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The Evolution of Performance Evaluation Research in the Public Sector: From Traditional Models to Multi-Criteria Decision-Making Approache

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Abstract


Since the 1980s, performance measurement and management have been considered as one of the fundamental pillars of modern public management reforms. This study aims to provide a comprehensive picture of the current state of research and identify future research opportunities in performance measurement and management in the public sector. Using two main methods namely: 1) performance analysis, and 2) scientific mapping techniques, a comprehensive bibliometric review was conducted to examine the publication trends, conceptual structure, and developments in the field. The results show that research on performance measurement and management in public organizations has grown significantly in recent years and has established strong links with the management, accounting, and economics literature. The study also analyzed the conceptual structure of the existing literature and identified areas for further development. The findings suggest that to respond more effectively to the needs of public organizations in performance evaluation, future research should pay particular attention to developing key concepts and analytical frameworks in this area. In addition to reviewing the current state of the art, this article offers suggestions for the field's future development.

Keywords: Performance measurement, Performance management, Performance analysis, Modern public management, Balanced scorecard.

1 | Introduction

Since the 1980s, modern public management reforms have emphasized the need to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of public organizations through better performance measurement and management [1]. As a result, many public organizations have begun to pilot the implementation of Performance Measurement

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Systems (PMS), defined as a balanced and dynamic set of measures that includes setting goals and collecting, analyzing, and reporting information on the performance of actions [2]. In doing so, public organizations often adopt the most relevant performance measurement models traditionally used by NGOs [3]. The most widely used performance measurement model is the Balanced Scorecard (BSC). This standard model supports integrated management between the organization's internal and external critical success factors [4]. Since the 1980s, new modern public management reforms have emphasized the need to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of public organizations through better performance measurement and management [1]. As a result, many public organizations have begun experimenting with implementing PMS, which are defined as a balanced and dynamic set of measures [5]. These measures include setting goals and collecting, analyzing, and reporting information on performance measures [2].

In doing so, public organizations often adopt the most relevant performance measurement models traditionally used by non-governmental organizations [3]. However, designing, implementing, and using effective performance evaluation systems remains a significant challenge in public sector organizations, as they are heterogeneous and also differ from private organizations in terms of internal structure and external environment [5]. To meet the specific needs of public organizations, many researchers have highlighted the key role of some performance measurement activities, such as performance monitoring and reporting, for the effective management of performance information [6].

Although there is a great deal of emphasis on performance measurement and management in public sector organizations, the research literature rarely examines the status of performance measurement and management in public sector management. A literature review on this topic strongly focuses on performance measurement, considering why public sector managers should measure performance [7]. Some research also examines the management objectives that performance measurement helps to achieve and how these objectives can be achieved using performance measurement measures [8].

Other studies examine the issue of management as a key determinant of performance in public sector organizations [9]. This paper aims to provide an overview of the current state of research on performance measurement and management in public sector management and highlight possible future research opportunities, focusing on the business, management, and accounting literature. Based on these premises, this study answers a general research question: What is the state of and future research opportunities for performance measurement and management in public sector management? Specifically, this paper reviews the performance measurement and management literature on public sector management to answer the following three research questions: 1) What is the publication trend of the articles? 2) What is the conceptual structure of the articles? 3) What is the thematic evolution of the literature? Furthermore, based on the analysis, this paper intends to discuss the main "topics" of performance measurement and management.

The structure of the paper is as follows: the next section describes the methodology chosen to conduct the bibliometric literature review. The third section synthesizes the useful findings in answering the research questions. The fourth section presents the findings to enhance the understanding of the existing literature on performance measurement and management in the public sector and discusses gaps and future research opportunities. The final section summarises the main findings of the paper. It highlights the need for further research into how performance appraisal can improve public sector organizations' efficiency.

This paper has reviewed the literature on performance appraisal using performance analysis and scientific mapping techniques. Performance assessment and analysis have been recognized as valuable tools for evaluating scientific research, and they describe the progress of science in various ways. This paper has conducted a detailed assessment of the publication trends of articles, including the number of publications of articles, the temporal distribution of the publication of articles, and the most prolific authors of articles related to performance appraisal. Using bibliometric indicators supports the design of a conceptual structure and thematic evolution of a research field, i.e., it represents how topics, fields, and research streams are related [10]. Specifically, the conceptual structure of this study reflects the main research topics addressed in a research field over a given period.

2 | Theoretical Foundations

2.1 | Performance Appraisal Systems

This section presents the theoretical foundations of performance appraisal systems, focusing on the concepts, dimensions, and models used to evaluate organizational performance in terms of effectiveness, efficiency, and productivity.

2.1.1 | Model for measuring effectiveness and efficiency

The concepts of effectiveness and economic efficiency are derived from technical knowledge in accounting, auditing, and management literature. According to a systemic approach, the components of effectiveness, efficiency, and economic efficiency make up productivity. In some organizations, efficiency, and economy lead to effectiveness; in others, they have no relationship. Therefore, effectiveness, efficiency, and economy are criteria for assessing performance.

2.1.2 | BSC model

The BSC is one of today's most widely accepted performance management tools [11]. Kaplan and Norton [12] developed the BSC approach at the University in the early 1990s. The BSC is a multidimensional approach to performance measurement linked to organizational strategies and is used by several organizations [13]. This model suggests that attention should be paid to customer requirements, business processes, long-term sustainability, and financial performance measures [14]. The BSC has been used in a variety of research areas, including strategy evaluation Prouty [15], librarianship Self [16], and financial performance review [17]. The BSC aims to provide managers with key business success factors and link performance to the organization's overall strategy. The aspects of the BSC are shown in *Fig. 1*.

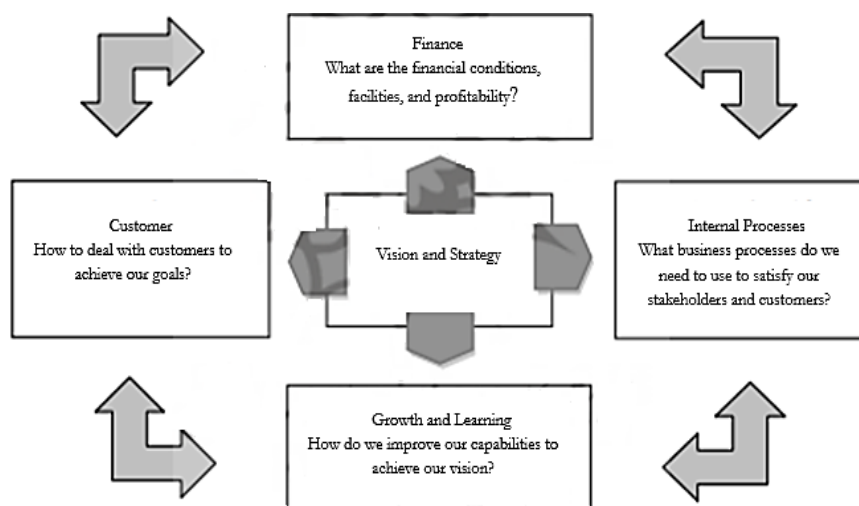


Fig. 1. Aspects of the BSC [18].

2.1.3 | Organisational excellence model (EFQM)

In today's modern management sciences, the role of efficient evaluation and monitoring systems in improving and excelling organizations is quite obvious. Meanwhile, some Iranian organizations have applied modern evaluation methods in line with organizational excellence models. However, despite the prominent features of this model, a review of literature conducted in other countries and practical experience in Iranian organizations shows that given the exclusivity of the services and goods provided, as well as other specific features of public sector organizations, evaluation faces complexities that, if not taken into account, may cast doubt on the functioning of the model. The concepts of the principles of excellence in the model of

organizational excellence are as follows: 1) results orientation, 2) customer focus, 3) leadership and consensus, 4) process and fact based management, 5) people involvement and development, 6) continuous improvement, innovation and learning, 7) partnership development, and 8) public responsibility. Fig. 2 shows the development cycle of the concept of excellence.

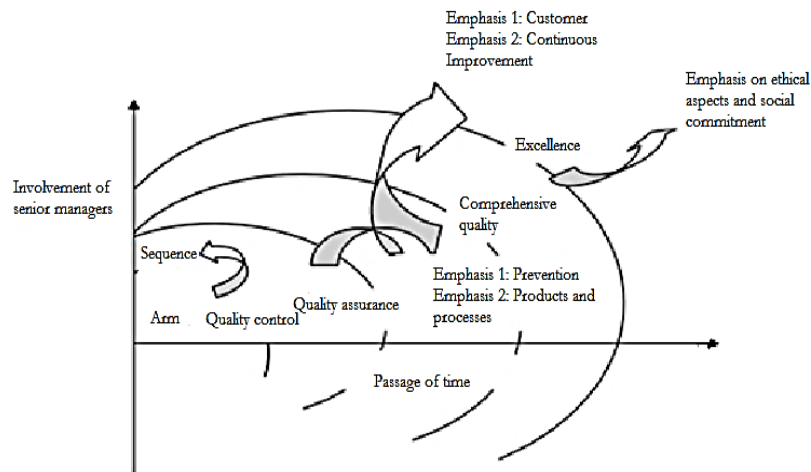


Fig. 2. The evolutionary cycle of the concept of excellence [19].

2.1.4 | Auditing model international organization for standardization

International Organization for Standardization (ISO) is an acronym for a non-governmental organization. Its members are not government representatives but national standards organizations and institutes of countries selected based on existing procedures. The use of standards developed by ISO is voluntary. ISO has no executive power to implement and enforce these standards. It is also not within ISO's remit to check that these standards are implemented by the conditions mentioned.

2.1.5 | Total quality management model

Total Quality Management (TQM) is a strategy that can improve learning and increase the competitive advantage of organizations. Rapid market changes and reduced product life span are important challenges in competitive markets, encouraging organizations to adopt software innovations [20]. Given the importance of quality in organizations and the increasing attention to it in today's organizations, various methods and tools have been proposed to achieve it. Today, TQM can control services, products, and even the sales process because of its comprehensive view of organizational issues. Various researchers have also tested and confirmed TQM regarding organizational performance. Reid and Saunders [21] stated: "Quality is the meeting of customer needs and more than meeting customer needs by everyone in the organization through an integrated effort." This integrated effort is called TQM.

According to Demirbag et al. [22], TQM 2006 was a factor that can improve quality and provided a comprehensive perspective on continuous improvement in all organizations. TQM is a management philosophy necessary for all organizations to survive in a competitive environment. TQM is a source of innovation, competitive advantage, and organizational culture. Therefore, the customer will be dissatisfied if a company provides poor-quality service. What is now defined as TQM comes from the ideas of quality giants such as Deming [23], Juran [24], Karzabi [25], Ishikawa and Loftus [26], whose primary goals were customer satisfaction and continuous improvement. An integrated approach to achieving and maintaining high-quality results focuses on maintaining and continuously improving processes and preventing defects at all levels and in all functions of the organization to meet and exceed customer needs.

2.1.6 | Analytic hierarchy process model

The Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) was first introduced to allocate scarce resources and meet the planning needs of the military. Since its introduction, it has become one of the most widely used Multi-Criteria Decision-Making (MCDM) methods. It has been used to solve unstructured problems in various fields of human interest and need, such as politics, economics, social sciences, and management. The AHP procedure consists of six basic steps: 1) define the unstructured problem and clearly state the objectives and consequences, 2) Break down the complex problem into a hierarchical structure with decision elements (detailed criteria and solutions), 3) Make a pairwise comparison between the decision elements using comparative scales, 4) The slate matrix's eigenvalues estimate the decision elements' relative weights, 5) Check the consistency criterion of the scales to ensure that the decision makers' judgments are consistent, and 6) Sum the decision elements' relative weights to obtain the alternatives' final weight.

2.1.7 | The reengineering model

Most people are reluctant to change, even though they are dissatisfied with the status quo and understand the potential benefits of change. The Plan, Do, Check, Act (PDCA) method describes the reengineering process based on the following 4 simple steps: 1) needs assessment, 2) planning, 3) implementation, and 4) measurement and evaluation.

3 | Data Collection of International Articles

The first step of this research was to identify keywords related to the literature on performance evaluation in the public sector. Keywords such as "public sector" "performance measurement" and "performance management" were examined in the articles. The keyword "public sector" was also used to avoid excluding relevant articles without further specifications (restrictions).

Table 1 shows that the search was limited to keywords in English-language articles and journals on the Elsevier scopus website. The authors chose scopus because it is the world's largest abstract and citation database. However, the authors examined the similarities and differences between Scopus and Web of science and concluded that:

- I. Almost all articles identified by web of Science were also found in scopus.
- II. Scopus contained more articles consistent with the research study identified.

Table 1. Extracted data.

| Dataset | Scopus Elsevier |
|---------------|---|
| Time | From 1982 (the date of the first article was published on scopus) to 2019 |
| Resource Type | Journal |
| Subject | "Business, management and accounting" |
| Language | English |
| Keywords | General" and "performance measurement" or "performance management*." |

Table 1 shows that 1046 articles were reviewed in this study. This number of articles was used to answer the first study question (i.e., what is the publication trend?). In this study, an analysis of the published articles was carried out to provide an overview of the status of the publication trend. To answer the second and third questions (what is the conceptual structure? What is the thematic development?), the search for authors was then limited to the keywords of the articles.

3.1 | Data Analysis

The identified collection of articles on performance evaluation and management has been examined, and the results are presented in various tables in different categories. These categories include; 1) the number of articles published in different years, 2) the number of citations to different articles, 3) the most prolific authors, 4) the most relevant journals, 5) the most relevant countries (geographical area of research), 6) the most relevant keywords, and 7) the most relevant articles. *Fig. 3* shows the trend of publishing articles in different years:

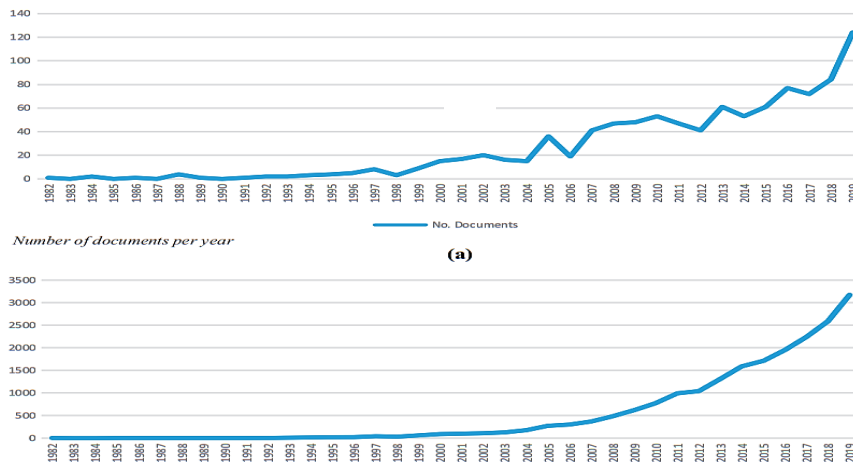


Fig. 3. Trends in the publication of articles in different years.

Table 2 also categorizes the most prolific foreign authors in the field of performance management and evaluation:

Table 2. Most commonly used authors.

| Author | Number |
|-------------|--------|
| Moynihan | 11 |
| Poster | 9 |
| Model | 8 |
| Laihonen | 8 |
| Jasline | 7 |
| Arena Baldi | 7 |
| Carol | 7 |
| Bianchi | 6 |
| Hook | 6 |
| Lagrid | 6 |
| Pasha | 6 |
| Agostino | 4 |

Table 3 lists the most important journals regarding the number of articles published on performance evaluation and management in the public sector. The international journal of productivity and performance management has the highest percentage of articles published in this field, with 56 articles.

Table 3. Most relevant journals.

| Journal | Number of Articles |
|--|--------------------|
| International journal of productivity and performance management | 56 |
| International journal of public administration | 49 |
| Public administration review | 44 |
| Public management and finance | 43 |
| Public administration review | 38 |
| Public management and performance review | 31 |
| Public administration reviews in the United States | 22 |
| Journal of public administration research and theory | 20 |
| Measuring business growth | 19 |
| International journal of public sector performance management | 17 |
| Public personnel management | 16 |
| Financial accountability and management | 16 |
| Evaluation and planning | 15 |

As shown in *Table 4*, this study also breaks down the geographical scope of the articles. The United States of America has the highest number of articles in terms of geographical scope, with 267 articles, which may be due to the large public sector in the United States.

Table 4. Geographical scope of articles.

| Country | Number of Articles |
|---------------|--------------------|
| United States | 267 |
| England | 207 |
| Australia | 80 |
| Italy | 76 |
| Canada | 42 |
| Netherlands | 36 |
| Finland | 33 |
| Malaysia | 31 |
| Denmark | 28 |

Table 5 shows the frequency of keywords identified in the extracted articles. As is clear from this table, the frequency of keywords "performance management" "performance evaluation" and "public sector" accounted for approximately 70% of the total keywords, which indicates that researchers relied on these keywords to select more articles.

Table 5. Identified keywords.

| Keywords | Number |
|--------------------------|--------|
| Performance management | 275 |
| Performance appraisal | 256 |
| Public sector | 129 |
| BSC | 48 |
| Efficiency | 45 |
| Modeling | 43 |
| Accountability | 41 |
| Performance measurement | 40 |
| Modern public management | 37 |

Table 6 shows the most cited articles in performance measurement and management in the public sector. As can be seen, Eccles' article [27] 'the performance measurement manifesto, Harvard business review' is the most cited. It was one of the first articles published in this field.

Table 6. Most cited articles.

| Authors | Article Title | Number of Citations |
|-------------------------------|--|---------------------|
| Eccles [27] | The performance measurement manifesto, Harvard business review | 681 |
| Weaver et al. [28] | Integrated and disaggregated corporate social performance: management commitments, external pressures, and corporate ethics practices, academy of management journal | 465 |
| Christensen and Læg Reid [29] | A whole-of-government approach to public sector reform, public administration review | 408 |
| De Julnes and Holzer [30] | Promoting performance measures in public organizations: An empirical study of factors affecting adoption and implementation, public administration review | 365 |
| Brignall and Modell [31] | An institutional perspective on performance measurement and management in the new public sector, management accounting research | 356 |
| Head and Alford [32] | Wicked problems: Implications for public policy and management, management and society | 312 |

4 | Findings

The bibliometric performance analysis answers the first question. It identifies the main publication trends in the business, management, and accounting literature related to performance measurement and management in the public sector. The analysis highlights the increasing number of articles and the volume of citations, especially in the last 15 years. As shown in the figures above, the number of publications and citations has increased significantly from 1982 to 2019, confirming the growing relevance of this field, especially during the recent years under review. The ranking of the most prolific authors identified these key researchers: Moynihan [33], Poister [34], Modell [35], Jaaskelainen [36], and Arnaboldi [5] *Table 2*.

Moynihan and Pandey [37] examined the use of performance information by managers and identified it as one of the key challenges for performance management research. Although governments have made significant efforts to generate performance data, little attention has been paid to defining the factors associated with effectively using performance information. In another key paper, Moynihan [33] provides a case study of the United States government's adoption of managing for results. This paper assesses the implementation of public management reforms in the United States and argues that the adoption of managing for results has been limited and that these implementations often fail to achieve the desired results. *Table 7* reflects the centrality of the topics of various articles from 1996 to 2003, which indicates that communities and institutions have the highest importance coefficient.

Table 7. Strategic chart and performance measures from 1996 to 2003.

| Name | Number of Documents | Number of Referrals | Importance Factor |
|------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| Communities and institutions | 4 | 122 | 4 |
| Data overlay analysis | 4 | 250 | 3 |
| Effectiveness | 2 | 132 | 1 |
| Productivity | 2 | 4 | 1 |
| Service | 3 | 64 | 3 |

Also, *Table 8* reflects the focus of various articles from 2004 to 2011, which indicates that financial management and BSCs have the highest importance coefficients.

Table 8. Strategic chart and performance measures from 2004 to 2011.

| Name | Number of Documents | Number of Referrals | Importance Factor |
|------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| Organization | 7 | 144 | 6 |
| Performance assessment | 12 | 426 | 8 |
| Financial management | 17 | 427 | 12 |
| Communities and institutions | 12 | 120 | 6 |
| BSC | 23 | 620 | 12 |
| Private sector | 10 | 316 | 7 |
| Customer satisfaction | 8 | 89 | 5 |
| Government | 13 | 279 | 7 |
| Banks | 2 | 58 | 2 |
| Strategic planning | 3 | 10 | 2 |
| England | 11 | 143 | 6 |
| Netherlands | 3 | 80 | 2 |
| Accounting | 4 | 71 | 4 |

Table 9 reflects the focus of the topics of the different articles from 2012 to 2019, which shows that the modern public management paradigm has the highest importance coefficient.

Table 9. Strategic roadmap and performance metrics from 2012 to 2019.

| Name | Number of Documents | Number of Referrals | Importance Factor |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| Performance assessment | 13 | 32 | 4 |
| Decision making | 16 | 103 | 7 |
| Universities | 26 | 120 | 7 |
| New public management paradigm | 32 | 253 | 11 |
| Supply chain | 9 | 51 | 4 |
| Balanced assessment | 24 | 91 | 5 |
| Beginning | 7 | 61 | 4 |
| Human resource management | 7 | 12 | 2 |
| TQM | 4 | 18 | 2 |
| Communities and institutions | 5 | 20 | 3 |
| Local government | 16 | 31 | 3 |
| Simulation | 3 | 14 | 2 |
| Taxation | 2 | 11 | 2 |

5 | Review of Internal Articles

The Normags website was used to extract articles about public sector performance evaluation in Iran. After reviewing the keywords and titles of the articles, 29 articles were finally selected. The period for determining the articles is from 1380 to 1400. Therefore, we will continue to categorize these articles based on different dimensions. The process of publishing performance evaluation articles in other years is shown in *Fig. 4*.

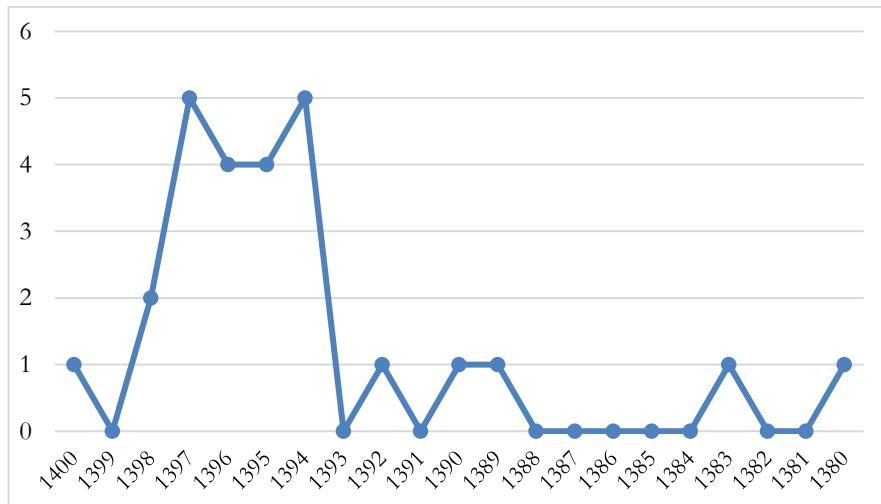


Fig. 4. The process of printing performance evaluation articles.

As can be seen from the figure above, the most significant number of articles (5) were published in 2018 and 2015. It is also clear that in recent years, the topic of management and performance evaluation in the public sector has gained more attention among Iranian researchers.

5.1 | Classification of Journals that Have Published Topics in Public Sector Performance Evaluation

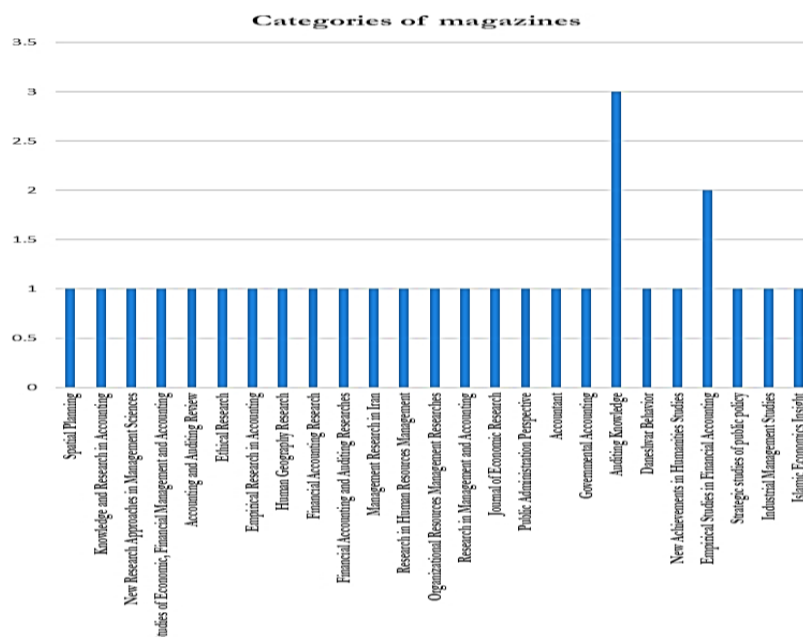


Fig. 5. Magazine classification.

Fig. 5 shows that the most significant articles (3) related to the court of accounts were published in danesh Awsari. The high number of articles published in this journal is because the court of accounts is responsible for auditing public sector units. Therefore, authors submit their articles on public sector issues to this journal.

5.2 | Classification of Research According to the Nature of the Research

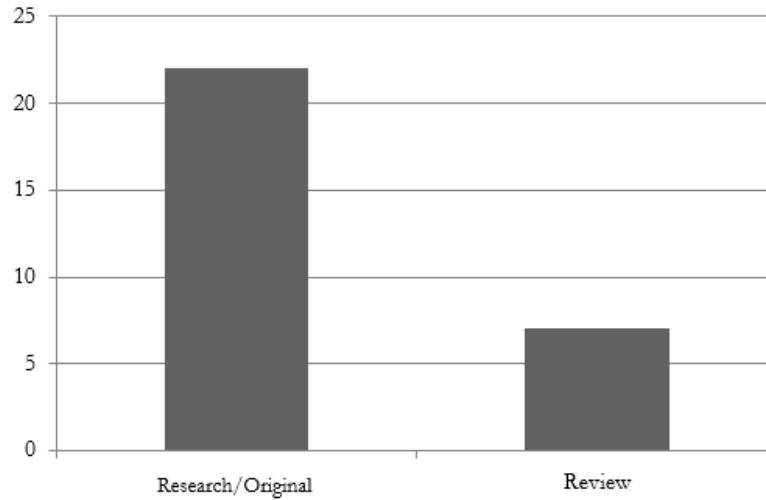


Fig. 6. Classification of research according to the nature of the research.

As can be seen from Fig. 6, most of the research carried out was original and high-quality, indicating that researchers have primarily focused on exploring new topics and raising new questions in studies related to performance evaluation in the public sector.

5.3 | Classification of Research by Data Collection Method

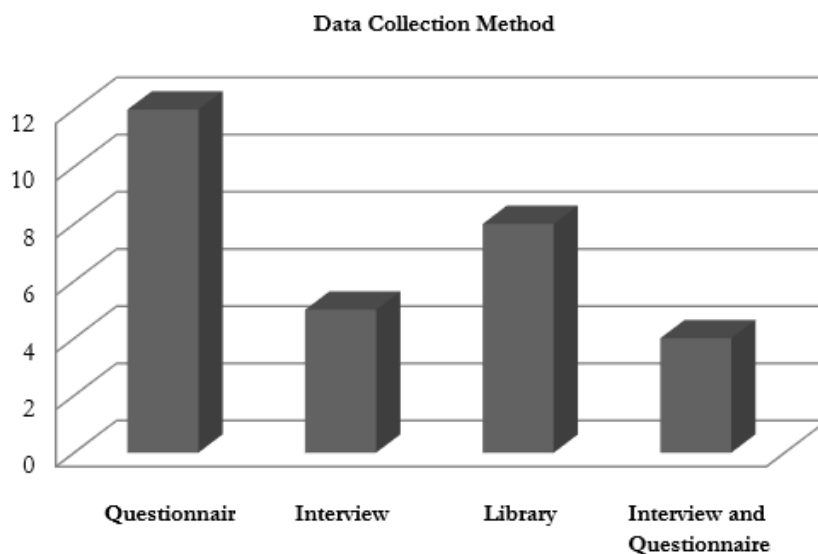


Fig. 7. Classification of research according to data collection.

As shown in Fig. 7, the data collection method of most studies was a questionnaire, reflecting that researchers have conducted most of their research in the field of performance evaluation in the public sector.

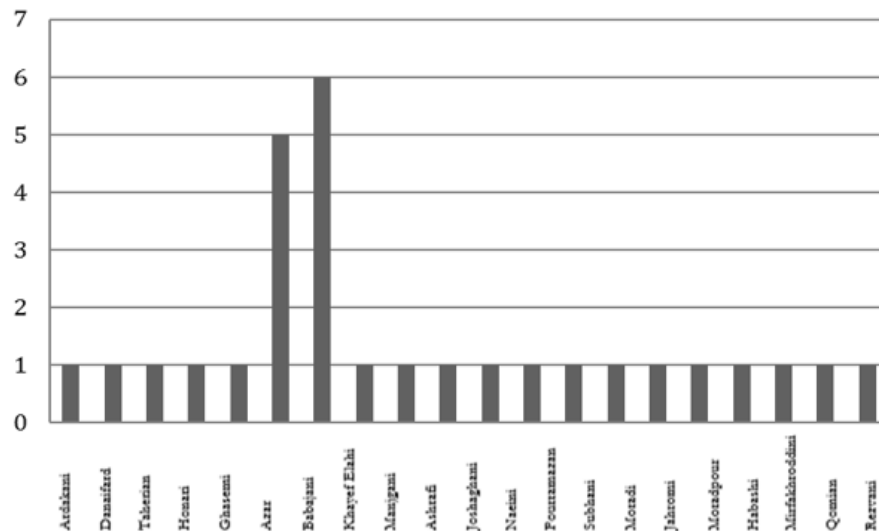


Fig. 8. Classification of research by author.

As Fig. 8 shows, Babajani [38] and Azar [39] conducted most of the research on performance evaluation and management. Therefore, researchers interested in performance evaluation should benefit from the experience of these eminent scholars.

6 | Discussion and Identification of Research Gaps and Recommendations

This article evaluates the implementation of public management reforms in the United States and argues that the management for results doctrine has been adopted only to a limited extent and that most of these implementations do not achieve the expected results. It also examines the decision-making process model and evaluates public management reforms in the United States. The findings suggest that adopting modern public management reforms has been limited and that most programs implemented with these reforms have not achieved the expected results.

The model in 2001 evaluated the decision-making process model that senior management uses in developing multi-level performance management and assessment. Ballantyne et al. [40] also studied different performance management and assessment practices adopted by countries such as the UK and Sweden. Poister [34] discusses the key role of strategic planning in the future and the need for management to adopt a holistic strategic management approach. He emphasized the need for a greater link between strategic management and performance processes than in previous years. Jaaskelainen and Laihonen [41] and Arnaboldi [5] emerged as two major researchers in the performance measurement research stream. Jaaskelainen [42] has published five papers on performance management and evaluation in the public sector. Initially, he studied only the measurement of productivity in public sector organizations; then, he extended his research scope to the design of performance evaluation systems. He identified an innovative strategic framework for performance management and evaluation in the public sector [43]. Arnaboldi [5] studied performance management and evaluation in the Italian public sector, examining and studying the transformation of public organizations from bureaucratic to performance-oriented models. Arnaboldi [5] also addressed transferring the performance appraisal system into operational use in the context of public sector reforms and defining the effectiveness dimension in the performance appraisal system for public organizations. The analysis of journals publishing articles related to management and performance appraisal in the public sector shows that the international journal of productivity and performance management is the most relevant in this area, followed by the international journal of public administration, management review, and public money management.

As explained in the previous section, to answer the first question, what are the main trends in the publication of articles over the years? The performance analysis highlights the growing importance of research on

performance measurement and management in public organizations, which many journals, authors, and countries have studied. In reviewing the literature on performance measurement and management in the public sector, it was found that the thematic evolution of performance management and evaluation research is related to responding to the needs of public sector organizations.

This study shows an increasing trend in subjects studied from the first to the second period. Also, the subject areas studied did not change significantly from the second to the third period. As seen from the tables above, in the first period, studies on performance management and evaluation in the public sector focused mainly on examining a few specific issues. This period also saw the development of many 'productivity' and 'effectiveness' indicators for various activities, which were often easy to measure and process through information systems [44]. The analysis of performance information has been dominated by a mathematical programming approach to improving decision-making, particularly in the health sector. Strategic and integrated approaches to performance management and evaluation are rarely explored. The second period (2004-2011) shows a significant increase in the topics studied, publications, and citations, reflecting the growing importance of management and performance evaluation in the public sector. During this period, the conceptual structure of several topics created an important movement in introducing performance measurement tools in public sector organizations (such as the BSC). This period also saw the emergence of new themes (such as strategic planning, customer satisfaction, and the impact of accounting systems) that aligned with modern public management reforms. What is striking in the next period (the third) is the reversal of the trend in the conceptual structure of the third period. In this period, even if we consider the thematic structure of the studies to be constant, their content changes drastically, and their relative importance and linkages decrease. This indicates a clear lack of focus in the research on performance management and evaluation conducted in the public sector in recent years. As can be seen from the previous tables, the topics studied and mentioned are comprehensive and relevant to the public sector, such as 'new public management,' 'BSC,' and 'university.' Several other topics were also covered during this period, such as supply chains and decision-making, of which only decision-making showed high relevance and potential for further development over time. However, performance management and evaluation for decision-making in the public sector have received too much attention, mainly because of the need for performance auditing. Performance suggests that research on management and performance evaluation in the public sector has primarily focused on general issues and neglected the issues needed to address the specific management complexity of public organizations.

In addition, the qualitative analysis of the identified literature revealed five main research gaps and research opportunities in performance evaluation issues, which are explained below:

As explained at the beginning of the study, the emergence of the international public sector reform movement Hood [45] highlighted the growing attention to management and performance evaluation in the public sector. In the 1990s, new public management reforms were essential to support the paradigm shift from the traditional public management model to the new public management paradigm. For many years, the new public management reforms were the primary reference for research on management and performance evaluation in the public sector. The importance of the new management paradigm in enabling changes in performance evaluation research has been widely criticized in recent years [29]. Public management reform usually seeks to spread a culture of efficiency, often characterized by the proliferation and circulation of concepts such as performance, transparency, objectives, results, rationalization, etc. [46]. In the last 15 years, research has often been associated with implementing performance measures mainly aimed at controlling what public organizations do [47]. However, to effectively shift the paradigm, research needs to clarify the role of performance management and evaluation in public organizations and the key factors for successful management and performance assessment in the different environments in which each public organization operates. To highlight the shortcomings of MPM, recent research has described it as 'stagnant,' too vague, and general and argued that a new reform trend has emerged in recent years, known as post-MPM [48]. In this context, Hood [45] described the term as overused.

Modern public management is a broad and general topic. In addition, more environmental research and approaches should be used to support effective management and performance evaluation in the public sector. To support the effective adoption of performance management and evaluation in public organizations, we need to go beyond specific topics and focus research more on effective management and performance evaluation of public organizations; therefore, considering the identified research gap, the following research proposal can be made:

6.1 | Suggestions Arising From the Identification of the First Research Gap

- I. Identify best practices of performance management and evaluation that are appropriate to face the specific complexities of the public sector
- II. Theorise a new and context-specific paradigm of performance management and evaluation in the public sector versus a context-specific approach.

Consequently, more research on performance management and evaluation in different countries and sectors is needed to identify the needs and possible useful cases for defining new models and theories.

6.2 | Second Research Gap

In the early years of public sector reform, the TQM approach was very popular in publishing articles on assessing quality and efficiency, along with the need to measure performance in public sector organizations [49]. This approach supports a new orientation towards customer needs and the positive impact of TQM tools. It approaches for organizational improvement (e.g., the adoption of the Business excellence model, ISO norms) [50].

As in the private sector, adopting TQM principles and principles brought performance evaluation systems to public sector organizations and attempted to shift the focus from studying a single phenomenon and/or indicator to analyzing the organization as an integrated system [51]. In the early 2000s, a new approach known as total government Christensen and Læg Reid [29] was proposed to overcome the existing structure based on separating organizations. This approach was very compatible with the reforms of the new public management paradigm. This new approach was more visible in English-speaking countries-such as the United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand and was known as the engineering of the new public management paradigm. Later, it also appeared in other countries, such as the United States, where it is known as participatory public management [52]. Countries that joined the NPM movement late (such as the Scandinavian countries) also gradually conducted studies on management and performance evaluation in the public sector. As shown in the findings section, during the second period under review (2004-2011), the focus of organization research reversed towards public management and performance evaluation research (the organization has the highest centrality and the highest intensity of links with other topics Faezi and Bagherzadeh [53]. In the third period, the public sector has shown increasing interest in TQM and performance management and evaluation as drivers of organizational change that can improve service quality and, consequently, stakeholder satisfaction [51]. New organizational quality assessment tools have recently been developed to create a common assessment framework for measuring organizational quality across European countries [54]. However, current evidence suggests the potential inadequacy of these approaches, which still focus on performance measurement and almost completely ignore the management of the performance of the whole organization [55]. These approaches seem inappropriate for the public sector as they do not fully consider the diverse, complex, unstable, and uncertain environments that public organizations face [56].

Adopting a TQM approach is not enough to support organizational improvement. The findings section shows that TQM research has been examined separately in general performance management and evaluation studies. Given the lack of research on the implications for Human Resource management (HR), strategic management, process improvement, and performance evaluation, it can be concluded that the current TQM approach is not sufficient to support a shift in the focus of management and performance evaluation from a

single management process to the entire general organization. Therefore, in light of the above, the following suggestions can be made:

- I. Establish an integrated approach to link individual management processes into a comprehensive system with strategic objectives.
- II. Generate knowledge about organizational processes that are often ignored in management and performance evaluation studies but are essential in the current competitive environment (for example, HR management, operations, services, etc.).
- III. To develop and promote a comprehensive and strategic approach to the management of public organizations.

6.3 | The Third Research Gap

Since the 1900s, adopting management frameworks borrowed from the industrial sector has emerged as the primary way of introducing management practices and performance evaluation in public organizations Dixon [57].

Several studies have argued that there is a need to develop new specific frameworks to address the complex environment of public organizations [5]. However, since the early 2000s, the BSC has emerged as one of the most relevant topics. Several literature reviews have empirically examined the implementation of the BSC in public organizations [58]. In the last period (third period), the BSC was the most relevant topic and was often used for defining key performance indicators [59].

Even if special attention is paid to the private sector as a reference for the reform of the new public management paradigm the numerous differences between the private and public sectors require the development of a specific framework for performance management and evaluation to respond to the complexity of public organizations [60], [61]. Moreover, recent research indicates a need to move from a technical approach to the definition of a new management approach Birdsall [62]. Therefore, even if the BSC is the most comprehensive framework for performance management and evaluation in the public sector, it is not suitable for addressing the specific needs of public management, and this area requires further research. Therefore, in light of the above, the following suggestions are made:

- I. Identify performance management and evaluation frameworks that address public organizations' specific needs and complexities.
- II. Identify a new performance management and evaluation approach to assess actions that emphasize management activities. To overcome the traditional public management model and adopt the new one, the focus must shift from performance measurement frameworks and tools to a new management approach using cultural and behavioral controls.

Empirical studies should be useful in developing additional knowledge about the cultural and behavioral patterns that explain how organizations adopt performance measurement. The aim should not be to develop completely innovative frameworks for performance management and evaluation but to include key issues such as personality traits, interpersonal interactions, and implicit levels such as leadership, democratic culture, and participative decision-making [63].

6.4 | Research Gap Four

During the second period under review (2004-2011), strategic planning emerged as a new topic, highlighting the need for a strategic approach to managing and evaluating performance in public organizations [34]. Therefore, strategic planning in performance measurement projects became essential in setting organizational goals and motivating, evaluating, and rewarding performance. During these years, the US government emphasized the link between strategic planning and performance measurement. Still, these implementations often failed to implement reforms that increased managerial authority and undermined the rationale that promised to improve performance [64]. Poister [34] outlined a shift in measurement towards achieving

strategic goals and objectives rather than specific but heterogeneous domains. However, although studies have highlighted the key role of a strategic approach and the need to closely link strategic management with performance management processes Poister [34], most studies have not addressed the reforms of the modern public management paradigm.

As Ansoff stated in 1998, 'Strategic planning focuses on optimal decision-making.' In contrast, reforming the new management paradigm requires adopting strategic management because it focuses on achieving strategic results. This means that the goal is not just to produce a plan but to integrate planning with all other parts of the organization to meet the need for management integration [61]. Therefore, studying and practicing management and performance evaluation in public sector organizations requires shifting from isolated strategic planning activities to a comprehensive strategic management approach. In light of the above, future theoretical and empirical research to identify new management and performance evaluation models may be necessary and useful. Therefore, in the light of the above, the following suggestions can be made:

- I. Integrate strategies, objectives, and results to produce dynamic reports supporting integrated planning.
- II. Establish a dynamic performance evaluation system to support the planning, control, and forecasting of public activities.

6.5 | Research Gap Five

The research literature describes performance management and appraisal as a system by which an organization provides employee feedback and helps the organization improve individual performance' [65]. As early as 2005, Kaplan and Norton [66] emphasized that HR investments must be integrated to realize the full potential of performance management and appraisal. The alignment and integration of performance management and appraisal practices with HR management provide conceptual building blocks for developing goals for human, information, and organizational capital in a learning and growth perspective for the BSC. In the context of the New England Public Management paradigm reforms, several studies of HR management practices have shown a positive and significant relationship between HR management practices, organizational performance management and appraisal practices, and the performance of public organizations e.g., [67]. With the reform of the modern public management paradigm, managers are held personally accountable for achieving results. As a result, the need to link organizational performance management and evaluation with 'the policies, procedures, and processes involved in managing people at work' has become essential [68]. Several HRM evaluation systems have been implemented to manage people's behavior and monitor the achievement of results [69]. Therefore, recent research highlights the differences between private and public organizations and describes some specific characteristics of public organizations that may determine the lesser impact of HRM practices on individual performance (such as more significant goal ambiguity, stricter regulations, and the specific work motivation of public sector employees) [70], [71]. Some researchers have suggested that performance measurement can change public-sector authority relationships, which may affect how public-sector managers can use performance information strategically to gain managerial authority and accept organizational change [72].

However, despite the recent interest in public sector performance management and appraisal research on HR management, most studies focus on HRM practices such as performance-based rewards and competency development, with little attention to the importance of key issues such as leadership, strategic alignment, knowledge sharing, and awareness of shared values [72]. Implementing different performance appraisal systems aims to ensure everyone's participation in achieving results, with little consideration of the integration of HRM with organizational performance management and appraisal practices and cultural and behavioral influences. However, since the introduction of the BSC, HR management has been considered one of the most relevant research areas. It should complement the performance management and evaluation process to create valuable, rare, inimitable, and irreplaceable capabilities that lead to competitive advantage [66]. In addition, HR management plays a key role in performance measurement.

Further theoretical and empirical studies are needed to understand the effective role of HR management practices in managing and evaluating public performance. Therefore, in light of the above, the following suggestions can be made:

- I. Develop knowledge on the impact of HRM practices on individual performance in public sector organizations.
- II. Theorise the role of strategic HRM practices in public performance management and evaluation to support effective organizational performance.

The research opportunities highlight the need to theorize a new paradigm to develop comprehensive and integrated models rooted in public organizations' culture and behavioral practices.

This paradigm should integrate all strategic outcomes for planning, controlling, and predicting future public scenarios. All this requires a strong engagement with the HRM sector, and recent literature has highlighted the key role of the interaction between performance measurement, performance management, employee engagement, and performance [73].

7 | Conclusion

Since the 1980s, New Public Management has created a public perception that adopting new business practices will increase organizational efficiency [74]. As a result, public sector researchers and practitioners have attempted to transfer business performance measurement and management practices to the public sector. Many studies have suggested that public sector management should shift from the traditional public management model to the new one. However, the debate about how management practices and performance evaluation align with the latest public management model remains open, and researchers are investigating this issue. The literature review shows that performance management and evaluation practices in the public sector are still at an early stage of development. Despite the numerous tools and practices adopted from the private sector, public sector management focuses on measuring the efficiency of individual processes without considering the organizational and strategic dimensions of performance evaluation systems. The findings of this study are in line with the work of Bitisi et al. [50], who place performance management and evaluation practices in the public sector in the early stages of 'integrated performance measurement' and emphasize that in the past period, research and management practices in public performance evaluation have resolved many of the technical issues of public sector organizations. As a significant contribution to the research, this paper identifies five main issues that must be addressed to effectively promote the development of management and performance evaluation in public sector management. The identified issues include new management and performance evaluation practices, integration of organizational processes, design of management and performance evaluation frameworks, strategic management approach, and HR management practices that need further exploration and analysis. Identifying and exploring these issues can also significantly help public sector practitioners because they provide an overview of the key areas that need addressing for effective organizational development. Finally, the identified regions should guide policymakers in setting the optimal framework for investment in improving management and performance evaluation in public sector management; therefore, this paper should align with modern public management reforms and needs assessment of requirements related to abandoning the traditional public management model. Two significant limitations of this study are: Since this paper aimed to focus on public sector management, "business, management and accounting" was chosen as the research area under study, which may limit the entry of other studies into this research area. Secondly, the method used in this study could be limiting in terms of qualitative evidence; therefore, studies conducted in this way should allow comparisons of the public sector of different countries regarding management and performance evaluation and highlight best practices in management and performance evaluation.

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Data Availability

The data supporting the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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