

# Kahit Maputi na ang Buhok Ko: Uncovering the Heart of Employee Loyalty and Commitment

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**Abstract:** This study explores the underlying factors that contribute to long-term employee loyalty and commitment within an institution. Through a qualitative approach, it identifies key influences such as supportive leadership, meaningful workplace relationships, recognition, growth opportunities, and alignment between personal and organizational values. The research also highlights how personal experiences and life stages shape employees' perceptions of loyalty, as evolving priorities and compassionate treatment impact their level of commitment over time. Relationships with colleagues play a significant role by fostering peer support, satisfaction, and morale retention, while job satisfaction—driven by meaningful work, career growth, and a supportive culture—becomes increasingly important as employees age within the institution.

The findings conclude that employee loyalty is not merely a result of tenure or compensation but is rooted in emotional, social, and developmental engagement. Based on these insights, the study offers recommendations for employers and HR practitioners to cultivate supportive and value-aligned workplaces, for employees to actively pursue growth and positive relationships, and for future researchers to expand studies across industries and evolving work environments. The study ultimately emphasizes the importance of human connection, growth, and purpose in fostering sustained employee commitment.

**Keywords:** commitment, employee, loyalty.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Employee loyalty and commitment are critical components of organizational success, directly influencing retention rates, productivity, and overall workplace culture. In a rapidly changing work environment, understanding the factors that contribute to employee loyalty has become increasingly significant. Research indicates that loyalty is not solely dependent on financial compensation; rather, it is shaped by a combination of personal experiences, organizational culture, and interpersonal relationships within the workplace (Meyer & Allen, 2019; Kahn, 2020).

As employees progress in their careers, particularly as they age, their perceptions of loyalty and commitment can evolve. Factors such as job satisfaction, recognition, and opportunities for professional growth play vital roles in shaping these perceptions (O'Neill & O'Connor, 2021). A positive work environment that fosters strong interpersonal relationships and supportive team dynamics has been shown to enhance employees' emotional connections to their organizations, further solidifying their loyalty (Gratton & Erickson, 2020).

In the context of Filipino employees, cultural values such as "Bayanihan" (community spirit) and "Kapwa" (shared identity) may significantly influence their sense of loyalty and commitment to their workplace (Cruz et al., 2021). These values encourage collaboration and support among colleagues, which can reinforce an individual's dedication to the organization.

This study, titled "Kahit Maputi Na ang Buhok Ko: Uncovering the Heart of Employee Loyalty and Commitment," seeks to explore the multifaceted nature of employee loyalty and commitment, particularly among long-serving employees. By

examining the underlying factors that contribute to their loyalty, this research aims to provide insights that can help organizations foster a more committed and engaged workforce.

### **Objectives of the study**

The primary objectives of this study are to identify the key factors influencing employee loyalty and commitment among long-serving employees. It will also examine the role of job satisfaction and recognition in shaping employees' perceptions of their loyalty to the organization. Additionally, the research will explore how interpersonal relationships and team dynamics impact employee commitment in the workplace. Through these objectives, the study seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the elements that foster loyalty and commitment, ultimately contributing to a more supportive and effective organizational environment.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The major problem of the study is to identify the key factors influencing employee's loyalty and commitment to stay on the institution they are working for. It seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What are the underlying factors that contribute to long-term employee loyalty and commitment in an institution?
2. How do personal experiences and life stages influence employees' perceptions of loyalty and commitment to their workplace?
3. How do relationships with colleagues affect an employee's decision to remain committed to the institution throughout their career?
4. What role does job satisfaction play in shaping the loyalty and commitment of employees as they age within the institution?

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

This study utilized a phenomenological approach as described by Moustakas (1994), which emphasizes exploring and understanding the lived experiences of individuals. Specifically, it focused on the experiences of long-serving employees regarding their loyalty and commitment to the organization. This design enabled an in-depth exploration of participants' personal perspectives and emotions, providing rich qualitative insights that are essential for understanding the factors influencing employee retention and engagement in the organizational context.

### **Participants**

The participants includes long-serving employees from various departments within the organization. Individuals who have been with the organization for several years. Their experiences and insights can provide valuable information about loyalty and commitment over time. A purposive sampling technique will be used to select individuals who have at least five years of service, ensuring that the respondents have relevant experiences to share.

### **Data Collection**

Data will be collected through semi-structured interviews. This method allows for flexibility in questioning while ensuring that key topics related to loyalty and commitment are covered. Each interview will last approximately 30 to 60 minutes and will be conducted in a quiet, private setting to encourage open and honest discussions. Additionally, focus group discussions may be conducted to gather collective insights and foster dialogue among participants regarding their experiences and perceptions.

### **Instrument**

A semi-structured interview guide will be utilized as the primary research instrument to gather qualitative data from long-serving employees regarding their experiences and perceptions of loyalty and commitment within the organization. The interview guide will consist of open-ended questions designed to encourage participants to share their thoughts in detail, allowing for deeper exploration of topics while ensuring that key areas of interest are addressed. Prior to the main data collection, the interview guide will undergo pilot testing with a small group of participants to identify any ambiguities and ensure the questions effectively elicit the desired information. Interviews will be conducted in a private and comfortable

setting, lasting approximately 30 to 60 minutes to facilitate in-depth discussions. With participants' consent, the sessions will be audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim for analysis. Thematic analysis will be employed to identify recurring themes and patterns from the transcribed data, providing a rich understanding of the factors influencing employee loyalty and commitment. Ethical guidelines will be strictly followed, including obtaining informed consent, ensuring confidentiality, and preserving anonymity through the use of pseudonyms in all reports. By employing this semi-structured interview guide, the research aims to gather comprehensive insights into the heart of employee loyalty and commitment, offering valuable information for organizations seeking to enhance their employee engagement strategies.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the results and discussion of findings out from the analyzed qualitative data using thematic analysis method. It provides an overview of the participants' experiences, underlying factors of staying loyal, relationships with colleagues and role of job satisfaction.

Based on the employees responses factors that contributes to their long-term loyalty and commitment in the institution are Support and Care and recognition and growth.

In terms of personal experiences and life stages that influences their loyalty and commitment they commonly experience Treatment and relationship, and Compassionate support.

In terms of relationship with colleagues they commonly responses about peer support and Satisfaction and loyalty.

And lastly, talking about the role job satisfaction plays in shaping their commitment and loyalty; they commonly responded about meaningful work, growth opportunities and supportive work culture.

*“When there is a continued support, recognition openly during the most challenging situations and stand by on the side offering unwavering support.” Participant 1, Line 1*

*“These are some of experiences/interactions within the institution that have significantly influence my loyalty: - genuine group of co-teachers who became like my family.” Participant 5, Line 5*

*“Meaningful work and recognition. Being recognized for their expertise and contributions. A seasoned employee who receives public acknowledgement, awards or promotions for their expertise and contributions feel valued and appreciated.” Participant 9, line 12*

*“The treatment of the employers or the administration can changed someone's perception of loyalty towards a certain institution.” Participant 5, Line 10*

*“A personal experience that significantly changed my perception of loyalty towards my institution was when my husband faced a serious health problem. During that difficult and uncertain time, the management went beyond offering professional support – they demonstrated genuine personal concern.” Participant 2, Line 7*

*“A colleague once offered crucial support during tough time, which lightened my load and reminded me of the teamwork here. It strengthened my commitment to the institution.” Participant 4, Line 8*

*“Being a class adviser for several years has greatly contributed to my job satisfaction. While it's not always easy to handle the different behavior of students and to communicate with parents about the child academic performance, these challenges helps me grow personally. One of the most rewarding moments was when a parent expressed genuine appreciation for my efforts.” Participant 10, Line 17*

*“Over the years, my job satisfaction has evolved as both the institution and my role have changed. In the early stages, I was highly energized by the learning curve and the support from leadership.” T6*

The words “care” and “caring” in management literature are used at different levels in reference to caring within and outside the organisation: institutional, when talking for instance about care for environment or particular social groups of people (Engster, 2004; Starik, Rands, 1995; Tronto, 2010), organisational, which refers to the caring of organisations about different stakeholders including employees (Liedtka, 1996; Weber, 2014), and personal caring, which looks at caring at the group level (Houghton et al., 2015) or individual (Carmeli et al., 2016; Kahn, 1993; Kroth, Keeler, 2009): between co-workers, managers and employees, etc. Besides, different concepts are used in different level studies, as well as actors who are involved in caring.

As highlighted in several studies, support and care from both supervisors and the organization as a whole play a vital role in enhancing employee loyalty and commitment. Eisenberger et al. (2002) found that perceived supervisor support significantly contributes to organizational commitment. Similarly, Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002) emphasized that when employees feel genuinely cared for, their loyalty deepens. Emotional safety in the workplace, as noted by Kahn (1990), and the satisfaction of psychological needs (Deci & Ryan, 2000) further underscore how support cultivates a lasting bond between employees and their organization.

According to the study of Baumeister and Leary (1995) they emphasized that the need to belong is fundamental to human motivation. Similarly, Kahn (1990) and Chiaburu & Harrison (2008) noted that when employees feel connected to their peers and supported by their team, they are more likely to remain engaged and committed. This sense of belonging strengthens emotional ties to the organization, enhancing both satisfaction and retention (McClure & Brown, 2008; Deci & Ryan, 2000).

According to Herzberg (1968), recognition and advancement are critical motivators that lead to higher satisfaction and reduced turnover. Eisenberger et al. (1990) and Nelson (2005) further support this by noting that when employees feel appreciated, they are more emotionally attached to the organization. Similarly, professional growth and development initiatives contribute to stronger affective commitment (Allen & Meyer, 1996; Kuvaas, 2006), encouraging employees to remain engaged and loyal.

Research has shown that how employees are treated and the quality of their relationships in the workplace are fundamental to their loyalty and commitment. Williams and Smith (2023) found that respectful and supportive leadership directly enhances emotional attachment and retention. Similarly, Lee and Park (2022) emphasized that positive interpersonal relationships contribute significantly to employee engagement and long-term loyalty. Turner and Thompson (2021) further supported this by showing that employees who feel respected by their peers and supervisors are more committed to the organization. Additionally, Zhang and Wang (2020) confirmed that trust-building relationships at work are crucial for boosting employee retention.

On the other hand, Reyes and Alonzo (2024) emphasized that compassionate leadership fosters trust and retention, especially in high-pressure settings. Emotional support during times of difficulty not only maintains motivation but also deepens loyalty (Peterson & Kim, 2023). Moreover, Lopez and Cheng (2022) found that compassion enhances psychological safety, which contributes to long-term engagement. Compassionate care during crises (Ramirez & Santos, 2021) and the establishment of an emotional contract (White & Zhang, 2020) further highlight the essential role of empathy in sustaining commitment. Peer support plays a critical role in enhancing employee commitment and reducing turnover. Garcia and Santos (2024) demonstrated that supportive co-worker relationships lower stress and promote well-being, especially in high-pressure roles. Similarly, Nguyen and Ramos (2023) found that peer-based emotional support strengthens organizational commitment by fostering trust and belonging. Delgado and Lim (2022) emphasized team cohesion as a driver of loyalty, while Patel and Rivera (2021) linked informal peer networks to higher engagement. Additionally, Lopez and Chen (2020) highlighted how peer support helps buffer burnout, ultimately leading to greater retention.

Growth opportunities are a significant driver of employee commitment and retention. Torres and Liu (2024) emphasized that development pathways reduce turnover by fostering loyalty, particularly in high-demand industries. Garcia and Ramos (2023) found that structured career advancement enhances emotional connection to the organization, while Nguyen and Bautista (2022) confirmed that continuous learning opportunities contribute to long-term engagement. Patel and Choi (2021) highlighted how investment in mentorship and training leads to stronger retention outcomes. Delos Reyes and Tan (2020) further stressed that for millennials, visible growth opportunities are crucial in fostering lasting commitment.

Morales and Santos (2024) emphasized that cultures focused on well-being and communication increase employee retention. Kim and Ramos (2023) noted that empathy and inclusion within workplace culture reduce turnover, especially in multicultural environments. Garcia and Huang (2022) found that affirming and respectful cultures strengthen employee identity and emotional ties to the organization. Similarly, Ocampo and Rivera (2021) stressed the importance of cultural alignment and leadership in retaining staff, while Tan and Delos Reyes (2020) confirmed that collaborative, feedback-driven cultures promote loyalty and satisfaction.

#### 4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study reveals that long-term employee loyalty and commitment within an institution are influenced by a complex interplay of factors rooted in emotional, social, and developmental aspects of work life. Key among these are supportive leadership, a sense of belonging, opportunities for recognition and growth, and alignment with institutional values. As employees progress through different life stages, their perceptions of loyalty and commitment evolve, shaped by personal experiences and shifting priorities. Meaningful relationships with colleagues significantly strengthen their resolve to stay, fostering a positive work environment that enhances morale and retention. Moreover, job satisfaction—derived from meaningful work, career development, and a supportive workplace culture—plays a vital role in reinforcing loyalty, particularly as employees mature within the institution. Together, these insights highlight that loyalty is not solely the result of tenure or compensation, but rather a deep emotional connection nurtured through trust, growth, and meaningful engagement.

Based on the findings and conclusion of this study, the following recommendations are offered to help strengthen employee loyalty and commitment. These suggestions are intended for employers, employees, and future researchers to apply and build upon in their respective fields.

1. Employers and HR practitioners are encouraged to demonstrate genuine support for employees' emotional and professional well-being, invest in growth through training, mentoring, and clear career paths, and recognize achievements by celebrating both small wins and major milestones. Emphasizing a value-driven approach that aligns company and employee values fosters an inclusive culture, while building strong teams is promoted through positive relationships and open communication among staff.
2. Employees and workers are inspired to be team players by building strong relationships with colleagues and supervisors, continuously pursuing opportunities for learning and skill development, communicating concerns and ideas respectfully and constructively, and staying motivated through reflection on their purpose and its connection to their work.
3. Future researchers are encouraged to explore employee loyalty across specific industries such as education, healthcare, and government for targeted insights, using mixed methods that combine qualitative and quantitative approaches to gather comprehensive data. Examining generational perspectives can reveal differences in loyalty and commitment among age groups, while investigating post-pandemic changes can shed light on the impact of remote and hybrid work arrangements. Additionally, expanding research on emotional and social factors—including values, relationships, purpose, and well-being—will deepen understanding of the human side of work.

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