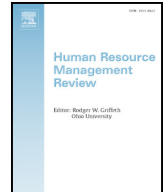


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The Advantages and Limitations of Using Meta-analysis in Human Resource Management Research

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ABSTRACT

This article provides an introduction to the special issue titled “Using meta-analysis to advance research in human resource management.” It begins by defining meta-analysis and considering the advantages and limitations of using this method in HRM research. For instance, we argued that meta-analysis is a valuable tool because (a) it provides a better estimate of the relation that exists in the population than single studies, (b) the estimates are more precise because there is an increased amount of data and statistical power, (c) hypothesis testing and biases associated with publications can be examined, and (d) it helps resolve inconsistencies in research, and identifies potential moderating or mediating variables. However, we also maintained that there are a number of limitations associated with the method. For example, the results of meta-analysis may be limited by the (a) selection of an incomplete set of studies, (b) inclusion of studies that lack internal, external, construct, and statistical conclusion validity, (c) presence of studies with small sample sizes, and (d) heterogeneity of methods used in studies that may lead to erroneous inferences. Finally, the article presents a brief review of the studies included in the special issue.

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1. Introduction

Interest in understanding behavior in organizations can be traced to Aristotle's discussion of leadership in the 4th century BCE, and many of the books written on organizations in the late 1800s (e.g., [Max Weber's book on “The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism”, 1864](#)). However, most of the empirical research in Human Resource Management (HRM) and Organizational Behavior (OB) emerged with Frederick Taylor's Scientific Management Theory in the early 1900s ([Taylor, 1914](#)). Subsequently, we have amassed a considerable amount of research on a wide range of theories and topics (e.g., motivation, job design, compensation, job attitudes, leadership, selection).

Given the large number of empirical studies in our field, researchers have started combining the results of research in order to assess the degree to which research supports our theories, and enhances our understanding of behavior in organizations. For example, researchers are increasingly using meta-analysis to aggregate the results of empirical studies on key organizational

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phenomena (e.g., recruitment, selection, training, job attitudes). Meta-analysis can be defined as a set of statistical procedures designed to accumulate research results across studies in order to estimate the relations between variables in the population as a whole (Glass, 1977). A key assumption of this approach is that each study provides an estimate of the relation between variables in the population, and when results across studies are aggregated, we gain a better estimate of the relation in the population than if we used only a single study (Bobko & Stone-Romero, 1998).

Meta-analyses have been conducted primarily in the social sciences, especially psychology, but are also widely used in biology and medicine. To date, HRM and OB (hereinafter referred to as HRM) researchers published meta-analyses on a number of important topics including (a) recruitment and job choice (e.g., Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005; McEvoy & Cascio, 1985), (b) selection and assessment (e.g., Barrick & Mount, 1991; Ones, Dilchert, Viswesvaran, & Judge, 2007), (c) training, (e.g., Alliger, Tannenbaum, Bennett, Traver, & Shotland, 1997; Bennett, Edens, & Bell, 2003), (d) performance appraisal (e.g., Harris & Schaubroeck, 1998), and (e) compensation (e.g., Judge, Piccolo, Podsakoff, Shaw, & Rich, 2010; Williams, McDaniel, & Nguyen, 2006). Apart from these topics, articles have also presented results of meta-analyses on HR Strategy, turnover, and other organizational outcomes (e.g., Combs, Liu, Hall, & Ketchen, 2006; Griffeth, Hom, & Gaertner, 2000). Moreover, some recent articles conveyed results of meta-analyses on issues associated with diversity and unfair discrimination in the employment process (e.g., Hosoda, Stone-Romero, & Coats, 2003; Oswald, Mitchell, Blanton, Jaccard, & Tetlock, 2013). Researchers also published a number of articles on methods issues associated with meta-analysis (e.g., Aguinis, Pierce, Bosco, Dalton, & Dalton, 2014; Bobko & Stone-Romero, 1998; Schmidt & Hunter, 2014; Spector, 2006).

Given the widespread use of meta-analysis in our field, the primary purposes of this special issue are to advance research in the field of HRM by (a) presenting reviews of the existing meta-analyses in our field, and suggesting topics for future meta-analyses, (b) relaying the results of meta-analysis on several key topics (e.g., work-related stress, collective turnover, employee engagement, the relation between HR practices and organizational performance), and (c) considering strategies that can be used to improve the methods for conducting meta-analysis. Thus, in the sections that follow we discuss the advantages and limitations of using meta-analysis to accumulate the results of empirical research, and provide an overview of the articles in the special issue. It merits noting that our review of the advantages and limitations of meta-analysis is not meant to be exhaustive, and includes only a cursory evaluation of the issues. More thorough reviews of the benefits and shortcomings of this method can be found in Bobko and Stone-Romero (1998), Murphy (2017), and Ones, Viswesvaran, & Schmidt (2017).

2. Advantages of Meta-analysis

A number of researchers have argued that meta-analysis is a valuable tool for enhancing our understanding of organizational phenomena, and assessing the degree to which research supports theoretically based hypotheses (Ones et al., 2017; Schmidt & Hunter, 2014). For instance, researchers maintained that, in many cases, the results of meta-analysis can provide better estimates of the relations that exist in the population than single studies (Schmidt & Hunter, 2014). In addition, the precision and accuracy of estimates can be improved because the increased amount of data used in a meta-analysis provides more statistical power to detect effects than separate independent studies. Furthermore, hypothesis testing can be applied on summary estimates, and the presence of publication bias can be assessed. Apart from these benefits, meta-analysis also helps researchers resolve inconsistencies in research findings, and enables them to identify moderating or mediating variables that may explain the reasons for these discrepancies.

For example, researchers in the fields of HRM have conducted numerous studies on the relation between job satisfaction and performance in organizations, and results of much of that research have been contradictory (e.g., Judge, Thoresen, Bono, & Patton, 2001). As a result, researchers typically argued that we need more research to examine this relation, but conducting additional studies does not answer the question about the relation or examine the conditions under which job satisfaction is or is not related to performance. However, a review of this relation by Judge et al. (2001) found that in some studies there were small or no relations between satisfaction and performance, and in other studies there was a reciprocal relation between these two variables. Still other studies indicated that the relation between satisfaction and performance was moderated by other variables including performance-based compensation, job complexity, and individual self-esteem. Thus, there was a great deal of uncertainty in the research literature about the relation between these two important variables.

In order to resolve this uncertainty, Judge et al. (2001) conducted a meta-analysis of 254 studies on the satisfaction-performance relation with an $N = 54,451$. The results of their analysis revealed an uncorrected weighted mean correlation between satisfaction and performance of 0.18, and a corrected mean correlation of 0.30. It merits noting that the uncorrected mean was small, but researchers argued that most effect sizes in organizational research are small (Aguinis, Pierce, Bosco, Dalton, & Dalton, 2014). Apart from the effect size, Judge et al. (2001) also found that job complexity moderated the relation between satisfaction and performance. In particular, the results indicated that when jobs were highly complex, satisfaction was positively related to performance, but when there was low job complexity there was no relation between the variables.

Thus, one advantage of conducting a meta-analysis is that researchers can identify key moderating variables that may influence the nature of a relation between variables. Adding moderating variables is useful because it helps explain the inconsistencies found in previous research. Therefore, based on the results of the Judge et al. (2001) meta-analysis and a qualitative review, the researchers developed a new integrated model of the satisfaction-performance relation that included moderating variables such as performance-reward contingencies, job characteristics, need for achievement, and mediating variables including task success, achievement, task self-efficacy, and positive mood. As a result, one important advantage of meta-analysis is that it can help

researchers estimate the relation between variables in the population, and can be used to identify other variables that explain the conditions under which the relation exists and does not exist.

Taken together, researchers (Schmidt & Hunter, 2014; Walker, Hernandez, & Kattan, 2008) maintained that meta-analysis has the following advantages:

- (a) Results of meta-analyses can provide better estimates of the relation in the population than single studies.
- (b) The precision and validity of estimates can be improved as more data are used in a meta-analysis, and the increased amount of data increases the statistical power to detect an effect.
- (c) Inconsistencies in results across studies can be analyzed, and the bases for these differences can be analyzed (e.g., publication bias, differences in the representativeness of samples).
- (d) Hypothesis testing can be applied on summary estimates.
- (e) Moderators can be identified and included in the analyses to explain variation between studies.

3. Limitations of Meta-analysis

Although we discussed a number of the advantages of meta-analysis, there are also several limitations associated with this method, and researchers have argued that it is not a panacea (Bobko & Stone-Romero, 1998). In particular, violations of accepted meta-analytic procedures can result in erroneous inferences about the relation between variables (Murphy, 2017; Walker et al., 2008). For instance, problems with meta-analysis can arise from (a) the selection of studies to be included in the analysis, (b) the validity of studies selected for the analysis, (c) publication bias, (d) small sample sizes, and (e) the heterogeneity of methods used in studies included in the analysis. Each of these issues will be considered below (see Bobko & Stone-Romero, 1998; Greco, Zangrillo, Biondi-Zoccali, & Landoni, 2013; Murphy, 2017).

3.1. Selection of Studies for the Meta-analysis

One of the primary goals of meta-analysis is to improve our understanding of organizational phenomena by combining all research evidence from multiple independent studies to evaluate hypothesized relations (Bobko & Stone-Romero, 1998). However, meta-analysis only includes a small subset of studies on a topic based primarily on articles in the published literature. These articles provide limited evidence on the estimated relations because they do not identify all possible studies on phenomena (Greco et al., 2013). Some researchers call this the “file drawer phenomenon” because many studies on a topic have not been published and remain in researchers’ file drawers (Walker et al., 2008). Given that all possible studies on a phenomenon are not included in the meta-analysis, the selection and inclusion of a limited set of studies biases estimates about the effect sizes in the population. Thus, it has been argued that researchers should make every effort to identify and include all published and unpublished studies on a topic in their meta-analysis.

3.2. Validity of included studies

Another major limitation of meta-analysis is that inferences made from meta-analyses are affected by the validity of the individual studies included in the analyses. In some cases, independent studies lack internal, construct, statistical conclusion, and external validity (Bobko & Stone-Romero, 1998). Thus, researchers argued that one problem with meta-analysis is that when the studies included in the analysis lack validity then the results may be characterized as garbage-in-garbage-out (Sackett, Harris, & Orr, 1986). Stated differently, the extent to which valid inferences can be made from meta-analysis depends on the quality of the studies included in the analysis (Bobko & Stone-Romero, 1998, p. 363). For instance, the “validity of inferences made from a meta-analysis depend on the (a) degree to which the participants in the individual studies are representative of those in the population, (b) validity of inferences made from each of the independent studies included in the analysis, and (c) number of studies included” (Bobko & Stone-Romero, 1998, p. 369).

Apart from these factors, the selection of studies for the meta-analysis may be influenced by the extent to which the original studies were published in a prestigious journal, or authored by someone with a prominent reputation. In addition, publication bias can be one of the major limitations of meta-analysis because most journals only publish articles that report positive results or those that support hypotheses. As a result, the selection of only those studies published in journals may result in high Type I error rates or false positives (Greco et al., 2013). Thus, if the individual studies chosen for the meta-analysis lack validity or are the result of publication bias, the results may lead to misleading inferences about an issue (Bobko & Stone-Romero, 1998; Murphy, 2017). This can become a serious problem in medical research if researchers claim that a drug treatment is effective when it is not, or in organizational research if researchers argue that a costly organizational intervention has a positive impact on organizational effectiveness and it does not (Murphy, 2017).

3.3. Small sample sizes

An additional limitation of meta-analysis is that, in some cases, the original studies included in the analysis have small sample sizes. Studies based on small sample sizes typically have low statistical power, and large standard errors (Bobko & Stone-Romero, 1998). As a result, a meta-analyses based on these studies can produce effect sizes that are very heterogeneous, and the findings

may lead to erroneous inferences. Thus, methodologists (Cooper, Hedges, & Valentine, 2009) argued that researchers should conduct sensitivity analysis to examine the heterogeneity in effect sizes of studies included in the analysis.

Small sample sizes also make it difficult to detect moderators or identify other factors that influence the magnitude of the relation between variables. Although some researchers argued that the use of meta-analysis reduces concerns about low statistical power, the problems associated with low power is still an issue when the original studies have small sample sizes. In addition, results of Monte Carlo studies revealed that the power of meta-analysis to detect moderators is not always effective (Sackett et al., 1986). Thus, methodologists contend that researchers should conduct valid studies with large sample sizes rather than rely on combining a number of studies with small samples in a meta-analysis (Bobko & Stone-Romero, 1998). They also maintain that well conducted meta-analyses can provide complementary information to these large scale studies.

Apart from the small sample sizes in many independent studies, research in HRM often includes samples that are not representative of the population of interest (Bobko & Stone-Romero, 1998). For example, even though student samples may be representative of some populations, a study on goal setting and performance by Tubbs (1986), cited in Bobko & Stone-Romero, 1998) found that the mean effect size was 0.89 in lab studies, and 0.52 for those in a field setting. The large differences in effect sizes suggested that the findings of meta-analysis may be misleading if the original studies do not include representative samples.

3.4. Heterogeneity of methods and data analysis

Another limitation of meta-analysis is that the heterogeneity in the methods used in studies, and the type of data analysis may lead to misleading inferences about the relation between variables (Greco et al., 2013; Murphy, 2017). For example, if the effects are the same across studies then fixed effects models should be used, and the effects are weighted by the sample size (Cooper et al., 2009). However, when the effects are heterogeneous then random effects models are most appropriate, and each effect is weighted equally (Cooper et al., 2009). Fixed effect models are useful when studies are similar, and random effect models allow researchers to make inferences about a wide-ranging population of studies (Murphy, 2017). However, when methods used in studies are dissimilar and there are differences in measures, samples, contexts then it is hard to determine if researchers are studying the same phenomenon (Murphy, 2017). Thus, the heterogeneity in studies' methods may increase the risk of making erroneous inferences from the data (Greco et al., Murphy, 2017). As a result, methodologists maintained that sensitivity analysis should be conducted to identify the heterogeneity in effect sizes before inferences are made from the results (Cooper et al., 2009).

Despite the limitations associated with meta-analysis, we believe that it is still a useful tool for advancing theory in our field, and increasing our understanding of organizational phenomena. Therefore, we have assembled a very interesting set of articles in the sections that follow. These articles (a) provide reviews of the existing meta-analyses in our field, (b) apply meta-analysis to develop theory and enhance our understanding of HRM topics, and (c) advance the methods used to conduct meta-analysis.

4. Description of Articles Included in the Special Issue

There are sixteen articles in this special issue, and we provide a brief overview of each of them in the sections below.

4.1. Articles that review existing meta-analyses

The first two articles in the special issue presented a review of HRM and OB research that used meta-analyses, and suggested directions for future research and theory development. For example, the opening article titled “Collective Assessment of the HRM Field: Meta-analysis Needs and Theoretical Prospects for Future Research” was authored by Daniels, Wang, Lawong, and Ferris (2017). These authors presented a thought-provoking review of the research in HRM in order to identify where meta-analyses have been conducted. They also identified several research areas that are in need of meta-analyses including strategic HRM, organizational withdrawal, and compensation, benefits, and reward systems. In addition, they considered the impact of meta-analysis on our field, and offered ideas about the effective application of meta-analysis.

The second article titled “A Quantitative and Qualitative Review of What Meta-analyses Have Contributed to Our Understanding of Human Resource Management” by Pindek, Kessler, and Spector (2017) reviewed the contributions researchers have made to the HRM field using meta-analysis. They conducted content analysis of the most frequently studied HRM topics and found that they included performance, attitudes, diversity/demographics, personality, withdrawal, and job characteristics. Then, they performed a citation analysis of the meta-analytic papers that had an impact on the field, and found that the most often studied topics were justice and turnover. Finally, they considered the extent to which these articles were designed to test theory or identify effect sizes and moderators, and discussed the breadth of contributions made by meta-analysis.

4.2. Articles that apply meta-analysis to understand organizational phenomena

The next set of ten articles used meta-analysis to test existing theory, and increase our understanding of HRM issues. In particular, they focus on a variety of topics including work stress, collective turnover, employee engagement, rater accountability, liking and LMX, and the relation between HRM and firm performance, etc.

The initial article in this set is by Fila, Purl, and Griffeth (2017) and is titled “Job Demands, Control, and Support Meta-analysis, Moderating Effects of Gender, National Culture, and Occupation.” The authors conducted a meta-analysis of the research on the job-demands control model of work stress. In particular, the analyses examined the extent to which gender, national culture,

and occupation moderated the relation between job-demands and satisfaction, and job satisfaction and emotions. Results revealed that gender moderated the job-demands satisfaction relation, and national culture and occupation moderated the relation between job satisfaction and emotion.

A subsequent article by [Hancock, Allen and Soelberg \(2017\)](#) is titled “Collective Turnover: An Expanded Meta-analytic Exploration and Comparison.” (2017) They combined and expanded the existing meta-analyses on collective turnover, and found that involvement of management may be the most effective mechanism for decreasing collective turnover. In addition, their findings indicated that strategic HRM approaches, such as the use of High Commitment HR Systems, coupled with increasing levels of satisfaction, commitment, perceptions of fairness, and interpersonal team relationships may limit collective turnover. Their results also revealed a curvilinear turnover-performance relation, and the contagious influence of turnover.

The third article in this set is titled “Exploring the Relationship Between HRM and Firm Performance: A Meta-analysis of Longitudinal Studies” (2017) was by [Saridakis, Lau, and Cooper \(2017\)](#). These authors used meta-analysis to estimate the effect size of the relation between high performance work practices (HPWP) and firm performance using longitudinal studies. Their results indicated that a set of mutually reinforcing HPWP was more strongly related to firm performance than individual HR practices. Another article in this special issue focuses on a similar topic, but revealed very different results (see [Tzabbar, Tzafirir & Baruch, 2017](#)). We included articles in this special issue that had inconsistent results in order to expand our understanding of this topic, and encourage readers to review both studies.

The fourth article is by [Chiaburu, Oh, Wang, and Stoverink \(2017\)](#), and is titled “A Bigger Piece of the Pie: The Relative Importance of Affiliative and Change-oriented Citizenship and Task Performance in Predicting Overall Job Performance.” The authors used meta-analysis to examine the degree to which both in-role (task performance) and extra-role dimensions of performance (organizational citizenship behaviors, [OCBs]) account for variance in ratings of overall job performance. The results indicated that overall performance is determined more by three forms of OCBs in combination (i.e., OCBs targeted at Organizations, OCBs targeted at Individual, OCB targeted at Change) than by task performance. Results of multiple regression analyses also showed that the incremental contribution of each performance dimension above and beyond the other performance dimensions is highest for OCB-O, followed by those of task performance, OCB-CH, and OCB-I.

The next article is titled “Investigating the Incremental Validity of Employee Engagement in the Prediction of Employee Effectiveness: A Meta-analytic Path Analysis,” and is by [Mackay, Allen, and Landis \(2017\)](#). This study used meta-analysis and path-analysis to examine the degree to which employee engagement shows incremental validity in the prediction of employee effectiveness over other job attitudes (e.g., job satisfaction, job involvement or organizational commitment). Results revealed that employee engagement has low to moderate incremental validity over job attitudes, and engagement has low incremental validity over higher order job attitudes representing a combination of the job attitudes just noted.

The sixth article in this set is by [Harari and Rudolph \(2017\)](#) and is titled “The Effect of Rater Accountability on Performance Ratings: A Meta-Analytic Review.” These authors used meta-analysis to examine the relation between rater accountability and performance ratings. The findings revealed that the relation between rater accountability and performance ratings varied as a function of accountability source, such that accountability was related to ratings only when raters were held accountable by the ratee rather than a superior. This relation was consistent regardless of whether accountability was introduced through identification or justification, and the results did not find that rating direction or nor study setting influenced this relation.

A seventh article by [Tzabbar, Tzafirir, and Baruch \(2017\)](#) titled “A Bridge Over Troubled Water: Replication, Integration and Extension of the Relationship between HRM Practices and Organizational Performance Using Moderating Meta-Analysis” examined the relation between HRM practices and organizational performance. Their results indicated that study context and research design influenced the relation between HRM practices and performance. In addition, they found that the differences in the relations of various HRM practices explained only 4% of the variance in performance, whereas, societal context, industry sector, and firm size explained 33%, 12%, and 8%, respectively. Potential moderators including four categories of performance outcomes and four types of participants were also considered. The authors argued that their findings provide strong support for contingency theory. As noted above, the findings of this study are not consistent with those reported by Saridakis et al., so we urge readers to review both studies.

The title of the next article is “Does Liking Explain Variance Above and Beyond LMX? A Meta-Analysis,” and is by [Dulebohn, Wu, and Liao \(2017\)](#). This study used two meta-analyses to examine if liking, as a reflection of interpersonal attraction, had incremental validity and construct redundancy with Leader Member Exchange (LMX). Results of incremental variance analysis showed that subordinate-reported liking explained unique variances beyond subordinate-reported LMX in important attitudinal and behavioral outcomes including affective commitment, normative commitment, and turnover intention. In addition, their findings suggested that liking is an important and distinct construct that facilitates the development of LMX. The results of their study suggested that liking may be an important, but recently neglected construct in organizational research.

The ninth article by [Culbertson, Weyhrauch, and Huffcutt \(2017\)](#) is titled “A Tale of Two Formats: Direct Comparison of Matching Situational and Behavior Description Interview Questions.” This study used meta-analysis to examine the psychometric properties of situational interview (SI) and behavior description interview (BDI) questions written to assess the same set of job attributes. The authors found an observed mean correlation of 0.40 (0.47 corrected) between construct-matched SI and BDI questions. In addition, their results revealed that several variables moderated the correspondence between interview format questions including the (1) internal consistency of questions, (2) number of questions per format, (3) the degree to which probing was allowed, and (4) purpose of the interview was for research (vs. employment). Given these findings, they indicated that SI and BDI questions should not be assumed to be interchangeable even when they assess the same attributes.

The final article in this set is titled “Task and Person-focused Leadership Behaviors and Team Performance: A Meta-analysis” and is authored by Booms, Curseu, and Oerlemans (2017). It reports the results of a meta-analytic review of the relation between person and task-focused leader behaviors and team performance. Results revealed a positive relation ($\rho = .33$) between both types of leadership behaviors and subjective team performance. However, for objective team performance the relations were positive, but smaller for task-focused than person-focused leadership behaviors. Furthermore, the analyses showed that a number of variables moderated the relation between leadership behaviors and team performance including (a) the source of leader ratings, (b) the degree to which the ratings were at the individual or team level, and (c) team type.

4.3. Articles that focus on the methods used to conduct meta-analysis

The next set of four articles focus on the methods used to conduct meta-analysis, and the inferences that can be made from the results.

The first article in this set is by Murphy (2017) and is titled “What Inferences Can and Cannot Be Made on the Basis of Meta-Analysis?” The author argued that meta-analysis has both descriptive and inferential uses. He also suggested that if the results of several studies that are asking similar questions are pooled together, the average effect size is likely to be a valuable and important statistic. However, the validity of inferences about what this average means often depends on the extent to which effect size estimates vary from study to study, and the task of making sense of this variability has become central to interpreting meta-analyses. In view of these issues, the author relayed the risks inherent in inferences made from meta-analysis and discussed a Bayesian approach to using meta-analysis to determine if effects vary in important ways.

The next article is titled “Realizing the Full Potential of Psychometric Meta-Analysis for a Cumulative Science and Practice of Human Resource Management” by Ones, Viswesvaran, and Schmidt (2017). These authors focus on the issues and potential problems that may threaten the veracity and usefulness of meta-analyses in HRM. They argued that these problems must be correctly tackled for meta-analyses to realize their full potential in advancing HRM science and practice. They addressed the problems of identification and inclusion of all relevant effect sizes, as well as appropriate corrections for unreliability and range restriction. In addition, they offered concrete proposals to enable inclusion of unpublished, practitioner research and data in HRM meta-analyses.

The third article in this set is by Rosopa and Kim (2017), and is titled “Robustness of Statistical Inferences Using Linear Models with Meta-Analytic Correlation Matrices.” The authors maintained that researchers are increasingly using meta-analytic procedures to aggregate effect sizes across primary studies to form meta-analytic correlation matrices, which are then subjected to further analyses using linear models (e.g., multiple linear regression). Because missing effect sizes (i.e., correlation coefficients) and different sample sizes across primary studies can occur when constructing meta-analytic correlation matrices, this article examined the effects of missingness under realistic conditions and various methods for estimating sample size (e.g., minimum sample size, arithmetic mean, harmonic mean, and geometric mean) on the estimated squared multiple correlation coefficient (R^2) and the power of the significance test on the overall R^2 in linear regression. Simulation results revealed that missing data had a more detrimental effect as the number of primary studies decreased, and the number of predictor variables increased. They also considered minimum sample sizes for improving statistical power and estimation of overall R^2 .

The final paper in this special issue is titled “metaBUS as a Vehicle for Facilitating Meta-Analysis,” and is by Bosco, Uggerslev, and Steel (2017). The authors argued that using the metaBUS platform can assist researchers with conducting meta-analysis. metaBUS is a data platform that includes coding for over a million effect sizes from a broad set of journals in the field of HRM, and applied psychology from 1980 to today. They maintained that this platform enables researchers and practitioners to create field level summaries in real time (metaBUS, 2016). In addition, Bosco et al. provided a detailed description of the platform and the database, and considered recommendations for using metaBUS in three contexts including (a) generating literature search terms by using the metaBUS taxonomy, (b) conducting metaBUS queries to locate findings and generate first-pass meta-analyses, and (c) identifying relevant findings that might have gone overlooked during traditional literature searches.

In summary, we believe that we have assembled an interesting set of articles that will expand our knowledge of important content areas, and enhance our understanding of meta-analysis. We want to take this opportunity to thank Rodger Griffeth and Howard Klein for giving us an opportunity to edit this special issue. We greatly appreciate all of their help and support. We are also truly grateful to all of the authors who submitted manuscripts, and the reviewers who spent countless hours evaluating submissions. We could not have completed the special issue without their hard work and diligence. Finally, we learned a great deal of information from reviewing the articles in this special issue, and hope that they will also be helpful to our colleagues. The primary goal of this special issue was to disseminate knowledge on how meta-analysis can be used to advance theory and research in HRM. We hope that the articles in this issue increase our understanding of organizational phenomena, advance meta-analysis methods, and foster additional research on key topics in HRM.

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