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**Workplace happiness as a foundation for healthy relationships in the education sector**

**Felicidad laboral como base de relaciones saludables en el sector educativo**

Felicidade profissional como base para relações saudáveis no setor educacional

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**ABSTRACT**

The educational system faces delicate and profound fragility, resulting from tensions among its various educational stakeholders and the emergence of psychosocial risk factors that directly impact interpersonal relationships, service quality, and mental health in the educational environment. These problems are reflected in concerning indicators such as work absenteeism and decreased productivity. **Objective:** To examine the influence of happiness management on promoting healthy and productive labor relations in the education sector. **Methodology:** The article employs a mixed methodology, analyzing the productivity of happiness and workplace well-being management plans from a reflective perspective acquired during the development of a Master's degree in Administration. The need arises to implement workplace well-being plans that counteract the effects of stress, poor communication, and lack of empathy—factors that deteriorate the mental, emotional health and productivity of those participating in the educational environment. It is essential to implement strategies aimed at reducing adverse psychosocial factors, as well as creating healthy, empathetic workspaces that promote communication, contributing to improving the organizational climate and productivity of educational institutions.

**Keywords:** Mental health; emotional health; productivity; happiness; labor relations.

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**RESUMEN**

El sistema educativo enfrenta una delicada y profunda fragilidad, producto a las tensiones entre sus distintos actores educativos y la aparición factores de riesgo psicosocial que impactan de manera directa las relaciones interpersonales, la calidad del servicio y la salud mental en el ámbito educativo. Estas problemáticas se reflejan en indicadores preocupantes, como el ausentismo laboral y la disminución de la productividad. El objetivo del presente estudio es: examinar la influencia de la gestión de la felicidad en la promoción de relaciones laborales sanas y productivas en el sector educativo. El artículo utiliza una **metodología** mixta, analizando la productividad de los planes de gestión de felicidad y bienestar laboral de los colaboradores desde una perspectiva reflexiva adquirida en el desarrollo de la maestría en administración. Surge la necesidad de implementar planes de bienestar laboral que contrarresten los efectos del estrés, la deficiente comunicación y la falta de empatía, factores que deterioran la salud mental, emocional y productividad de quienes participan en el entorno educativo. A manera de **conclusiones**,es esencial implementar estrategias orientadas a reducir los factores psicosociales adversos, así como la creación de espacios laborales saludables, empáticos y promotores de la comunicación, contribuyendo a la mejora del clima organizacional y la productividad de las instituciones de educación.

**Palabras clave:** Salud mental; salud emocional; Productividad; Felicidad; Relaciones laborales.

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**RESUMO**

O sistema educacional enfrenta uma delicada e profunda fragilidade, produto das tensões entre seus diferentes atores educacionais e do aparecimento de fatores de risco psicossocial que impactam diretamente as relações interpessoais, a qualidade do serviço e a saúde mental no ambiente educacional. Essas problemáticas se refletem em indicadores preocupantes, como o absenteísmo e a diminuição da produtividade.

O objetivo do presente estudo é: examinar a influência da gestão da felicidade na promoção de relações de trabalho saudáveis e produtivas no setor educacional. O artigo utiliza uma metodologia mista, analisando a produtividade dos planos de gestão da felicidade e bem-estar no trabalho dos colaboradores a partir de uma perspectiva reflexiva adquirida no desenvolvimento do mestrado em administração.

Surge a necessidade de implementar planos de bem-estar no trabalho que combatam os efeitos do estresse, da comunicação deficiente e da falta de empatia, fatores que deterioram a saúde mental, emocional e a produtividade de quem participa do ambiente educacional.

Como conclusão, é essencial implementar estratégias voltadas para a redução dos fatores psicossociais adversos, assim como a criação de espaços de trabalho saudáveis, empáticos e que promovam a comunicação, contribuindo para a melhoria do clima organizacional e da produtividade das instituições de ensino.

**Palavras-chave:** Saúde mental; saúde emocional; Produtividade; Felicidade; Relações de trabalho.

**INTRODUCTION**

The term happiness is defined as a fundamental factor in organizational management, especially in companies where people are considered the center of productivity. The concept of happiness has been defined as something personal, dependent on each individual, their mood, or the socioeconomic conditions in which they are immersed. However, the evolution of business dynamics has generated a change in the perspective of this element, to the point of being considered a factor that directly impacts institutional productivity, performance, and above all, the physical, mental, and emotional health of educational stakeholders (Díaz et al., 2018).

In this way, it has ceased to be a relative element to become a strategic factor, where proper implementation can determine the success or failure of organizations, primarily in the education sector.

According to E. Leyton (2016), who indicates that: "What is relevant in this new paradigm is that employees can enjoy what they do, which is why organizations have begun to be concerned about the happiness and well-being of their personnel," this becomes more relevant because it is in the education sector where greater emphasis should be placed, due to the constant interaction among various stakeholders.

This evidences situations that generate high levels of stress, emotional burdens, and above all, the commitment acquired with the formation and development of students. It can be observed that this is a particularly sensitive terrain regarding interaction among different educational stakeholders.

Employees belonging to different educational institutions, whether in teaching or administrative roles, face constant challenges, such as the need to meet goals, achieve enrollments, achieve student retention and conservation, face lack of resources, deterioration in physical facilities, and most importantly, reduce school dropout rates, even considering that this is a factor that may be uncontrollable.

These obligations generate physical and emotional exhaustion and work demotivation as pressing factors that require direct intervention. This is why organizational happiness must be taken into account as a strategy that, when properly applied, helps minimize the impact these generate and satisfactorily transform the organizational culture of educational institutions.

Developing a culture of happiness in organizations encompasses several factors that are desired to impact positively, such as employee well-being, as well as generating healthy and productive environments. According to Valderrama et al. (2023), who argues that "the emotional well-being of workers is fundamental for organizational productivity, as employees with good emotional well-being tend to be more committed, have better performance, and collaborate more effectively." When analyzing the previous quote, we can see that the emotional stability of employees is directly linked to productivity. This is because highly motivated and emotionally satisfied employees have high levels of commitment and higher productivity rates.

Likewise, having tools in the company that allow for spaces or work environments that promote the care of physical, mental, and emotional health help reduce the risk of occupational diseases or stress-related illnesses, contributing to strengthening relationships within the framework of respect and trust. It is understood that companies must generate strategies that respond to needs and allow for improving the quality of life of employees, thus increasing business productivity.

From this perspective, the following question is posed: How does happiness management contribute to improving workplace well-being and institutional productivity?

**Theoretical framework / reference framework**

**Happiness Management**

This chapter explores happiness management, its conceptual evolution, its intrinsic relationship with human talent, the perspective of humanization in organizations, and its link to productivity. The reflection focuses on the relevance of these elements and their specific impact on the education sector.

From this perspective, the term "Happiness Management" has gained prominence in the last decade, especially in the field of human talent management. This approach represents an organizational transformation that recognizes the employee as an integral individual, transcending the traditional vision of "human resources" Castellanos (2022, p. 2) notes that happiness has transcended the exclusive domain of psychology to become a relevant field of study in administration and economics.

In administration, "happiness management" seeks to cultivate job satisfaction, based on the managerial premise that employee happiness contributes to business competitiveness.

This initial perspective suggests that happiness management is not limited to workplace well-being but has the potential to positively impact various processes and areas of the company. When transferring this idea to the education sector, the importance of healthy work environments, constructive interpersonal relationships, and promoting empathy among all educational stakeholders as crucial elements for the effective development of learning processes is emphasized.

However, the implementation of strategies oriented toward workplace happiness, improving quality of life, and strengthening communication often runs the risk of becoming a mere formal compliance exercise, devoid of genuine intention for work and personal growth. Garassini Chávez (2022); Cortés and Ocampo (2025) highlights that positive psychology focuses on the integral development of well-being throughout the life cycle, in various areas, including the workplace.

This statement poses a critical relationship about the authenticity of well-being initiatives implemented by organizations, contrasting those that generate real value with superficial discourses and ephemeral actions.

The connection between happiness and the humanization of work spaces is configured as a comprehensive corporate strategy, where happiness is incorporated into the daily activities of organizations. According to this, companies that prioritize the well-being of their employees experience greater capacity to face challenges that drive productivity and position themselves as attractive employers for human talent. Happiness management thus emerges as a key administrative tool for human capital management, contributing to reducing turnover and increasing personnel retention.

Nobile and Gamba (2024) argue that socioemotional competencies, such as self-awareness, self-control, empathy, relational skills, and responsible decision-making, are fundamental for this purpose. Therefore, it is crucial to consider the integral development of the "BEING" of employees, complementing technical competencies with strategies that promote healthy work environments and a positive organizational climate.

In the educational field, Nobile and Gamba (2024) point out that positive emotions and a favorable emotional climate are indispensable conditions for learning, as they facilitate knowledge acquisition and neutralize negative emotions that hinder these processes. Teachers, in this sense, are required not only as education professionals but also as facilitators of positive experiences in the classroom. To foster healthy educational spaces and meaningful learning, all educational stakeholders must feel calm, motivated, and satisfied with the workplace well-being initiatives implemented by the institution.

According to this, it is understood that there is a direct and bidirectional relationship between happiness and workplace well-being, which in turn articulates with the development of employee functions and organizational productivity. Torres (2024, p. 5) summarizes the foundations of positive psychology in the study of emotions, positive traits, and positive institutions. Within this framework, organizational well-being programs seek to cover these aspects through mental and physical health initiatives, with the aim of developing employee potential. This perspective validates the importance of comprehensive well-being plans that address the diverse needs of educational stakeholders.

Assertive happiness management translates into high levels of satisfaction among employees, facilitating communication with their leaders and promoting a warm work environment. This, in turn, drives greater responsibility in task completion, turning functions into challenges and opportunities for personal and professional growth.

Emotional intelligence is considered a crucial factor in leadership, allowing educational leaders to create work spaces that foster happiness, well-being, and integral team development. Rodríguez Moreno and Cristancho Gordillo (2024, p. 13) define emotional intelligence as the capacity that involves self-knowledge, emotional self-regulation, and social skills such as empathy, effective communication, leadership, conflict resolution, and building solid relationships.

These skills are fundamental for implementing and monitoring strategies focused on happiness, requiring emotionally intelligent leaders who strengthen positive interpersonal relationships, resolve conflicts constructively, and develop strategies that improve the institutional climate, promoting empathy, collaborative work, and trust, becoming motivating and transformative leaders.

Fritz et al. (2023, p. 2) emphasize the importance of humanizing organizational processes to fully exploit the qualities of the people who comprise them. Regarding the educational field, this implies the constant search for strategies focused on workplace happiness, mental and emotional well-being of educational stakeholders, generating more inclusive models centered on the integral well-being of the academic community. The emotional, social, and academic development of different educational stakeholders is prioritized (Salazar et al., 2023).

Segura Hernández (2021) notes that, although work contributes less to total happiness than other aspects of life, it has high potential to generate unhappiness. In the educational field, teachers spend a significant part of their day in institutions, interacting with colleagues and developing their academic functions.

This reality underscores the need to implement adequate well-being plans that promote healthy work spaces, contributing to staff satisfaction and improving their quality of life at work. This should be based on identifying the shortcomings of the education sector and the need to strengthen labor relations, teamwork, assertive communication, and creating healthy environments—determining factors for growth, performance, and organizational productivity.

Marenco Escuderos (2016) identifies specific socio-labor conditions of teachers, such as work climate, limitations in promotion, work overload, instability, low salaries, and managing a high number of students with various disorders, as relevant factors that generate negative impact on teaching performance and institutional productivity.

**Happiness Management and Institutional Productivity**

While productivity is a critical factor for institutional growth and profitability, the constant pursuit of improving indices often leads companies to neglect their most valuable asset: human capital. In increasingly competitive markets, adaptation to environmental demands is not always accompanied by due importance to employee well-being, who are direct actors in institutional development.

In the education sector, this can manifest in high teacher turnover, where priority on profitability and sustainability can translate into precarious contracts and absence of well-being strategies that motivate teachers to perform their function optimally. Velásquez (2017, p. 163) notes that adaptation to global market demands generates new demands for employees, resulting in complex transformations of work activities. Emotional work and frequent social interactions can affect workers' health and well-being, negatively impacting organizational efficiency by becoming factors of work stress, emotional exhaustion, and burnout.

It is crucial to remember that time dedicated to work often exceeds time shared at home, which underscores the importance of cultivating a happy work environment as a factor that positively impacts performance and productivity.

Relating happiness management and empowerment allows organizations to attract and retain talent by promoting happiness at work. Organizational culture plays a crucial role in this process, and environments favorable to institutional growth and development offer keys to this point.

Hernández and Cázares (2024, p. 43) propose that talent management is an effective tool to guarantee employee commitment, which in turn ensures long-term permanence in the organization. Empowerment, hand in hand with happiness, fosters confidence and autonomy in decision-making, which increases interest and develops significant competencies in employees. This generates a greater sense of belonging and satisfaction with assigned responsibilities, reinforcing the perception that their work is important and valued, which in turn leads to happiness and achievement of their goals.

This process promotes a shared vision, fosters loyalty, a positive work environment, and team recognition. Equity and transparency in decision-making, as well as strengthening positive relationships like companionship, lead to better communication, cooperation, and collaboration. Leadership that promotes positivity and includes the entire team facilitates more efficient decision-making.

Happiness generates commitment, bonds of union and responsibility, sense of belonging and loyalty toward the institution and personal objectives. Perceived continuity in organizational policies provides security, affection toward work, and stability. Therefore, there is a strong relationship between empowerment and workplace happiness.

Identifying concepts such as happiness, performance, and productivity are intrinsically related. Implementing relevant strategies focused on employees that promote their growth and well-being generates improvements in work performance and an increase in organizational productivity. Barberi (2023) suggests that happiness, understood as a set of aspects involving family, economic, and work life, also extends to the organizations of which the individual is part. Therefore, establishing organizational policies focused on happiness management is considered fundamental, promoting direct improvements in relationships and communication, as well as employee growth and development, generating a spontaneous sense of belonging that translates into better performance and increased business productivity.

**METHODOLOGY**

This reflection article emerges as a result of the formative process developed within the framework of the Master's in Administration. Throughout the program, understanding of how innovation acts as an essential engine for organizational transformation and adaptation in dynamic business environments was deepened.

This article was developed from a mixed approach, integrating quantitative components with qualitative factors. Numerical references are employed that allow measuring and analyzing trends, while valuable reflections from different educational stakeholders are collected. The purpose is to describe and understand the current reality regarding the implementation of happiness models in educational institutions.

A methodology based on the PISA approach was implemented, adapted to the proposed educational contexts, which allowed for comparative and situational analysis that strengthened the interpretation of collected data.

**Methodological Design**

This reflection was developed in three sequential stages, aimed at highlighting the importance of implementing strategies centered on the care and well-being of employees within educational institutions. In Stage 1, validation of the current educational situation was carried out, evaluating practices, policies, and conditions related to care and well-being in institutions. For the development of Stage 2, active participation of teachers, administrators, and directors was sought through structured surveys and semi-structured interviews, in order to capture their perception of well-being and happiness management. And finally, in Stage 3, systematization and analysis of collected information was generated, used as input to design sustainable strategies oriented toward the integral well-being of educational stakeholders.

*Educational Stakeholders*

Different educational stakeholders directly involved in institutional development participated. First, we have teachers as key agents for direct interaction with students and directors, and their role in implementing well-being strategies. As a second participant, we find administrators responsible for executing and promoting activities oriented toward the care of educational personnel. And finally, directors as fundamental decision-makers in resource allocation and implementation of well-being plans.

Participants were selected from different educational levels, public and private institutions, covering both urban and rural contexts, to obtain a more integral and representative vision.

*Tools and Instruments*

For information collection, validated tools adapted to the context were used. Structured surveys, based on the PERMA model (positive, emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning and accomplishment), allowed measuring emotional well-being, motivation, labor relations, and organizational climate. The writing was empathetic and reflective, promoting introspection in participants. Semi-structured interviews were also used, designed to establish fluid dialogues that allowed identifying perceptions, experiences, and opinions about happiness management in educational institutions. Finally, organizational happiness assessment, for which a specific instrument was created based on the RISE model (reflect, inquire, suggest, and elevate), allowed identifying the emotional state and sense of belonging of stakeholders in performing their roles.

*Development*

The methodological implementation was structured based on the following phases: diagnostic, in which surveys and interviews were applied in selected institutions, in an atmosphere of cordiality, respect, and empathy.

Quantitative analysis phase, in which data processing and systematization was carried out using simple statistical techniques such as averages, frequencies, and correlation analysis, to identify trends among happiness, performance, and emotional health variables, then moving to the qualitative analysis phase, in which thematic analysis of discourses obtained in interviews was performed, allowing recognition of patterns, good practices, needs, and areas for improvement in institutional well-being.

Finally, we find the information integration phase, which corresponds to triangulation of quantitative and qualitative results, to design comprehensive proposals that respond specifically to needs detected in different educational institutions.

*Analysis Strategy*

To ensure rigor in data interpretation, various techniques were used. One was simple descriptive statistics, with which calculations of averages, percentages, and bivariate correlations were developed, in order to generate clear and accessible results that allow informed decision-making.

Another technique used was qualitative thematic analysis, which allowed identification of patterns, perceptions, and emotions emerging from collected testimonies, based on a rigorous coding and categorization process. Finally, methodological triangulation, with which integration of qualitative and quantitative findings was performed, strengthening the validity of recommendations and ensuring that proposals have both statistical support and emotional and reflective foundation.

*Ethical Commitment*

The article was based on principles of respect, empathy, and social responsibility. Confidentiality and anonymity of all participants were guaranteed. Additionally, each educational stakeholder was informed about research objectives and their free and voluntary consent was obtained. Finally, participating institutions were considered strategic allies and directly benefited from proposals generated to strengthen their well-being and care practices for their educational community.

**RESULTS**

The development of the research allowed identifying and understanding the close relationship between emotional well-being and productivity of educational stakeholders. Information obtained through surveys and interviews facilitated both quantitative and qualitative analysis, evidencing the most relevant aspects that require intervention by educational institutions.

**Emotional Well-being of Educational Stakeholders**

The collection process was conducted based on a sample of 150 participants, which allowed evaluating their current level of emotional well-being.

As observed in Table 1, 33% of educational stakeholders report a low level of emotional well-being, a concerning figure, as it represents one-third of participants potentially exposed to psychosocial risk. On the other hand, only 18% express feeling highly satisfied with their emotional well-being, which evidences an important intervention opportunity in educational institutions.

**Table 1. Level of emotional well-being presented by participants (n=150)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Well-being Level** | **Participants** | **Percentaje (%)** |
| High  Medium  Low | 27  74  49 | 18%  49%  33% |

Source: Own elaboration, 2025

From surveys and interviews, various factors that directly affect performance and productivity in the educational environment were identified.

According to data in Table 2, the predominant risk factor is work overload, with a high percentage of 48%. In contrast, little participation in decision-making registers the lowest value, with 8%. This information allows educational institutions to prioritize strategies that mitigate work overload, considering it a critical aspect that requires attention and control.

**Table 2. Risk factors affecting productivity**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Risk Factor** | **% of Participants** |
| Work Overload | 48% |
| Lack of Recognition | 14% |
| Little Participation in decisión – making | 8% |
| Lack of emotional support | 30 % |

**Source:** Own elaboration, 2025

Finally, the relevance of workplace well-being programs currently implemented in educational institutions was evaluated, finding the following results:

As seen in Table 3, there is a broad opportunity in well-being plans. By adding medium and low satisfaction levels, 89% is obtained, suggesting that the majority of participants consider these programs require revision, updating, or even creation. These results should serve as input for institutions to strengthen their well-being plans in order to improve quality of life and organizational climate of their employees.

**Table 3. Participant satisfaction with relevance of well-being plans**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Well-being Level** | **Participants** | **Satisfaction porcentaje (%)** |
| High  Medium  Low | 17  84  49 | 11%  56%  33% |

Source: Own elaboration, 2025

**DISCUSSION DE RESULTS**

Implementing happiness management in educational organizations should not be understood as a superficial or trivial concept, as sometimes assumed in certain sectors. On the contrary, organizational happiness implies deep and constant analysis of human beings, considering various factors that can affect their daily performance, such as their emotional and mental health and the internal and external risks that diminish their productive capacity in the educational environment. Whether in administrative or teaching roles, it must be taken into account that emotions play a determining role, not only in daily tasks but also as elements that constantly impact their performance.

The educational environment is profoundly human by essence. In a space where interaction between individuals and their particular characteristics generate an environment of meaningful learning. Therefore, it is necessary to implement strategies that strengthen healthy work climates and promote continuous learning.

According to what is proposed by Montoya Franco, M. A., & Moya Ruiz, M. X. (2020, p. 22), "due to excess psychological demands of work, lack of control over work contents and conditions and development possibilities, lack of social support, quality leadership, predictability or role clarity at work and scarce work compensations," multiple situations that affect performance and reduce productivity in the work environment are derived.

When we take time to analyze the daily work of educational stakeholders, we can evidence the direct impact that happiness has on performance and motivation. Human beings are emotional by nature, and these aspects cannot be separated from our work functions. It is not possible to speak of well-being in contexts dominated by a toxic work climate, marked by authoritarianism, where employees feel undervalued, repressed, or disconnected from their educational mission. Therefore, it is fundamental to create awareness about the importance of implementing action plans that promote improvement of climate and organizational culture.

These elements are the foundation on which creativity, motivation, commitment, and service vocation of different educational stakeholders are sustained. In adverse environments, demotivation, emotional exhaustion, and disillusionment become inevitable consequences, affecting not only people but also work quality and ultimately student formation.

Promoting organizational happiness strategies must be a permanent task and cannot be conceived solely as a work quality indicator or, worse yet, as an unnecessary luxury. It must be understood as an essential condition to guarantee relevant and meaningful academic development. It is important to remember that education is not limited to theoretical concepts or technical procedures: it is a collaborative learning process where the human being, in all their emotional, ethical, and social dimension, occupies a central place.

It is not just about transmitting knowledge, but about sharing values, building healthy interpersonal relationships, and cultivating the capacity to inspire and transform those who participate in the educational process.

Therefore, happiness in educational institutions becomes fertile ground where healthy and productive relationships are woven, where sense of belonging, mutual respect, and empathy play a fundamental role.

When an organizational happiness environment is fostered, a space is created where educational stakeholders can develop fully, not only in the professional realm but in their integral well-being. In these environments, educational vocation is revitalized, work acquires a deeper purpose, and employees feel like active parts of a common project. Thus, organizational happiness not only improves work quality of life but is also reflected in educational excellence, contributing to the formation of a more just, equitable, and enriched society.

**CONCLUSIONS**

This article has allowed identifying various variables that directly affect relationships among educational stakeholders and can generate toxic work environments, low performance, and scarce productivity. Below are the main conclusions derived from the study:

Happiness management in the education sector, at all formative levels, should not become an idealistic objective nor a superficial exercise intended solely to comply with regulations or project a good institutional image. On the contrary, it must be solidly integrated into institutional policies and become a strategic axis of well-being management. This management must prioritize integral care of educational agents, promoting their physical, mental, and emotional health.

The reflective process evidenced the importance of consolidating healthy and safe work environments that coherently articulate with a positive organizational climate. It is fundamental that educational stakeholders feel motivated, valued, and supported with guarantees that favor adequate development of their academic functions.

Happiness management in educational institutions must transcend specific activities such as celebrations, bonuses, or recognition. While these are valuable, it is crucial to establish comprehensive well-being policies that include participatory spaces, training programs, leadership development, and emotional intelligence. These actions not only strengthen hard technical competencies but must especially focus on enhancing soft skills related to being, such as empathy, communication, and resilience.

Leadership plays a fundamental role in creating healthy work environments. Leaders must assume responsibility for constantly accompanying and motivating, monitoring implemented strategies, and fostering construction of labor relations based on respect, tolerance, and empathy. In the education sector, where various stakeholders converge, this role acquires special relevance, as strengthening assertive communication and collaborative work directly impacts educational quality.

Finally, it is essential to reflect on organizational happiness, where institutions make quick decisions based on data and statistics to be competitive. However, this approach should not relegate human resources, which constitute the organization's most valuable asset. It is imperative to design effective strategies for personnel retention and workplace well-being that foster professional development, improve organizational climate, reduce absenteeism, and elevate employees' quality of life. These factors, when properly articulated with organizational strategies, translate into greater job satisfaction, performance, and productivity.

**CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest related to the article presented for publication.

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