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Review article

Research trends in organizational behavior: thematic evolution and future research agenda

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Abstract
This study advances the understanding of organizational behavior by identifying emerging thematic patterns and conceptual transitions in the field through a comprehensive bibliometric analysis based on PRISMA-2020. Using Scopus and Web of Science data, it examines articles to reveal how research has evolved toward complex issues such as unethical pro-organizational behavior, identity processes, and the integration of technology in organizational dynamics. Findings highlight a significant increase in scientific production, a shift toward multifaceted behavioral constructs, and the consolidation of new intellectual clusters that reshape the research agenda. This study contributes by mapping the conceptual evolution of organizational behavior, identifying research gaps, and proposing key areas for future inquiry that strengthen both theoretical development and managerial practice.

Keywords: decision making; organizational culture; effective communication; job satisfaction; organizational resilience.

Tendencias de investigación en el comportamiento organizacional: evolución temática y agenda de investigación

Resumen
Este estudio aporta al campo del comportamiento organizacional al identificar los patrones temáticos emergentes y las transiciones conceptuales mediante un análisis bibliométrico integral basado en PRISMA-2020. A partir de datos de Scopus y Web of Science, se examinan artículos para evidenciar cómo la investigación ha evolucionado hacia problemáticas complejas como el comportamiento proorganizacional no ético, los procesos de identidad y la integración de tecnologías en la dinámica organizacional. Los resultados muestran un aumento significativo en la producción científica, un desplazamiento hacia constructos conductuales más multifacéticos y la consolidación de nuevos clústeres intelectuales que reconfiguran la agenda investigativa. Este estudio contribuye al mapear la evolución conceptual del comportamiento organizacional, identificar vacíos de investigación y proponer áreas prioritarias para futuras indagaciones que fortalezcan tanto el desarrollo teórico como la práctica gerencial.

Palabras clave: toma de decisiones; cultura organizacional; comunicación efectiva; satisfacción laboral; resiliencia organizacional.

Tendências de pesquisa em comportamento organizacional: evolução temática e agenda de pesquisa

Resumo
Este estudo contribui para o campo do comportamento organizacional ao identificar padrões temáticos emergentes e transições conceituais por meio de uma análise bibliométrica integral baseada no PRISMA-2020. A partir de dados do Scopus e do Web of Science, os artigos são examinados para evidenciar como a pesquisa evoluiu para questões complexas, como comportamento pró-organizacional não ético, processos de identidade e integração de tecnologias na dinâmica organizacional. Os resultados mostram um aumento significativo na produção científica, uma mudança para construções comportamentais mais multifacetadas e a consolidação de novos clusters intelectuais que reconfiguram a agenda de pesquisa. Este estudo contribui para mapear a evolução conceitual do comportamento organizacional, identificar lacunas de pesquisa e propor áreas prioritárias para futuras investigações que fortaleçam tanto o desenvolvimento teórico quanto a prática gerencial.

Palavras-chave: tomada de decisão; cultura organizacional; comunicação eficaz; satisfação no trabalho; resiliência organizacional.

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1. Introduction

The study of organizational behavior is a crucial field of inquiry in both business and academic contexts. It focuses on understanding individual and group behaviors within workplaces. It examines the impact of these behaviors on organizational functioning and performance, including factors such as productivity, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and work ethics. A growing body of research examines a range of diverse aspects of organizational behavior, including workplace behaviors that promote environmental sustainability and the role of ethical climates in shaping employee conduct through the lens of social identity frameworks.

Although prior bibliometric and conceptual reviews have examined specific dimensions of organizational behavior—such as leadership, unethical pro-organizational behavior, or organizational psychology—there is still a lack of integrative analyses that simultaneously explore thematic evolution, intellectual clusters, and emerging research domains across the field. Existing studies often focus on isolated constructs or restricted time windows, limiting their ability to capture broader conceptual transitions. This study addresses this theoretical gap by offering a comprehensive, longitudinal mapping of organizational behavior research, integrating quantitative bibliometric indicators with thematic evolution analysis. In doing so, it makes a differentiated contribution by identifying how core concepts have shifted, which topics have gained momentum, and where new research frontiers are forming, thus extending beyond the scope and depth of previous reviews.

The need for theoretical mapping of organizational behavior is increasingly evident due to the fragmentation of the field and the rapid diversification of constructs, methodologies, and thematic domains. Although organizational behavior has accumulated a substantial body of research, much of this knowledge remains dispersed across subfields such as leadership, ethics, identity, technology, and workplace dynamics. This dispersion limits the ability to understand how concepts evolve, how intellectual clusters interact, and where theoretical inconsistencies or overlaps persist. Comprehensive mapping is therefore essential to critically integrate existing knowledge, reveal conceptual misalignments, and identify the mechanisms through which theoretical advancements emerge. By addressing these gaps, this study offers a structured and critical overview that strengthens coherence in the field and supports more robust theory-building.

Furthermore, research explores the moral and ethical dimensions of organizational behavior, including the effects of self-serving norms, organizational identification, and moral maturation on pro-organizational behaviors. Graham et al. (2020) underscored the impact of leaders' unethical conduct on employees and the role of social learning and moral disengagement (Lian et al., 2022). Likewise, Foucault examined organizational behaviors within particular contexts, such as Russia Today (RT), illustrating how practices influence organizational perception and operations.

Organizational culture and practices, including tax evasion, have a considerable impact on employee attitudes and sustainable organizational performance, particularly when moderated by corporate social responsibility (Y. Li et al., 2022). Additionally, studies have investigated the correlations between job insecurity, psychological contract violations, and counterproductive behaviors, emphasizing the necessity to address employee concerns for more optimal work environments (Ma et al., 2019). Moreover, the influence of organizational injustice on deviant workplace behaviors was found to be contingent on personality traits (Khattak et al., 2019). The impact of pay transparency, fairness, and communication on counterproductive behaviors highlights the pivotal role of pay justice in employee actions. The relationship between corporate social responsibility and employee behavior, mediated by organizational practices, also underscores the advantages of socially responsible business strategies (Lu et al., 2020).

Notwithstanding substantial advancements, research gaps persist. A bibliometric analysis of work and organizational psychology over a century revealed underexplored areas (Sott et al., 2020). The investigation of unethical pro-organizational behaviors has underscored the need for multiple perspectives and contextual considerations (Z. Li, 2022). Furthermore, bibliometric reviews have emphasized the importance of elucidating the mechanisms through which leadership influences employees' unethical pro-organizational behaviors (Manelkar & Mishra, 2024). These findings underscore the dynamic and multifaceted nature of organizational behavior, which requires continuous exploration to enhance organizational success.

These investigations demonstrate the existence of hitherto unexplored areas and highlight the need for bibliometric studies to identify and address these knowledge gaps in the field of organizational behavior. In light of these shortcomings, this study aims at examining the current research trends in organizational behavior. In light of the aforementioned considerations, the following questions are posed:

- In which temporal periods has scholarly attention to organizational behavior research demonstrated peak intensity?
- What is the trend in the number of scientific articles on organizational behavior?
-Which seminal works constitute the foundational bibliometric references within the organizational behavior literature?
- What is the thematic evolution derived from scientific production on organizational behavior?
- What are the main thematic clusters on organizational behavior?
- What are the growing and emerging keywords in the field of organizational behavior research?
- Which thematic domains occupy central positioning as priority focal areas for the formulation of a prospective research agenda in organizational behavior?

The relevance of studying organizational behavior has increased significantly in recent years due to the

profound transformations affecting modern workplaces. As organizations face growing ethical challenges, technological disruptions, and shifting employee expectations, understanding behavioral dynamics becomes essential for strengthening organizational performance, well-being, and resilience. Scientifically, this topic contributes to clarifying how employee attitudes, identity processes, and leadership interactions shape organizational outcomes. Practically, it provides evidence-based insights for improving decision-making, designing healthier work environments, and guiding leaders in managing emerging challenges such as digitalization, job insecurity, and ethical conduct. Therefore, examining current research trends in organizational behavior is crucial for advancing both theoretical development and organizational practice.

This study is organized into the following key sections: 1) Introduction establishes the context and objectives of the bibliometric analysis; 2) Methodology details the search criteria, databases, inclusion and exclusion criteria, and analysis methods; 3) Results presents the main findings including temporal trends, citation networks, prominent thematic areas, and influential authors; 4) Discussion presents results interpretations in the context of this field, and explores implications and future research directions; 5) Conclusions summarize key findings and highlight study contribution to advancing knowledge in organizational behavior.

2. Theoretical Framework

Organizational behavior studies the actions and interactions of people within organizations, and how they impact their performance, culture, and structure. In recent years, this field has undergone significant transformations due to technological advances and societal changes. Karthikeyan (2025) analyzes how artificial intelligence is reshaping the work environment, affecting not only productivity but also organizational relationships and dynamics. Singla (2024) emphasizes current challenges, such as change management, diversity, and technological integration to maintain organizational cohesion.

Green innovations have gained prominence in organizational research. Atalay and Tekinyer (2025) argue that these practices not only improve sustainability but also influence internal culture and behavior, thus promoting ethical values and collaboration. Organizational ethics and commitment are essential to addressing current challenges. Rumangkit (2025) points out that engagement is a key predictor of performance and talent retention, while Kalwani and Mahesh (2020) underscore the importance of employee well-being in hybrid and remote environments.

Furthermore, Rousseau (1997) emphasizes that organizations must adopt flexible, trust-based structures to adapt to the complexity of the globalized world. Amri (2024) complements this perspective by identifying emerging trends in human resource management that respond to these changes. Singla (2024) also highlights the growing diversity of issues and the need for more inclusive organizational models. Finally, Atalay and Tekinyer (2025) emphasize the importance of aligning environmental innovations with organizational behavior and culture to achieve sustainable and ethical development.

3. Methodology

The present research is based on an exploratory approach to organizational behavior, using secondary research sources and a bibliometric analysis in accordance with the parameters set forth by the PRISMA-2020 declaration (Page et al., 2021). This methodological approach enables the identification of trends, areas of interest, and gaps in the extant literature on the subject, thereby providing a systematic and structured overview of the current state of the field of organizational behavior.

3.1 Eligibility criteria

This study sets inclusion criteria based on primary metadata, such as titles and keywords, to address the various methods of referencing concepts related to organizational behavior. A strategic combination of relevant terms is made to ensure the exhaustiveness and representativeness of the bibliographic search, which encompasses a broad range of pertinent studies in the field.

Operational eligibility criteria were defined to ensure consistency and replicability. Only peer-reviewed journal articles written in English and explicitly related to organizational behavior were included. A record was considered relevant when: (a) at least one of the target terms (e.g., "organizational behavior," "workplace behavior," "organizational psychology") appeared in the title or author keywords, and (b) the abstract clearly addressed individual or collective behavior within organizational settings. Articles classified as editorials, book reviews, notes, conference proceedings, or non-scientific documents were excluded. These parameters were applied using a binary coding sheet completed independently by all authors, allowing discrepancies to be discussed and resolved by consensus.

Conversely, the exclusion process comprises three discrete phases. In the initial phase, all records with erroneous indexing that fail to meet the established criteria for organizational behavior are excluded. The second phase is applied exclusively to systematic literature reviews; all documents that did not have full-text access enabled were eliminated. This ensures the integrity of the analysis. It should be noted that this bibliometric analysis is limited to the examination of metadata. In the final exclusion phase, texts with incomplete indexing, conference proceedings, and documents that are not significantly relevant to the study of organizational behavior are excluded.

3.2 Source of information

The Scopus and Web of Science databases were selected due to their reputation as principal sources of scientific information, providing comprehensive coverage

of journals, conferences, and publications in organizational behavior. The Web of Science database's focus on the administrative, psychological, and social sciences ensures a multidisciplinary approach to the literature search. Their precision and effectiveness in retrieving relevant research, as demonstrated in comparative studies with PubMed, justify their inclusion in this bibliometric analysis due to their reliability and prominence within the scientific community.

3.3 Search strategy

To conduct the bibliometric search across the selected databases, two bespoke search equations were created, tailored to the inclusion criteria and specific search characteristics of each platform. These equations were designed with the objective of ensuring comprehensive and accurate retrieval of relevant records on organizational behavior. In order to refine the search strategy and obtain high-quality results for the bibliometric analysis, key terms, synonyms, and relevant combinations were considered, along with Boolean operators and filters available in Scopus and Web of Science.

The bibliometric search covered the period from 2015 to 2025, encompassing all records indexed in Scopus and Web of Science that contained the selected keywords. The inclusion criteria considered peer-reviewed articles written in English and directly related to organizational behavior, based on title, keywords, and thematic alignment. Exclusion criteria were applied in three phases following PRISMA-2020, as mentioned above. After screening 3417 initial records, 2693 were excluded during the first two phases, leaving 1,137 articles for final analysis. These figures reflect the complete flow reported in the PRISMA diagram and ensure transparency regarding the selection process, period of analysis, and scope of the dataset.

In Scopus database, the search string was:

TITLE ("organizational behavior" OR "workplace behavior" OR "employee behavior" OR "organizational psychology" OR "workplace psychology" OR "employee psychology")

For the Web of Science database:

TI=("organizational behavior" OR "workplace behavior" OR "employee behavior" OR "organizational psychology" OR "workplace psychology" OR "employee psychology")

3.4 Data management

Microsoft Excel® was employed as the primary tool for extraction, storage, and data processing. This tool facilitated the efficient organization and handling of bibliographic information, thereby enabling systematic statistical analysis and calculation of various bibliometric indicators. Furthermore, the open-source software VOSviewer® was employed to visualize co-authorship networks, keywords, and generate graphs of the bibliometric indicators. VOSviewer®, developed by Van Eck and Waltman, enables the creation of bibliometric maps and the visual representation of author collaborations and the thematic structure of the literature (Eck & Waltman, 2010).

3.5 Selection process

In accordance with the PRISMA 2020 statement, it is essential to disclose whether an internal automatic classifier was used for the selection process and, if so, whether internal or external validation was performed to assess the risk of study loss or erroneous classifications. This practice helps to guarantee the integrity and reliability of the study selection process in systematic reviews or bibliometric analyses by reducing the potential for bias and errors (Page, 2021). In this study, the available automation tools in spreadsheets were employed as an internal solution. These tools were developed collectively by all researchers and subsequently applied independently to the inclusion and exclusion criteria. This rigorous approach helped to mitigate the risk of study loss or incorrect classifications by facilitating consensus among the researchers.

To enhance methodological transparency, each stage of the bibliometric process was documented in a step-by-step manner. First, the search equations were designed and adapted for Scopus and Web of Science, followed by a comprehensive retrieval of all records published between 2015 and 2025. Second, duplicate records were automatically identified and removed using spreadsheet-based tools. Third, titles and keywords were screened independently by all authors to ensure alignment with the inclusion criteria. Fourth, full-text availability was verified, and documents with incorrect indexing or insufficient relevance were excluded. Fifth, the remaining records were classified, exported, and standardized for analysis. Finally, bibliometric indicators, co-occurrence networks, thematic evolution analyses, and growth metrics were generated using Microsoft Excel® and VOSviewer®. This sequence ensures full methodological traceability and aligns with PRISMA-2020 reporting standards.

3.6 Data collection process

It is of the utmost importance to delineate the methodologies employed for the acquisition of data from bibliometric reports, including the number of reviewers, the extent of their independent work, procedures followed for the confirmation of data, and automation tools that were employed in the process (Page, 2021). In this study of organizational behavior, an automated tool was employed to collect data from reports obtained from selected databases. All authors participated in the data validation process as independent reviewers, after which a collective confirmation procedure was conducted to guarantee consistency and accuracy. This resulted in the attainment of comprehensive convergence in the findings. This approach guaranteed the integrity of data collection and reliability of bibliometric results.

3.7 Assessment of the risk of bias of the study

The potential for bias in the included studies was evaluated by all authors using an automated Microsoft Excel® tool. The tool enabled each author to assess the studies independently, thereby ensuring consistency and reliability in the results. The utilization of the automated tool facilitated the evaluation process, ensuring that all pertinent dimensions were taken into account in determining the risk of bias, thereby enhancing the quality and integrity of the research.

3.8 Measures of effect

The measures of effect used in this study for synthesizing and presenting the results are clearly defined. Unlike primary research, which often uses effect measures like risk ratios or mean differences, this study relies on bibliometric indicators such as the number of publications, citations, and the temporality of keyword usage. Additionally, VOSviewer® software is employed to visualize nodes and determine thematic associations between the documents. This combination of methods enables a comprehensive and detailed analysis of academic production in organizational behavior, helping to identify trends, patterns, and key areas of interest in a systematic and precise manner.

In addition to publication counts and citation frequencies, complementary bibliometric indicators were incorporated to strengthen the analytical depth of the study. The annual growth rate of scientific production was calculated to capture the expansion dynamics of the field, revealing a sustained upward trend over the last decade. Furthermore, the h-index of the most influential authors and journals was examined to assess both productivity and impact within the domain of organizational behavior. These indicators provide a more comprehensive understanding of the intellectual structure of the field by integrating measures of output, influence, and temporal evolution, thereby enhancing the robustness of bibliometric assessment.

3.9 Synthesis methods

The processes for determining study eligibility and preparing the data for synthesis are delineated, including the methodologies employed to present the results. The bibliometric indicators of quantity, quality, and structure were applied in accordance with the methodology described by Durieux & Gevenois (2010). The aforementioned indicators were automatically applied to all documents that successfully completed the three exclusion phases using the Microsoft Excel® software. Furthermore, data tabulation and visualization techniques were employed to enhance the presentation and synthesis of the results, thereby ensuring the rigor and efficiency of the study selection and analysis, as well as clear and precise findings.

3.10 Assessment of reporting bias

The possibility of bias in a synthesis resulting from reporting biases and the absence of results is subjected to rigorous examination. Bias may result from the influence of thesauri preferences, such as those observed in the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) criteria for inclusion, search strategies, and data collection standards. The exclusion of texts with incomplete indexing, conference proceedings, or limited relevance may result in the loss of valuable information, potentially affecting the representativeness of the bibliometric analysis. Therefore, it is essential to conduct a comprehensive examination of these potential biases in order to ensure the validity and reliability of the findings.

3.11 Certainty assessment

The assessment of certainty in the body of evidence is conducted in a comprehensive manner, in contrast to the approach taken in primary studies, where certainty is assessed on an individual basis. This approach considers several key elements, including the independent application of inclusion and exclusion criteria, the definition of bibliometric indicators, and the identification of potential biases in the methodology. The limitations of the study are addressed in the discussion section, thereby ensuring a more transparent and reliable evaluation of confidence in the results. This process serves to enhance the robustness and reliability of evidence on organizational behavior.

The PRISMA flow process was fully documented with detailed figures at each stage. A total of 3,417 records were initially identified across Scopus (n = 2,602) and Web of Science (n = 815). Before screening, 724 duplicate records were removed. The remaining 2,693 records underwent title and keyword screening, resulting in the exclusion of 19 records due to misalignment with the inclusion criteria. A total of 2,674 reports were then sought for retrieval, all of which were successfully retrieved (n = 0 reports not retrieved). During the eligibility assessment phase, 1,189 records were excluded due to incomplete indexing or classification as conference papers. This stepwise process resulted in a final sample of 1,137 studies included in the bibliometric review. These detailed counts ensure full transparency of the selection flow and correspond directly to the PRISMA diagram.

In the preliminary phase of this bibliometric analysis, a tailored search strategy was applied to each selected source, followed by the removal of duplicate records. Three exclusion phases were then carried out, eliminating records with incorrect indexing, inaccessible full texts, and those of minimal relevance. As a result, 1,137 articles were included for analysis in this bibliometric study (see Figure 1).

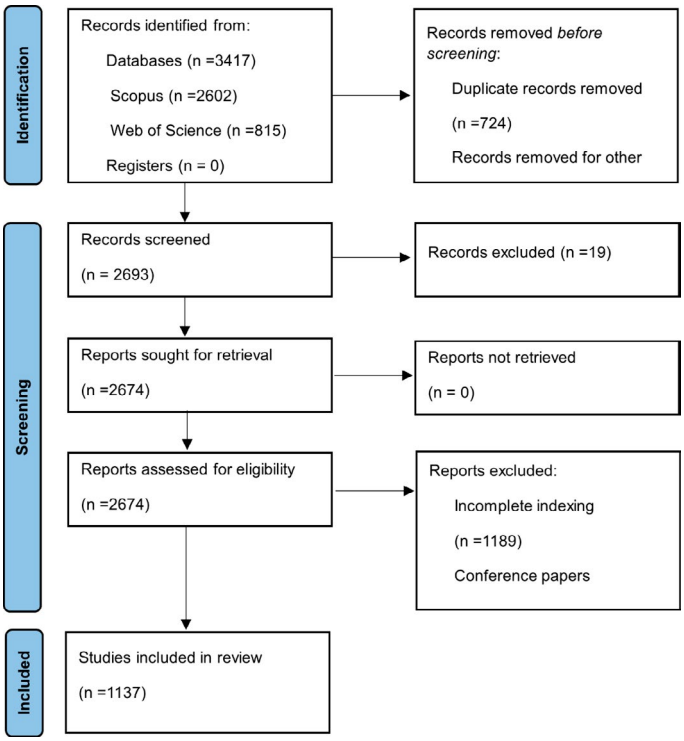


Figure 1. PRISMA flowchart.
Source: own elaboration based on Scopus and Web of Science.

4. Results

An analysis of 1,137 articles about organizational behavior provides a comprehensive overview of the academic output in the field, elucidating trends, patterns, and pivotal areas of interest through bibliometric indicators. The study reveals a significant exponential growth of 97.39% in article production, as seen in Figure 2, with peak years in 2023, 2022, and 2021. This growth reflects an increasing interest in and research on organizational behavior, indicating that both the academic and professional communities are paying closer attention to this field. An analysis of the quantity, quality, and structure of published work provides a rigorous understanding of the current state of knowledge in the field.

The analysis of principal authors in organizational behavior, illustrated in Figure 3, reveals two distinct groups. The first group includes influential authors such as Weiss HM with Brief AP, and Luthans F with Youssef CM, who are notable for their significant contributions in both productivity and impact. Despite their recognition, their scientific productivity index is relatively low. The second group consists of authors distinguished by high scientific productivity but with fewer citations. This analysis offers a comprehensive overview of the diverse profiles and contributions within the field of organizational behavior.

As illustrated in Figure 4, an analysis of the top journals in organizational behavior reveals the existence of three distinct groups. The initial group comprises journals that exhibit both high productivity and impact. Prominent examples include the Journal of Applied Psychology, the Journal of Business Ethics, and Frontiers in Psychology, which are renowned for their timeliness and substantial citations. The second group comprises journals with substantial impact but lower productivity, such as the Journal of Management and the Annual Review of Psychology. Lastly, the third group comprises journals with high scientific productivity, such as the Journal of Organizational Behavior Management. This classification offers a comprehensive overview of the diversity and influence of publications within the field.

As illustrated in Figure 5, an examination of the primary countries engaged in organizational behavior research reveals the existence of two discernible clusters. The initial group encompasses countries such as the United States, China, and the United Kingdom, which are distinguished by both their scientific productivity and impact, as evidenced by the number of publications and citations. The second group comprises countries such as Canada, Australia, and the Netherlands, which, despite having relatively low productivity, exert a considerable influence within the field. This geographical analysis underscores the significance of international collaboration in advancing research in organizational behavior.

This research on organizational behavior, depicted in Figure 6, traces the thematic evolution of literature from 1955 to 2024. In 1955, the concept of field service workers emerged prominently. However, more recent years have seen a focus on topics such as unethical pro-organizational behavior, personnel management, organizational behavior management, artificial intelligence, and cybersecurity culture. These trends highlight evolving concerns and research priorities in the field. This temporal analysis provides valuable insights into how the academic discourse on organizational behavior has developed over time.

This paper presents a comprehensive examination of the keyword co-occurrence network in organizational behavior, organized into six thematic clusters. The most prominent cluster, represented in purple, includes terms such as "Unethical Pro-Organizational," "Organizational Identification," "Ethical Leadership," "Moral Identity," and "Social Exchange Theory." The second cluster, in yellow, encompasses terms such as "leadership," "organizational behavior," "behavior," "bullying," "training," and "management." Additional clusters in blue, green, and red serve to highlight other conceptual affinities within the field. The co-occurrence analysis offers a comprehensive overview of the key themes and their interconnections in the literature on organizational behavior.

This paper presents a novel approach to keyword analysis using a Cartesian plane, with the frequency of use on the X axis and the validity of use on the Y axis. It divides keywords into four quadrants. Quadrant one includes consolidated and growing concepts, like "Unethical Pro-Organizational Behavior," demonstrating their continued significance. Quadrant two features emerging concepts, such as "Job Insecurity," "Moral Identity," "Covid-19," "Corporate Social Responsibility," and "Ethical Leadership," which are

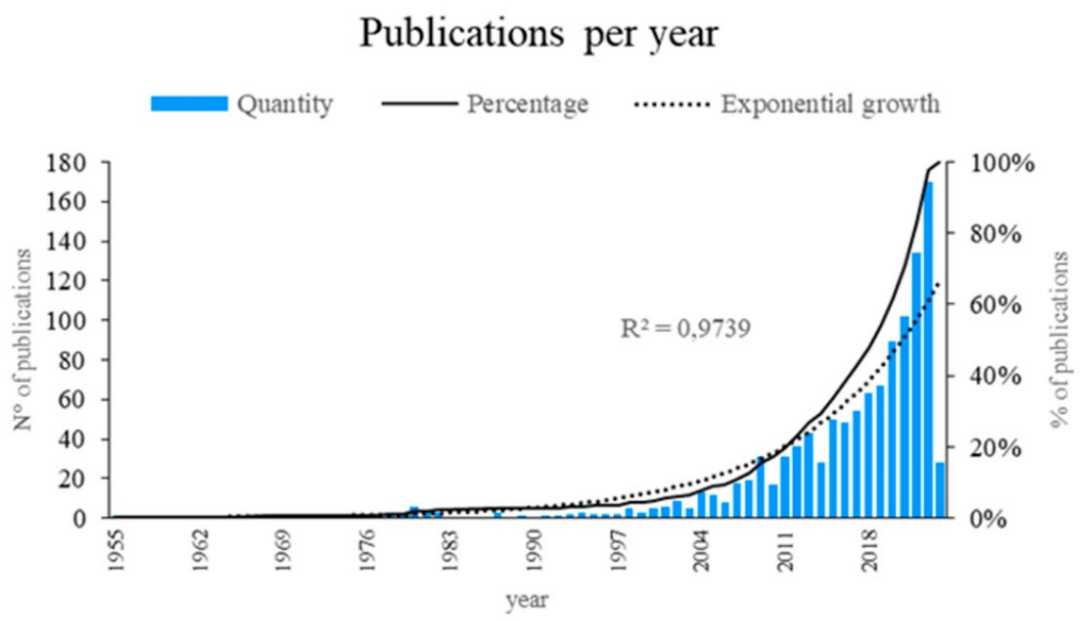


Figure 2. Publications per year.
Source: own elaboration based on Scopus and Web of Science.

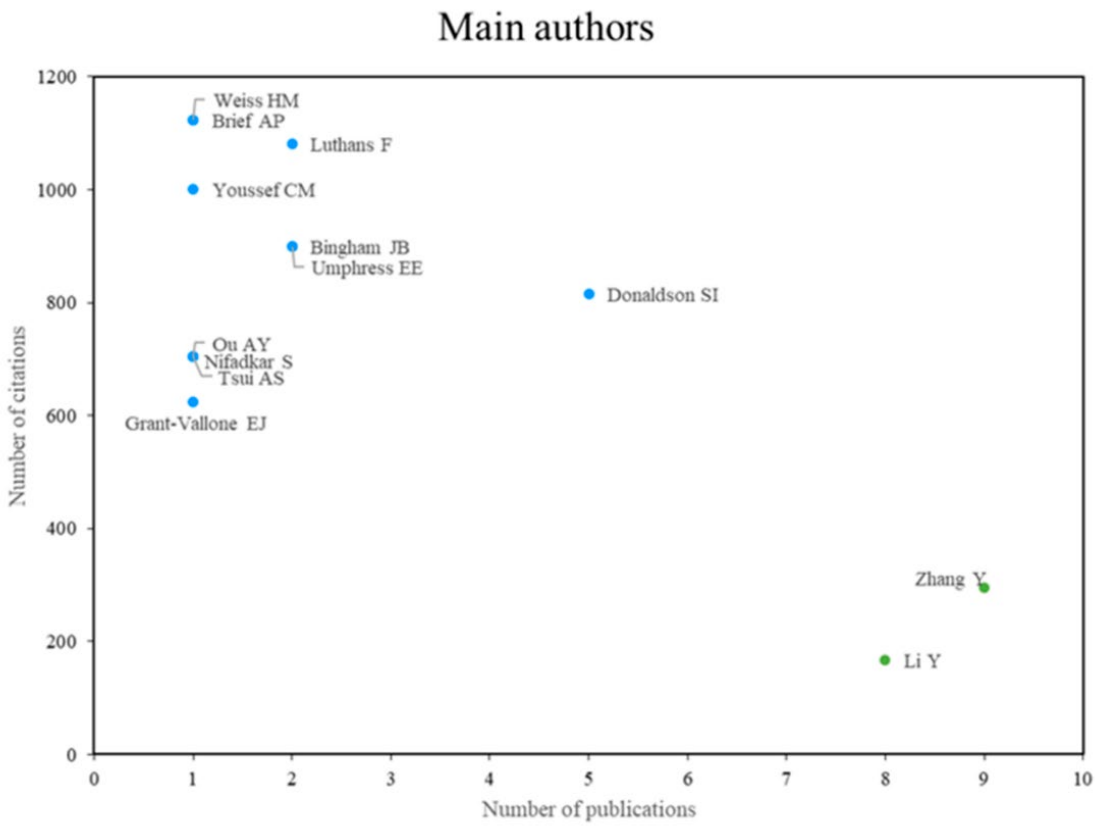


Figure 3. Main authors.
Source: own elaboration based on Scopus and Web of Science.

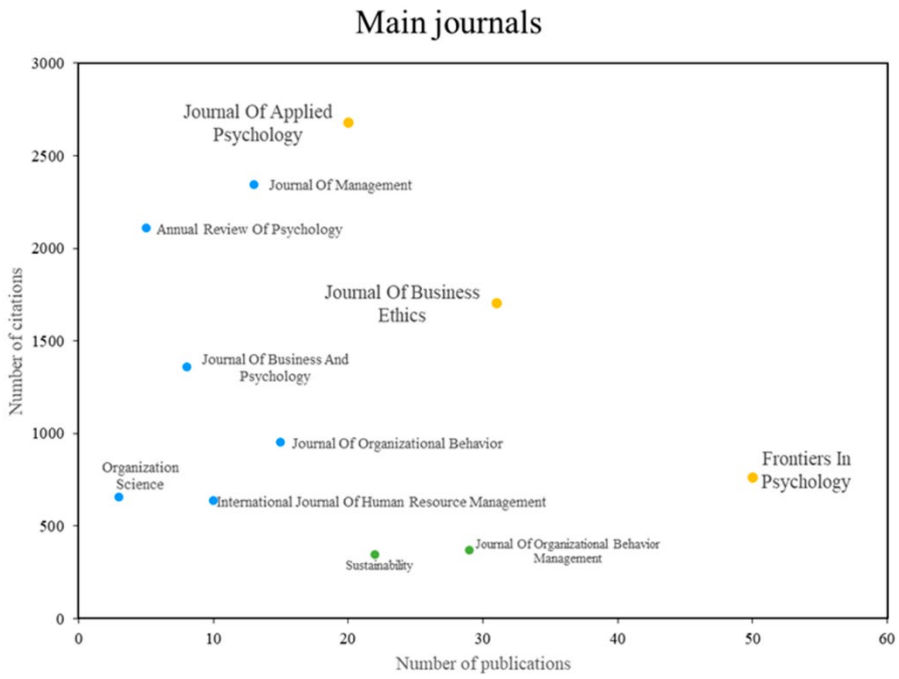


Figure 4. Main journals.
Source: own elaboration based on Scopus and Web of Science.

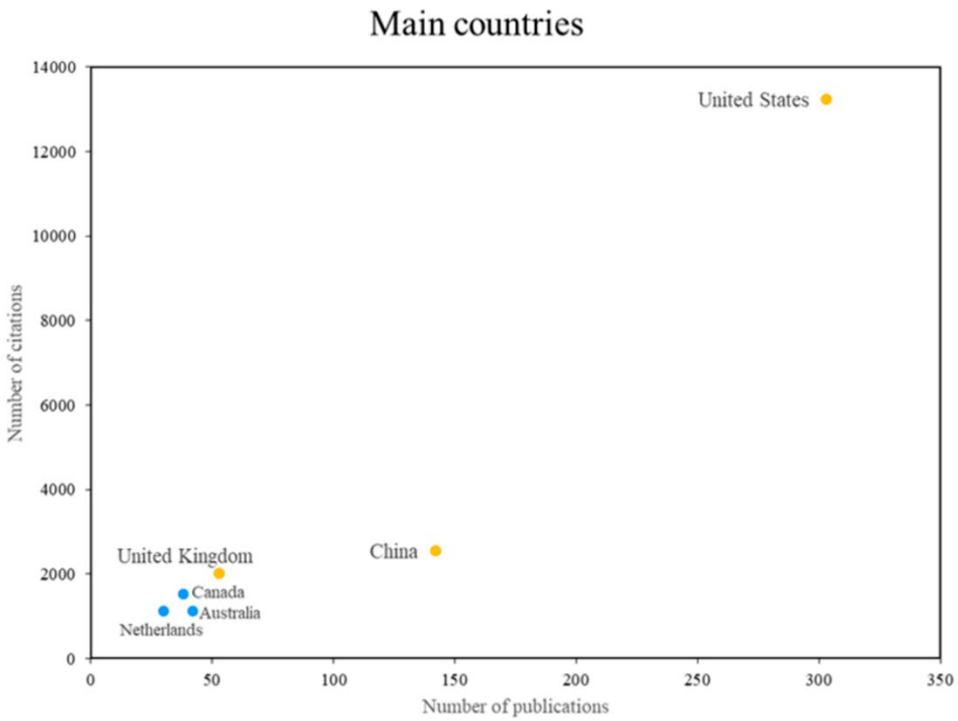


Figure 5. Main countries.
Source: own elaboration based on Scopus and Web of Science.

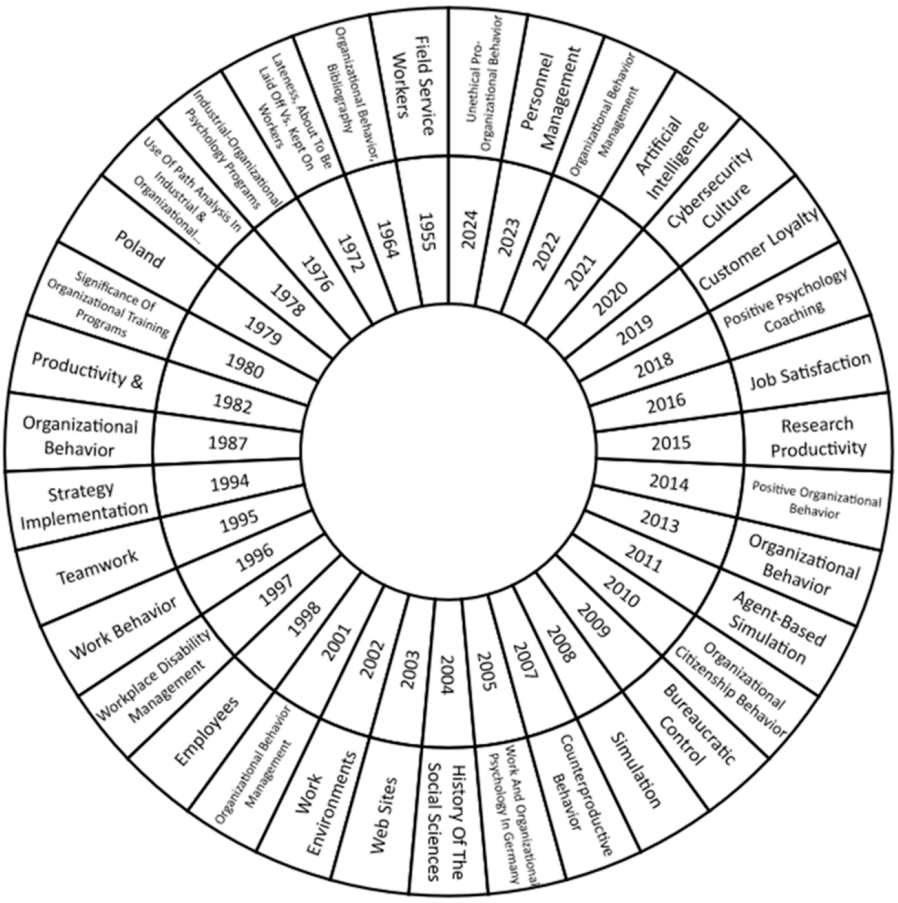


Figure 6. Thematic evolution.
Source: own elaboration based on Scopus and Web of Science.

infrequent but currently relevant. Quadrant four includes concepts, such as "Organizational Behavior," with declining frequency and validity. This method provides a dynamic view of the evolution of concepts in organizational behavior.

Beyond descriptive patterns, the results reveal theoretical implications that contribute to understanding how organizational behavior has evolved as a research field. The rise of themes such as unethical pro-organizational behavior, identity processes, and psychological dynamics suggests a conceptual shift toward more complex and multidimensional interpretations of employee behavior. Likewise, the consolidation of clusters related to ethical leadership, moral identity, and social exchange theory indicates the strengthening of theoretical frameworks that explain how individual cognition interacts with organizational structures. These patterns demonstrate that the field is transitioning from purely behavioral descriptions toward integrative models that connect ethics, identity, technology, and organizational culture, offering renewed foundations for future theory-building.

5. Discussion

This section provides a detailed analysis of emerging trends, patterns, and relationships identified in the data. Practical implications are explored, highlighting their potential impact on organizational practices and managerial decision-making. The study's limitations are critically assessed, addressing its validity and scope. Additionally, a classification of keywords by function and relevance is presented, alongside the identification of significant research gaps that warrant further exploration. Finally, a research agenda is proposed, prioritizing key thematic areas and unanswered questions to advance the field.

5.1 Analysis of the growth of scientific literature on organizational behavior

A data review indicates that publication activity in the field of organizational behavior had a peak activity in 2023, 2022, and 2021. In 2023, notable contributions included a call for a transformative shift in leadership research, a critique of the overuse of the term "behavior," and the proposal of novel perspectives for more effective understanding of organizational leadership (Banks et al., 2023). Furthermore, a relational theory of employee engagement underscored the significance of authenticity and transparency in employee-organization interactions, offering insights for fostering sustainable engagement (Jiang & Shen, 2023).

In 2022, Mathews, Pineault, and Hong (Matthews et al., 2022) demonstrated the reliability of evidence-based methods at scale, thereby providing a solid framework for the evaluation of individual studies in organizational behavior. In 2021, research conducted during the ongoing pandemic underscored the necessity for organizational flexibility and resilience, emphasizing the importance of adapting strategies to effectively manage disruptions like the pandemic crisis (Rudolph, 2021). These studies advanced the field by addressing critical topics and offering innovative approaches to understanding and improving organizational dynamics.

5.2 Analysis of research references on organizational behavior

The results section identifies the principal authors and journals that have made a significant contribution to the field of organizational behavior research. The most impactful and productive authors include Weiss, H. M., Brief, A. P., Luthans, F., Youssef, C. M., and Zhang, Y. Weiss and Brief are influential for their work on the role of affect in the work environment, exploring its impact on organizational behavior and contributing to a more integrative approach in the field (Brief & Weiss, 2002). Luthans is renowned for his research on psychological constructs in organizational behavior, particularly for his introduction of the concept of psychological capital, which facilitates the comprehension and advancement of well-being and performance in organizations (Harms & Luthans, 2012). Youssef's contributions are primarily focused on positive organizational behavior, particularly in relation to hope, optimism, and resilience. His work has significantly advanced the understanding of human potential in the workplace (Youssef & Luthans, 2007). Zhang Y is renowned for his research on social exchange perspectives and unethical pro-organizational behavior. His study, for instance, examined the effect of individual moral identity on workplace ethical behavior (Wang et al., 2019).

The following journals represent the primary sources of research and scholarship in this field: Journal of Applied Psychology, Journal of Business Ethics, Frontiers in Psychology, Journal of Management, Annual Review of Psychology, and Journal of Organizational Behavior Management (Neubert et al., 2008). These journals have published seminal studies on a range of topics, including the influence of leadership and organizational structure on employee behavior, ethical codes and employee conduct, corporate social responsibility (Jones et al., 2017), cross-cultural organizational behavior, and the role of emotions in the workplace (Brief & Weiss, 2002). These journals have played a pivotal role in advancing the field by disseminating crucial research findings.

Notable contributions to the field of organizational behavior have been made by countries including the United States, China, and the United Kingdom. The United States has been a significant contributor to the field of organizational behavior, producing influential studies on the role of emotions in the workplace (Brief & Weiss, 2002). China has emerged as a prominent research hub, particularly in the field of cross-cultural organizational behavior, which has underscored the significance of such research endeavors (Tsui et al., 2007). The United Kingdom has conducted research examining the relationship between human resource practices, employee commitment, and behavior, thereby providing valuable insights into the domain of human capital management (Alfes et al., 2013) Other countries, including Canada, Australia, and the Netherlands, have also made noteworthy contributions, addressing topics such as unprofessional behavior and self-interest orientation in organizational behavior (Dreu, 2006; Elangovan et al., 2010; Martin & Hine, 2005). These contributions have enhanced the global understanding of organizational behavior.

5.3 Analysis of the thematic evolution of organizational behavior

The evolution of organizational behavior is closely tied to emerging variables influenced by social and technological forces. The concept of field service workers, introduced in 1955, was crucial in the development of organizational behavior, focusing on factors like customer interaction, job autonomy, and physical demands that affect worker performance and well-being in non-traditional settings (Comrey et al., 1955). This research laid the foundation for later studies on personnel management, organizational adaptation, and job effectiveness.

The growing interest in unethical pro-organizational behavior highlights concerns about ethically questionable actions in organizations and their effects on performance and culture. Research in this area examines motivations for unethical behavior aimed at benefiting the organization, with implications for human resource management and organizational policy design (Yan et al., 2024). Additionally, studies on personnel management emphasize the continued relevance of recruitment, selection, training, and staff development in influencing organizational performance (Partiko et al., 2023). The field of organizational behavior management focuses on applying behavioral management principles to enhance employee performance (Brethower et al., 2022), while research on artificial intelligence (AI) explores its impact on employee behavior and human resource management through technologies like linguistic and voice analysis (Hu & Zhao, 2021). Lastly, cybersecurity culture research shows that fostering a security-aware culture can improve employee behavior, reduce risks, and strengthen organizational resilience to cyber threats (Alshaikh, 2020).

5.4 Analysis of thematic clusters on organizational behavior

A comprehensive examination of the primary network of co-occurring keywords in organizational behavior has yielded two principal thematic clusters. The initial cluster, depicted in purple within Figure 7, encompasses terms such as "Unethical Pro-Organizational," "Organizational Identification," "Ethical Leadership," "Moral Identity,"

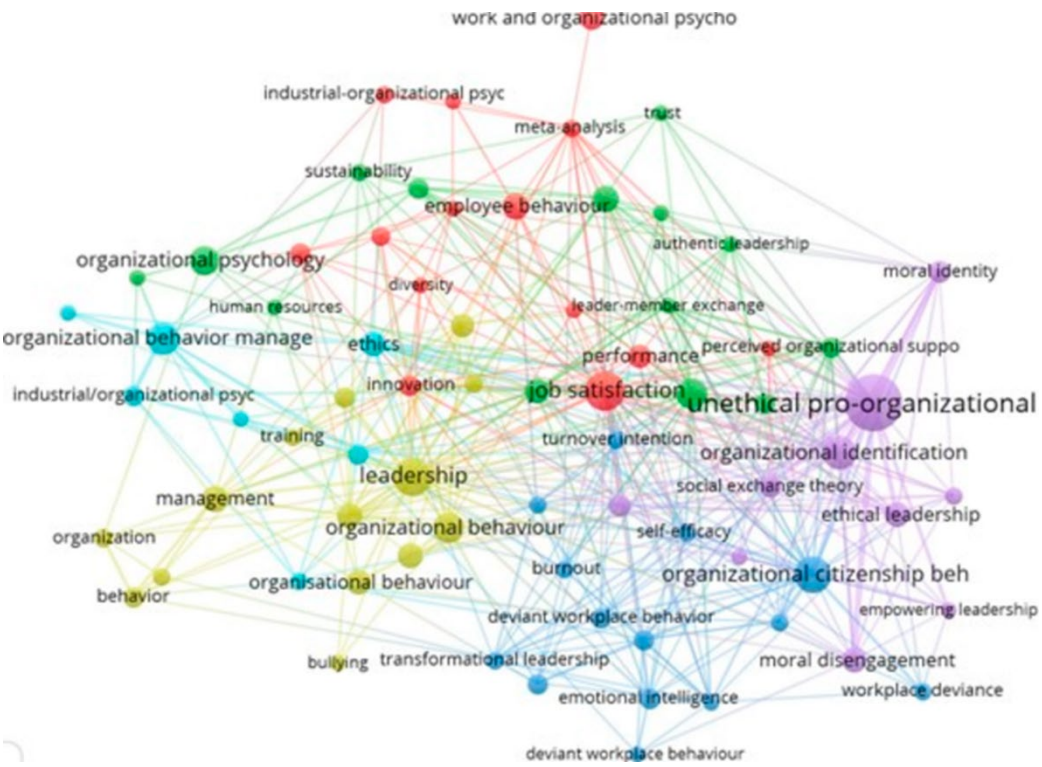


Figure 7. Keyword co-occurrence network.
Source: own elaboration based on Scopus and Web of Science.

and "Social Exchange Theory." These terms underscore the emphasis on ethics, organizational identity, and the influence of social exchange theory on workplace conduct. The research conducted within this cluster investigates the relationship between ethical leadership and unethical pro-organizational behavior, offering invaluable insights for management and leadership in organizations (Miao et al., 2013; Zhang, 2020).

The second cluster, depicted in yellow in Figure 7, contains terms such as "leadership," "organizational behavior," "bullying," "training," and "management." This cluster addresses fundamental aspects of organizational behavior, including leadership, workplace dynamics, and the management of conduct. The studies in this area contribute to the development of tools for measuring organizational behavior, advance positive organizational psychology, and examine negative workplace behaviors (Donaldson & Ko, 2010; Hawkins et al., 2021; Olguín et al., 2008).

5.5 Analysis of the frequency and conceptual validity around organizational behavior

A bibliometric analysis of organizational behavior literature reveals that the keyword "organizational behavior" is situated in quadrant four of the Cartesian plane, which represents concepts that are less frequently utilized (see Figure 8). This suggests a reduction in the term's usage compared to previous periods, during which it was extensively studied, including investigations into the role of procedural and distributive justice in organizational behavior. These studies contributed to a deeper comprehension of the manner in which perceptions of justice impact employee attitudes and behaviors within organizational contexts (Alexander & Ruderman, 1987).

Quadrant 2, which represents emerging concepts in organizational behavior, includes keywords such as "job insecurity," "moral identity," "Covid-19," and "corporate social responsibility." These concepts have gained prominence and are regarded as promising avenues for further research. For example, studies have examined the effects of job insecurity and job immersion on unethical pro-organizational behavior, emphasizing the importance of addressing job insecurity in the workplace (Ghosh, 2017). Moreover, research on benevolent leadership and its potential to engender unethical conduct from a social identity perspective underscores the significance of moral identity in the domain of organizational behavior studies (Shaw & Liao, 2021). The influence of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (Covid-19) on industrial and organizational psychology has also been investigated, underscoring the necessity to address emerging workplace challenges (Rudolph, 2021). Finally, the nexus between corporate social responsibility and organizational psychology has been investigated, identifying a crucial avenue for future inquiry into the integration of socially responsible practices within organizational operations (Jones et al., 2017).

5.6 Classification of keywords on organizational behavior according to their function

Table 1 presents a classification of the principal emerging and growing keywords on organizational behavior, according

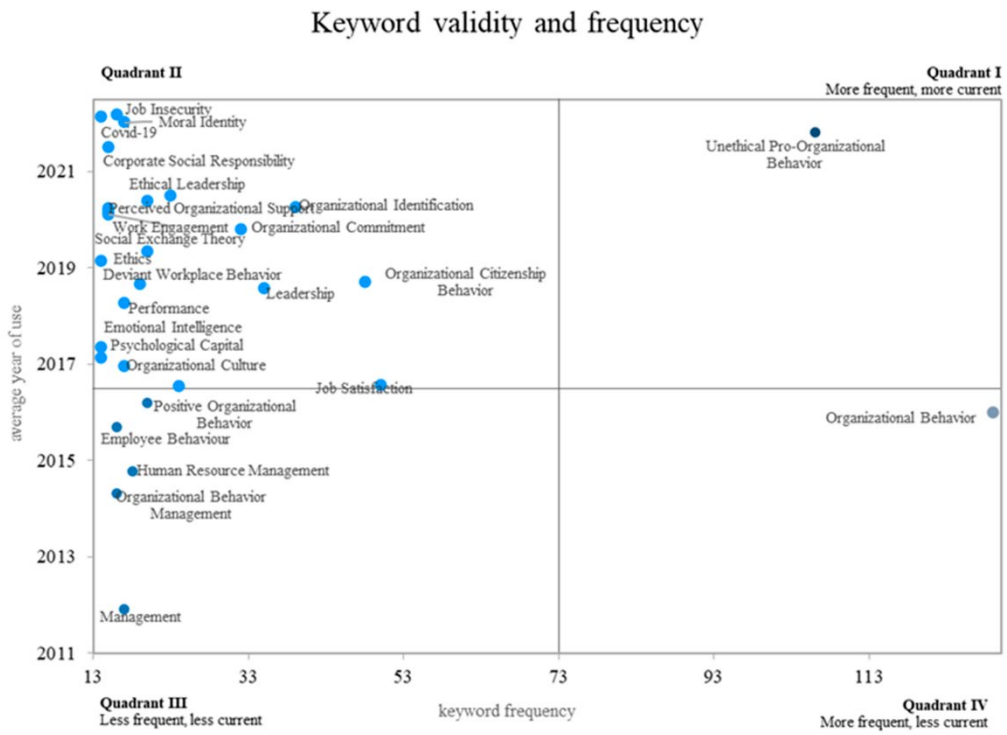


Figure 8. Keyword validity and frequency
Source: own elaboration based on Scopus and Web of Science.

Table 1. Classification of keywords according to their function.

Keyword	Associated Tools	Applications	Characteristics
Job Insecurity	Job satisfaction surveys	Change management	It generates stress and demotivation
	Work environment analysis	Talent development	Impact on employee mental health
	Exit interviews	Preventing absenteeism at work	It makes it difficult to retain talent
Moral Identity	Evaluating organizational values	Ethics in decision making	Guide individual ethical behavior
	Organizational culture analysis	Promoting social responsibility	Impact on the company's reputation
	Training in organizational ethics	Developing ethical leadership	Promotes cohesion and commitment
Covid-19	Occupational health and safety protocols	Crisis management	Adoption of remote working modalities
	Occupational health and safety protocols	Business continuity	Adapting to new work environments
	Internal communication	Change management	Focus on employee health and well-being
Corporate Social Responsibility	Sustainability Report	Implementation of CSR policies	Improving reputation and image
	Participation in community projects	Building relationships with stakeholders	Commitment to sustainable development
	Social audits	Corporate ethical responsibility	Influence on consumer perception
Ethical Leadership	Ethical climate assessment	Promoting organizational values	Inspiration and motivation for teams
	Ethical coaching	Ethical decision making	Building trust and credibility
	Development of ethical policies	Modeling ethical behavior	Creating ethical organizational cultures
Unethical Pro-Organizational Behavior	Ethical risk assessment	Training in organizational ethics	Deterioration of trust and morale
	Monitoring ethical conduct	Development of integrity programs	Risk of reputational and legal damage
	Implementation of codes of conduct	Preventing unethical behavior	Conflict creation and organizational dysfunction

Source: own elaboration based on Scopus and Web of Science.

to their function. This classification enables the identification of the principal characteristics and applications associated with each of the categorized functions.

Keywords in organizational behavior can be grouped into three categories: theoretical concepts (e.g., "transformational leadership"), practices and processes (e.g., "change management"), and emerging trends (e.g., "telecommuting," "AI in HR"). This classification serves to highlight the key aspects of the field.

5.7 Theoretical implications

The theoretical implications of this study underscore the evolving nature of knowledge in the field of organizational behavior. By examining the evolution of publication trends and identifying emerging areas of interest, the study illuminates the manner in which research adapts to address the challenges faced by organizations. It identifies key theoretical references and authors, offering a historical perspective on the field's development and providing resources for researchers and practitioners to engage with specific topics or understand the discipline's evolution.

Thematic and keyword analyses demonstrate the conceptual expansion of the field, identifying emerging trends and poorly researched areas. Such insights assist scholars in anticipating future directions and refining their research methodologies. Furthermore, the identification of research gaps offers a foundation for the advancement of both theoretical exploration and practical applications in organizational behavior.

5.8 Practical implications

Bibliometric analysis reveals a notable shift in the thematic focus of organizational behavior research, moving from the study of field service workers to more contemporary issues such as unethical pro-organizational behavior, artificial intelligence, and cybersecurity culture. These evolving themes reflect the growing complexity of modern workplaces, underscoring the necessity for organizations to adapt. The analysis identifies key areas, including ethical leadership, moral identity, and job insecurity, which indicate that companies should prioritize cultivating ethical practices, reinforcing organizational commitment, and solving urgent issues such as the Coronavirus pandemic and corporate social responsibility.

These findings also have significant implications for strategic decision-making and human resource planning. By identifying emerging trends, organizations can anticipate future talent needs, implement relevant training programs, and foster a culture of innovation, collaboration, and employee engagement. Furthermore, the insights derived from this analysis can inform the allocation of resources in both academic and industrial contexts, ensuring that research investments are directed towards impactful areas. This proactive approach will assist organizations in maintaining competitiveness, effectively managing change, and contributing to the advancement of organizational behavior practices.

5.9 Limitations

One of the current limitations of bibliometrics is the dependence on the selected databases, namely Scopus and Web of Science. This could have resulted in the omission of some relevant publications that could have been included in the analysis. Although Scopus and Web of Science are widely used and recognized for their coverage and quality, it is possible that some relevant publications are indexed in other databases or academic repositories that were not considered in this study. This could have introduced bias into the results and limited the representativeness of the analyzed sample. Moreover, the PRISMA-2020 methodology, despite its widespread acceptance and use in bibliometric research, does have inherent limitations such as subjectivity in data selection and extraction, as well as the potential for human error in the data analysis process. It is important to bear these limitations in mind when interpreting the results and conclusions of the present bibliometric study.

5.10 Research gaps

Table 2 presents a summary of the principal research gaps in organizational behavior identified in bibliometrics. These gaps represent thematic areas or specific aspects of organizational behavior that require further attention and investigation in future research in order to enhance the understanding of the field and advance knowledge.

The identified gaps in organizational behavior research underscore the necessity for further investigation into understudied areas, the need to address deficiencies in existing literature, and the emergence of new research frontiers. These gaps provide a valuable framework for future research, directing scholars toward pertinent topics that can significantly advance the field.

5.11 Research agenda

The study of unethical pro-organizational behavior has gained prominence due to its significant impact on organizational reputation and performance. Further research could investigate the underlying causes of this phenomenon, which may be situated at the individual or organizational level, and develop strategies to foster a culture of ethical conduct and integrity.

Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), which encompasses voluntary actions that benefit organizations and their members, remains a crucial factor in organizational success. Further research could investigate the underlying motivations for OCB, its impact on organizational productivity, and the role of leadership and recognition programs in fostering such behavior.

The role of leadership in guiding and motivating employees is of paramount importance. Future research

Table 2. Research gaps.

Category	Research gap	Justification	Questions for future researchers
Thematic gaps	Lack of studies on the impact of teleworking on organizational behavior	Despite the growing interest in teleworking, there is a lack of comprehensive research on how this work model affects organizational behavior.	How does teleworking impact team cohesion and collaboration among employees? What strategies can organizations implement to effectively manage teleworking and mitigate potential negative impacts on organizational behavior?
	Lack of research on the relationship between cultural diversity and organizational behavior	Cultural diversity influences organizational behavior, but has been understudied, limiting our understanding of its processes and dynamics.	How does cultural diversity affect organizational climate and employee job satisfaction? What diversity management strategies are most effective in multicultural environments?
Geographic gaps	Limitations in the geographical representation of organizational behavior studies	Most research focuses on English-speaking countries, limiting the applicability of findings to other cultural contexts.	How do management and leadership practices differ in different cultural contexts? How can cultural differences influence the effectiveness of organizational interventions?
Interdisciplinary gaps	Lack of integration between organizational behavior and positive psychology	Lack of research on positive aspects limits our understanding of well-being and motivation in the workplace.	How can workplace wellness programs contribute to productivity and job satisfaction? What is the impact of gratitude and optimism on employee engagement and motivation?
Time gaps	Lack of longitudinal studies in organizational behavior	Most research is cross-sectional, making it difficult to understand long-term trends in organizational behavior.	What are the factors that contribute to stability or change in organizational behavior over time? How can organizational strategies adapt to changes in behavior over time?

Source: own elaboration based on Scopus and Web of Science.

could investigate the effectiveness of diverse leadership styles, such as transformational and ethical leadership, in different contexts, particularly in terms of their influence on engagement, culture, and performance.

Organizational commitment is defined as the emotional bond that employees have with their organization. Future studies could concentrate on factors such as the quality of leadership and human resources (HR) practices that foster commitment, as well as the efficacy of interventions such as professional development and wellness programs.

The concept of job insecurity has become a significant area of interest due to its impact on employee well-being and performance. Further research could investigate the underlying causes of job insecurity, such as restructuring and economic uncertainty, and develop strategies to mitigate the negative effects on motivation, satisfaction, and commitment.

The field of organizational behavior is currently engaged in the examination of several emerging topics, including the impact of technology, diversity and inclusion, and the evolving role of leadership in digital transformation. An investigation into these areas would help to address the complexities inherent in modern workplaces.

The concept of corporate social responsibility (CSR) is becoming an increasingly significant factor in a number of areas, including employee engagement, employer branding, and customer loyalty. Further research could investigate novel methods for integrating corporate social responsibility (CSR) into business strategies, with a view to achieving mutual societal and organizational benefit.

In addition, job satisfaction and positive organizational behavior remain of paramount importance due to their impact on productivity, retention, and well-being. It would be beneficial for future studies to identify factors that enhance satisfaction across industries and cultural contexts, as well as to measure the impact of leadership, culture, and HR policies on the creation of positive work environments.

6. Conclusions

This study provides a comprehensive and updated mapping of organizational behavior research, revealing how the field has expanded toward more complex and ethically oriented behavioral constructs, as illustrated in Figure 9. By integrating thematic evolution, keyword dynamics, and intellectual clustering, the study contributes to clarifying how organizational behavior has transitioned from traditional workforce analyses to multidimensional perspectives that incorporate ethics, identity, technology, and cultural factors. These findings offer a valuable foundation for future theoretical development and for guiding managerial practice in contexts characterized by uncertainty, digital transformation, and evolving employee expectations.

In addition to its contributions, the study acknowledges important limitations. The analysis is constrained by its reliance on Scopus and Web of Science, which may exclude relevant publications indexed in alternative repositories. Likewise, the focus on metadata rather than full-text content limits the depth of theoretical interpretation. Future research could address these limitations by incorporating additional databases,

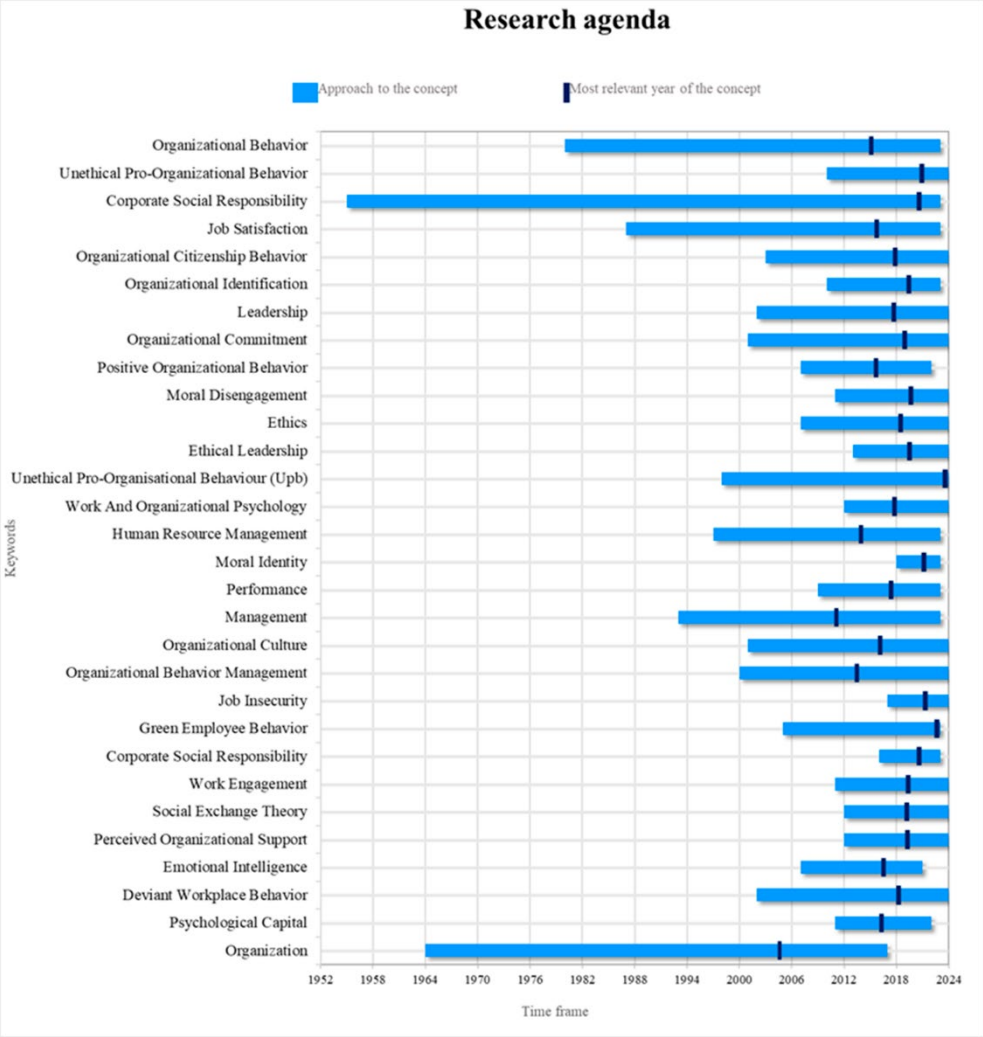


Figure 9. Research agenda.
Source: own elaboration based on Scopus and Web of Science.

applying qualitative content analyses, or exploring emerging constructs through mixed-method approaches. Overall, this study strengthens the understanding of the conceptual trajectory of organizational behavior and outlines promising avenues for future inquiry.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest.

Statement on the Use of AI

The authors declare that they used generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools solely as support in the manuscript writing process. Platforms such as ChatGPT were used for writing suggestions, idea organization, and style editing. All content was subsequently reviewed, validated, and edited by the authors, who assume full responsibility for the accuracy, originality, and validity of the work presented.

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