Harmonizing Personal and Professional Boundaries: An Explanatory Qualitative Study of Relationship Tensions from a Critical Realist Perspective

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ABSTRACT

Organisations attempt to maintain the balance between personal friendships and professional relationships. Proof of this is how organisations assert the importance of team-building activities that it has become a regular in the annual plan of big and small corporations alike. The goals – promote camaraderie and create more friendships in the workplace. Yet, organisations also worry that employees will be too close that work matters will be disrupted, interactions will be less professional, and conflicts of interest will arise. The spectrum of friendships spans from initial acquaintances to close and best friends that weave human interactions (Hojjat & Moyer, 2017; Morales, 2022, Sias & Cahill, 1998). This involves shared respect, genuine regard, and reciprocal exchanges that grow as the bond between individuals strengthens. In the workplace, friendships go beyond social connections, fostering support and a deeper sense of belonging (Dietz & Fasbender, 2022; Morales, 2022).

Keywords: workplace friendships, critical realist, tensions, personal friendships, professional relationships