Social Policy and Compensation Policy: A Strategic Articulation for Sustainable Performance at COSIDER

السياسة الاجتماعية وسياسة الأجور: تكامل استراتيجي للأداء المستدام في شركة كوسيدار

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Abstract

The competitiveness of modern companies increasingly depends on their ability to effectively articulate social policy and compensation policy. COSIDER Carrières, an Algerian industrial company, has undertaken a structured project aiming to establish an integrated social policy aligned with a fair and motivating compensation policy. This article examines the relationship between employee well-being at work, skills development, and financial recognition, based on a field study conducted within COSIDER Carrières. The analysis demonstrates that the interdependence between social policy and compensation policy contributes to employee engagement, retention, and organizational performance. The article proposes an integrated strategic model linking social policy, skills management, and compensation as levers of sustainable competitiveness in the Algerian industrial context.

Keywords: Social policy, Compensation policy, Employee well-being, Pay equity, COSIDER Carrières, Human capital, Organizational performance

JEL Codes: J24, J31, M51

الملخص

تعتمد القدرة التنافسية للشركات المعاصرة بشكل متزايد على قدرتها على التوفيق الفعّال بين السياسة الاجتماعية وسياسة الأجور. شركة كوسيدار، وهي مؤسسة صناعية جزائرية، انطلقت في مشروع منظّم يهدف إلى إقامة سياسة اجتماعية متكاملة منسجمة مع سياسة أجور عادلة ومحفّزة.

يتناول هذا المقال العلاقة بين الرفاهية في مكان العمل، وتطوير الكفاءات، والاعتراف المالي، مستندًا إلى دراسة ميدانية أُجريت داخل شركة كوسيدار للمحاجر. تُظهر التحليلات أن الترابط بين السياسة الاجتماعية وسياسة الأجور يُسهم في تعزيز التزام الموظفين، والاحتفاظ بهم، والأداء التنظيمي. يقترح المقال نموذجًا استراتيجيًا متكاملاً يربط بين السياسة الاجتماعية، وتسيير الكفاءات، والأجور كرافعات للتنافسية المستدامة في السياق الصناعي الجزائري.

الكلمات المفتاحية :السياسة الاجتماعية، سياسة الأجور، الرفاهية في العمل، عدالة الأجور، كوسيدار للمحاجر، رأس المال البشري، الأداء التنظيمي

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Introduction

The Algerian socio-economic environment, characterized by rapid industrial mutations and increased competition, compels companies to reconcile economic performance with social responsibility. Since the economic reforms of the 1990s and the progressive market liberalization, the social dimension has become a strategic issue for industrial enterprises. COSIDER Carrières exemplifies this dynamic by engaging in the implementation of a structured social policy aimed at guaranteeing the well-being and equity of its employees.

This study highlights three central research questions:

- How can employee well-being at work be reconciled with economic performance?
- In what manner can compensation policy constitute an extension of social policy?
- What lessons can COSIDER Carrières' experience provide to the Algerian context?

International literature on corporate social responsibility and compensation has demonstrated that integrated practices directly influence employee satisfaction and retention (Adams, 1963; Beer & Nohria, 2000; Barney, 1991). Authors such as Ulrich (1997) emphasize that human resources represent critical strategic assets, while Kaplan & Norton (2001) demonstrate the importance of balanced performance metrics including human capital development. Barney (1991) and Becker & Huselid (1998) highlight the resource-based view of competitive advantage rooted in superior human capital management. Research by Pfeffer (2005) emphasizes that competitive advantage increasingly derives from people management excellence rather than physical assets. In the Algerian context, several studies highlight the importance of wage equity and working conditions for social and economic stability (Boutaleb, 2012; Ben Zitouni & Slimani, 2014), while Souak (2008) documents the specific challenges of wage regulation in emerging economies. Touil (2015) demonstrates that coherent social policies remain essential for organizational sustainability in Algeria.

1. Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

1.1. Social Policy: Definition and Scope

Social policy is multidimensional, encompassing workplace well-being, social benefits, training, career management, and diversity (Lawler, 2003; Zingheim & Schuster, 2000). It aims to ensure equity, strengthen workplace climate, and support productivity. The theoretical approaches mobilized include equity theory (Adams, 1963), which posits that employees evaluate fairness through comparing input-output ratios; needs theory (Maslow, 1943), which establishes hierarchical motivation structures; two-factor theory (Herzberg, 1968), distinguishing between hygiene factors and motivators; and expectancy theory (Vroom, 1964), which explains motivation through expectancy-valence relationships.

Social policy encompasses multiple dimensions: primary elements include occupational health and safety, working conditions quality, social dialogue mechanisms, and employee assistance programs. Secondary elements include professional development, career progression opportunities, and recognition systems. Tertiary elements encompass diversity management, work-life balance initiatives, and organizational culture development (O'Neill & Marsick, 2018).

Compensation policy, previously perceived as a cost (Lawler, 1981), is now recognized as a strategic investment with significant organizational implications. Research demonstrates that strategic compensation systems directly impact employee motivation, organizational culture, and competitive positioning (Milkovich & Newman, 2008). Modern compensation strategies move beyond base salary to encompass total reward systems integrating financial and non-financial elements (Zingheim & Schuster, 2000).

1.2. Compensation Policy as a Strategic Lever

Compensation policy transcends its traditional role as a mere cost center. Modern organizational literature establishes it as an essential strategic tool for attracting, retaining, and motivating talent (Lawler, 2003; Pfeffer, 2005). Milkovich and Newman (2008) demonstrate that strategic compensation systems create competitive advantage through multiple mechanisms: signaling organizational values, reinforcing desired behaviors, and attracting talent aligned with organizational culture. When aligned with organizational objectives and employee expectations, compensation policy becomes a driver of competitive advantage.

Research by Trevor et al. (1997) shows that compensation transparency and internal equity significantly influence organizational commitment and intention to remain. Furthermore, studies demonstrate that fair compensation systems reduce voluntary turnover by 15-25% compared to organizations perceived as inequitable (Griffeth et al., 2000). The integration of compensation with broader human resource strategies creates synergies that amplify organizational effectiveness, as documented by Huselid (1995) in his landmark research on high-performance work systems.

Contemporary compensation strategy increasingly incorporates non-monetary elements. Zingheim and Schuster (2000) argue that total rewards frameworks addressing psychological contracts alongside financial compensation generate superior engagement and performance outcomes. This holistic approach proves particularly important in contexts like Algeria where non-monetary benefits carry significant value for workforce retention.

1.3. Articulation Between Social Policy and Compensation

The relationship between social policy and compensation policy creates a virtuous cycle that amplifies organizational effectiveness. When employees perceive equitable treatment and receive compensation aligned with their contributions, engagement levels increase significantly (Adams, 1963; Locke & Latham, 1990). Adams' (1963) equity theory suggests that individuals evaluate fairness through comparison of their contributions relative to rewards received, comparing these

ratios to relevant reference groups. When perceived ratios are proportional, satisfaction and commitment increase; when disproportionate, dissatisfaction and disengagement result.

This engagement translates into reduced turnover, enhanced productivity, and improved organizational climate, as demonstrated by Griffeth et al. (2000) in their meta-analysis of turnover determinants. Organizational commitment research by Meyer and Allen (1991) shows that integrated social and compensation policies particularly strengthen continuance commitment and normative commitment, reducing voluntary separation rates. Conversely, misalignment between social initiatives and compensation structures can undermine the effectiveness of both policies, creating organizational cynicism (Pugh & Hickson, 1968).

Chew and Puah (2011) specifically document in Asian organizational contexts that alignment between HR practices and compensation strategy significantly moderates the relationship between organizational commitment and voluntary turnover. This alignment principle proves particularly relevant for Algerian enterprises navigating rapid economic transitions.

1.4. Theoretical Foundations

This study draws from multiple theoretical traditions, synthesized into an integrated explanatory framework:

Equity Theory (Adams, 1963): Employees assess fairness by comparing their input-outcome ratio to relevant reference groups (coworkers, industry benchmarks, previous positions). Proportional ratios generate satisfaction; disproportional ratios generate dissatisfaction and effort reduction. This theory particularly explains compensation equity perceptions.

Needs Theory (Maslow, 1943): Different hierarchical levels of needs motivate employee behavior—from physiological and safety needs at the base, through belonging and esteem needs, to self-actualization at the apex. Compensation policies must address multiple need levels simultaneously, while social policies increasingly address higher-order psychological needs.

Two-Factor Theory (Herzberg, 1968): Hygiene factors (working conditions, security, administration, compensation base levels) and motivators (achievement, recognition, work content, advancement) operate independently to influence satisfaction. Importantly, increasing hygiene factors prevents dissatisfaction but does not automatically create satisfaction; motivators are necessary for genuine engagement. This explains why compensation increases alone prove insufficient without concurrent social policy improvements.

Expectancy Theory (Vroom, 1964): Motivation results from the multiplicative relationship between expectancy (belief that effort leads to performance), instrumentality (belief that performance will be recognized and rewarded), and valence (value placed on potential rewards). Integrated social and compensation policies strengthen all three components: social policies

increase effort-performance linkage credibility; compensation policies clarify performance-reward linkages and increase reward valence.

Resource-Based View of Competitive Advantage (Barney, 1991): Organizations achieve sustained competitive advantage through valuable, rare, inimitable resources. Human capital represents the quintessential such resource, particularly when managed strategically through integrated social and compensation policies that create organizational-specific competencies. This framework positions human capital development as central to competitive strategy.

These theories collectively support the proposition that integrated social and compensation policies generate superior outcomes compared to fragmented approaches, as evidenced by Porter (2006) who argues that competitive strategy must increasingly rest on human capital advantage.

2. Case Study: COSIDER Carrières

2.1. Context and Methodology

COSIDER Carrières, a major industrial company in Algeria's quarrying and construction materials sector with approximately 450 employees, initiated a comprehensive social policy implementation project in 2023. The company operates within Algeria's industrialization strategy and faces significant talent competition and retention challenges. The organization structure includes five operational divisions: quarrying operations, materials processing, logistics, administrative services, and human resources.

The methodology combined initial diagnostic assessment, social surveys, participatory workshops, and validation by senior management, following the Action Research approach outlined by Coghlan and Brannick (2005). This approach ensures practical relevance while maintaining academic rigor.

Tools Employed:

- Competency-oriented job descriptions aligned with internal mobility
- Workplace social climate barometer based on validated instrument scales
- Age pyramid analysis and workforce demographic mapping
- Skills mapping and competency inventory using role-based competency frameworks
- Semi-structured interviews conducted by external consultants (30 respondents)
- Structured questionnaires with Likert scales (150 respondents, 33% response rate)
- Focus group discussions with management and employee representatives
- Comparative analysis against industry benchmarks

The gradual integration of the compensation policy component enabled the company to identify disparities, improve equity, and strengthen talent retention. The study sample included 150 employees representing different departments (production n=65, maintenance n=35, HR n=20, finance n=18, logistics n=12), constituting a 33% sampling rate of the workforce. Data collection occurred over six months (January-June 2024) following institutional review protocols.

2.2. Sectoral Comparison and Perspectives

Compared to other Algerian companies such as Saidal (pharmaceuticals) or Sonelgaz (energy), COSIDER Carrières distinguishes itself through a progressive and participatory approach aligned with contemporary organizational development principles (Saïdi, 2016). While Saidal emphasizes compliance-focused social programs and Sonelgaz implements centralized HR policies, COSIDER Carrières adopted a participatory model ensuring employee voice in policy design.

The implementation of tools such as the social barometer and competency mapping fostered internal appropriation and employee engagement more effectively than traditional top-down approaches. This methodology aligns with research by Beer and Nohria (2000) demonstrating that Theory E approaches (economics-driven change) prove less effective than Theory O approaches (organization capability-building) when implemented with participatory elements. COSIDER Carrières' hybrid approach combined economic efficiency concerns with genuine organizational development, producing superior adoption and sustainability outcomes.

Comparative analysis reveals that COSIDER Carrières' investment in participatory processes generated significantly higher engagement in initial implementation phases (75% positive response) compared to sectoral average engagement in traditional top-down implementations (45% positive response). This substantiates contingency theory predictions that implementation approaches must align with organizational readiness and context (Lawrence & Lorsch, 1967).

Criterion	**Before (2022)**	**After (2025)**
Workplace Well-being/Social Climate	Weak indicators	High satisfaction
Turnover Rate	18%	10%
Pay Equity	Internal disparities	Market alignment

Table 1: Comparative Analysis Before and After Implementation (2022--2025)

2.3. Social Diagnosis and Mobilized Tools

The social policy implementation project employed multiple diagnostic and analytical instruments utilizing validated assessment instruments adapted from Meyer and Allen (1997), Weiss et al. (1967), and Williams et al. (2006):

Tools	Description
Social Barometer	Measures employee satisfaction and organizational climate
Job Descriptions	Defines competencies, missions, and performance expectations
Skills Mapping	Facilitates workforce planning, skills development, and mobility
Performance Indicators	Tracks engagement, productivity, and retention metrics

Table 2: Social Policy Tools Implemented at COSIDER Carrières

2.4. Observed Results and Contributions of Social Policy

The implementation of the integrated social policy generated measurable improvements across multiple dimensions, consistent with high-performance work system research by Combs et al. (2006) documenting 0.20 effect sizes between HR practice implementation and organizational outcomes:

Indicators	2023	2025
Employee Engagement Rate	62%	80%
Productivity Index	100	118
Positive Social Climate	65%	83%
Average Salary Increase	--	12% (controlled)
Productivity Gain	--	18%

Table 3: Observed Results and Key Performance Indicators (2023--2025)

These results demonstrate that structured social policy initiatives, when coupled with compensation alignment, generate positive returns on investment, as predicted by resource-based competitive advantage theory (Barney, 1991; Teece et al., 1997). The controlled salary increase of 12% accompanied by an 18% productivity gain indicates improved organizational efficiency and favorable return on HR investment.

Notably, engagement rate improvements from 62% to 80% (18 percentage point increase) exceed typical organizational development intervention outcomes reported in meta-analytic studies (average effect = 12-15 percentage points) as documented by Combs et al. (2006), suggesting implementation quality and contextual alignment advantages. The reduction in turnover from 18% to 10% (44% reduction) compares favorably to industry standard improvement rates in developed

economies (typical range: 25-35% reduction) and substantially exceeds typical improvement rates in emerging economy industrial enterprises (Griffeth et al., 2000).

The productivity index increase from 100 to 118 (18% improvement) likely reflects multiple contributing factors: reduced disruption from turnover, improved employee engagement, skill development from training initiatives, and motivational effects of compensation alignment. This increase aligns with research by Wright and Boswell (2002) documenting productivity gains from 15-25% following HR system improvements.

2.5. Integration of Compensation Policy

The integration of compensation policy with the broader social policy framework proceeded through several strategic phases, following change management principles articulated by Kotter (2012) and Hiatt (2006):

1. **Diagnostic Phase:** Identification of salary disparities and inequities through benchmarking against market rates using regional industry data (beverages, construction materials, mining sectors). Internal equity analysis employed factor evaluation methods assessing position complexity, responsibility, and market criticality. External equity analysis benchmarked against companies of comparable size and sector (±15% size parameters, same or adjacent sectors).

2. **Design Phase:** Development of transparent compensation structures based on competency levels and market positioning. This phase explicitly rejected traditional seniority-based structures in favor of competency-based pay architecture (Milkovich & Newman, 2008). The design process involved compensation specialists, department managers, and employee representatives in a collaborative design process.

3. **Implementation Phase:** Gradual adjustment of salary bands with clear communication regarding criteria and timelines. Rather than immediate implementation (potentially destabilizing), the company implemented 30% of required adjustments in year one, 50% in year two, with full implementation by year three (Kotter, 2012). Communication employed multiple channels: individual conversations with affected employees, group sessions, written policy documents, and manager training (Hiatt, 2006).

4. **Monitoring Phase:** Continuous assessment through employee surveys (biannual), engagement metrics (turnover, promotion rates, internal mobility), and compensation effectiveness metrics (market positioning percentile tracking). This phase includes annual strategy reviews with stakeholder inputs.

This phased approach, grounded in organizational change management research, minimized disruption while ensuring buy-in from both management and employees (Kotter, 2012).

Importantly, early wins in initial phases built organizational credibility and trust, facilitating acceptance of later adjustments.

2.6 Organizational Culture and Study Methodology

The success of the project at COSIDER Carrières is partly explained by an organizational culture anchored in solidarity and employment stability, reflecting both Algerian national values and the company's historical identity as a state-owned enterprise. Organizational culture represents a moderating variable influencing HR practice effectiveness, as demonstrated by Sheridan (1992) in comparative organizational culture studies. COSIDER Carrières' existing culture emphasizing collective welfare proved compatible with integrated social policy frameworks.

Data collection employed mixed-methods research design combining quantitative and qualitative approaches, following Creswell (2014) and Tashakkori & Teddlie (2010) frameworks for mixed-methods rigor. Quantitative methods included questionnaires administered to 150 employees (stratified random sampling by department and hierarchical level) using validated instruments assessing organizational commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1997), job satisfaction (Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire, Weiss et al., 1967), and compensation perceptions (Williams et al., 2006). Qualitative methods included semi-structured interviews (n=30, purposive sampling selecting key informants from various hierarchical levels: 6 senior managers, 8 middle managers, 10 supervisors, 6 frontline employees) with interview protocols developed from literature review and analyzed using thematic content analysis.

Results indicate satisfaction levels exceeding 70% in departments that benefited from compensation grid revisions, with some departments (production, maintenance) reaching 83-86% satisfaction levels. The triangulation of data from multiple sources, respondent types, and temporal measurements strengthened the validity of findings and supported the robustness of conclusions, as advocated by Patton (2015) in qualitative research methodology. Effect sizes for interventions exceeded typical organizational development baselines, suggesting both methodological rigor and genuine intervention impact (Combs et al., 2006).

3. Discussion and Analysis

3.1. Integration Effects and Mechanisms

The cross-analysis of COSIDER Carrières' results demonstrates that the articulation between social policy and compensation policy has enabled improvements in internal climate, reduction of turnover, and increased motivation. These findings substantiate systems theory (von Bertalanffy, 1968) predicting that coordinated system elements generate emergent properties exceeding the sum of individual components. Specifically, the combination of social policy elements (training, career development, well-being initiatives) with compensation policy created multiplier effects on employee outcomes (Huselid, 1995).

Mechanistically, improved social climate increased organizational identification (social identity theory, Tajfel & Turner, 1979), which heightened compensation perception favorability. Simultaneously, compensation alignment reduced equity violations (Adams, 1963), generating greater willingness to engage in social policy investments (skill development initiatives). This circular dynamic created cumulative advantage spirals (Porter, 2006).

However, certain limitations persist, notably the difficulty in objectifying performance criteria in context of Algeria's evolving industrial standards. Additionally, maintaining external competitiveness of salaries in a volatile labor market presents ongoing challenges, particularly in competing with multinational enterprises offering higher compensation packages (Khiari, 2019). Data suggests that 8-10% annual real wage growth would be necessary to maintain relative competitiveness amid regional labor market tightening.

3.2. Transferable Lessons and Contingencies

The discussion illuminates transferable lessons applicable to other public and private enterprises in Algeria:

1. Importance of Integrated Approach: Fragmentary interventions lack the synergistic effects of coordinated social and compensation policies, consistent with contingency theory research (Lawrence & Lorsch, 1967). COSIDER Carrières achieved superior results through simultaneity rather than sequential implementation of social and compensation initiatives.

2. Participatory Implementation: Involving employees in policy design enhances acceptance and effectiveness significantly (Locke & Latham, 1990). COSIDER Carrières' participatory workshops generated substantially higher adoption rates (estimated 75% vs. sector average 45%) compared to traditional top-down implementations.

3. Transparent Communication: Clear explanation of policy rationale and implementation criteria builds trust and reduces organizational cynicism (Pugh & Hickson, 1968). COSIDER Carrières' multi-channel communication strategy proved particularly effective in manufacturing contexts where information asymmetries typically generate skepticism.

4. Continuous Adjustment: Regular monitoring and adaptation ensure ongoing relevance and effectiveness amid changing internal and external contexts (organizational learning theory, Argyris & Schön, 1978). COSIDER Carrières' biannual assessment cycles proved more effective than annual cycles common in Algerian enterprises.

Critical Contingencies: The transferability of these lessons depends importantly on organizational and contextual factors including: existing organizational culture (prior solidaristic orientations facilitate implementation); management commitment and consistency in implementation; availability of technical expertise in HR and organizational development; and political-institutional stability enabling multi-year implementation horizons.

4. Proposed Integrated Model and Recommendations

Integrated Strategic Model

We propose a strategic model structured in three interdependent levels, grounded in integrated theory synthesis and empirical validation from the COSIDER Carrières case study:

1. **Social Level:** Employee well-being, social benefits, diversity and inclusion, workplace safety and health. This foundational level addresses basic need satisfaction and organizational legitimacy (Maslow, 1943; Freeman, 1984).
2. **Competency Level:** Skills management, training and development, career progression, succession planning. This intermediate level addresses growth needs and value creation (Becker, 1964; Barney, 1991).
3. **Recognition Level:** Equitable compensation, performance incentives, non-monetary recognition, advancement opportunities. This reinforcement level addresses motivation and commitment (Vroom, 1964; Adams, 1963).

These three levels interact dynamically through feedback mechanisms: social policies create the psychological foundation for engagement (reducing defensive responses, increasing openness to organizational objectives); competency development enhances individual and organizational value creation capacity (making subsequent compensation increases sustainable and credible); recognition reinforces commitment and performance through expectancy-valence mechanisms (Herzberg, 1968). Disruption at any level creates cascading negative effects: absent social policies reduce engagement regardless of compensation; absent competency development creates compensation-performance misalignment generating inequity perceptions; absent recognition undermines motivation despite substantial investments in social policies and development.

The model incorporates temporal dynamics: social policies require 6-12 months for impact manifestation (culture and climate change operate on extended timescales); competency development typically requires 12-24 months for measurable performance impact (learning curve effects); recognition impact (compensation changes) manifests more rapidly, typically within 3-6 months. This temporal recognition informs realistic implementation planning and management of expectations.

Recommendations for COSIDER Carrières

1. **Strengthen competency evaluation tools:** Develop more robust assessment methodologies linked to organizational competency frameworks
2. **Enhance salary transparency:** Communicate compensation criteria clearly to reduce perception gaps and strengthen perceived equity
3. **Develop collective performance incentives:** Institute profit-sharing or team-based bonus systems aligned with organizational objectives

4. **Promote diversity and inclusion:** Implement targeted recruitment and development programs to enhance workforce diversity across all levels
5. **Leverage digital HR tools:** Adopt HR information systems to improve efficiency of policy implementation and data-driven decision making
6. **Benchmark continuously:** Maintain awareness of labor market trends to ensure compensation competitiveness
7. **Employee development pathway:** Create visible career progression opportunities linked to skill development and performance

Conclusion

COSIDER Carrières' experience confirms that integration between social policy and compensation policy constitutes a strategic lever of sustainable competitiveness, substantiating theoretical propositions from resource-based competitive advantage theory (Barney, 1991), organizational capability theory (Teece et al., 1997), and human capital theory (Becker, 1964). By placing the employee at the center of strategic consideration, the company improves its image as a responsible employer and increases overall organizational performance, as predicted by stakeholder theory (Freeman, 1984) and organizational legitimacy theory (Meyer & Scott, 1983).

Beyond the specific case study, this work proposes a conceptual framework for industrial enterprises in Algeria, emphasizing the critical importance of human capital valued and equitably recognized. The framework integrates social policy, competency development, and compensation recognition into unified strategic architecture rather than fragmented HR functions. As Algerian enterprises navigate the challenges of globalized competition, they must increasingly recognize that human capital represents their most enduring competitive advantage (Porter, 2006; Pfeffer, 2005). This recognition proves particularly acute for state-owned enterprises transitioning toward commercial competitiveness (Saïdi, 2016).

Policies that ensure employee well-being, equitable compensation, and meaningful recognition create virtuous cycles of engagement, retention, and performance, as demonstrated through both longitudinal organizational research (Huselid, 1995; Becker & Huselid, 1998) and the COSIDER Carrières empirical case. These virtuous cycles prove self-reinforcing through multiple feedback mechanisms: engagement increases performance, which increases value justifying compensation increases, which reinforces engagement (Wright & Boswell, 2002).

The evidence from COSIDER Carrières demonstrates that reconciling social responsibility with economic performance is not merely possible but strategically necessary for organizational sustainability. Organizations that successfully integrate these dimensions position themselves for sustainable success in increasingly competitive environments. For Algerian industrial enterprises specifically, integration of social and compensation policies addresses both moral imperative

(ensuring just treatment of workforce) and strategic necessity (competing effectively in globalized markets) (Khiari, 2019).

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