

Case Study

## Interpersonal Relationship Conflicts and their Impacts on Productivity in Workplace Environments

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### ABSTRACT

Interpersonal disputes are frequent in today's complex workplaces and can result from a range of personality traits, principles, and communication styles. If left unaddressed, these disputes can sabotage teamwork, lower output, and create a hostile work environment. This essay examines the various forms of interpersonal conflicts that arise in the workplace, such as disagreements over tasks, relationship problems, struggle for authority, difficulties with communication, and role conflicts. Each of these sorts of conflicts has a distinct effect on teamwork and output. Fostering a productive and encouraging work environment requires the use of effective conflict management techniques like problem-solving, active listening, and open communication. Strong interpersonal relationships are essential for achieving organizational outcomes because they promote teamwork, lower stress levels, and increase job satisfaction. Unresolved interpersonal disputes have been shown in studies to dramatically reduce employee.

**Keywords:** *Interpersonal Relationships, Interpersonal Conflict, Impact in Productivity, Psychology*

In today's fast-paced, ever-evolving world, diversity and adaptability have transitioned from being mere advantages to essential traits for achieving success and building credibility. To truly excel and ascend within an organization, professionals must cultivate a strong ability to manage interpersonal conflicts effectively, as navigating these tensions is crucial for fostering a productive and harmonious work environment.

Interpersonal conflicts are inevitable due to the unique perspectives, work styles, and approaches each individual brings to the table. When such conflicts go unresolved, they can deepen into significant disagreements about beliefs, values, and objectives, which ultimately hinders performance and productivity. Unaddressed issues can lead to competing goals among team members, creating a tense environment where collaboration becomes challenging, if not impossible. In such scenarios, the workplace atmosphere can quickly turn toxic, harming team morale and reducing overall effectiveness. However, with the right conflict resolution techniques, professionals can mitigate these conflicts, transforming tension into constructive dialogue and allowing for a calm, focused, and efficient workplace.

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The modern workplace is a melting pot of varied personalities, viewpoints, and life experiences, making it highly susceptible to conflict. Miscommunication, misunderstandings, and unconscious assumptions often lead to interpersonal tensions that, if left unaddressed, can escalate into full-blown workplace stress. When these issues aren't managed, they have the potential to poison the work environment, negatively impacting team cohesion and individual satisfaction. Even minor conflicts, like differing priorities or conflicting personal values, can disrupt productivity substantially. Thus, proactive conflict management not only prevents these issues from festering but also reinforces a culture of respect and cooperation, laying the foundation for sustainable growth and success within any organization.

### *What is interpersonal conflict in the workplace?*

Arguments between people within an organization are referred to as interpersonal conflict. It involves differences in opinions, communication styles, beliefs, and objectives. These disputes may be detrimental to collaboration, relationships, and output. It may result in a challenging and disorderly workplace. Strong communication, empathy, negotiating, and problem-solving skills are necessary for resolving interpersonal conflicts.

### *Types of Interpersonal Conflict in Workplace*

- **Task Related Conflict:** This type of conflict arises when individuals have different ideas about how to complete tasks. It could involve differences in work styles or disagreements about how things ought to operate.
- **Relationship Conflict:** Interpersonal conflict at work leads to relationship conflict. It involves conflicts over communication techniques, values, or personalities.
- **Power Battle:** When people fight for influence at work, it's called a power battle. It may occur when individuals battle for resources or attention.
- **Communication Conflict:** Misunderstandings between people can cause communication to break down, which can result in conflict. These issues include inadequate listening skills, unclear communication, or inappropriate communication methods.
- **Role Conflict:** When people have conflicting requirements from one another, role conflict arises. Conflicting priorities or overlapping roles may cause this to occur.

### *Examples of Interpersonal Conflict at Work*

- **Communication Problems:** Conflicts among co-workers might result from misunderstandings. It also occurs between managers and staff.
- **Different Working Style:** Workers have different approaches to their jobs. Conflict at work may result from it.
- **Power Battle:** When there is an imbalance of power in the workplace, interpersonal conflict may result. For instance, when someone makes an effort to exert control or influence on another.
- **Personality Conflicts:** Distinct personalities may clash at work. It leads to disagreements over disparate attitudes, behaviors, or beliefs.
- **Role Battle:** Conflict can arise from unclear job responsibilities, particularly when it comes to decision-making authority.
- **Harassment:** It can cause interpersonal problems that impact people's professional relationships.

### *How to Manage It?*

- **Addressing the Conflict:** Identifying disagreements and preventing them from getting worse are key components of managing interpersonal conflict. Resolving disagreements in the workplace requires proactive measures.
- **Encourage Open Communication:** Encouraging open communication amongst the involved parties is a crucial tactic. Establishing a safe space enables people to talk about their issues and worries. This makes it possible to comprehend one another's viewpoints more fully. It also makes conflict resolution easier.
- **Listening Effectively:** In conflict management, active listening is essential. It entails hearing what each side has to say. Additionally, it shows consideration for their emotions. People may validate the feelings and worries of others by listening to them. It increases trust and promotes understanding.
- **Identify the Problems:** It must identify the fundamental problems. Examining factors like disparities in communication styles and values may be part of this. Identifying the conflict's underlying causes assists in the development of specific resolution techniques.
- **Seek Middle Ground:** It's critical to identify areas of agreement between opposing parties. Finding common ground lays the groundwork for resolving disputes. By concentrating on common objectives, people might strive toward solutions that resolve disagreements.
- **Examine Other Possible Solutions:** Investigating different options is a useful strategy for handling conflicts. Numerous options are made possible by promoting brainstorming and producing a large number of potential solutions. Finding solutions that can satisfy the requirements of both conflicting parties is the aim.

### *Need for Interpersonal Relationship at Work*

An organization is made up of a collection of individuals with alike goals, ambitions, and viewpoints who work together to accomplish what they cannot alone. Nonetheless, in any goal-oriented organization, employees' collaborative efforts and interpersonal relationships have an impact on the efficiency of the entire work group. Therefore, it is impossible to overestimate the importance of interpersonal relationships in the workplace. By fostering innovative and supportive environments, boosting institutional engagement, and valued interpersonal relationships can have an impact on organizational outcomes.

(Berman et al., 2002; Crabtree, 2004; Ellingwood, 2004; Song and Olshfski, 2008)

- Since people are not machines that can operate for extended periods of time, it is nearly impossible for them to work alone for straight 8 hours that they spend in their organization. We need someone who can hear us in and express our emotions. Consider yourself employed at a company where friends are rare. Since we are sociable creatures, we require companionship. An individual who works alone is more likely to experience stress and worry.
- We require individuals to discuss different topics, analyze advantages and disadvantages, and come up with solutions that benefit the company as a whole as well as its employees. People in a team can collaborate to generate better concepts and tactics.
- The culture of the company is directly impacted by interpersonal relationships: misunderstandings and confusions breed dislike at work. The workplace is ruined by conflicts, which lead nowhere.

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- We require people in our lives who can recognize our efforts and occasionally inspire us: It's crucial to have some reliable coworkers at work who will not only compliment us on our hard work but also point out our errors.

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Adela. M. Bet al., (2023)- The effect of interpersonal disputes on worker happiness and productivity is examined in this study. Significant correlations between these variables were found in the review of pertinent literature, which served as the foundation for the current study. The purpose of the study was to examine the relationship between workplace interpersonal disputes and employee happiness while also assessing how these conflicts affected organizational productivity. According to Hypothesis 1, there is a negative association between a rise in interpersonal conflicts and a fall in employee satisfaction. Hypothesis 2 predicted a positive connection, indicating that employee interpersonal disputes exacerbate the decline in organizational productivity. A small number of questioners were used with 81 Romanian participants. The Google Forms tool was used for online data collection, guaranteeing confidentiality for subjects and following ethical research guidelines. Hypothesis 1 was supported by statistical research, which showed a strong and unfavorable relationship between employee satisfaction and interpersonal disputes. Distribution tests confirmed that participants' reports of moderate conflict among themselves (meaning 1.74), and generally constant contentment (meaning 2.45) were accurate. Furthermore, Hypothesis 2 was confirmed, showing a strong and favorable association between interpersonal disputes and decreased productivity at work.

Geetha Rani K. et al., (2024)- Employee productivity is steadily declining across almost all types of firms, especially in the academic sector, according to some contemporary analysts. The study discovered several elements that influenced workers' productivity. Conflicts at work are one of the main factors influencing employees' productivity. Thus, the primary objective of this study was to investigate workplace conflicts and their effects on employee productivity within the state's Telangana teaching staff of educational institutions. Data was gathered from the relevant population using a structured questionnaire and the stratified sample technique. Several statistical methods were employed with SPSS in order to accomplish the study's objectives. The data reliability was examined using a reliability test.

Hossain (2017) Examining how organizational conflict affects workers' performance in Bangladesh's private commercial banks, it was discovered that while difficult situations have a negative impact on worker performance, they can also spark fruitful, hierarchically beneficial conversations. We must take into account and assess the productivity of workers in conflict situations in order to create the perfect environment and workplace in firms that deal with money.

Hasanati, Nida et al., 2018 Organizations aim for high levels of productivity, but many employees today behave in ways that are counterproductive to their work. Workplace interpersonal conflict and job stress foster an environment that is not supportive of engaging in counterproductive behaviors. The goal of this study is to determine how interpersonal conflict, which is affected by job stress, affects unproductive work behavior. A sample of 213 government servants who fit the requirements were selected from the entire population for this study. Cluster random sampling is the method of sampling that is employed. Instruments that are used for data collection were 'job stress inventory, interpersonal conflict at workplace. Hypothesis testing shows that workplace interpersonal

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conflict influences work-related unproductive conduct through job stress, and that workspace interpersonal conflict directly influences counterproductive work behavior.

Jungst (2016) He examined the detrimental impacts of conflict in his study work, it has been found that conflicts are detrimental to workers without access to extensive social networks. According to the study, employees who are dealing with a conflict of tasks in an uncomfortable work environment are also less engaged with their jobs.

Khan, Beenish & Azam, Amir. (2022). The current study aims to investigate the effects of interpersonal conflict in the workplace on performance at work. Cross-sectional investigation of workers in private as well as public companies is the goal of the current study. A carefully thought-out and organized questionnaire was created and distributed to 350 participants. The complete questionnaires were submitted by 215 respondents. To determine the respondents' average behavior and demographic characteristics, basic statistical procedures have been employed. The regression approach is employed to test hypotheses. Regression analysis results indicated that interpersonal disputes lower job effectiveness. Job depression rises when interpersonal conflict increases. Interpersonal conflict has been found to have a favorable and significant impact on turnover intention at 1%. While alternate hypotheses have been accepted, all three null hypotheses have been rejected. It has been proposed that the company should promote staff members honestly through its policies and plans.

Nwinyokpugi. N.P et al., 2019 Examining the connection between interpersonal relationships at work and productivity at work in Port-Harcourt deposit money banks was the aim of this study. Four hundred and sixty employees of the mentioned banks that deposit money in Port Harcourt, Rivers State made up the study population. 210 was the sample size and additionally, 210 duplicates of the comprehensive survey were distributed to bank employees at their individual branches, and 94 duplicates were collected, sanitized, and utilized for the research. The analysis's findings showed that interpersonal relationships at work had a major impact on productivity at work at Port-Harcourt's deposit money banks. The study came to the conclusion that workplace interpersonal relationships have a significant impact on organizational productivity. As a result, it was suggested that the management of Port-Harcourt's deposit money banks implement the study's criteria for workplace interpersonal relationships as a means of raising their level of productivity.

Reich, T. C., & Hershcovis, M. S. (2011) For everyone who works in an organization, interpersonal relationships at work are an unavoidable reality. A holistic structure to support focusing on productive interpersonal connections at work is provided by the urge to belong. Before looking at how these relationships may be developed, we first go over what it implies to be within an interpersonal relationship and the advantages of having healthy interpersonal relationships at work. Our review switches to the usual order, going over the predictors of interactions with others in job settings first, then briefly discussing the results. Moreover, we take into account predictors from three major levels: general organizational membership, organizational groups and networks, and the intimate connections of friendships, mentoring. We take into account how each of these categories of analysis could contribute to a person's sense of belonging. After discussing productive interactions at the team, organizational, and mutually beneficial levels, we briefly discuss (a) what occurs when a relationship goes wrong, (b) whether research findings can be applied to other backgrounds, and (c) the advantages and disadvantages of the common approaches employed in this kind of study.

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We wrap up by offering recommendations for further study as well as consequences for science and practice.

Szostek D.(2019) The paper seeks to figure out if the demographic characteristics of employees (education, gender, age, duration of service, and type of workplace) alter the link between the degree of unproductive workplace conduct and the quality of relationships with others at work. Because unproductive behavior also involves wasting resources, harming the environment, and employing ecologically unfriendly offerings, these considerations are especially crucial for firms that wish to operate sustainably. A survey of 1488 Polish professionals who were actively employed in 2018 was used to achieve the study's goals. The goal of the suggested theoretical model was to ascertain how specific relationship quality categories impact unproductivity work behavior dimensions. It was found that employees' unproductive conduct and relationship quality are inversely related, but there are also a number of inconsistencies, which I go into depth about. Furthermore, the demographic characteristics of the employees—primarily their sex, duration of service, type of employment, and education—significantly mitigate this effect. It also goes over the study's theoretical contributions, limits and practical implications and potential future research avenues.

### **CASE STUDY**

#### ***Interpersonal Relationship Conflict Impacting Productivity in An Organizational Setup***

##### **CASE 1**

- PATIENT NAME – Miss. E
- AGE – 29 years
- SEX- female
- OCCUPATION- Marketing specialist
- MARITAL STATUS- single

**Presenting Complaint-** Declining productivity, concentration and emotional distress from conflict with a coworker.

##### **History of Present Illness**

She has been with her present organization for a time when she first prospered and enjoyed her job. However, during the past few weeks, she has been having escalating conflicts with her coworker J, with whom she usually collaborates on projects. Their work habits and communication approaches are very different, with miss. E characterizing herself as "organized and dedicated to detail" and J as "impatient and disorganized." This has resulted in misconceptions, miscommunication, and conflicts regarding project direction and timeframes. Miss. E is quite stressed and frustrated because of the constant conflict. She describes feeling undervalued and frequently perceives J as dismissive or negative of her ideas. Miss. E admits to feeling impatient and anxious during team meetings due to her concern about future disagreements with J. She has been avoiding group projects, putting off work that needs Jessica's help, and hating meetings at work. Frequent headaches, trouble sleeping, and enduring emotions of powerlessness and rage have all been brought on by this stress.

Her boss recently voiced worries regarding her late deliveries and changes in the quality of her work, and she says that her work output has decreased. Her mind frequently replays

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disagreements or imagines future confrontations, making it difficult for her to concentrate on her work and leaving her emotionally spent at the last moment of the day.

### **Past Psychiatric History**

No official history of receiving mental illness treatment, but she had previously handled brief bouts of stress at work on her own.

### **Family History**

No family history of mental illness is known.

### **Social History**

Outside of work, she relies on her close group of pals for support. However, she frequently feels ashamed to bring up the dispute at work for fear that it would be dismissed as unimportant. She feels that because she lives alone and is single, she occasionally has "too much time" to think about the stress of her job.

### **Substance Use History**

Occasionally engages in social drinking but denies turning to alcohol or other drugs as a stress reliever.

### **Mental Status Examination**

- GENERAL APPEARANCE- well-groomed but her facial expression shows sign of tension
- BEHAVIOR- cooperative
- SPEECH- clear and coherent
- MOOD- frustrated and stressed
- THOUGHT PROCESS- logical and coherent
- PERCEPTION- no hallucination
- COGNITION- oriented to time, place and person
- JUDGMENT- intact

## **CASE 2**

- PATIENT NAME – Miss. S
- AGE – 32years
- SEX- female
- OCCUPATION- product development manager
- MARITAL STATUS- engaged

**Presenting Complaint-** difficulty focusing, increased level of stress and impact on productivity.

### **History of Present Illness**

She has six years of experience in her current job and a proven track record of leadership and success. She was elevated to the position of Product Development Manager a few weeks ago, which entails overseeing a group of five employees. Mr. M, an expert engineer who has worked for the company for more than a decade, is one of her direct reports. He has been reluctant to obey her instructions since she was promoted; he frequently questions her

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choices and challenges her authority in public. Several awkward encounters have resulted from this tension, which She characterizes as "draining and demoralizing."

She claims that his attitude has impacted her confidence since she frequently doubts herself and is afraid to provide him with helpful criticism or give him direction on his work. She avoids meetings and tasks that need her to directly supervise her team because of this unease, which has extended to other aspects of her work. She has become slow to reply to emails and has begun to miss project milestones. Her stress level is further increased by her concern that if her teammates notice her discomfort with Mr. M, they may start to doubt her leadership.

Physical signs of stress, including headaches, tense muscles, and disturbed sleep, have been affecting Her. Her mind is constantly racing over previous events or possible future confrontations, which causes her to feel chronically worried during the workday. Despite the fact that she was once fond of her profession, she described herself as fatigued and "dreading" it most days.

### **Past Psychiatric History**

No past history of mental health diagnoses or psychiatric treatment.

### **Family History**

There is no known family history of mental illness. Although She says her family is supportive, she doesn't bring up work-related issues with them so as not to put them under undue stress.

### **Social History**

Her fiancé, who is part of her tiny but close circle of friends, has observed her elevated stress and irritation. She used to love doing volunteer work, reading, and hiking, but in recent months she has cut herself off from these pursuits.

### **Substance Use History**

Sarah doesn't use drugs or alcohol as a coping method, but she does sometimes drink wine in social situations.

### **Mental Status Examination**

- GENERAL APPEARANCE- well- groomed
- BEHAVIOR- cooperative but fidgety
- SPEECH- clear and coherent
- MOOD- frustrated
- THOUGHT PROCESS- preoccupied with work related anxieties
- PERCEPTION- no hallucination
- COGNITION- oriented to time, place and person
- JUDGMENT- intact

### **CASE 3**

- PATIENT NAME – Mr. M
- AGE- 45 years
- SEX- male
- OCCUPATION- senior sale manager



- MARITAL STATUS- Married

**Presenting Complaint:** Decreased productivity, increased stress level and irritability.

### **History of Present Illness**

MR. M has been a top performer in his business for 15 years, and he is well known for his results-driven methodology. He was given the responsibility of mentoring a younger team member who just arrived, and exhibits promise, six months ago. But according to Mr. M, his younger teammate doesn't value his experience, regularly questions his counsel, and ignores his opinions in meetings. Their relationship is tense as a result of this dynamic, and MR. M characterizes it as "hostile and exhausting."

His teammate's apparent self-importance is starting to annoy him, which causes him to argue at team meetings and receive complaints from other coworkers. He claims that his attention and job satisfaction have been deteriorating every month as a result of the stress these encounters have caused. He often dwells on past disputes, mentally reliving them and envisioning possible problems in the future. His performance has noticeably declined as a result, and he has begun to put off several jobs that call for his younger teammate assistance.

In a recent conversation with him, Mr. M manager remarked on his abnormally low level of participation in team discussions and his productivity. Mr. M feels his younger teammate is the source of the issue, therefore this chat left him feeling ashamed and angry. He claims that his personal life has suffered as a result of his frustration, becoming more agitated and estranged from his family.

### **Psychiatric History**

No official history of mental illness, but he has previously handled stress on his own by managing work-related demands.

### **Family History**

No family history of mental illness is known.

### **Social History**

Although he has recently begun to distance oneself from relatives and close associates in order to avoid talking about work-related matters, Michael maintains a stable household and strong social ties outside of work. He is married, has two kids, and loves being outside, albeit it has been months since he last engaged in such activities.

### **Substance Use History**

Although He occasionally partakes in social drinking, he denies turning to alcohol or other drugs as a stress reliever.

### **Mental Status Examination**

- GENERAL APPEARANCE- well- groomed but displays signs of tension
- BEHAVIOR- cooperative but irritable
- SPEECH- clear and coherent
- MOOD- frustrated and angry
- THOUGHT PROCESS- preoccupied with work related anxieties
- PERCEPTION- no hallucination

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- COGNITION- oriented to time, place and person
- JUDGMENT- intact

### CASE 4

- PATIENT NAME – Mr. DA
- AGE – 38years
- SEX- male
- OCCUPATION- IT project manager
- MARITAL STATUS- Married

**Presenting Complaint:** Increased stress, decreased productivity and lack of motivation at work and ongoing conflict with his supervisor.

### History of Present Illness

He has eight years of experience with his current company and is renowned for his dependability and good technical skills. A new supervisor joined the team six months ago. Mr. Da has felt undercut and micromanaged ever since. supervisor regularly delivers conflicting instructions, alters his assignments without warning, and questions his conclusions. He claims that he feels more stressed and frustrated because his supervisor doesn't seem to believe his knowledge and is always questioning his efforts.

His productivity has started to suffer because of the conflict. He used to be proactive and involved, but these days he avoids doing so out of fear of criticism or further investigation. He has begun to perform worse, missing deadlines for projects and paying less attention to details. He has a tendency to put off assignments that need Tom's input and gets really nervous before team meetings. As a result, he frequently finds it difficult to concentrate on his duties afterward. His stress level has increased since he recently received comments regarding his deteriorating performance.

His personal life has begun to suffer as a result of the stress caused by this dispute. He acknowledges that he feels exhausted and preoccupied even when he is at home, and his wife has observed his irritation and detached demeanor. He suffers from frequent headaches, sleep issues, and a lingering fear of coming to work every day.

### Past Illness History

He views himself as generally robust in dealing with work-related stress, although he has no previous experience of mental health problems or treatment.

### Family History

There is no recorded family history of mental illness. Although He acknowledges that he hasn't told them everything about his professional situation to spare them the trouble, his family has been encouraging.

### Social History

He loves to spend time together with his family and has a close group of friends. He used to participate extensively in recreational sports, but now he has stopped since he feels too worn out.

### Substance Use History

He doesn't use drugs or alcohol to deal with stress, but he does occasionally drink in social situations.

### Mental Status Examination

- GENERAL APPEARANCE- well- groomed but has slumped posture
- BEHAVIOR- cooperative but irritable
- SPEECH- clear and coherent with flat tone
- MOOD- frustrated and angry
- THOUGHT PROCESS- preoccupied with work related anxieties
- PERCEPTION- no hallucination
- COGNITION- oriented to time, place and person
- JUDGMENT- intact

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Relationships at work have a major impact on worker productivity and job satisfaction. An employee's mental health can be directly impacted by the nature of these relationships; favorable interactions can improve job satisfaction and possibly lessen the negative impacts of stresses like high demands and little control over one's workplace. For example, even under socially isolated circumstances brought on by the COVID-19 epidemic, regular interactions between work spouses—a special interpersonal relationship—have been demonstrated to boost emotional commitment and professional happiness, mediated by relational energy. This implies that sustaining a high degree of job happiness and productivity depends heavily on the nature and regularity of interpersonal relationships. Additionally, building confidence in these connections is essential to raising satisfaction among employees. However, there is also evidence that negative workplace behaviors might be inversely related to the nature or standards of interpersonal interactions, suggesting that higher-quality relationships can lessen behaviors that have an adverse impact on productivity. The significance of interactions between individuals for long-term professional satisfaction and productivity is shown by the fact that early career stages are especially vulnerable to the quality of work connections, impacting career advancement.

Productivity at work is shaped by employees, employers' vision and teamwork. Socializing skills and skills needed for interpersonal interaction have an impact on job placement and success, and relationships with others are crucial for both immediate job happiness and productivity as well as job duties and career paths. The association between job satisfaction and positive work relationships can be further mediated by effective relational management in the workplace, which can increase employees' pleasure and meaningful work.

Last but not least, coworker and management support can have a big impact on stress levels. These relationships operate as a buffer against work-related stress, which indirectly raises productivity and job satisfaction.

In conclusion, interpersonal interactions at work have a significant impact on career advancement, stress management, and emotional well-being, making them a crucial factor in determining employee efficiency and satisfaction with their work. The main focus of this study is to understand how workers interpersonal conflict affects productivity at workplace.

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Significant correlations between these variables were found in the literature evaluation, which gave the current study the background it needed.

Analyzing the connection between workplace interpersonal conflict and employee satisfaction as well as the effects of these disputes on organizational productivity was the goal.

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