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Digitalized Organizational Career Management Systems: A Dual-Lens Examination of Functional and Experiential Dimensions

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Abstract

This study investigates Digitalized Organizational Career Management Systems (DOCMS) through two complementary perspectives: functional design and user experience. A systematic literature review was conducted on 87 peer-reviewed articles published between 2010 and 2024, applying PRISMA guidelines to ensure transparency and rigor. Braun and Clarke's six-phase thematic analysis framework was employed for synthesis. The study first developed a bibliometric mapping as a pre-analysis step and then identified six emergent themes: career management strategies, information technology integration, organizational career management, job satisfaction and organizational commitment, career self-management, and career motivation. The review contributes to the literature by combining both bibliometric and thematic approaches, thereby providing a structural overview of the field while enabling a deeper thematic interpretation. The findings indicate that DOCMS research has matured considerably along functional sense-making dimensions (i.e., functional design) while remaining fragmented with respect to experiential aspects (i.e., experience design), thereby necessitating greater integration between the two. Significant contradictions were identified within the literature: between algorithmic objectivity and organizational politics, between system-driven guidance and individual autonomy, and between functional design criteria and relational evaluation processes. A dual-lens framework is proposed to integrate these perspectives through a socio-technical lens. The review offers both theoretical explanations of the socio-technical structure of DOCMS—in terms of organizational functionality—and practical implications for the development of DOCMS that balance organizational efficiency and employee career development. The framework provides organizations with a diagnostic tool for identifying functional-experiential gaps and understanding the underlying contradictions that may limit DOCMS effectiveness regardless of technical sophistication.

Keywords: Digitalized Career Management; Organizational Career Systems; Digital Transformation; Human Resource Technology; Employee Experience; Socio-Technical Systems

1. Introduction

The digital evolution of organizational career management represents one of the most significant changes in human resource management over the past decade [1]. As technology continues to transform the workplace, traditional methods of career development are being redefined through digital platforms and intelligent systems [2].

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Digitalized Organizational Career Management Systems (DOCMS) enable career paths that are more strategic and responsive than ever before. Building on prior conceptualizations of digital HRM and career management, a DOCMS is operationally defined here as a socio-technical system that digitally enables career planning, monitoring, and development through data-driven, interactive, and personalized digital platforms. DOCMS differs from traditional Organizational Career Management (OCM) through its reliance on digital integration and from HR digitalization more broadly by focusing specifically on employee–organization career co-creation. Through the dual-lens perspective, DOCMS can be examined from a functional dimension—focusing on system design, digital integration, and analytics—and an experiential dimension—comprising employee-level perceptions, agency, and relational value.

This framing builds upon Strohmeier's [3] view of digital HRM as a socio-technical system integrating technological and human dimensions and is consistent with Wiblen and Marler's [4] insights regarding the balance between the efficiency of digitalized talent management systems and the experience of employees using them. DOCMS applies this logic specifically to career development contexts by integrating advanced technology solutions such as analytics and artificial intelligence with platform-based applications [5, 6]. Amid rapid changes in career management, the challenge lies in creating a balance between managing the talent pipeline and meeting employee expectations for engaging career development experiences [7, 8].

To respond to this dual-sided pressure, organizations must improve process efficiencies while also creating career management systems that feel relevant to individual employees. Implementing this integrated approach requires organizations to move from a single-function perspective based on conventional thinking to a more holistic view of career management [9]. A comprehensive study of system design, integration capacities, and automation aspects—alongside personalization, engagement levels, and user empowerment outcomes—therefore serves a critical purpose [10].

1.1. Literature Gap and Research Question

Existing research is fragmented across different streams, providing only a partial view. While studies have addressed turnover reduction [5], knowledge worker development [6], and career involvement by sector [8], a cohesive synthesis of how the functional capabilities of systems directly affect user experience remains lacking. Recent systematic and bibliometric reviews have assessed both talent management and employee experiences with digital HRM. Some reviews treat digitalization solely as a technology tool, while others view it only as a managerial concept related to employee experience. Only a few bring both approaches together, thereby highlighting the need for improvement in future research. To clarify this positioning and identify gaps that directly informed the present research question, Table 1 summarizes key reviews published between 2022 and 2025.

To address this gap, the following research question was formulated: *"What are the salient functional and experiential dimensions of DOCMS, as outlined in the current academic literature?"*

This study utilizes a dual-lens framework [11] based upon the emerging digital career competencies concept to create a comprehensive content analysis and synthesis of 87 peer-reviewed articles within the DOCMS domain. Prior reviews on organizational career management have provided useful contributions but also exhibit significant limitations. Certain studies conceptualized their reviews from traditional career management and talent perspectives, with only peripheral attention to digital aspects [12, 10]. Recent bibliometric reviews consider HR digitalization and mention career management but do not provide a systematic synthesis of DOCMS as a conceptual construct.

The present review differs in three distinct ways: (1) timeframe—spanning from 2010 to 2024, reflecting the full movement from early digitization to AI-based systems; (2) scale—studying 87 peer-reviewed articles, providing a broader evidentiary base than prior career management reviews; and (3) focus—applying a dual-lens framework that integrates functional system capabilities and employee outcome experiences.

Previous systematic reviews [10, 12, 13] were primarily focused on organizational career management and talent management frameworks, with limited synthesis of digitalized employee experience perspectives. Lou et al. [13] examined HR digitalization for sustainable performance, and John et al. [14] explored employee experience management in hybrid work contexts; however, these studies tended to view functionality and experience as independent constructs. The present review synthesizes a socio-technical understanding, connecting functional and user-centric DOCMS dimensions.

1.2. Objectives

The objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To investigate DOCMS using a dual-lens framework that combines both functional and experiential perspectives.
2. To identify and analyze the key thematic dimensions emerging from the DOCMS literature.

Table 1: Comparative summary of recent reviews. Source: Authors' compilation.

Study	Dataset	Timeframe	Method	Specific Gap Related to Digitalized Career Management
Sakib et al. (2025)	532 documents from Scopus and Web of Science	1984–2024	Systematic Review and Bibliometric Analysis	Research largely emphasizes operational and relational digital HR activities, overlooking how integrated digital career systems can strategically transform employee development. This absence of a socio-technical synthesis directly motivates examining DOCMS functional dimensions.
Indroputri & Sanjaya (2024)	19 key studies selected from 306 unique records	2020–2024	Systematic Literature Review	Highlights an experiential gap concerning digital-native employees' perceptions of organizational digitalization. Indicates a need for frameworks that integrate user experience and digital system functionality—a core DOCMS objective.
Marin (2023)	Literature from Web of Science and Scopus	Varied	Literature Review and Bibliometric Analysis	Demonstrates weak conceptual linkage between talent management and digitalization. This functional fragmentation shows the need for models that unify digital career infrastructure and human experience—central to the DOCMS inquiry.
Moganadas & Goh (2022)	17 articles plus grey literature and snowballing sources	2016–2022	Content Analysis and Comprehensive Review	Identifies dispersed definitions of Digital Employee Experience and a lack of measurable constructs. This absence of cohesive experiential modeling supports the need to explore experiential DOCMS dimensions.
Zhao et al. (2022)	85 highly influential OCM-related papers	1978–2021	Systematic Review	Finds that organizational career research is still grounded in pre-digital hierarchies. Calls for exploration of digitally enabled career agency and perception, aligning with the experiential perspective of DOCMS.

3. To contribute theoretical insights into socio-technical career management systems and practical guidance for organizations seeking to optimize their digital career systems.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Evolution of Career Management in Organizations

Recent years have witnessed major changes in organizational career management. The field has shifted from manager-dominated processes to complex technology-powered platforms focused on employee agency and personalization [15]. Earlier, organizational career management was a fragment of general human resource management activities, characterized by standardized processes, formal succession planning procedures, and high levels of managerial intervention [6, 16].

These systems were mainly based on internal labor market philosophy and organizational hierarchies [17]. Career advancement was previously defined by set performance metrics and managerial discretion—a definition largely centered on processes, procedures, and control rather than individual development or employee satisfaction [18]. The only opportunity for career advancement was through the traditional promotion ladder, with rare opportunities for lateral or alternative career paths [9].

As employees demanded flexibility and autonomy in managing their own career development, these rigid structures began to erode [19]. Employees also sought employer support for self-directed learning, valued contracted responsibilities, and expected ongoing development of their career identity [20]. This change represents a general shift in the employment relationship, where job security has been traded for increased opportunities for learning and career adaptability [12].

Within knowledge-driven industries and among the younger workforce, older career management systems hold little appeal. These employees value rich learning experiences and professional development over upward mobility within organizational hierarchies [21]. Organizations have begun to realize that managing employee career trajectories cannot simply be a mechanical process. Instead, systems that enable the management of multiple individual career aspirations while aligning those aspirations with overall strategic business goals are now sought.

2.2. The Emergence of Digital Career Platforms

The introduction of digital technologies marked an important shift in career management. Digital technologies offer greater opportunities for scalability, accessibility, and customization than traditional methods. Digital career platforms eliminated many difficulties associated with traditional career management and manager-centric systems by providing greater transparency regarding job opportunities and increased feedback regarding career progression. Prior studies indicate that digital career platforms are able to meet the growing demand of employees for self-directed career growth [7, 22], thereby aligning with evolving employee expectations.

Early digital platforms provided a way of automating existing processes without fundamentally changing how careers were managed. Over time, technology progressed to offer more advanced automation, including the ability to create personalized development pathways and to facilitate mentorship relationships within both the hospitality and higher education industries [23]. Additionally, functional integration increased through technology enabling seamless data transfer between talent analytics, learning management, and performance tracking systems [24, 25], thereby paving the way for digitally driven strategic human resource management [26].

Virtual learning platforms have also created new ways of learning collaboratively, fostering career growth. Social learning and mentoring tools have increased the importance of developing careers through informal peer networks rather than solely through traditional hierarchical supervisor–subordinate relationships [27].

2.3. Digitalization vs. Digital Maturity

A Career Management System (CMS) has evolved from one that merely converts paper-based processes into electronic formats to a digitally mature system. A digitally mature CMS utilizes advanced, integrated technologies that promote the creation of a Digital Workplace Environment where each employee's career path is informed by data-driven feedback and peer interaction [28, 29].

A digitally mature CMS demonstrates that the current career management system is a combination of social and technical components, maintaining a balance between organizational financial success and employee personal development. By considering both factors, a digitally mature CMS supports the goals of increasing overall organizational efficiency while also meeting individual employee goals through digital workplace technologies. These technologies allow a digitally mature CMS to develop anticipatory career interventions and create tailored career development paths. Machine learning algorithms review employee competencies, performance patterns, and career goals to provide tailored recommendations on learning interventions, likely occupational transitions, and development priorities. Such systems can identify impending skill gaps before they become critical and suggest anticipatory development programs to address them.

However, research indicates that technological sophistication alone is no assurance of system effectiveness. Technologically advanced but poorly designed systems have been found to lead to employee alienation, incongruence between personal objectives and system suggestions, and reduced trust in organizational career counseling [30]. The implication is that DOCMS must be strong at the functional level while also being experientially capable from the user's perspective.

2.4. The Need for Combined Perspectives

Although great progress has been made with DOCMS development, practice and research remain split into two areas: technology development and human experience. The major trends in career management research proceed from two different perspectives. The first focuses on the technological capability of systems, such as usability, automation capabilities, and analytic support systems. The second is centered on user behavior toward DOCMS, including user satisfaction, engagement, and identity construction. Research has addressed both perspectives, but they have rarely been examined together, even though they are often intertwined [24, 31].

By separating the understanding of DOCMS into technology and user behavior, a knowledge gap has emerged regarding how to properly design and implement DOCMS to achieve optimal system performance while enhancing user experience. Organizations attempting to leverage automation and analytics for increased productivity must simultaneously create a DOCMS that meets the needs of employees by providing personalized and meaningful career support. Due to these divergent approaches, it is not uncommon for a DOCMS to excel in one capacity while being deficient in another.

The functional versus experiential dichotomy demonstrates the conflicting theories present in DOCMS scholarship. Baruch and Vardi [32] describe "Doublethink" as a set of contradictions within career management literature that utilizes overly optimistic language regarding digitalized systems while failing to consider the complexities of employee experience with instability and risk. Although such systems allow career choice through self-directed tools, the algorithms behind them can limit true autonomy. De Vos and Cambré [33] also identified the "Career Management Paradox," which holds

that while organizations need predictable talent pipelines, the contemporary workforce is more individualized and less likely to adhere to a standardized model of talent development. Institutional systems have made this paradox even more prevalent, creating solutions that provide opportunities for empowerment while limiting actual choices.

A growing body of literature advocates for a more integrated approach examining how DOCMS function best when system and engagement characteristics are combined rather than examined independently. Guan et al. [31] concluded that career adaptability is influenced by both DOCMS characteristics and individual psychosocial development. Salleh et al. [24] added that technical capability alone is never sufficient, as users also need to feel emotionally engaged with the system.

These findings serve as the basis for the dual-lens methodology used in this review. Specifically, DOCMS are assessed on two interrelated levels: the outcomes achieved by system users and the design of the system itself as a functional entity. This dual evaluation recognizes that long-term DOCMS utility depends on both functional performance and the degree to which the system is valued by employees. The review therefore incorporates both perspectives to address the long-standing fragmentation in DOCMS research.

3. Review Methodology

This research utilized a systematic thematic literature review to explore DOCMS in human resource management. The purpose was to determine the most significant functional and experiential drivers of workplace career management digitalization. The literature scope was broad, with stringent inclusion and exclusion criteria applied to ensure the highest possible quality and pertinence of sources.

3.1. Search Strategy and Inclusion Criteria

Peer-reviewed journal articles were systematically retrieved from Scopus on 7 May 2025. The search approach complied with PRISMA guidelines [34] to enable replicability and transparency. A systematic Boolean search syntax employing wildcards (e.g., "digitali*ed," "organi?ational") and truncation operators was used to accommodate terminological variation across international scholarly settings [35, 36]. Scopus was selected as the primary database because of its comprehensive coverage of management and HRM journals, proven reliability, and suitability for bibliometric analysis [37]. The review period was 2010–2024, encompassing early digitization efforts along with more recent AI-driven platforms. The database search was conducted in May 2025, applying a time filter from 2010 to 2025 to ensure full coverage of recent studies. However, the final eligible corpus comprised 87 publications from 2010 to 2024, and all analyses, results, and reporting correspond exclusively to this 2010–2024 period. The base year (2010) was selected because it reflects the initial emergence of digitized career systems in the scholarly literature.

The broad search query employed was as follows: ("digitali*ed organizational career management system" OR "organi?ational career management" OR "Digital* career management system" OR "Technolog* career management system" OR "E-career management system" OR "Digital career management platform" OR "HR tech career management system" OR "organi?ational career Development" OR "OCM" OR "career management" OR "career management framework" OR "E-career management system" OR "career management tool"). The broad initial yield reflected the intentional inclusiveness of this Boolean search, which combined both explicitly digitalized and traditional career management terms using OR logic. Including non-digital descriptors (e.g., "OCM," "career management") was deliberate to capture transitional and foundational studies where organizational career systems have evolved toward digitalization. This approach follows construct-evolution logic [3, 4] and ensured conceptual completeness. Multi-stage PRISMA screening subsequently refined the dataset for relevance to digitalized or technology-enabled career management, maintaining methodological rigor.

Articles were limited to English-language journals within Business, Management, and Accounting. Only articles and review papers were considered to ensure analytical richness and specificity. Table 2 summarizes the search parameters.

Table 2: Summary of search parameters. Source: Authors, based on PRISMA [34] protocol.

Parameter	Description
Database	Scopus, selected for comprehensive coverage of management and HRM journals and suitability for bibliometric analysis [37].
Search Date	7 May 2025
Search Terms (Boolean Syntax)	Using TITLE-ABS-KEY: ("digitali*ed organizational career management system" OR "organi?ational career management" OR "Digital* career management system" OR "Technolog* career management system" OR "E-career management system" OR "Digital career management platform" OR "HR tech career management system" OR "organi?ational career Development" OR "OCM" OR "career management" OR "career management framework" OR "E-career management system" OR "career management tool")
Timeframe	Search timeframe: 2010–2025 (from early digitization to AI-based systems); final included studies: 2010–2024.
Document Type / Language	Peer-reviewed journal articles and review papers; English only
Subject Area	Business, Management, and Accounting
Inclusion Criteria	Studies addressing digitalized or technology-enabled organizational career management; HR digitalization linked to career systems; conceptual or empirical works meeting DOCMS scope
Exclusion Criteria	Non-peer-reviewed sources, conference papers, books, reports, and grey literature (excluded during Identification). Conceptual exclusions applied during Screening: studies focused solely on traditional organizational career management or individual career behavior with no digital or technology component; studies on HR digitalization or HR technology without explicit linkage to career management or employee career experience; macro-level labor policy or historical career studies unrelated to organizational digital systems.
Screening Stages (per PRISMA)	Identification: 5,011 records retrieved from Scopus. Filters (timeframe, subject, document type, and language) reduced the set to 408 records. Duplicate removal, exclusion of one medical journal entry, and removal of records with missing author names and DOIs reduced the corpus to 369. Screening: 282 records were excluded based on title and abstract review against inclusion/exclusion criteria. Eligibility: 87 reports met eligibility criteria. Inclusion: 87 articles were included for final synthesis.

3.2. PRISMA Flow and Screening

The initial search query returned 5,011 articles. Timeframe, subject area, document type, and English language filters reduced the corpus to 408. One duplicate (identified by title) was removed, and one entry from a medical journal was excluded, leaving 406 distinct articles. Data cleaning eliminated 33 entries with missing DOIs and 4 entries with missing author information, as these fields are essential for reliable bibliometric mapping and cross-referencing in R-based Bibliometrix analyses, resulting in a final dataset of 369 articles with complete metadata.

Title and abstract screening was conducted to remove studies that did not align with the DOCMS scope. Two reviewers jointly performed the screening and conceptual exclusion process to ensure that only studies linking digital or technology-enabled systems with organizational career management were retained. To assess reviewer consistency, 20% of the full-text papers (74 out of 369) were independently cross-checked, resulting in 91% agreement on inclusion decisions [38]. Any discrepancies were resolved through discussion until consensus was achieved. This process yielded 87 articles for full inclusion. A summary of the systematic search process is shown in Fig. 1.

3.3. Sample and Source Characteristics

Bibliometric and co-word analyses were performed in RStudio (R version 4.5) using the Bibliometrix R package via its Biblioshiny interface [39]. The Scopus dataset was imported and structured using `convert2df()`. Descriptive bibliometric indicators were generated with `biblioAnalysis()` and `summary()`, as shown in Figs. 2 and 3. Co-word networks were created using `biblioNetwork()` and visualized through `thematicMap()`, as shown in Figs. 4 and 5. The keyword co-occurrence network and thematic map were generated using Biblioshiny with author keywords (field = DE). Terms occurring at least twice (minfreq = 2) were retained, resulting in a 250-node co-occurrence network normalized using the association strength method. Labels were automatically generated and positioned by the software without manual adjustment to maintain analytical objectivity. Keyword clusters were identified using the default community-detection routine implemented in Bibliometrix [39]. All analytical parameters were verified from the exported BiblioshinyReport-2025-05-19.xlsx, ensuring reproducibility consistent with bibliometric reporting standards [40].

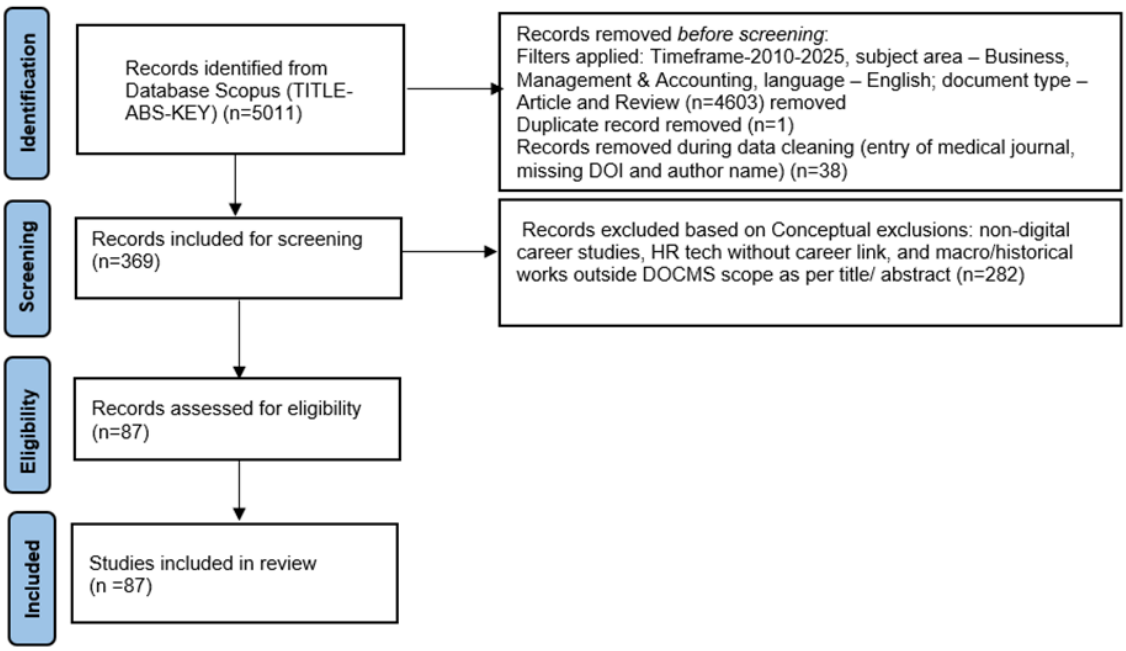

Figure 1: PRISMA flow diagram (search timeframe: 2010–2025; final included studies: 2010–2024). Source: Authors, adapted from PRISMA protocol [34].

The final pool comprised 87 articles across 55 journals authored by 217 scholars, with an average of 2.8 co-authors per document and 14 single-authored papers over the period 2010 to 2024. Fig. 2 shows the bibliometric analysis conducted with Bibliometrix, which revealed an annual growth rate of −4.83% for DOCMS-related studies, suggesting a temporary plateau in scholarly output rather than a decline in relevance. This pattern may reflect thematic consolidation or a shift toward practice-oriented work that is less visible in academic publishing [39]. International co-authorship accounted for 32.18% of output, indicating extensive international collaboration, particularly from India and China [22, 31].

Figure 2: Overview of the sample ($n = 87$). Source: Authors, using Bibliometrix R package.

The leading outlets were the *International Journal of Human Resource Management* (11 articles) and *Career Development International* (8 articles), as shown in Fig. 3. These outlets mirror the field's two major orientations: functional and experiential DOCMS studies. HRM journals largely highlighted technical system features, while the *Journal of Vocational Behavior* focused on user-level career constructs [20].

3.4. Data Analysis Approach

In line with the bibliometric analysis method, this study visualizes how research in the field has developed and uncovers the structural patterns behind it. The literature was thematically analyzed using Braun and Clarke's [41] six phases to identify and interpret themes. Combining these two types of analysis provides a review that integrates an overview of publication trends with deeper thematic insights. DOCMS is an emerging construct, and thus this review incorporated studies that used digital and/or technology-enabled career management approaches to illustrate the development of the DOCMS concept. The use of digital technology in HRM has been viewed as a continuum from traditional HRM practices through to advanced digital systems, according to previous research [42, 43]. Additionally, numerous calls have been made for theory regarding digital HRM to be extended into more specific areas, such as DOCMS [3, 4]. The bibliometric results provided the "what" of the research landscape, while the thematic synthesis provided the "so what"—integrating descriptive evidence with theoretical understanding.

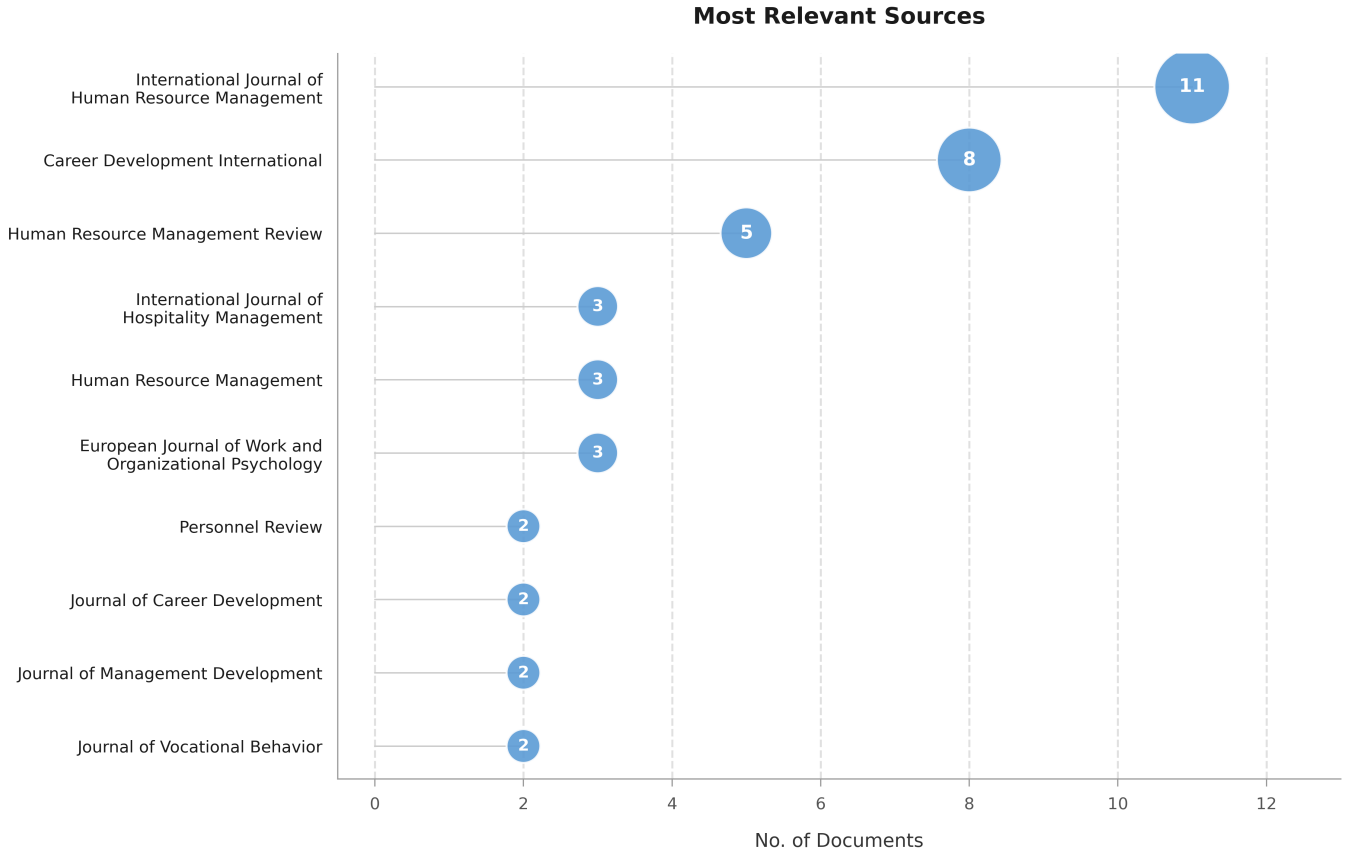

Figure 3: Most relevant journal sources in DOCMS research. Source: Authors, using Bibliometrix R package (Biblioshiny).

3.5. Thematic Analysis Framework

To enhance analytical transparency and methodological rigor, this review adopts Braun and Clarke's [41] six-phase thematic analysis framework as a guiding scaffold for interpreting bibliometric outputs. While the literature analysis employed bibliometric tools (Bibliometrix in R), the conceptual abstraction logic, theme development, and interpretation followed qualitative research best practices, particularly for synthesizing conceptual patterns from diverse sources.

In the first phase (familiarization), all 87 included studies were read in full and revisited multiple times to develop interpretive immersion in the dataset. During this phase, the titles, abstracts, and author keywords of all included papers were also revisited as reference points to support full-text interpretation and ensure consistency with the bibliometric dataset. This reading differed from the earlier eligibility screening, focusing on conceptual understanding rather than inclusion verification.

To identify and refine themes, a hybrid methodology was employed linking bibliometric co-occurrence analysis with interpretive thematic quadrant mapping generated using Bibliometrix (R). Based on the mapped quadrants, two reviewers independently compared the mapped clusters and associated literature and interpreted and labeled the identified themes through discussion until consensus was reached, consistent with the reflexive thematic analysis approach of Braun and Clarke [41]. The 91% agreement reported in Section 3.2 applied only to inclusion decisions, while theme abstraction relied on collaborative interpretation and iterative discussion rather than quantitative coding.

The interpretation process was inductive and concept-driven. Both reviewers independently identified recurring constructs and conceptual phrases (e.g., "career adaptability," "user control," "internal mobility," "digital integration") from titles, abstracts, and author keywords. These constructs were then treated as conceptual codes within Braun and Clarke's [41] framework and refined through iterative discussion to ensure interpretive consistency. The repeated appearance of key concepts—including career management strategy, IT integration, and career self-management—across various articles confirmed the stability of the clusters. The convergence between the bibliometric quadrant map and the qualitative interpretation established six themes, providing comprehensive coverage of the functional and experiential aspects of DOCMS through the dual-lens approach. Functional dimensions represent system-level, data-driven, or technological mechanisms (e.g., predictive analytics, IT integration, algorithmic feedback), while experiential dimensions reflect employee-level perceptions, agency, and relational value (e.g., autonomy, trust, motivation, fairness).

In the second stage, conceptual abstraction was supported mainly through identifying recurring conceptual structures. Keyword co-occurrence data were noted but used as an anchoring point rather than as a basis for coding. This approach aligns with established protocols for integrative and systematic reviews that merge bibliometric structure with qualitative synthesis [44]. In the theme search phase, themes were developed using thematic mapping (Fig. 5), which arranges concepts by density (internal development) and centrality (prominence across the literature).

In the fourth phase (reviewing themes), both reviewers revisited the mapped clusters and literature sources to ensure that the themes accurately reflected the underlying conceptual patterns. Consistency with the dual-lens DOCMS model was applied as a review criterion, and theme boundaries were refined through joint discussion, in line with qualitative synthesis standards [38]. In naming and defining themes (phase five), six core themes were synthesized and clearly categorized under functional and experiential dimensions.

This hybrid design integrates quantitative co-occurrence mapping with qualitative conceptual abstraction, allowing the six themes to emerge both from data structure and interpretive convergence across studies. As DOCMS research is conceptually emergent, not all reviewed studies employed explicit AI, gamification, or predictive analytics frameworks. Accordingly, references to such technologies are used in a general, integrative sense to represent the broader digital or data-driven career management mechanisms identified across the corpus.

3.6. Visual Theme Mapping

A co-occurrence network of keywords in DOCMS literature is shown in Fig. 4. The network was generated using Biblioshiny (field = DE; minfreq = 2; association strength normalization) and includes 250 keywords meeting the frequency threshold. Node size represents keyword occurrence, and edge thickness represents co-occurrence strength.

Larger, centrally located nodes (e.g., "career management," "career development," "organizational career management") represent established functional research clusters focused on organizational processes and interventions. In contrast, smaller peripheral nodes (e.g., "job satisfaction," "career success," "employee retention") reflect emerging experiential dimensions related to individual employee outcomes. Evidence of fragmentation is observed in isolated peripheral keywords (e.g., "career self-management," "person–job fit") and in the limited connections between functional and experiential dimensions, indicating a significant research gap around the mechanisms linking organizational career practices to employee outcomes.

The thematic quadrant map (Fig. 5) was generated using Biblioshiny (field = DE; $n = 250$; minfreq = 2; association strength normalization). Quadrants represent motor (upper right), niche (upper left), basic (lower right), and emerging (lower left) themes. The thematic map analysis identifies dominant motor themes in the top right quadrant: career management strategy and information technology, organizational career management, organizational commitment and job satisfaction, career motivation, and career self-management. The experiential core appears in the bottom right quadrant, consisting of career management, career development, and career success themes. These experiential themes are highly applicable but still disconnected and need to be better integrated with system-level design thinking. The analysis demonstrates that functional capabilities are highly developed but experiential aspects are under-integrated, which justifies the dual-lens approach.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Motor Theme Integration in DOCMS: Dual-Lens Analysis Framework

The evolution of digital career platforms has changed the nature of job postings from basic job boards to complete ecosystems that include performance management, learning management systems, and workforce analytics. Kong et al. [45] noted that job postings and 360-degree feedback systems became key tools for promoting internal mobility through open and transparent pathways. Through this integration, organizations are able to align employee development with strategic goals while providing employee-controlled, accessible career resources [6, 16, 45].

Thematic content analysis identified six significant areas of focus for how DOCMS have evolved. While functional dimensions demonstrate increasing convergence around technological integration and analytic capability [24, 29, 46], the experiential dimensions remain comparatively fragmented. Constructs such as user trust, autonomy, motivation, and perceived fairness are discussed across several studies [31, 30, 20, 47] yet without a unified theoretical framing. Functionally, DOCMS studies increasingly align around system-level analytics and predictive models, whereas experiential perspectives are dispersed among psychological, relational, and motivational subfields, reflecting a fragmented theoretical foundation. These six areas are presented below.

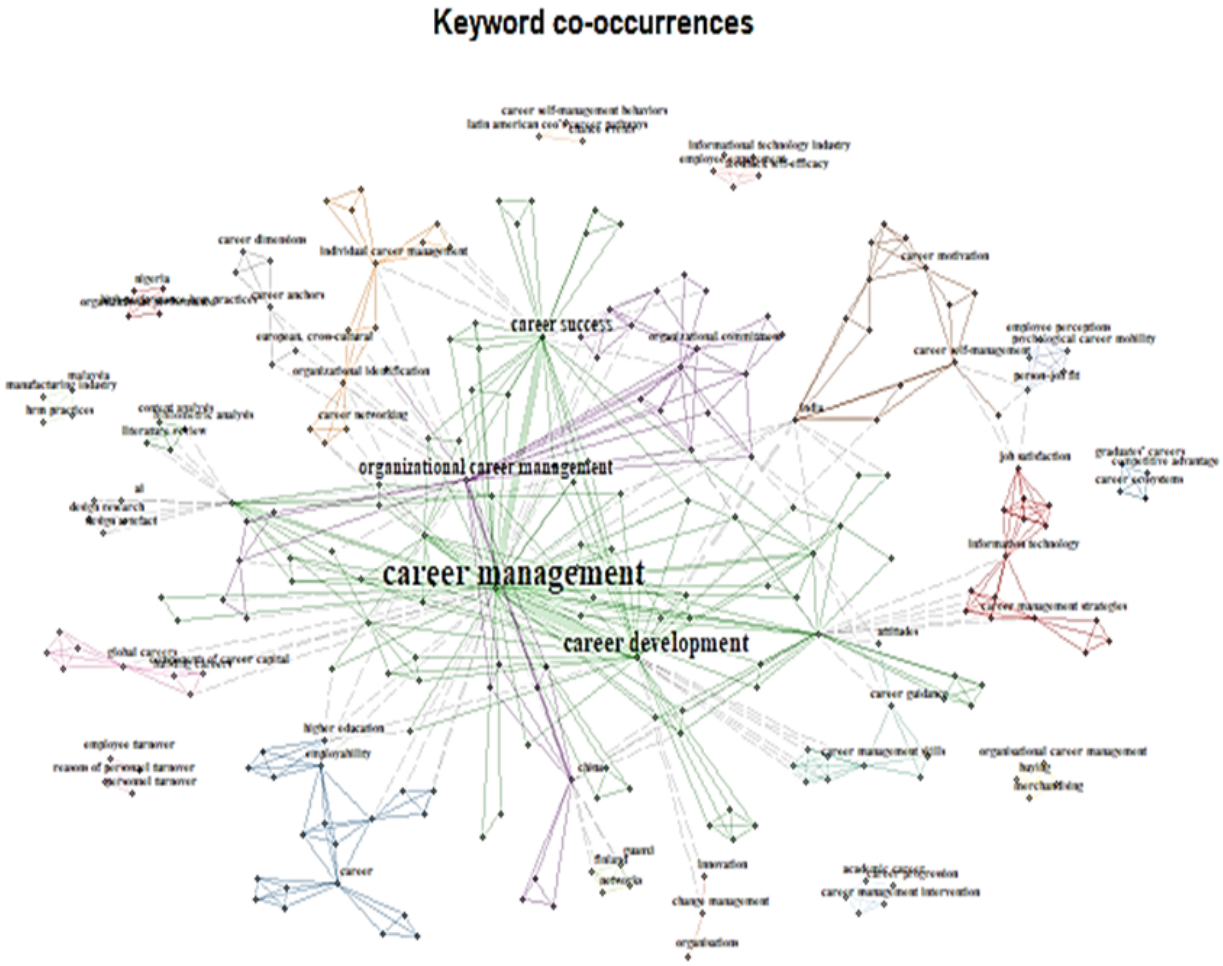

Figure 4: Keyword co-occurrence network in DOCMS literature. Source: Authors, generated in Biblioshiny.

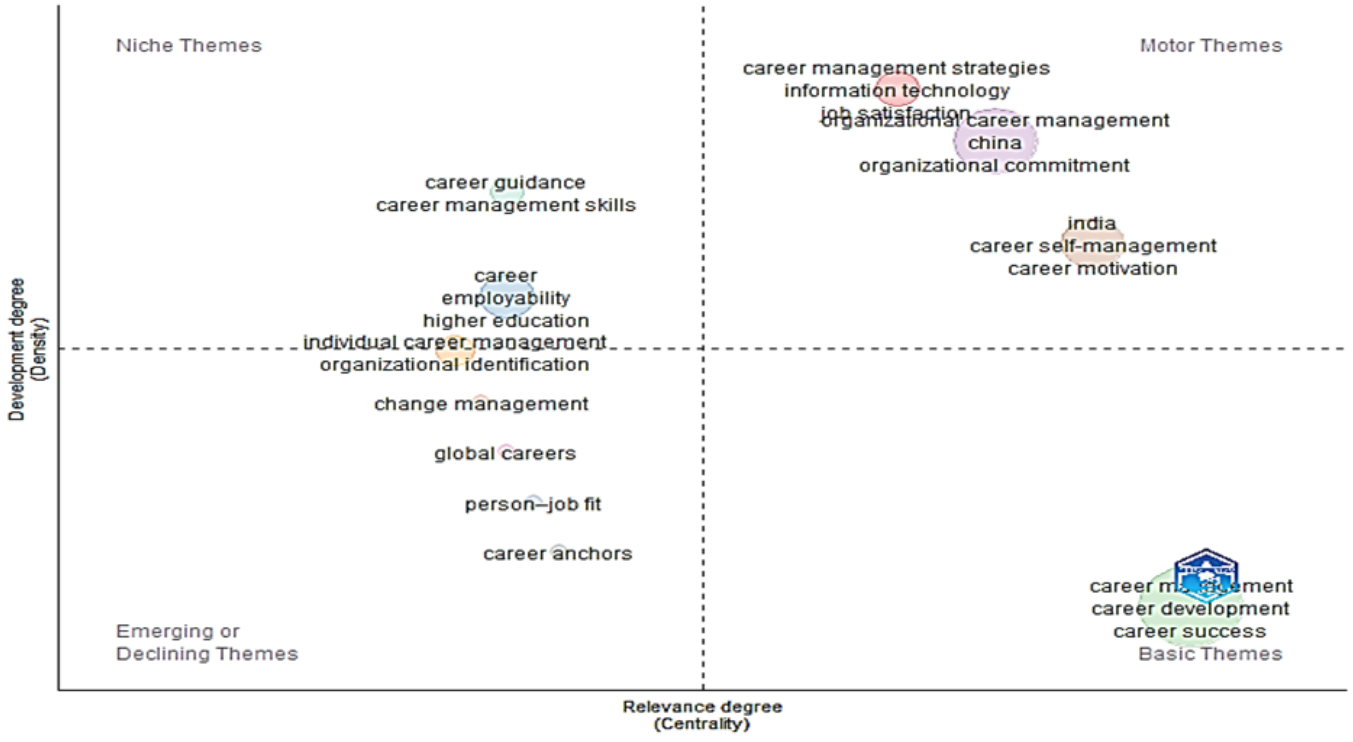

Figure 5: Thematic quadrant mapping of DOCMS literature. Source: Authors, generated in Biblioshiny.

4.2. Career Management Strategies

This theme refers to the algorithmic and analytics-based structuring of career pathways within DOCMS, through which progression options are generated, ranked, and recommended.

Functional focus: Continuous performance data, predictive analytics, and algorithmic job matching are used to construct career ladders and mobility pathways.

Experiential focus: Employees calibrate trust and acceptance of algorithmic career recommendations within predefined system logic.

4.2.1 Functional Dimensions

The incorporation of continuous performance feedback into a career identity framework through advanced analytics is changing how career identity is created and digitally structured. Studies illustrate the increasing importance of algorithmically based job matching, upskilling, and mobility pathways [24, 29]. Such systems lead employees to rely less on direct human decision-making and to make career advancement decisions based on the transparency of organizational succession plans while aligning growth objectives with the changing industry landscape [46, 48]. Contemporary career management platforms (e.g., SAP SuccessFactors, Oracle HCM Cloud) illustrate the real-world manifestation of DOCMS functionalities, using machine learning and predictive analytics to personalize career pathways. These examples are illustrative rather than drawn from the reviewed corpus, as they embody comparable mechanisms reported in the reviewed studies [46, 48]. Such platforms provide organizations with customized learning pathways and structured career ladders, while machine learning systems observe and assess career trajectories to identify optimal career paths and predict probable future skill shortages [1].

4.2.2 Experiential Dimensions

The reviewed studies highlight the importance of balancing algorithmic support with individual user autonomy. Tools that provide real-time feedback and enable self-evaluation of career progress help users gain a better understanding of their careers through iterative processes [31]. On the other hand, excessive automation can erode trust, reduce engagement, and limit the perceived value of recommendations [49]. Several authors [30] emphasize the embedding of career management within daily work routines so that employees may take advantage of data-driven recommendations while maintaining the authority to make their own career decisions.

The literature also reveals significant contradictions regarding algorithmic career recommendations. While DOCMS provide ostensibly equitable means of determining job suitability through algorithms, Darling and Cunningham [19] found that many of these systems operate by "procedural merit" rather than "real merit." Furthermore, Hoffmann et al. [50] found that perceived equality of advancement diminished significantly when employees demonstrated high levels of self-direction—one of the key attributes DOCMS seek to foster. This finding suggests that the most agentic employees may derive the least satisfaction from formalized digital career advancement systems.

4.3. Information Technology Integration

This theme captures the technological infrastructure that enables the operation and accessibility of DOCMS.

Functional focus: Cloud technologies, APIs, real-time data access, and interoperability connecting DOCMS with learning and performance systems.

Experiential focus: User engagement and usability outcomes derived from intuitive design and social learning affordances.

4.3.1 Functional Dimensions

The literature indicates that DOCMS function most effectively when supported by advanced IT systems [25]. These systems provide managers with access to real-time data, mobile connectivity, and assistance in connecting to learning and performance management platforms [25, 24]. Cloud technologies and APIs enable DOCMS users to access global talent pipelines from any region [28]. The integration of these systems allows for a centralized resource that combines employee performance reviews, training history, and skill updates, enabling organizations to track career development paths that directly link to strategic objectives and individual employee growth.

4.3.2 Experiential Dimensions

Usability plays a key role in the successful user experience, even with technological advances. Social learning features and responsive design provide higher engagement than traditional function-driven systems [46]. User-centered designs, including social learning features, enable DOCMS users to discover new opportunities, receive timely feedback, and internalize career insights. Across the reviewed studies, the alignment of technological capabilities with user engagement mechanisms contributes to experiential success, emphasizing that sophisticated functionality cannot guarantee positive career development outcomes without a strong user experience.

4.4. Organizational Career Management

This theme encompasses the organizational-level structuring and governance of careers enabled by DOCMS.

Functional focus: The use of performance data, learning information, and workforce analytics within DOCMS to proactively align individual career paths with organizational objectives, succession planning, and long-term capability development.

Experiential focus: Employee perceptions of organizational support and relational alignment as shaped by career dialogue, clarity of mutual expectations, and the maintenance of the psychological contract.

4.4.1 Functional Dimensions

Career management within organizations has changed from static, hierarchical structures to dynamic, analytics-based systems. Organizations use DOCMS to link individual career paths to organizational objectives by relating performance data, individual learning preferences, and career aspirations [8, 16]. This integration enables HR practitioners to transition from reactive to proactive career management—anticipating and mitigating risk, developing succession plans, and strategically investing in employee development [7].

4.4.2 Experiential Dimensions

Employees derive the most benefit from CMS when their personal goals align with organizational expectations. Cappellen and Janssens [9] posit that digital tools enabling structured "career dialogues" assist in this alignment by clarifying mutual expectations and sustaining the psychological contract between employees and employers. Conversely, without meaningful dialogue and customized development plans, employees may view DOCMS as monitoring tools rather than enablers of growth, leading to dissatisfaction and disengagement [20, 31].

An inherent conflict exists between how DOCMS are functionally designed and how employees evaluate relational career support. Van Vianen et al. [47] found that employees determine whether they are fairly supported by comparing themselves to colleagues rather than by evaluating DOCMS functional capabilities. This creates a challenge particularly for knowledge workers, who tend to distrust supervisor-led career development and rely instead on peer-based learning and interaction [51].

4.5. Job Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment

This theme concerns the affective and attitudinal outcomes associated with employee interactions with DOCMS.

Functional focus: The use of analytics dashboards and predictive models within DOCMS to monitor, assess, and anticipate levels of employee satisfaction, organizational commitment, engagement patterns, and retention risk.

Experiential focus: Employee emotional evaluations of their career development experience, including perceived value, trust, and affective commitment, as outcomes of DOCMS use.

4.5.1 Functional Dimensions

Analytics dashboards integrated with modern DOCMS provide organizations with the opportunity to assess employee satisfaction and organizational commitment in real time. By providing detailed analysis of engagement patterns and possible signs of retention risk [48], DOCMS can identify relationships between satisfaction/commitment metrics and employee performance reviews, participation in learning activities, and career advancement opportunities [52]. Predictive analytics within DOCMS can identify early signs of disengagement, allowing timely organizational intervention.

4.5.2 Experiential Dimensions

Job satisfaction and organizational commitment cannot be fully captured with quantitative metrics alone. Research shows that systems providing meaningful feedback, autonomy, and career clarity are more likely to create and maintain higher levels of organizational commitment [30, 23]. When DOCMS are perceived as monitoring tools rather than development tools, employee trust in the system decreases and affective commitment declines [20, 46]. Systems that succeed in building satisfaction and commitment do so by enhancing the quality of career development experiences rather than merely tracking satisfaction measures.

4.6. Career Self-Management

Career self-management refers to the employee-initiated use of DOCMS to plan, monitor, and adjust career development.

Functional focus: AI-enabled guidance, personalized dashboards, and analytic tools supporting self-directed learning, competency tracking, and career exploration while maintaining linkage to the organizational talent system.

Experiential focus: Employees' perceived control and trust in using DOCMS as a supportive aid for informed career decisions, rather than as an automated or controlling career mechanism.

4.6.1 Functional Dimensions

DOCMS has integrated various tools enabling career self-management, including AI-based career guidance systems, integrated career dashboards, and personalized development planning tools. Through DOCMS, employees can plan, track, and reflect on their careers more autonomously, in addition to enhancing self-directed learning, competency tracking, and applications for internal movement [24, 29]. Using machine learning modules, DOCMS assess learning readiness, recommend professional networks, and identify potential career paths based on employee behavior and progress data.

4.6.2 Experiential Dimensions

Functional capabilities alone are insufficient to create a rich career self-management experience. Research indicates that when organizations offer employees access to digital tools supporting self-directed learning, those employees are more motivated to pursue personal growth [31]. Allowing employees to select training programs and career paths (choice) enables the belief that they possess the ability to make meaningful career decisions (empowerment). However, if a digital system limits authority or second-guesses decisions, employees will likely disengage.

The DOCMS literature regularly presupposes that career capital transfers seamlessly across organizational contexts. However, Dickmann and Cerdin [53] demonstrated that employees at humanitarian field stations build "know-how" and "know-whom" skills that cannot be effectively transferred to organizational headquarters, creating "un-intelligent careers" for employees who forgo upward mobility in commitment to organizational mission. Digital systems designed on the assumption that career capital transfers uniformly between contexts are likely to provide inadequate guidance in specialized sectors.

4.7. Career Motivation

Career motivation refers to the processes through which DOCMS sustain employee engagement in career development activities over time.

Functional focus: Machine learning–driven motivational systems, including gamification features, adaptive feedback, and personalized incentives that respond to users' behavioral patterns and motivational styles.

Experiential focus: Employees' intrinsic motivation, including feelings of mastery, purpose, and relevance, shaped by the perceived developmental value of DOCMS rather than by short-term rewards or control mechanisms.

4.7.1 Functional Dimensions

Several studies anticipate that machine learning–based motivational systems are increasingly central to sustaining career engagement among employees. These platforms use algorithms that continuously improve their ability to motivate users by learning from their behaviors [25]. Gamification features (e.g., badges, leaderboards, achievements) engage users with career development activities [46]. The most sophisticated DOCMS identify different motivational styles

using characteristics identified through behavioral psychology, delivering personalized nudges, feedback, and incentives based on intrinsic motivation patterns.

4.7.2 Experiential Dimensions

Individual career motivation varies considerably. Employees report the strongest connection and engagement with DOCMS when systems adapt to their specific preferences, recognize their accomplishments, and align career development activities with their values and future goals [20]. Because individuals respond differently to encouragement, standardized motivational methods prove inadequate; motivation can degrade rapidly if gamified features do not support real career progression [48, 30]. Sustainable motivation is created when digital systems provide meaningful career growth experiences while demonstrating value based on perceived relevance and developmental benefit rather than merely through gamification models.

4.8. Integrative Framework

To delineate the conceptual boundaries and linkages among the six emergent themes, Fig. 6 presents the Integrative Dual-Lens Framework of DOCMS Themes. It indicates how each theme operates concurrently in a functional (system design) and an experiential (user perception) capacity through various bridging mechanisms, including usability, relational alignment, and empowerment. While certain constructs such as analytics or performance data may recur across themes, this reflects their operation at different analytical levels—systemic, organizational, and individual—rather than conceptual redundancy.

4.9. Practical and Theoretical Implications

The evidence presented indicates that, for any DOCMS to be successful, both technical capability and user-centered design must be combined. Elements that facilitate personalized career support, provide intuitive ease of use, and include opportunities for social interpersonal relationships result in increased user engagement and organizational ownership when used in conjunction with analytics and strategic workforce planning [7, 24]. The dual-lens framework reveals where systems might be unbalanced—strong in function but weak in experience—and exposes a similar divide in the academic literature. DOCMS extends beyond HR digitalization or e-HRM by focusing on career enablement rather than HR automation, integrating both technological and experiential dimensions. It represents a distinct, career-specific evolution of digital HRM that emphasizes co-created digital career value.

4.10. Future Research Directions

Most empirical studies on DOCMS focus on large organizations in Western contexts, and limited attention has been paid to DOCMS use within SMEs, not-for-profit organizations, and developing economies [22, 31]. Future research should examine the minimum viable configurations of DOCMS applicable in resource-limited environments and assess how cultural and infrastructural factors affect system success in Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

Longitudinal studies are also critical. Research designs spanning 3–5 years would allow mapping of DOCMS usage pathways, trust development, and system use patterns, while 5–10 year cohort studies would provide means to measure long-term consequences such as internal career mobility, career adaptability, and retention—aspects not adequately captured by current cross-sectional designs.

Theoretical contradictions associated with DOCMS also require empirical testing, including the paradox of autonomy and control in digital career management [33], the transferability of career capital across contexts [53], and the divergence between DOCMS rhetoric and actual employee experience [32]. Ethical issues requiring attention include conducting audits of bias in algorithmic systems and ensuring equitable access to career opportunities for digitally excluded populations [19]. Finally, further investigation is needed on how algorithmic tools can enhance rather than replace human mentoring and informal mechanisms of career support [30, 31].

4.11. Limitations

Limitations are acknowledged at methodological, disciplinary, and conceptual levels. Methodologically, only Scopus-indexed, English-language publications were searched; therefore, relevant studies may have been missed from regional journals not indexed by Scopus, grey literature, and scholarly material in other languages. Conference proceedings, dissertations, and book chapters were excluded, potentially omitting early-stage research.

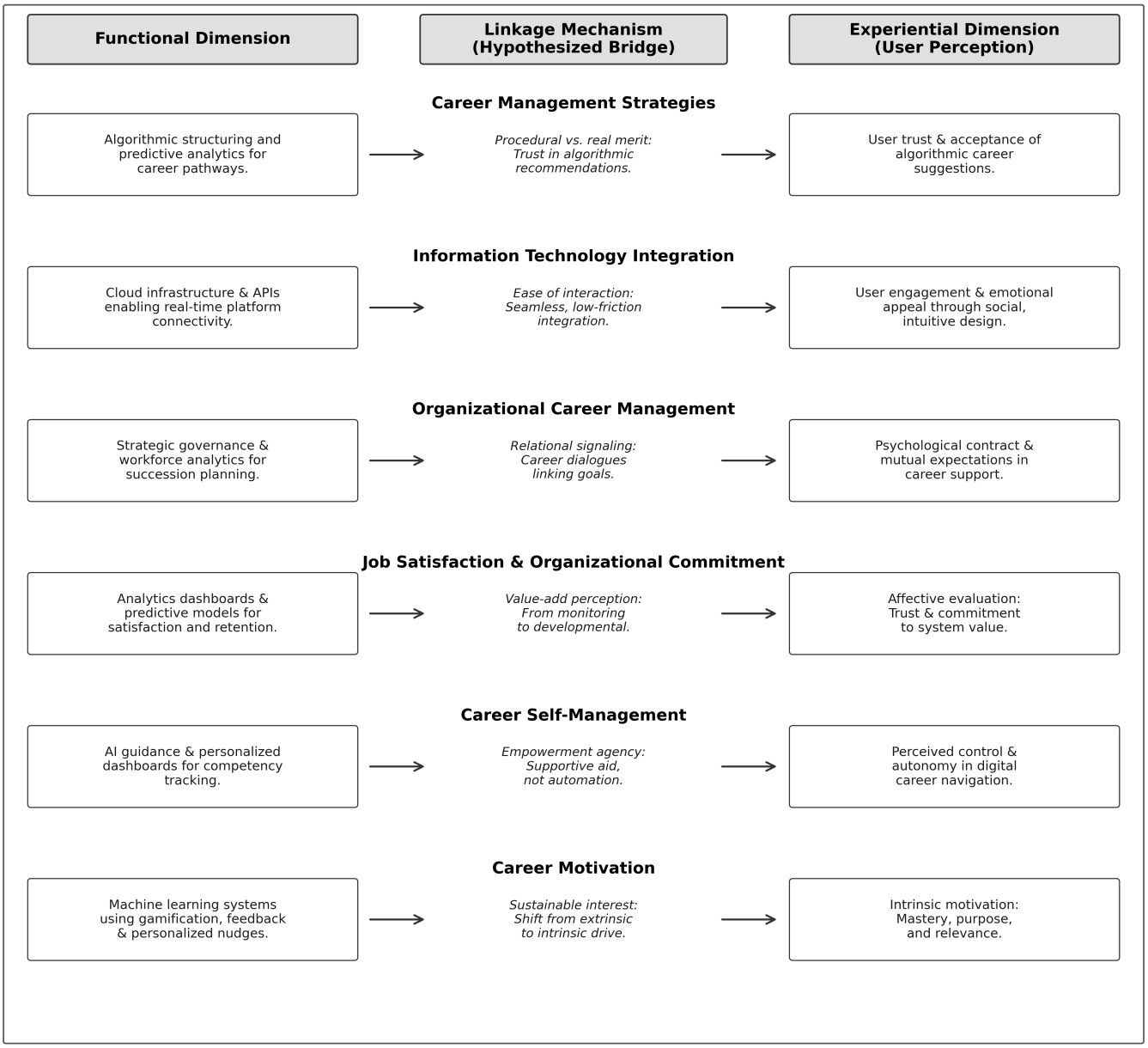

Figure 6: Integrative dual-lens framework of DOCMS themes. Source: Authors' conceptual synthesis, based on thematic and bibliometric integration.

At the disciplinary level, only studies published within Business, Management, and Accounting were reviewed. Studies from information systems, organizational psychology, sociology, and human–computer interaction may offer valuable perspectives for understanding DOCMS as socio-technical systems.

Conceptually, the dual-lens framework does not integrate emerging domains with limited theoretical development in current scholarship, such as algorithmic bias and fairness mechanisms, affective trust in AI-mediated guidance, digital well-being and technology-induced anxiety, and equity of access. The majority of reviewed studies employed cross-sectional designs, which limited the synthesis of longitudinal effectiveness and longer-term career outcomes. Publication bias may also exist, whereby studies yielding positive results are more likely to be published than those yielding null or negative findings.

5. Conclusions

This systematic literature review examines and synthesizes existing research on DOCMS, providing an integration of bibliometric and thematic synthesis rather than proposing a new theory or conducting empirical research. The review offers a thematic analysis of DOCMS through a novel dual-lens framework that integrates functional and experiential dimensions, bridging disparate research streams and providing an integrated picture of effective DOCMS implementation for contemporary organizations.

The six motor themes that emerged—career management strategies, information technology integration, organizational career management, organizational commitment and job satisfaction, career self-management, and career motivation—reveal both the socio-technical promise and inherent tensions of modern career management systems. While DOCMS offer unprecedented functional capabilities, the literature exposes significant contradictions: between algorithmic objectivity and political realities, between system-driven guidance and individual autonomy, and between functional design and relational evaluation. These contradictions indicate that successful DOCMS implementation requires organizations to look beyond efficiency and satisfaction to critically analyze whether digitalization-driven changes are truly transformative or simply the formalization of pre-existing career management contradictions. The dual-lens framework provides organizations with a means to identify functional-experiential gaps and understand the underlying contradictions that may ultimately limit DOCMS effectiveness regardless of technical sophistication.

Author Contributions

Timsy Kakkar: Conceptualization, Methodology, Formal Analysis, Investigation, Data Curation, Writing – Original Draft, Visualization. **Bharti**: Conceptualization, Supervision, Methodology, Writing – Review and Editing, Project Administration.

Declaration of Competing Interests

The authors declare no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

Data Availability Statement

The Scopus database was searched using the Boolean search method described in Section 3.1 on 7 May 2025. The final set comprised 87 peer-reviewed articles within the Business, Management, and Accounting subject areas. Data were cleaned and screened following PRISMA guidelines. Due to Scopus licensing restrictions, the raw exported file cannot be made publicly available; however, the complete list of 87 included studies with DOIs and titles is available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

AI Disclosure Statement

The authors used an AI-based language tool to improve grammar and readability during manuscript preparation. The scientific content, analysis, and conclusions were reviewed and validated by the authors. The AI tool was not involved in the design, conduct, or interpretation of the research.

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Ethics Approval and Consent

Not applicable. This study is a systematic literature review of published scholarly articles and did not involve human participants, animals, or sensitive data.

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