

The Impact of Unhealthy Relationships Among Co-Workers on Employees' Performance and Organizational Commitment

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AbstractS

This study examined the impact of unhealthy relationships among co-workers on employee performance and organizational commitment among non-teaching personnel of Jose Rizal Memorial State University–Katipunan Campus during School Year 2025–2026. Anchored on Social Exchange Theory (SET), Affective Events Theory (AET), and the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model, the study explored how workplace interpersonal dynamics relate to employee outcomes. A descriptive-correlational research design was employed involving 109 non-teaching personnel selected through total enumeration. Data were gathered using an adapted questionnaire-checklist that assessed unhealthy workplace relationships in terms of workplace conflict, gossip and backstabbing, lack of trust, poor communication, and bullying or harassment; employee performance in terms of work quality, productivity, efficiency, and task completion; and organizational commitment in terms of affective, continuance, and normative commitment. The instrument underwent validation and reliability testing, while data were analyzed using mean, standard deviation, and Spearman rank correlation through Jamovi software. Findings revealed that unhealthy workplace relationships were manifested at an average level, with gossip and backstabbing and poor communication identified as highly evident concerns, while workplace conflict and lack of trust were moderately manifested and bullying or harassment occurred at a low level. Despite these workplace concerns, employees demonstrated a high level of performance across all indicators, including work quality, productivity, efficiency, and task completion. Organizational commitment was generally average, with affective commitment rated high, while continuance and normative commitment were rated average. Results further showed that unhealthy relationships among co-workers had no significant relationship with employee performance ($r = 0.033$, $p = 0.735$) and organizational commitment ($r = 0.068$, $p = 0.479$). The study concluded that unhealthy workplace relationships did not significantly influence employee performance and organizational commitment, suggesting that other organizational and personal factors may contribute to employee outcomes. The study recommends strengthening workplace relationships through improved communication, conflict resolution initiatives, employee development programs, and supportive human resource policies. The study supports Sustainable Development Goal 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) by promoting respectful, inclusive, and accountable workplace environments. It also contributes to institutional sustainability by providing insights that may guide organizations in developing policies and practices that enhance workplace well-being, employee engagement, and organizational effectiveness.

Keywords: Employee Performance, Organizational Commitment, Organizational Behavior, Unhealthy Workplace Relationships, Workplace Conflict

1. Introduction

Unhealthy relationships among co-workers may negatively affect employee performance and organizational commitment. These relationships are often manifested through disagreements, miscommunication, lack of trust, and behaviors that compromise employees' workplace experiences. Continuous exposure to negative interactions may contribute to emotional fatigue, reduced productivity, declining job satisfaction, and weakened organizational attachment. Employees experiencing persistent workplace strain may demonstrate absenteeism, reduced loyalty, or intentions to transfer to other departments or institutions. Research has emphasized that interpersonal relationships significantly influence employee outcomes. Emotional exhaustion may reduce employees' commitment; however, supportive workplace conditions and servant leadership can help address these challenges (Mostafa et al., 2023). Similarly, positive peer relationships contribute to improved job performance and organizational objectives (Pelin & Osoian, 2021). Leadership practices, supportive workplace relationships, and positive interpersonal dynamics may influence employee commitment, motivation, and the achievement of organizational goals. Despite increasing attention toward organizational behavior and employee well-being, the influence of unhealthy peer relationships on employee performance and commitment remains an area requiring further investigation. Examining workplace relationships provides opportunities to understand how organizations can strengthen communication, improve employee interactions, and establish healthier workplace environments.

Workplace relationships involve formal and informal interactions among employees, supervisors, and organizational members directed toward achieving shared goals. These relationships include communication exchange, emotional support, collaboration, and professional interactions among colleagues (Methot et al., 2017; Anasi, 2020). Positive workplace relationships promote trust, cooperation, motivation, and organizational effectiveness, whereas unhealthy relationships may contribute to isolation, stress, and decreased morale. Social connections influence employees' psychological and physical well-being. Interpersonal relationships affect mental health, behavior, and overall wellness (Umberson & Montez, 2010). Positive social interactions activate psychological mechanisms that encourage trust and cooperation. In organizational settings, trust, respect, and collaboration enhance employee engagement and performance (Geue, 2017; Gallup, 2015). Social interactions also facilitate knowledge sharing, teamwork, and collective improvement (Cornelissen, 2016). Favorable relationships among co-workers contribute to increased motivation and positive workplace outcomes (Basford & Offermann, 2015).

Conversely, toxic workplace environments are associated with aggressive behaviors, harassment, bullying, ostracism, and negative interpersonal experiences (Azuma et al., 2015; Wolf et al., 2017). These conditions may increase stress, burnout, and counterproductive workplace behaviors (Anjum, 2018). Workplace harassment, bullying, and ostracism weaken employee engagement and organizational effectiveness (Burgess et al., 2018; Fiset et al., 2018; Lam et al., 2017). Employee engagement, organizational support, and positive workplace climates remain important factors in reducing burnout and strengthening employee commitment (Tanwar & Kumar, 2019; Bakker & Albrecht, 2018; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Wang et al., 2020). Employee performance is influenced by work quality, productivity, efficiency, and task completion. Productivity reflects an organization's ability to maximize outputs through effective utilization of resources. Employee efficiency involves completing tasks with minimal resource consumption and reducing unnecessary delays. Effective performance management practices enhance communication, job satisfaction, employee development, and organizational alignment (Ulin & Yosepha, 2019; Caldwell, 2002). Supportive management, recognition, training, and positive interpersonal relationships are significant contributors to employee motivation and performance (Daneshkohan et al., 2014; Dieleman et al., 2016; Mathauer & Imhoff, 2006).

Workplace relationships continue to be a significant concern across different organizational settings because employee interactions influence productivity, retention, and institutional effectiveness. Globally, organizations recognize that interpersonal challenges such as workplace conflict, gossip, and communication barriers may affect employee well-being and organizational outcomes. The increasing complexity of modern workplaces requires institutions to develop strategies that promote collaboration, respect, and psychological safety among employees. Within educational institutions, non-teaching personnel play essential roles in supporting academic operations and institutional services. Their effectiveness depends not only on technical competencies but also on the quality of workplace relationships that shape coordination and daily interactions. In the context of Jose Rizal Memorial State University – Katipunan Campus, understanding unhealthy workplace relationships among non-teaching personnel provides evidence that may guide organizational development initiatives, employee support programs, and human resource interventions. The need to strengthen workplace relationships aligns with broader organizational goals of maintaining productive, inclusive, and sustainable institutions. Addressing interpersonal challenges may contribute to improved employee experiences while supporting institutional performance and service delivery.

This study is anchored on Social Exchange Theory (SET) by Blau (1964) and Homans (1958), Affective Events Theory (AET), and the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model. Social Exchange Theory explains that workplace interactions are influenced by reciprocal exchanges between individuals. Positive relationships characterized by fairness, trust, and support may strengthen motivation and organizational commitment, while negative exchanges involving conflict and mistrust may reduce employee attachment and satisfaction. Affective Events Theory explains that workplace events influence employees' emotions, attitudes, and behaviors. Negative experiences such as gossip, conflict, and harassment may trigger frustration, anxiety, and dissatisfaction, which may affect concentration, commitment, and performance. The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model explains how workplace demands and available resources influence employee well-being and performance. Workplace conflicts and lack of support may increase psychological strain, while supportive co-workers, effective communication, and positive workplace climates may reduce stress and enhance engagement, productivity, and commitment. Together, these perspectives explain how interpersonal relationships within organizations may influence employee performance and organizational commitment.

Although previous studies have examined workplace relationships, employee performance, and organizational commitment separately, limited attention has been given to how unhealthy peer dynamics specifically influence employee outcomes within educational institutions. Existing literature emphasizes the negative effects of conflict, poor communication, gossip, and workplace toxicity; however, the extent to which employees maintain performance and commitment despite experiencing unhealthy relationships requires further investigation. Understanding this relationship is important because employees may respond differently to workplace challenges depending on organizational culture, leadership support, personal coping strategies, and institutional conditions. Examining these factors provides valuable

insights for developing evidence-based workplace interventions, strengthening employee relations, and improving organizational well-being.

This study contributes to SDG 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth by promoting healthier workplace environments that support employee well-being, productivity, and organizational effectiveness. Addressing unhealthy workplace relationships contributes to creating respectful, supportive, and sustainable work environments where employees can perform effectively. The study also aligns with SDG 16 – Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions by emphasizing the importance of constructive communication, trust, fairness, and institutional mechanisms that support positive workplace interactions. Strengthening organizational relationships contributes to institutional stability and effective governance. Furthermore, the study supports SDG 17 – Partnerships for the Goals by recognizing collaboration and positive interpersonal relationships as essential elements in achieving organizational objectives through shared responsibility and cooperation.

The study contributes to multidisciplinary sustainability by addressing social, organizational, and institutional dimensions of workplace development. From a socio-economic perspective, healthier employee relationships may enhance productivity, reduce workplace disruption, and support organizational continuity. From an institutional perspective, understanding interpersonal challenges provides evidence for improving human resource practices, leadership strategies, and employee development programs. The findings may contribute to organizational sustainability by supporting policies and interventions that promote communication, collaboration, respect, and employee engagement. By examining workplace relationships as a factor influencing employee outcomes, the study provides insights relevant to organizational behavior, human resource management, psychology, and educational administration. These contributions support the development of sustainable institutions capable of maintaining employee well-being and achieving long-term organizational goals.

2. Material and methods

2.1 Research Design

The study utilized a descriptive-correlational research design to examine the relationship among unhealthy workplace relationships, employee performance, and organizational commitment without manipulating the variables. Creswell (2012) described descriptive-correlational design as an approach that identifies existing conditions and determines the degree of association among measurable variables. This design was appropriate in determining the extent of unhealthy relationships among co-workers and examining their relationship with employee performance and organizational commitment.

2.2 Locale of the Study

The study was conducted at Jose Rizal Memorial State University – Katipunan Campus, one of the constituent campuses of the Jose Rizal Memorial State University (JRMSU) system located in Zamboanga del Norte. JRMSU was established through Republic Act No. 9852, which elevated the former Jose Rizal Memorial State College into university status. The institution developed through the integration of several educational institutions, including Rizal Memorial Vocational School, Zamboanga del Norte School of Arts and Trades, Siocon National Vocational School, Katipunan National Agricultural School, and Zamboanga del Norte Agricultural College. The Katipunan Campus focuses on providing quality agricultural education.

2.3 Respondents of the Study

The respondents of the study were 109 non-teaching personnel of Jose Rizal Memorial State University – Katipunan Campus. Participants were included based on their willingness to participate and their minimum of six months employment experience in the institution. Employees who had served for less than six months and those on extended leave were excluded from participation.

2.4 Sample and Sampling Procedure

The study utilized total enumeration, wherein all qualified non-teaching personnel of Jose Rizal Memorial State University – Katipunan Campus were included as respondents. This sampling approach was employed to obtain comprehensive information regarding workplace relationships, employee performance, and organizational commitment among the identified population.

2.5 Research Instrument

Data were collected using an adapted questionnaire-checklist consisting of three sections. The first section measured the extent of unhealthy relationships among co-workers through indicators such as workplace conflict, gossip and backstabbing, lack of trust, poor communication, and bullying or harassment. The second section assessed employee performance in terms of work quality, productivity, efficiency, and task completion. The third section measured organizational commitment through affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment. The

instrument utilized a five-point Likert scale for measuring respondents' perceptions. Although the questionnaire was adapted from existing instruments, it underwent validation and reliability testing. Face validation was conducted through evaluation by a human resources expert, graduate school faculty member, and panel member. Revisions were incorporated based on their recommendations, while reliability was established through Cronbach alpha coefficient calculation using Jamovi software.

2.6 Data Gathering Procedure

After securing the necessary approvals, the validated questionnaire was administered to the identified respondents through printed questionnaires and an online survey using Google Forms. The purpose of the study was explained to the participants before data collection, and informed consent was obtained to ensure voluntary participation. Confidentiality of the gathered information was maintained throughout the research process.

2.7 Data Analysis Techniques

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical procedures. Mean was used to determine the average responses of participants regarding unhealthy workplace relationships, employee performance, and organizational commitment. Standard deviation was applied to measure the variation of respondents' perceptions and determine the consistency of responses. Spearman rank correlation was utilized to determine the relationship between unhealthy workplace relationships and employee performance, as well as between unhealthy workplace relationships and organizational commitment. The significance of the correlation coefficients was tested through the t-test of r using Jamovi statistical software.

2.8 Ethical Considerations

The study observed ethical principles throughout the research process. Creswell (2014) emphasized that ethical research requires the protection of participants' rights, dignity, and well-being. In accordance with this principle, participation was voluntary, informed consent was obtained, and participants were informed about the purpose of the study. Confidentiality and anonymity of the collected information were ensured to protect the respondents' privacy.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Extent of Unhealthy Relationships Among Co-Workers

The findings revealed that unhealthy relationships among co-workers were generally manifested at an average level, with an overall mean of 3.230. Among the identified dimensions, poor communication obtained the highest level of manifestation with a mean of 3.722, followed by gossip and backstabbing with a mean of 3.485, both interpreted as high. Workplace conflict obtained an average level with a mean of 3.353, while lack of trust was also rated average with a mean of 3.138. Bullying or harassment obtained the lowest rating with a mean of 2.453, indicating a low level of occurrence among respondents. The findings indicate that unhealthy workplace relationships existed primarily through communication problems and negative informal interactions rather than through severe forms of interpersonal aggression. These results suggest that workplace relationships are influenced by how employees exchange information, manage differences, and build trust with colleagues. The findings support previous literature emphasizing that poor interpersonal relationships may negatively influence employee well-being, teamwork, and organizational effectiveness.

3.1.1 Workplace Conflict

The findings showed that workplace conflict among co-workers was manifested at an average level, with an overall mean of 3.353. The highest-rated indicator was that disagreements among co-workers disrupted workflow, followed by increased work-related stress due to internal conflicts. Respondents also perceived that conflict resolution was sometimes delayed or ignored, which affected workplace interactions and the accomplishment of assigned responsibilities. The results suggest that disagreements and unresolved workplace concerns may interfere with smooth coordination among employees. Misunderstandings, unclear expectations, and differences in perspectives may contribute to stress and reduce workplace harmony. These findings indicate that frequent disagreements and ineffective conflict management may create workplace stress, disrupt team coordination, and reduce employee productivity.

3.1.2 Gossip and Backstabbing

The findings revealed that gossip and backstabbing were highly manifested among co-workers, obtaining an overall mean of 3.485. The highest-rated indicator showed that gossiping created distrust among team members, followed by rumors affecting teamwork and cooperation. Respondents indicated that negative discussions about colleagues may influence workplace relationships, reduce openness, and affect collaboration among employees. The findings imply that gossip and backstabbing may weaken trust and cooperation within workplace groups. Although informal conversations may support social connection, negative gossip can damage professional relationships by creating uncertainty and fear among employees. These findings suggest that workplace gossip and backstabbing may reduce trust, weaken teamwork, create workplace tension, and negatively affect collaboration and organizational effectiveness.

3.1.3 Lack of Trust

The findings indicated that lack of trust among co-workers was manifested at an average level, with an overall mean of 3.138. Respondents reported concerns regarding withholding important information, limited confidence in colleagues, and hesitation in sharing opinions within the workplace. The highest-rated concern was that some co-workers hid important information, suggesting that trust issues affected information exchange and collaboration. The results demonstrate that trust serves as an important foundation for workplace cooperation and effectiveness. When employees hesitate to share information or express ideas, teamwork and organizational coordination may become limited. Lack of trust may prevent employees from fully participating in collaborative activities and achieving shared objectives. The findings reinforce the importance of maintaining transparent communication and supportive relationships to strengthen workplace trust and organizational performance.

3.1.4 Poor Communication

The findings showed that poor communication was one of the most evident unhealthy workplace relationship factors, obtaining a high overall mean of 3.722. The highest-rated indicators showed that poor communication slowed work processes and that miscommunication resulted in frequent errors. Respondents also identified lack of open dialogue, unclear instructions, and misunderstood messages as workplace concerns affecting task accomplishment. The results indicate that communication problems may create barriers in completing workplace responsibilities effectively. Inadequate information sharing and unclear instructions may increase errors, delay tasks, and create gaps between employee performance and organizational expectations. These findings suggest that effective communication, transparency, and open information sharing are essential for minimizing errors, improving coordination, and supporting employee performance and organizational effectiveness.

3.1.5 Bullying or Harassment

The findings revealed that bullying or harassment was the least evident form of unhealthy workplace relationships, obtaining an overall mean of 2.453, interpreted as low. Respondents indicated low occurrences of workplace intimidation, verbal abuse, exclusion, improper handling of harassment complaints, and personal experiences of harassment. The results suggest that serious forms of workplace mistreatment were not common among the respondents; however, their presence, even at a low level, remains a concern requiring attention. Preventive strategies, awareness programs, and appropriate organizational mechanisms remain important in ensuring that workplace environments remain respectful and supportive. These findings indicate that organizations should continue implementing measures that promote respect, encourage the reporting of workplace concerns, strengthen anti-harassment practices, and foster a safe and supportive work environment for all employees.

3.2 Level of Employee Performance

The findings revealed that the respondents demonstrated a high level of employee performance, with an overall mean of 3.748. All dimensions of performance were rated high, including work quality, productivity, efficiency, and task completion. The results indicate that despite the presence of unhealthy workplace relationship factors, employees continued to perform their responsibilities effectively and maintained expected standards in their assigned duties. The findings suggest that employees were able to sustain their performance through professionalism, responsibility, and commitment to their roles. The ability of employees to maintain productivity despite workplace challenges indicates that performance may also be influenced by personal motivation, organizational expectations, and professional values. These results emphasize that workplace relationships are only one of several factors affecting employee outcomes.

3.2.1 Work Quality

The findings showed that employees demonstrated a high level of performance in terms of work quality, obtaining an overall mean of 3.785. Among the indicators, employees' efforts to improve the quality of their work obtained the highest rating, followed by consistently meeting quality standards and taking pride in the accuracy of their outputs. Respondents indicated that they regularly checked their work, corrected errors, followed established procedures, and adapted to changing work requirements to maintain quality performance. The results indicate that employees demonstrated strong commitment to producing accurate and reliable outputs. Their ability to maintain quality standards reflects professionalism and accountability in fulfilling their responsibilities. Employees who consistently prioritize work quality are more likely to maintain high performance, demonstrate professionalism, and develop stronger commitment to their organization (Ahmed et al., 2016).

3.2.2 Productivity

The findings revealed that employees exhibited a high level of productivity, with an overall mean of 3.625. Respondents indicated that they were able to complete significant amounts of work, manage their time effectively, meet productivity targets, and avoid delays in completing assigned responsibilities. Employees also reported maintaining schedules and completing tasks within expected deadlines. The results imply that effective time management and responsibility contribute

significantly to employee productivity. Employees who organize their workload and manage available resources efficiently are more capable of meeting institutional expectations, enabling them to accomplish assigned responsibilities on time and sustain productive work performance.

3.2.3 Efficiency

The findings indicated that employees demonstrated a high level of efficiency, with an overall mean of 3.735. Respondents showed that they were capable of minimizing errors, avoiding unnecessary processes, using workplace tools and systems effectively, and completing tasks using available resources efficiently. Employees also demonstrated willingness to improve their technological skills and adapt to workplace systems. The results suggest that employees' efficiency was supported by their ability to manage resources, apply appropriate procedures, and continuously develop workplace competencies. Efficient employees contribute to organizational effectiveness by reducing unnecessary delays, optimizing resource utilization, improving workflow processes, and enhancing overall work performance.

3.2.4 Task Completion

The findings showed that employees demonstrated a high level of performance in terms of task completion, with an overall mean of 3.845. Respondents indicated that they consistently met deadlines, completed assigned tasks on time, remained focused until completion, and delivered expected outputs. The highest-rated indicator showed that employees ensured assignments were finished within the required timeframe. The findings demonstrate that employees possessed strong work discipline and responsibility in managing their assignments. Effective prioritization, scheduling, and focus contributed to their ability to complete tasks efficiently. Claessens et al. (2007) explained that time management involves completing activities on schedule, meeting deadlines, and avoiding unnecessary use of time. Likewise, maintaining focus, perseverance, and effective work habits enables employees to accomplish assigned tasks efficiently and achieve expected organizational outcomes.

3.3 Level of Organizational Commitment

The findings revealed that employees demonstrated an average level of organizational commitment, with an overall mean of 3.310. Among the dimensions, affective commitment obtained a high level with a mean of 3.777, while continuance commitment and normative commitment were rated average, with means of 2.821 and 3.330, respectively. The results indicate that employees' strongest attachment to the organization was based on emotional connection and sense of belonging rather than practical considerations or obligation. The findings suggest that employees-maintained commitment to the organization primarily because of their emotional attachment, appreciation of their workplace, and identification with institutional goals. However, continuance and normative commitment were less pronounced, suggesting that practical concerns and feelings of obligation were not the strongest reasons influencing employees' decision to remain.

3.3.1 Affective Commitment

The findings revealed that employees demonstrated a high level of affective commitment, obtaining an overall mean of 3.777. Respondents expressed happiness in remaining with the organization, a strong sense of belonging, emotional attachment, and personal meaning associated with their workplace. Employees indicated that they actively participated in institutional activities, maintained positive relationships, and contributed efforts toward achieving organizational goals. The findings indicate that emotional attachment plays an important role in strengthening employee commitment. Employees who identify with their organization are more likely to demonstrate engagement, loyalty, and willingness to contribute beyond basic responsibilities. Allen & Shanock (2013) reported that career commitment is an important factor influencing employee retention, while Salami (2010) emphasized that emotional attachment strengthens employee engagement and reduces turnover intentions.

3.3.2 Continuance Commitment

The findings showed that continuance commitment was at an average level, with an overall mean of 2.821. Respondents indicated that leaving the organization would be difficult due to limited alternatives and potential challenges associated with finding another job. However, indicators related to personal sacrifice and disruption of life circumstances received lower ratings, suggesting that employees did not remain solely because of perceived costs of leaving. The results imply that continuance commitment was influenced more by practical employment considerations rather than strong dependence on the organization. Employees may consider job availability and career alternatives when deciding whether to remain, but these factors were not the primary source of organizational attachment.

3.3.3 Normative Commitment

The findings revealed that normative commitment was at an average level, with an overall mean of 3.330. Respondents indicated that they felt a sense of responsibility and obligation toward their organization, particularly in recognizing the institution's support and opportunities provided to them. Employees expressed that remaining with the organization reflected loyalty and responsibility. The findings suggest that employees' sense of duty contributed to their willingness to remain and support organizational goals. However, normative commitment was not as strong as emotional attachment,

indicating that personal connection may have a greater influence on employee commitment. These findings imply that organizations may strengthen employee commitment by fostering a supportive work environment, recognizing employee contributions, and encouraging meaningful workplace relationships that promote both loyalty and emotional attachment.

3.4 Relationship Between Unhealthy Relationships and Employee Performance

The findings revealed that there was no significant relationship between unhealthy relationships among co-workers and employee performance. The Spearman rank correlation analysis produced an r -value of 0.033 with a p -value of 0.735, which exceeded the significance level of 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant relationship between unhealthy workplace relationships and employee performance was retained. The results indicate that although unhealthy workplace relationships such as poor communication, gossip, conflict, and lack of trust were present among employees, these factors did not significantly influence their ability to perform their assigned responsibilities. Employees continued to demonstrate high levels of work quality, productivity, efficiency, and task completion despite experiencing interpersonal challenges. This suggests that other factors, such as personal motivation, professionalism, organizational expectations, and work commitment, may have a stronger influence on employee performance. The findings indicate that employees may be able to maintain their performance despite interpersonal challenges in the workplace, possibly because of their ability to adapt to workplace conditions, remain focused on their responsibilities, and uphold professional standards while carrying out their assigned tasks.

3.5 Relationship Between Unhealthy Relationships and Organizational Commitment

The findings revealed that there was no significant relationship between unhealthy relationships among co-workers and organizational commitment. The Spearman rank correlation analysis yielded an r -value of 0.068 with a p -value of 0.479, which was higher than the 0.05 level of significance. Thus, the null hypothesis indicating that unhealthy workplace relationships do not significantly relate to organizational commitment was retained. The results demonstrate that unhealthy workplace relationships did not substantially affect employees' commitment to their organization. Despite experiencing concerns related to poor communication, gossip, and interpersonal challenges, employees maintained their organizational attachment, particularly their affective commitment. Their commitment appeared to be influenced more by emotional connection, institutional belonging, and personal values rather than solely by their relationships with colleagues. The findings suggest that workplace relationships may not be the only determinant of organizational commitment. Other organizational factors, such as job security, organizational culture, leadership support, and institutional attachment, may contribute more strongly to employees' willingness to remain committed. These findings further indicate that the broader organizational environment and employees' personal connection to the institution may play a greater role in sustaining commitment than interpersonal challenges experienced in the workplace.

3.6 Overall Interpretation of Findings

The overall findings revealed that unhealthy relationships among co-workers existed within the organization, particularly in the areas of poor communication and gossip and backstabbing. However, these workplace concerns did not significantly reduce employee performance or organizational commitment. Employees continued to demonstrate high performance and maintained commitment to the institution despite experiencing interpersonal challenges. The results highlight that workplace relationships are important components of organizational functioning, but their effects may vary depending on employees' coping mechanisms, professional attitudes, organizational support systems, and institutional conditions. The findings suggest that while organizations should address unhealthy workplace interactions, interventions should also consider broader factors that contribute to sustained employee performance and commitment. The study emphasizes the importance of developing workplace strategies that promote effective communication, conflict resolution, trust-building, and supportive organizational practices. Strengthening these areas may contribute to healthier workplace relationships while sustaining employee productivity, engagement, and long-term organizational effectiveness.

4. Conclusion & Recommendations

The study concluded that unhealthy relationships among co-workers were manifested at an average level, with gossip and backstabbing and poor communication identified as highly evident concerns, while workplace conflict and lack of trust were moderately manifested and bullying or harassment occurred at a low level. Despite the presence of unhealthy workplace relationships, employees demonstrated a high level of performance in terms of work quality, productivity, efficiency, and task completion. Organizational commitment was generally average, with affective commitment showing a high level while continuance and normative commitment were at an average level. Furthermore, the study revealed that unhealthy relationships among co-workers had no significant relationship with employee performance ($r = 0.033$, $p = 0.735$) and organizational commitment ($r = 0.068$, $p = 0.479$), indicating that other organizational and personal factors may have stronger influence on employee outcomes.

Based on the findings, employees are encouraged to strengthen workplace relationships by participating in activities that reduce conflicts, disagreements, arguments, gossip, backstabbing, rumors, and negative workplace interactions while

enhancing interpersonal skills and communication practices. Department heads and administrators are recommended to develop programs and initiatives that promote harmonious relationships, effective communication, and conflict resolution in the workplace. Human resource personnel may utilize the findings as basis for developing training programs, policies, and interventions that support positive workplace relationships and employee engagement.

Compliance with ethical standards

The author declares no conflict of interest. This study complied with recognized ethical standards for human-participant research by ensuring voluntary participation with informed consent, the right to withdraw without penalty, and strict confidentiality through anonymous, secure, and aggregated data handling. Given the focus on psychological well-being, procedures were non-invasive, and safeguards were observed to minimize discomfort, with guidance to appropriate support services when needed, and required institutional permissions were secured for instrument use and access to academic records.

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