

**A Qualitative Study of Peer Relationships:
How it can impact Employee's Organisational
Commitment**

Arantxa Talukdar

Master of Arts in Human Resource Management

National College of Ireland

Submitted to the National College of Ireland August 2020

Abstract

Studies have observed the positive correlations between workplace relationships such as peer relationships and organisational commitment. This study aims to explore and understand this link by focusing on the qualitative perspectives and experiences of 7 employees working in 7 different companies in India. Related and relevant literature has been referred to facilitate in approaching the research topic. The research has applied the qualitative method in the collection and analysis of the data. The findings are projected and explained in relation to the existing literature that makes observations as how qualitative perspectives and experiences enables an explanation of how peer relationships can be impacted and how it can impact on employees' organisational commitment. The study includes limitations, scope for future research and recommendations based on the findings.

**Declaration Form
Submission of Thesis and Dissertation**

**National College of Ireland
Research Students Declaration Form
(Thesis/Author Declaration Form)**

Name: Arantxa Talukdar

Student Number: x18137016

Degree for which thesis is submitted: MA in Human Resource Management

Material submitted for award

- (a) I declare that the work has been composed by myself.
- (b) I declare that all verbatim extracts contained in the thesis have been distinguished by quotation marks and the sources of information specifically acknowledged.
- (c) My thesis will be included in electronic format in the College

(d) *Either* *I declare that no material contained in the thesis has been used in any other submission for an academic award.

Or *I declare that the following material contained in the thesis formed part of a submission for the award of

(State the award and the awarding body and list the material below)

Signature of research student:  **Date:** 19th August 2020

Library Submission Form
Submission of Thesis to Norma Smurfit Library, National College of
Ireland

Student name: Arantxa Talukdar

Student number x18137016

School: NCI School of Business

Course: MA in HRM

Degree to be awarded: Master of Arts in Human Resource Management

Title of Thesis: A Qualitative investigation into Remote working in the Recruitment Industry and the Influence it has on employee well-being.

One hard bound copy of your thesis will be lodged in the Norma Smurfit Library and will be available for consultation. The electronic copy will be accessible in TRAP (<http://trap.ncirl.ie/>), the National College of Ireland's Institutional Repository. In accordance with normal academic library practice all theses lodged in the National College of Ireland Institutional Repository (TRAP) are made available on open access.

I agree to a hard bound copy of my thesis being available for consultation in the library. I also agree to an electronic copy of my thesis being made publicly available on the National College of Ireland's Institutional Repository TRAP.

Signature of Candidate:



For completion by the School:

The aforementioned thesis was received by _____ Date: _____

This signed form must be appended to all hard bound and electronic copies of your thesis submitted to your school

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my gratitude towards my supervisor, Mr. Fearghal O'Brien for his guidance, support and facilitating me on this dissertation. I would also like to extend my gratitude towards all the respondents who spared their time and provided their valuable views and experiences.

I would like to thank Veron for proof reading my dissertation and finally, yet importantly, I would like to thank my family and friends for their unconditional support and valuable advices.

Contents

Abstract	1
Declaration Form.....	2
Chapter1: Introduction.....	7
1.2 Research Context.....	7
1.3 Research Question and Aims of Study	10
1.4 Research Question	10
1.5 Research Aims	10
Chapter 2: Literature Review	12
2.1 Introduction.....	12
2.2 Importance of Peer Relationships.....	12
2.3 Scholarly studies on Workplace Relationships	14
2.4 Social Support.....	16
2.5 The link between Supportive Peers and Organisational Attachment	17
2.6 Negative effects of Peer Relationships.....	18
2.7 The role of Organisational Initiatives/Factors	19
2.8 Peer Relationships, Trust and Organisational Commitment	20
2.9 Research Gap.....	22
Chapter 3: Methodology.....	23
4.1 Introduction	23
4.2 Research Approach	23
4.4 Method of collecting data	25
4.5 Interview Schedule	25
4.6 Analysis of data.....	26
4.7 Ethical considerations	28
Chapter 4: Findings.....	30
5.1 Analysis and Findings	30
5.2 Informal and Reciprocal	30
5.3 Peer Support.....	30
5.4 Formal and strictly professional	32
5.5 Close bonds, Trust and Friendship.....	33
5.6 Organisational Opportunities	34
5.7 Commitment: A sense of belongingness and a sense of connection	35
5.8 Positive Work Environment.....	36
5.9 Peer to peer influence.....	37
5.10 Career Progression versus career hindrance	37
Chapter 5: Discussion	38
6.1 Limitations and Further Research.....	43
Chapter 6: Conclusion.....	45
7.1 Conclusion.....	45
7.2 Recommendations, Costings and Timeline for Implementation (CIPD Requirement)	47

Recommendation 1: Effective Communication and well-being Training and Development Programme.....	47
Recommendation 2: Alignment of values between the Organisation and Employees.....	49
Recommendation 3: Research and revision of strategy and policies	50
Personal Learning Statement.....	51
Reference List.....	52

Chapter1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This study intends to explore how employees perceive peer relationships and how their perception and experience of it can impact their organisational commitment. This chapter presents the background and the main context of this study. It also presents the research method selected for this study and a brief outline of how this study.

1.2 Research Context

Work relationships are very important in organisational life as they are integral to increasing employee's attachment towards their organisation (Ehrhardt and Ragins, 2019). Schneider (1987 cited in Ehrhardt and Ragins, 2019) asserted that "the people make the place" implying that it is through the employees whose efforts and productivity helps enable a well functioning and successful organisation. Positive employee outcomes such as their well being, performance, productivity and career progression are impacted by the social workplace relationships and networks (Tran, Nguyen and Ton , 2018). The shift from hierarchical structured to flatter structured organisations has increased the practice of engaging more of team work towards completion of tasks and projects (Chiaburu and Harrison, 2008; Grant and Parker, 2009). Hence organisations are required to rely on interdependent relationships in order to create an efficient working environment for employees. However, there are lesser known studies that attempt to understand how workplace relationships occur and why it can impact employee outcomes through the qualitative perspectives of employees.

The workplace holds an integral status in many people's daily lives. It is widely acknowledged that employees spend more time with their peer workers than with most people at work. (Comer,1991 cited in Sias, 2008).Workplace relationships as a result enable people to engage with their peers, subordinates and supervisors which altogether moulds people's work experiences (Chiaburu and Harrison,2007;Sias, 2009 cited in Collins, Hislop and Cartwright, 2016) and moreover add meaning to one's job (Collins et al; 2016). One of the leading concerns in organisational development and Human Resource development has been to find ways that motivate and continue to motivate employees' affective commitment towards their organisations (Mercurio, 2015).Organisations require attracting, establishing and retaining talent with skills and capabilities to sustain a competitive advantage in their respective industries and sectors (Alvino 2014; Clifton 2014; Pangarkar and Kirkwood, 2013). The modern business environment is characterized by uncertainty, rapid changes, globalisation, emerging and increasing competition and the emerging millennial workforce have all been adding pressure on organisations, practitioners and scholars to find and

understand the ways to secure employee commitment (Meyer, Stanley et al;2002; Morrow 2011; Mercurio , 2015).

Healthy and positive peer relationships provide valuable employee outcomes in organisations (Chiaburu and Harrison, 2008). Several advantages are acquired through informal social workplace relationships such as instrumental and emotional support (House, 1981; Karasek,1979), enabling positive identity development (Dutton, Roberts and Bednar,2010; Sluss and Ashforth,2007), socialisation (Morrison,2002) and facilitating employees to flourish (Colbert, Bono and Purcanova,2016). On the other hand, it can be inferred that negative workplace relationships affect factors such as employee satisfaction, retention, organisational commitment and employee withdrawal. Negative interactions at the workplace can affect employees' organisational attachment as observed through their experience of lower levels of job satisfaction, affective commitment and turnover intentions.

Venkataramani et al; (2013) observed that employees' experiences of positive and negative ties related to friendship and advice and avoidance respectively can indirectly affect such outcomes by the association of employee satisfaction with employees' workplace relationships. Risher (2014 cited in Mercurio, 2015) found that lower levels of employee morale can affect employees' levels of commitment. Similarly, Alvino (2014) argued that employees' volition to work longer hours and their productivity are enhanced by emotional attachment, particularly affective commitment to their organisations' goals and values.

Organisational commitment also increases employee engagement (Pangarkar and Kirkwood, 2013). Hence when employees have higher levels of organisational commitment, they tend to engage themselves emotionally, mentally and physically towards the accomplishment of organisational success.

Studies have shown that employees who receive information through workplace relationships display increased levels of job satisfaction and commitment (Brown and Mitchell,1993; Allen, 1996 cited in Tran et al;2018). Tran's et al; (2018) study indicated that increasing quality of workplace interactions keep employees better informed, reducing ambiguity in their perception of their tasks and goals and also improving their perception of their performance.

The relationships with supervisors and colleagues are two types of relationships that can affect the acquired information and resources (Tran et al;2018). Previous studies indicated the strong link between these two types of relationships and the employee performance appraisals (Breukelen et al; 2002, Schyns et al; 2005; Tran et al; 2018). Sias (2005) argues that employees rely on their leaders to gain technical skills and resources and high-quality relationships with supervisors are connected to trust, respect, obligation, support and

encouragement (Sias, 2005). Co-worker relationships on the other hand facilitate employees with emotional and instrumental support due to the co-workers' experience of the internal workplace environment (Jia and Shoham, 2012). However inadequate studies in understanding how employees view peer relationships and the kind of experiences they have makes it crucial to understand workplace factors and employee outcomes through the perception of the employee. Most of the research does not explain how employees' peer relationships affect their organisational commitment but that peer relationships can impact their organisational commitment. That is why this research seeks to understand the workplace and organisational factors through the lens of the employees. Due to relatively insufficient studies on employees' experiences of peer relationships and the way it may impact organisational factors such as commitment; this research focuses on the relationships between the employees and their peers. A lack of sufficient studies of such interpersonal relationships and particularly there being studies done more on the superior-subordinate relationships makes it crucial to have more in depth studies of peer relationships (Sias, 2008).

Several studies have acknowledged the pivotal role committed employees play in the overall organisational performance. Organisations cannot produce successful results if employees are not aligned to the organisational objectives and values (Lesabe and Nkosi, 2007). With increasing competition and fluctuating business environments, organisations must keep recognising and finding ways to commit employees to continue working in the organisation. A committed employee is an asset for any organisation and due to its strong influencing effect on the relationship between employees and their organisations, organisational commitment has become one of the most researched topics of interest (Talib and Mitra, 2017; Sow, Anthony, and Berete, 2016; Ahmed and Nawaz, 2015; Paillé, 2012). Rogers, (2001) and Tsui, Pearce and Porter, (1995 cited in Lesabe and Nkosi, 2007) argue that loyal and engaged employees incline towards causing organisational success as it improves productivity, profitability and retention. Organisational commitment is a significant indicator of employee attitudes and behaviour adding value to understanding the views and experiences of employees.

The concept of commitment has been considered distinct from other attitudes such as that of motivation as commitment drives an employee's behaviour in ways which can be in conflict with other existing motives and attitudes (Lesabe and Nkosi, 2007). As noted by Meyer and Herscovitch (2001), employees can behave in opposition to their own self-interest. This implies that a committed employee despite earning low salaries, performs productively and efficiently directed towards organisational performance.

Ellenbecker and Cushman (2011) acknowledged the importance of considering the factors and explained organisational commitment as various reasons which navigate organisational commitment. Some of these factors include moral and emotional attachment and obligation (Sow *et al.*, 2016).

This research focuses on peer relationships and organisational commitment; it will explore how employees' experiences of peer relationships can influence their organisational commitment. According to the literature available, there have been insufficient qualitative perspectives on employee experiences of peer relationships and how it responds to commitment. The research commences with reviewing the literature on the existing studies done on peer relationships and organisational commitment. To understand how peer relationships can influence organisational commitment, a qualitative study will be conducted involving a sample of 7 employees working in 7 different companies in Delhi and Mumbai located in India. In comparison to the western context, there are lesser known studies that pertain to the Asian context (Oh, 2019), hence India was selected as the area of study intended to generate crucial findings in the Indian context. Based on the findings and its analysis, the key findings are discussed concluding with limitations, scope for further study and recommendations as per the findings.

1.3 Research Question and Aims of Study

As pointed out, there is an emergent gap in the previous studies as discussed. The following research question have been chosen to examine this gap as it attempts to find significant insights into how employees experience peer relationships and how their experience itself can impact their organisational commitment.

1.4 Research Question

"How do employees' experience of peer relationships at work impact their organisational commitment?"

Based on this, 4 aims were deduced which will be applied throughout the study:

1.5 Research Aims

Research Aim 1: To explore and understand the experiences of and how employees view peer relationships and the ways it can impact on their organisational commitment.

This aim emerged as the literature captures the research gap which shows that studies require to look into the qualitative perspectives of employees.

Research Aim 2: To understand how peer relationships are developed and facilitated.

This aim emerged to find how employees form peer relations and how such relations transform into forming positive and close relationships.

Research Aim 3: To understand how factors that influence organisational commitment function together to build organisational commitment.

This aim emerged to explore the kind of factors which impact employees' peer relationships and the ways these factors can influence their organisational commitment.

Research Aim 4: To understand how other factors that influence organisational commitment relate to peer relationships.

This aim emerged as to understand the way peer relations can determine organisational commitment by exploring the way it can influence.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The chapter presents an extensive outline of research done by academics and scholars previously that covers a range of areas such as workplace relationships, positive workplace relations, peer relationships, peer support and organisational commitment. This chapter attempts to look at the findings and observations made from these studies and it is looked at critically depicting the research gap.

2.2 Importance of Peer Relationships

Positive relationships can lead to an increase in the levels of job satisfaction, job performance, decrease in intention to leave the organisation and increase in organisational commitment (Sias, 2009). Most employees tend to spend more time with their peer workers than with most people at work (Comer, 1991 cited in Sias, 2008). More interestingly, most employees tend to spend more time with their peer workers than even with their family and friends (Sias, 2008). The kind of peer relationships and its impact produces significant implications for the kind of employees' experiences and the organisation overall (Sias, 2008). A lack of sufficient studies of such interpersonal relationships and particularly there being studies done more on the superior-subordinate relationship makes it crucial to have more in depth studies on peer relationships (Sias, 2008).

Peer relationships provide crucial employee outcomes in organisations. Some of the several advantages gained from informal social relationships at work are instrumental and emotional support (House, 1981; Karasek, 1979 cited in in Pillemer and Rothbard, 2018), fostering positive identity development (Dutton, Roberts, & Bednar, 2010; Sluss & Ashforth, 2007) and socialization (Morrison, 2002), and helping employees to flourish (Colbert et al; 2016). Scholars have studied workplace social relationships for a long time which necessitates how important such relationships are especially when it impacts the relationship between an employee's perception of social satisfaction at work and one's productivity at work (Akila and Priyadarshini, 2018). The quantity and quality of interpersonal relationships have been acknowledged as valid indicators of happiness and satisfaction across all age groups amongst people (Diener and

Seligman, 2002). This can situate interpersonal relationships as significant determinants of employee engagement.

Social interactions and relationships hold a central place in organisations. Friendships play a pivotal part in people's lives adding value and meaning to their lives (Goldman, Cooper, Ahern, and Corsini, 1981; Rawlins, 1992 cited in Pillemer and Rothbard, 2018). Friendships are also beneficial to teams and organisations altogether by enabling cooperation and cohesion (Jehn and Shah, 1997), fostering creativity and innovation (Lu et al., 2017), and even spurring the organisational process itself (Weick, 1979 cited in Pillemer and Rothbard, 2018). Hence studies have shown that workplace interpersonal relationships when they are positively experienced especially in the form of friendship can be valuable in determining several positive employee outcomes.

Workplace relationships are very important in organisational life as they are integral to organisational attachment which is accurately mentioned by Schneider (1987) --“the people make the place”. Schneider's model, the attraction-selection-attrition (or ASA) asserts that the attributes of people in an organisation determines the organisational characteristics. Research has shown how an increase in the degree of misfit, leads to the likelihood of an employee experiencing low job satisfaction, higher absenteeism, increase in intention to leave the organisation and decrease in commitment (Schneider, 1987). This sense of misfit is caused when one is unable to connect and when one's own principles, values and expectations contradict their own experience of working in the organisation. Schneider (1987) emphasises on how the characteristics of people in an organisation conditions the policies and practices of the organisation which also regulates the people who are attracted to and remain within the organisation (Schneider, 1987). A sense of belonging and relatedness to others makes individuals thrive in an environment and this also includes the social connections at work (Ferris et al., 2009; Spreitzer, Lam and Fritz; 2005). Friendships also enable that feeling of relatedness as friends can share positive traits (Tesser, 1988 cited in Smith, 2000) such as taking upon qualities of another with whom one is able to relate to or admires (Cialdini et al; 1976 cited in Smith, 2000). This leaves to question if employees can influence each other in employee outcomes such as organisational commitment.

Furthermore, relationships within work are important because co-workers share an understanding of the workplace that non-employees do not have, and can impart relevant organisational

information and gossip (Sias, 2005). Positive social relations can enrich jobs (May et al., 2004), provide job fulfillment (Hodson, 2004), and positively influence turnover as employees who experience support from colleagues are less likely to leave the organisation in the short term (Moynihan and Pandey, 2008). Hence it is important to keep exploring and understanding how workplace relationships are experienced by employees as there is a lack of studies that cater to looking at the perspectives of employees and the way it can impact crucial positive outcomes such as organisational commitment. In the following section, some of the scholarly studies on workplace relationships are presented that imply the inadequate studies done on peer relationships.

2.3 Scholarly studies on Workplace Relationships

There are two concepts that frame the relationships between co-workers in an organisation, these are the leader-member relationship and interactions between co-workers (Lin and Lin, 2011).

The social exchange theory is one of the relevant theories relating to interpersonal relationships. It considers both the leader-member relationship and also the relationship between co-workers (Lin and Lin, 2011). Hence the theory is not limited to vertical relationships only.

The Social Exchange theory implies more of a transactional relationship between people. The social exchange theory treats social life as involving a series of sequential transactions between two or more parties (Mitchell et al; 2012). Economic exchanges tend to involve less trust and more active monitoring, whereas social exchanges tend to be open ended and involve greater trust and flexibility (Organ, 1988 cited in Pillemer and Rothbard, 2018). Although the social exchange theory has been applied as a perspective in understanding relationships, it does not provide a wider contemplation of workplace relationships (Ragins and Dutton, 2007). This theory is focused on the exchange between maximizing benefits and minimizing costs. The theory asserts upon fixed resources that is contradicted by the fact that positive workplace relationships form new individual and organisational resources such as psychological safety and motivation (Carmeli and Gittel, 2009). Workplace relationships are not restricted to exchanging regulated resources and quantified utility. As Silver (1990, p.1456) argued “friendship is diminished in moral quality if friends consciously monitor the balance of exchange between them, for this implies that the utility friends offer each other constitutes their relationship, rather than being valued as expressions of personal commitment”. Workplace relationships can transform into deeper and meaningful relationships that deviate away from the regulations of the

balance between benefits and costs. That is why workplace relationships are important to keep exploring and more so because it tends to be an unexplored aspect of organisational life (Ragins and Dutton, 2007).

Work relationships can have variations as Rawlins (1992 cited in Akila and Priyadarshini, 2018) argued that work connections vary from ‘friendly relations’ to a more engaging connection transcending from the workplace setting. Different kinds of relationships can be created in the workplace; from having relationships which facilitate one’s career to having relations which provide self-affirmation and emotional support (Akila and Priyadarshini, 2018). Understanding how relationships develop and transform into close and intimate connections over time provides an in-depth clarification of the different kinds of workplace relationships that exists (Akila and Priyadarshini, 2018). This can be facilitated by looking at it through qualitative perspectives from employees, which is what this research aims to apply and explore.

Studies based on positive relationships have shown that high-quality relationships tend to lead to a variety of functions and outcomes such as attachment, engagement and citizenship behaviours (Colbert et al. 2016; Feeney and Collins, 2015). However there still remains a lot to be explored and understood in terms of the processes of how and why workplace relationships attach employees to their organisations. There’s a lack of studies which answer how work relationships such as peer relationships reinvigorate employees’ work experiences and in what way it may impact employee outcomes. However, studies tend to grasp and emphasise more on the positive experiences which is negated in Ehrhardt and Ragins’ (2019) argument that questions if supportive work relationships tend to always hold positive implications for employees. A continuing detection of answers to such questions contributes more information to the area of workplace relationships based studies (Pillemer and Rothbard, 2018; Ferris et al;2009) and also improve the understanding of how workplace relationships such as peer relationships are pivotal to employee outcomes.

Positive relationship scholars argue that positive relationships induce energy and psychological resources which results in a range of positive outcomes (Creary, Caza and Roberts, 2015). Similarly, Rousseau and Ling (2007 cited in Ehrhardt and Ragins, 2019) argued that positive relationships increase the potential of individuals and improve their psychological states and well-being. Tran et al; (2018) studied the effects of healthy workplace relationships on employees’ working behaviours. They studied in association with its impact on employees’

performance. Their study made observations and found that healthy workplace relationships positively influenced employees' commitment and mental well-being particularly in terms of reducing job-based stress levels. They also presented findings that showed the causal link between positive relationships between leaders and employees and the formation of high-quality workplace relationships and employee performance. Although studies have shown what positive relationships can result in, it does not explain how it creates such impact and the kind of processes involved in influencing positive relationships at work.

Positive manager-subordinate relationships are invaluable to organisations because they enable positive employee attitudes, citizenship behaviours, task performance, and more effective organisations (Creary et al; 2015). In organisations, supervisor and peer relationships have been applied to understand employees' attitudes and behaviours. Relationships between supervisor and peers in the literature have been found to transform knowledge from individual to individual, groups and organisations (Shah and Shah, 2010; Peroune, 2007). As prominent, more such studies are focused on the supervisor-subordinate relationships, which is why more studies on peer relationships that explores employees' attitudes, behaviour and perceptions would provide a richer understanding of employee experiences both on an individual basis and group basis. The following sections presents some of the aspects of peer relationships that the study attempts to explore to facilitate understanding the experiences of the respondents as employees and as individuals.

2.4 Social Support

Social support as defined by Sias refers to 'the verbal and non-verbal communication between receiver and provider that reduces uncertainty about a situation, one's self, another, or a relationship (Sias, 2008:70). Social support can vary from being emotional (providing sympathy, listening to peer's problems and offering consolation), informational (providing advice and information) to instrumental (providing assistance to get the job done) (Sias, 2008). Social support hence can be very valuable as when employees provide support to each other, it can significantly impact their own experiences of work (Collins et al; 2016; Chiaburu and Harrison, 2008). Hence, it can be said that social support within the workplace can have an effect on the psychological strain and well-being of an individual (Cooper et al., 2001). Supportive peers who provide assistance and clarification of tasks can minimize one's peer's role ambiguity, role conflict and work load (Chiaburu and Harrison, 2008). This leads to the increase in the

employee's job satisfaction and organisational commitment (Collins et al; 2016; Chiaburu and Harrison, 2008). The studies here primarily focus on the outcomes of social support and do not explain how one is influenced to offer support and receive support and the variation in the experiences of receiving support.

A lot of research focuses on the positive aspect of social support at work which does not cover the variations in which employees can experience social support as the extent to which employees are sociable with each other is not always constant (Winnubst and Schabracq, 1996 cited in Collins et al;2016; Cutrona and Russell,1990). Qualitative experiences and views can help provide insights as to the kind of social support employees receive and provide to their peers. This research by looking into the way employees experience peer relationships at work, intends to understand how it generates support and how that may impact commitment.

A study by Colbert et al; (2016) showed through the stories shared by employees, how relationships cater to a wide range of functions such as task assistance, career advancement, emotional support, personal growth and friendship. In Halford's study (2005) the teleworkers were found to have maintained and developed more personal relationships with particular teleworkers to whom they could turn to for both informational and emotional support.

Furthermore, teleworkers relied on other teleworkers for instrumental and informational job-related support despite the organisation emphasising that teleworkers should contact team leaders or supervisors if they needed help with their work. (Halford, 2005). This brings up a crucial point that peer relationships can be enhanced and influenced from an employee's relationship with one's manager entailing that workplace relationships can influence each other.

2.5 The link between Supportive Peers and Organisational Attachment

As Kahn (2007) observed that not only do the existence of relationships or supportive peers provide a sense of connection to employees' workplace but also as emphasised by him that employees have different relational needs and their attachment to their organisations can be built through the types of relationships which fulfil those varying needs (cited in Erhardt and Ragins,2019). Kahn's theory is highly significant due to its shift from the traditional perception of workplace social support. As the traditional viewpoints inclined towards more of what relationships provided excluding what employees actually want or need from their work relationships and the processes that make the relationships influential (cited in Erhardt and Ragins, 2019).

It has been empirically observed that employees presume their feelings of attachment to others at work into feelings of attachment with the organisation itself (cited in Ehrhardt and Ragins, 2019). As found by management scholars, supportive work relationships presented stronger organisational commitment in employees (Meyer et al; 2002; Heffner and Rentsch, 2001). In a study conducted by Ehrhardt and Ragins (2019), the results present that when employees experience stronger psychological attachment to their colleagues, there is an increase in their attachment to the organisation and in addition they also receive advantageous outcomes. The study caters to understanding how and why employees become attached to others at work and the impact of this on organisational attachment, other positive work attitudes and psychological states. This is one of the few studies that looks into the context of the 'how' that helps explore the connection between supportive peer relationships and organisational attachment.

2.6 Negative effects of Peer Relationships

There is a leading assumption amongst organisational scholars that the effects of support are generally positive. Although there are several obvious advantages of workplace friendships, an emerging growth of scholarship has proposed the complexity and the negative aspects of friendships at work (Pillemer and Rothbard, 2018; Methot et al; 2015; Ingram and Zou, 2008). Relationship scholars have found that support despite its positive intentions, can have effects which may vary from positive to negative (McClure et al; 2014, Rafaeli and Gleason, 2009). Employees have different needs which could lead them to seeking different kinds of relationships which would hold different outcomes. Support can contribute to feelings of being controlled and smothered (Brock and Lawrence, 2009, 2014; Silverstein, Chen and Heller, 1996 cited in Ehrhardt and Ragins, 2019) and also produce feelings of powerlessness and deprivation of autonomy (Rafaeli and Gleason, 2009).

Negative work relationships can lead to stress and job dissatisfaction which can threaten an employee's emotional well-being (Winnubst and Schabracq, 1996 cited in Collins et al; 2016; Labianca and Brass, 2006). When social relationships at work appear disrespectful, distrustful and lack the reciprocity, it can damage an employee's mental health (Collins et al; 2016; Oksanen et al., 2010).

When an individual contributes to a social relationship that goes beyond work-related interrelationship and goals, it can lead to compromising instrumental goals (Sanchez-Burks, 2002). This paradox has not been addressed adequately in the literature of work relationships

which makes it important to be looked into as supportive work relationships are predominantly seen as valuable to organisations. As the majority of the studies have focussed on the positive aspects of peer relationships at work, This study attempts to also take note of any emergent negative aspects regarding workplace relations and how such aspects change the ways employees relate to each other and how this shift impacts their commitment.

2.7 The role of Organisational Initiatives/Factors

Several factors play a role in influencing organisational commitment for instance, training and development establishes and increases commitment in employees. Such initiatives make employees feel valued which increases commitment and retention (Ahmed and Nawaz, 2015; Maurer and Lippstreu, 2008). Training and development cater to not only building commitment but also increase job security, job satisfaction, career growth and personal development which altogether respond to commitment as a whole (Ahmed and Nawaz, 2015). Job satisfaction according to studies such as that of Agarwal and Sajid (2017) and Yücel (2012) have shown how employees who are content with their jobs are more committed to their organisation. Peer relationships are also fostered through different organisational initiatives such as training and development (Najeemdeen et al; 2018).

Interestingly, organisations can enable commitment in other employees through already existing committed employees, particularly the managers. Buchanan II's (1974) study acknowledges the significance of commitment to an organisation and to employees' commitment. The study situates the commitment of managers as an influencing factor in effecting commitment in employees especially through social interactions with colleagues and superiors. It raises the question if employees themselves can influence each other's commitment levels which remain to be explored.

A lot of relationships and activities are regulated by formal, role-grounded interactions in organisations and even though informal relationships strive, there are several involuntary factors that influence whom individuals communicate with at work (Ibarra, 1993; Weber, 1968 cited in Pillemer and Rothbard, 2018). Hence there are factors which can impact the kind of social interactions employees have with each other. Individuals make choices regarding the kind of people they want to spend time with and interact with whereas in organisations, a lot of the social interactions are manufactured by team assignments and organisational departments. According to Weber (1968 cited in Pillemer and Rothbard,2018), discrepancy in the choice of friends and the

informal rules, socializing and styles of communication that conduct these bonding relationships contradict with the formal rules and predetermined interactions frequently occurring in organisations. Moreover, the social and emotional purposes of friendship also contradict the instrumental goals that are integral to individuals' and teams' success at work (Ingram and Zou, 2008).

2.8 Peer Relationships, Trust and Organisational Commitment

According to Lesabe and Nkosi (2007), recruiting loyal employees is indispensable for an organisation but it is even more valuable when an organisation is able to retain the employee by establishing and maintaining a satisfying work environment. Therefore, enabling a committed workforce is inevitably important to organisational success. McElroy (cited in Lesabe and Nkosi, 2007) asserts that it is important for management to comprehend the concept of organisational commitment, not just in the context of what it means and how it works but also the demonstration of employee behaviour as influenced by commitment.

Committed employees tend to feel a bond with the organisation, experiencing a feeling of belongingness and aligning themselves towards the organisational goals and values. A sentimental attachment is induced when employees experience commitment towards organisational goals and values (Ahmed and Nawaz, 2015). A major difference in studies related to commitment emerged when focus was stressed upon attitudinal outlooks, i.e. how individuals related to commitment (Talib and Mitra, 2017). Commitment can be experienced in different ways by employees, which is why a focus on employee perspectives is crucial and essential to understand how commitment can be developed.

A significant typology in the work of Allen and Meyer (2001) related to organisational commitment introduces three mindsets: affective commitment (attachment towards the organisation), continuance commitment (attachment towards one's own actions), and normative commitment (sense of obligation). These three mindsets have significant impact on the duration of an employee's stay in an organisation. Hence, organisations recognizing the different types of commitment which can exist enables in encouraging affective commitment in employees.

Studies have shown that organisational commitment can be influenced by peer relationships at work (Akila and Priyadarshini, 2018). According to Allen and Meyer (1990) affective commitment corresponds to the way employees connect to the organisational values, objectives, and goals. Employees experiencing high affective commitment are loyal and dedicated to their

organisation and continue to work with such loyalty and dedication for the organisation (Maiti and Sanyal, 2017). Affective commitment inclines towards emotional connectivity which can stem from positive relationships at the workplace, not just through supervisory-subordinate relations but also peer relationships. Employees become more attached to their organisations when they experience a positive work environment stemming from their attachment to others at work (Ehrhardt and Ragins,2019).

The accomplishment of any organisational goal relies on the collaborative efforts of the employees altogether (Tamer and Dereli,2014). Hosmer (1995) asserts that trust acts as the most effective element in assuring the collective behaviour of individuals. Interpersonal trust acts as a crucial force in the entire social exchange system. This implies that when trust exists between employees, they notice the intentions and behaviours of each other and trust in the benevolence, integrity and ability of each other, expecting that their attitudes and behaviour would be reciprocated (Tamer and Dereli). One of the significant implications of trust has been found to be organisational commitment (Tamer and Dereli, 2014). Tan and Lim's (2009) study observed that commitment in organisations is determined by interpersonal trust. According to their study, trust between peers builds a psychological connection between them. When such a connection is created, employees are more inclined to stay in the organisation (Tamer and Dereli,2014; Tan and Lim,2009).Several factors of commitment remain to be studied or do not hold sufficient research support and for organisations to retain its employees, such factors must be inspected and analysed as to how they can relate to commitment.

One of the factors that remain to be explored in relation to organisational commitment is peer relationships. Mastroianni and Storberg-Walker (2014) found that work interactions foster feelings of well-being such as trust and respect. They also found that when interactions lack such positive feelings, this affects the well-being and behaviours of employees, both at work and off work sites. The study however does not explain how work interactions occur and the ways they can be facilitated and encouraged to create impact .Tamer and Dereli's (2014) study has found that peers can increase employees' comfort within the organisation by fulfilling needs for respect, acceptance and affiliation. Similarly, Takahasi (2005) argues that the feature of affective in relationships fulfil the human needs for emotional support, mutual exchange of amiable attention, and mutual concern and care. Relationships especially when it turns to friendship can become more personal and affective as it relates to the specific individuals. As Silver (1990)

said, friendship is “grounded in the unique and irreplaceable qualities of the partners” (Silver, 1990, p. 1476).” Although this implication is crucial, however it would have more insightful if it explained how the element of affective is developed in relationships which this study attempts to examine how peer relationships develop different elements such as affective and trust.

2.9 Research Gap

There are several ways employees can choose to develop and establish workplace relationships. Ehrhart and Ragins (2019) suggests that studies should go into how employees’ needs can change over time and how work relationships develop to fulfil their needs. There can be varied ways in which trust can develop for instance, an employee may trust one’s peers but may distrust one’s management team or vice versa (McCauley and Kuhnert, 1992 cited in Ozmen, 2019). Effective communication helps employees communicate their needs and boundaries to others which the studies do not explain as to how such communication is developed between peers. It requires also for managers to be good listeners and hence to enable strong communication skills, emotional intelligence and ability to comprehend non-verbal cues that may imply violation of privacy can be enacted by organisations facilitating communication and relationship building training programs (Ehrhardt and Ragins, 2019).

There is a lack of theoretically directed research which explains how relationships can connect employees to their organisations. Even though it has been shown in studies that supportive work relationships attach employees to their organisations, there has been a lack of sufficient studies which explains how this happens. A lot of the organisational studies especially in the Indian context, have been based on large organisations which is why in order to facilitate a qualitative understanding of different experiences of peer relationships and organisational commitment, this research will be based on qualitative perspectives of 7 employees working in 7 different companies in Delhi and Mumbai located in India. Hence, this research through the qualitative approach attempts to explore and understand how employees view and experience peer relationships and the ways their experiences can influence organisational commitment.

Chapter 3: Methodology

4.1 Introduction

This chapter explains the method applied for acquiring the data. It will start with explaining the qualitative study approach as this was used to explore the research question. This is followed by the description of a semi-structured interview used to collect the data for this research. The researcher explains the way this method was applied to this study, the selected sample of the study and finally, the method of data analysis is described along with ethical considerations.

4.2 Research Approach

This research attempts to understand how employees view peer relationships and the kind of impact it can have on their organisational commitment. This research has selected the qualitative approach as it has been implemented in some of the studies included in the literature review (Lesabe and Nkosi, 2007; Tamer and Dereli, 2014). This is one of the reasons as to why this research has selected the qualitative approach. Erickson and Kovalainen (2008) asserted that the qualitative approach collects and analyzes data within a particular context that enables a holistic understanding of the phenomena as part of the study. This method facilitates an explorative understanding of people's beliefs, attitudes, and perspectives on a diverse range of topics and also in obtaining stories of personal experiences and their connotations (Prior, 2017; Vasquez, 2014). Hence, the qualitative approach suits this study as the researcher intends to understand and look into the qualitative perspectives and lived experiences of the respondents through their own personal narratives.

The researcher acknowledges the shortcomings of this approach; one of them being that due to its subjective nature, the data can be less reliable, however using reflexivity as a tool, it can facilitate the researcher in grasping a reliable and valid research. As noted by Parahoo (2006 cited in Palaganas, Sanchez, Molintas and Caricativo, 2017), reflexivity is an ongoing process enabling the researcher to reflect on one's values. This allows acknowledging, realizing and analyzing how one's social background, geography and preconceived notions can affect their research process (Hesse-Biber, 2007 cited in Palaganas et al; 2017). Reflexivity as a result allows the research to constantly question one's approach and way of interpretation during the entirety of the research process.

4.3 Sample

This study has selected a sample size of 7 employees working at 7 different companies in Delhi and Mumbai located in India. A small sample size allows more communication with the respondents enabling longer and follow up interviews (Thomson, 2010) and an in-depth qualitative research (Boddy, 2016) which is why a small sample size has been selected.

The study adopts the non-probability sampling due to the insignificance of randomization relating to the selection of the sample from the population of interest, restricting the participation in the study to a selected specific number of people (Etikan, 2016). It also supports this research as it does not seek to formulate generalizations that mirror the entire population (Etikan, 2016) especially when this study's selected country is enormously populated.

This research applied the convenience sampling as it considers practicalities of accessibility, costing, availability and volition of respondents (Dörnyei, 2007 cited in Etikan, 2016). Purposive sampling is also applied as it enables an intentional selection of respondents based on the qualities of the respondents. The sample for this study hence included respondents who were experienced and knowledgeable with the matter of study (Cresswell, 2011 cited in Etikan, 2016). The respondents as a result were found to be articulate in their responses, expressive and also reflective to an extent which helped the process of collecting the data.

The researcher aimed to include a diverse sample of the study pertaining to employment and work history, age, job role and duration of employment in the company. These employees have been selected as the employees hold different professional backgrounds and consist of permanent, full time and part time job roles which are all non-supervisory and non-managerial roles. Delhi and Mumbai are two of the largest cities in India consisting of a range of organisations from various sectors. Due to relatively lesser studies done in the Asian context as compared to the Western context (Oh, 2019), India has been selected as the country of geographical location.

Listed below is a brief profile of the sample:

1. Gender- 4 females and 3 males
2. Age-between 26-50
3. Job roles in- Startup company, finance, research and development, sales, administration and marketing

4. Duration of employment- between 4 years and 32 years

The interviews were conducted during the month of May 2020. Most of the interviews were conducted in English with the exception of two interviews which were conducted in native languages of Hindi and Assamese which have been translated in English to its most accurate translation.

4.4 Method of collecting data

The research employed semi-structured interviews as part of data collection. The interviews were conducted through the application of Zoom which also assisted in the automatic recording of the interviews. Interviews explore the authentic and genuine experiences of the respondent (Silverman, 2001 cited in Ericksson and Kovalainen, 2008) hence the study's interview questions are directed to understand the perceptions, experiences, and feelings of the respondents. This research selected the semi-structured interviews as it allows the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding whereby the respondents respond towards a preset list of open-ended questions (Jamshed, 2014) and although it adheres to a certain structure theoretically or methodologically, it is not completely structured (Blandford, 2013). Interviews were completed within the duration of 35 to 55 minutes in this study as generally these interviews are conducted between 30 minutes to an hour (Dicicco-Bloom and Crabtree, 2006). The interviews were guided by the semi-structure guide which is a schematic representation of questions or topics required to be explored by the researcher (Dicicco-Bloom and Crabtree, 2006). The questions for the study as per the guide consisted of the core question and additional questions related to the key question. To gain a more effective way of collecting the data, the interviews were recorded as Jamshed (2014) argues that using strictly handwritten notes during interviews can become unreliable, risking the loss of important points pertaining to the data.

In Semi-structured interviews, all respondents were asked the same questions; however, it allowed the researcher to follow up the questions with additional and clarifying questions when required. This is done so to enable a better understanding of the respondents' views on a topic.

4.5 Interview Schedule

Eriksson and Kovalainen (2008)'s outline of interview questions were used as a guiding tool during the framing of the questions. The researcher framed the questions based on the guidance of the supervisor and also through the emphasis of the authors on the recommendation of using a

sequence of simple questions instead of directing a complex question to the respondents. The interview questions for this study inclined towards being open ended to facilitate the respondents to answer freely. Questions were asked such as: ‘Could you tell me about your relationships with your current colleagues at work?’

The researcher attempted to formulate neutral questions to prevent pre-conceived notions and pre-determined typologies (Eriksson and Kovalainen 2008). However certain questions such as ‘What does it mean for an employee to be committed to one’s organisation?’ were important to ask despite appearing as a leading question as it allowed to understand to what extent the respondents could relate it to. This was followed up by ‘How would you describe your connection towards your company?’ This helped the researcher understand how organisational commitment is viewed by the respondent and how they may relate to it.

4.6 Analysis of data

The process of analyzing qualitative data starts during the process of collecting the data itself to facilitate an understanding of the data (DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree 2006). The first step towards analyzing the data was to complete transcribing all interviews.

Thematic Analysis does not demand from the researcher to possess expertise over theoretical and technological knowledge of approaches such as grounded theory (Braun and Clarke, 2006) hence, it facilitates a novice researcher by increasing accessibility in analyzing data. Thematic analysis was applied guided by the following six principles of Braun and Clarke (2006):

- 1) Familiarization with the data
- 2) Generation of initial codes
- 3) Search for themes
- 4) Reviewing themes
- 5) Defining themes
- 6) Write-up

Thematic analysis examines the views of different respondents, captures similarities and differences and also establishes unanticipated insights (Brooks et al; 2015; Braun and Clarke, 2006). This suits this research as it has a research sample of 7 different employees from 7 different companies and enables flexibility and examination of questions relating to respondents’ experiences, views, and behaviour.

Braun and Clarke (2006) argue that thematic analysis enables examination of the data collected, locating repetitive patterns of meaning as a result. The researcher hence has derived certain themes that emerged from the data which addressed the research study and its related concerns.

There are two kinds of themes; semantic and latent which focus on explicit and implicit meanings respectively (Braun and Clarke, 2006) hence the research looks into both the types of themes in order to gain a better understanding of the respondents' perspectives.

The process of applying thematic analysis went as follows:

1) Familiarisation with the data:

In this step, a thorough reading and re-reading of the transcripts was done to be familiarised with all the data collected. The researcher made notes and scripted down initial impressions. organisations.

2) Generation of initial codes:

In this step, the data was sorted in a meaningful and systematic manner by breaking the data minimally and meaningfully. The data was coded accordingly to bring out interesting aspects relating to the research questions.

As there were no pre-arranged codes, open coding was applied wherein the data was generated and reorganized during this stage of coding. There were certain emergent codes after the first step, for instance, the concept of reciprocal relationships that continued to be prevalent in all the interviews. Keeping in mind some of the initial conceptualization of the codes, each transcript was coded individually where fragments of text relating to the research questions were coded. This was followed by comparisons of the codes and further revisions, producing newer codes which were revised again along with some of the existing ones.

With regards to software usage, Taguette was used which is a free qualitative research software.

3) Search for themes

As clarified by Braun and Clarke (2006), there are no rules that require to be followed orderly in order to specify a theme. Here, codes were analysed and themes emerged from suitable group of codes. For instance, there were many codes pertaining to perceptions of healthy and positive peer relationships and the expectations and desires of employees from peer relationships, these codes

were grouped into a theme known as ‘The advantages of peer relationships’. This theme was again modified during the next step when existing themes were revised.

In this step, codes were arranged into broader themes that produced certain aspects relating to the research question. Most codes convey one theme; however, some connects with more than one as observed.

4) Reviewing themes

In this step, the themes are reconsidered and readjusted by focusing on the data pertaining to each theme and viewing to what extent the data subjects to the themes. Here, Taguette was used again which helped to look at all of the codes and themes in a quicker and easier way. Certain themes were found to be unsuitable when the data was looked into, it was noted certain codes pertained to different areas of concern and hence new themes were generated as a result.

5) Defining themes

In this step, as Braun and Clarke (2006) asserts one must locate the ‘essence’ of what every theme possesses. Here, themes are analysed with its implications, the connections between the themes and how it corresponds to the main theme.

6) Write-up

This final step is to write up the research.

The researcher has attempted to be conscious of the ways in how the researcher may affect the interpretation of the data. It is not possible to completely deviate away from one’s own experiences and thoughts as it can contribute even unintentionally to the process of the research.

4.7 Ethical considerations

In order to provide assurance of confidentiality and complete anonymity, each respondent was asked to sign an informed consent form prior to the interview. The researcher ensured respondents were informed prior to and after the interview, of their choice to detract themselves from participation. The researcher ensured respondents felt comfortable to take breaks during the interviews and other ways were ensured to make respondents feel secure and comfortable.

Building rapport with the respondents is a crucial part of the qualitative approach. This approach demands the researcher’s dedication in creating personal connections established on mutual trust, respect and consent; being sensitive towards power relations and the co-production of knowledge; and acknowledgement of that the researcher is conducting research with the

participants and not on them (Nagy Hesse-Biber 2013; Gubrium et al. 2012; Rubin and Rubin 2011; Kvale and Brinkmann 2009; Pillow 2003 cited in Prior, 2017). Hence this person-centered approach requires the researcher to ensure to build a rapport with the participants as part of adhering to the principles and objectives of data collection.

Although the respondents were informed about the research topic, prior to the interviews, a brief summary of the research topic was shared again to create a rapport and to facilitate comfort in responding to questions related to the topic. They were also informed of how the interviews would be recorded and the duration of the retention of audio files. The respondents were assured that their confidentiality would be guaranteed and respected and the questions would avoid being intrusive and they would have the freedom to not choose to answer a question or questions should they wish to do so.

The researcher shared the interpretations with the respondents as it increases validity of the research by enabling participants to make statements, remarks or reflect on the accuracy of the data collected and its interpretations (Maxwell 1996 cited in Kaiser, 2009). The researcher also acknowledges that this falls under the researcher's own interpretations and hence prone to be mistaken.

Chapter 4: Findings

5.1 Analysis and Findings

This chapter describes the process of analyzing the data pertaining to the interviews conducted. The chapter explains the themes, followed by the analysis of the respondents' views of peer relationships and organisational commitment.

5.2 Informal and Reciprocal

This theme captures how the respondents perceive peer relationships. The nature of relationships with one's peers is different in comparison to the relationships with one's manager.

Respondent 1 described it as *“Every relationship goes two ways; however, this two-sided relationship is different with my peers and my manager. I have more of a formal relationship with my manager and informal relationship with my colleagues.”*

Respondents view positive and healthy peer relationships provide them with not only instrumental support but also emotional support. Respondents described peer relationships as a form of reciprocal relationship.

Respondent 6 described peer relationships as *“It is like a give and take relationship, for example, we share details or news related to our jobs or the company and also we are there for each other during difficult times.”*

The respondent associated positive and close relationships with their peers with the elements of trust and flexibility where their interactions and the kind of support they receive from each other were not limited to economic and instrumental support. In the next theme, the different dimensions relating to the kind of support that frames peer relationships is discussed.

5.3 Peer Support

Respondents have described emotional support as showing concern for a peer's well-being, providing support during difficult times, having someone to share one's personal and professional issues and providing the role of a friend. Hence emotional support is not centered on

providing support to one emotionally, but support is also perceived by the respondents when one engages with them on a personal level, socially, and emotionally.

As respondent 4 explained:

.. “we share our stories with each other, check on each other if one’s sick, celebrate each other’s good work, support each other when one is scolded or spoken off by our manager and involve ourselves in each other’s lives in ways that brought us closer and we became friends”..

Respondents have described instrumental support as receiving and giving information to their peers related to work, assistance with tasks and other work-related activities, receiving advice and advising on work related matters and career related matters and support in general.

To quote respondent 6 as:

.. “we went through similar challenges at work and helped each other not just in specific work tasks or projects but also ensure we provide each other any relevant information or any news we hear from someone else especially from the management.”

Here informational support emerges where it is associated with instrumental support together as the respondent aligns work related information with work related tasks. Hence respondents having received social support from their peers have also shared how it impacts their working experience positively.

Most respondents shared their experiences of how they receive not only instrumental and informational support but also the opportunity to form close bonds with their peers transforming into friendships.

Respondent 1 said *“I do not even consider them as peers but as my friends.”*

Being able to trust and understand and be able to reciprocate that, establish close bonds and develop genuine friendship blurs the typological differences in support.

To quote respondent 3:

... “my friend wanted to get a master’s degree in leadership and management as he wished to apply for a managerial post in the future. I pushed him to pursue it and he is doing very well...I have been trying to help him as much as I can...for example, I cover shifts for him during his exams or even assignments so that gets enough time..”

Close bond creates a deep and meaningful connection helping peers to do better not just professionally but also be encouraged to pursue personal aspirations. The respondent further

shared that he felt equally happy and took pride when his friend performed very well in his semester exams. Friendship creates a concrete and sustaining connection as respondent 4 shared that having a small group of people with whom there is a deeper attachment and different from other peers as they take the additional interest in each other's lives that relates to non-work matters as well.

The qualitative perspectives taken in for this study, has given insight into the kind of support they receive and have avail of, it also shows that close ties, trust and friendship do not restrict support to its typologies but can also be extended from support and enable support to someone. This theme engages a lot with the previous theme because they both describe how employees experience and understand peer relationships.

5.4 Formal and strictly professional

This theme presents how relationships with managers can influence peer relationships. Most respondents described their relationships with their managers being strictly professional where their communication framed their interactions subsumed strictly under work.

Respondent 1 described:

“It is more formal with my manager, so is the communication between us, each morning I go up to my manager and we discuss our day to day activities about work and updates, submissions.”

The hierarchical demarcation between the employee and the manager confines the relationship to a more professional relationship. However, as respondent 5 mentioned:

“My manager is a cool person; our personalities make us very compatible and we have a good working relationship that is both formal and informal.” Approachable managers do create a closer and semi-formal relationship between employee and one's manager. It is noted that employees can have needs for freedom to share their thoughts, feelings and emotions. It especially becomes important when employees have a tensed relationship or a tensed experience with their managers as it makes them open up about it with their trusted peers and friends at work.

As respondent 1 mentioned:

.. “I go to a couple of my colleagues....talk to them, vent out, whenever one of our managers takes a class of us or we have a bad day because of some issue with them, we are there for each

other than.” Here the expression ‘taking a class’ implies getting either scolded or told off by someone.

Respondent 5 described:

.. “was hard to make any friends or have any connection with my colleagues, the working energy was so bad out there and my relationship with my manager was equally bad, it was scary, competent, tensed and very uncomfortable...that’s why I could not work there longer, it was too hard so I left.”

It is crucial to understand that a negative work experience that involved negative work environment and lack of peer relationships discouraged the respondent to continue working there.

5.5 Close bonds, Trust and Friendship

This theme captures the common and key characteristics of peer relationships as noted from the responses and also as valued most by the respondents. It determines how peer relationships are developed where common factors that were emerged were similar backgrounds, personality compatibility, communication, sharing the same workspace and working in teams, sharing meals, recreational and leisure activities.

Respondents found that sharing similar backgrounds such as education, qualifications, family and similar upbringing helped build relationships and closer relationships with their peers.

As respondent 1 explained:

.. “there are different ways that helped me bond with them, I think for me because of our similar backgrounds especially our educational backgrounds, we even have similar levels of qualifications, it does manufacture similar kinds of personalities.”

Respondents found that having peers and even peers as friends, where an element of trust is created, helped to communicate better and effectively. Support is rejuvenated through effective, productive and supportive communication as inferred from the interviews.

As respondent 4 explained:

.. “different personalities help people get closer and form close groups. ...we have built trust between us and we are able express ourselves better and talk about other things that are not about work...when I moved to a new place, helping me find the new place and even while moving in, they all helped me.”

Communication can be facilitated and improved through allocated lunch breaks and tea breaks at work.

As respondent 7 said:

.. “we would sit down together for every lunch break and tea breaks and talk, that helped me know my colleague better and get closer. I find during such times, it helps relax and remove ourselves from our desks, eat together and talk about other things.”

Group work and group tasks and projects also help in the development of strong and close relationships.

As respondent 3 said:

.. “we would wind up in the same teams for assignments and a few projects, I got to know them better that way. Working with someone helps you know each other's' strengths and weaknesses and helps us work much more productively, saves time and makes it easier and simpler for people to work together for newer projects when they know each other.”

Recreational and leisure activities have helped a lot of the employees build a bond with their peers transforming some of their peer relationships into friendships.

To quote respondent 5:

.. “spending time outside work helps get you closer to them, know them on a personal level and helps us work better together. We go to restaurants and cafes, sometimes even for a few drinks. We enjoy each other's company.”

These factors do operate through the involvement of the organisation with the intention of promoting healthy and positive relationships.

5.6 Organisational Opportunities

This theme captures the organisational factors and initiatives that have facilitated developing positive and close relations with their peers. From the interviews, these initiatives/factors can be perceived as opportunities that can unintentionally and intentionally facilitate positive peer relationships.

Training and development has been repetitively mentioned in the interviews where communication specific training and development programmes facilitated relationships.

To quote respondent 2:

.. *“I took part in personal growth and skill enhancement training sessions.... we had these communication skill-based workshops that really helped me personally and even my colleagues. These workshops helped me communicate better and get to know some of my colleagues.”*

Similarly, to quote respondent 1:

“Training programmes definitely worked in finding my people here.”

Asking additionally to make suggestions as to what they think may help them build better and closer relations with their peers helped understanding their expectations.

To quote respondent 4:

“I think communication skills should be taught, even certain basic social skills and understanding of basic psychology. I found some of my colleagues not having that basic understanding and it was hard to connect with them which made it hard to work together.”

It shows that work interactions can be facilitated and these interactions itself can improve communication helping build positive and close relationships.

Company initiatives such as parties, games, themed tea breaks, organized company outings and trips help build closer bonds with peers by helping them get to know each other.

To quote respondent 6:

“I like the parties, outings, trips my company organizes, we get together away from that office life.... you get to relax and know each other and bond.”

Company initiatives that aim to accommodate their employees’ needs with requiring support such as in this case providing transport facility can help build relations indirectly.

To quote respondent 7:

“We shared the same company transport facility. The journey would be for almost an hour and obviously you start to talk to each other.”

It was noted from the interviews that organisational initiatives that promote healthy and positive relationships create a positive work environment increasing productivity.

To quote respondent 2:

“...such positive relationships create a positive environment. I work better, even my colleagues, we work better, more productivity.”

5.7 Commitment: A sense of belongingness and a sense of connection

This theme captures the way the respondents perceive commitment towards their organisation and to what extent they associate themselves with their organisation.

Respondents shared that commitment implies a sense of belongingness through a sense of alignment with one's own and the organisation's values and principles.

To quote respondent 7:

“To be committed feels like you belong there, you feel strongly connected to your company's goals, values, you find that you can relate.”

The sense of belongingness comes with the sense of relationships with peers and connecting with everyone at work.

As respondent 7 further elaborated:

.. “you feel like you belong when you have positive and strong relationships with your co-workers, your manager, everyone. It's like a link between people which makes me feel connected to my company.”

5.8 Positive Work Environment

The respondents emphasised on the necessity and the kind of impact a positive environment has on them both professionally and personally.

To quote respondent 5:

“You need a positive place if you expect good quality work from your employees, I like working here because there are positive people around me and it is a positive environment.”

From the interviews, it was also noted that positive and healthy peer relationships act as a strong enhancer of a positive working environment. Respondents explained that it brings in feelings of sense of belongingness, friendships, instrumental and emotional support increasing productivity, employee satisfaction and job satisfaction. Peer relationships when it transforms into genuine friendships and close bonds, also make employees want to work there longer despite experiencing other work factors in unequal or lesser satisfaction.

To quote respondent 4:

.. “you get through the long hours and low wages when you have friends at work.”

Respondents also shared how they feel more committed towards their organisation knowing that their needs are being paying heed to and taken care of.

To quote respondent 1:

“If companies look after their employees then employees will work harder and will be more committed, more driven.”

5.9 Peer to peer influence

These themes capture how respondents themselves are influenced by their peers and also influence their peers to be more productive, more engaged and more committed.

To quote respondent 3:

“I share information, any important news, my knowledge with them, from my own experiences of working here, I tell them the ways to perform better. We take pride and share that pride with each other for being part of this company.”

Respondent 3 has been working in his company for almost 32 years and from what he has shared, it can be inferred that peers help each other align themselves with the company’s objectives, goals and values. It can also be inferred that by influencing whether through advice, sharing experiences and greater value in doing good work helps one to be more dedicated and be more committed.

Respondent 3 further said:

“..my company is actively involved in community and social service..watching my colleagues involved shows that I work with people with good values and people who are kind. I encourage new colleagues to take part in this and to feel part of the family.”

This captures the previous themes of organisational opportunity and with the sense of belongingness and connecting towards one’s organisation.

5.10 Career Progression versus career hindrance

This theme emerged from the disjunction some of the respondents experienced when it comes to their relations with their peers, between receiving support in career related advice and also experiencing inner conflicts to pursue career-based aspirations.

It can be inferred that peer relationships encourage people to continue working in their organisation however it can also hinder someone’s career aspirations, personal and professional growth.

To quote respondent 1:

.. “if I find another opportunity to work in another company, it would not be an easy decision to leave my company and just move elsewhere. You get comfortable when you have such people...This can stop you from your own dreams and individuality.”

Chapter 5: Discussion

This chapter presents the findings discussing extensively how the findings are important to the research and how it is positioned within the existing literature.

As discussed in the literature review, the social exchange theory emphasises on the principle of reciprocity (Mitchell et al; 2012) which was characterised by respondents in their perception of peer relationships. The qualitative perspectives clarify how social exchange theory does not provide a complete explanation of all positive work relationships (Ragins and Dutton, 2007). Workplace relationships provide different kinds of support (Akila and Priyadarshini, 2018) as opposed to the social exchange perspective which focuses on the exchange of fixed resources. As new individual and organisational resources are procured from positive work relationships (Carmeli and Gittel, 2009), the findings have shown it is not only the different kinds of support that is provided from positive peer relationships but also leads to close bonds, mutual trust, mutual understanding and friendship that encourages an individual to provide support without expecting a return or an equal return. This is reiterated especially in the context of once friendship is developed; friends do not keep track of the exchange of resources between them (Silver, 1990). A respondent shared how as friends, they stand up for each other showing how support cannot be strictly categorized or pertain to the categorization as the meanings of the types of support can merge or intersect such as in this case. Social support has been mainly observed in typologies (Sias, 2009) which not only has restricted implications but also it does not look into the non-work related forms of support (Colbert et al; 2016). Respondents have shared how their peers helped them become not just better at work but also better as individuals. The respondents shared that as friends, there is a deep care, attachment and affection which explain how peer relationships are perceived and the role it plays in the employees' work experiences. Reiterating the observation that the results from the interviews present that the overall impact on the respondents was profoundly positive. Precisely, the respondents reported that peer support positively influences their work life, mental health and well-being (Chiaburu and Harrison, 2008; Cooper et al., 2001). As a respondent shared how having supportive colleagues who can be trusted for advice and support makes one enjoy work and encourages one to come to work. Hence consistent with the observation, that social support can increase employee's job satisfaction and organisational commitment (Chiaburu and Harrison, 2008).

One of the crucial implications of organisational commitment is that it influences employees to work towards the accomplishment of organisational goals. To attain that, there is an inevitable requirement for employees to work collaboratively (Tamer and Dereli, 2014). Tamer and Dereli's (2014) study on the reciprocity involved in interpersonal trust between employees do not explain how trust is developed and the complexity of the kind of trust that can be established. A respondent shared how there is trust between him and some of his peers and that pertains more to convenience and instrumental interpersonal relationships whereas with few others, he shares a more meaningful and emotional trust nurtured through close bonds and friendship. Although, the element of trust is crucial as it is an important determinant of organisational commitment (Hosmer, 1995) there are other determinants too. Respondents shared how getting to know their peers, building mutual trust, understanding and respect creates a strong connection that may encourage employees to remain in the organisation (Tamer and Dereli, 2014).

Friendships have been observed in contributing to creating positive effects both for employees and the organisation (Jehn and Shah, 1997, Weick, 1979 cited in Pillemer and Rothbard, 2018). Although such positive benefits from friendship have been evident with the majority of interview responses, this research as one of its aims intends to understand how employees develop peer relationships. Findings explained how the element of close bonds and trust give into forming friendships, as a respondent shared that there is a close bond that creates a deep and meaningful connection helping each other to grow and do better and to pursue their own personal aspirations. Friendship as implied from the responses is seen as a personal and affective relationship wherein the feature of personal pertains to the specific individuals in that relationship. The feature of affective in relationships fulfil the human needs for emotional support, mutual exchange of amiable attention, and providing care (Takahasi, 2005). As a respondent shared that having a small group of people with whom there is a deeper attachment and mutual care where they take an additional interest in each others' lives.

Tesser (1988 cited in Smith, 2000) argues that people share positive attribute of friends such as emulating the qualities of others with whom one is able to relate or admires (Cialdini et al., 1976 cited in Smith, 2000). As a respondent shared that he tries to inspire the sense of pride and sense of connection attached to his organisation amongst his peers. As noted from some of the perspectives of the respondents, to be able to relate to someone and share a sense of connection establishes a level of friendship where through a deeper establishment of mutual trust, respect

and understanding, individuals in the relationships inspire each other to be better and hence contribute to each other's personal growth (Colbert et al; 2016).

The themes emerged from the responses attempts to answer the question of how employees develop peer relationships. Personality, socialization, similar backgrounds, sharing meals, eating together and recreational and leisure activities have been commonly mentioned by respondents as some of the contributing factors. What was interesting to note were the occurrences of overlaps between some of the non-organisational factors and organisational initiatives/factors. For instance, a respondent shared how they would have company organized themed tea breaks that show the merged regular tea breaks with an organisational initiative of themed tea break projecting a fun and informal event amidst an office allocated break time helping peers know each other and bond. Another overlap occurrence was noted when a respondent shared that spending with her peers outside of work happened as a result of spending time at work by being involved in organisational initiatives such as board games with her peers.

Organisational initiatives such as training and development programmes, parties, games, themed tea breaks, festivals, outings and trips have been noted from the responses as facilitators of creating positive peer relationships that has led to creating close bonds, building trust and friendships. Respondents have shared how such initiatives enable opportunities to interact and communicate helping to get to know their peers and in turn help their peers get to know them. Effective communication helps employees communicate their needs and boundaries to others (Ehrhardt and Ragins, 2019). As a respondent shared that to be able to understand each other and respect each other's workspace, a sense of individuality and individual differences helps to work better together. This adds into understanding Mastroianni and Storberg-Walker's (2014) finding that work interactions enable positive feelings of well-being and trust as the findings from this study explains how such interactions can create such positive feelings helping understand the different factors that can impact interactions between peers. Similarly, findings have clarified Tamer and Dereli's (2014) argument that peers can increase employees' comfort within the organisation by fulfilling needs for respect, acceptance and affiliation. Findings showed that feeling comfortable and being able to approach people at work and involve oneself in work interactions can facilitate positive feelings and fulfil such needs.

This does not imply that work interactions between peers alone can produce that positive impact but also it is important for managers to initiate and encourage healthy work interactions.

Although organisations facilitating communication and relationship building training programmes can help managers gain strong communication skills (Ehrhardt and Ragins, 2019), the findings showed that such organisational training programmes can be crucial for employees in forming healthy and positive peer relationships. As a respondent suggested that her organisation should organize and promote training programmes that focus on communication skills and emotional intelligence. To reiterate, effective and improved communication helps peers get familiarised with each other helping create mutual understanding, respect and trust fulfilling valuable needs (Tamer and Dereli, 2014). Organisations that invest in such training programmes can facilitate such positive impact and also benefit from it as training increases job satisfaction which can cause a positive impact on commitment (Ahmed and Nawaz, 2015) as observed that when employees are content with their jobs they are more committed to their organisation (Agarwal and Sajid , 2017;Yücel, 2012). This appears to be true with some of the respondents as findings showed that enjoying working with people also makes one enjoy one's job.

Company initiatives that aim to accommodate their employees' needs with requiring support such as transport facility can help build relations indirectly as noted from a respondent.

Employees feel valued when organisations make efforts through effective initiatives that lead to increasing employee's commitment and retention levels (Ahmed and Nawaz, 2015; Maurer and Lippstreu, 2008). As a respondent mentioned "when our company takes care of us, we take care of our company, it's like a parent-child relationship."

The research question of understanding how employees' experiences of peer relationships at work can impact their organisational commitment was explored through the final themes. The first one being a sense of belongingness and connection has been associated with commitment by the respondents. Individuals perform better in an environment where they experience a sense of belongingness and relatedness to others (Ferriset al., 2009; Spreitzer et al; 2005) and the respondents viewed commitment with a sense of belongingness and relating to the organisation's goals, values and principles. Aligning oneself with the organisation creates a connection towards the organisation as argued by Allen and Meyer (1990) affective commitment corresponds to the way employees connect to the organisational values, objectives, and goals. Ehrhardt and Ragins

(2019) has empirically supported that employees' feelings of attachment to others predict their feelings of attachment towards their organisation which impacts organisational commitment. Respondents have shared how having supportive peers and supportive peers as friends makes them like coming to work. Affective commitment encourages employees to continue to be loyal and dedicated to their organisation (Maiti and Sanyal, 2017), as a respondent shared that his company makes their employees feel like one big family who take care of each other. Affective commitment inclines towards emotional connectivity which can stem from positive relationships at the workplace. This corresponds to the themes discussed earlier where the responses clarified that affective relationships can fulfil needs such as emotional support (Takahasi, 2005). According to Kahn's theory (2007, cited in Ehrhardt and Ragins, 2019) not only do workplace relationships and supportive peers provide a sense of connection to one's workplace but there are also employee relational needs encouraging attachment towards the organisation. Although the results do not show the varying relational needs, it does show how positive and close peer relations fulfil some needs of employees such as support, trust, respect, care and need to belong, friendship.

That sense of attachment as experienced by employees towards their organisation increases when they experience a positive work environment stemming from their attachment to others at work (Ehrhardt and Ragins, 2019) which is another emergent. From the interviews, it was also noted that positive and healthy peer relations play an effective role and act as a strong enhancer of a positive working environment.

Peer to peer influence is another theme generated from the qualitative experiences of respondents that showed that by influencing peers through words of advices, sharing experiences and greater value in doing good work helps one to be more dedicated and committed. A respondent shared how organisational initiatives such as community service not only makes one feel good but also strengthens relations between peers. This theme corresponds to the theme relating to organisational initiatives as it shows how such initiatives encourage in developing and creating positive peer relationships. It aligns everyone with their values and objectives, increasing the connection between the people, and between the employees and the organisation. This sentimental connection is fostered when employees experience commitment towards organisational goals and values (Ahmed and Nawaz, 2015).

The intersections between organisational factors and non-organisational factors are crucial to locate and explore them as relationships and activities are influenced by both formal and role-specific interactions and involuntary factors that influence whom individuals communicate with (Chandler Ibarra, 1993; Weber, 1968 cited in Pillemer and Rothbard, 2018). As noted from the findings, respondents make choices regarding the kind of people they want to spend time with and interact with outside work where it is stimulated by the social interactions in organisations manufactured by team work-based assignments, projects, training programmes and so on. Studies also showed how the social and emotional purposes of friendship also contradict the instrumental goals that are integral to individuals' and teams' success at work (Pillemer and Rothbard, 2018; Methot et al; 2015; Ingram and Zou, 2008). This was inconsistent with some of the findings as it entailed that instrumental goals were accessed better and more feasible to accomplish when there was close bonds and mutual trust to the extent of friendship. It implies that the instrumental resources can be secured by the element of affective in the relationship which denotes liking someone leading to trust, sympathy and empathy that in turn can impact instrumental and economic developments in relationships (Uzzi, 1996).

Career Progression versus career hindrance as a theme displayed the disjunction between the positive and the negative aspect of peer relations and commitment as well. As a respondent shared that close friendships and connections make it more difficult to leave an organisation. It can be inferred that peer relationships encourage people to continue working in their organisation however it can also hinder someone's career aspirations, personal and professional growth. This questions the observation provided by relationship scholars that the effects from support can range from positive to negative experiences (McClure et al;2014, Rafaeli and Gleason, 2009). Although the findings from this research do not show the prominent negative experiences of peer relationships, employee perspectives should be continued to be explored as experiences cannot be restricted to the continuum between positive and negative, there may be different aspects in between. In the following, the limitations and scope for further study are discussed.

6.1 Limitations and Further Research

The application of a small sample is a primary limitation of this study as it is unable to establish a level of generalization through the findings. Precisely, the findings correspond to a small sample qualitative study hence there is ambiguity in understanding whether the findings extend across all age groups, genders, sectors, job roles and organisations.

It is recommended that further studies consider applying larger sample groups with more diversity, for instance, examining peer relationships and its possible outcomes from the perspective of men and women across different age groups and job profiles working in a particular sector or organisation.

The underlying assumption within this study was that there is more to the peer relationships than what it leads to with particular emphasis on how it is developed, experienced and perceived and how that can impact organisational commitment. However, it cannot be adequately explored and understood without additional examination of the different contexts and situations. Furthermore, it would be valuable for further studies to include views of people involved in such interactions and relationships altogether, for instance, studies could contribute valuable knowledge if they looked into the perspectives of one's respective peers, managers, bosses, HR, and other colleagues. This wider inclusion of perspectives and experiences would enable observations as to how the experiences are impacted by the complex and dynamic social interactions that emerge from an individual's interaction with another (Collins et al; 2016).

Chapter 6: Conclusion

7.1 Conclusion

Majority of us spend time at workplace and experience workplace in varied ways. This study showed how peer relationships can impact outcomes such as job satisfaction and organisational commitment. This study attempted to provide some insights on explaining how such relationships are experienced by employees and how do their own experiences of peer relationships can impact their organisational commitment. The findings can be useful from an individual point of view as an employee and from an organisational point of view.

Peer relationships have been primarily described by the respondents in terms of reciprocity where there is support provided and received by both individuals in the relationship. However, reciprocity does not restrict or quantify the interactions and resources exchanged between the individuals as findings showed that the elements of affective, mutual trust, close bonds and friendship can encourage one to reciprocate support and benefits without expecting the same from a peer.

It is not only support that is reciprocated between peers, but also trust, respect, understanding, and friendship. The forms of support are not limited to instrumental, informational and emotional support but also as Colbert, Bono and Purvanova (2016) asserted, it is also found in personal growth and friendship. The research focusses on what develops and facilitates peer relationships and how they can transform into close bonds, mutual trust and into friendships. The findings presented a number of factors such as eating together and spending time outside work in recreational activities and a number of organisational initiatives/factors such as training programs, parties and trips. What was important and interesting to observe were the occurrences of overlaps between the non-organisational initiatives and organisational initiatives/factors. It shows these factors do not act independent of each other but can function together interacting with each other and creating an impact together.

The findings overall show how the respondents experience a positive impact on their work experiences, mental health and employee well-being, having a positive impact on job satisfaction and organisational commitment. It showed how peer relationships can impact employee's organisational commitment and how peers themselves can influence each other by emulating each other's positive qualities, inspiring in each other a sense of pride and commitment towards

their organisation and providing not only support but also engaging themselves in their peer's lives socially and emotionally, and encouraging each other to do better. The research focuses on the employee outcome of organisational commitment which shows how positive experiences of peer relationships especially when it builds closer bonds, established mutual trust and respect and formation of friendships can increase positive peer relationships, job satisfaction, productivity, and organisational commitment. The kind of commitment that has been commonly depicted in the findings is that of affective commitment as understood from Allen and Meyer's (1990) typology. Affective commitment has shown how the respondents as employees experience a sense of connection and belongingness with each other and to each other and also between them and their organisation. Findings showed how the element of affective blurs reciprocity between the organisation and the employee as employees can be committed to their organisation even when they may be receiving low salaries or benefits.

The researcher acknowledges that more questions should have been included that emphasised on negative aspects of peer relationships which would have provided valuable and varied employee experiences.

The research study acknowledged the significance of looking into qualitative perspectives and experiences that explains the 'how'. However, it cannot establish generalizations from the findings as it is based on a small sample. Although, it provides an insight into individual experiences of the employees, a larger sample size would enable a more comprehensive understanding that can be considered as part of further studies, providing valuable insights the field of workplace relationships. Another important aspect is to consider taking in the wider sources of perspectives such as one's peers, friends, manager, HR (Human Resources) and other colleagues.

Noting the limitations, readers should consider the findings from the research through the process of transferability. Again, the researcher acknowledges that the researcher's own interpretations may have affected the content and results depicted in this study.

7.2 Recommendations, Costings and Timeline for Implementation (CIPD Requirement)

This section presents recommendations that can be applied towards enforcing positive and healthy peer relationships and could be replicated to other workplace relationships under careful consideration by employers in their respective organisations.

The findings have shown that peer relationships when experienced positively can positively impact employee outcome such as job satisfaction and organisational commitment.

Recommendation 1: Effective Communication and well-being Training and Development Programme

As observed from the findings, effective communication enables improved communication making it a crucial determinant of interactions between peers that facilitates the development of positive and close peer relationships. It is suggested that a well-planned and innovative programme be formed intended to improve and advance communication between peers and well-being of employees. This can also be formed for management as well and would also be recommended to conduct programmes that involve managers and employees as work interactions can be stimulated by different members of an organisation.

This recommendation can be adopted by all employers, of any organisational size. In accordance to the number of employees in a department or in a specific job role and also the size of a team a manager manages, programmes can be formulated and organized and would be more valuable if this is collaborated with the HR department. There could be specific timeline set for the programs where participants could be involved in different workshops and activities that involve both theory and practical situations of learning that build and improves communication skills relating to oral, written, emotional maturity and other forms involving basic social and psychological skills. This may incline towards larger organisations that may have avail of more resources to invest in such programs. However, smaller organisations and even when it has accessibility to limited resources can still operate such programs by enabling simpler, still innovative and well-organised programs. The activities and workshops of the training program can touch upon various topics that can assist peer employees to get to know each other that would help them work better as well. They can be done in different groups whether of two or more to foster different scenarios. Participants do not have to be confined within the walls of their workplace implying for instance, participants can be encouraged to “have a tea/coffee talk”

whether in their organisation or outside of it and could be provided with activities that imparts communication tactics and skills.

To be aware of the expectations of the participants, a survey could be taken or a face-to face interactive session would be conducted prior to the program that is separate from the information session related to the program. Also a feedback session could be conducted in order to make note of what worked well, what did not and insights into making improvements in the programs. If suitable and depending on staff, a HR along with one manager should be allocated to groups of participants ideally between 20-30 in larger organisations and in smaller organisations, this can be done in accordance with what is suitable.

Financial Costs and Timeframe-To facilitate and to guide groups and to be able to make important observations, organisations may require employing additional staff in HR or staff who holds expertise in conducting such training programs. This may require substantive costs as it could include salary and related employment financial costs. Organisations may also take avail of companies that provide services in conducting such programmes, however this again would require substantive financial costs. Training progammes does involve significant financial support depending on the kind of results expected and on kind of material resources needed. The estimated timeframe for both organizing and implementing this would be for 3-6 months that is estimated for recruiting and setting up the programme. In the case of organisations that do not have HR managerial roles or a HR department, managers, directors and other senior level roles could undergo training to gain knowledge and a level of expertise in planning, conducting and implementing the programmes. This may incur an increase in costs, more material resources and significant timeframe depending on the organisation. This also implies that training would be addition to their existing workload.

Based on a successful conduct and implementation of the programme, employees would gain effective communication skills that would improve communication between them and their colleagues that could include everyone involved in their network circle at work. This will improve employee well-being, workplace relationships, could lead to forming closer bonds, mutual trust, understanding, respect and possible friendships. This could lead to a positive impact on job satisfaction, performance, employee retention, organisational commitment, productivity, and employer brand, being very advantageous for the organisation.

Recommendation 2: Alignment of values between the Organisation and Employees

Organisations should have strong and distinct fundamental values that are presented through effective and transparent communication with the employees to make them engage in it. Hence, organisations when dedicated to policies and practices that foster positive feelings can increase employee well-being and also work environment. For instance, an organisation could adhere to environmental protection by “no plastic” or “going green” or could incline towards community services that could include social services as well. Findings showed how when employees are involved in community services organized by their organisation fosters affective connection between the organisation and the employee. Moreover, it generates connection and close bonds between employees as peers. Organisations must continue to inspire their employees not just verbally and by highlighting their mission statements but also inspire it by making employees engage in it practically. For instance, when an organisation is set on the value of being environmentally conscious, themed tea breaks, friendly staff competitions, gala balls, fundraisers and other socially engaging activities pertaining to the value can be implemented. This can be done holding a staff engagement meeting where the HR, managers and staff could discuss on what kind of activities they would like to partake in. There could be representatives from each department in this meeting or as suited according to the respective organisations. This reinforces collaboration and cohesion as it necessitates team work and effective communication again. Employees participating together as individuals and in teams could be encouraged to have a positive outlook and connect closely towards their organisation’s goals and values and share a sense of pride and belongingness. The timeframe for this could be considered an annual initiative as organisations can enforce this on an annual basis helping reinforce their values in employees. This could be done on a particular set date every year or could be done for a week/month every year depending on the organisations. The financial costs depend on the kind of activities an organisation may want to hold or outsource. If organisations have social clubs that relies on staff payroll deductions, the costs for these activities can be taken from that. Similar benefits can be estimated here as for employees, it can lead to employee well-being, improving peer relationships, a sense of belongingness and other positive feelings. Organisations can benefit from it by an improved work culture, employer brand, retention and commitment.

Recommendation 3: Research and revision of strategy and policies

It is recommended that attempts are made to detect the factors that influence one to leave an organisation that is part of exit interviews but can also be determined by doing monthly surveys or in team meetings. Research and records of the observations would help understand what kind of aspects organisations and HR may have overlooked or that may require further scrutiny. From the study's findings, an important limitation was that the researcher could not dwell into the negative aspects of peer relationships and even factors that affects peer relationships. Hence, it would be valuable to have this information as it may help revising and redesigning strategies, policies and support systems that is aimed towards increasing retention and commitment. The timeframe for this is estimated between two-five years as that would help record and retain valuable data and enable a better understanding by reflecting employee experiences. The financial costs depend on the organisation, it would be valuable if organisations are able to recruit research and analyst experts that can produce high-quality quantified and qualitative data. This implies cost for salary and other relevant employment costs. Understanding employee experiences and perspectives helps in understanding of the extent of effect of implementation of existing organisational and HR policies, strategies and support systems. This can lead to reframing or revising or rejuvenating certain aspects of it that can lead increasing employee morale, retention, commitment, productivity, positive workplace relationships and positive working environment.

Personal Learning Statement

As part of my master's degree in human resource management, I conducted a research study on a qualitative study of employees' experiences of peer relationships and the way it can impact their organisational commitment. This topic continues to be significant area for studies such as organizational and management studies, workplace relationships holding valuable insights and implications for organisations as a whole.

I have gained experience related to not only theoretical knowledge but also significant research skills, writing skills and analytical skills. I was able to have access to important insights into peer relationships and employee outcomes such as organisational commitment through the qualitative perspectives of the respondents. Having no prior experience in conducting the research and also in writing it, the process of this research study has been inevitably challenging but also a valuable and fascinating learning experience.

I am grateful for my supervisor as his guidance and questions encouraged me to think upon my approach and the presented content for my study. I think I would have produced a better and more satisfying write-up with better and more pronounced time management and organisational skills, however this again has helped me reflect on my own inadequacies and other relevant areas.

Being an enjoyable and valuable learning experience from working on this dissertation, I hope this research can be valuable to any extent to the readers.

Reference List

Agarwal, P. and Sajid, S. M. (2017) 'A study of job satisfaction, organisational commitment and turnover intention among public and private sector employees', *Journal of Management Research* (09725814), 17(3), pp. 123-136. Available at: <http://eds.b.ebscohost.com/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=854a66b3-0edb-4cfe-9ff9-cf68d0bad571@pdc-v-sessmgr04> [Accessed 3 August 2020].

Ahmed, M. and Nawaz, N. (2015) 'Impact of organisational commitment on employee turnover: A case study of Pakistan International Airlines (PIA)', *Industrial Engineering Letters*, 5(8), pp. 57-69. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/323780126_Impact_of_Organisational_Commitment_on_Employee_Turnover_A_Case_Study_of_Pakistan_International_Airlines_PIA [Accessed 10 January 2020].

Akila, A. and Priyadarshini, R.G. (2018) 'The impact of workplace friendships on organisational commitment and intention to leave', *IOP Conference Series: Materials Science & Engineering*, 390(1), pp.1-6. doi: 10.1088/1757-899X/390/1/012064.

Allen, N. J. and Meyer, J. P. (1990) 'The measurement and antecedents of affective, continuance and normative commitment to the organisation', *Journal of Occupational Psychology*, 63(1), pp. 1-18. doi:10.1111/j.2044-8325.1990.tb00506.

Allen, N. J. and Meyer, J. P. (2001) 'Affective, continuance, and normative commitment to the organisation: An examination of construct validity', *Journal of Vocational Behaviour*, 49(3), pp. 250-278. doi: 10.1006/jvbe.1996.0043.

Alvino, L. (2014r) 'Engage your employees or lose billions', *Forbes Magazine*. Available at: <http://www.forbes.com/sites/womensmedia/2014/09/29/engage-your-employees-or-lose-billions/> [Accessed 6 August 2020].

Blandford, A. (2013) 'Semi-structured qualitative studies. In: Soegaard, Mads and Dam, Rikke Friis (eds.)', *The Encyclopedia of Human-Computer Interaction, 2nd Ed. Aarhus, Denmark: TheInteraction Design Foundation*. Available at:

https://qualresearchmethods.files.wordpress.com/2016/05/blandford_2013_semi-structured-qualitative-studies.pdf [Accessed 6 August 2020].

Boddy, C. R. (2016) 'Sample size for qualitative research', *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, 19(4), pp. 426–432. doi: 10.1108/QMR-06-2016-0053.

Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2006) 'Using thematic analysis in psychology', *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3 (2), pp. 77-101. doi: 10.1191/1478088706.

Brooks, J., McCluskey, S., Turley, E. and King, N. (2015) 'The Utility of Template Analysis in Qualitative Psychology Research', *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 12, pp. 202–222, doi: 10.1080/14780887.2014.955224.

Buchanan II, B. (1974) 'Building organisational commitment: The socialization of managers in work', *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 19(4), pp. 533-546. doi: 10.2307/2391809.

Carmeli, A. and Gittell, J. H. (2009) 'High-quality relationships, psychological safety, and learning from failures in work organisations', *Journal of Organisational Behaviour*, 30(6), pp. 709–729. doi: 10.1002/job.v30:610.1002/job.565.

Chiaburu, D. S., and Harrison, D. A. (2008) 'Do peers make the place? Conceptual synthesis and meta-analysis of co-worker effects on perceptions, attitudes, OCBs, and performance', *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 93(5), 1082–1103. doi: 10.1037/0021-9010.93.5.1082.

Clifton, J. (2014) 'Why being engaged at work isn't as simple as being happy', *Gallup: The Chairman's Blog*. Available at: <http://thechairmansblog.gallup.com/2014/10/whybeing-engaged-at-work-isnt-as.html> [Accessed 10 January 2020].

Colbert, A. E., Bono, J. E. and Purvanova, R. K. (2016) 'Flourishing via Workplace Relationships: Moving beyond Instrumental Support', *Academy of Management Journal*, 59(4), pp. 1199–1223. doi: 10.5465/amj.2014.0506.

Collins, A. M., Hislop, D. and Cartwright, S. (2016) 'Social support in the workplace between teleworkers, office-based colleagues and supervisors', *New Technology, Work & Employment*, 31(2), pp. 161–175. doi: 10.1111/ntwe.12065.

Cooper, C.L., Dewe, P.J. and O'Driscoll, M.P. (2001) 'Organisational Stress: A Review and Critique of Theory, Research, and Applications', *Gender Work and Organisation*, 10(1), pp. 130-131. Doi: 10.1111/1468-0432.00006_4.

Creary, S. J., Caza, B. B. and Roberts, L. M. (2015) 'Out of the Box? How Managing a Subordinate's Multiple Identities Affects the Quality of a Manager-Subordinate Relationship', *Academy of Management Review*, 40(4), pp. 538–562. doi:10.5465/amr.2013.0101.

Cutrona, C. E. and Russell, D. W. (1990) 'Type of social support and specific stress: Toward a theory of optimal matching. In B. R. Sarason, I. G. Sarason, & G. R. Pierce (Eds.)', *Wiley series on personality processes. Social support: An interactional view*, pp. 319–366. John Wiley & Sons. Available at : https://www.researchgate.net/publication/232560583_Type_of_social_support_and_specific_stress_Toward_a_theory_of_optimal_matching [Accessed 10 August 2020].

Dicicco-Bloom B, Crabtree, B.F. (2006) 'The qualitative research interview', *Medical Education*, 40(4), pp. 314-321. doi:10.1111/j.1365-2929.2006.02418.

Diener, E. and Seligman, M. E. P. (2002) 'Very happy people', *Psychological Science*, 13(1), pp. 81–84. doi: 10.1111/1467-9280.00415.

Dutton, J. E., Roberts, L. M. and Bednar, J. (2010) 'Pathways for positive identity construction at work: Four types of positive identity and the building of social resources', *The Academy of Management Review*, 35(2), pp. 265–293. doi: 10.5465/AMR.2010.48463334.

Ehrhardt, K. and Ragins, B. R. (2019) 'Relational Attachment at Work: A Complementary Fit Perspective on the Role of Relationships in Organisational Life', *Academy of Management Journal*, 62(1), pp. 248–282. doi: 10.5465/amj.2016.0245.

Ellenbecker, C. H. and Cushman, M. (2011) 'Home health care nurse retention and patient outcome model: Discussion and model development', *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 68(8), pp. 1881-1893. doi: 10.1111/j.1365-2648.2011.05889.

Eriksson, P. and Kovalainen, A. (2008) '*Qualitative Methods in Business Research*', London: Sage, pp. 279-290. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/282671971_Qualitative_Methods_in_Business_Research [Accessed 6 August 2020].

Etikan, I., Musa, S.A. and Alkassim R.S. (2016) 'Comparison of Convenience Sampling and Purposive Sampling', *American Journal of Theoretical and Applied Statistics*. 5(1), pp. 1-4. doi: 10.11648/j.ajtas.20160501.11.

Feeney, B. C. and Collins, N. L. (2015) 'A New Look at Social Support: A Theoretical Perspective on Thriving Through Relationships', *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 19(2), pp. 113–147. doi: 10.1177/1088868314544222.

Ferris, G. R. (2009) 'Relationships at work: toward a multidimensional conceptualization of dyadic work relationships', *Journal of Management*, p. 1379. Available at: <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,cookie,shib&db=edsgao&AN=edsgcl.217973730&site=eds-live&scope=site> (Accessed: 2 August 2020).

Ferris, G. R., Liden, R. C., Munyon, T. P., Summers, J. K., Basik, K. J. and Buckley, M. R. (2009) 'Relationships at work: Toward a multidimensional conceptualization of dyadic work relationships', *Journal of Management*, 35(6), pp. 1379–1403. doi:10.1177/0149206309344741.

Gerald R. Ferris, Robert C. Liden, Timothy P. Munyon, James K. Summers, Kevin J. Basik, M. Ronald Buckley Spreitzer, G., Sutcliffe, K., Dutton, J., Sonenshein, S. and Grant, A. M. (2005) 'A socially embedded model of thriving at work', *Organisation Science*, 16(5), pp. 537–549. doi: 10.1287/orsc.1050.0153.

Goldman, J. A., Cooper, P. E., Ahern, K. and Corsini, D. A. (1981) 'Continuities and discontinuities in the friendship descriptions of women at six stages in the life cycle', *Genetic Psychology Monographs*, 103(1), pp. 153–167.

Grant, A. M. and Parker, S. K. (2009) 'Redesigning work design theories: The rise of relational and proactive perspectives', *The Academy of Management Annals*, 3(1), pp. 317–375. doi: 10.1080/19416520903047327.

Halford, S. (2005), 'Hybrid Workspace: Re-Spatialisations of Work, Organisation and Management', *New Technology, Work and Employment*, 20(1), pp. 19–33. doi: 10.1111/j.1468-005X.2005.00141.

Heffner, T. S., & Rentsch, J. R. (2001). Organisational commitment and social interaction: A multiple constituencies approach. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 59(3), 471-490. doi:10.1006/jvbe.2001.1808.

Hodson, R. (2004) 'Work life and Social Fulfillment: Does Social Affiliation at Work Reflect a Carrot or a Stick?', *Social Science Quarterly*, 85(2), pp. 221–239. doi: 10.1111/j.0038-4941.2004.08502001.

Hosmer, L. T. (1995) 'Trust: e connecting link between organisational theory and philosophical ethics', *Academy of Management Review*, 20, pp. 379-403. doi:10.5465/amr.1995.9507312923.

Ibarra, H. (1993) 'Personal networks of women and minorities in management: A conceptual framework', *Academy of Management Review*, 18(1), pp. 56–87.

doi: 10.5465/amr.1993.3997507.

Ingram, P. and Zou, X. (2008) 'Business friendships', *Research in Organisational Behavior*, 2, pp. 167–184. doi: 10.1016/j.riob.2008.04.006.

Jamshed S. (2014) 'Qualitative research method-interviewing and observation', *Journal of Basic and Clinical Pharmacy*, 5(4), pp. 87–88. doi: 10.4103/0976-0105.141942.

Jehn, K. A. and Shah, P. P. (1997) 'Interpersonal relationships and task performance: An examination of mediation processes in friendship and acquaintance groups', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 72(4), pp. 775–790. doi: 10.1037/0022-3514.72.4.775.

Jia, M. and Shoham, M. (2012) 'Communication Motives, Satisfaction, and Social Support in the Workplace: Are Supervisors Effective Support Sources in Employee Networks?' *45th Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences*, pp. 4407-4416. doi:10.1109/HICSS.2012.164

Kaiser, K. (2009) 'Protecting Respondent Confidentiality in Qualitative Research', *Qualitative Health Research*, 19(11), pp. 1632–1641. doi: 10.1177/1049732309350879.

Labianca, G. and Brass, D. J. (2006) 'Exploring the social ledger: Negative relationships and negative asymmetry in social networks in organisations', *The Academy of Management Review*, 31(3), pp. 596–614. doi: 10.2307/20159231.

Lesabe, R. A. and Nkosi, J. (2007) 'A qualitative exploration of employees' views on organisational commitment', *South African Journal of Human Resource Management*, 5(1), pp. 35-44. doi: 10.4102/sajhrm.v5i1.106.

Lu, J. G., Hafenbrack, A. C., Eastwick, P. W., Wang, D. J., Maddux, W. W. and Galinsky, A. D. (2017) 'Going out of the box: Close intercultural friendships and romantic relationships spark

creativity, workplace innovation, and entrepreneurship’, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 102(7), pp. 1091–1108. doi: 10.1037/apl0000212.

Maiti, R. B. and Sanyal, S. N. (2017) ‘Optimizing the role of organisational commitment: A qualitative study in the school education sector’, *International Journal of Organisational Analysis*, 26(4), pp. 669-690. doi: 10.1108/IJOA-06-2017-1183.

Mastroianni, K. and Storberg-Walker, J. (2014) ‘Do work relationships matter? Characteristics of workplace interactions that enhance or detract from employee perceptions of well-being and health behaviours’, *Health Psychology and Behavioural Medicine*, 2(1), pp. 798-819. doi: 10.1080/21642850.2014.933343.

Maurer, T. J. and Lippstreu, M. (2008) ‘Who will be committed to an organisation that provide support for employee development?’, *Journal of Management development*, 27(3), pp. 328-347. doi: 10.1108/02621710810810858632.

May, D.R., Gibson R.L. and Harter L.M. (2004) ‘The Psychological Conditions of Meaningfulness, Safety and Availability and the Engagement of the Human Spirit at Work’, *Journal of Occupational and Organisational Psychology*, 77(1), pp. 11–37. doi: 10.1348/096317904322915892.

McClure, M. J., Xu, J. H., Craw, J. P., Lane, S. P., Bolger, N. and Shrout, P. E. (2014) ‘Understanding the costs of support transactions in daily life’, *Journal of Personality*, 82(6), pp. 563–574. doi: 10.1111/jopy.12061.

Mercurio, Z. A. (2015) ‘Affective Commitment as a Core Essence of Organisational Commitment: An Integrative Literature Review’, *Human Resource Development Review*, 14(4), pp. 389–414. doi: 10.1177/1534484315603612.

Methot, J. R., Lepine, J. A., Podsakoff, N. P. and Christian, J. S. (2016) ‘Are workplace friendships a mixed blessing? Exploring tradeoffs of multiplex relationships and their

associations with job performance’, *Personnel Psychology*, 69(2), pp. 311–355. doi: 10.1111/peps.12109.

Meyer, J. P. and Herscovitch, L. (2001) ‘Commitment in the workplace: Toward a general model’, *Human Resource Management Review*, 11(3), pp. 299-326. doi: 10.1016/S1053-4822(00)00053.

Meyer, J. P., Stanley, D. J., Herscovitch, L., and Topolnytsky, L. (2002) ‘Affective, continuance, and normative commitment to the organisation: A meta-analysis of antecedents, correlates, and consequences’, *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 61(1), pp. 20–52. doi: 10.1006/jvbe.2001.1842.

Mitchell, M. S., Cropanzano, R. S., and Quisenberry, D. M. (2012) ‘Social exchange theory, exchange resources, and interpersonal relationships: A modest resolution of theoretical difficulties. In K. Törnblom & A. Kazemi (Eds.)’, *Critical issues in social justice. Handbook of social resource theory: Theoretical extensions, empirical insights, and social applications*, pp. 99–118. Springer Science + Business Media. doi: 10.1007/978-1-4614-4175-56.

Morrison, E. W. (2002) ‘Newcomers' relationships: The role of social network ties during socialization’, *Academy of Management Journal*, 45(6), pp. 1149–1160. doi: 10.2307/3069430.

Morrow, P. C. (2011) ‘Managing organisational commitment: Insights from longitudinal research’, *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 79(1), pp. 18-35. Available at: <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,cookie,shib&db=edsgao&AN=edsgcl.258607489&site=eds-live&scope=site> [Accessed 1 August 2020].

Moynihan, D.P. and Pandey S.K. (2008) ‘The Ties That Bind: Social Networks, Person-Organisation Value Fit, and Turnover Intention’, *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 18(2), pp. 205–227. doi:10.1093/jopart/mum013.

Najeemdeen, I.S., Abidemi, B.T. and Anuforo, P. (2018) ‘The relationship between peer relationships on transfer of training among employees’, *Asian Journal of Multidisciplinary*

Studies, 6(6), pp.66-72. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/325484461_The_Relationship_between_Peer_Relationships_on_Transfer_of_Training_among_Employees [Accessed 30 December 2019].

Oh, H.S. (2019) 'Organisational Commitment Profiles and Turnover Intention: Using a Person-Centered Approach in the Korean Context', *Frontiers in Psychology*, 10, pp. 1499. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2019.01499.

Oksanen, T., Kuovonen, A., Vahtera, J., Virtanen, M. and Kivimaki, M. (2010) 'Prospective Study of Workplace Social Capital and Depression: Are Vertical and Horizontal Components Equally Important', *Journal of Epidemiology Community and Health*, 64(8), pp. 684–689. doi : 10.1136/jech.2008.086074.

Ozmen, Y.S. (2019) 'How the exchange relationship affects employee commitment: The mediating role of organisational trust', *Journal of Management Development*, 38(6), pp. 501-516. doi: 10.1108/JMD-08-2018-0220.

Paillé, P. (2012) 'Employee retention: Exploring the relationship between employee commitment, organisational citizenship behaviour and the decision to leave the organisation', *International Journal of Human Resources Development and Management*, 12(1/2), pp. 140 - 157. doi:10.1504/IJHRDM.2012.044189.

Palaganas, E. C., Sanchez, M. C., Molintas, M. P. and Caricativo, R. D. (2017) 'Reflexivity in Qualitative Research', *A Journey of Learning. The Qualitative Report*, 22(2), pp. 426-438.

Available at:

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/316543295_Reflexivity_in_qualitative_research_A_journey_of_learning [Accessed 6 August 2020].

Pangarkar, A., and Kirkwood, T. (2013) 'Four ways to gain employees commitment', *Association for Talent Development*. Available at:

<http://www.astd.org/Publications/Newsletters/ASTD-Links/ASTD-Links-Articles/2013/03/Four-Ways-to-Gain-Employees-Commitment> [Accessed 9 August 2020].

Peroune, D.L. (2007) 'Tacit knowledge in the workplace: the facilitating role of peer relationships', *Journal of European Industrial Training*, 31(4), pp. 244-258. doi: 10.1108/03090590710746414.

Pillemer, J. and Rothbard, N. P. (2018) 'Friends without benefits: Understanding the dark sides of workplace friendship', *The Academy of Management Review*, 43(4), pp. 635–660. doi: 10.5465/amr.2016.0309.

Pillow, W., (2003) 'Confession, catharsis, or cure? Rethinking the uses of reflexivity as methodological power in qualitative research', *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 16(2), pp. 175–196. doi: 10.1080/0951839032000060635.

Prior, M (2018) 'Accomplishing "rapport" in qualitative research interviews: Empathic moments in interaction', *Applied Linguistics Review*, 9(4), pp. 487-511. doi: 10.1515/applirev-2017-0029.

Rafaeli, E., & Gleason, M. E. (2009) 'Skilled support within intimate relationships', *Journal of Family Theory & Review*, 1(1), pp. 20–37. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/227714495_Skilled_Support_Within_Intimate_Relationships [Accessed 6 August 2020].

Ragins, B. R. and Dutton, J. E. (2007) '*Positive Relationships at Work: An Introduction and Invitation.*' In J. E. Dutton & B. R. Ragins (Eds.), LEA's organisation and management series. Exploring positive relationships at work: Building a theoretical and research foundation', Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers, pp. 3–25. Available at: http://webuser.bus.umich.edu/janedut/High%20Quality%20Connections/dutton_01.pdf [Accessed 6 August 2020].

Sanchez-Burks, J. (2002) 'Protestant relational ideology and (in)attention to relational cues in work settings', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 83(4), pp. 919–929.

doi: 10.1037/0022-3514.83.4.919.

Schneider, B. (1987) 'The people make the place', *Personnel Psychology*, 40(3), pp. 437-453.
doi: 10.1111/j.1744-6570.1987.tb00609.

Schyns, B, Paul, T, Mohr, G and Blank, H. (2005) 'Comparing antecedents and consequences of leader: member exchange in a German working context to findings in the US', *European Journal of Work and Organisational Psychology*, 14(1), pp. 1-22. doi: 10.1080/13594320444000191.

Shah, N. and Shah, S. (2010) 'Relationships between Employee Readiness for Organisational Change, Supervisor and Peer Relations and Demography', *Journal of Enterprise Information Management*, 23(5), pp. 640-652. doi: 10.1108/17410391011083074.

She-Cheng, L. and Shu-Jen, J.L. (2011) 'Impacts of co-workers' relationships on organisational commitment- and intervening effects of job satisfaction', *African Journal of Business Management*, 5(8), pp. 3396-3409. doi: 10.5897/AJBM10.1558.

Sias, P.M.(2006) 'Workplace Relationship Quality and Employee Information Experiences', *Community. Studies*, 56(4), pp. 375–395. doi: 10.1080/10510970500319450.

Sias, P.M. (2008) '*Organizing Relationships: Traditional and Emerging Perspectives on Workplace Relationships*', *Thousand Oaks: Sage*, pp. 57-88. Available at :
https://www.academia.edu/11991720/Peer_Coworker_Relationships [Accessed 4 August 2020].

Silver, A. (1990) 'Friendship in Commercial Society: Eighteenth-Century Social Theory and Modern Sociology', *American Journal of Sociology*, 95(6), pp. 1474-1504.
doi: 10.1086/229461.

Sluss, D. M. and Ashforth, B. E. (2007) 'Relational Identity and Identification: Defining Ourselves Through Work Relationships', *The Academy of Management Review*, 32(1), pp. 9–32. doi: 10.2307/20159278

Smith, R. H. (2000) 'Assimilative and contrastive emotional reactions to upward and downward social comparisons. In J. Suls & L. Wheeler (Eds.), *The Plenum series in social/clinical psychology. Handbook of social comparison: Theory and research*', *Kluwer Academic Publishers*, pp. 173–200. doi: 10.1007/978-1-4615-4237-7_10.

Tamer, İ. and Dereli, B. (2014) 'The relationship between interpersonal trust, peer support and organisational commitment', *Journal of Mamara University Social Sciences Institute/ Öneri*, 11(42), pp. 175-196. doi: 10.14783/od.v11i42.5000065518.

Tan, H. H. and Lim A. K. H. (2009) 'Trust in Co-workers and Trust in Organisations.', *Journal of Psychology*, 143(1), pp. 45-66. doi:10.3200/JRLP.143.1.

Takahashi, K. (2005) 'Toward a Life Span Theory of Close Relationships: The Affective Relationships Model', *Human Development*, 48(1-2), pp. 48–66. doi: 10.1159/000083215.

Talib, P. and Mitra, R. (2017) 'Relationship between retention factors and organisational commitment', *International Research Journal of Management, Science & Technology*, 8(1), pp. 49-61. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/19619945_Relationship_between_Retention_Factors_and_Organisational_Commitment [Accessed 18 December 2019].

Tesser, A. (1988) 'Toward a self-evaluation maintenance model of social behaviour', In L. Berkowitz (Ed.), *Advances in experimental social psychology*, Social psychological studies of the self: Perspectives and programs Academic Press, 21, pp. 181–227. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/200008925_Toward_a_Self-Evaluation_Maintenance_Model_of_Social_Behavior[Accessed 9 August 2020].

Thomson, S. B. (2010) 'Sample Size and Grounded Theory', *Journal of Administration and Governance*, 5(1), pp.45-52. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228513695_Sample_Size_and_Grounded_Theory [Accessed 3 January 2020].

Tran, K.T., Nguyen, P.V., Dang, T.T. and Ton, T.N (2018) 'The Impacts of the High-Quality Workplace Relationships on Job Performance: A Perspective on Staff Nurses in Vietnam' *Behavioural Sciences*, 109(8), pp.1-21. doi:10.3390/bs8120109.

Van Breukelen, W., Konst, D. and Van der Vlist, R. (2002) 'Effects of LMX and Differential Treatment on Work Unit Commitment', *Psychological Reports*, 91(1), pp. 220–230. doi: 10.2466/pr0.2002.91.1.220.

Vasquez, D. (2014) 'Employee retention for economic stabilization: A qualitative phenomenological study in the hospitality sector', *International Journal of Management, Economics and Social Sciences*, 3 (1), pp. 1-17. Available at: <http://oaji.net/articles/2014/1346-1412842087.pdf>.

Venkataramani, V., Labianca, G. (J.), & Grosser, T. (2013). Positive and negative workplace relationships, social satisfaction, and organisational attachment. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 98(6), 1028–1039. doi.org/10.1037/a0034090.

Yücel, I. (2012) 'Examining the relationships among job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and turnover intention: An empirical study', *International Journal of Business and Management*, 7(20), pp. 44-58. doi: 10.5539/ijbm.v7n20p44.

Appendices

Appendix 1. Interview Schedule

Q1. Where were you working prior to this job?

Q2. How were your relationships with your former colleagues?

Q3. Could you tell me about your relationships with your current colleagues at work?

Q4. Could you tell me about your relationships with your current manager at work?

Q5. Amongst all of your colleagues, with whom do you spend more time at work?

a) How does that impact you at work?

b) How did such a relationship/s develop?

c) What kind of initiatives introduced at your company helped build such relations?

d) What do you think of these initiatives?

Q6. What other factors do you think may have helped you develop such relationship/s?

Q7. What are your thoughts on companies that put in efforts in encouraging strong relationships among colleagues at work?

a) How would it impact you?

1) at work 2) off work

Q8. What do you think it means for an employee to be committed to a company that one works at?

a) How would you describe your connection to this company?

Q9. What are the ways do you think could help employees be more committed to their organisation?

Q10. How do you think your company could be encouraging you to continue to work here?

Q11. In what ways do you think your relationships with your colleagues can encourage you to continue working at your company?