Nº 46

AD-MINISTER

UNIVERSIDAD EAFIT · MEDELLÍN · COLOMBIA · ENERO - JUNIO 2025 · ISSN 1692-0279 · E-ISSN: 2256-4322

FERNANDO ANDRÉS MUÑOZ
JASON STEVE PULIDO REINA
DIANA CAROLINA AGUILAR

JEL: M10, M12, M54

DOI: https://doi.org/10.17230/Administer.46.6

UNIVERSIDAD EAFIT®

SOFT SKILLS AND EMPLOYEE PRODUCTIVITY: CURRENT STATUS AND PROPOSAL FOR AN IMPACT MODEL

HABILIDADES BLANDAS Y PRODUCTIVIDAD DE LOS EMPLEADOS: ESTADO ACTUAL Y PROPUESTA DE UN MODELO DE IMPACTO

FERNANDO ANDRÉS MUÑOZ[1]
JASON STEVE PULIDO REINA[2]
DIANA CAROLINA AGUILAR[3]

ABSTRACT

This study examines the impact of critical soft skills on employee productivity to support organizational performance through effective human resource management. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) was employed to test the proposed model, which included an endogenous latent variable (employee productivity) and an exogenous variable (soft skills), based on data from 287 questionnaires. Results reveal a strong, significant relationship between soft skills and employee productivity. Key soft skills identified were communication, problem-solving, and teamwork; significant factors influencing productivity included staff training, technological innovation, and the work environment. The findings contribute to the limited literature on soft skills as drivers of human and organizational development by offering empirical evidence of their positive impact on productivity. This research highlights the strategic value of soft skills in shaping a development model that enhances employee performance and supports organizational sustainability. The model provides a practical framework for companies seeking to improve productivity through targeted soft skill development initiatives.

KEY WORDS:

[1] Ingeniero Industrial por la Universidad Militar Nueva Granada; Especialista en Gerencia Integral de Proyectos por la Universidad Militar Nueva Granada; MBA en Dirección de Proyectos por la Universidad Viña del Mar, Chile. Docente – Investigador de la Universidad Militar Nueva Granada. ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3670-8102 Correo electrónico: fernando.munoz@unimilitar.edu.co

[2] Administrador de Empresas por la Universidad Nacional de Colombia; Especialista en Gerencia de Logística Integral por la Universidad Militar Nueva Granada; MBA en Dirección de Proyectos por la Universidad Viña del Mar, Chile. Docente – Investigador de la Universidad Militar Nueva Granada. ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4111-0842 Correo electrónico: jason.pulido@unimilitar.edu.co

[3] Estudiante de Maestría, Universidad Militar Nueva Granada. Auxiliar de Investigación de Posgrado. ORCID: https://orcid.org/0009-0006-4302-3351 Correo electrónico: est.diana.caguilar@unimilitar.edu.co

*The proofreading and style correction of this document were carried out by the authors.

JEL: M10, M12, M54

RECEIVED: 09/04/2025
MODIFIED: 14/05/2025
ACCEPTED: 11/06/2025

DOI: https://doi.org/10.17230/Ad-minister.46.6

Employee productivity, labor productivity, soft skills, employability, structural equation modeling.

RESUMEN

Este estudio examina el impacto de las habilidades blandas críticas en la productividad de los empleados para apoyar el desempeño organizacional a través de una gestión eficaz de los recursos humanos. Se empleó el Modelo de Ecuaciones Estructurales (SEM) para probar el modelo propuesto, que incluía una variable latente endógena (productividad del empleado) y una variable exógena (habilidades blandas), con base en datos de 287 cuestionarios. Los resultados revelan una relación fuerte y significativa entre las habilidades blandas y la productividad de los empleados. Las habilidades blandas clave identificadas fueron la comunicación, la resolución de problemas y el trabajo en equipo; los factores significativos que influyen en la productividad incluyeron la capacitación del personal, la innovación tecnológica y el entorno laboral. Los hallazgos contribuyen a la limitada literatura sobre las habilidades blandas como impulsores del desarrollo humano y organizacional al ofrecer evidencia empírica de su impacto positivo en la productividad. Esta investigación destaca el valor estratégico de las habilidades blandas en la conformación de un modelo de desarrollo que mejora el desempeño de los empleados y apoya la sostenibilidad organizacional. El modelo proporciona un marco práctico para las empresas que buscan mejorar la productividad a través de iniciativas específicas de desarrollo de habilidades blandas.

PALABRAS CLAVE:

productividad de los empleados, productividad laboral, habilidades blandas, empleabilidad, modelado con ecuaciones estructurales

1. INTRODUCTION

Micro, small and medium-sized (SMEs) enterprises are a key economic sector in developing economies such as Colombia. SMEs contribute to the growth of the economy, and through their commercial activities they contribute to the growth of the country's gross domestic product (Sudarmo, Dwi Suhartanti, & Eko Prasetyanto, 2022). In the case of Bogotá, which is the capital city of Colombia, SMEs represent 97% of the business fabric (Cámara de comercio de Bogotá, 2021). And Bogotá, as the capital city, contributes approximately 25% of the total Gross Domestic Product of Colombia (Larepublica, 2023), additionally, eight out of every ten jobs are generated by SMEs (Larepublica, 2022).

Consequently, SMEs are consolidated as the economic engine for Bogotá and for Colombia. Due to the importance of SMEs in the Colombian economic context, it is important to design policies and programs aimed at strengthening the capabilities of SMEs in areas such as management, finance, marketing and administration, offering support in identifying market opportunities and improving processes can enhance their performance

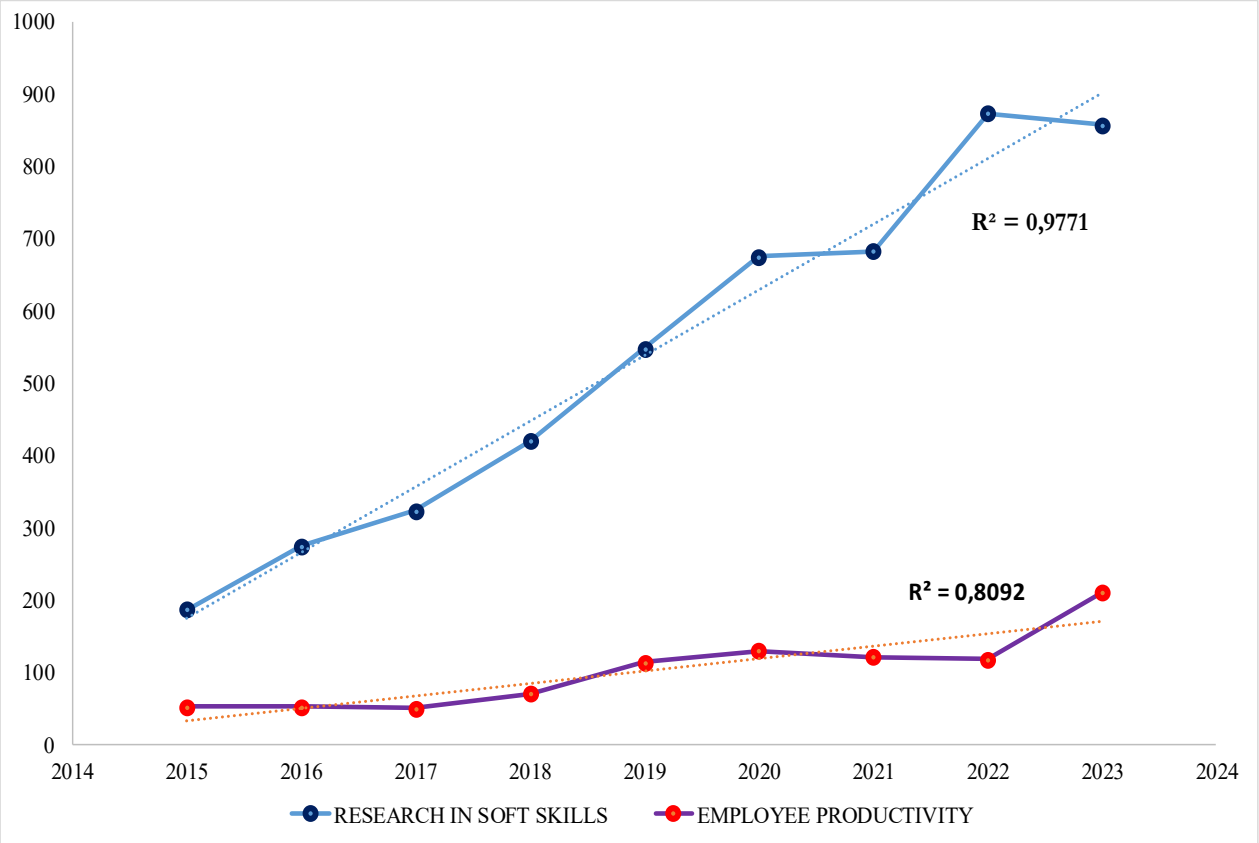
and long-term sustainability (Salas, Candelo, & Rivera, 2024). According to (Namdarian, Sajedinejad, & Bahanesteh, 2020), achieving a competitive advantage from organizational knowledge requires its precise management called knowledge management, within this field of knowledge is the management of human talent. Previous research, such as that developed by (Aguenza, 2012) (Harris & Fleming, 2017), has pointed out the role of employee productivity as a key factor and the main driving force for companies. Business development is necessary to be able to generate sustainable competitive advantages, therefore, organizations are obliged to improve the associated productive factors, one of them focuses on employee productivity (Sudarmo, Dwi Suhartanti, & Eko Prasetyanto, 2022). Employee productivity provides critical insights into the dynamics of motivation and work processes (Olekanma, Harrison, Oyewunmi, & Adedeji, 2024). Starting in the 1990s many firms, especially in the advanced economies, have started to embrace new work patterns/practices, one of these practices is associated with the analysis, generation and measurement of employee productivity as the main driver of company productivity and organizational performance (Wadu Mesthrige & Hung Chiang, 2019) (Buallay, Adden Abuhommous, & Kukreja, 2021), there are multiple factors that can affect the productivity of employees, one of them, which significantly affects this productivity, is related to human interactions or relationships within the offices (Haynes, 2007). According to the available scientific evidence, there is no single criterion that can be used to measure employee productivity, that is, its construction, modeling, and analysis is multivariate.

Therefore, identifying and implementing appropriate productivity variables is essential for developing employee productivity. Another factor associated with business sustainability that has received special attention and research growth in the last 10 years is that of soft skills. Several recent studies have concluded that soft skills contribute significantly to success in the workplace (Dabke, 2016) (Deming, 2017) (Robles, 2012) (Taylor, 2016) (Manullang, 2017). While soft skills have traditionally been undervalued compared to hard skills in the workplace, employers in today's market have begun to emphasize soft skills as more important than hard skills (Kasten, 2014). Currently, possessing various academic degrees and technical skills is not enough to get and keep a job, nor to function adequately in the business world (Beard, Schwieger, & Surendran, 2008) (Schulz, 2008) (Gibson & Sodeman, 2014). Employers are recognizing employee soft skills as strong contributors to a company's competitive edge (Deepa & Seth, 2013).

To stay active in an increasingly dynamic economy and in highly competitive work environments, workers in organizations need to have not only hard skills, but also soft skills, since both types of skills not only help employee development, but are a means of organizational improvement and sustainability. The deficiency in the development of soft skills in professionals becomes a situation of increasing concern, since companies demand highly trained professionals with this type of skills that ensure quality and efficient work performance for employers, as well as for employees a secure, dignified and stable job with opportunities to continue growing professionally (Infante-Alcántara, Araiza-Vázquez, & López-Pérez, 2023). The gap found in the literature to date is based on the fact that employee productivity has been approached as an independent variable focused on explaining organizational performance; however, it has not been analyzed as a dependent variable. This implies that the influence that soft skills have on employee productivity has

not been determined. Therefore, by addressing this research, a broader understanding of soft skills and organizational performance would be created. Another important factor analyzed was the analysis of research trends in the fields of productivity, employee performance, and soft skills. These trends indicate a growing interest in research in these fields, this research is illustrated in figure one. This interest can be explained by the fact that sustainability and organizational performance are not only explained through traditional or advanced models that address technical variables; it is necessary to expand the analysis to include variables associated with human behavior.

Figure 1.
Research in the fields analyzed



The problem arises in that the current theoretical frameworks provide limited guidance to employers as to about the importance and potential that soft skills have for the development of their employees, and the development of the organization in the short, medium and long term. Furthermore, no significant evidence has been found of the impact of soft skills on employee performance. Similarly, no evidence was found that employee productivity analysis and workloads are a dependent variable explained or influenced by soft skills. Consequently, this paper aims to determine the influence that critical soft skills have on employee performance, which could provide better guidance

not only to employees, but also to employers to improve their performance indicators. As previously identified, soft skills have a positive and significant influence on organizational performance, therefore, this research contributes to the field of knowledge as it identifies critical soft skills that directly affect employee productivity, and therefore, have an impact on organizational performance, this, in turn, contributes to business sustainability. This problem, in principle, has been identified through a national survey of C-suite executives conducted by Northeastern University reported that 73 per cent of business leaders recognize a skills gap among today's workforce, and 87 per cent believe that today's college graduates lack the necessary skills to succeed (Northeastern Global News, 2014).

In order to support the objective of this research, this article begins the scientific description about soft skills, and their effect on employee productivity, and on organizational performance, and proposes the following hypothesis:

H1: There is a positive and significant relationship between soft skills and employee productivity.

Subsequently, a theoretical description of the main concepts is made, and the soft skills that are considered critical are identified, as well as the critical variables for the concept of employee productivity. The measurement model through structural equations is proposed, on which its measurement is carried out, and finally the conclusions, discussion, and limitations are set out. This study adds to the knowledge available in the field of soft skills. Beyond simply analyzing and quantifying how soft skills influence employee productivity, the research included specific variables on which the organization can directly influence. By observing the role that different factors play in the employee performance, we can fill a space in the literature and disseminate an understanding of the influence of soft skills have on the employee productivity.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Employee productivity

Workforce productivity is a crucial factor that can enhance, strengthen and sustain a company's overall business performance (Mohammad, Quoquab, Halimah, & Thurasamy, 2019). Employee productivity provides critical insights into the dynamics of motivation and work processes (Olekanma, Harrison, Oyewunmi, & Adedeji, 2024). The different productivity measures have as their main objective the analysis of work-related aspects, employee behavior, motivation levels, and factors underlying human capital (Velimirovica, Velimirovicb, & Stankovica, 2011). Consequently, this productivity can be understood in a global way as through certain inputs, employees transform them into products of organizational value in a given period (Olekanma, Harrison, Oyewunmi, & Adedeji, 2024) (Igudia, 2021), and from this concept, each organization, and from various investigations carried out, has tried to establish the types of indicators that allow this to be measured, and the frequency of these measurements. However, not only the results obtained are important, but also their quality, thus, bringing to the fore ongoing debate that measuring productivity is quite controversial and difficult (Davenport & Prusak, 2000). Given the complexity in the analysis of employee productivity that is based on an integration of factors, Coker, 2011defined it as the level of employee performance in relation to a series

of factors such as attendance, work quality, capacity of performance, and personal factors, but it also depends to a large extent on the organizations' strategies (Darvishmotevali, Altinay, & Koseoglu, 2020). Various investigations have addressed the concept of employee productivity, and although the definitions do not have a significant difference, a very interesting structure has been determined that allows for an in-depth analysis of the characteristics of this productivity. According to (Olekanma, Harrison, Oyewunmi, & Adedeji, 2024), productivity is defined as the ability of an employee to transform inputs (instructions, requirements, etc.) into results in a given period of time. A research conducted by (Rueda, Jiménez, & Sánchez, 2015)managed to determine the positive influence of the training of related human talent and compensation on the efficiency of projects, this type of research is significant in the body of knowledge because projects are the unit of organizational development, and it is the way through which the strategic plans of organizations manage to be implemented.

Employability

The concept of employability capital draws its foundation from a rich basket of theories and frameworks, each accentuating the importance of various dimensions, such as social attributes, emotional intelligence, psychological capital, and cultural intelligence (Bisschoff & Massyn, 2024). Tong and Gao (2022) note that employability is a measure of employees' competencies as well as an instrument for understanding the linkage between the job market and higher education (Paunescu, Acatrinei, Argatu, McGUIRE, & Zhang, 2024). A complementary field to soft skills is that of Employability capital, since it emerges as a component of personal attributes (Tomlinson , 2017). Employability capital shows potential employers the capacity of certain subjects for the future development of soft skills (Wilton , 2014), which in turn can ensure that employees keep their jobs (Peeters, y otros, 2019). In conclusion, employability refers to the set of skills, attributes, and experiences that enable an individual to secure and maintain employment, and to successfully navigate and adapt to a constantly evolving labor market. Therefore, it is not only about quantitative expressions, but also about the ability to apply knowledge and skills in various work environments (Tomlinson, Graduate Employability and Student Attitudes and Orientations to the Labour Market, 2007).

Labor productivity

Labour productivity is a concept related to employee productivity, as it represents the volume of output produced per unit of labour input, that is, labour productivity measures the average amount of goods and services produced for each hour worked by the labour force (Bureš & Stropková, 2014). Labour productivity is a key dimension of economic performance and an essential driver of changes in living standards. Labor productivity measures the efficiency of a country with which inputs are used in an economy to produce goods and services and it offers a measure of economic growth, competitiveness, and living standards within a country (International Labour organization, 2014). Labor productivity is a key dimension of economic performance and an essential driver of changes in living standards (OECD, 2018). Improving labor productivity is one of the core objectives of firms (Ahn, Yoo, & Cho, 2023). Labor productivity is one of the most common indices among partial productivities. This index describes the role of labor in

manufacturing products or services. More labor productivity indicates better efficiency and more useful labor (Nezu, 2001). Labor productivity therefore is a key measure of economic performance. High labor productivity growth can reflect greater use of capital, falling employment of low-productivity workers or general efficiency gains and innovation.

Soft skills

The conceptualization of soft skills has undergone significant evolution in both theoretical and empirical domains. Initially perceived as a set of observable interpersonal behaviors, soft skills are now understood as encompassing a broad spectrum of attributes, including attitudes, values, socio-emotional competencies, and non-cognitive forms of intelligence (Coetzee, 2012). Soft skills facilitate the development of a collaborative and psychologically safe working environment, which in turn enables employees to perform more efficiently and contributes to measurable improvements in job performance (Namora, Zunaida, & Widayawati, 2023). According to (Succi & Canovi, 2019), soft skills make up a group that combines interpersonal and intellectual skills that positively help people to face daily environments in their lives, and organizational environments.

Human resources represent a critical asset and a foundational element in the success of any organization. Within this context, soft skills are increasingly acknowledged as essential components of the competency profile required for future employment, given their role in enhancing adaptability, collaboration, and interpersonal effectiveness in dynamic work environments (Poláková, y otros, 2023); In other words, these soft skills are qualities that make someone a good employee and generate compatibility with co-workers. Development of soft skills is more important than development of technical skills when it comes to performing globally (Minbaeva & Collings, 2013). Therefore, it is necessary to emphasize the importance of human skills, as the labor market recognizes and rewards these skills for their ability to confer flexibility and adaptability, thus reflecting the competitive attributes of the future workforce (Poláková, y otros, 2023).

3. CONCEPTUAL MODEL

Through a bibliometric analysis conducted in recent years, a set of research articles was identified that provided empirical evidence on the relationship between soft skills and employee productivity. Based on this corpus, a frequency analysis of the variables employed in these studies was performed. The objective was to identify the most recurrent soft skill indicators utilized across the literature. The analysis led to the following conclusions:

Figure 2.

Frequency table of soft skills variables

AUTHOR / SOFT SKILL	Adaptation	Information management	Continuous learning	Analytical skills	Creativity	Communication	Empathy	Writing	Listening	Initiative	Leadership	Time management	Negotiation	Organization	Results orientation	Resilience	Problem solving	Critical thinking	Planning and organization	Decision making	Teamwork
(Ismail, Yussof, & Sieng, 2011)						1		1			1						1			1	
(Garwood, 2012)						1								1							
(Lavy & Yadin , 2013)			1	1		1									1					1	1
(Abdol & Bahroom, 2014)									1		1							1		1	1
(Sermsuk, Triwichitkhun, & Wongwanich, 2014)	1	1	1			1											1				1
(Cimatti, 2016)		1				1				1							1		1		1
(Mahfud, Kusuma, & Mulyani, 2017)					1	1	1			1							1	1		1	1
(Olarinre & Taiwo, 2017)						1		1	1			1	1				1				
(Zepeda, Cardoso , & Rey, 2019)				1		1					1										1
(Chaibate, Hadek, Ajana, Bakkali, & Faraj, 2020)	1					1								1			1			1	1
(Rodge & Gupta, 2020)					1										1		1				
(Singh, Paul, & Tewari, 2021)			1			1		1	1			1	1		1		1	1		1	1
(Suleman, y otros, 2021)			1			1	1										1			1	1
(Khanom, 2021)	1					1					1	1									
(Rodríguez Martínez , Sierra Sánchez, Falcón Linares, & Latorre, 2021)	1				1	1					1						1			1	1
(Constantino & Rodnizka, 2022)					1								1				1	1		1	1
(Gruber, Barni de Campos, Pereira, & Borges, 2022)			1			1			1		1						1				1
(Infante, Araiza, & López, 2023)											1						1			1	
(World Economic Forum, 2023)			1	1	1						1					1	1	1			
(Poláková, y otros, 2023)					1	1											1	1			1
FREQUENCY	**4**	**2**	**6**	**3**	**6**	**15**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**2**	**8**	**3**	**3**	**2**	**3**	**1**	**15**	**6**	**1**	**10**	**13**

Figure 2 presents a synthesis of twelve years of research on soft skills, highlighting the critical or most frequently cited soft skills identified in each study. The figure concludes with a summary of the cumulative frequencies of these skills across the reviewed literature. Subsequently, Figure 3 offers a graphical representation of the frequency distribution of the soft skills analyzed. The selection of the observable variables associated with the Soft Skills factor was conducted through a systematic procedure that involved the review of peer-reviewed research articles published over the past twelve years. In light of the considerable diversity of soft skills identified and the methodological constraints of this study, a frequency analysis was employed to determine the most recurrent variables reported in the literature.

Figure 3.
Soft skills frequency chart variables

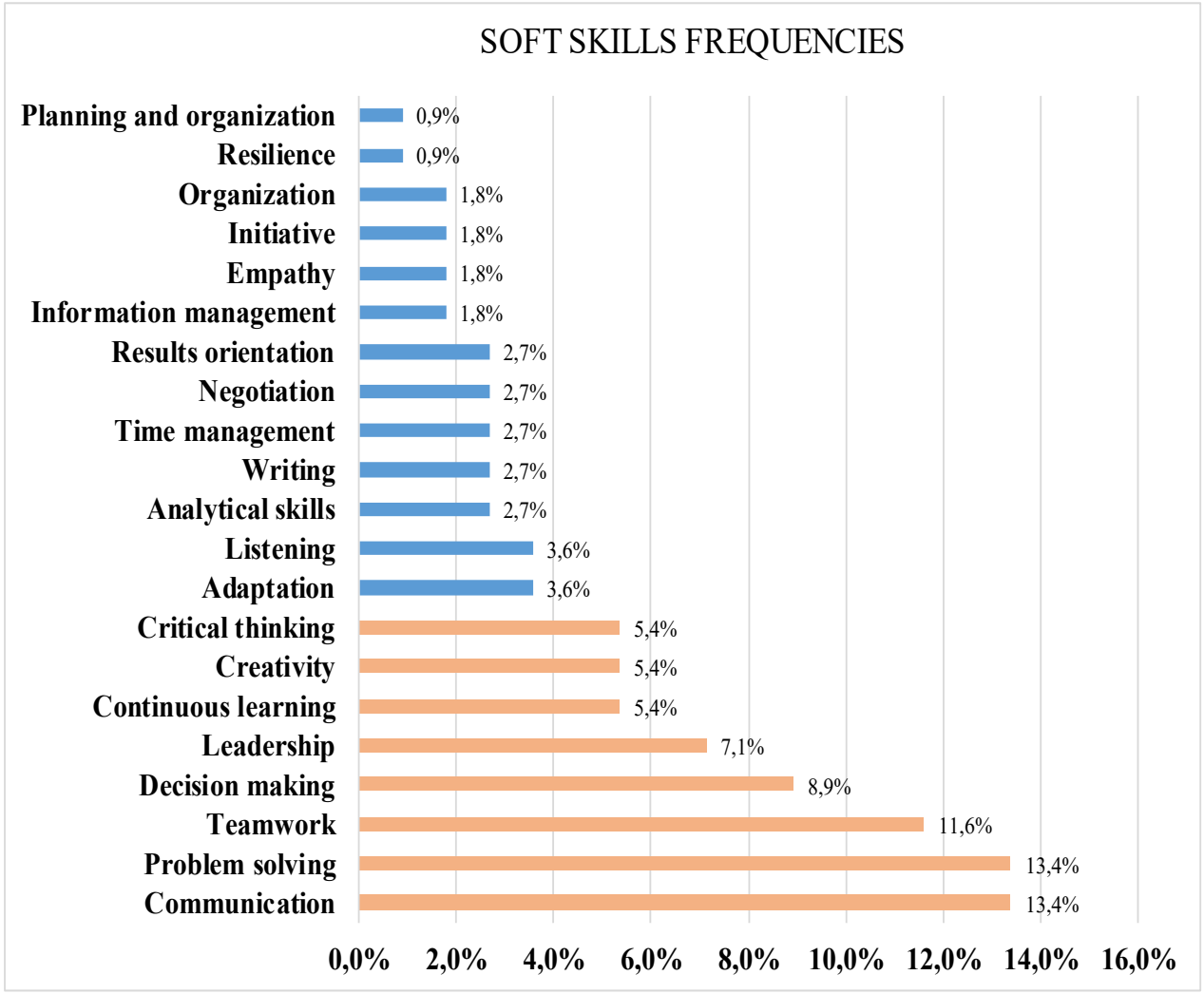
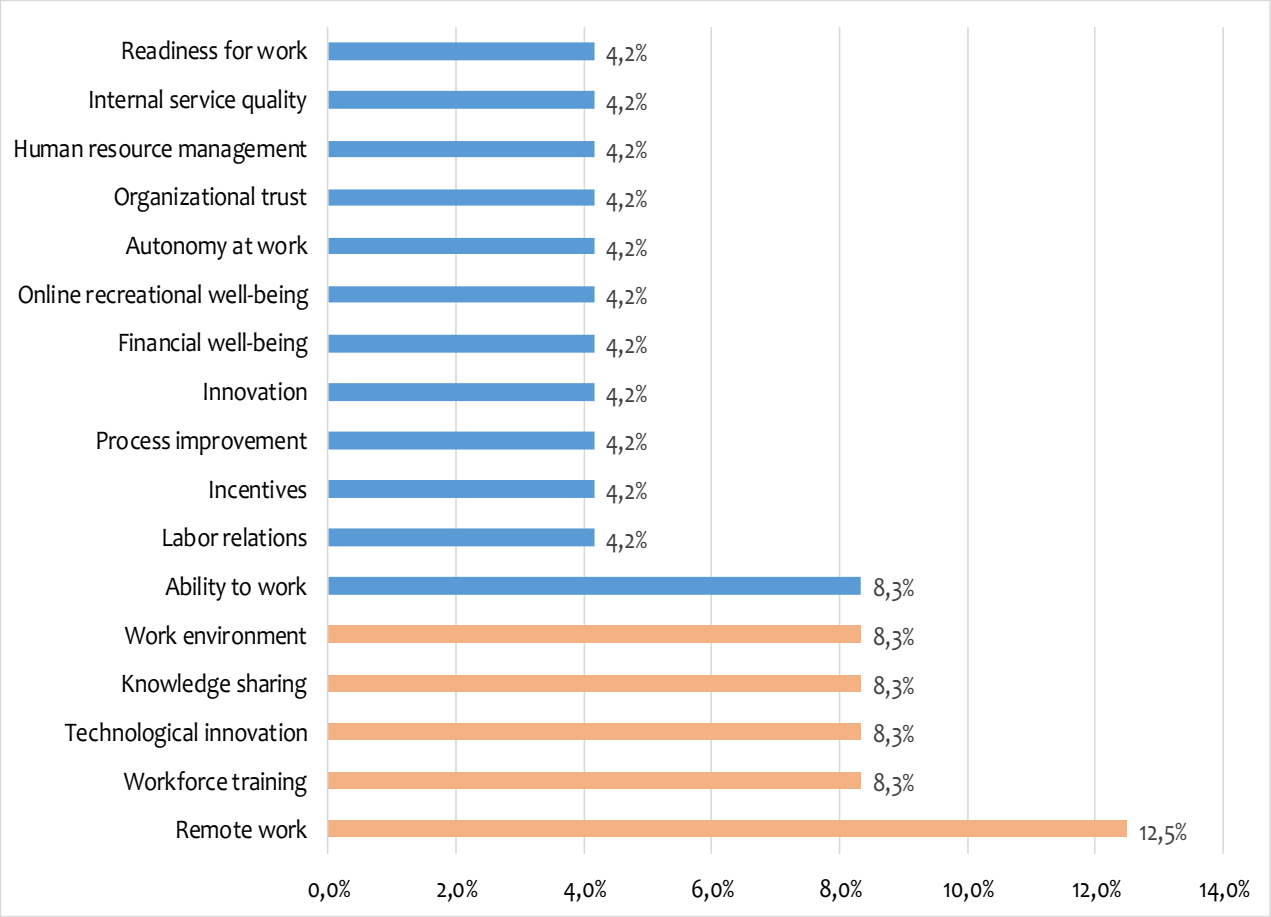


Figure 4.
Frequency table of employee productivity variables

AUTHOR / EMPLOYEE PRODUCTIVITY	Remote work	Workforce training	Technological innovation	Process improvement	Innovation	Knowledge sharing	Financial well-being	Online recreational well-being	Autonomy at work	Organizational trust	Human resource management	Internal service quality	Readiness for work	Ability to work	Work environment	Labor relations	Incentives
(Sulaimon & Ametepe, 2024)	1	1	1	1													
(Nwankpa & Roumani, 2024)	1				1	1											
(Bashir et al., 2024)							1										
(Farooq & Sultana, 2022)	1																
(Tarigan et al., 2022)															1		1
(Mohammad et al., 2019)								1	1								
(Iqbal et al., 2019)										1	1						
(Adeinat & Kassim, 2019)												1					
(Aboelmaged, 2018)		1	1			1											
(Putri et al., 2017)													1	1	1	1	
TOTAL	**3**	**2**	**2**	**1**	**1**	**2**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**2**	**1**	**1**

A similar approach was employed in the analysis and identification of critical variables related to the concept of employee productivity. This process is summarized in Figures 4 and 5. While research on employee productivity has shown a clear upward trend (Figure 1), there remains a limited body of work that thoroughly examines the variables associated with the *Employee Productivity* factor. As such, the review of the current literature focused on studies published from 2017 onward. Subsequently, a procedure analogous to the one used for identifying the variables related to soft skills was applied.

Figure 5.
Frequency chart of employee productivity variables



In conclusion, below is a summary of the critical variables found in the literature review of the concepts of soft skills and employee productivity, definitions and proposed authors:

Table 1.
Observable variables included in the model

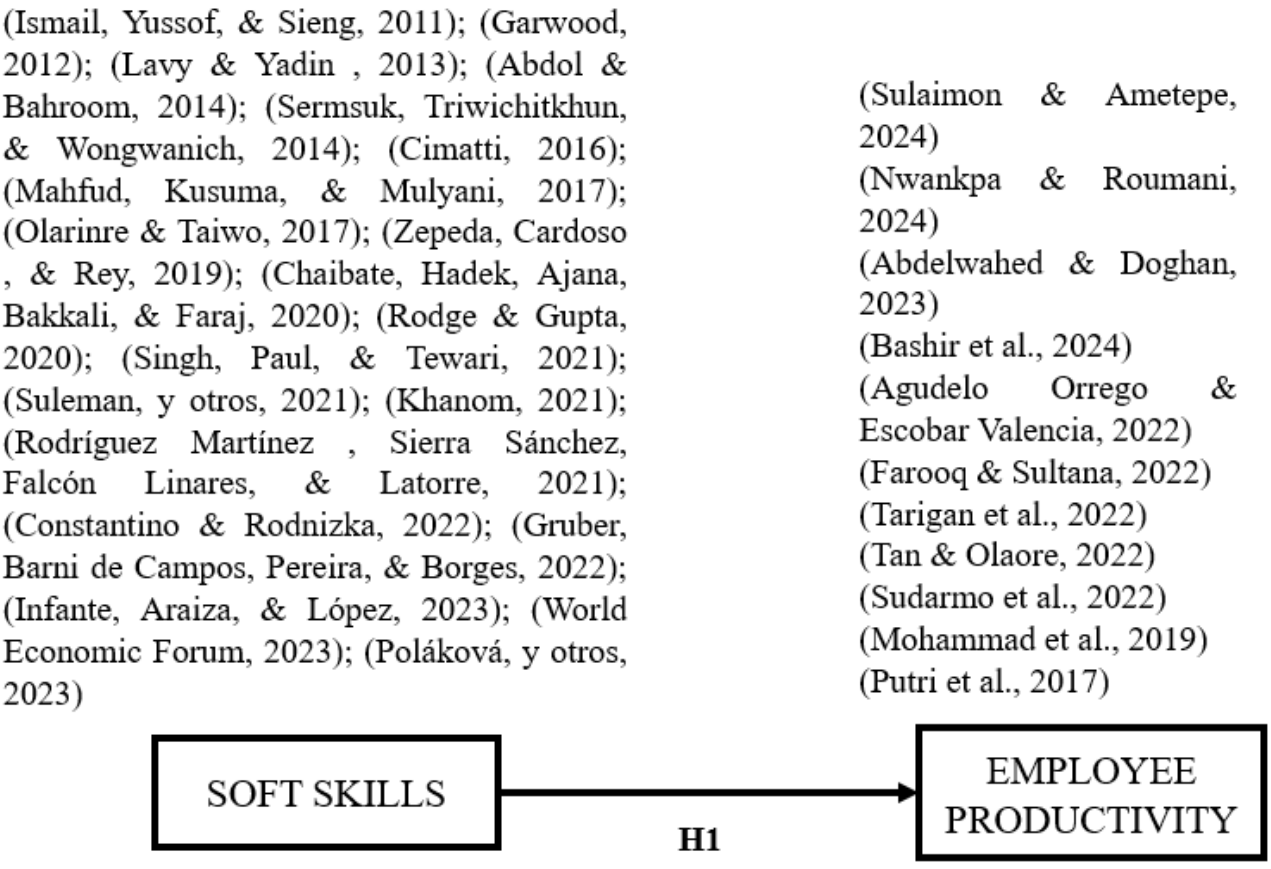
LATENT VARIABLE	OBSERVED VARIABLE	DEFINITION	AUTHORS
Soft Skills	Communication (SK1)	Ability to convey, transfer and receive information, ideas and feelings.	(Poláková, y otros, 2023).
			(Gruber, Barni de Campos, Pereira, Hansch, & Borges, 2022)
			(Rodríguez, Sierra, Falcón, & Latorre, 2021) (Suleman, y otros, 2021) (Singh, Paul, & Tewari, 2021)
			(Chaibate, Hadek, Ajana, Bakkali, & Faraj, 2020) (Olarinre Oladokun & Taiwo Gbadegesin, 2017)

	Problem solving (SK2)	Abilities that influence the acquisition and application of knowledge in complex problem-solving	(Poláková, y otros, 2023) (Infante-Alcántara, Araiza-Vázquez, & López-Pérez, 2023) (Gruber, Barni de Campos, Pereira, Hansch, & Borges, 2022) (Constantino & Rodzinka, 2022) (Rodríguez Martínez, Sierra Sánchez , Falcón Linares, & Latorre, 2021) (Suleman, y otros, 2021)
			(Singh, Paul, & Tewari, 2021)
			(Rodge & Gupta, 2020) (Chaibate, Hadek, Ajana, Bakkali, & Faraj, 2020)
	Teamwork (SK3)	Ability to effectively and cooperatively work in small groups toward a common goal.	(Poláková, y otros, 2023) (Gruber, Barni de Campos, Pereira, Hansch, & Borges, 2022) (Constantino & Rodzinka, 2022) (Rodríguez Martínez, Sierra Sánchez , Falcón Linares, & Latorre, 2021) (Suleman, y otros, 2021) (Singh, Paul, & Tewari, 2021) (Chaibate, Hadek, Ajana, Bakkali, & Faraj, 2020)
			(Zepeda, Cardoso , & Rey, 2019)
			(Mahfud, Jati, & Mulyani, 2017)
			(Cimatti, 2016)
	Decision making (SK4).	Competence to choose the alternative following a complete process and assume full responsibility for the consequences of the decision made	(Infante-Alcántara, Araiza-Vázquez, & López-Pérez, 2023)
			(Constantino & Rodzinka, 2022)
			(Rodríguez Martínez, Sierra Sánchez , Falcón Linares, & Latorre, 2021)
			(Suleman, y otros, 2021)
			(Singh, Paul, & Tewari, 2021)
			(Chaibate, Hadek, Ajana, Bakkali, & Faraj, 2020)
Employee Productivity	Remote work (EP1)	Flexible work arrangement that enables employees to work outside the traditional corporate office operated by the employer	(Farooq & Sultana, 2021)
			(Nwankpa & Roumani, 2024)
			(Sulaimon & Ametepe, 2024)
	Workforce training (EP2)	It entails providing employees with training, workshops, coaching, mentoring, or other learning opportunities in order to inspire, challenge, and motivate them to perform their job functions to the best of their abilities while adhering to local, state, federal, and licensing organizations guidelines	(Sulaimon & Ametepe, 2024)
			(Gamal Aboelmaged, 2017)
			(Igudia, 2021)
	Technological innovation (EP3)	It increased the speed with which service firms can deliver prompt services or products to consumers while ensuring that quality is	(Gamal Aboelmaged, 2017)
			(Sulaimon & Ametepe, 2024)
			(Igudia, 2021)

		identified as the primary driver of technology investments.	(Coppersmith, 2019)
	Work environment (EP4)	The physical, social, and psychological conditions in which people work	(Putri, Yusof, Hasan, & Darma, 2017)
			(Tarigan, Cahya, Valentine, Hatane, & Jie, 2022)

Based on the relationship proposed as a hypothesis, the conceptual model illustrated in Figure 6 is proposed, in which soft skills are proposed as an independent latent variable, and employee productivity is proposed as a dependent latent variable:

Figure 6.
Proposed conceptual model



The conceptual model and hypothesis proposed in this study are grounded in independent investigations conducted by the authors, as illustrated in Figure 6. However, as previously discussed, empirical evidence supporting the proposed relationship between soft skills and employee productivity remains limited. Figure 7 and Table 1 depict the structural model and its corresponding mathematical configuration, which will be tested to assess the validity of the hypothesis presented. The model incorporates two latent variables (ξ_1, ξ_2), and within these, employee productivity (ξ_2) is the dependent variable.

Each latent variable has 4 observable or indicator variables, which configure the structural model.

Figure 7.
Proposed structural model

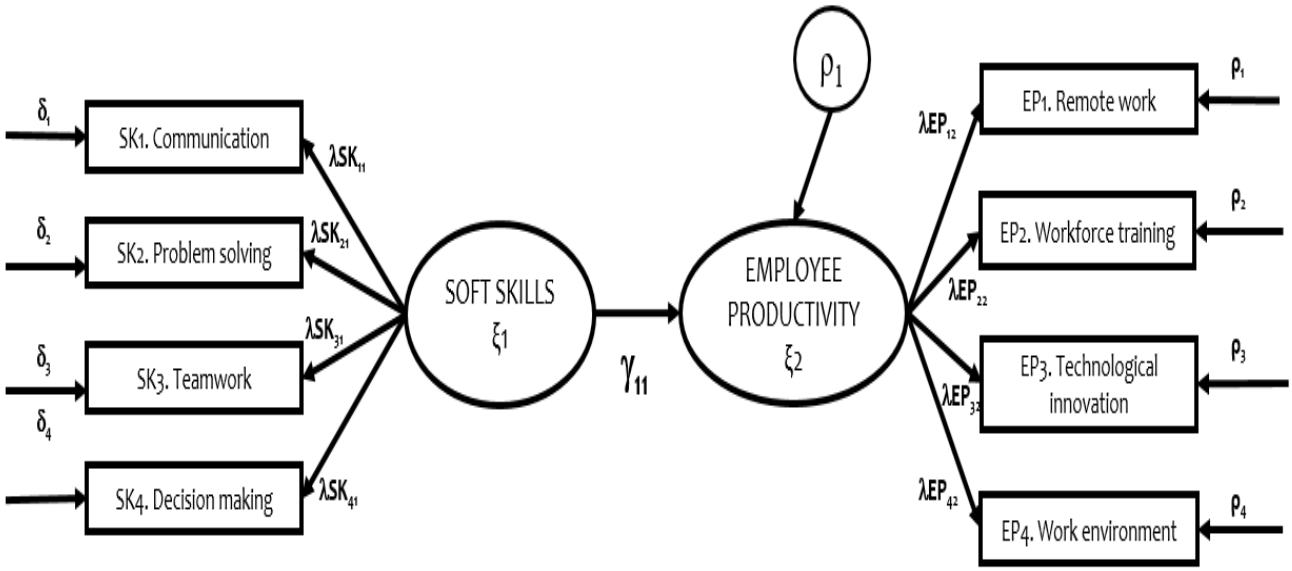


Table 2.
Equations related to the structural model

LATENT VARIABLE	OBSERVABLE VARIABLE
SOFT SKILLS (SK)	SK_1
	$\lambda SK_{11}\ \xi_1+\delta_1$
	SK_2
	$\lambda SK_{21}\ \xi_1+\delta_2$
	SK_3
	$\lambda SK_{31}\ \xi_1+\delta_3$
	SK_4
	$\lambda SK_{41}\ \xi_1+\delta_4$
EMPLOYEE PRODUCTIVITY (EP)	EP_1
	$\lambda EP_{12}\ \xi_2+\rho_1$
	EP_2
	$\lambda EP_{22}\ \xi_2+\rho_2$
	EP_3
	$\lambda EP_{32}\ \xi_2+\rho_3$
	EP_4
	$\lambda EP_{42}\ \xi_2+\rho_4$

4. METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH PROCESS

Sample and data collection

The target population of this research is made up of employees of small and medium-sized companies, who have been working for the organization for one year or more. The types of organizations to study are public and private. This research has a scope for micro, small, and medium-sized companies because it is a strategic sector for Colombia. The selection of the population to study was based on the authors' suggestions related to sample sizes in structural equation models. According to (Rex, 2016) suggests an appropriate sample size of 20 cases for each variable contained in the model. This leads to the inference that for this research, in which there are eight observable variables, a size of 160 questionnaires is required. However, a greater number of questionnaires will be sent due to losses resulting from poorly completed or incomplete instruments. The questionnaire is composed of basic information about the interviewee, an explanatory section of the concepts discussed, and 5 sections of questions with a Likert scale. This questionnaire was previously validated through expert opinion.

Data analysis

The data collected have been analyzed respecting the rules about the privacy and adopting all the techniques for avoiding possible biases (Ott & Longnecker, 2015). The questionnaires were developed and sent in Word and Google Forms, and were subsequently analyzed using the SPSS statistical package, through the application called AMOS, since these models focus on the estimation and validation of statistical relationships between latent variables or constructs. In this research work, the model consists of one exogenous variable, one endogenous variable, and eight observable variables. The assumptions required to perform SEM were validated through SPSS, establishing a sufficiently large sample (Byrne, 2016).

5. RESULTS

Measure development

Employee productivity (ξ2) is the dependent variable in the model that measures the influence of soft skills (ξ1).

The observable variables associated with soft skills (ξ1) are: communication (SK1), problem solving (SK2), teamwork (SK3), and decision making (SK4).

Finally, employee productivity (ξ2) has the following associated variables: remote work (EP1), workforce training (EP2), technological innovation (EP3), and work environment (EP4).

Hypotheses testing

The examination of the conceptual framework was conducted with the use of the 'SEM technique (Hair, Andreson, Tatham, & Black, 1995). The estimation of the structural model was conducted with the maximum likelihood estimation method, which is the most widespread method of estimation (Kelloway, 1998). The tested hypothesized model

consisted of two latent variables, eight observable variables, eight measurement errors associated with latent and indicator variables, and a residual variable linked to the dependent variable (figure 7). The model was evaluated by statistical means to determine the adequacy of its goodness-of-fit.

In the first run of the measurement, the structural model was chosen to test the hypothesized model accordingly to theory; oriented from previous studies by (Deming, 2017) (Manullang, 2017) (Suan Chin, 2021) (Abdur, 2023) (Adi Jaya & Maryanto, 2023) (Namora, Zunaida, & Widayawati, 2023) (Sudarso, Prakoso, & Widakdo, 2022) (Poláková, y otros, 2023) (Nwankpa & Roumani, 2024) (Abdelhamid & Al Doghan, 2023) (Agudelo Orrego & Escobar Valencia, 2022) (Farooq & Sultana, 2021) (Tarigan, Cahya, Valentine, Hatane, & Jie, 2022) (Tan & Olaore, 2021) (Sudarmo, Dwi Suhartanti, & Eko Prasetyanto, 2022) (Mohammad, Quoquab, Halimah, & Thurasamy, 2019) (Putri, Yusof, Hasan, & Darma, 2017).

Table 2 shows the indicators that establish the goodness-of-fit of the hypothesised model indicated a poor fit. The results (shown in Table 3) of this first run indicated that the root mean square residual (RMSEA = 0.176) was greater than 0.08, indicates a poor fit for the model (Byrne, 2016). In the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI =0.808), this indicator should be close to one (Jöreskog and Sörbom, 1998); in the comparative fit index (CFI =0.87), this indicator ranges from zero to one, with higher values indicating a better fit (Hu and Bentler, 1999); in the χ2/degrees of freedom index (CMIN/DF = 7.702), this indicator must be ≤ 5. In the normed fit index (NFI =0.855), a value 0.90 is typically considered representative of a well-fitting model (Bentler, 1992).

Table 3.
Parameter estimates of the model one

Relationship			Estimate	S.E	C.R	P
Employee productivity	←	Soft Skills	0,292	0,077	3,814	***

Note: *** Significant level

Table 4.
Goodness-of-fit statistics model in the first run

Fit index	Recommended value (Hair et al., 2012)	Results of the model
RMSEA	≤ 0,08	0,176
TLI	≥ 0,8	0,808
CFI	≥ 0,9	0,87
CMIN/DF	≤ 0,5	7,702
NFI	≥ 0,9	0,855

Second run of the model with modification indices

In the second run of the model, the modification indices were used. SEM provides a unique approach to variance and measurement error interdependence, following methodological guidelines of SEM from (Byrne, 2016). It uses goodness-of-fit statistics and the modification indices for each parameter, which were computed by SEM. The covariance within measurement errors was estimated in the model; Table 4 shows the modification indices.

Table 5.
Modification indices

			M.I.	Par Change
E3	<-->	E5	4,742	0,018
E2	<-->	E3	11,686	0,166
E1	<-->	E2	5,525	-0,105
S1	<-->	E3	10,406	-0,114
S1	<-->	E1	12,028	-0,113
S2	<-->	E5	14,762	-0,022
S2	<-->	E4	10,583	-0,069
S2	<-->	E3	6,674	-0,104
S2	<-->	S1	11,551	0,084
S3	<-->	E5	7,891	0,009
S3	<-->	E4	7,705	0,033
S3	<-->	S2	8,039	-0,046
S4	<-->	E4	4,264	-0,045
S4	<-->	E2	5,596	0,083
S4	<-->	E1	4,064	0,077
S4	<-->	S2	46,953	0,197

The incorporation of the error covariance between the elements produced an improvement in the adjusted model that is reflected in the goodness and adjustment statistics (Table 5). Accordingly, the RMSEA decreased from 0.176 to 0.08. RMSEA (shown in Table 6) is recognized as one of the most informative criteria in the evaluation of model fit, and the RMSEA value of 0.08 indicates a good fit (Schreiber et al., 2010). The other goodness-of-fit indices also improved. Based on all these indicator s as well as on goodness-of-fit statistics, the theoretical model was considered valid. Based on the results obtained, and with the aim of responding to the hypothesis raised, as illustrated in Table 5, soft skills (ξ_1) have a positive and significant impact on employee productivity (ξ_2), with $\beta = 0.95$, p =*** (significant).

Table 6.
Adjusted model: parameter estimates

Relationship			Estimate	S.E	C.R	P
Employee productivity	←	Soft Skills	0,95	0,084	3,805	***
Communication	←	Soft Skills	0,796	0,085	11,791	***
Problem solving	←	Soft Skills	0,617	0,064	11,841	***
Teamwork	←	Soft Skills	0,27	0,077	13,94	***
Workforce training	←	Employee productivity	0,54	0,594	3,468	***
Technological innovation	←	Employee productivity	0,415	0,523	3,447	***
Work environment	←	Employee productivity	0,93	0,956	3,919	***

Note: *** Significant level

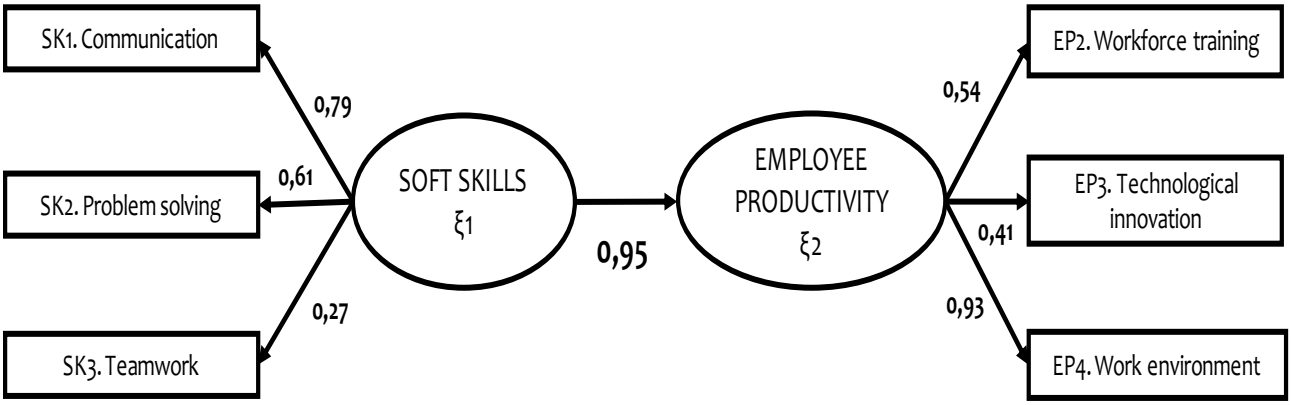
Table 7.
Goodness-of-fit indices in the adjusted model

Fit index	Recommended value (Hair et al., 2012)	Results of the model
RMSEA	≤ 0,08	0,08
TLI	≥ 0,8	0,96
CFI	≥ 0,9	0,986
CMIN/DF	≤ 5	2,3
NFI	≥ 0,9	0,976

The model presented in Figure 8 illustrates the estimated coefficients for the significant variables, derived following the application of modification indices intended to enhance the model's fit. A positive and statistically significant relationship between soft skills and employee productivity is evident. Specifically, an increase in the development and application of soft skills is associated with an inferred improvement in labor productivity. The observable variables significantly linked to the *Soft Skills* factor include communication, problem-solving, and teamwork. Among these, communication presents the highest factor load; consequently, its strengthening has a positive impact on the

general development of this factor. The Employee Productivity factor is made up of the observable variables training, technological innovation and work environment, the latter having the greatest weight. Therefore, improvements in the work environment have a direct impact on the increase in employee productivity.

Figure 8.
Final model with results of significant variables and estimators



6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

These findings provide valuable insights into organizational performance, highlighting the importance of human resource management interventions. By strategically addressing these factors, organizations can generate added value and achieve a differentiated level of competitiveness. According to the results reported in Table 5 and 6, the study demonstrates the existence of positive and significant relationship between soft skills (ξ_1), and employee productivity (ξ_2). This result is in line with previous studies, which, although indirectly, illustrated a relationship between soft skills, employee productivity, and organizational performance (Olekanma, Harrison, Oyewunmi, & Adedeji, 2024) (Namora, Zunaida, & Widayawati, 2023) (Poláková, y otros, 2023). Therefore, to generate competitive advantages, organizations can incorporate a series of targeted investments in soft skills as part of their improvement strategies. These investments are expected to have a positive and statistically significant impact on employee productivity, leading to broader organizational improvements. This approach reflects a shift in management focus, emphasizing not only financial performance but also the development of human capital.

Additionally, the findings underscore communication, problem-solving, and teamwork as critical variables within the soft skills framework. And the training of workers, technological innovation, and the work environment as significant variables in employee productivity. These results emphasize the critical role of the human factor in organizational development, providing new evidence regarding the impact of qualitative variables within organizational settings. In doing so, they support and validate previous

studies that highlight the importance of developing and internalizing soft skills. This research not only analyzed the overarching *soft skills* factor but also identified and examined associated variables, including communication, problem-solving, teamwork, and decision-making. Among these variables, decision-making does not exhibit a significant impact on employee productivity. Consequently, organizations may consider integrating the development and internalization of this skill within their career development plans. While this research contributes to advancing the body of knowledge in the fields of management and business, it is important to acknowledge certain limitations. Specifically, the study was conducted in the city of Bogotá, and cultural factors unique to different regions may influence the applicability and generalizability of the results. Another limitation pertains to the sample size, as a total of 900 questionnaires were distributed, with only 286 completed responses received. Additionally, response bias may be a concern, as participants could have felt reluctant to disclose certain organizational information due to concerns about job security or potential repercussions. Finally, that each categorical variable has an underlying continuous and normally distributed scale is undoubtedly a difficult criterion to meet and, in fact, may be totally unrealistic (Byrne, 2016).

The results of this research have theoretical implications that contribute to the existing literature on business and management from a human resource intervention perspective:

First, the results contribute to clarifying and emphasizing the role of soft skills in employee productivity. The literature review demonstrated that soft skills significantly influence organizational performance. Although there is limited research specifically addressing the relationship between soft skills and employee productivity, the available evidence suggests a positive and statistically significant association, thereby contributing to organizational sustainability. This study also identified key variables associated with employee productivity, such as employee training, technological innovation, and the work environment, all of which were found to be significant. These findings offer valuable insights for organizations, suggesting a shift away from traditional approaches to labor productivity—many of which focus on increasing working hours—in favor of strategies that promote the development of soft skills and improve the work environment. A positive impact, derived from low investment costs, can generate positive and significant changes in employee productivity, improving not only the results obtained, but also healthy work environments. Second, the results allow us to infer that salary increases or bonuses, although they may be motivating for employees, do not necessarily ensure higher levels of productivity. Investments focused on technology and the work environment have a favorable impact on this productivity. This research constitutes a significant contribution to human capital development strategies in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

Based on the results obtained, senior management would be in a position to design and implement career plans aimed at strengthening internal talent. These plans should include two fundamental components: the first, focused on the development of hard or technical skills, related to the acquisition of specific knowledge in various functional areas; and the second, focused on the strengthening of soft skills, adjusted to the behavioral competencies required by each position. The implementation of this structure would contribute not only to maximize personnel productivity, but also to optimize the allocation of training resources by focusing on specific training needs aligned with organizational

objectives. It would also become a strategic input for human talent management processes, particularly during the recruitment and selection stages, by facilitating the precise definition of required occupational profiles. As a result, it would increase the probability of recruiting suitable collaborators, whose competencies are effectively adjusted to the specific demands of the organization. An additional benefit of implementing this model lies in the possible reduction of staff turnover. By promoting the development of specific skills aligned with organizational requirements, a greater affinity between employees and their work environment is favored, which could translate into greater stability and commitment on the part of human talent.

7. FINAL REMARKS, LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR RESEARCH

Over the last few years, an increasing number of researchers and practitioners have provided managerial studies about soft skills, and employee productivity, however, many of these investigations analyze the significance of these factors, and very few investigations analyze the influences or impacts between factors. With the aim to bridge this gap, the paper tries to build a model that determines the influence between factors, whose objective is to establish critical variables that affect the behavior of these factors.

Accordingly, the research demonstrates the existence of variables associated with soft skills that affect employee productivity, opening to multiple managerial implications. In this sense, this research provides input that encourages and promotes improvement in the human resources of organizations, thus providing a vision about the management of employees and those critical variables on which companies could develop career plans, focused on specific needs. In this way, budgets will be optimized by focusing on very specific criteria with a high organizational impact. From this perspective, several general recommendations can be derived as following summarized:

- ✓ Prioritize communication, problem solving, and teamwork as soft skills to develop, and generate continuous training.
- ✓ Companies must ensure that they improve the training of their workforce, technological innovation, and the work environment, since these variables, added to the soft skills described above, maximize the productivity of their employees, and as a consequence, the probabilities of sustainability of organizations over time increase.
- ✓ This type of research opens the door for companies, and with contributions from the university, to address in a more in-depth way the study, management and improvement of human talent, as a critical factor in the success and sustainability of organizations.

REFERENCES

Abdelhamid, N., & Al Doghan, M. (2023). Developing Employee Productivity and Performance through Work Engagement and Organizational Factors in an Educational Society. *Societies, 13*(65), 3-19. doi:https://doi.org/10.3390/soc13030065

Abdur, S. (2023). Soft Skills -- The Key to Career Success. *Management Education for Achieving Sustainable Development*, 165-175. doi:https://doi.org/10.57240/DUJMBK12

Adi Jaya, U., & Maryanto, T. (2023). EFFECT OF HARDSKILL AND SOFTSKILL ON EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE. *Jurnal multidisiplin, 1*(1), 36-46.

Agudelo Orrego, B., & Escobar Valencia, M. (2022). Análisis de la productividad laboral en el sector panificador del Valle del Cauca, Colombia. *Revista de Ciencias Sociales, 28*(2), 122-134.

Aguenza, B. (2012). A conceptual analysis of social networking and its impact on employee productivity. *IOSR Journal of Business and Management, 1*(2), 48-52.

Ahn, D., Yoo, S., & Cho, S. (2023). Do competent managers increase labor productivity? Evidence from Korea. *Journal of Derivatives and Quantitative Studies, 31*(3), 242-260.

Beard, D., Schwieger, D., & Surendran, K. (2008). Integrating soft skills assessment through university, "Integrating soft skills assessment through university,. *Journal of Information Systems Education, 19*(2), 229-240.

Bisschoff, Z., & Massyn, L. (2024). Aconceptual soft skills competency framework for enhancing graduate intern employability. *Higher Education, Skills and WorkBased Learning*, 1-16. doi:10.1108/HESWBL-08-2023-0239

Buallay, A., Adden Abuhommous, A., & Kukreja, G. (2021). The relationship between intellectual capital and employees' productivity: evidence from the Gulf Cooperation Council. *Journal of Management Development, 40*(6), 526-541.

Bureš, V., & Stropková, A. (2014). 'Labour productivity and possibilities of its extension by knowledge management aspects. *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences, 109*, 1088-1093.

Byrne, B. (2016). *Structural Equation Modeling with Amos.* New York: Routledge.

Cámara de comercio de Bogotá. (27 de Julio de 2021). *Cámara de comercio de Bogotá CCB. Noticias*. Obtenido de https://www.ccb.org.co/de-interes/noticias/mipymes-en-bogota-y-la-region-representan-el-97-del-tejido-empresarial

Chaibate, H., Hadek, A., Ajana, S., Bakkali, S., & Faraj, K. (2020). A Comparative Study of the Engineering Soft Skills Required by Moroccan Job Market. *International Journal of Higher Education, 9*(1), 142-152.

Cimatti, B. (2016). Definition, development, assessment, of soft skills and their role for the quality of organizations and enterprises. *International Journal for Quality Research, 10*(1), 97-130. doi:10.18421/IJQR10.01-05

Coetzee, M. (2012). A framework for developing student graduateness and employability in the economic and management sciences at the University of South Africa. En M. Coetzee, N. Eccles, & H. Nienaber, *Developing Student Graduateness and Employability: Issues, Provocations, Theory and Practical Guidelines* (págs. 119-266). South Africa: Knores Publishing.

Coker, B. (2011). Freedom to surf: the positive effects of workplace internet leisure browsing. *New Technology, Work and Employment, 26*(3), 238-247.

Constantino, L., & Rodzinka, J. (2022). The role of soft skills in employability in the financial industry. *Financial Internet Quarterly, 18*(1), 44-55. doi:https://doi.org/10.2478/fiqf-2022-0004

Coppersmith, K. (2019). *How Technology Improves Workplace Productivity, Evaluating Organisational Change and Employee Productivity in Nigeria: A Case Study of Union Bank*. Obtenido de https://www.business2community.com/humanresources/

Dabke, D. (2016). Soft skills as a predictor of perceived internship effectiveness and permanent placement opportunity. *The IUP Journal of Soft Skills, IX*(4), 26-42.

Darvishmotevali, M., Altinay, L., & Koseoglu, M. (2020). The link between environmentaluncertainty, organizational agility, and organizational creativity in the hotel industry. *International Journal of Hospitality Management, 87*. doi:10.1016/j.ijhm.2020.102499

Davenport, T., & Prusak, L. (2000). Working Knowledge: How Organizations Manage What They know. *Harvard Business School Press*, 1-7.

Deepa, S., & Seth, M. (2013). Do soft skills matter? Implications for educators based on recruiters' perspective. *IUP Journal of Soft Skills, 7*, 7-20.

Deming, D. (2017). The growing importance of social skills in the labor market. *Quarterly Journal of Economics, 132*(4), 1593-1640. doi:10.1093/qje/qjx022

Farooq, R., & Sultana, A. (2021). The potential impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on work from home and employee productivity. *j MEASURING BUSINESS EXCELLENCE j, 26*(3), 308-325.

Gamal Aboelmaged, M. (2017). Knowledge sharing through enterprise social network (ESN) systems: motivational drivers and their impact on employees' productivity. *JOURNAL OF KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT, 22*(2362-383). doi:10.1108/JKM-05-2017-0188

Gibson, L., & Sodeman, W. (2014). Millennials and technology: addressing the communication gap in education and practice. *Organization Development Journal, 32*(4), 63-75.

Gruber, L., Barni de Campos, D., Pereira, D., Hansch, F., & Borges, A. (2022). Training to develop soft skills for engineering students. *Academic Journals, 17*(4), 57-72. doi:10.5897/SRE2022.6753

Hair, F., Andreson, R., Tatham, R., & Black, W. (1995). *Multivariate Data Analysis with Readings* (Vol. 4th ed). London: Prentice-Hall.

Harris, E., & Fleming, D. (2017). The productive service employee: personality, stress, satisfaction and performance. *Journal of Services Marketing, 31*(6), 499-511.

Haynes, B. (2007). Office productivity: a theoretical framework. *Journal of Corporate Real Estate, 9*(2), 97-110.

Igudia, P. (2021). Evaluating organisational change and employee productivity in Nigeria: a case study of Union Bank, Plc. *European Scientifc Journal, 17*(19), 208-229. doi:10.19044/esj.2021.v17n19p208

Infante-Alcántara, L., Araiza-Vázquez, M., & López-Pérez, J. (2023). Competencias blandas que influyen en la empleabilidad laboral de profesionistas egresados de ingeniería de una universidad del Norte de México. *Formación Universitaria, 16*(2), 1-12.

International Labour organization. (2014). *Labour productivity.* International Labour organization.

Kasten, A. (2014). Winning the war for talent with soft skills. *Graduate Management News*, 1-6.

Kelloway, E. (1998). *Using LISREL for Structural Equation Modeling: A Researcher's Guide.* CA: SAGE.

Kumar, V., & Sharma, P. (2018). Leadership styles and their relationship with TQM focus for Indian firms: an empirical investigation. *International Journal ofProductivity and Performance Managemenrt, 67*(6), 1063-1088.

Larepublica. (4 de noviembre de 2022). *Diario LaRepublica*. Obtenido de https://www.larepublica.co/especiales/el-futuro-de-las-mipyme/ocho-de-cada-10-empleos-son-creados-por-una-mipyme-3482995

Larepublica. (30 de mayo de 2023). *Diario la república*. Obtenido de https://www.larepublica.co/economia/bogota-antioquia-y-valle-del-cauca-concentraron-casi-50-del-pib-del-ano-pasado-3626253

Mahfud, T., Jati, B., & Mulyani, Y. (2017). SOFT SKILL COMPETENCY MAP FOR THE APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMME IN THE INDONESIAN BALIKPAPAN HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY. *Journal of Technical Education and Training, 9*(2), 16-34.

Manullang, M. (2017). The effect of soft skills, competence, and human relations skills on principal leadership. *International Journal of academic research in economics and management sciences, 6*(4), 14-27.

Minbaeva, D., & Collings, D. (2013). Seven myths of global talent management. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management, 24*(9), 1762-1776.

Mohammad, J., Quoquab, F., Halimah, S., & Thurasamy, R. (2019). Workplace internet leisure and employees' productivity. *Internet Research, 29*(4), 725-748. doi:10.1108/IntR-05-2017-0191

Namdarian, L., Sajedinejad, A., & Bahanesteh, S. (2020). The Impact of Knowledge Management on Organizational Performance: A Structural Equation Modeling Study. *AD-MINISTER, 37*(4), 85-108. doi:https://doi.org/10.17230/

Namora, M., Zunaida, D., & Widayawati, E. (2023). THE INFLUENCE OF SOFT SKILLS AND HARD SKILLS ON THE PERFORMANCE. *International Journal of Entrepreneur and Business Administration, 1*(1), 89-99.

Nezu, R. (2001). *Measuring Productivity OECD Manual.* Paris: OECD.

Northeastern Global News. (3 de Octubre de 2014). *Most business leaders believe innovation is critical for US colleges to remain globally competitive*. Obtenido de https://news.northeastern.edu/2014/04/28/survey-innovation-higher-education/

Nwankpa, J., & Roumani, Y. (2024). Remote work, employee productivity and innovation: the moderating roles of knowledge sharing and digital business intensity. *JOURNAL OF KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT, 28*(6), 1793-1818. doi:10.1108/JKM-12-2022-0967

OECD. (2018). Compendium of Productivity Indicators 2018. En OECD, *Labour productivity* (págs. 40-41). Paris: OECD.

Olarinre Oladokun, S., & Taiwo Gbadegesin, J. (2017). Adequacy of core knowledge and soft skills in the performance of professional employees of real estate firms in Nigeria. *Property Management, 35*(2), 132-149. doi:10.1108/PM-02-2016-0008

Olekanma, O., Harrison, C., Oyewunmi, A., & Adedeji, O. (2024). The dilemma of employee productivity measures and managerialism practices: an empirical exploration. *International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management*, 1-26. doi:10.1108/IJPPM-01-2023-003

Ott, R., & Longnecker, M. (2015). *An Introduction to Statistical Methods and Data Analysis,.* New York: Nelson Education.

Paunescu, C., Acatrinei, C., Argatu, R., McGUIRE, S., & Zhang, Y. (2024). EMPLOYABILITY, PROACTIVENESS AND WORKPLACE BEHAVIORS: IS SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS A MEDIATOR? *JOURNAL of BUSINESS ECONOMICS & MANAGEMENT, 25*(1), 47-65.

Peeters, E., Nelissen, J., De Cuyper, N., Forrier, A., Verbruggen, M., & De Witte, H. (2019). Employability capital: a conceptual framework tested through expert analysis. *Journal of Career Development, 46*(2), 79-93. doi:10.1177/0894845317731865

Poláková, M., Horváthová , J., Madzík, P., Lukás, C., Molnárová, I., & Polednová, J. (2023). Soft skills and their importance in the labour market under the conditions of Industry 5.0. *Heliyon*, 1-20. doi:https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2023.e18670

Putri, N., & Darma, H. (2014). The effect of TQM implementation towards productivity of employees using structural equation modelling analysis method in PT XYZ. *Proceeding of the 7th IEEE International Conference on Management of Innovation and Technology*, 23-25.

Putri, N., Yusof, S., Hasan, A., & Darma, H. (2017). A structural equation model for evaluating the relationship between total quality management and employees' productivity. *International Journal of Quality & Reliability Management, 34*(8), 1138-1151. doi:10.1108/IJQRM-10-2014-0161

Rex, K. (2016). *Principles and practice os structural equation modeling .* New York: The Guilford Press.

Robles, M. (2012). Executive perceptions of the top 10 soft skills needed in today's workplace. *Business Communication Quarterly, 75*(4), 453-465. doi:10.1177/1080569912460400

Rodge, V., & Gupta, R. (2020). A STUDY ON THE EMPLOYABILITY SKILL GAP OF ENTRY LEVEL PROFESSIONALS: AN INDUSTRY PERSPECTIVE. *Journal of archaeology of egypt*, 552-566.

Rodríguez Martínez, A., Sierra Sánchez , V., Falcón Linares, C., & Latorre, C. (2021). Key Soft Skills in the Orientation Process and Level of employability. *Sustainability, 13*. doi://doi.org/10.3390/su13063554

Rodríguez, A., Sierra, V., Falcón, C., & Latorre, C. (2021). Key Soft Skills in the Orientation Process and Level of Employability. *Sustainability, 13*, 1-12. doi:https://doi.org/10.3390/

Rueda, C., Jiménez, K., & Sánchez, Y. (2015). Perceptions of the impact of training, compensation and recruitment on project effectiveness. *AD-MINISTER*(27), 5-26. doi:10.17230/ad-minister.27.1

Salas, L., Candelo, J., & Rivera, M. (2024). GESTIÓN HUMANA Y GESTIÓN DEL CONOCIMIENTO SOBRE EL DESEMPEÑO ORGANIZACIONAL DE PEQUEÑAS Y MEDIANAS EMPRESAS DE UNA ECONOMÍA EMERGENTE: UN ENFOQUE AL CONTEXTO COLOMBIANO. *AD-MINISTER*, 85-97. doi:https://doi.org/10.17230/

Schulz, B. (2008). The importance of soft skills: education beyond academic knowledge. *Journal of Language and Communication*, 146-154.

Singh, R., Paul, J., & Tewari, V. (2021). The soft skills gap: a bottleneck in the talent supply in emerging economies. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*. doi:https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2020.1871399

Suan Chin, S. (2021). Soft skills as part of the competitive advantage framework. *Journal of Management Information and Decision Sciences, 24*(1), 1-5.

Succi, C., & Canovi, M. (2019). Soft skills to enhance graduate employability: Comparing students and employers perceptions. *Studies in Higher Education, 45*(9), 1834-1847. doi:10.1080/03075079.2019.1585420

Sudarmo, S., Dwi Suhartanti, P., & Eko Prasetyanto, W. (2022). Servant leadership and employee productivity: a mediating and moderating role. *International Journal of Productivity and Performance, 71*(8), 3488-3506.

Sudarso, D., Prakoso, W., & Widakdo, J. (2022). The Effect of Soft Skills on Organizational Performance: The Mediating Role of Resilient Leadership. *GLOBAL BUSINESS & FINANCE REVIEW, 27*(4), 17-26.

Sulaimon, A., & Ametepe, P. (2024). Estrategia de mejora de procesos (PIS) y productividad de los empleados en medio de la pandemia de COVID-19 entre los empleados bancarios. *IIMT Journal of Management, 1*(2), 264-285. doi:https://doi.org/10.1108/IIMTJM-11-2023-0052

Suleman, Q., Ali, M., Zamir, S., Zeb, A., Noreen, R., & Ullah, M. (2021). Association between Soft Skills and Job Performance: A Cross-Sectional Study among Secondary-School-Heads in Kohat Division, Pakistan. *International Journal of Innovation, Creativity and Change, 15*(7), 1-24.

Tan, F., & Olaore, G. (2021). Effect of organizational learning and effectiveness on the operations, employees productivity and management performance. *Journal of management, 19*(2), 110-127. doi:10.1108/XJM-09-2020-0122

Tarigan, J., Cahya, J., Valentine, A., Hatane, S., & Jie, F. (2022). Total reward system, job satisfaction and employee productivity on company financial performance: Evidence from

Indonesian generation z workers. *16*(6), 1041-1065. doi:https://doi.org/10.1108/JABS-04-2021-0154

Taylor, E. (2016). Investigating the perception of stakeholders on soft skills development of students: evidence from South Africa. *Interdisciplinary Journal of E-Skills and Lifelong Learning, 12*(1), 1-18. doi:10.28945/3412

Tomlinson , M. (2017). Forms of graduate capital and their relationship to graduate employability. *Education þ Training, 59*(4), 338-352. doi:10.1108/ET-05-2016-0090.

Tomlinson, M. (2007). Graduate Employability and Student Attitudes and Orientations to the Labour Market. *Journal of Education and Work, 20*(4), 285-304.

Velimirovica, D., Velimirovicb, M., & Stankovica, R. (2011). Role and importance of key performance indicators measurement. *Serbian Journal of Management, 6*(1), 63-72. doi:10.5937/sjm1101063v

Wadu Mesthrige, J., & Hung Chiang, Y. (2019). The impact of new working practices on employee productivity. *Journal of Facilities Management, 17*(2), 122-141.

Wilton , N. (2014). "Employability is in the eye of the beholder: employer decision-making in the recruitment of work placement students. *Higher Education, Skills and Work-Based Learning, 4*(3), 1302-1319. doi:10.1108/heswbl-07-2014-0027

Zepeda, M., Cardoso , E., & Rey, C. (2019). El desarrollo de habilidades blandas en la formación de ingenieros. *Científica, 23*(1), 61-67.