



Enhancing workplace relationships to develop work motivation and innovative work behavior

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ABSTRACT

The study aimed to examine the influence of workplace relationships on work motivation and innovative work behavior. To deepen the concept of the study, the literature was reviewed. The study used descriptive assessment and a correlational research design. The study population consisted of all employees of the institution where the study was conducted. The data gathered through research questionnaires was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The study found that workplace relationships, work motivation, and innovative work behavior were high, and there is a significant correlation between workplace relationships and work motivation, as well as between workplace relationships and innovative work behavior. The hypothesis is accepted. However, it is recommended that further study is necessary to identify other organizational contexts or cultures that may affect work motivation and innovative work behavior.

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Introduction

Achieving organizational success in a competitive environment requires special attention to both the external environment and competitors, as well as to internal environments. The external and internal environment affects an organization's operation, forcing it to adapt or shift its strategy in response to new developments. One of the dimensions of the internal environment is the workplace relationship. It is about the employer-employee relationship within the organization (Gerbasi et al., 2023) and is considered a critical issue that requires serious attention (Gerbasi et al., 2023). Good workplace

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relationships can affect work motivation and job satisfaction (Mohamed & Mohamud, 2024). It fosters a sense of belonging, trust, and camaraderie, which can lead to work engagement, better collaboration, innovation, and a greater willingness to work in a team, ultimately contributing to greater organizational success (Durrah, 2022).

Work motivation is considered a critical element of work performance. However, despite its significant contribution to the performance, it has been poorly defined (Rainey, 2009). Rainey (2009) describes it as the person's desire to work hard and well, or a psychological force within the person to exert a certain level of effort toward the work that leads to the attainment of objectives. Studies have noted the significant role of work motivation in boosting job satisfaction, work engagement, and performance (Engidaw, 2021; Elamalki et al., 2024; Ringelhan et al., 2013; Shkoler & Kimura, 2020). The positive correlation between motivation and work performance suggests that management cannot afford to neglect monitoring employees' level of work motivation. It can be seen from their work performance or the output of their work (Uka & Prendi, 2016), and therefore, monitoring the work output is an important management activity.

Innovative work behavior is also another key element that contributes to organizational performance. It is an employee's intentional actions to generate, promote, and implement new ideas, processes, products, or services, and procedures within their work that benefit and contribute to overall organizational innovation (AlEssa & Durugbo, 2021; Farr & Ford, 1990). Innovation should not be confused with creativity, though they are closely related, because innovation is not about creating something new but about improving existing products or services that benefit an organization based on new ideas (Amabile, 1988). On the one hand, creativity involves generating new and original ideas. On the other hand, innovations entail implementing those ideas to create tangible solutions that turn creative ideas into practical realities with real-world value (Vehar, 2013). Studies indicated the importance of innovative work behavior in promoting organizational performance (Salahat et al., Berisha et al., 2020; Susilo, 2019).

Despite the importance of workplace relationships in enhancing organizational performance, however, there have been few existing studies to date concerning the effect of workplace relationships on work motivation and innovative work behavior. Thus, the current study aims to address this gap by investigating the interplay dynamics between workplace relationships, work motivation, and innovative work behavior. The study is divided into several parts: the first part is the introduction, which explains the background of the study. The second part is the literature review, which investigates the existing literature that explains the concept or theories of the study. The third aspect is the research methodology, which describes the research design, population, locale, instruments, procedures, and statistical treatment of data. The fourth part is the data presentation and analysis, and the fifth is the results, discussion, and conclusion.

Literature review

Understanding workplace relationships

It cannot be denied that positive workplace relationships matter in creating a good feeling (Kun & Gadanecz, 2022; Curry et al., 2024; Berdicchia et al., 2022). A good workplace relationship or a bad workplace relationship affects the mood of a person in doing their job (Morrison, 2008). Therefore, a good workplace relationship is essential to maintain and sustain the excitement of employees to do their jobs, which helps improve employees' performance (Tran et al., 2018). The harmonious work relationship between employees and supervisors can affect positive feelings and energy, which consequently affect the performance of the person (Tran et al., 2018; Lane et al., 2016a). Studies noted that the level of mood affects how the employee performs their job which influences the level of performance (Andrade, et al., 2016, Hosie et al 2006; Essays, 2013, para. 1). Studies also suggest that more pleasant mood is associated with higher performance (Brandt, et al., 2016, Lane & Terry, 2000; Zandi & Rad, 2013). The study by Zandi and Rad (2013) found that different mood levels make a difference between the winner and the loser in the game competition. This goes along with Job satisfaction. It is one of the results of a positive mood and positive working relationship (Abun et. al., 2018), and such job satisfaction is not always caused by salary (Ram, 2013). Thus, creating such an environment is the job of management and the job of every employee, as Patricia (2015, pp. 115-125) argued that management intervention can help create friendship at work through social activities inside and outside of the workplace. Besides management intervention, it is also essential for the employees to try to get along well with other employees (Durrah, 2022).

Ramjee (2018) classified three kinds of workplace relationships: management flexibility and coworker relationships. Management flexibility refers to the effort of management to balance work and personal life. Employees should not be confined to the office from 8-5, without considering unforeseen events related to family or personal matters (Sushil, 2013). A coworker relationship refers to a harmonious working relationship between employees. Employees should be able to interact with other employees freely within the organization (Jacobs et al., 2013; Uslukaya & Demirtas, 2024). Finally, a social relationship is related to group bonding, where employees feel comfortable with each other and form groups over coffee, breakfast, or lunch. He then recommended team building as a solution to those working relationships (Tjulin & Eachen, 2016).

Edward (2015) argued that workplace satisfaction is crucial to increasing productivity; therefore, management should prioritize improving workplace satisfaction to enhance work performance. Making employees happy is one of the essential jobs of management (Raghunattan & Chitturi, 2023). Taking a hard-nose approach is not the best policy for success. While the structure is also necessary, it has nothing to do with workplace happiness and individual employee satisfaction (Dong et al., 2021). The brain will work better when a person is feeling positive or happy (Robinson & Eid, 2017). He then recommended several tips to improve workplace satisfaction, including listening to employees, avoiding excessive supervision, fostering creativity and personalization, offering competitive benefits, and respecting employees.

Scholars have studied workplace relationship and their studies have revealed that most employees' difficulties in performing their jobs are a product of a working relationship between employee and supervisor (Tran, et al., 2018, Ross & Boles, 1994, Khoa, et al., 2018, Hampton, 2019) Their studies concluded that most of the supervisors are not aware of the impact of their working relationship with the employees on the effectiveness of a subordinate (Essays, 2013).

Employee-employer relationship

The relationship starts when an employer hires a new employee and signs a contract. All Answers Ltd (2018) defines an employee as a person in the service of another under any contract of hire, express or implied, oral or written, where the employer has the power or right to control and direct the employee in the material details of how the work is to be performed. Through the contract, an employer and employee set promises to perform in the future as their duty toward each other (Basu et al., 2021). It is seen as an agreement between the employer and employees that creates a legal and moral obligation between the two parties (Persson, 2006; Bix, 2021). It is implied that the employee has accepted the offer before they signed the contract. However, it is also pointed out that a contract does not create productivity or high performance, but motivation. Wood et al. (2004), Naa et al. (2021), Maduka & Okafor (2014), and Aliyu (2019) argued that motivation plays a vital role in maintaining the relationship and productivity. Thus, motivation is the foremost concern of the contract because, without it, organizational objectives cannot be achieved. It is acknowledged that the most challenging factor for employers to manage in the employment relationship effectively is motivation (Shah, 2015). Stone (2005) and Dubin (1958) further elaborate on this, noting motivation as something that moves a person to action and continues him in the course of action already initiated.

Initially, the employment relationship was determined by law. The law defines the rights and responsibilities/rules that govern the behavior of both employer and employee, which has an impact on how the relationship works out. In recent developments, particularly in Human Resources Management, the concept of the employer-employee relationship has changed, which was formally dependent upon the interaction of formal legal regulations (Beardwell & Claydon, 2007). Before Collective Bargaining, employer and employee representatives would negotiate matters such as pay, terms of employment, and working conditions. However, this traditional method of bargaining may give way to individual negotiations in the absence of a collective bargaining association. In some contexts, there is a trend to shift from traditional collective bargaining to a more individualized method of bargaining (Henderson 2008, cited by Essays, 2018). It is not only a collective relationship that warrants consideration, but also an individual relationship.

According to Marchington and Wilkinson (2011), the employer-employee relationship indicates employee involvement. Such employee involvement is a form of relationship in which employees can participate in decision-making that was initially reserved for management only. Employee-employer relations also indicate conflict and cooperation. Therefore, according to Marchington and Wilkinson (2011), employee-employer relations are crucial to an organization's success, and their failure can lead to its downfall.

The success of the organization depends on how well the employee and employer work together (Samwel, 2018). An employer cannot achieve their goal alone but through their employees. Therefore, the employer needs to develop a relationship with the employees. Employees' jobs are assigned by their employers, and therefore, employees need to build a relationship with their employers. Both rely on each other to conduct business (Berkeley & Watson, 2009; Demyen, 2024). According to Schreiner (2018), managing relationships between employer and employee is vital to business success, as strong relationships can lead to greater employee happiness and even increased productivity (Berkeley & Watson, 2009). To reap these benefits, keep the dynamics of the employer-employee relationship in check. While maintaining a good relationship with the employee is essential, the question is what kind of relationship is it? Oftentimes, some employers maintain a distance from the employees in order not to cross the line, while others do not. They prefer to be closer to and more friendly with the employees (Herr et al., 2022). Two styles do not preclude the best style; what is crucial is that both parties recognize the gap and their respective limitations.

A good employer-employee relationship leads to high performance or productivity (Hagenimana et al., 2018). Thus, it is necessary to maintain a good relationship between employers and employees. Halsal (2014) suggested several key points for promoting good working relationships, including mutual respect, mutual reliance, support or nurturing, gratitude and appreciation, open communication, consistent feedback, and follow-through on promises made to employees. O'Brien (2014) emphasizes the importance of maintaining a good relationship as the key to the ultimate success of an organization. He pointed out the benefits of a good employer-employee relationship, such as increased productivity, employee loyalty, and conflict reduction. Task Management Guide (n.d) explains that the purpose of the employment relationship is to contribute to satisfactory productivity, motivation, and morale of employees as well as to ensure sufficient revenue and profits for employers through preventing and resolving problems that arise out of or affect various work situations.

Employee-employee relationship

Employee relation is defined as the relationship between employees and employers in the organization (Crail, 2023). One of management's challenging tasks is to foster a harmonious working relationship among employees and with the employer (O'Hara, 2018). Any employee working in the organization must feel comfortable interacting with colleagues and the employer without hesitation, as this can facilitate knowledge sharing among employees, leading to better performance (Kuzu & Ozilhan, 2014). A good work relationship is essential for employees to perform their jobs effectively, and a healthy relationship among employees significantly motivates them and boosts their confidence and morale (Durrah, 2022; Clayton, 2021). This is not only the job of management, but it is also the employees' participation in the management to create a better workplace environment in which employees can reach out to each other to facilitate work and work performance (Galeazzo et al., 2021). A good workplace encourages cooperation and discourages conflicts among employees, and it can also reduce tensions and absenteeism (Roffey, 2016).

A good relationship is born over time, nurtured, and naturally grows. It may begin with an acquaintance relationship or social relationship, and then it is nurtured as friendship (Traeem & Kvaem, 2022). One enters into a friendship voluntarily because one has a similar or the same goal as the other (Patricia, 2015). The individuals enter this relationship after they have known each other and have shared social and emotional goals, and these goals may include feelings of belonging, affection, and intimacy (Lee, 2005). The sense of belongingness, tenderness, and intimacy between individuals must be nurtured and allowed to grow, as neglecting it will cause it to deteriorate and die naturally. Therefore, according to Maxwell (2004), developing personal relationships is a serious business that yields dividends to those committed to it. According to the Social Exchange Theory (Homans, 1961), those feelings must be reciprocated to stay in the relationship. The relationship can never be one-sided; both must nurture and invest their time and energy in such a relationship. Homans's Social exchange theory posits that human relationships are formed using a subjective cost-benefit analysis and the comparison of alternatives (Homans, 1974).

There are several suggestions on how to improve employee-employee relations at the workplace. These include forming teams, encouraging idea sharing, assigning targets, promoting bonding activities, fostering open communication, scheduling meetings, and organizing celebrations (Van den Hout & Davis, 2021). These activities, organized by management, help strengthen the bond among employees and ensure each one is content and enjoys a healthy relationship with the others.

Employee relations encompass not only the relationships among employees but also those with line managers, aiming to establish a trust-based relationship with employees (Bingham, 2016). This is based on the belief that a favorable climate of employee relations - with high levels of employee involvement, commitment, and engagement - can improve business outcomes as well as contribute to employees' well-being (CIPD, 2018).

Work motivation

Definition of motivation and work motivation theories

The psychological definition of motivation might be different from the work management definition of motivation. Psychologically, motivation is a driving force behind action (Mannell, 2014). It is a force that maintains one's energy to achieve goals. It keeps the person going even when things get tough (Cherry, 2023). However, researchers have defined and explained motivation differently, leading to various theories, *such as the instinct theory of motivation*. William James and Sigmund Freud, in their instinctive theory of motivation, argued that our behavior is motivated by the desire for survival (Bandhu et al., 2024). Clark Hull introduced *the drive theory of motivation*. He argued that our actions are motivated to maintain a state of balance, driven by biological needs or drives such as hunger, thirst, and sleep, in which individuals are driven to engage in actions to reduce and restore homeostasis (Remley, 1980). William James and Carl Lange introduced *the arousal theory of motivation*, noting that a behavior is caused by a desire to maintain an optimal level of psychological arousal (Ningjian, 2024). The individual seeks out activities to keep their excitement or alertness at a comfortable level, neither too high nor too low, to perform at their best (Hancock, 1987). Abraham Maslow is credited with introducing *humanistic motivation theory*, which posits that a behavior is performed to meet specific needs (Madsen & Wilson, 2012). B.F. Skinner coined the *incentive theory of motivation*, a behavior pursued to achieve a reward, and the expectancy theory of motivation. This behavior is carried out to realize our expectations in the future (Cherry, 2023). In a work-oriented organizational setting, motivation is closely tied to work. Work motivation is understood as a process of stimulating people to action to accomplish a desired goal (Scott, 1961). Brech (1969, p.4) defines it as "a general inspirational process which gets members of the team to put their weight effectively to give their loyalty to the group to carry out properly the task that they accepted and generally to play an effective part in the job that the group has undertaken" It is the way how management stimulates or inspires employees to put their loyalty and effort to carry out their tasks and responsibilities. In other words, it is a process by which management inspires or motivates employees to enhance their desire, morale, and willingness to fulfill their responsibilities and achieve organizational objectives.

In a work setting, motivation is directed toward the attainment of goals (Chen, 2016). Thus, motivation is an intentional effort designed by management to inspire employees to work harder and smarter to achieve the objectives. The challenge for management is how to motivate employees, a skill that management needs to master. Several theories or approaches have been recommended for motivating employees. The first one is the need-based approach/theory, and this approach was introduced by several scholars like Maslow (1943, 1954), Alderfer (1969), Herzberg (1959), and McClelland and Burnham (1976). This approach is also called the content theory of motivation. According to Maslow (1943, 1954), human beings have their own needs that are ranked hierarchically, which suggests that there are lower or basic needs and higher needs. Human beings are moved to action to fulfill basic needs first, before they move on to higher needs. Maslow identified five needs according to their hierarchy.

At the lowest level are physiological needs, or the need for survival, and without them, human beings cannot survive. The needs include air, food, and water. Only after these needs are fulfilled do you move to the next level, which is safety needs. People are looking for safety from danger, pain, and an uncertain future. When these needs are met, one then moves to the next level of needs, namely social needs (Navy, 2020). These needs motivate people to connect to other human beings and the need to be loved. Human beings believe that living without attachment to other people can harm one's health and well-being (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). The fulfilment of social needs leads toward the esteem need, a need to be respected, recognized, feel important, and appreciated. After all lower needs are fulfilled, the motivation for behavior is to realize the highest need, which is self-actualization or the ultimate dream one wants to achieve. Work is no longer just about fulfilling basic needs, safety needs, and social needs; it is about realizing one's dream. The Maslow hierarchy of needs is questioned by Alderfer (1969). For Alderfer, one's needs cannot be structured because one's needs can be felt together, the lower and the higher level at the same time. Thus, the second theory of need motivation is the ERG theory of needs, which is Existence,

Relatedness, and Growth needs. This theory is not a new theory but a simplification of the hierarchy needs of Maslow because existence needs refer to the basic needs (physiological) and safety needs of Maslow's hierarchy needs that are necessary for one's existence. While relatedness needs refer to the social needs of Maslow's hierarchy, growth needs refer to the self-esteem and self-actualization aspects of it.

Alderfer does not rank needs in any particular order because he believes that more than one need may operate at a given time. However, he argued that a person who pursues higher or higher needs tends to regress to lower needs when he/she cannot achieve those needs (Weber-Kramer, 2023). The third theory of need motivation is the two-factor theory proposed by Herzberg et al. (1959) and Herzberg (1965). The two factors are hygiene and motivation. Hygiene encompasses the work environment, including company policy, supervision and relationships, working conditions, salary, and security. Motivators include achievement, recognition, interesting work, increased responsibility, advancement, and growth. According to Herzberg, hygiene is not a motivation, but the motivation is achievement and recognition.

However, when these factors are not fulfilled, employees become demotivated or dissatisfied. The fourth theory of need motivation is the acquired need theory of motivation proposed by Douglas McClelland. McClelland and Burnham (1976) identified three types of needs: need for achievement, need for affiliation, and need for power. The need for achievement is the desire to succeed. Those who have a high need for achievement tend to accomplish work on time, come up with brilliant ideas, and maybe plan for their next career move (Harrell & Stahl, 1981; Trevis & Certo, 2005; Turban & Keon, 1993). The need for affiliation is similar to Maslow's social need, which requires affiliation, association, and acceptance of others (Wong & Csikszentmihalyi, 1991). Thus, in this context, one wants to be friends with others and tends to keep harmonious working relationships. The need for power refers to the need to influence and control others and their environment. Though it may be destructive if not managed, the need for power is important for effectiveness in managerial and leadership positions (McClelland & Burnham, 1976; Spangler & House, 1991; Spreier, 2006)

The second theory of motivation is *a process-based theory of motivation*. This theory suggests that efforts or behaviors cannot be undertaken to achieve a target. These theories emphasize the mechanism by which one chooses a target and then sets the level of effort to achieve the target (Sandvik et al., 1985). *There are four theories under the process theory of motivation, namely operant conditioning theory, equity theory, goal theory, and expectancy theory.* The operant conditioning theory of Skinner (1953) explains that reward and punishment are important to modify behavior (Skinner, 1953). People will only do those things that they will be rewarded for and avoid doing things that they will be punished for. For one, behavior changes after learning the consequences, whether the result is good or bad, and then modifies the behavior. *Equity theory posits* that the outcome one influences their motivation is perceived as equal to the inputs they provide, and this is then compared to the inputs and outcomes of others (Adams, 1965). A person evaluates the outcome or what they receive, comparing it to their inputs and the outcome of the other person with the same inputs, to determine how much they receive. One expects to receive something equal to the inputs, and if it is also applied to other people. Demotivation occurs when one's efforts or inputs are not recognized or rewarded according to their value, and it is particularly frustrating when someone with the same inputs receives more than they do. Next is the goal theory. *Goal theory* argues that people are motivated when they are given challenging, specific, and accepted goals or objectives (Locke, 1978; Taylor, 1911; Pinder, 1984).

Expectancy theory suggests that we exert extra effort to perform at a high level in order to achieve the valued outcome. In this case, individual motivation to exert extra effort or less is determined by a rational calculation in which individuals evaluate their situation (Porter & Lawler, 1968; Vroom, 1964). The individual will exert effort to achieve high performance because they expect a reward or outcome that they desire (Effort-Performance-Reward). The effort-performance expectancy is the individual's perception of the probability that effort will lead to a high performance. Performance outcome expectancy is an individual's perception that performance will lead to a specific outcome (Filipove, 2-26, Sewandono, et al., 2023). In short, a certain number of efforts will lead to a high performance, which consequently leads to a specific outcome. Thus, performance serves as an instrument to achieve the desired outcome, which is reward.

Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation

According to Ryan and Deci (2002), not all activities are performed intrinsically motivated, just like a child who does something purely for the sake of pleasure. However, as the person matures, activities or work are no longer pursued for

pleasure, but rather for external motivation, where the person performs such activities as a means to gain rewards or recognition (Schröder, 2023).

Earlier motivation theories, such as Maslow, Herzberg, Alderfer, and McClelland, which we have discussed above, have clear classifications or identification of which of those needs are considered intrinsic or extrinsic motivation, which makes it challenging to apply to work settings (Gagne & Deci, 2005). In the work setting, motivation can be classified into two types: intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation means that people are doing certain things because they find them interesting and derive satisfaction from such activities (Dei, 1975). In contrast, extrinsic motivation states that people perform certain behaviors or activities because of some consequences like praise or other forms of recognition, and they get satisfaction from the rewards but not from the activity itself (Gagne & Deci, 2005). However, according to Gagne and Deci (2005), the simple dichotomy between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation made the theory difficult to apply to work settings. Thus, related to work motivation, they proposed the Self-Determination theory. The key concept of Self-Determination theory is the distinction between *autonomous motivation and controlled motivation* (Poppelaars et al., 2014). Autonomous motivation refers to the situation where a person performs a behavior with a sense of volition, choosing or determining their action without external pressure. In other words, one endorses their action (Dworkin, 1988). People engage in an activity because they want to, not because they have to, and they find satisfaction in performing it. One performs the work because it is fun. The pleasurable feeling comes from the work itself and not from the rewards or other external recognition (Zhu et al., 2024).

In contrast, controlled motivation is externally driven. It involves doing things with a sense of pressure (Gagne & Deci, 2005). A person performs a particular activity because they have to, with no choice, and they do it to get something, such as rewards. Using rewards is a controlled motivation (Deci, 1971). Thus, both autonomous and controlled motivation differ in terms of underlying regulatory processes and accompanying experiences. Therefore, behaviors are characterized by the degree to which they are autonomous and controlled (Gagne & Deci, 2005). Following such a concept, under SDT, motivation is not treated as a singular construct but a multidimensional construct composed of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation with its classification (Gagne & Deci, 2005, pp. 331-362). Intrinsic motivation is defined as the inherent desire to seek challenges, to work and perform activities within one's capacities, and to find enjoyment in such activities (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Extrinsic motivation is defined as the absence of inner excitement and finding excitement in performing the job, but performing the job to attain a separable outcome. For example, employees do their job, not because they find enjoyment in doing their job, but because of external rewards (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

However, the degree to which they are controlled, OIT (Organismic Integration Theory), a sub-theory of SDT (Deci & Ryan, 1985), classifies extrinsic motivation into ***external regulation, introjected regulation, identified regulation, and integrated regulation***. External regulation refers to motivation that is externally controlled and whose actions have an external locus of causality (deCharms, 1968). Introjected regulation means taking regulation but not fully accepting it as one's own. A person performs the job to avoid feeling guilty. He/she performs the job to maintain a feeling of worth (William, et al. 1996, Uzun & Aydemir, 2020). Identifying regulation reflects a conscious valuing of a behavioral goal or regulation in which a person accepts that such action is important (Brenner, 2022). Finally, integrated regulation means a person has evaluated specific actions to be in congruence with their values (Benner, 2022).

Innovative work behavior

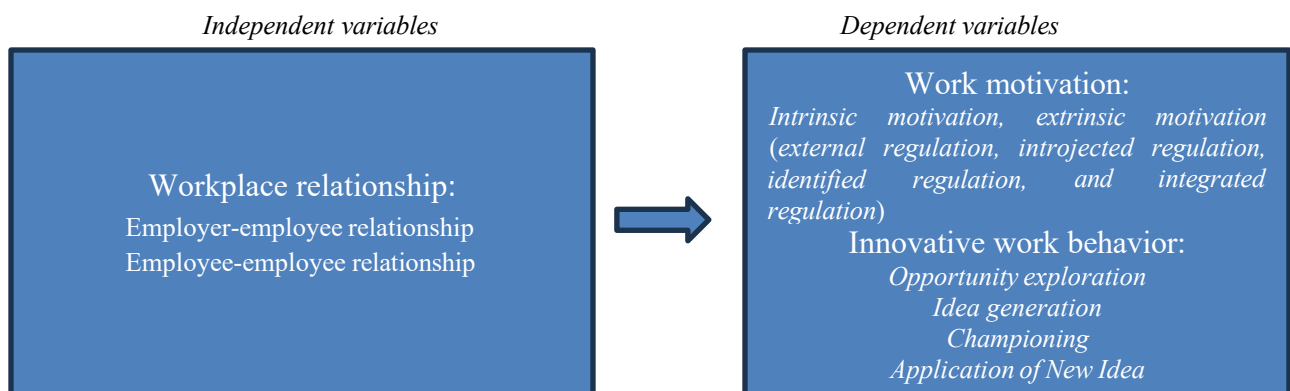
Scott and Bruce (1994, 1998) introduced the concept of innovative work behavior; however, the founding fathers did not define IWB. Though many articles proposed definitions, however, according to De Spiegelare, et al. (2014) most of these definitions are copied from West and Farr (1990) who defined innovative work behavior as the intentional introduction and application of ideas, processes, products or procedures, new to the relevant unit of adoption, designed to significantly benefit the individual, the group, organization or wider society. Later definitions are similar to the definition given by West and Farr (1990). For example, Spreitzer (1995, p. 1449) defines it as the creation of something new or different. Innovative behaviors are by definition change-oriented because they involve the creation of a new product, service, idea, procedure, or process. Janssen (2000, p. 288) also views it as "the intentional creation, introduction and application of new ideas within a work role, group or organization, to benefit role performance, the group, or the organization". Dorenbosh, et al. (2005, p. 129) consider it as "the willingness by individual employees to constitute on-the-job innovations – for example, the upgrading of ways of

working, communication with direct colleagues, the use of computers, or the development of new services or products". Those definitions are repetitions of the definition provided by West and Farr (1990) because there are no new dimensions added to the existing definition. Most of the definitions emphasize the nature of innovation's novelty. However, De Spiegelaere et al. (2014, p. 11) have criticized the notion that novelty alone is sufficient to determine an innovation, as novelty refers to the dependent result. Novelty is only known after something has been done successfully. Suppose innovative work behavior is measured only as result-dependent and neglects the generation, introduction, and application of new ideas, which lead to positive change or novelty (De Spiegelaere et al., 2014). In that case, it fails to describe innovative work behavior. Thus, to solve such an issue De Spiegelaere, et al. (2014) proposed a definition of innovative work behavior to include other dimensions such as the generation of an idea, introduction and the application of an idea as they define it as "all behaviors aimed at the generation, introduction and/or application (within a role, group or organization) of ideas, processes, products or procedures, new and intended to benefit the relevant unit of adoption"

Thus, from such a definition, the innovative work behavior is not a single construct but a multidimensional construct which includes the *generation of ideas, introduction, application, and a positive result* (benefit to the relevant unit) (Kleysen & Street, 2001). In terms of the dimensions, de Jong and Den Hartog (2008) identified four dimensions of innovative work behavior namely *opportunity exploration* (paying attention to issues that are not part of his daily work and wondering how things can be improved), *idea generation* (search out new working methods, techniques or instruments, generate original solutions for problems, find new approaches to execute tasks), *championing* (make important organizational members enthusiastic for innovative ideas, attempt to convince people to support an innovative idea) and *application* (systematically introduce innovative ideas into work practices, contribute to the implementation of new ideas, and put the effort in the development of new things). Although the definition of de Jong and Den Hartog does not include the benefit, it is sufficient to define the innovative work behavior that we are adopting in this study. The reason is that innovation should focus on idea generation, introduction, championing, and application (Kabir, 2019; Simon, 2009). The benefit is not included as an innovative work behavior variable because there is no result/benefit if there is no opportunity for exploration, idea generation, introduction, championing, and the application of ideas.

Many researchers have studied the function of innovative behavior. There have been studies concerning the effect of innovative work behavior on organizational performance. For example, Shanker et al. (2017) examine the effect of innovative work behavior on organizational performance, and the study indicated that innovative work behavior is a contributing factor to organizational performance. Organizational performance is the output of individual performance, and the study also suggests that individual performance is influenced by innovative work behavior, as pointed out by Leong and Rasli (2013). Innovative work behavior is also influenced by other factors such as entrepreneurial culture or entrepreneurial work environment, as indicated by the study of Nguyen et al. (2021). These studies suggest that improving organizational performance requires paying attention to the work environment and determining whether it helps motivate employees to be innovative, as recommended by Purwanto's study (2020). Two key dimensions of the work environment that require attention are leadership and entrepreneurial culture.

Conceptual framework



Source: Raziq and Maulabakhsh (2015), Ryan and Deci (2000), de Jong and Den Hartog (2008)

Figure 1: The conceptual framework reflects the concept of the study. It indicates that workplace relationship affects work motivation and innovative work behavior.

Statement of the problems

The study aimed to examine the influence of workplace relationships on work motivation and innovative work behavior. It specifically seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of work motivation of employees in terms of:
 - a. Employer-employee relationship
 - b. Employee-employee relationship.
2. What is the level of work motivation in terms of:
 - a. Intrinsic motivation
 - b. Extrinsic motivation
 - B1: External regulation
 - B2: Introjected regulation
 - B3: Identified regulation
 - B4: Integrated regulation
3. What is the level of innovative work behavior of the employees in terms of:
 - a. Opportunity exploration
 - b. Idea generation
 - c. Championing
 - d. Application of new idea
4. Is there a relationship between workplace relationships and work motivation?
5. Is there a relationship between workplace relationships and innovative work behavior?

Hypothesis

Workplace relationship plays a significant role in individual work performance and organizational performance (Schmidt et al., 2013; Osta, 2018). The current study hypothesizes that workplace relationships affect the work motivation and innovative behavior of employees.

Scope and delimitation of the study

The study limits its investigation to the employees of the Divine Word College of Laoag, focusing on workplace relationships, motivation, and innovative work behavior within the institution.

Research methodology

The study is a quantitative study and thus, it utilizes a descriptive assessment and correlational research design. The locale and the population of the study are the Divine Word College of Laoag and its employees. The study employs questionnaires to collect data, utilizing both descriptive and inferential statistics. Consequently, it employs the weighted mean and Pearson r for data analysis. In the process of gathering data, the researcher sent a letter to the President requesting permission to distribute the questionnaires. The data collection was then conducted through the employees' representatives. The researcher also considered the ethical review, and since the research does not involve sensitive human issues, the ethical review was waived.

The following ranges of values with their descriptive interpretation will be used:

Statistical Range

Descriptive Interpretation

4.21-5.00	Strongly Agree/Very High (SA/VH)
3.41-4.20	Agree/High (A/H)
2.61-3.40	Somewhat Agree/Moderate (SWA/M)
1.81-2.60	Disagree/Low (D/L)
1.00-1.80	Strongly Disagree/Very Low (SD/VL)

Data presentation and analysis

The study aimed to examine the influence of workplace relationships on work motivation and innovative work behavior. It specifically seeks to answer the following questions:

Problem 1: What is the level of workplace relationships in terms of:

- a. Employer-employee relationship
- b. Employee-employee relationship

Table 1: Workplace relationship

Indicator	Mean	DI
Employer-employee relationship		
There is a mutual relationship between supervisors and subordinates	3.46	A/H
Supervisors rely on their subordinates, and subordinates rely on their supervisors	3.17	SWA/M
Supervisors communicate openly with their subordinates, and the same subordinates communicate openly with their supervisors	3.41	A/H
Supervisors support their subordinates, and subordinates support their supervisors	3.67	A/H
Supervisors feel free to give feedback to their subordinates, and subordinates feel free to give feedback to their supervisors	3.39	SWA/M
Supervisors often express gratitude to their subordinates, and subordinates also express gratitude toward their supervisor	3.52	A/H
Supervisors follow through with what they have promised to their subordinates, and subordinates, too, follow through with what they have promised to their supervisors	3.35	A/H
Supervisors allow subordinates to participate in decision-making, and subordinates can make their own decisions	3.60	A/H
The supervisor can get the cooperation of subordinates easily, and subordinates can get the cooperation of supervisors easily	3.52	A/H
Composite Mean	3.45	A/H
Employee-employee relationship		
There is a mutual respect among employees.	3.72	A/H
Employees can depend on each other	3.67	A/H
Employees can easily get the cooperation of other employees in community programs or activities	3.77	A/H
Employees can communicate openly with other employees without hesitation	3.74	A/H
Employees often help one another in solving problems they encounter in the workplace	3.79	A/H
Employees always show respect to their fellow employees	3.95	A/H
Employees support one another whenever there is a need for support	3.86	A/H
Employees often give feedback to their fellow employees, even if it is negative feedback	3.64	A/H
Employees also often express gratitude to their fellow employees after they are helped	3.84	A/H
Composite Mean	3.77	A/H
Overall Mean	3.61	A/H

Source: Raziq and Maulabakhsh (2015)

Legend:

4.21-5.00	Strongly Agree/Very High (SA/VH)
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3.41-4.20	Agree/High (A/H)
2.61-3.40	Somewhat Agree/Moderate (SWA/M)
1.81-2.60	Disagree/Low (D/L)
1.00-1.80	Strongly Disagree/Very Low (SD/VL)

Based on the data in the table, the data reveals that overall workplace relationships obtained an overall mean rating of 3.61, which is considered high (agree). Such a rating indicates that the overall workplace relationship, specifically between employer and employees, employees and employees, is not very high, nor is it very low, or low but rather it is moderate. Even when the dimensions are taken separately, both dimensions are rated at the same level of mean rating. Concerning employer and employee relationship (3.45), the employees highly agree that there is a mutual relationship (3.46), an open communication (3.41), support for each other (3.67), an appreciation from and for both sides (3.52), participation in decision-making (3.60), and cooperation (3.52). However, the employees rated lower or moderate in terms of receiving and giving feedback (3.39) and trust or reliance (3.17). High rating along employer-employee relationship signifies a mutual respect, open communication, trust, and satisfaction between employer and employees, which can lead to increased loyalty, productivity, lower turnover, and better organizational performance (Demyen, 2024; Bal et al., 2015; Blyton & Thurnbull, 1998). In terms of high rating along with employee-employee relationship (3.77) implies that the employees highly agree that there is a mutual respect among employees (3.72), depend on each other (3.67), cooperation (3.77), open communication (3.74), helping one another (3.79), respect for co employees (3.95), supporting one another (3.86), open for feedbacks (3.64), and express gratitude to co employees after being helped (3.84). High ratings in employee-employee relationships imply that employees have a strong, positive connection with their colleagues, leading to increased productivity, higher morale, better employee retention, improved collaboration, improved well-being, engagement, satisfaction, communication, and a healthy work environment (Tran et al., 2018; Sypniewska et al., 2023). Overall high rating of workplace relationship suggests that there is respect, open communication and trust between employer and employee and among employees in the institution/organization which consequently will lead to higher job satisfaction, improved collaboration and increased productivity (Seppala & Nichols, 2022; Mastroianni & Storberg-Walker, 2014, Tran, et al. 2018, Langley, 2011, Gerbasi, et al. 2023, Johnstone & Wilkinson, 2016).

Problem 2: What is the level of work motivation in terms of:

- a. Intrinsic motivation
- b. Extrinsic motivation
 - b1: External regulation
 - b2: Introjected regulation
 - b3: Identified regulation
 - b4: Integrated regulation

Table 2: Work motivation

Indicator	Mean	DI
Intrinsic motivation		
Because I derive much pleasure from learning new things in my job	3.97	A/H
For the satisfaction I experience from taking on interesting challenges	4.08	A/H
For the satisfaction I experience when I am successful at doing a difficult task	4.04	A/H
Composite Mean	4.03	A/H
Extrinsic motivation		
External regulation		
For the income, it provides me	3.68	A/H
Because it allows me to earn money	3.70	A/H
Because this type of work provides me with security	3.51	A/H
Sub-composite Mean	3.63	A/H
Introjected regulation		
Because I want to succeed at this job, if not, I would be very ashamed of myself	4.04	A/H
Because I want to be very good at this work, otherwise, I would be very disappointed	3.87	A/H

Because I want to be a winner in life	3.80	A/H
Sub-composite Mean	3.90	A/H
Identified regulation		
Because this is the type of work I chose to do to attain a certain lifestyle	3.47	A/H
Because I chose this work to attain my career goals	3.92	A/H
Because it is the type of work I have chosen to attain certain important objectives	3.94	A/H
Sub-composite Mean	3.78	A/H
Integrated regulation		
because it has become a fundamental part of who I am	3.73	A/H
Because it is part of how I have chosen to live my life	3.83	A/H
Because this job is part of my life	3.84	A/H
Sub-composite Mean	3.80	A/H
Composite Mean	3.78	A/H
Overall Mean	3.91	A/H

Source: Ryan and Deci (2000)

As demonstrated by the data in the table, the work motivation of the employees received an overall mean rating of 3.91, which is high (agree). The rating implies that overall, the work motivation of the employees is not very high, nor is it very low, low, or moderate, but it is high (agree). Even if the dimensions are considered individually, all dimensions are rated at the same high level of mean rating. In terms of *intrinsic motivation* (4.03), the employees agree that they work because they derive pleasure from their job (3.97), learn new things (4.08), and find satisfaction in taking on interesting challenges (4.08), as well as completing difficult tasks (4.04). High rating in intrinsic motivation suggests that employees get the drive to work for its own sake, out of their interest and enjoyment. They discover inherent satisfaction in doing their task and fulfill their psychological needs such as autonomy and competence after completing their tasks (Swiatczak, 2021; Moller & Deci, 2024; Palso et al., 2025; Grassinger et al., 2024). In the same vein, a high rating in extrinsic motivation (3.78) implies that employees work not for the sake of the work itself and find enjoyment in the work they do, but for money, rewards, security, and fulfilling personal ambition. High rating in extrinsic motivation indicates that employees are motivated by external rewards or pressures rather than inherent interest (Fabien, 2015; Sengupta & Guchhait, 2024; Deci & Ryan, 2008; Deci & Flaste, 1996; Derfler-Rozin & Pitesa, 2021).

Problem 3: What is the level of innovative work behavior of the employees in terms of:

- Opportunity exploration
- Idea generation
- Championing
- Application of a new idea

Table 3: Innovative work behavior

Indicator	Mean	DI
Opportunity exploration		
I pay attention to issues that are not part of my daily work	3.61	A/H
I wonder how things can be improved	4.11	A/H
Composite Mean	3.86	A/H
Idea generation		
I search out new working methods, techniques, or instruments	4.02	A/H
I generate original solutions for problems	3.87	A/H
I find new approaches to executing tasks	3.95	A/H
Composite Mean	3.94	A/H
Championing		
I make important organizational members enthusiastic about innovative ideas	3.79	A/H
I attempt to convince people to support an innovative idea	3.87	A/H
Composite Mean	3.83	A/H

Application of New Idea		
I systematically introduce innovative ideas into work practices	3.88	A/H
I contribute to the implementation of new ideas	3.93	A/H
I put the effort into the development of new things	4.00	A/H
Composite Mean	3.93	A/H
Overall Mean	3.89	A/H

Source: de Jong and Den Hartog (2008)

In terms of innovative work behavior, the data indicates that the overall innovative work behavior of employees obtained an overall mean rating of 3.89, which is considered high. It means that the innovative work behavior of the employees is not very high, nor is it very low, moderate, or anything in between; rather, it is high. Even when the dimensions are taken separately, all dimensions are rated within the same level of mean rating, which is high. In terms of opportunity exploration (3.86), employees agree that they pay attention to issues beyond their work (3.61) and are interested in how things can be improved (4.11). High ratings, along with opportunity exploration, indicate that employees have also investigated and developed new potential opportunities by finding new ideas, experimenting, and differentiating from current approaches to achieve new advancements (Schlichte & Junge, 2024; Wasdani & Mathew, 2014; Lineiro et al., 2024). Regarding idea generation, the employees agree that they searched out new work methods (4.02), generated original solutions for solving problems (3.87), and found new approaches to execute tasks (3.95). High rating along with idea generation indicates that the employees were able to generate many novel and quality ideas contributing to work improvement and problem-solving (Park, et al. 2024, Groß, et al. 2024, Wise & Kenett, 2024). Regarding championing, the employees admitted or agreed that they individually make organizational members enthusiastic about innovative ideas (3.79) and attempted to convince them to support new ideas (3.87). High rating in championing means employees actively promote and drive the adoption of novel concepts among them because they are passionate about change and innovations. Thus, they build support even in the face of resistance (Cerne et al., 2024; Howel & Boies, 2004). Similarly, the application of new ideas (3.93) and the systematic introduction of innovative ideas (3.88) were also agreed upon by employees. Furthermore, they contributed to the implementation of new ideas (3.93) and invested effort in developing new concepts (4.00). High ratings, along with the implementation of new ideas, demonstrate that employees actively and successfully participated in generating new ideas to improve work and implemented these ideas into action (Qu & Liu, 2020; Palazzeschi et al., 2018; Valtonen et al., 2023).

Problem 4: Is there a relationship between workplace relationships and work motivation?

Table 4: Relationship between workplace relationships and work motivation

		Intrinsic motivation	External regulation	Introjected motivation	Identified motivation	Integrated motivation	Extrinsic motivation	Level of work motivation
Employer-employee relationship	Pearson Correlation	.325**	.158*	.079	.022	.523**	.323**	.377**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.025	.263	.761	.000	.000	.000
Employee-employee relationship	Pearson Correlation	.456**	.296**	.419**	-.040	.307**	.393**	.497**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.576	.000	.000	.000
Level of workplace relationship	Pearson Correlation	.447**	.258**	.280**	-.009	.483**	.411**	.501**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.894	.000	.000	.000

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS

The results demonstrate a significant and positive relationship between workplace relationships and various forms of work motivation, with distinct patterns observed for intrinsic motivation and the components of extrinsic motivation. At the aggregate level, the overall quality of workplace relationships was positively correlated with intrinsic motivation ($r = .447$, $p < .001$), overall extrinsic motivation ($r = .411$, $p < .001$), and total work motivation ($r = .501$, $p < .001$). This suggests that employees who experience supportive and harmonious relationships at work—both with supervisors and peers—tend to display higher levels of enjoyment in their work as well as stronger motivation linked to external and internalized goals.

Breaking down extrinsic motivation into its components provides a more nuanced view. Overall workplace relationships were significantly correlated with **external regulation** ($r = .258$, $p < .001$), **introjected motivation** ($r = .280$, $p < .001$), and **integrated motivation** ($r = .483$, $p < .001$), but showed no significant association with **identified motivation** ($r = -.009$, $p = .894$). This suggests that positive workplace relationships, which are linked to motivation driven by rewards, obligations, and value congruence, may have little to no influence on motivation based on personal endorsement of work goals without full value integration.

When examining the relational dimensions separately, **employer–employee relationships** displayed robust correlations with integrated motivation ($r = .523$, $p < .001$), intrinsic motivation ($r = .325$, $p < .001$), and overall extrinsic motivation ($r = .323$, $p < .001$), highlighting the influence of managerial support on aligning work with employees' values and fostering enjoyment of work. The weaker yet significant association with external regulation ($r = .158$, $p = .025$) suggests that while supervisors contribute to compliance-based motivation, their greater impact lies in encouraging deeper forms of motivation.

In contrast, **employee–employee relationships** were strongly associated with intrinsic motivation ($r = .456$, $p < .001$), introjected motivation ($r = .419$, $p < .001$), and overall extrinsic motivation ($r = .393$, $p < .001$). These results suggest that peer interactions may particularly influence motivation through social belonging, mutual accountability, and a sense of pride or obligation. Integrated motivation also correlated significantly with peer relationships ($r = .307$, $p < .001$), further highlighting the role of collegial bonds in value alignment.

Problem 5: Is there a relationship between workplace relationships and innovative work behavior?

Table 5: Relationship between workplace relationships and innovative work behavior

		Opportunity exploration	Idea generation	Championing	Application of a new idea	Level of innovative work behavior
Employer-employee relationship	Pearson correlation	.474**	.507**	.461**	.538**	.618**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
Employee-employee relationship	Pearson correlation	.566**	.428**	.182**	.402**	.521**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.010	.000	.000
Level of workplace relationship	Pearson correlation	.596**	.540**	.375**	.543**	.657**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

Source: SPSS

The findings reveal a strong and statistically significant positive relationship between workplace relationships and innovative work behavior (IWB) across all measured dimensions—opportunity exploration, idea generation, championing, application of new ideas, and overall innovative behavior. At the aggregate level, the **overall quality of workplace relationships** demonstrated high positive correlations with opportunity exploration ($r = .596$, $p < .001$), idea generation ($r = .540$, $p < .001$), championing ($r = .375$, $p < .001$), application of new ideas ($r = .543$, $p < .001$), and the overall level of IWB ($r = .657$, $p < .001$). These results indicate that employees embedded in supportive and collaborative relationships are more likely to engage in the full cycle of innovation, from identifying opportunities to implementing new ideas.

When the types of workplace relationships are considered separately, **employer–employee relationships** emerged as particularly influential, with strong positive correlations across all innovation dimensions, most notably with the application of new ideas ($r = .538, p < .001$) and overall IWB ($r = .618, p < .001$). This suggests that managerial support not only fosters the early stages of innovation (opportunity exploration and idea generation) but is also critical in facilitating the implementation phase, where resources, approvals, and structural backing are often necessary.

Employee–employee relationships also showed significant associations with all dimensions of IWB, particularly with opportunity exploration ($r = .566, p < .001$) and overall IWB ($r = .521, p < .001$). Peer relationships appear to play a key role in stimulating the creative and exploratory aspects of innovation, possibly through knowledge sharing, informal collaboration, and mutual encouragement. The weaker yet significant correlation with championing ($r = .182, p = .010$) may indicate that peers have less direct influence on advocacy for ideas, which often requires hierarchical influence and managerial endorsement.

Results and discussions

The study aimed to examine the impact of workplace relationships on work motivation and innovative work behavior. The findings indicate that workplace relationships, work motivation, and innovative work behavior were all rated high. Pearson r correlation analysis indicates that workplace relationships are correlated with both work motivation and innovative work behavior; therefore, the hypothesis is confirmed. This result leads to further discussion concerning management and theoretical implications.

First, in terms of management implications. The result suggests that the institution or organization strengthens its workplace relationships through team-building initiatives. Through team building, communication, trust, and collaboration can be improved and can enhance a healthier and more productive work environment (Demyen, 2024; Sanfilippo et al., 2025; Durrah, 2022). The results also encourage the administrators to conduct training on how to build strong relationships with team members, promoting a supportive work environment that motivates employees to perform (Kaabomeir et al. 2022, Elamalki et al. 2024, Hunter et al. 2017; Viitala et al. 2015; Taghizadeh & Aflakifard, 2017). Besides trainings that promote workplace relationships, it is also necessary for management to recognize employees' behavior that contributes to positive workplace relationships to encourage other organizational members to do the same (Harandi et al., 2024; Kim & Hang, 2024). Theoretically, the results support the existing social exchange theory, which posits that positive relationships at work lead to reciprocal behaviors, such as increased motivation (Rajaa & Mekkaoui, 2025; Ahmad et al., 2023; Jianchun, 2024). Further, strong workplace relationships can contribute to job embeddedness, making employees more likely to be motivated and committed to their work (Schmidbauer et al., 2025; Achmadi et al., 2023).

The implication of the correlation between workplace relationships and innovative work behavior. In terms of management, the results recommend that the management foster a culture of collaboration where employees feel comfortable sharing ideas and taking risks, which may lead to increased innovation (Ghani et al., 2023; Caro-Gonzalez, 2023; Guha et al., 2025). Besides collaboration, the result also encourages the management to focus on building diverse and cohesive teams that encourage knowledge sharing, idea generation, and experimentation. Teamwork enables the collective activation of necessary functions for complex problem-solving and motivates employees to generate ideas (Nishat & Haque, 2025; Ramadhani et al., 202; Le et al, 2020). Further, the results also encourage the exercise of supportive leadership, such as active listening and providing feedback, to motivate employees to venture into innovative work behavior (Crans et al., 2022; Kock et al., 2019; Muss et al., 2025).

Regarding its theoretical implications, the results confirmed the social capital theory, which suggests that positive relationships at work can facilitate knowledge sharing, collaboration, and innovation. This relationship is supported by trust, norms, and shared understanding, which enables the flow of information and resources within the network, fostering an environment conducive to the development of new ideas and solutions (Do et al., 2025; Zhang et al., 2017; Dhar & Bose, 2022). Further, strong and positive workplace relationships facilitate organizational learning, enabling employees to share knowledge and expertise and drive innovation (Abdelrahman et al., 2025; Allen et al., 2024).

Conclusion

The study aimed to assess the workplace relationship, work motivation, and innovative work behavior, as well as the influence of workplace relationship on work motivation and innovative work behavior. Using descriptive and inferential statistics to analyze the data. The results showed that workplace relations, work motivation, and innovative work behavior obtained high mean ratings. The Pearson r correlation analysis revealed a significant correlation between workplace relationships, work motivation, and innovative work behavior, thereby supporting the acceptance of the hypothesis.

However, the study acknowledged its limitations due to its limited population and coverage, as a broader population and coverage may alter the results. Thus, it is important to conduct further study to include a broader population and other SVD institutions in the Northern Province. It also recommends considering organizational culture and other institutional contexts when examining the effect of workplace relationships on work motivation and innovative work behavior.

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Data analysis: D.A., E.B.N., E.B.V. A.S.B.

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