	Tarigan, Josua; Cahya, Jordan; Valentine, Albert; Hatane, Saarc; Jie, Ferry	2022	17	5,67

Journal	Title	Author/s	Year	TC	C/Y
Sa Journal of Human Resource Management	Total rewards and its effects on organisational commitment in higher education institutions	Mabaso, Calvin M.; Dlamini, Bongani I.	2018	17	2,43
Sa Journal of Human Resource Management	Total rewards that retain: A study of demographic preferences	Pregnotato, Monica; Bussin, Mark H. R.; Schlechter, Anton F.	2017	17	2,13
Labour Economics	Total Reward and pensions in the UK in the public and private sectors	Danzer, Alexander M.; Dolton, Peter J.	2012	17	1,31
Organizational Dynamics	Creating a new employment deal: Total rewards and the new workforce	Lawler, Edward E., III	2011	16	1,14
Frontiers in Psychology	Relationship Between Total Rewards Perceptions and Work Engagement Among Chinese Kindergarten Teachers: Organizational Identification as a Mediator	Ji, Dongying; Cui, Li	2021	15	3,75
Sa Journal of Industrial Psychology	The impact of a total reward system of work engagement	Hoole, Crystal; Hotz, Gabi	2016	15	1,67
Sa Journal of Human Resource Management	Total rewards strategy for a multi-generational workforce in a financial institution	Bussin, Mark; van Rooy, Dirk J.	2014	15	1,36
Journal of Applied Probability	On the total reward variance for continuous-time Markov reward chains	Van Dijk, Nico M.; Sladky, Karel	2006	15	0,79
Neurocomputing	A partial policy iteration ADP algorithm for nonlinear neuro-optimal control with discounted total reward	Liang, Mingming; Wei, Qinglai	2021	14	3,5
Journal of Mathematical Analysis and Applications	Nonatomic total rewards Markov decision processes with multiple criteria	Feinberg, EA; Piunovskiy, AB	2002	14	0,61
Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior	Compensation, Benefits, and Total Rewards: A Bird's-Eye (Re)View	Fulmer, Ingrid Smithey; Li, Junting	2022	12	4
Sage Open	Does Generation Moderate the Effect of Total Rewards on Employee Retention? Evidence From Jordan	Alhmoud, Ayman; Rjoub, Husam	2020	12	2,4
Frontiers in Neurology	Decreased Functional Connectivity in the Reward Network and Its Relationship With Negative Emotional Experience After Total Sleep Deprivation	Zhang, Ying; Dai, Cimin; Shao, Yongcong; Peng, Jiayi; Yang, Yan; Hou, Yanhong	2021	10	2,5
Computers & Industrial Engineering	Optimally solving Markov decision processes with total expected discounted reward function: Linear programming revisited	Alagoz, Oguzhan; Ayvaci, Mehmet U. S.; Linderroth, Jeffrey T.	2015	9	0,9
Sa Journal of Human Resource Management	A total rewards framework for the attraction of Generation Y employees born 1981-2000 in South Africa	Bussin, Mark H. R.; Mohamed Padayachee, Keshia; Serumaga-Zake, Philip	2019	8	1,33

TC Total Citations; C/Y – Citations per year

Source: Own research, with analysis and visualization using *Bibliometrix* (version 3.2.0).



Source: Own research, with analysis and visualization using *Bibliometrix* (version 3.2.0).

The following ranking was developed based on the number of publications by authors who have conducted research on *Total Rewards*. The results of this analysis are presented in Figure 4. This study highlights that the authors that most contributes to this field are Cavazos Cadena R. from Mexico and Feinberg Eugene from the United States. Each of these researchers has contributed four publications on the topic of *Total Rewards*, highlighting their significant presence in this area of study. In addition, the bibliometric analysis confirms research assumption A3, which states that the United States and a small number of institutions and scholars contribute the most to *Total Rewards* research, contributing to academic debate and influencing professional practice in organizations globally. With plenty of U.S.-based research and researchers in the area, it's clear that the nation has been and continues to be influential in the development of *Total Rewards* research and its application in organizations worldwide.

An increase in the number of articles published around the field of *Total Rewards* can be observed. It is a multidisciplinary field that encompasses elements of finance, technology, business, entrepreneurship meaning that it is studied in different fields of knowledge and that its results have a clear application to companies. A bibliometric analysis was conducted to detect and assess which are the focuses of greatest productivity (measured in number of publications) and of greatest influence (measured in number of citations). This study aims to justify the interest in “*Total Rewards*” as an object of study, both for researchers and for enterprises. After the bibliometric study of *Total Rewards*, having reviewed the publications and citations that appear in WOS, compared to the results obtained in other bibliometric studies on more mature topics in the field of research, one of the most important general conclusions is that it is a very young and underdeveloped subject of study, still with a low number of publications and citations, but which since 2017 has shown a growing interest that has led to relevant growth as a research topic, hence the first research assumption (A1) is validated. In my view, the growing interest in the topic of total rewards stems from companies' efforts to retain their top talent. Nowadays, companies and

institutions offer much more than a salary package and are more creative (variable, benefits, voucher & meal tickets, learning platforms, etc.). It's important for organizations to know what makes their employees tick to keep morale high and the staff retention level.

The results of numerous studies reveal that organizations which adopt a Total Rewards approach, that is, reward systems that extend beyond monetary benefits to encompass non-monetary rewards, such as on-the-job skills development and personal growth, to encourage higher levels of employee motivation and innovation, not to mention retention, compared to those that rely solely on traditional, salary-based pay models. One of the themes that resulted from the bibliometric analysis is the relationship between rewards and the motivation, performance, and innovation of employees, as well as their impact on the effectiveness of organizations. It's well-reported in study after study that rewards are primary motivators of employee engagement. From a motivational perspective, SDT (Deci & Ryan, 2017) acknowledges the role of intrinsic and extrinsic motivations in relation to stimulating employee job motivation. Extrinsic rewards, such as bonuses or promotions, are matched by the intrinsic rewards of autonomy, personal development opportunities, and interesting work. As associations craft rewards strategies that reflect employees' inner desires, they generate a culture of involvement and commitment. In terms of performance, extrinsic rewards related to performance outcomes are equally posited to facilitate an alignment of employees' interest with the organizational goals in Agency Theory (Ajmal et al., 2015). Performance-based pay arrangements help to improve task performance and goal accomplishment, while preserving company compatibility. In addition to that, incentives are extremely important for innovative thinking. Research by Herbiyanti et al. (2024) shows intrinsic motivation mediated by creative self-efficacy, motivates innovative behaviors for employees. Organizations that recognize and reward employees with learning, recognition and self-development opportunities create environments in which employees will be willing to take risks and be innovative.

Additionally, there is empirical evidence in support of these claims. According to previous studies, internal rewards substantially increase employee motivation, implying that non-monetary incentives can play a crucial role in improving performance among employees (Manzoor et al., 2021). Research on employee retention equally reveals that an effective reward system that encompasses both financial and non-financial rewards, promotes higher retention rates, thus reinforcing the importance of a meticulously designed Total rewards approach (Aziz et al., 2024). Furthermore, studies investigating the association between rewards and employee creativity indicate that both monetary and non-monetary rewards have strong positive effects on encouraging innovation, which implies the importance of combining financial and non-financial incentives in nurturing creative performance (Yue Yang et al., 2020). These findings collectively provide strong empirical evidence to support the proposition that a well-connected Total Rewards system is more effective than traditional pay-based models to facilitate employee engagement, innovation, and long-lasting retention (i.e., A2 self-validates with secondary data). Through a mix of financial and non-financial rewards, an organization can be more successful in engaging a motivated and high performing workforce that is more innovative, and ultimately better able to deliver sustainable competitive advantage.

The scientific significance of Total Rewards lies in its power to integrate multiple disciplines and address one of the most pressing challenges organizations face today: how to attract, motivate, and retain talent in a highly competitive and dynamic labor market. Total rewards packages go beyond traditional compensation models to incorporate benefits, career development

opportunities, and work-life balance programmes, making them essential for developing sustainable employee engagement and organizational success.

In addition, the increased emphasis on the well-being of employees, along with the rise of knowledge-based economies worldwide, further emphasizes the need for understanding the concept of Total Rewards. Ogbonnaya and Messersmith (2019) suggest that HR practices, such as rewards, lead not only to individual performance but also to firm Performance Health, creating a win-win for both employees and employers. The bibliometric analysis underlines that businesses need to consider Total Rewards as strategically driven rather than a transactional process. The findings highlight the importance of an integrative perspective towards rewards that aligns with employees' preferences and organizational goals. Corporations can tailor systems that increase retention, engagement, and productivity once they know how rewards, motivation, and innovation are all connected.

Conclusion

This paper provides a *quantitative vision* of Total Rewards research through *bibliometric analysis*. The results confirm that Total Rewards is a *subject of increasing interest*, with *exponential publication growth since 2017*, but it remains a *young research field* with great potential for future studies. The *USA emerges as the most active country* in this field, both in terms of publication volume and scientific influence.

As to limitations, this study is restricted to the WOS Core Database Collection and relies on specific search criteria (keywords/titles) selected by the author. Although the WOS is a well-regarded scientific publication source, reliance on alternative databases such as Scopus or Google Scholar could have provided additional views or broader themes. Future research could then extend this research in other databases, use advanced citation analysis, or use specific cluster of terms or geographic regions to try to uncover the broader effects of Total Rewards.

The results also support the research hypotheses, or that Total Rewards is a developing cross-disciplinary field that deserves more academic and research attention. Total Rewards as a concept is gaining popularity in the corporate world where employers want to attract the right talent, motivate and provide an environment of innovation. This bibliometric study provides a strong foundation for future research, highlighting the need for interdisciplinary approaches to explore Total Rewards as a key element of workforce management. This is an area where researchers can expand upon these findings, incorporating larger datasets and optimizing analytical approaches to enhance our knowledge in this area.

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