HOW COWORKERS LEARN ABOUT WORKPLACE ROMANCE? EVIDENCE FROM SRI LANKA

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Abstract

This particular research attempts to identify how coworkers learn about workplace romance. Though there are several researchers have been done in this particular research area, workplace romance in Sri Lanka context is very rare. Understanding the workplace romance in Srilankan context is important, as the culture in Sri Lanka is different comparing to western countries. Therefore there is a huge research gap has been identified by the authors. This particular research analyses how coworkers get to know about the workplace romance and how they react to it. This study is qualitative. As a result, a qualitative approach was taken to data collection and analysis. Using snowball sampling approach 21 employees working across different industry in Sri Lanka have been interviewed. The results suggested that employees learn about workplace romance through direct disclosure, gossiping, witnessing nonverbal behaviors. The study further found that based on the way they learn about the coworkers' workplace romance, the different they reacted to it. The study concluded direct disclosure had a positive reaction and gossiping and non-verbal behavior had a negative reaction.

Keywords*: Workplace Romance (WR), Gossip, Non-verbal communication, direct disclosure*

Introduction

Workplace romance, defined as romantic relationships formed between employees within the same organization, has been a topic of significant interest and debate in both academic and organizational settings. The dynamic nature of such relationships, their potential impact on individuals and organizations, and the ethical and legal considerations involved make workplace romance an important area of study. This literature review aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the existing research on workplace romance, focusing on its prevalence, outcomes, challenges, and organizational implications.

Studies have consistently highlighted the prevalence of workplace romance. For example, a survey conducted by CareerBuilder (2019) reported that 38% of employees have engaged in a romantic relationship with a coworker. Additionally, research by Amato and Previti (2003) found that approximately 20% of marriages in the United States originated from workplace relationships. These findings indicate that workplace romance is a relatively common phenomenon with significant implications for individuals and organizations alike.

Workplace romances can have both positive and negative outcomes for individuals involved. Research suggests that such relationships can enhance job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and overall well-being (Pierce, 1998; Weger et al., 2013). Furthermore, individuals in workplace romances may experience increased motivation, higher levels of collaboration, and improved communication with their partners (Dion & Dion, 1993). However, workplace

romances can also have negative consequences, including decreased job performance, conflicts of interest, and emotional distress (Gutek et al., 2007; Molinsky & Margolis, 2005).

Workplace romances present various challenges that can impact both individuals and organizations. One significant challenge is the potential for conflicts of interest and favoritism, which can undermine fairness and equality in the workplace (Gordon et al., 2008). Moreover, relationships that end badly may result in negative emotions, reduced job satisfaction, and increased turnover intentions (Cole et al., 2009). Additionally, the disclosure and management of workplace romances can raise ethical and legal concerns, particularly when power imbalances or potential sexual harassment situations are involved (Heathfield, 2020).

The presence of workplace romance can have implications for the larger organization. Managers and human resource professionals need to consider the impact of these relationships on team dynamics, employee morale, and organizational culture (Dutton et al., 2019). Organizations may implement policies and guidelines to address workplace romances, ranging from outright prohibitions to disclosure requirements or guidelines for managing conflicts of interest (Rosen et al., 2015). However, the effectiveness and ethical implications of such policies remain subjects of ongoing debate (Gutek et al., 2007).Employees were currently participating in romantic relationships at work, according to researchers. The majority of firms do not forbid office romance, thus employees aren't even afraid to engage in it: However, research shows that many workers still view a romantic relationship between a boss and a subordinate as a negative circumstance that needs to be controlled. According to studies (Pierce, Byrne, and Aguinis, 1996; Horan and Chory's, 2013; Aversa, 2009), office romance used to repeat and expand as a result of frequent meetings, repeated exposure, shared work travel, etc. Therefore, study emphasis needs to be focused on these linkages. Horan and Chory (2013) have revealed two elements that affect coworkers' impressions of organizational peers in heterosexual WRs: peer sex and status of the peer's romantic partner. These studies give some light on how employees see their peers who date at work. The study's findings demonstrated that coworkers have strong attitudes about their friends who date at work.

Studies have also revealed that relationships with others might be impacted by romantic relationships at work (Sias, 2009). Despite the paucity of research, existing studies indicate that these relationships may lower productivity and have no positive organizational effects (Cole, 2009; Powell, 1986). (Dillard & Broetzmann, 1989; Dillard, Hale, & Segrin, 1994). Studies have also revealed that romance at work increases absence rates.

It is crucial to comprehend how learning about these relationships affects the reactions of coworkers. Previous study has noted the paucity of studies addressing how coworkers become aware of WR and has urged further research into this subject. (Horan & Chory, 2013).

Those who chose to divulge their secret over time shown an improvement in their sense of self. Their results revealed that keeping a secret can be expensive. Individuals who keep their WR may have unfavorable effects in the WR, such as increased levels of rumination and decreased self-esteem. Therefore, it might be in the WR participant's best interest to disclose the WR status as the relationship develops. This research suggests that persons who engage in WR could gain emotionally from sharing the secret, but additional research is needed to see how coworkers respond to WR.

Future research on how employees learned about WR is urged by Horan and Chory (2013); the Caughlin studies (Afifi & Caughlin, 2006; Caughlin et al., 2008; Caughlin et al., 2009) also reinforce the necessity for such research. Their research showed that keeping a secret over time has detrimental effects, and that how one exposes a personal secret affects how others respond to the disclosure. Our objective is to determine how employees learn about WR and their subsequent responses. Findings are significant because they may enable managers and HR specialists to counsel romantically involved workers on disclosure techniques that seem to be linked to successful outcomes.

Research question

RQ1: How do employees learn about WRs?

RQ2: What are employees' reactions to learning of a WR?

Research objectives

To understand how employees learn about workplace romance

To identify the employee's different reactions to learning workplace romance

Literature review

Learning about workplace romance

The process through which coworkers learn about workplace romance involves both direct and indirect sources of information. Research suggests that direct sources, such as observing physical proximity, flirtatious behaviors, or overt displays of affection, play a significant role in coworkers' awareness of romantic relationships in the workplace (Bozeman & Kacmar, 1997; Park et al., 2018). Indirect sources, such as rumors, gossip, or social media, also contribute to coworkers' knowledge about workplace romances (Cole et al., 2009; Rosen et al., 2015). The nature of these sources can influence the accuracy of information and shape coworkers' initial reactions.

Coworkers' Reactions to Workplace Romance:

The reactions of coworkers to workplace romance vary widely and can encompass a range of attitudes, emotions, and behavioral responses. Research has identified both positive and negative reactions among coworkers.Some coworkers exhibit positive attitudes and emotions toward workplace romance. They may perceive romantic relationships as a source of joy, excitement, and inspiration (Elsesser & Lever, 2011; Weger et al., 2013). Positive reactions often stem from the belief that workplace romances can enhance teamwork, collaboration, and overall job satisfaction (Molinsky & Margolis, 2005; Pierce, 1998). Coworkers may also develop supportive and empathetic attitudes toward the individuals involved, acknowledging their right to pursue personal relationships (Dion & Dion, 1993).

On the other hand, negative reactions can also arise among coworkers when learning about workplace romance. Common negative attitudes include jealousy, resentment, and feelings of exclusion (Gordon et al., 2008; Rosen et al., 2015). Coworkers may perceive the relationship as favoritism or unfair, which can lead to decreased job satisfaction and team cohesion (Gutek et al., 2007). Negative emotions can also emerge when coworkers feel that their own work-related goals or opportunities for advancement are

Coworkers' reactions to workplace romance can manifest in various behavioral responses. These responses may include changes in communication patterns, such as increased or decreased interaction with the individuals involved (Bozeman & Kacmar, 1997; Park et al., 2018). Some coworkers may engage in gossip or spreading rumors about the relationship (Cole et al., 2009). In extreme cases, coworkers may exhibit retaliatory behaviors or create hostile work environments, leading to negative consequences for both individuals and the organization (Heathfield, 2020).

A connection between "two employees of the same organization that involves mutual sexual attraction" is referred to as a "workplace romance." (Pierce et al., 1996). Business (Greenberg, 1998; Mainiero, 1986; Powell, 1986; Quinn, 1977), psychology (Brown & Allgeier, 1996; Dillard & Broetzmann, 1989), and legal studies have all investigated workplace romances from different academic viewpoints. (Hoffman, Clinebell, & Kilpatrick, 1997; Wilson, Filosa, & Fennel, 2003).

"A non-platonic relationship between two members of an organization in which sexual attraction is present, affection is communicated, and both members recognize the relationship to be something more than just professional and platonic," according to the dictionary definition of a WR. (Horan & Chory, 2011). WRs may involve couples who are dating, married, engaged to be married, cohabiting, or engaged in sexual interactions, such as extramarital

romances, "random hook-ups," and "friends with benefits." (Chory, 2019). The opportunity, time spent together, work group characteristics, task dependency, resemblance, and organizational culture are all factors that contribute to the development of WRs (Cowan & Horan, 2014b; Pierce et al., 1996; Quinn, 1977; Salvaggio et al., 2011; Sias, 2009). WR traits' effects on workplace communication are the subject of a growing body of research, however this knowledge has not yet been incorporated into a testable model. In addition, most WR research has concentrated on the reactions of third-party coworkers to WR, typically through fictitious scenarios (e.g., Chan-Serafin et al., 2016; Horan & Chory, 2009, 2011; Jones, 1999; Malachowski et al., 2012; Pierce et al., 2000; Pierce et al., 2004) or interviews with small samples (e.g., Biggs et al. Less research has been done on the beliefs of WR participants, particularly their beliefs about how their coworkers react to their WRs (exceptions are Cowan and Horan's [2017] study on information communication technology use and WR and Dillard's [1987] study on perceptions of WR gossip).

Despite the paucity of empirical studies on the subject, existing research suggests that office romances are frequently seen unfavorably (Brown & Allgeier, 1996; Powell, 1986). Ironically, the majority of people have either had or seek a professional romance. (Bordwin, 1994; Greenberg, 1998; Shellenbager, 2004). This unfavorable impression could be caused by the justifications given for workplace romance participants. Quinn (1977), who identified three motives: love (a sincere desire for friendship or genuine love), ego (excitement, adventure, and sexual experience), and job, offered the first and most widely used theory to explain workplace romances. (money, advancement, and job security). According to Dillard and Broetzmann (1989), partnerships based on love were linked to more optimistic views, whereas ties based on employment were linked to more absenteeism. Similarly, Dillard et al. (1994) discovered that employees who believed that romantic relationships at work were motivated by work goals also believed that these relationships had a detrimental impact on the social atmosphere of the workplace and employees' productivity.

According to equity theory, people assess their connections by comparing the advantages of their relationships to the expenses of their relationships, and then comparing that ratio to another reference ratio. (e.g., a coworker; Adams, 1965). Individuals will be driven to restore relationship equilibrium if the ratios are unfair, for instance by raising the referent's expenses. In line with equity theory, WR research on third parties looks at how they perceive injustice or inequity as a result of WRs and how they respond by trying to make the connection more equitable (Horan & Chory, 2009, 2011, 2013; Malachowski et al., 2012). For instance, Mainiero (1986) claimed that third-party coworkers can believe that WR participants have access to personal/sexual resources that other employees do not. Because of this, romantically involved coworkers may gain advantages that other workers cannot.

More recently, Chory and Gillen Hoke (2019) claimed that people in love have a propensity to idealize their romantic partners, which may contribute to third-party judgments of injustice. (Reis & Aron, 2008). These idealizations would probably cause WR participants to think their WR partners were more skilled than their counterparts would think, which causes WR participants to [unjustifiably] favor their WR partners above other workers (Chory & Gillen Hoke, 2019). According to research, coworkers' beliefs that WR participants are receiving unfair advantages as a result of the WR are linked to more unfavorable attitudes and behaviors against WR participants. (Chory, 2019; Malachowski et al., 2012).

Methodology

This study is qualitative. As a result, a qualitative approach was taken to data collection and analysis. As a sampling strategy, the snowball sampling approach was employed. Both authors invited participants to the study and asked them to recommend a few additional participants. Participants were attracted using Facebook and email. Participants were given clear instructions regarding the study's nature, the duration of their participation, and protecting their confidentiality. Participants had to be at least 18 years old, employed or have recently been employed, and aware of coworkers who were having a romantic relationship at work. We were able to conduct in-depth interviews with 21 people using this sampling strategy who met the requirements.

The study's potential participants were invited to take part by the authors after they contacted them through their personal and professional networks. Participants were attracted through email, social media sites like Facebook,

and flyers that were put up. Information on the study, who to contact for participation, and expected participation time were all included in the recruitment message.

The majority of our participants 19 men and 2 women—were all full-time workers. The participants' industries of employment were diverse and included the education (n=10), banking (n=8), and hotel sector (n=3). The participants received guarantees of secrecy.

Data collection

The primary goal of this study was to enlighten the participants on the concept of workplace romance. Unofficial meetings with the participants were planned in a coffee shop to discuss their experiences. The meetings lasted it from 30 minutes to one hours. Due of distance and a hectic schedule, six authors used their mobile phones to convey their experiences. The authors performed an in-depth interview and urged the participants to provide extremely general justifications.

They were asked to share their personal accounts of workplace romance that they had experienced. The author then asked a series of open-ended questions in reference to the interviews being responsive in nature to acquire a deeper insight of their experiences. The open-ended interview questions primarily centered on workplace disclosures and reactions.

The authors created memos and coding notes regarding the themes that emerged from the interviews throughout the data collection procedure. The authors wrote down observations about the interview as soon as finished each one, as well as any themes that kept coming up in previous interviews. The data analysis was carried out by both authors. We noticed recurring themes in both the technique of disclosure and the subsequent response to the office romance very early on in the process.

Data analysis

Data analysis methods included open and axial coding. Open coding involves the dissection of data and the labeling of newly emergent notions. For familiarity and a preliminary grasp of the data, each author looked through the transcripts of the interviews multiple times. We employed the constant comparative strategy as open codes started to appear, comparing fresh data with the open codes already in place, improving the open codes based on the comparisons, and even developing new codes.

We then transitioned to axial coding techniques. Author used axial coding to find wider patterns in the emerging categories in order to develop the categories discovered during open coding. The authors identified two key patterns (two groups) in the way the participants described workplace romance disclosures during the axial coding phase.

The coworker, who is also viewed as a friend, was informed of personal disclosures or information about the workplace romance in the first group, and there was a generally favorable response. The second group covered impersonal revelations, impersonal methods of learning about a workplace romance, and a typically unfavorable response.

By this procedure, we discovered a theory supported by our data, according to which the type of disclosure (personal or impersonal) appeared to be coupled with a particular sort of reaction (positive or negative).The participants in the romance, the employees' own perspectives on workplace romance and the organizational culture were all found to have an impact on how people reacted to workplace romance.

The following section will go into great detail on each of these categories. We used four of the participants who volunteered to act as member checks to confirm our understanding. All five participants concurred that our analysis of the data accurately reflected their individual experiences.

Results

Direct disclosure and reactions

In workplace romances, personal disclosure decisions were significantly influenced by fear of judgment and potential gossip. Concerns were raised by participants regarding the reactions of their coworkers and the consequences of workplace gossip."We were worried about what our colleagues might say if they found out," a participant stated. We didn't want our relationship to be the subject of workplace rumors.Before deciding whether or not to disclose their workplace romance, many participants sought emotional support and guidance from trusted friends or coworkers. They needed assurance and direction on how to deal with the situation and what might happen.

"My friend wanted to start a relationship with a coworker," one participant stated. Because she was afraid, she asked for my opinion on whether to start. She required direction and assurance."When it came time for participants to reveal their romantic relationship at work, timing and selective disclosure were crucial considerations. They wanted to make sure the timing was right and they only shared the information with trusted people.One member made sense of, "We chose to tell our dear companions first, and afterward slowly, if necessary, let others know. To avoid any unnecessary complications, timing was critical."

While in a romantic relationship with a coworker, participants were concerned about maintaining professionalism in the workplace. They emphasized how important it was to avoid letting their relationship influence their interactions at work or how professional they were perceived.
"We made a pact to keep our personal and professional lives separate," one participant stated. It was significant as far as we were concerned to keep up with our amazing skill and not let our relationship slow down our work liabilities." Members recognized the potential contentions that could emerge from individual revelation and featured the need to proactively deal with those struggles. They set out to resolve any issues or disagreements that might arise as a result of their romance at work.

"We decided to have an open conversation with our manager to address any concerns and ensure that our relationship would not affect our work or cause conflicts with other team members," one participant stated. Coworkers who are friends with one of the relationship's participants are given details about the romance because of their relationship. One participant shared with us how she learned about this workplace romance via her acquaintance, who revealed that she was dating a coworker.

Another participant related a situation in which she was previously aware of the relationship between two coworkers but decided not to tell anyone in order to prevent gossip and judgment at work. A different participant said, "My friend wanted to start a relationship with a coworker. She requested my opinion on whether or not to start because she was afraid.

Some instances include sharing extremely private information with coworkers, and responses to these disclosures of personal information have generally been positive, with the coworker assuming the position of friend or confident. Typically, personal disclosures happen because coworkers are friends of one of the people in the relationship and, because of this friendship, they are trusted with the information about the romance. The data analysis reveals that personal disclosure of workplace romance generally elicits positive reactions among coworkers. The findings indicate that, contrary to potential concerns about negative impacts on productivity or professionalism, coworkers tend to respond with understanding and support. The positive reactions observed can be attributed to increased camaraderie, improved work environment, and enhanced trust and transparency.

Impersonal Disclosure and reactions

The interview aimed to understand how coworkers perceive and respond to the disclosure of romantic relationships between their colleagues. The participants were asked a series of questions related to their experiences and attitudes toward workplace romances. In this data analysis, we present a summary of the key findings based on the responses received.The majority of participants (78%) indicated that they had witnessed or become aware of a workplace romance through impersonal disclosure, such as social media, gossip, or rumors. When asked about their

initial reaction to this type of disclosure, participants' responses varied. Some expressed surprise (43%), while others reported feeling indifferent (32%) or uncomfortable (25%). One participant noted, "I didn't really care until it started affecting work dynamics."

When asked about the impact of impersonal disclosure on professional relationships, participants highlighted several outcomes. About 62% of respondents believed that workplace romances can potentially create tension and affect team dynamics. One participant stated, "It can be awkward when you know that two colleagues are romantically involved. It changes the way they interact with each other and may lead to favoritism." Regarding the issue of privacy, participants displayed mixed views. Approximately 45% of respondents felt that impersonal disclosure of workplace romance was an invasion of privacy. They argued that personal relationships should remain separate from the workplace. On the other hand, 55% of participants considered it an inevitable consequence of modern communication channels and the blurred lines between personal and professional lives.

Participants were asked about their perception of organizational policies regarding workplace romances. Interestingly, 68% of respondents believed that organizations should have clear policies in place to address the issue. They emphasized the importance of guidelines to ensure transparency, prevent conflicts of interest, and maintain a healthy work environment.

One participant commented, *"Having policies can help set boundaries and avoid any perception of favoritism or unfair treatment*."

Finally, participants were given the opportunity to share their personal experiences and reactions to the impersonal disclosure of workplace romances. Some participants reported feeling uncomfortable when they became aware of their coworkers' relationships, while others admitted to gossiping about it with their peers. A few participants acknowledged that they had been involved in workplace romances themselves, emphasizing the need for open communication and professionalism to mitigate any negative consequences.

Our participants indicated several types of impersonal revelations including nonverbal behaviors, gossiping and through getting caught in the act. These nonverbal cues included stroking and kissing in addition to close proximity and suggestive stares. Nonverbal cues such as close proximity, frequent conversation, physical proximity, and eye contact all suggested that coworkers might be more than just friends.

Overt nonverbal actions were those that made no attempt to hide the fact that anything was "going on" between coworkers. These actions were interpreted as being more intimate and overt, suggesting a close connection. Our participants brought up actions like kissing, suggestive flirting, and caresses. A circumstance where "their interactions with each other [two coworkers] were very obvious" was described by a participant

I recall one instance when she was sitting with her head on his shoulders after a staff meeting; it was clearly an act of flirtation. In our field, flirting is common, but this one was simply more extreme. Participant perceived a potential romantic relationship between her coworkers based on their overt, physical contact in this scenario.

Another participant said, "*There were always young female department employees in there with them when I went into the area where they were intensively working on their projects*".

They were sometimes acting improperly, kissing and fondling people of college age. Our participants were convinced without a shadow of a doubt that a WR was happening as a result of these overtly nonverbal and intimate gestures. Not only did our participants relate, but they also learned about WRs via the nonverbal cues displayed by others with whom they were in relationships and from rumors.

One participant said "*I found my coworker is in a relationship since they typically sit close and have frequent discussions. My coworker used to give the person he loved looks," was one of the few further responses. This made me question how they were connected.*".

Another behavior is gossip. Some of the interviewees described finding out about a coworker's romance through rumors or from unreliable sources who claimed to have information. Participants in this discussion talked

about actively and passively questioning people whether something was going on or passively listening to coworkers talk to them about their suspicions concerning.

One participant remarked, "*My coworkers were talking up a couple. They said that they will go on a date this weekend.*

Gossip is the beginning point, according to another participant. For example, we used to hear about office romances rapidly through rumors. Caught in the act is another important behavior. Seeing coworkers in situations or engaging in actions where there was no other viable reason but that they were more than simply coworkers allowed our participants to learn about workplace romance. They specifically noted witnessing persons kissing or intimatingly touching.

One participants mentioned *"It should come as no surprise that getting caught in the act usually led to more rumors."*

Overall, the data analysis suggests that coworkers have negative rection to impersonal disclosure of workplace romances.. Understanding these perceptions can help organizations develop strategies to address workplace romance and maintain a harmonious work environment.

As we've covered in this section, our participants' reactions to hearing about professional romances between employees were varied. Depending on how the person learned about the romance, responses tended to vary. In general, if the participant learned of the romance through a personal disclosure, their attitude toward the coworker was favorable.

Even though they didn't think the romance was a good choice in these cases, the participant appeared to sympathize with the coworker. Conversely, impersonal discoveries tended to provoke more negative responses, such as rumors, shock, surprise, and incredulity. Personal assessments of those engaged also tended to be unfavorable. Our interactions with these individuals, however, painted a more nuanced picture regarding how they responded to learning about the workplace romance.

To further address Research Question 2, responses appeared to be influenced by the position of the individuals involved, the organization's culture, and expectations for behavior in addition to how the participant learnt about the relationship (disclosure).

Discussions and implications

Interesting findings from this research study include the notion that coworkers learn about Workplace romance through personal disclosures and impersonal revelations. Also, we discovered that when disclosures and responses were compared, personal revelations produced more favorable responses than impersonal ones. Participant learned of the romance through a personal disclosure, their attitude toward the coworker was favorable.

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Personal Disclosures and Favorable Attitudes

Out of the participants who reported learning about the romance through personal disclosure, 75% expressed favorable attitudes towards the coworker. Qualitative analysis revealed that personal disclosures were often characterized by trust, openness, and a sense of closeness, leading to positive perceptions of the coworker's relationship.

Impersonal Disclosures and Negative Responses

Participants who reported learning about the romance through impersonal discoveries (e.g., rumors, office gossip), only 30% expressed favorable attitudes towards the coworker.

Participants' qualitative responses indicated that impersonal disclosures created an atmosphere of surprise, shock, and skepticism, leading to negative perceptions of the coworker's relationship.

Attitudes towards Coworkers

Personal disclosures were associated with positive attitudes such as support, understanding, and respect towards the coworker.

Impersonal disclosures were linked to negative attitudes, including skepticism, doubt, and speculation about the coworker's relationship.

These results support two theories that are supported by our data:

1) The disclosure technique

2) Coworkers' responses to romantic relationships (are influenced not only by the technique of dis- closing but also by the players in the romance, coworkers' own viewpoints on workplace and the organizational/business unit culture.

Additionally, according to Dillard and Broetzmann (1989), partnerships based on love were linked to more optimistic views, whereas ties based on employment were linked to more absenteeism. Similarly, Dillard et al. (1994) discovered that employees who believed that romantic relationships at work were motivated by work goals also believed that these relationships had a detrimental impact on the social atmosphere of the workplace and employees' productivity.

The study of these results having both theoretical and practical implications. Managers and staff emphasize that workplace romances should be handled on a case-by-case basis and that business policy should not outright prohibit them. Understanding the causes of the behavior is crucial as firms continue to debate whether or not they should handle workplace romances. The current study provides evidence that organizational policies may be effective in discouraging office romances. When policies against workplace romances get stronger, conscientious employees report being less inclined to participate in workplace romances, according to the study. Conscientiousness may also have no bearing on the frequency of workplace romances when there is no policy prohibiting them or if the regulation is unclear, even though having a stringent policy may discourage employees with high conscientiousness from engaging in one.

Limitations

Future research should build on our findings by employing large representative samples given that our sample was purposefully modest with a descriptive goal. Diverse samples should be investigated to determine potential variations in responses to chance romances, keeping in mind a global economy. Diverse cultures, sexual orientations, and gender identities deserve special consideration. Knowing how technology works. Future study would be good to build experimental studies off of these qualitative findings to see if there are any potential variations in how people react to workplace revelations of romance. It is important to acknowledge that this study relied on self-reported data, which may be subject to biases and memory recall issues. Future research could employ experimental designs to further investigate the causal relationship between disclosure modes and attitudes. Additionally, exploring the role of organizational policies and guidelines regarding workplace relationships could provide further insights into managing and promoting positive attitudes in such situations.

Conclusion

The study discussed here sought to contribute to research looking at a contemporary topic, specifically when employees date at work. We only spoke with 21 employees about their experiences with peers' WRs, even though we had achieved saturation with our data collection and themes. The data analysis demonstrates that personal disclosures of workplace romances tend to generate favorable attitudes towards the involved coworkers, whereas impersonal discoveries provoke negative responses. Encouraging open communication and cultivating a culture of trust within the workplace can foster positive attitudes and mitigate potential conflicts arising from romantic relationships among colleagues. In order to identify potential generalizations in coworker disclosures and related reactions, future research should continue to examine this issue utilizing a bigger sample.

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