Working Paper
IIMK/WPS/299/OB & HR/2019/03
January 2019
Perceived Workplace Romance Motives and Their Measurement

Neetha Azeez¹
Unnikrishnan K Nair ² (Corresponding Author)
S. Jeyavelu ³

¹ Doctoral Student (Graduated), Organizational Behavior and Human Resource, Indian Institute of Management Kozhikode, email: neethaazeez@gmail.com

² Professor, Organizational Behavior and Human Resource at the Indian Institute of Management Kozhikode, Kozhikode, India. IIMK Campus P.O., Kozhikode, Kerala 673570, India; Email: unni@iimk.ac.in, Phone: +91-495-2809247

³ Dean, VIT-AP School of Business, Amaravati, Andhra Pradesh.
ABSTRACT

Workplace romance (WR) has become a common phenomenon in organizations these days. It is not the relational participants alone who are affected by such romantic relationships, but also their co-workers. Co-workers make sense of WR by attributing different motives to the WR participants. While Quinn’s (1977) pioneering three-motives typology helps in understanding WR even after forty years, recent research highlights the need to update and review it. Hence, the goal of this study was to explore the contemporary perceived WR motives, and develop a valid and reliable instrument to measure them. This was done by conducting focus groups (Study 1) followed by two quantitative studies: first one to generate items to measure perceived WR motives, and examine its factor structure (Study 2) and the second to confirm the factor structure and provide evidence of convergent and divergent validity (Study 3). Our results indicate robust evidence for five perceived WR motives: Love, Job, Ego-boosting, Pleasure, and Emotional support. The newly developed instrument displays sound psychometric properties, and therefore could be employed in future studies. The updated typology of motives also opens broadened avenue for future research in WR, including suitably replicating some of the past studies, if felt needed.

Keywords: Workplace romance, Perceived motives, Scale development, Focus groups, Quinn’s typology