Meritocratic Organizational Behavior Profile Informetry: Mapping the Evolution of the Scientific Context Between 2010 and 2020

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Abstract

Research has presented that organizational behavior derives from some factors that may have got the potential for positive and negative effects on people's performance in organizations. The objective of the development of this study was to perform a systematic mapping of the evolution of the literature regarding the meritocratic organizational behavior construct, aiming to organize, evaluate and integrate scientific evidence with the selected articles. In this study of mapping the specialized literature, the Web of Science Scopus databases were used, through the application of informetric techniques using the bibliometrix package of the R language. The mapping of the evolution of behavior at work and merit in the organizational context made it necessary to contextualize the empirical research that supports the proposal of this study. The descriptive results illustrate the evolution of publications involving the terms "organizational behavior and merit or meritocracy" over the period studied, which was confirmed by the verification of the average annual growth rate of publications of 10.84%. An important demonstration refers to the clear identification of the capacity to produce publications by country. The mapping of time tracks related to publications on organizational behavior and merit presented that the United States of America is the major protagonist of this current of research at a global level. It was observed that a combination of aspects that involve not only the management of organizational behavior and its relationship with meritocracy between genders and diversity at work, as well as the merit in careers and promotions, and, mainly, the meritocratic system for performance as the focus of public management.

Keywords: merit, human resources, talent management, management policy, bibliometry

1. Introduction

We live in an accelerated period characterized by turbulent changes (Prem *et al.*, 2017). Amidst this, organizations need to adapt at the same speed to new scenarios and changes to remain sustainable. In empirical research, some factors may have got the potential for positive and negative effects on employee performance (Crawford; Lepine & Rich, 2010; Prem *et al.*, 2017). Thus, many scientists began to develop research on organizational behavior, which in many ways is intrinsically correlated with meritocracy.

Some authors dispute, stating that employees continue to be treated differently, depending on their participation in the social group (Rubery & Grimshaw, 2015; Merluzzi & Sterling, 2017; Pitesa & Pillutla, 2019), although the attributes and personal merits are built from these perceptions (Razack *et al.*, 2020).

The size of samples on this topic has been increasing more and more, and researchers are making these data available (Christensen *et al.*, 2019), attracting interest from other researchers (Tepper, 2011). For example of Harms, who conducted an informal survey of 19 introductory books on organizational behavior and human resource management (Harms, 2011).

Corroborating with academia, the aim of this study is to perform a systematic mapping of the evolution of the literature regarding the meritocratic organizational behavior construct, aiming to organize, evaluate and integrate scientific evidence with the selected articles, summarizing the available scientific evidence and its applications.

2. Theoretical Reference

In globalized markets, organizations need to develop adaptive capacity quickly to not only survive, but also change in light of the new contexts that present themselves. To be sustainable, it is increasingly important for organizations to maintain a prosperous workforce with energy to grow and develop (Prem *et al.*, 2017), in which a set of internal practices have been adopted, such as staff allocation, training, assessments, rewards and promotions, designed and implemented to ensure that a company's human capital contributes to the achievement of its business objectives (Guillaume *et al.*, 2017).

Organizations are increasingly committed to seeking qualified and effective employees, analyzing in detail the excellence, capacity and competences, as studies have presented that there is a positive and significant relationship between organizational competence and individual results (Jafarpour & Mohammadi, 2020), developing an understanding of the processes and stimulating reflection on how the work should be performed, with greater creativity and effectively (Sung & Choi, 2014; Vough & Caza, 2017).

High-quality interactions between team members increase the positive affective tone of teams, which, in turn, promotes performance-related results (Hmieleski & Baron, 2012). A new management model needs to be reinvented or its processes need to be redesigned, thus justifying the organizational change that took place in the study period proposed in this article.

Scientific research on meritocracy is old and dates back to the beginnings of management science (Bilhim, 2017). The meritocratic culture has been a contemporary discourse, seeking efficiency based on merit, with proposals for changes in processes and management models. From this perspective, Barbosa (2010) observes that, for management, the implementation of meritocracy is the imagined solution for increasing organizational results.

In a historical and cultural context, the interaction between individuals and organizations is intertwined with issues of social diversity; gender; public and private organizations; and, finally, social issues linked to power in organizations.

As for social diversity, Amis (2020) makes it clear that the emergence of social and economic inequality is linked to organizational practices, although several study methods seek to involve employees with a focus on their production process (de Souza *et al.*, 2020).

As for gender, researchers point to empirical relationships regarding the workforce (Selvaraj, 2015), although the "paradox of meritocracy" tends to have a bias in favor of men over women (Castilla & Benard, 2010). For organizations that perform activities with low formality, the managerial level presents greater wage inequality between genders, inversely to organizations that perform bureaucratic activities, for example a financial institution (Abraham, 2017), a relevant situation to be observed in further studies, as high-ranking positions are linked to their working careers (Van de Brink & Benschop, 2012; Schmidt *et al.*, 2020). With such parameters of the evolutionary envelope of terms linked to meritocratic organizational behavior, the basic hypothesis for this study was formulated (***Hb***): the literature presents a consolidated range of publications that go beyond the line of research related to gender and diversity in organizations. Portraying meritocracy in public services, in which the guiding effects are viscerally intertwined with political behavior, with parsimony in less developed countries (O'Connor; Janenova, 2021). For Ebinger and Fromm (2019), the exacerbation of political involvement is considered harmful to the performance of professional activities as well as to meritocracy.

Therefore, studies present that merit-based recruitment in public service substantially represents the insertion of corruption (Egeberg & Trondal, 2019). In this theoretical speculative plan, our second hypothesis (***Hs***) is born: new conceptions, linked to reforms in public management affected the increase of studies on meritocracy applied to organizational behavior, characterizing the formation of a specific cluster of publications.

As for meritocracy in the private service, an important factor to be reported is that this is a more objective management, in which the policy of promotion and the succession process has become more scientific, and the construction of competence linked to professional merit (Kumar & Tiwari, 2020). They corroborate the research Perés and Sabelis (2020), proposing the study on meritocracy, based on the individualized construction of the organization's members, with a focus on the organization's intermediate management.

Finally, researchers describe that social origin continues to be a powerful driver in determining success in private organizations (Maclean; Kling, 2014), with the formulation of organizational policies towards equal opportunities (Noon, 2010).

In this context, the importance of the role of individuals in organizations emerges. Allen (2012) describes the

understanding that meritocracy presents itself as a set of actions for the performance of individual tasks. Depicting the organizational environment, Castillo and Bernard (2010, p. 543) note that

> [...] advocates of meritocracy point out that in true meritocratic systems everyone has an equal chance to advance and earn rewards based on their own merits and efforts, regardless of their gender, race, class, or other factors.

However, it is worth noting that researchers report that, through meritocracy, everyone has an equal chance to advance based on his or her abilities and efforts. A study by Kim and Choi (2017) presented that, despite the growing focus on non-meritocratic elements in accessing opportunities, meritocracy is still an evolving system in societies.

3. Methodology

For this study of systematic mapping of the specialized literature, the Web of Science – Clarivate Analytics and Scopus – Elsevier databases were used, through the application of informetric or bibliometric techniques (Hood; Wilson, 2001). To address the mapping of the evolution of human behavior at work and merit in the organizational context, it was necessary to contextualize the empirical research that supports the proposal of this study, with the application of technological bibliometric tools in order to meet the scientific demand of the researchers. The Scopus and Web of Science (WoS) databases proved to be coherent and assertive, as a strategy, due to the relevance of their journals to elucidate and clarify possible controversies, relying on quality and reference studies (Galvão & Pereira, 2014).

The Scopus database is characterized by the multidisciplinarity of its journals, which cover the areas of Science, Technology, Medicine, Social Sciences and Arts and Humanities, with a collection of more than 21,000 titles, 5.5 million event texts and over 370 book series (Seabd, 2017). The Web of Science is a base with articles and scientific documents in the areas of Applied Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities. Its main resource is the "Web of Science Core Collection" and includes more than 20,000 high-quality peer-reviewed academic journals published worldwide and approximately 190,000 conference files (Capes, 2020).

The effort to merge these databases is justified because even though WoS is a database with expertise in applied social sciences, the additional use of Scopus is important for the high quality of its journals. Thus, the two databases complement each other (Meho & Yang, 2007).

For the methodological design of the research, it was based on informational techniques, which are mainly focused on measuring the tangible output of researchers, in order to statistically analyse articles, patents, books and other publications (Hood & Wilson, 2001). The informetry is performed through maps and graphs that demonstrate the associations between the main concepts studied, mobilizing information about the structure of the scientific field, providing the visualization of the division of the field into several subfields and their relationships.

Infometrics is a solution capable of dealing with a large volume of information concentrated in scientific databases, also providing for the development of new knowledge, based on analyses of the set of results obtained (Belinski *et al.*, 2020; Estevão, 2020). Steps and action criteria that characterize them build the mapping of Science by bibliometric method. In this study, the authors adopted and adapted the Zupic and Ater (2014) method as a reference. In this sense, the article deals with the data within the perspective corresponding to the illustration in Figure 1.
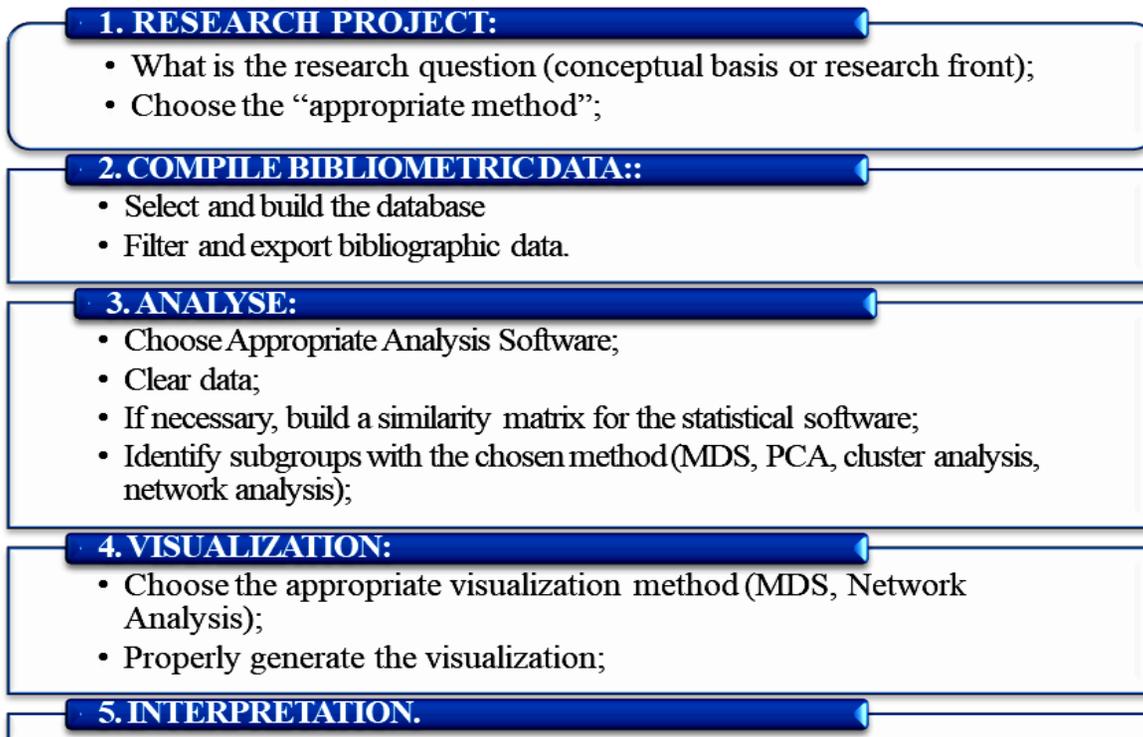
1. RESEARCH PROJECT:
- What is the research question (conceptual basis or research front);
- Choose the "appropriate method";

2. COMPILE BIBLIOMETRIC DATA::
- Select and build the database
- Filter and export bibliographic data.

3. ANALYSE:
- Choose Appropriate Analysis Software;
- Clear data;
- If necessary, build a similarity matrix for the statistical software;
- Identify subgroups with the chosen method (MDS, PCA, cluster analysis, network analysis);

4. VISUALIZATION:
- Choose the appropriate visualization method (MDS, Network Analysis);
- Properly generate the visualization;

5. INTERPRETATION.

Figure 1. Steps to map the science in focus with bibliometric methods

Source: adapted from Zupic & Ater (2014).

The design of the research project contemplated fundamental questions to guide the investigation actions, since the praxis must be based on aspects arising from a contemporary issue. To meet the demand, the authors developed the research questions, listed below:

a)   What are the relevant factors that emerge in the titles and keywords, considering the context of the research line involving merit and human behavior in organizations?

b)   What are the main conceptual evolution paths mapped over time?

c)   Is there a connection between the clusters formed by the terms in the titles?

The aspects observed were source name, year of publication, production title, keywords, abstract, authors' names and research country. The structure of parameters for data collection followed the methodological design that culminated in an assertive framework to guide the execution of the work to be developed, following the essential criteria established by the authors.

Table 1. Informetric portfolio selection process

METHODOLOGICAL DESIGN
(1st Phase)
BOOLEAN SEARCH
Period: 2010 to 2021
Selection Procedures
"and", *"or"*
KEYWORD MATCHING
ENGLISH STRING'S

"organizational behavior", "merit", "meritocracy"
"organizational behavior"
and
*"merit" **or** "meritocracy"*
WoS: Topics
SCOPUS: Title**,** Abstract**,** Keywords
CATEGORIES: Management or Business or Public Administration or Industrial Relations Labor (Web of Science Categories)

PORTFOLIO OF SELECTED ARTICLES	
(**2nd Phase**)	
RESEARCHED BASES	
Scopus	**Web of Science**
Document Types: Articles	**Document Types:** Articles
Collected number: 39	Collected number: 848
Filtered number 12	Filtered number: 71
TOTAL OF SELECTED ARTICLES IN THE PORTFOLIO	
83 Articles	

Source: The authors (2021)

The portfolio of articles was improved considering the terms for the composition of the search criteria (title, keywords and abstract) for the elaboration of the string, necessary for exploratory research, which were written in English for purposes of internationalizing the work (Table 1). The excellence of the databases provided the inclusion of articles, books and book chapters, which addressed the theme "organizational behavior" and "merit", being excluded: productions with the theme or context outside the organizational aspect; repeated productions; any other type of production that does not meet the inclusion criteria. Through this methodological design, the study may be characterized as theoretical-illustrative, because it uses a structured process for the selection of the bibliographic portfolio, which represents the "state of the art" in publications, as presented in Table 1 (Ensslin *et al.*, 2014).

3.1 Description of the Software Tool Used for Analysis

The research used two of the relevant and recognized databases for the scientific literature in general and mainly for studies on organizations (Scopus and Web of Science). For the analysis, a set of open source solutions was used, software R – Windows platform, version 4.1.0, using the graphical interface Rstudio version 1.4.1717, configured with the Bibliometrix R package (Developers version is published on GITHUB repository).

Bibliometrix is an R tool for comprehensive analysis of scientific mapping and construction of data matrices for co-citation, coupling, scientific collaboration analysis and co-word analysis, widely used for bibliometric analysis studies that supports the Scopus and Web of Science databases. The Bibliometrix R package currently provides several routines for importing bibliographic data from Scopus – Elsevier, Clarivate Analytics 'Web of Science', PubMed, Digital Science Dimensions and Cochrane databases (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017; Bibliometrix, 2018; Biblioshiny, 2021).
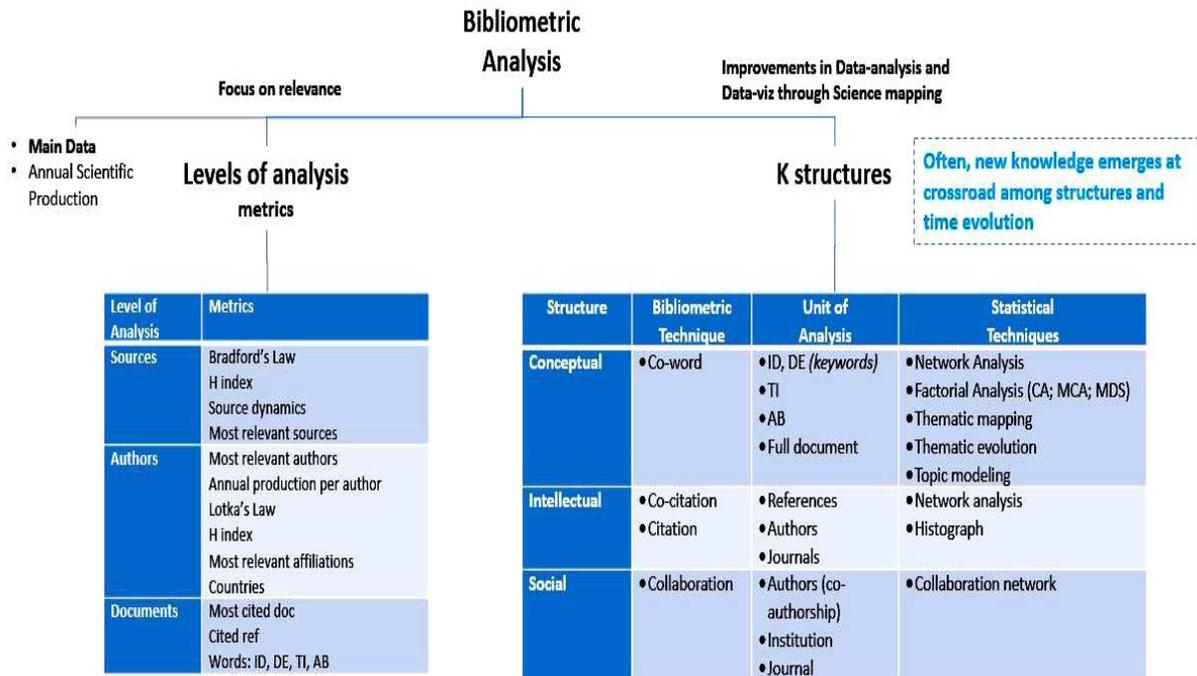
Figure 2. Bibliometrix analysis functions

Source: Bibliometrix (2018)

In practice, in this study, the conversion and import of data for mapping was made, filtering and later running the application according to research questions:

a) Creation of an algorithm in R language for the conversion and merging of files from the bases for treatment in Bibliometrix:

– **defining**: the directory where the files are and will be saved;

– **charging**: the Bibliometrix APP for the R environment;

– **importing**: search files for environment R and converting them to table;

– **agrouping:** Scopus files in a "file" variable;

– **agrouping:** WoS and Scopus files into a "file" variable;

– **doing**: the merging of the two temporary tables of the data, coming from the searches in the databases;

– **removing**: the duplicate records from the database;

– **recording**: in a table, an Excel format file for the final cleaning of the data; and

– **importing**: the unified file to the Biblioshiny R environment and analyzing them.

b) Analytics, plots and metrics for three different levels: sources, authors and documents.

c) The analysis of three knowledge structures (K-structures): conceptual structure, intellectual structure and social structure.

The accuracy, coherence and automation of the process are very important factors in the development of the research, in which the solutions adopted via the R language, the Biblometrix R package and the Biblioshiny application met these Premises, allowing the authors to concentrate efforts on the output analysis.
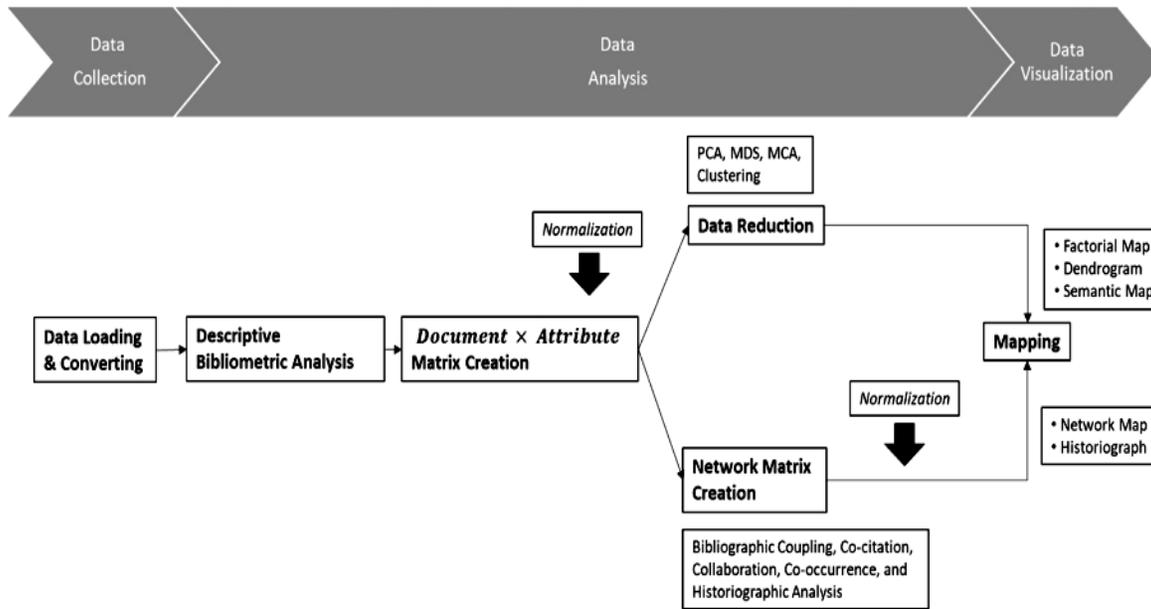
Figure 3. Bibliometrix R state-of-the-art mapping construction track

Source: Aria & Cuccurullo (2017), Bibliometrix (2018), Biblioshiny, (2021).

Data analysis was performed using the software's pre-configured parameters following the path presented in Figure 3. Bibliometrix has five sections divided into:

a) Descriptive analysis (sources, authors and documents);

b) Clusters (data, maps, networks and clusters);

c) Conceptual structure (co-word analysis by keywords and direct matches);

d) Intellectual structure (co-citation analysis of articles with references and origin of journals); and

e) Social structure (analysis of the authors' collaboration network, by universities and by country), as stated in Biblioshiny (2021).

In this article, to answer the research questions, information from the descriptive analysis and conceptual structure sections of the Bibliometrix was used.

4. Results

The results were extracted in the research using the Scopus and Web of Science journals databases, accessed through the journal portal of the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (Capes) with restricted access via the Federated Academic Community (Café) of the Federal Institute of Goiás (IF Goiano). The descriptive analysis of the data was obtained by importing the unified databases through Biblioshiny (Bibliometrix environment), sample that, after the improvement process with elimination of duplicate and inappropriate publications, totaled 83 articles, since conference materials, papers in press, books and chapters included, all relating to the period from 2010 to 2020, were excluded, characterizing the contemporary trajectory of the state of the art in relation to the subject in focus.

Table 2. Dataset from the database

MAIN INFORMATION ABOUT DATA	
Timespan	2010:2020
Sources (SO)	64
Documents	83
Average years from publication	4.65
Average citations per documents	14.14
Average citations per year per doc	2.07
References	601
DOCUMENT TYPES	
Article	83
DOCUMENT CONTENTS	
Author's Keywords (DE)	318
AUTHORS	
Authors (AU)	177

Source: The authors (2021)

The descriptive results demonstrate the evolution of publications involving the terms "organizational behavior and merit or meritocracy" over the period studied, which was proven by verifying the average annual growth rate of publications of 10.84% (calculation by Biblioshiny), in line with the compound annual growth rate or geometric root of progression, considered over the period (Anson *et al*., 2010). Thus, it may be inferred how much the evaluated terms somehow converge over time.
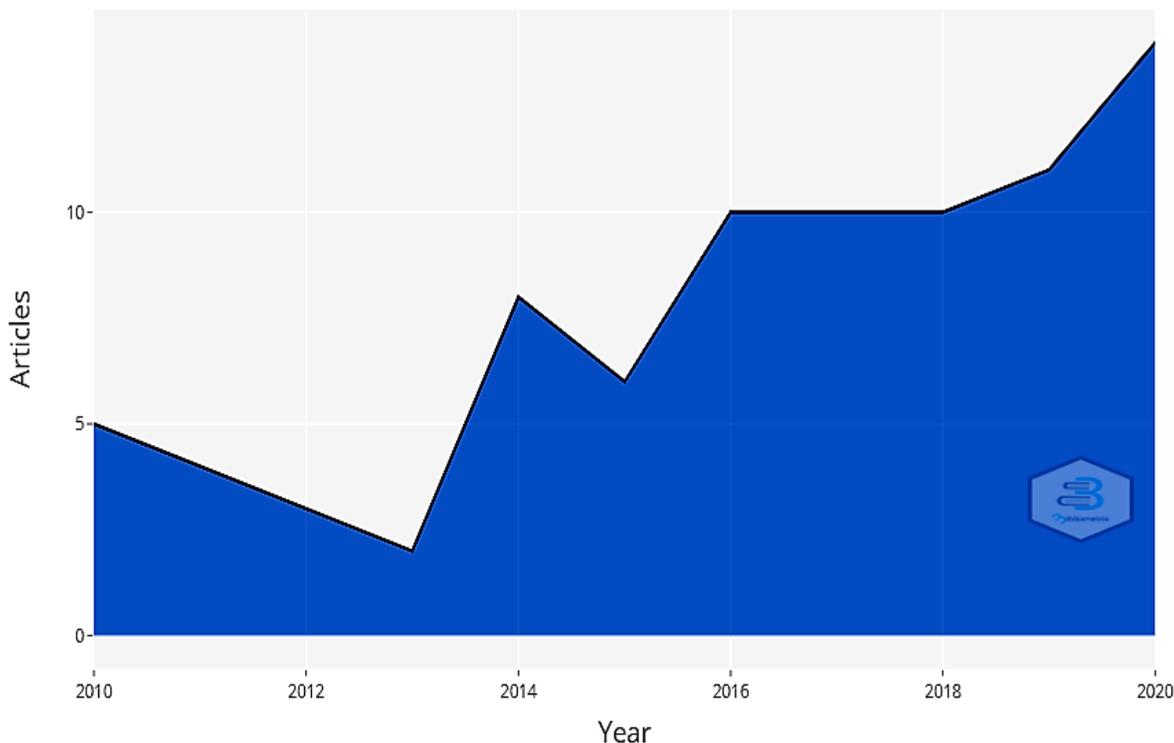
Figure 4. Annual Scientific Production, 2010 to 2020

Source: The authors (2021)

Still in Figure 4, it appears that the average of publications on the studied topic has been growing year by year, in the evaluated period, with a drop only in 2013 and 2015. A stabilization of publications may be observed in the period from 2016 to 2018, but an important subsequent growth with a peak in 2020, with 14 published articles.

4.1 Track of Indexed Keywords

The analysis of a Sankey diagram extrapolates data quantification, envisioning the path taken by a given term in the flow of time, and their combinations are evidenced by the trajectory. Figure 5 presents a Sankey diagram and traces the connections between three elements over the period studied: countries, keywords and journals, with calculation weighted by the path of the keywords based on their frequency in publications during the period. The three elements are connected by a gray track that relates to each other. From the keywords, it is possible to know the nationality of the authors (main) and the scientific journals in which they were published. From the research string (organizational behavior and merit or meritocracy), terms emerge via keywords that index publications in the "Big Data" of global literature.
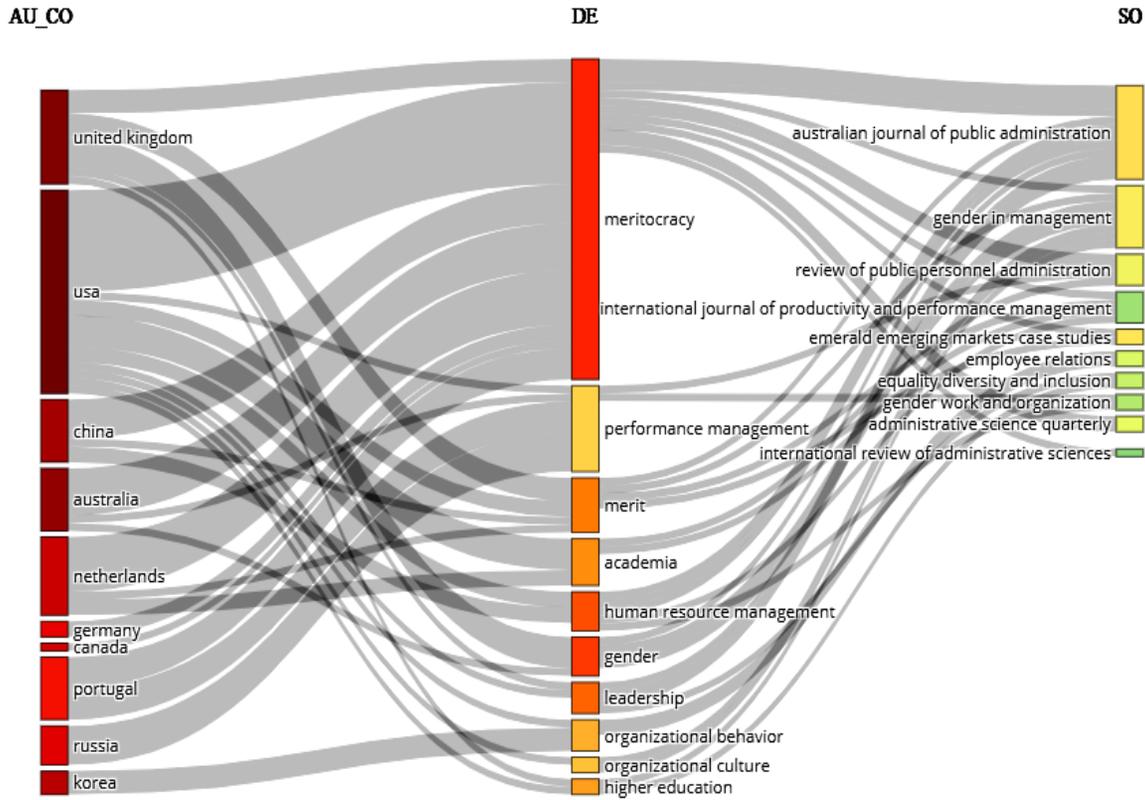
Figure 5. Map of the Keywords, Countries, and Journals connection tree, 2010 to 2020.

Source: The authors (2021)

The diagram in Figure 5 presents some discontinued tracks when they reach the title terms (DE) column, and this means that they were published in other journals where they were not ranked in the journal column (SO). Another important point is the clear demonstration of the capacity to produce publications by country (AU_CO), and the highlight goes to the United States of America and the United Kingdom (USA) in terms of multi-participation in terms. It is noteworthy that the countries were placed according to the authors' addresses, weighted by the frequency of publications, which generated the geographic distribution in the countries that connected with the destination periods. It is also noted that Portugal and Russia had a strong concentration on the term performance management, while the USA, China, Netherlands, Australia, Canada and Germany focused on the indexation of meritocracy, and South Korea on organizational behavior.
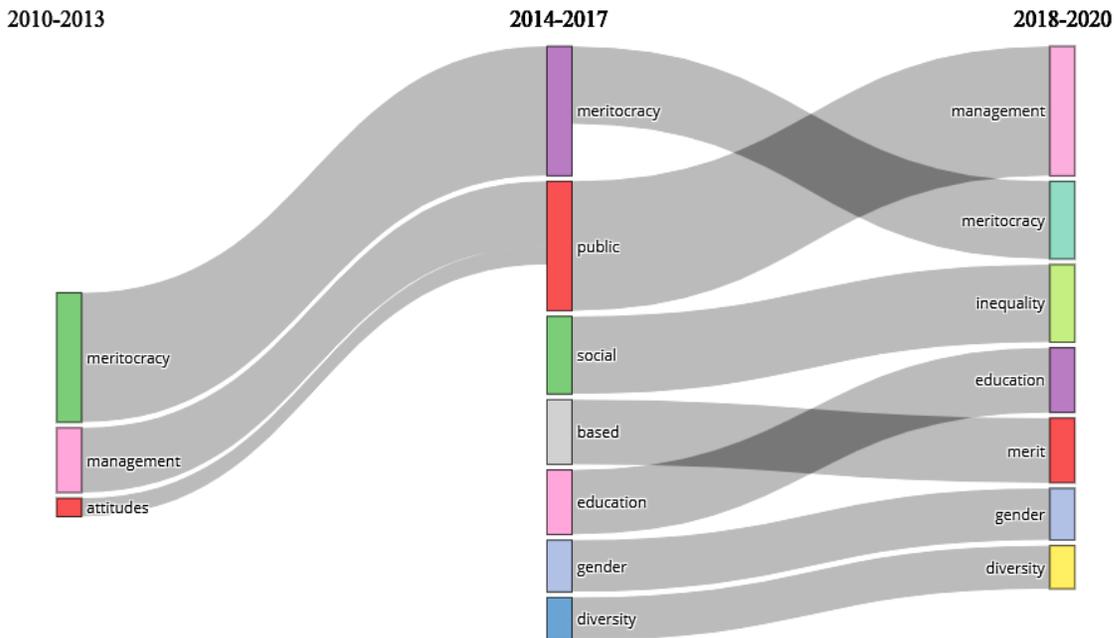
Figure 6. Thematic Evolution of the Author's Keywords, 2010 to 2020.

Source: The authors (2021)

In Figure 6, there is again a Sankey diagram, used to present how the different terms referring to the keywords were connected and developed over the years, in order to help locate the most important contributions of a flow, often indicating quantities conserved within the limits defined by the system (Schmidt, 2008). The total number of keywords in the sample was used as a parameter to run the Bibliometrix R package, with a minimum frequency of 20 incident keywords to form the cluster, having as inclusion criteria indexing weighted by the frequency of the keyword, minimum weighting factor for indexing of 10%, cutoff points (in years) for cluster analysis of cutoff point 1, the years 2013/2014 and cutoff 2, 2017/2018. The analysis is performed for each subperiod separately (2010 to 2013; 2014 to 2017; 2018 to 2020), making it possible to map the temporal evolution of the search terms, the various terms by the software using a modified version of the inclusion index (Rip & Courtial, 1984), considering the occurrences from the period 2010 to 2020 of each keyword that focuses on the selected string.

From the diagram above, it is known that, in the first column, there are three keywords indexed in the *Three-Field Plot* that represent the main terms in the publications of the first quadrennium. The main term refers to meritocracy, followed by management and attitude. Then, in the second column in the centre of the diagram, there is the evolution track of the previous terms and the expansion with new members (meritocracy, public, social, merit-based, educational, gender and diversity). In the last column, there is the current point at which discussions evolved in the area, with the reinsertion of management in the context of the study. The results demonstrate that, in fact, the researches, including the thematic evolution, go beyond discussions of merely gender or diversity in the organizational context, confirming the *Hb* of this study.

4.2 Clusters of Published Titles

Figure 7 illustrates the dynamics of growth in the incidence of the main terms used in bonds during the period studied. Among the ten most cited terms in the titles of published articles, the hegemony of meritocracy, gender, management and merit may be seen. In addition, an advantage of this type of chart is that the most frequent terms are also evidenced in the sense of objective magnitude, compared to word cloud charts, facilitating the visualization of its evolution over time and contributing to the notion of interpellations, since it is possible to visualize the decline and peak of the

different terms in the timeline. For Carley and Kaufer (1993), important and significant words are the most used and frequent in studies, in this sense, it is highlighted that the terms of titles with greater volume (meritocracy, gender, management and merit) may be interpreted as the most significant from the perspective of frequency in the authors' authorship.
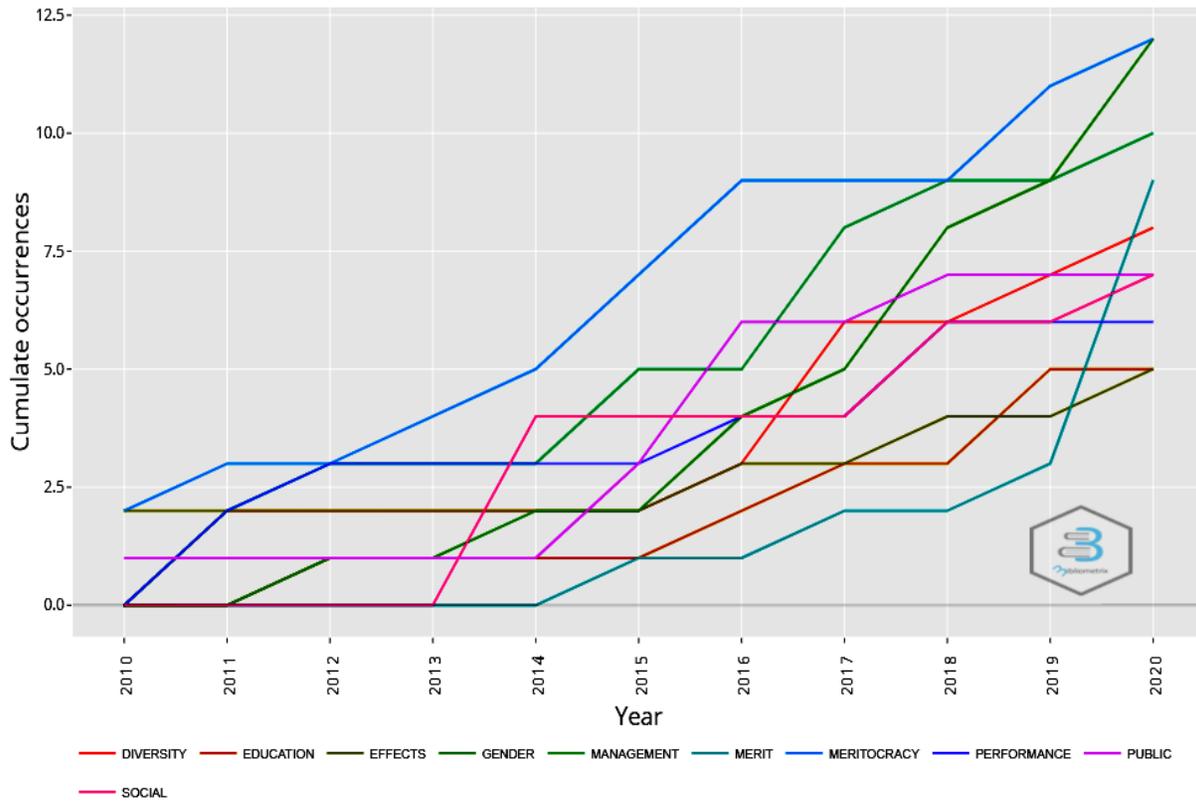

Figure 7. Words in Dynamic Titles, 2010 to 2020

Source: The authors (2021)

In Figure 8, it has the formation of clusters based on the detection of communities in the large network formed by the titles of published articles. The Louvain clustering algorithm was used, coming from a mathematical family designed to detect networked communities. Louvain Clustering applies a methodology that seeks to improve the existing modularity in a range of values (-1 to 1), comparing the volume of edges inside and outside the data community, performing an evaluation of the dataset. For better understanding, a community may be understood as a group of individuals closer to each other who interact more often with each other than those outside the group (Bedi & Sharma, 2016).

Figure 8. Mapping Title Clusters, 2010 to 2020

Source: The authors (2021)

Thus, Louvain Clustering converts the data set into a graph, where it finds highly interconnected *nodes* (Blondel *et al.*, 2008). With the formation of clusters, it was possible to identify the formation of term tracks through the *nodes*, which were connected in networks in six colours: brown, orange, lilac, green, red and blue. The *node* dimension of each item indicates the frequency of occurrence of the term in the titles and that its relationship is stronger the closer they are. Figure 8 plays an important role in clarifying the *Hs*, as it demonstrates that the theme of meritocracy in the public sector is directly involved in terms (factors), such as employment, reform and the positive effects, in order to confirm it.

5. Discussion

The large volume of article sources and their dispersion have made the activity of identifying quality scientific studies a complex task (Sandes *et al.*, 2016). In research with specialized themes such as the one proposed here, the potential for contributing to reveal variables that support lines of research involving meritocratic organizational behavior is observed. This theme has gained importance in administrative science due to the need to demystify, for example, the belief that meritocracy is the basis of perceived success in society, organizations and individual careers.

This belief is based on the idea that those who succeed do so because they have got more merit than those who do not. In fact, true organizational meritocratic principles are based on a simple conception, but very difficult to be established, based on individual merits, this conception configures that the principles must be conceived without distinction of any kind and that they always report to meritocratic criteria (Castilla & Benard, 2010). Given this scenario, establishing variables and contexts is important for the sustainability of research lines on this topic.

Factors that are the most present and perennial throughout the study period, which culminate in the contemporaneity of this discipline, emerged as consolidated from the terms of the titles and keywords. This analysis is more accurate from the generation of clusters, which were didactically identified by colours in Figure 6. The brown cluster has two terms and covers the relationship between capital and social, indicating the articles that deal with aspects of meritocracy at work from the social position or power of capital within organizations (Noon, 2010; Maclean; Harvey & Kling, 2014). The orange cluster refers to terms that report affirmative actions in diversity and merit-based performance (Daubner-Siva, Vinkenburg & Jansen, 2017; Vinkenburg, 2017; Ozbilgin & Yalkin, 2019; Amis; Mair & Munir,

2020).

The blue cluster includes terms related to perspectives based on merit (Pérez & Sabelis, 2020; Kumar; Jaisinghani & Tiwari, 2020; Steed, de Nobile & Waniganayake, 2020). The purple cluster reproduces reflections in a context that addresses the issue of gender meritocracy in organizations, with special emphasis on the academic environment (Castilla & Benard, 2010; Brink & Benschop, 2012; Śliwa & Johansson, 2014). Interesting formation takes place in the red and green clusters, which report to meritocracy in public organizations (red), and orange to reform, personification, employment and studies on the positive effect of managing organizational behavior (Lee & Jimenez, 2011; Kim & Holzer, 2016; Schuster, 2017; Hur, 2018; Pedersen & Johannsen, 2018; Ebinger; Veit & Fromm, 2019; Egeberg; Gornitzka & Trondal, 2019).

This study managed to identify a strong link between the two main clusters formed by the terms in the titles, which happens exactly in the red and green clusters, which are interconnected, leading to the perception that meritocracy in public organizations (red) has a research path directly connected to questions about reform, personification, employment and studies on the positive effect of managing organizational behavior. It is observed that the red and orange clusters (Figure 6) are the most impactful on the general community due to the highlight of their items.

The relevance of this discovery increases when it is verified that meritocracy is a principle that prescribes that only the most deserving people should be rewarded. The interconnection of these clusters signals a concern mainly in public organizations for reforms that better configure the relationship of organizational behavior and merit, since meritocracy only exists in fact and accurately in an impartial system (Vinkenburg, 2017).

It may be relevant for authors to study networks of systematic connections. This article allows a clear view of the evolution of the study paths over the time of the theme, expanding the possibility of collaborative network research in terms that converge to meritocracy, management, inequality, academic education, merit, gender and diversity. This general picture is compounded by the observation that most of these publications originate in the United States of America, followed by the United Kingdom, and the United States may be ranked as the most productive country in terms of author origin.

The expansion of the COVID-19 pandemic drastically affected the world economy, characterized by a rapid spread with economic damage, representing losses that the globe had not experienced in decades (Pramono *et al*., 2021). The present study also identified a relevant increase in publications in the period of the COVID-19 pandemic, which allows us to speculate the approach in future studies, its effects not only on organizations (Islam, 2021), but also the consequent reflection in studies on organizational behavior (Gomes *et al*., 2020), validating new studies to unveil the degree and dimension of the effects on organizations, whether private or public.

6. Conclusion

The mapping of time tracks related to publications on organizational behavior and merit presented that the US is the main protagonists of this current of research in the world. It was observed that the main terms that emerged denote a thematic discussion that is directed towards a combination of aspects that involve not only the management of organizational behavior and its relationship with meritocracy between genders and diversity at work, as well as the merit in careers and promotions, and, mainly, the meritocratic system for performance as the focus of public management, as evidenced by the structure of the clusters elucidated.

Another plausible perception refers to the incipient publication of this theme in Brazil specifically in the databases and period researched, providing a consequent space to be explored for future studies and investigations based on a proposal for an expanded agenda, aiming at a more comprehensive methodological design with a regional nature, in this way it could be to replicate the parameters of this research in databases with publications in Portuguese, such as Scielo and Spell. It is also recommended that in future research studies may be carried out that continue to explore this theme in depth, aiming to understand other resilient factors related to the state of the art and the influence of publications in the composition of the context of meritocratic organizational behavior at a global level.

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