

# Job Performance Analysis: Scientific Studies in the Main Journals of Management and Psychology from 2006 to 2015

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In the field of organizational psychology, individual job performance is a central concept (Sonnentag & Frese, 2002). Despite its fundamental importance in most decisions involving human resources, there is still no comprehensive theory of job performance (Campbell, 1990; Deadrick & Gardner, 2008). In the mid-1970s researchers began the task of clarifying and broadening the job performance concept (Campbell, 1990), and the advances have focused mainly on the specification of predictors and processes associated with individual performance (Sonnentag & Frese, 2002).

Job performance can be defined as all the behaviors employees engage in while at work. Individual job performance is a relevant outcome measure of studies in the occupational setting; it refers to how well someone performs at his or her work. Aspects such as job-specific task proficiency, behavior related to core tasks of the job, the level of commitment to core tasks, and general work behavior are becoming important factors related to job performance. To understand developments within the literature of job performance, some questions should be considered: What is the recent scenario of research on job performance in the main management and psychology journals? How has job performance been studied? What are the unexplored themes? Based on these issues, we want to study how organizational researchers understand job performance and what types of studies have been developed.

The aim of this article is to offer an overview of studies related to job performance, presenting the results of a bibliometric review of empirical studies appearing in the principal journals of management and psychology (according to the Journal Citation Reports [JCR] index) in the period 2006–2015. We want to understand how researchers are studying job performance (e.g., which methods are employed, which variables relate to performance, and how the construct has been defined). This review is particularly relevant given that there is an absence of reviews during the past 10 years. In addition, the adoption of management, applied psychology, and business journals is justified because they are areas that traditionally publish articles on organizational behavior, the field of study into which the variable job performance is inserted. Our study analyzed 175 articles that investigated the theme *job performance*. The results showed the importance of performance in organizational studies, especially in understanding which factors (or variables) contribute to an increase in job performance. Therefore, it is recommended that more research be conducted to further develop this field of study, with our research being a step toward comprehending the job performance construct.

This review is particularly relevant given that a bibliometric analysis was employed. Bibliometrics plays an important role in the analysis of the scientific production of a knowledge area, as it portrays the behavior and development of the theme by pointing out theoretical and empirical gaps and quantifying the existing features in the studies (Pritchard, 1969; Tague-Sutcliffe, 1992). Therefore, the aim of this article is to offer an overview of studies related to job performance, presenting the results of a bibliometric review of empirical studies engendered in the principal journals of management and psychology, according to the Journal Citation Reports (JCR) index, in the period 2006–2015. We want to understand how researchers are studying job performance (e.g., which methods are employed, which variables relate to performance, and how the construct has been defined). The analysis conducted allowed the identification of gaps in the literature and the subsequent design of a research agenda.

## Literature Review

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Studies involving job performance have been frequent in the international literature, probably because this construct is characterized as a key dimension in the organizational psychology (Bendassolli, 2012; Sonnentag and Frese, 2002) of management and human resources management, among other areas related to the studies of organizational behavior. The use of econometric indicators to measure job performance has appeared in a substantial number of concentrated studies; however, some measures of job performance perception can be found in the literature. Such measures consider that the mental models that individuals build about their activity can favor their performance, influencing the planning processes and maximizing effectiveness (Bendassolli, 2012; Sonnentag & Frese, 2002).

Perhaps the main reason for the high degree of interest in the concept of performance lies in the multiple perspectives of this construct (Bates, 1999). There is a consensus among the authors in this field that whichever concept of performance is proposed, it is necessary to clarify whether it refers to behavioral aspects or to result-goal aspects (Campbell, 1990; Sonnentag & Frese, 2002). The behavioral aspect refers to what the individual does in the work situation, whereas the result aspect refers to the consequence or result of individual behavior. Importantly, performance results aspects depend on other factors beyond individual behavior and, as a rule, only the actions relevant to organizational goals are considered as performance (Sonnentag & Frese, 2002).

Thus, based on Sonnentag and Frese (2002), Coelho Jr., Borges-Andrade, Oliveira, and Pereira (2010) and DeNisi (2000), performance is inferred as a multidimensional concept and consists of individual, contextual (or situational), and control variables. There are some factors that

affect performance, considering that not just the individual characteristics (e.g., motivation and job satisfaction) should be considered for purposes of performance measurement. Task characteristics (the degree of knowledge and expertise required of individuals for the task) and working environment can influence performance at the individual level (Coelho Jr., 2009).

Sonnentag and Frese (2002) highlight that, when studied as a dependent variable, performance is commonly investigated through the prism of an individual approach to background variables. Lam and Schaubroeck (1999) explain that this habit may derive from the fact that organizations are concerned with improving the performance of individuals based on the recognition of their difficulties rather than on factors such as working environment and its influence on office design.

Therefore, according to Deadrick and Gardner (2008) and Bendasolli (2012), performance refers to an intentional act of individuals resulting in action guided by results, with a conscious purpose or prior motivation. Thus, job performance may be influenced by factors such as social, cultural, or demographic conditions as well as job conditions. Job performance can be influenced by several factors (organizational characteristics, work environment, and worker characteristics) of different natures. For Campbell (1990), performance refers to the action itself and not just its consequence or result. Effective performance is one that achieves the desired result, properly employing the mechanisms provided by the organization to achieve the task (Manning & Barrette, 2005).

As a multifaceted phenomenon performance, Arvey and Murphy (1998) emphasize the importance of individual and contextual factors in the work environment in the conceptual definition. However performance can be defined based on the nature of the work, and it is underpinned in the individual capacity of workers to adapt occupations that are constantly changing. Based on the conceptual grouping of individual job-performance dimensions found in the literature, Koopmans, Bernaards, Hildebrandt, Schaufeli, de Vet, and van der Beek (2011) identified four major dimensions: (1) execution of tasks, (2) contextual performance, (3) counterproductive work behavior, and (4) adaptive performance. Coelho Jr. (2009) and Sonnentag and Frese (2002) emphasize that performance is closely related to actions relevant to the achievement of organizational goals, so that not all behaviors expressed by individuals can be translated into performance, only those that are desired for the implementation of the office and are related to the duties and performance of tasks.

Individual job performance refers to behaviors enacted by an employee that are designed to meet organizational objectives. Individual performance also differs from group and organizational performance. However, some studies demonstrate that certain types of individual performance can contribute to performance results in units of analysis beyond the individual level, such as for groups and for organizations (Parker & Turner, 2002).

Sonnentag and Frese (2002) state that performance consists of skills and expertise applied in the job context in an implementation of a duty or task, or the way an individual acts in terms of efficiency and performance, culminating in achieving organizational results. It refers to a deliberate undertaking by the individual of an action that is guided by its outcome (i.e., an action that has a conscious purpose or prior motivation).

Job performance is essentially a person's behavior in the context of doing a task, but it is not always clear which behaviors are important performance components. Performance theories serve as valuable resources to guide us through this complexity. They provide a description of the critical components of performance that must be captured and considered to generate corrective feedback. General individual-performance theory has three determined factors: declarative knowledge, procedural knowledge, and skill. Performance is determined by the level of skills that the learner has (Salas, Rosen, Held, & Weissmuller, 2009).

## Method

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Consistent with the objectives of this research and in view of the list of existing journals in various databases, the 10 journals with the greatest impact factor indexes (JCR) in the areas of management, applied psychology, and business were chosen, areas that traditionally publish articles on "job performance." To calculate the impact factor of a journal, the number of citations received by articles published in the journal in the two years prior to the evaluation is divided by the number of articles published during the period. Some journals appeared simultaneously in two or in three categories; therefore, the final list of accessible journals totaled 23. Table 1 provides a list of the selected journals.

The search was focused on the titles, abstracts, or keywords with the following terms: "job performance," "individual performance," "work performance," and "individual job performance." In total, 175 articles were selected. To proceed with the bibliometric review of the articles, we used the following categories of analysis: journal name, year of publication, type of article, the most published authors on the journals during the time period investigated, measures used for job performance, and variables that relate to performance. For the articles classified as empirical studies, the following categories were also employed: research methods, data-collection methods, and data-analysis methods.

## Results

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In the search conducted in the journals selected for this article, we found that 12 journals published articles on the theme researched from 2006 to 2015. Of this total, one journal had 32% of all selected articles, with 56 articles published; five journals had between 16 and 22 articles,

**TABLE 1 LIST OF JOURNALS INCLUDED IN THE REVIEW**

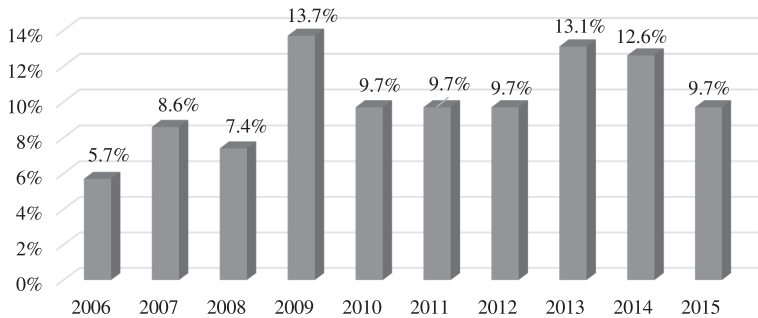
JOURNAL	IMPACT FACTOR (JCR)* (**2014 JOURNAL CITATION REPORTS®—THOMSON REUTERS, 2015)
<i>Academy of Management Review</i>	7,817
<i>Academy of Management Annals</i>	7,333
<i>Journal of Management</i>	6,862
<i>Management Information Systems Quarterly</i>	5,405
<i>Academy of Management Journal</i>	4,974
<i>Personnel Psychology</i>	4,540
<i>Journal of Operations Management</i>	4,478
<i>Journal of Applied Psychology</i>	4,367
<i>Organization Science</i>	3,807
<i>Journal of Information Technology</i>	3,789
<i>Organizational Research Methods</i>	3,525
<i>International Review of Sport and Exercise Psychology</i>	3,353
<i>Journal of Organizational Behavior</i>	3,262
<i>Journal of Counseling Psychology</i>	2,955
<i>Organizational Behavior and Human Performance/Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes</i>	2,897
<i>Journal of Sport &amp; Exercise Psychology</i>	2,593
<i>Journal of Occupational (and Organizational) Psychology</i>	2,480
<i>Family Business Review</i>	4,243
<i>Journal of Marketing</i>	3,819
<i>Journal of International Business Studies</i>	3,594
<i>Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science</i>	3,410
<i>Journal of Management Studies</i>	3,277
<i>Journal of Business Venturing</i>	3,265

representing 53.7% of the total production; and six journals had fewer than 10 articles published, which represents 14.3% of the articles selected. The data demonstrates that the *Journal of Applied Psychology* contributed one-third of the total production as well as the highest number of articles published in 2015 from the selected articles—four studies. The list of the publishing journals is given in Table 2.

The analysis of these 10 years (2006–2015) allowed us to observe how this field of study has been researched in recent years, the interest researchers have on this theme, and the distribution of articles over the years. Figure 1 shows that the distribution of 175 articles published has been steady over time, with an increase of articles in 2009, 2013, and 2014.

**TABLE 2 PUBLISHING JOURNALS**

JOURNAL	FREQ.	%
<i>Journal of Applied Psychology</i>	56	32.0%
<i>Personnel Psychology</i>	22	12.6%
<i>Journal of Organizational Behavior</i>	21	12.0%
<i>Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology</i>	18	10.3%
<i>Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes</i>	17	9.7%
<i>Journal of Management</i>	16	9.1%
<i>Organization Science</i>	9	5.1%
<i>Journal of Management Studies</i>	6	3.4%
<i>Journal of Academy of Marketing Science</i>	6	3.4%
<i>Organizational Research Methods</i>	2	1.1%
<i>Journal of Operations Management</i>	1	0.6%
<i>Academy of Management Annals</i>	1	0.6%

**FIGURE 1. ARTICLES PUBLISHED BY YEAR**

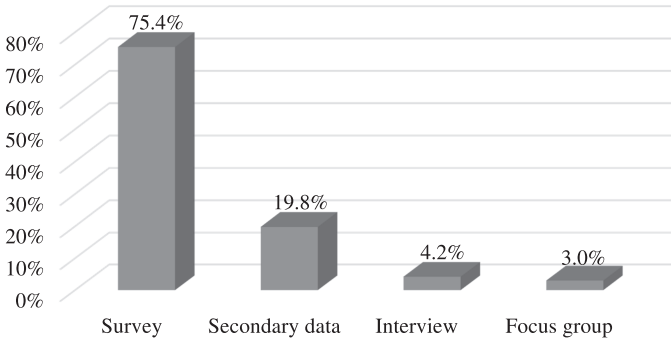
The 175 selected articles were published by 445 authors. Of this total, 379 were listed in only one article, 47 were listed on two articles, and 19 appeared on three or more articles. The top three publishing authors (independent of the position of authorship) were: Fred O. Walumbwa (6), Filip Lievens (5), and Adam M. Grant (4). These results show that a few authors have been consistently publishing studies on job performance in recent years. In addition, 4.7% of the articles were single authored, 29.7% had two authors, 33.7% had three authors, 20.3% had four authors, 7% had five authors, 3.5% had six authors, 0.6% had seven authors, and 0.6% had eight authors.

Regarding the types of the articles, 95.4% (167) of the 175 selected articles were empirical studies, 4% (7) were theoretical studies, and 0.6% (1) consisted of a literature review. In addition, there was only one literature-review article on the theme under consideration, which points to a lack of reviews during the recent past and indicates an opportunity for the development of new systematic literature reviews, such as bibliometric studies. Of the 167 empirical studies selected, 93.4% (156) chose quantitative research

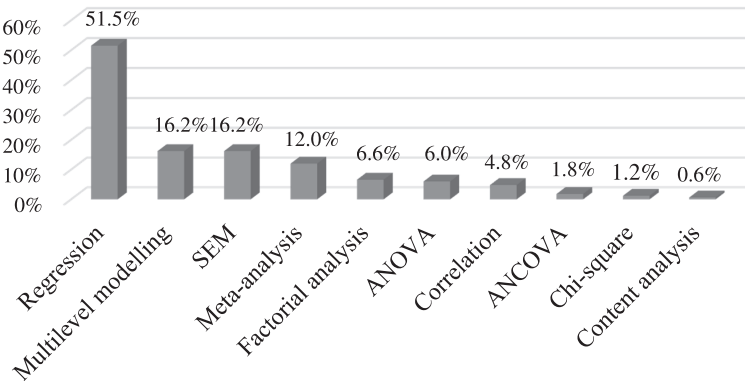
methods and 6.6% (11) used mixed methods (i.e., both quantitative and qualitative). None of the selected articles chose only qualitative research methods to develop a study related to job performance.

We also investigated the main research methods used for data collection. Most studies (126 articles, or 68.5% of the selected articles) chose surveys to collect the information necessary. Other methods, such as secondary data, interviews, and focus groups were also used but with lower frequency. Some studies also collected information using more than one method, such as survey and interview. That is why the sum of all the research methods used exceeds 100%. Figure 2 shows the methods for data collection used by the researches published from 2006 to 2015 and selected by this study.

Furthermore, this article investigated the main methods of data analysis used in the selected articles. Of the 167 empirical studies, 86 analyzed the data with regression techniques, 27 used multilevel modeling, 27 chose structural-equation modeling (SEM), and 20 used meta-analysis to analyze the data collected. Fewer studies used exploratory factorial analysis, chi-square, ANOVA, ANCOVA, GEE, or content analysis. These results confirm a preference for quantitative methods and models for investigating themes related to job performance. Figure 3 resumes the methods of data



**FIGURE 2.** DATA-COLLECTION METHODS



**FIGURE 3.** DATA-ANALYSIS METHODS

analysis used by the selected articles. The sum of the percentages exceeds 100% because some studies used more than one analysis technique.

In relation to the definition—both constitutive and operational—of performance, the results show a variety of concepts and measures, with a preponderance of empirical definitions. In the analyzed studies, most empirical definitions were based on output measures, mainly organizational results found in reports and organizational performance evaluations. In 37 manuscripts, it was not possible to identify explicit definitions of performance. Explicit theoretical definitions had little convergence among articles as well, but mostly they focused on behavioral aspects. Main themes identified were job/task performance and desired/perceived behaviors. Performance as the successful innovation implementation appeared in two theoretical definitions and three performance-measurement definitions. Counterproductive behavior appeared in three studies, and adaptive performance in one. Table 3 presents the main theoretical definitions found in our research.

Regarding measuring methods, most empirical articles adopted objective measures—for example, product sales, GPA and test scores, revenue obtained—and around 10% referred to subjective (behavioral) measures, and another 10% had a mix of objective and subjective measures. Regarding data source, most objective measures came from the organization's performance evaluation, whereas the most common sub-

**TABLE 3** SUMMARIZED THEORETICAL DEFINITIONS

THEORETICAL DEFINITION	AUTHORS
Job performance as employee behavior	Campbell, McCloy, Oppler, & Sager (1993)
Task performance as specific role-prescribed behaviors that contribute to the technical core of an organization	Borman & Motowidlo (1993)
Performance as a measure of innovation generated by individuals, defined as successful contributions to organizational outcomes; new ideas implementation	Criscuolo, Salter, & Ter Wal (2014); Leung, Huang, Su, & Lu (2011)
Task performance is a form of in-role performance and refers to the particular duties that employees are hired to perform. Contextual performance is a form of extra-role performance that is defined as activities that “support the broader organizational, social, and psychological environment in which the technical core must function.”	Borman & Motowidlo (1993)
Employee performance as the effectiveness of employees' efforts in achieving organizational goals	Campbell (1990)
Task performance as behaviors recognized by formal rewards systems and are part of task requirements	Williams & Anderson (1991)
Adaptive performance is a set of competences and behaviors individuals show toward future or current changes, reflecting competences acquisitions.	Shoss, Witt, & Vera (2012)
Counterproductive behavior is the behavior with intent of harming the organization or the individuals in it.	Sackett & DeVore, 2001, apud Shoss et al. (2012)



jective data source was a supervisor's performance evaluation of individuals, with three studies using both supervisors and self-report measures. A few studies employed existing theoretical measures, e.g., the Podsakoff and MacKenzie (1989) scale, the Wayne, Shore, and Liden (1997) contextual performance scale, and the Williams and Anderson (1991) scale, the latter was the most often employed, figuring in nine studies. These findings may indicate that authors tend to minimize possible self-report bias when evaluating individual performance and that performance is, in many empirical studies, measured as units of production; even though the behavioral dimension is valued, it is usually not the focus of empirical studies.

About research design, out of the 175 articles selected 165 had performance as dependent variable and one presented performance both as dependent and independent. Of the nine in which performance was the independent variable, in these cases variables such as turnover, satisfaction, self-efficacy, and organizational performance were analyzed as dependent variable. These results show that performance is classically understood as a dependent variable of personal and organizational conditions. It may also signify that what drives performance at all levels is a very relevant theme for the literature.

There is no clear trend identifiable for performance predictors. Most researched variables are organizational citizenship behaviors, personality traits (especially the Five Factor model of personality and recruitment processes based on personality) as performance predictor, organizational justice, attitudes, leadership, and team themes (e.g., leadership style, team-leader exchange, trust in superiors, etc.), task characteristics, satisfaction and motivation, turnover (or intention of leaving), organizational environment elements (culture, HR policies, performance remuneration), and affects and related emotions. In contrast, a few studies have researched how recruitment indicators predict performance (2), coaching/mentoring influences both on mentored and mentors' performance (5), well-being themes (e.g., biological rhythms, relaxation, life-work balance) (4), adaptive performance (2), networks (2), and counterproductive behavior. Control variables, such as age, education level, and gender have appeared in a few studies, with a preference for gender studies.

The diversity of performance predictors and measures is the main trend; these two factors in common may be a result of the multiple predictors and their relations among variables and of the complexity of defining what is performance: (1) an objective individual/organizational output/goals met; (2) a set of desired behaviors; or (3) a mix of both. It is worth noticing that while theoretical definitions emphasize behavioral dimensions, empirical definitions and measures are based mainly on organizational goals. Therefore, an important research opportunity is the operationalization of the theoretical definitions, which may improve our knowledge of which factors constitute and influence individual performance.

Another important trend is that definitions usually focus on the individual level, even though theoretical discussion points to differences in individual, team, and organizational performance. This trend is reflected in the chosen data-analysis strategy: out of 175 articles, 22 employed multilevel modeling and are concentrated in the past five years. Therefore, an important empirical development may rest on multilevel research design, to apprehend the complex nature of performance on the micro-, meso-, and macro-analysis levels.

Considering the existence of a journal focused on the theme *performance*, we sought to compare the results of this bibliometry with what has been published in *Performance Improvement Quarterly*. This journal addresses performance at various levels of analysis, addressing organizational performance, team performance, and individual job performance. Observing the 10 years examined for this article, a predominance of studies involving organizational performance was identified. However, specifically focusing on “job performance,” it is observed that in the analyzed period, the published studies for the most part treated the relationship of performance and training, including the consequences of training and issues such as support for learning and competences.

Other variables were also present in connection with job performance, such as job rotation, employee engagement, motivation, coaching, organizational justice, and feedback. In a few studies, one of the ways of measuring job performance was the result of performance evaluation. Another theme developed over the 10 years was performance support. Considering the variables found, it is noticeable that this journal does not present studies relating to behavioral variables, such as satisfaction and personality. These findings, compared with those found in this review, demonstrate the strong participation of psychology in the development of construct performance.

## Discussion

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Job performance, in a multidimensional perspective, should be defined in terms of behavior rather than results and includes only those behaviors that are relevant to the organization's goals. Context variables, such as results or effectiveness of macro indicators, are also commonly related to performance. Performance refers to skills, professional competences, and expertise applied in the context of a duty or task or to the way an individual acts in terms of effectiveness and efficiency, promoting the accomplishment of organizational results and mission. The majority of the studies have shifted their focus on defining job performance in terms of outcomes and behavior.

The results of this study show that job performance is still mostly investigated as the dependent variable in the analyzed articles, confirming the results of the meta-analysis conducted by Sonnentag and Frese (2002). Most studies also prefer quantitative research designs to

qualitative measures, as presented in the results section of this article. This choice might imply the prevailing of economic aspects, such as the contribution of the individuals to organizational goal achievement. Noteworthy also is the predilection for objective measurements over performance measures. This scenario may be related to the great challenge of organizational behavior—measuring latent variables.

Studies investigating variables or organizational factors that could relate to performance, promoting and inspiring further studies to test these relationships, could contribute to the research on job performance. Other methods such as focus group and observation could contribute substantially to the understanding of specific aspects of the performance construct, and these results coupled with quantitative analysis would form a strong theoretical and empirical framework of performance. This new path is extremely important for the deepening of the field as it will result in a greater understanding of the individual, with more openness to a psychosocial character approach in studies with a view that the behavioral aspect of the individual is closely related to the quality and result of his or her service (Campbell, 1990).

Nevertheless, this article fills a gap identified in this review. In the period and scope investigated, we found only one literature review on the subject. This finding points to a great opportunity to conduct studies on the subject and may contribute greatly to a breakthrough in understanding the performance construct. Discussions of this nature could help to reduce the complexity in defining performance and thus provide support for constructing a concise theory of job performance.

However, despite the concern of researchers in understanding performance as a means to achieve organizational goals, it was found that a significant number of studies were published in psychology-oriented journals, given that in the list of 12 journals published on the subject, seven among the top 10 indices were in the psychology category. This finding raises the following questions: Why does a theme primarily geared to organizational results essential for management of people and results not figure significantly in management journals? Is there openness to this issue in these journals? It is important that researchers focused on human resource management reflect on these issues and explore this opportunity.

Whatever the justification, it is compelling that management researchers worry about issues related to performance. At the individual level, because of the importance that the individual has in the development of organizational activities and in the consequent results, one may, to know antecedents and consequences, develop organizational and people-management practices focused on improving human performance.

The answer to these questions might be related to the multidimensional characteristic of performance and a focus on the individual, which is shown by the addition of subjective measures, based on individual perceptions, on the instruments that measure performance (Coelho Jr., 2009).

This tendency shows the absence of studies that seek to understand the individual, emphasizing the psychosocial characteristic considering the intimate relation of the individual behavioral aspects and the quality and results achieved (Campbell, 1990).

The focus of job performance studies lies on individuals and their characteristics, highlighting individual performance, as pointed out by Coelho Jr. (2009), Sonnentag and Frese (2002), and DeNisi (2000). Whereas the performance is a multidimensional construct and even though the field is established, these results indicate that there is still much to be explored on the subject, focusing mainly on situational (or contextual) and performance-regulation prospects, which translates into a call for more research. It is also important that future research addresses the concept of performance as result, for performance results also depend on other factors beyond the behavior of an individual (Sonnentag & Frese, 2002), in line with the previous statements. Attention to the constitutive and operational aspects of performance can also contribute to generalization and to the development of instruments that go beyond results achieved to investigate behavioral aspects.

We have identified that most of the articles are searching for a construct that they do not define but that they can operate based on the data collected. Perhaps this diversity of measures used and unsupported with theoretical definitions is making it difficult to understand what job performance is, especially in the different areas in which it is studied. There is no clarity as to how management and psychology understand the construct. Moreover, this may be one of the reasons for the difficulty in constructing a theory about job performance.

It is also clear that research is concentrated in only two dimensions of performance, as proposed by Koopmans et al. (2011), which are task performance and contextual performance. The adoption of these two dimensions is related to the trend of literature in human job performance using this two-dimensional view of the performance. However, although the two dimensions appear in most of the results, there is a clear preference for studying task performance, because the measures adopted consider more technical aspects and even indices of production. Given the extent that construct performance has, it is recommended that future studies seek to address the other dimensions identified by Koopmans et al. (2011)—adaptive performance and counterproductive performance (present in only four studies). The performance analysis in the organizational setting in these two dimensions would contribute significantly to the development of a comprehensive theory of performance.

It is worth noticing that few articles incorporated collective (group/team) perceptions or variables; however, most performance situations happen in units. Klein and Kozlowski (2000) suggest that job performance studies should be in a multilevel perspective, because it is really important that empirical models combine more than one level of analysis. Future research should consider aggregating lower-level variables to higher levels as trustworthy representations of the construct (Bliese,

Chan, & Ployhart, 2007). Therefore, to further develop studies in this field, some questions must be asked by the researchers: How can the individual performance be combined to represent team performance? How can individual perceptions be aggregated? Furthermore, researchers in this field need to comprehend the differentiation of the behaviors developed by the individuals, the teams, and the organizations to allow further progress in developing the performance theory.

It is known that job performance can be influenced by context variables, such as social, cultural, demographic, and workplace conditions (Coelho Jr. et al., 2010; DeNisi, 2000; Sonnentag & Frese, 2002). Nevertheless, the results of this study reveal that the researchers are more focused on investigating workplace conditions and only a few articles addressed how other context variables, such as cultural conditions, affect the individual perception of variables such as work pressure, job performance, and job satisfaction.

Another suggested study agenda is related to the creation and consolidation of measurement instruments, because although researchers try to diminish any bias and use objective and subjective instruments, many of these measures do not relate to theoretical concepts and definitions. The development of new instruments may also contribute to the generalization and measure that go beyond the reached results but might also investigate behavioral aspects. Another suggestion is to test the job performance construct as a mediating or moderating variable of other behaviors (e.g., job satisfaction and well-being at work).

Observing the evolution of annual production of articles on performance, a peak occurred in 2009, followed by a slight decline in the following years until there is a new return to growth in 2013, which in turn began to decline from 2014 onward. What do these results mean? What reasons would lead to the decline of articles on the subject—theoretical saturation? This reflection is important because although a substantial production was seen, there are still underexplored points, and their development can ensure that the performance issue still endures consistently in organizational studies.

Outcomes are the key elements for the classical job-performance appraisal. Aspects referring to personal traits are becoming less common in the contemporary literature. Currently, the management perspective has been adopted to investigate job performance. Greater emphasis is being given to planning, monitoring, and performance review. The role of leaders in providing performance support has been fundamental in this regard. The effectiveness of performance-management practices lies in considering the so-called contextual performance in typical variables of the work environment (e.g., the formation of the work team, informal leaders, and others). Job performance must be conceived as a management tool that aims to promote the achievement of objectives and goals and the development of human resources through a participatory process of dynamic, continuous, and systematic planning, monitoring, evaluation, and performance improvement.

It is worth highlighting that the suggestions made in this research agenda can also contribute to the reduction of conceptual gaps caused by the diffusion of the meanings and definitions attributed to job performance, culminating in the creation of a root concept, with possible ramifications that could be used according to the specific field characteristics and the variables being studied.

## Conclusion

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The bibliometric study is intended to research the individual-performance field during the time period of 2006-2015 and to help to fill a gap in the literature, since most of the work on job performance, as shown here, is empirical. Moreover, it contributes by proposing reflections intended to generate a research agenda on the topic. Therefore, understanding how performance has been portrayed is a key point in filling possible knowledge and research gaps.

In turn, some limitations can be pointed out. It should be emphasized that the authors did not intend to exhaust the international production of this study. In fact, the search has been restricted to the most relevant journals in the areas of management and psychology. This restriction served as a filter of the quality of the articles. This type of mapping has the potential to contribute to the direction of the theoretical construct that promotes the advancement of scientific knowledge in the field at various levels of analysis.

Despite the limitations described for now, the balance here laid out allows for a preliminary mapping of the recent international production concerning the construct performance. In this sense, the results showed the importance of performance in organizational studies, especially in understanding what factors (or variables) contribute to increase in job performance. Studies focused on the dimensions of adaptive and counterproductive performance are needed.

There are great opportunities for research to rebuild the already established theories and to propose new theories, new models, and new relationships between job performance and other organizational variables.

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