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Administrative management and labor productivity in a subnational government in Peru

Gestión administrativa y productividad laboral en un gobierno subnacional en Perú

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Jesús Ochoa Valer
https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7093-160X
jesusochoavaler@gmail.com
Universidad César Vallejo. Lima, Peru

Joel Reynaldo Ochoa Valer
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6159-504X
jreynaldo8a@gmail.com
Universidad César Vallejo. Lima, Peru

Abstract

In a context of globalization and constant transformation, administrative management, understood as the set of processes for planning, organizing, directing, and controlling activities, is positioned as a fundamental element for achieving an organization's objectives. Its proper implementation has a significant impact on labor productivity, influencing both efficiency and employee performance. This research, conducted in Peru, aimed to establish the correlation between administrative management and the labor productivity of employees in a public entity belonging to the regional government of Madre de Dios. To this end, a basic study with a quantitative approach, a non-experimental, correlational, and cross-sectional design, was carried out. The sample consisted of 83 employees, selected through random probabilistic sampling from a total population of 104 workers. Data collection was carried out through two standardized surveys, applied to measure the variables under study. The results obtained indicated a strong positive correlation between administrative management and labor productivity, leading to the conclusion that proper administrative management contributes to enhancing the performance and productivity of employees in public organizations in the country. Furthermore, the importance of implementing efficient administrative processes to improve organizational results in the public sector is highlighted.

Keywords: administration, labor efficiency, management.

Resumen

En un contexto de globalización y constante transformación, la gestión administrativa, entendida como el conjunto de procesos para planificar, organizar, dirigir y controlar actividades, se posiciona como un elemento fundamental para alcanzar los objetivos de una organización. Su adecuada implementación tiene un impacto significativo en la productividad laboral, influyendo tanto en la eficiencia como en el desempeño de los empleados. Esta investigación, desarrollada en el Perú, tuvo como finalidad establecer la correlación existente entre la gestión administrativa y la productividad laboral de los empleados de una entidad pública perteneciente al gobierno regional de Madre de Dios. Para ello, se llevó a cabo un estudio básico con enfoque cuantitativo, de diseño no experimental, correlacional y transversal. La muestra estuvo conformada por 83 empleados, seleccionados mediante un muestreo probabilístico aleatorio a partir de una población total de 104 trabajadores. La recolección de datos se realizó a través de dos encuestas calificadas, aplicadas para medir las variables en estudio. Los resultados obtenidos indicaron una correlación positiva y fuerte entre gestión administrativa y productividad laboral, lo que permite concluir que una correcta gestión administrativa contribuye a potenciar el desempeño y la productividad de los colaboradores en organismos públicos del país. Asimismo, se destaca la importancia de implementar procesos administrativos eficientes para mejorar los resultados organizacionales en el sector público.

Palabras clave: administración, eficiencia laboral, gestión.

Introduction

Administrative management (AM) encompasses a range of strategic actions aimed at executing specific tasks, forming an essential component for achieving organizational goals. Effective implementation fosters the integration and development of the members within the entity (Peralta et al., 2023; Mendoza-Fernández & Moreira-Chóez, 2021). Furthermore, administrative management directly influences the tasks and processes carried out by collaborators, whose actions must align with goals that competitively respond to institutional objectives in a globalized environment (Robbins et al., 2013; Peralta et al., 2023).

In recent years, public entities have faced new challenges that hinder their effectiveness in meeting citizen needs, often characterized by perceptions of bureaucratic inefficiencies that limit operational capacity (Banco Mundial, 2020). Globally, 95% of the population recognizes low levels of innovation in public management (Dutta et al., 2023), while 89% perceive a lack of transparency in administrative processes. This situation is reflected in the fact that 67% of nations report high levels of corruption (Transparencia Internacional, 2022), thereby affecting the transparency, efficiency, and effectiveness of public institutions.

On another note, labor productivity (LP) is a critical economic indicator linked to growth, prosperity, and competitiveness (International Labour Organization [ILO], 2023). One of the frequent challenges is its low rate, which necessitates that responsible parties implement strategies to enhance competitiveness and strengthen the capabilities of collaborators in order to deliver agile and high-quality services aimed at optimizing outcomes and reducing unnecessary processes (Saavedra & Delgado, 2020; Rojas et al., 2020).

In the Peruvian context, public administration confronts significant difficulties stemming from high levels of bureaucracy, ranking 55 out of 64 countries in the global competitiveness index (Marquina et al., 2023) and exhibiting a governmental effectiveness level of only 35.38%, placing it at 123 out of 213 countries (Private Competitiveness Council, 2023). Additionally, Peru contributes merely 72.7% to labor momentum according to the ILO (2023), with the public sector experiencing a lack of leadership due to poor organizational structures, low functional compliance, and a poorly articulated planning system (Campos & Barros, 2020). This combination leads to institutional deterioration and citizen dissatisfaction due to inadequate public service delivery.

Locally, public administration also faces these challenges, as the lack of integration in administrative systems and ineffective execution of activities negatively impacts professional productivity. This situation results in limited state action, perceived as slow or insufficient to address local demands, undermining trust and credibility in public institutions.

For a public entity to operate optimally, it is essential that its management organizes resources and processes in a manner that exceeds established goals (Montes de Oca & Pulla, 2019). In this regard, the present study aims to analyze, using a quantitative, correlational, and cross-sectional design, the relationship between administrative management and labor productivity among collaborators in an executive unit of a regional government in Peru.

Administrative management

Administrative management is defined as a process oriented toward ensuring the optimal use of institutional resources to achieve proposed goals (Chiavenato, 2006). According to Amaru (2009), this process comprises five fundamental elements: planning, organization, leadership, direction, and control. Essentially, management entails making strategic decisions aligned with the institution's objectives and efficiently managing available resources. This function is central and significant in any organization, as it facilitates the coordination of internal work to achieve established goals (Anzola, 2002).

Koontz and Weihrich (2004) similarly define it as the set of essential actions necessary for fulfilling organizational objectives, developed through five stages: planning, organizing, directing, coordinating, and controlling. Likewise, Ramírez et al. (2022) describe this process as an effort aimed at reaching goals established by individuals or organizations, requiring solid planning, careful execution, and constant supervision of resources.

Regarding its dimensions, Chiavenato (2006) identifies four pillars: planning, organization, direction, and control. Planning involves setting clear goals and designing a framework that outlines the pathway to achieve them. In this phase, objectives are selected and adapted to the internal structure, aligning with management guidelines, and a strategic plan is developed that delineates activities, assigns responsibilities, regulates task execution, and defines coherent decision-making mechanisms (Chiavenato, 2009).

Organization, in turn, entails structuring functions and resources according to the strategic plan. This requires coordinating teamwork, providing and allocating resources, as well as designating responsible parties. To achieve common objectives, it is crucial to define responsibilities, authorities, and the distribution of work within the organizational structure (Luna, 2014). Hernández and Pulido (2011) emphasize that this dimension establishes the norms that guide institutional progress and growth. For efficient operation, it is necessary to delineate

operational units, construct hierarchies, present organizational charts, and implement flexible management systems (Münch, 2014).

With regard to direction, personnel must adhere to the guidelines established by the manager or leader (Chiavenato, 2006). This leader resolves issues and oversees task compliance (Chiavenato, 2009). Directing involves executing strategies, coordinating efforts through leadership, motivation, effective communication, and ongoing evaluations. Thus, individuals align with and orient themselves toward institutional objectives through effective authority, clear dialogue, and motivational stimuli. To achieve optimal performance, personnel management should be guided by specific goals tailored to each hierarchical level (Hernández & Pulido, 2011). Each collaborator must commit to their role, necessitating strong leadership, interpersonal skills, and effective motivational techniques.

Finally, the control dimension focuses on the constant supervision of actions and resource utilization, requiring a detailed review of each activity to detect deviations and promptly correct them, thereby ensuring satisfactory results (Chiavenato, 2009; Chiavenato, 2006). Münch (2014) notes that this stage culminates the administrative process; during it, programs and tasks are evaluated to verify goal compliance and propose adjustments for improving future performance. Hernández and Pulido (2011) add that an effective monitoring system allows for understanding both achievements and challenges within the process, facilitating a comprehensive analysis that enables modifications to activities not only to achieve but also to sustain the established objectives.

Labor productivity

Labor productivity is defined as the ratio between the quantity of products or services generated from a specific process and the inputs utilized in that process (Gutiérrez, 2010). It serves as a key indicator for organizations, revealing the level of competence and efficiency of employees in transforming resources into products or services within a given time frame (Van Den, 2005; Carro & González, 2012). The optimal use of labor resources during production enhances efficiency at every stage, subsequently increasing the availability of productive inputs. Therefore, effective management of human capital is essential for the competitiveness of entities in today's landscape (García et al., 2023).

In terms of analysis, the variable of labor productivity is approached through three main dimensions: effectiveness, efficiency, and labor effectiveness (Gutiérrez, 2010). The efficiency dimension focuses on measuring personnel capacity to enhance effectiveness through an appropriate distribution of productivity within the organization. This is achieved by evaluating the relationship between what has been attained and what could theoretically be achieved, quantifying this relationship as the ratio of the results obtained to the resources invested, while emphasizing continuous optimization of these inputs (Gutiérrez, 2010; Chiavenato, 2009). This assessment considers internal factors, such as procedures, spaces, equipment, workers, and managers, as well as external factors, such as infrastructure, raw materials, corporate policies, and public administration (Quesada & Villa, 2007).

Conversely, labor effectiveness refers to the execution of planned tasks using the designated resources to achieve anticipated results (Gutiérrez, 2010). According to Chiavenato (2009), this effectiveness involves the capacity to respond to business environment needs through the supply of goods and the establishment of favorable economic and political conditions that guide the fulfillment of organizational goals. Quesada and Villa (2007) define it as the comparison between what was planned and what was achieved, providing a clear view of the impact on both quantity and quality, thereby enabling cost controls and deviation management.

Finally, labor effectiveness is associated with the subjective satisfaction of workers regarding their performance and the impact that their work has on the market or collective expectations (Quesada & Villa, 2007). For García (2011), effectiveness represents the combination of competence and relevance in work; it refers to carrying out tasks efficiently while adapting them properly to each context, ensuring that the process leads to the fulfillment of proposed goals through efficient execution and satisfactory achievement of expected results.

Methodological aspects

This research is basic in nature, aimed at expanding the understanding of observable social phenomena without seeking immediate practical application (Organización para la Cooperación y el Desarrollo Económico [OCDE], 2018). A quantitative approach was employed, characterized by an ordered sequence of steps to test hypotheses through numerical data and statistical analysis (Hernández et al., 2014). Additionally, a hypothetical-deductive method was applied, validating propositions based on prior reasoning. The analysis was correlational in nature and the design was non-experimental, since the variables were observed in their natural context without manipulation (Hernández et al., 2014). The study was also cross-sectional, collecting data at a single point in time (Hernández et al., 2014).

The population consisted of 104 collaborators from an executive unit belonging to a regional government in southeastern Peru, from which a representative sample of 83 participants was selected using a formula for finite populations. Simple random sampling was employed, ensuring that each individual had an equal chance of being selected. A survey was used as the data collection technique, with a questionnaire developed for each variable.

Prior to its implementation, the items in the questionnaires were validated for content—including relevance, appropriateness, and clarity—by a group of experts, following recommendations by Hernández et al. (2014). The internal consistency was also evaluated using Cronbach's alpha coefficient.

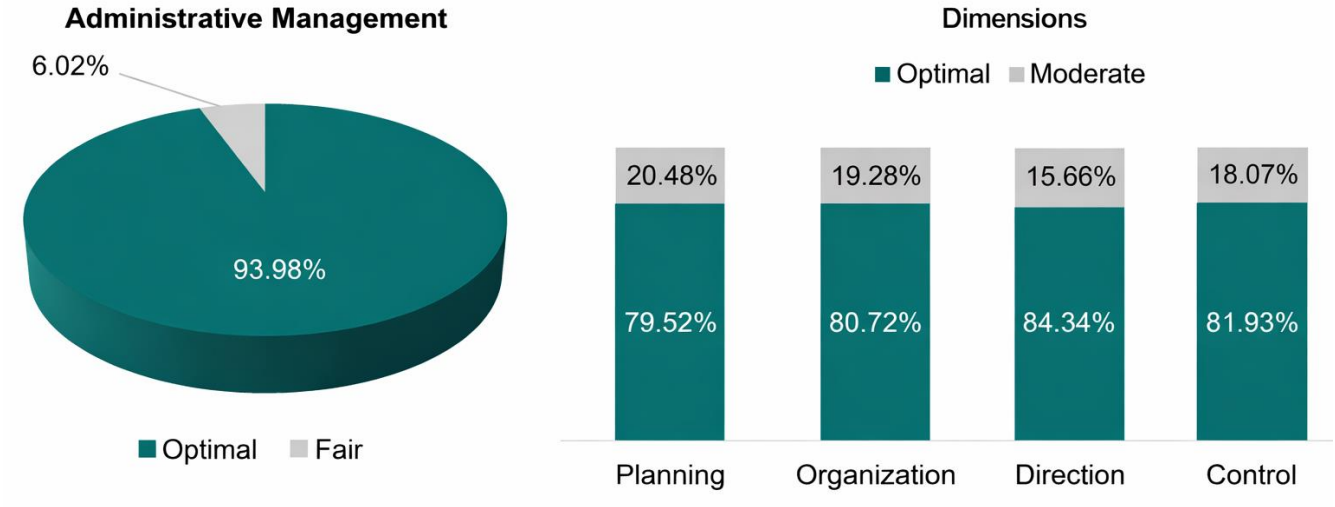
Regarding statistical analysis, a database was created in Microsoft Excel. Initially, a descriptive analysis was conducted to present the findings, followed by inferential statistics to conduct hypothesis testing. Prior to this, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test (applicable to samples larger than 50) was performed to meet the statistical assumptions (Galindo-Domínguez, 2020).

Results and discussion

The descriptive analysis of the administrative management variable reveals that 93.98% of participants rated it as optimal, while only 6.02% evaluated it as average. When delving into each of its dimensions, it is observed that, with regard to planning, 79.52% considered it optimal compared to 20.48% who rated it as average; in organization, 80.72% perceived it as optimal and 19.28% as average; regarding direction, 84.34% valued it as optimal, whereas 15.66% considered it average; finally, in control, 81.93% provided an optimal evaluation, and 18.07% rated it as average.

Figure 1

Results for the Administrative Management Variable and Dimensions



Note. Elaborated based on data processing

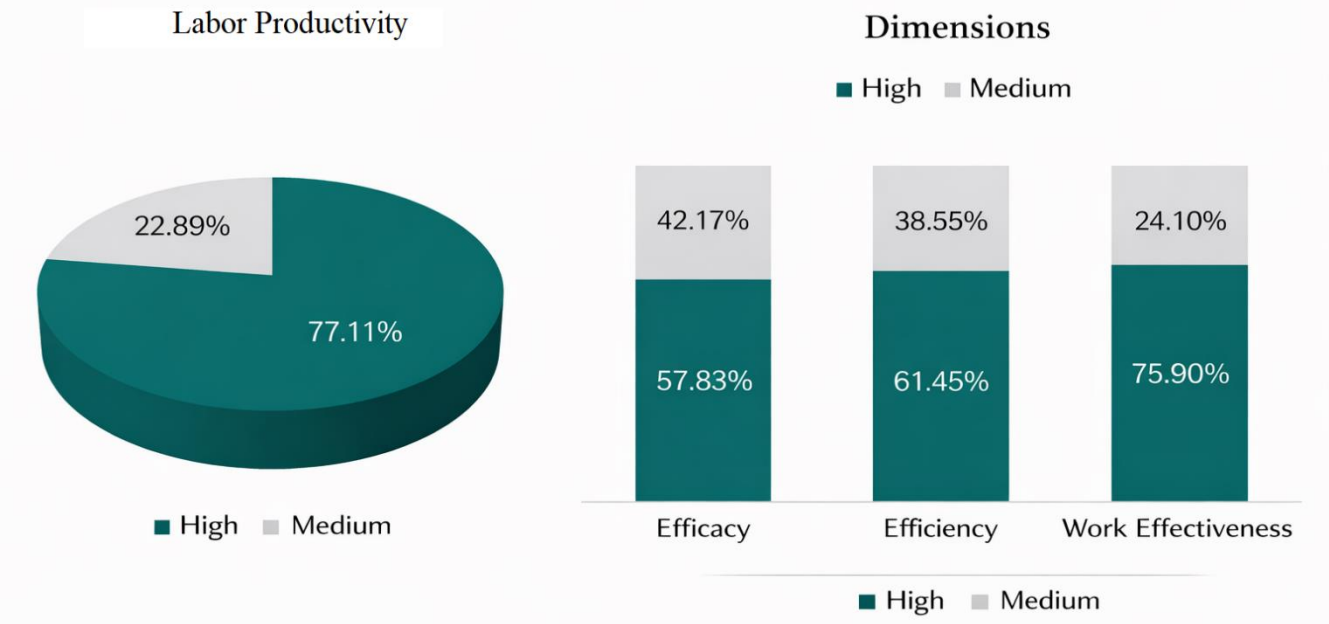
The findings from this study differ from those reported by Dávila (2023), who indicated that 40.0% of participants rated administrative management as average, with 30.0% considering it good and another 30.0% as poor. Regarding labor performance, Dávila reported 52.1% as average, 29.3% as good, and 18.6% as poor. Conversely, the results of the present study partially align with those of Obeso (2021), who found that in a health entity, 57.6% rated administrative management as good, 35.9% as average, and only 6.5% as deficient. Likewise, Obeso indicated that 56.5% of labor productivity was perceived as good, while 43.5% evaluated it as average.

In theoretical support, Münch (2014) emphasizes that administrative management ensures the proper functioning of the entity, guiding its design and operation while establishing a set of norms for directors to efficiently manage core functions. Similarly, Anzola (2002) considers administrative management to be a key task in any organization. Furthermore, Hylianska (2017) highlights the importance of administrative management, as it provides a framework for any methods implemented to achieve standardized objectives.

With regard to labor productivity, 77.11% of participants rated it at a high level, while 22.89% assessed it at a medium level. When analyzing its dimensions, 57.83% indicated a high level, and 42.17% reported a medium

level. In the efficiency dimension, 61.45% considered it high, while 38.55% evaluated it as average. Finally, in the dimension of labor effectiveness, 75.90% rated it as high, with 24.10% placing it at a medium level.

Figure 2
Results for the Labor Productivity Variable and Dimensions



Note. Elaborated based on data processing

Robbins et al. (2013) define labor productivity as the individual capacity to complete tasks within reasonable timeframes, control costs, and manage time to achieve established objectives. In this context, Abioro et al. (2018) underscore labor productivity as an essential component in the workplace, capable of enhancing the productive skills and competencies of the entire organization.

Subsequently, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test was applied to both variables. For administrative management, the bilateral significance value was 0.000, while for labor productivity it was 0.017, both values falling below the threshold of 0.05, indicating that the data distributions are non-parametric. Consequently, the hypothesis testing was conducted using a non-parametric test, opting for Spearman's rank correlation.

Table 1 presents the results of the correlation test conducted among the analyzed variables, revealing a significance value of 0.000, which is significantly lower than the threshold of 0.05. Consequently, the null hypothesis, which posited the absence of a relationship between Administrative Management (GA) and Labor Productivity (PL), is rejected, while the alternative hypothesis affirming such a relationship is accepted. Furthermore, a Spearman rank correlation coefficient (Rho) of 0.719 was obtained, indicating a strong positive correlation between the two variables (Santander & Ruiz, 2004). As a result, it can be inferred that any improvements in administrative processes are likely to lead to a significant increase in personnel productivity.

Table 1
Correlation between Administrative Management and Labor Productivity via Spearman's Rank Correlation

	Labor productivity		
	Correlation coefficient	**Sig. (two-tailed)**	**N**
Administrative management	,719**	,000	83

** Significance at the 0.01 level (two-tailed)

Note. Adapted from processed results

The findings corroborate the observations of Riofrío (2023), who reported a Spearman Rho coefficient of 0.826, demonstrating a strong and significant positive association between administrative management and labor productivity. Similarly, the results are consistent with those of Mendivel et al. (2020), who documented a significance level of 0.006 and a Rho coefficient of 0.661, indicating a medium-level positive relationship. These connections suggest that the implementation of an appropriate management model enables the organization to ensure optimal service delivery to the community.

Moreover, our results align with those of Barrios (2022), who found a strong positive relationship between improved administrative management and higher productivity among employees in a local government, reporting a bilateral significance of 0.003 and a Spearman Rho coefficient of 0.741. An agile and efficient administration creates favorable conditions for workers to increase their productivity and meet community demands, as evidenced by these findings. In the same vein, Arauco-Jiménez et al. (2024) showed that enhancing organizational management significantly influences labor productivity growth, presenting a significance less than 0.000 and a Rho coefficient of 0.574, highlighting the importance of investing in solid administrative practices for agile and sustainable development in the workplace.

On another note, Luna (2014) asserts that administrative management acts as the science that ensures the compliance of procedures, articulating planning, order, and direction from a theoretical perspective. Complementarily, Chiavenato (2009) emphasizes the essential link between management and production in the workplace, generating tangible benefits for the organization. Montes de Oca and Pulla (2019) confirm that effective management, rooted in the rational use of resources, increases production in any entity. Similarly, Robbins et al. (2013) underscore that the dimensions of labor productivity are fundamental for the overall success of the organization.

In this context, well-executed administration that ensures responsible resource usage, efficient planning execution, and active collaboration from each employee—who, even partially, participates in management tasks—along with continuous monitoring, facilitates the achievement of expected results and productivity levels in the workplace, positively or negatively affecting organizational performance

Regarding the correlation analysis designed for the specific hypotheses, its description is presented in Table 2, while the results are detailed in Table 3.

Table 2

Specific hypothesis statements

No.	Null Hypothesis	Alternative Hypothesis
1	No relationship exists between planning and labor productivity	A relationship exists between planning and labor productivity
2	No relationship exists between organization and labor productivity	A relationship exists between organization and labor productivity
3	No relationship exists between direction and labor productivity	A relationship exists between direction and labor productivity
4	No relationship exists between control and labor productivity	A relationship exists between control and labor productivity

Note. Developed based on information from the study

Table 3

Correspondence between dimensions of Administrative Management and Labor Productivity

Variable	Dimension	Labor Productivity		
		Correlation coefficient	Sig. (two-tailed)	N
Administrative management	Planning	,558**	0,000	83
	Organization	,585**	0,000	83
	Direction	,612**	0,000	83
	Control	,528**	0,000	83

** Significance at the 0.01 level (two-tailed)

Note. Spearman correlation, processed in SPSS 26

The analysis of the first hypothesis, which relates planning to improvements in labor productivity, yielded a significance value of 0.000, below the threshold of 0.05, and a coefficient of 0.558, supporting the initial assumption. This finding aligns with the study by Minaya et al. (2024), who reported a p-value of 0.000 and a Spearman Rho of 0.636, thus confirming a robust correlation between the two variables.

To achieve targets within the expected timeframe, it is necessary for leaders, upper management, and employees to coordinate their efforts toward organizational objectives. Planning guides workers toward the organization's direction and contributes to enhancing their productivity (Asca et al., 2021). The results obtained support this notion. Consequently, a clear plan must be drafted to guide the proper direction and effective administrative tools must be implemented to elevate labor productivity. The absence of structured planning is often associated with a decline in work performance.

Regarding the second hypothesis, focused on the relationship between organization and labor productivity, a positive and moderate link was identified, with a significance level of p=0.000 and a Spearman Rho coefficient of 0.585. Although this value falls short of Dávila's (2023) report of p=0.000 and Rho=0.900, both studies agree on demonstrating a clear and favorable association. These data suggest that collaborators appreciate having effective internal order, as this structure is considered a necessary condition for performing tasks efficiently and achieving high levels of productivity.

From a theoretical framework, Chiavenato (2006) notes that, following planning, it is essential to delegate functions, manage resources, and coordinate efforts. Similarly, Luna (2014) asserts that a solid internal organization reflects a common objective, generating synergy and institutional identity that promote productive work. Efficient task distribution, optimal input usage, and continuous improvement of organizational processes contribute to reducing obstacles and yielding better results. The organization, coordination, and integration of responsibilities facilitate efficient workflows in production processes.

In terms of the third hypothesis, which explores the correlation between leadership style and labor productivity, a Rho of 0.612 was obtained, indicating a moderately positive link; however, the statistical significance was p=0.000, suggesting that this connection is relevant for collaborators. This contrasts with findings reported by Rosillo (2023), whose results showed a significance of 0.298 and a Rho of 0.196, concluding the absence of a relationship. Nevertheless, proper direction enables each stage of the production process to be executed in an orderly manner (Münch, 2014).

Finally, in relation to the fourth hypothesis, which investigates the connection between the control dimension and labor productivity, a significance of p=0.000 was found, clearly below the threshold of 0.05, with a Rho of 0.528. This result reaffirms the initial hypothesis and indicates a direct relationship of moderate magnitude between the two factors. The association found aligns with the assertions of Obeso (2021), who reported a similar positive connection, supported by data with p=0.000 and a Spearman Rho of 0.609.

Monitoring and following up on previously established objectives enhances labor productivity. Therefore, organizations must implement solid internal controls capable of timely detecting any deviations or failures. These controls should define clear goals and form the foundation of management by supervising and auditing completed tasks to optimize productivity. Ultimately, control is a vital component in any organization to ensure the efficiency, effectiveness, and efficacy of its processes.

Conclusions

Administrative management plays a crucial role in all entities, whether public or private, for the effective fulfillment of their institutional objectives. The proper integration of these management functions, alongside their ability to adapt to changes and specific needs in the creation of goods and services, is critical for driving continuous improvements in labor productivity. This function is not exclusive to the private sector; public entities also face the challenge of efficiently organizing their limited resources and establishing clear goals to guide their actions. In this way, they can respond more effectively to citizens' demands and optimize the services they provide.

In the context of regional public administration, the results obtained demonstrate a positive and significant correlation between administrative management and labor productivity. This strong link suggests that improvements and advancements in administrative processes translate directly into a substantial increase in personnel performance and efficiency. The supporting statistics, with a significance value of p=0.000 and a Rho coefficient of 0.719, confirm the robustness of this relationship. Therefore, strengthening administrative management not only contributes to optimizing resource usage but also enhances organizations' ability to achieve their institutional objectives efficiently and sustainably.

This finding underscores the importance of investing in effective administrative processes and cultivating committed and skilled management teams capable of designing and implementing strategies that positively impact productivity. Furthermore, it serves as a call for public policies to reinforce the administrative role within

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governmental entities, acknowledging that strong administrative management is a fundamental pillar for improving service delivery and meeting social demands.

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