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Effects of workplace relationships among organizational members on organizational identification and affective commitment: nuanced differences resulting from supervisor vs. colleague relationship

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Abstract
This study aims to investigate the impact of relationships with supervisors (RS) and relationships with colleagues (RC) on two key employee attitudes toward organizations: organizational identification (OI) and affective commitment (AC). Data was collected from a survey of employees of a Korean conglomerate. The sample company was chosen due to its organizational culture that values interactions and relationships among its members. We conduct a response surface analysis and demonstrate that, while RS increases OI, RC enhances AC. We also discover that the imbalance between RS and RC has contrasting effects on OI and AC, which exerts a positive impact on OI and a negative impact on AC. In particular, the asymmetrical impacts of the imbalance are identified in which the imbalance of the relatively stronger RS has a greater influence than the imbalance of the relatively stronger RC. Although employees have two distinguished workplace relationships (i.e., RS and RC) which are governed by different mechanisms, studies that have distinguished these two relationships and examined the effect of each relationship are limited. By revealing the distinct patterns that OI and AC exhibit when they are affected by RS and RC and discovering the asymmetrical impacts of the imbalance between RS and RC, this study provides new insights into the effects of personal workplace relationships on employee behaviors. By offering valuable information for the conceptualization and differentiation of OI and AC, this study enriches the existing literature on these two key employee attitudes.

Keywords Organizational identification (OI) · Affective commitment (AC) · Employee-Supervisor Relationship · Colleague relationship · Response surface analysis (RSA)

Introduction

Personal relationships in the workplace are critical factors that determine job satisfaction and affect organizational performance. As people increasingly prioritize their quality of life and work-life balance, fostering positive relationships among organizational members has become vital for organizational management (Horan et al., 2021). Previous research has shown that personal workplace relationships influence employees' job performance (Tran et al., 2018), participation in leadership activities (Chen & Tjosvold, 2006), and organizational commitment (Rousseau & Aubé, 2010). In this study, which builds on existing research (e.g., Fiaz & Qureshi, 2023; Horan et al., 2021; Morry, 2007; Rousseau & Aubé, 2010; Tran et al., 2018; Van Knippenberg & Sleebos, 2006; Wang et al., 2023), the impact of personal workplace relationships on two key employee attitudes

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toward organizations is examined: organizational identification (OI) and affective commitment (AC).

OI and AC are critical employee behaviors. OI and AC have conceptual similarities and they are affected by common antecedents such as organizational support, organizational value, organizational changes, etc. (Afshari, 2020; Hanelt et al., 2021; Khan et al., 2018; Wayne et al., 2009). Both OI and AC premise an individual's need for relationships with a social group (Ashforth et al., 2008) and involve the relationships between individuals and organizations. OI and AC develop based on the social connections between employees and an organization, and thus personal relationships among employees, formed through social interactions, are presumed to influence OI and AC. Despite its high plausibility, an empirical test about the impact of personal workplace relationships on OI and AC has not been fully conducted yet.

In particular, this study focuses on the duality of personal relationships, noting the hierarchical differences among organizational groups and the distinct patterns of social interactions between them. Through multi-level interactions, employees develop personal relationships simultaneously with two distinct groups: supervisors and colleagues. Although both types of relationships are personal, social interactions with supervisors versus colleagues differ significantly in terms of conversation topics, attitudes toward social gatherings, and reactions to counterparts (Chae et al., 2019). Consequently, individuals form two distinct personal relationships, relationships with supervisors (RS) and relationships with colleagues (RC). Despite both being personal relationships, RS and RC can have different effects on employees.

Based on social identity theory (Tajfel, 1978) and organizational commitment theory (Meyer & Allen, 1991), this study uncovers the distinct mechanisms through which RS and RC affect either OI or AC. While social identity theory (Tajfel, 1978) underpins the OI development process through an identification mechanism, organizational commitment theory (Meyer & Allen, 1991) explains strengthening AC based on emotional exchanges and reciprocal relationships. Both theories are critical conceptual paradigms that have been extensively studied to understand organizational behavior, providing a good understanding of the different mechanisms of OI and AC. Therefore, drawing on these two theories, this study examines the relative impact of RS and RC on OI and AC.

We further explore the effect of asymmetry between RS and RC. To better understand employee behaviors, it is necessary to identify the nuanced conditions under which multiple identifications and commitments from dual relationships operate differently (Ashforth et al., 2008). For example, an employee may have equally close social interactions with supervisors and colleagues, but it is common that interaction with one group is more active and intense than that with the other group. This asymmetry determined by the interplay of RS and RC and the nuanced difference of which relationship is stronger between RS and RC can affect the extent to which OI and AC are manifested. Therefore, this study focuses on the asymmetry in personal relationships and investigates how it affects OI and AC.

The effects of personal relationships on various organizational behaviors have been supported by previous studies (e.g., Allen & Meyer, 1990; Morry, 2007; Rousseau & Aubé, 2010; Van Knippenberg & Sleebos, 2006). However, research on the impact of personal relationships on OI and AC is limited. In particular, few studies distinguish RS and RC, and thus, little is known about the effects resulting from the asymmetry between them. Supervisors and colleagues are two distinct workplace groups. Employees naturally develop relationships with both groups and often experience an imbalanced relationship between the two groups. There is a need to investigate how tension from asymmetric relationships between RS and RC affects employee behavior. By revealing the effects of biased relationships, this study extends research on the effects of workplace relationships, contributing to academia. This study is also of great practical significance in that it provides valuable new information to manage employees' OI and AC.

In the following, we develop hypotheses based on a thorough review of the literature related to OI and AC, the role of personal relationships, and the duality embedded in personal relationships within an organization. Then, we empirically test the hypotheses via response surface analysis (RSA), using survey data collected from a South Korean conglomerate. Based on the empirical test results, we present a discussion and various implications.

Literature review and theoretical background

Organizational identification and affective commitment: similarities and differences between the two concepts

Both OI and AC are important for employees' experiences in the workplace and lead to crucial outcomes for their personal and organizational lives (Gautam et al., 2004). In addition to their significance, the nature of OI and AC share many commonalities, which can be inferred from their conceptual definitions. In brief, OI represents the perception of oneness or belongingness to a human aggregate (Ashforth & Mael, 1989, p. 21), while AC refers to the emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in an organization

(Allen & Meyer, 1990, p. 1). A quick assessment of AC's definition, which includes the term "identification," reveals the conceptual overlap between OI and AC; both concepts involve the relationships between individuals and organizations. Overall, OI and AC are conceptually based on the needs and formation of individual members' relationships with a social entity (Ashforth et al., 2008), while they also share common antecedents, such as perceived organizational support, leader–member exchange (LMX), and job autonomy (Wayne et al., 2009).

OI is rooted in the concept of social identity introduced by Tajfel (1978), which plays a crucial role in understanding how individuals perceive their identity within intergroup contexts. The social identity approach has extensively studied organizational members' identity processes, including group, team, or organizational membership (Scott, 2019). It posits that individuals categorize themselves into various social groups to which they feel they belong (Scott, 2019) and emphasizes an individual's knowledge of belonging to specific social groups and the significance of the membership (Tajfel, 1978). When a particular social identity becomes salient, individuals tend to favor in-group beliefs, attitudes, or behaviors over those of the out-group. OI, as a form of social identification, highlights individuals' perceptions of themselves in relation to their organizational membership (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). Previous research found that strong differentiation between in-group and out-group contributes to a greater sense of connectedness and trust for the collective, and thus OI increases cooperative behaviors (Kramer et al., 2013).

Self-categorization theory, building on the ideas of Tajfel et al. (1979), explains the process of categorization and underlies identification (HOGGY & Terry, 2000). It suggests that when individuals categorize themselves into a group, they accentuate perceived similarities with in-group members and differences with out-group members. This leads to the assimilation of behaviors in line with in-group norms and prototypes, fostering group cohesion and identification. OI is understood as not a static concept but an interactive communication process (Scott et al., 1998). Communication plays a vital role in the development of relationships and organizational goals. Individuals negotiate their belongingness or membership in organizational contexts through communicative interactions with co-volunteers, managers, and stakeholders. Scott et al. (1998) describe identification as "the process of emerging identity," emphasizing its dynamic nature and communicative essence.

OI research has been evolving in the research areas of organizational behavior and psychology. Its recent trends adopt a multilevel perspective at various levels, such as individual, team, and organizational levels. How individual-level factors interact with team and organizational dynamics to influence OI was examined (e.g., Jamali et al., 2020; Klasmeier & Rowold, 2020). Growing interest is also given to the role of leadership. For example, how different leadership styles and behaviors impact OI and how leaders can foster employee identification were investigated (e.g., Suifan et al., 2020; Teng et al., 2020). Another focus is the examination of how organizational changes, such as mergers and acquisitions, or restructuring, influence OI with the new entity (e.g., Hanelt et al., 2021). Understanding how employees adapt their identification during times of change is in the same vein. Recent studies are also exploring the relationship between OI and various well-being outcomes, such as burnout, stress, and work-life balance, emphasizing the importance of fostering a strong sense of identification for employee welfare (Zhao et al., 2019). Cross-cultural studies are also conducted to understand how cultural differences affect the development of OI (e.g., Gurbuz et al., 2021; Zhao et al., 2019).

On the other hand, AC research has been grounded in organizational commitment theory, initially proposed by Meyer and Allen in 1991. The theory identifies three components of organizational commitment: affective commitment (AC), continuance commitment, and normative commitment. AC specifically refers to employees' emotional attachment to and identification with their organization. Compared to social identity theory which highlights the intersection of self- and organizational identity and belongingness, organizational commitment theory relies on social exchange to explain the development of AC. According to social exchange theory (Vandenberghe et al., 2004), intimate interactions and exchanges strengthen AC. Previous studies revealed that employees increase their attachment to organizations through favorable interactions and positive emotional exchanges (e.g., Brunetto et al., 2010; Vandenberghe et al., 2004).

Early research on AC aimed to understand its antecedents and consequences (Allen & Meyer, 1990). Factors such as organizational support (El Akremi et al., 2014), job satisfaction (Froese & Xiao, 2012), and perceived organizational justice (Hansen et al., 2014) were found to influence AC and variables such as employee engagement and organizational loyalty were included in the consequences (e.g., Froese & Xiao, 2012; Hansen et al., 2014). Recent research extends its focus to the role of leadership in cultivating AC (Kim, 2014). How transformational leadership, supportive leadership, and authentic leadership influence AC was investigated (Ribeiro et al., 2018). The role of perceived organizational values and ethics was also investigated (Bouraoui et al., 2019; Markovic et al., 2018). Attention was also given to the impact of organizational change and uncertainty. How factors like downsizing, restructuring, and mergers and acquisitions affect AC was explored (e.g., Aujla & Mclarney, 2020;

Thuy et al., 2020). Lastly, one of the emerging trends is the exploration of cross-cultural differences. How cultural values and practices influence AC has been investigated (e.g., Afshari, 2020; Khan et al., 2018).

In conclusion, although OI and AC share certain similarities, they diverge in various aspects, which are explained by social identity theory (Tajfel, 1978) and organizational commitment theory (Meyer & Allen, 1991). These theories illuminate the distinct mechanisms of OI and AC, providing a good understanding of the different manifestations between them. The key mechanism of OI involves categorizing oneself into a specific social group distinct from others and a cognitive process of recognizing similarity and organizational fit is necessary to develop OI. On the other hand, AC can develop without an identification mechanism, which requires the "oneness" of an individual. Instead, intimate interactions and emotional exchanges are needed to strengthen AC. These two different mechanisms provide a basis to understand the different effects of workplace relationships depending on the context (supervisors vs. colleagues) on OI and AC.

The impact of personal workplace relationships on organizational identification and affective commitment

As personal well-being becomes increasingly valued, companies are providing a wide range of social activities in the workplace, promoting personal interactions among members and strengthening relationships within the organization. These personal workplace relationships affect OI. OI is based on the personalized perception of similarity between oneself and a group to which people, including the subject of OI, belong (George & Chattopadhyay, 2005). To develop strong OI, individuals first need to find a reference group within their organization that shares similarities with them. Cohorts and/or supervisors serve as social reference groups in the workplace (George & Chattopadhyay, 2005), and a distinctive organizational identity from a reference group is the foundation for an individual's identification with an organization (Whetten, 2006).

Once a reference group is identified, similarity comes into play in building OI. Individuals develop a group identity based on the shared similarity among in-group members (Brickson, 2007). Employees use perceived similarity as a fundamental stepping-stone to develop a sense of belongingness, considered an antecedent (e.g., Reade, 2001) or a key component of OI (e.g., Davila & Garcia, 2012). Organizational identification is developed first by perceived similarity and then by strong membership in a social group within an organization, such as cohorts or supervisors (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; George & Chattopadhyay, 2005). The larger the overlap between individual and organizational identities, the stronger the OI.

What, then, is the role of personal relationships in the workplace in completing the puzzle of OI? A study by Morry (2007) provides the missing link by revealing that a positive relationship increases perceived similarities with a target individual. Personal relationships offer opportunities to recognize similarities with and build a sense of belonging to reference groups within an organization, which is pivotal in building strong OI. For example, Badrinarayanan et al. (2015) demonstrated, online game players' personal relationships, even in a virtual environment, accelerate the players' identification with the game characters.

The mechanism of AC also provides a rationale for the impact of personal workplace relationships on the formation of commitment. The mechanisms of AC are rooted in positive personal relationships and emotional bonds with the organization and/or other organizational members (Wang, 2008). Previous studies have focused on emotional and economic exchanges between employees and organizations to understand the mechanism of AC (Gautam et al., 2004). According to this exchange-based view, employees develop AC in return for the emotional support or benefits provided by the organization. This view reveals the primary distinction in the mechanism of AC. For example, the rationale for the mentoring effect on the increase in AC is employees' appreciation of and/or repayment to other organizational members, mentors (Brunetto et al., 2010).

Therefore, AC arises from satisfactory personal relationships with other organizational members which accompany the social support (Rousseau & Aubé, 2010). Better personal relationships can lead to higher AC through favorable social exchange and emotional attachment perceptions. Indeed, Van Knippenberg and Sleebos (2006) showed that satisfactory social relationships are critical predictors of employees' AC. When employees perceive organizational support that is sufficient to justify their efforts and loyalty to the organization, the AC is strengthened. Rousseau and Aubé (2010) also empirically demonstrated that supportive social interactions with organizational members increase the AC of employees.

How the duality of personal workplace relationships works differently for organizational identification and affective commitment

Duality occurs when a person develops distinct or similar attitudes and/or identities toward two different social entities simultaneously (Kuhn & Nelson, 2002). For example, an individual may develop a dual identity as a parent and a teacher, with each identity becoming more prominent depending on the context (i.e., home vs. workplace). In the

current study, we narrow the scope of duality to focus on complex attitudes and identities shaped by a diverse spectrum of personal relationships within an organization. We focus on simultaneous interactions with two workplace groups (i.e., supervisors and colleagues) and the imbalances arising from these interactions.

Two main groups exist in the workplace: supervisors and colleagues (Bennett et al., 2018; Sias & Shin, 2019). An employee's personal relationships with these groups are typically distinct. Although both relationships are personal, the content and aspects of the interactions within each relationship have unique characteristics (Chae et al., 2019; Sias, 2005; Sias & Shin, 2019). For example, the expectations for employees' roles may differ between supervisor and colleague groups, leading to different activities and contexts involved in building personal relationships (Chae et al., 2019). Given the distinction between RS and RC, the impact of personal workplace relationships on OI and AC should be examined in greater detail by considering these separate reference groups (i.e., supervisors vs. colleagues). Both relationships may affect OI and AC, or only one relationship may come into play.

The impact of RS on OI

Supervisors often serve as role models for junior employees, providing a code of conduct specific to the organization and shaping the ideal employee image (Reid, 2015). Employees with positive RS might believe they align well with typical organizational members and fit the ideal member profile (Tangirala et al., 2007). In contrast, conflicts and unsatisfactory RS may suggest that organizational values, typically passed from supervisors to junior members, are not well-shared, leading employees to continually question their fit within the organization (Ateş et al., 2020; Liu et al., 2016). As such, supervisors, who play a decisive role in organizational identity, are expected to influence employees' OI, representing belongingness to the organization, by altering their perception of organizational fit (Vondey, 2010).

In contrast to OI, which involves cognitive processes of identifying and comparing identities, AC refers to emotional attachment, which is strengthened by sincere and open emotional interactions and intimate exchanges. However, the relationships with supervisors, who occupy higher positions in the hierarchy, are inherently determined by employees' abilities and performance and do not necessarily involve intimate emotional exchanges (Chiang et al., 2021). Therefore, maintaining a positive RS does not guarantee the growth of emotional attachment to the organization. Based on this discussion, we propose the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1 An employee's personal RS positively affects OI.

The impact of RC on AC

In contrast to supervisors, employees typically have horizontal and equal RC. While employees must demonstrate their capabilities to supervisors, they can more openly share their concerns about work-life with colleagues at similar career stages (Amos & Weathington, 2008; Chiang et al., 2021). Since colleagues' evaluations are less critical for promotions compared with supervisors', employees can more easily be honest with them (Methot et al., 2016; Peluchette et al., 2013), allowing for intimate interactions and emotional exchanges (Sias, 2005). In addition, employees may have similar schedules with colleagues due to engaging in comparable levels and types of work, providing more opportunities for social gatherings where active emotional interactions and friendships can develop (Bartels et al., 2019; Peluchette et al., 2013). Therefore, a better RC can lead to higher AC within the organization.

However, RC is not likely to guarantee an increase in OI. Supervisors who have proven themselves by meeting organizational expectations and passing promotion screenings are closer to being ideal members of an organization. In contrast, colleagues occupy the same hierarchical position and thus do not serve as models with a superior organizational identity. Consequently, mechanisms of identity and organizational fit, which are essential for OI improvement, cannot be effectively utilized, resulting in no change in OI. Accordingly, we propose the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2 An employee's personal RC positively affects AC.

How asymmetric dual targets in personal workplace relationships affect organizational identification and affective commitment

Employees can interact with supervisors and colleagues equally, developing similar relationships with both groups. However, it is common to interact with one group more often and better than with the other. Employees develop both relationships but typically have a biased focus on one group rather than the other. In the above, H1&2 predict the effect of RS on OI and RC on AC, respectively, leading to the prediction that both OI and AC will be high if both RS and RC are good and well-balanced. In the following, we focus on the unbalanced situation in which asymmetry exists between RS and RC. Then, based on the discussions

on identity incompatibility and emotional exchanges, H3&4 are developed.

Expected roles shape individual identity, and the roles expected by supervisors and colleagues differ. Consequently, duality in relationships leads to two separate identities, generating a dual-target issue. Experiencing dual targets, an employee faces identity incompatibility accompanied by psychological conflicts (Matschke & Fehr, 2017). This has been addressed in terms of organizational members in the gray zone between two group identities, such as contract workers and expatriates, where different values pursued by the two groups were assumed to be in a zero-sum game (George & Chattopadhyay, 2005; Veldman et al., 2017; Vora & Kostova, 2007).

How does this identity incompatibility stemming from relationship duality affect OI and AC? Previous studies reveal that multiple identities and incompatibility within those identities negatively impact employees' organizational behaviors and performances, referred to as the paradox of dual identification (Chang et al., 2016). For example, a CEO with identity duality as both a CEO and a board director experiences an unclear value that should be vigilantly pursued, leading to less-focused leadership and poorer performance (Duru et al., 2016). Female officers also face challenges at police stations due to their dual identities (Veldman et al., 2017).

The impact of better RS asymmetry on OI

To understand the problem of identity incompatibility, we need to focus on the gap between the two identities, which represents the degree of incompatibility. Although people possess competing multiple identities, psychological conflicts can be mitigated if one identity is salient and strong enough compared to the other. This allows for a clearer identity match between the individual and the organization, preventing the person from feeling isolated in a gray area within the organization. It has been shown that to avoid potential conflicts between two identities, people tend to remain in one social group rather than extending their identity boundary (George & Chattopadhyay, 2005). It is also demonstrated that possessing a salient identity can resolve conflicts by maintaining a consistent self-image (Swann Jr et al., 2000). Therefore, it is expected that a positive relationship with one particular group over another encourages an employee to hold stronger OI.

In this mechanism, the positive impact of the gap might be stronger if the group with a more positive relationship aligns better with the identity of the entire organization than the other group. In the workplace, a supervisor group can better represent the identity of the whole organization than a colleague group. When employees interact with supervisors and their organizations, the mechanisms of commitment and mindset are similar. Therefore, if the relationship with supervisors is much better than with colleagues, employees will more easily focus on their organizational identity, feeling more confident in their organizational fit. Based on this discussion, it is presumed that asymmetric RS and RC positively impact OI, and the impact is greater when the better relationship is with the supervisor. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3 Asymmetry from a better supervisor relationship has a greater positive impact on OI than asymmetry from a better colleague relationship.

The impact of better RS asymmetry on AC

In contrast to OI, AC is expected to be negatively affected by an asymmetric dual target based on previous studies. Compared to OI, which is deeply rooted in perceived similarity with a clear identity premise, a strong sense of belongingness and membership is not necessary for AC. An employee's emotional exchanges and attachments to a particular group do not necessarily imply that the employee perceives the same identity as that group; rather, AC employs the mechanisms of attitude and emotional development (Van Knippenberg & Sleebos, 2006).

When people interact and have emotional exchanges with multiple groups, a balance among different groups and across the attendant relationships is important. Well-balanced relationships with different groups yield positive effects, resulting in an emotionally stable state. Especially in the context of members' interactions for fellowship and socializing, dual targets are not competing groups but members of the same organization that should harmonize well. Therefore, well-balanced simultaneous relationships with supervisors and colleagues can create a synergistic, positive effect (Wombacher & Felfe, 2017). However, favoring one strong relationship can generate friction and tension, implying that one group is neglected and not properly cared for. Therefore, a positive relationship with one specific group over another is presumed to harm AC.

This negative impact is expected to be greater when an employee has a stronger RS than RC. The RC is crucial for employees to have positive emotional experiences in the workplace and to develop affection for their organization. It can mitigate the negative effect of role conflict on workplace stress and reduce the negative impact of abusive supervision (Xu et al., 2018). Therefore, a personal workplace relationship biased toward supervisors and neglectful of colleagues is likely to hinder the stable development of affection and emotional attachment to the entire

organization. An employee whose work commitment and performance are superior has a higher chance of having a better RS than colleagues. The more severe this asymmetry, the fewer opportunities the employee has for emotional exchanges with organizational members. Accordingly, it is presumed that, as the gap between RS and RC grows, the AC decreases, and this negative effect will be greater when RS is better than RC, leading to the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 4 Asymmetry from a better supervisor relationship has a greater negative impact on AC than asymmetry from a better colleague relationship.

Figure 1 illustrates our research framework and hypotheses. H1 and H2 suggest a positive relationship between RS and OI and RC and AC, respectively. The large circle surrounding both RS and RC indicates asymmetry due to better RS than RC. H3 and H4 suggest the effect of asymmetry on OI and AC, respectively.

Empirical test

An empirical test was conducted on a Korean conglomerate using a survey. Data was collected from 300 employees belonging to two affiliates in the conglomerate's manufacturing and life insurance sectors. Under the same corporate governance, both affiliates share the same organizational culture and values. With a mutual understanding of the confidentiality of the corporate identity, the conglomerate's human resource manager at headquarters supported the data collection. The manager reviewed and approved all questionnaires in advance. The survey package included individual consent forms explaining the purpose of the study, as well as the assurance of privacy and confidentiality. Initially, the package clearly stated that respondents had the right to refuse to answer any question, including those related to demographic or personal information.

In our study, we implemented several procedural strategies to lessen the potential impact of measurement errors. Firstly, to ensure that the survey participants stayed attentive and provided accurate responses, we used a strategy involving reverse-formatted questions. For example, instead of asking, "I feel a strong sense of belonging to this company," we asked, "I don't feel a strong sense of belonging to this company." This approach helps us spot any inconsistent responses and reduces the chance of measurement errors. Secondly, we conducted the survey offline by personally interacting with the participants in their office environment during business hours. This approach ensured that the questions were understood clearly and attentively, and allowed participants to directly relate the questions to their work context, thereby reducing measurement error. Thirdly, we tried to separate the measurement of the predictor and dependent variables in the survey as much as possible to decrease the chance of respondents deducing the relationships being examined.

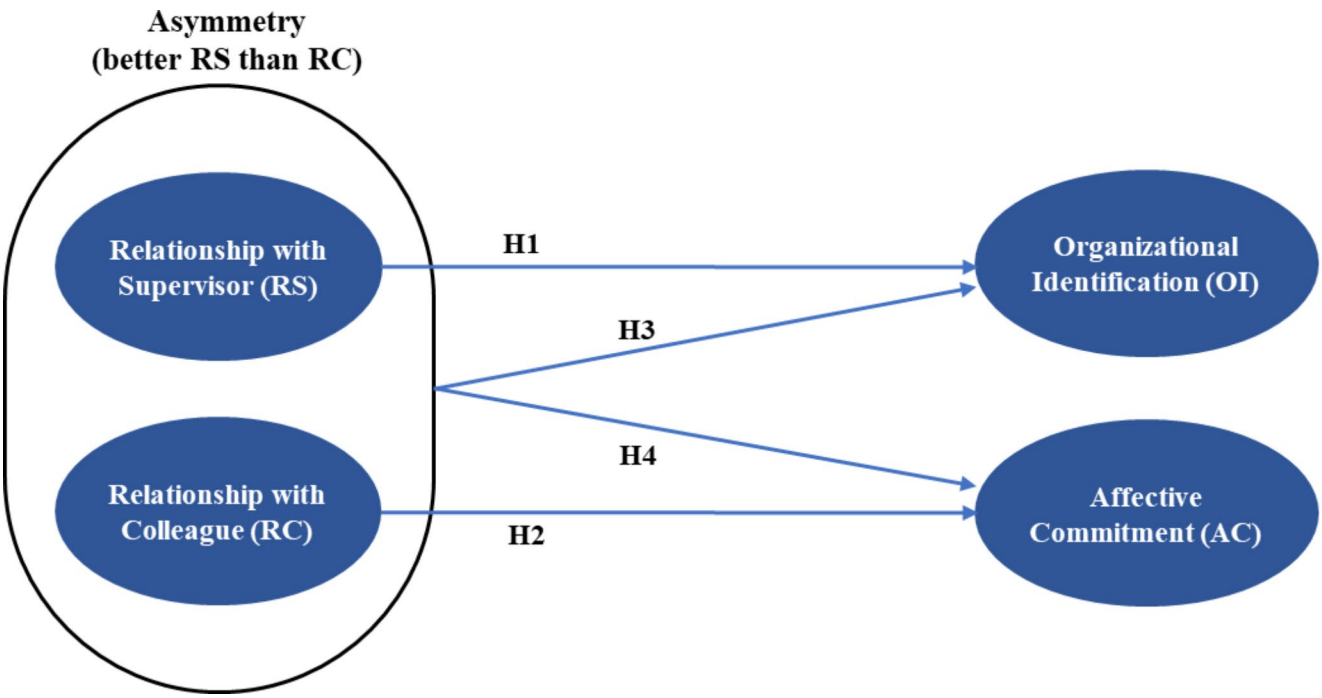

Fig. 1 Conceptual framework and hypotheses

Model

Current research focuses on how the incompatibility between the two predictors (i.e., RS and RC) affects the dependent variables (i.e., OI and AC). Hypotheses 3 and 4 predict that the gap between RS and RC will increase (or decrease) OI (or AC). We assume that this effect is nonlinear. The research suggests that RS and RC influence OI and AC through the mechanisms of identity and emotional development, and the difference between the two relationships determines which of the two groups drives these mechanisms. One group, in a stronger position at a given point, dominates the mechanisms. Therefore, instead of each of the two groups affecting OI and AC at a constant rate, the gap that determines the dominant group affects OI and AC nonlinearly.

We conducted an RSA to test this subtle effect of the gap. The RSA technique can explain nonlinear relationships and sophisticated changes according to the combination of two predictors (Shanock et al., 2010). When the discrepancy (incompatibility) between two predictors plays a role, it reveals the effect of congruence, discrepancy, and the direction of the discrepancy between the two predictors on an outcome (Shanock et al., 2010). As its name suggests, RSA is primarily interested in visually identifying patterns embedded in data revealed on a response surface (Edwards & Parry, 1993; Shanock et al., 2010). To understand the nonlinear relationship between the discrepancy between the two predictors and the dependent variable, we illustrate how OI and AC change according to the gap using RSA.

The RSA approach requires a second-degree polynomial regression model that includes five terms: two independent variables, squares of each independent variable, and a product of the two independent variables. These terms allow us to observe how a dependent variable linearly and nonlinearly changes according to the combination of the two independent variables. In this study, employees' two personal relationships (i.e., RS vs. RC) are predictors that explain changes in the dependent variables, OI and AC. Therefore, two different regression models were developed, including both RS and RC as independent variables and either OI or AC as the dependent variable. RS and RC are included in the form of the above five terms (i.e., RC, RS, RC-squared, RC x RS interaction, and RS-squared). The following equations represent our models:

$$\mathrm{OI} = b_1\mathrm{RS} + b_2\mathrm{RC} + b_3\mathrm{RS}^2 + b_4\mathrm{RS} * \mathrm{RC} + b_5\mathrm{RC}^2 + b_6\mathrm{W} + \mu \quad (1)$$

$$\mathrm{AC} = b_1\mathrm{RS} + b_2\mathrm{RC} + b_3\mathrm{RS}^2 + b_4\mathrm{RS} * \mathrm{RC} + b_5\mathrm{RC}^2 + b_6\mathrm{W} + \mu \quad (2)$$

where OI is organizational identification, AC is affective commitment, RS is a centered variable of RS, RC is a centered variable of RC, W is the control variables, and μ is the intercept.

The independent variables, RS and RC, were mean-centered to avoid the multicollinearity that commonly arises in polynomial regression models. Further, b_1 in Eqs. (1) and (2) represents the coefficients for RS, while b_2 represents the coefficients for RC, indicating the linear effects of RS and RC on OI or AC. The nonlinear effects are represented by b_3 and b_5, which are the coefficients for RS squared and RC squared, respectively. The b_4 corresponds to the coefficient for the cross-product of RS and RC. In our models, the relationship between the discrepancy of RS and RC and the dependent variable can be estimated from the slope and curvature of the response surface along the incongruence line (RS = − RC), where RS and RC increase in opposite directions (Tsai et al., 2022). To simplify the interpretation, we can replace the dependent variables OI and AC with Z and assume that Eqs. (1) and (2) represent the same model. Then, assuming RS = − RC and replacing RS with X, Eq. (1) is transformed as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} \mathrm{Z} &= b_1\mathrm{X} - b_2\mathrm{X} + b_3\mathrm{X}^2 - b_4\mathrm{X} * \mathrm{X} + b_5\mathrm{X}^2 + b_6\mathrm{W} + \mu \\ &= (b_1 - b_2)\mathrm{X} + (b_3 - b_4 + b_5)\,\mathrm{X}^2 + b_6\mathrm{W} + \mu \end{aligned} \quad (3)$$

Accordingly, the linear slope of the response surface along the incongruence line is represented by $(b_1 - b_2)$, and the curvature of the response surface along the incongruence line is determined by $(b_3 - b_4 + b_5)$. Therefore, the four coefficients that allow the testing of our hypotheses are as follows:

1) b_1 in Eq. (1) (Hypothesis 1).

2) b_2 in Eq. (2) (Hypothesis 2).

3) $S_{OI} = b_1 - b_2$ and $C_{OI} = b_3 - b_4 + b_5$ in Eq. (1) (Hypothesis 3).

4) $S_{AC} = b_1 - b_2$ and $C_{AC} = b_3 - b_4 + b_5$ in Eq. (2) (Hypothesis 4).

In our analysis, S_{OI} and S_{AC} represent the linear slopes, demonstrating the relationship between the discrepancy and the dependent variables OI and AC, respectively. In addition, the two curvature estimates, C_{OI} and C_{AC}, signify the increase or decrease in the nonlinear relationship between the discrepancy (i.e., RS − RC) and the dependent variables.

In order to mitigate the potential confounding impacts from participants' traits that could simultaneously affect both the independent and dependent variables (Podsakoff et al., 2003), our models incorporate several control variables. These variables, which pertain to personality and demographic factors, were selected based on previous studies and theoretical rationale. Previous studies have suggested that agreeableness and sentimentality are important personality factors associated with OI and AC as well as RS and RC (e.g., Aghaz & Hashemi, 2014; Mael & Tetrick, 1992).

For instance, individuals with high agreeableness tend to exhibit greater cooperation, empathy, and harmonious interactions, leading to better workplace relationships and stronger identifications with and attachments to their organization (Aghaz & Hashemi, 2014; Mael & Ashforth, 1992). Likewise, sentimentality also can influence members' relationships and their affiliations with the organization, since it drives stronger bonds to members with other members and the organization (Mael & Ashforth, 1992). Therefore, we controlled for these two factors. Gender, age, and affiliations were also controlled, as they have also been found to be associated with both our primary independent variables and the dependent variables (e.g., Fritz & Van Knippenberg, 2017). To address the association between OI and AC, which have conceptual overlap and are known to be related, we included AC in Eq. (1) and OI in Eq. (2), respectively as a control variable. By controlling for these factors, we could ensure that the observed effects are primarily due to the independent variables.

Sample

Of the 300 distributed questionnaires, 250 copies (83.3%) were collected. After excluding the data from nine cases with unreliable respondents who failed to answer more than 50% of the variables' Likert-scale questions necessary for calculating scale reliability, 230 copies were ultimately obtained for the analysis. The demographic characteristics of the respondents included in the final analysis are shown in Table 1. The sample's skewed gender ratio (female respondent ratios of 6.9% and 13% in each company) reflects the typical demographic pattern of large Korean firms, where headquarters are populated with managerial-level employees. Among the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) member countries, Korea is one of the nations with low gender equality (Cho et al., 2017).

Table 1 Demographic information of the respondents

		Affiliate A	Affiliate B	Total
		Counts (%)	Counts (%)	Counts (%)
Gender	Male	121 (93.1)	87 (87.0)	208 (90.4)
	Female	9 (6.9)	13 (13.0)	22 (9.6)
Age	20s	2 (1.5)	38 (38.0)	40 (17.4)
	30s	107 (82.3)	57 (57.0)	164 (71.3)
	40s and over	21 (16.2)	5 (5.0)	26 (11.3)
Education	High school	2 (1.5)	8 (8.0)	10 (4.4)
	Junior college	2 (1.5)	3 (3.0)	5 (2.2)
	College	120 (92.4)	81 (81.0)	201 (87.4)
	Graduate	6 (4.6)	7 (7.0)	13 (5.7)
	Missing		1 (1.0)	1 (0.4)
Job	Office work	117 (90.0)	55 (55.0)	172 (74.8)
	Sales	6 (4.6)	34 (34.0)	40 (17.4)
	Manufacturing	0 (0.0)	1 (1.0)	1 (0.4)
	R&D	0 (0.0)	3 (3.0)	3 (1.3)
	Other	1 (0.8)	2 (2.0)	3 (1.3)
	Missing	6 (4.6)	5 (5.0)	11 (4.8)
Rank	Entry	6 (4.6)	54 (54.0)	60 (26.1)
	Low managerial	71 (54.6)	23 (23.0)	94 (40.9)
	Mid managerial	49 (37.7)	14 (14.0)	63 (27.4)
	Top managerial	4 (3.1)	7 (7.0)	11 (4.8)
	Missing		2 (2.0)	2 (0.9)
Total		130 (100.0)	100 (100.0)	230 (100.0)

Measures

To measure personal relationships, we utilized three items adapted from George and Chattopadhyay's (2005) scale (e.g., "I think my supervisor would make a good friend" and "I like my colleagues very much as a person"). The items met the reliability criteria for each target social group: supervisor ($\alpha = 0.85$) and colleague ($\alpha = 0.79$). To measure the OI, we adapted nine items ($\alpha = 0.88$) from Mael and Tetrick's (1992) organizational identification scale. The original scale consisted of ten items, but one item was dropped due to localization issues. The items inquire about respondents' perceptions of belongingness to their organizations, such as "when someone criticizes (the organization), it feels like a personal insult" and "the organization's success is my success." We measured the AC by adapting six items from Allen and Meyer's (1990) organizational commitment scale. The items ask respondents about their emotional attachment to their organizations, such as "I would be happy to spend the rest of my career in the organization" and "I feel personally attached to my work organization" ($\alpha = 0.91$). These key variables' reliability measures correspond with the previous studies that presented Cronbach's alphas of these scales: RS (0.90, George & Chattopadhyay, 2005), RC (0.89, George & Chattopadhyay, 2005), OI (0.76, Mael & Tetrick, 1992), and AC (0.75, Allen & Meyer, 1990). We also measured the respondents' agreeableness and sentimentality, which served as control variables. Agreeableness ($\alpha = 0.80$) was measured using three items from a corresponding subscale of the Big Five Inventory-Korean Version (Kim et al., 2010). Sentimentality ($\alpha = 0.82$) was measured using seven items adapted from Mael and Ashforth's (1992) scale. Except for the agreeableness items, which were adapted from the Korean version scale, all items were translated into Korean. We employed a six-point Likert scale for all items. Gender, age, and affiliations were assessed through demographic questions at the end of the survey.

Table 2 Descriptive statistics and correlations

	Mean	S.D.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Gender	0.90	0.29	1								
2. Affiliation	0.54	0.50	0.10	1							
3. Age	33.36	5.08	-0.23**	0.42**	1						
4. Sentimentality	3.80	0.62	0.05	-0.04	-0.07	1					
5. Agreeableness	4.12	0.58	0.00	-0.05	-0.06	0.49**	1				
6. RS	0.00	0.90	-0.08	0.01	0.04	0.23**	0.40**	1			
7. RC	0.00	0.69	-0.06	0.05	0.10	0.36**	0.56**	0.63**	1		
8. OI	4.61	0.63	-0.04	0.06	0.10	0.20**	0.40**	0.53**	0.54**	1	
9. AC	4.18	0.77	-0.08	0.00	0.16**	0.27**	0.49**	0.64**	0.67**	0.71**	1

Note: *Correlation is significant at $p < 0.05$; **correlation is significant at $p < 0.01$

Table 3 RS as a predictor of OI

	b	Std. Error
(Constant)	2.16**	0.40
Gender dummy	0.08	0.10
Affiliation dummy	0.12	0.09
Age	−0.01	0.01
Sentimentality	−0.01	0.06
Agreeableness	0.01	0.07
Affective commitment	0.55**	0.07
RS (H1)	**0.15****	**0.05**
RC	−0.01	0.07
RC squared	0.30**	0.07
RC × RS	−0.43**	0.08
RS squared	0.19**	0.07
S_{OI} (H3: linear)	**0.17****	**0.06**
C_{OI} (H3: curved)	**0.92****	**0.16**

Note: $N = 230$. *Statistical significance at $p < 0.05$; **statistical significance at $p < 0.01$

Table 4 RC as a predictor of AC

	b	Std. Error
(Constant)	0.58**	0.43
Gender dummy	−0.07	0.10
Affiliation dummy	−0.16	0.06
Age	0.02**	0.01
Sentimentality	−0.00	0.06
Agreeableness	0.14*	0.07
Organizational identification	0.58**	0.06
RS	0.09	0.06
RC (H2)	**0.26****	**0.05**
RC squared	−0.27**	0.08
RC X RS	0.37**	0.09
RS squared	−0.17**	0.04
S_{AC} (H4: linear)	**−0.17****	**0.06**
C_{AC} (H4: curved)	**−0.81****	**0.18**

Note: $N = 230$. *Statistical significance at $p < 0.05$; **statistical significance at $p < 0.01$

Results

Descriptive statistics

The descriptive statistics and correlations are provided in Table 2. The mean-centered independent variables, RS and RC, displayed zero values for their mean scores, as intended. All independent variables (i.e., RS and RC) and dependent variables (i.e., OI and AC) correlated positively and significantly. The control variables, sentimentality and agreeableness, demonstrated positive and significant correlations with all key variables. Age had a significant correlation with AC (0.16, $p < 0.05$) but not with OI (0.10, ns), which remained consistent in the regression analysis (see Tables 3 and 4). This result aligns with previous studies (Kooij et al., 2010; Riketta, 2005). In earlier meta-analyses, age's positive correlation with AC was consistently found (Riketta, 2005), while its correlation with OI was not (Kooij et al., 2010). A conceptual explanation for this exists. Developing AC takes time, and affective attachment grows as an employee remains in an organization (Mael & Ashforth, 1995). In contrast, OI can be formed immediately through a cognitive mechanism as soon as an employee joins an organization. This difference can lead to distinct correlations between AC and OI. The insignificant correlation with OI may also be due to scale-related technical issues. Studies using a Mael-based scale, such as the current study and Klimchak et al.'s (2019) study, tend to display nonsignificant correlations compared with studies using other scales, such as the organizational identification questionnaire (Cheney, 1983).

Confirmatory factor analysis

Before conducting the regression analysis, we performed confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to assess the reliability and validity of variables using ONYX software. Acceptable fit indices (χ^2 [183, $N = 230$] = 407.29, $p = 0.00$; CFI = 0.91, TLI = 0.90, RMSEA = 0.07, SRMR = 0.06) were achieved with significant loading weights for all individual items. All construct reliability (CR) for each variable was equal to

or greater than 0.7. To test discriminant validity, the square roots of Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and the correlation coefficient between constructs were compared (Fornell & Larcker, 2012), as presented in Table 5. The square roots of AVE for OI and AC were 0.63 and 0.79, respectively, whereas the correlation coefficient between these factors was 0.71, indicating only partial and marginal discriminant validity between OI and AC. Therefore, we compared the measurement model to another new measurement model with combined variables of OI and AC. The new model was not significant, suggesting that the two variables are distinguishable.

Model estimates

Two separate models were run to test H1 and H2, measuring the hypothesized effects of RS on OI and RC on AC. As shown in Table 3, the linear association between RS and OI was significant in the hypothesized direction ($b_1 = 0.15$, $p < 0.01$), demonstrating that the better the relationship with the supervisor, the more an individual identifies with the organization, supporting H1. Hypothesis 2 was similarly tested, with RC as a predictor of AC. The results for AC (Table 4) revealed a significant and positive association between RC and AC ($b_1 = 0.26$, $p < 0.01$), supporting H2. The effects of RS on AC and RC on AC were insignificant, suggesting that the effects of RS and RC were exclusive. These results indicate that, depending on which group an employee maintains a good relationship with, only one of the two constructs, OI or AC, develops.

To test the nonlinear associations proposed by Hypotheses 3 and 4, the discrepancy surface values for the linear slope ($= [b_1 - b_2]$) and the nonlinear curve ($= [b_3 - b_4 + b_5]$) were analyzed. Both indicators represent predictions when RC and RS move in opposite directions. One extreme case of such discrepant (incongruent) situations might be an employee with an extremely good RC but an extremely poor RS, or vice versa.

Figures 2 and 3 visualize the changes in OI and AC along the discrepancy (incongruence) line. The black curves in each figure depict the predicted OI and AC, and the shaded area represents the 95% confidence interval. The control variables in W, denoted in Eq. (3), are set at the mean of each variable. Along the x-axis, RS increases from low to high (i.e., becomes stronger), while RC decreases from high to low (i.e., becomes weaker). The lower limit on the x-axis corresponds to the point where RS is at the lower 2.5 percentile while RC is at the upper 97.5 percentile (i.e., low RS and high RC). Conversely, the upper limit of the x-axis corresponds to the upper 97.5 percentile of RS and the lower 2.5 percentile of RC (i.e., high RS and low RC). The midpoint of the x-axis corresponds to the point where RS and RC are the same (i.e., RS – RC = 0).

Significantly positive surface values of S_{OI} (0.17, $p < 0.01$) and C_{OI} (0.92, $p < 0.01$) were found (see Table 3), indicating that as the relationship with the supervisor becomes far better than that with colleagues (e.g., very high RS and very low RC), the OI increases proportionally to the square of the difference between the two relationships (i.e., RS vs. RC). The stronger the relationship with the supervisor compared with colleagues, the better the identification as a member within the organization, with an increasing marginal rate. In addition, as shown in Fig. 2, the OI decreased slightly from the left end of the incongruence axis to the right and then began to increase exponentially slightly after the point where RS and RC were both 0. This implies that although having an extremely good RC may help increase OI when the RS is bad, an employee perceives far higher identification with the organization as the RS becomes far better than the RC. Therefore, Hypothesis 3 was supported.

The opposite pattern of the linear ($S_{AC} = -0.17$, $p < 0.01$) and nonlinear ($C_{AC} = -0.81$, $p < 0.01$) effects was obtained from the models for AC (see Table 4), showing that a biased RS over colleagues reduces AC at a steeper rate as the gap increases. Figure 3 illustrates the opposite pattern of AC compared to OI. Along the discrepancy line, the AC ascended slightly from the left endpoint toward the midpoint but then drastically descended thereafter. As the discrepancy, in which RS is better than with colleagues (i.e., RS – RC > 0), increases, employees feel lower AC, demonstrating a nonlinear negative effect. Accordingly, Hypothesis 4 was also supported.

Discussion

Theoretical implications

A significant finding of this study is the distinct mechanisms of the impact of personal relationships in the workplace on

Table 5 Discriminant validity and AVE matrix

		AVE	CR	1	2	3	4
1	RS	0.61	0.85	**0.78**			
2	RC	0.80	0.70	0.63	**0.89**		
3	OI	0.40	0.85	0.53	0.54	**0.63**	
4	AC	0.62	0.90	0.64	0.67	0.71	**0.79**

Note: Diagonal elements are square roots of AVE

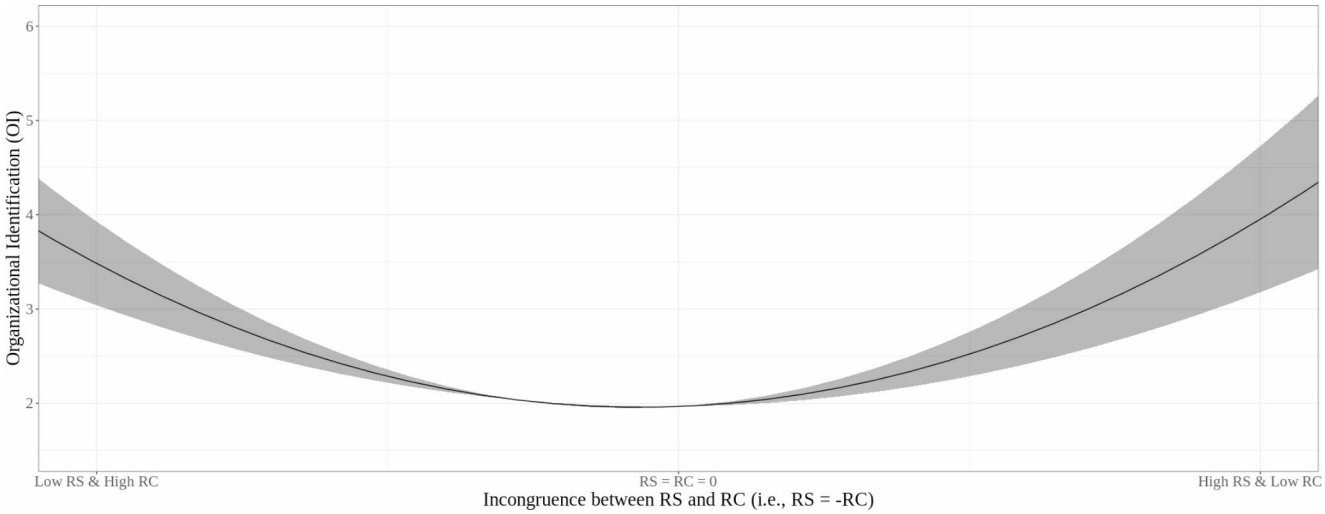

Fig. 2 The OI as predicted by discrepant RC vs. RS

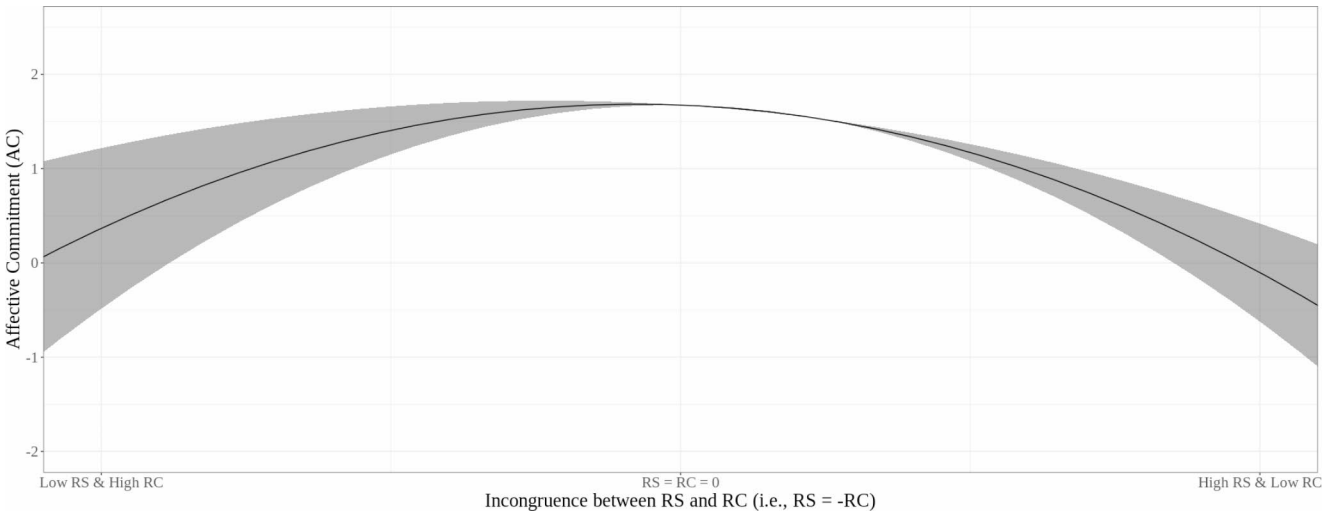

Fig. 3 The AC as predicted by discrepant RC vs. RS

OI and AC. We discovered that while RS influences OI, RC affects AC. Specifically, we identified that the patterns of OI and AC differ in response to the surface determined by the two workplace relationships. The asymmetry of these relationships impacts OI and AC. While OI increases, AC decreases when there is an asymmetrically stronger personal focus on a specific group. The asymmetry is more pronounced when the RS is better than the RC. The detailed theoretical contributions of this study are the following.

As our first theoretical contribution, we present the demonstration of the impact of personal workplace relationships on OI and AC. Despite increasing attention given to personal relationships among organizational members (Howard et al., 2020; Kaeppel et al., 2020), empirical tests have not been fully conducted yet. By demonstrating the impact of workplace relationships on employee behaviors, this study provides empirical evidence of the impact of workplace relationships. In particular, by revealing the differences and relevant impact of RS and RC, this study sets a good milestone for further investigation. The duality of social relationships, which naturally arises within organizations where multiple social groups exist, has not received a great deal of attention. According to our results, although both are the relationships that an employee develops within an organization, the impacts of RS and RC are different. This result illuminates the varied spectrum of personal relationships in the workplace. Our results show that personal relationships among organizational members play an important role in organizational behaviors and the relationships emerge as varied formats that exert different effects.

Secondly, this study reveals the mechanisms behind OI and AC, presenting a nuanced understanding of how personal relationships influence employees' attitudinal outcomes. Our results evidence the contrasting mechanisms of

OI and AC. Specifically, this study delves into the detailed mechanisms underlying cognitive and affective processes of OI and AC. Both represent employees' attitudinal outcomes derived from interpersonal relationships with other organizational members (Yue et al., 2021). However, OI originates from individuals' cognitive interpretations of the relationship, while AC stems from emotional reactions to the relationship. Our findings shed new light on the underlying processes of OI and AC. These findings align with a body of organizational studies addressing the foundational assumption of the disparity between cognition and emotion in the workplace (Kay & Skarlicki, 2020). According to previous studies, cognition (or perception) and emotion (or affection) play distinct roles in organizational management and behaviors, such as organizational change management (Rafferty & Minbashian, 2019), workplace energy (Baker, 2019), cognitive processing of emotions (Castellano et al., 2019), organizational empathy (Clark et al., 2019), creation of firms' positive cultures (Men & Yue, 2019), job satisfaction, team morale, and commitment to the group (Jehn et al., 1999), and so on. Our study extends this understanding by introducing the interpersonal workplace relationship context to the discourse of cognition vs. emotion in the workplace.

Thirdly, the findings of this study offer a new theoretical avenue for researchers. Both OI and AC are crucial variables affecting employees' experiences and organizational performances, meaning understanding their respective mechanisms is essential (Mihalache & Mihalache, 2022). Although OI and AC share many conceptual similarities, they possess distinct differences. This study demonstrated that OI and AC are distinguishable. By showing that their observed patterns concerning interpersonal relationships exhibit opposite results, this study provides new insights into the conceptualization and differentiation of OI and AC and thus holds significant academic value. This study reveals the nuanced differences between OI and AC, extending existing research on them. Our findings offer a new perspective to understand OI and AC and call for further investigation on this issue.

Fourthly, our study embarks on the significance of the asymmetry of interpersonal relationships within organizational settings. Historically, much of the focus has been on the strength and quality of individual relationships (cf., Yue et al., 2021), often underestimating the influence of imbalanced relationships on organizational outcomes. This study's revelation of the implications of such asymmetry—especially when RS is superior to RC—introduces an uncharted terrain in organizational behavior research. This asymmetry, often a reflection of uneven power dynamics, communication gaps, or cultural nuances, can manifest in various ways within an organization. The phenomenon of stronger RS leading to higher OI while deteriorating AC is indicative of a broader narrative where employees, despite feeling integral to the organization, might harbor reservations due to perceived favoritism, biases, or other disparities (Mikani et al., 2022). By spotlighting this aspect, our research underscores the need for a holistic assessment of interpersonal dynamics rather than just examining them in isolation. As organizations today become more diverse and complex (Kumar et al., 2021), understanding the nuances of these asymmetric relationships becomes crucial. This adds a layer of depth to the discourse on organizational relationships and propels future research to decode the myriad ways in which these asymmetries play out and their resultant organizational ramifications.

Practical implications

The findings of this study have significant implications for practitioners, offering valuable insights for enhancing organizational improvement. Every organization has different situations and challenges, which require a different strategic focus to guide and regulate its members. The results of this study suggest that each organization should strategically approach its workplace relationships depending on its own circumstances and needs. The specific practical suggestions from our findings are the following.

Firstly, our results suggest that managers who seek to foster a positive work environment should first consider whether they aim to cultivate OI or AC among their employees. Based on this determination, they can strategize and create targeted interventions to strengthen either OI or AC. If they want to strengthen OI, communication between supervisors and employees should be facilitated (Guo et al., 2020). On the other hand, if the aim is to enhance AC, exchanges among employees and the time employees spend together can be promoted. When a focus is given to AC, whether employees are dwelling in balanced workplace relationships with both groups also needs to be monitored.

Secondly, our findings emphasize leaders' understanding of the nature of their hierarchical positions, which results in different effects on team dynamics (Sarin & O'Connor, 2009). Our results imply that there is a discrepancy between supervisors' leadership identity and the prevailing cohort culture among employees. Proficient team leaders should be able to recognize this discrepancy and find appropriate roles for themselves. In order to develop a better organizational culture, while a leader's clear identity that can guide employee behaviors is required, an intimate personal relationship needs to be left as a realm among colleagues. Ironically, the discrepancy also highlights the importance of fostering an overarching team identity that can incorporate both groups. Since our results support different identities and their roles between supervisors and employees,

an overarching unified team identity is needed to promote a sense of unity and camaraderie within the whole team.

Thirdly, our results uniquely suggest a cognitive approach to leading a team. This approach diverges from conventional advice that often focuses on the emotional aspect of supervising team members (e.g., Elfenbein & Ambady, 2002) or emphasizes leaders' knowledge and skills (e.g., Kickul & Neuman, 2000). Our results suggest that managers should understand team members' cognitive interpretations and social dynamics among them. Cognition involves a thorough, deliberate, and analytical mental process, while emotion entails a more intuitive, automatic, and holistic one (Castellano et al., 2019). People tend to break down stimuli into smaller pieces of information when they use cognitive interpretation. Therefore, employees' cognition can lead to a unique perception of the nature of the supervisor group and the colleague group, giving rise to "target-specific" attitudes toward these two distinct groups. Therefore, managers should adopt a more comprehensive and holistic leadership approach that considers both cognitive and emotional aspects.

Lastly, one pivotal implication for businesses, especially for HR professionals, is the integration of insights on personal workplace relationships into both employee onboarding and continuous training processes. Recognizing the significance of both RS and RC relationships, organizations should craft tailored training modules that encourage wholesome social interactions. For example, mentoring initiatives can be established to bolster a harmonious relationship between supervisors and their teams, potentially enhancing OI (Brunetto et al., 2010). Concurrently, team-building exercises geared towards fostering camaraderie among peers can bolster AC. Complementing these efforts, it's imperative for organizations to adopt regular feedback mechanisms (Evans & Dobrosielska, 2021). Utilizing tools like periodic surveys or focus group discussions (cf., Khan et al., 2023) allows firms to continuously assess the dynamics of interpersonal relationships and their consequential impacts on OI and AC. With a real-time grasp on their workforce's sentiments, organizations are better positioned to make swift, informed interventions, aiming for a balanced nurturing of both cognitive and emotional ties. Such proactive endeavors not only elevate employee morale but also yield tangible organizational benefits, such as heightened productivity and minimized attrition.

In summary, our study's practical implications highlight the importance of strategic decision-making by managers in nurturing OI and AC. By implementing a cognitive approach to team leadership and fostering an inclusive team identity, managers can drive organizational success and create a cohesive and motivated workforce. This approach stands as an innovative contribution (Elfenbein & Ambady, 2002; Kickul & Neuman, 2000), enriching the understanding of effective leadership strategies and their impact on employees' attitudinal outcomes.

Limitations and future research directions

This study has several limitations that suggest future research directions. Firstly, the study is based on data from a single company, which may raise concerns about the generalizability of the results. Organizational culture varies across companies, with each having its own unique culture (Petitta et al., 2022). The study assumes differences in identity and role between supervisors and colleagues based on their positions within an organization's hierarchy. The extent of these differences may depend on the organizational culture. For example, in startups or IT companies that emphasize a flexible culture to maximize creativity, these differences may be smaller, yielding different results than those found in this study. Therefore, future studies could incorporate variables that reflect the diverse organizational cultures of different types of companies. This approach will offer more specific guidance for both practitioners and scholars concerning the generalizability of the findings of this research.

Secondly, future research can also consider cultural differences depending on geographical locations. This study collected data from one country, Korea; however, Eastern and Western value systems tend to differ and companies in Western countries may exhibit alternative patterns of interaction and social exchange between members. In particular, the cultural dimension, collectivism (or individualism) worth paying attention to. Previous studies have empirically established the connections between collectivistic culture and both OI and AC. For instance, Zhao et al. (2019) demonstrated the crucial role of collectivism in Chinese companies, where it amplified the positive impact of Corporate Social Responsibility on OI. Conversely, concepts related to collectivism have also shown generalizability across different cultures. Gurbuz et al. (2021) demonstrated that the individualistic concept of core self-evaluation and its measurement can be applied to collectivistic cultures too. As such, the interplay between culture, OI, and AC requires further investigation. It will not only benefit organizational practitioners in shaping effective strategies but also contribute to the academic literature by providing insights into cross-cultural applicability.

Thirdly, this study examines only how personal relationships and the gap between different relationships affect OI and AC. Although OI and AC are crucial organizational behavior variables, and the results of this study hold significant value, further investigation into the subsequent effects of OI and AC is necessary. This study distinguishes OI and AC, and thus the impacts of OI and AC are also assumed to

be distinctive. Therefore, how duality in the personal workplace relationship ultimately affects specific organizational and/or individual outcomes through OI and AC and its specific psychological processes can be explored. For example, Vora and Kostova (2007) argued that dual identification might benefit members' performance in complex organizations, such as multinational enterprises composed of parent management and subsidiaries. Similarly, variables such as job satisfaction may also be influenced by personal relationship duality through OI and AC.

Fourthly, while personal characteristics were not the primary focus of this study, sentimentality and agreeableness exhibited significant positive correlations with all key variables, highlighting the need for further research. Specifically, agreeableness, a "Big Five" personality trait, can shape positive attitudes toward both individuals and organizations. Previous literature has shown the association between agreeableness and personal relationships (i.e., Ashforth et al., 2008; Mael & Tetrick, 1992). Future studies could examine whether individuals with agreeable personalities maintain a high level of AC based on benevolent personal relationships and exhibit strong OI due to voluntarily internalized organizational identity and individual discipline. Among the other Big Five traits, conscientiousness could be also another topic for further investigation, as it denotes a personal tendency to pursue goal-oriented, self-disciplined behaviors aligned with social norms. It can simultaneously address the core mechanisms of OI and AC, thus connecting individuals and organizations.

Lastly, although we put great efforts into minimizing potential measurement errors in our study, it is acknowledged that there may be other factors that our design could not have fully addressed. One such issue could be common method variance, a type of measurement error that can arise when data is collected from a single source using questionnaires (Podsakoff et al., 2003). This might be relevant to our study, as we used the same scale length for questions measuring similar constructs. Future research could benefit from techniques that assess the presence of such measurement errors. Enhancing the questionnaire design before data collection or applying statistical remedies after data collection could help detect and control these measurement errors (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

Authors' contribution KHC and JSP designed the study and developed the theoretical framework. JSP and SRH contributed to data collection and analysis. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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Data Availability The datasets generated during and/or analyzed during the current study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Declarations

Consent to participate Verbal informed consent was obtained prior to the interview.

Consent to publish The participants have consented to the submission of the article to the journal.

Conflict of interest The authors have no competing interests to declare that are relevant to the content of this article.

Compliance with ethical standards The questionnaire and methodology for this study were approved by the VinUniversity Committee for the Ethical Review.

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