Research article

Employee experience: a systematic review

Experiencia de empleado: un análisis detallado de mapeo científico

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Abstract
Introduction: The increasing employee focus on job and personal satisfaction has led to growing interest in Employee Experience (EX). This article aims to provide an overview of the knowledge and intellectual structure within the EX scientific field. **Methodology:** A systematic review of 97 articles published in SCOPUS-indexed journals was conducted to assess the main themes and development of EX literature. **Results:** The findings reveal that EX is a recent, expanding research area linked to five primary themes: occupational health and safety, well-being, engagement, human resource management (HRM), and organisational culture. Four main lines of research within EX are identified and analysed. **Discussion:** EX research is still in its early stages, and further study is needed to explore its key components fully. This review highlights critical areas and proposes future research directions. **Conclusions:** This study fills a gap in understanding EX's state of the art, offering insights that may help researchers and practitioners streamline their focus on the most relevant and impactful areas in EX.

Keywords: employee experience; human resource management; job; employee; bibliometric.

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Resumen

Introducción: La creciente atención que prestan los empleados a la satisfacción laboral y personal ha suscitado un interés cada vez mayor por la Experiencia del Empleado (EX). Este artículo pretende ofrecer una visión general de los conocimientos y la estructura intelectual del campo científico de la EX. **Metodología:** Se realizó una revisión sistemática de 97 artículos publicados en revistas indexadas en SCOPUS para evaluar los temas principales y el desarrollo de la literatura EX. **Resultados:** Los resultados revelan que EX es un área de investigación reciente y en expansión vinculada a cinco temas principales: salud y seguridad en el trabajo, bienestar, compromiso, gestión de recursos humanos (GRH) y cultura organizativa. Se identifican y analizan cuatro líneas principales de investigación dentro de EX. **Discusión:** La investigación sobre la EX se encuentra aún en sus primeras fases, por lo que son necesarios más estudios para explorar a fondo sus componentes clave. Esta revisión pone de relieve las áreas críticas y propone futuras líneas de investigación. **Conclusiones:** Este estudio viene a colmar una laguna en la comprensión del estado de la cuestión de las EX y ofrece ideas que pueden ayudar a investigadores y profesionales a centrarse en las áreas más relevantes y de mayor impacto de las EX.

Palabras clave: experiencia de empleado; gestión de recursos humanos; trabajo; empleado; bibliometría.

1. Introduction

Since a couple of decades ago, the simultaneous search for satisfaction in the work and personal spheres has been increasingly valued by workers, so the interest in the Employee Experience is gaining great prominence.

Yadav and Vihari (2021) defined employee experience (EX) as the mental perception they have of the workplace, through their own personal interaction. It refers to everything with which he or she has had a relationship, whether recurrent, temporary or sporadic. For his part, Batat (2022) conducted a conceptual review, by introducing a holistic framework of EX to conceptualize the relationships between companies and the well-being of their employees. He defined EX as "employees' subjective and changing perceptions of their cognitive, behavioral and emotional state, together with the social interactions that arise in the relationship between the organization and its social actors, whether internal (co-workers and managers) or external (suppliers and customers) (Batat, 2022)

In the pursuit of excellence in terms of performance, commitment and development potential, Apascaritei and Elvira (2018) recommended the improvement of employees' work experience as a key strategy, relying on the need to foster from the "top" a culture that prioritizes the emotional to achieve business growth.

From a business standpoint, competing for talent requires redesigning company-employee relationships. This redesign does not treat work as a mere job, but as a vital experience, where the worker is the protagonist. This employee's work journey has many milestones and interactions along the way, and the quality that the employee experiences is directly related to his or her personal level of satisfaction, commitment and, ultimately, performance. Therefore, the employee-organization relationship must undergo a profound transformation. Beyond the traditional transactional strategy in HRM, the organization must be able to understand the needs, demands, fears and emotions of each employee. The aim of a strategy thus defined is not to provide services, but to design an experience that demonstrates concern and care for its employees in the context of their work (Plaskoff, 2017).

The benefit of this redesign is global. It goes far beyond its impact on employees and those around them (inside and outside the company). It embraces, from the genuine satisfaction of HR managers with the success of selective processes, and of managers, with the marginal and qualitative growth of their teams, to the function and department colleagues with whom they are integrated and all those with whom they interact. Finally, the circle is completed with the effective contribution to Employer Branding, achieving a strong, professional and captivating brand image.

Accenture's 2017 study (Liley M. et al., 2017) highlighted that the dividing line between professional and personal life is increasingly blurred. Employees are looking for relevant, appropriate and engaging experiences, both outside and inside work, and, above all, the opportunity to influence and decide on all aspects of their lives.

Currently, EX is a differentiating factor in terms of business focus, an experience with high impact power on future relationships and interactions that, in addition, generates numerous positive effects on budget compliance figures, business activity and quality and systematic indicators. Also market positioning according to employee satisfaction with respect to their company is a theme of current interest. According to Bersin and Clugston (2015), providing a quality experiential system facilitates the company's success in attracting and retaining good professionals.

Growing EX research is generating fragmented knowledge that is increasingly difficult to accumulate. According to Aria and Cuccurullo (2017), determining the intellectual structure and research front of scientific domains is important not only for research, but also for policymaking and practice. The literature has analysed the dimensions of EX (Itam & Ghosh, 2020a), developed conceptual frameworks for the design and management of EX (Sinha, Varkkey and Meenakshi, 2020; Batat, 2022), the digital emploee experience (Gheidar & Shami Zanjani, 2021). Scales for measuring EX have also been developed (Yadav & Vihari, 2021). However, previous conceptual reviews on EX are scarce. No bibliometric study has been conducted to date.

At this point, we are considering questions that have not been properly elucidated, such as: what interest does EX arouse; is it really an emerging field of research; which are the most relevant authors, documents and journals in this field; what topics are involved; what lines of research have been developed in this field; what are the most relevant ones; and which are the most impactful.

For all these reasons, we consider it appropriate to carry out a bibliometric analysis of the EX, with the aim of offering a current and complete vision of the knowledge and intellectual structure in this scientific field. Most bibliometric analyses develop partial aspects of science mapping, i.e., they analyze the intellectual structure or the research front (conceptual structure). Our study is more comprehensive. It performs a complete science mapping analysis of the literature on EX.

The article is structured as follows: it first explains the methodology followed and performs a descriptive analysis of the scientific production. Next, the intellectual structure (research lines) and conceptual structure (EX topics) of the EX are presented. Finally, the conclusions, limitations and proposed future research are presented.

2. Materials and Methods

Science mapping is applied to a wide range of scientific areas, included employee experience. "Bibliometric methods have been widely used to provide comprehensive maps of the structure of knowledge in a given literature stream" (Rialti et al., 2019) A bibliometric and content analysis was applied to the literature on EX published in SCOPUS-indexed journals.

The scope of the SCOUPS database is broader in the social sciences than in other sciences (Mongeon and Paul-Hus, 2016). In it, we applied the keyword "employee experience" in the "title" field, in order to be as selective as possible and locate only papers whose main research objective is "employee experience" (Strozzi et al., 2017). Next, we selected the articles. Examining titles and abstracts resulted in a set of 97 articles published up to March 2022 (Fig 1) For data cleaning, we filled in the empty author keyword fields, and unified their abbreviations (e.g., human resource management-HRM) and similarity (organizational-organisational).

Figure 1.

Prisma Flow Chart-based Studies Selection Process
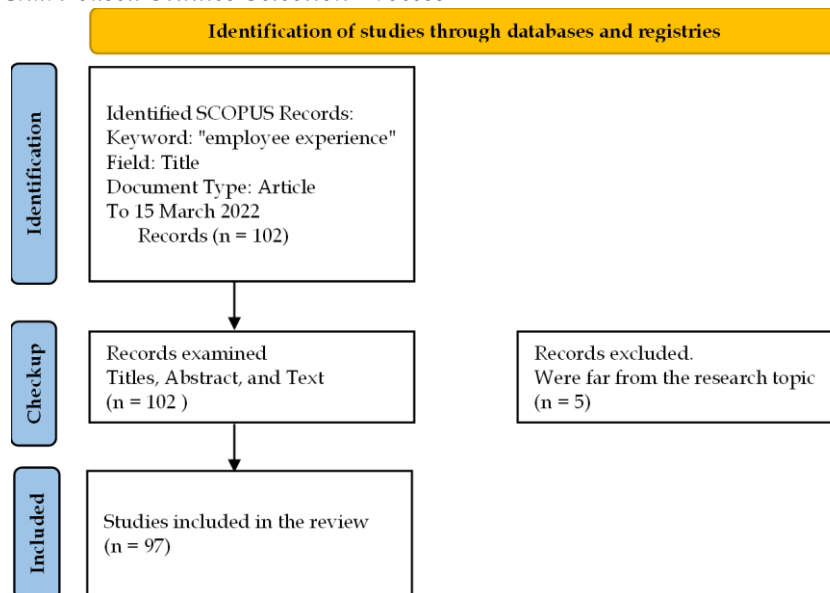
Source: Own elaboration (2024).

The software used was Bibliometrix R-package. Open source tool developed in R language by Aria and Cuccurullo (2017), designed for the complete analysis of scientific maps. Also, we applied VosViewer for map visualization, as the VOSviewer platform provides the most suitable options for easily displaying the bibliometric maps and is easily understandable by any type of audience (Bhagat et al., 2022)

The data analysis was structured in three parts. First, a descriptive analysis of the bibliometric characteristics of the dataset, from Biblometrix R- package results, followed by intellectual and conceptual structure mapping, using VosViewer and Biblometrix R-pakage.

3. Results

3.1. Descriptive analysis

3.1.1. Scientific production

We note a growing interest in EX (Fig 2). Although employee opinion has been the basis of business decision making for decades, our data place the first research that explicitly takes into account the "employee experience" in 1978. Since then, this research has been growing, especially in the wake of Covid-19. The first two years of Pandemic (2020-2021) concentrate 31% of the publications, making the EX a crucial tool for the adaptation and transformation experienced by the way of working.

This research has been developed in multidisciplinary fields, mainly business (28.7%) and social sciences (19.10%), although medicine is also contributing considerably (17.8%). Anglo-Saxon countries lead this type of research.

Figure 2.

Scientific Production
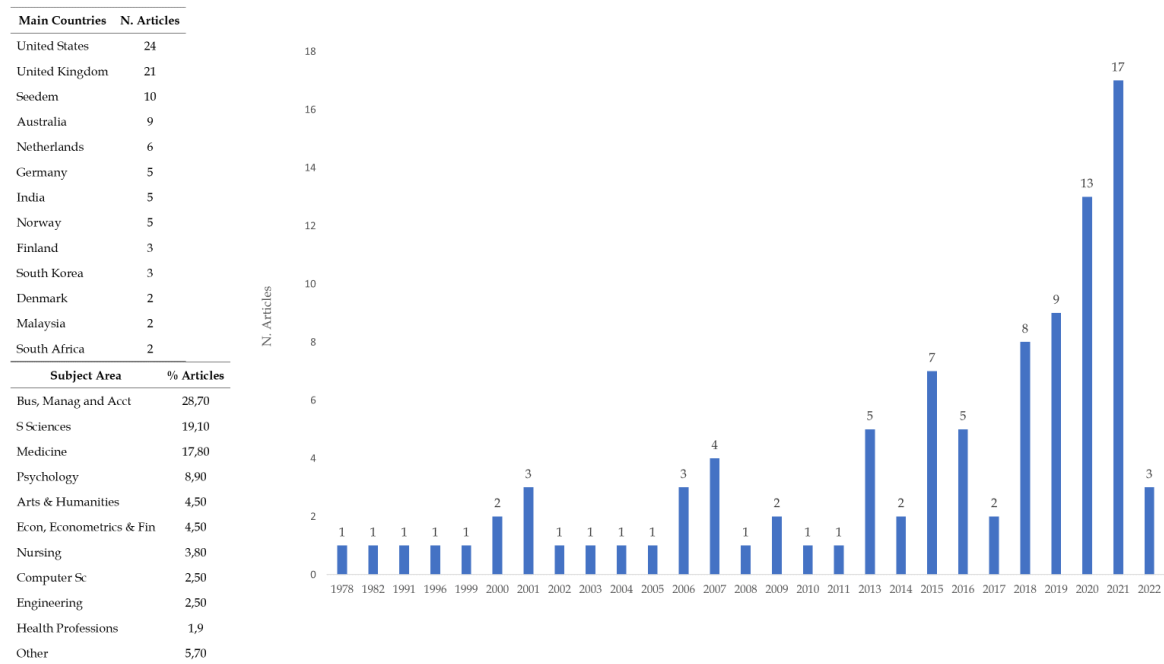
Source: Own elaboration (2024).

3.1.2. Journals

The 97 articles in our dataset were published in 83 journals. Sixty-six percent belong to the first two SJR quartiles (41% Q1 and 26.5% Q2), reflecting the interest of top-tier journals in this subject. These 83 journals received a total of 1489 citations.

Table 1.

Top 15 Journals

Rank	Source	N. Articles	Citations	Publication Year Start	End Publication Year	SJR Cuartile
1	Int. J. of Human Resource Management	4	65	2013	2022	Q2
2	Work, Employment and Society	3	343	2007	2013	Q1
3	Human Resource Managemen Journal	3	48	1996	2021	Q
4	British Journal of Industrial Relations	2	119	2007	2021	Q1
5	Human Relations	2	71	2004	2019	Q1
6	Human Resource Management	2	65	2013	2018	Q1
7	Disability and Rehabilitation	2	15	2013	2019	Q1
8	Strategy and Leadership	2	5	2020	2020	Q3
9	Employee Relations	2	34	2005	2021	Q2
10	Frontiers in Psychology	2	23	2016	2021	Q2
11	Industrial and Organizational Psychology	1	70	2013		Q2
12	Journal of World Business	1	65	2001		Q1
13	Computers in Human Behavior	1	63	2000		Q1
14	Jnal. of Public Administration Research and The	1	62	2015		Q1
15	Organizational Dynamics	1	40	2003		Q1
	Total	29	1088			

Source: Own elaboration (2024).

Table 1 shows the 15 most productive journals. This group published 29.9% of the articles and received 73.1% of the citations. By quartiles, the majority (66.7%) belong to the first SJR.

We found that interest in this subject is recent in nine of the journals in this ranking, with International of Journal of Human Resource Management being the one that has been publishing in this field for the longest period of time.

3.1.3. Authors and documents

Our dataset was written by 298 authors, 15 of them single-document authors. Each author wrote an average of 0.326 papers. The collaboration rate between authors was 3.45. With these data we observe a low specialization of authors.

The most productive author was Conway, with two papers. One in 2015 on the impact of cutbacks and innovation measures on the well-being and attitude of UK public employees (Kiefer et al., 2015). Later, in 2019 he studied the impact of daily HRM actions on employees' perception of strong HRM generating work engagement (Chacko & Conway, 2019).

Table 2 presents the 15 most cited papers and their respective authors. By number of citations, the most globally relevant papers were the one written by Warhurst and Nickson (2007) on "aesthetic work" under the perspective of employees in the retail and hospitality industries; and the one written by Harley, Allen and Sargent (2007), which analyzed the experience of elderly caregivers in applying high-performance work systems.

Table 2.

Top 15 Main Documents

Rank	Author	Title	Year	Global.Citations	Local Citations (%)
1	Warhurst C, Nickson D.	Employee experience of aesthetic labour in retail and hospitality	2007	210	0,48
2	Harley, B., Allen, B. C., & Sargent, L. D	High performance work systems and employee experience of work in the service sector: The case of aged care	2007	116	0,86
3	Ruggs, E. N., Hebl, M. R., Law, C., Cox, C. B.,	Gone fishing: I–O psychologists' missed opportunities to understand marginalized employees' experiences with discrimination	2013	70	0,00
4	Carter, B., Danford, A., Howcroft, D., Richardson, H., Smith, A., &	Stressed out of my box': employee experience of lean working and occupational ill-health in clerical work in the UK public sector	2013	68	0,00
5	Foster, D	Legal obligation or personal lottery? Employee experiences of disability and the negotiation of adjustments in the public sector workplace	2007	65	0,00
6	Risberg, A	Employee experiences of acquisition processes	2001	65	0,00
7	Stanton, J. M., & Weiss, E. M.	Electronic monitoring in their own words: an exploratory study of employees' experiences with new types of surveillance	2000	63	0,00
8	Kiefer, T., Hartley, J., Conway, N., & Briner, R. B.	Feeling the squeeze: Public employees' experiences of cutback-and innovation-related organizational changes following a national	2015	62	0,00
9	Clair, J. A., & Dufresne, R. L.	Playing the grim reaper: How employees experience carrying out a downsizing	2004	50	0,00
10	Farndale, E., & Kelliher, C.	Implementing performance appraisal: Exploring the employee experience	2013	42	7,14
11	Schneider B., Hayes S.C., Lim B.-C., Raver J.L., Godfrey E.G., Huang M.,	The human side of strategy: Employee experiences of strategic alignment in a service organization	2003	40	0,00
12	McDonald, P., Guthrie, D., Bradley, L., & Shakespeare-Finch, J.	Investigating work-family policy aims and employee experiences	2005	34	0,00
13	Reissner, S., & Pagan, V.	Generating employee engagement in a public–private partnership: Management communication activities and employee experiences	2013	33	3,03
14	Rogelberg S.G., Allen J.A., Conway J.M., Goh A., Currie L., McFarland B.	Employee experiences with volunteers: Assessment, description, antecedents, and outcomes	2010	33	0,00
15	Heyes, J., & Stuart, M.	Does training matter? Employee experiences and attitudes	1996	32	0,00

Source: Own elaboration (2024).

Farndale, Reissner, Harley and Warhurst are, in order, the authors with the greatest internal impact on our dataset (local citations) and can be considered seminal papers in this area.

3.2. Intellectual structure: research lines

There are two types of analysis of the intellectual structure of a scientific field: Co-citation network and historiographic mapping. Co-citation analyzes cited papers (C. Chen et al., 2010). Analyzed over time, it helps to detect changes in paradigms and schools of thought. This type of analysis is used to map older articles (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017).

Klavans and Boyack (2017) suggested that direct citations are more accurate in representing a research front than bibliographic linking and co-citation. The historiographic map is a chronological citation network that represents a chronological map of the most relevant direct citations in a bibliographic collection (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017). In this section we will elaborate a Historiographic Map, where we will represent the lines of research developed on the EX.

Figure 3.

Historiographic Map
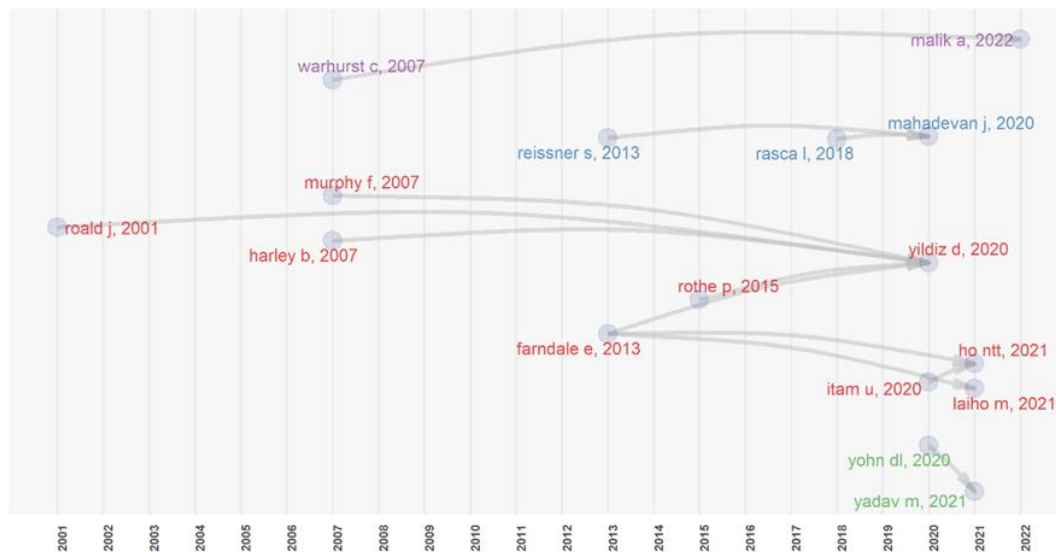
Source: Own elaboration (2024).

Figure 3 represents the lines of research, their authors and central documents, as well as the evolution over time on XME. Each color identifies a research topic, its central authors/documents, and its evolution over time. Each node represents a document cited by another. Each axis represents a direct citation. Nodes and horizontal axis represent the year of publication. There are four very recent lines of research on employee experience. The most developed is the red one.

3.2.1. Employee attitudes and behaviors in an emerging technology environment

This line of research (purple) observes the work experience, framed in the use of technologies that, as facilitators of the development of tasks, configure and modulate the attitude of employees.
From a view of interactive services, Warhurst and Nickson (2007) observe the aesthetic result of performing certain functions. This effect is perceived by workers as part of their own individualization, improving levels of self-satisfaction and influencing the final interaction with the customer. Malik et al. (2022) further explores these issues and the effects of hyper-individualization of HR services using AI techniques, with positive effects on internal communication, engagement and satisfaction. The results of both experiences, observed in contexts of technological development, have a decisive influence on the development of beneficial behaviors for the employee and the organization.

3.2.2. Management involvement as a vital prerequisite for a positive and sustainable emerging EX

In this line of research (blue), the shift of organizations towards employee ownership requires more than impressive presentations on the importance of people and mere "good words". It is necessary to involve all levels of the organization, thus bringing about a real cultural change, the central objective of this new focus on the employee. It is also essential to have the active participation of managers in the messages conveyed and in the events witnessed; only then will the organization and each of its members believe in this change.

Authors such as Reissner and Pagan (2013) underline the importance of clear communication from the managerial roles, explicitly betting on the EX. Without an evident commitment, neither effects nor followers will be achieved. Only the perception of real involvement of managers exponentially raises the levels of trust and satisfaction of the workforce. Therefore, the attraction factor of this type of companies becomes a differentiating element. Rasca (2018) analyzes this issue through employee well-being, and their personal and professional balance, applying it, by means of the motivation-satisfaction-engagement model to the field of talent attraction, management and retention.

Mahadevan and Schmitz (2020) delves into the discourse of managers, but, specifically, of the HR area, attributing to them directly and under their full responsibility the design of the EX. This gives the HR manager a new position as the employee's strategic partner at the organizational level.

In short, this line is presented as a new trend of best practices in HR, through effective management, promoting the relevance of the employee and his or her experience.

3.2.3. Importance and effects of the focus on the EX

Since the beginning of this century, the literature has become openly interested in employees' perceptions of changes, how they interpret them and how they affect both their individual results and their impact on the collective (red line). In this line of research, the management of significant changes and their effect on people become relevant in business strategies (the works of Roald and Edgren (2001); Farndale and Kelliher (2013) or Itam and Ghosh (2020) are shown in this line), establishing specific objectives of robustness of corporate culture, certainty of goals or job security, whose real impact will begin to be measured through the analysis of the EX in the implementation of such changes and in their personal assessment through criteria of fairness and trust in the organization (Myrphy, 2007); (Farndale & Kelliher, 2013) or (Rothe et al., 2015).

This strategic nature of EX measurement will become increasingly important, progressively involving managers in the process, as an essential tool for credibility and application in real practice.

HRM itself ((Yildiz et al., 2020); (Itam & Ghosh, 2020a) or (Laiho et al., 2022)) assumes essential importance in the process thus described and EX plans and models are designed to measure the impact produced, both on the perception of employees, their satisfaction and commitment, and on the economic results (Harley et al., 2007) or (Farndale & Kelliher, 2013) and work climate (Ho et al., 2021); or (Laiho et al., 2022) that are generated.

Knowing the employee experience and managing it qualitatively has an impact on a satisfying and performance-enhancing work environment (Yildiz et al., 2020).

3.2.4. The value of caring for employees and the measurement of their experience

Social values are integrated into companies in a decisive way. Concern for its workers (defined as a vital necessity, following Covid's experience) must permeate the organization. This must be more than a fact, it must be perceptible for all intents and purposes, so the actual situation of the workers, how they feel, and the way the company demonstrates and disseminates this concern, must be three perspectives that come together in a coherent way (green line).

Yohn (2020) emphasizes the authenticity of the brand, aligning and disseminating its company culture, and highlights CSR as a basis for creating coordination between individual and organizational goals by creating a shared value system, the result of which, through the EX, must be consciously sought and conveniently measured.

Others, such as Yadav and Vihari (2021), highlight the real and growing interest in knowing how companies treat their workers, providing validated solutions to measure the EX in an objective and comparable way.

In this line of research, the importance of designing an excellent EX is equated to the same level as CX and even beyond. Subsequently, effective measurement mechanisms are established to demonstrate the prominence given to this aspect and the result perceived by employees, thus projecting a differentiating brand image as a great place to work; much more than a place, a culture with the power of attraction and the capacity to generate commitment.

3.3. Conceptual structure: Employee Experience topics

The EX field of study, is associated with 353 keywords, which shows the dispersion and breadth of applications it has had up to this point. Graphical maps based on word relationships, allow to interpret the structure of knowledge within the research domain (G. Chen & Xiao, 2016); (Walter & Ribière, 2013). Figure 4 provides three network visualizations of author keywords in the EX field. On the left it provides a static view, on the upper right a dynamic visualization of these words overlaid with their year of publication, using colors representing their temporal variation. The lower right part enlarges the EX node.

Figure 4.

Conceptual Structure (Vosviewer net)
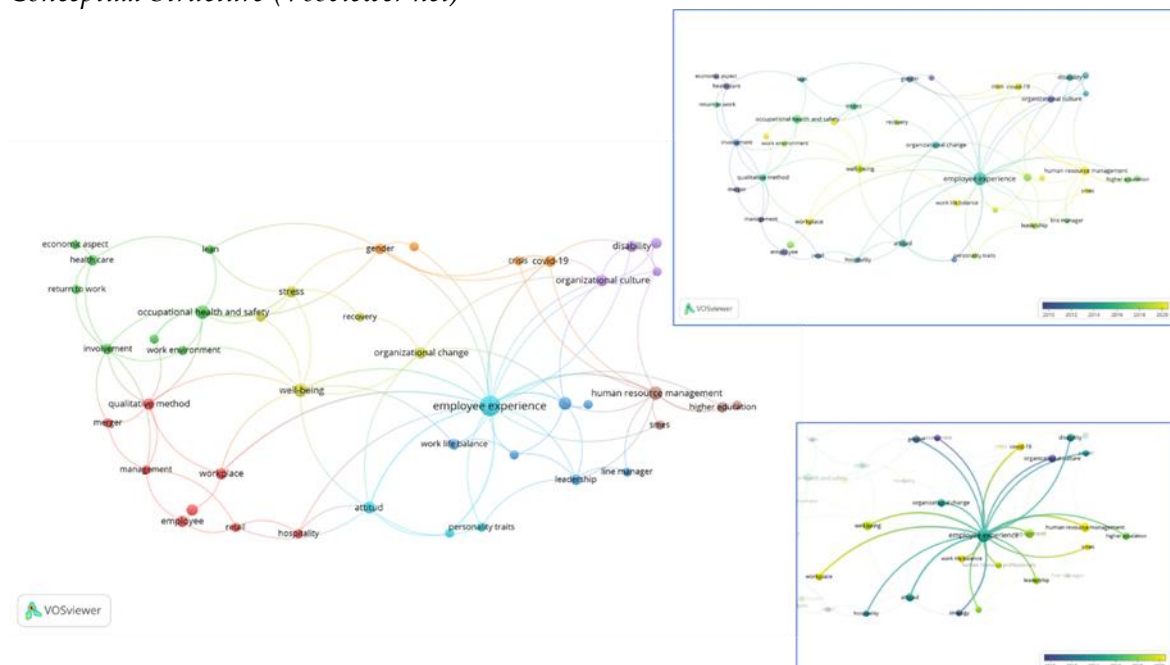
Source: Own elaboration (2024).

These visualizations were produced by applying a VOSviewer keyword co-occurrence mapping, taking author keywords with a minimum frequency of 2 occurrences. The normalization method used was "association strength". In general, the more closely related

two terms are, the smaller the distance between them on the map. The size of the circle shows the number of occurrences of a keyword, and the weight of the line indicates the frequency with which they are linked.

This network is made up of 43 keywords. In addition to "employee experience", "human resource management", "well-being" and "occupational health and safety" are the most frequently repeated and have the greatest overall strength in terms of links to other keywords, followed by "engagement", "attitude", "covid-19" and "qualitative method".

In terms of their position, "well-being", "organizational change" and "employee experience" occupy central positions. Of these, "employee specificity" is more central, with a greater number of terms concurring in this node, either directly with 20 links or by means of bridges. On the periphery, there are isolated topics on "employee experience".

The dynamic visualization (top right fig 4) shows "employee experience" as a recent research field (2014-2016). Also, "human resource management", "covid-19", "workplace", "work life balance", "crisis", "SMES", "mindfulness", "well-being" and "engagement", as emerging topics (lime yellow).

The enlargement of the "employee experience" node (bottom right of fig 4) shows that, in terms of distance, "employee experience" is very close to themes such as "engagement" or "work-life balance", among others. It is also strongly related to "well-being", "workplace" or "SMES".

Below, we analyze in detail each of the eight thematic clusters (left side of Fig 4) that make up the EX research field.

Within the red cluster, health is the subject of qualitative method on EX in works such as Engström, Rosengren and Hallberg (2002); Schön Persson et al. (2018) and Di Battista et al. (2019). In this line, Rimstad, Sagvaag and Robertson (2021) culturally analyze the role of British pubs and after-work drinking in relation to work life.

In the same field, the EX of pharmacy (Stakenborg et al., 2016), or Public Health (Staniford et al., 2020); the effectiveness in work inclusion of employees with health problems (Ree et al., 2019) or the EX on return-to-work programs after an accident at work (Williams, 2019) have been analyzed.

Also mergers and acquisitions in hospitals (Engström et al., 2002), or in the banking sector (Abdullah et al., 2018), have become favorable strategies for the growth of companies with a vital impact on EX.

Within this cluster is also the Hospitality theme referring to customer contact with the employee, and how this experience can influence their loyalty. Purely aesthetic aspects such as image or personal beauty (Warhurst & Nickson, 2007), as well as other more profound aspects such as perceived authenticity in the reciprocal relationship can favor favorable treatment in the medium or long term in the workplace (Han & Lee, 2020).

Included in the green cluster and within the field of occupational health and safety, the importance of awareness of psychosocial conditions and physical disorders in administrative jobs (Carter et al., 2013), the impact of leader personality traits on the well-being of their workgroup members (Robertson et al., 2014), perceptions of support received from supervisors to facilitate return after extended sick leave (Buys et al., 2019), recovery after work Ejlertsson et al. (2021), and estimating the costs of psychiatric coverage for Federal employees in the US (Krizay, 1982).

In the prevention sub-theme, it highlights how the organization engages and extols the value of early detection (Di Battista et al., 2019) or that of risk assessment (Rispler & Luria, 2021), and how employees, through these programs, perceived their workplace as a trusted environment and a better organizational safety climate.

In terms of involvement, the literature concludes the importance of involving employees and promoting their participation, especially in change processes ((Engström et al., 2002), in terms of occupational reintegration (Maiwald et al., 2013), or in improving internal communication and understanding of tasks by changing the individual perspective to an organizational one (Hellman et al., 2019).

Within the blue cluster they highlight the essential role that management plays in the EX (Reissner & Pagan, 2013). In this line, we find studies on the work of employers, defined by Rasca (2018) in a motivation-satisfaction-commitment model that through a commitment to quality in the personal and professional lives of employees is able to attract, manage and retain talent.

Particularly interesting, for introducing models of inter-influence with other constructs, are the works of Chacko and Conway (2019), on perception and expectations, shapers of satisfaction and its impact on engagement; the proposal of Lemon (2019), which adds a component of co-participation of other employees in the individualized experience; or the analysis of Farndale and Kelliher (2013) on the performance evaluation processes implemented by line managers, finding higher levels of engagement in employees with high trust in their managers. Butler and Muskwe (2021) detected a lack of attention to the high impact of leadership skills and competence of frontline managers on franchise EX.

On the other hand, in the dynamic visualization of the cluster, other markedly emerging themes are evident: work-life balance and internal communication. The former highlights the prominence of well-being and happiness, conditioned by personal and work-related needs and experiences (Lee et al., 2018). As a determinant of such needs and experiences, Låstad, Tanimoto and Lindfors (2021) analyze the effect of job insecurity from various professional profiles and at the gender level. Sun et al. (2021) present results on internal communication in the context of COVID-19, identifying rational and emotional consequences of a new situation and the influence of organizational accompaniment.

In the yellow cluster we detected how the EX has served to study the impact of an arts-based organizational intervention (Giaver et al., 2017) as well as the perceived lack of positive organizational practices (van Rensburg & Rothmann, 2020). Diachenko et al. (2021) identified mindfulness as a cost-effective intervention suitable for preventing stress, promoting comfort with oneself, maintaining a healthy work life, and voluntarily prolonging the work life of employees nearing retirement.

In terms of factors contributing to employee well-being, different research has identified leader personality (Robertson et al., 2014); interpersonal relationships (Schön Persson et al., 2018); and also career fit, international workplace types, and cross-cultural work readjustment (Ho et al., 2021).

According to the dynamic visualization, the themes included in the purple cluster constitute some of the oldest themes. In relation to organizational change, (Heise, 2006) revealed the transformation of organizational culture in a hotel group, through the incorporation of

personalization and enrichment of the EX. In the context of Covid-19, (Yohn, 2020) advocated the need for the development by managers of a values-based code of conduct that promotes the integration of brand, culture, core values and ethics.

In the area of inequality, EX has been used to analyze the experience of disabled people in negotiations to bring their workplaces into compliance with disability regulations Foster (2007); discrimination of employees from marginalized groups in the workplace (Ruggs et al., 2013), employee behavior with HIV-related stigma (Moalusi, 2018), as well as to assess the competencies and identify practical training needs of caregivers working with the intellectually disabled (Olsson & Gustafsson, 2020).

The light blue cluster includes work in the worker experiential domain on electronic employee monitoring (Stanton & Weiss, 2000), or the application of high performance systems (Harley et al., 2007) or the proposal by Risberg (2001).

The second term in this block is attitude. Within the framework of the emotional component, findings such as those of Halbesleben et al. (2009), in the study of service superusers, or those of (Warhurst & Nickson, 2007), focused on employee interaction both in internal processes and in external relationships, customers and suppliers, where attitude is perceived as a whole, of behavior, education and aesthetic presence, are noteworthy. Kiefer et al. (2015) observe positive attitudinal behaviors towards technological innovation in workplaces, as a preferred option to any other cost reduction alternative.

Finally, the terms personality traits and strategy are included in works such as those by Camps, Stouten and Euwema (2016) on different personality patterns of supervisors and their relationship with the actual perception of abusive situations in supervisees; and by Schneider et al. (2003) on the conditions that make up a good service, among which the service culture itself is indispensable, something difficult to create and which requires constant reinforcement and commitment from everyone.

Although in the orange cluster we find studies on EX in gender issues (Gerrity, 2000) and some specific research on the analysis of the experience of employees working with volunteers (Rogelberg et al., 2010), the main topic is EX in crisis situations, especially COVID-19.

The crisis is the context for analysis of employee experiences in specific topics, such as Carter et al. (2013), already mentioned in the green cluster. Jones et al. (2021), studied disability-related disadvantages at work during the 2008-2009 recession in Great Britain.

From a gender and race perspective, Park and Ahn (2022), found a clear gender gap and racial disparities in U.S. government employees' experience and expectations of socioeconomic hardship during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Zacher and Rudolph (2022), from review of theoretical models and empirical studies on employee experiences and behaviors during Covid-19, suggest general theoretical and methodological considerations for studying them in times of future crisis.

In the brown cluster we find research that initially studied the experience of academics (Nadolny & Ryan, 2015), the value addition experienced by students who worked part-time in their university libraries (Melilli et al., 2016) ,and the EX of consulting with flexible work (Cañibano, 2019). In education, EX through academic culture, emerges as the strongest predictor of overall performance in higher education institutes (Pandita & Kiran, 2021).

We verified the emerging nature in the lime yellow cluster themes. In the field of HRM, Itam and Ghosh (2020) gave EX a central role in HR strategy making, and authors such as Sinha, Varkkey and Meenakshi (2020), Pine (2020) and Gheidar and Shami Zanjani (2021) proposed conceptual frameworks, for the design and management of an EX.

From a critical perspective, Mahadevan and Schmitz (2020), present the EX as another new trend with which the HR function tries to legitimize itself in the organization. Further, building on an inclusive conception of employee voice as a mechanism for sharing ideas at work, Prouska et al. (2021), in a study of employee experience of voice and the impact of this experience on work behavior in non-unionized SMEs, found that the interaction between the external and internal institutional context of SMEs influences perceived levels of voice and, ultimately, employee voice behavior. Butler and Muskwe (2021), highlighted the impact of lack of leadership skills and competencies of front line managers on work climate.

Malik et al. (2022) found that the application of artificial intelligence in HR management (bots, digital and personal virtual assistants), in addition to providing a hyper-personalized and individualized experience to employees, improved their overall experience, profitability, engagement and satisfaction levels, and reduced turnover, in the subsidiary of an Indian multinational technology consulting firm.

4. Discussion and conclusions

We conducted this study to provide a comprehensive view on the knowledge and intellectual structure in the scientific field of XME. Several bibliometric indicators were used. The findings revealed that EX is a recent and emerging field of research. The emerging nature is evident from the dynamic visualization of the topics covered, which places it between 2014-2016. The analysis of the scientific production reveals a growing trend, especially in the last five years. This research has developed mainly in the field of business and social sciences, and has been led by Anglo-Saxon countries. It arouses interest in first level journals (Q1 and Q2 SJR), and has been carried out by a high number of authors, scarcely specialized, with Conway being the most productive author. The authors of the most relevant papers are Warhurst and Nickson (2007b); Harley, Allen and Sargent (2007b) and Ruggs et al. (2013b).

Among the papers in our dataset, the papers published by Farndale and Kelliher (2013), Reissner and Pagan (2013), (Harley et al., 2007) and (Warhurst & Nickson, 2007), can be considered seminal papers, having had the greatest impact on our documents.

Our findings revealed that, since the recognition of the consumer experience phenomenon by (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982), research on EX has followed four lines of research. By level of development, they are: the importance and effects of the focus on EX; managerial involvement as a vital requirement for a positive and sustainable EX; the value of caring for employees and the measurement of their experience; and finally, employee attitudes and behaviours in emerging technology environments.

The oldest, most developed strand, which constitutes the bulk of EX research (the importance and effects of the EX approach), has used employee perceptions to analyse the changes implemented by organisations and their impact on individual and collective behaviours and performance. The remaining three, less developed strands are more recent, reaffirming the emerging and embryonic nature of the experiential approach to EX.

Although there are many topics that make up this field of research, we can affirm that the EX is associated with five major topics (conceptual structure): occupational safety and health, well-being, commitment, HRM, and organizational culture. Well-being and organizational change are the central themes. Of these, wellbeing, together with HRM, SMEs and engagement, are emerging themes, which are currently attracting the most interest.

The content analysis allows us to state next assertions. First, EX has been used as a qualitative method to obtain information to support HR decision making, mainly applied to employees in the fields of health, public administration, tourism, education and SMEs.

Second, recently, the problems of talent attraction and engagement that companies had been facing before Covid-19, as a result of the digitalization of society, economy, work, and due to generational change, were aggravated by the disruption caused by this Pandemic, putting HRM at the center of the business board, as a key element to cope with the supervening physical and mental health problems arising from the pandemic, the immediate implementation of telework and the search for employee well-being. In addition, they reinforced the role of the EX as a key element to address the needs and expectations of company-employees in this process of transformation and change, especially in small and medium enterprises, and, consequently, have generated a new paradigm in the EX.

Third, in the experience-based economy, where the worker is the center, and work is a "life experience", the EX is no longer a tool for obtaining information for decision making. It has become a differentiating factor and an essential strategy for the organization. The design, management and measurement of the EX are at the core of this strategy, with the aim of generating a satisfying work environment that is conducive to greater engagement and performance. Executives at all levels, especially in HR, are an unquestionable and essential part of the cultural change that involves focusing on employees to make their day-to-day work a satisfying experience. Technology offers great potential in personalizing and automating this experience.

We recognize that our findings and conclusions are limited to articles retrieved from a single database, SCOPUS. They are also constrained by the quality of the metadata and the cleaning process they have undergone. Space limitations have not allowed us to include the analysis of co-occurrences of cited documents, which would expand the intellectual structure of the EX.

The topic analysis indicated that well-being, HRM, covid19, SMES and engagement are the emerging topics that are currently attracting the most interest. In this sense, researchers can delve deeper into the relationship between EX and employee well-being and emotional health, or test the interrelationship between EX, the implementation of Agile work methodologies and engagement at work. Remote work environments, hybrid work, and small and medium-sized companies would be specific groups where it could be applied.

We verified the emergent nature in the themes of the lime-yellow cluster. In the field of human resource management, Itam and Ghosh (2020) gave EX a central role in HRM strategy making, and authors such as Sinha, Varkkey and Meenakshi (2020), Pine (2020), Gheidar and Shami Zanjani (2021) and Batat (2022), proposed conceptual frameworks, for the design and management of an EX.

We consider it necessary to make further progress in the four lines of research identified. It is important to integrate and go deeper into the components, design and management of EX mentioned above, and to continue the measurement work of Yadav and Vihari (2021). Further analysis on the implications of this new paradigm for the manager, especially in HR (Itam &

Ghosh, 2020a), or on the design of the workplace and to what extent it can be customised (Heise, 2006) the EX (if it is possible to design an EX a la carte) would generate knowledge and guidance for managers.

In the field of new technologies, future research could continue the work of (Malik et al., 2022) and shed light on their applicability and effectiveness in personalising positive experiences in the different stages of the employee's life cycle in the company (recruitment, training and corporate onboarding processes). They would also allow progress to be made in the management and measurement of EX, proposing "real-time" monitoring systems and predictive models tested on the basis of HR Analytics case studies in EX.

Finally, although the contribution of EX in the achievement of a strong, professional and captivating brand image has been mentioned, it would be advisable to carry out further studies on the role of EXM in the development of Employer Branding, in attracting (Rasca, 2018) and engaging talent.

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