



## RESEARCH ARTICLE

## Public Sector Results Management in Developing Countries: An Analysis of Scientific Production in Scopus

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**ARTICLE INFO****ABSTRACT**

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The aim of this study was to analyze the scientific production on results-based management in the public sector in developing countries between 2004 and 2024. Bibliometrics was used as a method to quantify the amount of scientific production of existing data on the subject. A total of 909 Scopus documents were considered for inclusion in the research based on their relevance and the key words in English (public sector, results management and developing countries). There was a significant increase in scientific output from 2019 to 2022 (n=284; 31%), with the United States leading with 12%. The most significant source was BMC Health Services Research, which had 25 papers. The author with the most citations (255) and most papers is Bennett, S. Scientific articles accounted for 92% of these publications, prominent in the area of social sciences (23%). It is concluded that there is a greater diversity of sources, authors, topics and resources in general regarding the impact of results-based management in the public sector in developing countries. This provides a more complete picture of the global influence, perception and importance of scientific output studies. Furthermore, by conducting a comprehensive assessment of the existing literature, this bibliometric study provides background-based support, thus laying the foundation for future research.

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**INTRODUCTION**

The development of results-based management (RBM) has progressively advanced as a global initiative to alleviate poverty, foster long-term and distributed economic expansion, and help national governments and development organizations refine their approaches to defining and measuring development success (Cañari-Otero & Hanco-Bustinza, 2021; Yunching, 2022). Thus, development effectiveness, in its broadest sense, is the degree to which nations and agencies are able to achieve their common development goals, have adequate means to measure and report on their progress toward those goals, and apply lessons learned to improve their performance over time (Castanedo-Abay, 2022).

In that vein, when deciding how to manage government, MfDR means using data that accurately reflect the social impacts of particular policies (Guerra & Palomino, 2020). Measuring the effects produced by an action is therefore crucial for its implementation (Lener, 2021). This requires methods that incorporate data analysis into decision-making processes, systems that process the information and tools to record these differences (Albuja & Sandoval, 2020).

On the other hand, several developed nations have used MfDR to make government programs more effective and efficient (Villamil, 2022). However, developing nations in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) are beginning to take an interest in this type of public management (Morveli, 2021). Thus, performance indicators, results-based budgets, and policy and program evaluations are just some of the MfDR tools that have become essential for Latin American administrative frameworks in

the last two decades (Bravo et al., 2022). Thus, while there were some pioneering efforts in the early 1990s, MfDR programs can now be found throughout the subcontinent.

Thus, since MfDR requires significant changes in the way the public sector is managed, its implementation usually requires a medium- and long-term commitment that goes beyond the mandate of a single administration (Tejada, 2021). Consequently, the institutional and legal frameworks of public management systems may need to be revised to accommodate these developments; in addition, continuous training of public employees and restructured agencies may be required to encourage teamwork and collaboration rather than individual effort and rivalry (Flores & Delgado, 2020; Solórzano, 2022).

In this sense, in the last decade there has been an increase in the number of research studies on results-based management in the public sector in developing countries (Tunque & Quispe, 2022). Therefore, based on the review of the existing literature on the subject related to RBM, the aim is to understand the conceptual framework that supports its use to promote more effective public administration (Dávila & Sánchez, 2021). In any case, bibliometric research helps scholars to determine which publications are the most important and to follow the growth of human knowledge by analyzing books, articles, and other forms of written scholarship (Caló, 2022; Leyva et al., 2022).

Therefore, for databases to be useful in historical context research, it is important to have a reliable method of collecting research data (Sanz, 2022). This entails the use of bibliometric indicators, a set of metrics to quantify the amount of material written on a specific topic or a group of related topics (García-Villar & García-Santos, 2021; Llerena & Arévalo, 2021).

Similarly, a bibliometric framework is needed for the collection of information on performance management in the public sector in developing countries. At each stage of the evaluation, the following parameters will be taken into account: year of publication of the information, country of origin, subject matter, type of file, affiliation to an institution, source and authors. Thus, the objective of the proposed study is to analyze the scientific production on performance management in the public sector in developing countries between 2004 and 2024.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The present dataset on performance management in the public sector in developing countries was evaluated using bibliometric analysis. Consequently, it follows that bibliometrics played a key role in facilitating data collection for the research (Salinas and Garcia, 2022). Likewise, Scopus is a worldwide known database that gathers and evaluates academic publications; the originality of the topic was another determining factor in the search.

To delimit the scope of the research, 1106 academic papers were selected using Boolean search terms including public AND sector, results AND management and developing AND countries. Once data collection and filtering were completed, 909 publications were selected for further analysis. In addition, the dataset did not include any publications that did not meet the following criteria: (1) study conducted before 2004 or after 2024; (2) publications that were identical to each other; and (3) research that had nothing to do with the present investigation.

On the other hand, 909 papers were evaluated to determine their total contribution to results-based management in the public sector in developing countries using criteria. Additional indicators were considered, such as the following: date of publication, authors, journals, country of origin, file type, academic discipline and bibliometric affiliations (Florez-Fernández & Aguilera-Eguía, 2020). The data were processed and analyzed using Excel, specifically descriptive statistics and count data. Meanwhile, the keyword co-occurrence map was created using VOSviewer V\_1.6.19.

## **RESULTS**

Specifically, this bibliometric study analyzed papers published in journals and other sources between 2004 and 2024. For this study, 909 academic papers dealing with performance management in the public sector in developing countries were selected. Thus, Figure 1 shows the most current global publications included in the Scopus index. According to the figures, the annual publication rate reached an all-time high of 31% between 2019 and 2023, with the publication of 284 academic papers.

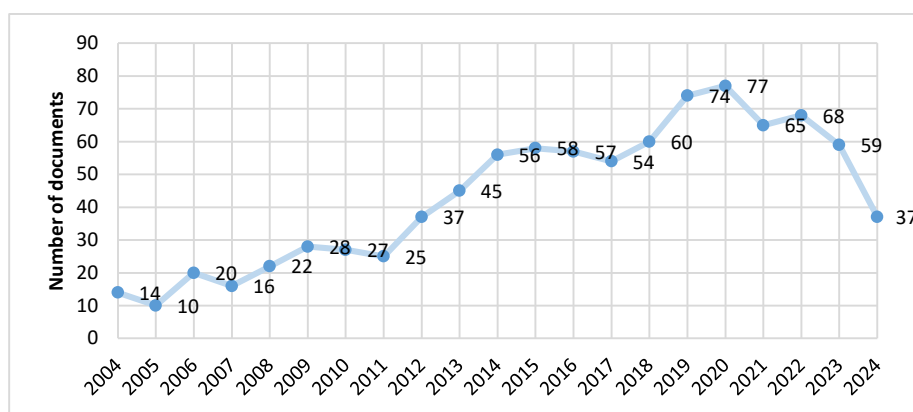


Figure 1: Documents published by year

Source: Scopus data (2024)

According to Table 2, a total of 137 countries were considered for the study. Scientific production was highest in the United States, with 12%, followed by the United Kingdom, with 7.8%, and finally South Africa, with 4.4%. In addition, of the three languages most used for academic writing, English accounted for 88.2% of the papers published, followed by Spanish with 9.5% and Portuguese with 2.3%.

Table 1: Publication of documents by country

N°	Country	Number of documents	%	N°	Country	Number of documents	%
1	United States	180	12.0%	17	Ghana	23	1.5%
2	United Kingdom	117	7.8%	18	Italy	23	1.5%
3	South Africa	66	4.4%	19	Indonesia	22	1.5%
4	India	59	3.9%	20	France	20	1.3%
5	Pakistan	58	3.9%	21	Sweden	20	1.3%
6	China	49	3.3%	22	Nigeria	19	1.3%
7	Australia	43	2.9%	23	Tanzania	18	1.2%
8	Canada	36	2.4%	24	Thailand	16	1.1%
9	Iran	36	2.4%	25	Viet Nam	16	1.1%
10	Malaysia	36	2.4%	26	Kenya	15	1.0%
11	Brazil	33	2.2%	27	Turkey	15	1.0%
12	Switzerland	31	2.1%	28	Nepal	13	0.9%
13	Germany	30	2.0%	29	Saudi Arabia	13	0.9%
14	Netherlands	26	1.7%	30	United Arab Emirates	13	0.9%
15	Japan	24	1.6%	31	Indefinite	409	27.2%
16	Spain	24	1.6%	<b>Total</b>		<b>137</b>	

Source: Scopus data (2024)

To carry out this evaluation, a total of 139 academic sources were analyzed. The information collected for this study is condensed in Table 2. It also shows the total number of articles published in various journals and sources, such as BMC Health Services Research, with 25 publications. While the journal Sustainability Switzerland published 22 papers. In addition, each of these sources has contributed significantly to the growth of its corresponding academic field.

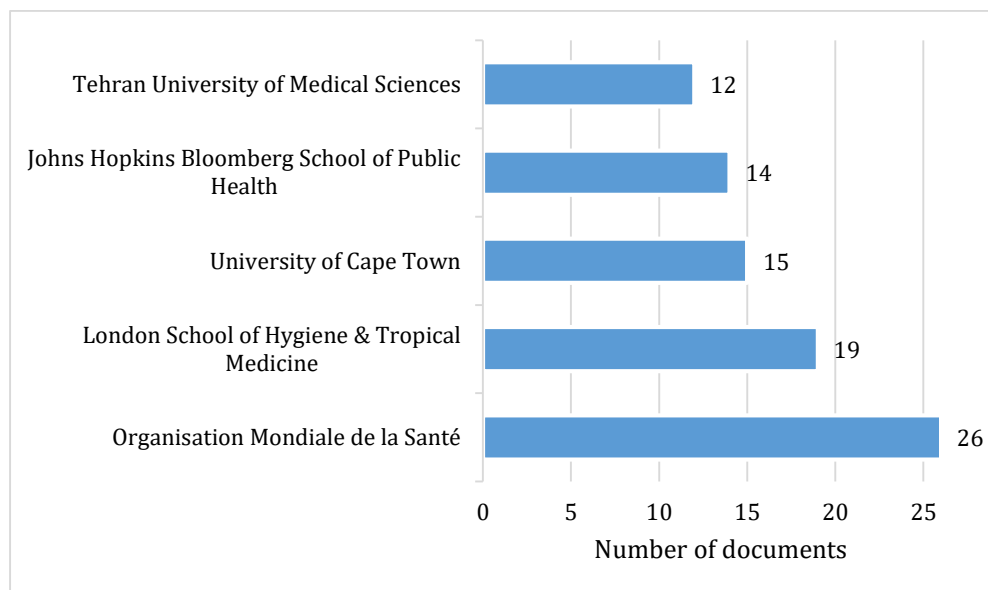
Table 2: Publication of documents by source or journal

Source or Magazine	Number of documents	Source or Magazine	Number of documents	Source or Magazine	Number of documents
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BMC Health Services Research	25	Global Health Action	7	Waste Management	5
Sustainability Switzerland	22	Health Policy and Planning	7	Water Resources Management	5
Globalization and Health	19	International Journal for Equity in Health	7	Habitat International	4
Human Resources for Health	13	Journal of Cleaner Production	7	BMC Cardiovascular Disorders	3
Plos One	13	International Journal of Energy Sector Management	6	BMC Medical Informatics and Decision Making	3
Tropical Medicine and International Health	13	BMJ Open	5	BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth	3
Waste Management and Research	13	Bulletin of The World Health Organization	5	Buildings	3
International Journal of Health Planning and Management	11	Energy Policy	5	Cogent Business and Management	3
International Journal of Public Sector Management	11	Environmental Science and Pollution Research	5	Energy	3
BMC Public Health	10	Health Policy	5	Engineering Construction and Architectural Management	3
Health Research Policy and Systems	8	International Review of Administrative Sciences	5	Frontiers In Public Health	3
International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health	8	Resources Conservation and Recycling	5	Indefinite	211
Public Administration and Development	8	Social Science And Medicine	5	<b>Total revistas</b>	<b>139</b>

Source: Scopus data (2024)

The 909 academic papers were also co-authored by scholars from more than 144 different institutions. During the research period, Figure 2 shows the universities that produced the largest number of scholarly publications. This group includes the following universities: Organisation Mondiale de la Santé (26), London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (19), University of Cape Town (15) and Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health (14).



**Figure 2: Documents published by institutions**

Source: Scopus data (2024)

A total of 146 authors contributed to the selected academic journals. According to Table 3, Bennett, S. obtained the highest number of citations, with 255 in total. He was followed by three authors: Leufkens, H.G.M. and Mantel-Teeuwisse, A.K. (233 citations, respectively) and Chan, A.P.C. (205).

**Table 3: Published papers by author**

By author	Quantity	Total citations	By author	Quantity	Total citations
Bennett, S.	5	255	Arab, M.	3	14
Chan, A.P.C.	5	205	Footman, K.	3	111
Chileshe, N.	5	142	Goodman, C.	3	82
Benova, L.	4	138	Juma, P.A.	3	99
Campbell, O.M.R.	4	138	Karon, R.	3	9
Macleod, D.	4	138	Leufkens, H.G.M.	3	233
Powell-Jackson, T.	4	76	Lynch, C.A.	3	111
Rashidian, A.	4	54	Mantel-Teeuwisse, A.K.	3	233

Source: Scopus data (2024)

Figure 3 shows a synthesis of studies covering the years 2004-2024 that focus on performance management in the public sector in developing countries. Recently published data on this topic come mostly from the social sciences (23%). Furthermore, in terms of types of documents, it is clear that scientific articles represent 92% of the production, book chapters 7% and books 1%.



## DISCUSSION

The time period covered by this analysis is from 2004 to 2024, with a review of the literature worldwide. The data indicate that the maximum number of research publications on results-based management in the public sector in developing countries occurred between 2019 and 2022.

Also, due to theoretical advances in various disciplines, such as social sciences, medicine, environment, business management and economics, this topic has gained importance in the modern era (Tejada, 2021). Where it is highlighted, studies such as that of Lapuente & Van de Walle (2020) who state that the role of MfDR is to increase efficiency in the employment and use of public resources, so that more results are produced with less costs; its purpose is to create a more effective state that is closer to citizens is the basis of this new approach to public management.

For their part, developing countries have adopted this management tool to improve the quality of public spending. This coincides with Vargas & Zavaleta's (2020) research, which states that by optimizing public spending and offering solutions to current problems, results-based management makes it possible to improve institutional circumstances. This is achieved mainly through the integration of public welfare, government efficiency and competitiveness in educational programs (Rosenbloom et al., 2022).

Likewise, the large number of scientific papers published, developed on various topics and with the support of institutions, sources and authors (Valbuena & Sanchez, 2024) are highlighted. The research of Calero (2022), who affirms that practical experiences reinforce the concept of MfDR, which is based on organizational studies, is highlighted; for this reason, it is important to remember that public employees must continue to use a managerial and professional approach to produce results that increase the value of society. In addition, Soledispa-Rodriguez et al. (2020) point out that improving the effectiveness of the State through more and better public service delivery is one of the greatest challenges facing States. That is, strengthening their capacity to efficiently use limited resources and, at the same time, produce tangible and favorable modifications in some or all of the variables relevant to sustainable development (Recalde, 2020).

In general, it is shown that bibliometric analysis of performance management in the public sector in developing countries has progressively boosted research in various fields, countries and languages (Cabana et al., 2020). Because it offers a relevant alternative for all those involved in public policy and management, representing a set of principles, methods and tools that guide public decisions and activities towards the improvement of development factors (Rodriguez et al., 2021). According to Artieda et al. (2021), MfDR is not just a model with a fixed set of parameters that is applied mechanically. On the contrary, it can be applied in several ways. The methods employed, the objectives pursued, and the social, political and economic climate of each nation determine the course of action.

## CONCLUSION

Research on performance management in the public sector in developing countries has grown in the number of studies conducted over the last decade. Among all papers indexed by Scopus over the research period, the most prominent years were between 2019 and 2022, with an increase of 31% (n=284). The United States stands out among the nations examined with a production rate of 12%. In addition, 88.2% of the publications were written in English. Also, of all the authors cited, Bennett, S. received 255 mentions, while the most important source published 25 scientific papers in BMC Health Services Research.

Moreover, the vast majority of publications (92%) were scientific articles, and 23% belonged to the social science category. In addition, the VOSviewer keyword analysis found seventy-three hits for the term "developing countries". The terms "public sector", "results management" and "financial management" should also be taken into account because they are relevant to the selected study.

The literature review of the 909 scientific papers highlights the importance of results-based management in the public sector, since the studies suggest that the general welfare of the population should be the ultimate objective of the State's resources and initiatives. It is concluded that there is a greater diversity of sources, authors, topics and resources in general regarding the impact of results-

based management in the public sector in developing countries. This offers a more complete view of how studies of scientific production are perceived, impact and significance at the global level. In addition, this bibliometric research lays the foundation for future research by providing evidence-based support through a comprehensive review of the current literature.

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