

# Impact of Workplace Romance on Organizational Settings and Policies : Review Research

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## Abstract

Workplace romance has become a very common phenomenon in each and every type of industry. The goal of this study was to analyze the changing trend of workplace romance in the organizations in addition to exploring new factors leading to its formation and impact on organizational settings. This research also discussed about the various policies required in this context. A review research was conducted by taking into consideration some of the relevant studies on workplace romance (WPR). The findings of this study provided various new factors like attachment styles, psychological well - being, aestheticization of work, employees' attitude about workplace romance, prior engagement in workplace romance, and conscientiousness, which provided a boost to WPR in organizations as compared to traditional WPR parameters like proximity, attitudinal similarity, romantic motives, and organizational climate. Looking at the impact, the study showed both positive and negative impact of workplace romance on the organizational settings in terms of employee performance, co-worker's attitude, organizational commitment, and organizational environment. As far as policies are concerned, a list of suggestions is provided for framing a correct WPR policy to manage such relationships in an organization.

**Keywords :** formation factors, organizational policies, settings, workplace romance

**JEL Classification Codes :** M12, O15, O35

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In the present competitive globalized world, every individual wants or has to work, and therefore, ends spending most of his/her time in office cubicles. People work together, eat together, and learn together in the office premises. Even if they are at home, they interact by the means of mobile phones, emails, and other social media options, and this interaction further leads to the feeling of attachment. Joseph D. Levesque in *The Human Resource Problem – Solver's Handbook* wrote about how interaction during work related activities at the workplace gives an opportunity to the employees to know the ideas, feeling, habits, and interests of one another (Levesque, 1992). This type of interaction and sharing of ideas and experiences leads to a sense of togetherness and further gives rise to attraction.

If we closely analyze the situation, we will realize that all this process of togetherness and attraction revolves

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around the emotions of an individual. Emotions play a very vital role where human beings are involved. There are various types of emotions an individual feels, but among all the emotions, love is considered to be the most powerful emotion. In this context, workplace romance is considered to be a relationship between two members of the same organization perceived by a third party as characterized by sexual attraction (Reilly, 1977). Similarly, Horan and Chory (2011) defined it as, “a relationship that occurs between two members of an organization where sexual attraction is present, affection is communicated, and both members recognize the relationship to be something more than just professional and platonic” (p. 565).

The scope of literature review includes factors leading to formation and individual motives of workplace romance along with its consequences in context of both the organization and employees involved in the relationship. This review covers most of the foreign studies conducted on workplace romance and few research studies from the Indian context.

The most prevalent forms of workplace romance are hierarchical romance – supervisor to subordinate romance, lateral romance – peer to peer, and romance involving married employees – extra marital affairs.

Workplace romance not only affects the individuals involved in the relationship ; rather, it affects the co-workers as well as the organization also (George & Alex, 2013). The impact could be both negative and positive ; positivity comes when the relationship is pure love. The positive outcomes are marked as increased job performance, employee morale, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, organizational citizenship behaviour both among the individuals and organizations (Sowmya, 2013). Workplace romance becomes a subject of gossip for the co - workers. This gossip ultimately impacts the morale of co-workers ; in some cases, romance can lead to a happy environment in the department, which further boosts the morale of co-workers while in some cases, it can negatively affect the morale of co-workers, like in the case of a dissolved relationship. Workplace romance further leads to emotional problems like difficulty in concentrating on work, stress & depression, lack of motivation, and increased substance abuse among the romantic partners in case the relationship turns sour/dissolves. On the other hand, workplace romance leads to positive outcomes also. Most of the times, a romantic partner will work more to impress the other partner, which increases his/her performance at the job. Pure love interests not only lead to positive outcomes at work, but also increase the organizational commitment of the employees as they enjoy working with their romantic partners. We have discussed the outcomes further in this paper along with the relevance of workplace romance policies.

Nowadays, workplace romance is gaining tremendous attention not only as an area of research, but also a matter of concern by organizations. Past research took a very narrow view, with analysis of very few parameters and their influence on the workplace. The current study tries to establish the relationship between origin and impact of workplace romance in the workplace.

## **Review of Literature**

Workplace romance is a common phenomenon nowadays in every organization. In this context, a survey conducted in the last few decades clearly proves the existence of workplace romance in the organizations. As per the survey conducted by SHRM (Society for Human Resource Management) on 384 HR professionals in 2013, 24% of the employees reported their engagement in workplace romance and 43% of the HR professionals reported current incidences of workplace romance at their organizations (Dong, Alonso, Esen, & Scanlan, 2013). In 2011, a survey conducted by Careerbuilder.com in U.S. stated that 40% of the respondents had dated a co-worker at their workplace. In UK, approximately more than 70% of the employees had experienced workplace romance (Clarke, 2006). In this study, we have tried to review the trends of workplace romance in the organizations with the help of some latest reports and research studies. The main objective of this paper is to study the formation factors and impact of workplace romance on the organization, romantic partners, and co-workers. This paper also reviews the workplace romance policies followed by various countries.

**(1) Literature Review of Formation Factors of Workplace Romance :** Table 1 shows the various factors responsible for emergence of workplace romance in an organization. The previous researchers marked the factors such as proximity, attitudinal similarity, job autonomy, and organizational climate as the formation factors of workplace romance in an organization (Reilly, 1977). With the passage of time, new research studies in this field came out with some other factors leading to its formation.

A study conducted by Mano and Gabriel in 2006 in Taiwan and Iran listed some of the factors leading to the emergence of workplace romance in a hot organizational climate such as aestheticization of work, which means in a cold climate, the physical environment of the organization and the appearance of the staff were less important as compared to these factors in a hot climate. Therefore, cold climate was less prone to the emergence of workplace romance as compared to hot climate organizations. Work arrangement is the second factor which leads to the emergence of workplace romance. Long working hours, business trips, and physical proximity over extended periods of time encourages intimacy and romantic relationships, such arrangements, whether in hot, temperate, or cold climates leads to workplace romance in an organization. Performance measures and hedonistic ethics was the third factor taken into consideration. The performance measures in cold and temperate climate were more objective and impersonal. On the other hand, hot climates had hedonistic ethics where customer satisfaction was the main concern, therefore, they encouraged colourful relationships among their employees, leading to workplace romance. Organizational policy was the fourth factor which revealed that a cold organizational climate, where sexuality was controlled through lengthy codes of practice & regulations, was less prone to the emergence of WPR. On the other hand, in a hot organizational climate, where romantic relationships were encouraged directly or indirectly among the staff members, was more prone to workplace romance.

Doll and Rosopa (2015) conducted a study in USA in 2015 and outlined employees' attitude about workplace romance, prior engagement in workplace romance, and conscientiousness as the factors related to their willingness to engage in workplace romance. Employees' attitudes about workplace romance as well as prior engagement in workplace romance were positively related to their willingness to engage in WPR. As per Pierce, Broberg, McClure, and Aguinis (2004), employees having a more favourable attitude towards WPR were more likely to enter into a workplace romance. Similarly, past behaviour tends to predict future behaviour. According to Ouellette and Wood (1998), an employee previously involved in a WPR was more likely to involve in such romantic relationships in the future. On the other hand, conscientiousness was also found to be positively related to the attitude about workplace romance. Conscientiousness is the tendency of an individual to be achievement oriented, organized, and dependable. It is considered to be a reliable and valid predictor of multiple areas of job performance across multiple occupations (Barrick & Mount, 1991 ; Campbell, 1983 ; Digman, 1990 ; Dudley, Orvis, Lebiecki, & Cortina, 2006). The quality of the relationship was another factor, which can be concluded with the help of conscientiousness (Gray, 2002). As far as the workplace romance policy is concerned, it was observed that strict policies led to a negative relationship between conscientiousness and willingness to engage in

**Table 1. List of Factors Responsible in Formation of Workplace Romance**

S. No.	Authors	Factors
1	Belinda (2017)	Attachment styles (avoidance & anxiety), motives behind romance
2	Doll & Rosopa (2015)	Employees' attitude about workplace romance, prior engagement in workplace romance, & conscientiousness
3	Mano & Gabriel (2006)	Aestheticization of work, work arrangements, performance measures & hedonistic ethics, organizational policy
4	Reilly (1977)	Proximity, attitudinal similarity, job autonomy, organizational culture, & organizational climate

workplace romance and in a no - policy situation, the relationship was positive (Doll & Rosopa, 2015).

Belinda's study conducted in 2017 viewed employees' attachment style and motives for engaging in workplace romance as other factors engaged in building of romantic relationships at the workplace. The employees high on attachment avoidance were uncomfortable in relying on others, but did not oppose to engaging them in a sincere relationship. Therefore, once trust was established in their relationship, they started valuing sincere romantic relationships more than others, which means their motive in the relationship was love. Employees high in attachment anxiety were more concerned with how they were perceived by others than being in a sincere, dependable relationship ; therefore, such employees boosted their self-image by engaging in a romantic relationship with high - performing or high status employees, which meant entering into the relationship because of ego or job-related motives.

The first objective of our study, that is, to understand the organizational and personal factors leading to workplace romance is fulfilled after this review.

**(2) Review for Consequences of Workplace Romance :** Once the romantic nets or ties build in the organizational setting, they start affecting the working environment in both positive and negative terms. Some of the relevant studies conducted in this context are discussed in order to find out the impact of workplace romance as shown in Table 2.

A study conducted in 2017 by Sutton illustrated that all the factors like trust, openness, communication, collaboration, and fair & respectful treatment of employees helped to create an ethical and enjoyable workplace. In many ways, workplace romance affected these factors leading to negative or positive outcomes. If workplace romance helps in building these above - mentioned factors, the results would be positive, otherwise negative. The loyalty of partners involved in WPR would drive them to choose their partner over co-workers regardless of situation, thus creating an us vs. them type of feeling which, in turn, lowers the level of trust. Gossip is another

**Table 2. List of Factors Affected by Workplace Romance**

S. No.	Authors	Factors Affected by Workplace Romance (Either Positively or Negatively)
1	Sutton (2017)	Trust, openness, communication, collaboration, fair & respectful treatment of employees
2	Belinda (2017)	Job performance, job satisfaction, intrinsic job motivation, organizational commitment, organization citizen behaviour – individual & organization citizen behaviour – organization
3	Pierce (1998)	Employee motivation, performance, & job attitudes
4	Khan, Jianguo, Usman, & Ahmad (2017)	Psychological well - being
5	Bhebhe & Hove (2016)	Social support, safety nets, employee performance & productivity, favouritism
6	Tengberg & Tidefors (2016)	Workplace environment
7	Dong et al. (2013)	Real or perceived favouritism, claims of sexual harassment, retaliation, productivity
8	Salmani, Taatian, & Hakiminia (2011)	Stress & worry, work flow, employee morale, work environment, organizational efficiency
9	Mano & Gabriel (2006)	Employee & organization performance

factor which affects the productivity of the co-workers as they spend more time in gossiping rather than on their work. On the other hand, the author reported that hierarchical WPR leads to favouritism and manipulation of the lower level employees involved in the relationship, further negatively affecting the workplace environment. Some of the studies took different ways by taking into consideration the role of various types of attachment styles further affecting the workplace environment.

A study conducted by Belinda (2017) on adult attachment styles illustrated that attachment avoidance was positively related to all the employee work outcomes, that is, job performance, job satisfaction, intrinsic job motivation, organizational commitment, organization citizen behaviour – individual (OCB – I), and organization citizen behaviour – organization (OCB – O). The individuals high on attachment avoidance were found to be uncomfortable in and distrusted close interpersonal relationships (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2005). According to the findings of Mikulincer, Shaver, and Pereg (2003) and Hazan and Shaver (1990), individuals high on attachment avoidance had a tendency to become overly involved in their work, thereby giving more preference to their work as compared to relationships. That is why there was a positive relationship between attachment avoidance and employee outcomes. On the other hand, attachment anxiety style was positively related to organizational commitment & OCB – Os, but was negatively related to job performance & OCB – Is. This positive relation could be explained by the fact that an employee who was romantically involved with a member of his/her organization, and who had a tendency to become overly concerned that others will not be available to him/her in times of need (Hazan & Shaver, 1990) may become emotionally attached to his/her organization. Negative relation between attachment anxiety and job performance & OC – Is was seen because anxiously attached individuals commonly had a negative self-image that translated into high interpersonal dependency (Sumer & Knight, 2001), which means they struggled to make independent work decisions which led to low OCB – Is. As far as job performance is concerned, highly anxious people tended to perceive themselves negatively (Mikulincer & Nachshon, 1991), tried to abstain themselves from close interpersonal interactions, were preoccupied with relationships & views of others to the extent that they felt stressed which, in turn, led to low performance.

Pierce and Aguinis (2003) also illustrated the relationship between relationship motives and employee performance. The love motive was positively related to employees' work outcomes. This positive relationship was based on the notion of affective spillover, that is, the potential for emotions experienced in one life domain, such as one's personal life, to influence emotions experienced in another life domain, such as work. As per the research, love driven workplace romance promoted positive emotions among romantic partners which, in turn, led to positive emotions at work, thereby increasing employees' performance and motivation levels. Ego motive was positively related to job performance, intrinsic job motivation, and OCB – Is. The positive relationship was because when an employee experienced ego satisfaction due to workplace romance, he/she also experienced positive emotions, that is, affective spillover as discussed above which, in turn, kept him/her motivated to perform well. Job related motive was only positively related to organizational commitment & OCB – Os. Job related motive was positively related to organizational commitment & OCB – Os because the employees who were concerned about getting ahead in the job to the extent that they engaged in a romantic relationship with a co-worker depended heavily on their organization to establish a positive self - image. As far as job performance, intrinsic job motivation, and OCB – Is are concerned, the employees who were engaged in workplace romance due to job related motives were mostly dissatisfied with their current job status and tried to pursue instrumental gains like increased flex time or a promotion at the potential cost of another worker's well - being (Belinda, 2017).

Psychological well - being was another factor studied by the researchers. Psychological well - being includes relative absence of negative emotional experiences and states as well as the presence of positive emotional experiences and states usually on a single axis (Cropanzano, Weiss, Hale & Reb, 2003 ; Wright & Staw, 1999). Khan et al. (2017) and Biggs, Matthewman, and Fultz (2012) stated that most of the time, romantic partners felt good in gaining colleagues' sexual attention, resulting in high job satisfaction and performance. The workplace



romance positively contributed to psychological well - being that, in turn, positively affected employees' performance. The romantic relationships promoted psychological well - being as a research showed that affectionate touch from the romance partner relieved stress and instilled optimism (Ditzen, Neumann, Bodenmann, von Dawans, Turner, Ehlert, & Heinrichs, 2007) which, in turn, increased the employees' performance. As far as gender is concerned, women were more cautious than men about their involvement in WPR (Wilson, 2015). Men kept a more favourable attitude towards WPR in comparison to women, which means women were less motivated to involve themselves in WPR (Powell & Foley, 1998 ; Reilly, 1977). Studies also illustrated that workplace romance in the form of mutually committed relationships positively affected the employee performance. The partners involved in the relationship worked hard to create a favourable impression (Dillard & Broetzmann, 1989 ; Khan et al., 2017 ; Pierce & Aguinis, 2003).

Looking at a study conducted at a local authority office in Zimbabwe in 2016 revealed that co-worker to co-worker or peer to peer type of workplace romance helped employees to build social support, safety nets, and to deal with home stressors leading to positive organizational outcomes as the energies from WPR directly channelled into work in case the romance ended in a marriage. But at the same time, it was noted that married partners (couples) did not separate work from the home issues, which led to poor performance and low productivity. On the other hand, hierarchical WPR led to favouritism or perceived favouritism by a superior, which further demotivated other co-workers who were not a part of WPR. Especially in a hierarchical workplace romance, the superior accepted the poor performance and low quality work from the subordinate with whom he or she was romantically involved, thereby compromising with the work performance (Bhebhe & Hove, 2016).

The most important factor involved in workplace romance is the secrecy of the relationship. As a romantic relationship develops between two individuals, they try to hide the relationship from their co-workers or superiors. One of the research studies (Tengberg & Tidefors, 2016) illustrated that individuals wanted secrecy of their relationship due to fear of negative consequences like disapproval, office gossip, and jealousy on the part of superiors/ colleagues. But people who were involved in extramarital affairs stressed the need for secrecy to avoid critical opinion from their co-workers and disapproval of their relationship. This study also illustrated that women emphasized more towards the importance of informing their superiors about the romance in comparison to men. On the other hand, men stressed the need of having their own workplace and independence as the passion phase of romance ended. Here, we can say that secrecy was another factor which affects workplace romance in an organization.

Workplace romance, no doubt brings in both positive and negative outcomes, but as per the survey conducted by Dong et al. (2013), organizations did not permit workplace romance because they were concerned about real or perceived favouritism (84%), potential for claims of sexual harassment (78%), and potential for retaliation (72%). As per the survey conducted, concerns about potential retaliation increased from 50% in 2005 to 72% in 2013, concerns about lowered productivity and workplace romances being viewed as unprofessional decreased from 52% and 58% in 2005 to 29% and 29% in 2013, respectively. In the past 5 years, 40% of the organizations received complaints of favouritism from co-workers of those involved in a workplace romance, nearly one-fourth (23%) received claims of sexual harassment, and 22% received complaints of retaliation (Dong et al., 2013). Such claims in an organization lead to a hostile environment, which further turns into a challenge for an organization to retain and motivate the employees to work efficiently (Akhtar, Zahir, Tareq, & Mahdzir, 2017).

Looking at the scenario of workplace romance in Iranian organizations in 2011, Salmani et al. (2011) stated that expressing of romantic feelings by one partner to the other partner would increase the sexual attractiveness as people think positive about themselves and others, in turn increasing the organizational efficiency. Similarly, a study conducted in 2004 in two countries – Taiwan and Iran by Mano and Gabriel (2004) illustrated that in Taiwan, people believed that employees properly in love will be happier and, therefore, more productive, while the employees having just an affair will suffer and so will the organizational performance. They believed in the

concept of true love. The study also revealed that WPR romance emerges in all the three organizational climates, but in a hot climate organization, WPR was viewed as positive and enjoyable as compared to cold and temperate climates, where it was described as negative and painful.

The second and third objectives of our study, that is, to examine the impact and changing trends in the area of workplace romance with the passage of time are fulfilled after this review.

**(3) Review of Organization Policies and Workplace Romance :** As per the survey conducted by Dong et al. (2013), overall, more than one-half (54%) of the organizations did not have a written or verbal policy that addressed workplace romance. However, in 2013, an increasing number of organizations (42%) indicated having a written or verbal policy compared with the figure in 2005 (25%). Now, the most important and challenging issue for the organizations is to find out the existence of workplace romance. As per the survey, suspicions about workplace romance were generally revealed through office gossip (67%) or through reports to the HR department (61%). It also stated that over 89% of the organizations held the HR department responsible for taking action when such suspicion or complaint came to light. Now, we will look at the status of workplace romance policies in different countries.

A study in an Iranian organization by Salmani et al. (2011) showed that organizational policies and strategies were required to handle WPR so that an atmosphere of self-control can be created. Organization trust would lead to strong emotional ties (rational affection) between employees and the organization, thereby increasing organizational efficiency and this trust can be built up by creating sound workplace romance policies. On the other hand, development of sexual attractiveness without any formal written measures in the organization would negatively affect organizational efficiency (anxiety, aggressive & hostile atmosphere, jealousy & sexual harassment). As per the study, acceptance of workplace romance rather than prohibiting it is a good policy with the development of a mutual respect culture at the organizational, individual, and group levels on the one hand and creating a safe and dynamic working environment on the other hand. A study by Mishra, Patnaik, and Mishra (2016) also indicated that an optimistic culture in an organization helped in increasing employee performance and job satisfaction.

Bhebhe and Hove (2016), in their study conducted in a local authority of Zimbabwe, showed that the human resource department did not involve itself in the matters to solve the complexity of harmed relationships. In the absence of a policy, WPR becomes a challenge for the HR department. The HR department faced the challenges such as difficult to identify romantic partners, separating professional life from personal life of the employees, and managing sexual harassment cases. Therefore, HR can intervene by formulating policies, counselling, and facilitating workshops & training.

Studies conducted in UK & USA revealed that the main reason for discouraging WPR was workplace distress (gossip, perceived or real favouritism, distraction and discomfort of employees) rather than sexual harassment (Biggs et al., 2012). In this context, the survey conducted by SHRM (Dong et al., 2013) reported that among organizations that had workplace romance policies, almost all (99%) indicated that romance between a supervisor and a direct report was not permitted followed by romance between employees of a significant rank difference (45%) and between employees who reported to the same supervisor (35%). Consequences for breaking an organization's workplace romance policy varied depending on the type of workplace romance and the rank of employees. The most frequently reported consequence was a transfer of an employee involved in a workplace romance to another department (34%) and counselling (32%). Biggs et al. (2012) concluded that a manager should discuss the situation privately with the participant if he/she is involved in a problematic WPR rather than terminating the employee. The organization's workplace romance policy should not require individuals to disclose their WPR at it is unsafe. There should be a third party to supervise the hierarchical relationships.

Sidhu, Bhalla, and Ali (2019b) revealed that various individual and organizational factors were responsible for

dissolution of romantic ties in an organization. Most of the people were unaware about the company policy for workplace romance and suggested that the policy would not prevent people from entering into a WPR. Some people suggested that company policies should not allow married couples to enter into romantic relationships/extra marital affairs (Verhoef & Terblanche, 2015).

Research conducted in California stated that prohibiting workplace romance was not a good solution as it leads to low employee morale because employees felt like the organization was regulating their personal lives. The study also stated that in case of hierarchical relationships, before taking a strict action, both the parties must be allowed to resolve the situation themselves. As far as love contracts were concerned, they were not a permanent solution to the problem, therefore, some of the organizations, especially private employers, were opting for general anti - nepotism policies. Such policies not only regulate romantic or sexual relationships, but any relationship at work, which could lead to difficulties in inter - company relationships as well as legal problems. These policies include prohibitions against the employment of relatives/close relatives, house mates or roommates, and person(s) with whom the employee can share confidential information (Binetti, 2007).

The last objective of our study, that is, to study the various workplace romance policies formulated by various organizations in different geographic parts of the world is fulfilled after this review.

## **Gaps Identified**

The following gaps are identified after going through the literature review :

- (1) Research has discussed the various individual and organizational factors leading to the formation of workplace romance in an organization, however, the changed organizational settings give rise to new factors also. Hence, there is a need of further research in this context.
- (2) Most of the studies in this field have discussed about both positive and negative consequences arising out of workplace romance in an organization. However, no research talked about the in between emotional processes on the part of an individual which led to such consequences. Hence, there is a need to research the emotional intelligence levels of individuals when they get involved in such romantic ties and give rise to such consequences. A research study conducted by Sidhu, Bhalla, and Ali (2019a) can be referred to in this context.
- (3) There is very less discussion about the policies to be made in order to manage workplace romance in an organization. Hence, there is a need of research which clearly comes out with a framework of workplace romance policies and training programmes which should be imparted to the employees in order to help them in managing their romantic ties within the boundaries of such policies.

## **Suggestions and Managerial Implications**

An organization is simply defined as a group of people with similar vision. As people are an inseparable part of an organization ; similarly, attention, attraction, love, and conflict are part and parcel of having humans in an organization. To deal with human perceptions and behaviour, a manager must interpret, understand, evaluate, judge, and take decisions very carefully, especially towards or for people who are involved in relationships. The relationships can be tapped with positive motivation for higher output or upgraded performance, but if grapevine destroys the relationship, a performer would automatically be converted into a non - performer. A manager must ensure proper setting and policies to balance this difficult situation with a rope walk.

✎ Acceptance of workplace romance rather than prohibiting it is a good policy and by the development of a



mutual respect culture at organizational, individual, and group levels on one hand and creating a safe and dynamic working environment, on the other hand, leads to healthy relationships in the organization.

✧ Development of sexual attractiveness within the organization requires formal written measures ; otherwise, it will negatively affect the organizational efficiency by giving rise to situations like sexual harassment and a hostile workplace environment.

✧ Romantic partners must be provided an opportunity for marriage reasonably and within the organizational policies rather than taking strict action against the romantic partners.

✧ The HR department can play an important role in handling romantic relationships by formulating policies, counselling, and facilitating workshops & training.

✧ Employee Assistance Policy (EAP) is a helpful tool in managing dissolved workplace romances. This policy can be utilized by the employees during or after breakup, but it could be more effective if two parties are seen collectively by a counsellor for managing the dissolved workplace romance (Verhoef & Terblanche, 2015).

✧ In case of hierarchical relationships, before taking a strict action, both the parties must be allowed to resolve the situation themselves. They can mutually decide which one can take the voluntary transfer before the company forcefully transfers one of the partners.

✧ As far as love contracts are concerned, they are not a permanent solution to the problem, therefore, some of the organizations, especially private employers, are opting for general anti - nepotism policies. Such policies do not regulate only romantic or sexual relationships, but any relationship at work which could lead to difficulties in inter - company relationships as well as legal problems. These policies include prohibitions against the employment of relatives/close relatives, house mates or roommates, or the person(s) with whom the employees can share confidential information.

✧ The purpose of a WPR policy is not to prohibit the emergence of WPR, but to control the behaviour emerging out of such romantic relationships, and the resultant behaviour can be managed through policy and managerial training.

✧ Love contracts should be pro-active rather than being reactive so that employees feel secure at the workplace environment rather than feeling insecure. Love contracts are a legal document in which the organization and employee involved acknowledge the romance by stating that the relationship is mutual and consensual and is not in violation of the organization's sexual harassment policy. Again, managerial training is required for the effectiveness of this step.

✧ An organization's WPR policy must be in accordance with the size and culture of the organization. One policy may not be suitable for every organization.

✧ The organizational policy must clearly notify that hierarchical relationships are required to be communicated quickly, and a dating contract must be signed by the involved employees, specifically listing the supervisor's/manager's additional responsibilities in the situations such as not looking into the non - performance by the other partner or excusing him/her for mistakes. Along with this, counselling of employees regarding the appropriate behaviours can be another tool to cope with the ill effects of hierarchical relationships.

✧ Standards for use of office equipments for personal communication, especially intimate communication, must be clearly addressed in the policy.

✧ The WPR policy should address the issues of inappropriate sharing of confidential information of the organization among the romantic partners.

✧ Training managers and supervisors regarding workplace romance is another important area under consideration. Managers should be familiar with the employee morale, productivity, and legal risk of workplace romance. New employees joining the workplace should also be given appropriate training and information regarding such policy (Lickey, Berry, & Whelan - Berry, 2009).

✧ Organizations must understand the significance of organization culture and try to inculcate the same within their employees also (Kumari & Singh, 2018 ; Roy, 2012).

## **Conclusion**

This study aimed to look at the formation factors and impact of workplace romance along with the workplace romance policies followed by the organizations. Latest research studies were taken into consideration to review the situation. As per the earlier research studies, the most important factors considered are proximity, job autonomy, attitude similarity, organization culture, and organization climate, however, as per the latest research, there are some other factors which help in the emergence of workplace romance such as aestheticization of work, work arrangements, performance measures, hedonistic ethics, and organizational policies (Mano & Gabriel, 2006). Employees' attitude about workplace romance, prior engagement in workplace romance, and conscientiousness also play a very important role in emergence of workplace romance in an organization (Doll & Rosopa, 2015).

As per the various studies taken into consideration, it is concluded that workplace romance gives rise to both positive and negative outcomes depending upon the motive of romance, type of romance, sour/dissolved romance, attachment styles (avoidance & anxiety), and organizational policies followed by the organizations. Love motive is linked with long - term relationships and is marked by compassionate love. Workplace romance emerges because the love motive positively affects the employee performance and morale, thereby increasing organizational efficiency. On the other hand, ego and job motives are related to short term relationships and may turn into sour relationships or dissolved relationships. Dissolved / sour relationships further lead to retaliation, hostile workplace environment, sexual harassment claims, absenteeism, psychological problems (stress, anxiety, or depression) among the partners, legal cases, and bad public image of the organization. Research has also stated that hierarchical type of workplace romance is considered to be harmful for both employees and organization because it negatively affects the organization from all aspects.

This paper also reviews the role of workplace romance policies in the organization. Workplace romance policies are considered to be an effective tool in regulating romantic relationships at the workplace. They are required to handle WPR so that an atmosphere of self-control can be created.

## **Limitations of the Study and the Way Forward**

As discussion of love affairs, attractions, and romance are considered as a part of negative personality measures, very few studies are available in this area, especially in the Indian context. Most of the studies have mainly focused on the formation and impact of workplace romance on an organization, but there are very few studies that have been conducted on the emotional and psychological impact of workplace romance on an individual involved in the relationship. It is ultimately the emotional process of an individual which gives rise to positive and negative outcomes of such relationships. Therefore, this area can be explored further to give a deeper look into the concept.

## Authors' Contribution

Amrita Sidhu and Pretty Bhalla conceived the idea and planned to conduct a review study. Amrita Sidhu and Afroze Nazneen extracted various research papers based on the keywords and created a framework to understand the concept deeply. Dr. Pretty Bhalla verified and supervised the study along with providing some relevant study material. Amrita Sidhu wrote the manuscript in consultation with both other authors.

## Conflict of Interest

The authors certify that they have no affiliations with or involvement in any organization or entity with any financial interest, or non-financial interest in the subject matter, or materials discussed in this manuscript.

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