

FROM BOARDROOMS TO BEDROOMS: UNVEILING WORKPLACE EXTRAMARITAL AFFAIRS



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Abstract

This study investigates the impact of power dynamics, gender roles, and organizational structures on extramarital affairs within professional environments. It examines how hierarchical structures and societal conventions influence relationships, frequently to the detriment of women. This research employs interdisciplinary approaches, including Marxist alienation, power-approach theory, and social identity theory, to link workplace infidelity to broader concerns of gender inequity, and corporate accountability. The study seeks to examine the influence of organizational hierarchies on workplace relationships, the significance of cultural notions such as "ibuisim" and "neo-ibuisim" within Indonesian society, and the psychological and professional ramifications of these dynamics. It also assesses business policies and human resources initiatives in the management of workplace relationships. A desk research analysis method is employed, examining literature from sociology, psychology, and management disciplines. Secondary data from international research offer insights into workplace infidelity and gender discrepancies. Principal themes encompass power and gender dynamics, workplace hierarchies, cultural expectations, and human resource regulations pertaining to workplace relationships. The study emphasizes the influence of authority and control on relationships, frequently resulting in exploitation, harassment, and professional stagnation for women. This study enhances gender equity, and corporate governance by promoting regulations that guarantee equitable and secure professional environments. It advocates for a decentralized, decolonized, and gender-sensitive approach to workplace relations, highlighting the necessity for ethical business frameworks that avert exploitation and foster diversity and equality.

Keywords: Workplace Affairs, Gender Inequality, Power Imbalance, Sexual Hubris, Neo-Ibusm

INTRODUCTION

Extramarital affairs in the workplace have garnered heightened scrutiny due to their extensive repercussions beyond the parties directly engaged. Numerous studies emphasize the adverse consequences, including sexual harassment, conflicts of interest, and abuse of power (Lickey et al., 2009). The influence of corporate culture and workplace architecture on power dynamics is still inadequately examined.

The prevalence of infidelity differs among nations. A JustDating survey positions Indonesia as the second-highest in Asia, with 40% of couples acknowledging extramarital affairs (RRI, 2024). In the United States, 20% of married men and 13% of married women have engaged in infidelity (If Studies, 2018). Thailand, Denmark, and Germany exhibit the highest rates of infidelity globally, whereas Israel, Turkey, and China demonstrate the lowest rates (Outrage Magazine, 2020).

Extramarital affairs entail clandestine romantic or sexual interactions occurring outside of marriage (Song & Nadarajah, 2022). Betzig's research (1989) in Kia et al. (2013) identified infidelity as a significant contributor to divorce across several cultures. The COVID-19 pandemic further obscured personal and professional boundaries, resulting in a rise in instances of both physical and virtual adultery (Rosaline & Kasaraneni, 2024). Despite extensive research on infidelity, spanning counseling experiences (Moller & Vossler, 2015) to behavioral analyses (Arantes et al., 2020), there is limited emphasis on the influence of workplace power relations on women's experiences in extramarital encounters.

In Indonesia, conventional gender roles influenced by "ibuisim" have historically delineated women's positions as spouses and mothers (Kabullah & Fajri, 2021). Despite contemporary "neo-ibuisim" enabling women's political and economic engagement, societal norms continue to emphasize female loyalty. Extramarital affairs continue to occur, indicating underlying structural factors, including gender disparities in the workplace and emotional coercion.

Workplace connections are not merely personal ethical shortcomings; they are influenced by power dynamics that generate chances and pressures for such interactions (Abzug, 2016). Hierarchical organizational systems frequently disfavor women, thereby hindering career advancement (Chan-Serafin et al., 2017). Power imbalances can result in sexual hubris, as those in positions of authority perceive themselves as entitled to exploit their status for sexual advantage (Mainiero, 2020). Women reporting harassment frequently encounter societal stigma, adversely affecting their jobs (Hart & McLaughlin, 2024). Unreported incidents result in psychological suffering and job isolation (Blackstone, Uggan, & McLaughlin, 2009).

Studies indicate that those in positions of authority are more susceptible to infidelity, attributed to increased possibilities and the perception that they can hide their behaviors (Williams et al., 2013). Simultaneously, sexploitation transpires when persons in subordinate roles leverage their appeal to obtain professional benefits from their superiors (Mainiero, 2020). This illustrates a multifaceted interaction among gender, job hierarchy, and sexual dynamics.

The dual-mating strategy idea posits that women may pursue adulterous relationships for genetic advantages while retaining their primary partner for economic

security (Murphy, Phillips, & Blake, 2024). Workplace romances are frequently motivated by proximity, common interests, and regular interactions, impacting company culture and communication (Cowan & Horan, 2014).

Although workplace connections may occasionally improve productivity and job satisfaction, they can also result in stress, diminished mental well-being, and heightened employee turnover (Anand, Doll, & Centobelli, 2023). Efficient Human Resource Management (HRM) is crucial for reconciling organizational policies with employee autonomy. Prohibitive measures against workplace romances may prove ineffective, particularly when rooted in authentic emotions (Doll & Woodside, 2024). Consequently, HR regulations should take contextual elements into account to rectify power imbalances while avoiding excessive limitations on personal connections (Horan, Chory, Craw, & Mainiero, 2023).

Statistical approaches, including the Conway–Maxwell–Poisson and Pareto distributions, facilitate the analysis of adulterous behavior patterns, underscoring their complexity (Song & Nadarajah, 2022).

Extramarital affairs in the workplace warrant analysis through sociocultural, organizational, and evolutionary perspectives. Comprehending the influence of workplace structures, gender roles, and power dynamics on these matters is crucial for addressing their wider implications. This study seeks to offer a more holistic perspective by incorporating interdisciplinary methodologies, highlighting both institutional factors and human decisions..

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Beyond Affection: The Influence of Power and Gender on Professional Relationships

Power affects both tangible and intangible facets of existence, encompassing emotions and psychological experiences (Raekstad, 2018). This viewpoint elucidates how women engaged in professional relationships encounter societal pressure, stigma, and manipulation stemming from power disparities. Consistent with Marx's notion of alienation, Jabiri (2017) contends that women in workplace partnerships frequently lack autonomy over their time, creativity, and emotional resources, rendering them more reliant on superior partners both professionally and personally.

Marx's theory of alienation elucidates how capitalism results in individuals relinquishing control over their potential and actions, hence engendering power disparities (Raekstad, 2018). This concept is pertinent in professional partnerships when power dynamics influence interactions. Jabiri (2017) delineates three principal forms of women's alienation: firstly, their exclusion from political and professional arenas via externalization and exceptionalization; secondly, their subjugation through symbolic or physical violence, resulting in exacerbated power imbalances; and thirdly, objectification, which legitimizes their absence from decision-making positions. These alienation processes exacerbate workplace disparities, especially in romantic relationships.

Power encompasses not only material dominance but also the influence over social connections (Raekstad, 2018). Disparate power dynamics, particularly between superiors and subordinates, can adversely affect women's psychosocial well-being. Wilkinson and Pickett (2010) emphasize that socioeconomic inequality frequently results in mental health

challenges and deteriorated relationships. In professional environments, power may be exhibited through coercion, favoritism, or emotional manipulation.

Keltner et al. (2003) present the power-approach theory, positing that power affects cognition, emotions, and behavior, enabling individuals to concentrate on personal objectives with diminished constraints. Individuals in positions of authority may perceive others as simple instruments for the attainment of their goals (Gruenfeld et al., 2008). Research indicates that men with pronounced power goals are inclined to pursue casual sexual encounters (Hofer et al., 2010; Kunstman & Maner, 2011). Furthermore, moral licensing theory posits that individuals in positions of authority may rationalize immoral conduct subsequent to doing ostensibly virtuous behaviors (Hershcovics et al., 2017; Page & Pina, 2018).

Gender discrepancies exacerbate these challenges, since women in subordinate roles encounter increased risks of exploitation and workplace harassment. Maia et al. (2023) indicate that women encounter a higher prevalence of sexist remarks (42.9%) and unsolicited suggestive gestures (32.3%). The workplace hierarchy influences the reporting of harassment, with merely 18.6% of women and 12.5% of males notifying authorities of incidences. Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986, in Powell, 2001) elucidates how individuals safeguard their in-group, frequently hindering women's ability to confront male-dominated power systems.

Political ideology influences views of authority and hierarchy. Conservatives generally advocate for conventional frameworks that emphasize stability and authority, whereas liberals value equality and justice (Jost et al., 2003 in Ortiz-Bonnin & Blahopoulou, 2025). Power dynamics in workplace relationships enable persons in superior positions to exploit subordinates, fostering a reliance on essential resources governed by the influential (Blau, 1964; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959; Thacker & Ferris, 1991). When faced with power abuse, individuals either exhibit resistance (reactance) or adopt passivity (learned helplessness), contingent upon their impression of control (Thacker & Ferris, 1991 in Powell, 2001).

Comprehending power dynamics within businesses can facilitate the establishment of equitable workplaces where professional and interpersonal relationships operate without exploitation. Rectifying power disparities is essential for fostering ethical and equitable professional settings.

The Elevated Cost of Desire: Navigating Extramarital Affairs in the Workplace

Extramarital affairs in the workplace entail romantic or sexual connections among employees, with at least one individual being married. These relationships are shaped by organizational frameworks, workplace culture, and regular contacts (Abzug, 2016). Johnson (1970b) in Azbug (2016) asserts that organizational hierarchies, particularly between superiors and subordinates, generate considerable potential for such relationships.

Multiple elements facilitate workplace extramarital affairs, such as extended proximity, strong professional collaboration, and organizational power dynamics (Quinn, 1977; Anand et al., 2023). Prolonged interaction cultivates emotional and physical attraction (Panigrahy et al., 2024). Moreover, organizational frameworks and gender-oriented power dynamics affect the characteristics of these connections (Villarreal, 2010).

LaBier (2010) in Syaebani et al. (2020) classifies workplace extramarital affairs into various categories. "It's-Only-Lust" affairs are predicated solely on sexual attraction,

whereas "I'll-Show-You" encounters stem from unhappiness or a desire for retribution against a spouse. "Just-In-The-Head" affairs pertain to emotional attachments devoid of physical interaction, while "All-In-The-Family" affairs complicate personal and professional dynamics by engaging in-laws. "It's-Not-Really-An-Affair" affairs transpire when one participant regards the relationship with gravity, while the other does not. Ultimately, "Mind-Body" relationships encompass profound emotional, intellectual, sexual, and spiritual bonds, frequently resulting in significant repercussions such as divorce.

The consequences of workplace extramarital affairs might be significant. Powell (2001) observes that hierarchical structures frequently produce power disparities, resulting in allegations of sexual harassment, favoritism, and disputes. Such connections can undermine team cohesion, diminish morale, and reduce production (Cowan & Horan, 2014). Relationships between bosses and subordinates increase the likelihood of coercion and unethical decision-making (Pierce & Aguinis, 1997).

Organizations employ diverse techniques to mitigate workplace extramarital relationships. Certain firms employ "love contracts" to guarantee professional behavior in working interactions (Milligan, 2022). Digital surveillance and workplace advisory services are being employed to manage interpersonal connections (Panigrahy et al., 2024). Establishing explicit policies and upholding ethical workplace norms helps alleviate the hazards linked to extramarital affairs, promoting a just and efficient work environment.

Workplace Romance: Enhancing Engagement or Transgressing Boundaries?

Panigrahy, Jena, and Priyadarshini (2024) employed many prior ideas to elucidate the notion of workplace romance. Quinn (1977) initially described workplace romance as a relationship between two organisational members that third parties regard as possessing traits of sexual attraction. Pierce and Aguinis (2001) subsequently broadened this description, asserting that workplace romance encompasses two primary categories of workplace relationships: hierarchical and lateral. A hierarchical relationship exists between personnel at various organisational levels, such as between a manager and a subordinate. Hierarchical relationships often result in issues due to power inequalities that can incite conflicts and antagonism (Powell, 2001).

Workplace romance (WR) is described as a consensual connection between two individuals that includes physical or sexual intimacy within the workplace (Powell & Foley, 1998; Anand et al., 2023). Another idea posits that workplace romance denotes a non-platonic relationship between two organisational members characterised by sexual desire, expressed affection, and recognition that the relationship transcends mere professional and platonic boundaries (Horan & Chory, 2011).

Employees are more inclined to form romantic relationships with colleagues, partly due to the greater amount of time spent in the workplace compared to time with family (Schor, 1991, in Powell, 2001). While these ties are often a crucial element of workplace social and relational dynamics, they yield intricate repercussions for individuals, groups, and organisations (Chory & Hoke, 2019). Elements such as geographical closeness, perceived intentions, and team dynamics might affect workplace romance. Consistent physical proximity, whether resulting from nearby work environments or employment obligations necessitating ongoing engagement, may foster romantic love (Quinn, 1977; Sias, 2015; Anand et al., 2023).

Quinn and Lees (1984) delineated three categories of professional romances: true love, characterised by a sincere and enduring relationship that frequently culminates in marriage; the fling, defined as an intense yet ephemeral relationship; and the utilitarian relationship, founded on reciprocal advantages. Romantic relationships between employees of equal status are less complex than those with a hierarchical dynamic. Mainiero (2020) highlighted that hierarchical work relationships generate intricate power and dependency dynamics, including reliance on tasks and professional progression.

Pierce and Aguinis (1997) contended that hierarchical workplace relationships are more prone to lead to sexual harassment. This is especially applicable to relationships that develop directly between leaders and subordinates. The contributing factors include: (a) job dependency necessitating ongoing social interaction post-relationship; (b) the potential for a subordinate to pursue the relationship for career advancement; and (c) intrinsic power imbalances wherein a superior exerts influence over a subordinate (Aguinis, Nesler, Quigley, Lee, & Tedeschi, 1996, in Pierce & Aguinis, 1997). These dynamics may elevate the probability of sexual coercion or inequitable leadership judgements.

Workplace romance can affect employee behavior, encompassing performance, loyalty, engagement, and job happiness (Cavico & Mujtaba, 2021; Chory & Gillen Hoke, 2020; Malachowski et al., 2012). Power disparities within companies frequently generate tensions, particularly for women, who encounter elevated expectations and pressures in these dynamics (Roscigno, 2019). The ramifications of professional romance can be both advantageous and detrimental. Romantic relationships can enhance commitment, productivity, and overall well-being (Biggs et al., 2012). Nonetheless, they may also result in conflicts, ethical dilemmas, animosity, and workplace discord (Burke, 2016).

Sexual harassment in the workplace constitutes a significant problem with extensively recorded adverse consequences. It diminishes productivity, hinders job advancement (Bostock & Daley, 2007; Jagsi et al., 2016 in Raj et al., 2020), and precipitates physical and mental health problems, such as depression and suicidal ideation (Harnois & Bastos, 2018; Hom et al., 2017 in Raj et al., 2020). It is additionally associated with substance usage and psychological suffering (Rospenda et al., 2009; Buchanan et al., 2008 in Raj et al., 2020).

Power hierarchies perpetuate workplace inequity. Subordinate employees are more susceptible to control and injustice owing to restricted access to grievance procedures (Doeringer & Piore, 1971; Pfeffer & Cohen, 1984 in Roscigno, 2019). This complicates the ability of individuals, especially women, to contest inequitable treatment. Colleagues' perceptions influence the perception of workplace romance (Alder & Quist, 2014). Workplace romances frequently generate greater complications than other professional relationships (Gillen Hoke & Chory, 2015). Adverse perceptions may result in exclusion, social distancing, and ineffective communication (Quinn, 1977; Alder & Quist, 2014).

Organizational norms and leadership practices are essential in influencing workplace equity (Roscigno, 2019). Transgressing romance-related conventions may result in social stigma, particularly for women, who encounter greater scrutiny in such circumstances. Given that workplace romance is associated with power dynamics, comprehending these interactions is crucial for resolving the obstacles encountered by women in these partnerships.

When Romance Confronts Hierarchy: Analyzing the Inequalities

Human sexuality, including gender identity and expression, is fluid and shaped by societal norms. The Genderbread Person framework (Syaebani & Ekosiwi, 2017) clarifies the influence of gender and sexual orientation on power dynamics inside the workplace, especially on romantic relationships. Traditional gender conventions often sustain power imbalances, making women more vulnerable in workplace settings (Bettencourt et al., 2011). Heteronormativity (Kadir, 2007 in Syaebani & Ekosiwi, 2017) coerces individuals, especially women, to conform to society standards, affecting their professional experiences and responses to infidelity.

Male-dominated environments frequently perpetuate power disparities, heightening the probability of inappropriate relationships or harassment (de Haas & Timmerman, 2010; Gruber & Morgan, 2004). This habit often functions as a means of maintaining hierarchical systems (Morrall et al., 2015). Gender is not merely biological (Muehlenhard & Peterson, 2011 in Kinanti et al., 2021) but also a social construct that influences workplace dynamics and perceptions of "quid pro quo" situations, where career advancement is associated with romantic or sexual involvement (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2018). Organizations exhibiting enhanced gender balance alleviate these challenges, but male-dominated environments frequently prolong them (Berdahl, 2007).

Power hierarchies sometimes limit women's access to leadership roles (Jabiri, 2017), and workplace romances may illustrate these inequalities. Women are more susceptible to exploitation in these situations (Powell, 2001), as gender stereotypes portray them as opportunistic, whereas men are viewed as motivated by emotion or ego (Biggs et al., 2012). Research indicates that female executives involved in extramarital affairs encounter less condemnation than their male equivalents (Batra et al., 2024), highlighting the gendered dynamics of workplace scrutiny.

Historically, women have been anticipated to tolerate sexual harassment as a facet of career advancement (Gurney, 1985 in Harries, 2022). The performativity of intimacy (Thwaites, 2017) complicates women's navigation of workplace power dynamics, heightening their susceptibility. Jabiri's (2017) interpretation of Karl Marx's alienation theory elucidates the exclusion of women from power by both symbolic and physical violence, hence sustaining workplace disparities.

Mainiero (2020) characterizes "sexual hubris" as an exploitative mindset that permits powerful individuals to abuse their authority for sexual engagements. Conversely, "sexploitation" is manipulative tactics employed by those of inferior rank who exploit their sexual allure to obtain advantages or favorable treatment from those in power. These mismatches generate complex and often exploitative relationships inside organizations. Improper behavior, such as sexual harassment and workplace exploitation, occurs when individuals in positions of power neglect to govern their actions. MacKinnon (1979), referenced in Mainiero (2020), contends that sexual harassment functions as a means of control inside patriarchal structures. Individuals who report harassment or exploitative workplace encounters frequently encounter ostracism and adverse social consequences (Sumanth et al., 2011). The JP Morgan Chase case (2020) illustrates how women who opposed the stringent masculine culture were sidelined.

Moreover, organizational power dynamics often compel women into partnerships devoid of complete permission, as they apprehend potential implications for their

employment or social status. Mainiero (2020) notes that women frequently participate in "sexual performances" with dominating men in male-dominated environments, expecting professional advantages. Hierarchical workplace romances continue to be common. Hewlett's research (2010), referenced in Mainiero (2020), reveals that 34% of female executives recognized their peers participating in connections with superiors, while 37% perceived these interactions as beneficial for professional progression. Alternative study indicates that women who leverage their sexual allure for professional advancement frequently encounter enduring drawbacks, such as hindered career advancement and diminished incomes (Bradley et al., 2005, in Mainiero, 2020).

The #MeToo movement has heightened awareness of power disparities in professional environments. Infidelity instances marked by power struggles frequently result in negative repercussions for women, such as reduced respect from colleagues and possible career interruptions (Mainiero, 2020). Therefore, investigating workplace power dynamics is crucial for comprehending how women maneuver professional interactions within contemporary organizational structures.

Society institutionalizes sexual harassment from an early age (Trigg & Wittenstrom, 1996). The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) characterizes harassment as unwelcome sexual approaches that foster a hostile work environment (McLaughlin, Uggen, & Blackstone, 2012). A multitude of women are reluctant to confront infidelity because of societal stigma; nonetheless, qualitative research offers significant insights into their experiences (van Hooff, 2017). Individuals engaged in workplace relationships frequently encounter feelings of shame, loneliness, and intimidation (Summers & Myklebust, 1992 in Anand et al., 2023).

In male-dominated workplaces, the probability of harassment intensifies, resulting in heightened maltreatment of women (Fitzgerald et al., 1997 in McLaughlin, Uggen, & Blackstone, 2012). Gender norms influence reactions to authority; males dread public disgrace, but women frequently expect male hostility (Atwood, 1992 in Dougherty, 1999). Women displaying dominating characteristics encounter more harassment as they confront traditional gender roles (Berdahl, 2007b in McLaughlin, Uggen, & Blackstone, 2012). These assumptions further marginalize minority women, who often encounter othering in professional environments (Harries, 2022).

Workplace conventions necessitate that women prioritize professionalism and harmony, so constraining their autonomy in relationship management. Positive relationships with coworkers can reduce harassment risks, whereas negative interactions with supervisors intensify them (Roscigno, 2019). Ultimately, professional romance mirrors wider societal inequalities. The Marxist alienation theory (Jabiri, 2017) highlights how power disparities influence workplace dynamics, sustaining women's oppression via exclusion and dominance. Comprehending these relationships is crucial for tackling gender disparity in professional settings.

Gendered Expectations: The Progression of Women's Roles in Indonesian Society

Historically, Indonesian culture has defined women's roles through rules that prioritize their domestic responsibilities and subordination to men. Julia Suryakusuma (1996) in Kabullah & Fajri (2021) established the notion of "ibuism," which positions women as partners to their husbands and custodians of domestic peace, so promoting

devotion and commitment to family and the nation. This conventional viewpoint also presents concerns about gender equality.

The cultural approach highlights that workplace or community norms and values might affect the availability of possibilities for individuals to partake in extramarital affairs. Hirsch et al. (2009) assert that the configuration of adulterous possibilities across diverse cultural contexts suggests that social customs, gender roles, and familial structures can influence the propensity for individuals to commit infidelity.

A study by Maykovich (1976), referenced in Azbug (2016), revealed that cultural views towards infidelity differ; women employed outside the home possess greater options for extramarital relationships compared to those who are not employed. This indicates that changes in social and cultural frameworks have resulted in a rise in the incidence of female infidelity.

Furthermore, research by Ellingson et al. (2005) illustrates how corporate and societal norms influence the chances and obstacles for sexual activity. Women may encounter heightened structural constraints in power dynamics inside companies characterized by a robust patriarchal culture. This may result in their engagement in adultery, which might not be solely predicated on free will.

According to an ethnographic study in Mexico by Hirsch (2003), as reported in Azbug (2016), social factors, including friendship networks and gender interaction patterns in the workplace, influence the norms and chances for extramarital affairs. This study suggests that a corporate culture that condones infidelity or perceives it as a facet of social interaction may elevate the probability of persons participating in extramarital affairs.

Gender inequality in Indonesia persists as a multifaceted issue shaped by entrenched cultural norms. Notwithstanding economic development, male supremacy endures, influenced by elements such as religion, colonial legacy, and patrilineal customs (Robinson, 2018). Concurrently, progressive principles advocating for women's rights and gender equality are advancing, as the government enacts measures to increase female involvement in decision-making, address gender-based violence, and promote access to education and healthcare (Anggorowati et al., 2023).

In addition to governmental activities, Gerwani (Gerakan Wanita Indonesia) significantly contributed to the advocacy of women's rights. The group empowered rural women via the promotion of health, sanitation, and nutrition awareness. The Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDF) acknowledged Gerwani's accomplishments as a model women's movement. Prominent individuals such as Suwarti Bintang Suradi, Darmini, and Sudjinah operated within the WIDF in East Berlin, advocating for the international recognition of Indonesian women's efforts (McGregor, 2012).

Sudjinah emphasized the effects of colonialism on poverty, gender disparity, and women's struggle for autonomy. She participated in international conferences to promote awareness of these concerns. Simultaneously, Sulami, the Deputy Secretary-General of Gerwani, condemned child marriage, educational limitations imposed on women, and feudal customs that compromised women's rights (McGregor, 2012). Notwithstanding Gerwani's progressive position on gender equality, cultural impediments endure, especially with traditional gender roles and workplace power dynamics.

The notion of neo-ibuiism arose after the Reformation, affording women enhanced positions in politics and society but preserving their duties as spouses and mothers

(Kabullah & Fajri, 2021). In contrast to conventional ibuisism, which restricted women to the domestic realm, neo-ibuisism permits their engagement in public life while still demanding devotion and obedience in both personal and professional interactions. This dual expectation engenders cultural friction as women traverse old moral standards and contemporary socio-economic requirements.

Research on ibuisism and neo-ibuisism indicates that although women have achieved autonomy, they continue to function under patriarchal frameworks. Power inequalities in the workplace can result in relationships shaped by authority and control. From this viewpoint, extramarital affairs involving women should not be regarded merely as moral transgressions but as outcomes of imbalanced power dynamics and divergent cultural expectations. In Indonesian society, where marital faithfulness is highly valued, additional research is required to comprehend how workplace power dynamics affect women's choices concerning extramarital affairs.

By examining the evolving roles of women within Indonesia's socio-cultural framework, it becomes evident that true gender equality requires not only policy reforms but also a shift in societal expectations. Creating a work environment where women are valued, protected, and empowered is not just a step toward progress, it is a fundamental necessity for sustainable social and economic development.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that extramarital affairs in the workplace are not solely individual moral shortcomings but are intricately linked to overarching systems of corporate power dynamics, gender roles, and sociocultural expectations, especially in patriarchal societies like Indonesia. The convergence of professional hierarchies, conventional gender conventions, and cultural ideologies such as ibuisism and neo-ibuisism significantly impacts women's experiences of workplace romances. Instead of being viewed only as perpetrators of infidelity, women in these situations frequently maneuver through intricate relationships characterized by limited autonomy, emotional manipulation, and structural disparity.

Essential findings reveal that power imbalances inside organizations markedly elevate the likelihood of coercive or exploitative relationships, with women in subordinate positions shouldering disproportionate psychological, professional, and social responsibilities. Cultural frameworks perpetuate expectations of loyalty and commitment for women, so further constraining their autonomy in navigating professional and personal relationships. The combined phenomena of sexploitation and sexual hubris illustrate the manifestation of power asymmetry in both dominant and subordinate roles. Furthermore, gender stereotypes influence public views on workplace romance, frequently portraying women more negatively than males, thereby exacerbating stigma and hindering their career advancement. The organizational culture significantly influences the perception and management of relationships, consequently affecting employee well-being and the ethical integrity of the workplace.

This study offers significant theoretical contributions. It employs Marxist theory of alienation to elucidate the exploitation of women's emotional, creative, and professional energy in male-dominated settings. It broadens current classifications of workplace romance by integrating socio-political and cultural aspects, especially from non-Western

viewpoints. Additionally, it advocates for a gender-sensitive expansion of power-approach theory, examining the interplay of authority, sexual autonomy, and moral justification within workplace relationship dynamics. This study integrates organizational theory with feminist critique to provide a sophisticated understanding of infidelity in professional situations, viewing it as a phenomena influenced by institutional structures and cultural beliefs rather than merely isolated moral choices.

This research underscores significant deficiencies in the social sciences, especially on the intricate interactions among gender, culture, and organizational structure. It highlights the frequently imperceptible nature of structural coercion, wherein cultural and institutional norms conceal the exploitative elements of workplace romance. The emotional labor and social expenses associated—particularly for women managing professional relationships in hierarchical environments—are predominantly underexamined, especially in emerging economies and non-Western cultures.

Notwithstanding its observations, the study possesses multiple drawbacks. The predominant emphasis on Indonesian society may limit the applicability of the findings to diverse cultural or organizational contexts. Furthermore, the analysis predominantly relies on existing literature and is devoid of fresh fieldwork or qualitative interviews that could offer a more profound, experiential comprehension of these dynamics. The study predominantly investigates male-female workplace interactions, excluding significant viewpoints from LGBTQ+ individuals who may encounter workplace romance and power dynamics in distinct ways.

Future study should concentrate on qualitative ethnographic studies that investigate the lived experiences of women engaged in adulterous workplace relationships, especially in societies characterized by significant gender hierarchies. Comparative cross-cultural studies would be useful in elucidating how diverse societies and organizational cultures influence the dynamics between gender and power in workplace romance. Furthermore, there is a necessity for more inclusive research to investigate how LGBTQ+ individuals maneuver through these dynamics. There is an urgent necessity to assess the efficacy and ethical ramifications of HR practices, including love contracts, surveillance, and relationship disclosure policies.

The results of this study provide numerous practical advantages for various stakeholders. Organizations and HR experts must design workplace policies that recognize and rectify power inequalities, instead than enforcing universal prohibitions on workplace romance. Priority should be given to gender-sensitive training programs and support networks for reporting harassment. Policymakers should promote legal frameworks that safeguard individuals against nuanced emotional and professional pressure, while simultaneously advancing workplace equity through comprehensive gender-focused legislation. Advocates for gender equality can utilize these insights to contest stigmatizing narratives around women's sexuality and professional behavior, promoting a more compassionate and systemic comprehension of the challenges. Finally, educational institutions and academics should integrate multidisciplinary viewpoints into their courses and create novel instruments for evaluating the effects of power dynamics on emotional well-being, ethical decision-making, and career advancement.

This study emphasizes that workplace romance, especially when associated with extramarital romances, requires analysis through a comprehensive framework

encompassing organizational, cultural, and gender-based power dynamics. Addressing these intricate dynamics is crucial for fostering more equitable, respectful, and inclusive professional environments.

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