

Employee/Work Engagement and Organizational Performance: A Combined Bibliometric and Systematic Literature Review

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Abstract

This paper examines the relationship between employee/work engagement (EE/WE) and organizational performance by combining bibliometric analysis and a systematic literature review (SLR). It aims to map the development of the literature, identify the main thematic structure of the field, and synthesize direct and supporting evidence linking EE/WE to organizational performance. Lens was used as the primary database, while Google Scholar via Publish or Perish served as a supplementary source. After deduplication and title–abstract screening, 266 records were retained for bibliometric mapping. From this corpus, 74 full-text articles were reviewed in detail and classified into 31 core studies, 26 supporting studies, and 17 non-core studies. The bibliometric results reported in this paper focus on publication trends, keyword co-occurrence and thematic evolution, and bibliographic coupling by source. The findings show that the literature has expanded markedly since 2022 and has increasingly shifted from a traditional organizational behavior orientation toward a more strategic and capability-based perspective. The systematic synthesis further indicates that EE/WE is generally associated with stronger organizational outcomes across sectors, although the evidence is stronger for non-financial and multidimensional organizational performance than for purely financial performance. The review also suggests that the engagement–performance relationship frequently operates through indirect pathways such as job satisfaction, commitment, resilience, customer-oriented behavior, and HRM-related processes. Overall, EE/WE emerges as a strategic organizational resource, while the literature still requires more longitudinal, multi-source, organization-level, and financially focused studies.

Keywords: Employee engagement, Work engagement, Organizational performance, Bibliometric analysis, Systematic literature review

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Employee engagement (EE) and work engagement (WE) have become central issues in contemporary organizations because they influence how employees invest cognitive, emotional, and behavioral energy in their work. More importantly, the literature increasingly

positions EE/WE as a strategic organizational resource linked to productivity, retention, innovation, service quality, and broader business success, rather than merely as an individual psychological state ([Devkota et al., 2025](#); [Rajendran & Doraisamy, 2022](#); [Yuswardi et al., 2025](#)).

EE/WE is not formed in isolation. Recent studies consistently identify leadership, HRM practices, organizational culture, communication quality, trust, knowledge sharing, training and development, and supportive work environments as key drivers of stronger engagement. By contrast, the effect of compensation and other extrinsic rewards appears more conditional and context-dependent ([Rajendran & Doraisamy, 2022](#); [Rusilowati et al., 2025](#); [Yuswardi et al., 2025](#)).

The literature also shows that EE/WE often influences organizational outcomes through intermediate mechanisms. Engaged employees tend to report higher job satisfaction, motivation, commitment, discretionary effort, and lower intention to quit. These proximal outcomes often become the channels through which engagement contributes to broader organizational results. Recent studies, for example, show that job satisfaction, organizational resilience, and service quality can help translate engagement into measurable organizational outcomes ([Abu-Mahfouz, 2026](#); [Praktikno et al., 2025](#); [Setyawan et al., 2024](#)).

This issue has become more important in the context of globalization, digital transformation, Industry 4.0/5.0, hybrid work, and AI-enabled management. Digital technologies are reshaping coordination, decision-making, and productivity, while also changing how engagement is created and sustained. These changes increase the strategic importance of leadership, communication, work design, and organizational adaptability in shaping the engagement–performance relationship ([Praktikno et al., 2025](#); [Rusilowati et al., 2025](#); [Tummalapalli et al., 2025](#)).

Despite this growing interest, two important gaps remain. First, much of the recent literature examines EE/WE indirectly, often as a mediator between leadership, HRM practices, job satisfaction, resilience, or talent management and organizational performance, rather than isolating the direct EE/WE–organizational performance relationship itself. As a result, the independent contribution of EE/WE is often difficult to determine ([Abu-Mahfouz, 2026](#); [Praktikno et al., 2025](#); [Setyawan et al., 2024](#); [Yuswardi et al., 2025](#)).

Second, organizational performance is measured inconsistently across studies. Rather than being treated as a single construct, it is commonly operationalized through financial, non-financial, or multidimensional indicators, including balanced-scorecard-type measures. In some studies, performance refers to profitability, revenue growth, or branch-level financial outcomes; in others, it refers to productivity, service quality, innovation, resilience, research output, public value, or customer satisfaction. This diversity reflects the complexity of organizational performance, but it also complicates cross-study comparison and helps explain why direct evidence on purely financial performance remains limited ([Devkota et al., 2025](#); [Kossyva et al., 2023](#); [Praktikno et al., 2025](#); [Rajendran & Doraisamy, 2022](#)).

These gaps make the present study necessary. A combined bibliometric analysis and systematic literature review is needed not only to map the development of the field, but also to clarify what recent studies actually show about the relationship between EE/WE and organizational performance. In particular, it is important to distinguish direct evidence from supporting or indirect evidence and to separate financial, non-financial, and multidimensional organizational performance outcomes. This focus allows the study to move beyond a general engagement review and address a more specific strategic question: whether, and how, EE/WE contributes to

organizational performance in contemporary organizations.

1.2 Aim and Research Questions

Accordingly, this study aims to map the recent literature on EE/WE and organizational performance, synthesize the direct and indirect evidence linking EE/WE to organizational outcomes, and identify the major conceptual, methodological, and contextual gaps that remain.

This review is guided by the following research questions: RQ1. How has the literature on employee/work engagement and organizational performance developed in recent years? RQ2. What direct evidence exists on the effect of EE/WE on organizational performance? RQ3. How has organizational performance been operationalized across financial, non-financial, and multidimensional forms? RQ4. What supporting pathways, contextual patterns, and research gaps can be identified from the recent literature?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Employee Engagement and Work Engagement

Employee engagement (EE) and work engagement (WE) are closely related concepts that describe the extent to which employees invest physical, cognitive, and emotional energy in their work. [Kahn \(1990\)](#) introduced engagement as the harnessing of employees' selves to their work roles. Later studies refined the concept. [Macey and Schneider \(2008\)](#) emphasized engagement as a psychological state associated with effort, involvement, and persistence, while [Saks \(2006, 2019\)](#) treated employee engagement as a multidimensional construct with consequences for both employees and organizations. In the work engagement tradition, [Schaufeli et al., \(2002\)](#) defined work engagement as a positive, fulfilling, work-related state characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption.

Although the two terms are often used interchangeably, the literature suggests a useful distinction. WE is usually tied more closely to the job itself, whereas EE may also reflect a broader connection to the organization, its goals, and its systems. [Schneider et al., \(2018\)](#) extended this view by defining workforce engagement as the aggregate of individual engagement within the organization and arguing that engagement should also be examined at the organizational level. This distinction is important because the present study focuses not only on employee states, but also on their implications for organizational performance.

The literature further shows that EE/WE is shaped by both individual and organizational conditions. Foundational work emphasizes meaningfulness, safety, and availability ([Kahn, 1990](#)), while later studies highlight leadership, supervisory support, organizational practices, rewards, development opportunities, communication, and work environment. Recent studies continue to confirm the importance of empowering leadership, collaboration culture, procedural and distributive justice, training, and supportive systems as antecedents of engagement ([Liu et al., 2022](#); [Rajendran & Doraisamy, 2022](#); [Rusilowati et al., 2025](#)). [Schneider et al., \(2018\)](#) and [Albrecht et al., \(2015\)](#) likewise show that engagement is strongly conditioned by organizational practices and work attributes.

In terms of outcomes, EE/WE has been associated with job satisfaction, commitment, motivation, discretionary effort, individual performance, and lower turnover intention. At the organizational level, engagement is increasingly linked with productivity, service quality, innovation, customer satisfaction, competitiveness, and broader organizational effectiveness. However, the literature also indicates that these effects often operate through indirect mechanisms such as innovation culture, HRM outcomes, and customer-oriented behavior rather

than through a simple one-step relationship.

2.2 Organizational Performance and Its Relationship with Employee/Work Engagement

Organizational performance refers to the extent to which an organization achieves its goals and sustains effectiveness over time. Contemporary literature no longer treats performance as a purely financial construct. Instead, it is generally understood as multidimensional, encompassing both financial and non-financial outcomes. Financial performance commonly includes profitability, revenue growth, return on assets (ROA), and margin, whereas non-financial performance includes productivity, service quality, innovation, customer satisfaction, operational efficiency, and broader organizational effectiveness ([Rajendran & Doraisamy, 2022](#); [Schneider et al., 2018](#)).

This multidimensional view is especially relevant in the context of global competition, digital transformation, Industry 4.0/5.0, and AI-enabled management. In such environments, organizational success depends not only on short-term profit, but also on adaptability, resilience, innovation capability, service responsiveness, and learning capacity. Under these conditions, EE/WE becomes strategically important because it links leadership, culture, and HR systems with broader organizational outcomes ([Rusilowati et al., 2025](#)).

Several theories help explain why EE/WE may influence organizational performance. Kahn's engagement theory ([Kahn, 1990](#)) suggests that employees engage more deeply when they experience meaningfulness, safety, and availability. The Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) theory explains that job resources such as support, autonomy, and growth opportunities foster engagement, while excessive demands can weaken it ([Bakker & Demerouti, 2017](#)). Social Exchange Theory (SET) further suggests that when organizations provide support, fairness, and valued resources, employees reciprocate through stronger involvement and effort. At the organizational level, this logic aligns with the resource-based view, in which engagement can be treated as a valuable capability that contributes to productivity, customer outcomes, and competitive advantage ([Ahmeti, 2023](#); [Albrecht et al., 2015](#)).

Empirical studies support this strategic interpretation. [Schneider et al., \(2018\)](#), for example, showed that workforce engagement predicts both financial and customer-related outcomes at the company level and mediates the relationship between organizational drivers and performance. Taken together, the literature indicates that EE/WE should be understood not merely as an employee attitude, but as an organizational resource shaped by leadership, systems, and culture, with consequences that extend to broader organizational performance.

At the same time, an important limitation remains. Direct evidence linking EE/WE to purely financial performance is still more limited than evidence relating EE/WE to non-financial or multidimensional organizational performance. Recent empirical studies across hospitality, banking, manufacturing, public-sector, and cross-sector settings suggest that engagement may be linked with business performance, branch performance, service quality, organizational effectiveness, innovation, growth, and broader organizational outcomes, although the strength and mechanism of these relationships vary by context and model specification ([Al-dalahmeh et al., 2018](#); [Ghlichlee & Bayat, 2021](#); [Liu et al., 2022](#); [Rajendran & Doraisamy, 2022](#); [Schneider et al., 2018](#); [Kulachai, 2025](#)). This cross-sector pattern supports the view that engagement should be examined not only as an employee attitude, but also as a strategically relevant organizational capability.

Accordingly, the present literature review provides the conceptual foundation for the study, while the broader empirical evidence from the 74 full-text articles is synthesized in Sections

4.4–4.7. This distinction is important because the conceptual literature review is not intended to list all reviewed studies individually; rather, it establishes the theoretical and definitional basis for the subsequent systematic synthesis.

3. Research Method

3.1 Research Design and Data Source

This study employed a combined bibliometric analysis and systematic literature review (SLR) to examine the relationship between employee/work engagement (EE/WE) and organizational performance. The bibliometric analysis was used to map the development and structure of the literature, while the SLR was used to synthesize the substantive evidence, particularly the direct and indirect relationships between EE/WE and financial, non-financial, and multidimensional organizational performance. This design was selected because bibliometric mapping is useful for identifying publication patterns and intellectual structures, but it cannot by itself explain the empirical evidence underlying the engagement–performance relationship.

Lens was used as the primary database because it provides broad scholarly coverage and exportable metadata suitable for bibliometric analysis. Google Scholar, accessed through Publish or Perish (PoP), was used as a supplementary source to improve coverage and cross-check potentially relevant studies. The search was limited to the title and abstract fields to improve topical relevance. The Lens search initially produced 332 records, while the supplementary Google Scholar search was restricted to the first 200 records due to result instability and volume.

3.2 Screening Process and Eligibility Criteria

The screening followed a nested review design. First, records retrieved from Lens and Google Scholar via Publish or Perish were merged and checked for duplicates. Second, the remaining records were screened at the title and abstract level to retain studies clearly related to employee/work engagement and organizational performance. This stage resulted in a bibliometric corpus of 266 records, which was used for publication mapping and network visualization.

Third, full-text retrieval was attempted for the most relevant studies within the screened corpus. A total of 74 full-text articles were successfully retrieved and assessed in detail. These full-text studies were then classified into three categories according to their analytical contribution to the review: 31 core studies, 26 supporting studies, and 17 non-core studies.

Studies were included if they were written in English, published as journal articles or conference papers, and examined employee engagement or work engagement in relation to organizational performance at the organizational level. Studies were excluded if they were duplicates, non-English publications, review-type studies such as bibliometric reviews, scoping reviews, systematic reviews, or meta-analyses, grey literature, or conceptual papers without sufficient relevance to the review objective.

3.3 Bibliometric Analysis Procedure

The bibliometric analysis was conducted on the 266 records retained after title- and abstract-level screening. Metadata were exported primarily from Lens and processed using VOSviewer and spreadsheet-based tabulation. To maintain alignment between the method and the results actually reported in this paper, the bibliometric outputs presented here are limited to publication trends, keyword co-occurrence and thematic evolution, and bibliographic coupling by source.

These outputs were selected because they directly support the objective of mapping the temporal, conceptual, and source-level structure of the field.

All bibliometric maps reported in Figures 1–4 were generated from the same bibliometric corpus ($n = 266$). Thresholds were applied pragmatically in VOSviewer to improve readability by excluding isolated or weakly connected items. As is common in combined bibliometric–SLR studies, the bibliometric corpus served as the analyzed dataset, whereas the reference list of the manuscript includes only the studies explicitly cited in the conceptual framing, reported tables, and narrative synthesis, not all records contained in the bibliometric dataset.

3.4 Systematic Literature Review Procedure

After bibliometric mapping, the 74 full-text articles were reviewed in detail to assess their relevance to the main objective of the study. Each article was evaluated based on (1) the role of EE/WE in the model, (2) the type of organizational performance examined, and (3) the degree to which it provided direct evidence on the engagement–performance relationship at the organizational level.

The full-text studies were classified into three categories: “Core”, “Supporting only”, and “Non-core”. Core studies directly examined EE/WE in relation to organizational performance and therefore formed the main synthesis sample. Supporting-only studies remained relevant to the review but addressed the relationship indirectly through mediating, moderating, or contextual mechanisms. Non-core studies did not sufficiently match the main review objective and were retained only for screening transparency.

Accordingly, the systematic synthesis in Sections 4.5 and 4.6 is based on the 31 core studies, whereas Section 4.7 draws additionally on the 26 supporting studies to interpret indirect pathways, contextual patterns, and research gaps. This distinction is important because the review aims to separate direct evidence from supporting evidence rather than treating all reviewed full-text articles as analytically equivalent.

4. Findings and Discussion

Unless otherwise stated, Figures 1–4 and Table 1 were generated from the same bibliometric corpus retained after deduplication and title–abstract screening ($n = 266$).

4.1 Publication Trends

To examine the temporal development of the literature, annual publication trends on employee/work engagement and organizational performance were analyzed using the final dataset retrieved from Lens. Figure 1 shows that publication output remained limited in the early period, with only 2 to 8 studies published annually between 2015 and 2018. A modest increase appeared in 2019, followed by slight fluctuations in 2020 and 2021.

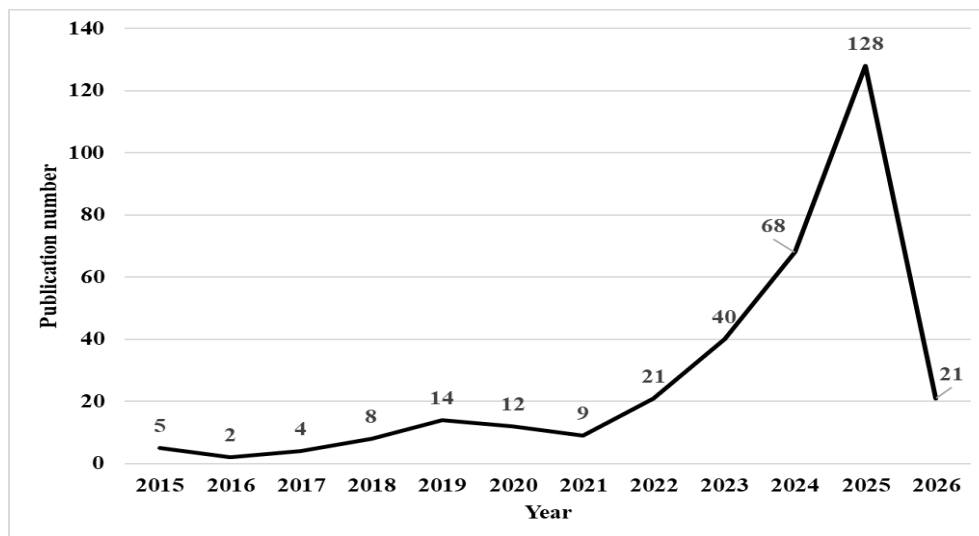


Figure 1. Annual publication trend in the literature on employee/work engagement and organizational performance, based on the bibliometric corpus retained after deduplication and title–abstract screening (n = 266).

Source: Author

A clearer upward trend emerged from 2022 onward. The number of publications increased to 21 in 2022, 40 in 2023, 68 in 2024, and peaked at 128 in 2025. This pattern indicates that scholarly attention to the relationship between employee/work engagement and organizational performance has accelerated substantially in recent years. The lower figure recorded for 2026 should be interpreted cautiously because it likely reflects an incomplete publication year rather than a decline in interest. Overall, the dataset shows a strong recent expansion of the field, particularly in relation to organizational management, HR strategy, and performance research.

4.2 Keyword Co-occurrence Network and Thematic Evolution

To map the conceptual structure of the field, a keyword co-occurrence analysis was conducted using RIS data exported from Lens and processed in VOSviewer. Figure 2 shows that organizational performance occupies the most central position in the network and is strongly connected with terms such as satisfaction, employee performance, company, motivation, and organizational commitment. This indicates that the literature does not treat organizational performance as an isolated outcome, but as part of a broader system of employee attitudes, managerial practices, and organizational conditions.

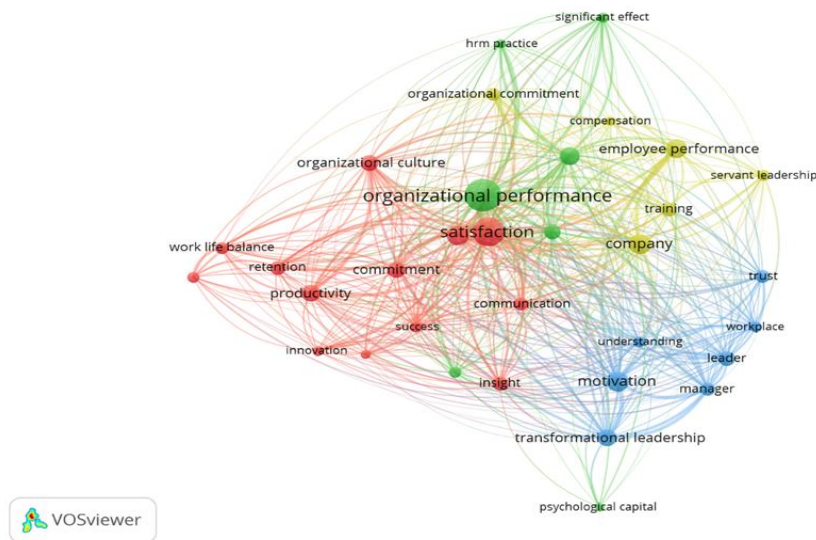


Figure 2. Keyword co-occurrence network in studies on employee/work engagement and organizational performance, generated from the bibliometric corpus retained after deduplication and title–abstract screening (n = 266).

Source: Author

The network also reveals several interconnected thematic groupings. One group centers on employee attitudes and internal organizational outcomes, including satisfaction, commitment, organizational culture, productivity, retention, innovation, and communication. Another reflects HRM and organizational support mechanisms, such as HRM practices and compensation. A third highlights leadership and workplace relations through terms such as transformational leadership, leader, manager, workplace, and trust. Together, these patterns suggest that organizational performance is commonly framed as a multidimensional outcome shaped by employee attitudes, leadership processes, and organizational capabilities.

Figure 3 further shows a thematic shift over time. Earlier studies were more closely associated with terms such as work-life balance, organizational commitment, leader, manager, and workplace, indicating a stronger focus on traditional organizational behavior concerns. More recent studies increasingly emphasize transformational leadership, organizational culture, trust, training, productivity, and innovation, suggesting that the field is moving toward a more strategic and capability-oriented understanding of organizational performance. Overall, the keyword analysis indicates that the literature has evolved from a primarily behavioral orientation toward a broader organizational and strategic perspective.

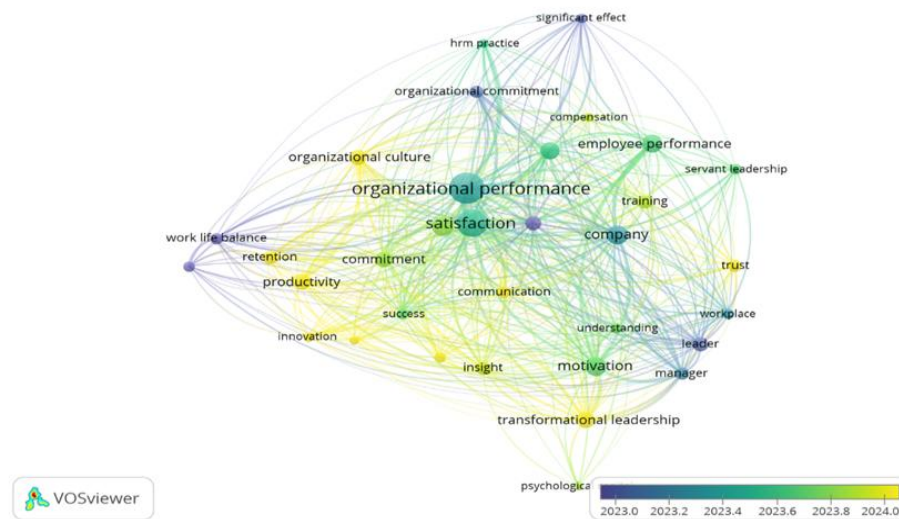


Figure 3. Overlay visualization of thematic evolution in studies on employee/work engagement and organizational performance, generated from the bibliometric corpus retained after deduplication and title–abstract screening (n = 266).

Source: Author

The color gradient indicates the average publication year associated with each keyword, with darker blue tones representing relatively earlier themes and yellow tones representing relatively more recent emphases. This pattern suggests that the earlier phase of the literature focused more heavily on classical organizational behavior concerns, managerial roles, and the testing of basic relationships among workplace variables.

Although the density visualization is not presented as a separate figure, it further supports the interpretation derived from Figures 2 and 3. The highest concentration of terms is centered around organizational performance and satisfaction, indicating that these two concepts constitute the densest thematic core of the dataset. Other relatively dense terms include employee performance, company, motivation, commitment, and training, reinforcing the conclusion that the literature consistently links organizational-level performance to employee attitudes, behavioral mechanisms, and organizational support practices. Thus, the density pattern strengthens the argument that the field is structured around a central performance-oriented core while increasingly expanding toward leadership, trust, culture, and innovation.

Overall, the combined interpretation of the network and overlay visualizations suggests that the literature has developed from a relatively traditional organizational behavior orientation toward a more strategic and capability-driven understanding of organizational performance. In its earlier stage, the field was dominated by managerial and workplace-related concerns; in its more recent stage, it has increasingly incorporated themes such as transformational leadership, organizational culture, trust, training, productivity, and innovation.

4.3 Bibliographic Coupling by Source

To clarify the intellectual structure of the dataset, bibliographic coupling was analyzed at the source level using the Lens dataset and visualized in VOSviewer. This analysis shows that the literature on employee/work engagement and organizational performance is anchored in a relatively limited group of journals, mainly from human resource management, organizational behavior, and applied management.

Figure 4 shows that the network is centered on a relatively limited group of journals, mainly from the domains of human resource management, organizational behavior, and applied management.

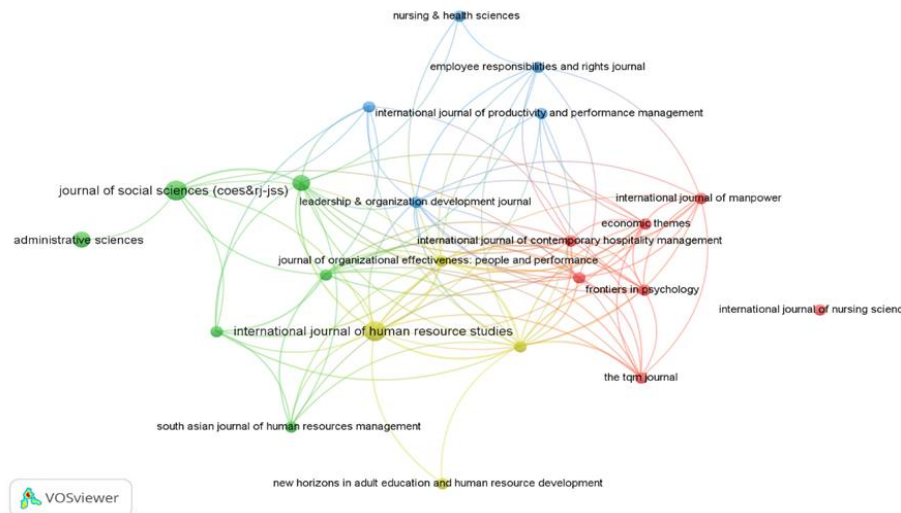


Figure 4. Bibliographic coupling network by source in the literature on employee/work engagement and organizational performance, generated from the same bibliometric corpus ($n = 266$) and visualized in VOSviewer.

Source: Author

Several journals occupy especially central positions in the network, including *International Journal of Human Resource Studies*, *Journal of Organizational Effectiveness: People and Performance*, *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, and *International Journal of Manpower*. Their central placement indicates that the field is supported by a closely related reference base and a relatively concentrated publication structure. At the same time, the presence of outlets such as *Frontiers in Psychology*, *The TQM Journal*, *Global Business Review*, and *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management* suggests that the field has expanded beyond conventional HRM boundaries into broader management, psychology, service, and performance-related domains.

Overall, the bibliographic coupling pattern indicates a field that remains strongly rooted in HRM and organizational effectiveness, while also showing clear thematic expansion into interdisciplinary and sector-specific publication outlets. This suggests that future research on employee/work engagement and organizational performance may continue drawing on its HRM foundation while engaging more broadly with managerial and interdisciplinary perspectives.

To make this pattern more explicit, Table 1 summarizes the leading sources in the bibliographic coupling network based on the number of documents, citation counts, and total link strength (TLS).

Table 1. Top 10 sources by total link strength in the bibliographic coupling network

No.	Source	Documents	Citations	Total Link Strength
1	International Journal of Management Reviews	1	657	98
2	Journal of Organizational Effectiveness:	1	580	98

No.	Source	Documents	Citations	Total Link Strength
People and Performance				
3	International Journal of Human Resource Studies	3	165	83
4	Modern Applied Science	2	107	59
5	Global Business Review	1	22	56
6	International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management	1	56	56
7	Management Research Review	1	50	52
8	Leadership & Organization Development Journal	1	29	49
9	Economic Themes	1	59	48
10	Frontiers in Psychology	1	52	45

Note. The table presents the top 10 sources ranked by total link strength (TLS) in the bibliographic coupling network generated from the bibliometric corpus retained after deduplication and title–abstract screening (n = 266).

The table shows that a small number of journals account for the strongest coupling positions. In particular, *Journal of Organizational Effectiveness: People and Performance*, *International Journal of Human Resource Studies*, and other management-oriented outlets display high TLS values, indicating that they share strong reference similarity with other journals in the dataset. This confirms that the literature is supported by a concentrated set of influential journals rather than being evenly distributed across a very wide range of publication outlets.

4.4 Overview of Full-Text Review and Core Synthesis

Following the bibliometric mapping, the study proceeded to the systematic literature review stage to examine the substantive evidence on the relationship between employee/work engagement and organizational performance. A total of 74 full-text articles were reviewed in detail after title- and abstract-level screening. These studies were assessed not only for general relevance, but also for whether they explicitly examined employee/work engagement in relation to organizational performance at the organizational level. Particular attention was given to outcomes such as financial performance, productivity, service quality, organizational effectiveness, competitiveness, growth, and innovation.

To maintain analytical focus, the 74 full-text articles were classified into three categories: “Core”, “Supporting only”, and “Non-core”. The “Core” category included studies that directly examined the relationship between employee/work engagement and organizational performance and therefore formed the core synthesis sample. “Supporting only” referred to studies that remained relevant but addressed the relationship indirectly through mediating, moderating, or contextual pathways. “Non-core” referred to studies that did not sufficiently match the main review objective. Based on this process, the final classification consisted of 31 core studies, 26 supporting studies, and 17 non-core studies.

Table 2. Classification of the 74 full-text articles reviewed

Category	Definition	Number of Studies	Role in Review
Core studies	Directly examine EE/WE in	31	Main synthesis in

	relation to organizational performance		Sections 4.5–4.6
Supporting only	Indirect, mediating, moderating, or contextual evidence	26	Used in Section 4.7
Non-core	Insufficient fit with the main review objective	17	Retained for screening transparency only
	Total	74	

Note. All 74 full-text articles were reviewed, but only the 31 core studies were used in the direct-evidence synthesis.

This distinction is methodologically important because it ensures that the review gives analytical priority to studies providing the clearest evidence on the engagement–organizational performance relationship, while still using supporting studies to enrich the interpretation of mechanisms, contextual patterns, and research gaps. Accordingly, the next subsections focus first on the direct evidence from the 31 core studies and then on the broader contextual insights provided by the supporting literature.

4.5 Direct Evidence of Employee Engagement on Organizational Performance

The main systematic synthesis is based on 31 core studies that directly examined the relationship between employee/work engagement and organizational performance. Overall, these studies show a consistent pattern: higher engagement is generally associated with better organizational outcomes across sectors and institutional contexts. This suggests that employee engagement should be viewed not only as an individual psychological state, but also as a strategically relevant organizational resource.

As shown in Table 3, the core evidence comes from diverse sectors, with the strongest representation from government organizations, service companies, multi-sector settings, and financial organizations, followed by manufacturing, hospitality, and education. Smaller contributions also came from healthcare, construction, and private company settings. This distribution indicates that the engagement–performance relationship has been examined across a broad range of organizational environments rather than within a single industry.

Table 3. Sectoral distribution of 31 core studies

No	Sector	Publication Number	Author
1	Government Organization	7	Adamu et al., 2025 ; Akanpaadgi & Binpimbu, 2021 ; Devkota et al., 2025 ; Kulachai, 2025 ; Nematswerani & Govender, 2025 ; Novitasari et al., 2025 ; Zamzam et al., 2023
2	Service Company	6	Kamran et al., 2023 ; Kazimoto, 2016 ; Osman et al., 2022 ; Prajapati, 2022 ; Purandare & Patil, 2020 ; Setyawan et al., 2024
3	Multi-sector / General Organization	4	Chatterjee, 2022 ; Poorani & Pradap, 2024 ; Rusilowati et al., 2025 ; Schneider et al., 2018
4	Financial Organization	4	Al-dalalmeh et al., 2018 ; Bano et al., 2024 ; Ghlichlee & Bayat, 2021 ; Jaya et al., 2024
5	Manufacturing	3	Lakshmi & Swapna, 2019 ; Noercahyo et al., 2021 ; Sihite et al., 2023

No	Sector	Publication Number	Author
6	Hospitality	2	Liu et al., 2022 ; Praktikno et al., 2025
7	Education	2	Davis & Okeke-Uzodike, 2024 ; Gede & Huluka, 2024
8	Healthcare	1	Fahad et al., 2026
9	Construction	1	Abu-Mahfouz, 2026
10	Private Company	1	Mansor et al., 2023
Total		31	

Note. This table summarizes only the 31 core studies used for the direct-evidence synthesis.

Substantively, the reviewed studies show that employee engagement is positively associated with outcomes such as productivity, service quality, innovation, competitiveness, profitability, and broader organizational effectiveness. However, the strength of this relationship often depends on favorable organizational conditions, including leadership quality, HRM practices, communication, trust, and organizational culture.

However, this relationship is not always uniform or unconditional. Several studies indicate that employee/work engagement has a stronger association with organizational performance when supported by favorable organizational conditions such as leadership quality, HRM practices, communication, organizational culture, and trust in supervisors. In this sense, engagement can be understood as an organizational capability whose performance implications become more visible when employees are supported by systems and conditions that enable their energy, involvement, and dedication to be translated into collective outcomes.

Another important observation is that the clearest evidence tends to come from studies that explicitly operationalize organizational performance as an organizational-level dependent variable, rather than treating it merely as a background implication or a broad organizational aspiration. This distinction is important because a substantial part of the wider engagement literature still focuses mainly on employee-level outcomes such as job satisfaction, commitment, retention, or individual performance. By contrast, the 31 core studies retained in this synthesis provide more focused evidence on the relationship between employee/work engagement and organizational performance.

Taken together, the core studies suggest that employee/work engagement is generally associated with stronger organizational performance, although the strength and mechanism of this relationship vary across sectors, institutional settings, and analytical models. This makes the present review more precise than broader engagement reviews that do not clearly distinguish employee-level consequences from organizational-level performance outcomes.

4.6 Financial and Non-Financial Organizational Performance Outcomes

An important finding from the core synthesis concerns the type of organizational performance examined in the 31 core studies. As shown in Table 4, the literature is dominated by studies focusing on non-financial organizational performance and studies combining financial and non-financial performance within a broader multidimensional framework. By contrast, studies examining purely financial performance as the sole outcome remain very limited. This indicates that the employee/work engagement literature is more strongly oriented toward broader organizational effectiveness and composite business performance than toward narrowly defined accounting-based outcomes alone.

Table 4. Type of organizational performance examined in the 31 core studies

No	Type of OP	Number of Core Studies	Representative Author/Year	Common Performance Indicators
1	Financial	0	-	-
2	Non-financial	18	Akanpaadgi & Binpimbu, 2021 ; Gede & Huluka, 2024 ; Kulachai, 2025 ; Liu et al., 2022 ; Zamzam et al., 2023	Productivity, service quality, innovation, organizational effectiveness, organizational growth, operational performance, customer-oriented outcomes, sustainability-related performance
3	Both Financial and Non-financial	13	Al-dalahmeh et al., 2018 ; Ghlichlee & Bayat, 2021 ; Schneider et al., 2018 ; Setyawan et al., 2024 ; Sihite et al., 2023	Profitability, ROA, net margin, business performance, branch performance, balanced scorecard dimensions, customer perspective, internal process performance, competitiveness, overall firm performance
Total		31		

Note. This table summarizes only the 31 core studies used for the direct-evidence synthesis.

The predominance of non-financial outcomes suggests that many studies conceptualize organizational performance in terms of productivity, service quality, innovation, operational effectiveness, customer-oriented outcomes, and broader institutional effectiveness rather than solely in terms of profitability or return-based indicators. This pattern is theoretically plausible because employee/work engagement is more directly associated with discretionary effort, service behavior, innovation, and internal organizational processes than with immediate financial ratios.

At the same time, a substantial number of core studies use combined financial and non-financial performance measures. In these studies, organizational performance is treated as a multidimensional outcome in which financial results are embedded within broader business performance systems. In practice, this often includes combinations of profitability, customer-related outcomes, internal processes, quality indicators, learning and growth dimensions, competitiveness, or overall business performance. The literature therefore shows a preference for treating organizational performance as a broader construct rather than separating it into isolated financial metrics.

The scarcity of financial-only studies should not be interpreted as evidence that employee engagement lacks financial relevance. Rather, it appears to reflect the fact that the relationship between employee engagement and financial performance is often more distal, more complex, and more difficult to isolate than the relationship between employee engagement and non-financial organizational outcomes. Employee engagement may affect profitability, return on assets, revenue growth, or margins, but these financial results are usually shaped by many additional factors, including market conditions, competition, strategic decisions, operational systems, customer behavior, and broader environmental pressures. As a result, the effect of engagement on financial outcomes is less likely to appear as a clean and immediate one-step relationship.

This pattern can be understood more clearly through the conceptual synthesis presented in Figure 5, which summarizes the pathways identified in the reviewed studies. The figure shows that the literature supports both direct and indirect pathways from employee engagement/work engagement to organizational performance, but the strength of evidence differs across performance types. The strongest direct evidence appears in relation to non-financial organizational performance and multidimensional organizational performance, whereas the evidence for a direct effect on purely financial performance remains comparatively limited.

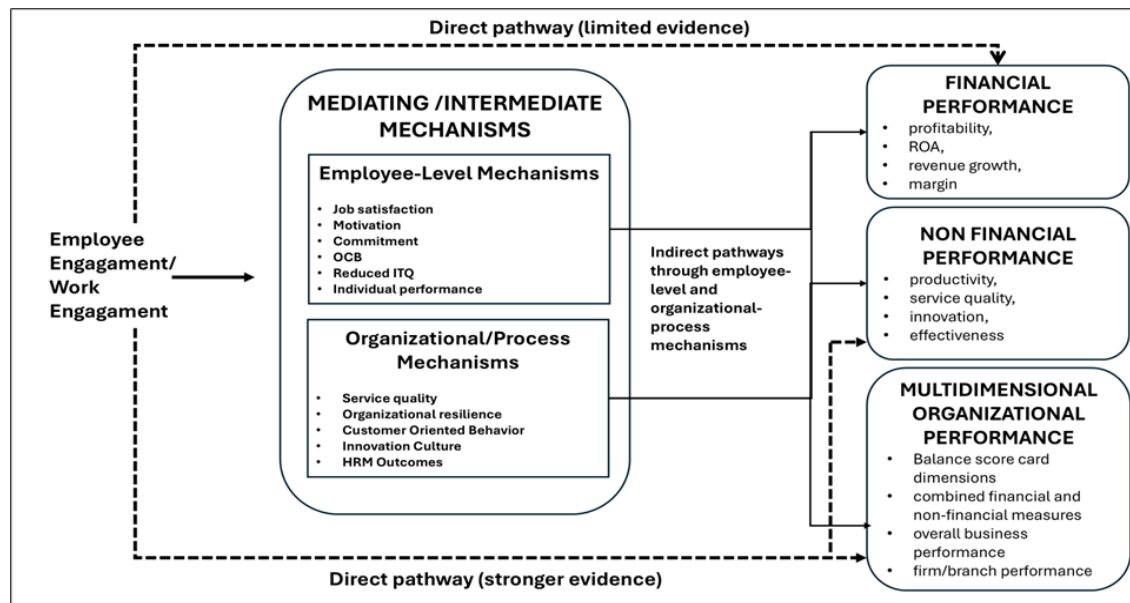


Figure 5. Conceptual synthesis of direct and indirect pathways from employee/work engagement to financial, non-financial, and multidimensional organizational performance.

Source: Author

As illustrated in Figure 5 above, the direct pathway from employee/work engagement to financial performance is marked as having limited evidence. This does not mean that engagement is irrelevant to financial outcomes. Rather, relatively few studies isolate financial performance as a standalone dependent variable. In the reviewed literature, financial outcomes such as profitability, ROA, revenue growth, and margin are more often embedded within broader business performance constructs than tested independently. This suggests that the financial implications of engagement are harder to capture directly and may emerge over time through more complex organizational and market processes.

On the other hand, the reviewed studies provide stronger evidence for the impact of employee/work engagement on multidimensional and non-financial organizational performance. Non-financial performance commonly includes outcomes such as productivity, service quality, innovation, and organizational effectiveness, while multidimensional performance combines financial and non-financial indicators through broader measures such as balanced scorecard dimensions, overall business performance, or firm/branch performance. This suggests that employee/work engagement is more consistently observed as improving the organizational outcomes that are closer to day-to-day operations, internal organizational processes, and collective work execution.

Figure 5 also highlights the role of indirect pathways through employee-level and organizational/process mechanisms. At the employee level, engagement is frequently

associated with job satisfaction, motivation, commitment, organizational citizenship behavior, reduced intention to quit, and individual performance. At the organizational or process level, engagement is often linked with service quality, organizational resilience, customer-oriented behavior, innovation culture, and HRM outcomes. These mechanisms help explain why the relationship between employee/work engagement and organizational performance is often not immediate or linear. Instead, engagement may first strengthen employee attitudes and organizational processes, which then contribute to higher organizational performance.

Overall, Figure 5 supports the primary finding of this subsection: there are several ways in which employee/work engagement improves organizational performance, but the evidence for non-financial and multidimensional outcomes is stronger and more consistent than for purely financial ones. Employee/work engagement should therefore be considered as a strategic organizational resource, according to the reviewed studies, whose benefits are frequently first apparent in operational, behavioral, and process-related outcomes before being fully represented in financial results.

This interpretation also raises broader questions. If employee engagement frequently affects organizational performance through intermediary mechanisms and contextual factors, the evaluation must also take into account how this relationship functions, what circumstances make it stronger, and what gaps in the literature still exist.

This pattern is broadly consistent with the theoretical perspectives discussed in the literature review. From a JD-R perspective, engagement is more likely to influence proximal organizational outcomes such as service quality, innovation, discretionary effort, and internal effectiveness before being reflected in more distal financial indicators. A similar interpretation follows from Social Exchange Theory, in which organizational support, fairness, and valued resources are reciprocated through stronger employee involvement and collective effort. The present findings also align with Schneider et al. (2018), who demonstrated that workforce engagement predicts company-level financial and customer-related outcomes, while suggesting that such effects often operate through broader organizational mechanisms rather than through a simple one-step relationship.

4.7 Supporting Pathways, Contextual Patterns, and Research Gaps

Although the main synthesis is based on 31 core studies, the supporting studies remain important for explaining how the relationship between employee/work engagement and organizational performance operates across contexts. These studies indicate that the relationship often works through indirect pathways, including job satisfaction, organizational commitment, customer-oriented behavior, resilience, innovation culture, and HRM-related outcomes. This suggests that engagement does not always influence organizational performance through a simple one-step relationship, but often through intermediate employee-level and organizational processes.

A second recurring pattern concerns the role of managerial and organizational conditions. Across the supporting literature, employee/work engagement is frequently associated with leadership, HRM practices, communication, work-life balance, trust in supervisors, reward systems, talent management, and organizational culture. This indicates that engagement is not merely an employee state, but is shaped by organizational systems that can either enable or constrain its translation into performance outcomes.

The supporting studies also reveal sectoral variation. In hospitality and service settings, engagement is commonly linked with customer-oriented behavior, service quality, innovation-

related performance, and frontline effectiveness. In financial institutions, the literature more often emphasizes branch business performance, competitiveness, HRM-driven performance, and broader firm outcomes. In public and educational organizations, employee engagement is more frequently tied to organizational effectiveness, mission delivery, institutional output, public value, service quality, and research or community impact. This variation suggests that organizational performance is not uniformly defined across the literature; rather, the engagement–performance relationship is filtered through sector-specific performance logics, which partly explains why financial-only studies remain relatively uncommon.

Several research gaps follow from this pattern. First, the literature still provides limited direct evidence on financial organizational performance as a distinct outcome, as most studies emphasize non-financial outcomes or combine financial and non-financial indicators into broader performance constructs. Second, the field remains dominated by cross-sectional survey designs, limiting confidence in temporal ordering and causal inference; Schneider et al., (2018) remains a notable exception with its company-level predictive design using lagged financial and customer metrics. Third, many studies continue to rely on self-reported or perceptual measures of organizational performance, while objective financial indicators remain less available and less easily linked to employee-level engagement data. Fourth, persistent conceptual overlap between employee engagement and related constructs such as commitment, retention, empowerment, job satisfaction, and work involvement makes it difficult to determine whether organizational outcomes stem specifically from engagement or from a broader cluster of employee attitudes and behaviors. Finally, the sectoral distribution of studies remains uneven, with public organizations, service industries, and financial institutions better represented than manufacturing, construction, and more competitive private-sector settings.

Taken together, these supporting pathways and contextual patterns reinforce the overall conclusion of this review: employee engagement may affect organizational performance through multiple mediating mechanisms, sector-specific processes, and enabling organizational conditions in addition to direct effects. However, the literature still needs more longitudinal, multi-source, organization-level, and financially explicit research to clarify when, how, and under what conditions employee engagement contributes most strongly to organizational performance.

5. Conclusion

This study combined bibliometric analysis and systematic literature review to examine the relationship between employee/work engagement and organizational performance. The bibliometric findings show that the literature has expanded markedly in recent years, especially after 2022, and has moved from a traditional organizational behavior orientation toward a more strategic and capability-based perspective. Thematic patterns are centered on organizational performance, satisfaction, motivation, commitment, leadership, training, and innovation.

The systematic synthesis indicates that employee/work engagement is generally associated with stronger organizational outcomes across sectors. However, the evidence is stronger for non-financial and multidimensional organizational performance than for purely financial performance. The review also shows that this relationship often operates through indirect mechanisms such as job satisfaction, commitment, resilience, customer-oriented behavior, and HRM-related processes, while leadership, organizational culture, communication, trust, and work environment act as important enabling conditions.

Overall, the study supports the view that employee/work engagement is a strategic

organizational resource rather than merely an employee-level attitude. At the same time, the literature still needs more financially explicit, longitudinal, multi-source, and organization-level studies to clarify how engagement translates into organizational performance under different contexts.

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