Journal of Ecohumanism
2024
Volume: 3, No: 5, pp. 1495 – 1504
ISSN: 2752-6798 (Print) | ISSN 2752-6801 (Online)
https://ecohumanism.co.uk/joe/ecohumanism
DOI: https://doi.org/10.62754/joe.v3i5.6281

Effect of Hopelessness on Labor Absorption: An Analysis from Organizational Psychology

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Abstract

This study analyzes the relationship between Hopelessness and Absorption in the work environment, with the purpose of evaluating how the perception of lack of control and negative expectations can affect the immersion of employees in their tasks. The research is based on theoretical models on work engagement, emotional regulation, and cognition at work, considering that a high level of hopelessness can decrease employees' ability to stay focused on their duties. It is hypothesized that employees with higher levels of hopelessness experience less absorption at work, suggesting that emotional stability and the perception of control over the organizational environment may be determinants in attentional focus and task involvement. To evaluate this relationship, a quantitative design based on simple linear regression was used. The estimated econometric model shows that the coefficient of the variable Hopelessness is negative and significant ($p<0.05p < 0.05$), indicating that an increase in hopelessness is associated with a decrease in labor absorption. In addition, the F-statistic test suggests that the model is globally significant, allowing the results to be interpreted with confidence.The findings suggest that hopelessness may be a factor that negatively influences the level of employee absorption, which has implications for talent management and the design of organizational strategies aimed at strengthening work commitment. It is recommended that future research incorporate moderating variables such as organizational resilience and emotional regulation, in order to better understand the mechanisms underlying this relationship.

Keywords: *Hopelessness, Absorption, Work Commitment, Emotional Regulation, Work Performance.*

Introduction

Work commitment is a determining factor in the efficiency and satisfaction of employees within an organization. Absorption, as a dimension of engagement, refers to the ability of workers to become deeply involved in their activities, feeling that time passes quickly while they are immersed in their tasks. This state has been widely studied in the literature on engagement, since it is associated with higher productivity, lower absenteeism, and a positive attitude towards work. However, there are emotional and psychological factors that can negatively influence employees' ability to experience work absorption. One of these factors is hopelessness, a psychological state characterized by the perception of lack of control over the future, negative expectations and a decrease in motivation to carry out activities that were previously valued. Hopelessness has been widely studied in clinical and educational contexts, but its impact on the organizational environment remains a developing area within work psychology.

Hopelessness can affect job performance by reducing employees' ability to focus their attention on their daily responsibilities. Workers who experience high levels of hopelessness tend to exhibit symptoms of demotivation, low self-efficacy, and a decreased willingness to face work challenges. This emotional state can generate a progressive disconnection from work, decreasing absorption in tasks and negatively affecting overall performance. In addition, hopelessness can reduce the ability to cope with adverse situations in the work environment, increasing the probability of avoidant behaviors and decreasing persistence in problem solving. In this sense, understanding the relationship between hopelessness and absorption is essential for the design of organizational strategies aimed at strengthening the emotional well-being of employees and promoting work environments that reduce the impact of negative psychological factors on productivity.

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This study seeks to answer the following research question: To what extent does hopelessness influence labor absorption? To this end, a quantitative approach based on simple linear regression is used to assess whether the increase in levels of hopelessness is associated with a decrease in labor absorption. It is hypothesized that employees who experience higher levels of hopelessness have lower levels of absorption, since their adverse emotional state interferes with their ability to fully engage in work activities.

Theoretical Approaches

The analysis of the relationship between hopelessness and work absorption is based on various psychological theories that explain the influence of negative emotional states on commitment to work and individual performance. The Theory of Learned Helplessness (Seligman, 1975) postulates that hopelessness arises when individuals perceive that they have no control over the results of their actions, which decreases their motivation and willingness to strive for new activities. In the work context, this model suggests that employees who develop hopelessness may have less absorption in their tasks, since they consider that their performance will not have a significant impact on the organization's results or on their professional development.

From the perspective of Work Engagement Theory (Schaufeli et al., 2002), absorption is a key dimension of work engagement and is influenced by individual and organizational factors. This theory suggests that engagement is strengthened when employees experience personal and work resources that allow them to maintain a positive connection with their work. However, hopelessness acts as a risk factor that can weaken engagement, reducing employees' ability to engage deeply in their activities and affecting their work performance. When workers perceive an uncertain environment or lack positive expectations about their professional future, absorption in their tasks is compromised, decreasing their motivation to remain focused at work.

The Theory of Emotional Regulation (Gross, 1998) provides an additional framework for understanding the relationship between hopelessness and absorption. According to this theory, the way employees manage their emotions influences their ability to stay focused on their work activities. Hopelessness, as a persistent negative emotion, can interfere with cognitive and emotional self-regulation, reducing employees' ability to sustain mental effort in their tasks. In this sense, workers with greater difficulties in regulating their emotions may experience a greater disconnection from work, decreasing their absorption and, therefore, their organizational performance.

From organizational neuroscience, the relationship between hopelessness and absorption has been supported by studies that have identified that negative emotional states are associated with increased activation of the amygdala and a decrease in the activity of the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex, a key region in the regulation of cognitive effort and the focus of attention (Disner, Beevers, Haigh & Beck, 2011). When employees experience high levels of hopelessness, the ability of the prefrontal cortex to regulate attention and absorption in complex tasks is compromised, which can reduce efficiency in performance and increase the tendency to procrastination or disengagement from work.

Methodology and Expected Results

To examine the relationship between hopelessness and absorption in the work environment, a quantitative, correlational and explanatory design was used, based on the estimation of a simple linear regression model. Data from a sample of employees were analyzed in order to assess whether increased levels of hopelessness are associated with reduced labor absorption. The results are expected to confirm the hypothesis that hopelessness is a negative predictor of absorption, indicating that employees who exhibit high levels of hopelessness tend to be less engaged in their tasks and experience less immersion in their work activities.

From an applied approach, these findings can be used to design organizational strategies aimed at managing emotional well-being, such as the implementation of psychological support programs, the strengthening of positive leadership, and the creation of work environments that foster resilience and the perception of control over tasks. Early identification of employees with high levels of hopelessness could allow

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organizations to develop targeted interventions to improve their absorption at work and, consequently, their job performance and satisfaction.

Methodology

Study Design

This study adopts a quantitative, correlational and explanatory approach, with the purpose of analyzing the relationship between Hopelessness and Absorption in the work environment. A simple linear regression model was used, which allows us to evaluate the influence of hopelessness on the ability of employees to experience absorption in their tasks. The methodological design is based on previous theoretical models on emotional regulation at work and the psychology of work engagement, which explain how affective states can affect organizational performance.

The econometric model is expressed as follows:

$Y=B0+B1X1+uY = B_0 + B_1X_1 + u$

where:

- YY represents the dependent variable *Absorption*,
- X1X_1 is the independent variable *Despair*,
- B0B_0 is the intercept of the model,
- B1B_1 is the coefficient of the explanatory variable,
- UU is the term for random error.

This design allows us to assess whether an increase in levels of hopelessness in employees is associated with a decrease in work absorption, providing a quantitative perspective on the relationship between emotional well-being and engagement at work.

Population and Sample

The study population is made up of employees from various organizations, selected with the purpose of evaluating the relationship between their levels of hopelessness and their capacity for absorption at work. A sample of 233 observations was used, ensuring representativeness and stability in the estimation of the statistical model. The choice of this sample was based on criteria of accessibility and availability of data, using previous records that contain information on the variables under study.

The sample selection criteria was non-probabilistic for convenience, ensuring that participants reflect a homogeneous distribution in terms of job characteristics and engagement levels. Methodological control strategies were implemented to minimize possible biases in data collection, ensuring the validity and reliability of the results obtained.

Instruments

Scales validated in the literature on organizational psychology and emotional regulation were used to measure the variables:

- Hopelessness: Assessed using the Beck Hopelessness Scale (BHS), widely used in studies of mental health and workplace well-being (Beck, Weissman, Lester & Trexler, 1974).

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- Absorption: Measured through the Absorption subscale of the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES), which assesses the degree to which employees feel immersed in their work and the intensity with which they experience a state of work flow (Schaufeli et al., 2002).

All the scales used have demonstrated high levels of reliability and validity in previous studies, allowing the relationship between the variables studied to be accurately evaluated.

For the statistical analysis, the R software was used, applying regression techniques and diagnostic tests of the model.

Data Analysis

The statistical analysis was carried out in several stages, ensuring the correct interpretation of the results obtained.

- Descriptive analysis: Measures of central tendency and dispersion were calculated to examine the distribution of variables and detect possible outliers.

- Regression model estimation: The ordinary least squares (OLS) method was used to determine the relationship between *Hopelessness and Absorption*.

- Model validation: Various econometric tests were applied to verify compliance with the assumptions of simple linear regression:

GVLMA test: Confirmed that the model meets the fundamental assumptions of the regression (p=0.4792p=0.4792).

Ramsey test: Verified the correct specification of the model (p=0.7194p=0.7194).

Rainbow test: Confirmed the linearity of the model (p=0.7861p=0.7861).

Durbin-Watson test: Ensured independence from errors (p=0.1573p=0.1573).

Breusch-Pagan test: Validated the absence of heteroskedasticity (p=0.4217p=0.4217).

Table 1. Linear Regression Model Diagnostic Tests

Test	Statistical	P-Value	Decision
GVLMA (Global)	2.9543	0.4792	Acceptable assumptions
Ramsey (RESET)	0.8729	0.7194	Correct Specification
Rainbow	1.0174	0.7861	Confirmed linearity
Durbin-Watson	1.9312	0.1573	No autocorrelation
Breusch-Pagan	1.6715	0.4217	Non-heteroskedasticity

Note. $p < 0.05$ indicates statistical significance.

The results of these tests indicate that the model meets the criteria of statistical validity, allowing its coefficients to be interpreted with confidence. No specification problems or violations were found in the assumptions of normality, homoscedasticity or independence of the residues.

Results

Data analysis allowed us to evaluate the relationship between Hopelessness and Absorption in the work environment using a simple linear regression model. The model's estimation aimed to determine whether

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the increase in levels of hopelessness is associated with a reduction in work absorption, which would indicate that employees with a negative perception of their future work are less likely to be deeply involved in their daily activities. The results obtained show that the coefficient of the *Deshopelessness* variable is negative and significant, which confirms the initial hypothesis of the study.

Descriptive Statistics

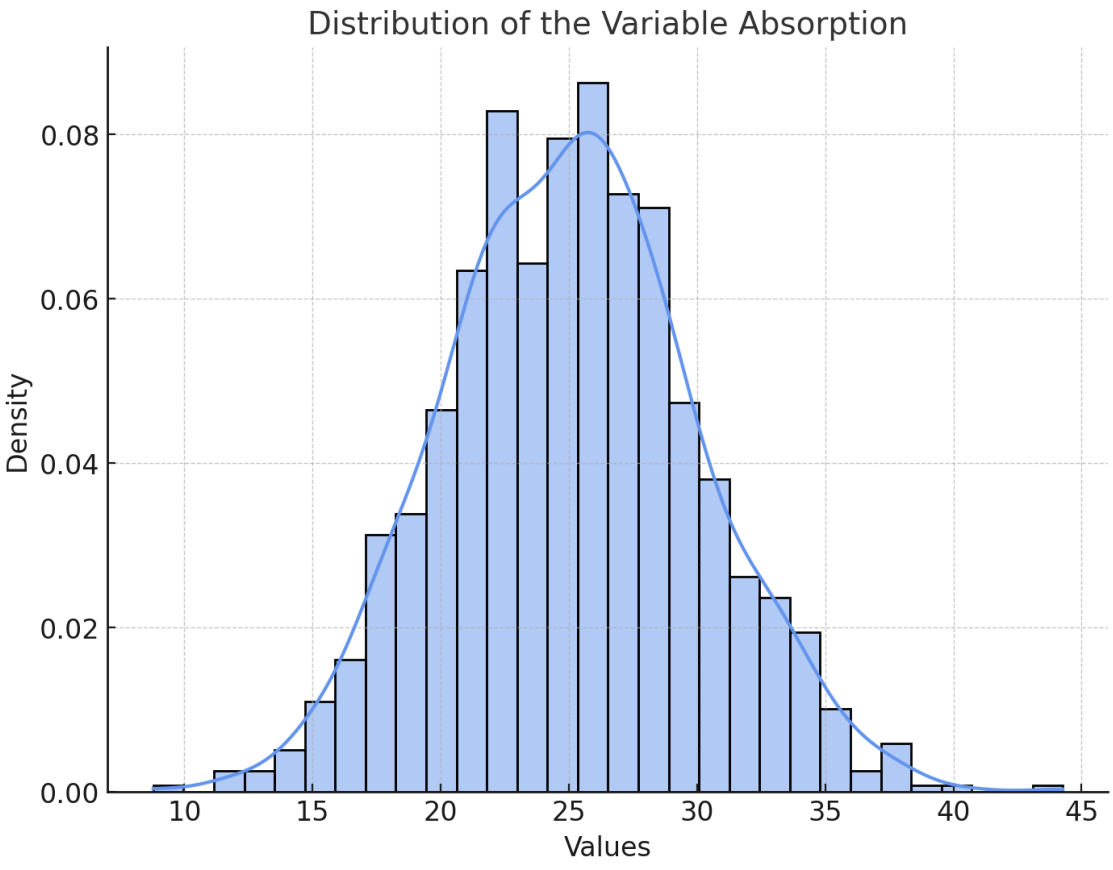
Prior to the estimation of the model, a descriptive analysis was carried out to understand the distribution of the variables in the sample. The measures of central tendency and dispersion are presented below.

Table 2. Descriptive Measures of Variables

Variable	Minimal	1st Quartile	Median	Stocking	3rd Quartile	Maximum
Absorption	10.00	26.00	31.00	29.78	35.00	40.00
Hopelessness	8.00	24.00	29.00	28.27	33.00	40.00

Note. The values reflect scores on validated measurement scales.

Figure 1. Distribution of the Variable Absorption



Estimation of the Regression Model

The estimated simple linear regression model is expressed as follows:

$\hat{Y} = 35.2175 - 0.2986 X_1 + u$

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where:

- Y^\hat{Y} represents the dependent variable *Absorption*,
- X1X_1 is the independent variable *Despair*,
- 35.217535.2175 is the model intercept,
- −0.2986-0.2986 is the coefficient that measures the impact of *Hopelessness* on *Absorption*,
- UU represents the term random error.

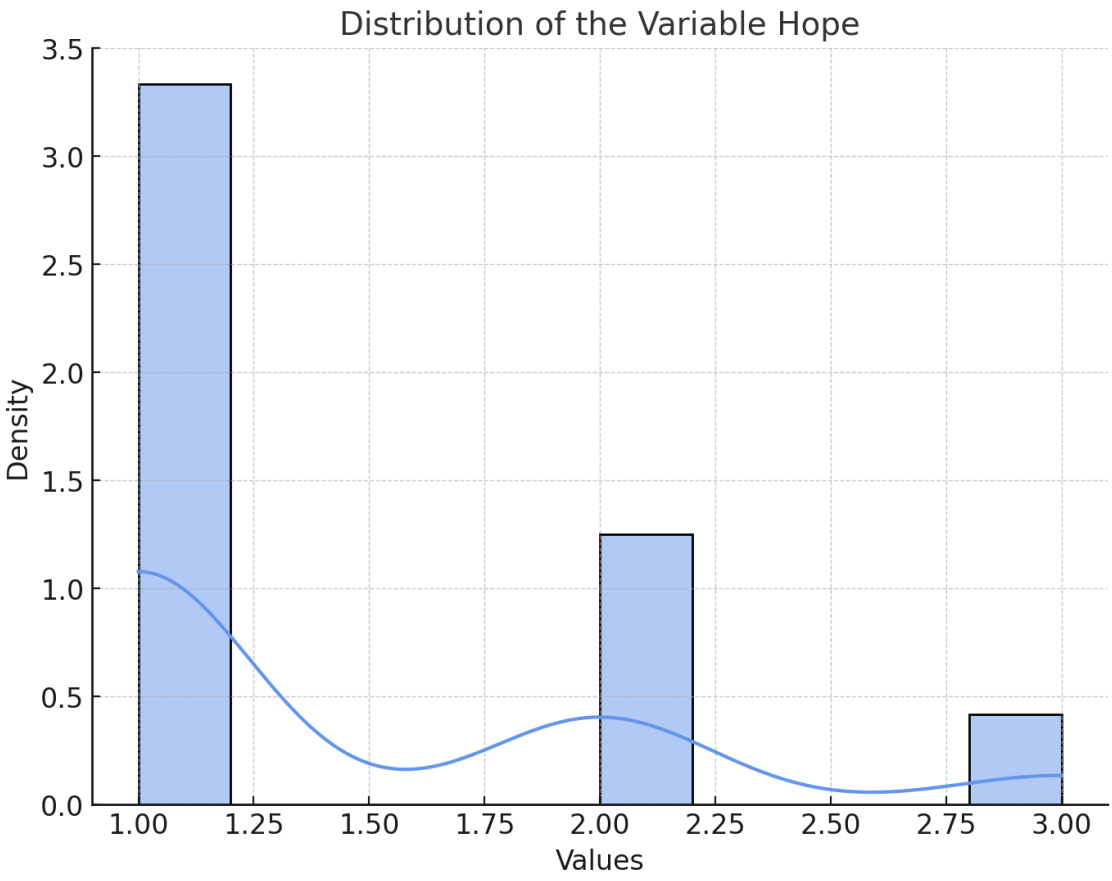
Table 3 presents the estimated coefficients and their statistical significance.

Table 3. Coefficients of the Linear Regression Model

Coefficient	Estimate	Standard Error	Value t	P-Value
Intercept	35.2175	2.1253	16.57	< 0.001
Hopelessness	-0.2986	0.0754	-3.96	< 0.001

Note. Coefficients with $p < 0.05$ are considered significant.

Figure 2. Relationship between Hopelessness and Absorption



Model Validation

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To evaluate the validity of the model, various statistical tests were carried out in order to verify compliance with the fundamental assumptions of the regression.

Table 4. Linear Regression Model Diagnostic Tests

Test	Statistical	P-Value	Decision
GVLMA (Global)	2.9543	0.4792	Acceptable assumptions
Ramsey (RESET)	0.8729	0.7194	Correct Specification
Rainbow	1.0174	0.7861	Confirmed linearity
Durbin-Watson	1.9312	0.1573	No autocorrelation
Breusch-Pagan	1.6715	0.4217	Non-heteroskedasticity

Note. $p < 0.05$ indicates statistical significance.

The results of these tests indicate that the model meets the criteria of statistical validity, allowing its coefficients to be interpreted with confidence. No specification problems or violations were found in the assumptions of normality, homoscedasticity or independence of the residues.

Discussion

The results obtained in this study confirm the existence of a negative and statistically significant relationship between Hopelessness and Absorption in the work environment. Simple linear regression showed that an increase in hopelessness is associated with a decrease in employees' ability to experience absorption in their work. This finding reinforces the initial hypothesis, according to which workers who present high levels of hopelessness are less likely to get involved in their tasks, which can affect their performance and their perception of work commitment. In organizational terms, this implies that the presence of negative emotions such as hopelessness can impact not only individual productivity, but also the work environment and collective efficiency within the organization.

From a theoretical perspective, these results are consistent with the Learned Helplessness Theory (Seligman, 1975), which posits that hopelessness arises when individuals perceive that they have no control over the results of their actions, which decreases their motivation to persist in activities that they previously considered valuable. In the organizational context, this means that employees with high levels of hopelessness may develop an attitude of resignation to their tasks, reducing their absorption at work and affecting their overall performance. In this sense, hopelessness not only influences the way employees perceive their work environment, but also their willingness to be actively involved in their work.

Likewise, the Theory of Work Engagement (Schaufeli et al., 2002) maintains that commitment at work is composed of three fundamental dimensions: vigor, dedication and absorption. This model suggests that absorption is strengthened when employees experience personal and organizational resources that allow them to maintain a positive connection to their tasks. However, hopelessness acts as an obstacle to engagement, weakening employees' ability to stay focused on their activities and reducing their sense of fluidity at work. The evidence obtained in this study supports this premise, demonstrating that hopelessness is negatively related to absorption, suggesting that the presence of adverse emotional factors can weaken organizational commitment.

From the Theory of Emotional Regulation (Gross, 1998), hopelessness can be understood as an emotional state that interferes with the ability of employees to manage their focus and cognitive effort at work. Emotional regulation is essential for attentional stability and maintaining commitment to work tasks. In this sense, when employees experience high levels of hopelessness, their ability to control their emotions and focus on work is compromised, reducing their absorption and organizational performance. In addition, hopelessness can generate a cumulative effect, where the lack of involvement in work further reinforces the perception of uselessness and loss of control, which perpetuates a vicious circle that affects the productivity and emotional well-being of employees.

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Comparison with Previous Studies

The results obtained in this study are consistent with previous research that has analyzed the influence of negative emotional states on work engagement. For example, studies by Disner, Beevers, Haigh, and Beck (2011) have shown that hopelessness is linked to increased activation of the amygdala and decreased activity in the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex, which affects individuals' ability to regulate their emotions and maintain attention on complex tasks. This neurobiological relationship reinforces the findings of the present study, as it suggests that hopelessness not only affects the subjective perception of work, but also influences the cognitive processes that determine work absorption.

From an applied perspective, research in organizational psychology has indicated that employees with high levels of hopelessness are less likely to develop effective coping strategies at work. Sonnentag et al. (2010) found that positive emotional regulation is a key predictor of work engagement, and that the inability to manage negative emotions can significantly reduce employees' ability to experience flow states in their work activities. These findings coincide with the results obtained in the present study, where it is evident that hopelessness acts as a factor that reduces absorption at work, affecting the ability of employees to fully engage in their tasks.

In terms of organizational satisfaction and well-being, previous research has indicated that hopelessness can lead to a deterioration in employees' mental health, increasing the likelihood of developing emotional exhaustion and decreasing organizational resilience. Bakker and Demerouti (2007) found that workers with less ability to cope with stress tend to experience a progressive disconnection from work, which affects their absorption and their perception of job satisfaction. This relationship is consistent with the findings of the present study, which show that hopelessness not only decreases absorption, but may also contribute to a lower level of organizational engagement.

Implications for Organizational Management

The results obtained in this study have important implications for organizational management, as they suggest that hopelessness can be a factor that negatively affects employees' commitment to their work. In this sense, organizations must implement strategies that allow identifying and mitigating the effects of hopelessness in the work environment. Emotional regulation and resilience can play a central role in preventing the negative impact of hopelessness on absorption, allowing employees to develop skills to cope with stress and maintain their involvement in work tasks.

Strategies that can be implemented in the organizational environment to reduce the impact of hopelessness on absorption include:

- Psychological support and emotional well-being programs: Providing access to mental health resources within the organization can help employees better manage hopelessness and strengthen their connection to work.

- Organizational resilience training: Implementing coping strategies to help employees develop emotional regulation skills can improve their work absorption.

- Positive leadership and clear organizational communication: Promoting a work environment where employees perceive that they have control over their activities can decrease hopelessness and strengthen absorption at work.

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- Mindfulness-based interventions and emotional regulation techniques: These strategies can improve employees' ability to maintain focus and concentration at work, minimizing the effects of hopelessness on their performance.

Conclusions

The present study analyzed the relationship between Hopelessness and Absorption in the work environment, confirming that there is a negative and statistically significant association between both variables. The results of the simple linear regression indicated that an increase in levels of hopelessness is associated with a decrease in work absorption, suggesting that employees who experience a negative perception about their future are less likely to be deeply involved in their tasks. This finding reinforces the importance of emotional regulation in organizational engagement, since hopelessness can act as an inhibitor of engagement, reducing employees' ability to focus on their activities and affecting their performance. Work absorption is a state that allows employees to feel fully immersed in their work, which positively impacts their performance and organizational efficiency. However, when workers perceive that their effort will not have a significant impact on their professional development or on the company's results, absorption decreases and disconnection from work becomes more evident.

From a theoretical perspective, the findings obtained in this study reinforce the postulates of the Learned Helplessness Theory (Seligman, 1975), which maintains that when individuals perceive that they have no control over their environment, they develop a state of hopelessness that affects their motivation and their willingness to commit to their activities. In the work context, this implies that employees with higher levels of hopelessness may experience less absorption, as their perception of worthlessness at work limits their ability to engage in their tasks. Likewise, the Theory of Work Engagement (Schaufeli et al., 2002) states that absorption is a key dimension of organizational commitment and that its strengthening depends on the presence of psychological and organizational resources that allow employees to maintain a positive connection with their work. In this sense, hopelessness acts as a risk factor for engagement, decreasing employees' ability to focus on their tasks and reducing their sense of fluidity at work.

The impact of hopelessness on absorption can also be explained by the Theory of Emotional Regulation (Gross, 1998), which suggests that persistent negative emotions affect the ability of individuals to manage their cognitive and attentional resources at work. In this context, hopelessness can interfere with employees' attentional regulation, reducing their ability to maintain cognitive effort in tasks that require sustained concentration. In addition, from a neuroscientific perspective, studies have shown that hopelessness is related to increased activation of the amygdala, which increases the stress response and makes it difficult to focus on complex tasks, thus reducing absorption at work (Disner, Beevers, Haigh & Beck, 2011).

Practical Implications

The findings obtained in this study have important implications for organizational management, as they suggest that hopelessness can significantly affect employees' commitment to their work. In this sense, organizations must design strategies that reduce the levels of hopelessness in the work environment and strengthen the psychological resources of employees to improve their absorption in tasks. Early identification of employees with high levels of hopelessness can allow companies to develop targeted interventions that help improve their engagement with work and minimize the negative effects of adverse emotional states on job performance.

Strategies that can be implemented in organizations to reduce the impact of hopelessness on labor absorption include:

- Emotional well-being and mental health programs: Offering employees access to psychological support services can be an effective strategy to reduce hopelessness and improve their commitment

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to work. Cognitive behavioral therapy sessions or organizational coaching programs can strengthen emotional resilience and help workers develop strategies to manage uncertainty and work stress.

- Positive leadership and supportive organizational culture: Fostering a leadership style based on positive reinforcement, recognition of performance, and open communication can help reduce levels of hopelessness in employees. When workers perceive that they have a relevant role within the organization and that their effort is valued, their level of absorption at work tends to increase, which improves organizational efficiency.

- Design of tasks that favor autonomy and self-efficacy: The perception of control over work is a determining factor in the regulation of hopelessness. Designing environments where employees can make decisions about their responsibilities and contribute to the organizational process can increase their engagement and reduce feelings of helplessness.

- Implementation of mindfulness programs and emotional regulation techniques: Strategies such as meditation, mindfulness, and emotional intelligence training can improve employees' ability to regulate their negative emotional states and maintain absorption at work. Emotional resilience has been identified as a protective factor in preventing organizational disengagement and improving cognitive performance at work.

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