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HEC MONTRÉAL
École affiliée à l'Université de Montréal

**Beyond Tradition: An In-Depth Exploration of New Trends in Performance
Management**

par
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Résumé

Bien que la gestion de la performance soit omniprésente dans les organisations, son efficacité fait l'objet d'un débat constant. Conscientes de la nécessité d'une amélioration continue, les entreprises ont commencé à expérimenter de nouveaux systèmes de gestion de la performance. Cette quête d'efficacité a conduit à l'adoption de pratiques novatrices visant à améliorer la performance de ces systèmes. Toutefois, bien que les entreprises cherchent à perfectionner leur gestion de la performance, les dirigeants poursuivent cet objectif avec des preuves souvent anecdotiques ou limitées. Ce travail s'intéresse à la gestion de la performance, en mettant en lumière les tendances récentes et importantes adoptées par les organisations. Les trois articles composant cette thèse explorent chacun un phénomène spécifique parmi ces innovations : les pratiques de gestion de la performance axées sur le développement, la gestion de la performance basée sur les forces et la gestion algorithmique de la performance. Dans l'ensemble, cette thèse propose une exploration approfondie des tendances récentes en gestion de la performance, comble certaines lacunes théoriques et offre des recommandations pratiques aux organisations. Elle s'inscrit dans une perspective de gestion positive des ressources humaines, mettant l'accent sur des systèmes de gestion de la performance favorisant le développement des employés, l'apprentissage, la croissance et le fonctionnement optimal.

Mots-clés : gestion de la performance, développement des employés, apprentissage, gestion de la performance basée sur les forces, perceptions des parties prenantes, gestion algorithmique de la performance, gestion humaniste, fonctionnement optimal

Méthodologie : revues de littérature, méthodes conceptuelles, méthodes de recherche qualitative

Abstract

While performance management is prevalent in organizations, its efficacy remains a subject of ongoing debate. Recognizing the need for continuous improvement, firms have begun experimenting with their performance management systems. This pursuit for efficacy has led to the adoption of novel practices that are intended to enhance the effectiveness of these systems. Even though firms are seeking to improve the way they manage performance, firm leaders are pursuing this objective with anecdotal or limited evidence. The current work delves into subject of performance management, shedding light on recent and important trends embraced by organizations. The three articles that compose this thesis each tackle a specific phenomenon among these innovations, namely development-oriented performance management practices, strength-based performance management and humanistic algorithmic management. Overall, this thesis provides a comprehensive exploration of recent performance management trends, addressing theoretical gaps, and offering practical guidelines to organizations. The thesis grounds itself in a positive human resource management perspective, emphasizing performance management systems that foster employee development, learning, growth, and optimal functioning.

Keywords : Performance management, employee development, learning, strengths-based performance management, stakeholder perceptions, algorithmic performance management, humanistic management, optimal functioning

Research Methods : Literature reviews, theory building, qualitative research methods

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

AM = Algorithmic Management

APM = Algorithmic Performance Management

DOPM = Development-Oriented Performance Management

DOPMP = Development-Oriented Performance Management Practices

HAPM = Humanistic Algorithmic Performance Management

HR = Human Resources

HRD = Human Resource Development

HRM = Human Resource Management

PM = Performance Management

SBA = Strengths-Based Approach

SBPM = Strengths-Based Performance Management

SDT = Self-Determination Theory

Preface

The articles that comprise this dissertation were written in collaboration with Olivier Doucet, Marie-Ève Lapalme, Xavier Parent-Rocheleau, and Antoine Bujold. As the first author of each of the three articles, I played a leading role in their development and completion. These articles are at various stages of the publication process, the first one being published, the second being under review and the third remaining in a preliminary form. Each article has been carefully reviewed by my co-authors, with whom I maintained ongoing communication to incorporate their feedback and guidance. Each of the authors have provided me with their approval to include these three articles in my thesis.

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1.0 Introduction

Performance management (PM) refers to the process of “identifying, measuring, and developing the performance of individuals and teams and aligning performance with the strategic goals of the organization” (Aguinis, 2013, p.2). PM serves multiple functions in organizations (Aguinis, 2013). For example, PM can have a strategic function where it can be used to align business priorities with employee goals and objectives. PM may also have an administrative function where it can enable managers and HR professionals to take more informed personnel decisions related to staffing (e.g., promotions, demotions etc.) talent management (e.g., identifying high-potential workers), and compensation (e.g., bonuses). Additionally, PM can also have a developmental role in the organization, whereby managers can use PM to understand their employees’ performance, identify performance related gaps, and address these gaps through coaching, training and mentoring (Aguinis, 2013).

When PM systems are well implemented in organizations, this can have a positive impact on both employees and organizations. To be more precise, employees can experience engagement, motivation and performance at work (Den Hartog, 2004). In turn, organizations can deliver high quality goods and services to their clients, which means that they can be more profitable for their shareholders (Pavlov et al., 2017). Now, even though organizations tend to have a formal PM system in place (Cascio, 2006) and that PM has great potential, few business leaders feel like PM concretely leads to positive outcomes (Pulakos & O’Leary, 2011). Company surveys indicate that only 3 out of 10 business leaders perceive that PM systems are “effective” (Aguinis et al., 2011; Holland, 2006) and only 5% of managers feel like their PM systems are satisfactory (Pulakos et al., 2015). With these two stakeholders largely buying out of PM, even employees see little value in it as they do not feel like they receive enough support from managers in this process (Pulakos et al., 2015). All this being said, the effectiveness of PM systems is being thoroughly questioned in academic (Adler et al., 2016; Murphy, 2019; Pulakos et al., 2015; Pulakos & O’Leary, 2011) and practitioner circles (Brecher et al., 2016; Deloitte,

2017), with endless recommendations on how to improve PM so it can fully achieve its intended potential in organizations (Haines III & St Onge, 2012).

The disparity between the actual and desired effectiveness of PM systems is a complex issue. A large part of the PM literature has roots in accounting and finance research where PM is viewed as necessary set practices that facilitate management control (Otley, 2003). According to these streams of literature, PM's main objective is to ensure employees are carefully monitored and regulated so they can generate profits for organizations (Langfield-Smith, 1997). This perspective of PM fosters and shapes an narrowly focused economically driven narrative around PM that emphasizes error reduction and profit maximization (Bourne et al., 2003). While this perspective may have been helpful for scholars in the past, it discounts the very human and inter-relational aspects of PM that are important to PM's success (Tseng & Levy, 2019) Additionally, such traditional perspectives of PM view PM as a static process whereby firms can set goals in the beginning of the year and check-in at the end of the year. This view of PM has changed in recent years as today's organizations demand agility and competitiveness to remain relevant on the market (Bourne et al., 2003). Thus, more agile and dynamic forms of PM have emerged (Pulakos et al., 2015, 2019). Moreover, the literature indicates that challenges in PM effectiveness also stem from other challenges, such as suboptimal implementation, misalignment with strategic objectives, insufficient planning, and neglect of crucial factors like upholding processes, fairness, and meritocracy in organizations (Aguinis, 2013; Bourne et al., 2003; Cunha et al., 2018; Pulakos & O'Leary, 2011). Nonetheless, addressing these issues are important to change the way we think about PM and for scholars to find ways to enhance PM's effectiveness.

In response to these challenges, organizations have begun experimenting with their PM systems. For example, high profile companies such as Accenture, Adobe, Deloitte, Gap Inc., General Electric, IBM, Microsoft, and Netflix have begun adapting their PM systems (Schrøder-Hansen & Hansen, 2022). Among these innovations, are PM practices that include : 1) dynamic goal-setting, 2) continuous performance feedback, 3) abandoning performance ratings, 4) decentralizing PM decision making and appraisals, and 5) informalizing the PM process (Kubiak, 2020; O'Kane et al., 2022; Schrøder-Hansen &

Hansen, 2022). Nonetheless, despite these substantial changes to PM systems, organizations are moving forward with little to no empirical evidence about the effectiveness of these new practices (Doucet et al., 2019).

This points to two issues within the PM literature. First, despite the extensive history of PM research spanning over a century, there's a noticeable gap in addressing the needs of practitioners (Denisi & Murphy, 2017). Indeed, PM research has traditionally focused on scale formats, rating evaluations, and various other aspects of PM (Denisi & Murphy, 2017). However, a significant gap exists in the literature regarding emerging PM trends. This gap becomes a hindrance for practitioners, preventing them from making well-informed decisions and incurring considerable financial and temporal costs (Brecher et al., 2016). Second, moving outside the research-practitioner gap, the literature has urged PM scholars to broaden their focus beyond performance (Tweedie et al., 2019). More specifically, scholars have advocated for a more critical and nuanced exploration of employees' learning, development, flourishing and well-being (Brown et al., 2018; Gruman & Budworth, 2022; Tweedie et al., 2019). These calls stem from several oversights in the PM literature which have stunted discourse in the field. Thus, examining novel PM trends with alternative theoretical lenses and by being more inclusive of people's development and well-being holds significant relevance, especially in the context of a post-pandemic world where there is a growing demand for healthier work environments among employees (Ng & Stanton, 2023) and performance (Manroop et al., 2024).

The examination of the latest trends in PM is necessary, as such an exploration holds the potential to offer important insights for both researchers and practitioners to address issues related to PM's effectiveness. The principal objective of this thesis is to delve into the current landscape of PM, providing comprehensive insights into these recent trends. To guide this exploration, the present thesis poses the following overarching research question: "What do we know about current PM trends in organizations?" This inquiry forms the core of this work, which aims to identify novel PM practices and perspectives, but also to document outcomes and contextual factors that can promote their success in organizations.

1.1 Thesis Structure and Contributions

This work addresses the overarching question through a series of three scientific articles. The first thesis article takes the form of a scoping review that systematically maps the existing literature on novel trends in PM. More specifically, it identifies emerging PM practices that are specifically aimed at employees' development. In addition, this first thesis article documents both their intended and actual outcomes for employees. The second thesis article presents a case study examining the implementation of a strengths-based approach to performance management within an organization. It explores both the intended and actual practices while also capturing the perceptions and reactions of key stakeholders involved in the process. In the third thesis article, the focus shifts to a conceptual exploration about the automation of PM systems, specifically through algorithmic management, in the realm of app-based work. This third thesis article introduces a model grounded in humanistic management and self-determination theory, which emphasizes a humanistic approach to PM that promotes employees' basic psychological needs, self-determined motivation, and optimal functioning at work. All these thesis articles come together and address the research question in different ways and inform each other conceptually.

Overall, the current thesis contributes to the literature on PM by addressing the research-practitioner gap and by expanding PM's research horizons beyond past perspectives. More specifically, the first thesis article develops a framework based on systems theory that promotes a configuration-based view of development-oriented PM practices. As such, the article makes a theoretical contribution that bridges knowledge between the employee development and PM literatures that enables researchers to generate new research on PM. Furthermore, it provides us with a more comprehensive understanding of how PM can be used to foster employee development. The second thesis article contributes to the literature as it examines the implementation of a novel and trendy PM system in an organization. More specifically, this article examines the structural application of the strengths-based approach to PM. This work advances the literature by shedding light on this approach, and it informs us of the benefits, drawbacks, stakeholders' perceptions, along with the boundary conditions in which such a system is most effective. The third

thesis article contributes to the literature by challenging traditional perspectives on PM and algorithmic management which focus on the management control of workers. More specifically, this article shifts the conversation in the algorithmic PM literature by introducing a novel model based on the fundamentals of humanistic management and self-determination theory. The model demonstrates how humanistic algorithmic PM practices promote people's basic psychological needs essentially leads to mutual gains for both platforms and app workers. Practically, my work provides HRM practitioners with a better understanding about the novel trends in PM including the novel practices and systems that are being adopted, the key factors that facilitate or hinder their implementation, the perceived outcomes of these trends, and strategies for leveraging them and maximize their impact.

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2.0 Literature review

Now that the introduction has been set, a literature review has been conducted to provide readers with a comprehensive overview of performance management (PM). More specifically, the objective of this literature review is to 1) distinguish PM from performance appraisal, 2) discuss the history of PM, 3) expose readers to PM's conceptual and theoretical foundations, 4) shed light on PM's intended outcomes as well as 5) its success and detracting factors.

Taking a moment to achieve these objectives is important for several reasons. First, by distinguishing PM from performance appraisal (PA) we can have a more precise understanding about what PM is. Second, by reviewing the history of PM, we can better contextualize how the field has evolved in response to changing research trends and organizational needs. Third, by exploring PM's conceptual and theoretical foundations, we can offer insight into how scholars have conceptualized PM over time and the mechanisms through which PM may influence outcomes. Fourth, by examining the intended outcomes of PM we can have a better idea of its effectiveness and provide an evidence-based understanding of its impact on individuals and organizations. Finally, identifying the factors that contribute to PM's success or limitations allows for a more nuanced perspective on how to facilitate its implementation. Together, these elements form a comprehensive literature review that not only informs researchers and practitioners about PM but also pinpoints the key trends that will be further explored in this thesis.

2.1 Performance Management vs Performance Appraisal

PM and PA are often mentioned together in the literature which can lead to potential confusion about what each of these concepts refer to. First, PM is defined as “the process of “identifying, measuring, and developing the performance of individuals and teams and aligning performance with the strategic goals of the organization” (Aguinis, 2013, p.2). In other words, PM is an ongoing, day to day process that managers must conduct to ensure that employees are meeting performance-related expectations. By contrast, PA is defined as “the process through which supervisors assess, after the fact, the job-related

performance of their supervisees and allocate rewards to the supervisees based on this assessment" (Cappelli & Conyon, 2018, p.88). In essence, PA differs from PM in that PA represents a single practice within the PM process which strictly focus on evaluating employees' performance and it occurs at very specific times of the year (e.g., mid and or end of year) (Cappelli & Conyon, 2018). PM and PA are frequently discussed together in both research and practice, which is expected given that PA is a key component of PM. Now that the difference between PM and PA has been made explicit, we will dive into the history of PM.

2.2 The History of PM

2.2.1 *Ancient and Early Modern Eras*

Today, PM is a well-established process in most organizations (Cascio, 2006). However, its nature and complexity have significantly evolved over time and its roots can be traced back to hundreds, if not thousands of years (Armstrong & Taylor, 2017). Even though the current concept of PM was not as developed in the past, scholars certainly agree that practices related to PM such as PA were documented in different historical periods and laid the foundation for the emergence of PM as a structured HR process (Armstrong & Taylor, 2017).

According to historical accounts, one of the earliest instances of PA can be traced back to ancient China during the Wei Dynasty (221–265 AD). During this period, it is believed that the emperor of the time hired an imperial rater to evaluate the performance of the members of the royal family (Armstrong & Taylor, 2017; DeNisi & Murphy, 2017). This historical example represents one of the earliest recorded instances of PA and highlights an early recognition of the importance of evaluating people's performance (DeNisi & Murphy, 2017). The Chinese were not the only ones to implement PA, in the 16th century the Jesuits (a religious order of men in the catholic church) would conduct PAs by rating the performance of the various members of their congregation (Armstrong & Taylor, 2017). This marks yet another historical example of PA being used as a tool for managing and evaluating people's performance. Moreover, in the early 1800s, another PA method was documented in Scottish cotton mills (Wiese & Buckley, 1998). In one cotton mill,

supervisors used “silent monitors” or wooden blocks painted with different colors to visually indicate an employee’s performance (Wiese & Buckley, 1998). To do so, at the end of each workday, supervisors would rotate the block to display a color corresponding to the worker’s rating and they would make an employee’s performance visible to all of the personnel at work (Wiese & Buckley, 1998). This serves as another example of PA and people holding others accountable for their performance.

2.2.2 *First and Second Industrial Revolutions*

While the origins of PM and PA can be traced back to ancient civilizations and the early modern era, more formal academic discussions and published works on these concepts remained scarce. It was not until the late 19th and early 20th centuries or during the first and second industrial revolutions where PM and PA indirectly became more structured and integrated into management practices.

The emergence of Frederick Taylor’s “*Principles of Scientific Management*” (1911) introduced key concepts that set the premise for PM and PA (Tweedie et al., 2019). His work emphasized the importance of employee monitoring, task standardization, and performance optimization which influenced the organization of work and how employee performance was managed in factories at the time (Taylor, 1911). Under his principles of management, Taylor broke down the production of goods in factories into very discrete and simple tasks. Employees would be trained to achieve very simple and repetitive work. Employees’ performance would be monitored and surveilled, and people’s performance was measured in terms of their output (e.g., car parts attached per hour) (Wright, 1993). This approach helped improve efficiency, standardize the work process and create financial value for organizations (Wright, 1993). Additionally, it established a structured way to evaluating and managing employee performance using quantifiable metrics (Wright, 1993). Despite PM and PA not being explicitly cited in Taylor’s work, he had a major impact on PM and PA as many of his management principles (e.g., performance optimization, employee monitoring etc.) are very much present in terms about how we think about employee performance and how it should be managed today (Tweedie et al., 2019). More contemporary researchers would view PM as a management control system that should strive to minimize errors related to the production of goods and services as

well as other potential inefficiencies that may arise from managing labour in order to ensure profit maximization (Franco-Santos & Otley, 2018; Otley, 1999, 2003).

Even though Taylor did not specifically study PM and PA, scientific research on these topics began to emerge a few years later. In fact, PA became a subject of study as early as the 1920s, way before PM was formally researched as a structured HRM process (DeNisi & Murphy, 2017). To be more precise, Edward Thorndike was one of the early American social scientists who studied PA (DeNisi & Murphy, 2017). He published the first dedicated research article to PA which he titled “A constant error in psychological ratings” (Thorndike, 1920 as cited in DeNisi & Murphy, 2017). Through this work, he introduced people to the “halo error” or “halo effect” which is a bias that can occur during PA (Thorndike, 1920). More specifically, this bias can happen when raters base their performance evaluations on an overall impression of a person instead of carefully assessing how the individual performs in specific areas or tasks (Borman, 1975). To make this more concrete, if a manager perceives an employee as very kind and hardworking, the manager might rate the employees’ performance highly across all areas, even though the employee may be underperforming in specific areas of their work.

2.2.3 World War I and World War II

Around the time that Edward Thorndike (1920) published his seminal work “A constant error in psychological ratings”, PA gained significant attention in and outside of academic circles. During World War I, both the military and organizations recognized the value of PA for assessing personnel, as the urgency of war necessitated more efficient methods for training competent soldiers and ensuring that organizations could have personnel that will help them meet wartime demands (Ahlstrom, 2014; Spickelmier, 1987). A strong collaboration between governments, management practitioners and organizations took place with the objective of implementing rigorous HRM processes that would yield high levels of productivity (Ahlstrom, 2014). While several practices existed to boost people’s performance (Ahlstrom, 2014), one that particularly stood out was the man-to-man rating system (Wiese & Buckley, 1998). This system involved soldiers being ranked based on their “physical qualities, intelligence, leadership, personal attributes, and overall value to the service” (Wiese & Buckley, 1998, p.236). Rather than assessing specific job-related

behaviors, the man-to-man rating system focused on comparing soldiers relative to one another and it offered a structured approach to evaluating personnel based on their traits and perceived potential (Wiese & Buckley, 1998).

While the HRM practices of World War I were a great success (Ahlstrom, 2014), PM and PA began to evolve in practice. PM practices continued evolving during World War II, where the military would use relative rankings (or forced rankings) to evaluate soldiers relative to one another and determine which soldiers had the potential to become officers (Cappelli & Tavis, 2016). During World War I, approximately 20% of organizations had implemented HRM practices, such as PA, and established dedicated HR departments to implement these practices so that their workforces could meet the high wartime demands (Ahlstrom, 2014). By World War II (or about 21 years later), this number had risen to about 60%, with American organizations having already implemented PA systems to evaluate employee performance and optimize their productivity (Cappelli & Tavis, 2016). This marked the rapid adoption of PM and PA so that organizations could achieve the highest levels of possible output.

2.2.4 The Decades After World War II

The context of the First and Second World Wars certainly played an important role in accelerating the adoption of HRM practices in organizations. Moreover, in the decades that followed, PM and PA continued to evolve throughout time. However, these practices appeared to evolve in their implementation before gaining significant traction in academic research. In the 1950s, Douglas McGregor introduced the idea that employees should actively participate in the appraisal process and goal-setting which allowed employees to actively participate in PM (Cappelli & Tavis, 2016). Later on, in the 1960s, companies like General Electric refined PA by separating discussions into distinct components, some focusing on employee accountability and other meetings focusing on employee growth and development (Cappelli & Tavis, 2016). Here we can observe PA latching out and slowly evolving into the more elaborate PM process that we are more familiar with today that includes goal setting, feedback and consequences related to performance (Kinicki et al., 2013).

Nonetheless, while all of this was happening in practice, research mostly focused on PA rather than PM. In the 1970s-1980s researchers focused on sub-topics such as scale formatting, where scholars explored various types of psychometric scales that were used during appraisals. Researchers attempted to find ways that they could make scale formats (i.e., graphic rating scales, weighted checklists, and behaviorally anchored rating scales) “more objective” to mitigate rater biases (DeNisi & Murphy, 2017). Researchers during this period also examined the impact of training on rater outcomes. More specifically, researchers explored how training could enhance the accuracy and reliability of PAs by increasing raters' awareness of potential biases they may hold towards ratees (DeNisi & Murphy, 2017). Additionally, studies delved into the cognitive processes of raters to better understand how raters organize performance related information to evaluate people's performance (DeNisi & Murphy, 2017). Later on, in the 1990s to 2000s' scholars research began to strongly focus on employee reactions. To be more precise, researchers were greatly concerned about employees' perceptions of PAs and whether their outcomes were perceived to be engaging, fair, motivating and satisfying for them (DeNisi & Murphy, 2017). In addition to this research theme, researchers explored whether demographic factors like race, age, and gender of raters and ratees could influence the outcomes of performance appraisals. Lastly, studies also discussed the impact of different rating sources, such as ratings from subordinates, peers, and self-assessments to assess how the source of ratings can affect the outcomes of PAs (DeNisi & Murphy, 2017).

2.2.5 The 2000's and Today's Performance Management Trends

While previous research disproportionately focused on PA, during the 2000's, researchers began to study PM as a structured process with PA being one of the many parts of this process. Scholars have worked diligently to develop different PM process models that explain PM as a process and its potential outcomes for employees and organizations (Aguinis, 2013, 2019; Den Hartog et al., 2004; DeNisi & Smith, 2014; Giamos et al., 2024; Kinicki et al., 2013; Kubiak, 2020; Pulakos, 2009; Schleicher et al., 2018, 2019; Tseng & Levy, 2019). Moreover, scholars have researched how PM can be effective in organizational settings (e.g., Biron et al., 2011; Haines & St-Onge, 2012; Schleicher et al., 2019) Now, unlike PA research, which has been neatly organized into clearly defined

sub-themes and sub-topics, PM research in the context of HRM has only a few emerging areas of study. These include 1) the examination of PM systems in agile business environments (Pulakos, Kantrowitz, et al., 2019; Pulakos, Mueller-Hanson, et al., 2019), 2) the exploration of how PM systems can simultaneously support employees' development and performance (Giamos et al., 2024; Van Strydonck et al., 2024), 3) the way in which PM can mobilize people's strengths at work (Krezek et al., 2023; van Woerkom & de Bruijn, 2016), 4) the role of technology in automating or enhancing PM processes (Freyermuth & Lougee, 2019; Leavitt et al., 2024; Poitevin & Cameron, 2015) and 5) the different ways that PM can contribute to operational and financial outcomes (DeNisi & Smith, 2014; Pavlov et al., 2017).

Studying these emerging trends in PM is important for both organizations and employees, as workplaces continue to evolve in response to technological advancements, shifting employee needs, and dynamic business environments (Ng & Stanton, 2023). Research on PM systems in agile business contexts can help organizations design more flexible and adaptive PM processes that can align with rapid market changes (Pulakos, Mueller-Hanson, et al., 2019). In addition, understanding how PM can simultaneously support employee development and performance can be helpful to ensure that PM can do more than just fulfill an administrative role, but it could foster positive outcomes such as motivation and performance, making it a truly strategic function of HRM (Giamos et al., 2024; Van Strydonck et al., 2024). Building on this point, examining how PM can leverage employees' strengths can provide us with deeper insights into how PM can foster positive outcomes while enabling individuals to apply their best qualities at work (Krezek et al., 2023; van Woerkom & de Bruijn, 2016). Moreover, the increasing role of technology in PM presents opportunities for real-time feedback, data-driven decision-making and algorithmic management which are all uncontested terrains of research at the moment (Freyermuth & Lougee, 2019; Leavitt et al., 2024; Poitevin & Cameron, 2015). Lastly, linking PM practices to operational and financial outcomes ensures that organizations can justify PM investments and refine their strategies to organizational performance. By examining these areas, researchers and practitioners can further develop PM research and practice so that they are both effective and aligned with modern organizational and employee needs.

2.3 The Conceptual and Theoretical Foundations of Performance Management

Now that current knowledge on PM has been described, we will now dive into the conceptual and theoretical foundations of PM. To be more precise, this section will explore 1) how PM is conceptualized and 2) the various theories and models of PM across disciplines. By exploring these aspects of PM, we can gain a better understanding of what PM is, how it unfolds as a process and to some extent what PM can predict.

2.3.1 *Conceptualizing Performance Management*

Earlier on in this review, we explained that PM refers to “the process of “identifying, measuring, and developing the performance of individuals and teams and aligning performance with the strategic goals of the organization” (Aguinis, 2013, p.2). Based on this definition, PM scholars generally agree that PM should be designed to achieve these objectives. However, there is considerable debate about how PM should be structured and implemented in organizations. To expand on this point, the literature presents a wide range of PM process models, each one offering similar yet different key steps and mechanisms through which employees can achieve performance (see Aguinis, 2013, 2019; Den Hartog et al., 2004; DeNisi & Smith, 2014; Giamos et al., 2024; Kinicki et al., 2013; Kubiak, 2020; Pulakos, 2009; Schleicher et al., 2018, 2019; Tseng & Levy, 2019). Even though perspectives on PM process models vary across scholars, taking a step back reveals that PM can be best summarized into four essential steps that bring this process to life: 1) goal setting, 2) feedback, 3) PA and 4) consequences for performance (Kinicki et al., 2013).

To provide a clearer understanding of the PM process, this paragraph will outline how PM can take place in organizations through the four key steps mentioned earlier. First, in the beginning of the calendar year, managers and employees typically set goals to clarify performance expectations and establish a plan for achieving them (Kinicki et al., 2013). Second, after goals have been set, managers will provide employees with feedback throughout the year to help them stay on track and ensure that they are meeting their goals consistently. Third, towards the end of the calendar year, PAs are conducted, during which employees are evaluated/rated based on the performance that their supervisors could observe. Finally, after PA is complete, employees should receive rewards, such as

financial or non-financial incentives, or face consequences, such as demotion, depending on the results of their PA (Kinicki et al., 2013).

2.3.2 Theories and Models of Performance Management

Now that PM has been defined and its process has been clearly outlined, we will now examine the different theories that have been used in PM research. As PM is a relatively recent field of study, there is a lack of theory that has been developed from the ground up by PM scholars. Consequently, PM researchers have had to borrow theories and models from closely related disciplines, including 1) Strategic Human Resource Management, 2) Industrial and Organizational Psychology, 3) Economics, Management, and Critical Studies. In this section of the literature review, we will explore the most influential theories from these fields and note their theoretical contributions to PM.

2.3.3 Theories and Models from Strategic Human Resource Management

Currently, there are several models and theories in the PM literature that stem from strategic HRM. This field of research involves the study of bundles of human resource activities that are intended to achieve positive outcomes for organizations (Marler & Fisher, 2013). Strategic HRM scholars often study bundles of practices such as high-performance work systems (HPWS) which refer to “a set, or bundle, of human resource management practices related to selection, training, performance management, compensation, and information sharing that are designed to attract, retain, and motivate employees” (Messersmith & Guthrie, 2010, p.242). Although strategic HRM is not solely concerned with HPWS, these systems remain a central focus for many researchers in the field, particularly those examining their impact on individual and organizational outcomes (Wang et al., 2020).

The HRM Performance Model. PM researchers have borrowed models from HPWS scholars to explain how PM can generate outcomes. More specifically, Den Hartog et al. (2004) built on David Guest's (1997) model of HRM and performance to explore these relationships. They argue that, like other HRM practices, PM can influence employees' perceptions, attitudes, behaviors, and performance, which, in turn, affect organizational performance. Moreover, they explain the potential of a reverse causal link with

organizational performance and PM practices whereby, high profits can lead to additional investments in HRM practices like PM. However, the extent and direction of the above-mentioned relationships can depend on several contextual factors, including the organizational environment, employee characteristics and preferences, and the quality of manager-employee relationships (Den Hartog et al., 2004). Den Hartog et al's., (2004) model makes a significant contribution to the PM literature by providing researchers and practitioners with a structured framework that illustrates how PM may lead to employee and organizational outcomes. Their framework highlights both mediating and moderating factors, which offers us a clear understanding of the conditions and reverse causal links under which PM can be effective.

The AMO Model. In addition to the model of HRM and performance, PM researchers have also borrowed other models from strategic HRM researchers, such as the Ability, Motivation and Opportunity (AMO) model. The AMO model is quite popular in strategic HRM and is also used to understand how HRM systems and practices can lead to employee and organizational outcomes (Bos-Nehles et al., 2023; Paauwe, 2009). To be brief, ability refers to an individual's capacity to effectively perform a task, which includes their knowledge, skills, and competencies (Blumberg & Pringle, 1982; Kim et al., 2015; Marin-Garcia & Tomas, 2016, as cited in Bos Nehles et al., 2023). Motivation represents the internal drive that directs and sustains behavior, which influences an employee's willingness to complete tasks (Bos-Nehles et al., 2013; Van Iddekinge et al., 2018, as cited in Bos Nehles 2023). Opportunity, on the other hand, consists of external environmental factors that either enable or constrain performance, shaping the conditions under which individuals work (Blumberg & Pringle, 1982, as cited in Bos Nehles, 2023)

Each dimension of the AMO model is associated with specific HRM practices that support employee performance. Ability-enhancing practices focus on developing employees' skills and knowledge through initiatives such as training, recruitment, and professional development (Bos-Nehles et al., 2023; Jiang et al., 2012). Motivation-enhancing practices aim to foster employee motivation through mechanisms like performance evaluations, compensation, incentives, and career advancement opportunities (Bos-Nehles et al., 2023; Jiang et al., 2012). Finally, opportunity-enhancing practices create conditions that enable

employees to perform effectively by shaping job design, decision-making, autonomy, and HRM policies (Bos-Nehles et al., 2023; Jiang et al., 2012). Together, these practices contribute to optimizing employee performance and organizational outcomes (Boxall & Purcell, 2003). Their impact is mediated by employees' attitudes (e.g., affective commitment and motivation), behaviors (e.g., learning), and perceptions (e.g., perceived climate and psychological empowerment) (Bos-Nehles et al., 2023).

The AMO model can certainly be studied in the more conventional strategic HRM perspective where researchers will focus on the AMO-related practices and their impact on outcomes. However, other scholars adopt a different approach, whereby the AMO model as a framework that outlines the essential abilities, motivations, and opportunities that various organizational stakeholders must possess to drive positive outcomes (Van Waeyenberg & Decramer, 2018). In the context of PM research the latter has been used whereby managers should have the necessary abilities, motivation and opportunities to fully implement and enact PM to positively influence their employees perceptions of PM. When managers successfully fulfill these conditions, employees are more likely to perceive PM positively (Van Waeyenberg & Decramer, 2018). That being said, no theoretical or empirical studies have explicitly established a direct link between the AMO perspective of PM with employee and/or organizational performance despite its strong potential theoretical and empirical links. Overall, the AMO model significantly contributes to PM research by offering a framework that explains how HRM practices like PM enhance employee performance. Moreover, as the AMO model emphasizes the interplay between employees' skills, motivation, and the opportunities provided by the work environment, the model helps identify the key levers through which HRM practices like PM can drive both individual and organizational outcomes.

2.3.4 Theories from Industrial and Organizational Psychology

Having now reviewed the main PM models and theories from strategic HRM research, we will now examine those rooted in industrial and organizational psychology. While strategic HRM theorists mostly study the relationship between HRM systems, practices, and employee and/or firm outcomes, industrial and organizational psychology scholars focus more on how PM practices can influence individual outcomes. Moreover, industrial

and organizational psychology scholars approach this by either examining PM systems as a whole and their potential impact on employees or by focusing on specific PM practices, such as goal setting and feedback, to understand how they influence employee outcomes.

Self-Determination Theory. One prominent theory in industrial and organizational psychology is self-determination theory (SDT). This theory suggests that individuals have a natural drive for their own personal development that enables them to act with self-determination (Ryan & Deci, 2000). SDT theorists explain that this innate tendency is fueled by the satisfaction of three basic psychological needs: 1) autonomy, where people feel like they have control over their choices, 2) competence, where people feel capable through the actions that they take and/or the work that they do, and 3) relatedness, where people experience strong and meaningful connections with others (Ryan & Deci, 2017). SDT scholars explain that when people's basic psychological needs are met, they can experience intrinsic motivation where individuals will begin to engage in activities for the sake of the activity and when people are intrinsically motivated they can demonstrate positive work behaviors like performance and experience well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2017). For example, an employee who is given the autonomy to lead a project they are passionate about may feel a deep sense of engagement and satisfaction, which motivates them to go above and beyond in their work and feel good while they are doing so.

In the context of PM, SDT scholars have explored how PM practices, can contribute to the fulfillment of employees' basic psychological needs, enhance their motivation, along with their attitudes and behaviors (Kubiak, 2020; Laguerre & Barnes-Farrell, 2024). Research in this area generally follows two main approaches. Some scholars take a broad perspective by examining HRM systems, such as high-performance work systems (which include PM), and their impact on employee outcomes (Laguerre & Barnes-Farrell, 2024), while others focus specifically on PM practices and their direct effects on employees (Kubiak, 2020). Either way, both approaches emphasize the importance of having PM practices and systems that can satisfy people's basic psychological needs to effectively motivate individuals and foster commitment, thriving at work, individual performance, work meaningfulness and decrease turnover intentions (Kubiak, 2020; Laguerre & Barnes-Farrell, 2024). From our perspective, the application of SDT in PM research

makes a significant contribution to the field as it shifts the focus from control-based HRM approaches to more human-centered perspectives that prioritize employees' basic psychological needs.

Goal Setting Theory. While SDT scholars have taken a comprehensive approach to studying PM, goal-setting researchers in industrial and organizational psychology have focused specifically on the practice of goal setting, as the name of the theory suggests. Goal setting theorists explain that individuals who set specific yet challenging goals are more likely to enhance their performance compared to individuals who do not have such goals set for themselves and simply "do their best" (Locke, 1966 ; Locke & Latham, 1990 as cited in Heslin et al., 2008). Proponents of goal setting theory explain that this is the case because in order to get to such high levels of performance individuals must a) focus their attention on specific objectives, b) ensure that they put sufficient effort to achieve them, c) be resilient in the face of challenge, and d) develop strategies to safeguard goal attainment (Bandura & Cervone, 1983; Latham & Locke, 1975; Locke & Bryan, 1969; Wood, 1990 as cited in Heslin et al., 2008).

In the context of PM, goal-setting theory provides guidance for establishing goals that can encourage employees to stay motivated throughout the year. Moreover, when employees do achieve their goals at the end of the year, they can experience self-satisfaction and self-efficacy (Heslin et al., 2008). Nonetheless, the success of goal-setting on the above mentioned outcomes will be highly dependent on people's level of goal commitment, task complexity, goal framing, team goals and the feedback they receive (Heslin et al., 2008). For instance, an employee who sets a challenging yet attainable sales target, receives regular feedback, and remains committed to their goal is more likely to stay motivated and perform at a higher level throughout the year. That being said, goal-setting theory contributes to PM research by providing a structured framework for understanding how well-defined, challenging goals can enhance employee motivation and performance.

Control Theory. Goal-setting theorists have applied goal-setting theory to examine how this specific PM practice influences employee outcomes. Control theory moves beyond this by exploring the role of feedback in enhancing employee performance. Control theory

explains how individuals assess their current performance by comparing it to a desired standard of performance (Campion & Lord, 1982; Kernan & Lord, 1990; Lord & Levy, 1994; Powers, 1973). According to control theory personal performance standards are shaped by both an individual's beliefs and external feedback, such as input from supervisors (Campion & Lord, 1982). When a gap emerges between one's actual and expected performance, individuals are motivated to take corrective actions to reduce this discrepancy and restore their performance to an optimal level (Campion & Lord, 1982; Kernan & Lord, 1990; Lord & Levy, 1994; Marken & Carey, 2015; Powers, 1973).

At its core, control theory suggests that people strive to align external feedback with their internal performance expectations (Campion & Lord, 1982; Powers, 1973). This motivation to regain balance becomes particularly pronounced when individuals perceive themselves as underperforming (Marken & Carey, 2015). In this context, performance ratings and feedback play a crucial role by serving as reference points that help individuals adjust their efforts and improve their performance (Marken & Carey, 2015; Powers, 1973). As employees process this information and take corrective action, the gap between their current and desired performance narrows, leading to a sense of control and the maintenance of satisfactory performance levels over time. While control theory is well structured, critics of this theory argue that control theory oversimplifies human motivation by assuming that individuals automatically adjust their behavior to reduce performance gaps (Buchner, 2007). Despite such criticisms, control theory has left its mark on PM research by providing scholars with a framework that helps us understand how employees can regulate their performance through continuous feedback, self-monitoring, and corrective actions to align their current performance with their desired standards.

2.3.5 Theories from Economics, Management and Critical Studies

Having now described the main theories from strategic HRM and industrial-organizational psychology, we now turn to prominent theoretical perspectives from economics, management, and critical studies. Like their counterparts in strategic HRM and industrial-organizational psychology, scholars in economics, management and critical studies have developed theories to explore how PM practices and systems can influence

individuals. While numerous theories from these fields can be applied to PM, this review focuses on those that have stood out the most in the literature.

Agency Theory. One of the most prominent theories from economics and management that has been applied in PM research is agency theory. This theory conceptualizes the relationship between employers or management (the principal) and employees (the agents) as one in which employees are expected to act in the best interests of their employer (Eisenhardt, 1989). However, this relationship is inherently complex, as the interests of both parties do not always align which can lead to conflicts between management and employees or what some people could call the principal agent problem (Evans & Tourish, 2017; Shah, 2014). To give an example of such an issue, employees (agents) may attempt to shirk their responsibilities at work by putting in minimal effort and avoiding accountability. However, these behaviors can conflict with managers' (principals') objectives, as they have to ensure that employees are not avoiding their essential tasks, and that they are actively contributing to the organization's success.

In the context of performance management (PM), agency theorists argue that PM practices function as control mechanisms that align employee behavior with organizational objectives and managerial interests while limiting employees' opportunistic behaviors (Evans & Tourish, 2017; Franco-Santos & Otley, 2018). To achieve this, managers can implement several PM practices: 1) setting clear goals to define performance expectations, 2) monitoring employee performance to ensure adequate effort and task completion, 3) providing feedback to guide employees toward the established goals, 4) using specific performance metrics to assess whether employees have met their goals, and 5) offering targeted incentives to reinforce compliance with organizational priorities (Baiman, 1982; Eisenhardt, 1989; Franco-Santos & Otley, 2018). While agency theory has been criticized for its' "instrumentalist" view on human behavior and employment relationships (Evans & Tourish, 2017), it certainly has contributed to the PM literature. More specifically, agency theory has provided researchers and practitioners with insights into designing PM systems that align managerial interests with employee behavior, minimize opportunism, and incorporate incentives to promote desirable workplace behaviors that lead to performance.

Labour Process Theory. While agency theory has been widely discussed in the PM literature, labour process theory (Braverman, 1998), which is more prominent in critical studies, has also been used to shed light on PM systems and their outcomes (Tweedie et al., 2019). In essence, labour process theory argues that organizations exert control over employees through monitoring and extractionary practices (e.g., PM practices) which are meticulously designed to ensure compliance, generate employee performance, and maximize profits (Butler et al., 2004). In this framework, PM practices can function as mechanisms of control, reinforcing managerial authority and shaping employee behavior (P. Thompson & Newsome, 2004). However, rather than viewing this control as inherently something that is positive, labour process theory critically assesses its consequences, emphasizing that employee performance is often achieved at the workers' expense (Tay et al., 2023). This perspective highlights how PM practices systems may extract significant effort and resources from employees while offering little in return (P. Thompson & Newsome, 2004).

For example, in a corporate setting, a company may implement a PM system that includes goal setting, regular performance appraisals, and continuous employee monitoring. Managers will employee performance using key performance indicators or other quantifiable performance metrics and provide feedback to ensure that employees are aligned with organizational objectives. While these practices are intended to enhance productivity, they can also create pressure on employees to meet targets, often leading to increased workloads and stress. While labour process theory is indeed critical of PM, it contributes to the PM literature by critically examining how PM practices function as mechanisms of control that prioritize performance over employee well-being (Tweedie et al., 2019). It can shed light on the ways in which PM systems may intensify work demands, extract maximum effort from employees and reinforce managerial authority (Tweedie et al., 2019). Hence it can be used in mind to help researchers and practitioners design better PM systems that are more mindful of employees and their work environment.

2.4 The Intended Outcomes of Performance Management

Now that PM has been defined and its process has been outlined, we will now examine the intended outcomes of PM. While the previous section provided a theoretical perspective on what PM is designed to achieve, it is essential to briefly review the literature to gain a clearer understanding of the full range of potential outcomes that PM can generate. The outcomes that PM can generate can be categorized in two distinct categories: 1) attitudinal and behavioral outcomes and 2) operational and financial performance outcomes.

2.4.1 Attitudinal and Behavioral Outcomes

In this review, attitudinal outcomes refer specifically to an individual's job attitudes toward performance management (PM). Job attitudes are broadly defined as "evaluations of one's job that express one's feelings toward, beliefs about, and attachment to one's job" (Judge & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2012, p. 344). Research has shown that PM and its related practices shape several key job attitudes, including organizational commitment (Fletcher & Williams, 1996), job satisfaction (Decramer et al., 2015; Fletcher & Williams, 1996), fairness or justice perceptions (Vajda, 2019), engagement (Gruman & Saks, 2011; Mone et al., 2011), motivation (Pritchard & Payne, 2002), and well-being (Decramer et al., 2015). By influencing these attitudes, PM can play a role in shaping employees' experiences, their level of investment in their work, and their overall perceptions of fairness and support within the organization.

PM may also play a role in shaping employees' concrete workplace behaviors. In this context, behavior is defined as the way that "individuals and groups act within the organizations where they work" (Publisher [authors anonymized], 2017, no page available). More specifically, PM can influence organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs), positive, voluntary actions that benefit the workplace, such as helping colleagues (Sørdalen, 2024), as well as counterproductive work behaviors (CWBs), which are harmful actions towards the organization like damaging company property (Sørdalen, 2024). Additionally, PM is linked to people's performance which signals that it can help getting people to be effective in their job roles (Gerrish, 2016).

2.4.2 Operational and Financial Performance Outcomes

Moreover, while much of the research on PM focuses on individual outcomes, recent studies have begun exploring its impact on firm-level performance, particularly in relation to operational and financial outcomes (DeNisi & Smith, 2014; Pavlov et al., 2017). Evidence suggests that people's perceptions of PM systems may be linked to operational performance, including the quality of products and services, innovation in new offerings, talent attraction and retention, and customer satisfaction (Pavlov et al., 2017, p. 436). Additionally, PM has been associated with financial performance indicators, which include turnover, profitability, revenue growth, and market share relative to competitors (Pavlov et al., 2017, p. 436). These findings on individual and organizational outcomes highlight the potential of PM systems to extend beyond individual outcomes, influencing broader organizational success.

2.5 The Success and Detracting Factors of Performance Management

Having now synthesized the outcomes of PM, it is also important to examine the various factors that influence its effectiveness. Research suggests that the success of PM systems is determined by multiple interrelated elements, with the main ones being: 1) context, 2) communication, 3) individual differences.

2.5.1 Context

For PM systems to be effective, they must be aligned with the specific context of organizations. Some researchers highlight the importance of integrating PM with an organization's strategy to ensure that key stakeholders recognize its value. More specifically, scholars emphasize that PM systems should be designed to cascade broad organizational goals into individual objectives, which allows employees to meaningfully contribute to the organization's performance (Biron et al., 2011; Haines & St-Onge, 2012). Additionally, beyond strategic alignment, organizational culture plays a major role in determining PM's effectiveness. Even though various types of organizational cultures exist, research suggests that organizations with an engaging culture or one that fosters employee commitment and participation is more likely to ensure PM's success (Haines &

St-Onge, 2012). Moreover, the labour relations climate, which reflects the quality of social interactions between managers and employees, can influence how smoothly PM is implemented. A positive labour relations climate is more likely to create relationships between managers and subordinates that are based on trust and cooperation, which in turn can enhance the success of PM. Conversely, a strained labour climate may create challenges that hinder the success of PM initiatives (Haines & St-Onge, 2012).

2.5.2 Communication

In addition to the contextual factors previously discussed, the success of PM also depends on how information about PM is communicated to employees (Biron et al., 2011). Employees are more likely to engage with PM processes when they have a clear understanding of their responsibilities, performance goals, future opportunities within the company, and evaluation criteria (Biron et al., 2011). To facilitate this, HR professionals and managers play a role in ensuring that these points are clearly communicated to their subordinates. By fostering a sense of awareness, HR professionals and managers can ensure that PM is more successful in organizations (Biron et al., 2011).

2.5.3 Individual Differences

Research on PM has also highlighted the role of individual differences among managers in ensuring its success. One of the most widely emphasized factors is managerial training, managers who receive structured training on PM, including its components, purpose, and implementation, are more likely to apply it effectively. In contrast, those who lack proper training may struggle with implementation, leading employees to perceive PM as ineffective or lacking value (Biron et al., 2011). Beyond training, prior exposure to the organization's PM system also facilitates effective implementation. Managers who have experience with their organization's PM practices tend to navigate the process more smoothly than those encountering it for the first time (Srinivasa, 2007)). Additionally, interpersonal skills play a critical role in PM effectiveness. Since PM involves continuous communication and feedback between managers and employees, managers with strong interpersonal abilities are better equipped to handle performance discussions which can be a sensitive topic for some employees (Srinivasa, 2007;

Thompson & Dalton, 1970). While individual differences among managers can impact the success of PM, employees' characteristics also play a role in shaping its effectiveness. Research suggests that factors such as age, gender, and education level may influence PM's effectiveness (Den Hartog et al., 2004).

2.6 Next Steps for the Performance Management Literature and Concluding Thoughts

Having examined the history, conceptual and theoretical foundations, intended outcomes, and success factors of PM, it is now essential to take a step back and consider the future direction of the field. As previously mentioned, there are currently 5 emerging trends in the PM literature : 1) PM systems in agile business environments (Pulakos, Kantrowitz, et al., 2019; Pulakos, Mueller-Hanson, et al., 2019), 2) PM and employee development (Giomas et al., 2024; Van Strydonck et al., 2024), 3) PM and employee strengths use (Budworth et al., 2024; van Woerkom & de Bruijn, 2016), 4) technology and automation in the PM process (Freyermuth & Lougee, 2019; Poitevin & Cameron, 2015) and 5) the PM systems and operational and financial outcomes (Pavlov et al., 2017).

This thesis will focus on three of these five key areas which helps address significant gaps in the literature. First, it examines development-oriented PM practices, investigates their nature, impact, and stakeholder perceptions, as well as their role in fostering employee development. Second, this thesis dives into strengths-based PM, which moves away from deficit-focused approaches and instead emphasizes leveraging employee strengths to enhance outcomes (van Woerkom & de Bruijn, 2016). Third, it explores the rise of algorithmic PM, with a focus on designing more humane systems that promote workers' optimal functioning. By exploring these themes, this thesis aims to deepen our understanding of contemporary PM practices and their ability to meet the evolving needs of organizations.

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3.0 Article 1

What is Known about Development-Oriented Performance Management Practices? A Scoping Review

3.1 Abstract

Although a growing number of organizations now focus on the developmental aspect of their performance management practices to improve their effectiveness, little research has been conducted so far on these practices and their outcomes. To deepen our understanding of this phenomenon, we undertook a scoping review on development-oriented performance management practices (DOPMPs) within the employee development and performance management literatures. After mapping the literature on these topics, synthesizing their outcomes, and factors for implementation, we identified research gaps and proposed research avenues. Our review suggests that most of the literature on DOPMPs comes from the grey literature, that most practices are used for performance execution, but more attention needs to be given to strategic planning. By structuring the current knowledge on this topic, this review encourages researchers to produce new knowledge about DOPMPs, their synergies, and their outcomes through a systems approach.

Keywords: employee development; performance management; development-oriented performance management practices; scoping review, systematic review

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3.2 Introduction

Performance management represents a key activity for organizations. It is reported that approximately 90% of organizations have a formal performance management system in place (Aguinis et al., 2011), and that firms devote millions of dollars and thousands of hours to performance management practices annually (Adler et al., 2016; Buckingham & Goodall, 2015; Corporate Leadership Council, 2012; Murphy, 2019). Given the strategic scope of performance management, it comes as no surprise that researchers have conducted numerous studies over the years to identify systems, strategies and practices that can be used to better manage employee performance (Brown et al., 2018; Den Hartog et al., 2004; Denisi & Murphy, 2017; DeNisi & Smith, 2014; Schleicher et al., 2018, 2019). Performance management (PM) refers to “a set of processes and managerial behaviors aimed at defining, measuring, motivating, and developing the desired performance of employees” (Kinicki et al., 2013, p.1). Performance management is one of many strategic HR activities that can be used to ensure that employees remain efficient in their job roles and that their performance is tightly aligned with organizational goals (Pulakos et al., 2019; Pulakos & O’Leary, 2011). It generally consists of a formal and continuous process of planning, evaluating and monitoring the performance of employees that mostly occurs on an annual basis (Aguinis, 2013; Armstrong & Taylor, 2017).

Despite the benefits and promises of performance management practices, several criticisms have emerged in recent years regarding their effectiveness (Adler et al., 2016; Denisi & Murphy, 2017; Murphy, 2019; Pulakos et al., 2019). Indeed, it is often observed that traditional performance management systems can be administrative, focusing on compliance, documentation, and formal processes, rather than fully embodying their intended strategic role (Pulakos et al., 2015; Pulakos, Mueller-Hanson, et al., 2019). Researchers and practitioners also concur that these systems can be demobilizing, unagile and ill-suited to new organizational realities (Cappelli & Conyon, 2018; Murphy, 2019; Pulakos et al., 2019). These limitations have been exacerbated by the upheavals and transformations in work contexts brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, in particular the rise of remote work, the need for more meaningful work and employees' increased

desire to be seen as people rather than just workers (Aguinis & Burgi-Tian, 2021; Turner, 2023).

To remedy these shortcomings, some organizations have opted to overhaul their performance management systems (Cappelli & Tavis, 2016). For instance, some organizations have chosen to abandon performance ratings altogether, but mainly with mixed results as this approach doesn't seem to be effective and respond to employees' needs for objectivity and fairness surrounding personnel decisions (Adler et al., 2016; Ledford & Benson, 2019; Murphy, 2019). While maintaining the administrative purpose of their PM system, other organizations have chosen to put more emphasis on its developmental function (Adler et al., 2016). The professional literature is replete with reports and surveys of renewed performance management systems that are said to be more "employee/development-oriented", but their names and configurations are highly variable, and there is yet little empirical evidence of their added value for the organization and its users (Brandon Hall, 2020; Ernst & Young, 2019). Moreover, whereas some of these practices like setting development goals, or identifying strengths and areas of improvement are certainly in line with the developmental appraisal approach (Marescaux et al., 2019; Vidè et al., 2022), we do not yet have a clear and comprehensive picture of which specific practices are part of this "next performance management revolution" (Cappelli & Tavis, 2016, p.1), where they fit in organizations' annual performance management cycle, and what are their main outcomes.

Accordingly, it is important to synthesize and structure current knowledge on what can be described as development-oriented performance management practices (DOPMPs). Hence, the purpose of this scoping review is to: 1) map out what is known about DOPMPs from the perspective of both the academic and grey literature, 2) examine the expected and empirically tested outcomes that are associated with these practices, 3) identify factors for implementation, and 4) identify research gaps to stimulate future research.

In doing so, our study attempts to bring together the HRD and HRM literature on performance management. Indeed, even though both HRM and HRD scholars have thoroughly studied performance management, their approaches to the matter are similar

yet distinct (Alagaraja, 2013; Brown et al., 2018; Werner, 2014). Whereas HRD researchers have viewed performance management as a core function to enhance employees' human capital, fostering long-term individual and organizational success (Brown et al., 2018; Garavan, 2007; McLagan, 1989; Werner, 2014), HRM scholars have mostly been concerned with the capacity of performance management systems to orient administrative decisions related to pay, promotions, and underperformance, which may have taken away the potential added value of performance management (Pulakos et al., 2019). By identifying and organizing the different developmental practices associated with performance management systems, the current study provides a framework to guide researchers in the production of new knowledge to ensure that performance management systems fully meet their developmental purpose. Our efforts are in line with the previous work of Brown et al. (2018), who identified the developmental aspect of performance management as an important avenue for future research and highlighted the need for scholars and practitioners to better understand how performance management can facilitate employee improvement and growth to sustain performance.

Moreover, our study aims to reduce the gap between research and practice by helping researchers focus on critical issues for practitioners, gain insight into DOPMPs and the factors for their successful implementation. Pursuing such efforts is necessary to ensure that organizations adopt effective performance management practices based on sound evidence rather than simply organizational trends (Schrøder-Hansen & Hansen, 2022). This point is especially important when considering the substantive financial and temporal resources spent annually on managing employee performance and developing human capital (Brecher et al., 2016) and the direct implications of such practices on the operational and financial performance of firms (Jiang et al., 2012).

3.3 Methodology

3.3.1 The Scoping Review

Scoping reviews are a type of literature review that "aim to rapidly map the key concepts underpinning a research area and the main sources and types of evidence available" (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005, p.21). Scoping reviews determine the magnitude, range, and

nature of research on a particular topic, allowing researchers to establish “what is known” and identify gaps in the existing literature (Arksey & O’Malley; Levac et al., 2010). A scoping review is a relevant form of knowledge synthesis when the research topic is emergent, complex, or has not yet been reviewed before (Arksey & O’Malley, 2005; Levac et al., 2010; Paré et al., 2015; Rocco et al., 2023), and is advantageous when researchers wish to synthesize existing knowledge from both academic and grey literatures, as in the current study (Arksey & O’Malley, 2005; Daudt et al., 2013; Levac et al., 2010; Paré et al., 2015).

We conducted this scoping review following the methodological framework originally proposed by Arksey and O’Malley (2005), later refined by Levac et al., (2010) and Daudt et al. (2013). The PRISMA-ScR guidelines were also followed to ensure a high-quality scoping review that is as transparent and systematic as possible (Tricco et al., 2016). The rationale behind each step of the methodological framework is explained in the following sections.

A research team was created to carry out the different steps that were necessary to complete the present study. The research team was composed of the authors and a graduate research assistant.

3.3.1.1 Stage 1: Identifying a Research Question

According to Arskey and O’Malley, (2005), the first stage in conducting a scoping review is to *identify a research question*, which is typically framed in terms of “*what is known*” about a topic. Hence, the research question for the present scoping review is: “*What is known about the practices underlying the developmental approach to performance management?*”.

3.3.1.2 Stage 2: Identifying Relevant Studies

The second stage in the scoping review methodological framework is to identify relevant studies to include in the review (Arksey & O’Malley, 2005, Levac et al., 2010) by targeting relevant keywords, databases, and articles. A helpful tool that was to identify relevant studies was a PIO statement. A PIO statement aids researchers to identify key

concepts and facilitates the execution of an elaborate search strategy (James Cook University, 2023; Mani et al., 2017). The research team probed keywords into *Population, Intervention, and Outcome*. To maximize the efficiency of the search, a librarian was consulted to assist in developing the most appropriate Boolean operators and truncations (Daudt et al., 2013). The keywords and search strategy are presented below (see Table 3.1).

Table 3.1. Keyword search strategy

Population	Intervention	Outcome
Employees	Performance Management	Development
Staff	Performance Appraisal	Growth
Personnel	Performance Evaluation	Learning
Workers	Employee Development	Performance
	Employee Training	Thriving
	Coaching	

Note. This table illustrates the different keywords from the PIO statement. The key words are not presented in truncated form to avoid confusion.

The keywords search was performed in academic and non-academic databases (i.e. grey literature). As suggested by Arksey & O’Malley (2005), we used multiple sources, databases, and various types of literature. More precisely, we searched for academic articles, book chapters, company/corporate reports, PowerPoint presentations from firms,

magazines (such as HBR), and reports on websites. Table 3.2 presents the databases that were consulted to search for academic and grey literature.

Table 3.2. Database type and databases used in the current review

Database Type	Database	Literature type
Academic	ABI/INFORM (Proquest)	Academic articles (peer-reviewed)
	EBSCO	
	Web of Science	
Grey Literature	ABI/INFORM	Books, book chapters, conference papers
	Conference Board of Canada	conference proceedings, reports and
	Corporate Websites	magazines/periodicals
	EBSCO	
	Gartner	
	Regional Business News	

We conducted a backward search of key articles and searches on corporate websites (such as Adobe, Accenture, Deloitte, EY, etc.) to extract reports on the developmental approach to performance management that may not be annexed in non-academic databases (as cited in Table 3.2) (Brocke et al., 2009).

We also circumscribed the scope of our search. According to Cappelli and Tavis's (2016), the shift in performance management toward more developmental practices was first documented in 2011. Using this date as our starting point, the research team investigated the last 12 years of the academic and non-academic literature on this topic (2011 to 2023).

The reference management software End Note 20 was used to create a database that assisted the research team in organizing the selected studies and removing duplicates.¹

3.3.1.3 *Stage 3: Study Selection*

This third step involved carefully choosing studies that emerge from the searches in the literature review by using specific inclusion/exclusion criteria (Arksey & O’Malley, 2005; Daudt et al., 2013; Levac et al., 2010). These criteria are illustrated in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3. Inclusion and exclusion criteria for the scoping review

Inclusion	Exclusion
Relevant to the topic of interest (i.e. DOPMP).	Studies were excluded if the studies focus on organizational performance management.
Relevant to the population of interest (i.e. employees and businesses)	Grey literature that has not been specifically mentioned in the current study (i.e. blogs, speeches, etc.).
Academic articles or Grey Literature	
Publications in the English Language	
Publications in the last 10 years (2011 – 2021).	

Note. This table illustrates the inclusion and exclusion criteria that the researchers used for the scoping review.

Before engaging in the selection of the retrieved articles, the inclusion/exclusion criteria were piloted to ensure that studies could be classified correctly (Meline, 2006). Two researchers on the team reviewed a sample (i.e., 10%) of the titles, abstracts, and full texts of the studies that emerged from the search independently. Issues with the inclusion/exclusion criteria were resolved through discussion, and the final decisions were taken by the lead researcher (Levac et al., 2010; Meline, 2006). The aim was to obtain a high level of inter-rater reliability (i.e. Cohen’s Coefficient Kappa of 0.85 or above;

¹ Please note a sample of a fully reproducible search is available upon contacting the corresponding author.

Howell, 2016), ensuring that the inclusion/exclusion criteria were valid (Anastasi & Urbina, 1997). We obtained an inter-rater reliability score of .88.

After the inclusion/exclusion criteria were piloted, the researchers conducted a full independent review of all the articles, reading thoroughly the titles, abstracts, and full texts. Through this exercise, the researchers selected the studies to be part of the current review. It is important to note, that instead of conducting a critical appraisal, we assessed the quality of the studies based on the relevance of the research question. We proceeded in this fashion as the topic is emergent, and because the literature is heterogeneous in nature.

3.3.1.4 *Stage 4: Data Charting*

The fourth step is to chart (or extract) the data from the selected studies, which refers to a “technique for synthesizing and interpreting qualitative data by sifting, charting and sorting material according to key issues and themes” (Arksey & O’Malley, 2005, p.26). We selected specific types of information that we wanted to acquire from the included studies, and we inserted this information in a data extraction form (Arksey & O’Malley, 2005; Levac et al., 2010). The data charting form was first piloted with a sample of 10 studies (15% of the sample), to ensure it was accurate and helped the researchers answer the research question (Daudt et al., 2013; Levac et al., 2010). Data were charted by two of the researchers on the team using the categories that are depicted in Table 3.4 below. Once the two researchers determined that the data charting form was adequate, the remaining studies were charted by the lead researcher.

Table 3.4. Information to include in the data chart

Information	
(0) Unique ID*	(7) Method (if applicable)
(1) Title	(8), Limitations (if applicable)
(2) Authors	(9) Outcomes (expected/inferred and empirical)
(3) Objectives,	(10) Informational points
(4) Research question (if applicable)	(11) Recommendations for practice implementation (if applicable)
(5) Hypotheses (if applicable)	(12) Future research directions / propositions
(6) Sample (if applicable)	(if applicable)

Note. This table illustrates the information that the researchers documented as part of their data charting exercise.

3.3.1.5 Stage 5: Synthesis of Results

To synthesize the findings that have been collected in the data charting form, we first used numerical frequency analysis; a technique that provides a quantitative summary of the various studies that are part of a literature review (Arksey & O’Malley, 2005; Levac et al., 2010). We summarized the following pieces of information: (1) the number of studies included, the number of studies by (2) literature type (i.e. academic, grey literature), (3) study type (conceptual, empirical, report, etc.), and by (4) study design (cross-sectional, experimental, etc.).

Second, we used thematic analysis to identify the different DOPMPs and their implementation factors. Thematic analysis can be defined as a qualitative research technique that allows researchers to extract patterns (i.e. themes) that emerge from data (Braun & Clarke, 2012; Lester et al., 2020). We used a reflexive approach to conduct thematic analysis, whereby themes are developed inductively (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2012, 2019). To do so, we followed the six-stage process by Braun and Clarke (2006)

where researchers: 1) familiarize themselves with the data, 2) generate codes, 3) generate themes, 4) review them, 5) label the themes and 6) report them.

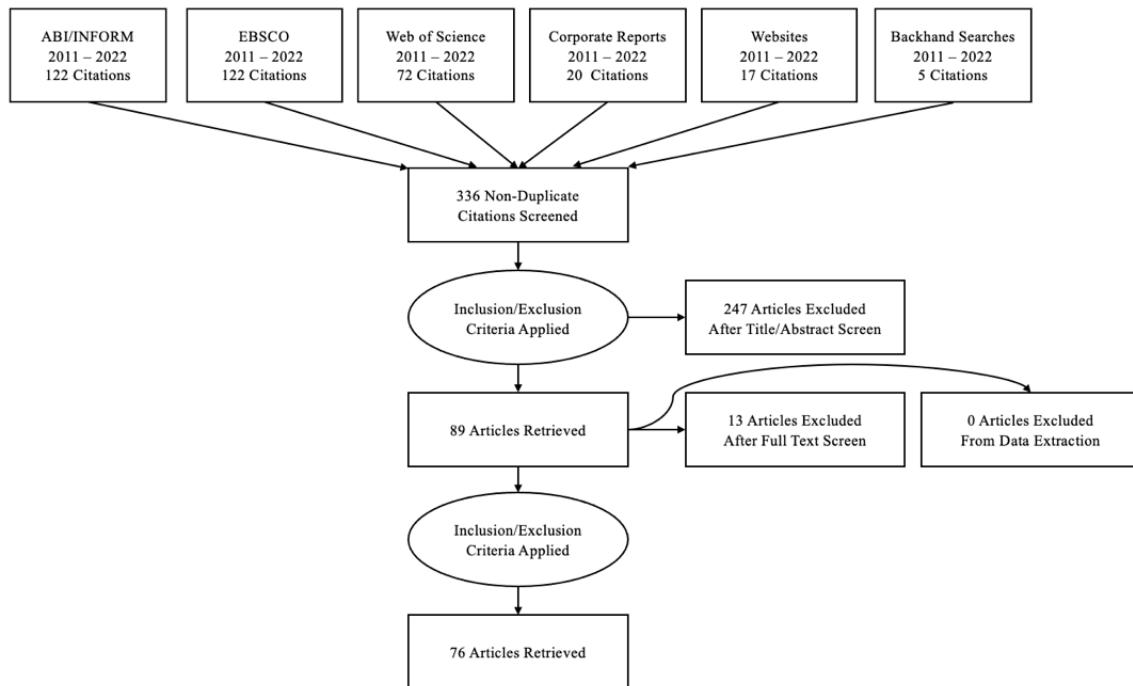
Third, the outcomes of the different practices were synthesized from the academic/grey literature through narrative syntheses, a technique that helps combine information from heterogeneous streams of literature, and from both qualitative and quantitative research (Barnett-Page & Thomas, 2009).

3.4 Results

3.4.1 *Selection of Sources of Evidence*

After duplicates and unretrievable citations were removed, 336 citations were identified from searches of academic/non-academic databases, along with backward searches. Based on the title and abstract, 247 citations were excluded, with 89 full-text articles to be retrieved and assessed for eligibility. After reading the full texts of these 89 articles, 13 were excluded because they did not meet criteria. The remaining 76 studies were considered eligible for the current review. This process is depicted in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1. PRISMA flow diagram: selection of sources of evidence

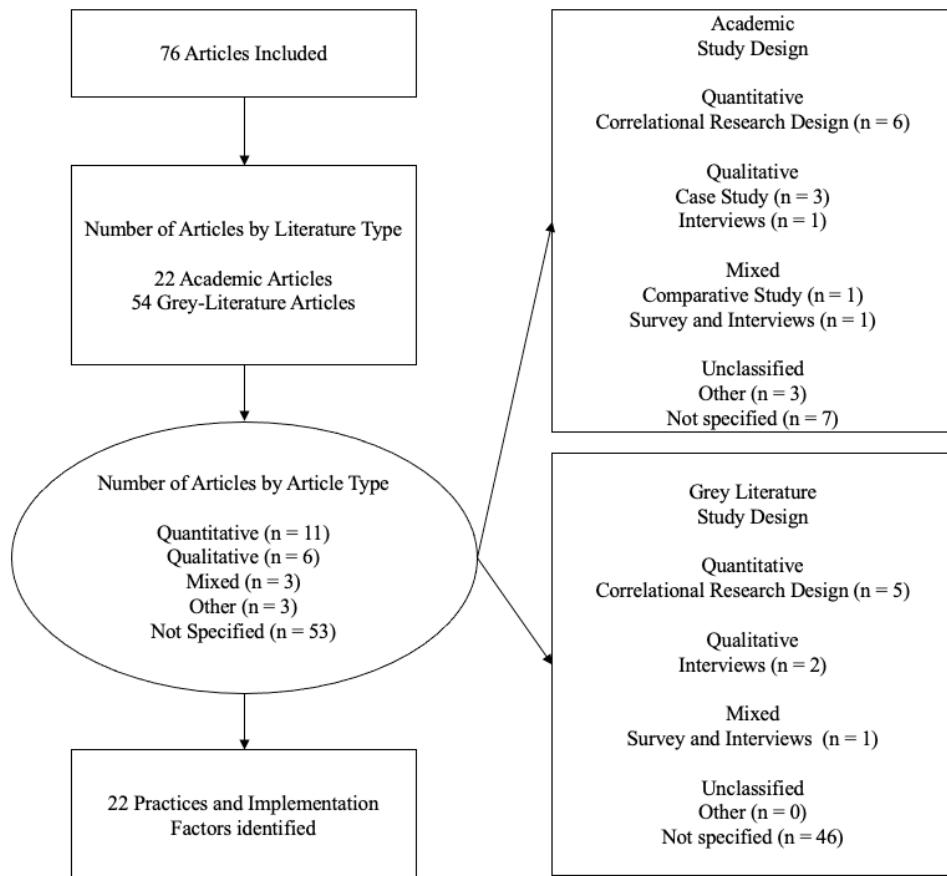


Note. The PRISMA Flow diagram illustrates the number of databases that were selected, the number of citations that were retrieved per database, and the total number of articles that were retrieved after duplicates were removed and inclusion/exclusion criteria were applied.

3.4.2 *Characteristics of Sources of Evidence*

After the inclusion of the 76 articles, we conducted a numerical frequency analysis of our data (see Figure 3.2). Of these articles, 22 were from the academic literature and 54 articles were from the grey literature. We also found that in terms of article type, most articles ($n = 56$) were not empirical (i.e., other and not specified), with only a minority of articles being empirical in nature where quantitative ($n = 11$), qualitative ($n = 5$), or mixed methods ($n = 3$) were used. We found that in terms of study design, most articles did not have a specified research design ($n = 53$). However, of the seven quantitative articles, all were correlational research designs. Moreover, of the six qualitative articles, three were case studies and three reported the use of interviews. In addition, of the three mixed methods articles, one was a comparative study, and the others were a mix of interviews paired with surveys.

Figure 3.2. Numerical frequency analysis



Note. The current figure illustrates the numerical frequency analysis. The number of articles was classified by literature type, by article type and then by study design. Through this exercise, we were able to map the literature and identify 22 DOPMPs.

3.3.3 Identifying DOPMPs

From carefully analyzing the 76 articles included in our review, we identified 22 different DOPMPs. The practices were categorized by the number of articles that discussed/mentioned the various practices in descending order. The practices are listed below in Table 3.5.

Table 3.5. Identified DOPMPs

Author(s)	Practice	Frequency
Bidwell, (2019); Boettge, (2017); Brecher et al., (2016); Buckingham & Goodall, (2015); Budworth & Chummar, (2022); Cameron & Poitevin, (2015); Cappelli & Tavis, (2016); Chillakuri, (2018)*; Cox, (2016); Deloitte, (2017a); Deloitte, (2017b); EY, (2019); Freyermuth & Lougee, (2019); Gravallese et al.,(2016); Gray, (2014); Jones, (2016); Kubiak, (2022)*; Ledford et al., (2016); Lougee, (2017); Moran, (2021); Mueller- Hanson & Pulakos (2013); N.A, (2016); The Conference Board, (2016); The Conference Board, (2017); Rivera, (2021)*; Risley, (2020)*; Sherwood, (2017); Schrøder-Hansen & Hansen, (2022)*	Continuous performance feedback	28
Bidwell, (2019); Berg et al., (2018); Brecher et al., (2016); Budworth & Chummar, (2022); Cappelli & Tavis, (2016); Cameron & Poitevin, (2015); Chawla et al., (2016)*; Chillakuri, (2018)*; Churches, (2017); Chowdhury, (2018); Effron, (2013); Freyermuth & Lougee, (2019); Freyermuth, (2022); Gravina & Siers, (2011)*; Gravallese et al., (2016); Kim et al., (2013)*; Loew, (2015); Pace, (2012); Poeppelman & Blacksmith, (2016); Power, (2017); The Conference Board, (2017); Trudel, (2020); Schraeder & Jordan, (2011); Sluis, (2014); Sherwood, (2017); Schoen & Mok, (2021); Schrøder-Hansen & Hansen, (2022)*	Coaching (General)	27
Brecher et al., (2016); Cameron & Poitevin, (2015); Cappelli & Tavis, (2016); Deloitte, (2017a); Deloitte, (2017b); Effron, (2013); EY, (2019); Kubiak, (2022)*; Ledford et al., (2016); Lougee, (2017); Risley, (2020); The Conference Board, (2016); The Conference Board, (2017); Schrøder-Hansen & Allan Hansen (2022)*	Ratingless reviews	14

Budworth & Chummar, (2022); Cappelli & Tavis, (2016); The Conference Board, (2016); Freyermuth & Lougee (2019); Poitevin, (2019); Rivera, (2021)*; Ledford et al., (2016); Schrøder-Hansen & Hansen, (2022)*	Feedback digital tools	8
Bringsen & Lidnstrom, (2022)*; Cameron & Poitevin, (2015); Bidwell (2019); Cappelli & Tavis, (2016); Deloitte, (2017a); The Conference Board, (2017)	Development/Career conversations	6
Aguinis et al., (2012)*; Bindels et al., (2021)*; Goffnet, (2014); Greenan, 2016; Kelleher, (2017); Perry, (2011); N.A, (2017); McPhun (2014); Vasset et al., (2011);	Employee development Plans	6
Aguinis et al., (2021)*; Budworth & Chummar, (2022); Bindels et al., (2021); Deloitte, (2017a); Ledford et al., (2016); Schrøder-Hansen & Hansen, (2022)*	Multisource feedback	6
Berg et al., (2018); Lougee & Poitevin, (2019); Poitevin, (2019); Poeppelman & Blacksmith, (2016); Sherwood, (2017)	Coaching digital tools	5
Budworth et al., (2019)*; Budworth & Chummar, (2022); Kubiak, (2022)*; Schroder-Hansen & Hansen (2022)*	Feedforward interview	4

Coetzer, (2014)*; Schrader & Jordan, (2011); Loew, (2015); Schrøder-Hansen & Hansen,(2022)*	Strengths-based coaching	4
Aguinis et al., (2012)*; Brecher et al., (2016); Budworth & Chummar, (2022); Kubiak, (2022)*	Strengths-based feedback	4
Boettge (2017); Lougee & Poitevin (2019); Deloitte (2017)	Continuous coaching	3
Deloitte (2017a); Kubiak, (2022)*; Schraeder & Jordan, (2011)	Promoting feedback seeking	3
Brewerton, (2011)*; Buckingham & Goodall, (2015); Schraeder & Jordan, (2011)	Strengths-use	3
Deloitte (2017a); Vasset et al., (2011)*	Development-focused goals	2
Bindels et al., (2021)*; Chen et al., (2011)*	Developmental performance appraisal	2
Gravallese, (2016)	Clear conversations	1
Vasset et al., (2011)*	Feedback (General)	1
Schraeder & Jordan, (2011)	Mentoring	1

Bindels et al., (2021)	Peer coaching	1
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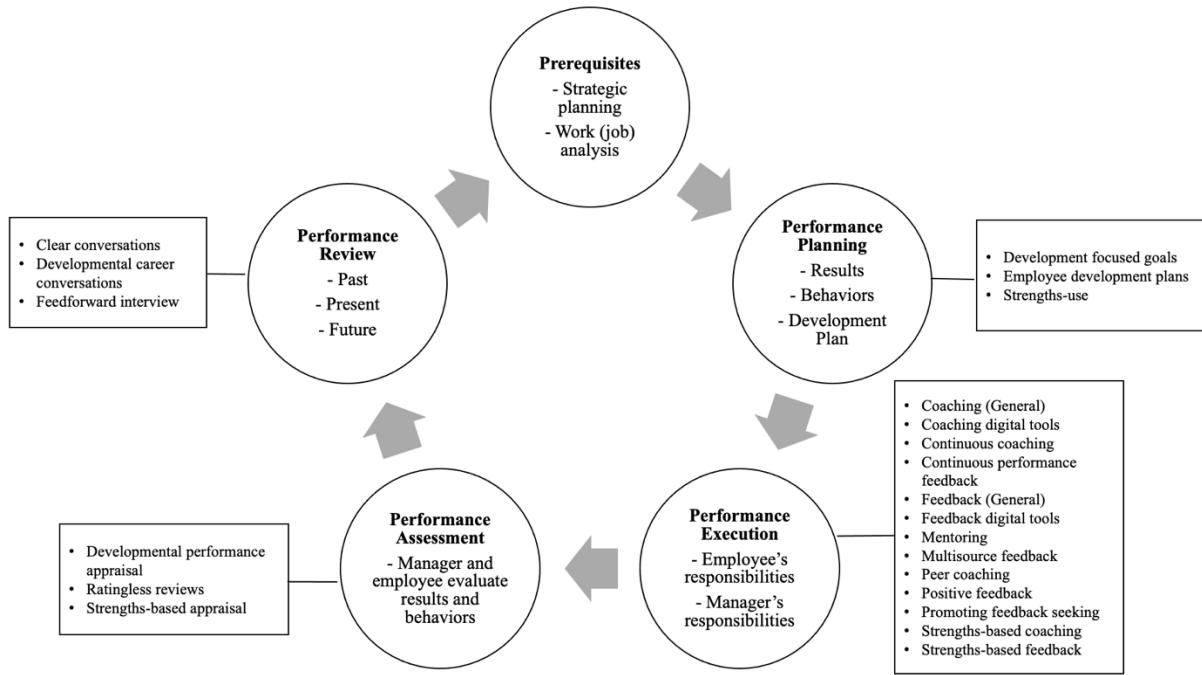
Kubiak, (2022)*	Positive feedback	1
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van Woerkom & Kroon, (2020)*	Strengths-based appraisals	1
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Note. This table illustrates the different DOPMPs and their frequency or number of hits from the sample of 76 articles. The asterisk distinguishes authors who published an academic piece.

We found that continuous performance feedback and coaching were the most prevalent DOPMPs with respectively 28 and 27 hits. Ratingless reviews, feedback digital tools, development/career conversations, employee development plans, multisource feedback, and coaching digital tools were less frequent in the literature but still significantly discussed by authors with 14 to 5 hits. Furthermore, we found 12 other practices with 4 hits or less, namely: feedforward interviews, strengths-based coaching, strengths-based feedback, continuous coaching, promoting feedback seeking, strengths-use, development-focused goals, developmental performance appraisals, clear conversations, feedback (general), mentoring, peer coaching, positive feedback, and strengths-based appraisals. To better grasp where these practices fit in the formal performance management process, we positioned them within a typical annual performance management cycle (Aguinis, 2023). We can observe that the DOPMPs are distributed among four of the five components of the cycle, with a majority of practices situated in the performance execution stage.

Figure 3.3. DOPMPs within the annual performance management cycle



Source. The present figure draws on Aguinis's (2023) performance management cycle.

3.4.4 Identifying Outcomes of DOPMPs

From the 76 articles that were retained, only 23 articles associated specific DOPMPs to outcomes. We reported the intended/expected outcomes or empirically tested outcomes of each DOPMP as evidence. With most articles being from the grey literature, we chose to report on outcomes generally to provide us with a broad sense of what each DOPMP is supposed to do. These findings are summarized in Table 3.6.

Table 3.6. Reported outcomes of DOPMPs

Practice	Author	Intended outcomes	Empirical outcomes
Coaching (General)	Chowdhury (2018)	↑ Fairness	
	Freyermuth & Lougee (2019)	↑ Agility	
	Grant (2017)	↑ Engagement	
	Kim et al., (2011)*	↑ Satisfaction ↑ Role clarity ↑ Career commitment ↑ Organization commitment ↑ Performance	
Continuous performance feedback	Buckingham & Goodall, (2015)	↑ Performance	
	Deloitte, (2017a)	↑ Employee development	
	Deloitte, (2017b)	↑ Performance	
	EY, (2019)	↑ Adaptability ↑ Skills ↑ Motivation	
	Kubiak, (2022)*	↑ Needs satisfaction	

		↑ Work meaningfulness
Ledford et al., (2016)	↑ Employee development	↑ Performance
	↑ Motivation	
Loew, (2015)		
Risley, (2020);	↑ Communication	
	↑ Employee development	
	↑ Engagement	
	↑ Satisfaction	
	↑ Performance	
Ratingless reviews	↑ Fairness	
EY (2019)	↑ Needs satisfaction	
Kubiak, (2022)*	↑ Work meaningfulness	
The Conference Board, (2016)	↑ Motivation	
The Conference Board, (2017)	↓ Stress	
Development/Career conversations	↑ Motivation	
Multisource feedback	Aguinis et al., (2021)*	↑ Performance

Coaching digital tools	Berg et al., (2018)	↑ Productivity
	Lougee & Poitevin, (2019)	↑ Engagement
Employee development plans	Greenan, (2016)	↑ Skills ↑ Knowledge
Feedforward interview	Budworth et al., (2019)*;	↑ Relational resources ↑ Personal resources ↑ Performance
	Kubiak, (2022)*	↑ Needs satisfaction ↑ Work meaningfulness
	Schroder-Hansen & Hansen, (2022)*	↑ Adaptability ↑ Employee development
Strengths-based feedback	Aguinis et al., (2012)*	↑ Engagement ↑ Performance ↑ Well-being ↓ Turnover

	Kubiak, (2022)*	↑ Needs satisfaction ↑ Work meaningfulness
Continuous coaching	Lougee & Poitevin, (2019)	↑ Growth-oriented mindset
Promoting feedback-seeking	Kubiak, (2022)*	↑ Needs satisfaction ↑ Work meaningfulness
Development-focused goals	Deloitte, (2017a)	↑ Performance ↓ Defensiveness
Vasset et al., (2011)*		↑ Learning
Developmental performance appraisal	Chen et al., (2011)*	↑ Satisfaction with workgroup ↑ Relationship with co-workers
Feedback (General)	Vasset et al., (2011)*	↑ Learning ↑ Motivation
Strengths-Use	Buckingham & Goodall, (2015)	↑ Performance

	Schraeder & Jordan, (2011)	↑ Performance
Strengths-Based Appraisals	van Woerkom & Kroon, (2020)*	↑ Perceived supervisor support
		↑ Motivation to improve performance
Mentoring	Schraeder & Jordan, (2011)	↑ Performance
Peer Coaching	Bindels et al., (2021)*	↑ Motivation ↑ Trust
Positive Feedback	Kubiak, (2022)*	↑ Needs satisfaction ↑ Work meaningfulness

Note. This table illustrates the different DOPMPs and their expected and empirical outcomes. The asterisk distinguishes authors who published an academic piece.

We observed 28 different outcomes of DOPMPs (i.e., please note that some of the outcomes overlap). The most common expected outcomes of these practices were respectively employee performance (10 hits), engagement (5 hits), motivation (5 hits), needs satisfaction (5 hits), work meaningfulness (5 hits), employee development (4 hits),

fairness (2 hits) and adaptability (2 hits). As for the empirical outcomes, the most common was employee performance (3 hits) and learning (2 hits). Finally, all other outcomes reported in Table 3.6 received only one hit.

3.4.5 Identifying Factors for DOPMPs Implementation

Of the 76 articles that were included in the study, a total of 29 articles identified a total of 22 factors for the implementation of DOPMP in organizations. These elements speak to the different factors that can enable or hinder the success or failure of these practices. The findings are outlined in Table 3.7.

Table 3.7. Identified implementation factors for DOPMPs

Authors	Implementation Factors	Count
Budworth et al., (2019); Cameron & Poitevin, (2015); Cappelli & Tavis, (2016); Gray, (2014); Jepsen, (2017); van Woerkom & Kroon, (2020); Lee & Rhee, (2020); The Conference Board, (2017); van Woerkom, M & Kroon, (2020)	Managerial training	11
Boettge (2017); Deloitte (2017a); Effron, (2013); Gravallese, (2016); Ledford et al., (2016); N.A, (2017); Novak et al., (2019)	Stakeholder Involvement	7
Cameron & Poitevin, (2015); Jones, (2016); Moran, (2021); Mueller-Hanson & Pulakos, (2013)	Manager-Employee trust	4
Deloitte, (2017a); Effron, (2013) Loew, (2015); Sherwood, (2017)	Managerial/HR Accountability	4
Deloitte, (2017a); Effron (2013); Loew, (2015)	Strategic alignment	3
Brecher et al., (2016); Cameron & Poitevin (2015); Novak et al., (2019)	Transparency	3
N.A, (2016); N.A, (2017); Moran, (2021)	Supervisor support	3
The Conference Board, (2016)	Employee participation	2
Moran, (2021)	Communication	1

Authors	Implementation Factors	Count
Budworth & Chummar, (2022)	Climate (Strengths-based)	1
Effron, (2013)	Culture (Accountability)	1
Pace, (2012)	Culture (Coaching)	1
Risley, (2020)	Culture (Growth)	1
Moran, (2021)	Culture (Inclusive)	1
Brecher et al., (2016)	Culture (Openness)	1
Brecher et al., (2016)	Culture (Transparency)	1
Gravallese, (2016)	Focus groups/Pilot groups	1
Risley, (2020)	Growth-mindset	1
Ledford et al., (2016)	Leadership	1
Ledford et al., (2016)	Measure PM effectiveness	1
Bindels, (2021)	Monitor PM process	1
Sherwood, (2017)	Perceived positive benefits	1

Among the factors identified, managerial training emerged as the most prevalent element with 11 hits. Additionally, stakeholder involvement and manager-employee trust garnered notable attention, with 7 and 4 hits, respectively. Furthermore, managerial/HR accountability, strategic alignment, transparency, supervisor support, and employee participation were also recognized as relevant factors, each appearing with 3 and 2 hits. All other key elements for the implementation of DOPMPs only had 1 hit.

3.5 Discussion

The purpose of the current study was to uncover what is known about the practices underlying the developmental approach to performance management. Through scoping

the academic and grey literature on this topic, we identified 22 DOPMPs, reported their outcomes and key elements of implementation in organizations. Seven key observations can be drawn from our findings.

First, despite the plurality of DOPMPs found in our study, we observed similarities between some of the practices, and found that they can be organized within six categories, or families of practices, namely: 1) feedback, 2) performance coaching, 3) employee development, 4) strengths-based management, 5) performance appraisal and 6) digital performance management. The full list of categories and practices is presented in Table 3.8.

Table 3.8. Summarizing the data

Category	Practices
Feedback	Feedback (General)
	Continuous feedback
	Feedback digital tools
	Multisource feedback
	Positive Feedback
	Promoting feedback seeking
	Strengths-based feedback
Performance coaching	Coaching (general)
	Coaching apps
	Continuous coaching
	Peer coaching
	Strengths-based coaching

Employee development	Clear conversations
	Development-focused goals
	Development/career conversations
	Employee development plans
	Mentoring
Strengths-based management	Feedforward interviewing
	Strengths-based appraisal
	Strengths-based coaching
	Strengths-based feedback
	Strengths-use
Performance appraisal	Developmental performance appraisal
	Ratingless reviews
	Strengths-based appraisal
Digital performance management	Coaching apps
	Feedback apps

Note. This table illustrates the different categories (or families of practices) and their related DOPMP.

Two patterns emerged from the examination of each family of practices. On the one hand, some sets of practices contained different variations of a similar DOPMP. For instance, numerous articles focused on feedback, but from different angles. We found articles discussing continuous performance feedback, multi-source feedback, feedback apps, promoting feedback seeking, and feedback in general. These studies all have in common that they consider feedback as an effective performance management tool to promote the development and growth of individuals. To this point, many studies on feedback mentioned that there is a need for managers to administer feedback more frequently (i.e.,

continuously) to nurture employee performance regularly. Additionally, studies pointed out that promoting feedback from different sources (i.e. peers) and encouraging employees to seek feedback can also be helpful to achieve this end, moving away from the traditional view of feedback as a top-down process emanating from the manager. Similar patterns were found for coaching, where we observed multiple delineations of this set of practices, namely coaching (general), coaching apps, continuous coaching, and strengths-based coaching. Seen as a powerful tool for employee development, it appears there is also a need for coaching to become more frequent (i.e., continuous) in organizations and to allow more seasoned peers to coach their colleagues for performance development.

On the other hand, we observed that some families of practices were more akin to approaches through which DOPMPs can be enhanced. For instance, through digital performance management, practices such as coaching and feedback can be conducted virtually (rather than in person). The articles pointed out that technology can facilitate these practices as they would allow firms to reduce transaction costs, allow for better follow-ups, and allow employees to personally request their managers for coaching and development opportunities. Similarly, practices such as strengths-use, strengths-based feedback, strengths-based appraisals, strengths-based coaching, and feedforward interviews, can be regrouped within a broader category of strengths-based performance management, as they all involved the identification, use, or development of employee strengths (Doucet et al., 2019). The strengths-based approach can be beneficial in terms of effectively identifying employees' strengths, developing them, and making the best of their potential (Miglianico et al., 2020). These practices that are popular in positive psychology are an emergent trend for performance management.

Second, we observed that DOPMPs predominantly manifest themselves within the sphere of performance execution, indicating a strong alignment with the operational (day-to-day) aspects of performance management. However, a noticeable disparity arises when considering their application in the stages of performance planning, assessment, and review. DOPMPs appear to be less prevalent in these critical phases, signaling a potential gap in their comprehensive integration within the performance management cycle. We

also noted the absence of any discernible DOPMPs at the very start of the performance management cycle (pre-requisites). For instance, there were no practices that were specifically part of strategic planning. This absence suggests a potential oversight within current DOPMPs, wherein the focus has been predominantly skewed toward the immediate and tangible facets of performance management rather than the strategic bedrock upon which these practices should be based upon. To ensure a greater cohesion between DOPMPs and a better alignment with the organizational context, HRD professionals should take a greater part in strategic discussions on how employee performance is planned, managed, and evaluated.

Third, we observed that most of the articles in the current review did not provide definitions for the various DOPMPs discussed and when definitions were available, they were not consistent throughout articles. This was somewhat expected as most articles that we analyzed were from the grey literature. Nonetheless, this finding has important implications, as it makes it difficult to build on the current results and evaluate the effectiveness of DOPMPs. For example, with respect to coaching, the lack of clear definitions (and considering our inclusion/exclusion criteria) allow us to implicitly assume that the articles deal with managerial coaching, a performance management practice to develop employees, and not other types of coaching such as career coaching, which is a talent management practice (Beattie et al., 2014; Claussen et al., 2014; Feldman & Lankau, 2005; Hagen, 2012). The same can be said for the practice of continuous performance feedback where there is no consensus regarding the frequency, nor the level of formalization of conversations between the manager and the employee. For some, continuous performance feedback meant that employees would receive feedback on a quarterly basis (Cappelli & Tavis, 2016), while for others they would receive feedback in real-time through digital tools like mobile applications for instance (Freyermuth & Lougee, 2019).

This point brings us to our fourth observation, which is the under-representation of scientific articles dealing with DOPMPs compared to the number of articles in the grey literature. Overall, we observe that the conversation about the developmental approach to performance management is taking place mainly amongst practitioners. Given the

popularity of these practices and their increasing adoption in organizations, researchers must address the issues raised by professionals, to provide them with sound empirical evidence on the different applications of these practices and their effects.

Fifth, we found that the literature on DOPMPs seems to over-represent positive outcomes (expected/empirical). Of all the DOPMPs that were identified, none were associated with negative outcomes. While this may demonstrate the relevance and importance of these practices, the lack of critical perspective may lead to the adoption of certain practices without considering their potential adverse effects on employees' attitudes, behaviors, and health. For instance, it has been discussed that strengths-use can lead to lower levels of performance when employees are asked to use their strengths too frequently (i.e., strengths overuse) (Kaiser & Overfield, 2011; Kaplan & Kaiser, 2009; Niemiec, 2019). Furthermore, similar arguments can be made for continuous performance feedback where receiving feedback too frequently has been associated with feedback overload (i.e., cognitive exhaustion from feedback) (Kubiak, 2020; Lam et al., 2011; Morse, 2004).

Sixth, we found that several key implementation factors can enhance the success of DOPMPs in organizations. Managerial training was the most popular key implementation factor to achieve this goal. However, ensuring that managers are well-trained to effectively nurture employees' performance is only one piece of the puzzle. For example, for DOPMPs managers need to also mobilize their leadership to foster strong managerial-employee relations to increase the acceptance of these practices (Tseng & Levy, 2019). Additionally, for DOPMPs to be more successful, several articles mentioned that organizations should also involve other important stakeholders (e.g. executives, HR professionals, employees) and ensure a close alignment with the organizational strategy; all elements that are part of the prerequisite component of the performance cycle. Moreover, we found that cultivating an organizational culture that is tightly aligned with DOPMPs was a key factor to enhance their likelihood of success. Nonetheless, it is important to keep in mind that there is no clear consensus on the specific type of organizational culture that best facilitates DOPMP implementation, whether it be coaching-oriented, inclusive, accountability-focused, or otherwise. More research is needed to explore this culture-practice fit.

Finally, we identified numerous factors contributing to the successful implementation of DOPMPs. However, we observed that the literature offered little insight into the potential impediments to DOPMP implementation. We encourage HRD scholars to explore this topic of research using case studies to shed light on facilitators and barriers to the implementation of DOPMPs. Such an approach would allow researchers to have a nuanced understanding of the contexts where DOPMPs are most and least effective (Dooley, 2002). HRD researchers are certainly well situated to explore DOPMPs in professional settings and to build more holistic performance management systems (Brown et al., 2018).

3.5.1 *Implications for HRD Research*

The current study provides a starting point for HRD researchers to carefully examine performance management practices that can encourage individuals to not only perform in the workplace but simultaneously foster their professional development (Joo et al., 2013). Even though significant attention has been given by HRD scholars to development-oriented practices such as coaching, mentoring and career development, many of the cited practices in our study have not been fully studied in the context of HRD (Ellinger & Kim, 2014; Hezlett & Gibson, 2005; McDonald & Hite, 2005). As performance management systems are now being considered useful and powerful tools for employee development, increasing productivity and firm performance (Alagaraja, 2013; Buchner, 2007; Jiang et al., 2012). We believe that researchers should further investigate less mature practices such as feedforward interviews, peer coaching, or strengths-based appraisal.

To that end, our review has identified two major research gaps that can inspire future HRD research. First, as noted, DOPMPs have definitions that are either absent or inconsistent. Clearly circumscribing the main characteristics of specific DOPMPs are a necessary first step to develop a common understanding about these practices and develop research proposition and hypotheses (Jaccard & Jacoby, 2019). Clearer definitions should also help HRD researchers in terms of measuring DOPMPs, comparing them, and evaluating their effectiveness more rigorously. Furthermore, it will be beneficial for HRD practitioners to facilitate the use and implementation of DOPMPs in organizations to support the development and performance of their workforce.

Second, clear definition and measurement of DOPMPs must be paired with the use and/or development of theory that will help researchers establish how and why DOPMPs produce their effects and in what context (e.g., culture, leadership, industry etc.). Such an understanding is paramount because this can help organizations manage employee performance more effectively, better preserve their human capital and foster organizational competitiveness (Pulakos et al., 2019; Troise et al., 2022). We believe that future researchers will benefit from mobilizing micro- and meso-level theories from positive psychology, human resource development and organizational behavior to explain relationships between DOPMPs and their outcomes as theories from these fields of study have been used to establish relationships between HRD practices and employee outcomes (Bakker & Demerouti, 2018; Chang & Chen, 2011; Dubreuil et al., 2014; Kubiak, 2020; Seo et al., 2019). Keeping this in mind, researchers must also think critically about DOPMPs' potential downfalls, limitations, and unintended consequences.

Thus, we believe that rigorous empirical and theoretical work on how and why DOPMPs sustain employee performance, learning, growth and well-being will be highly beneficial, especially when we consider the dearth of research on this topic in the literature (Gruman & Budworth, 2022; Kowalski & Loretto, 2017; Peccei & van de Voorde, 2019). Understanding these relationships, are particularly relevant to organizations as they are grappling with an increasing number of employees that have important skills gaps and we may come to a better understanding of how we could better develop their human capital (Agrawal et al., 2020; Brunello & Wruuck, 2021).

3.5.2 *Implications for HRD Practice*

The current study provides insights for practitioners interested in participating in the transformation of their performance management practices from mere administrative tools to drivers of employee engagement and development. Favouring more agile, collaborative, and development-oriented performance management systems has been identified as one of the most pressing challenges organizations and HRD professionals must address to succeed in today's rapidly evolving landscape (Brown et al., 2018; Wang, 2018). Our review identified relevant families of practices that HRD professionals can promote to effectively support the performance and development of employees. As HRD

professionals are familiar with many of these practices, the work of integrating them into their organization's current performance management processes can be done more easily. However, for other practices, such as strengths-based performance management, which are more novel, doing so may require HRD professionals to be trained on these practices to properly support and accompany the organization's managers who must use these practices daily.

A considerable monetary investment may also be needed if digital performance management practices are to be implemented. Thus, the choice and the extent of the implementation of these practices should be based on a careful analysis of the contingency factors related to the organization's strategy and culture (Kuchinke, 2003). For instance, organizations that have a quality strategy (i.e., improving product/service quality) and an innovation strategy (i.e., developing new products and services compared to rivals) are more likely to be concerned about the developmental aspects of employees' performance management systems compared to organizations that are focused on a cost strategy (i.e., having the lowest costs to out-do competitors), and will give prominence to the administrative function of such systems (Bayo-Moriones et al., 2020; Sun & Pan, 2011). We believe that if HRD practitioners are mindful of these contingency factors, they will be more successful in implementing DOPMPs in a strategic way that can foster the human capital of organizations and drive business objectives and performance outcomes.

Our review identified several positive outcomes associated with the practices. Although many of these outcomes are more expected than confirmed. The empirical study results we identified support the view that investing in DOPMPs is beneficial to both employees and organizations. The results of our study can therefore be used to help HRD professionals build a business case for reorienting their organization's performance management systems towards a developmental approach that supports human capital growth.

3.5.3 *Limitations*

While the current review carefully considered the methodological framework from scoping reviews (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005; Levac et al., 2010; Daudt et al., 2013) and

based itself on the PRISMA-ScR guidelines, it is subject to some limitations (Tricco et al., 2016). First, the current review provided a narrative (or descriptive) account of the outcomes of DOPMPs. It is important to note that scoping reviews do not weigh or aggregate evidence to determine the extent to which an intervention/practice is effective (Arksey & O’Malley, 2005). Scoping reviews synthesize what is being said about a phenomenon of interest. To assess to what extent a practice or intervention is effective, it is best to conduct a review that allows for the aggregation of evidence, such as the meta-analysis (Paré et al., 2015). This type of systematic literature review would have been deemed pre-mature considering that DOPMPs are an emerging topic, but should be considered when once research on the subject is more developed.

Second, even though we conducted searches in multiple databases and included different types of literature (i.e. academic and non-academic literature), our review systematically excluded articles that were not written in the English language. While this did assist the researchers in narrowing the scope of the review and obtaining the most relevant findings, this may have introduced publication bias, which may have negatively affected the content validity of the current study (Meline, 2006). For instance, the cultural perspective on employee development may vary between English-speaking and non-English-speaking countries (Hofstede, 1980). To be more precise, in English-speaking countries, where individualism is prevalent, organizations may tend to prioritize practices that focus on individual development, while collectivist non-English-speaking countries may emphasize team development (Hofstede, 1980). Thus, publication bias may have not been fully mitigated and we encourage future research to be more inclusive of other languages and cultures.

3.6 Conclusion

The present study scoped the literature to determine what is known about DOPMPs. We did so by mapping the literature and synthesizing the expected and observed outcomes. Our data revealed that 22 DOPMPs were associated with positive outcomes. Furthermore, we found that a lot of the supportive evidence for DOPMPs mostly emerged from the grey literature. There is still a lot about DOPMPs that we do not know. We identified as such three pressing research gaps that need to be addressed for HRD academics to begin tying

the knot between research and practice and help organizations reach the full potential of growth and development DOPMPs can bring.

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4.0 Article 2

Strengths-Based Performance Management: A Multistakeholder Case Study

4.1 Abstract

The strengths-based approach to performance management offers promising advantages to organizations, however, despite its potential, it has received limited attention from researchers and practitioners. To date, the literature has predominantly featured works about single and one-off strengths-based interventions that are aimed at enhancing employee performance. The current study goes beyond past literature as it examines the structural application of the strengths-based approach to performance management within a privately-owned organization that specializes in elderly care. Through a qualitative case study, based on 19 semi-structured interviews and document analysis, we provide an in-depth exploration of strengths-based performance management, along with a nuanced view about this topic as we tap into the perceptions and reactions of multiple stakeholders in the organization (e.g., HR professionals, managers and employees). Our analysis sheds light on strengths-based performance management, brings forward stakeholders' perceptions and reactions, and obviates the opportunities and challenges of the strengths-based approach within the field of human resource management. Our work advances the literature on by circumscribing what strengths-based performance management is and by challenging prevailing assumptions in the field. More specifically, we emphasize its drawbacks, which have significant implications for theory. Practically, we provide practitioners with guidance on how to best implement strengths-based performance management in organizations to facilitate its success.

Keywords: strengths-based approach; human resource management; performance management; stakeholder perceptions; case study

4.2 Introduction

Performance management (PM) refers to the “continuous process of identifying, measuring, and developing the performance of individuals and teams and aligning performance with the strategic goals of the organization” (Aguinis, 2009, p.2). PM is a nearly universal human resource management (HRM) process, with 95% of organizations reportedly using a formal PM system (The Talent Strategy Group, 2023). Yet, despite its widespread adoption, only 2% of Chief Human Resources Officers believe that these systems effectively fulfill their primary purpose of improving employee performance (Wigert & Barrett, 2024). The widespread lack of confidence towards PM's effectiveness has sparked ongoing debates among both academics and practitioners, who are focusing on the different ways that PM can be enhanced as a strategic component of HRM (Adler et al., 2016; Haines & St-Onge, 2012; Murphy, 2019; Pulakos & O’Leary, 2011). This challenge has prompted researchers and practitioners to seek innovative and novel approaches to ensure that PM fulfills its intended purpose. With the growing advocacy for a more positive orientation to PM, one that not only drives performance but also promotes positive experiences, the strengths-based approach (SBA) to PM stands out (Giamos, Doucet, & Lapalme, 2023).

The SBA to PM roots itself in positive psychology and it emphasizes recognizing and leveraging individual strengths to make the best of employees’ potential in the workplace (Doucet et al., 2019; Miglianico et al., 2020). Despite there being an array of strengths-based interventions in the context of PM (van Woerkom, 2021), the literature predominantly features strengths-based interventions as single or one-off initiatives, which are often implemented within specific organizational contexts (Gottlieb & Gottlieb, 2017; Price et al., 2020; van Woerkom, 2021). Even though there is strong interest towards the SBA to PM, its systematization and integration within HRM processes, particularly PM, where it has great potential, remains underexplored (van Woerkom, 2021; van Woerkom & de Bruijn, 2016). This lack of exploration points to a significant research gap, where HR scholars have a limited understanding about how the SBA to PM can be operationalized and embedded within PM systems and ultimately lead to positive outcomes. Addressing this gap is both timely and important as on the one hand, HR

researchers and practitioners are increasingly looking for new PM solutions that work (Giamos, Doucet, & Lapalme, 2023). And, on the other hand, filling this gap can provide HR scholars and practitioners with a deeper, more nuanced theoretical and practical understanding of the applicability, benefits, and challenges of integrating the SBA to PM in organizations.

Hence, the main purpose of this study is to explore the use of strengths-based performance management (SBPM) system in organizations. To achieve this, we conduct a case study in one organization that has implemented a SBPM system. In our study, we identify the various SBPM practices, examine the perceived gaps in their implementation, and highlight the perceived benefits, drawbacks, and boundary conditions of this approach. Our study makes several theoretical and practical contributions to the HRM literature. Theoretically, our model clarifies what SBPM is, and it demonstrates how it can be utilized to consistently leverage employees' strengths. Moreover, our model highlights the various individual, managerial, and systemic factors that can facilitate and/or hinder the perceived effectiveness of SBPM. Furthermore, by incorporating the perspectives of diverse stakeholders, our work provides a nuanced, multi-level, and multi-perspective understanding of SBPM, shedding light not only on its benefits, but also on unforeseen drawbacks that have been largely overlooked in the literature (Giamos et al., 2024). Practically, we offer actionable guidelines for organizations looking to adopt SBPM by giving practitioners insights about its implementation.

4.3 Literature Review

From the onset of the positive psychology movement, the SBA has gained the attention of scholars in numerous disciplines (Ghielen et al., 2018; Kapur et al., 2013; Quinlan et al., 2012). More particularly, scholars in HRM have shown a strong interest towards the SBA (Kersten et al., 2024), as it has valuable insights especially in the context of talent management (Meyers & van Woerkom, 2014), and PM (Giamos et al., 2024). The SBA literature has gained significant traction in recent years (Miglianco et al., 2020). This body of literature includes various theories, as well as conceptual and empirical studies, that highlight the potential of strengths-based interventions in the context of PM (Aguinis et al., 2012; Budworth et al., 2015; Kubiak, 2020; van Woerkom & Kroon, 2020).

According to strength-use theorists, when employees are encouraged to use their strengths at work, their performance is enhanced because utilizing strengths often entails tapping into mastered skills and capacities that naturally foster success (Bakker & van Woerkom, 2018). Some scholars go further and explain that when strengths use is promoted in organizations, this can elicit positive emotions, thoughts, and behaviors that make employees feel good (Lyubomirsky & Layous, 2013). Broaden-and-build theorists would add to this point and explain that these positive emotions can lead to employees building critical resources that make their professional success more likely (Dubreuil et al., 2020; Fredrickson, 2004). Proponents of the job demands-resources model would view strengths-use as a resource that buffers the relationship between job demands and job performance, because when employees use their strengths, they are more likely to cope with job demands, thus, enabling them to work more effectively (Lavy & Littman-Ovadia, 2017; van Woerkom et al., 2016). Moreover, self-determination theorists would argue that strengths-based interventions can lead to the satisfaction of basic psychological needs and in turn stimulate people's performance (Moore et al., 2024). Lastly, proponents of the AMO model would explain that strengths-based interventions can foster performance when people have the ability, motivation and opportunity to apply their strengths at work. When these conditions are met, individuals are more likely to apply their strengths consistently and repeatedly, thus sustaining excellent performance in the long-run (Ding et al., 2021; Pak et al., 2019).

In addition to performance, strengths-based interventions are also positively related to other important desirable outcomes (Ghielen et al., 2018; Meyers et al., 2013; Miglianico et al., 2020; Quinlan et al., 2012). To be more precise, strengths-based interventions positively associate with attitudinal outcomes such as job engagement, job satisfaction, life satisfaction, and meaning at work (Botha & Mostert, 2014; Douglass & Duffy, 2015; Harzer & Ruch, 2015; Miglianico et al., 2020; Stander et al., 2014). Moreover, they positively associate with behavioral outcomes such as thriving at work, organizational citizenship behaviors, and motivation (Ding & Chu, 2020; Lavy & Littman-Ovadia, 2017; Meyers & van Woerkom, 2017). In terms of psychological and health outcomes, SBM interventions positively associate with employees' psychological capital (Meyers & van Woerkom, 2017), and negatively associate with burnout/strain (Allan et al., 2019).

Keeping these advantages in mind, it is important to acknowledge that SBM can sometimes have unintended consequences (Niemiec, 2019). For example, employees may overuse their strengths, and this can lead to exhaustion, or unethical behaviors (Ding & Liu, 2023). Hence, managers must always carefully consider how they can optimally encourage strengths-use in the workplace (Niemiec, 2019).

4.3.1 *An Emergent and Fragmented Literature*

While the literature on SBA to PM literature is emergent and growing, it is fractured in two separate streams of study. More specifically, scholars have examined two types of strengths-based interventions that have been studied in the context of PM (van Woerkom, 2021). In the first stream of literature, scholars have focus on examining “one-time” or “one-off” strengths-based interventions that are aimed at performance improvement for employees (see Harzer et al., 2021; Harzer & Ruch, 2014; Kalyar & Kalyar, 2018; Pang & Ruch, 2019; Sosik et al., 2012). Among these one-off interventions, the character strengths interventions are some of the most well-studied (Heintz et al., 2019; Schutte & Malouff, 2019). In essence, character strengths interventions “aim at making people aware or encouraging the application of their character strengths in their daily lives to bring benefit to oneself, others, and/or society” (Ruch et al., 2020, p.680). These one-off interventions are well documented, and have been beneficial for people and organizations (see Heintz et al., 2019; Quinlan et al., 2012; Schutte & Malouff, 2019). However, they are not part of the more structural and formalized process of PM/HRM systems (van Woerkom, 2021), which can cast doubt on their long-term applicability, scalability and overall impact in HR settings.

There also exists a second stream of research in the SBM and PM literature that does examine the application of SBA within PM systems. This body of literature is much more modest, with only a handful of relevant studies, but is slowly expanding (see Krezek et al., 2023; Kubiak, 2020). In this particular stream of research, strengths-based adaptations of PM practices such as strengths-based goal setting, strengths-based feedback, strengths-based appraisal, and the feedforward interview have been conceptually and/or empirically studied in organizations (Giamos et al., 2024; Grammer & Bernhardt, 2021). More specifically, the field features theory building, cross-sectional and quantitative studies that

examine whether such practices lead to positive outcomes. These studies will be outlined below.

First, in the case of strengths-based goal setting which can be defined as the identification and promotion of an individual's unique strengths to achieve goals, research is very much conceptual at this stage (Grammer & Bernhardt, 2021). Researchers suggest that this practice is more likely to be needs satisfying and motivating for employees as they do not simply focus on attaining goals, but rather they are encouraged to use their strengths to learn, grow and achieve objectives in their organization (Grammer & Bernhardt, 2021).

Second, strengths-based feedback refers to the recognition of employees' positive behaviors and results that are derived from their knowledge, skills, or talents and sharing this information with them (Aguinis et al., 2012). This has been identified as a helpful practice to motivate employees to do their best at work because this specific form of feedback highlights employees strengths (i.e., traits, skills etc.) (Aguinis et al., 2012; Buckingham & Clifton, 2001). However, there is only one empirical study that examines the effects of strengths-based feedback on employee outcomes. This single study essentially corroborates that strengths-based feedback can be motivating for employees (see Gradito Dubord et al., 2022).

Third, the strengths-based performance appraisal is a type of performance evaluation where managers are interested in "identifying, appreciating, and promoting the future use and development of employee strengths" (van Woerkom & Kroon, 2020, p.2). The literature features one theoretical piece (Bouskila-Yam & Kluger, 2011) and a single empirical study on this practice (van Woerkom & Kroon, 2020). So far, it seems like the practice can be a helpful tool to raise the awareness of employees own strengths, direct them towards opportunities where they can make the best of their potential, and motivate them to improve their performance through satisfying their basic psychological needs (van Woerkom & Kroon, 2020).

Finally, the feedforward interview is a structured interview that highlights an individual's strengths and future aspirations (Budworth et al., 2019). The literature features some theoretical works that explain how and why feedforward interviews can be helpful for

employees (Budworth et al., 2019; Kluger & Nir, 2010). Essentially, feedforward interviews facilitate the development of employees' personal and relational resources, which in turn, bolster motivation and enhance job performance (Budworth et al., 2019). Furthermore, field studies have demonstrated that the feedforward interview can be effective at achieving these outcomes (see Budworth et al., 2015).

4.3.2 *Bridging the Gap in the SBA to PM Literature and Moving Further*

While the above-mentioned studies argue for or demonstrate the positive outcomes of SBPM practices, the literature faces several notable gaps. First, due to the nature of these studies, which are mainly theory-building and cross-sectional and/or quantitative studies, we have limited understanding of people's lived experiences with SBPM practices and systems. Specifically, there is little evidence on how stakeholders perceive these practices, particularly from the perspectives of employees, managers, and HR professionals. Second, these studies offer little insights into the complexities of SBPM implementation, leaving us with not enough knowledge about the factors that contribute to its success or failure in organizational settings. Third, to our knowledge, no studies have thoroughly explored the perceived benefits and challenges associated with the SBA to PM, nor have they investigated its unintended consequences. While the SBA approach to PM is certainly helpful, the lack of evidence on its' potential drawbacks limits our ability to fully evaluate its implications. To address these timely and pressing research gaps, we developed a qualitative case study that addresses these concerns by asking the following research question:

RQ: How is SBPM enacted and experienced in organizations by key stakeholders (e.g., employees, managers and HR professionals).

4.4 Method

The current study used the case study method. To be more precise, a case study is a "detailed investigation, often with data collected over a period of time, of phenomena, within their context" (Hartley, 2004, p.323). Case studies are helpful when researchers want to answer "how" and "why" questions about their phenomena of interest (Yin, 2014). This study employs a single-case study design, focusing on SBPM within a single

organization. This approach was chosen because it enables an in-depth exploration of the phenomenon within its context, utilizing multiple data sources (Welch & Piekkari, 2017). Additionally, it allows for capturing diverse perspectives on the strengths-based approach to performance management (Nishii & Wright, 2008) providing a comprehensive understanding of its implementation and perceived impacts.

We examine the case of Horizon Living, a Canadian company in elderly care, that specializes in the management of senior's residences. Their operations are rooted in the senior care and retirement housing sector, catering to retirees seeking a comfortable living environment.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Horizon living had overhauled its HRM practices and systems. The HR leaders of the organization took this initiative to enhance Horizon Living's attractiveness to new recruits and existing employees as the organization was faced with exceptionally high levels of employee turnover at that time. Among the many HR changes, the implementation of the SBA to PM or an SBPM system that would yield performance and positive employee experiences. The previous PM system relied on conventional methods and was seen as cumbersome and unengaging. Consequently, many employees felt like the PM process would undervalue and underappreciate their performance, particularly during year-end performance reviews. Recognizing the need for a more effective and employee-centered approach, the HR leaders of Horizon Living redesigned their PM system to not only drive performance but also create a positive environment where employees feel like their contributions are valued. To achieve this, they adopted an SBPM system tailored to fulfill these objectives.

4.4.1 *Data Collection*

Our collaboration with Horizon Living for this research project began in 2023, enabling us to collect data from multiple sources. First, we conducted 19 in-depth, semi-structured interviews to capture the perceptions of the various stakeholders in the organizations. More specifically, we interviewed 2 HR leaders in the firm that oversee the SBPM process, along with 9 managers and 9 employees. Participants were recruited through a combination of general calls for participation and follow-up e-mails. On average the

interviews lasted approximately 45 minutes, were conducted via Microsoft Teams and in French. In total, we had 764.41 minutes or 12.74 hours of interview audio and 284 pages of transcribed interview data. We had a flexible interview guide that we used to guide our different talks with participants. Each interview partner was assured of data protection and confidentiality. Throughout our results section, we identify the main role of each interviewee within the organization and assign an identifier for referencing their quotes. HR 1 and HR 2 represent the HR professionals, Manager 1 through Manager 9 represent the managers, and Employee 1 through Employee 9 represent the employees. As such we provide an identifier for each person that we use for referencing quotes to express their perceptions.

In addition to interview data, we collected field notes, reviewed training videos used to prepare managers for implementing SBPM practices, along with company documents related to this. We had a total of 52 pages of interview notes, 109 minutes or 1.82 hours of training video data and, 88 pages of company documents that discussed SBPM. By leveraging these diverse data sources, we enhanced the depth and richness of our data, contextualized our findings within the organization's practices, and validated our conclusions through triangulation across multiple sources (Dooley, 2002).

4.4.2 *Data Analysis*

To rigorously analyze our data, we adopted the Gioia methodology (Gioia et al., 2012). As previously hinted, our interviews were recorded, transcribed, and imported into NVivo software for coding. The two leading authors were engaged in data analysis. Our analysis began with open coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1998), focusing on the interviewees' own words to accurately capture their subjective perceptions and descriptions of SBPM. This step resulted in the generation of 321 distinct codes. Building on our understanding of the SBPM literature, we then developed second-order themes to provide deeper insights into the phenomenon under investigation. These themes were subsequently grouped into broader categories, culminating in the identification of three overarching dimensions: perceived benefits, drawbacks, and boundary conditions associated with SBPM. During the process of coding, when there were divergences in analysis, the two leading authors went back to the data, discussed, and resolved differences.

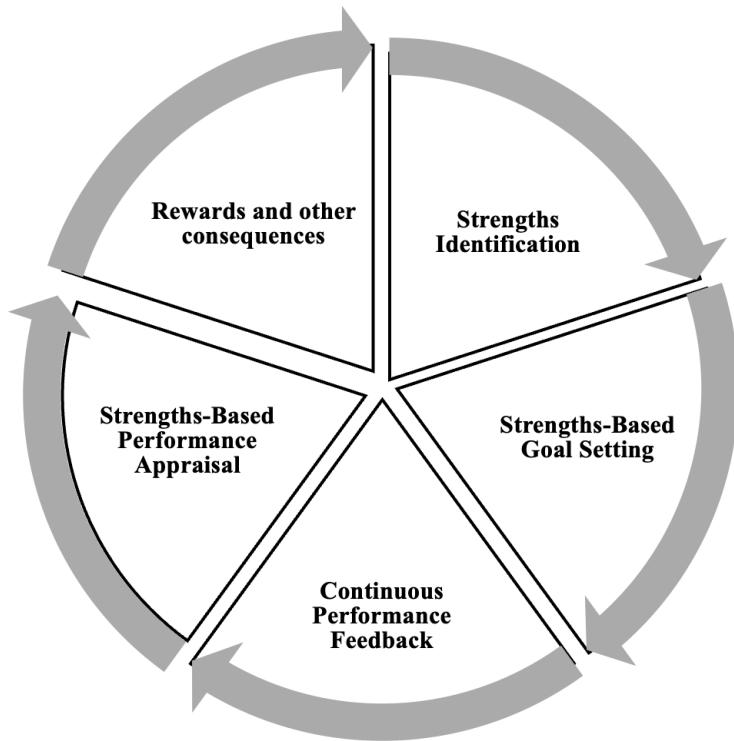
In addition to analyzing the interview data, the two lead authors conducted a documentary analysis of field notes and company-provided documents. This supplementary analysis provided a detailed understanding of the intended and actual SBPM processes. It also allowed the two leading authors of this paper to examine whether the intended practices matched up with people's actual experiences with SBPM (e.g., implementation gaps). Thus, the authors were able to identify gaps, consistencies, and inconsistencies. As with the coding process, any differences in interpretation during documentary analysis were resolved through collaborative discussions, ensuring a thorough and cohesive analysis.

4.5 Results

4.5.1 Intended HRM: The Strengths-Based Performance Management Process

The intended SBPM process was designed as follows. First, employees must identify their strengths through various methods, such as self-assessment, questionnaires, introspection, or feedback from managers and colleagues. Second, once strengths are identified, employees collaborate with their managers to set goals that align their strengths and the priorities of their organization (e.g., customer experience etc.). In addition to these objectives, managers also set personal development goals for their employees, aimed at continuous improvement by building on their strengths in the workplace. Third, after such goals are set, employees receive continuous performance feedback, at least once per quarter. This feedback focuses on their progress toward the goals set earlier in the year and determines whether these goals need to be adjusted in response to changing organizational realities. Fourth, at the end of the year, employees undergo a formal performance appraisal, during which their performance is evaluated against the agreed-upon objectives. Lastly, based on this evaluation, employees may receive rewards, such as bonuses (see Figure 4.1).

Figure 4.1. Strengths-Based Performance Management



4.5.2 *Actual HRM: Gaps in the Application and Implementation of SBPM*

While the intended process was designed to follow the steps outlined in Figure 4.1, gaps emerged in the application and implementation of SBPM. Specifically, although all employees in our sample successfully identified their strengths using the various methods described earlier (Step 1) and were appraised based on the goals they set with their managers which included their strengths (Step 4), significant gaps were observed in the intermediate steps of the SBPM process.

Gaps were noted in Step 2, strengths-based goal-setting. Even though employees were encouraged to set goals that aligned their strengths with both organizational and personal objectives, a small number of employees were assigned goals that did not necessarily contribute to their personal development. Instead, these employees were directed to focus solely on leveraging their strengths to meet organizational objectives, representing a missed opportunity for fostering their personal development.

Additional gaps emerged in Step 3, continuous performance feedback. Although all employees in our sample received performance feedback, the nature and timing of this feedback varied across managers. Some managers provided weekly feedback that focused primarily on the operational aspects of employees' roles, while discussions about strength-aligned goals were postponed until the more formal, quarterly performance review sessions.

Lastly, in Step 5, rewards and other consequences, managers were mainly responsible for determining employees' compensation for the following year. However, some managers expanded this process by offering development opportunities that were not explicitly part of the SBPM process. These opportunities included horizontal or vertical career mobility, job crafting, creating new roles to better utilize employees' talents, and providing mentoring or coaching initiatives.

4.5.3 Perceived HRM: Perceived Benefits, Challenges and Boundary Conditions

The comparison between the intended and actual HRM processes revealed several gaps in the application and implementation of the SBPM process. Participants' perceptions of SBPM further allowed us to identify key benefits, challenges and boundary conditions that influenced its perceived effectiveness, whether related to its implementation, enactment, or overall experience with the approach.

4.5.3.1 Perceived Benefits

In terms of the perceived benefits for the SBPM approach, we found that this approach can be helpful for managers and employees. More specifically, we found that the SBPM approach a) humanizes PM, b) mobilizes employees and c) develops synergies in teams.

Humanization of PM. Based on our findings, it seemed that the SBPM approach is a distinct, more humane way to conduct PM. This may be because the SBPM approach not only accounts for people's strengths, but it also considers people's unique aspirations and motivations.

HR professional 1 & 2: “*We wanted to create a human and rewarding experience (for employees). We wanted people to feel stimulated, that's why we set up*

discussions (in the SBPM process) to target employees' motivations and aspirations (...) It (SBPM) is about fostering consideration for the humanistic aspect while tapping into their potential and performance."

HR professional 1 & 2: "We wanted to create a human and rewarding experience (for employees). We wanted people to feel stimulated, that's why we set up discussions (in the SBPM process) to target employees' motivations and aspirations (...) It (SBPM) is about fostering consideration for the humanistic aspect while tapping into their potential and performance."

Building on this point, managers acknowledged these positive aspects of SBPM. Moreover, they felt like it is conducive to employees' development as the SBPM process can provide people with opportunities to leverage their strengths and pursue their development.

Manager 9: "Fundamentally, I buy into this method of performance management (...) Increasingly, people in organizations need to develop themselves. (...) And I think that managing based on strengths brings people to become aware of their strengths, because, it puts a little bit of the responsibility for personal development on the shoulders of the individual."

Employees seemed to agree with managers on this specific point, in that, the SBPM process allowed them to look inwards and observe themselves.

Employee 3: "We learn to know ourselves more deeply. It (SBPM) pushes us to reflect and to observe ourselves."

4.5.3.2 Engagement, Motivation, and Performance. In the context of our study, we found that both managers and employees held positive attitudes toward SBPM. Specifically, they described the approach as engaging and motivating, with the potential to lead to high levels of employee performance. Managers expressed that by putting employees' strengths forward, employees are more likely to achieve the goals that they set in the beginning of the year, because those goals are typically within the scope of their strengths.

Manager 3 : "When goals are set based on an employee's strengths, it's clear that the employee finds it easier to achieve those goals. Because it's within the parameters of their strengths (...) And they can excel much more easily under those conditions."

Moreover, managers expressed that given that strengths are already something that employees master, getting them to excellent levels of performance requires less effort, as they already have a strong capacity for the goals and the tasks that are required of them.

Manager 4: "When you manage through people's strengths, there's less of a need for them to adapt. It's clear. Managing someone based on their strengths makes people more motivated. People are more engaged because, in the end, it requires less effort for them (...). So, they can simply do what they would naturally do (...) and apply the same thing at work."

Similar to managers, employees generally had positive attitudes towards SBPM as an overall process and felt like it was engaging for them.

Employee 4 : "It (SBPM) is a positive lever. It is engaging to be managed by one's strengths (...) You know, it's very positive".

4.5.3.3 Team Strengths. The SBPM approach was perceived as beneficial for enhancing employees' engagement, motivation, and performance. Additionally, several participants highlighted that this approach enables managers to leverage employees' strengths within their respective teams. Managers appear to do this intuitively, by relying on their perception of individual employees' strengths. More specifically, they assigned tasks by matching each employee's unique strengths to various tasks, ensuring that work is completed effectively.

Manager 4 : "Everyone on the team has their own strengths, and honestly, for me, it (goal/project/task assignment) happens naturally. When I have a project to assign, I know exactly who I'll involve in it. I know who I'll ask to take charge of it to ensure, first and foremost, that the project gets done. "

Employees seemed to share similar thoughts on the SBPM approach, that by bringing people's strengths together, it can help a team be strong and performative at work.

Employee 3 : “What makes a team strong? Well, it's about bringing together everyone's (team members) strengths and working with them”.

4.5.3.4 *Perceived Challenges*

While the SBPM approach can be a humanizing process that engages employees and fosters team synergies, potentially benefiting organizations in terms of productivity, our findings revealed several significant drawbacks associated with this approach. More specifically, according to some of our participants, the SBPM approach had several challenges and unintended consequences such as a) narrow focus on strengths, b) skills loss, and c) not always aligned with people's day to day realities.

Narrow focus. One unintended consequence of the SBPM approach was its excessive focus on employees' strengths. The excessive focus on employees' strengths can result in strengths overuse where employees rely too heavily on their strengths and apply them in situations where they are not appropriate or conducive to performance without realizing it. One manager in our sample illustrated this by sharing an example of an employee who overused their strengths in a specific situation.

Manager 4: I addressed an issue with someone in my team who hadn't noticed it (strengths-overuse) for a year. (...) I was able to say, look, one of your strengths is that you're always persuasive, and you always manage to get things done. You always succeed. But in this case, you overused your strength, and it turned into a weakness.”

In addition to strengths overuse, the excessive focus on strengths may result in managers neglecting other essential competencies that employees may have. More specifically, by prioritizing employees' strengths, the SBPM process may overlook the broader range of knowledge, skills, abilities, and attributes that employees must put forward to perform their job roles effectively. These important and valuable competencies were not

necessarily appreciated, encouraged or promoted during the employees' performance appraisal.

Employee 4 : “You know, my performance evaluation does not reflect the entirety of my work (...) My objectives (which are set based on my strengths) might represent only 25% of the work I do in a year, while the other 75% isn't necessarily evaluated. (...) We do not have a complete view of people's performance. It's like looking at an aquarium but using a magnifying glass to focus on just a few fish, rather than seeing the whole picture.”

4.5.3.5 Skills Loss. Some participants expressed concerns that the SBPM process, while focusing on strengths, might lead to the loss of certain skills. Specifically, one employee pointed out that consistently prioritizing strengths could overshadow opportunities to improve weaker or less developed skills, potentially limiting overall growth and self-improvement. This participant seemed to suggest that this particular issue may result in skill gaps (e.g., gap between the skills that employees have and skills they need to have to perform at their jobs) because employees' may rely on their colleagues strengths to compensate for their skills which are not their strengths. By never addressing or keeping a minimum level of proficiency in one's other skills sets, this could pose significant challenges for employees' and organizations.

Employee 4: “I feel like with strengths-based management, there's a lot of focus on leveraging your strengths, but it's somewhat at the expense of addressing your areas of improvement or opportunities for growth that remain undeveloped. We compensate for that (strengths-based approach) by relying on someone who has strengths that are very different from yours. Sure, it makes for great teamwork, but it raises the question: if we only capitalize on your strengths, will the skill gap eventually become too large because you haven't worked on certain areas (deficits or weaknesses) ? I don't mean just meeting the minimum required skills, but, for example, if I'm really bad at Excel and never use it, and I have a colleague who's really good at it and always does it because it's their strength, will that eventually hurt me ? (...) I would have focused so much on my strengths that I would have

completely neglected my areas for improvement, and the gap (skills gap) will become too big.”

4.5.3.6 *Misaligned with day-to-day realities.* Despite the significant resources allocated by the HR professionals in this sample to ensure the SBPM approach would benefit both managers and employees, many participants felt that the approach did not align well with their day-to-day realities. Participants noted the strengths-based goal setting process felt abstract, and translating those strengths into concrete, actionable goals posed a significant challenge.

HR 1&2 : The identification of strengths is done at the beginning of the year, alongside the goal-setting process (...) This is where the problem lies. It requires, honestly, even though I’m in this field, even though I’ve studied it (SBPM), read everything, including the consultant’s book. it’s difficult. It takes a lot of management finesse, I think, to align everything. So it’s not easy. Our people still struggle to say, “Okay, you have this strength, so we’ll assign you this goal.” Instead, they start with the goals and then ask, “What strength can you use to achieve this?” Or they approach it informally and intuitively, like, “You’re good at this, so we’ll give you that project.” They don’t make the direct connection, like, “Here’s your strength, so here’s your goal.”

Our interviews with managers and employees align with the HR team’s observations, highlighting that the process was likely confusing for them, challenging to implement, and remains abstract for employees. Specifically, employees struggle to understand how their strengths will be applied.

Manager 6 : “Uh, well, at first, you know, people found it a little bit confusing. But then, well, it gradually got sorted out, slowly but surely.”

Employee 1 : “When we talk about focusing on strengths, it’s still a bit abstract for me, to be 100% honest. I don’t know if I’m the only one in this situation, but (...) maybe it’s because I don’t have training in human resources. So, you know, I can’t figure out where we’re trying to go with this. And how do we motivate an employee by having them write down their strengths and their goals?”

Some participants noted that while the SBPM process can be helpful and encouraging, it may not always be effective, particularly for addressing underperforming employees. Discussing strengths during conversations about underperformance can be challenging but is crucial for addressing genuine underperformance issues and for promoting accountability.

Employee 4 : “For employees ... I don't have the right word ... for employees where things are going well, it is (SBPM) great. But as soon as an employee underperforms, managing through strengths feels a bit like putting blinders on something that needs to be addressed (...) It is great to identify the person's strengths, but (...) I feel like it (SBPM) might be a little unbalanced when only focusing on strengths. It (SBPM) becomes harder in cases of performance improvement plans, or when not quite in the realm of disciplinary actions but rather dealing with underperformance.”

4.5.3.7 *Boundary Conditions*

Having outlined the opportunities and challenges of SBPM, we now shift our focus to the conditions that influence its success within organizations. Our research indicates that the effectiveness of SBPM depends on three key factors a) HR communication and support, b) management style and c) employee capacity for introspection.

4.5.3.8 *HR Communication and Support.* To ensure the success of the SBPM approach, the HR team provided managers with trove of resources to assist them in their adoption of the SBPM approach. The quote below outlines some of the resources that were afforded to them to ensure that they all had a common understanding of the SBPM approach.

HR 1: “There were information sessions (...). Afterwards, there were training modules as well. (...) We also have a lot of printed documentation that can be downloaded. There were also dialogue circles on the themes of the modules. Now that it's been launched, each year there are still two information sessions available for new managers or for managers who have questions, as well as reminder emails

at key moments. A shared calendar is also provided with important dates and milestones.”

However, despite the availability of such resources, not all managers possessed the same comprehension of SBPM. Furthermore, considering the limited understanding of the process, it appears that some managers took matters into their own hands and applied the SBPM approach based on their own intuition. We suspect that there may have been differences in communication, reception, and follow-ups between the HR team and managers on this point.

Manager 3: “The communication is there, honestly. The HR team, I think they’re doing a good job. They presented it well and explained it clearly.”

Manager 6: Uh, well, at first, you know, people found it a little confusing. But then, well, it gradually got sorted out.

Manager 1: “I am not sure I understand (...) Well, I apply performance management in the way I think it should be done on my part. And after that, well, I reflect the results or I try to, to fill out the forms and everything so that it fits.”

4.5.3.9 Management Style. The actions or inactions of the HR team influenced managers' experiences with the implementation and application of the SBPM process. For some managers, the approach aligned naturally with their managerial style and felt intuitive, while others found it more challenging to adopt. Our findings suggest that managerial styles played a role in these differences in experiences with SBPM. More specifically, managers with a more nurturing style found SBPM easier to navigate and implement, while managers with a more operational approach found it counter intuitive.

Manager 5: “The very operational people I know in the company, despite everything, tend to have a profile that more or less resembles mine. I recognize myself in them (...) The methodology (SBPM) focuses on leveraging strengths, it appeals to a certain type of person (manager). It requires a lot of adaptation to sit down and talk extensively with an employee (...).

Manager 4: “It is part of my management process to help them grow (...) I would describe it (my managerial style) as forward-thinking in my words, though others might call it atypical. But the truth is, I don’t consider myself the manager of my department. I believe I’ve put the right people in the right roles with the right skills. (...) For me, it’s all about the person behind the skills, and that person inevitably comes with strengths. So, when I hire someone, I’m able to determine what type of strengths are needed for a particular position and assess if that person has them (...) For me, it’s just a no-brainer. It’s (SBPM) natural because it fits perfectly with my management style. So, it’s clear that a process like this in a company makes my management style much more effortless, in my opinion.

4.5.3.10 Employee Capacity for Introspection. While SBPM is more conducive to managers with certain managerial styles, it seems that it may be more or less successful in employees that have a better capacity for introspection. Some individuals found it relatively easy to reflect on themselves and identify their strengths, while for others, this process was less straightforward.

Employee 2: “Yeah, I think it (strengths-based approach) can be very useful for self-reflection about myself and also a bit about the people around me. I can self-analyze based on what I perceive as my strengths.”

Employee 3: “Oh my God! You know, it’s a strange exercise to do because it requires introspection. And you know, life moves fast, right? So, it’s not every day that we stop for four hours to say, “Okay, what are my strengths?” (...) But it’s still very enriching to take a pause like that and do this exercise. (...) Actually, I’m pretty sure it is, because it really helps us get to know ourselves more deeply. It pushes us to understand ourselves better, to reflect, and to observe ourselves, as I was saying.”

Employee 8: “I have difficulty taking a step back, looking at myself and analyzing myself”

4.6 Discussion

In this study, we conducted a qualitative case study about SBPM. Our study aimed to better understand what SBPM is, understand its implementation (intended vs actual HRM), and explore the perceptions of HR professionals, managers, and employees regarding this approach. Our findings revealed that the intended and actual applications of SBPM did not always perfectly align. Moreover, in terms of stakeholder perceptions, participants identified several positive outcomes of the SBPM approach. Participants noted that it could humanize the performance management process, foster individual engagement, motivation and performance, and team productivity. Despite its benefits, the study also highlighted significant drawbacks. Notably, the narrow focus on strengths sometimes led to the overuse of these strengths, limited growth opportunities and that the SBPM approach did not always align with the operational realities of the organization. Lastly, the success of the SBPM approach appeared to depend on several factors such as the effectiveness of HR communication, managers' managerial style, and employees' ability for introspection.

4.6.1 Theoretical Contributions

Having now, summarized the study, we now turn to the paper's theoretical contributions. This paper advances the literature in three distinct ways. First, the current study addresses the fragmented nature of the SBPM literature, which has predominantly focused on isolated character strengths interventions aimed at improving performance (Heintz et al., 2019; Quinlan et al., 2012; Schutte & Malouff, 2019) and/or the implementation of single SBPM practices (Budworth et al., 2015; Gradito Dubord et al., 2022; Grammer & Bernhardt, 2021; van Woerkom & Kroon, 2020). Our study achieves this by offering researchers a more comprehensive understanding of SBPM through an in-depth examination of its full integration within an organization that has a formalized SBPM system, along with its intended and actual implementation.

Second, our study integrates the perspectives of diverse stakeholders, offering a qualitative, nuanced, multi-level, and multi-perspective understanding of SBPM. This approach allowed us to uncover not only its perceived benefits, but also its unforeseen drawbacks, which have been largely overlooked in the existing literature (Giamos, Doucet, & Lapalme, 2023). For instance, our study showcases certain tensions that can

arise from implementing SBPM in organizations. Specifically, while leveraging employees' strengths can lead to perceived positive outcomes such as increased engagement, motivation, and performance, it can also result in the overuse of strengths, which may ultimately backfire and negatively impact employees at work. Furthermore, although SBPM is designed to enhance performance through development, our findings suggest that the scope of development may be constrained by individuals' self-reported strengths, limiting their potential for development. This point is noteworthy, given that strengths-based interventions are often framed as opportunities for employee development (Giamos, Doucet, & Lapalme, 2023). However, our findings suggest that their potential to do so may be inherently constrained.

Lastly, our work emphasizes the HR, managerial, and individual related factors that can either support or hinder the effective implementation and appreciation of SBPM. This is particularly important given that such factors can have an influence on whether or not HRM systems like SBPM achieve their intended impact and can maintain their legitimacy within organizations (Den Hartog et al., 2013; Woodrow & Guest, 2014). Furthermore, understanding the managerial and employee factors that influence the success of SBPM in the workplace allows researchers to account for the various personal dispositions individuals may have and how it can influence the success of these systems. This understanding is crucial for enhancing the effectiveness of SBPM, ensuring positive user experiences, and fostering stakeholder buy-in within organizations (Schiemann & Seibert, 2017).

4.6.2 Practical Contributions

In addition to its theoretical contributions, the current study provides several practical insights for HR professionals seeking to ensure the success of SBPM systems in organizations. Specifically, it highlights the importance of effective communication between HR and all stakeholders, ensuring that everyone is provided with adequate resources, maintaining consistent follow-ups with people, and HR being readily available to address staffs' questions and concerns. Furthermore, HR professionals should consider the varying management styles of managers and prioritize supporting those whose styles may not naturally align with the principles of SBPM. Providing targeted guidance and

resources to such managers can help facilitate a smoother and more effective implementation of SBPM systems. In addition, HR leaders should consider offering sufficient tools that can help employees introspect about their strengths and ensure that they know how to tie their strengths to concrete goals that are operationalizable in the context of their job role. Moreover, our study also highlights potential pitfalls of SBPM and identifies key drawbacks that HR leaders and managers should consider when implementing this approach. Specifically, understanding that strengths can be overused, that the approach may limit opportunities for broader development, and that it can be challenging to operationalize allows HR leaders to anticipate these issues. Nonetheless, our work makes HR leaders aware of these issues and they can develop strategies and tools to mitigate these drawbacks and increase the likelihood that SBPM will be successful in their organization.

4.6.3 Limitations and Future Research

While our study offered significant theoretical and practical contributions, it is important to acknowledge that our study has three main limitations. First, this research is based on a single-case study, examining our phenomenon of interest within a single organization. While this approach may limit the generalizability of our findings to other organizations or sectors, it provided the opportunity to establish a strong relationship with the organization, deeply engage with our phenomenon of interest (Eisenhardt, 1989). It also allowed us to capture the nuanced intricacies related to our research question (Street & Ward, 2012). Nonetheless, to address our first limitation, we recommend that future research expand on our work by conducting multiple case studies across diverse organizational contexts, including private, public, and non-profit sectors, as well as industries such as healthcare, technology, and education. This would enhance the generalizability of findings and provide a broader understanding of SBPM implementation in organizations. Second, our study did not include participant observation. While we gathered multiple sources of evidence, we were unable to conduct on-site observations within the organization or directly examine how managers enacted the SBPM system with their employees. Future research could address this limitation by incorporating participant observation as a method to gain deeper insights into the real-life

dynamics of SBPM implementation. Observing managers and employees in their natural work environments would provide valuable context for understanding how SBPM practices are operationalized, how managers navigate challenges, and how employees engage with SBPM. Additionally, participant observation could help identify potential gaps between the intended design of SBPM and its actual application, offering a richer perspective on the alignment (or misalignment) of HRM policies and practices.

Third, we were unable to establish dyads within our sample. Despite multiple recruitment efforts, forming manager-employee dyads proved challenging. This limitation is noteworthy because dyads would have provided valuable insights into the SBPM process, which inherently involves the social interactions and dynamics between two interconnected parties (e.g., managers and their employees). Without dyads, we were unable to capture the full picture of how SBPM operates in practice, including the perspectives and experiences of managers and employees. Dyadic data would have allowed us to directly compare managers' and employees' perceptions of the same processes and explore how their social interactions can influence the effectiveness of SBPM. Additionally, such data would have provided deeper insights into alignment or discrepancies in expectations, communication, and satisfaction with SBPM. This kind of data could offer future researchers with a more nuanced understanding of the relational dynamics of SBPM, which is central to its success and is generally understudied in HRM (Tseng & Levy, 2019).

4.7 Conclusion

To conclude, this study advances our understanding of SBPM by examining its implementation as a formalized PM system in an organization. Our findings highlight the benefits of SBPM, while also uncovering key challenges, and difficulties. By integrating diverse stakeholder perspectives, we provide valuable insights into the factors that drive SBPM's success and the conditions that can hinder its effectiveness. Despite limitations, such as the single-case design and lack of dyadic data, our work lays the groundwork for future research to explore SBPM in varied contexts and with more comprehensive methods. Ultimately, this study offers actionable guidance for organizations seeking to implement SBPM systems effectively and sustainably.

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5.0 Article 3

A Humanistic Approach to Algorithmic Performance Management: A Model for Enhancing App Workers' Motivation and Optimal Functioning

5.1 Abstract

Purpose – As algorithmic management becomes increasingly prevalent in the contemporary world of fluid work, and considering its well-documented drawbacks on both platforms and app workers, we introduce a humanistic approach to algorithmic performance management to improve app workers' experience and optimal functioning.

Approach – Drawing on humanistic management, self-determination theory, and current knowledge on algorithmic performance management, we develop an alternative model containing specific propositions to showcase how algorithmic performance management can become more humanistic for app workers.

Findings – We advocate for a humanistic algorithmic performance management system that prioritizes the satisfaction of app workers' basic psychological needs, fostering self-determined motivation and optimal functioning. We explain how algorithmic performance management practices can foster more positive outcomes for app workers.

Originality – The proposed humanistic algorithmic performance management model offers a novel and alternative framework to the dominant control-oriented approaches to algorithmic performance management. Instead, our model underscores the importance of app workers' flourishing, helping platforms reduce dehumanization and other negative outcomes. Furthermore, our model opens up opportunities for theorizing and proposition testing for future research.

Practical implications – The study provides valuable insights and guidance for platforms to enhance workers' positive outcomes in a constantly changing world of work.

Keywords : Algorithmic management; performance management; algorithmic performance management; humanistic management; self-determination theory; optimal functioning

5.2 Introduction

Among the recent technological developments impacting the way people work, platform work represents one of the most significant and disruptive changes in the world of work. Platform work is a type of fluid employment through which workers are linked to consumers or clients via an application (i.e., app) or internet platform (Florisson & Mandl, 2018). It involves facilitating the exchange of labor by using digital channels of communication, which serve as intermediaries that connect workers with individuals or businesses seeking tasks, services, or products (Vallas & Schor, 2020). Among the various forms of platform work, app work is particularly relevant, it is characterized by workers providing services to customers within a defined geographic area and time frame (Duggan et al., 2020). This type of work is facilitated through various smartphone applications such as Uber, Lyft, and Deliveroo (Duggan et al., 2020). A particularity of app work is that app workers are managed through algorithmic management (AM) which involves “the use of software algorithms that operate on the basis of digital data to augment HR-related decisions and/or to automate HRM activities” (Meijerink et al., 2021, p. 2547). AM involves three key components: 1) the creation and utilization of digital data, 2) the application of software algorithms to analyze this data, and 3) the automation, either partially or fully, of decision-making processes related to human resource management (HRM) (Meijerink et al., 2021). AM automates various HRM functions, such as 1) workforce planning, 2) recruitment and selection, 3) training and development, 4) performance management, and 5) compensation and benefits (Meijerink & Keegan, 2019). AM encompasses these functions, however, research demonstrates that it plays a critical role in the performance management (PM) of app workers (Kadolkar et al., 2024). Several authors point to the idea that the main end of AM is to drive the performance of app workers, and as such, their performance is carefully managed through a variety of algorithmic performance management (APM) practices and systems (Gagné, Parent-Rocheleau, et al., 2022; Kellogg et al., 2020; Parent-Rocheleau & Parker, 2022).

While APM is intended to carefully manage and yield performance, it often comes at the expense of app workers’ well-being (Cram et al., 2022; Kadolkar et al., 2024; Sariraei et al., 2022; A. Zhang et al., 2022). APM systems mostly feature control, surveillance, and

automated decision-making with opaque processes that hold app workers accountable with little to no recourse (Jabagi et al., 2019). For example, app workers may experience sudden changes in compensation and employment status without prior notice (Kellogg et al., 2020). Furthermore, APM systems can lead to perceptions of information asymmetry, impersonal treatment, and performance pressure which can make already precarious working conditions worse. For instance, the lack of transparency for performance ratings often leaves app workers in a state of uncertainty, where they are compelled to overperform, without any clear understanding of whether their hard work will yield positive results and if their current gig will be their last (Bucher et al., 2021). Hence, app workers can experience anxiety, emotional exhaustion, isolation, stress, poor motivation, and a decline in overall well-being (Bucher et al., 2021; Gagné, Parent-Rocheleau, et al., 2022; Kadolkar et al., 2024; Kellogg et al., 2020; Noponen et al., 2023; Rosenblat & Stark, 2016), despite the advantages that platforms may promote to app workers.

In response to these challenges, online labor platforms have increasingly faced, ethical, legal, market, and strategic pressures to provide decent working conditions to their workers. Legal pressures emanate in many countries from the emergence of new laws, policies, and regulations aiming to protect gig workers, preserve their dignity, safety and reduce the precarity that they face (Adams-Prassl & Gruber-Risak, 2022; Aloisi, 2022). Moreover, ethical pressures emerge from growing public concerns regarding the decency and the sustainability of gig work, as advocated by influential international institutions like the UN, OECD, and EU (ILO, 2022; Rani & Gobel, 2022). Additionally, market pressures to treat workers in a humane manner also stem from a new challenge that platforms face. More specifically, nowadays platforms have recruitment and selection challenges they did not have before. While app workers were once seen as easily replaceable and disposable, they are now increasingly difficult to attract and retain on platforms, thus making investments in them necessary for platforms' success (Williams et al., 2023). Finally, strategic pressures exist due to the growing understanding that platforms' performance depends on workers' service performance (Z. Zhang, Liu, et al., 2024), which is largely driven by the quality of their working conditions and work environment.

Given these pressures from consumers, investors, lawmakers, and non-profit organizations, platforms are called upon to review their APM practices and systems. These concerns about the pervasive effects of APM on app workers are echoed by more and more researchers (Cameron, 2024; Kadolkar et al., 2024; Kellogg et al., 2020), highlighting the need to explore how APM systems can be re-imagined to better support rather than restrict app workers' flourishing. In this perspective, an emerging group of scholars has proposed adopting a more humanistic approach, one that is caring, dignifying, ethical, and socially responsible (Lamers et al., 2024; Pirson, 2019). Such an approach to APM calls for practices that promote app workers' performance and well-being while also driving value for the platforms that "employ" these workers (Cui et al., 2024). Humanistic APM does this by being considerate of people's needs and motivation which are some of the main ingredients that ultimately lead to their optimal functioning (Melé, 2016; Van den Broeck et al., 2019).

To demonstrate how humanistic APM systems can achieve such outcomes, we mobilize self-determination theory (SDT) (Ryan and Deci, 2000a). Aligned with the principles of humanistic management, SDT emphasizes the importance of having practices and systems that fulfill people's basic psychological needs and promote their self-determined motivation to achieve optimal functioning (Arnaud & Wasieleski, 2014; Van den Broeck et al., 2019). Although SDT has mostly been used to critique APM and to showcase how it is deleterious to app workers (Gagné, Parent-Rocheleau, et al., 2022; Kadolkar et al., 2024), we use it instead to demonstrate how APM practices can be adapted to generate positive outcomes for app workers and why it is beneficial to do so (Jabagi et al., 2019). SDT is not only compelling when it is used in this fashion, but it has strong explanatory power that helps us describe our phenomena of interest with nuance, simplicity, and validity. Hence, the main objective of this study is to propose a conceptual model that outlines how and why humanistic APM practices can fulfill app workers' basic psychological needs, foster their self-determined motivation and optimal functioning.

The current study makes three main contributions to the AM and HRM literature. First, while the existing literature on AM has predominantly emphasized control mechanisms and economic rationality, we along with other scholars such as Lamers, Meijerink, and

Rettagliata (2024), urge for a shift in perspective. We advocate that scholars should reimagine APM beyond these narrow mechanistic lenses and explore how it can be designed to promote the optimal functioning of app workers. Second, to advance this view of humanistic APM, we use a theory-driven approach to explain how and why such practices can lead to positive outcomes. Doing so helps us establish a clear theoretical framework, clarify causal relationships, and prevent misinterpretation of APM phenomena and their outcomes (Cheng & Hackett, 2021). By leveraging SDT, our humanistic framework addresses these issues and offers a comprehensive understanding of how humanistic APM practices can be beneficial. Thus, the framework not only offers a novel approach relative to the dominant controlling perspective of APM but also provides researchers with a new lens for theorizing along with testable propositions for future research. Third, our work enriches the SDT literature by highlighting the mechanisms and boundary conditions of fluid workers' motivation and optimal functioning. Moreover, our work showcases the relevance of SDT and its capability as a key framework to understand and guide best practices in the growing gig economy. Practically, the paper proposes that the transformation of platforms' APM practices towards a more humanistic approach can help platforms assuage concerns from key stakeholders. More specifically, we present actionable propositions designed to enhance platforms' attractiveness and competitiveness while simultaneously promoting a more positive and fulfilling work experience for their workforce.

The study's structure unfolds as follows: We begin by presenting APM, its potential advantages and disadvantages. Then we open on humanistic APM and SDT. Afterward, we present our theoretical framework, outline our propositions, and steer the paper toward a discussion that includes future research directions.

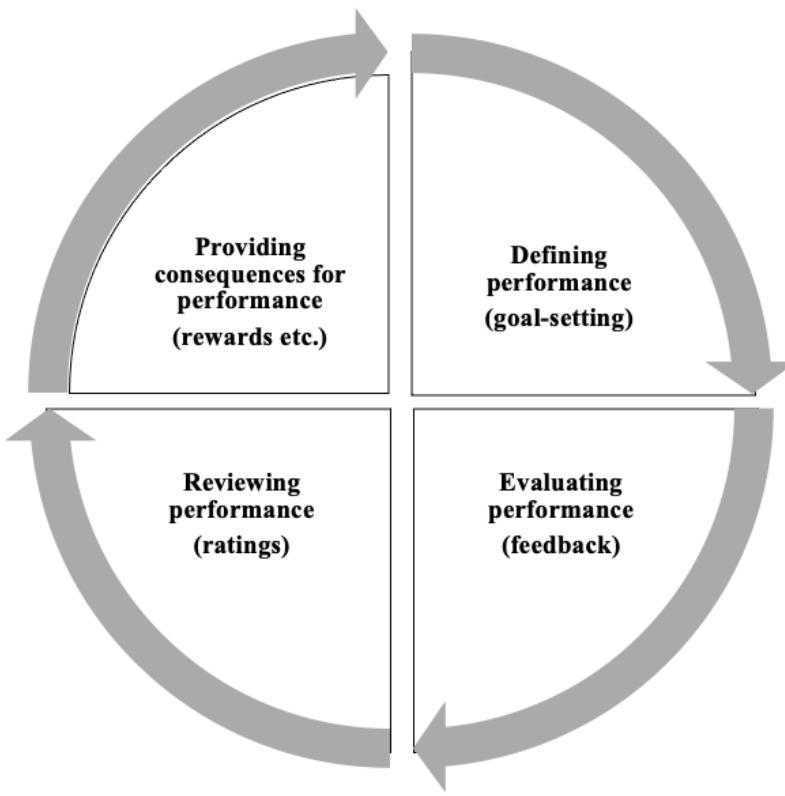
5.3 Literature Review

5.3.1 Algorithmic Performance Management

As two organizational processes, AM and PM share important similarities, notably that they are both focused on performance optimization. To be more precise, PM is “a set of processes and managerial behaviors aimed at defining, measuring, motivating, and

developing the desired performance of employees" (Kinicki et al., 2013 p. 1). While there are several PM process models in the literature, PM typically unfolds on an annual basis through four core components (see Kinicki et al., 2013). First, performance needs to be defined, whereby managers establish their expectations and set goals for their workers. Second, performance must be evaluated whereby managers will provide workers with performance feedback to ensure that performance is aligned with their goals. Third, reviewing performance is necessary to gauge the extent to which goals were met with ratings. Finally, the culmination of PM lies in the administration of consequences, where rewards, positive reinforcement, and/or corrective actions are applied by managers to hold workers accountable for their performance (Kinicki et al., 2013). In the context of AM and app work, the application of PM essentially mirrors this process with what is more commonly known as APM. The main difference between what happens in traditional employment versus platform work lies in the fact that APM can partially or fully automate app workers' PM process with little to no managerial involvement (Kellogg et al., 2020; Nguyen & Mateescu, 2019). Thus, contrary to conventional forms of employment where employees go through the PM process throughout the year, app workers go through PM cycles with nearly every ride, gig, or task they complete with their performance being continuously monitored, evaluated, and disciplined (Kellogg et al., 2020; Leavitt et al., 2024) (See Figure 5.1).

Figure 5.1. APM process model



Note. Based on Kinicki et al's., (2013) model of PM.

5.3.2 *The Potential Benefits of Algorithmic Performance Management*

This structured way of managing app workers' performance has its benefits. First, it ensures that app workers are matched to gigs that they can accomplish based on their skill set (Meijerink & Keegan, 2019). APM systems can adjust app workers' goals/tasks in real-time, responding to fluctuations dictated by customer demands and environmental circumstances (Rani & Furrer, 2021; Veen et al., 2020; L. Zhang et al., 2023). Second, as app workers complete their gigs, they receive feedback and performance ratings, providing them with valuable insights about their performance, which helps them meet client expectations and platform standards (Jarrahi and Sutherland, 2019; Benlian et al., 2022). Third, app workers can get rewards that are directly linked to their work. More specifically, they can have higher compensation, when their services are in high demand,

and when they receive additional tips from clients (Croppanzano et al., 2023; A. Zhang et al., 2022). Moreover, app workers technically have flexibility in managing their work schedules (Benlian et al., 2022). This allows them to work during times when they feel most energetic and motivated which can potentially make them more productive. Finally, the absence of direct human oversight over one's performance can reduce some power imbalances between workers and managers typically found in traditional work settings, which can minimize the politicization of one's performance (Poon, 2004).

5.3.3 *The Potential Downfalls of Algorithmic Performance Management*

While APM systems provide several potential advantages, recent literature highlights significant challenges, particularly emphasizing how their current use can dehumanize and harm app workers. First, even though APM systems can match app workers to gigs in real-time and provide adaptable goals, these systems can reduce workers' sense of autonomy in achieving their goals and impose heightened demands from platforms (Parent-Rocheleau & Parker, 2022). Second, although APM systems deliver immediate feedback after each completed gig, the feedback that app workers may not be helpful for performance improvement (Cram et al., 2022; A. Zhang et al., 2022). Similarly, performance ratings are often opaque and delivered without sufficient context, which further complicates workers' understanding of their evaluations (Allen-Robertson, 2017; Bucher et al., 2021; Jarrahi et al., 2023). Third, despite potential benefits in compensation, APM systems can devalue app workers' labor rather than promote fair pay (Hoang et al., 2020). Moreover, while APM systems offer flexibility, some platforms may penalize workers for inconsistent engagement, which can actually undermine their work-life balance (Mohlmann & Zalmanson, 2017). Additionally, power dynamics are still imperfect in APM systems, where power shifts from managers to algorithms, leaving workers at the mercy of algorithms (Bucher et al., 2021). Lastly, more and more research supports the idea that APM practices are detrimental to app workers' well-being (Kadolkar et al., 2024) as they can be dehumanizing (Cui et al., 2024; Mohlmann et al., 2021).

5.3.4 *Humanistic Algorithmic Performance Management*

To tackle the challenges of dehumanization and negative well-being outcomes often linked to APM systems, scholars have suggested rethinking these systems through alternative perspectives, such as humanistic management (Lamers et al., 2024). This approach to APM emphasizes treating workers with fairness, ethics, and care (Pirson, 2019). Central to humanistic management is the belief that human development, flourishing, and performance are essential for business success (Melé, 2016; Pirson, 2019). By prioritizing individual well-being and growth, this approach promotes practices that allow people to self-determinate (Arnaud & Wasieleski, 2014) and businesses to create value (Spitzeck, 2011). The humanistic perspective challenges the "homo economicus" view in the APM literature (Lamers et al., 2024) as it recognizes that workers as more than just "rational actors" within a system (Melé, 2016). It goes further by explicating that people are also emotional beings with unique capacities, desires, experiences, motivations, and needs (Melé, 2016). By adopting a more comprehensive understanding of app workers and integrating both the rational and emotional dimensions of their experiences, the humanistic perspective enables the design of APM practices that respect and address workers' needs, thus, the potential for creating APM systems that humanize app workers (Arnaud & Wasieleski, 2014), promote their flourishing (Melé, 2016), and drive value for organizations (Spitzeck, 2011).

5.3.5 *Humanistic Algorithmic Performance Management and Self-Determination Theory*

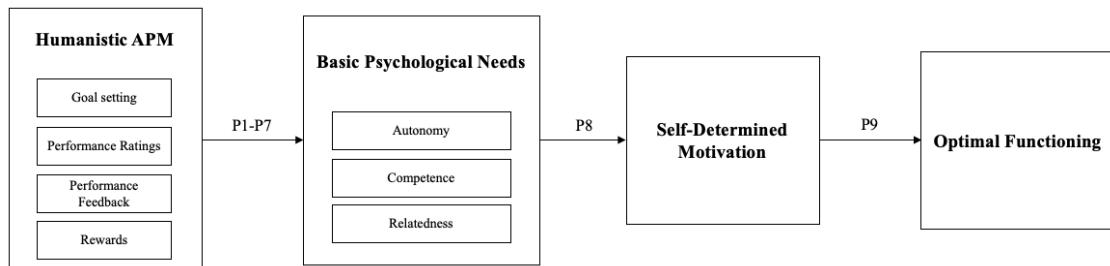
One of the best ways to demonstrate how and why humanistic APM can promote flourishing is through SDT (Arnaud & Wasieleski, 2014). This theory of human motivation posits that individuals possess an inherent proclivity toward their growth and development so that they can self-determinate (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Scholars explain that this inherent tendency is driven by the satisfaction of three basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Both SDT scholars and humanistic management researchers recognize the importance of acknowledging and supporting these needs (Arnaud & Wasieleski, 2014), as people will become intrinsically motivated to engage in actions that foster their growth and development (Deci & Ryan, 2000). SDT considers

this type of self-regulation of behaviors as autonomous forms of motivation and can lead to positive attitudinal, behavioral, and psychological health outcomes (Van den Broeck et al., 2021). Moreover, SDT acknowledges the importance of this form of motivation as it can lead people to experience optimal functioning at work (Van den Broeck et al., 2021), which refers to “the manifestation of intra- and interpersonal growth and development in terms of employee well-being (e.g., positive emotions and vitality), attitudes (e.g., positive attitudes toward others and the organization), and behaviors (e.g., performance, proactivity, and collaborative behaviors)” (Van den Broeck et al., 2019, p. 22). Because such work experiences have been widely shown to be altered in the context of platform work (Croppanzano et al., 2023; Gagné, Parent-Rocheleau, et al., 2022; Kadolkar et al., 2024; Noponen et al., 2023), we argue that humanistic APM systems, following our set of propositions, can be needs satisfying, motivating, and enabling of app workers’ optimal functioning at work.

5.4 Theoretical Framework

Building upon recent studies, we target four practices that take us through a typical platform work APM cycle: 1) goal-setting, 2) performance feedback, 3) performance ratings, and 4) rewards (See Figure 5.1). These practices form the foundation of our model and are interdependent on one another. They collectively impact app workers’ needs satisfaction which in turn fosters their self-determined motivation and optimal functioning (See Figure 5.2).

Figure 5.2. The Humanistic APM framework



5.4.1 *APM Goal-Setting and Basic Psychological Needs*

Through a PM lens, goals are known to influence workers' attitudes and behaviors by highlighting what people should achieve (Pulakos, Mueller-Hanson and Arad, 2019). By setting goals, organizations specify their expectations and tie individuals' efforts towards the achievement of organizational priorities (Erez et al., 1985; Latham & Steele, 1983; Pulakos, Mueller-Hanson, et al., 2019).

In the context of app work, APM systems are used to assign tasks and set performance targets. For example, app workers may be asked to complete a delivery within a specific time frame (Parent-Rocheleau & Parker, 2022; Rosenblat, 2018). The adaptability and fast reactivity of APM systems enable organizations to provide and adjust workers' goals in real-time, responding to fluctuations dictated by customer demands and environmental circumstances (Rani & Furrer, 2021; Veen et al., 2020; L. Zhang et al., 2023). For example, algorithms are used to constantly set new targets that are based on real-time data, such as customer demands, geolocation, previous performance, and deadlines (Duggan et al., 2020; L. Zhang et al., 2023). This automated goal-setting process plays an integral role in ensuring that APM systems are efficient and responsive to all these factors. However, this adaptability can result in rapidly changing, conflicting or ambiguous goals, and powerlessness in the goal-setting process (Gagné, Parent-Rocheleau, et al., 2022; Mohlmann et al., 2021; Myhill et al., 2021; Parent-Rocheleau & Parker, 2022). Platform systems also tend to orient workers toward short-term objectives, limiting their role and potential growth within platform work (A. Zhang et al., 2022). Here, we provide a proposition for a more humanistic approach to algorithmic goal-setting.

5.4.1.1 *Worker input in Goal-Setting.* Whereas employee participation in goal-setting is encouraged in the PM literature (Kleingeld et al., 2011), the general approach in app work is authoritarian. In this context, goals are most often imposed on app workers without their input (Lehdonvirta, 2018; Veen et al., 2020), and app workers face penalties or rating downgrades if they decline too many "gigs" (i.e., tasks assigned by the system) (Kellogg et al., 2020; Rosenblat, 2018). By contrast, research suggests that a more

participatory approach to goal-setting can be associated with more positive outcomes, such as an enhanced sense of autonomy, competence, task comprehension, goal acceptance, and ultimately, performance (Erez et al., 1985; Kleingeld et al., 2011; Koestner & Hope, 2014; Latham & Steele, 1983). Given these benefits, we argue that platform work would better support workers by allowing them to engage in goal-setting in ways that are compatible with platform structure.

For instance, without necessarily providing full flexibility, platforms could allow app workers to set personalized long-term goals in the system (e.g., achieving X number of deliveries in a month) or express preferences for certain types of gigs. Additionally, enabling a worker to decline certain assignments when worker availability is high, and doing so without penalty, would foster a stronger sense of autonomy and competence without undermining the platform's efficiency. This approach would necessitate balancing worker input with the operational needs of the platform, yet we believe it could yield a more humanized and sustainable workforce, with workers' basic psychological needs being more satisfied, within the constraints of app work. Hence, we suggest:

P1: App workers who are provided with the capacity to influence algorithmically assigned goals (e.g., task acceptance/rejection) are more likely to have their needs for autonomy and competence satisfied.

5.4.2 APM Performance Feedback and Basic Psychological Needs

In platform work, the feedback that app workers receive plays a critical role in their work. Performance feedback refers to “information about performance that allows a person to change his/her behavior” (Daniels & Daniels, 2004). Within APM, performance feedback can be qualitative, where app workers receive comments from the clients who request their services (Kuhn & Maleki, 2017). Such comments can be particularly helpful for app workers, as they can read up on the ways that they can improve the quality of their services. However, app workers tend to receive feedback that restricts their actions and that is inherently negative which may limit their sense of autonomy and competence (Bucher et al., 2021; Rosenblat, 2018). We argue in this section that humanistic APM

systems should provide workers with autonomy-supportive change-oriented feedback, and promotion-oriented feedback.

5.4.2.1 Autonomy-Supportive Change-Oriented Feedback. In the context of platform work, feedback is mostly seen as controlling as organizations carefully oversee workers' performance in real-time (Jabagi et al., 2019). This can lead to a sense of limited options for performance improvement and that they need to adhere to feedback due to potential repercussions such as expulsion (Jabagi et al., 2019; Kellogg et al., 2020). Therefore, it is essential to consider the potential role of autonomy-supportive change-oriented feedback and how it can be helpful for app workers.

Autonomy-supportive change-oriented feedback is defined as feedback that supports an individual's autonomy, self-determination, and personal growth (Carpentier & Mageau, 2013; Jabagi et al., 2019). It is characterized by providing individuals with a rationale, acknowledging feelings, giving choices, tips, and solutions to improve oneself (Carpentier & Mageau, 2013; Deci & Ryan, 1985). The objective of autonomy-supportive change-oriented feedback is to change people's undesirable behaviors or to help people work on their weaknesses to improve themselves (Carpentier & Mageau, 2013). Research has shown that this type of feedback helps satisfy people's basic psychological needs and is related to motivation, skill development, performance, and well-being (Carpentier & Mageau, 2016; Cheon et al., 2020).

A humanistic APM approach should therefore provide app workers with autonomy-supportive change-oriented feedback so that they can have more opportunities to adjust their performance. For instance, if an app worker on a food-delivery platform did not perform as expected to deliver a service, they could explain why they did not meet performance expectations (e.g., rationale - "Timely delivery is important as customers expect their meals to be warm and fresh"). App workers' hard work should be acknowledged (e.g., acknowledging feelings - "We recognize that bad weather and restaurant delays can make this objective difficult to achieve, which are factors that are out of your control"). Moreover, app workers can be presented with all the different options they have to improve on this aspect (e.g., giving choices - "You can a) plan routes

using the shortest delivery times, b) communicate with restaurants to reduce waiting times, and/or c) inform customers proactively if delays are unavoidable”). Lastly, they can receive advice on how they can concretely improve their performance based on their choices (e.g., tips and solutions - “Using features like delivery zone optimization in the app can help you significantly reduce your travel time and ensure that your clients are content”). Having more options for performance improvement can already foster a greater sense of autonomy for app workers (Carpentier & Mageau, 2013; Jabagi et al., 2019). Moreover, when individuals receive such feedback, it can contribute to a heightened sense of mastery (Carpentier & Mageau, 2013, 2016). This is because autonomy-supportive change-oriented feedback enables them to identify how they can concretely enhance their performance. Keeping these arguments in mind, we make the following proposition:

P2: App workers who receive autonomy-supportive change-oriented performance feedback are more likely to have their need for autonomy and competence satisfied.

5.4.2.2 Promotion-Oriented Feedback. Promotion-oriented feedback can be defined as feedback that acknowledges and highlights peoples’ desirable behaviors to reinforce positive aspects of their performance (Carpentier & Mageau, 2013, 2016). In the context of platform work, algorithmic feedback is more focused on their deficits, such that workers struggle when they receive negative feedback (Bucher et al., 2021; Chan, 2022). Conversely, their positive behaviors are likely to be under-emphasized.

We contend that a humanistic approach to AM should involve providing app workers with more promotion-oriented feedback, as this can counterbalance the negative feedback. For example, app workers could receive prompts such as “Your clients consistently rate you highly for your friendliness and professionalism. This is a key strength that sets you apart and keeps clients coming back.” Such feedback not only highlights positive aspects of performance but also reinforces the behaviors that contribute to success. Moreover, promotion-oriented feedback tends to be a signal of effectiveness (Amabile, 1993), hence it is more likely to be accepted and translated into action (Anseel & Lievens, 2009). These factors collectively contribute to a heightened sense of competence among app workers,

as they not only recognize their strengths but also understand how to sustain and build upon their efforts. From this perspective, we suggest that:

P3: App workers who receive promotion-oriented feedback in the context of humanistic APM are more likely to have their need for competence satisfied.

5.4.3 APM Performance Ratings and Basic Psychological Needs

Contrary to performance feedback, performance ratings are numerical data that provide a quantitative representation of an individual's past performance (Giamos, Doucet, & Léger, 2023). In conventional forms of employment, performance ratings rely on the subjective assessments of supervisors, however, APM introduces a transformative approach, utilizing data analytics and machine learning to compile performance-related metrics in real-time (Jarrahi et al., 2021; Kellogg et al., 2020). In this context, app workers often lack transparency in the rating process, leaving them vulnerable to the opaque decisions of the algorithms, and the ratings of customers (Allen-Robertson, 2017; Bucher et al., 2021; Jarrahi et al., 2023) that can be devoid of context. We contend that this lack of transparency, coupled with uncontextualized ratings, erodes basic psychological needs.

5.4.3.1 *Transparent Ratings.* The lack of transparency in performance ratings that app workers receive poses two significant obstacles. First, performance ratings are opaque. More specifically, platforms do not openly communicate to app workers how their ratings are calculated and weighted (Rahman, 2021). This lack of information can exacerbate workers' fear of the consequences that are associated with these ratings. App workers usually have limited opportunities to improve their performance and the impact of one single negative rating can lead to serious consequences (e.g., less visibility on the platform, deactivation, expulsion, etc...) (Bucher et al., 2021). As such, individuals can grapple with a lack of autonomy, as they find themselves unaware of how they can positively influence their performance (Parent-Rocheleau & Parker, 2022). Second, the lack of transparency can hinder app workers' competence by obscuring the specifics of what they are doing well and/or where they need improvement (Parent-Rocheleau & Parker, 2022).

From this perspective, we argue that humanistic APM systems should emphasize the importance of transparent performance ratings. For instance, these systems should provide app workers with detailed information about the specific performance metrics used by the platform, as well as the rating sources (e.g. data, clients) and their relative weight in their overall performance assessment. This greater transparency should instill greater autonomy as app workers would have the knowledge required to improve their performance and positively influence their ratings. Furthermore, it can also provide them with the sense of competence that is necessary to execute their tasks in a manner that aligns with performance expectations. Therefore, we suggest that:

P4: App workers who receive transparent performance ratings are more likely to have their needs for autonomy and competence satisfied.

5.4.3.2 *Contextualized Ratings.* Furthermore, we argue that performance ratings should not only be more transparent, but also contextualized. APM can establish high-performance expectations by framing success in terms of meeting both clients' and platforms' needs (Duggan et al., 2020). This approach implies that if app workers fail to meet these demands and consequently receive low-performance ratings, they face the potential threat of termination (Duggan et al., 2020; Galière, 2020; Prassl, 2018). This is particularly important when considering that app workers may receive low ratings from clients for circumstances beyond their control (DeVault et al., 2019). For instance, a delivery person might be rated poorly by a client for a delayed delivery caused by extreme weather conditions, despite completing the delivery (DeVault et al., 2019). This raises the possibility that customers, on the one hand, might be influenced by contextual factors like traffic conditions or speed regulations, leading to inaccurate assessments of app workers' performance (Rosenblat & Stark, 2016). On the other hand, platforms may not systematically consider these contextual factors in their algorithms, thus failing to account for these barriers that influence performance ratings.

Thus, we argue that humanistic APM systems should provide app workers with contextualized performance ratings. This involves algorithms incorporating relevant information for a more comprehensive and objective assessment of workers' performance.

For example, some organizations have been using machine learning to consider and notify app workers and clients about potential service disruptions (Ribeiro, 2023); therefore facilitating more accurate assessments of performance by both platforms and clients. Furthermore, contextualized ratings would present the advantage of acknowledging specific challenges of app workers in the accomplishment of their tasks; fostering a greater sense of relatedness because workers would feel better understood and supported, but also treated with respect and consideration. Tailoring evaluations to their specific context could also promote app workers' autonomy, as they would see that their actions are considered within the broader framework of their job roles. Moreover, the provision of context-specific ratings enables app workers to better comprehend the intricacies of their performance, thus fostering a sense of competence. Hence, we suggest that:

P5: App workers who receive contextualized ratings are more likely to have their need for autonomy, competence, and relatedness satisfied.

5.4.4 AM Rewards and Basic Psychological Needs

For most app workers, AM systems are a source of income uncertainty and instability (Goods et al., 2019; Jarrahi et al., 2021; Rani & Furrer, 2021). For some, the income instability that is part of app work qualifies it as a precarious form of work (Chan, 2022; Muralidhar et al., 2022). Additionally, most platforms focus on individual rewards, fostering a competitive atmosphere that can lead workers to feel isolated from one another (Watkins, 2022). We argue that these elements, income instability, and predominantly individual rewards, undermine basic psychological needs. A more humanistic approach to AM would offer both more predictable rewards and collective, team-based rewards for app workers.

5.4.4.1 Predictable rewards. One significant source of income in platform work is the dynamic, real-time adjustments to compensation rates made by the AM systems. These systems continuously adjust the prices of gigs charged to customers to match prices with customer demand. This means that what a worker receives for performing a similar gig can vary significantly as demand rises and falls (Bokányi & Hannák, 2020; Mäntymäki et al., 2019). These rapid changes are difficult to predict for

workers and they must pay close attention to price surges so that they can work when it is most rewarding for them (Mohlmann et al., 2021; Wood et al., 2019). This reliance reduces the autonomy of workers, who become more dependent on the decisions of the system and feel less free to act as they desire.

Moreover, AM can be opaque, which also increases the uncertainty of rewards. The opacity of an algorithmic system makes it difficult to understand and therefore predict how an algorithmic reward system arrives at its outcomes, especially if it is AI-based (Bujold et al., 2022; Kellogg et al., 2020). Disclosing the process and providing explanations of how the AM system works could mitigate algorithmic opacity and, therefore, increase its predictability to workers by allowing them to better understand the process behind the reward system (Lee et al., 2015; Parent-Rocheleau & Parker, 2022; Rahman, 2021; Robert et al., 2020).

Therefore, a more humanistic approach to APM would implement a predictable reward system that is comprehensive and ensures similar gigs are compensated at similar rates over time. Predictable rewards could promote workers' perceptions of being freer and in control of their actions because they would become less dependent on irregular pay variations. In addition, a more predictable pay rate would also lead to a greater sense of competence, with workers more regularly feeling that they have mastered their work environment, not just when pay suddenly surges. Moreover, more predictable rewards may foster a sense of relatedness among workers, as those who cannot work during peak hours will not feel that they are being left behind. Also, the reduction of uncertainty regarding the precarity of their work (e.g., due to unstable income) is likely to enhance workers' sense of belongingness, fostering a greater affiliation with their organization (Gagné, Parent-Rocheleau, et al., 2022). In sum, this leads to the following proposition:

P6: App workers who receive more predictable rewards are more likely to have their need for autonomy, competence, and relatedness satisfied.

5.4.4.2 From single-player to more multi-player rewards. The gig economy often revolves around individual rewards to increase competition (Chan, 2022; Kellogg et al., 2020; Muralidhar et al., 2022). More precisely, the platforms are generally based on the

gamification of work, where workers log in as players competing for individual rewards (Cameron, 2022; Vasudevan & Chan, 2022). This gamified environment can discourage worker-to-worker socialization and create barriers to building peer relationships. As individual players, app workers are less likely to socialize with their peers and engage in sharing relationships, that is, to relate to each other (Bunders & Akkerman, 2023; Wood et al., 2019). Moreover, platforms rarely facilitate direct peer interaction (Cameron, 2022; Rosenblat, 2018), leading many gig workers to seek alternative online communities to fulfill their need for relatedness (Watkins, 2022; Z. Zhang, Wang, et al., 2024).

In more traditional work settings, group rewards have been associated with positive outcomes, such as increased cooperation and support (Nyberg et al., 2018). We argue that such group rewards could also be beneficial in the context of app work. For instance, a ride-sharing platform might introduce regional group rewards based on the collective performance of drivers within a particular area or during a special event (e.g., a group bonus for completing X rides over New Year's Eve in a designated area). By incorporating group rewards into the AM cycle and introducing communication features, platforms could foster a sense of relatedness among workers, transforming the gig economy from a purely individualistic pursuit into a more team-oriented environment.

Group rewards are strong incentives to foster collaboration towards shared goals, increasing cooperation and mutual support (Nyberg et al., 2018; Trencerry et al., 2021). By incorporating group rewards, the feeling of relatedness with other workers will be reinforced as one achieves success with peers, rather than competing for individual wins. Moreover, group rewards will have the effect of moving away from a “winner takes all” APM and allowing more workers to share their achievements. Being on the “winning team” will have the effect of fostering a sense of effectiveness in one's work, hence the need for competence. All in all, this leads us to the following proposition:

P7: App workers who receive group rewards are more likely to have their need for relatedness and competence satisfied.

5.4.5. Basic Psychological Needs, Self-Determined Motivation, and Optimal Functioning

Now that we have explored the connection between humanistic APM practices and the satisfaction of app workers' basic psychological needs, we turn our attention to how they can indirectly drive self-determined motivation and optimal functioning.

In the context of platform work, APM practices are often designed to promote efficiency, neglecting workers' basic psychological needs (Jabagi et al., 2019). This oversight can demotivate (Leclercq-Vandelannoitte, 2017) or promote extrinsic or controlled forms of motivation (Gagné, Parker, et al., 2022). Platforms can instead adopt humanistic APM practices around goal-setting, feedback, performance ratings, and rewards which are specifically designed to satisfy app workers' basic psychological needs and foster their self-determined motivation (Deci et al., 2013).

Meta-analyses demonstrate the association between the satisfaction of people's basic psychological needs and people's self-determined motivation (Howard et al., 2017; Van den Broeck et al., 2016). Needs satisfaction fosters self-determination for several reasons. First, the satisfaction of the need for autonomy leads to self-determined motivation because people engage in activities for reasons that they choose (Howard et al., 2017). In the context of app work, this can manifest itself as having more autonomy support in terms of scheduling, feedback, and having a say in how app workers can deliver their services (Gagné, Parent-Rocheleau, et al., 2022; Jabagi et al., 2019). Second, the satisfaction of the need for competence leads to self-determination because workers who perceive that they are competent in their tasks are more likely to find inherent enjoyment or self-determined motivation from their work (Gagné, Parent-Rocheleau, et al., 2022; Jabagi et al., 2019). Finally, the satisfaction of the need for relatedness leads to self-determined motivation because when people feel connected, valued, and supported by others, they are likely to autonomously regulate their behaviors toward the pursuit of this situation (Howard et al., 2017).

Howard, Gagné and Bureau (2017) describe a continuum of motivation ranging from controlled forms of motivation to self-determined (or autonomous) forms. Self-

determined motivation is thus comprised of identified regulation, integrated regulation, and intrinsic motivation. Identified regulation represents instances where individuals engage in behaviors because they are personally important to them (Ryan et al., 2019). For instance, participation in the determination of one's goals (P1) can highlight the meaning of work through the satisfaction of autonomy and competence needs. Similarly, the provision of collective rewards is likely to help workers find importance in the achievement of common goals (P7). Integrated motivation is slightly different, as people will engage in activities because they are consistent with their identity and values (Ryan et al., 2019). Moreover, autonomy-supportive change-oriented, and promotion-oriented feedback will give workers clear signals on how they fit in terms of values and identity (P2 and P3). Furthermore, intrinsic motivation is even more distinct and is viewed as the most self-determined form, as it reflects the inherent satisfaction and enjoyment that people experience from their behavior (Ryan et al., 2019). This appears when workers have a high capability to self-regulate their behaviors and do their work and tasks because they genuinely want to, thanks to a strong feeling of autonomy, competence, and affiliation (Ryan et al., 2019). We argue that the quality of the goal-setting process (P1), feedback (P2 and P3), ratings (P4 and P5), and rewards (P6 and P7) represent important building blocks of these feelings and of app workers' ability to pursue their work for intrinsic reasons.

P8: App workers who have their basic psychological needs (autonomy, competence, affiliation) satisfied due to humanistic APM practices are more likely to experience self-determined motivation.

Moreover, self-determined motivation tends to be positively associated with people's optimal functioning (Gagné, Parker, et al., 2022; Ryan & Deci, 2000). As individuals experience self-determined motivation, they are more likely to experience more positive attitudes such as a heightened sense of engagement in their work (Soyer et al., 2022). Furthermore, people who are motivated in this way are also more likely to demonstrate more positive behaviors (i.e., organizational citizenship behaviors towards individuals and organizations) and actual performance at work (Soyer et al., 2022). Within and beyond the workplace self-determined motivation is intricately connected to people's

psychological health (Deci & Ryan, 2008; Gagné, Parker, et al., 2022). A recent meta-analysis by Van den Broeck *et al.* (2021) showed that intrinsic motivation, which is the most self-determined form of motivation has the strongest influence on positive outcomes, explaining around 50% of the statistical variance of indicators of optimal functioning like burnout, work engagement, job satisfaction, affective commitment, turnover intention, proactivity, counter-productive behavior, and absenteeism. Hence, we suggest:

P9: App workers who elicit self-determined motivation due to humanistic APM practices are more likely to experience optimal functioning at work.

5.5 Discussion

In this paper, we mobilized SDT to propose a humanistic approach to APM. The specific propositions that we formulated demonstrate how and why humanistic APM practices can satisfy app workers' psychological needs, and subsequently foster self-determined motivation and their optimal functioning. These propositions offer researchers and practitioners a framework to examine the APM practices used by platforms and provide actionable means for developing practices that are more caring, dignifying, and ethical toward app workers.

5.5.1. *Theoretical Contributions*

The present work makes three key theoretical contributions to the AM and HRM literature. First, it re-imagines APM beyond the traditional, control-focused, and economically-driven perspectives that dominate APM (Lamers et al., 2024), which mostly regard APM systems as autonomous, opaque, and mechanistic “entities” that are solely designed to drive productivity. Moreover, these views tend to assume that app workers are rational, mechanical actors that are embedded within a broader platform ecosystem, operating as instruments in achieving organizational goals. Such prevailing assumptions have introduced several challenges in the AM and HRM literature, notably creating a “singular” and narrow view of APM practices and systems. This focus has created several blind spots, which have limited scholars’ ability to explore alternative, potentially valuable approaches to APM, such as the humanistic perspective (Lamers et al., 2024). Our paper moves beyond these assumptions by acknowledging the human experience in

the context of gig work through the principles of humanistic management and SDT. Furthermore, our study showcases that when APM systems are purposefully designed with these principles in mind, they can lead to positive outcomes.

Second, we adopted a theory-driven approach to develop a clear conceptualization of humanistic APM and offer a strong theoretical framework that helps us better understand how platform practices can enhance workers' experience. With only a handful of studies that have explored this topic (see Cui, Tan and Shi, 2024; Lamers, Meijerink and Rettagliata, 2024; Leavitt, Barnes and Shapiro, 2024), establishing a strong theoretical foundation for this subfield of AM is important. We did so by adopting SDT, which represented a compelling theory for several reasons. On the one hand, SDT tightly aligned with the principles of humanistic management (Arnaud & Wasieleski, 2014; Ferguson et al., 2024). On the other hand, it predicted and explained how and why humanistic APM practices can lead to positive outcomes (Deci et al., 2017; Van den Broeck et al., 2019). Hence, we derived propositions that serve as a robust ground to develop and expand future research on more people-centered APM practices.

Third, this manuscript enriches the SDT literature by reinforcing its relevance and applicability to analyze and improve working conditions in the growing platform economy. In that, our study expands the contribution of recent pieces exposing the importance of SDT as a key framework to meet research challenges pertaining to the future of work (Gagné, Parker, et al., 2022; Jabagi et al., 2019). Specifically, our model mobilizes SDT's widely validated assumptions to the new realities and challenges yielded by the gig economy. As mentioned, app work tends to deplete optimal functioning because of its controlling practices. In this context, SDT provides rich and solid insights into how work practices can allow workers to regain self-determination of their actions through autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Our contribution is thus to propose concrete ways in which APM practices can better fulfill these needs. In sum, our study reiterates the relevance of SDT as a key framework to analyze and improve APM 134racticees and app workers' optimal functioning and consequently paves the way for an important trend of empirical studies.

5.5.2. *Practical Contributions*

The current study also offers valuable practical insights for platforms, app workers, and policymakers. For platforms, implementing humanistic APM systems can lead to several benefits like reducing the risk of dehumanizing app workers, which is a prevalent issue that platforms face (Anicich, 2022; Cameron & Rahman, 2022; Cui et al., 2024). It can also bring platforms several operational, regulatory, and financial advantages. For instance, platforms that prioritize humanistic APM practices may become more attractive to potential recruits (Schmidt et al., 2022; Williams et al., 2023). Additionally, given that humanistic APM practices can foster app workers' motivation, this may lead to increased retention on platforms (Jabagi et al., 2019) and lead to more consistent service quality. Moreover, humanistic APM practices can foster trust between app workers and platforms, as workers may perceive platforms as enablers of work opportunities rather than exploitative profit-driven entities. This can improve the image of platforms as partners that aid app workers in securing meaningful and dignified work that helps them meet their needs (Schmidt et al., 2022). By integrating humanistic APM practices, platforms may also be able to approach regulatory compliance more proactively, avoid legal risks (e.g., lawsuits), and align themselves with environmental, social, and governance (ESG) standards, which are compulsory in major markets around the world (Krueger et al., 2024). Overall, by mitigating all these operational and compliance risks, platforms are likely to strengthen their profits sustainably and public image.

For app workers, the proposed model fosters more positive work experiences by supporting their basic psychological needs, enhancing motivation, and promoting optimal functioning. Humanistic APM practices can help app workers feel valued as individuals and obtain greater economic stability, job satisfaction, and reduced job precarity. Hence, they may perceive platform work to be more sustainable, which can enable their economic participation and growth in the long run. By prioritizing the dignity and respect of app workers, a humanistic APM approach not only prevents exploitation but also ensures that workers are treated in ways that support their self-determination and flourishing.

Finally, for policymakers, this framework provides guidance on the ethical, responsible, and humane application of APM, helping to avoid exploitative practices and advocate for human-centered technology that protects and promotes worker well-being. By relying on our framework, policymakers will be better equipped to establish policies and programs that prevent exploitative practices, safeguard workers' well-being, and foster transparency in algorithmic decision-making processes. A humanistic approach to APM, highlights the importance of balancing productivity goals with the well-being of workers, advocating for a fair, inclusive, and respectful treatment for all (Lane, 2020).

5.5.3. *Limitations and Future Research*

Despite its contributions, our model has certain theoretical boundaries and limitations. First, while this paper provides valuable insights into humanistic APM, we did not account for specific moderating factors that could significantly influence the direction and strength of certain relationships within our model. On the one hand, we did not consider the potential impact of platform characteristics; such as platform type, size, operational structure, and strategic approach on our model's applicability and outcomes. On the other hand, our model also did not incorporate individual-level factors that may affect app workers' reactions to humanistic APM systems. Personal dispositions, including age, cultural background, socioeconomic status, personality traits, skill level (e.g., high-skilled versus low-skilled), and reliance on these platforms for income, can shape individuals' perceptions, experiences, and reactions to humanistic APM practices (Cropanzano et al., 2023; Kadolkar et al., 2024). We encourage future researchers to delve deeper into these moderating factors by conducting case studies that investigate the unique characteristics of different platforms and examine how these may shape humanistic APM systems. Through this method, researchers can generate novel theoretical insights that can enrich our understanding of inter- and or intra-platform differences (Dooley, 2002; Eisenhardt, 1989). Additionally, researchers might consider conducting in-depth interviews with app workers to gain insights into how their individual dispositions affect their reactions to humanistic APM practices (Busetto et al., 2020; Rowley, 2012). Through qualitative exploration, researchers could uncover the underlying reasons as to why certain personal traits and circumstances lead to positive, neutral, or negative reactions to humanistic APM

practices, offering a more comprehensive understanding of how these practices are experienced by app workers (Busetto et al., 2020; Rowley, 2012).

Second, our humanistic APM model represents an aspirational vision of APM practices that platforms may choose to adopt; however, we do not propose it as a one-size-fits-all solution for every platform. While we believe that implementing the model's practices can benefit both platforms and their workers, it is not necessary for platforms to adopt every element of humanistic APM to create a functional and supportive system. Instead, researchers and practitioners should focus on the complementarity and synergy of these practices, aiming to develop a coherent approach that aligns with each platform's unique strategy and operational context (Bedford, 2020; Grabner & Moers, 2013; Lepak & Snell, 1999; Youndt et al., 1996). Importantly, attention should be given to practices that genuinely support app workers' well-being and promote their flourishing (Laguerre & Barnes-Farrell, 2024). This balanced and context-sensitive approach can help foster APM systems that are both effective and aligned with humanistic values. Future research could investigate how various combinations of humanistic APM practices interact to impact app workers' outcomes, providing insights into the most effective configurations of these practices. To support this research, we recommend developing a humanistic APM practices scale that accurately reflects workers' perceptions of these practices, adhering to established best practice guidelines (Robinson, 2018). Furthermore, we encourage researchers to test the propositions presented in this study through time-lagged or longitudinal research designs. These approaches would offer a stronger understanding of the relationships between humanistic APM practices and worker outcomes over time, as they better capture the evolving nature of these relationships (Ployhart & Vandenberg, 2010). Together, these steps could yield a richer, evidence-based understanding of humanistic APM and its impact on platform work.

5.6 Conclusion

To conclude, we provided in this paper a model of humanistic APM and its outcomes. We showcased how humanistic APM practices can help app workers experience basic psychological need satisfaction, self-determined motivation, and optimal functioning at work. We emphasized the importance of tailoring humanistic APM practices to align with

the specific context and strategic objectives of platforms. By doing so, platforms can create systems that not only promote app workers' optimal functioning but also improve their working conditions, satisfaction, and sense of pride in their work. Moreover, we believe that such systems would not only benefit app workers but also the platforms themselves, as they would be better able to maintain their workforces more easily, with greater loyalty, and generate profits responsibly. As the platform economy is becoming an increasing part of the workforce, it is imperative to make AM systems more humanistic, caring, and conducive to flourishing.

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6.0 Conclusion

The current thesis explored novel trends in PM through three separate articles, which each examined a different approach to PM. More specifically, the current work investigated three key themes: 1) PM and employee development, 2) PM and the strengths-based approach, and 3) algorithmic PM. Each of these studies highlights innovative PM practices and systems, which capture the novel strategies that organizations are using to modernize PM. These approaches are designed with the expectation of enhancing effectiveness and achieving positive outcomes.

6.1 Theoretical and Practical Contributions

This thesis makes several key contributions to the PM literature. The current work advances the field by 1) expanding current knowledge on emerging PM trends, by 2) promoting a person-centric approach, and 3) providing insights into the conditions under which these novel PM trends are more or less likely to be effective. All these contributions offer valuable guidance for both researchers and practitioners.

First, this thesis advances knowledge on PM trends by providing researchers with novel theoretical insights and empirical evidence on emerging developments. By pinpointing these trends, this thesis helps PM scholars recognize and understand these recent advancements which may have previously gone unnoticed. At the same time, practice is evolving rapidly, with HRM professionals actively experimenting with new PM practices, systems, and approaches to optimize PM within organizations (Buckingham & Goodall, 2015; Cappelli & Tavis, 2016). Moreover, this experimentation seems to be occurring with limited collaboration with academics which results in a practitioner-driven discourse (Giamos et al., 2024). This situation creates a research gap where scholars struggle to keep pace which limits their ability to apply their expertise to systematically assess these trends and provide practitioners with the evidence-based insights that are needed to evaluate their effectiveness (Giamos et al., 2024; Vosburgh, 2022). To address this gap, this thesis identified novel PM practices, systems, and approaches, examined their outcomes, and investigated the barriers and success factors which could influence their implementation.

In doing so, it equips both researchers and practitioners with rigorous, evidence-based knowledge to inform decision-making and advance the field. Additionally, the articles within this thesis serve as a foundation for future conversations, encouraging scholars to explore new research avenues in key areas of PM. Specifically, this work highlighted the growing relevance of subfields such as PM and employee development, PM and the strengths-based approach, and algorithmic. These emerging subfields present important opportunities for academics to collaborate with practitioners by participating in the conversation with them rather than working in isolation (Kaufman, 2022). Moreover, by engaging directly with practitioners, scholars can develop meaningful research that address both theoretical puzzles and real-world challenges that can ultimately drive PM forward in a meaningful and impactful way.

6.1.1 Promoting a Person-Centric Approach to PM

Second, beyond advancing current knowledge on PM trends, this thesis promotes a person-centric approach to PM which has been overlooked or underemphasized in previous research. To be more precise, past research often frames PM as a control system to limit employees' opportunism, control their behaviors and increase their performance (Franco-Santos & Otley, 2018; Otley, 1999, 2003). While these perspectives emphasize efficiency, they often neglect employees' experiences, needs, and well-being (Gruman & Budworth, 2022; Kowalski & Loretto, 2017; Peccei & van de Voorde, 2019). Instead, prior research has primarily focused on employees as human capital, valuing them mainly for their productivity which can be dehumanizing (Gruman & Budworth, 2022). This narrow conceptualization essentially reduces employees to cogs in a system (Gruman & Budworth, 2022; Tweedie et al., 2019). Person-centric approaches to PM are intended to be different. While they still aim to yield performance, they do so by prioritizing employee development and growth, as discussed in Chapters 1 and 2 (Giamos et al., 2024). Additionally, as explored in Chapter 3, these approaches seek to humanize workers' experiences by fostering employees optimal functioning (which includes positive attitudes, behaviors and well-being) (Van den Broeck et al., 2019). By integrating these elements, person-centric PM may help future researchers promote sustainable PM practices and systems, that allow employees to thrive while contributing to organizational

success. Moreover, it may help practitioners reflect on the way that they can yield performance while promoting positive work experiences for employees that can mitigate against ill-being.

6.1.2 Success vs. Detracting Factors of PM Practices and Systems

Lastly, an important contribution of this thesis to both research and practice is its exploration of the factors that influence the success or failure of novel PM approaches. On the one hand, understanding these factors can help us better understand the conditions under which PM systems are more or less effective. On the other hand, these factors provide practitioners with guidance on the elements that can facilitate or hinder the successful implementation of PM in organizations. More specifically in articles 1 and 2 we identified several factors that could impact PM's success/failure from the perspective of different stakeholders (e.g., HR practitioners, managers and employees). More specifically from the HR perspective, factors such as stakeholder buy-in, organizational culture, and communication can ensure that innovative PM practices are not only "introduced" in organizations by HR practitioners but also accepted and effectively integrated (Giamos et al., 2024). There are also several managerial factors such as training, trust and accountability which can play an important role in facilitating the adoption of these new PM practices and systems. Managers must be equipped with the necessary tools to implement PM effectively, held accountable for applying it as intended, and foster trusting relationships with employees to ensure a smooth PM process (Giamos et al., 2024). Finally, employees' personal dispositions can also influence the effectiveness of novel PM practices and systems. For instance, in Articles 1 and 2, the importance of employees' personal dispositions was discussed, such as employees' growth mindset and their capacity for introspection. Person-centric PM systems require that employees set their own goals and define their own development paths, which can be challenging for those who have difficulty with self-reflection. Such individual differences can play a role in determining whether employees will fully adopt person-centric PM systems or disengage from them.

6.2 *Last word*

To conclude, the current work examined the novel trends in PM. It did so through three different thesis articles where my co-authors and I 1) identified novel PM practices and systems, 2) pinpointed the different intended or actual outcomes of such systems, 3) took note of the different success or detracting factors of such systems. The current work advances both research and practice by deepening our understanding of these systems while offering practical insights for their implementation. By bridging theory and practice, this provides researchers and practitioners with guidance for adopting and promoting novel PM systems in organizations.

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Annexes

Table A-1. Sample codes to themes structure.

Data Snippets	1 st order themes	2 nd order themes	Aggregate themes
“It’s important that employees receive constant feedback, both positive and corrective. Continuous dialogue between supervisor and employee helps to ensure employees know what to do, what’s acceptable, what to fix and what their work is leading toward. When review time comes, supervisors’ common fears include giving out bad news and dealing with confrontations” (Gray, 2014, p XX).	Feedback (General) Continuous feedback Feedback digital tools Multisource feedback Positive Feedback Promoting feedback seeking Strengths-based	Feedback	DOPMP
“A multisource feedback system includes performance data from peers, direct reports, partners, vendors, and customers, in addition to supervisors and employees themselves. It is most useful for developmental purposes (i.e., employee development rather than evaluation” (Aguinis et al., 2021, p XX).			
“To fully reap the benefits of using feedback, managers should instead primarily rely on a strengths-based approach to feedback that consists of identifying employees’ areas of positive behavior and results that stem from their knowledge, skills, or talents” (Aguinis et al., 2012, p XX).			
“Real-time feedback applications are increasingly utilized for performance appraisals and so-called 360-degree feedback that allows for feedback from supervisors to employees, from employees to supervisors, from peers, and from the self” (Rivera, 2021, p XX).			
We define continuous performance management as (...) an approach that fosters continuous conversations between managers, direct reports, and teams about goals, work progress, and performance to date (in the form of constructive or positive feedback), (Deloitte, 2017, a).			

Note. The Gioia method was used to develop this codes to themes structure (see Gioia et al., 2012).