

Factors and strategies for improving organizational productivity: A theoretical analysis

Factores y estrategias para la mejora de la productividad organizacional: Un análisis teórico

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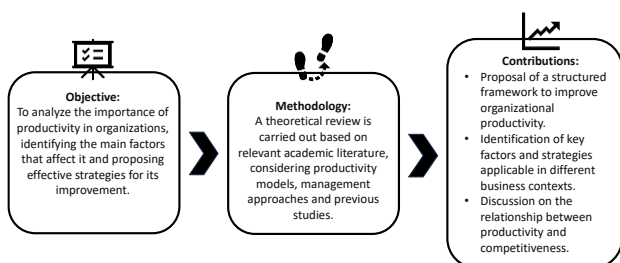
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Abstract

Organizational productivity is a determining factor in the efficiency, competitiveness and sustainability of companies. Its optimization not only impacts profitability and business growth, but also influences employment generation, innovation and economic development. Productivity is affected by multiple factors, including human talent management, the adoption of innovative technologies, organizational culture and strategic leadership. This article analyzes the importance of productivity in the organizational environment, exploring the main elements that condition it and the most effective strategies for its improvement. Through a theoretical review, management models and approaches that have proven to be successful in different productive sectors are examined. It also discusses the relationship between productivity and competitiveness, emphasizing how efficient management allows organizations to improve their market positioning and adapt to a dynamic and globalized environment.

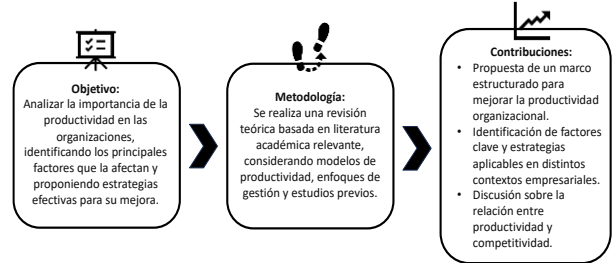
Resumen

La productividad organizacional es un factor determinante en la eficiencia, competitividad y sostenibilidad de las empresas. Su optimización no solo impacta en la rentabilidad y el crecimiento empresarial, sino que también influye en la generación de empleo, la innovación y el desarrollo económico. La productividad se ve afectada por múltiples factores, entre los que destacan la gestión del talento humano, la adopción de tecnologías innovadoras, la cultura organizacional y el liderazgo estratégico. En este artículo, se analiza la importancia de la productividad en el entorno organizacional, explorando los principales elementos que la condicionan y las estrategias más efectivas para su mejora. A través de una revisión teórica, se examinan modelos de gestión y enfoques que han demostrado ser exitosos en distintos sectores productivos. Asimismo, se discute la relación entre productividad y competitividad, enfatizando cómo una gestión eficiente permite a las organizaciones mejorar su posicionamiento en el mercado y adaptarse a un entorno dinámico y globalizado.



Productivity, Efficiency, Competitiveness

Area: Strengthening the scientific community



Productividad, Eficiencia, Competitividad

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Introduction

Organisational productivity is a key factor for the success and sustainability of companies in a competitive environment. According to Fontalvo [2018], understanding the factors that influence productivity and strategies for its improvement is essential to maintain competitiveness and ensure operational efficiency.

Various theoretical approaches have highlighted the importance of productivity in organisational management. From classical management perspectives to modern theories of innovation and technology, it has been shown that productivity improvement not only increases profitability, but also influences job satisfaction and long-term sustainability [Drucker, 2007; Porter, 1990].

In this article, the main determinants of organisational productivity are analysed, addressing human talent management, innovation and technology, organisational structure, organisational culture, leadership, and time and resource management. It also explores strategies to optimise productivity and its impact on firm competitiveness.

Furthermore, the qualitative approach of the study consists of a theoretical review of recent academic literature to provide a frame of reference on organisational productivity. Through the analysis of specialised sources, the relevance of productivity in the current context is argued and practical strategies for its optimisation are presented.

Methodology

As mentioned above, a documentary research design was used with a critical analysis of secondary sources, including books, scientific articles and specialised studies on management, human talent management, innovation, leadership and organisational culture. In addition, literature selection criteria were determined to ensure the validity and depth of the analysis, which are as follows:

- Thematic relevance: Studies addressing key factors of organisational productivity from different theoretical and practical perspectives were included.
- Recency and timeliness: Priority was given to publications from the last 10-15 years to reflect contemporary trends, although classic references such as Drucker [1954, 2007], Porter [1985, 1990] and Herzberg [1968] were considered due to their impact on the field.
- Academic rigour: Articles indexed in recognised databases such as Scopus, Web of Science and Secihti were selected, as well as books and institutional reports with scientific backing.

Analysis Technique

A content analysis was used to identify, classify and synthesise the main factors influencing organisational productivity. From this analysis, findings were grouped into five main categories:

1. Human talent management
2. Innovation and technology
3. Organisational structure
4. Organisational culture
5. Leadership, time and resource management

The analysis was carried out following a thematic coding process based on the approaches of Strauss and Corbin [1998] in grounded theory, which allowed for the identification of patterns and relationships between the different elements that impact organisational productivity.

This methodology allows a deep and argued understanding of the factors that influence productivity, providing a solid theoretical framework for the discussion and formulation of improvement strategies at the organisational level.

Thematic coding process

The analysis followed the three phases of coding mentioned above: open coding, axial coding and selective coding.

1. Open coding:
 - An exploratory reading of the selected texts was conducted to identify key concepts related to organisational productivity.

- Recurrent terms and phrases were highlighted, such as ‘human talent management’, ‘automation and digitalisation’, ‘organisational culture’, ‘leadership strategies’, ‘business competitiveness’, among others.
- Preliminary codes were generated by grouping similar terms under emerging categories.

2. Axial coding:

- Relationships between codes identified in the previous phase were analysed by grouping them into broader categories.
- For example, concepts such as ‘training’, ‘motivation’ and ‘professional development’ were unified under the category ‘Human talent management’.
- Sub-categories such as ‘training strategies’ and ‘work incentive models’ were established for a more structured understanding.
- In this phase, interactions between factors were examined, identifying causal patterns, such as the influence of organisational culture on talent retention or the impact of digitalisation on operational efficiency.

3. Selective coding:

- Findings were integrated into a consolidated theoretical structure, identifying the relationship between organisational factors and productivity.
- A conceptual model was developed summarising how key factors affect organisational efficiency and competitiveness.
- Final categories were validated through cross-analysis with previous studies and relevant theories.

The use of thematic coding allowed not only to organise the data in a structured way, but also to delve deeper into the relationships and dynamics that influence organisational productivity.

Definition and relevance of organisational productivity

Organisational productivity refers to a company's ability to optimise its resources and maximise its results [Ramírez et al., 2022]. In a globalised context, where market demands change rapidly, it is essential that organisations implement effective strategies to improve their performance.

According to Porter [1985], a firm's competitive advantage depends largely on its ability to improve its productivity by optimising resources and processes. This assertion is reinforced by recent studies that have shown that companies that invest in the digitisation of their operations achieve significant improvements in their productivity levels [Brynjolfsson & McAfee, 2014]. From an economic perspective, Porter [1990] highlights that productivity is a fundamental pillar for the development of countries, as more productive companies generate employment, promote innovation and strengthen competitiveness in global markets. At the organisational level, higher productivity translates into lower operating costs, higher quality products and services, and sustainable competitive advantage [Kaplan & Norton, 1996].

Organisational productivity has been the subject of many studies in management and economics. According to Drucker [2007], it is understood as the ability of an organisation to generate goods and services efficiently, maximising the use of its resources. This definition has evolved over time, incorporating approaches that include innovation, technology and human talent management as key determinants of productive performance [Chiavenato, 2019; Franco, 2021].

Factors affecting Organisational Productivity

1. Human talent management: Robbins and Coulter [2018] emphasise that continuous training and professional development of employees increase their level of commitment and efficiency in their tasks. Herzberg [1968] highlights the importance of work motivation as a determining factor in productivity, arguing that factors such as recognition, personal development and autonomy at work can significantly increase employee performance.

Human talent is a strategic resource for productivity [Balderrabano, 2024]. Continuous training and competence development influence employee performance, increasing their motivation and commitment [Chiavenato, 2019]. Companies that invest in professional training tend to experience significant improvements in their productive performance. [Cabrera et al., 2024].

2. Innovation and technology: Brynjolfsson and McAfee [2014] highlight that digitisation and automation have significantly transformed productivity in companies. The integration of tools such as artificial intelligence and data analytics allows for more agile and accurate decision-making [Davenport, 2018]. The incorporation of new technologies enables process automation, reduced operating costs and increased organisational efficiency [Brynjolfsson & McAfee, 2014]. Models such as Industry 4.0 have demonstrated the positive impact of digitisation and artificial intelligence on business productivity.
3. Organisational structure: Mintzberg [1993] points out that a flexible and well-defined structure facilitates communication and decision-making, which improves operational efficiency. Agile management models, such as scrum and lean management, have proven to be highly effective in optimising processes and fostering innovation within organisations [Sutherland, 2014].
4. Organisational culture: Schein [2010] argues that a strong corporate culture aligned with the company's strategic objectives fosters greater employee engagement and performance [Acosta, 2021]. Organisational culture directly influences productivity by defining the values, norms and behaviours within the company. A strong culture can improve internal communication, team cooperation and employee satisfaction. Kotter [2012], emphasise that an adaptive and innovation-oriented organisational culture enables firms to respond more effectively to changes in the business environment.

Hofstede [2001] emphasises that cultural values influence decision-making, conflict resolution and human talent management, which can positively or negatively impact organisational productivity. To strengthen organisational culture, companies can implement onboarding programmes, foster transformational leadership and promote employee participation in decision-making [Cameron & Quinn, 2011]. A positive work environment and an organisational culture based on excellence foster employee engagement and efficiency [Schein, 2017]. Organisations with a culture of continuous improvement have higher levels of productivity and job satisfaction.

5. Leadership and management of time and resources: The implementation of methodologies such as management by objectives [Drucker, 1954] and the use of key performance indicators [KPIs] allow companies' performance to be continuously evaluated and improved. Recent studies highlight that the use of cloud-based business management platforms facilitates remote collaboration and reduces production times [Davenport, 2018; Zapata & Tovar, 2024]. Telework and flexible working have emerged as key strategies for maintaining high levels of productivity in dynamic and changing environments [Eurofound, 2020]. Effective leadership is crucial for the implementation of productive strategies. According to Kotter [2012], leaders who set clear goals and align their teams towards common objectives achieve higher organisational performance.
6. Working conditions: Factors such as ergonomics, work climate and work-life balance directly affect staff efficiency [Herzberg, 1966]. The quality of the working environment influences the motivation and well-being of employees, impacting the overall productivity of the company.

Strategies to improve productivity

To increase organisational productivity, various strategies based on best business management practices can be applied:

Automation and Digitalisation

The use of technological tools makes it possible to optimise processes, reduce production times and improve the precision of operational tasks. Models such as Lean Manufacturing and Six Sigma have proven to be effective in improving industrial productivity.

Human Talent Development

Training and continuous learning are key elements to enhance workers' performance. Training programmes in technical and leadership skills contribute to the improvement of human capital and organisational innovation [Noe et al., 2018].

Time management and agile methodologies

Techniques such as the Eisenhower matrix or the Pomodoro method can optimise time management at the individual and organisational level, reducing unproductive time and increasing operational efficiency.

Motivation and recognition culture

Rewarding effort and fostering an organisational culture based on performance recognition promotes productivity and talent retention. Performance management models, such as the Balanced Scorecard, help align incentives with the company's strategic objectives [Kaplan & Norton, 1996].

Evaluation and continuous improvement

The use of key performance indicators [KPIs] allows productivity to be measured and strategies to be adjusted to maximise efficiency. Data-driven management and informed decision making are essential for continuous improvement in organisations.

Impact of productivity on organisational competitiveness

Organisations with high levels of productivity can offer higher quality products and services at more competitive prices, allowing them to gain market share and expand globally [Porter, 1985]. In addition, internal efficiency improves profitability and ensures long-term sustainability.

In a dynamic and changing environment, adaptability and innovation are key elements for business competitiveness. Companies that prioritise productivity achieve a sustainable competitive advantage and contribute to overall economic development.

Discussion

One of the most prominent factors in the literature is human talent management. Robbins and Coulter [2018] emphasise that training and professional development not only increase workers' efficiency, but also foster their organisational commitment. These results are consistent with the findings of the present study, where it was found that firms with strong training programmes have higher levels of productivity. Furthermore, Herzberg [1968] argues that work motivation, derived from factors such as recognition and autonomy at work, has a direct influence on performance. This idea is reflected in the importance of establishing incentive mechanisms and transformational leadership within organisations [Chiavenato, 2019].

From a structural approach, Mintzberg [1993] highlights that organisational flexibility is key to facilitating decision-making and improving operational efficiency. In this sense, the implementation of agile management models, such as lean management and scrum [Sutherland, 2014], has been identified as an effective strategy to optimise workflow and productivity.

Innovation and Technology: Keys to Efficiency

The increasing digitisation of business has revolutionised the way productivity is conceived. Brynjolfsson and McAfee [2014] argue that automation and the use of digital tools can improve operational processes, reduce costs and increase competitiveness. Along these lines, the results obtained in this study confirm that the integration of advanced technologies, such as artificial intelligence and data analytics, represents a critical factor in improving organisational performance.

Furthermore, Davenport [2018] argues that data-driven decision-making contributes significantly to business efficiency, as it allows for greater precision in strategy planning and execution.

This perspective is reinforced by the observations of Kaplan and Norton [1996], who highlight the role of key performance indicators [KPIs] in measuring and optimising productivity.

Organisational Culture and Leadership as Strategic Factors

Organisational culture is another factor that affects productivity. Schein [2010] argues that a strong corporate culture facilitates the alignment of employees with the company's strategic objectives, promoting a more collaborative and efficient work environment. In line with this approach, Kotter [2012] emphasise that an innovation-oriented culture enables companies to better adapt to changes in the environment.

Likewise, Hofstede [2001] points out that cultural values influence decision-making and human talent management. In the present study, it was identified that organisations with a culture of continuous improvement have higher levels of productivity, as their employees develop a sense of belonging and intrinsic motivation towards work. This observation is consistent with Cameron and Quinn [2011], who argue that companies with well-defined organisational cultures achieve superior performance in the long run.

In terms of leadership, Drucker [1954] emphasises the importance of setting clear goals and aligning them with the strategic vision of the firm. This principle is supported by Kotter [2012], who argues that effective leaders not only manage resources, but also inspire their teams to achieve high performance. In this study, it was identified that organisations with transformational leadership tend to have higher levels of productivity due to their leaders' ability to generate commitment and foster innovation.

Impact of Productivity on Organisational Competitiveness

Porter [1985] defines competitive advantage as a firm's ability to differentiate itself through efficiency and resource optimisation. This approach is reaffirmed in this study, where it was found that more productive organisations can offer higher quality products and services at lower costs, allowing them to expand and strengthen their market position.

Furthermore, Porter [1990] argues that productivity is a key pillar for the economic development of countries, as it generates employment and fosters innovation. In this sense, the study's findings are consistent with this perspective, demonstrating that firms that prioritise productivity not only achieve higher profitability, but also contribute to the growth of the sector in which they operate.

Conclusions

Productivity is a central element in organisational management and a key determinant of business success. Factors such as human capital, technology, organisational culture and leadership have a direct impact on its development. To improve productivity, it is essential to implement strategies focused on process optimisation, staff training and employee motivation.

The research reviewed highlights that companies that adopt a holistic approach, combining talent management, innovation and technology, achieve sustainable productivity improvements. As the business environment continues to evolve, it will be crucial for organisations to adapt and adopt new practices to remain competitive in the global marketplace. Successful productivity improvement requires a long-term commitment, a culture of continuous improvement and a willingness to adopt new technologies and management methodologies.

In such an increasingly competitive business environment, productivity is not only an indicator of efficiency, but also a strategic factor that allows organisations to remain relevant and sustainable over time.

The results obtained in this study allow us to conclude that organisational productivity is a multidimensional phenomenon in which human, technological, structural and strategic aspects converge. While the existing literature has addressed these factors individually, this analysis highlights the interrelationship between them and their impact on organisational performance.

It also highlights the need for a holistic approach to productivity management, combining technological innovation with efficient human talent management and strategic leadership.

Productivity should not be seen only as an efficiency metric, but as a central axis in the long-term sustainability and competitiveness of companies.

In future research, it would be relevant to explore how digitalisation and telework impact productivity in different sectors, as well as to analyse the role of artificial intelligence in optimising organisational processes.

Declarations

Conflict of interest

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest. They have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that might have appeared to influence the article reported in this paper.

Authors' contribution

Eliseo-Dantés, Hortensia: Idea and conceptualisation, Literature review, Review and adjustments, Oversight and final validation.

Castro-De la Cruz, Jucelly: Methodology

Pérez-Pérez, Iris Cristel: Application of the analysis [thematic coding].

García-Reyes, David Antonio: Drafting, Proofreading and referencing

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Abbreviations

KPI: Key Performance Indicator

References

Background, Basics, Discussions, Differences

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