

Performance Management: A Scoping Review of the Literature and an Agenda for Future Research

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Abstract

Performance management (PM), in all its guises, occurs across all organizations whether formally through an official organizational process or informally through daily dialogue. Given its inherent importance to the field of Human Resource Development (HRD), we conducted a scoping review of the PM literature over a period of more than 11 years, uncovering 230 articles from 41 different journals. Our review suggests that the PM literature explores the more process driven aspect of PM, namely performance appraisal (PA), as opposed to investigating PM in a truly holistic way. Throughout, we suggest a series of research gaps which, if filled, will help both HRD scholars and practitioners better understand how employee performance can be effectively managed in the future.

Keywords

performance management, scoping literature review, performance appraisal

Introduction

Given the competitive global environment in which organizations operate, the need to develop (and retain) highly skilled employees is paramount for prosperity and survival (Crawshaw, Van Dick, & Brodbeck, 2012). Performance management (PM) is widely

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advocated as a way to develop employees (Aguinis, 2013; Cascio, 2014). Broadly speaking, PM can be defined as “identifying, measuring, and developing the performance of individuals and teams and aligning performance with the strategic goals of the organization” (Aguinis, 2013, pp. 2-3). This simple definition underscores the close alignment between PM practices and Human Resource Development (HRD). This link is further evidenced by Hamlin and Stewart’s (2011) review of the literature in which they proposed four core purposes of HRD: “improving individual or group effectiveness and performance”; “improving organisational effectiveness and performance”; “developing knowledge, skills and competencies”; and “enhancing human potential and personal growth.” (p. 211)

PM is important to HRD for several reasons. First, there is a significant overlap between the above-mentioned definition of PM and the four core purposes of HRD. Second, Werner (2014) argues that PM is a research area that could bridge Human Resource Management (HRM) and HRD given that appraising employees is a core function of HRM and improving individual and organizational performance is key for HRD. Third, HRD scholars advocate the use of coaching as an HRD intervention within the PM context (Ellinger, 2014; Werner, 2017). The HRD professional plays a role in training managers to be effective coaches and has the requisite interpersonal skills, and also has a responsibility to create a climate that facilitates coaching (Werner, 2017). These coaching elements are very much aligned with the broadening of PM beyond the annual performance review process.

Despite the potential of PM systems to positively support the organization and enhance both employee and organizational performance, the reality faced by practitioners may be very different (Aguinis, Joo, & Gottfredson, 2011; Bragger, Kutcher, Menier, Sessa, & Sumner, 2014; Davis, 2011; Pfeffer, 2009). In fact, PM systems, which include sometimes very blunt performance appraisal (PA) practices, have been called the “Achilles’ heel” of organizational processes (Pulakos, 2004; Pulakos, Mueller-Hanson, O’Leary, & Meyrowitz, 2012). Perhaps because of this more skeptical view, a significant shift in PM practices has been witnessed more recently with calls made to make PM more comprehensive, holistic, and ultimately more “developmental” in nature. For example, Rock and Jones (2015) found that approximately 30 large companies, such as Adobe, Deloitte, and GE, were changing their PM systems away from PA ratings, annual performance goals, and forced rankings which traditionally pit employee against employee, toward the use of shorter term goals which emphasize ongoing discussions between employees and their managers. The underlying reasons for this shift include the changing nature of work (now often team-based and global), the need for increased teamwork (vs. competition), and, perhaps most significantly, the need to attract, develop, and retain talent through more frequent feedback which was seen to facilitate engagement and development. This trend, as we describe below, represents a shift from PM systems characterized by an emphasis on annual PA toward a more developmental PM model.

Part of the problem may stem from the fact that the phrases PM and PA are frequently used interchangeably. Some scholars describe PA as one element of the broader PM system (Aguinis, 2013; Claus & Briscoe, 2009; Kinicki, Jacobson, Peterson, & Prussia,

2013). In essence, this view sees PA as an annual evaluation exercise; whereas, PM is an ongoing, if not continuous, activity that focuses on defining, assessing, and developing performance in a manner that aligns with strategic goals (Aguinis, 2013). Yet, other scholars have defined PA in ways that incorporate the broader PM elements, not least the strategic alignment of individual and team performance toward organizational goals (Latham & Wexley, 1994; Rotundo, 2009). Nankervis and Compton (2006), reflecting upon the implications of this confusion, suggest that although PM is a multifaceted, multi-purpose process involving multiple stakeholders throughout the organization, it has often been portrayed by managers as a “mechanical yearly ritual. . .[that]. . .has little relevance to their ‘bottom line,’” and hence, it ultimately fails to truly leverage human capital in an effective way (p. 84).

Regardless of the term used, the broader PM literature has a rich history with publications dating back to at least the 1920s (Link, 1920) with numerous literature reviews published on the topic over the past 30 years—for example, Arvey and Murphy (1998); Banks and Murphy (1985); DeNisi and Smith (2014); Iqbal, Akbar, and Budhwar (2015); and Rynes, Gerhart, and Parks (2005). Those published over a decade ago are less likely to be reflective of the current state of the PM literature, while publications from 2014 onward focus upon very specific elements of PM. For example, Iqbal et al. (2015) concentrated on issues related to ratee reactions while DeNisi and Smith (2014) centered their review on the relationship between individual employee performance and firm performance. While these influential contributions have guided the field, they have tended to focus on the narrower area of PA (as opposed to PM) and have largely been grounded upon extant HRM literature, with a psychology emphasis. Within the PA literature, scholars have traditionally argued that PA has two purposes: (a) employee motivation and development, and (b) usage of PA results for administrative purposes such as compensation (Latham & Wexley, 1994). This has often been referred to as the “split roles” of PA (Meyer, Kay, & French, 1965). Many of the issues related to evaluating performance for motivation and development purposes (e.g., ratings, rating accuracy, rater training, psychometric properties of PA instruments, etc.) have been the focus of industrial-organizational psychological outlets (Arvey & Murphy, 1998; Banks & Murphy, 1985). HRD scholars have also emphasized this first purpose, but with a heavier emphasis on goal setting, developmental feedback, and, in particular, coaching (Ellinger, 2014; Werner, 2017). In essence, coaching in the PM context has been defined by Werner (2017) as “. . . a process used to encourage employees to accept responsibility for their own performance, to enable them to achieve and sustain superior performance, and to treat them as partners working towards organizational goals and effectiveness” (p. 356). In contrast, researchers in the compensation field (Lawler, 2003; Risher, 2005; Rynes et al., 2005) have often examined the second PA purpose emphasizing the linkage between performance and compensation, such as the choice of metric to ground compensation decisions, the extent to which pay motivates or demotivates employee performance, the use of forced distributions, and the many ways compensation can be linked to pay (individual, group, stock, etc.).

Given this background, we add to the literature on PM through an examination of three research objectives: (a) to conduct a scoping review of PM research, with a particular focus on the contribution within the HRD field; (b) to identify research gaps for future investigation; and (c) to identify the prevalence of research into PM versus PA. Our review, and thus our objectives, focused on topics, methods, and samples contained within the literature rather than study results.

As HRD scholars, we share the views of others concerning the need to bridge the research–practice gap (Tkachenko, Hahn, & Peterson, 2017), the need for evidence-based HRD practice (Gubbins & Rousseau, 2015), and the need for both rigor and relevance in HRD research (Brown & Latham, 2018). In addition, we noted the historical criticism concerning the practitioner–scholar gap in PA (Banks & Murphy, 1985) and the ongoing debates on social media forums such as *LinkedIn* concerning the practical value of PM in modern organizations. Thus, as we identified the research gaps, we used a dual focus to understand the most vital elements of PM from the perspective of both academic researchers in the field and practicing managers, with the aim of suggesting further research useful to organizations. To address these research objectives, we conducted a scoping review covering 11½ of research into PM. The following section explains the methodology employed, followed by a discussion of the key results and subsequent research gaps. We finish by discussing the prevalence of PM and PA in the literature.

Method

We conducted a scoping review of the PM literature, consistent with a recent *Human Resource Development Review (HRDR)* publication (Tkachenko et al., 2017), where the research team “. . . met several times to define and clarify the problem statement of the inquiry, the scope of the study, and the inclusion and exclusion of sources for the review” (p. 237). In so doing, we used definitive steps to structure the research as well as to analyze the findings (see Figure 1¹).

We started our search at the beginning of 2016 with an initial boundary of peer-reviewed, scholarly articles published between January 2005 and December 2015 in relevant Association of Business Schools (ABS) and Financial Times 45 (FT45) journals.² As we started our detailed analysis in the fall of 2016, we wanted to ensure that our dataset was as current as possible, so we expanded our search to include articles published up to August 2016, giving a final time frame of 11½. We chose 2005 as the start year for three reasons. First, we felt we needed a minimum of a decade of literature to have sufficient data for our analysis. Second, 2005 marks the publication date of an extensive *Annual Review of Psychology* paper on performance evaluation (Rynes et al., 2005). Third, that time frame aligned with the publication of what we believe is the first comprehensive set of practitioner guidelines for effective PM (Pulakos, 2004).

The third author, a PhD student supervised by the first author, conducted the search using *Business Source Complete*, complemented with *Academic Search Premiere*, and *Google Scholar*, as appropriate (after discussion with a Management Studies

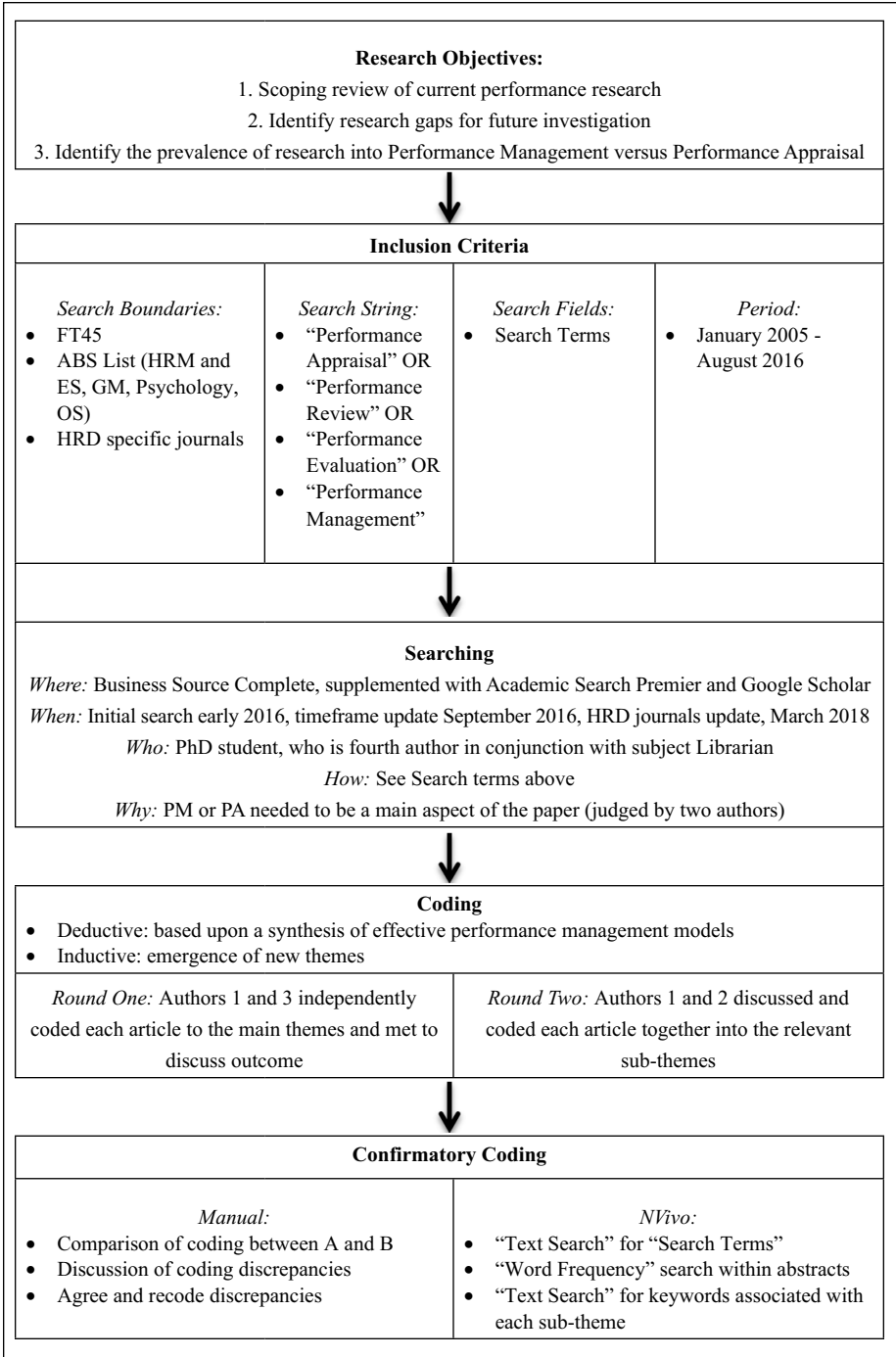


Figure I. Scoping review of the literature.

Librarian). Our search string comprised of the following terms: “Performance Appraisal,” “Performance Review,” “Performance Evaluation,” and “Performance Management” (as these are often used interchangeably). We searched for articles that had any of these search expressions in the subject terms, abstract or title. During the initial coding, five articles were deemed irrelevant as PM was not a central focus, leaving 214 articles from 39 journals. In March 2018, given the emergent HRD focus of our research, we included two further journals (*Advances in Developing Human Resources* and *European Journal of Training and Development*) which did not appear in the chosen subject areas of the ABS list or the FT45 list. To ensure we did not miss relevant articles in the HRD area, we hand-searched these along with *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, *Human Resource Development International*, *HRDR*, and *Journal of European Industrial Training*. This process yielded 42 further articles of which 16 were relevant.³ Our final sample was 230 peer-reviewed articles from 41 journals.⁴ A summary of these articles can be seen in Table 1.⁵

Once we established our sample, we began our thematic analysis. To guide this, we explored numerous models of, and best-practices for, effective PM (e.g., Aguinis, 2013; Biron, Farndale, & Paauwe, 2011; Haines & St-Onge, 2012; Kinicki et al., 2013; Pulakos, 2009). We primarily based our analysis upon Kinicki et al.’s (2013) framework, which has four elements: defining performance, evaluating performance, reviewing performance, and providing performance consequences. As we analyzed the data, we found much overlap between evaluating and reviewing, so these were collapsed into one element. In addition, we saw an increasing focus on how organizational and national context can influence PM practice and so added context as a key fourth element. Thus, we grounded our review on these four elements. To explore how the research was undertaken, we also coded the research methodology employed in each paper, as well as details of the research sample and participants. As we coded, we added other contextual factors such as nationality, age, gender, and whether participants worked in a virtual environment.

The first round of coding involved constructing an excel spreadsheet where the first and third authors individually examined each article’s abstract, keywords, and title and coded it into relevant themes. These authors then met to review their initial coding and to reach agreement on the categorization as well as deciding on which articles to include or disregard. During these discussions, each author voiced his or her agreement and/or disagreement regarding the other’s categorization; this resulted in the reassignment or re-categorization of 65 articles, and the removal of five articles. Once the first round of coding was complete, the abstracts were imported into NVivo and first and second authors together conducted the second round of analysis in which the articles were coded into the subthemes through mainly deductive coding, but new categories were added as they were encountered in the articles. Where the abstract lacked sufficient detail to uncover themes, consistent with the PA literature review of Iqbal et al. (2015), we “skim read (rapid scanning of the entire article)” (p. 511) the entire article. This resulted in a refinement of the themes as the authors discussed and debated the contents during numerous skype sessions. The resulting classification was felt to be comprehensive. The

Table 1. Articles by Journal.

Journal	n	%	Journal quality	
			ABS (2014)	Impact factor (JCR 2016)
ABS: General Management, Ethics, and Social Responsibility				
<i>Journal of Management</i> [FT45]	4	1.7	4 ^a	6.051
<i>British Journal of Management</i>	2	0.9	4	2.188
<i>International Journal of Management Reviews</i>	1	0.4	3	4.854
<i>Canadian Journal of Administrative Sciences</i>	3	1.3	2	0.405
<i>Management Decision</i>	4	1.7	2	1.134
<i>Business Horizons</i>	3	1.3	2	1.008
ABS: HRM and employment studies				
<i>Human Resource Management (USA)</i> [FT45]	12	5.2	4	1.795
<i>Human Resource Management Journal</i>	8	3.5	4	1.845
<i>British Journal of Industrial Relations</i>	4	1.7	4	1.820
<i>Work, Employment and Society</i>	1	0.4	4	2.153
<i>International Journal of HRM^b</i>	55	23.9	3	1.262
<i>Economic and Industrial Democracy</i>	3	1.3	3	0.896
<i>New Technology, Work and Employment</i>	1	0.4	3	1.281
<i>Gender, Work and Organization</i>	1	0.4	3	1.325
<i>Human Resource Management Review</i>	16	7.0	3	2.846
<i>Personnel Review</i>	18	7.8	2	0.704
<i>Asia Pacific Journal of Human Resources</i>	8	3.5	2	0.769
<i>Human Resource Development International^b</i>	6	2.6	2	0.446
<i>International Journal of Manpower</i>	2	0.9	2	0.446
<i>Human Resource Development Quarterly^a</i>	7	2.9	2	1.135
<i>Human Resource Development Review</i>	1	0.4	2	0.659
<i>Employee Relations</i>	4	1.7	2	0.933
<i>Review of Public Personnel Administration</i>	2	0.9	1	1.222
ABS: Public Sector				
<i>International Review of Administrative Sciences</i>	8	3.5	3	
ABS: Psychology (Organizational)				
<i>Journal of Applied Psychology</i> [FT45]	7	3.0	4	3.810
<i>Journal Of Occupational and Organizational Psychology</i>	7	3.0	4	2.059
<i>Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes</i>	2	0.9	4	2.805
<i>Personnel Psychology</i>	4	1.7	4	4.057
<i>Journal of Vocational Behavior</i>	1	0.4	4	2.764
<i>Applied Psychology: An International Review</i>	1	0.4	3	1.179
<i>European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology</i>	2	0.9	3	2.208
<i>Human Performance</i>	2	0.9	3	0.977
<i>Journal of Managerial Psychology</i>	8	3.5	3	1.136

(continued)

Table 1. (continued)

Journal	n	%	Journal quality	
			ABS (2014)	Impact factor (JCR 2016)
<i>Journal of Business and Psychology</i>	3	1.3	2	2.250
<i>International Journal of Selection and Assessment</i>	7	3.0	2	0.610
ABS: Psychology (General)				
<i>Annual Review of Psychology</i>	1	0.4	4	19.085
<i>Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin</i>	1	0.4	4	2.560
<i>Journal of Behavioral Decision Making</i>	1	0.4	3	2.768
<i>Personality and Individual Differences</i>	1	0.4	3	1.946
HRD specific journal				
<i>Journal of European Industrial Training</i> ^a	3	1.3	—	—
<i>European Journal of Training and Development</i> ^a	5	2.2	1	—
Total	230			

Note. ABS = Association of Business Schools; HRM = Human Resource Management; HRD = Human Resource Development; FT45 = Financial Times 45; JCR = Journal Citation Reports.

^aAs per the request of the reviewers in March 2018, we “hand-searched” the key HRD journals and added in six articles from *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, two from *Human Resource Development International*, three from *Journal of European Industrial Training*, and five from *European Journal of Training and Development*. *Advances in Developing Human Resources* did not contain any relevant articles.

^b*International Journal of Human Resource Management* produces 22 issues a year (*International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 2018). In contrast, empirical HRD journals such as *Human Resource Development Quarterly* only publish four issues a year (*Human Resource Development Quarterly*, 2018). Therefore, it is highly represented within the sample.

additional 16 articles identified in March 2018 during the manual search of HRD journals were coded using the refined classification.

To increase the confidence in our thematic analysis, we used several confirmatory techniques available in NVivo. First, to support our exploration of the use of the terms, we conducted a “text search” for each of our search terms. Second, we undertook a “word frequency” to identify the 100 most frequently occurring words, utilizing a “stemmed” search (which finds words with the same beginning, for example, perform also finds performance, performer) and a minimum word length of four characters. We removed words such as analysis and effects which did not have meaning within the research and reorganized the remaining words to reflect topics relating to the themes (see Table 3). Third, as we coded we identified keywords or phrases for each subtheme (e.g., organi*ational performance and HPWS were associated with organizational performance). We then conducted a “text search” for these keywords in all 230 abstracts to ensure we had not missed any coding. Each result was checked, and if it was not already coded, we reviewed the abstract and made a decision on whether or not to code it to that subtheme. This resulted in an additional categorization of 21 articles, mostly within inductive themes not included in the original coding structure. Gaps were then

developed by systematically examining the coding structure, themes, word frequencies, and research methodology to determine areas which would benefit from additional investigation.

Results and Discussion

The thematic analysis, based on a synthesis of preexisting models, was designed to understand how PM has previously been explored in the literature. We used the four broad themes: (a) defining performance; (b) evaluating and reviewing performance; (c) providing consequences for performance; and (d) context for our first round of coding, and then delved deeper into these in the second round identifying up to three levels of subthemes. Table 2 presents the thematic analysis of the 230 articles while Table 3 presents our confirmatory coding using a word frequency search. In many cases, the themes and topics we highlight in the next section could have been the focus of a comprehensive treatise. As the goal of our analysis was to explore PM topics and themes in the literature and to map out implications for scholarship and practice, we have added Table 4 which summarizes a table of cogent review articles and publications by theme area for readers seeking a more comprehensive commentary on an area. Following this, we explore the research approach used by scholars.

Defining Performance

In our sample, 37 articles⁶ (or 16.09%) substantively examined issues related to defining performance, which involves helping both the organization and the employee to understand the definition of good performance, how performance can be measured, and how performance expectations can be met. In essence, this aspect of defining effective performance is the cornerstone of effective HRD practice. Before we can think about interventions that might enhance effectiveness, we need to fully understand employee expectations and capabilities. Not surprisingly, in analyzing the articles, we saw frequent reference to setting goals and expectations and aligning goals to the organization's strategic direction.

Goal setting and expectations. As goals have long been argued to provide employees with a sense of expectation and direction (Locke & Latham, 1990, 2013), we found it difficult to separate goal setting from establishing performance expectations. Biron et al. (2011) argued that "(e)mployees need to have adequate and unambiguous information regarding performance expectations" (p. 1298). As such, setting goals or performance expectations is a core feature of effective PM systems (Aguinis, 2013; Latham, Sulsky, & MacDonald, 2007). Thus, it was not surprising that goal/expectation setting was a prevalent theme, with 25 articles (10.87%) examining these issues, and goal(s) mentioned 46 times in the abstracts. The majority of scholars examined the role of goal setting in creating performance expectations (Bouskila-Yam & Kluger, 2011; Brown & Warren, 2011; David, 2013). There was little evidence of other specific ways in which goal setting was utilized, with the exception of two studies. One looked at the impact of

Table 2. Themes and Subthemes.

Theme or subtheme	Articles	
	<i>n</i>	%
Define Performance	37	16.09
Goal Setting and Expectations	25	10.87
Intrinsic vs. Extrinsic	1	0.43
Team vs. Individual	1	0.43
Goal Alignment	23	10.00
Evaluate and Review Performance	144	62.61
Format	57	24.78
Design	25	10.87
Comparative	4	1.74
Forced Distribution or Ranking	4	1.74
Graphic	1	0.43
Narrative	2	0.87
Balanced Scorecard	3	1.30
Behavior	3	1.30
Competencies	6	2.61
OCB	3	1.30
Trait	1	0.43
Values	1	0.43
System	3	1.30
Electronic	3	1.30
Feedback	17	7.39
Feedback Frequency	10	
Feedback source	2	0.87
Electronic Feedback	1	0.43
Electronic Monitoring	1	0.43
Sources of formal feedback/ratings	33	14.35
Multi-rater	20	8.70
Peers	8	3.48
Managers	5	2.17
Self	2	0.87
Subordinates	1	0.43
Customer	1	0.43
Rater Training	20	8.70
System Training	16	6.96
Bias	2	0.87
Frame of Reference	1	0.43
Rater Error Training	1	0.43
Whole vs. Split	1	0.43

(continued)

Table 2. (continued)

Theme or subtheme	Articles	
	<i>n</i>	%
Developmental function	39	16.96
Psychometric properties	47	20.43
Freedom from Bias	40	17.39
Reliability	1	0.43
Validity	7	3.04
System Effectiveness	2	0.87
Provide Consequences for Performance	156	67.83
Linkage to HRM systems	82	35.65
Career Development	8	3.48
L&D	7	3.04
Layoff and Downsizing	6	2.61
Pay and Reward	36	15.65
Promotion	7	3.04
Employee Reaction	102	44.35
Justice	35	15.22
Satisfaction	27	11.74
Commitment	16	6.96
Fairness	15	6.52
OCB	4	1.74
Autonomy	3	1.30
Counter Productive Work Behavior	3	1.30
Leader–Member Exchange	1	0.43
Involvement	1	0.43
Stress	1	0.43
Organizational Performance	9	3.91
Absenteeism and Turnover	5	2.17
Context	88	38.26
National Culture	38	16.52
Cross-Cultural Study	26	11.30
Expatriate	6	2.61
MNE Research	17	7.39
Organizational Culture	21	9.13
Environmental Factors	42	18.26
Public Sector	19	8.26
Union	11	4.78
Team Setting	2	0.87
Age	3	1.30
Gender	5	2.17
Virtual Office or Team	3	1.30
Diversity	4	1.74

Note. OCB = Organizational Citizenship Behavior; HRM = Human Resource Management; MNE = Multi-national Enterprise.

Table 3. “Word Frequency” Search.

Word	Count	Stemmed words
performing	861	perform, performance, performed, performer, performers, performing
employees	342	employee, employees, employees'
managing	448	manage, managed, management, manager, managers, managers', managing
relationship	177	relationship, relationships
evaluators	131	evaluate, evaluated, evaluates, evaluating, evaluation, evaluations, evaluative, evaluator, evaluators
appraisers'	380	appraisal, appraisals, appraised, appraiser, appraisers, appraisers'
rater	54	rater, raters, raters'
goals	46	goal, goals
outcomes	61	outcome, outcomes
ratings	203	rate, rated, ratee, ratees, rates, rating, ratings
development	107	develop, developed, developing, developing', development, developments, develops
feedback	121	feedback
satisfaction	53	
commitment	46	
fairness	61	fair, fairly, fairness
justice	87	justice
behavior	79	behavior, behavioral, behaviors
procedural	49	procedural, procedurally, procedure, procedures
training	82	train, trained, training
systems	183	system, systemic, systems
reward	44	reward, rewarded, rewarding, rewards
pay	76	pay, paying
cultural	66	cultural, culturally, culture, cultures
context	82	context, contexts

intrinsic and extrinsic goals (Wang, Wong, & Kwong, 2010) and the other explored team goals. Chen, Wu, and Leung (2011) found that an individualistic focus within PM has a negative impact on team dynamics while co-operative goals, as opposed to competitive, can buffer negative employee reaction toward their work-group. Although goal setting is a well-studied topic in the history of PM, and perhaps taken as “a given” in any PM process, we suggest that scholars could explore how different types of goals can be utilized in effective PM processes. As the broader HRD literature has already shown, not all goals are equally effective in bolstering performance and self-efficacy in all contexts (Brown & McCracken, 2010; Locke & Latham, 2013). In particular, these scholars discuss the merits of breaking longer term goals into short-term goals (e.g., proximal plus distal goals) and setting learning goals (or developing strategies to

Table 4. Review Articles and Books.

Theme	Source
General Performance Management	Aguinis (2013); Pulakos, Mueller-Hanson, O'Leary, and Meyrowitz (2012)
Performance Management and Coaching	Werner (2017) (especially chapter 10)
Define Performance	
Goal setting and performance expectations	Locke and Latham (1990, 2002, 2013)
Alignment of goals/strategic direction	DeNisi and Smith (2014)
Evaluate and Review Performance	
PA format	Landy and Farr (1980)
Sources of formal feedback/ratings	Smither, London, and Reilly (2005)
Rater training	Roch, Woehr, Mishra, and Kieszczynska (2012)
Developmental function	Cleveland, Murphy, and Williams (1989)
Psychometric properties	Catano, Darr, and Campbell (2007)
Provide Consequences for Performance	
Linkage to HRM systems	Rynes, Gerhart, and Parks (2005)
Employee affect	Cawley, Keeping, and Levy (1998)
Context	
Culture	Levy and Williams (2004)

Note. PA = performance appraisal; HRM = Human Resource Management.

accomplish the task) in learning and novel environments. A recent development in the goal setting literature, not found in our sample of PM articles, is the concept of subconscious goals (Shantz & Latham, 2009). In essence, unconscious goals have been shown to improve performance over the conscious setting of specific, difficult goals. This brings us to *Research Gap 1*, the need for more research designed to examine different goal types in the context of PM.

Goal alignment. PM systems, by definition, should ensure that employee and team goals are aligned to the organization's strategic direction. In our sample, only 23 articles (10.00%) examined, in any material way, this issue of goal alignment and how integrated PM systems link with broader organizational strategies (Biron et al., 2011). This was surprising given that many scholars in the broader HRD literature have highlighted the need to ensure optimal alignment between individual employee/workgroup goals and those of the organization to ensure long-term success (Major et al., 2007; McCracken & Wallace, 2000). Empirical studies suggest that PM is a significant predictor of firm performance if it is effectively linked to strategic outcomes (Cravens, Oliver, & Stewart, 2010; Lee, Lee, & Wu, 2010; Nankervis & Compton, 2006). Supporting this, in Biron et al.'s (2011) study, it was found that three quarters of firms

strived to ensure that their PM systems enabled alignment of goals to the strategic objectives of the firm.

While the literature discusses the need for alignment, we found few scholarly articles which provided much guidance for practitioners who are known to struggle with goal alignment (Biron et al., 2011). With this in mind, *Research Gap 2* calls for HRD researchers to bridge the gap between research and practice and do more to equip practitioners with better tools to enhance PM and ultimately organizational performance. Ultimately, there is a need to specifically study *how* HRD practitioners can play a more active role in integrating individual and team goals with overall organizational goals.

Evaluating and Reviewing Performance

Once effective performance has been defined at the individual, team, and organizational levels, organizational members need to participate in the evaluation and review of their performance (Kinicki et al., 2013). In our review, we found that over half of our sample examined this area in-depth (144 articles, or 62.61%), across five main themes.

Format. The PM field has a rich history of investigating how PAs should be designed and formatted. Considerable past research has examined the usage of behavioral, personality/trait, and outcome formats (Smith & Kendall, 1963; Wiersma & Latham, 1986). Despite the call some 20 years ago for scholars to reduce their focus on PA format (Landy & Farr, 1980), our literature search found that 57 articles (24.78%) examined some aspect of PA format. There remains considerable diversity in this theme. While there is some interest among researchers concerning the merits of traditional format issues linked to behavioral measures of performance (three articles), graphic ratings (Yun, Donahue, Dudley, & Mcfarland, 2005), and behavior versus trait ratings (Cambon & Steiner, 2015), we also observed research designed to understand some of the newer PM formats such as competency-based evaluation (six articles, for example, Catano, Darr, & Campbell, 2007; Cheng, Dainty, & Moore, 2005; Molleman & der Vegt, 2007) and the balanced scorecard (Chan, 2006). Although less prevalent, we saw the use of narratives as opposed to purely numbers in two articles (Brutus, 2010). Given the movement away from forced rankings and ratings in practice, we suggest in *Research Gap 3* that research exploring both the use and efficacy of using a narrative approach is timely. The skills and talents of HRD researchers can aid our understanding of effective PM, given their diverse data collection traditions. More qualitative-based enquiry might help to understand how practitioners can effectively design and evaluate more open-ended narrative-based PM conversations.

Other format issues discussed included comparative/noncomparative appraisal practices in four articles (Roch, Sternburgh, & Caputo, 2007; Wong & Kwong, 2005), forced distribution ratings in four articles (Blume, 2013; Schleicher, Bull, & Green, 2008), and three articles examining the use of online or electronic forms of

PA, which we return to when we discuss virtual work later in the article (Payne, Horner, Boswell, Schroeder, & Stine-Cheyne, 2009). A noticeable point of discussion in this stream concerned elements that should (or should not) be included in assessing performance. For example, as we can see in Table 2, scholars have examined the impact of inclusion (or noninclusion) of aspects like values, competencies, and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB; Bret Becton, Giles, & Schraeder, 2008; Brutus, 2010; Catano et al., 2007; Culbertson & Mills, 2011; Ikramullah, Van Prooijen, Iqbal, & Ul-Hassan, 2016).

Giving frequent feedback through PA/PM. Although goal setting can provide feedback relative to performance standards and expectations, it may be insufficient to achieve PM's purpose of performance improvement. Detailed, constructive, and explicit feedback on goal progress combined with guidance for improvement is a powerful motivator (Latham & Locke, 2006). Thus, an effective PM system should encourage regular and ongoing feedback through both formal and informal processes (Baker, 2010) to enhance employee engagement, motivation, OCB, and/or job satisfaction (Dewettinck & Van Dijk, 2013; Sommer & Kulkarni, 2012). Despite such obvious significance, we found it surprising that only 17 articles (7.39%) discussed in any detail the importance of feedback, with 10 of these focusing upon feedback frequency such as the need to anchor PM frequency to organizational and employee need and how frequency can accentuate or diminish PM effectiveness (Espejo, Day, & Scott, 2005; Kuvaas, 2011). Interestingly, one article explored electronic feedback and another electronic monitoring, a field which could be further explored to understand its efficacy given the changing nature of work (Baker, 2010; Wells, Moorman, & Werner, 2007). Again this issue is revisited below when we explore PM within virtual and collaborative work.

The word frequency search revealed that feedback was mentioned 121 times in the abstracts, suggesting recognition of the need for feedback in some form; yet, HR practitioners have noted that managers often lack the skills, or do not take the opportunity, to provide performance feedback effectively, with some suggesting that training could aid in this matter (Nankervis & Compton, 2006). Moving forward, we would suggest, in *Research Gap 4*, that the literature could benefit from more systematic studies investigating how we can enhance the design, implementation, and evaluation of feedback training for managers. Given the HRD research tradition of examining transfer of training and coaching, HRD scholars could make a very practical contribution in this area.

Sources of formal feedback/ratings. Aligned to feedback format and frequency is feedback source, namely, those who provide the performance feedback or ratings. In our sample, 33 (14.35%) articles examined issues related to this area. We also saw the terms "evaluators" (131), "appraisers" (380), and "rater" (54) appearing frequently in the abstracts. The norm has long been that supervisors (or managers) assign work to, and manage, individual employees. Thus, they have traditionally been the most frequently used source of feedback and ratings (Dierdorff & Surface,

2007) and the focus of HRD coaching interventions (Ellinger, 2014). Yet, the exploration of manager ratings alone was less prevalent in our study (five articles). Rather, with the movement to more group-based work, we have seen increased focus on non-supervisory ratings of performance. In total, 20 of these 33 articles (about 8.70% of our sample) examined multiple raters of performance. Many of these articles examined the full 360-degree feedback process where self, peer, manager, and subordinate ratings were used (Morgan, Cannan, & Cullinane, 2005). Some studies used a broader definition of 360-degree feedback to include external customer ratings (Haines & St-Onge, 2012; Selvarajan & Cloninger, 2012). In addition, eight articles (3.48%) explored peer ratings (Dierdorff & Surface, 2007; Lievens, Conway, & Corte, 2008). Although there is much existing research exploring the impact of different raters, we do note a lack of studies exploring raters in the virtual work environment (discussed below).

Rater training. Twenty (8.70%) of the articles in our sample discussed training of PM raters, and “training” was referred to 82 times in the frequently used words. Four of these articles examined issues related to improving rating accuracy by reducing bias, including the use of traditional approaches such as frame of reference training and rater error training (Biron et al., 2011; Macan et al., 2011; Roch, Woehr, Mishra, & Kieszczyńska, 2012). We also found evidence of newer approaches such as the merits of whole-brain versus split-brain⁷ training (Selden, Sherrier, & Wooters, 2012). Perhaps somewhat predictably, the majority of studies in this area (16 papers, 6.96%) examined issues related to training people to use a PM system (Appelbaum, Roy, & Gilliland, 2011; Biron et al., 2011).

While considerable research has examined training to improve rating accuracy and system effectiveness, there has been less focus upon ways to improve managers ability to have the ongoing conversations that are key to effective PM as noted by scholars (Aguinis, 2013) and current industry trends (Rock & Jones, 2015). Given “(m)anagers often lack the skills needs to coach their employees. . .” (Ellinger, 2014, p. 261), and they “. . . often need to be trained in the communications skills necessary for coaching” (Werner, 2017, p. 368), this is a significant oversight. Pulakos and O’Leary (2011) further emphasized the need to improve manager–employee communication to improve PM through proper training around building supportive and open communication, engaging in informal performance conversation, diagnosing and addressing performance issues, and delivering feedback conversations constructively. Moreover, Haines and St-Onge (2012), following their survey of HRM practitioners, concluded that training managers in areas like justice perception, constructive feedback, employee needs assessment, and frame of reference improves overall effectiveness of the PM system.

Overall, we can conclude that rater training, particularly frame of reference training, improves rating accuracy as shown in the meta-analysis by Roch et al. (2012). We, in *Research Gap 5*, suggest that scholars redirect their focus away from rater and system training toward training feedback providers, in particular managers, on ways to have effective PM conversations that include “identifying, measuring, and developing

the performance of individuals and teams” (Aguinis, 2013, pp. 2-3). HRD scholars, with their expertise in training, development, and coaching, can make a significant contribution to enhancing such areas by designing research which really gets to the heart of the feedback conundrum.

Developmental function. Out of the 230 articles, 39 (16.96%) examined the developmental aspect of PM, and the term development (and its stemmed words) was mentioned 107 times. This is consistent with the traditional purpose of PM where the primary goal has often been summarized as motivating and developing employees and teams to achieve organizational goals (Aguinis, 2013; Latham & Wexley, 1994; Rynes et al., 2005). In our review, topics in this theme included the use of formal feedback for employee development and training, identifying employee strengths and weaknesses, and coaching employees to improve performance—both at the individual and organizational level (Akuratiyagamage, 2005; Peretz & Fried, 2012). Particularly prevalent were papers examining employee reaction toward developmental aspects of PM using quantitative survey data (Krats & Brown, 2013; Selvarajan & Cloninger, 2012). Given that the *raison d’être* of HRD is the development of the human resources in the organization, it is reassuring to see the depth of coverage on this topic in our review but, as discussed later in this article, we see the need for HRD scholars to become much more active in exploring developmental potential within newer work environments.

Psychometric properties. Researchers have historically placed considerable weight on psychometric properties, in particular, reliability, validity, and freedom from bias as criteria for effective PM (Catano et al., 2007; Kinicki et al., 2013). Building on this work, we found that 47 articles (20.43%) in our review examined the psychometric issues in PM systems. In particular, the issue of freedom from bias was distinctly prevalent and examined in 40 articles, with scholars examining bias stemming from rater/ratee attributes (e.g., gender, weight disability; Festing, Knapert, & Kornau, 2015; Inesi & Cable, 2014; Ren, Paetzold, & Colella, 2008; Rudolph, Wells, Weller, & Baltes, 2009). An interesting subtheme concerned how specific rater/ratee traits (e.g., political skills, impression management, Machiavellianism, and big five personality factors) could influence both the process and outcomes of the PM system (Brouer, Badaway, Gallagher, & Haber, 2015; Harari, Rudolph, & Laginess, 2015; Kuyumcu & Dahling, 2014). Surprisingly, given their prevalence in the past, the issues of reliability and validity were less evident in our analysis, coded in one and seven articles, respectively, suggesting that they have received less scholarly attention recently (Catano et al., 2007; Luria & Kalish, 2013). This too was supported by the word frequency analysis of the abstracts as neither the term “reliability” nor “validity” appeared in the 100 most frequent words. Given the findings from our literature search, we suggest that future research will likely continue to focus on areas related to freedom from bias particularly given the changing demographic composition of the workforce such as the aging workforce.

Provide Consequences of Performance

Models of PM effectiveness discuss the outcomes, or consequences, that flow from the evaluation of performance. In our review of the literature, a large number of articles (156 or 67.83%) examined this topic, with themes relating to linkage to other HRM systems and employee reaction being particularly prevalent.

*Linkage to other HRM systems*⁸. The importance of the relationship and alignment between the PA process, which forms the basis of most PM systems, and the HRM system has been well documented (Aguinis, 2013). After all, the secondary purpose of PA has historically been to support administrative decisions related to pay, promotion, and so on (Latham & Wexley, 1994). Over a third (35.65%; 82) of the articles concentrated on linkages to HRM systems; “system” and its stemmed words were mentioned 183 times. In particular, the linkage between PM and pay-for-performance and/or reward systems was particularly prevalent with 36 articles (Catano et al., 2007; Chang & Hahn, 2006; van Vijfeijken, Kleingeld, van Tuijl, Algera, & Thierry, 2006). This was supported by the word frequency search in which “reward” and “pay” were mentioned 44 and 76 times, respectively. However, scholars were divided on this topic. Some took it as “a given” that compensation changes should flow from well-administered PM systems (Ferner & Almond, 2013; van Vijfeijken et al., 2006). Others argued that tying rewards to PM can generate a sense of over-entitlement among employees and potentially trigger misconduct and political behavior when expectations are not met (Fisk, 2010; Werbel & Balkin, 2010).

We also saw nine articles that examined PM in the context of organizational performance and high performance human resource practices or systems. In many of these papers, the relationship between PM and bundles of different HR practices such as compensation, staffing, and employee participation were examined (Stumpf, Doh, & Tymon, 2010; Zhang & Li, 2009; C. Zheng, Morrison, & O’Neill, 2006). Moving forward, we suggest several areas for future research in relation to PM and outcomes. First, evidence suggests that a majority of firms link pay to performance (Rynes et al., 2005). Thus, in *Research Gap 6*, we call for additional research exploring how the negative aspects of PM–rewards linkage can be mitigated and what supplementary factors can be used to improve the PM–rewards relationship. Second, this scoping review suggests that the administrative purposes of PM go beyond compensation to areas such as promotion and layoff, although these were only explored in seven and six papers, respectively (Bragger et al., 2014; Kaya, Koc, & Topcu, 2010; Stumpf, Doh, & Tymon, 2010; Suazo, Martínez, & Sandoval, 2009; van Vijfeijken et al., 2006). In addition to linkages to functions with administrative foci, we also saw discussion in several articles of linkages to systems more developmental in nature. For example, learning and development and career development themes were found in six and eight articles, respectively (Cascio, 2014; Hassan, 2007; Potnuru & Sahoo, 2016). HRD scholars are well situated to explore techniques which can help organizations to ensure clear career paths are fostered through effective PM systems. Given the aging labor force of much of the industrial world, and the cyclical nature of the economy and economic sectors, we

suggest in *Research Gap 7* that scholars should examine how PM systems can better support staffing decisions related to promotion and layoff as well as learning and development and career development.

Employee reaction. While the literature has historically been criticized for failing to examine user reactions to PM (see review in Krats & Brown, 2013), there were 102 (44.35%) studies in our search that concentrated on this theme, while job attitude terms such as satisfaction and commitment appeared 53 and 46 times, respectively, in the word frequency search (Farndale, Hope-Hailey, & Kelliher, 2011; Krats & Brown, 2013; Selvarajan & Cloninger, 2012). In contrast, job-related behaviors such as OCB, turnover, and counterproductive work behavior were less commonly researched in relation to PM; each was coded five or fewer times in our analysis (Fisk, 2010; Juhdi, Pa'Wan, & Hansaram, 2013; Podsakoff, Whiting, Welsh, & Mai, 2013; W. Zheng, Zhang, & Li, 2012). Other less represented topics that emerged as part of this theme, with between one and three counts each, were quality of leader member exchange, perception of job autonomy, and job involvement (Elicker, Levy, & Hall, 2006; Jayawardana, O'Donnell, & Jayakody, 2013; Kuvaas, Buch, & Dysvik, 2016). Moreover, perceptions of justice and fairness were also well represented in our sample with each coded in 35 and 15 articles, respectively (Chang & Hahn, 2006; Farndale et al., 2011; Linna et al., 2012; Tuytens & Devos, 2012). Similarly, the word "justice" was mentioned in 87 abstracts and fairness mentioned in 61. Most of these studies suggest that positive employee reactions and outcomes occur when a PM system is perceived as fair and employee-centered. Clearly then, there is an important role for ensuring that PM systems are effective in terms of being perceived as leading to fair and equitable outcomes for employees. HRD scholars have a clear role to play in continuing to provide research which can support practitioners to effectively design, operationalize, and evaluate such systems.

The link between PM and organizational performance was only explored by nine articles (3.91%), with a further five (2.17%) specifically looking at absenteeism and turnover. The majority of these studies tended to explore bundles of practices such as compensation, talent, or career management. Three of these 14 articles specifically linked PM to bottom-line measures, two of which explored the public sector context (Peretz & Fried, 2012; Radnor, 2009; Sotirakou & Zeppou, 2006). Therefore, to really see the value of PM, we propose *Research Gap 8*, which calls for more studies which specifically link PM practices to a broad range of bottom-line organizational measures such as productivity, profit, sustainability, ethical behavior, and so on. Given that a core purpose of HRD is to improve organizational performance and effectiveness (Hamlin & Stewart, 2011), we believe that HRD scholars should examine this important issue.

Context

Clearly, an effective PM system does not operate in isolation of the organizational context (Haines & St-Onge, 2012). Our review found that approximately 38%, or 88 articles, had cultural or contextual influences as a key theme. In fact, the words

“context” and “culture” were mentioned 82 and 66 times, respectively, in the word frequency search. In particular, we found themes relating to both national and organizational culture, as well as other environmental factors.

National culture. Within this theme, three distinct streams were found. First, 26 articles examined issues related to PM practices across different cultures (Cooke & Huang, 2011; Decramer, Smolders, Vanderstraeten, & Christiaens, 2012; Lakshman, 2014). A second stream, comprising 17 articles, included studies attempting to understand how PM functions in the context of multi-national enterprises (Shih, Chiang, & Kim, 2005; Vo & Stanton, 2011; Yahiaoui, 2015). Finally, we found a third stream of six articles which explored challenges related to the design and implementation of PM for expatriate employees who often face the unique dilemma of communicating parent country/company culture while respecting the values of the host country (e.g., Ellis, 2012; Holopainen & Björkman, 2005).

Organizational culture and environmental factors. Twenty-one (9.13%) studies scrutinized the effects of PM across different dimensions of organizational culture and 42 (18.26%) looked at specific workplace environment factors (e.g., unionization, public sector, etc.). For example, HRM practices and the corresponding impacts vary considerably between unionized and nonunionized settings (Brown & Warren, 2011). Thus, we found 11 studies that examined the unionized context. Another distinct theme appearing in this stream related to PM within the context of public enterprises, with 19 articles focusing on the public sector context (Hondeghem & Dorpe, 2013; Johnson & Shields, 2007; Rego, Marques, Leal, Sousa, & Cunha, 2010). Not surprisingly, the studies within this theme suggest that culture, both internal and external to an organization, impact the effectiveness and acceptability of PM strategies (Cooke & Huang, 2011; Krats & Brown, 2013; Rao, 2007). HRD professionals are often responsible for training and organizational development interventions; therefore, they have a role to play in diagnosing the current culture and climate and how this might impact effective PM processes.

Given that PM systems are designed to align individual and team performance to organizational priorities, it was surprising that only two papers examined the context of team settings (Schneid, Isidor, Steinmetz, & Kabst, 2016). Surprisingly, articles with a specific focus on demographics were limited with gender (Festing et al., 2015) and age (Schneid et al., 2016) discussed in just five and three articles, respectively, and general diversity in four. With mandatory retirement removed in certain jurisdictions, as well as demographic phenomena such as retirees' re-engagement in the workforce, the issue of older worker within the PM context emerges. Similarly, the popular press has highlighted the existence of four distinct generations in workplace, with differing values and beliefs (Shaw, 2013). This provides an opportunity for HRD scholars to truly understand the impact of an organization's workforce composition. Thus, for *Research Gap 9*, researchers could examine whether age, or generational issues, impact upon employee reactions to PM systems.

Virtual and collaborative work. When field data were collected, it generally occurred in what we term traditional workplaces in which employees are co-located with their managers, peers, and subordinates. Given the changing nature of work, in which people are more likely to work more flexibly and remotely (e.g., teleworking, virtual teams, hot desking, etc.), we were surprised by the lack of studies focusing upon these more innovative work environments. Only three studies involved virtual work settings (Hertel, Geister, & Konradt, 2005) and none examined hot desking, floating, or flexible work. Similarly, we only found three studies that examined electronic PM formats (Kurtzberg, Naquin, & Belkin, 2005) and one study examining electronic feedback and monitoring (Wells et al., 2007). Despite the collaborative nature of newer forms of work, only two studies that examined issues related PM in team settings (Schneid et al., 2016). Therefore, in *Research Gap 10*, we believe that more research is needed into PM in the context of increasingly virtual and collaborative workplaces.

First, there is need for additional studies to compare the merits of alternative sources of feedback for work teams working from different locations. For example, the traditional manager rating of performance may be more challenging as such raters may have limited opportunity to observe performance. This could also require HRD interventions designed for non-managerial coaching processes. Second, future research could examine methods to ensure rater accuracy and self-efficacy in these situations as well as the extent to which current findings from traditional work environments hold true in these new work contexts. Third, HRD scholars could design and evaluate training methods addressing the challenges of assessing virtual team members and providing positive and negative feedback online. As one example, scholars could look at reactions related to the provision of PM feedback online or through email versus physical face-to-face formats. This could be an area well aligned to HRD as the focus could be on designing, implementing, and evaluating HRD interventions for feedback providers and receivers concerning ways to improve feedback in virtual settings. Fourth, the linkages between PM and HRM systems related to development and career development may well play out differently in these newer workplaces, suggesting new avenues for HRD scholarship.

Other Study Factors

We also coded each article based on the country of origin of the research, research methods utilized, and participant sample. Table 5 summarizes these elements across the 230 articles analyzed.

Country of origin. The sample was heavily clustered in a few global regions. For the 184 studies in which we could code the country, we found 77 involved European contexts, 56 Asian, 53 North American, and 18 Australian and New Zealand. In contrast, a mere four and two articles, respectively, examined African and South American contexts. Therefore, we suggest in *Research Gap 11* that studies examining PM practices in what may be considered the less developed areas of the world are needed.

Table 5. Research Setting.

	Articles (230)	
	<i>n</i>	%
Research Country	184	80.00
Africa	4	1.74
Asia	56	24.35
Australia/New Zealand	18	7.83
The United Kingdom	19	8.26
Scandinavian	16	6.90
Eastern Europe	5	2.17
Rest of Europe	37	16.09
North America	53	23.04
South America	2	0.87
Multi-Country	2	0.87
Research Methodology		
Conceptual	39	16.96
Meta-Analysis	8	3.48
Longitudinal	6	2.61
Qualitative	45	19.57
Quantitative	148	64.35
Observation	2	0.87
Field Data	142	61.74
Real Performance Data	14	6.09
Lab-based or Simulation	25	10.87
Action Research	1	0.43
Secondary	11	4.78
Participants		
Employees	102	44.35
Managers	69	30.00
Practitioner	21	9.13
Student	26	11.30
Union Reps	3	1.30

Research methodology. Methodologies utilized in these studies were heavily quantitative in nature (148 studies relative to 45 qualitative and 39 conceptual). In total, we found 25⁹ simulated or laboratory studies, six studies using longitudinal data, eight meta-analyses, and 11 using secondary data. We see several research gaps that emerge from this. First, arguably given the heavy psychological grounding of much of the research in this field, which has traditionally relied heavily upon quantitative methodologies, there is a need to increase usage of qualitative methods. As HRD has a strong tradition in this field, we, in *Research Gap 12*, call for increased used of qualitative methods, such as cases, interviews, and content analyses of PM documents, enabling more in-depth examination of the complexity of PM systems beyond what can be

obtained from self-administered, survey interventions that often dominate the PM literature. Second, if we are to truly provide valuable insights to practitioners, who deal with the longer term implications of PM systems, we must research longer term relationships. As we suggest with *Research Gap 13*, the field would benefit from increased longitudinal practical studies where actual functioning PM systems are researched within an organizational context. As we noted in our introduction, organizations struggle with best approaches to PM, and the area is fraught with negative perceptions. While it was encouraging to see that over half of the studies in our sample included field data, a minority of studies (14, 6.09%) used real performance ratings or performance data from employees (as opposed to, for example, self-assessments of performance from participant interviews and surveys). We argue, in *Research Gap 14*, that if we are to truly study the complexity of PM, we need to increase our inclusion of actual performance ratings or data from organizational settings.

Participants. In looking at the samples utilized, we found that employees were the most common participant (102 studies), followed by managers (69), students (26),¹⁰ HR practitioners (21), and union representatives (3).¹¹ Clearly this evidence points to a field of research that does involve different stakeholders in the PM process. We consider this a positive trend as PM research has frequently highlighted a disconnection between scholars and practitioners (Banks & Murphy, 1985; Buchner, 2007; Cascio & Aguinis, 2008; Rynes, Colbert, & Brown, 2002). However, only 21 articles utilized HR practitioners. In some, the article specifically addressed the practitioner perspective (Brutus et al., 2006; Haines & St-Onge, 2012; Nankervis & Compton, 2006), while others included HR professionals as a part of an aggregate sample of respondents (Chang & Hahn, 2006; van Vijfeijken et al., 2006). This was surprising as practitioners often develop PM systems, work closely with their line colleagues in their implementation, and in some cases are seen to own the systems. Thus, for *Research Gap 15*, we propose that for HRD scholars to really make an impact with the most important of all audiences, namely, practitioners in the field, more focus must be placed upon hearing their voices and perspectives. To do so, we advocate for increased collaborations between scholars and practitioners in the area of PM research.

The Prevalence of Research Into PM Versus PA

Turning to our third research objective concerning the prevalence of PA versus PM, we first did a text search within the abstracts of the original search strings used to identify the articles (see Figure 1 and Table 6). We can see that PA was mentioned in nearly half of the abstracts (47.82%), as opposed to PM which was mentioned in less than a third (29.56%). This suggests that PA is still the dominant terminology in the field. This is supported by the themes explored above. Our scoping review reveals that much research still surrounds PA design, format, ratings, rankings, and the utilization of PA for administrative purposes such as compensation. In contrast, the themes associated with the broader PM elements such as strategic goal alignment across individuals and teams, shorter term goals, and ongoing feedback received relatively less attention in

Table 6. NVivo “Text Search” for Search Terms.

	Articles mentioning search terms (<i>n</i> = 230)		Times mentioned
	<i>n</i>	(%)	
Performance Management	68	29.56	147
Performance Appraisal	110	47.82	221
Performance Review	2	0.87	2
Performance Evaluation	24	10.43	42

the scholarly literature. When we look at linkage to other systems, we also see less coverage for more HRD areas such as career development and learning and development, providing fertile research opportunities for HRD scholars. On a positive note, we did see many articles related to development within evaluating performance suggesting that the role of development in the PM system is on the increase, a positive for the field of HRD. HRD scholars could also help organizations move away from a narrow focus on PA toward a broader PM focus through systematic studies that explore how to design, implement, and assess the effectiveness of managerial training which can improve their ability to provide feedback through coaching processes.

Limitations and Conclusions

A potential limitation of this study was the use of the title, abstract, and subject terms to determine inclusion. Unfortunately during the analysis phase, we found that many abstracts lacked sufficient detail to enable an appropriate understanding of the article, thus requiring them to be skim read. There is the potential that more articles exist than we include in this study. Moving forward, we urge scholars to follow the guidance of Gubbins and Rousseau (2015) by structuring the abstract around the Population–Intervention–Comparison–Outcome–Context (PICOC) framework. A benefit of such an approach is the potential increase in dissemination of key findings as abstracts are usually available free of charge to both practitioners and scholars and many search engines focus on searching only abstracts (especially when there is an embargo on the full text of a paper).

Ultimately, we draw several conclusions from our research. First, our scoping review reveals that research in the field of PM is disproportionately distributed among elements of the process with PA elements such as format and psychometric properties more frequently explored and issues concerning feedback and goal alignment appearing less frequently. Second, we see that the field continues to focus on the narrower area of PA versus the broader area of PM. While the narrow field of PA, with a significant focus on employee appraisal, may be better suited to the fields of HRM and psychology, the broader area of PM is well aligned to the field of HRD for reasons we argued in our introduction. In fact, we concur with Werner (2014) that PM could well

Table 7. Summary of Research Gaps.

Research gaps	PM reviews with similar gaps
1 Role of different goal types in the context of PM.	
2 Role of HRD practitioners in integrating individual and team goals with organizational goals.	
3 Use and efficacy of narrative forms of PA.	
4 Designing, implementing, and evaluating feedback training.	Banks and Murphy (1985): need for training concerning best methods to enable managers to determine content of appraisals.
5 Training feedback providers to have effective PM conversations.	Banks and Murphy (1985): practitioners concerned with need to improve appraiser feedback.
6 Mitigating the negative aspects of PM–rewards linkage.	Rynes et al. (2005): the need to examine if sorting effects and individual differences may play a role in negative PM–reward linkages.
7 Using PM systems to support staffing decisions related to promotion and layoff, learning and development, and career development.	Banks and Murphy (1985): practitioners need different performance prototypes for staffing versus pay administration purposes.
8 Link between PM practices and a wider range of bottom-line organizational measures such as productivity, profit, sustainability, and ethical behavior.	Rynes et al. (2005): research concerning the link between merit-pay like programs and organizational performance.
9 The extent to which age, or generation, impacts employee reactions to PM systems.	
10 PM practices in the context of increasingly virtual and collaborative workplaces.	
11 PM practices in less developed areas of the world.	
12 Increased used of qualitative research.	
13 Increased longitudinal studies involving “real people and real PM systems.”	Rynes et al. (2005): need for research in “real world” settings with longer time frames. Banks and Murphy (1985): overreliance on laboratory studies.
14 Research which utilizes real performance data.	Banks and Murphy (1985): overreliance on laboratory studies. Rynes et al. (2005): need for research in “real world” settings with longer time frames.
15 Increased collaboration between practitioners and scholars.	Banks and Murphy (1985): need for practitioner–scholar collaboration to reduce the research–practice gap in PA.

Note. PM = Performance Management; HRD = Human Resource Development; PA = performance appraisal.

be a “bridge” area between these fields. Third, we believe that our article can contribute to HRD scholarship and practice in several ways. As we note in our review, there has been relatively limited inclusion of papers examining PM within the HRD journals. It is our hope that this article, comprised of a scoping review of the literature and the identification of research gaps, will provide a springboard for future research by HRD scholars. In particular, we advocate that HRD scholars, with expertise related to organizational development, qualitative methods, and coaching, could readily embark on research related to many of the research gaps noted on Table 7. For example, research needs to attempt to more fully capture the perspective of HRD practitioners (Gaps 2 and 15), understand how narrative forms of PA (Gap 3) can help to transform the annual PM or PA activity into a truly holistic developmental event, and relatedly

clarify what PM training (Gaps 4 and 5) can be offered to allow this to happen. Ultimately, from our perspective, there is a need for more qualitative methodologies (Gap 12) to be employed to ensure that researchers truly capture the multifaceted and complex nature of PM in organizations. Fourth, many of the gaps we have identified have existed for over 30 years now (i.e., Gaps 4-8; 13-15). Therefore, we particularly urge HRD scholars to look at ways to bridge these given their long-term prevalence in the literature. We believe that, given the increasing pressures to enhance productivity and retain key talent in organizations going forward, if HRD research can address some of these fundamental PM issues, it can truly carve out a firm place for itself in the organizational and management studies landscape.

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Notes

1. Specifically, as suggested by Callahan (2010), we provide information on who conducted the search; when the search was conducted; where the authors searched (e.g., search engines and databases); the keyword combinations used; and the criteria used to include/exclude articles.
2. To ensure a broad and high quality literature scope, we included peer-reviewed journals likely to include topics related to performance management (PM) listed in the *Financial Times Top 45* (FT45; which has subsequently become the FT50), and the UK's *Association of Business Schools' (ABS) Academic Journal Quality Guide* (version 5, 2015). "The [ABS] Guide is based upon peer review, editorial and expert judgments following the evaluation of many hundreds of publications, and is informed by statistical information relating to citation. It is a guide to the range, subject matter and relative quality of journals in which business and management academics publish their research" (Wood & Peel, 2015, p. 5). On the ABS list, we focused on four subject areas: (a) General Management, (b) Human Resource Management and Employment Studies, (c) Organization Studies, and (d) Psychology. Although these lists provide an "imperfect" assessment of quality, they have been used as the basis for article selection in other scoping and literature review (see, for example, Hayter et al., 2018; Nolan & Garavan, 2016, and for a critique of the ABS list, see Walker, Fenton, Salter, & Salandra, 2018).
3. Our manual search suggested that seven further articles could potentially be relevant but these were not included as they did not meet the initial search criteria. This ensured consistency with the broader literature search.
4. Approximately one fourth of the articles in our sample came from *International Journal of Human Resource Management (IJHRM)*. Given the international scope of *IJHRM*, and the number of issues that journal publishes per year, it is possible that our analysis may have over emphasized the examination of culture in our subsequent results.

5. A list of all articles used in this review can be obtained from the first author.
6. While we provide counts, space restrictions preclude the citation of all papers. Throughout this article, we provide indicative citations for each theme.
7. In that study, split-brain training focused on the left side of the brain, what is often considered traditional rater training, by encouraging raters to focus on information encoding and recall based on specific dimensions of performance. Whole brain training added training the right side of the brain in terms of raters being encouraged to organize performance information around the individual ratee.
8. We appreciate the debates concerning what is (or is not) Human Resource Development (HRD) versus Human Resource Management (HRM). As Werner (2014) noted, staffing and compensation are among the “big four” (p. 130) HRM functions and are “generally viewed as HRM topics” (p. 133). As this section focuses on the linkages between PM and systems related to staffing (e.g., promotion, layoff, etc.) and compensation, we use the phrase HRM.
9. These were not mutually exclusive. For example, a single article could contain both a field and laboratory study.
10. In some cases, scholars used samples of students who were also working for an organization. Given that they were invited to participate in the research by virtue of participating in a learning program, we classified them as students.
11. A single study could contain more than one group of participants.

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