

## The Impact of Workplace Romance and Sexual Harassment towards Organizational Performance and Stability: A Literature Review

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### Abstrak

Studi ini meneliti hubungan antara romansa di tempat kerja dan pelecehan seksual serta dampaknya terhadap kinerja dan stabilitas organisasi. Romansa di tempat kerja dapat meningkatkan kepuasan kerja dan budaya perusahaan, namun juga menghadirkan tantangan seperti pelanggaran privasi, gosip, dan gangguan kerja. Romansa yang melibatkan hierarki meningkatkan risiko favoritisme, konflik kepentingan, dan persepsi pelecehan seksual, yang dapat mengurangi moral pegawai dan kepercayaan organisasi. Pelecehan seksual di tempat kerja dikenal sebagai ancaman serius bagi kesejahteraan organisasi, menyebabkan tekanan psikologis, penurunan kepuasan kerja, dan keinginan untuk meninggalkan pekerjaan. Penelitian ini menekankan pentingnya keadilan dalam praktik manajemen untuk menekan dampak negatif dan menciptakan lingkungan kerja yang inklusif. Metode penelitian menggunakan tinjauan sistematis terhadap artikel jurnal, berfokus pada implikasi romansa di tempat kerja dan pelecehan seksual di berbagai lingkungan organisasi. Data dikumpulkan dari sumber seperti Scopus dan Google Scholar untuk mensintesis temuan dan mendiskusikan implikasi lebih luas bagi stabilitas dan kinerja organisasi. Temuan utama menyoroti sifat ganda romansa di tempat kerja yang, bergantung pada praktik manajemen, dapat memperkuat budaya organisasi atau menimbulkan konflik dan konsekuensi hukum. Selain itu, penelitian ini menggarisbawahi dampak pelecehan seksual terhadap kesejahteraan karyawan dan dinamika organisasi, termasuk konsekuensi hukum dan reputasi. Studi ini merekomendasikan kebijakan organisasi yang komprehensif mengenai romansa di tempat kerja dan pelecehan seksual, serta langkah-langkah pencegahan untuk menjaga lingkungan kerja yang adil dan kondusif. Penelitian lebih lanjut dianjurkan untuk mengembangkan alat standar guna menilai efek jangka panjang dari fenomena ini terhadap hasil organisasi dan peran budaya organisasi dalam merespons romansa dan pelecehan di tempat kerja.

**Kata kunci:** Romansa di Tempat Kerja; Pelecehan Seksual; Kinerja Organisasi; Kestabilan Organisasi; Praktik Manajemen

### Abstract

*This study explores the relationship between workplace romance and sexual harassment and their effects on organizational performance and stability. While workplace romance can enhance job satisfaction and corporate culture, it also presents challenges such as privacy invasion, gossip, and workplace disruption. Particularly, romances involving hierarchical dynamics risk favoritism, conflicts of interest, and perceptions of sexual harassment, leading to reduced employee morale and organizational trust. Sexual harassment is recognized as a serious threat to organizational well-being, causing psychological distress, decreased job satisfaction, and increased turnover intention. The study highlights the need for fairness in management practices to mitigate negative impacts and foster a respectful, inclusive work environment. The research utilized a systematic review of journal articles, focusing on the implications of workplace romance and sexual harassment across various organizational settings. Data were gathered from multiple sources, including Scopus and Google Scholar, to synthesize findings and discuss broader implications for organizational stability and*

*performance. The study's key findings underscore the dual nature of workplace romance, which can either positively influence organizational culture or lead to conflict and legal issues, depending on management practices. Additionally, the research emphasizes the extensive impact of sexual harassment on employee well-being and organizational dynamics, including significant legal and reputational risks. The study advocates for comprehensive organizational policies addressing workplace romance and sexual harassment, along with preventive measures to maintain a conducive work environment, uphold justice, and protect employee well-being. It concludes by recommending further research to develop standardized tools for assessing the long-term effects of these issues on organizational outcomes and to examine the role of organizational culture in shaping responses to workplace romance and harassment.*

**Keywords:** Workplace Romance; Sexual Harassment; Organizational Performance; Organizational Stability; Management Practices.

## INTRODUCTION

In contemporary times, the influence of the workplace romance and sexual harassment on organizational performance and stability has increasingly gained attention in academic literature. Workplace love affairs, often ignored in corporate policies, may result in isolation at work and personal disputes (Yang et al., 2023). Although open organizational policies can lead to employee satisfaction and improvement of work culture (Amanda & Mustika, 2023), they may not prevent issues related to sexual harassment or preferential treatment based on relationships among employees which can have a drastic effect on job productivity as well as workers' morale (Murray, 2022). Employers should be cautious because of the potential for workplace sexual discrimination and harassment claims that necessitate appropriate rules concerning office affairs (Cavico & Mujtaba, 2021; Mainiero, 2020).

The dynamics of workplace romance can be complex for organizational performance. In the hospitality industry, research has found out that romantic relationships at workplaces have a direct impact on job engagement and performance (Jung & Yoon, 2020). Further, Khan et al. (2018) noted that workplace romance is connected with affective commitment foci that mediate the relationship between workplace romance and employee job performance. Additionally, psychological well-being mediates this relationship between workplace romance and employee performance (Khan et al., 2017). These findings demonstrate how intricate it is to navigate through the interaction of workplace romance with organizational outcomes.

Workplace romances are common occurrences in many organizations and they can alter employee attitudes, engagement levels and job satisfaction (Salvaggio et al., 2011). At the same time it undermines work environment in terms of positive interpersonal relationships, which are very crucial because when people form romantic alliances there may arise some problems such as conflicts or even legal troubles. The structure of policies within an organization and elements of climate at work influence attitudes towards office arrangements concerning love affairs as well as their management (Salvaggio et al., 2011). Furthermore characteristics of failed office romances have been found to be associated with the occurrence and perceptions of sexual harassment, further emphasizing the intricate relationship between these phenomena (Salvaggio et al., 2011).

On the other hand, organizational performance is impaired by workplace harassment including sexual harassment. Studies have highlighted the negative impact of sexually-oriented behaviors by managers on firm performance, indicating associations with legal risks and stock market reactions (Baker et al., 2021). Workplace conflict, often exacerbated by factors like workplace romance and harassment, can lead to counterproductive work behavior and decreased organizational commitment (Deng et al., 2023). Furthermore, workplace deviant behavior resulting from informal relationships at work can affect work productivity and organizational profitability (Widjaja et al., 2023). These findings emphasize the importance of addressing workplace conflicts and deviant behaviors to maintain organizational stability.

Equitable management practices have been identified as a protective factor against workplace sexual harassment, leading to improved organizational citizenship behaviors and reduced turnover intention (Vara-Horna et al., 2023). Addressing sexual harassment requires a focus on leadership, organizational justice, and creating a climate of respect that discourages such behaviors (Rubino et al., 2018; Vara-Horna et al., 2023). Moreover, organizational stability is closely linked to the management of sexual interest within organizations. Stability, as a vital aspect of organizational resilience, determines the ability of an organization to navigate challenges and changes effectively (Liu, 2024). Procedural stability and public management practices have been shown to impact the performance of public corporations, highlighting the importance of organizational stability in uncertain environments (Ryu & Kim, 2021).

In addition to workplace dynamics, judgments about sexual violations and interventions that lessen such disparities are influenced by personal factors like perceptions of sexual interest and agency (Corzine & Dahl, 2022). The impact of organizational culture on experiences of sexual harassment and assault in the workplace underscores the importance of creating a supportive and inclusive work environment (Williams et al., 2023). In addition, organizational-specific concerns as to differing organizational cultures can further complicate responses to incidents of sexual harassment (Mills & Scudder, 2020).

To guarantee a favorable work environment, organizational leaders must adopt comprehensive policies that address both workplace romance and sexual harassment. Nevertheless, although effective management of workplace romance may have positive implications there is the risk of workplace ostracism, conflict or harassment necessitating clear guidelines as well as preventative measures (Cavico & Mujtaba, 2021; Mainiero, 2020; Yang et al., 2023). On one hand, employee wellbeing and organisational performance could be protected by organisations through encouraging fairness, transparency and ethical behavior in relation to romantic relationships within the organisation.

The study examines the complex connection between workplace romance, sexual harassment, and their impacts on organization performance and stability. The main objective of this research is to emphasize the importance of addressing workplace romance and sexual harassment in companies as well as mitigating their undesirable effects on workers' lives and organizational results. . By examining factors associated with participating in romantic relationships at work, the study seeks to highlight gender differences, career risks, and how the

effect of workplace romance and sexual harassment on organizational performance. Further, the article reviews equitable management practices that act as protective measure against workplace sexual harassment leading to improved organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs) and reduced turnover intention (TI). Organizations can discourage such actions and increase organizational stability by focusing on leadership issues related to justice in organizations, creating climate of respect. It aims at fostering equity accountability behavior within organizations through constructive engagement processes so as to encourage employees to report intern or subtle forms of workplace sexual harassment without fear of retribution from colleagues or supervisors. The major goal is therefore a promotion of fairness; transparency, which will negate negative effects on both employee welfare as well as company productivity due to workplace romance and sexual harassment. In short, the literature review seeks to provide insights into the complexities surrounding workplace romance and sexual harassment, urging organizational leaders to adopt comprehensive policies that address these issues to foster a healthy work environment and maintain organizational stability

## RESEARCH METHOD

The study will employ a systematic review of relevant academic articles that investigate workplace romance and sexual harassment within organizational settings in order to comprehensively assess their effects on organizational performance and stability. The following steps will be used to achieve the objectives of this review:

1. Literature Search: A search of academic databases such as Scopus and Google Scholar will be done thoroughly. Relevant articles will be identified using key words including “workplace romance,” “sexual harassment,” “organizational performance,” “organizational stability” and “management practices”.
2. Synthesis of Findings: The findings from the literature review will be synthesized and presented as an overview on how sexual harassment, workplace romance affects employee attitudes, engagement, job satisfaction, and organizational dynamics. The review indicates equitable management practices and challenges in mitigating negative consequences on workplace romance and sexual harassment within organizational settings.
3. Discussion and Implications: The review will conclude with a discussion of the implications of sexual harassment and workplace romance on organizational performance and stabilization. Recommendations for organizations to address and mitigate the negative impacts of these phenomena will be provided based on the synthesized findings.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### Workplace Romance in Organizational Settings

Workplace romance can have a significant impact on organizational performance and stability, influencing various aspects of employee behavior and organizational dynamics. Research has shown that workplace romance can lead to both positive and negative outcomes within the workplace environment. For instance, workplace romance can positively affect employee job satisfaction and contribute to an improved company culture when transparent

organizational policies are in place to manage such relationships effectively (Amanda, 2023). However, the presence of workplace romance can also give rise to challenges such as privacy rule violations, gossip, and workplace distractions when secrets about romantic relationships are shared with other organizational members (Cowan & Horan, 2017).

The performance and stability of organizations can be impacted significantly by romantic relationships in the workplace. Some research shows that romance at the workplace has positive and sometimes negative effects in working environments. For instance, romance at work can be beneficial to employee satisfaction with his or her job, as well as for a good corporate culture if there are clear guidelines regulating such cases (Amanda & Mustika, 2023). However, it can also lead to problems like violation of privacy rules, gossiping or even distractions within the workplace when other members of the organization have details regarding intimate connections (Cowan & Horan, 2017).

The effects of workplace romance extend beyond individual relationships to impact broader organizational factors such as employee job performance and commitment. Studies have found that workplace romance can influence different foci of affective commitment, including coworker commitment, supervisor commitment, and organizational commitment, which in turn are positively related to employee performance (Khan et al., 2018). However, workplace romance is often viewed through a critical lens due to social norms against such relationships, organizational policies prohibiting them, and concerns about potential negative judgments from other organizational members regarding productivity, decision-making, and favoritism (France, 2022).

Furthermore, hierarchical workplace romances especially those involving superior-subordinate relationship could impose additional intricacies and dilemmas in an organizational setting. Employees often perceive these relationships negatively because the fear of jealousy from colleagues, unfairness issues when it comes to raise and promotions, or maybe sexual harassment allegations arising from it (Murray, 2022). Hierarchical relationships are associated with power imbalances which might lead to conflicts among employees affecting their trust levels and overall stability of the company.

In addition, workplace romance has been discovered to have a positive connection with job satisfaction showing that romantic relationships in the work-place can shape employees general contentment towards their occupation (Syaebani & Rachmawati, 2017). Nonetheless, the pervasiveness of work romances and their ability to influence organizational productivity underscore the need for organizations to carefully consider the implications of such relationships on workplace dynamics and employee well-being (Wax et al., 2022). Moreover, romantic relationship perception at the workplace can affect leader-member exchange and organizational dynamics. For instance, Workplace Romance may affect leader-employee relationships thereby influencing the performance of the organization (Anggraeny et al., 2022). Organizational structures may become more complicated due to presence of love affairs within them hence leaders need to navigate professional boundaries and personal connections.



## Sexual Harassment in Organizational Settings

There has been a persistent problem with sexual harassment in the workplace, which is detrimental to organizational performance and continuity. For the past five years, various researches have revealed many facets of sexual harassment within the workplace. For instance, studies have shown that workplace sexual harassment can lead to many negative outcomes such as psychological distresses, deviant behaviors, reduced job satisfaction and turnover intention among employees (Jung & Yoon, 2020). It is very dependent on the gender dynamics of the work environment and also organizational climate that will determine how prevalent sexual harassment is within an organization (Pryor, 2024). Organizations that tolerate a lot of sexual harassments are likely to suffer from low productivity as well as higher rates of attrition especially affecting women due to job insecurity (Vara-Horna et al., 2023).

Furthermore, the consequence of workplace sexual harassment extend beyond the immediate work environment. For example, some Nurses have reported experiencing a breakdown in warm family relationships as a result of workplace sexual harassment, highlighting the pervasive nature of its impact (Zeighami et al., 2021). Sexual harassment affects organizations globally not just in particular industries or geographical areas causing lower morale, productivity and increased absenteeism (Reid & Allida, 2021). During crises, negative outcomes are worse with regard to sexual harassment which highlights the need for fair management systems to redress its effect on citizenship behaviors within organizations and employee job performance (Pryor, 2024).

Also, sexual harassment does not only affect individual victims but also has consequences on organizational dynamics as a whole. A phenomenological study of workplace sexual harassment brought out various factors contributing to this kind of behavior including worker-worker interaction; supervisor-worker Interactions; and the organization - social system linkages. These interactions may create a hostile working environment leading to decrease in morale, loss of productivity and damage to reputation among others (Hakim, 2023).

Workplace sexual harassment also directly impact of individuals and poses legal or reputational risks for organizations. Sexual behavior tendencies of managers have been linked to poor stock market results, as well as legal risk, which means that such acts do not only affect a person but also have an impact on the company as a whole (Baker et al., 2021). The absence of effective corporate governance on sexual harassment within organization might result in institutional betrayal consequently jeopardizing employee well-being and organizational loyalty (Smidt et al., 2023). This draws out the significance of proactively addressing sexual harassment, so as to protect both individual welfare and organizational stability.

The pervasiveness of sexual harassment across different organizational settings highlights the need for targeted interventions that can suitably address this issue. Sexual harassment at work may to emotional distress, decreased productivity, and negative influences on social lives and mental wellness (Hakim, 2023). Effective aid for victims' and witnesses' coped strategies during harassment is reliant upon comprehending its environmental causes within the organization through supportive infrastructure focused on psychosocial safety climate with zero tolerance towards harassment (Tan et al., 2020).

## Mitigating the Impact of Workplace Romance and Sexual Harassment

Addressing the impact of workplace romance on organizational performance and stability requires a strategic approach that considers various organizational factors and employee dynamics. One key aspect of managing workplace romance is the establishment of clear and transparent organizational policies that outline guidelines for romantic relationships among employees. These policies should address issues such as conflicts of interest, favoritism, and appropriate workplace behavior to ensure that romantic relationships do not interfere with job performance or create a hostile work environment (Lee, 2019). By setting clear expectations and boundaries, organizations can proactively manage workplace romance and mitigate potential negative consequences.

Furthermore, fostering a culture of open communication and trust within the organization can help address the impact of workplace romance on employee relationships and team dynamics. Encouraging employees to communicate openly about their relationships and ensuring that they feel supported and respected can contribute to a positive work environment conducive to productivity and collaboration (Zhang et al., 2020). Organizational leaders play a crucial role in modeling respectful behavior and promoting a culture of inclusivity that values employees' well-being and professional conduct.

In addition, promoting workplace ethics and values can help guide employees in navigating workplace relationships and maintaining professionalism. By emphasizing the importance of ethical behavior, integrity, and respect for colleagues, organizations can create a culture that upholds high standards of conduct and minimizes the risks associated with workplace romance (Mehari, 2024). Integrating ethics training and awareness programs into the organizational culture can reinforce the importance of ethical decision-making and promote a positive work environment.

Moreover, addressing workplace loneliness and social isolation can also play a role in mitigating the impact of workplace romance on organizational performance. Creating opportunities for social connection, fostering a sense of belonging, and promoting a supportive work environment can help employees feel more engaged, motivated, and connected to their colleagues (Wax et al., 2022). By addressing feelings of loneliness and isolation, organizations can enhance employee well-being and job satisfaction, contributing to overall organizational stability.

Furthermore, considering the impact of workplace spirituality and organizational commitment can provide insights into how employees' values and beliefs influence their behavior in the context of workplace romance. Understanding the role of spirituality in shaping employees' attitudes, relationships, and job performance can help organizations create a work environment that aligns with employees' values and fosters a sense of purpose and fulfillment (Sapra et al., 2021). By integrating spirituality into the organizational culture, organizations can promote a sense of community, shared values, and mutual respect among employees.

## CONCLUSION

Significantly, the literature review on workplace romance and sexual harassment has given valuable insights into the effects of these on organizational performance as well as stability. Research shows that there are favorable outcomes to workplace romance such as increased job satisfaction and improved company culture alongside negative consequences such as invasion of privacy, gossiping and potential distractions. Having clear organizational policies for managing office relationships supported by open communication can minimize these challenges resulting in positive work environment.

Sexual harassment remains a key issue with profound implications on organizational dynamics such as mental health problems, reduced job satisfaction, and high turnover rates. The persistence of sexual harassment calls for vigilance through strong proactive policies and practices which guarantee a safe organizational environment. In dealing with these issues organizations should implement comprehensive anti-harassment measures, promote ethical conduct while encouraging an inclusive culture that is concerned about employees' welfare.

The current literature also shows some limitations, despite all the valuable insights gained. The focus of existing studies is often on specific industries or regions, which may limit the generalizability of the findings.. However, future research requires a longitudinal design to ascertain the lasting effects of workplace romance and sexual harassment on the performance of an organization. Subjective decisions should be eliminated by employing standardized measurement tools for researchers. Therefore, it becomes important to close these gaps so that organizations can create proper management policies for developing healthy work environment in organizations with close relationships among employees.

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