INDIVIDUAL AND SITUATIONAL MODERATORS OF THE WILLINGNESS TO ENGAGE IN A WORKPLACE ROMANCE

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INDIVIDUAL AND SITUATIONAL MODERATORS OF THE WILLINGNESS TO ENGAGE IN A WORKPLACE ROMANCE

A Dissertation
Presented to
the Graduate School of
Clemson University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy
Psychology

by
Jessica Doll
May 2011

Accepted by:
Patrick J. Rosopa, Committee Chair
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the current study was to propose amendments to Pierce, Byrne, and Aguinis’ (1996) model of workplace romance. Specifically, based on prior research and theory, moderators of the relation between the desire to engage in a workplace romance and the willingness to engage in a workplace romance were examined. Additional consequences of engaging in workplace romances were also proposed. Data were collected from both student \((N = 347)\) and employee \((N = 172)\) samples at a mid-sized southern university. Additional employee data were collected from a small technical college and an on-line professional networking site. Using a \(2 \times 2 \times 3\) fractional factorial experimental design, the motive to engage in a workplace romance (i.e., love or job), relationship to the romantic interest (i.e., hierarchical vs. lateral), and the organizational policy regarding workplace romances (i.e., none, moderate, and strict) were manipulated in an online survey. Personality variables and attitudes about workplace romances were also measured. Attitudes about workplace romances were positively related to the willingness to engage in a workplace romance. Tolerant organizational policies and love motives were also significant predictors of the willingness to engage in a workplace romance. Conscientiousness was negatively related to the willingness to engage in a workplace romance and was mediated by attitudes about workplace romances. Additionally, relationship secrecy was proposed as a predictor of projected life and job satisfaction. Relationship secrecy was negatively related to both projected life and job satisfaction. Implications for the workplace are discussed.
DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my parents, Linda and George; as well as my husband, James. Completing this work was a long process and without their unwavering love, support, and guidance it is likely that I would not have accomplished this goal and it is certain that I would not have had as much fun doing so.
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Traditional theories of attraction state that spending time in the presence of another person, interacting with him/her, sharing similar interests with him/her, and being physically attracted to him/her is enough to plant the seeds of romantic attraction (Fiske, 2004). In modern society, most people of working age spend upward of 40 hours a week around others who share similar experiences and interests and this sets the stage for the development of workplace romances (Mainiero, 1989). And although it may seem like workplace romances are few and far between, in fact, they are far from uncommon (Parks, 2006).

Two separate polls revealed that between 40-58% of employees report having been involved in a workplace romance (American Management Association, 2003; Parks, 2006). In a poll of over 600 workers in Kansas City, “the workplace” was tied for second (with meeting in bars) as the second best way for singles to meet dating partners, after being introduced by mutual friends (“Workplace Dating”, 2005). In addition, almost 75% of co-workers report knowing someone who has been involved in a workplace romance (Dillard & Witteman, 1985) and in a study conducted by the Society for Human Resource Management and Careerjournal.com 42-62% of people polled who knew of a workplace romance reported that the relationship resulted in a long-term, committed partnership (Parks, 2006).

Although many people have engaged in or have known of someone involved in a workplace romance, little empirical research has been conducted on the subject (Pierce,
Byrne, & Aguinis, 1996; Powell & Foley, 1998). In addition, much of the current literature examining workplace romances utilizes qualitative or anecdotal data (Riach & Wilson, 2007). For example, a search for “workplace romance” returns 82 articles in the search engine Business Source Premier, only 29 of which appear in peer-reviewed journals and only 12 of those are empirical studies.

There seem to be a few reasons that may explain the dearth of research conducted in this area. First, romantic organizational behavior is a fairly new area of study. Quinn (1977) published the first article which attempted to identify, classify, and explain the motives for engagement in a workplace romance. More than 30 years have passed since Quinn’s study was conducted and there may be other reasons why researchers avoid this topic. One reason is that employees within organizations may feel uncomfortable reporting information about such “taboo” topics to researchers and management (Quinn, 1977), making it difficult to cumulate a knowledge base. Powell and Foley (1998) suggest that some researchers have shied away from the subject because (a) many organizational researchers may not be comfortable with studying love and sex, (b) the media already discusses the topic using non-empirical and sensationalist methods which may deter scholars from mingling in such dubious territory, and (c) organizational scholars may not see the connection between workplace romances and organizational outcomes.

Since Quinn’s (1977) study, the research on romantic organizational behavior that exists can largely be classified into the following categories: (a) the motives that drive employee’s decisions to engage in workplace romances, (b) whether or not workplace
romances are associated with employee job satisfaction, (c) the relationship between workplace romances and sexual harassment, (d) ethical issues (like engaging in extramarital workplace romances), (e) organizational climate and policy and its effect on workplace romances, and most recently, (f) co-worker’s perceptions of employees engaging in workplace romances (Cole, 2009; Horan & Chory, 2009; Pierce et al., 1996; Powell, 2001). One of the goals of the current study is to add to the literature on workplace romance by conducting a well-designed, empirical study that will make an incremental contribution to extant research.

Additionally, most of the empirical studies on workplace romances have been conducted from a third-person point-of-view (e.g., from the viewpoint of a co-worker or peer of someone involved in a workplace romance) (Anderson & Fisher, 1991; Brown & Allgeier, 1996; Cole, 2009; Horan & Chory, 2009; Karl & Sutton, 2000; Liberman & Okimoto, 2008; Mainiero, 1986; Powell, 2001; Quinn, 1977). As mentioned above, studying workplace romances can be difficult because many organizations discourage workplace romances (Parks, 2006) so employees who have engaged in such relationships may not feel comfortable discussing them with researchers (Quinn, 1977). Employees may feel even less comfortable discussing workplace romances if they are currently engaged in one, particularly because workplace romances are often conducted in secret (Lehmiller, 2009; Mainiero, 1989). To date, there have only been a handful of empirical studies conducted on workplace romances from a first-person point of view (see e.g., Berdahl & Aquino; 2009; Dillard & Broetzmann, 1989; Pierce, 1998; Salvaggio, Streich, Hopper, & Pierce, in press). Analyzing peer reactions to workplace romances can provide
interesting and useful information for organizations particularly in regard to
team/workgroup morale and justice perceptions (Jones, 1999; Karl & Sutton, 2000;
Liberman & Okimoto, 2008). These studies, however, may answer different research
questions than studies which examine workplace relationships from a first-person point-
of-view (Salvaggio et al., in press). For example, third-person studies may focus on how
coworkers perceive the motives of an employee who engages in a workplace relationship
while first-person studies may help researchers understand additional factors that
influence an individual’s motives to engage in a workplace romance. First-person studies
may also be useful because they could reveal that coworkers’ perceived motives may be
different from the actual motives someone has for engaging in a workplace romance. The
current study hopes to expand upon the body of literature by examining the factors that
predict, and the potential outcomes that arise from, engagement in a workplace romance
from a first-person point-of-view.

In addition to conducting an empirical first-person study, the current study hopes
to provide theoretical contributions to the workplace romance literature. Thus far, the
most comprehensive model of workplace romance was introduced by Pierce et al. (1996).
They proposed their multifarious model of workplace romance in order to help direct and
inspire future research on romantic relationships in organizational settings (see Appendix
A, Figure 1.1). Although the model is frequently cited and although Pierce (1998)
subsequently tested some of the model’s predictions, multiple parts of the model remain
untested. Additionally, the model fails to include seemingly important moderators in its
proposed relationship between constructs like the desire to engage, and the engagement
in, workplace romances. For example, while attitudes about workplace romances are included, additional variables related to individual differences are virtually non-existent. The current study responds to Pierce et al.’s request for further investigation of the model and will both test portions of the model and provide recommendations about amendments to the model. In particular, the current study hopes to expand upon the current body of literature by empirically studying moderators of the relationship between the desire to engage, and the engagement in, workplace romances.

Therefore, the overall purpose of the present study is to test and propose amendments to Pierce et al.’s (1996) model of workplace romance by conducting a first-person empirical study on the factors involved in the process of deciding to engage in a workplace romance. This paper will (a) begin with introducing the definition of workplace romance, (b) review theories that explain the process of attraction and the conceptualization of love, (c) review and propose amendments to Pierce et al.’s (1996) model of workplace romance, and (d) develop hypotheses involved the proposed amendments.

**Definition of Workplace Romance**

According to Pierce and Aguinis (2009), a workplace romance is defined as “a consensual relationship between two members of the same organization that entails mutual sexual attraction” (p.447). This definition does not include customers of the organization; however, no distinction has been made which asserts that contracted employees should not be included. In fact, it seems that if contracted employees are
fulfilling the duties of regular employees and are working alongside regular employees, they should be included in the definition.

Additionally, when most people think about workplace romances, they think about people who are doing more than just flirting. According to Pierce et al. (1996), workplace romances “typically involve (a) an intense . . . desire to be in the presence of one’s romantic partner, (b) a shared, intimate exchange of personal disclosures, (c) affection and respect, (d) pleasant emotional states such as need satisfaction, happiness, and sexual gratification, and (e) physiological arousal and the desire for sexual acts such as kissing, petting, and intercourse with one’s partner” (p. 6).

Therefore, although not often stated directly within the definition of workplace romances, the concept of close relationships is often used to further distinguish romantic organizational behavior from other socio-sexual behavior (e.g., sexual jokes, flirting, etc.) that might be present within the workplace. Close relationships describe people who physically or verbally express their feelings for, interact with, and influence each other (Fiske, 2004; Pierce et al., 1996). People in close relationships also share an understanding that the relationship provides the potential for increasing intimacy and commitment (Fiske, 2004). Traditional definitions of workplace romance also include couples who dated or were married before they started working together (Pierce et al., 1996). It should also be noted that the definition of workplace romance differs from the
definition of sexual harassment. Unlike sexual harassment, workplace romance is both consensual and welcomed by both individuals involved (Pierce & Aguinis, 2009).

**Theoretical Background**

Workplace romances evolve in a specific setting, and so engaging in them may have specific outcomes; however, the philosophy explaining their development is similar to that of any other relationship (Pierce et al., 1996). As the workplace romance literature remains underdeveloped, Pierce et al.’s (1996) model of workplace romance (MWR) incorporates variables found in the traditional interpersonal relationship literature. Although the antecedents in the MWR which predict the desire to engage in a workplace romance are based on variables found in the interpersonal relationship literature, Pierce et al. state that their model distinguishes between factors that predict romantic attraction (loving) and interpersonal attraction (liking or friendship). Although this paper will not discuss each of the elements of the MWR in detail, introducing the model’s principle antecedents will be helpful in providing the theoretical background for the present study.

Both the MWR and traditional relationship literature highlight the importance of interpersonal and romantic attraction in the decision to engage in a workplace romance (Pierce et al., 1996). The prominent antecedents of the desire to engage in a workplace romance include propinquity (i.e., how close in distance two people are to each other), repeated exposure (i.e., how frequently two people see or interact with each other), and attitude similarity (i.e., the degree to which two people share similar attitudes, values, and interests) as predictors of interpersonal attraction and physiological arousal (i.e., the body’s physical and emotional response to something) and physical attraction (i.e., the
degree to which someone finds another person attractive) as predictors of romantic attraction.

Regarding propinquity, Pierce et al. (1996) assert that both physical proximity (i.e., the physical distance between two people) and functional proximity (i.e., the degree to which the environment’s design encourages interaction) allow for individuals to interact with one another and can set the stage for liking to occur (Fiske, 2004). Although the influence of new technology (e.g., the ability to working remotely) has not been examined within the context of workplace romances, it seems that people who work together on traditional face-to-face projects and job-related tasks are more likely to be proximal to each other, spend more time interacting with each other, and subsequently they may develop liking for each other (Mainiero, 1986; Quinn, 1977).

Quinn (1977) identified three instances when the proximity of co-workers may lead to liking. They were ongoing physical proximity of work stations, ongoing completion of work requirements (e.g., training, business trips, etc.), and occasional proximity (e.g., crossing paths in the break-room). Of the three types of proximity, the physical proximity of work stations and engaging in ongoing work assignments together were attributed as the cause of 63 -77% of workplace romances, respectively. Anderson and Hunsaker (1985) conducted a survey of couples engaged in workplace relationships and found 94% of respondents said that they worked in the same building as their partner, while 68% of respondents reported working in the immediate vicinity as their partner.

In addition, propinquity allows for repeated (or mere) exposure to other co-workers. Repeated exposure to another person tends to increase, as opposed to decrease,
liking for that person (Zajonc, 1968). People tend to report liking both other people and inanimate objects better than if they have been exposed to them for just a few minutes (e.g., seen a picture of the person/object) than people or objects they have never been exposed to before (Bornstein, Leone, & Galley, 1987). Anderson and Hunsaker (1985) reported that 44% of employees who reported romantic involvement with a co-worker spent less than five hours per week together before their relationship began.

However, a recent study by Salvaggio et al. (in press) found that while the amount of face-to-face contact employees had with each other did not predict engagement in a workplace romance, there was an interaction between the amount of contact employees had with each other and the degree to which a workplace was sexualized (i.e., the degree to which gender roles are present in the workplace) (Gutek, Cohen, & Konrad, 1990), such that employees were more likely to report engaging in a workplace romance when both workplace sexualization and face-to-face contact were high.

However, when couples explain why they are involved with their partners, they rarely attribute their involvement with each other to the consequences of proximity or repeated exposure. It is hardly flattering for partners to admit that they are only together because they sat near each other in the office. Oftentimes, partners will instead talk about how much they have in common with each other (Fiske, 2004). According to Fiske, people like things that are familiar and understandable. She goes on to propose that the most familiar person in the world to oneself is oneself, so it follows that people who are similar to each other are more likeable than people who are not. Similarities between people reinforce and validate one’s own attitudes, which boosts self-esteem, and
ultimately leads to attraction. In essence, individuals find it rewarding to like similar others.

Potential employees are often attracted to organizations which represent their attitudes and values. In return, organizations often try to select individuals who seem like they will be a good “fit” with the company’s culture and values and those employees who do not end up “fitting in” exit the organization (i.e., people who seem to “fit” the organization are selected and those who do not fit well will eventually leave the organization). The process of attraction, selection, and attrition within an organization often results in a group of employees that have similar attitudes and values (Schneider, 1987). Because similarity is directly relevant to interpersonal attraction, an organization where employees share similar attitudes, values, and interests is a place rife for interpersonal attraction (Mainiero, 1989).

Pierce et al. (1996) assert that interpersonal attraction is not enough to make an employee desire a workplace romance with another co-worker. In addition, employees must also experience romantic attraction (e.g., physical attraction) to each other. Pierce et al. assert that factors particular to a workplace setting, like deadlines and work performance anxiety, generate arousal. However, sometimes this arousal can be misattributed as attraction to a co-worker (Pierce et al., 1996). Schacter and Singer (1962) reported that emotions are based on physiological arousal followed by the evaluation of the context in which the arousal was generated. This process ends in the development of a label for the arousal. For example, if a person sees a bear in the woods, they may feel their heart rate increase and their palms begin to sweat. That person will then try to
explain his/her arousal based on the environmental cues (e.g., I am aroused, I see a bear, I must be afraid).

Sometimes, however, people are wrong about why they are aroused because they misattribute their arousal to the wrong environmental stimulus. For example, in Dutton and Aron’s (1974) study, men who encountered an attractive woman after being on a suspension bridge were more likely to report finding the woman attractive and attempt to call her than did men who had met the woman in neutral settings. The men who had just been on the bridge labeled the arousal they felt as attraction to the woman versus residual fear from being on the bridge. Similar mistakes in attribution have also been found for women (Zillmann, Weaver, Mundorf, & Aust, 1986). Within workplace settings, arousal from job demands may be misattributed to attraction to a co-worker (Pierce et al., 1996).

In addition to the misattribution of arousal, Pierce et al. (1996) assert that physical attraction to a co-worker may make the difference between desiring a co-worker as a friend versus desiring him/her as a romantic partner. Individuals who are physically attractive have a number of desirable characteristics attributed to them including, social competence, intelligence, and success (Eagly, Ashmore, Makhijani, & Longo, 1991). In general, people tend to be attracted to others who are physically appealing for both their physical beauty and characteristics that are ascribed to those with such appeal. Pierce et al. argue that while physical attractiveness has been overlooked in previous workplace romance literature, it plays an important role in determining whether individuals will desire to engage in a workplace romance.
Although the elements of romantic and interpersonal attraction help to describe the process culminating in the desire to engage in a workplace romance, they do not describe the types of relationships that employees may experience. Close relationships that involve elements of friendship and love are most frequently categorized by how they adhere to elements of Sternberg’s (1986) triangular theory of love. According to Sternberg, love has three components which include (a) intimacy (i.e., including partner in one’s self-concept, in addition to feeling close, connected, and interdependent with one’s partner), (b) passion (i.e., physical and sexual attraction), and (c) commitment (i.e., deciding to maintain the relationship). Although other theorists have separated intimacy (i.e., overlapping self-concepts) (Reis & Patrick, 1996) and interdependence (i.e., the degree to which partners influence other’s behavior) (Rusbult & Van Lange, 1996), Sternberg’s model has remained the most popular.

Combinations of the three components of love result in defining eight different types of love, five of which are particularly relevant to workplace romances (Pierce et al., 1996). The five types of love that are particularly relevant to workplace relationships are liking (i.e., relationship has intimacy but not commitment or passion), infatuated love (i.e., relationship has passion, but not commitment or intimacy), romantic love (i.e., relationship has intimacy and passion, but no commitment), fatuous love (i.e., relationship has passion and commitment, but no intimacy), and consummate love (i.e., relationship has all commitment, passion, and intimacy) (Pierce et al., 1996; Sternberg, 1986).
Sternberg’s (1986) theory helps provide a framework for understanding the different types and variations of love that are likely to be encountered in a workplace setting. For example, a manager decides to enter into a sexual relationship with a subordinate; the supervisor in the relationship is likely experiencing passionate love. On the other hand, if an employee decides to engage in a relationship with a co-worker because they feel close to one another, want a long term relationship, and are sexually attracted to one another, they are likely experiencing consummate love. This study will explore variables involved with the willingness to engage in a workplace relationship and how the type of relationship an employee desires may affect that decision.

**Proposed Moderators in the Model of Workplace Romance**

In addition to the antecedents of the desire to engage in a workplace romance discussed above (i.e., interpersonal and romantic attraction), the MWR distinguishes between the *desire* to engage in a workplace romance and *actual* engagement in a workplace romance. While the model is fairly comprehensive there is little in the model that examines the relationship between the desire to engage in a workplace romance and actually engaging in a workplace romance. The MWR does include organizational culture (i.e., the values shared by employees in an organization that affect the way they behave and interact with each other), job autonomy (i.e., the ability to make decisions about one’s own work), and employee’s attitudes about workplace romance (Haavio-Mannila, , Kauppinen-Toropainen, & Kandolin, 1988; Hill & Jones, 2001) as moderators of the relationship. However, the current study will suggest that additional moderators should be included.
**Individual Differences as Moderators.** The MWR noticeably lacks variables related to individual differences. According to the current model, employees who desire to engage in romantic behavior at work are only deterred or enabled from actually engaging in a workplace romance by the degree of job autonomy they possess, their attitudes towards workplace romances, and their organization’s cultures. The inclusion of variables related to employee personality may be useful in explaining the relationship between the desire to engage and the engagement in workplace romances. To help clarify which model is being discussed, the MWR with amendments will be referred to as the amended model of workplace romance (AMWR) (see Appendix A, Figure 1.2).

Although a seemingly endless number of personality traits have been introduced into the body of psychological literature (Allport & Odbert, 1936; Cattell, 1957; Norman, 1963), the Five-Factor Model (FFM) (or “The Big Five”) of personality domains is a widely accepted taxonomy of general and universal personality dimensions (Church, 2010; Costa & McCrae, 2009; McCrae, Zonderman, Costa, Bond, & Paunonen, 1996). The five factors included in the model are extraversion, conscientiousness, neuroticism/emotional stability, openness to experience, and agreeableness (Costa & McCrae, 1992). According to Costa and McCrae, extraverted individuals are sociable/outgoing, assertive, expressive, active, and engage in excitement-seeking. Conscientiousness individuals are achievement-orientated, organized, task-focused, planful, and dependable. Neuroticism indicates a tendency for individuals to be anxious, fearful, or depressed. Conversely, if individuals are emotionally stable (i.e., not neurotic), they tend to be secure, emotionally well-adjusted, and calm. Individuals who are high on
openness to experience are likely to be imaginative, artistic, non-conforming, and autonomous. Finally, agreeableness refers to a tendency for individuals to be likable, nurturing, adaptable, and cooperative. The FFM dimensions have demonstrated the ability to predict attitudes, behaviors, and organizational outcomes including leadership behaviors (Bono & Judge, 2004), team performance (Kickul & Neuman, 2000), job productivity, and job satisfaction (Ones, Dilchert, Viswesvaran, & Judge, 2007).

Although there has been no mention of personality dimensions as predictors of workplace romances to date, it seems reasonable to expect that differences in employee’s personalities could influence their decisions about whether or not to engage in workplace romances. However, some FFM dimensions may be better predictors of romantic organizational behavior than others. The AWRM proposes that conscientiousness, emotional stability, and openness to experience moderate the relationship between the desire to engage and engagement in a workplace romance.

Conscientiousness has been included in the AWRM because conscientious individuals may be concerned that such a relationship might negatively impact their job performance or be counter-productive to the general work environment. Accordingly, conscientious individuals might refrain from entering into a workplace romance. Research has shown that conscientiousness is a reliable and valid predictor of multiple types of job performance across multiple occupations (Barrick & Mount, 1991; Digman, 1990; Dudley, Orvis, Lebiecki, & Cortina, 2006). Job performance is the degree to which an employee helps an organization achieve its goals (Campbell, 1983). Job performance is not limited to the behaviors that an employee performs, but also includes the evaluation
of the employee’s behaviors (Motowidlo, Borman, & Schmit, 1997). Barrick and Mount (1991) conducted a meta-analysis which included 117 studies for a total sample size of almost 24,000 employees. The study examined the relationship between the Big Five personality traits and three types of task-related job performance (i.e., job proficiency, training proficiency, and personnel data) across five occupations (e.g., police officers and managers). They found that out of all FFM model dimensions, only conscientiousness predicted all three types of job performance across all employee groups. Conscientious individuals may choose not to engage in a workplace romance over concerns that engaging in such a relationship would hurt their job performance.

Hurtz and Donovan (2000) were concerned that previous meta-analyses, like the one conducted by Barrick and Mount (1991), suffered from issues related to construct validity because the meta-analyses included data from studies not specifically measuring the FFM dimensions. Their results which included 45 studies, however, revealed that conscientiousness not only predicted task job performance (i.e., activities that effectively produce or aid the production of an organization’s technical core) (Borman & Motowildo, 1997), but also contextual job performance. Contextual job performance, also called organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), is defined as the activities that “contribute to organizational effectiveness in ways that shape the organizational, social, and psychological context [of the organization and so] serve as the catalyst for task activities and processes” (Borman & Motowildo, 1997, p. 100). Helping others and cooperating with others, promoting and supporting the organization’s goals, and following the organization’s rules and procedures are all examples of contextual
performance. Conscientious employees may decide not to engage in a workplace romance because it could negatively affect contextual job performance (i.e., hinder group and team morale).

Additionally, conscientious employees are more likely to engage in extra-role behaviors (Bowling, 2010; Yang & Diefendorff, 2009). According to Bowling, extra-role behaviors are “behaviors [which are] not a part of an employee’s official job duties that affect the well-being of the organization or its members” (p. 119). These behaviors include both contextual performance and counter-productive work behaviors (CWBs) (i.e., behaviors that are harmful to the organization). Using a snowball sampling method, Bowling found that employees across occupations who were high in conscientiousness were more likely to engage in OCBs than employees who were low in conscientiousness. Conversely, employees who were low in conscientiousness were more likely to engage in CWBs than were employees high in conscientiousness. Employees high in conscientious may be less likely to engage in workplace romances over concerns of engaging in counter-productive work behaviors. Conversely, employees low in conscientiousness may be more likely to engage in workplace romances because they are more likely to engage in counter-productive work behaviors.

Using employees from both the private and public sector in Thailand, Smithikrai (2008) also reported a negative relationship between conscientiousness and CWBs; however, the effect was only present when employees believed that their work performance was not being monitored closely. Smithikrai also asserted that when employees are in weak situations, conscientiousness is more likely to have an effect on
extra-role work behaviors. Weak situations are those in which there are few behavioral expectations and allow for people to behave in many different ways (Snyder & Ickes, 1985). Workplace romances are often discouraged by organizations and may negatively affect work performance (Mainiero, 1989). If employees perceive that their behavior is not being monitored or that there are no policies governing workplace romances, an employee’s willingness to engage in a workplace romance may be determined by his or her level of conscientiousness.

*Hypothesis 1 (H1):* Individuals high in conscientiousness are less likely to enter into a desired workplace romance than individuals who are low in conscientiousness.

*Research Proposition 1:* Conscientiousness moderates the relationship between the desire for and the engagement in workplace romances.

In addition to conscientiousness, openness to experience may also be relevant to predicting whether or not employees will choose to enter into a workplace romance. Unlike conscientiousness, openness to experience is only predictive of some elements of job performance (Barrick & Mount, 1991). For example, openness to experience is predictive of training performance, but not job proficiency (Barrick & Mount, 1991). The relationship between openness to experience and performance are likely artifacts of the personality trait, rather than a conscious awareness of the desire to diligently and thoroughly perform on the job (as is the case with individuals high in conscientiousness).
However, there seems to be other evidence that may lend support to the inclusion of openness to experience in the AMWR as a moderator of the relationship between employee’s desire to engage in workplace romances and whether or not they actually decide to become involved in a workplace romance. For example, individuals who are high in openness to experience tend to have vivid imaginations, a need for intellectual stimulation, a high level of curiosity, and a higher degree of broad-mindedness than those who are low in openness to experience (Barrick & Mount, 1991). Although romantic relationships at work are often discouraged, individuals who are high in openness to experience may be more likely to think of alternative ways of pursuing the relationship. In addition, individuals high in openness to experience may be more open-minded and creative about ways to begin engaging in romantic behavior in the workplace.

Additionally, Marušić, Kamenov, and Jelič (2006) explored the relationship between adult attachment styles and broad FFM personality dimensions. They found that individuals low in openness to experience were more likely to exhibit attachment avoidance (i.e., fearful of becoming involved in relationships and/or prefer an independent lifestyle). If employees are low in openness to experience, even if they want to become involved romantically with a co-worker, they may be hesitant to take the relationship any further because they are afraid of rejection or of getting hurt emotionally. Conversely, if individuals are more open to various types of experiences, more likely to have a vivid imagination, and if they are more likely to feel safe becoming involved in romantic relationships, they may be more likely to actually engage in a workplace romance.
**Hypothesis 2 (H2):** Individuals high in openness to experience are more likely to engage in workplace romances compared to individuals low in openness to experience.

**Research Proposition 2:** Openness to experience moderates the relationship between the desire for and the engagement in workplace romances.

Emotional stability may also predict whether employees enter into romantic relationships at work. There are often interpersonal and professional ramifications of engaging in workplace romances (Mainiero, 1989; Parks, 2006). For example, couples who engage in workplace romances may engender disapproval from co-workers, potential transference to another department, and occasionally termination (Parks, 2006). Even if employees are desirous of workplace romances, contemplation of these outcomes could reasonably create anxiety for some people. However, individuals high in emotional stability tend to be less anxious/worried and more tolerant of stress than individuals low in emotional stability, so they may feel equipped to mitigate feelings of anxiety that might arise from contemplating engagement in a workplace relationship. For those low in emotional stability, contemplation of such outcomes could generate a great amount of anxiety, worry, and stress.

In particular, if the organization’s climate is anti-office romance, employees may go to great lengths to keep their romance a secret (Mainiero, 1989). Being involved in a secret relationship can also generate a great amount of stress (Lehmiller, 2009). Because
individuals who are low in emotional stability tend to experience more stress, worry, and anxiousness, they may worry about the consequences of engaging in a workplace romance and therefore be less likely to engage in workplace romances than those high in emotional stability.

In addition, although an individual’s level of emotional stability in regard to overall job performance has not received consistent support (Barrick & Mount, 1991; Hurtz & Donovan, 2000), emotional stability seems to be important to job performance for roles involving interpersonal interaction (Barrick & Mount, 1998; Oh, 2010; Teng, Chang, & Hsu, 2009). Barrick and Mount’s meta-analysis revealed that emotional stability was particularly relevant to job performance when teamwork was involved. Lim and Ployhart (2004) found that desirable leadership behaviors (and desirable leaders) were likely to be high in emotional stability. It seems that employees who are high in emotional stability have the ability to navigate and interact with other members of their organizations more effectively than those who are low in emotional stability. Because individuals high in emotional stability are better able to successfully interact with other co-workers, they may feel more confident in dealing with potential consequences of engaging in a workplace romance than individuals low in emotional stability.

_Hypothesis 3 (H3):_ Individuals high in emotional stability are more likely to enter into a workplace relationship compared to individuals who are low in emotional stability.
Research Proposition 3: Emotional stability moderates the relationship between the desire for and the engagement in workplace romances.

The final individual difference variable that will be included in the AMWR is employee attitudes about workplace romance. An employee’s attitude about romantic behavior at work may affect his or her willingness to engage in a workplace romance. Unlike the FFM variables, the relationship between attitudes about workplace romance and engagement in workplace romances have been discussed (Crary, 1987; Pierce et al., 1996; Powell, 1986). However, these studies often examine attitudes about workplace romances from a third-person point-of-view (e.g., from the viewpoint of a peer rating how he/she feels about two other co-workers dating) (Horan & Chory, 2009; Jones, 1999; Liberman & Okimoto, 2008).

Although research has focused on attitudes about flirting at work, Haavio-Mannila, Kauppinen-Toropainen, and Kandolin (1988) empirically studied whether individuals who held more favorable attitudes about flirting in the workplace were more likely to engage in workplace romances from a first-person point-of-view. They found that for both men and women, more favorable attitudes about flirting in the workplace were related to engagement in workplace relationships. This study provided evidence for the assertion that employees with favorable attitudes about workplace romances would be more likely to engage in such relationships and employees with unfavorable attitudes about workplace romances would be less likely to engage in romantic organizational behavior.
The MWR includes attitudes about workplace romance as a moderator of the relationship between the desire to engage in workplace romances and actually engaging in such a relationships. Pierce et al. (1996) posited that employee’s attitudes about workplace romances, as opposed to flirting, would predict their engagement in one. In 1998, Pierce followed up his theory with the assertion that perhaps employees that were engaged in workplace romances would hold more favorable attitudes about such relationships. However, the results of his test were not significant. It seems possible that measures of the dependent variable could have suffered from range restriction; however, he did find that survey respondents who held unfavorable attitudes about workplace romances were significantly less likely to be involved in workplace romances. It seems that Pierce’s question should have been, “Are people who have favorable attitudes about workplace romances more likely to engage in such relationships?” as opposed to “Are people who are currently in workplace romances more likely to have favorable attitudes about them?”

Perhaps when trying to determine whether attitudes about workplace romances will predict engagement in workplace romances, it would also be helpful to refer to Ajzen’s (1985,1991) Theory of Planned Behavior, which is an extension of Fishbein and Ajzen’s (1975) Theory of Reasoned Action. According to the Theory of Planned Behavior, if employees do not have control over their situation, despite whatever their attitudes are, they will not act in accordance with them. Perhaps, employees in Pierce’s (1998) study had favorable attitudes about workplace romances, but did not have the opportunity or desire to date someone in the office.
Additionally, Ajzen’s (1991) theory states that if social norms, or in this case organizational norms, are not aligned with attitudes, it is less likely that behavior will be consistent with the attitude. However, if organizational norms are supportive of an employee’s attitude, the employee would be more likely to act in accordance with his or her attitude. That is, if the employee has control over his or her behavior (e.g., a viable romantic partner is present and they can interact with each other), if social norms are in accordance with favorable attitudes about workplace romance, and if the employee intends to engage in a workplace romance, it is likely that the employee will act in accordance with his or her attitude. The current study assesses attitudes about workplace romances to determine whether individuals will be more willing to engage in romantic organizational behavior if they are presented with a viable opportunity.

_Hypothesis 4 (H4):_ Individuals with favorable attitudes about workplace romances will be more likely to engage in workplace romances than will individuals with unfavorable attitudes about workplace romances.

_Research Proposition 4: _Attitudes about workplace romances moderate the relationship between the desire for and the engagement in workplace romances.

Individual levels of conscientiousness, openness to experience, emotional stability, and attitudes about workplace romances may help to explain additional variance in the willingness to engage in workplace romances. However, as individuals continually interact with their environments, situational variables should also be considered.
Additional Moderators of the Relationship Between the Desire for Workplace Romance and the Engagement in Workplace Romance. The norms and cultures of organizations may also play a role in determining whether employees decide to engage in workplace romances. Although the literature available on workplace romances is sparse, there are a few empirical studies that have been conducted on organizational policy and culture in relation to employee engagement in workplace romances. Both Mainiero (1989) and Parks (2006) reported 72-75% of their survey samples (including both employee and human resource professionals) reported that their workplaces did not have a formal policy about office romances apart from policies about sexual harassment. Even organizations that do have written or verbal policies discouraging workplace romances often do not prohibit them altogether (only about 9% of companies do this) (Parks, 2006). Even if there is not a formal policy in place, employees still perceive workplace romances as off-limits if the organizational climate is disapproving of workplace romances (Mainiero, 1989; Parks, 2006).

Although Mainiero (1989) reported that only 12% of survey respondents had formal policies against workplace dating at their workplaces, 86% of the respondents said that they worked at “traditional, reactive, and conservative” organizations that informally and/or formally discouraged workplace relationships (p. 108). Mainiero surmised that there tends to be large differences across industries regarding how tolerant they are of workplace romances. For example, in the conservative banking industry, “affairs go on all the time, but are widely discouraged” (Mainiero, 1989, p.109). However, other industries have a more liberal approach to workplace dating. Particularly, survey
respondents who worked in innovative, creative and action-orientated industries (like the computer industry) more frequently report that their company neither encouraged nor discouraged workplace romances. Additionally, Salvaggio et al. (in press) found that employees of organizations which had a high degree of sexualization were more likely to report being engaged in and/or perceiving workplace romances in than were employees who worked for companies with low levels of sexualization.

In addition to the organizational culture, the climate of employee’s departments/workgroups within companies may also vary in their degree of acceptance of workplace romances (Mainiero, 1989). If employees work climates are not accepting of romantic behavior in the workplace, often employees will choose not to engage in such relationships because they fear their career will be negatively affected (like being forced to transfer to a different department) (Mainiero, 1989). Cole (2009) surveyed co-workers of people involved in workplace romance. Of the co-workers surveyed, most believed that managerial inaction regarding the relationship was fair, unless the romance had a negative effect on the workplace (i.e., if the couple worked in the same department, and if the organization had a policy discouraging workplace romances).

In addition, peers of those involved in workplace romances often believe that engaging in romantic relationships at work are only appropriate if the relationship does not interfere with work effectiveness (Powell, 1986). Liberman and Okimoto (2008), however, reported that when peers were told that either team leaders or co-workers were engaged in a workplace romance, they were perceived as being less effective. Because co-workers can often affect workplace outcomes for other employees (Mainiero, 1989),
individuals desiring a workplace romance may choose not to enter into one, due to perceived career risks from behaving in ways counter to the prevailing organizational climate or organizational policy.

Hypothesis 5a (H5a): Individuals who work for organizations which have policies that deter workplace romances will be less likely to engage in workplace romances than will individuals who work for organizations that have more lenient (if any) policies that attempt to deter workplace romances.

Research Proposition 5: Organizational policy will moderate the relationship between the desire for and the engagement in a workplace relationship.

Additionally, based on the previous description of conscientiousness, it seems likely that individuals concerned with adhering to rules and expectations would be apt to act in accordance with the organizational policy regarding workplace romances.

Hypothesis 5b (H5b): The negative relation between conscientiousness and engaging in a workplace romance will be strongest when explicit organizational policies are in place compared to instances where there are no such policies.

Both organizations and co-workers tend to be particularly disapproving of workplace romances when such relationships are hierarchical (i.e., the employees are of unequal status). Pierce et al. (1996) and Mainiero (1989) agree that under some
circumstances, engagement in a workplace romance can enhance the workplace (e.g., increase job performance and team morale) if the relationship is between employees who are equal in status (i.e., a lateral relationship). The authors agree again, however, that problems can arise when the relationship is a hierarchical one.

At their core, workplace romances differ from sexual harassment in that workplace romances are consensual relationships. When an employee gets involved with a supervisor, the lines between what is required of the employee for the job and what behaviors are purely voluntary can become blurred. One problem typically associated with hierarchical relationships is that the consensual nature of the relationship is harder to prove when a workplace romance includes a supervisor and subordinate and so worries about sexual harassment claims become more pronounced (Parks, 2006; Pierce & Aguinis, 2001; Williams, Giuffre, & Dellinger, 1999). In fact, 77% of human resource professionals said that the fear of receiving sexual harassment claims was the sole reason workplace romances were discouraged (Parks, 2006). Pierce and Aguinis (2001) asserted that when workplace romances end, sexual harassment is more likely to occur. The effect is intensified when organizations are tolerant of romantic relationships and when relationships are hierarchical. As sexual harassment claims can negatively affect organizational operating costs and reputations, many organizations discourage hierarchical romantic relationships (Parks, 2006).

Another problem is that the subordinate in the relationship may be given better opportunities which are not based on merit (e.g., better assignments and higher performance ratings) and so peers of the subordinate may worry about unfair distribution
of resources (Horan & Chory, 2009; Mainiero, 1989; Powell, 2001). If co-workers worry about fair distribution of resources (i.e., procedural justice), workplace romances can undermine employee morale (Horan & Chory, 2009; Mainiero, 1989; Powell, 2001). Forty-four percent of human resource professionals reported that workplace romances were discouraged because it lowered employee morale (Parks, 2006). Peers who are disgruntled may spend more time and energy discussing and fretting about a supervisor who may be giving his/her romantic partner special consideration, projects, and other company resources and otherwise violating assumptions of procedural justice than working (Mainiero, 1989; Pierce et al., 1996).

Finally, hierarchical relationships tend to be discouraged because couples engaged in hierarchical relationships are less likely to be productive, and more likely to negatively affect the productivity of their peers, than employees engaged in lateral relationships (Devine & Markiewicz, 1990; Mainiero, 1989; Powell & Mainiero, 1990; Rapp, 1992). For example, Devine and Markiewicz (1990) found that couples engaged in a hierarchical romance were less productive on the job than those involved in a lateral romance. Horan and Chory (2009) found that peers reported feeling less trust in, and solidarity with, a co-worker who was dating a supervisor (as opposed to a co-worker who was dating a peer). Their data also revealed that because employees who were involved in a romance with their superiors were viewed as less trustworthy and lacked solidarity with their other co-workers, they were less likely to receive accurate information from their co-workers. As accurate information is important for effective organizational functioning, such
relationships could engender deficiencies in employee, team, and organizational performance.

For the reasons stated above, 80% of human resource professionals and 60% of employees surveyed said that hierarchical workplace romances should not be allowed in the workplace (Parks, 2006). Engaging in such relationships can have negative consequences for the couple’s career, social standing within the organization, and the effectiveness of the workgroup. For these reasons, it seems that employees would be less likely to enter into a hierarchical relationship (vs. a lateral relationship).

*Hypothesis 6a (H6a)*: Individuals will be more likely to engage in lateral workplace romances than hierarchical workplace romances.

*Research Proposition 6*: The reporting relationship of the workplace romance (i.e., hierarchical or lateral) will moderate the relationship between desire for and engagement in a workplace romance.

Additionally, as hierarchical relationships are often seen as “taboo” and are more frequently regulated than lateral relationships (Parks, 2006), it seems likely that even if organizational policies/culture do not specify which type of relationship is discouraged, individuals may be less likely to engage in hierarchical relationships (as opposed to lateral relationships).
Hypothesis 6b (H6b): Type of relationship (i.e., hierarchical or lateral) will interact with organizational policy (i.e., no policy to strict policy) such that individuals working for organizations with policies that deter workplace romances will be less likely to engage in hierarchical vs. lateral workplace romances.

Peers of co-workers involved in a hierarchical relationship may disapprove of the romance because they may question the couple’s motives for engaging in such a relationship. Quinn (1977) is recognized as being the first to categorize motives for engaging in workplace romances. Quinn conducted interviews and distributed questionnaires to individuals who had witnessed organizational romances. Quinn found that third-party observers generally attributed one of three motives to those who engaged in workplace romances (i.e., job, love, or ego motives).

According to Quinn (1977), employees who enter into workplace romances based on love motives are sincerely in love with their partners and are seeking companionship and a potential life-long partner (i.e., seeking consummate love). Employees entering into a workplace romance based on job motives, however, enter into the relationship because they hope to obtain promotions, power, financial rewards, or better work projects. Employees with ego motives enter workplace relationships because they are looking for excitement or sexual adventure (i.e., passionate love).

Typically, co-workers are much less accepting of workplace romances when they believe that such relationships were pursued based on job motives (Dillard, Hale & Segrin, 1994; Dillard & Miller, 1988). Foley and Powell (1999) proposed that if
workplace romances are perceived to satisfy needs other than love motives, and if one person in the couple seems to be receiving preferential treatment due to his or her engagement in the romance, work group disruption can occur. Work group disruption is particularly likely when the co-workers of those involved in the romance believe that organizational justice is being violated.

However, employee’s motives for engaging in a workplace romance can be difficult for third party-observers to determine (Anderson & Hunsaker, 1985). For example, Anderson and Hunsaker found that peers of those involved in a workplace romance often found it more difficult to pinpoint the motives of women than those of men. In addition to having difficulty pin-pointing motives of workplace romances, peers also tend to distribute blame for and disapproval of romantic organizational behavior unequally across workplace romance participants. For example, co-workers tend to be more disapproving of relationships when women (as opposed to men) pursue relationships for job motives (as opposed to love or ego motives) (Anderson & Hunsaker, 1985; Brown & Allgeier, 1996). Peers of those involved in workplace romances also tend to view men (as opposed to women) less favorably if they believe that men have engaged in the relationship for either ego or job motives (Brown & Allgeier, 1996). Although co-workers generally believe that individuals become involved in workplace romances for job motives only about 10% of the time, co-workers are more likely to believe that women pursue romantic relationships at work for that reason (Anderson & Hunsaker, 1985). Employees who desire social approval at work may think twice before entering into a workplace romance if their motives are job-based, as opposed to love based.
Peers may also be more accepting of couples engaged in a workplace romance if they believe that the couple’s motives are love-based because such couples tend to show an increase in job performance (Dillard, 1987; Dillard & Broetzmann; 1989). Couples who were engaged in a workplace romance based on love motives were more likely to show more enthusiasm for work than couples who were together based on job motives (Dillard & Broetzmann, 1989). Dillard (1987) asserted that individuals participating in a workplace romance for love motives are more likely to fear the negative consequences (e.g., social or performance related) associated with engaging in such a relationship and so are more likely to show enthusiasm for work and performance in order to mitigate co-worker or supervisor concerns. The authors, however, did not specify if “enthusiasm for work” was defined as “enthusiasm for doing/completing work” or “enthusiasm for being at work and near to one’s romantic partner.” Interestingly, regardless of the perceived/reported motives of one partner in a workplace romance, the other partner’s perceived/reported job performance was unaffected. Pierce et al. (1996) assert that couples involved in workplace romances based on love motives may be particularly afraid of negative consequences in organizations that tend to be disapproving of workplace romances.

While increases in job performance have been documented for individuals engaging in workplace romances based on love motives, mixed results have been reported for those who engage in romantic organizational behavior based on job motives. As the motive for engagement in such relationships is to get preferential treatment at work, understandably their performance may decrease as they become less concerned
about succeeding at work based on their own merit. For example, Dillard and Broetzmann (1989) reported that both peers and participants of workplace romances reported a positive association between engagement in a workplace romance based on job motives and absenteeism. Dillard (1987), however, reported no change in performance for individuals participating in workplace romances based on job motives.

Overall, individuals desirous of a workplace romance based on love motives are likely to obtain more organizational and social support and so may be less fearful of entering into a workplace romance than individuals desirous of a workplace romance based on job motives. Therefore, individuals with love motives may be more likely to enter into a workplace romance than individuals with job motives.

*Hypothesis 7 (H7)*: Individuals with love motives will be more likely to engage in workplace romances than those with job motives.

*Research Proposition 7*: The motive to engage in a workplace romance will moderate the relationship between the desire for a workplace romance and engaging in a workplace romance.

**Amendments to the Outcomes Proposed by the MWR**

Thus far, the current study has proposed additional moderators in the MWR, specifically moderators of the relationship between the desire to engage in a workplace romance and actual engagement in a workplace romance. However, there are some potentially interesting relationships still to be explored. The MWR also includes
outcomes of the decision to engage in a workplace romance. The current study will examine secrecy (i.e., visibility of relationship) as a moderator of the relationship between engagement in a workplace romance and two outcomes of workplace romances.

The first outcome is already included in the MWR. Job satisfaction is defined as an affective reaction to one’s job that results from comparing the desired outcomes wished of one’s job and the actual outcomes that one receives from one’s job (Cranny, Smith, & Stone, 1992). The relationship between engaging in a workplace romance and job satisfaction has already been studied to some degree (Dillard & Broetzmann, 1989; Pierce, 1998). Pierce et al. (1996) were the first to introduce the relationship between job satisfaction and workplace romances. They proposed that because both workplace romances and job satisfaction include an affective component, those engaging in a workplace romance (particularly a satisfying one) may experience some “affective spill-over”, where good feelings generated by the romance spill-over into evaluations of one’s job (Clore & Byrne, 1974; Pierce, 1998). Pierce’s theory, however, was only partly supported. He found that affective spill-over did affect job satisfaction if an individual reported loving their partner to a high degree, but that affective spill-over occurred when an individual was in any type of satisfying relationship, inside or outside of work.

Although Pierce (1998) briefly mentioned that there is a relationship between job satisfaction and life satisfaction, he did not test the relationship between engaging in a workplace romance and life satisfaction, nor was it included in the model (Pierce et al., 1996). The second outcome, subjective well-being (or satisfaction with life) is a proposed addition to the MWR. Satisfaction with life, defined as “the cognitive and global
evaluation of the quality of one’s life as a whole (Pavot & Diener, 1993), is a component of the multifaceted concept of subjective well-being. Subjective well-being includes both cognitive and affective evaluations of one’s level of happiness (Diener, Suh, Lucas, & Smith, 1999), and may also be affected by engagement in a workplace romance.

Judgments about life satisfaction are partially based on information which is currently available or easily called to mind, including moods, emotions, and important life domains (e.g., romantic relationships and work performance) (Pavot & Diener, 2008; Schimmack, Diener, & Oishi, 2002). Although the importance of domains differs across persons, if a domain is important to an individual, it is likely to affect his or her perceptions life satisfaction (Schimmack et al., 2002). Additionally, if the importance of a domain changes an individual’s life satisfaction is also likely to change. According to Schimmack and Oishi (2005), satisfaction with an important domain is assumed to be “the most proximal determinant of life satisfaction, and examining the determinants of domain satisfaction can provide important information about the determinants of life satisfaction” (p. 404). Because a romantic relationship, in general, is likely to be salient to most people, it is likely that it would affect an individual’s life satisfaction. Regardless of whether couples entered into the relationship for job or love motives, it is likely that satisfaction with the relationship will affect an individual’s satisfaction with life.

As both job and life satisfaction seem to be determined by the quality of social, work, and romantic relationships, it seems that whether or not a workplace romance was conducted in secret may affect the quality of all three relationships. Pierce et al. (1996) hypothesized that the visibility of hierarchical romances (i.e., the degree to which peers
of the couple were aware of the romance or the amount of secrecy surrounding the relationship) would have an impact on co-worker morale. They asserted that less visible hierarchical romances were less likely to negatively affect co-worker morale. Although Pierce et al. did not test this assertion, Karl and Sutton (2000) found that peers of those involved in a workplace romance were more likely to perceive strict anti-workplace romance policies as fair when the relationship was highly visible than if the relationship was not highly visible.

Although not addressed directly in the workplace romance literature, it also seems that relationship visibility, or the amount of secrecy, involved in conducting a workplace romance would also affect the participants involved in the romance. While there is little available research on the effects of secret romantic relationships within the traditional romantic relationship literature (Foster & Campbell, 2005; Lehmiller, 2009), it seems that the workplace would be a reasonable setting in which to encounter secret relationships. As mentioned above, oftentimes participants in workplace romances choose to keep their relationship a secret in order to avoid negative social and professional consequences (Mainiero, 1989). However, some research has suggested that secret relationships can be thrilling and exciting (Wegner, Lane, & Dimitri, 1994). Wegner asserts when relationships are thrilling and exciting, they may increase the amount romantic attraction between partners.

For example, Lane and Wegner (1994) and Wegner et al. (1994) theorized that romantic secrecy could increase attraction between partners because “(a) romantic secrecy creates a vicious cycle of thought suppression and thought intrusion and (b)
increased levels of thought enhance already-positive attitudes” (Foster & Campbell, 2005, p. 126). Wegner et al. tested this theory by asking participants to remember past relationships that were remembered either frequently or infrequently. They found that the frequency with which participants remembered relationships was positively associated with the level of secrecy attributed to the relationships. Additionally, when the theory was tested experimentally, participants who had just met each other were more likely to report being attracted to their partner if they were instructed to communicate secretly through foot touching than those who communicated through non-secret foot-touching or other types of non-secret, non-verbal communication.

More recent literature, however, suggests that most secret relationships tend to afford individuals with more problems than benefits (Foster & Campbell, 2005; Lehmiller, 2009). Foster and Campbell (2005) were the first to investigate differences in relationship quality among couples who were currently engaged in on-going secret romantic relationships (as opposed to those who were strangers or those who were reflecting on past relationships). They proposed that while romantic secrecy may be alluring (i.e., thinking about someone more frequently leads to increased attraction), situational constraints would decrease relationship quality by interfering with the realization of positive outcomes generally associated with engagement in a relationship (e.g., spending time together may be difficult) and therefore be ultimately less satisfying than open relationships. In subsequent studies, they found that relationship secrecy was negatively correlated with relationship quality (i.e., distress over potential break-up, perceived physical attractiveness, and love for the partner). Furthermore, the relationship
between secrecy and indicators of relationship quality was partially mediated by the perceived burden (e.g., participants could not engage in the activities they would like to with their partner and so felt that the relationship could be difficult to coordinate) relationship secrecy generated.

Lehmiller (2009) built upon these findings and tested the relationship between relationship secrecy, relationship commitment, and both physical and psychological health. Over 350 participants completed measures capturing the degree of romantic secrecy, relationship commitment, and their psychological and physical well-being. Relationship secrecy was negatively associated with relationship commitment. Relationship secrecy was positively associated with relationship burdens, psychological symptoms, and physical symptoms. Using structural equation modeling, Lehmiller tested a model of the effects of relationship secrecy and demonstrated that the relation between romantic secrecy and negative health effects is likely mediated by negative feelings (i.e., nervousness and stress) generated by the relationship. Based on this evidence, it seems reasonable to suspect that the degree of secrecy within workplace romances not only affects the peers of those involved in the romances, but the participants themselves.

**Hypothesis 8a (H8a):** Individuals engaged in a secret workplace romance will be lower on measures of projected life satisfaction than individuals engaged in an open workplace romance.
Hypothesis 8b (H8b): Individuals engaged in a secret workplace romance will be lower on measures of projected job satisfaction than individuals engaged in an open workplace romance.

Summary and Current Study

Both the body of empirical research and a scientific understanding of workplace romances are still fairly undeveloped (Pierce et al., 1996). As workplace romances can affect employee productivity (Anderson & Hunsaker, 1985; Dillard & Broetzmann, 1989; Mainiero, 1989), co-worker morale (Horan & Chory, 2009), job satisfaction (Pierce, 1998), and potentially employee well-being (Schimmack et al., 2002), it seems that achieving a better understanding of workplace romances would be beneficial to organizations and their employees. The current study will add to this literature by conducting empirical research that will test existing relationships within, and propose amendments to, Pierce et al.’s (1996) model of workplace romance from a first-person perspective. The specific hypotheses developed above are summarized in Table 1.1.
CHAPTER TWO

METHOD

Participants

Data for the current study were gathered from 347 students in undergraduate psychology classes. Data were also collected from workplace professionals most of whom were employed by either a small technical college or a mid-sized southern university. Data were also collected from workplace professionals via LinkedIn, an online professional networking site, using a snowball sampling method. In total, 172 participants with full-time jobs participated in the study. The majority of participants in the study sample were between 18-22 years of age (87%), female (65%), Caucasian (87%), heterosexual (96%), and single (63%). Additionally, 52% of the student participants reported having between 2-4 years of work experience. The employee sample was more varied, for example, ages ranged from early 20’s to over 65. The majority of participants were between 26-65 years of age (94%). The majority of the participants were also female (68%), Caucasian (91%), heterosexual (98%), and had either a Bachelor’s (23%) or Master’s degree (44%). However, 80% of the employee sample reported that they were either married or in a serious relationship. The majority of the employee sample also reported having over 21 years of work experience (58%).

Design

I used a 2 × 2 × 3 fractional factorial experimental design, manipulating the motive to engage in a workplace romance (i.e., love or job), the relationship to the romantic interest (i.e., hierarchical vs. lateral), and the organizational policy about
workplace romances (i.e., none, moderate, and strict) in an online survey. Personality
variables (including conscientiousness, openness to experience, emotional stability) and
attitudes about workplace romances were also measured.

Procedure

Participants completed the following procedure electronically. Participants were
directed to the study via an e-mail link. There were four distinct stages to the study.

Stage 1. In the first stage of the study, participants were asked to read an
informed consent document and then asked to complete measures of personality based on
the FFM and measures of their attitudes about workplace romances.

Stage 2. After completing these measures, each participant was presented with
one of nine scenarios (Appendix D). Each scenario described a hypothetical workplace
romance between the participant and a potential romantic interest. The scenarios were
constructed by systematically varying the type of relationship (i.e., hierarchical vs.
lateral), the participant’s motivation to engage in the relationship (i.e., job vs. love), and
the degree to which an organization’s policy permitted workplace romances (i.e., no
policy, moderate policy, or strict policy). Instructions to participants included the
following, “This is a survey that requires your imagination. Imagine that you are single
and experiencing the situation described. After reading the scenario, please take a few
minutes to visualize what you would do if you were in that situation.” After reading the
scenarios, participants were asked to complete a manipulation check and a short
questionnaire assessing the likelihood that they would enter into a relationship with
another member of their organization as described in the scenario.
**Stage 3.** Each participant was then presented with one of two additional scenarios (Appendix E). Each scenario described a hypothetical workplace romance between the participant and a romantic interest. The scenarios assumed that the participant was involved with another member of his or her organization and were constructed to systematically vary the degree of relationship secrecy (secret vs. open). Instructions to participants read as follows, “This part of the survey also requires your imagination; however, please disregard the situation discussed in the previous scenario. Imagine that you were not previously in a relationship, but are now experiencing the situation described below. After reading the description, take a few minutes to imagine how you would feel if you were in that situation.”

**Stage 4.** After reading the second scenario, participants were asked to complete a manipulation check, measures of projected life satisfaction, projected job satisfaction, and a demographic questionnaire. After the participants completed the questionnaires, they were thanked for their participation and exited from the survey.

**Measures**

The internal consistency reliability estimates of all continuous scales used in the study appear on the diagonal of Table 1 for both employee and student samples.

**FFM Personality Measures.** Conscientiousness, openness to experience, and emotional stability were measured using 10-item scales from the International Personality Item Pool (IPIP) (Goldberg et al., 2006) (Appendix B). The items in the scale correspond to items in Costa and McCrae’s (1992) NEO Personality Inventory (NEO-PI-R). Items assess how much participants agree with each statement on a scale from 1 (strongly
disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Sample items for conscientiousness include, “I am always prepared” and “I carry out plans.” Sample items for openness to experience include, “I have a vivid imagination” and “I enjoy hearing about new ideas.” Sample items for emotional stability include, “I often feel blue” and “I dislike myself.” The measures of conscientiousness, openness to experience, and emotional stability demonstrated good internal consistency reliability for both student and employee samples. The average reliability across samples for each scale was $\alpha = .78$, $\alpha = .78$, $\alpha = .85$, respectively.

**Attitudes about Workplace Romances.** Participant’s attitudes about workplace romance in general were measured using Pierce’s (1998) 7-item measure (Appendix C). Sample items include: “Some sexual intimacy among co-workers can create a more harmonious work environment” and, “It is all right for someone to look for a dating or marriage partner at work.” Items were measured on a Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The scale demonstrated adequate internal consistency reliability, $\alpha = .78$ averaged across both student and employee samples.

**Willingness to Engage in a Workplace Romance.** After reading one of nine scenarios (Appendix D) (Stage 2) participants were asked to predict how willing they would be to engage in the workplace romance described in the scenario provided (Appendix E) and to provide their reactions to the scenario (e.g., “I would enter into a relationship with the person in the scenario based on the situation described”). The item measuring the willingness to engage in a workplace romance was measured on a Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Participants were asked to complete one additional question about their willingness to engage in a workplace
romance. The additional item read as follows, “Based on the scenario you just read, please describe what you think the outcome of the relationship will be (e.g., ‘Do you think engaging in the relationship will have any positive or negative consequences?’ “How long do you think the relationship will last?’).” Participants were prompted to provide open-ended responses.

**Projected Life Satisfaction.** After reading one of two additional scenarios (secret vs. open relationship) (Appendix F), participants were asked to complete measures of projected life satisfaction (Stage 4). Projected life satisfaction was measured using an adapted version of the 5-item Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985) (Appendix H) which is designed to measure global judgments of satisfaction with one’s life ($\alpha = .89$). The adapted version of the scale asked participants to predict how satisfied with their life they thought they would be based on the scenario they had just read. Sample items include: “In most ways my life would be close to my ideal” and “The conditions of my life would be excellent.” Participants were asked one additional question which addressed their reactions to the scenario. The additional item read as follows, “Based on the scenario you just read, please describe what you think the outcome of the relationship will be, (e.g., ‘Do you think engaging in the relationship will have any positive or negative consequences?’ and “How long do you think the relationship will last?’).” Participants were then prompted to provide open-ended responses.

**Projected Job Satisfaction.** In addition to filling out the projected satisfaction with life measure, participants also completed a one-question measure of projected job
satisfaction (Appendix G) (Stage 4) which asked participants to rate the degree to which they thought they would be satisfied with their jobs, if they had experienced the situation described in the secrecy scenario answer choices range from 1 (very dissatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied).

Demographic Questionnaire. Participants provided some demographic information about themselves such as gender, age, race, experience/success with workplace romances, cultural background, and sexual orientation (see Appendix I).

Power Analysis

A-priori power analyses were conducted (see Table 2.1), using G*Power version 3.1.2 (Faul, Erdfelder, Buchner, & Lang, 2009), to determine the number of participants needed for the study to have 80% power for detecting an effect when using .05 as a criterion of statistical significance for each hypothesis. Power analyses were first conducted for each hypothesis to determine how many participants would be needed to test each hypothesis. Although many of the effect sizes used to calculate the desired sample size were only, at best, tangentially related to the hypotheses, the effect sizes used for each test are reported. The effect size used to test H1 and H5b (.08) was determined by averaging the effect sizes reported in three different studies about the relation between conscientiousness and work performance (Barrick & Mount, 1991; Cole, 2009; Mount, Barrick, & Stewart, 1998). As relevant effect sizes in the literature could not be found to conduct a power analyses for H2 or H3, their effect sizes were set at .09 in order to determine a moderately conservative estimate of power. The effect size reported in Glasman and Albarracín’s (2006) meta-analysis (.37) on the relation between attitudes
and their ability to predict behavior was used as the effect size to test H4. The effect size (.04) used to test H5a, H5b, and H6b was based on the effect size reported in a study about the relation between organizational policy and sexual harassment (Kakuyama, Tsuzuki, Onglatco, Matsui, 2003). The effect size (.09) used to test H6a and H6b was based on the average of the effect sizes reported in two studies on third-person perceptions of co-workers engaged in workplace romances (Horan & Chory, 2009; Karl & Sutton, 2000). The effect size used to test H7 (.09) was based on the findings reported in a study about third-person perceptions of co-worker’s motives to engage in a workplace romance (Anderson & Fisher, 1991). Finally, the effect size used to test H8a and H8b (.20) was based on the average of effect sizes reported in Lehmiller’s (2009) study on relationship secrecy and subjective-well-being.

After a-priori power analyses were conducted for each hypothesis, it was determined that a sample of 200 participants would be required for the study. The required sample size was determined by identifying the maximum number of participants needed to detect an effect across all hypotheses.
CHAPTER THREE

RESULTS

Before testing each of the hypotheses, the data for each of the variables used in the following analyses were screened for both kurtosis and skewness; data for all variables were within a normal range. The data were also screened for both missing values and outliers for each of the variables to be used in the analyses. Data for three students and 10 employees were excluded because complete data at the item level was needed to compute scale scores. Additionally, data for one student and two employees were excluded because the data for the participants had standardized residuals of +/- 3 for most of the analyses conducted in the study. Finally, the manipulation checks were tested. On average, most participants correctly identified the experimental manipulations (Cramer’s V for tests of each manipulation ranged from .72 - .95 for the student sample and from .69 - .96 for the employee sample, p < .01 for all tests), so no further data were removed from the study. Overall, data for three students and 12 employees were removed (1% of the data for students, 7% of the data for employees). The total number of cases included in the analysis of student data was 343. The total number of cases included in the analysis of the employee data was 160. Table 3 presents the means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations among the study variables for both the employee (upper triangle) and student data (lower triangle). Reliability estimates for the measures in the study appear on the main diagonal. Note that all analyses were conducted using version 18 of SPSS (now called PASW), a statistical software package for the social sciences.
Before testing each of the hypotheses, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to determine whether the two samples (employee and student) scored significantly different from each other on each of the dependent variables (i.e., willingness to engage in a workplace romance, projected life satisfaction, and projected job satisfaction). The results of the ANOVAs confirmed that the samples scored significantly different from each other on each of the dependent variables, $F\ (1,506) = 33.71, p < .001$, $F\ (1,506) = 10.31, p < .05$, $F\ (1,506) = 10.31, p < .05$, respectively. Because there were statistically significant differences between the employee and student samples on how they responded to each dependent variable, all hypotheses were tested separately for each group. A summary of the tested hypotheses are presented in Table 4.

Results for the Student Sample

Tests of Hypotheses 1-4. As no additional variables (i.e., age, gender, race, sexual orientation, current relationship status, work experience, experience with workplace romances) significantly predicted the willingness to engage in workplace romances, they were not controlled for in subsequent analyses. To test the hypotheses proposed by the current study for the student sample, regression analyses were conducted which are summarized in Table 4. Specifically, to test for the main effects of individual differences on the willingness to engage in workplace romances, simple linear regression analyses were conducted with each personality variable, conscientiousness (H1), openness (H2), emotional stability (H3), and attitudes about workplace romances (H4) serving as predictor variables and willingness to engage in a workplace romance serving as the criterion variable.
Table 3

Mean, Standard Deviations, and Intercorrelations for both Employee and Student Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Employee</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Willingness to Engage in WR</td>
<td>2.53</td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>.35**</td>
<td>-.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Openness</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>.21**</td>
<td>-.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Conscientiousness</td>
<td>3.96</td>
<td>.49</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>-.13**</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>-.34**</td>
<td>-.25**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Emotional Stability</td>
<td>2.16</td>
<td>.59</td>
<td>2.36</td>
<td>.61</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>-0.24**</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>(.84)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Attitudes about WR</td>
<td>2.59</td>
<td>.71</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td>.37**</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>-.19**</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Life Satisfaction</td>
<td>2.76</td>
<td>.82</td>
<td>3.02</td>
<td>.81</td>
<td>.42**</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>0.21**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Policy</td>
<td>.91</td>
<td>.81</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>.81</td>
<td>-.11*</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>-.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Relationship Type</td>
<td>.68</td>
<td>.47</td>
<td>.65</td>
<td>.48</td>
<td>-.37**</td>
<td>.11*</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>-.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Motive</td>
<td>.48</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>-.40**</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>-.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Secrecy</td>
<td>.48</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>.40**</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>.60**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Correlations for employee data are located in the upper triangle (N = 160). Correlations for student data are located in the lower triangle (N = 343). Reliability estimates for employee data are on the diagonals (reliability estimates for the student sample are in parentheses). *Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed). **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypotheses</th>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Employee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H1  Individuals high in conscientiousness are less likely to enter into a desired workplace romance than individuals who are low in conscientiousness.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2  Individuals high in openness to experience are more likely to engage in workplace romances compared to individuals low in openness to experience.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H3  Individuals high in emotional stability are more likely to enter into a workplace relationship compared to individuals who are low in emotional stability.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H4  Individuals with favorable attitudes about workplace romances will be more likely to engage in workplace romances than will individuals with unfavorable attitudes about workplace romances.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H5a Individuals who work for organizations which have policies deterring workplace romances will be less likely to engage in workplace romances than will individuals who work for more lenient (if any) policies that attempt to deter workplace romances.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H5b The negative relation between conscientiousness and engaging in a workplace romance will be strongest when explicit organizational policies are in place compared to instances where there are no such policies.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H6a Individuals will be more likely to engage in lateral workplace romances than hierarchical workplace romances.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Type of relationship (i.e., hierarchical or lateral) will interact with organizational policy (i.e., no policy to strict policy) such that individuals working for organizations with policies that deter workplace romances will be less likely to engage in hierarchical vs. lateral workplace romances.  

**H7**  
Individuals with love motives will be more likely to engage in workplace romances than those with job motives.  

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Individuals engaged in a secret workplace romance will be lower on measures of projected life satisfaction than individuals engaged in an open workplace romance.  

**H8a**  

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Individuals engaged in a secret workplace romance will be lower on measures of projected job satisfaction than employees engaged in an open workplace romance.  

**H8b**  

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Only two of the hypotheses (H1 and H4) were supported such that the main effects for both conscientiousness and attitudes about workplace romances significantly predicted willingness to engage in a workplace romance, $F(1, 342) = 5.63, p < .05, R^2 = .01$ and $F(1, 342) = 53.78, p < .01, R^2 = .13$. The main effects for openness to experience and emotional stability were not statistically significant. Thus, H2 and H3 were not supported.

Additionally, after the main effects mentioned above were tested, a hierarchical regression analysis was conducted to determine the unique contributions of each variable in predicting the willingness to engage in a workplace romance. Although the model was significant, $F(4, 338) = 14.35, p < .01, R^2 = .14$, when all variables related to individual differences were entered into the regression equation, only attitudes about workplace
romances significantly predicted the willingness to engage in a workplace romance, \( t(1, 342) = 7.09, p < .001, r^2 = .13 \). That is, conscientiousness was no longer statistically significant, and openness to experience and emotional stability remained non-significant predictors of the willingness to engage in a workplace romance.

To further examine the change in significance for conscientiousness, a mediated regression analysis was conducted using attitudes about workplace romances as a mediator of the relationship between conscientiousness and the willingness to engage in a workplace romance (Figure 2.1). Note that the indirect effect was tested using bootstrap procedures (Shrout & Bolger, 2002). The path coefficient from conscientiousness to attitudes about workplace romances (\( b = -.23 \)) was significant, \( t(1, 342) = -3.56, p < .01 \). The path coefficient from attitudes about workplace romances to the willingness to engage in a workplace romance (\( b = .68 \)) was also significant, \( t(1, 342) = 6.94, p < .01 \). The total effect of conscientiousness on willingness to engage in a workplace romance (\( b = -.29 \)) was also significant, \( t(1, 342) = -2.37, p < .05 \). However, the direct effect of conscientiousness on the willingness to engage in a workplace romance (\( b = -.14 \)) was not significant, \( t(1, 342) = -1.17, p > .05 \). The bootstrapped effect of the indirect path (-.15) was significant, with a 95% confidence interval of -.27 to -.07. Finally, the full mediated model was significant, \( F(2, 340) = 27.60, p < .01, R^2 = .14 \).

**Tests of Hypotheses 5-7 (manipulated variables).** To test the main effects of the manipulated variables on the willingness to engage in workplace romances, one-way ANOVAs were conducted with each independent variable (i.e., organizational policy (H5a), relationship type (H6a), and motive (H7)). The main effect for policy on the
willingness to engage in a workplace romance was marginally significant $F (2, 340) = 2.91, p = .06, R^2 = .01$. The main effects for both relationship type and motive were significant, $F (1, 341) = 54.72, p < .01, R^2 = .14$ and $F (1, 341) = 64.86, p < .01, R^2 = .16$, respectively. Thus, H5a was not supported, however, H6a and H7 were supported.

Figure 2.1. Relationship between conscientiousness and willingness to engage in a workplace romance (WR) mediated by attitudes about workplace romances for student data.

*p < .05. **p < .01.
Table 5
Predictors of the Willingness to Engage in a Workplace Romance for both Employee and Student Samples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>$\eta^2$</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>$\eta^2$</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conscientiousness</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>1.66</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>-0.13</td>
<td>0.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Openness to Experience</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.51</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>-0.26</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>-0.07</td>
<td>0.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Stability</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes about WR</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>28.91**</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>61.81**</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>0.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.52*</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11.80**</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship Type</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13.76**</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2.29</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motive</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20.16**</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>46.02**</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. WR = workplace romance. The full model for the employee sample, (including all variables) was significant, $F(8, 149) = 19.14, p < .01, R^2 = .48, N = 158. *p < .05, **p < .01. The full model for the student sample, (including all variables) was significant, $F(8, 334) = 24.50, p < .01, R^2 = .36, N = 343. *p < .05, **p < .01.
Additionally, after the main effects for each relationship were tested, a univariate general linear model (GLM) was used to determine the unique contributions of each variable to the willingness to engage in a workplace romance. When all variables were included in the model, the model was significant $R^2 = .23$. The effect of motive remained significant $F(1, 338) = 35.81, p < .01, \eta^2 = .10$, the effect of policy became significant, $F(2, 338) = 11.48, p < .01, \eta^2 = .06$; however, the effect of relationship type was no longer significant.

To assess the unique contributions of each independent variable in predicting the willingness to engage in a workplace romance, an additional univariate GLM was used with both personality and situational variables as independent variables. When all variables were entered, the overall model was significant, $R^2 = .36$ (see Table 5); however, only policy, $F(2, 334) = 11.80, p < .01, \eta^2 = .07$, motive $F(1, 334) = 46.02, p < .01, \eta^2 = .12$, and attitudes about workplace romances, $F(1, 334) = 61.81, p < .01, \eta^2 = .16$, were significant. Relationship type, conscientiousness, openness to experience, and emotional stability were non-significant. In additional analyses, it was also determined that neither the interaction between policy and conscientiousness (H5b) nor was the interaction between policy and relationship type (H6b) significant.

**Tests of Hypotheses 8a and 8b (secrecy).** Finally, to test for main effects of relationship secrecy on projected life and job satisfaction (H8a and H8b), two one-way ANOVAs were conducted with relationship secrecy as the independent variables and in turn, projected life, and then job, satisfaction as the dependent variable. Relationship secrecy did significantly predict differences in projected life satisfaction when controlling
for both gender and experience with workplace romances $F (1, 336) = 185.13, p < .01, \eta^2 = .36$. The overall model was also significant $F (6, 336) = 36.03, p < .01, R^2 = .38$. The overall model for projected job satisfaction (which included secrecy and gender only) was also significant $F (2, 340) = 131.78, p < .01, R^2 = .43$. Secrecy was a significant predictor of projected job satisfaction $F (1, 340) = 262.55, p < .01, \eta^2 = .44$.

**Results for the Employee Sample**

**Tests of Hypotheses 1-4.** As no additional variables (i.e., age, gender, race, sexual orientation, current relationship status, work experience, experience with workplace romances) significantly predicted the willingness to engage in workplace romances, projected life (or job) satisfaction, they were not controlled for in subsequent analyses. To test the hypotheses proposed by the current study for the employee sample, regression analyses were conducted which are summarized in Table 4.

Unlike the student sample, only one of the hypotheses (H4) was supported such that the main effects for attitudes about workplace romances significantly predicted variance in the willingness to engage in a workplace romance, $F (1, 158) = 32.39, p < .01, R^2 = .12$. H1, H2 and H3 were not significant, such that the main effects for conscientiousness, openness to experience, and emotional stability did not predict the willingness to engage in a workplace romance.

Additionally, a hierarchical regression analysis was conducted to determine the unique contributions of each variable in predicting the willingness to engage in a workplace romance. Although the model was significant $F (4, 153) = 6.03, p < .01, R^2 = .11$, when all variables related to individual differences were entered into the regression
equation, again, only attitudes about workplace romances significantly predicted the willingness to engage in a workplace romance, $t (1, 156) = 4.86, p < .01, sr^2 = .13$. That is, conscientiousness, openness to experience, and emotional stability remained non-significant predictors of the willingness to engage in a workplace romance.

As illustrated in Figure 2.2, a mediated regression analysis was also tested for the employee data using attitudes about workplace romances as a mediator of the relationship between conscientiousness and the willingness to engage in a workplace romance. The path coefficient from conscientiousness to attitudes about workplace romances ($b = -.34$) was significant, $t (1, 158) = -3.05, p < .01$. The path coefficient from attitudes about workplace romances to the willingness to engage in a workplace romance ($b = .63$) was also significant, $t (1, 158) = 4.50, p < .01$. However, neither the total effect conscientiousness ($b = -.14$) = $t (1, 158) = -.67, p > .05$, nor the direct effect of conscientiousness on the willingness to engage in a workplace romance ($b = .08$) were significant, $t (1, 158) = .38, p > .05$. The bootstrapped effect of the indirect path (-.22) was significant, with a 95% confidence interval of -.44 to -.07. Finally, the overall model was significant $F (2, 157) = 10.38, p < .01, R^2 = .11$.

Tests of Hypotheses 5-7 (manipulated variables). To test for the main effects of the manipulated variables on the willingness to engage in workplace romances, one-way ANOVA’s were conducted with each variable, organizational policy (H5a), relationship type (H6a), and motive (H7) as the independent variables and the willingness to engage in a workplace romance as the dependent variable.
The main effect of policy was not significant. However, the main effects for relationship type and motive were significant, $F(1, 157) = 66.50, p < .01, R^2 = .29$ and $F(1, 157) = 58.62, p < .01, R^2 = .27$, respectively. Thus, for the employee sample, although H5a was not supported, H6a and H7 were supported.

After the main effects for each relationship were tested, a univariate GLM was used to determine the unique contributions of each variable to the willingness to engage
in a workplace romance. The model was significant $R^2 = .23$. The effect of motive, $F(1, 155) = 19.12, p < .00, \eta^2 = .11$, and relationship type, $F(1, 155) = 10.32, p < .01, \eta^2 = .06$, remained significant. Additionally, the effect of policy, $F(2, 155) = 5.09, p < .01, \eta^2 = .06$, became significant.

Additionally, after the main effects for each relationship were tested, a GLM was used to determine the unique contributions of each variable to the willingness to engage in a workplace romance. When all variables were entered, the overall model was significant, $R^2 = .48$ (see Table 5); however, only policy, $F(2, 149) = 3.52, p < .05, \eta^2 = .06$, relationship type, $F(1, 149) = 13.76, p < .01, \eta^2 = .09$, motive, $F(1, 149) = 20.16, p < .01, \eta^2 = .12$, and attitudes about workplace romances, $F(1, 149) = 28.91, p < .01, \eta^2 = .18$, were significant. Openness to experience was marginally significant, $F(1, 149) = 3.51, p = .06, \eta^2 = .02$. However, conscientiousness and emotional stability were not significant. Like the student sample, the interaction between policy and relationship type (H6b) was not significant, $F(2, 147) = .11, p > .05$. However, unlike the student sample, the interaction between policy and conscientiousness (H6b) was significant, $F(2, 147) = 3.78, p < .05, \eta^2 = .05$, such that the simple slope for conscientiousness in the “no policy” condition ($b = .55$) differed from the slope of conscientiousness in the “strict policy” condition ($b = -.318$). This interaction is illustrated in Figure 3. Thus, for the employee sample, although H6b was not supported, H5b was supported.

**Tests of Hypotheses 8a and 8b (secrecy).** Finally, to test for main effects of relationship secrecy on SWB and JS (H8a and H8b), two one-way ANOVAs were
conducted with relationship secrecy as the independent variable and in turn, SWB and then JS as the dependent variable. Relationship secrecy did significantly predict differences in both projected life satisfaction, $F(1, 158) = 33.15, p < .01, R^2 = .17$, and projected job satisfaction, $F(1, 158) = 56.63, p < .01, R^2 = .26$. 

Figure 3. Interaction between conscientiousness and policy for employee sample.
CHAPTER FOUR
DISCUSSION

Although workplace romances are fairly common (Parks, 2006), little empirical research has been conducted to help both scientists and practitioners understand the mechanisms involved in the factors that explain why individuals may become involved in romantic relationships at work (Pierce et al., 1996). Pierce and colleagues (1996) introduced a model of workplace romance which helped to illustrate predictors and outcomes of engaging in workplace romances; however, much of their model remains untested. The current study attempted to test parts of Pierce et al.’s model from a first-person point-of-view, identify additional variables that should be included in the model, and add to the empirical body of literature on workplace romances.

Effects of Individual Difference Variables on Willingness to Engage in a Workplace Romance

Although conscientiousness predicted the willingness to engage workplace romances (H1) for the student sample only, follow-up tests revealed that when attitudes about workplace romances were controlled for, the direct relationship between conscientiousness and the willingness to engage in a workplace romance was non-significant for both student and employee samples. However, as FFM traits have been known to predict other variables, like attitudes (Bono & Judge, 2004), additional analyses were conducted to examine whether conscientiousness may instead predict attitudes about workplace romances which in turn predict the willingness to engage in workplace romances. The results of the path analysis indicated that the relationship between
conscientiousness and the willingness to engage in a workplace was, in fact, mediated by attitudes about workplace romances for both student and employee samples. Specifically, individuals high in conscientiousness were likely to have more negative attitudes about workplace romances than were individuals who were low in conscientiousness. Additionally, individuals who held negative attitudes about workplace romances were less willing to engage in workplace romances than were individuals who held more positive attitudes about workplace romances. Thus, although H1 was not supported, it does seem that conscientiousness plays an important role in predicting the willingness to engage in workplace romances.

It was also hypothesized that individuals who were high in openness to experience would be more willing to engage in workplace romances compared to individuals who were low in openness to experience (H2). It was also hypothesized that individuals who were high in emotional stability would be more willing to engage in a workplace romance than individuals who were low in emotional stability (H3). However, H2 and H3 were not supported. Although it may be that neither of these personality traits truly predicts the willingness to engage in a workplace romance, it is possible that specific facets of openness to experience and emotional stability may be better predictors of the willingness to engage in workplace romances than others. For example, there were some items on the domain measure of openness to experience that did not seem to pass the test of content validity (e.g., “I do not enjoy going to art museums”) (Goldberg et al., 2006) for predicting the willingness to engage in a workplace romance. Perhaps in future studies it
would be reasonable to include specific facets of openness to experience which may be more directly related to the outcome measures.

The results did suggest, however, that attitudes about workplace romances directly predicted the willingness to engage in workplace romances (H4) for both employee and student samples, such that individuals who held more negative views about workplace romances were less willing to engage in them than were individuals who held positive views about workplace romances. In summary, it seems that there may be a place in the MWR for additional measures of individual differences and future studies should examine the role of personality traits in predicting engagement in workplace romances.

Effects of Manipulated Variables on Willingness to Engage in a Workplace Romance

When examined without the other variables, the main effect of organizational policy in predicting the willingness to engage in a workplace romance (H5a) was marginally significant for the student sample and not significant for the employee sample; however, policy became significant for both samples when examined in the full model, such that if no policy deterring workplace romances was in place, individuals reported being more willing to engage in a workplace romance than if the organization had a strict policy in place. Additionally, although the interaction between policy and conscientiousness when predicting the willingness to engage in a workplace romance (H5b) was not significant for the student sample, the interaction was significant for the employee sample such that conscientious individuals were less willing to engage in workplace romances if the organization had a moderate or strict policy organizational
romances. The results of the interaction between policy and conscientiousness were unexpected in that participants high in conscientiousness in the no policy condition were more willing to engage in a workplace romance compared to participants low in conscientiousness. It seems possible that when organizations have policies that discourage workplace romances, conscientious employees may feel more obligated to adhere to the policy than to pursue the relationship. However, when no policy is in place conscientious employees may be more likely to follow-through on their desires/plans to engage in a workplace romance than employees who are low in conscientiousness.

The results also suggest that relationship type (hierarchical vs. lateral) may predict differences in the willingness to engage in a workplace romance (H6a). In the current study participants reported that they would be more willing to enter into a lateral vs. hierarchical workplace romance. The effect of relationship type remained significant for the employee sample in the full-model; however, the effect of relationship type became non-significant in the full-model for the student sample. One explanation for this difference may be that because the student participants may have less work experience, they may be less familiar with the taboos associated with dating a supervisor.

Additionally, the interaction between relationship type and the willingness to engage in a workplace romance did not depend upon organizational policy (H6a). The hypothesis stated that individuals working for organizations with strict policies about workplace romances would be less likely to engage in either hierarchical (vs. lateral) relationships compared to individuals working for organizations with more tolerant policies. Because hierarchical relationships are taboo (Parks, 2006; Pierce & Aguinis,
2001), it seems that they are avoided regardless of the type of policy an organization has about regulating them. The data also suggest that motive (i.e., either job or love) predicts the willingness to engage in a workplace romance. Overall, these results suggest that perhaps an employee’s motive for engaging in a relationship with another co-worker will affect his or her willingness to engage in the relationship.

Although the MWR includes both motives and relationship type, both of these variables only exist as moderators of the relation between engagement in a workplace romance and outcomes of the decision (e.g., job productivity and job involvement) (Pierce et al, 1996). Based on the results of the current study, it seems that both motive and relationship type may play a role earlier in the process such that they may also predict the willingness to engage in a workplace romance. The results of the current study suggest that motives and relationship type should be added as moderators of the relation between the desire to engage and engagement in workplace romances in the AMWR. Additionally, the results of the current study lend support for the assertion that organizational policies may play a role in predicting the willingness to engage in a workplace romance. As organizational policy does not always reflect organizational culture, perhaps policy should also be included in the AMWR as a separate predictor of engagement in a workplace romance.

Finally, relationship secrecy predicted differences in both projected life and job satisfaction (H8a and H8b) such that individuals who imagined being in a secret relationship expected to be less satisfied with their lives and their jobs. These findings, although unique in that they are applied to organizational settings, were in the expected
direction based on the literature that exists about the effects of secret relationships (Foster & Campbell, 2005; Lehmiller, 2009). *Relationship visibility* is included in the MWR as a predictor of worker morale (Pierce et al., 1996). The current conceptualization of relationship visibility is the degree to which the workplace romance is visible to other members of the organization. The inclusion of *secrecy* in the model; however, addresses additional instances of romantic behavior at work that may not be visible to other members of the organization. As secrecy may affect both life and job satisfaction, including it as a variable in the AMWR should be considered.

**Contributions of the Present Study**

The current study makes a number of unique contributions to the current body of literature on workplace romances. One of the most notable contributions is that the study provides first-person empirical data to the body of research on workplace romances. Researchers have typically shied away from studying workplace romances for a number of reasons (Powell and Foley, 1998). Although Pierce et al.’s (1996) MWR was intended to help stimulate and direct research on workplace romances, much of the model remains untested. The current study empirically tested variables to help explain why certain individuals may be more willing to engage in workplace romances than others (i.e., factors that affect the decision-making process). Additionally, the current study identified additional outcomes of engaging in workplace romances (i.e., life and job satisfaction).

Another notable finding is that individual differences (i.e., FFM traits) predicted differences in the willingness to engage in a workplace romance. Although Pierce et al. (1996) posited that attitudes about workplace romances may predict engagement in
organizational romantic behavior, the results of the current study suggest that attitudes about workplace romances seem to mediate the relationship between conscientiousness and the willingness to engage in organizational romances.

The current study also provides a better understanding of how attitudes predict the willingness to engage in a workplace romance. Although the MWR includes attitudes about workplace romances as a moderator of the relationship between the desire for and the engagement in a workplace romance, the results of Pierce’s (1998) study which tested this relationship did not fully support the assertion. Specifically, while Pierce’s study did find that individuals who held negative views about workplace romances were less likely to be engaged in a workplace romances, the study found no relationship between being engaged in workplace romances and favorable views about such relationships. The study did not address whether or not people who had favorable attitudes about workplace romances were more likely to engage in romantic behavior at work compared to people who had unfavorable attitudes about such relationships. The present study indicates that attitudes about workplace romances may have predictive value for explaining an individual’s willingness to engage in romantic organizational behavior.

Additionally, motives and relationship type appear to play an important role in determining whether or not individuals will be willing to engage in workplace romances. In Pierce et al.’s MWR, “motives” serve as a moderator of the relationship between engagement in a workplace romance and job productivity, gossip, and job involvement. Relationship type serves as a moderator of job productivity and worker morale. The findings of the current study illustrate that perhaps the motives for workplace romances
and relationship type should also be considered as predictors of engagement in a workplace romance. Overall, the findings of the current study enhance our existing understanding of the factors that are involved in an employee’s willingness to engage in a workplace romance.

Another contribution of the current study is the finding that engaging in a workplace romance may have implications for life satisfaction. As life satisfaction may be affected by important life domains (Pavot & Diener, 2008; Schimmack, Diener, & Oishi, 2002), like work-life and relationships, it seems like it would be prudent to include life satisfaction in the AMWR. Although Pierce (1998), suggested that there may be a relationship between job and life satisfaction, life satisfaction was not included as an outcome of engagement in a workplace romance in Pierce et al.’s (1996) model. The results of this study suggest that engaging in workplace romances may predict differences in life satisfaction and thus SWB or life satisfaction should be considered for inclusion in the model.

Finally, the current study contributes a better understanding of the effects of engaging in secret vs. open workplace romances on both projected life and job satisfaction. Studies by Foster and Campbell (2005) and Lehmiller (2009) detail the negative effects that secret relationships can have on life satisfaction. The results of this study suggest that perhaps the visibility a workplace romance does not just affect the co-workers of employees engaged in a relationship, but that the visibility (or lack thereof) of a workplace romance can affect the health, well-being, and job satisfaction of employees involved in the romance as well. Perhaps the AMWR should include secrecy as a
moderator of the relation between engagement in a workplace romance and both life and job satisfaction.

**Limitations and Future Research**

**Limitations.** This study had some limitations worth noting. As workplace romances are often viewed as a taboo subject (Parks, 2006; Pierce & Aguinis, 2001), participant data may have been biased as a result of responding to the questions in a socially desirable way. If this is the case, then the reported relationship between attitudes about workplace romances and the willingness to engage in workplace romances may be inflated. If more participants actually held more favorable attitudes about engaging in workplace romances, the significant negative correlation between attitudes about workplace romances, and the willingness to engage in workplace romances, may be smaller. It is also possible that participants were affected by demand characteristics and after reading the scenarios felt that they should respond to the dependent measures accordingly, which would inflate the reported effect sizes.

Additional artifacts may also account for differences in participant responding, like gender, occupation, or experience with workplace romances. For example, individuals who have prior experience (either positive or negative) with workplace romances may have answered questions differently than individuals who had no prior experience with engaging in workplace romances. As these variables were controlled for, when relevant (e.g., the effect of workplace romance experience and gender on projected life satisfaction in the employee condition), and the anticipated effects were still significant, this issue seems to be less relevant.
As mentioned above, another limitation of the current study is that some of the FFM measures may have been too broad to detect an effect (i.e., openness to experience and emotionally stability). Although it seems that range restriction could have been a problem when predicting the willingness to engage in a workplace romance using openness to experience and emotional stability, it should be noted that the means and standard deviations of both personality variables were similar to the mean and standard deviation of conscientiousness. Therefore, it seems that range restriction can be ruled out as an explanation for the lack of support for H2 and H3. Perhaps if more narrowly focused facet measures of openness to experience and emotional stability had been used in the study a significant relationship between the independent variables and the willingness to engage in a workplace romance would have been discovered. Future research could consider using more direct facet measures of personality traits. For example, including a measure of the degree to which individuals engage in fantasy as many of the questions on the scale seem like they may be predictors of engagement in a workplace romance (e.g., “I indulge in my fantasies”) (Goldberg et al., 2006).

Another limitation of the study was the use of hypothetical scenarios as experimental manipulations for the basis of determining both the willingness to engage in a workplace romance and projected life and job satisfaction. As hypothetical scenarios were used, instead of longitudinally examining the relation between predictor’s workplace romances and engagement in workplace romances, our data can only suggest that such relationships may occur if the individuals surveyed were presented with the situations described in the scenarios. In regard to predicting an individual’s willingness to
engage in a workplace romance, there is support for the notion that attitudes predict behavior (Ajzen, 1991; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). Additionally, situational judgment tests (e.g., interview questions that ask a job candidate what they think they would do in a future situation) have been shown to possess both construct and criterion-related validity (McDaniel, Morgeson, Finnegan, Campion, & Braverman, 2001) and have relatively high validities for job performance when testing for interpersonal and teamwork skills (Christian, Edwards, & Bradley, 2010). Future studies that collect data longitudinally may be able to better examine the relation between predictor variables and engagement in workplace romances.

However, while individuals may be able to predict their engagement in future behaviors, it may be more difficult for them to predict future affective states (e.g., satisfaction with life) (Brickman, Coates, & Janoff-Bulman, 1978; Eastwick, Finkel, Krishnamurti, & Loewenstein, 2008; Gilbert, Pinel, Wilson, Blumberg, & Wheatley, 1998; Welsch & Kühling, 2010). For example, a study by Brickman et al. (1978) surprisingly found that individuals who had become paraplegic or quadriplegic sometime in the previous year reported being only slightly less happy than control participants. Subsequent studies have shown that while individuals may be able to accurately predict the direction (positive or negative) of their affect, individuals are poor at predicting what both the intensity and duration of their feelings would actually be if they experienced the situation in real-life (Ayton, Pott, & Elwakili, 2007; Eastwick et al., 2008; Finkenauer, Gallucci, van Dijk, & Pollmann, 2007). For example, participants in Eastwick et al.’s
(2008) longitudinal study reported feeling distress over the dissolution of a romantic relationship, but overpredicted the duration of their distress.

As the current study asked participants to engage in affective forecasting (i.e., predictions of life and job satisfaction), participants may be overestimating, both in intensity and duration, the impact that a secret relationship would have on their life and job satisfaction. If this is the case, the actual effect size of relationship secrecy for both life and job satisfaction may be smaller than reported. To gain a better understanding of the relation between relationship secrecy and life/job satisfaction, future studies should gather data from employees that are actually engaged in workplace romances. However, if affective forecasting is used in the future, asking participants to imagine the impact that engaging in a secret relationship would have on their life and job satisfaction, within the context of all other daily life activities, may decrease the participant’s focus on the impact of the secret relationship and thus provide a more accurate estimate of the secret relationship’s effect on both life and job satisfaction (Ayton et al., 2007).

It should also be mentioned that although the target population for which the results of the study will be disseminated are those in both organizational and academic settings, the data collected for the study came from a convenience sample which included both undergraduate psychology students who received extra course credit for completing the surveys and employees who volunteered to participate in the study. As the responses of the student participants differed significantly from those of the employee participants on the dependent variables according the $\chi^2$ test, the data for each sample may represent responses that are derived from a unique point of view. For example, because student
participants tend to have less “real-world” experience than employee participants, the differences in their responses may result from characteristics not controlled for in the current study.

Overall, the student sample reported being more willing to engage in workplace romances than did the employee sample ($M = 3.19$ and $M = 2.53$, respectively); however, the difference between the student and employee samples may be due to different types of work experience. As the employee sample also reported having more years of work experience than did the student sample, perhaps the participants in the student sample did not have the same amount of exposure to taboos about workplace romances. This could explain differences in responding to measures of the dependent variables. Perhaps participants in the student sample, who tended to report working in mostly service-related industries, are employed by organizations which are more tolerant of workplace romances their organizations which employ professionals and academics. Differences in work experience, industry, and organizational culture may help to explain the differences between the student and employee sample responses. Additionally, as participants in the student sample may be less likely to consider their current job a career, they may be more likely to engage in workplace romances because they may be less afraid of losing their jobs.

It should be noted, however, that working students are still employees. They may have a different frame of reference than career professionals, but the organizations that they work for are just as real. Additionally, some of the findings were similar across both samples (e.g., the mediated relation between conscientiousness and willingness to engage
in a workplace romance). As some of the found relationships were similar across groups, any differences between student and employee samples may be useful in identifying differences additional variables which may predict engagement in workplace romances. It would be interesting for future research to examine the differences between student and employee data to identify the differences in the predictors of the willingness to engage in workplace romances.

**Implications and Future Directions.** Although it was not the purpose of the current study to determine whether or not organizations should implement or eliminate organizational policies deterring workplace romances, the findings have introduced variables which could be considered by those who wish to engage in such an argument. In general, the implications of the current study suggest that perhaps researchers or business consultants attempting to determine whether organizations should develop (or relax) policies regarding workplace romances are not considering important variables when making recommendations to organizations.

The results of the present study suggest that individual differences affect an employee’s willingness to engage workplace romances. Extrapolating from the results from the student data, it appears that individuals scoring high on conscientiousness may be less likely to engage in workplace romances than individuals who score low on conscientiousness. Perhaps organizational attempts to decrease the occurrence of workplace romances should focus on selecting employees who score high on measures of conscientiousness, as opposed to imposing policies that try to control such relationships after individuals are hired. Additionally, if organizations are already selecting for
conscientiousness in pre-employment screenings, perhaps developing policies about workplace romances is not value adding. If problematic incidents do arise, it may be more efficient to manage them on a case-by-case basis.

However, the results of the employee data suggest that it would be best to both select for conscientious individuals and institute organizational policies that deter individuals from engaging in workplace romances. It should also be noted that many employees may not have an accurate understanding of organizational policies about workplace romances. For example, Parks (2006) found that employees often believe that policies about workplace romances exist, when in fact they do not. Employees may be looking at the degree to which an organization is tolerant of workplace romances to make decisions about whether or not to engage in an organizational romance (as suggested by Salvaggio et al., in press) instead of the policy itself. Future studies should more fully explore differences in employee romantic organizational behavior based on the interaction between organizational policy and climate/culture.

It should also be noted that the current study examined a limited number of independent variables (both situational and trait-related). The current study’s main focus was an attempt to determine how personality traits may influence an individual’s willingness to engage in a workplace romance. However, as previously mentioned, there may be better (e.g., facet level measures of the FFM) or additional individual difference variables that should be examined (e.g., impulsiveness). Additionally, the predictors and outcomes of engagement in a workplace romance may be a result of interactions between those variables. For example, in the current study, only interactions between (a) policy
and conscientiousness and (b) policy and relationship type were explored. Future studies should examine additional moderators which may better explain the relationship between the desire for and the willingness to engage in a workplace romance. Because there was a main effect for motive, perhaps relationship type and motive interact to predict the willingness to engage in a workplace romance. Additional mediated relationships should also be explored. For example, the current study investigated how attitudes about workplace romances mediate the relationship between conscientiousness and the willingness to engage in a workplace romance. Feasibly the attitudes about workplace romances also serve as a mediator for other personality traits.

Although the present study, and the recent study by Salvaggio et al. (in press), have begun to test Pierce et al.’s MWR (1996), it seems that there is still a long way to go before the predictors of, and impacts of, engaging in workplace romances are fully understood. For example, Pierce et al. proposed that the effect of organizational culture may play a role in determining both predictors and outcomes of engaging in a workplace romance. Savaggio et al. recently illustrated that the degree of workplace sexualization may be one element of organizational culture that predicts employee engagement in workplace romances. However, Salvaggio et al. also stated that future research is needed to better understand how sexualization operates within organizations and how additional situational variables might impact employee decisions to engage in a workplace romance.

Suggestions for future research also include replicating the current study in organizational environments. Although data from undergraduate psychology students and college/university employees provides a starting point, to make broader statements about
the generalizability of the study’s findings, it would be useful to collect data from employees across multiple occupations and multiple organizations.

**Conclusion**

In summary, workplace romances are fairly commonplace and affect organizational outcomes (Parks, 2006; Pierce et al., 1996). However, present knowledge about romantic organizational behavior is limited. The current study adds a new perspective to the modern understanding of the relation between the desire to engage and actual engagement in workplace romances. The study also begins to address the effect that secret workplace romances may have on employee life and job satisfaction. Although this study makes a number of contributions to the current literature, there still remains much to explore.
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Appendix A

Models of Workplace Romance

Figure 1.1. Pierce et al.'s (1996) Model of Workplace Romance
Appendix A

Figure 1.2. Amendments to Pierce et al.'s (1996) Model of Workplace Romance
Appendix B

FFM Personality Measure

Personality Characteristics- Big Five

Instructions: Here are a number of characteristics that may or may not apply to you. For example, do you feel that you are someone who likes to spend time with others? Please rate the degree to which you agree or disagree with that statement using the following 1-5 rating scale (1= very inaccurate, 5 = very accurate). Please try to answer each question as honestly and accurately as possible.

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very Inaccurate</th>
<th>Moderately Inaccurate</th>
<th>Neither Accurate Nor Inaccurate</th>
<th>Moderately Accurate</th>
<th>Very Accurate</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Often feel blue</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Dislike myself</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Am often down in the dumps</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Have frequent mood swings.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Panic easily</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Rarely get irritated</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Seldom feel blue</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Feel comfortable with myself</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Am not easily bothered by things</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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</table>
10. Am very pleased with myself.  
11. Believe in the importance of art.  
12. Have a vivid imagination.  
13. Tend to vote for liberal political candidates.  
14. Carry the conversation to a higher level.  
15. Enjoy hearing new ideas.  
16. Am not interested in abstract ideas.  
17. Do not like art.  
18. Avoid philosophical discussions.  
19. Do not enjoy going to art museums.  
20. Tend to vote for conservative political candidates.  
22. Pay attention to details.
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<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>Get chores done right away.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.</td>
<td>Carry out my plans.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.</td>
<td>Make plans and stick to them.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26.</td>
<td>Waste my time. –r</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27.</td>
<td>Do just enough to get by. –r</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28.</td>
<td>Find it difficult to get down to work. –r</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29.</td>
<td>Don’t see things through. –r</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.</td>
<td>Shirk my duties. –r</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix C

Measure of Attitudes about Workplace Romances

Attitudes about Workplace Romances

Instructions: Here are a number of characteristics that may or may not apply to you. For each item below, please rate the degree to which you agree or disagree with that statement using the following 1-5 rating scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Agree nor Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Sexual relations foster better communication between the two workers involved.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Some sexual intimacy among coworkers can create a more harmonious work environment.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Any worker who directs sexual attention toward another should be reprimanded.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Organizations ought to ignore sexually oriented behavior among coworkers as long as it does not affect productivity.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>I would never get romantically involved with a coworker.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>It is all right for someone to look for a dating or marriage partner at work.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>I would go along with sexually oriented behavior that was common in my workplace.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix D

Workplace Romance Scenarios Varying Type of Relationship, Motive, and Organizational Acceptance of Workplace Romance

Instructions: This part of the survey that requires your imagination. Please read the following paragraph and imagine that you are single, have your first career related job after college, and that you are experiencing the situation described. After reading the scenario, please take a few minutes to visualize what you would do if you were in that situation. (Student participants will also be asked to imagine that they have their first career-related job after college).

1. IV’s- Hierarchical Relationship (2 levels, hierarchal vs. lateral relationship), Organizational Culture/Policy (3 levels, no policy/high tolerance, verbal warning/med tolerance, strict policy/no tolerance), and motive for engaging in workplace romance (love motive vs. job motive).

   a. Lateral Relationship- Love motives

      i. The organization you work for has a policy which states that employees who date each other will face termination. However, lately you have begun to realize that you have feelings for one of your co-workers, he/she is not your supervisor. You and your co-worker are both single, very physically attracted to each other, and are developing a closeness and connectedness to your interactions with each other. You know that he/she is also interested in you. You feel like you want to be more than “just friends” with your co-worker and believe that a relationship with him/her could be a very significant and lasting relationship in your life.

      ii. The organization you work for has a policy which states that employees who date each other may receive verbal or written warnings. However, lately you have begun to realize that you have feelings for one of your co-workers, he/she is not your supervisor. You and your co-worker are both single, very physically attracted to each other, and are developing a closeness and connectedness to your interactions with each other. You know that he/she is also interested in you. You feel like you want to be more than “just friends” with your co-worker and believe that a relationship with him/her could be a very significant and lasting relationship in your life.
iii. The organization you work for does not have an explicit policy about dating co-workers. However, lately you have begun to realize that you have feelings for one of your co-workers, he/she is not your supervisor. You and your co-worker are both single, very physically attracted to each other, and are developing a closeness and connectedness to your interactions with each other. You know that he/she is also interested in you. You feel like you want to be more than “just friends” with your co-worker and believe that a relationship with him/her could be a very significant and lasting relationship in your life.

b. Hierarchical Relationship- Love Motives

i. The organization you work for has an explicit policy which states that employees who date each other will face termination. However, lately you have begun to realize that you have feelings for one of your co-workers, he/she is your supervisor. You and your supervisor are both single, very physically attracted to each other, and are developing a closeness and connectedness to your interactions with each other. You know that he/she is also interested in you. You feel like you want to be more than “just friends” with your supervisor and believe that a relationship with him/her could be a very significant and lasting relationship in your life.

ii. The organization you work for has an explicit policy which states that employees who date each other will receive written warnings. However, lately you have begun to realize that you have feelings for one of your co-workers, he/she is your supervisor. You and your supervisor are both single, very physically attracted to each other, and are developing a closeness and connectedness to your interactions with each other. You know that he/she is also interested in you. You feel like you want to be more than “just friends” with your supervisor and believe that a relationship with him/her could be a very significant and lasting relationship in your life.

iii. The organization you work for does not have an explicit policy about dating co-workers. However, lately you have begun to realize that you have feelings for one of your co-workers, he/she is your supervisor. You and your supervisor are both single, very physically attracted to each other, and are developing a closeness and connectedness to your interactions with each other. You know that he/she is also interested in you. You feel like you
want to be more than “just friends” with your supervisor and believe that a relationship with him/her could be a very significant and lasting relationship in your life.

c. Hierarchical Relationship- Job Motives

i. The organization you work for has an explicit policy which states that employees who date each other will face termination. However, lately you have begun to realize that you have feelings for one of your co-workers, he/she is your supervisor. You realize that becoming involved with your supervisor could lead to a pay raise. It’s also likely that you would be considered for more, and better, opportunities for advancement.

ii. The organization you work for has an explicit policy which states that employees who date each other will receive written warnings. However, lately you have begun to realize that you have feelings for one of your co-workers, he/she is your supervisor. You realize that becoming involved with your supervisor could lead to a pay raise. It’s also likely that you would be considered for more, and better, opportunities for advancement.

iii. The organization you work for does not have an explicit policy about dating co-workers. However, lately you have begun to realize that you have feelings for one of your co-workers, he/she is your supervisor. You realize that becoming involved with your supervisor could lead to a pay raise. It’s also likely that you would be considered for more, and better, opportunities for advancement.
Appendix E

Measure of Willingness to Engage in a Workplace Romance

Instructions: Imagine that you are experiencing the scenario that you just read. Do you think you would enter into a relationship with the person in the scenario based on the situation described? Please circle to what extent you agree with the statement below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Agree nor Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. I would enter into a relationship with the person in the scenario based on the situation described.

2. Based on the scenario you just read, please describe what you think the outcome of the relationship will be (e.g., Do you think engaging in the relationship will have any positive or negative consequences? How long do you think the relationship will last?).
Appendix F

Workplace Romance Scenarios Varying Relationship Secrecy

Instructions: This part of the survey also requires your imagination; however, please disregard the situation discussed in the previous scenario. Imagine that you were not previously in a relationship, but are now experiencing the situation described below. After reading the description, take a few minutes to imagine how you would feel if you were in that situation.

a. Scenario- secret relationship

i. You have decided to enter into a relationship with a co-worker. You have also decided to keep the relationship a secret from everyone at work. Because you are keeping your relationship a secret from other people, oftentimes when you are around your partner at work, you cannot interact with him/her openly. You must also continually monitor your statements and actions so that others at work don’t become suspicious of your relationship. Additionally, it is challenging for you and your partner to find time to be together.

b. Scenario- open relationship

i. You have decided to enter into a relationship with a co-worker. You have also decided to make your relationship public and let others at work know that you and a co-worker are dating. Because your relationship is out in the open, you and your partner don’t try to hide your feelings for each other at work. You frequently find time to be together. Additionally, you often meet each other during the day.
Appendix G

Measure of Projected Job Satisfaction

**Instructions**: Imagine that you are experiencing the scenario you just read. How do you think you would feel about your job? Please circle one of the answers below.

1. I would be:
   
   a) much less satisfied with my job.
   
   b) a little less satisfied with my job.
   
   c) no more or less satisfied with my job.
   
   d) a little more satisfied with my job.
   
   e) much more satisfied with my job.
Appendix H

Measure of Projected Life Satisfaction

Instructions: Imagine that you are experiencing the scenario you just read. How do you think you would feel about your life? For each of the five statements below, imagine the degree to which you would agree or disagree with the statement. Using the 1 – 5 rating scale below, indicate your agreement with each item by circling the appropriate number following that item. Please be open and honest in your responding.

Part 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Agree nor Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>In most ways my life [would be] close to my ideal.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>The conditions of my life [would be] excellent.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>I would be satisfied with my life.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>I [would] have gotten the important things I want in life.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Part 2. Based on the scenario you just read, please describe what you think the outcome of the relationship will be (e.g., Do you think participating in the relationship as described will have any positive or negative consequences? How long do you think the relationship will last?).
Appendix I

Demographic Questionnaire

Instructions: Please circle the answer that best describes you.

1. Are you a male or a female?
   Male
   Female

2. What is your age?
   18-20
   21-22
   23-25
   26-30
   31-35
   36-40
   41-45
   46-50
   51-55
   55-60
   61-65
   65 and above

3. What is the highest level of education you have completed?
   High school/GED
   Some college
   2 year degree (Associates)
   4 year degree (BA/BS)
   Master’s Degree (M.A./M.S./M.B.A., etc.)
   Doctoral Degree (Ph.D./D.B.A., etc.)

4. What is your race?
   Caucasian
   African-American
   Native American
   Asian/Pacific Islander
   Other ______________

5. What is your sexual orientation?
   Heterosexual
   Homosexual
   Bi-Sexual
   Other

6. What is your current relationship status?
   Single
   In a serious relationship, but not married
Married/Domestic Partnership
Separated
Divorced

7. How much work experience do you have?
Under 1 year
2-4 years
5-10 years
11-15 years
16-20 years
21-25 years
26 or more years

8. Which of the following best describes your current role:
Undergraduate Student
Graduate Student
Teaching Faculty - Curriculum
Teaching Faculty – Non-Curriculum
Non-Teaching Faculty (Full or Part-time)
Staff- Academic Institution
Human Resources- Industry
Administration- Academic
Management- Industry
Administrative/Support Staff- Industry
Trained Professional-Industry
Skilled Laborer-Industry
Consultant-Industry
Other___________

9. How much experience do you have with workplace romances?
None
I’ve flirted with a co-worker(s)
I’ve done a little more than flirt with a co-worker(s)
I’ve dated a co-worker(s)
I’ve become involved in a serious relationship with a co-worker(s)

10. Have you had a workplace romance with a: (Please check all that apply)
Customer?
Independent Contractor?
Person you worked with occasionally?
Person you worked with frequently?
Person that works in your department?
Person that works for another department?
Person that was your supervisor/manager?
Person that was a peer?
Person that was your subordinate?

11. How many workplace romances have you had?
   0
   1-2
   3-5
   6-10
   11+

12. In your opinion, how likely is it that a workplace romance could develop into a serious, long-lasting, relationship?
   Not likely
   Somewhat unlikely
   Undecided
   Likely
   Very likely

13. If you have experience with workplace romance(s), please think about your most significant relationship. Please briefly describe your experience by answering the following questions (as well as anything else you’d like to add).
   1. Were romances discouraged at your workplace?
   2. How public was the relationship?
   3. Has the relationship ended?
   4. How long did it last?
   5. Do you feel like the overall experience was positive or negative?
Appendix J

Table 1. List of Hypotheses and Research Propositions

| H1: | Individuals high in conscientiousness are less likely to enter into a desired workplace romance than individuals who are low in conscientiousness. |
| RP 1: | Conscientiousness moderates the relationship between the desire for and the engagement in workplace romances. |
| H2: | Individuals high in openness to experience are more likely to engage in workplace romances compared to individuals low in openness to experience. |
| RP 2: | Openness to experience moderates the relationship between the desire for and the engagement in workplace romances. |
| H3: | Individuals high in emotional stability are more likely to enter into a workplace relationship compared to those who are low in emotional stability. |
| RP 3: | Emotional stability moderates the relationship between the desire for and the engagement in workplace romances. |
| H4: | Individuals with favorable attitudes about workplace romances will be more likely to engage in workplace romances than will individuals with unfavorable attitudes about workplace romances. |
| RP 4: | Attitudes about workplace romances moderate the relationship between the desire for and engagement in workplace romances. |
| H5a: | Individuals who work for organizations which have policies that deter workplace romances will be less likely to engage in workplace romances than will individuals who work for organizations that have more lenient (or no) policies that attempt to deter workplace romances. |
| RP 5: | Organizational policy will moderate the relationship between the desire for and the engagement in a workplace relationship. |
| H5b: | The negative relation between conscientiousness and engaging in a workplace romance will be the strongest when explicit organizational policies are in place compared to instances where there are no such policies. |
| H6a: | Individuals will be more likely to engage in lateral workplace romances than hierarchical workplace romances. |
| RP 6: | The reporting relationship of the workplace romance (i.e., hierarchical or lateral) will moderate the relationship between desire for and engagement in a workplace romance. |
| H6b: | Type of relationship (i.e., hierarchical or lateral) will interact with organizational policy (i.e., no policy to strict policy) such that individuals working for organizations with policies that deter workplace romances will be less likely to engage in hierarchical vs. lateral workplace romances. |
| H7: | Individuals with love motives will be more likely to engage in workplace romances than those with job motives. |
| RP 7: | The motive to engage in a workplace romance will moderate the relationship between the desire for a workplace romance and engaging in a workplace romance. |
H8a: Individuals engaged in a secret workplace romance will be lower on measures of projected life satisfaction than individuals engaged in an open workplace romance.

H8b: Individuals engaged in a secret workplace romance will be lower on measures of projected job satisfaction than individuals engaged in an open workplace romance.

*Note.* H = Hypothesis. RP = Research Proposition.
Appendix K

Tables 2.1 – 2.12 Power Analyses

Table 2.1.

Power Analysis for Conscientiousness Predicting the Willingness to Engage in a Workplace Romance
Table 2.2.

Power Analysis for Conscientiousness Predicting the Willingness to Engage in a Workplace Romance
Table 2.3.

Power Analysis for Emotional Stability Predicting the Willingness to Engage in a Workplace Romance
Table 2.4.

Power Analysis for Attitudes about Workplace Romances Predicting the Willingness to Engage in a Workplace Romance
Table 2.5.

Power Analysis for Organizational Policy Predicting the Willingness to Engage in a Workplace Romance
Table 2.6.

Power Analysis for the Interaction Between Conscientiousness and Policy Predicting the Willingness to Engage in a Workplace Romance
Table 2.7.

Power Analysis for Relationship Type Predicting the Willingness to Engage in a Workplace Romance
Table 2.8.

Power Analysis for the Interaction Between Relationship Type and Organizational Policy Predicting the Willingness to Engage in a Workplace Romance
Table 2.9.
Power Analysis for Relationship Motive Predicting the Willingness to Engage in a Workplace Romance

![Graph showing power analysis for relationship motive predicting workplace romance.](image-url)
Table 2.10.

Power Analysis for Relationship Secrecy Predicting Job and Life Satisfaction
Table 2.11.

Power Analysis for Regression Model with Continuous Variables Predicting the Willingness to Engage in a Workplace Romance
Table 2.11.

Power Analysis for Regression Model with Manipulated Variables Predicting the Willingness to Engage in a Workplace Romance