

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Organizational empowerment of human talent at the San Plácido Fine Aroma Cocoa Corporation, Ecuador

Potencialización organizacional del talento humano en la Corporación de Cacao Fino de aroma San Plácido, Ecuador

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Abstract This study aimed to diagnose the organizational enhancement of human talent as a management model in the Fine Aroma Cocoa Corporation of San Plácido, in the canton of Portoviejo, Ecuador. A mixed-methods approach was applied, combining surveys, interviews, direct observation, and analytical tools such as SWOT analysis and the Ishikawa Cause-and-Effect Diagram to identify the strengths, opportunities, weaknesses, and threats in human resources management. The results showed that the corporation had strengths in leadership and institutional development but faced challenges in defining responsibilities, organizational communication, and service orientation. Furthermore, it was evident that motivation and training strategies required improvement, as they influenced employee commitment and performance. The SWOT analysis indicated expansion opportunities, albeit with threats like staff turnover and economic factors. At the same time, the Ishikawa Cause-and-Effect Diagram revealed that poor internal communication and lack of emotional self-regulation negatively impacted productivity. It was concluded that implementing a structured human talent management model was essential to enhance organizational efficiency and ensure business sustainability.

Keywords organizational enhancement, human talent management, organizational development, business competitiveness, Fine Aroma Cocoa Corporation.

Resumen Este estudio tuvo como objetivo diagnosticar la potencialización organizacional del talento humano como modelo de gestión en la Corporación de Cacao Fino de Aroma San Plácido, en el cantón Portoviejo, Ecuador. Se aplicó un enfoque metodológico mixto, combinando encuestas, entrevistas, observación directa y herramientas analíticas como el DAFO y el Diagrama Causa-Efecto Ishikawa para identificar las fortalezas, oportunidades, debilidades y amenazas en la gestión del talento humano. Los resultados mostraron que la corporación contaba con fortalezas en liderazgo y desarrollo institucional, pero enfrentaba desafíos en la definición de responsabilidades, comunicación organizacional y orientación al servicio. Además, se evidenció que las estrategias de motivación y capacitación requerían mejoras, ya que influían en el compromiso y desempeño de los colaboradores. El análisis DAFO indicó oportunidades de expansión, aunque con amenazas como la rotación de personal y factores económicos, mientras que el Diagrama Causa-Efecto Ishikawa reveló que la falta de comunicación interna y autocontrol emocional afectaban la productividad. Se concluyó que la implementación de un modelo estructurado de gestión del talento humano resultaba esencial para mejorar la eficiencia organizacional y la sostenibilidad del negocio.

Palabras clave mejoramiento organizacional, gestión del talento humano, desarrollo organizacional, competitividad empresarial, Corporación de Cacao Fino de Aroma.

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Introduction

Human talent management has emerged as a central element in organizational development and is considered a strategic pillar for competitiveness in a constantly evolving global environment. In this context, the organizational enhancement of human talent is positioned as a key model that integrates theoretical, methodological, and empirical approaches to optimize individual and collective capabilities within organizations.

The existing literature highlights that human talent is a critical resource. Proper management enables the alignment of individual objectives with organizational goals, thereby improving productivity and fostering innovation. For instance, studies have demonstrated that talent management models that prioritize identifying, developing, and retaining high-potential employees significantly impact organizational effectiveness (Tamunomiebi & Worgu, 2020).

Businesses acknowledge that organizational enhancement is one of the most crucial factors for ensuring their overall functionality and facilitating change and innovation processes. From this perspective, human talent is fundamental in fostering innovation within organizations through its influence on leadership management practices (Gómez, 2008). Furthermore, contemporary approaches, such as integrating artificial intelligence into talent management processes, have enhanced employee engagement and performance, highlighting the importance of adopting innovative practices in this field (Rožman et al., 2022). On the other hand, qualitative studies emphasize the necessity of a systemic design that considers organizational, cultural, and learning factors to ensure the sustained development of individual competencies (Khanifar et al., 2020).

Empirically, the implementation of talent management models has been shown to contribute significantly to organizational learning, facilitated by intellectual capital, thus reinforcing organizations' ability to adapt and thrive in dynamic environments (Afshari & Nasab, 2020). However, despite conceptual and methodological advancements, challenges persist regarding the institutionalization of these practices and their acceptance within organizational structures (Meyers, 2020).

One of the primary functions of organizational enhancement is promoting employee behaviors that facilitate innovation within companies. These practices should foster trust in embracing the risks associated with change and establish motivational processes that enable employees to find alternative solutions to everyday or complex organizational challenges (Prieto, 2020).

Various studies have addressed the importance of organizational enhancement of human talent and its impact on competitiveness and business differentiation. First, Rexhepi and Vladi (2015) emphasize that investing in talent management and organizational quality strategies generates a significant competitive advantage, reinforcing the need to integrate these elements into corporate strategic development.

Similarly, Sen et al. (2023) found that aligning talent management with business objectives increases profitability and enhances organizational productivity. Additionally, Jaremczuk and Mazurkiewicz (2014) highlight that attracting and retaining highly skilled employees is essential for ensuring sustainability and organizational development in globalized environments. Moreover, Mattalatta and Andriani (2023) underscore that implementing talent strategies within human resource planning positively impacts business performance, reinforcing a more efficient and competitive structure.

Lastly, Ifeoma et al. (2015) stress that companies that develop integrated talent management strategies improve employee retention and increase long-term productivity. These studies demonstrate that strategic human talent management is a key factor in business success, allowing companies to adapt to market demands and remain competitive in increasingly dynamic environments.

In the Ecuadorian context, Hidalgo (2015) designed an administrative management model to improve customer service quality in the GAD of Babahoyo. His findings concluded that implementing a high-quality administrative management model tailored to institutional realities enhances internal processes and increases user satisfaction. Similarly, Moraño (2010) studied the importance of defining an administrative management model in corporate organizations, focusing on La Fabril. His study concluded that competitive differentiation allows companies to consolidate a unique market position. The research also showed that consumers prefer brands that distinguish themselves from competitors positively, making differentiation a key strategic factor.

Mora (2019) also analyzed commercialization strategies to increase the Olsty bottled and purified water company's sales in Salinas, Santa Elena province. The study determined that the low application of commercial strategies negatively affected market positioning and sales levels, leading to internal challenges that hindered business growth.

On the other hand, the Fine Aroma Cocoa Corporation of San Plácido, in the canton of Portoviejo, Manabí province, was initially established as a small and rustic homemade chocolate business, located in a central area of the San

Plácido parish. Initially, it produced chocolates for personal consumption and as gifts for neighbors and friends. However, after receiving positive acceptance, the business shifted towards small-scale production for sale in local establishments, handcrafting all its processes.

Thanks to the quality, preference, and loyalty of its distinguished consumers, clients, and friends, as well as the dedication of its collaborators and partners, this company's success has been built over time. With over five years in the market, it has provided customers with exceptional flavors and unique chocolate products, positively impacting the San Plácido and Portoviejo communities.

Over time, the company has sought to improve customer service. All management models are based on a cycle that begins when the customer interacts with the company. This is followed by interactions with different employees, who create a conscious or unconscious impression of whether their needs have been met (Jiménez, 2016).

Based on these antecedents, this article aims to diagnose the organizational enhancement of human talent as a management model in the Fine Aroma Cocoa Corporation of San Plácido in the canton of Portoviejo.

Methodology

This research used a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative methods to comprehensively analyze the studied phenomenon. According to Grinnell & Williams (2005), quantitative research emphasizes objectivity, minimizing researcher influence on the results. Meanwhile, the qualitative approach, as described by Hernández et al. (2010), allows for developing research questions and hypotheses before, during, or after data collection and analysis, offering greater flexibility in data interpretation.

Regarding the research design, this study adopts an exploratory, descriptive, and correlational approach to analyze the enhancement of human talent within the Fine Aroma Cocoa Corporation of San Plácido, establishing relationships between organizational enhancement and the efficiency of management models. Additionally, it is categorized as a field study, as data collection instruments were applied directly to the corporation's employees, enabling a first-hand analysis of the organizational reality. Furthermore, a bibliographic review was conducted to support the study with specialized literature on management models, human talent processes, and organizational enhancement strategies.

Various data collection techniques were employed to obtain accurate and reliable information, tailored to the study's context and nature. First, a survey was conducted with 135

participants, including clients, partners, operators, and corporate personnel, to gather perceptions and opinions on human talent management and its impact on the organization. To complement quantitative data, in-depth qualitative insights were gathered through an interview with the corporation's owner, focusing on key challenges and management strategies. Direct observation further enriched the study by providing empirical evidence of daily operations, enabling an accurate assessment of organizational dynamics and real-world practices.

Finally, the Ishikawa Cause-and-Effect Diagram was used to identify the causes and effects of existing issues in human talent management, serving as a basis for strategic decision-making alongside the SWOT analysis. This methodological approach provided a holistic perspective on organizational management, offering key insights for developing strategies to enhance human talent within the corporation.

Results and discussion

Various data collection techniques were applied to analyze information, including surveys, interviews, and direct observation, aimed at Fine Aroma Cocoa Corporation employees of San Plácido. The survey was conducted with a sample of 135 participants to understand their perceptions regarding human talent management, the work environment, and the effectiveness of the implemented management model. Additionally, the corporation's general manager was interviewed to obtain qualitative insights on internal processes, organizational strategies, and leadership.

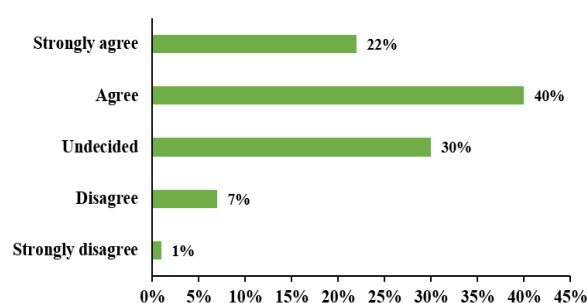


Figure 1. Perception of administrative process and work performance.

Direct observation and the Ishikawa Cause-and-Effect Diagram were employed to identify the causes and effects of organizational challenges. The survey results reflect key corporate areas influencing human talent management and organizational enhancement.

While 40% of survey participants considered the current administrative processes - including planning, organization, direction, and control - sufficiently aligned with organizational objectives, subsequent analysis revealed significant performance variations when cross-referenced with operational metrics. This discrepancy suggests that inconsistent implementation of management processes diminishes their potential effectiveness. Three key factors were identified as primary inhibitors to optimal performance: (1) ambiguous role definitions, (2) limited employee engagement in assigned responsibilities, and (3) gaps in job-specific technical competencies. These interrelated challenges collectively undermine both work output quality and overall corporate performance.

Proper human talent management is essential for optimizing organizational processes and achieving strategic objectives. According to Tamunomiebi and Worgu (2020), talent management models prioritizing identifying, developing, and retaining high-potential employees significantly influence organizational effectiveness. Likewise, Prieto (2020) emphasizes that a clear and well-defined organizational structure fosters employee commitment and innovation, improving overall job performance.

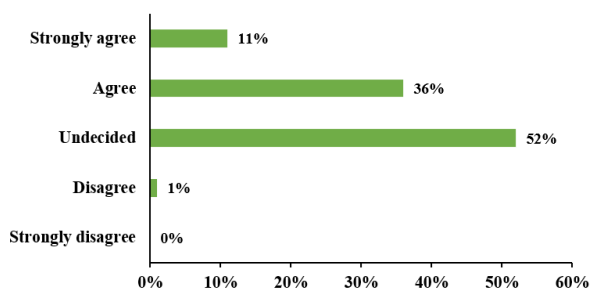


Figure 2. Performance strategies and work motivation.

The study revealed a significant knowledge gap regarding motivation strategies, with over half of the respondents unsure how such initiatives could impact their work performance. This uncertainty highlights the necessity for tailored engagement approaches that boost job satisfaction and foster professional development opportunities. A critical contributing factor appears to be flaws in the hiring system, particularly the absence of a competency-based selection framework. Without standardized role requirements, the organization risks hiring underqualified personnel, potentially exacerbating performance challenges.

Work motivation is key to enhancing human talent and organizational development. Gómez (2008) states that companies that invest in motivation strategies aligned with employee needs experience increased productivity and innovation. Additionally, Khanifar et al. (2020) argue that management models should integrate cultural and organizational factors

that support the continuous development of individual competencies, thereby reducing demotivation and misalignment with organizational goals.

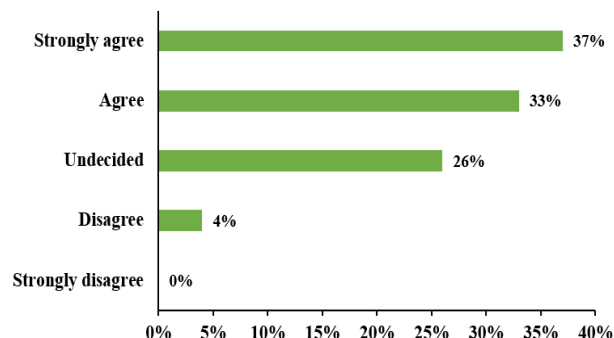


Figure 3. Service quality and customer care.

The survey revealed mixed perceptions regarding customer service quality, with one-third of respondents considering it adequate and a slightly higher proportion (37%) expressing qualified approval. These results underscore the importance of enhancing frontline staff competencies, given their direct impact on customer experiences and loyalty. To achieve service excellence, organizations should prioritize attentive listening to customer requirements and delivering tailored, value-creating solutions.

In this regard, Jiménez (2016) affirms that a customer's experience with a company is significantly influenced by the quality of service employees provide. A well-managed human talent system should include training and tools to improve client interactions and ensure customer satisfaction. Hidalgo (2015) also emphasizes that quality customer service is a key component of administrative management models, directly influencing customer perception and loyalty.

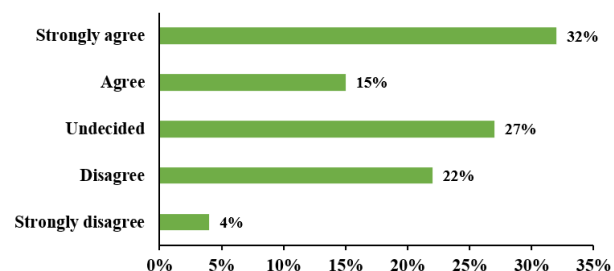


Figure 4. Employee commitment and responsibility.

Employee commitment levels revealed notable variation in the survey findings, with nearly one-third of respondents affirming strong task dedication among staff, while over a quarter expressed uncertainty. This disparity suggests that professional development opportunities and organizational

policies supporting work-life integration are pivotal in fostering workforce engagement and accountability.

Employee commitment is a key factor in organizational stability. Afshari and Nasab (2020) argue that implementing talent management models strengthens organizational learning and intellectual capital, leading to greater adaptability to changes and increased employee motivation. Similarly, Prieto (2020) stresses that trust-building within organizations is essential to encouraging active employee participation and ensuring their commitment to the company.

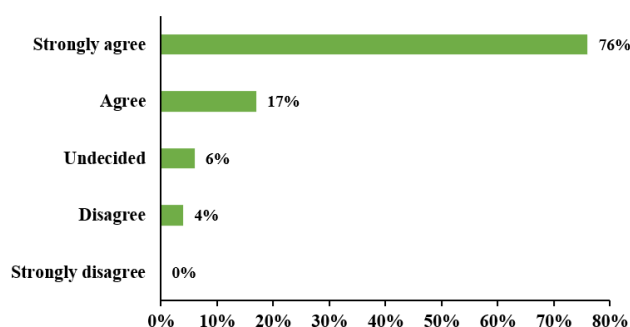


Figure 5. Work environment and organizational communication

Employee responses confirmed the organization's success in maintaining favorable working conditions supporting collaboration and productivity. The study found that subjective perceptions of workplace atmosphere significantly influence overall job satisfaction. Most participants reported efficient information exchange regarding communication systems, emphasizing its importance for operational alignment, employee commitment, and effective troubleshooting.

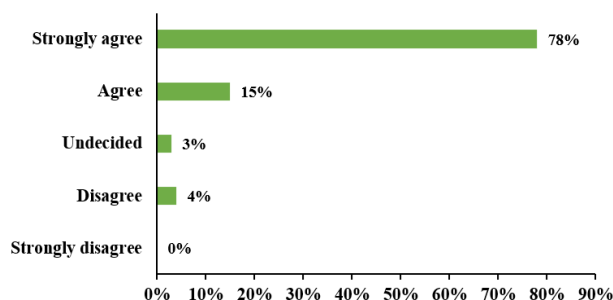


Figure 6. Leadership and Human Talent Management.

Organizational communication is a fundamental element in business development. Gómez (2008) asserts that effective communication strategies improve team integration and facilitate decision-making. Furthermore, research highlights that a corporate culture based on dialogue and participation positively impacts employee motivation and performance (Moraño, 2010). This aligns with Rožman et al. (2022), who

highlight that technological tool can enhance communication and strengthen employee engagement.

Survey results indicate that while most employees view departmental managers as competent leaders, workplace conflicts persist due to communication gaps, unclear goals, and weak conflict-resolution skills. Strengthening leadership strategies is therefore critical to improving team dynamics and operational effectiveness.

Effective leadership is crucial for human talent management and organizational growth. Meyers (2020) states that lacking leadership and proactive strategies can limit human capital development and create internal conflicts. Additionally, Prieto (2020) argues that transformational leadership fosters innovation and motivates employees to find solutions to organizational challenges, promoting a culture of continuous improvement.

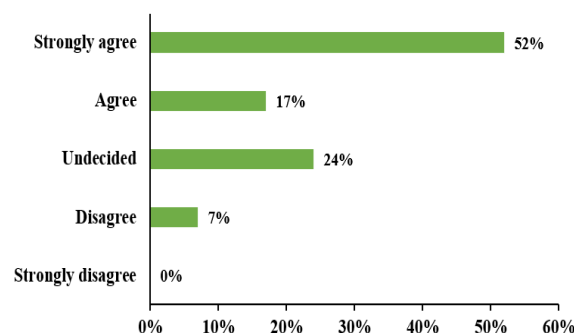


Figure 7. Training and organizational development.

The results also revealed that 52% of respondents believe that the corporation conducts training programs to improve job performance, while 17% agreed with this statement, albeit with some reservations. This indicates that although efforts are being made to enhance human talent, strengthening training and development programs is necessary to ensure continuous learning and greater specialization of employees.

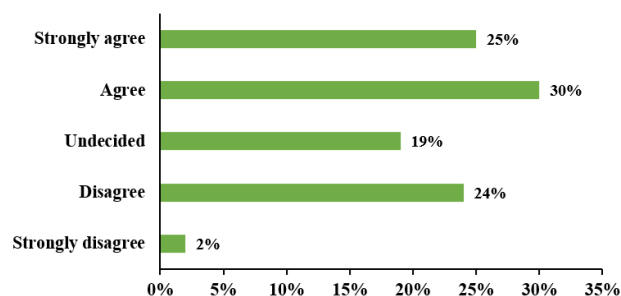


Figure 8. Definition of responsibilities and organizational manuals.

In this regard, Prieto (2020) states that organizations prioritizing employee training achieve greater efficiency and adaptability to market changes. Similarly, Afshari & Nasab

(2020) emphasize that organizational development through training strengthens human capital and fosters business innovation.

Regarding the existence of organizational manuals that clearly define employee responsibilities, 30% of respondents agreed, while 25% remained undecided. These findings indicate that role structuring deficiencies persist within the organization, leading to employee confusion and impacting overall performance.

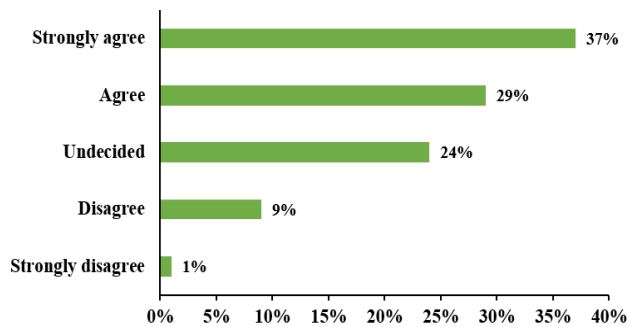


Figure 9. Proposal for improving the management model.

Tamunomiebi & Worgu (2020) state that high-quality organizational processes enhance work efficiency and reduce employee uncertainty. Moreover, the absence of clear organizational structures can negatively affect productivity and hinder strategic alignment within the company.

The survey revealed that 37% of respondents strongly supported defining alternative strategies to strengthen human talent organizationally through a more systematic management approach. Notably, integrating corporate social responsibility principles and ensuring workplace equity emerged as key factors that could significantly boost employee motivation and long-term engagement.

Gómez (2008) argues that innovation in organizational management enables companies to adapt to environmental changes and enhance their competitiveness. Similarly, Prieto (2020) adds that implementing management models aligned with organizational culture and market demands is essential for business success.

The results of the institution's SWOT analysis can be observed in the following table.

The SWOT analysis of the Fine Aroma Cocoa Corporation of San Plácido highlights that its main strength lies in its organizational leadership and institutional development programs, which have enabled it to establish a strong market presence. However, the company faces significant weaknesses, such as a lack of emotional self-regulation in management and the absence of a structured career guidance system, which could negatively impact its competitiveness.

In this regard, Gómez (2018) emphasizes that enhancing human talent is a key factor for organizational growth, as it allows companies to strengthen internal capabilities and adapt more effectively to market challenges. Likewise, Prieto

Table 1. SWOT analysis of the San Plácido Fine Aroma Cocoa Corporation

Aspect	Description
Strengths	Organizational leadership, institutional development programs, and effective managerial decision-making.
Opportunities	Leveraging commercial networks and product diversification.
Weaknesses	Lack of self-control in emotional management and absence of a structured career guidance system.
Threats	External economic factors, staff turnover, and internal family conflicts.

to (2020) highlights that trust and motivation within an organization are essential for employees to become proactive in generating innovative solutions.

On the other hand, the Ishikawa Cause-and-Effect Diagram reveals that issues such as lack of emotional self-regulation, inefficient internal communication, and the absence of service orientation generate adverse effects on organizational performance, leading to low productivity, job dissatisfaction, and internal conflicts. According to Afshari & Nasab (2020), organizational learning and intellectual capital development are key factors in mitigating these problems and ensuring the company's stability. Furthermore, Tamunomiebi & Worgu (2020) emphasize the importance of implementing talent management strategies based on continuous improvement

and employee training to reduce these negative factors.

Conclusions

This study evaluated the organizational strengthening of human talent as a management model in the Fine Aroma Cocoa Corporation of San Plácido, using a comprehensive approach that incorporated surveys, interviews, direct observation, SWOT analysis, and the Ishikawa Cause-and-Effect Diagram. The findings indicate that while the corporation benefits from strong leadership and a well-developed institutional structure, critical gaps persist in human talent management, particularly in role clarity, internal communication, and service orientation, which hinder productivity and per-

Table 2. Ishikawa Cause-Effect Diagram

Problem	Cause	Effect	Alternative solution
There is no emotional self-control.	Self-centeredness and low tolerance	Thoughtless reaction with spontaneous and negative thoughts that generate anger.	Technique of internal dialogues and positive affirmations.
There is no empathy.	Bad relationship with your immediate boss or supervisor	There is no satisfaction in their job performance.	Application of music therapy techniques to improve emotional intelligence.
There is no good communication.	Limited motivation	Failure to perform duties.	Constant training in effective communication.
There is no service orientation.	Inadequate centralized decision-making	Low productivity, absenteeism, inefficiency, and negligence in daily tasks.	Workshop on service culture with its development phases.
Domestic violence	Intrapersonal conflict	Aggressive behavior.	Emotional coexistence workshop.
Injustice and lack of equity	Job dissatisfaction	Irresponsibility in the performance of labor actions.	Motivation or group integration techniques.
Family disorganization	Intrapersonal conflict	Absenteeism and negative impulsiveness in the workplace.	Self-esteem integration technique.

formance. Furthermore, motivation and training strategies require refinement, as insufficient incentives and professional development opportunities weaken employee engagement and efficiency.

The SWOT analysis revealed potential growth opportunities alongside external risks, including economic volatility and high turnover rates. Concurrently, the Ishikawa Diagram identified internal challenges such as poor emotional regulation and ineffective decision-making processes. To address these issues, the corporation should adopt a strategic human talent management model emphasizing continuous training, transformational leadership, enhanced communication, and data-driven practices.

This research underscores that optimizing human talent is essential for operational efficiency and long-term competitiveness and sustainability in dynamic markets. It also provides a foundation for future studies on talent management in agribusiness SMEs.

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Conflicts of interest

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

Author contributions

Conceptualization: Rodríguez, X., Beltrán, N. F. and Zamora, M. A. **Data curation:** Rodríguez, X., Beltrán, N. F. and Zamora, M. A. **Formal analysis:** Rodríguez, X., Beltrán, N. F. and Zamora, M. A. **Research:** Rodríguez, X., Beltrán, N. F. and Zamora, M. A. **Methodology:** Rodríguez, X., Beltrán, N. F. and Zamora, M. A. **Supervision:** Rodríguez, X., Beltrán, N. F. and Zamora, M. A. **Validation:** odríguez, X., Beltrán, N. F. and Zamora, M. A. **Visualization:** odríguez, X., Beltrán, N. F. and Zamora, M. A. **Writing the original draft:** odríguez, X., Beltrán, N. F. and Zamora, M. A. **Writing, review and editing:** Rodríguez, X., Beltrán, N. F. and Zamora, M. A.

Data availability statement

The datasets used and/or analyzed during the current study are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

Statement on the use of AI

The authors acknowledge the use of generative AI and AI-assisted technologies to improve the readability and clarity of the article.

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