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Research Article

A Comprehensive Approach to Job Performance in the Service Sector: A Systematic Literature Review

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ABSTRACT

The service sector currently employs the largest portion of workers in the world and stands out due to the nature of labor in this context. This study aimed to produce a systematic multicriteria review on job performance in the service sector. We selected 50 articles in accordance with relevance criteria comprising recentness, citations, and journal's impact following the Methodi Ordinatio protocol. The articles were analyzed based on the components described in Campbell's theoretical model. All studies adopted survey as data collection technique – most of them collecting from more than one source – and 11 studies combined survey with other techniques. Only a fifth of the studies included three out of eight of Campbell's performance dimensions, the larger proportion, though the majority was restricted to only one dimension. The performance determinants often outnumbered the performance measures adopted. The review showed considerable fragmentation as well as neglect of some of the phenomenon dimensions foreseen in the theoretical model. We outline theoretical and methodological guidelines such as longitudinal studies and the need for instruments that cover the phenomenon in its entirety in order to advance the research on the subject.

Keywords: job performance; service sector; Methodi Ordinatio

JEL Code: D23

INTRODUCTION

The service sector is in full expansion and, in the year 2002, became a protagonist in the global economy, starting to concentrate the largest proportion of workers compared to the agricultural and industrial sectors (World Bank, 2020a). The added value of the tertiary sector — made up of organizations whose activities include commerce, restaurants, hotels, and transportation — jumped from \$22.8 to \$51.5 trillion, from 2002 to 2017 (World Bank, 2020b). The ratio of the economically active population working in service provision started from 34.5% in 1991 to come to the level of 50.6% in 2019 — reaching peaks of 90% in Macao, and 89% in Luxembourg and Hong Kong. This growth is associated with a strong decline in the agricultural sector, whose participation of the economically active population plummeted from 43.8% to 26.8%. Comparatively, the industrial sector showed a small fluctuation (0.8%) in the same period (World Bank, 2020a).

The expressive number of workers in the sector, which continues to grow, is a key factor in the sustainability of organizations, as the provision of excellent customer service ceased to be a competitive advantage to become an essential competence in this market. However, despite the economic relevance of the sector and the importance of the workers' performance linked to it, the dominant principles in the management and studies of behavior in organizations have developed in industrial environments, and the peculiarities of service provision do not always enable a direct transposition of theoretical and empirical models from one sector to another (Growth et al., 2019; Subramony, 2017).

If, on the one hand, there currently are many studies on service performance with a focus on the variables that interfere with performance, on the other hand, rare are those that present a comprehensive view of the theme or that test explanatory models proposed in the literature. On the contrary, for the most part, publications addressing the topic deal with restricted aspects of the phenomenon, without considering elements that should compose the job performance analysis linked to the service sector (Pulakos et al., 2019). Taking into account this theoretical limitation, the present study proposes a systematic review on job performance from the perspective proposed by Campbell (1990; revised in Campbell, 2012), whose model was considered as the most comprehensive one by some authors (Koopmans et al., 2011). Moreover, Campbell's theoretical model (2012) stands out for proposing the construct under the generalist, multidimensional, and behavioral aegis (Fogaça et al., 2018; Ramawickrama et al., 2017). Its multidimensional perspective offers a broad view of job performance, applicable to different positions and roles, although it still needs an empirical verification of the dimensions that compose it (Motowidlo & Kell, 2012).

Job performance comprises a set of objectives, observable and measurable actions, under the control of the worker, whose purposes are shared with the demands of the organization (Motowidlo & Kell, 2012). Despite this characteristic of encompassing observable behaviors, studies on the theme rarely include observation methods (Mourão et al., 2016). Thus, a conceptual and empirical alignment is not always achieved in studies on the subject, possibly because job performance functionally constitutes a complex, multifaceted, and dynamic

theoretical construct (Carlos & Rodrigues, 2016; Pandey, 2019). Furthermore, it should be approached not just comprehensively, but also highlighting other aspects and applying dynamic instruments, including a temporal perspective, due to its dynamic, adaptive nature, and with immediate feedback to enable interventions seeking improvements as soon as possible (Sandall & Mourão, 2020).

In order to allow for a broad view of the phenomenon, Campbell (2012) proposed a comprehensive theoretical model to explain workers' performance. His model lists eight dimensions that comprise behavioral classes distinguished by the work activities they house, having in common the fact that they are under the control of the worker. The 'technical dimension' comprehends core work behaviors that summarize what one does and that produce the most characteristic results of that work. Such activities are usually prioritized in performance appraisal (Viswesvaran et al., 2005). In service provision, they involve tasks referring to service production and delivery, as well as adjustments to meet the consumer's demand. The 'communication dimension,' in its turn, is characterized by the transmission of information, both verbally and in writing, directly or indirectly, that will be as successful as it is clear, understandable, and properly organized (Ramawickrama et al., 2017). This dimension gains importance in services whose customer demands need to be sufficiently detailed in the different stages of the work process.

The 'initiative, persistence, and effort dimension,' for its part, encompasses behaviors that evidence additional effort toward the completion of technical activities, including taking on tasks beyond those prescribed, creating ways to carry out the work, and voluntarily accepting an increase in the load. It gains relevance in the service sector, since it also involves a personal commitment to the quality of deliveries, even under extreme or adverse conditions (Harari et al., 2016). Another is the 'counterproductive dimension,' which works inverted, that is, the less of its behaviors, the better, as it is characterized by intentional behaviors that reduce the chances of the organization reaching its goals. Such behaviors can be directed at the organization, such as stealing supplies, missing work, sloppy work, or directed at members of the organization, such as moral or sexual harassment, spreading rumors, making mischief. In the service sector, they can also be directed at consumers through harsh treatment or intentional mistakes (Groth et al., 2019; Ryan & Ployhart, 2003).

Campbell's model (2012) reserves four dimensions to house behaviors linked to other people in the organization, combined in pairs depending on the target — peers or subordinates — and the purpose — leadership or management. In the purpose axis, leadership behaviors would be those that favorably influence the performance of other people, such as encouragement, direct guidance, personal support, recognition, and feedback. In the service sector, the quality of deliveries is usually related to teamwork, which increases the relevance of this dimension. The purpose of management involves behaviors that favorably influence the use of the organization's resources, such as setting goals, monitoring supply consumption, anticipating potential problems, and monitoring the work progress. Consequently, the four dimensions proposed by Campbell to cover behaviors linked to other people were the 'supervisory leadership dimension,' the 'supervisory management dimension,' the 'peer leadership dimension,' and the 'peer

management dimension.’ Because service production tends to be concomitant with consumption, management processes demand even greater attention (Groth et al., 2019).

Typical service attributes require that workers have customer service skills and resourcefulness to make deliveries tangible, most of which are immaterial. In addition, services are usually mediated by humans and comprehend customization in their attributes. As a result, one same service can be performed in a variety of contexts, so the job performance of professionals working in this sector involves great process heterogeneity, variability in results, and difficulty in replication (Gravina et al., 2018).

Furthermore, services are perishable because they cannot be stocked, while their production is limited by demand, on the one hand, and by a maximum flow of delivery, on the other. In parallel, production and consumption tend to be concomitant, so the interaction of workers with consumers tends to be as intense as it is frequent, resulting in the common participation of customers during the service provision itself (Fagerstrøm et al., 2020). Such specificities, once recognized, started to motivate performance investigations in the service context (Groth & Goodwin, 2011).

Yet, regardless of the economy sector, job performance depends on a large set of variables, with highlight to the nature of the work, the personal characteristics of workers, the normative attributes that the organization establishes for the performance of each role, as well as the understanding that each worker has of the organizational objectives and their stage of development. In this sense, job performance is not static and necessarily involves changes over time, either through adjustments to what the organization demands from workers, or through the very professional development of these people (Campbell & Wiernik, 2015; Sonnentag et al., 2008).

In addition to the eight performance dimensions, Campbell (2012) describes a network of determinants and outcomes for the performance delivered by workers. Determinants produce differences in performance between workers, as they encompass individual, procedural, and contextual characteristics, as well as the interactions between them. Examples of determinants are specific knowledge of the role, the skills to perform the latter, working conditions, available technology, among others.

At the opposite end of this process, outcomes signal the effects of individual performance. When well selected, they represent the performance expected from the worker as a whole, functioning properly as indicators. However, the worker does not have full control of the outcomes, since they are also influenced by situational or contextual elements – thus, this risk of bias is inherent to the evaluation of performance outcomes (Viswesvaran & Ones, 2000).

Other models present explanatory proposals with a lower conceptual range and a more restricted dimensionality (Koopmans et al., 2011). Therefore, the present study aimed to conduct a systematic review of the literature on job performance in the service sector, with a focus on the constitutive definitions of the phenomenon, in the light of Campbell’s model (2012). The next section presents the method developed to achieve this goal.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study was conducted in the form of a systematic multicriteria review of the literature, whose analyzed studies were selected using the Methodi Ordinatio (Pagani et al., 2015). This protocol is characterized by the procedures listed in Figure 1 and allows ranking articles published around a certain theme, based on three combined relevance criteria: the year of publication of the study; the number of citations obtained up to the moment of the search; and the impact factor of the journal in which it was published. Therefore, the text selection produced with the aid of the Methodi Ordinatio reduces biases by avoiding favoring journals or authors that the evaluator knows, as it adopts inclusion criteria that are less susceptible to the researchers' subjectivity.

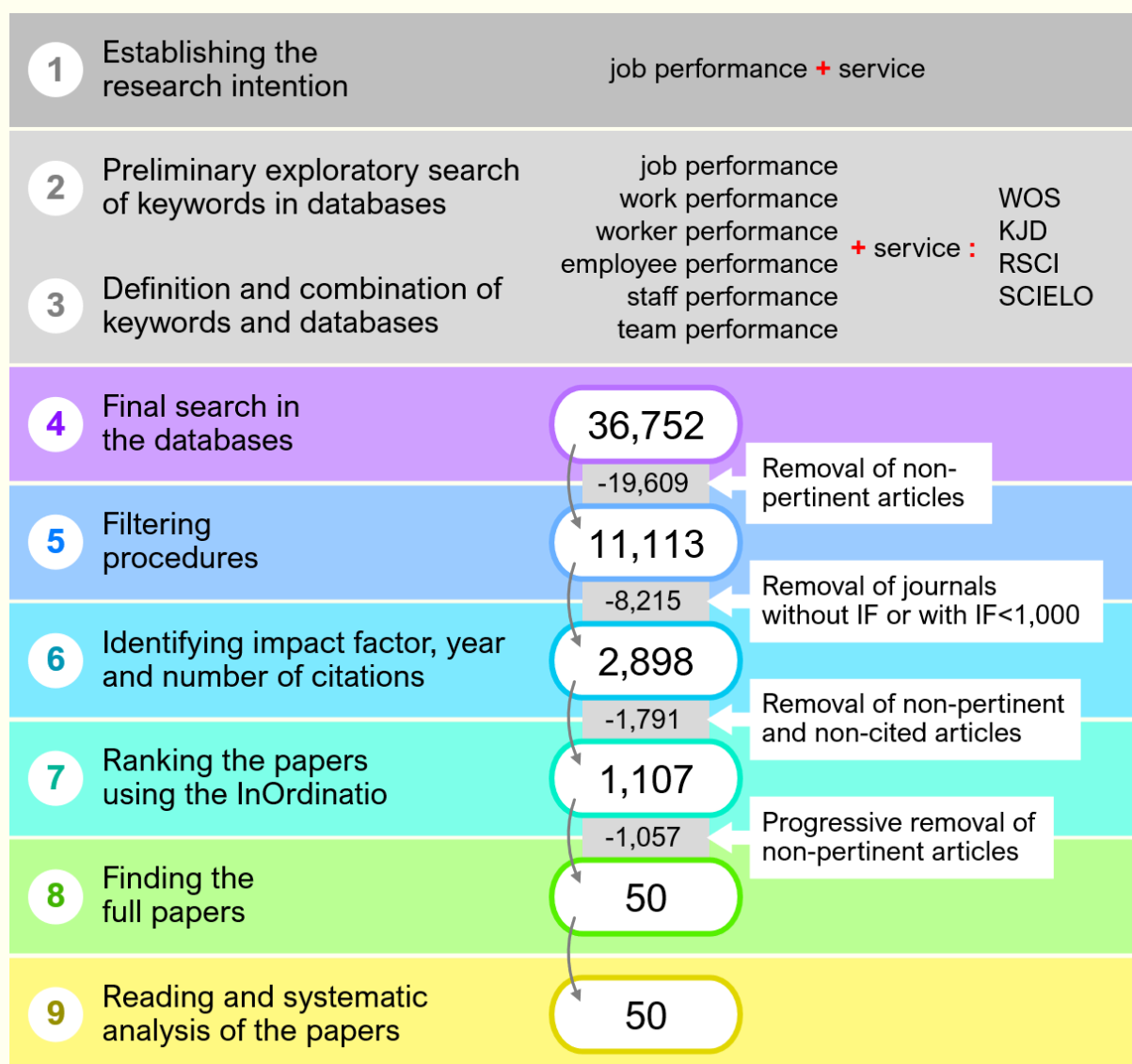


Figure 1. Evolution of the set analyzed over the stages carried out for study selection.

The selection followed the prescribed stages (Figure 1), starting with the definition of the research objective: to produce a systematic review of the literature on job performance in the service sector. The second stage consisted of exploratory assays on Google Academic by means of expressions such as ‘job performance AND services’ (416,000 results). In addition to the large number of returns, this search showed the need to include synonyms, since some authors use similar terms, such as ‘employee performance,’ ‘work performance,’ and “worker performance” to mention examples related to the expression ‘job performance.’

The third stage consisted of choosing the search expressions – [job performance OR work performance OR employee performance OR employees performance OR worker performance OR workers performance OR staff performance OR team performance] and [service OR services] – in titles, keywords, and abstracts, in the Web of Science (WOS) databases and their aggregated bases, Scientific Electronic Library Online (SciELO), Korean Journal Database (KJD), Russian Science Citation Index (RSCI), Science Citation Index Expanded (SCI-Expanded), and Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI). All of these were reachable at once through the advanced search engine available at the Web of Science (WOS) website, which significantly reduced the chances of double occurrences. We also searched through a logged access to the portal of the Brazilian Coordination for Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior – Capes). This stage was followed by a definitive search restricted to empirical articles (fourth stage) and returned 36,752 studies, all in the aforementioned databases.

Three criteria for the inclusion of articles were established, applied in successive screening stages. The first criterion was thematic relevance (job performance in the service sector). We began discarding glaring non-pertinent articles to narrow down the results such as ‘Refine by Web of Science Categories’ (e.g., ‘thermodynamics’ and ‘otorhinolaryngology’) and “Refine by Publication Titles” (e.g., ‘Journal of Applied Physics’ and ‘Applied Soft Computing’), among others, as instructed by the protocol, which resulted in 11,113 articles (fifth stage). The data was then exported to reference management software used (Zotero) where the references were processed. From the source, although combining several data sources, the original compilation was originated in a single hub, which avoided outputs with duplicate articles.

At this point, the database was exported again, this time to Excel, in order to allow us to add the additional components of the equation described ahead. Then, in the spreadsheet, we added the second inclusion criterion, the journal’s impact factor, which was obtained, at the time, in the most recent issue (2018) of the journal impact factor (JIF) supplied by Clarivate (Clarivate Analytics, 2019), according to the protocol (Pagani et al., 2015). Finally, the complete panel was downloaded to supply the index to each article cross-referenced by the journal’s ISSN. Therefore, articles from journals with impact factor bellow 1.000 or absent were suppressed from the database comprised of the remaining 2,898 articles (sixth stage).

Afterwards, we applied the third criterion consisted of the existence of at least one citation, whose application reduced the base to 1,107 remaining articles (seventh stage). The number of citations of each article was obtained one by one by searching the reference in Google Scholar and then added to the same spreadsheet. To these remaining articles, we calculated the InOrdinatio index

(Pagani et al., 2015) as a result of the equation $[(JIF/1.000) + (\alpha * (10 - (2019 - year))) + (cit)]$, in which 'JIF' corresponds to the journal's impact factor, and 'cit' corresponds to the article's total citations. As for the ' α ,' it represents the weight assigned to how recent the publication was, which may vary from 1 to 10; in the present study, we assigned the value 10 because the recentness of the article is relevant for studies in a constantly evolving field such as services. The articles were then sorted in descending order, in accordance with the result of each one of them in the InOrdinatio score.

The subsequent stages were carried out cyclically until the 50 best-ranked articles were found, which was the goal for the present literature review. The process started with the inclusion of articles from the last ten years, with predecessor years being added until the total of 50 articles was reached. This target was adopted in the expectation that such a contingent would be sufficient to offer a diversity of approaches and saturation of variables in the studies included in the ranking. If saturation was not reached, the target quantity would be reconsidered, which was not necessary at the end of the process.

From this stage onwards, further decisions were based on the critical reading of the abstracts and, often, examining the article content, especially method sections, to ensure conformity with the thematic criteria. So, we followed the ranking (Appendix) starting with the highest score (1,042), then the second highest (827), then the third (809) and so on. In this order, we examined the articles one by one to provide only proper articles to the final set. After this in-depth analysis, we found and discarded articles that deviated from the 'job performance in services' theme or that turned to the phenomenon at the team or organizational levels.

The set of studies found covered the period from 2008 to 2019, since no study published in 2020 reached the score necessary for it to be included. The first 35 articles were analyzed through the classification of the variables from Campbell's model (2012). The remaining articles were added one by one, taking into account the possible saturation of the variables in relation to said theoretical model. It was then confirmed that the addition of new articles was not producing relevant changes in the set of results, hence the decision to keep the literature review with the 50 articles best ranked by the InOrdenatio index. The articles that were selected were then all located online (eighth stage) and made available for analysis (ninth stage). The ranking listing all articles and their InOrdinatio scores is in the Appendix. The Figure 1 summarizes the stages of the selection process adopted in this systematic review.

The 'ranking of the 50 best studies' considering the Methodi Ordinatio protocol (Pagani et al., 2015) showed great variability as to the journals' impact factors, which ranged from 1.058 (*Human Performance*) to 9.056 (*Journal of Management*), with a median of 4.465. The number of citations of the articles included in this review had an even greater range, from 68 (Martinaityte et al., 2019) to 1,034 citations (Chan, Yim, & Lam, 2010), with a median of 260. As a result, the InOrdenatio index that generated the rank of the 50 studies started at a score of 1.042, with a significant distance between the first (Chan et al., 2010) and the second study in the rank (Liden, Wayne, Liao, & Meuser, 2014 – 827 points), and a smaller difference between the second and third places (Alfes, Shantz, Wayne, Liao, & Meuser, 2013 – 809 points). The 50th ranked study

(cutoff point in this review) scored 163 points (Hur, Moon, & Jung, 2015). The median score that generated the final rank was 279.

Subsequently, two cycles of analysis followed. In the first cycle, two judges categorized the variables of the participating studies in the light of the theoretical model adopted (Campbell, 2012), independently. In the second cycle, the evaluators discussed their analysis, seeking consensus on divergences. An additional step had a third judge arbitrating on persistent disagreements (which occurred in 20% of the total categorizations defined by the two independent judges). Thus, a set containing 50 highly relevant articles on the 'job performance in services' theme was produced for analysis, encompassing a total of 305 variables. The results presented in the next section derive from these consensual analyses and consisted of categorizing the variables of the participating studies, in the light of Campbell's theoretical model.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section was organized into three subsections. The first describes the bibliometric data of the 50 reviewed studies, also addressing the designs adopted. The following two subsections report findings from two complementary perspectives: dimensions of the construct, and measures used for their evaluation. The dimension perspective discusses Campbell's model (2012) and its representativeness in studies on job performance in the service sector. Then, the measure perspective takes place, pointing out and discussing how job performance in the service sector has been operationalized.

Bibliometric analysis of studies on performance in the service sector

The reviewed studies were distributed in 24 journals, the most prominent of which were the *Journal of Applied Psychology* (6), the *Journal of Management* (5), and the *International Journal of Hospitality Management* (4). As with journals, there was also a diversification of authorship. A total of 142 authors produced the studied articles, the most frequent of which were Osman M. Karatepe and Fred O. Walumbwa, responsible for three publications each. Another 12 authors contributed with two studies, and the others, with one each.

None of the authors was from Brazilian or any other Latin American universities. The other continents were represented by 20 countries. Although all continents other than Latin America were represented, North America had the most authorships (43%) led by far by the United States (58 authorships). With less than half that amount (17 authorships), the Netherlands was the second country most represented and its continent was also the second most represented with 37% of all authorships.

Considering the nature of the job performance phenomenon, it draws attention that only eight of the 50 investigated studies have analyzed temporal effects, by adopting longitudinal research designs. In this sense, cross-sectional investigations still prevail, which not only present a higher risk of bias, but also distance themselves from the very nature of the performance phenomenon.

When it comes to research techniques, all studies adopted a survey, with only one not including self-assessment as one of the elements of performance measurement. This result confirms the discussion by Mourão et al. (2016) that research on organizational behavior prioritizes the use of communication techniques, especially surveys, with rare cases of inclusion of observation as a research technique.

In 24 studies (48%), collections included hetero-evaluation, whether by the supervisor (19 studies; 38%), by customers (7 studies, 14%), or by the interviewer/observer (2 studies; 4%). Most studies (30 studies; 60%) adopted a mixed strategy as source of data collection, either combining primary and secondary data, or combining primary data collected with different types of actors. Of these, 11 studies (22%) had data from two sources, 14 (28%) were based on three sources, and five studies (10%) had their data collected from four different sources. Among these sources, in addition to the adoption of a survey, 11 of them (22%) included internal data, provided by organizations, on the participating employees. Such data varied from sociodemographic data, records in electronic systems (for instance, hours of actual customer service in the call center, or hours dedicated to the customer in law firms) to results of performance appraisal or consumer satisfaction surveys.

Dimensions included in the studies on performance in the service sector

Despite Campbell's model (2012) presenting an eight-dimensional structure, the literature review on performance in the service sector revealed quite fragmented studies about the phenomenon. A fifth of the studies (20%) included three performance dimensions, but most of them were restricted to only one dimension (23 = 46%), while in 17 studies (34%), two dimensions were addressed. These results are largely different from the comprehensive proposal conceived by Campbell, as none of them presented variables in more than three performance dimensions. Thus, the research designs adopted produced limited perspectives of job performance as a phenomenon, confirming what was discussed by Viswesvaran and Ones (2000).

The low representativeness of the dimensions in Campbell's model (2012) followed trends described in the literature that highlights the fragmentation of the phenomenon (Koopmans et al., 2011; Viswesvaran & Ones, 2000). The vast majority of the empirical studies focused on the technical dimension and on the initiative, persistence, and effort dimension, present, respectively, in 70% and 68% of the studies, while the counterproductive dimension appeared in 13 studies (26%). These three dimensions are associated with the three major axes of performance described by Koopmans et al. (2011).

The peer leadership and communication dimensions, in their turn, had a much lower frequency, with the former being addressed in three studies (6%), and the latter, in only two (4%). These two dimensions are aligned with the contextual axis, which has been given not much highlight in investigations about performance, not only in the service sector, as pointed out earlier by the literature review carried out by Koopmans et al. (2011).

Finally, the supervisory leadership, supervisory management, and peer management dimensions were not represented in any article as dimensions of performance itself. This fact confirms a low

alignment of these dimensions with the study axes of job performance evidenced by Viswesvaran and Ones (2000). Despite not addressing these performance dimensions, in some of the reviewed studies these constructs present an affinity with job performance determinants. They appear either in the relationship with heads (leader-member exchange, servant leadership, atmosphere of support from the supervisor, etc.) or in the relationship with peers (team performance, engagement and job crafting, etc.), totaling a frequency of 20 (40%) among the 50 reviewed studies.

An explanation for these studies not having been categorized as performance dimensions lies in the framework adopted by their authors, whose focus was placed on the subordinate in all studies but one, that is, the research participant is the one who is under management or leadership, not the one who exercises it. In this way, such variables appear as determinants of workers' performance in the service sector. This dominant characteristic reveals a gap in research in the field, since hierarchy has a fundamental role in the design of work in service provision (Subramony, 2017). In this sense, it is a surprise that supervisors' performance is not usually included in empirical investigations.

Consequently, the empirical models of the studies analyzed in the present literature review did not turn to investigating management or leadership as job performance dimensions. However, a search for empirical articles run in the same databases and in the same period defined for the present review shows that the literature in the field deals with managerial or leadership appraisal as a separate study object. Thus, a significant number of publications were obtained in the search using the following keywords: 'managerial performance' (11,325 occurrences), 'managerial support' (5,264 occurrences), and 'leadership styles' (3,663 occurrences).

This conclusion that supervisory leadership, supervisory management, and peer management were not included in the reviewed studies as performance dimensions is confirmed by the analysis of the target audience included in the investigations. Studies on job performance in the service sector did not include supervisory performance; they turned to workers at the frontline of service provision (N = 25 studies; 50%), or to workers with different roles in this sector.

Concerning the determinants and outcomes of job performance that do not compose the phenomenon itself, but that are included in Campbell's model (2012), the literature review points to an expressive number of variables. The determinants were verified in 49 studies (98%; 39 with indirect determinants, and 38 with direct determinants). On the one hand, the composition of designs including behavioral antecedents was expected (Pandey, 2019) and has an important role in the study of causal relationships and means of intervention. On the other hand, it is clear that there is a considerable disproportion between the antecedent variables (167) and those that refer to the performance dimensions themselves (105).

Regarding the performance consequences, the variables considered as outcomes were at the opposite end, as merely 20 studies (40%) included this category. In this sense, the present literature review evidences a gap in terms of the insufficient use of indicators to monitor performance, which may compromise the accuracy of the appraisals. This insufficiency may

provide a limiting view of the effectiveness of workers' behaviors (Pulakos et al., 2019; Ramawickrama et al., 2017).

The analysis of the presence of performance determinants points to a modal value of constructs per study equal to 5 (median = 4), while the frequency of performance consequences is much lower (mode and median = 1), which confirms the finalistic nature assigned to job performance (Viswesvaran & Ones, 2000). The performance dimensions, in their turn, had a modal and median value equal to 2, which is consistent with the use of predominantly single-factor, two-dimensional or three-dimensional measures. Figure 2 displays, for each of the 50 selected studies, the ones that included Campbell's performance dimensions (technical; communication; initiative, persistence, and effort; counterproductive; peer management; peer leadership; supervisory management; and supervisory leadership) and other components (direct/indirect determinants and/or results) in their research designs. It also shows which studies adopted non-specific samples (general employees) and specific samples (frontline employees).

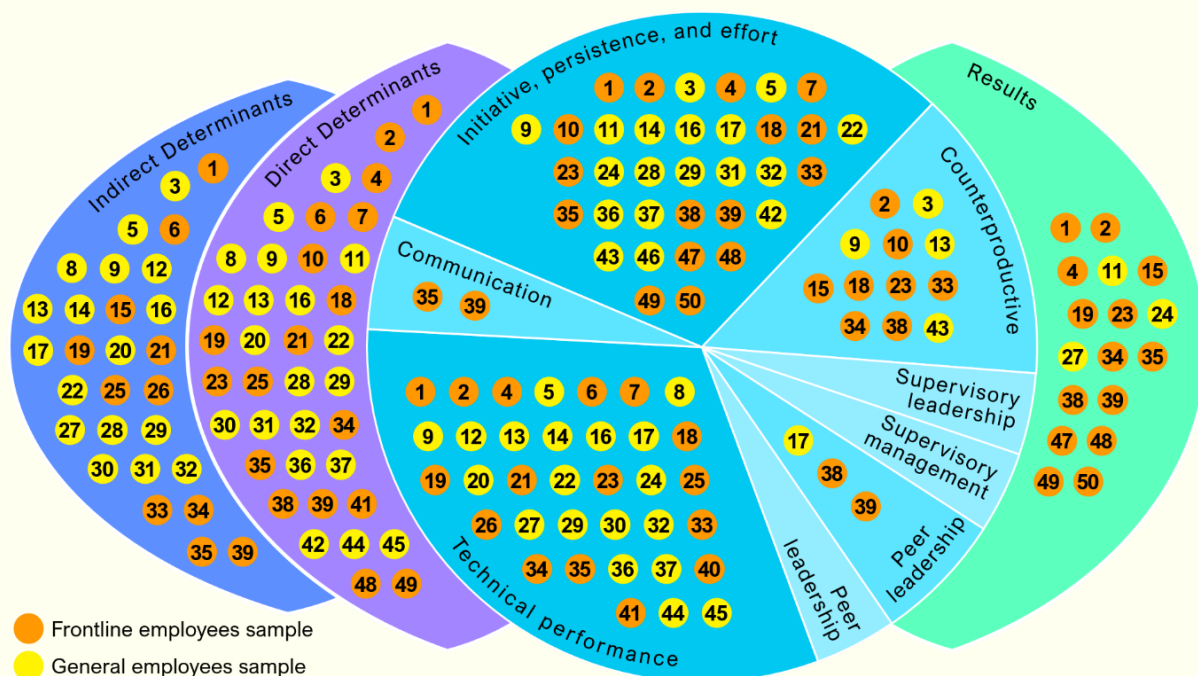


Figure 2. Dimensions and other elements composing the research designs adopted in the analyzed studies. The numbers indicate the place of the studies in the rank generated by the Methodi Ordinatio.

Source: the authors.

Measures adopted in studies on performance in the service sector

The analysis of the 50 studies showed a high number of scales (62) used to measure job performance in its respective dimensions. This quantity of measures signals a lack of consensus on how to measure performance. Only six scales were used totally or partially in more than one study, with a predominance of the performance scale (Williams & Anderson, 1991), present in

nine studies (18% of the total) and the job performance scale (Babin & Boles, 1998), present in six studies (12%). The emotional labor scale (Brotheridge & Lee, 2003) was adopted in four studies, and the employee performance scale (Wayne et al., 1997) was adopted in three studies, while three other scales were present in two out of the 50 reviewed investigations, namely: the service-oriented organizational citizenship behavior scale (Bettencourt et al., 2001) and the service sabotage scale (Skarlicki et al., 2008).

In addition to the performance scales present in the literature in the field, 11 studies (22%) adopted scales or items developed specifically for that investigation. Moreover, eight studies included forms of measurement specific to the investigated organizations. In those cases, there was no information about the psychometric data of these measures, although their scores were incorporated into the models of variables. Moreover, most studies described actions returning results as a way to reciprocate the time invested by those who collaborated with the research.

The review made it possible to observe that, although all studies adopted some performance scale as a way of operationalizing the construct, there is great heterogeneity in the measurement instruments. In addition, many scales were applied with significant adaptations; some of them were partially adopted, either with the choice of applying some of their dimensions, or with the isolated use of some of their items. In certain studies, the juxtaposition of items from different scales causes changes even in the levels of measurement and content researched. In these cases, it is difficult to replicate the studies, as well as to design interventions that could favor improvements in performance.

Another analysis carried out referred to the dimensions of Campbell's model (2012) included in the reviewed studies. The most frequent measures categorized in the technical dimension were those that typically seek to summarize the whole performance in a few generic items, called job performance, in-role performance, or task performance, among other similar denominations. Such measures, which usually have a one-dimensional structure, encompass a diverse set of behaviors at work, with a predominance of those considered as technical performance (Koopmans et al., 2011; Motowidlo & Kell, 2012).

A minority of the studies presented specific measures for economic segments or professions. Examples of this type involve specific scales for call center work, for work in the public service, or measures related to the provision of services in the health field. Performance measures aimed at professions or segments are frequent in the field, possibly due to the difficulty that generic scales have in measuring technical-performance behaviors inherent to certain occupations (Viswesvaran et al., 2005).

As for the communication dimension, only two measures were found, both of which are related to behaviors linked to innovation or to the expression of workers' commitment. Thus, the reviewed studies did not present measures aimed at the quality of oral or written communication. This result indicates an important gap in studies on performance in the service sector, since communication is a key element in understanding customer demands, in the service production process and in its resulting deliveries (Groth et al., 2019; Viswesvaran & Ones, 2000).

The measures related to the initiative, persistence, and effort dimension were also quite frequent, being included in 34 studies and totaling 47 scales or isolated dimensions of scales used to carry out this assessment. Such measures varied largely; however, they can be grouped into three categories, namely: emotional-work behaviors; behaviors typical of extra-role effort; and innovative behaviors (Harari et al., 2016). Although some of these behaviors are not exactly addressed in Campbell's model (2012), they are grouped in this theoretical axis, since the literature considers them as extra-role performance — also called contextual performance — being frequently related to organizational citizenship behaviors, as a component of performance (Koopmans et al., 2011; Viswesvaran & Ones, 2000).

Regarding the assessment of the counterproductive dimension, there is a gap in terms of measures, which does not find support in theoretical models, as the counterproductive axis is present in important job performance models (Viswesvaran & Ones, 2000). Besides not frequent, measures related to this dimension were more peripheral, focused, for instance, on turnover intention behaviors. Still, some classic indicators of counterproductive behavior, such as customer-oriented sabotage and abusive supervision, were found (Harari et al., 2016).

As for the dimensions concerning leadership and management, no performance measures were found, with the exception of peer leadership, which had a timid expression. Although this result reflects the absence of these dimensions in most theoretical models on individual performance at work (Koopmans et al., 2011), this finding also reveals a gap in the literature on performance, since leadership and management are investigated in such studies only from the point of view of the influence they have on subordinates and peers, without the specific performance of leaders and managers being measured. In the service sector, the absence of these dimensions draws even more attention, as the integration of the worker chain is an essential element in the provision of quality service (Groth et al., 2019).

In summary, the comprehensiveness of an ideal approach to job performance studies was absent in all of them. Besides, some designs were quite limited in terms of the approach to job performance, mostly showing few points of view about the phenomenon. Table 1 summarizes how often each one of Campbell's dimensions was represented by a variable in such research designs. It also provides examples of variables that fit each dimension.

Table 1.

Campbell's model dimensions frequency and examples of variables of each one.

| Dimension | N | Examples and notes |
|-------------------------------------|----------|--|
| Technical | 35 (70%) | Short one-dimensional 'job performance' or professions/segment-focused scales |
| Communication | 2 (4%) | Behaviors evidencing loyalty and interaction frequency |
| Initiative, Persistence, and Effort | 34 (68%) | General organizational citizenship behaviors and others showing initiative, innovation, and customer orientation |
| Counterproductive | 12 (24%) | Surface acting, and sabotage against customer |
| Supervisory Leadership | — | Absent |
| Peer Leadership | 3 (6%) | Pairing (working side by side training a colleague) and support for innovation |
| Peer Management | — | Absent |

The joint analysis of the measures used in the reviewed studies points to a lack of measurement instruments that comprise the different dimensions of performance, either in the light of Campbell's model (2012) or in the light of other comprehensive models of performance, such as that by Viswesvaran et al. (2005). The use of scales that are one-dimensional or that encompass a very small number of dimensions may result in a lesser understanding of the job performance phenomenon, whose nature is complex, multifaceted (Fogaça et al., 2018; Ramawickrama et al., 2017). Thus, the present literature review confirms the reflections by Viswesvaran et al. (2005) that the search to measure job performance in an objective manner has resulted in a superficial measure that poorly represents the complexity of the phenomenon.

Further considerations

The present study aimed to present a systematic literature review on job performance applied to services, with a focus on the constitutive and operational definitions of the phenomenon, in the light of the theoretical model proposed by Campbell (2012). The protocol used favored the articles lineup since it supplied clear parameters to minimize biases in finding and prioritizing articles. It also guided critical use of advanced searches in online databases and the references management software. This protocol provided an assortment of articles to be analyzed that varied in sources and research designs in order to provide us with the recent literature on job performance in the service sector.

The systematic literature review made possible some meaningful conclusions about empirical studies on job performance in the service sector. On the one hand, some of these conclusions are theoretical and consist of: (a) poignant fragmentation of the phenomenon, represented by investigations that consider few aspects of job performance, lacking a multidimensional approach; (b) neglect of specific aspects in the comprehensive perspective established by Campbell's (2012), such as communication, leadership, and management; and the (c) conceptual confusion between the job performance components and their nomological network, in such a way that some dimensions that compose performance end up appearing in empirical studies as antecedent or consequent variables.

On the other hand, we reached some methodological conclusions as well. Among them, we can point out: (d) the considerable disproportion between determinants of job performance and measures of the actual job performance, possibly due to the finalistic nature of the phenomenon; (e) the multiplicity of job performance measures, evidenced by the variety of instruments and by the adaptations reported in such instruments, which reduces both the replicability and the generalization of their findings; (f) and rarity of longitudinal studies about a phenomenon in which time has genuine relevance.

Finally, we can also consider practical conclusions in the sense that most research designs consist of one-time data collection and use surveys extensively. On another note, the articles rarely described feedback to participants as a way to reciprocate the time invested by those who collaborated with the research.

In light of such conclusions, relevant gaps in investigations on job performance in the service sector were noted. One of them is the insufficiency of variables referring to relationships with colleagues and subordinates, which restricts the understanding of the job performance phenomenon as a whole in a field where cooperation is paramount for reaching desired results. Another gap concerns the need for a comprehensive instrument to measure the phenomenon and that allows sufficiently addressing the job performance behaviors that characterize it. Besides comprehensive, such instrument should adapt itself to different work scenarios and provide feedback to the participants in order to facilitate ways of self-improvement through the management of their own job performance. Finally, an additional gap points to methods based on surveys and designs disregarding time as a key element.

Moreover, despite recent efforts of many Brazilian post-graduation programs for internationalization, none of the articles from the set had contributors from Brazilian or even Latin American institutions. In Brazil, the programs have been stimulated by national development agencies to help build international bridges (Costa et al., 2020; Menandro et al., 2015). The current study showed several approaches that can drive the fomentation of job performance research in Latin America.

This systematic literature review allowed us to structure a research agenda for the study of this theme in the coming years, subdivided into theoretical and methodological guidelines. Regarding the theoretical aspects, the main recommendation would be to conduct empirical studies that adopt comprehensive and multifaceted perspectives of job performance in order to meet the complex nature of the phenomenon. From a methodological point of view, there is a demand for the development of instruments that house a sufficient set of dimensions capable of describing and explaining the phenomenon. There is also a need for more longitudinal studies, and investigations that adopt a multilevel perspective, since job performance is related to variables such as organizational efficiency, productivity, effectiveness, and competitiveness. The research agenda also imposes a demand for meta-analyses that allow better understanding of the vast nomological network of the correlations between job performance and several other personal and environmental variables. One additional need would be the inclusion of Brazilian and Latin American researchers in job performance research initiatives in order to add a regional perspective to the advances in the subject.

Despite the contributions that the present literature review has generated, some limitations of the study need to be pointed out. The first concerns the keywords adopted in the initial search for studies that focused on performance in the service sector globally. A search that returned, in addition to the phenomenon itself, the dimensions that compose performance would favor the chances of a broader sample of empirical studies.

Notwithstanding these limitations, the present review brings contributions by focusing on one of the most relevant phenomena of organizational and work psychology, and about which there are still many questions and demands for research. We hope that the results herein presented and discussed lead to new investigations with less fragmentation of the phenomenon and with robust empirical models that fully encompass the job performance phenomenon.

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Authors' contributions

1st author: conceptualization (equal), data curation (equal), formal analysis (equal), funding acquisition (equal), investigation (equal), methodology (equal), project administration (equal), resources (equal), software (equal), supervision (equal), validation (equal), visualization (equal), writing – original draft (equal), writing – review & editing (equal).

2nd author: conceptualization (equal), data curation (equal), formal analysis (equal), funding acquisition (equal), investigation (equal), methodology (equal), project administration (equal), resources (equal), software (equal), supervision (equal), validation (equal), visualization (equal), writing – original draft (equal), writing – review & editing (equal).


3rd author: conceptualization (equal), data curation (equal), formal analysis (equal), investigation (equal), methodology (equal), project administration (equal), resources (equal), software (equal), supervision (equal), validation (equal), visualization (equal), writing – original draft (equal), writing – review & editing (equal).

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APPENDIX A

Articles ranking after analyzed in the review preceded by their respective InOrdinatio scores:

1. 1,042 Chan, K. W., Yim, C. K., & Lam, S. S. (2010). Is customer participation in value creation a double-edged sword? Evidence from professional financial services across cultures. *Journal of Marketing*, 74(3), 48–64. <https://doi.org/10.1509/jmkg.74.3.048>
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