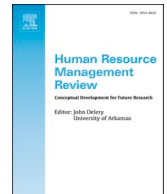




ELSEVIER

Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Human Resource Management Review

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/hrmr

Full Length Article

A bibliometric-systematic literature review of workplace gossip research

Junaid Khalid^a, Qingxiong Derek Weng^{a,*}, Hafiz Muhammad Usman Khizar^b^a School of Management, University of Science and Technology of, China^b University of Dubai

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Workplace gossip

Gossip triad

Gossip sender

Gossip receiver

Gossip target

Bibliometric-systematic literature review B-SLR

ABSTRACT

In recent years, scholars have shown immense interest in investigating the dynamics of workplace gossip. As a complex and rapidly growing phenomenon, workplace gossip has generated a wide range of findings. This rapid growth has led to confusion and fragmentation in the literature, highlighting the need for a comprehensive literature synthesis. To address this, we employed a bibliometric-systematic literature review (B-SLR) approach to integrate the diverse literature on workplace gossip. We systematically searched, selected, and critically reviewed a sample of 258 research articles from the Web of Science and Scopus databases. Our bibliometric analysis provides a thorough overview of 258 articles, followed by a critical literature synthesis of 183 articles, that organized prior studies into two main themes: antecedents and outcomes of workplace gossip. These are further categorized into three sub-themes: gossip sender, gossip receiver, and gossip target. Additionally, we developed a conceptual framework to illustrate the interactions within the gossip triad and proposed a gossip typology based on organizational hierarchical levels, along with practical future research guidelines. This study brings clarity and coherence to the complex and rapidly expanding field of workplace gossip, establishing a robust knowledge base to guide future research and inform policy development.

1. Introduction

Gossip is an integral aspect of human communication and constitutes a significant portion of individuals' daily interactions in the workplace (Greenslade-Yeats, Cooper-Thomas, Morrison, & Corner, 2023; Hu et al., 2024). Workplace gossip can be positive and negative, it occurs when one organizational member engages in informal and evaluative communication with another member about an absent third member (Brady, Brown, & Liang, 2017; Dores Cruz, Nieper, Testori, Martinescu, & Beersma, 2021). To qualify as gossip, the communication should (a) be targeted toward individuals (b) be evaluative, (c) occur in a social setting in which the target is known to both the gossip sender and the gossip recipient, and (d) be disseminated in the absence of the target (Sun, Schilpzand, & Liu, 2023). Workplace gossip has garnered increasing attention in recent years due to its multifaceted nature and substantial impact on individuals, groups, and organizations.

Workplace gossip is inherently more complex than other interpersonal workplace dynamics due to its triadic nature (Lee & Barnes, 2021). Unlike dyadic situations that involve only a perpetrator and a victim such as bullying, incivility, and mobile phubbing. Gossip includes three distinct parties: the sender, the receiver, and the target (Sun et al., 2023). This tripartite interaction forms multiple

* Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: junaidkhalid219@gmail.com (J. Khalid), Wqx886@ustc.edu.cn (Q.D. Weng), hkhizar@ud.ac.ae (H.M.U. Khizar).<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.hrmr.2025.101092>

Received 20 June 2024; Received in revised form 14 April 2025; Accepted 9 May 2025

Available online 16 May 2025

1053-4822/© 2025 Elsevier Inc. All rights are reserved, including those for text and data mining, AI training, and similar technologies.

layers of communication, influence, and complexities (Lian, Li, Pan, Du, & Zhao, 2023). The sender initiates the gossip, conveying the evaluative information. The receiver, who listens to, and actively engages in discussion, and may further disseminate it, plays a crucial role as an intermediary (Kakarika, Taghavi, & González-Gómez, 2023). This individual can either amplify the gossip by spreading it further or mitigate its impact by withholding or downplaying the information. The target, who is unaware of the gossip, bears the consequences without direct participation in the conversation (Cheng et al., 2023). This triangular relationship creates a web of interactions that complicates its understanding. We have visually presented this complexity in Fig. 1, a conceptual diagram that illustrates the intricate interplay between the three parties involved in gossip and explains this triadic structure with the help of social exchange and shared reality theories.

Research on gossip gained momentum around 2018 within the fields of organizational behavior and human resource management as shown in Fig. 3. Early studies, up until 2019, primarily focused on understanding the dynamics of gossip from the perspectives of the gossip sender and the target (Beersma & Van Kleef, 2012; Wu, Birtch, Chiang, & Zhang, 2018). However, the field underwent a significant shift when researchers began to explore the role of gossip receivers, introducing a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon (Bai, Wang, Chen, & Li, 2020; Greenslade-Yeats et al., 2023; S. H. Lee & Barnes, 2021). This shift, while valuable, has also contributed to an increasing fragmentation of research on workplace gossip, driven by the introduction of new perspectives and the complexity of the factors involved. Firstly, the field is still in its nascent stages, with no clear consensus on key issues. Secondly, the growing scholarly interest has led to a surge in diverse studies, further complicating the landscape. Lastly, the complex and multi-faceted nature of workplace gossip has resulted in a wide range of findings, contributing to confusion and inconsistency in the literature. To address these challenges, the present study employs a bibliometric-systematic literature review (B-SLR) approach to resolve the existing shortcomings in the workplace gossip literature (Marzi, Balzano, Caputo, & Pellegrini, 2025). Specifically, this review aims to answer the following research questions.

- RQ1. : What is the current status and profile of research on workplace gossip?
- RQ2. : What are the significant thematic areas within workplace gossip research?
- RQ3. : What are the limitations and knowledge gaps in previous research?
- RQ4. : What are the future research directions that may be taken to advance the research on workplace gossip?

Ostensibly, there exist a few notable contributions related to review studies on workplace gossip, each adding valuable perspectives. For example, [Dores Cruz, Nieper, et al. \(2021\)](#) conducted a systematic review to address definitional issues of gossip and provided an integrative definition. [Nieper, Beersma, Dijkstra, and Van Kleef \(2022\)](#) examined the mixed findings in the literature regarding the relationship between gossip and pro-social behavior. [Greenslade-Yeats, Cooper-Thomas, Corner, and Morrison \(2024\)](#) conducted a narrative review and provided a paradox-constitutive perspective of organizational gossip. [Sun et al. \(2023\)](#) performed a narrative review encompassing 51 studies from 1977 to 2021. In contrast to these insightful contributions, our review is distinct, novel, and contributes in several ways. First, we utilized a multi-method approach to review the literature, which is widely regarded as the gold standard in evidence synthesis due to its transparency, replicability, and comprehensiveness ([Marzi et al., 2025](#)). B-SLRs are known for providing an unbiased summary of the available evidence ([Thorpe, Holt, Macpherson, & Pittaway, 2005](#); [Tranfield, Denyer, & Smart, 2003](#)). Additionally, our sample includes 258 studies up to March 2025, offering a comprehensive and current review of the literature.

Second, workplace gossip is regarded as an effective way of communicating organizational culture and values ([Baumeister, Zhang,](#)

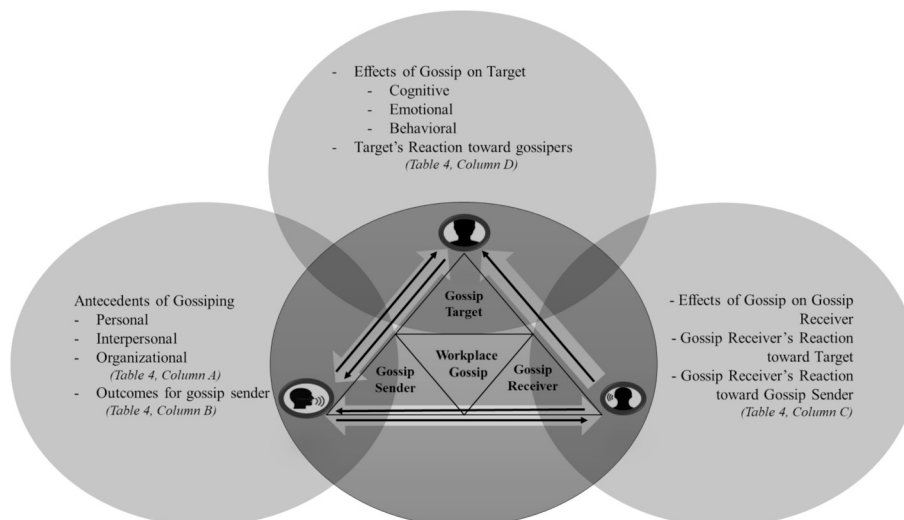


Fig. 1. The Triadic Structure of Gossip.

& Vohs, 2004), fostering a sense of closeness among employees, aiding in the establishment and maintenance of social bonds (Beersma & Van Kleef, 2011; Jiang, Xu, & Hu, 2019; Walter, Kreutzer, & Kreutzer, 2021), contributing to group cohesion (Chang & Kuo, 2021), and enhancing employee performance through reflective learning (Bai et al., 2020). However, gossiping can also be used as an act of retaliation (Jeuken, Beersma, Ten Velden, & Dijkstra, 2015; Kong, 2018; Yao, Luo, & Zhang, 2020), which can damage the reputation of its target (Dores Cruz et al., 2021), cause stress (Liu, Kwan, & Zhang, 2020; Liu, Wu, Yang, & Jia, 2020), and negatively affect health and well-being of the targeted individuals (Tan, Yam, Zhang, & Brown, 2021). These conflicting findings create confusion and highlight the need for a comprehensive perspective on workplace gossip. Therefore, this review provides a comprehensive knowledge base by offering a holistic picture of the existing literature on workplace gossip. In doing so, the present study contributes to enhanced clarity and reduced confusion. Our thematic analysis organizes the literature into two broader themes—antecedents and outcomes—and three sub-themes: gossip sender, gossip receiver, and gossip target, each with further sub-themes, making the body of research on workplace gossip more accessible and coherent for scholars. This structured synthesis not only strengthens and updates the knowledge base but also helps researchers recognize trends and gaps in the literature, ultimately guiding clearer and more unified future research trajectories.

Third, this review goes beyond merely synthesizing existing literature. We provide a nuanced conceptualization of the gossip construct based on its triadic and hierarchical nature. Moreover, we critically analyze the existing literature and propose actionable research guidelines. This review provides a clear roadmap for future investigations, offering specific research questions to explore under-researched aspects of workplace gossip and highlighting key neglected areas that need scholarly attention. This approach not only enriches the current understanding but also guides future researchers toward more focused and impactful studies. This contribution empowers scholars to conduct precise research that fosters a deeper and more cohesive understanding of the field as well as contributes to its growth.

2. Theoretical foundation of triadic structure of gossip

Workplace gossip is more than just an exchange of evaluative information (Brady et al., 2017). It is a complex social mechanism where interactions between these three parties shape shared perceptions and power dynamics (Kurland & Pelled, 2000; Zhong, Tang, & Lee, 2024). Understanding workplace gossip in isolation, focusing solely on the sender, receiver, or target, risks overlooking the dynamic and reciprocal nature of these roles and the broader relational consequences that emerge from their interplay. Despite the growing body of research, there remains a lack of a unified theoretical perspective that fully captures the intricacies of this inherently triadic phenomenon. To address this theoretical gap, an integrative framework is needed, one that can account for the shared meaning-making processes as well as the relational exchanges embedded within gossip interactions. Both shared reality theory (SRT) (Hardin & Higgins, 1996) and social exchange theory (SET) (Blau, 1964) offer broad theoretical relevance and explanatory power across various levels within the complex interplay of gossip triad. SRT provides a lens to understand how individuals align their internal states through gossip to form a shared understanding of social realities, while SET offers a foundational framework for examining interpersonal dynamics, reciprocal obligations, and the perceived costs and benefits that govern social relationships through gossip. Together, these theories provide complementary perspectives that are particularly well-suited for unpacking the cognitive, emotional, and relational mechanisms that underpin gossip in organizational settings.

SRT posits that individuals engage in social interactions (gossiping behavior) to construct a common understanding of reality, particularly concerning other individuals (targets) within organizational settings (Hardin & Higgins, 1996). Gossip in the workplace serves as a tool for collective meaning-making. The gossip sender and receiver co-create shared perceptions of the target and shape collective beliefs. Gossip begins with the sender-receiver interaction, where the sender selectively frames information about the target to shape the receiver's perception. The receiver, in turn, acknowledges and aligns their beliefs with the sender, leading to a shared cognitive reality about the target's behavior. While gossip affects the dynamics between sender and receiver, it also socially defines the target. Though absent from the conversation, the target's image is constructed through the sender-receiver exchange of information and evaluation. Over time, repeated gossips affect their cognition, emotion, and behavior. Furthermore, gossip significantly affects the target's reputation, influencing their social standing and relationships. Thus, SRT offers a useful theoretical base to explain how gossip shapes workplace realities, embedding certain narratives into the collective mindset of employees. The gossiping process strengthens group cohesion, promotes friendships between the sender and receiver (Estévez, Wittek, Giardini, Ellwardt, & Krause, 2022), reinforces social norms (Baumeister et al., 2004), and defines the relational dynamics within the gossip triad.

While SRT addresses the cognitive function of gossip, social exchange theory (SET) highlights its strategic motivations (Blau, 1964). SET suggests that workplace interactions operate on cost-benefit analyses, where individuals exchange resources to enhance their social position (Blau, 1964). In gossip, information acts as a form of social currency, influencing workplace dynamics in multiple ways (Martinescu, Jansen, & Beersma, 2021; Outlaw & Baer, 2024). For instance, the sender strategically selects whom to share gossip with, often targeting influential colleagues or those with similar interests. By controlling the flow of information, the sender gains social capital, reinforcing their status within the organization (Kurland & Pelled, 2000).

Gossip senders may have various motives, including information gathering, exerting negative influence, deriving enjoyment, protecting the group, and venting emotions (Beersma & Van Kleef, 2012; Dores Cruz et al., 2019). Meanwhile, the receiver assesses whether engaging in gossip will benefit or harm their standing within the organization. Gossip can strengthen alliances or signal loyalty, making it a relationship-building mechanism (Ellwardt, Steglich, & Wittek, 2012), but receivers may also choose not to participate if they perceive it as detrimental to their interests (S. H. Lee & Barnes, 2021). Such as, when the gossip target is a higher hierarchical individual, it may do more harm than benefit to participate in it for the gossip receiver. The target, often unaware of the gossip, experiences shifts in reputation that may lead to exclusion, reduced cooperation from colleagues, and diminished career growth

opportunities (X. Zhou, Fan, Cheng, & Fan, 2021). Their reactions toward the gossipers can further influence workplace interactions and group dynamics (Zong, Martinescu, Beersma, Xu, & Zhang, 2023). Together, SRT and SET provide a comprehensive framework for understanding workplace gossip, SRT explains how gossip constructs shared realities, while SET reveals the underlying strategic motives that drive gossip behavior.

3. Methodology (Step 1–5)

This study employed the Bibliometric-systematic literature review (B-SLR) methodology (Marzi et al., 2025). The B-SLR approach integrates two complementary methods: bibliometric analysis and systematic literature review. In the first stage, bibliometric techniques are used to objectively identify, map, and quantify the intellectual structure and research trends within the selected field, focusing on metadata analysis (Zupic & Čater, 2015). In the second stage, a systematic literature review offers a qualitative synthesis of the most relevant studies, providing deeper theoretical and contextual insights (Simsek, Fox, & Heavey, 2023). This multi-method approach is particularly valuable because it combines the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative analyses. While bibliometric analysis ensures a comprehensive and unbiased overview of the existing literature, the systematic review enables a critical evaluation and thematic interpretation of the research landscape. Together, they support both breadth and depth of understanding—offering a holistic view through the quantitative mapping of the field, and a specific, nuanced analysis through qualitative synthesis. This dual focus enhances the rigor, transparency, and interpretive richness of the review process, making B-SLR a powerful methodology for exploring complex and evolving research domains (Marzi et al., 2025).

B-SLR follows the 10-step process outlined by Marzi et al. (2025), with the first step related to the study’s boundaries through well-formulated research questions, which we have developed and defined in the introduction. Moreover, as part of this step, we established clear boundaries for our study by establishing inclusion and exclusion criteria presented in Table 1 to ensure the study’s focus and relevance. We included peer-reviewed journal articles, review studies, and research published in the English language that explicitly examines gossip in organizational or work settings. Conversely, we exclude studies that explore gossip in non-work contexts or examine related but distinct concepts, such as rumor, informal communication, and chit-chat. Additionally, studies from unrelated fields, such as computer science, where “gossip” refers to programming-related phenomena, are also excluded.

The second step in this process involves developing a search query. We began with a systematic approach to identifying relevant keywords. An initial search on Google Scholar using the two main keywords, “gossip” AND “workplace,” yielded a broad set of results. To refine our search strategy, two authors independently compiled lists of potential keywords, considering the broad and multifaceted nature of workplace gossip. After multiple rounds of discussion, they finalized a comprehensive keyword list, which was further validated by a third author. Based on these findings, we constructed the final search string to capture all relevant scientific literature on workplace gossip: (gossip AND ((workplace OR organi?ation OR leader OR supervisor* OR manager* OR boss* OR employe* OR subordinate* OR coworker* OR co-worker* OR colleague*) NOT (algorithm* OR protocol*))). This search string fulfills both key criteria for developing an effective search query: specificity and broader applicability. By carefully selecting keywords and exclusion terms, we ensure the query is precise enough to capture studies directly relevant to workplace gossip while remaining broad enough to encompass diverse organizational contexts and perspectives.

The third step is database selection. Given the interdisciplinary nature of gossip research and the need for a high-quality and broad range of scientific articles, we selected Scopus and Web of Science (WoS). Scopus is recognized for its extensive coverage, while WoS is known for its high-quality publication reputation. Moreover, these databases are widely used in existing B-SLRs in business management research (Marzi et al., 2025). The fourth step is data screening and data cross-checking. We conducted an initial search in both databases in October 2024 and then updated this search in March 2025. Our initial search retrieved 610 records from Scopus and 444 records from WoS. After applying filters for publication type (articles and reviews) and language (English), and obtained 447 records from Scopus and 402 from WoS. To ensure relevance, we further filtered studies based on subject categories: Social science, Business,

Table 1
Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria.

No	Criteria	Inclusion	Exclusion
1	Database Source	Articles indexed in Scopus and Web of Science databases	Articles not indexed in Scopus or Web of Science
2	Publication Type	Peer-reviewed journal articles and review studies	Non-peer-reviewed articles, book chapters, dissertations, conference papers, and editorials
3	Language	Articles published in English	Non-English publications
4	Research Context	Studies explicitly examining gossip in organizational or work settings	Studies exploring gossip in non-work contexts
5	Conceptual Focus	Studies where gossip is the primary construct, focusing on its nature, antecedents, or consequences	Studies focusing on related but distinct concepts (e.g., rumor, informal communication, chit-chat, grapevine communication) or using gossip as a secondary/incidental concept
6	Field of Study	Management, organizational behavior, psychology, and other relevant social science disciplines	Unrelated fields such as computer science , where “gossip” refers to technical or algorithmic terms
7	Sample Characteristics	Studies collecting data from employees or students working within organizations	Studies not focused on employee or organizational samples
8	Methodological Relevance	Methodology sections clearly indicating workplace or organizational context	Methodologies lacking clarity on sample context or not situated in formal organizational settings

Management and accounting, and Psychology in Scopus resulting in 357 records; and Management, Applied psychology, Business, Psychology multidisciplinary, Psychology social, Sociology, Ethics, Social science interdisciplinary, industrial psychology, and political science in WoS resulted in 270 records, details of each step is presented in Fig. 2.

The fifth step is data cleaning and export. Conducting metadata analysis using both the Web of Science (WoS) and Scopus databases presents a complex challenge. However, the literature offers user-friendly solutions to streamline this process. Following the three-step procedure outlined by (Caputo & Kargina, 2022), we used the bibliometrix package in R to merge metadata files from both databases. We have downloaded bibliographic data files in .bib format from WoS and Scopus, and then converted them into a merged dataset, and removed duplicate entries within the bibliometrix package. To enhance replicability, we included a YouTube tutorial link in the appendix, offering additional guidance for scholars. After completing these steps, we obtained a final Excel file containing 469 records.

These records then underwent an independent manual screening by two researchers based on predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria through a two-part process. First, we screened the studies based on their titles and abstracts to assess their relevance according to our inclusion and exclusion criteria. Each research paper was classified as A (relevant), B (potentially relevant), or C (irrelevant). Two authors, both active researchers in organizational behavior and human resource management, independently reviewed all 469 studies and finalized their classifications. They then compared their assessments, discussing any discrepancies related to category B articles and reaching a consensus on whether to mark them A (include) or C (exclude). At this stage, 154 irrelevant studies were excluded, and 315 studies proceeded to full-text analysis.

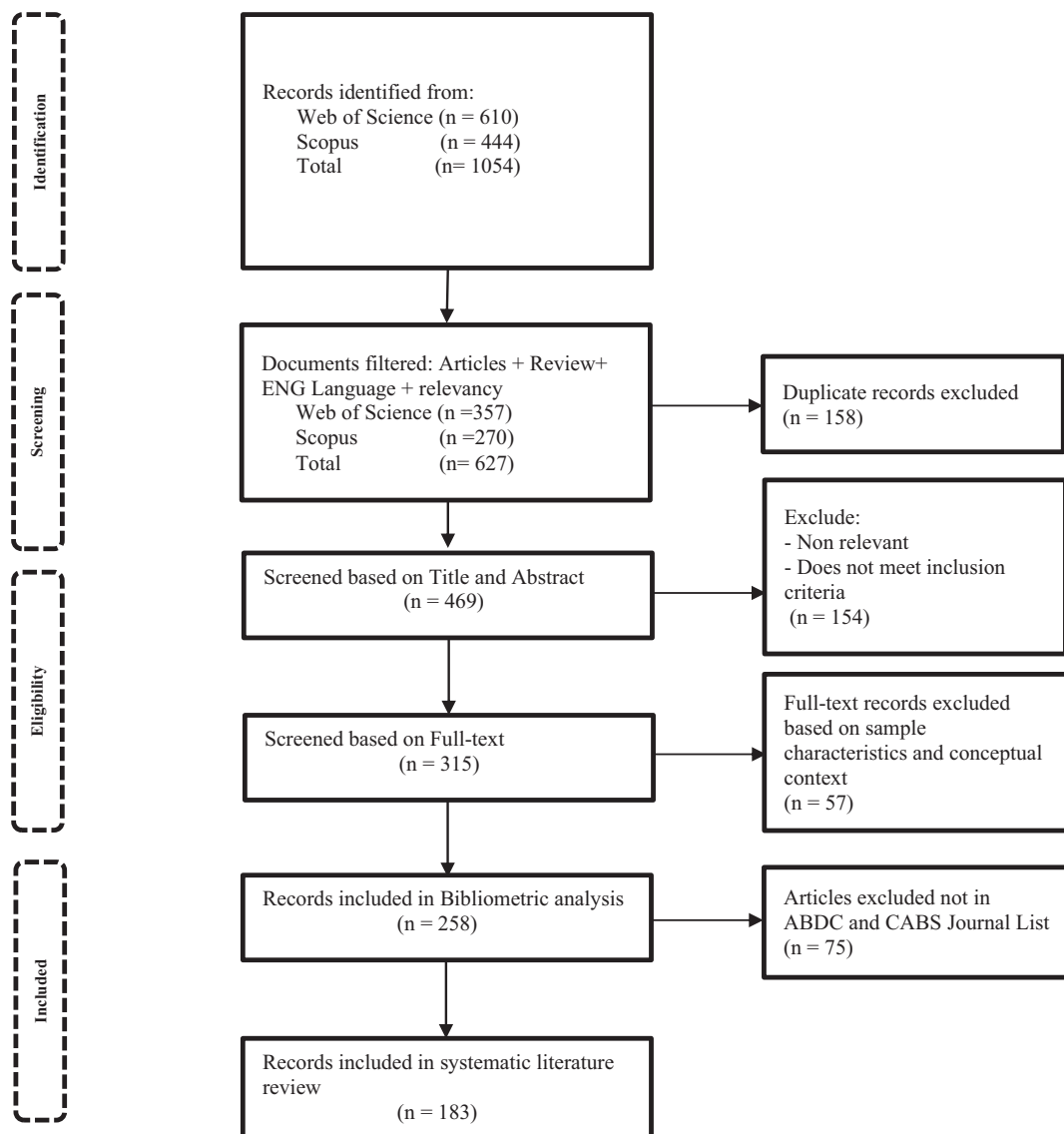


Fig. 2. The PRISMA Flowchart.
Source(s): Our adaptation from Balzano et al. (2024).

To obtain the full texts, we leveraged our institutional online library access and directly contacted the corresponding authors of subscription-based articles via email and professional research platforms such as Research Gate and LinkedIn. The response from scholars was highly positive, enabling us to proceed with the full-text analysis. Using the same independent review process, the two authors conducted an in-depth analysis of each article’s full text, shared their findings, and reached a consensus. A total of 57 studies were excluded based on our inclusion/exclusion criteria, resulting in 258 studies for the final bibliometric analysis. Further we applied a quality-based inclusion filter using the Australian Business Deans Council (ABDC) and the Chartered Association of Business School list (CABS) journal rankings. At this step we excluded articles published in journals not indexed in either the ABDC or CABS lists. This step resulted in the exclusion of 75 studies, thereby refining our final sample to 183 high-quality journal articles for systematic literature review. Fig. 2 presents the PRISMA model, outlining the systematic selection process for the final sample.

4. Results of bibliometric analysis (Step – 6)

The sixth step in the B-SLR process is the bibliometric analysis. We utilized Biblioshiny in R studio to conduct a comprehensive bibliometric analysis of 258 records. The results are presented in terms of bibliometric indicators, which provide an overview of key publication metrics, including documents, authors, keywords, geographical scope, time frame, and other descriptive aspects.

4.1. Bibliometric indicators

The annual production of articles on workplace gossip has shown a significant upward trend over time. From 1980 to the early 2000s, research output remained sporadic, with only a handful of articles published in certain years. However, a noticeable increase began around 2005, followed by steady growth in the following years. A major surge occurred after 2010, with the number of publications rising consistently. As illustrated in Fig. 3, the most substantial growth is observed from 2018 onward, where annual publications jumped from 10 articles in 2018 to 16 in 2019, followed by a sharp increase in 2021 with 30 articles and 2022 with 32 articles. The peak is recorded in 2024, with an unprecedented 62 articles, highlighting the growing academic interest in workplace gossip. This trend reflects the increasing recognition of workplace gossip as a critical topic in organizational behavior and management studies. The rise in publications suggests a broadening research scope, with more scholars contributing to theoretical and empirical advancements in this domain.

Fig. 4 presents the leading publication outlets for workplace gossip research. Journal of Business Ethics ranks highest with 14. Other key journals, followed by Group & Organization Management with 9, Human Relations, and the Journal of Applied Psychology with 7 each, contribute significantly. The inclusion of journals from psychology, business ethics, organizational behavior, and human resource management highlights the multidisciplinary nature of workplace gossip research. A total of 125 journals have published research on workplace gossip, with the complete list provided in the supplementary analysis. However, only the top fifteen journals that appear in both the ABDC and ABS lists are mentioned here.

The source local impact analysis presented in Table 2 evaluates the influence of academic journals in workplace gossip research by examining key bibliometric indicators such as the h-index, g-index, m-index, total citations (TC), number of papers (NP), and the starting publication year (PY-start). Journal of Business Ethics has the highest h-index (9) and g-index (14), signifying its strong

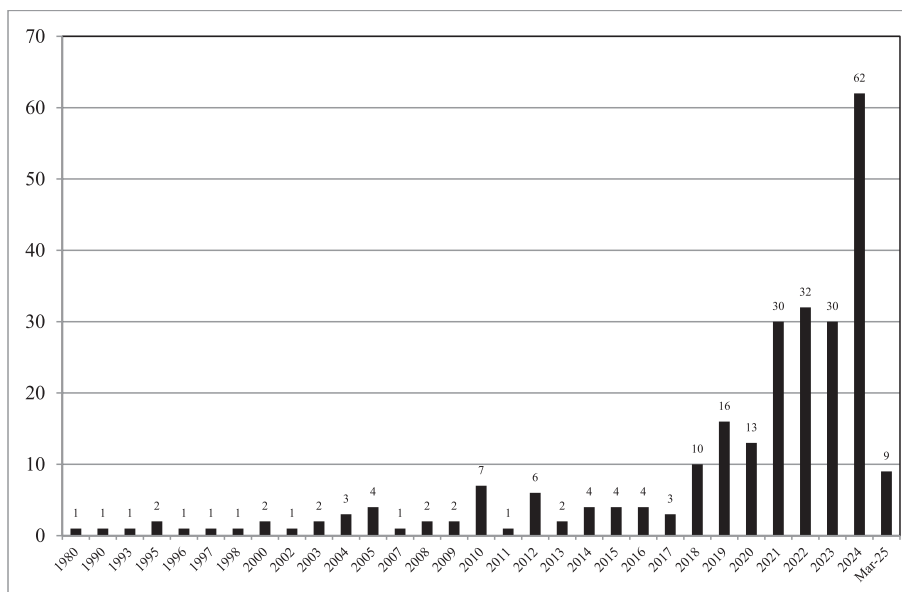


Fig. 3. Annual Scientific Production.



Fig. 4. Most Relevant Sources.

Table 2
Source Local Impact by h-index.

Source	h-index	g-index	m-index	TC	NP	PY-start
Journal of Business Ethics	9	14	0.692	427	14	2013
Group & Organization Management	7	9	0.437	734	9	2010
Human Relations	5	7	0.208	124	7	2002
International Journal of Conflict Management	5	5	0.416	48	5	2014
International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management	4	5	0.8	83	5	2021
International Journal of Human Resource Management	4	4	0.363	149	4	2015
Journal of Applied Psychology	4	7	0.444	323	7	2017
Journal of Knowledge Management	4	4	0.666	131	4	2020
Service Industries Journal	4	6	0.571	153	6	2019
International Journal of Hospitality Management	3	4	0.428	176	4	2019

Note: TC = total citations, NP = number of papers, and PY-start = starting publication year.

influence in workplace gossip research. However, Group & Organization Management has the highest total citations (TC = 734), despite a slightly lower h-index (7) and g-index (9), suggesting that its published papers are highly referenced within the field of workplace gossip. Other journals, such as Human Relations (h-index = 5, g-index = 7), have contributed to the field for a longer period (PY-start = 2002) but with a lower rate of impact growth (m-index = 0.21). The International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management (PY-start = 2021) and the Journal of Knowledge Management (PY-start = 2020) have relatively high m-index values (0.8 and 0.67, respectively), indicating promising early contributions despite their recent entry into the field. The Journal of Applied Psychology, despite its strong reputation, has an h-index of 4 and a g-index of 7, with 323 citations since 2017, showing moderate influence.

Table 3 presents the top 10 authors contributing to the research on workplace gossip, ranked by the number of articles published and their fractionalized contributions. Beersma B leads with 14 publications (3.75 fractionalized), followed by Martinescu E (12

Table 3
Top 10 Authors.

No.	Authors	Articles	Articles Fractionalized
1	Beersma B	14	3.75
2	Martinescu E	12	3.22
3	Cheng B	10	2.26
4	Zhu Q	9	3.08
5	Peng Y	8	1.81
6	Ellwardt L	7	1.98
7	Shalan A	7	1.48
8	Waddington K	6	4.83
9	Li J	5	1.28
10	Liu Y	5	1.45

publications, 3.22 fractionalized) and Cheng B (10 publications, 2.26 fractionalized). While, Table 4 highlights the top 10 local impact authors based on citation metrics, including h-index, g-index, m-index, total citations (TC), number of papers (NP), and starting publication year (PY-start). Beersma B again ranks highest with an h-index of 8 and 254 total citations, indicating substantial scholarly influence. Notably, Ellwardt L has the highest total citations (773), while recent contributors like Cheng B, Peng Y, and Shaalan A have high m-index values (1.5), reflecting strong early career impact. These tables collectively identify key contributors in the field, differentiating between publication volume and scholarly influence. (See Table 4.)

Fig. 5 presents the distribution of corresponding authors' countries, distinguishing between single-country publications (SCP) and multiple-country publications (MCP). China leads with 69 SCPs and 30 MCPs, indicating both a strong domestic research presence and international collaborations. The USA follows with 27 SCPs and only 2 MCPs, suggesting a higher proportion of domestically conducted research. The Netherlands and the UK each have 10 SCPs and 3 MCPs, while Pakistan (6 SCPs, 2 MCPs) and India (5 SCPs, 2 MCPs) also contribute significantly. Canada (3 SCPs, 3 MCPs) and Korea (4 SCPs, 1 MCP) demonstrate a more balanced distribution of domestic and international research collaborations. Notably, South Africa (5 SCPs, 0 MCPs) has no recorded international collaborations, whereas Egypt (3 SCPs, 1 MCP) exhibits limited engagement in multi-country research. Fig. 6 provides the overall frequency of publications by country, reflecting the total number of times each country appears as an author-affiliated institution across all publications. China dominates with 196 publications, followed by the USA with 84, the UK with 45, and Pakistan with 28. The Netherlands has 25, Canada 13, Egypt 12, Australia 10, and New Zealand 9, all contributing to the research landscape.

Table 5 presents the Top 10 globally cited documents based on bibliometric analysis, ranking them by total citations (TC). Burt and Knez (1995) leads with 364 citations, reflecting a long-standing impact in the field. However, more recent papers, such as Brady et al. (2017) and Wu, Birtch, et al. (2018), (Wu, Kwan, Wu, & Ma, 2018), have higher citations per year (TC-Y), indicating strong contemporary influence. Notably, Wu, Birtch, et al. (2018), (Wu, Kwan, et al., 2018 also has the highest normalized TC (N-TC), showing a significant citation impact relative to the field. Grosser, Lopez-Kidwell, and Labianca (2010) and Ellwardt, Steglich, and Wittek (2012), (Ellwardt, Wittek, & Wielers, 2012) also appear prominently, with Ellwardt contributing multiple highly cited papers. This table highlights both foundational and emerging influential research articles within workplace gossip research.

The word frequency trend over time in Fig. 7 reveals key shifts in research focus within workplace studies. Like any evolving field, gossip research initially focused on understanding broad human-related implications such as psychology and emotions (1990–2000). As the field matured, attention shifted toward workplace-specific applications (2010) and the trend of research changed, emphasizing organizational behavior and employee experiences. By 2020, this field further refined its focus, with workplace interactions, diversity, and organizational dynamics becoming dominant themes, reflecting a deeper exploration of niche areas within the broader concept. This trend indicates a maturing research field that has moved from understanding workplace concepts at a general level to exploring specific challenges such as diversity, social behavior, and organizational well-being, reflecting the evolving complexities of the modern workplace.

5. Clusters' Topic Identification (Step – 7)

Step seven is related to the process of identifying meaningful topic clusters within the literature by grouping studies based on their conceptual focus. This step helps in organizing fragmented research into structured themes, making it easier to analyze patterns, contradictions, and gaps. In our study, this involved systematically categorizing each paper by assigning a unique code and classifying it into one of two broad categories: antecedents or outcomes of workplace gossip. To refine this classification, we coded each study based on the perspective adopted—whether it focused on the gossip sender, receiver, or target. Following this, we sub-divided these categories into more specific themes: Antecedents were further classified into personal, interpersonal, and organizational factors. Outcomes were categorized based on their effect on the gossip sender, receiver, and target, with further sub-themes under each. This multi-layered coding approach ensured a structured synthesis of the literature, allowing for a clearer understanding of recurring themes and emerging research gaps.

Table 4
Top 10 Local Impact Authors.

No	Author	h-index	g-index	m-index	TC	NP	PY-start
1	Beersma B	8	14	0.667	254	14	2014
2	Martinescu E	7	12	1.4	224	12	2021
3	Cheng B	6	10	1.5	146	10	2022
4	Ellwardt L	6	7	0.429	773	7	2012
5	Peng Y	6	8	1.5	119	8	2022
6	Shaalan A	6	7	1.5	119	7	2022
7	Waddington K	6	6	0.286	297	6	2005
8	Wei F	5	5	1.25	54	5	2022
9	Zhu Q	5	7	1.25	56	9	2022
10	Guo G	4	4	0.8	83	4	2021

Note: TC = total citations, NP = number of papers, and PY-start = starting publication year.

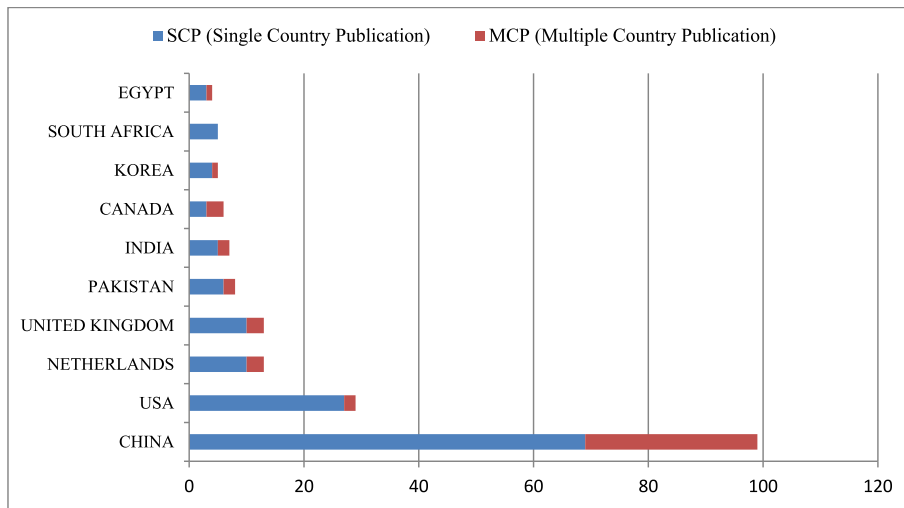


Fig. 5. Corresponding Author's Countries.

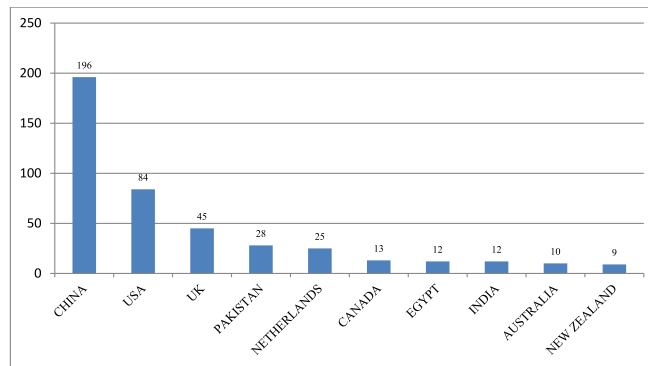


Fig. 6. Countries' Scientific Production.

Table 5
Top 10 Global Cited Documents.

Author(s)	Journal	DOI	TC	TC-Y	N-TC
(Burt & Knez, 1995)	Rationality and Society	10.1177/1043463195007003003	364	11.74	1.83
(Kurland & Pelled, 2000)	Academy of Management Review	10.5465/AMR.2000.3312928	274	10.54	1.58
(Grosser et al., 2010)	Group & Organization Management	10.1177/1059601109360391	231	14.44	2.65
(Noon & Delbridge, 1993)	Organization Studies	10.1177/017084069301400103	208	6.30	1.00
(Brady et al., 2017)	Journal of Applied Psychology	10.1037/apl0000164	179	19.89	2.74
(Ellwardt, Steglich, & Wittek, 2012)	Social Network	10.1016/j.socnet.2011.11.003	176	12.57	1.37
(Kulik, Bainbridge, & Cregan, 2008)	Academy of Management Review	10.5465/AMR.2008.27752765	143	7.94	1.51
(Wu, Birtch, et al., 2018)	Journal of Management	10.1177/0149206316632057	142	17.75	3.29
(Wu, Kwan, et al., 2018)	Journal of Business Ethics	10.1007/s10551-015-3006-5	134	16.75	3.10

Note: TC = total citations, TC-Y = Total citation per year, N-TC = Normalized citation per year.

6. Sample Ordering and Selection (Step – 8)

In the eighth step, we refined and prioritized the studies within each identified thematic cluster to ensure a coherent and high-quality literature synthesis. Although our initial bibliometric analysis was performed on 258 records, previous systematic literature reviews recommend a more manageable and analytically effective sample size—typically ranging between 60 and 140 studies—for in-depth synthesis and meaningful integration (Marzi et al., 2025). To align with these established guidelines and enhance the quality of our systematic literature review, we introduced an additional filtering criterion based on journal quality. Specifically, we applied a quality-based inclusion filter using the Australian Business Deans Council (ABDC) and the Chartered Association of Business School list (CABS) journal rankings. These widely recognized journal quality lists are frequently employed in systematic reviews to ensure the

8.2. Interpersonal factors

Interpersonal factors refer to the social influences and dynamics stemming from the behaviors, actions, or attitudes of others within the workplace. These factors capture how an individual's behavior or psychological response is shaped by interactions with, or perceptions of, other people in their organizational environment. Interpersonal antecedents of gossip behavior can be further divided into two categories: horizontal interpersonal factors, which relate to interactional dynamics between individuals at the same hierarchical level, and vertical interpersonal factors, which pertain to interactions between individuals at different hierarchical levels, such as supervisors and subordinates.

In the context of horizontal interpersonal dynamics, individuals have been found to engage in gossip as a reaction to co-worker incivility and organizational bullying, particularly when there is a high level of trust and frequent contact among colleagues (Bashir et al., 2020; De Clercq, 2022; Ellwardt, Wittek, & Wielers, 2012; Hughes, Lee, Hong, Currie, & Jex, 2023). This suggests that negative peer dynamics can intensify gossiping behavior. Moreover, gossiping has also been associated with high political skills, perceived oppositional courage, and psychological contract violation (Hu et al., 2024; Ni, Yang, & Chen, 2024; Thoroughgood, Sawyer, Kong, & Webster, 2024). Additionally, individuals embedded in strong workplace friendships or high structural embeddedness are more likely to engage in negative gossip (Kiran, Zubair, Shahzadi, & Abbas, 2018; Shoukat, Selem, Khan, & Shehata, 2024). Based on these findings, it is recommended that organizations foster open communication and proactively address peer-level conflicts before they escalate.

Vertical interpersonal dynamics also influence gossip behavior. Subordinates may resort to gossip as a means of responding to perceived injustices and power imbalances in the workplace. Negative workplace gossip about leaders has been linked to more forcing and yielding leader conflict management behavior, whereas positive gossip is associated with more avoiding and problem-solving leader conflict management behavior (Dijkstra, Beersma, & Van Leeuwen, 2014). Similarly, leadership styles also play a critical role in shaping gossiping behavior, such as abusive supervision, exploitative supervision, and arrogant leadership have all been positively associated with negative gossip (De Clercq, Fatima, & Jahanzeb, 2021; Decoster, Camps, Stouten, Vandevyvere, & Tripp, 2013; Majeed, Fatima, & Irshad, 2023; Uçan & Avcı, 2023). On the other hand, authentic leadership is found to be associated with reduced negative gossip (Cheng, Usman, Bai, & He, 2022). These insights highlight the need for organizations to promote constructive leadership styles and address detrimental supervisory behaviors to cultivate a more supportive and productive workplace environment, ultimately reducing the occurrence of negative workplace gossip.

8.3. Organizational factors

At the organizational level, structural and contextual factors significantly influence gossiping activity. For instance, perceptions of idiosyncratic deals (I-deals) provoke envy-driven negative gossip (Ding, Zhang, Zhao, & Zhang, 2023). Similarly, organization-initiated (procedural and distributive) justice and supervisor-initiated (interpersonal and informational) justice perception lead to gossip about the organization and gossip about the supervisor respectively (Kim, Moon, & Shin, 2019). Furthermore, diminished legitimacy, unfairness of the situation (Varty, Barclay, & Brady, 2021), organizational politics (A. Khan & Chaudhary, 2023b; Sethi & Srivastava, 2024), trust in management (Ellwardt, Wittek, & Wielers, 2012), cognitive job insecurity, affective job insecurity (Jiang, Hu, Näswall, López Bohle, & Wang, 2020), distributive injustice (Agina et al., 2023), Organizational cynicism (Adamska, 2023), contribute positively toward gossiping behavior among its employees. However, Kim, Shin, Kim, and Moon (2021) found that individuals are less likely to engage in negative gossip about their colleagues when groups comprise members with diverse organizational tenures. Therefore, organizations should promote transparency in decision-making processes a culture of openness and fairness, and fostering inclusivity in diverse teams to tactfully tackle the occurrence of negative workplace gossip.

9. Outcomes of workplace gossip

Workplace gossip generates multifaceted outcomes that affect all parties involved in the gossip triad: gossip sender, receiver, and target. Moreover, the complexity of gossip dynamics creates reciprocal influences among these parties. For instance, the gossip sender initiates evaluative communication that can shape the gossip receiver's perception of the target. The gossip receiver, in turn, plays a pivotal role in reinforcing, mitigating, or propagating the gossip, influencing both the sender and the target through their reaction. The gossip target is not merely a passive recipient but can actively shape the process by reacting to the gossip, which affects both gossipers. This intricate interplay is illustrated in Fig. 1 and in detail explained in Table 6.

9.1. Outcomes for gossip sender

The outcomes for gossip senders are multifaceted and can significantly influence their standing within the organization. For instance, gossip sender face managerial sanctions, which can manifest as abusive supervisory behavior or disciplinary actions that deter negative gossip behaviors (Ahmad, Tariq, Weng, Shillamkwese, & Sohail, 2019; Naeem, Weng, Ali, & Hameed, 2019; Ye, He, & Sun, 2022). Additionally, it is found that negative gossip is also sanctioned by colleagues leading to strained relationships (Zong et al., 2023), diminished trust (Yao et al., 2020), and social sanctions (Guo, Gong, Li, & Liang, 2021; S. H. Lee & Barnes, 2021). Moreover, the dynamics of power and influence within organizational networks can be profoundly affected; gossip senders may gain temporary power status through their gossiping (Kurland & Pelled, 2000), but this is often precarious and subject to a backlash in the form of a lower position in advice network centrality (Erdogan, Bauer, & Walter, 2015; Gordon & Schweitzer, 2024). Moreover, it is found that

Table 6 (continued)

Column A	Column B	Column C	Column D
- Trust in management, friendly relationships with managers, and frequency of interaction with managers, a low level of generalized trust in the organization (Ellwardt, Wittek, & Wielers, 2012)			Life satisfaction (Xie et al., 2024) -Work engagement (Cheng et al., 2023) - OCB (Kong, 2018; Wu, Kwan, et al., 2018) - Well-being, team empowerment, and job embeddedness (Chang & Kuo, 2021) - Unethical behavior (Guo et al., 2021) - Suicide intent (Wang, Liu, & Parker, 2020) - knowledge-sharing behavior (Li, Huang, Wang, & Wang, 2023) - Turnover intention (He & Wei, 2022) - Helping behavior (Cheng, Dong, et al., 2022, Cheng, Usman, et al., 2022; Zhao & Ma, 2025; Khalid et al., 2025) Emotional well-being/emotional exhaustion (Kaur et al., 2025) Displayed aggression (Cao et al., 2025) Silence and compulsory citizenship behavior (Wang et al., 2025) Team performance and team volunteer turnover (Zhong, Yu, Zhu, & Zhu, 2025)

the effects of workplace gossip on the sender fluctuate based on the quality of interpersonal relationships, gossip senders with strong, supportive connections may experience less severe repercussions compared to those with strained relationships (Guo et al., 2021).

9.2. How gossip receivers shape outcomes for sender

The reactions of gossip receivers toward the gossip sender reveal important insights into relational dynamics in the workplace. Different types of gossip such as protection-based, derogation-based, endorsement-based, and communication-based are attributed by receivers to pro-social or self-interest motives, affecting how they interact such as reciprocation of gossip, cooperation or social undermining of the sender (S. H. Lee & Barnes, 2021). Additionally, it is found that negative gossip is linked with the receiver’s ostracism toward the sender (Guo et al., 2021). Moreover, positive gossip relates positively to norm clarification perceptions of the receiver but negatively to norm-violation perceptions, whereas negative gossip relates positively to both norm clarification and norm-violation perceptions. Interactively, positive gossip weakens the norm-violation effects of negative gossip on gossip status, and each type of gossip replaces the norm-clarification effects of the other type of gossip on gossip status (Lian et al., 2023).

9.3. How gossip targets shape outcomes for sender

A growing body of research has documented various reactions from gossip targets, highlighting how these responses serve as consequences for the gossip sender. These reactions reflect how being the target of negative gossip provokes retaliatory or disengaged behavior from the target, ultimately impacting the sender’s social and professional standing. For instance, it is found that individuals holding higher hierarchical positions respond to being the target of negative gossip by exhibiting abusive supervision toward the gossip sender (Naeem et al., 2019). Similarly, (Ahmad et al., 2019) showed that gossip targets in leadership roles retaliate through aggressive managerial behaviors. However, a study investigated peer-level interactions and found that colleagues on the same hierarchical level respond to negative gossip by socially undermining the sender, indicating a covert yet impactful form of retaliation within peer dynamics (Zong, Martinescu, Beersma, Xu, & Zhang, 2024).

In addition, a study demonstrated that gossip targets engage in counter-gossip, spreading negative gossip about the original sender, as a deliberate act of revenge, thereby intensifying interpersonal conflict (Zong, Xu, Zhang, & Qu, 2021). On a more passive level it is found that being the target of workplace gossip reduces organizational citizenship behaviors, such as helping and cooperation, especially when the sender is perceived as the instigator (Wu, Birtch, et al., 2018). Likewise, (Khalid et al., 2025) reported a decline in helping behaviors among gossip targets, reflecting a withdrawal of support toward the sender. These studies emphasize that gossiping about others results in tangible interpersonal costs for the sender, as targets of gossip retaliate through direct, indirect, or passive means. These findings highlight the critical role of the gossip target in shaping the social outcomes faced by the gossip sender.

9.4. Outcomes of gossip for gossip receiver

The gossip receiver is the individual with whom the gossip is shared. As a central figure in workplace gossip dynamics, the receiver plays a pivotal role in the social communication process (Greenslade-Yeats et al., 2023). Understanding the receiver's perspective is essential, as gossip often carries multiple motives, and the way it is interpreted or attributed by the receiver significantly shapes its consequences (S. H. Lee & Barnes, 2021). Reflecting this importance, scholars have increasingly turned their attention to examining gossip from the receiver's standpoint. Recent studies have demonstrated that workplace gossip can generate both constructive and detrimental outcomes for gossip receivers. For instance, (Bai et al., 2020) found that when receivers are exposed to negative gossip from supervisors, they may experience improved performance as a result of reflective learning. This suggests that learning from the negative experiences of others can enable receivers to avoid similar pitfalls and adapt more effectively. Similarly, (Zhu, Martinescu, Beersma, & Wei, 2022) investigated the effects of negative gossip originating from co-workers. Their study revealed that receivers not only increased their task performance but also exhibited reduced interpersonal deviance. These effects were attributed to vicarious learning, whereby employees adjust their behavior by observing the consequences experienced by others.

Extending this line of research, a recent two-study investigation by (Outlaw & Baer, 2024) found that the truthfulness and interestingness of gossip significantly shaped the receiver's reaction. The study found that truthful and interesting gossip enhances the receiver's happiness and perception of social exchange, leading to increased helping behavior toward the sender. In contrast, excessive gossiping reduced receiver happiness and social exchange perceptions, ultimately decreasing helping behavior. In contrast, (Jalil, Xu, Jiang, & Wang, 2022) found that negative gossip could also have adverse emotional consequences. Their study demonstrated that gossip receivers are likely to experience elevated levels of job-related anxiety, particularly when the gossip reflects broader organizational or interpersonal tensions. Collectively, these studies underscore that workplace gossip has multifaceted implications for gossip receivers. While certain forms of gossip can promote learning, relationship-building, and behavioral refinement, others can trigger emotional strain and reduce psychological well-being.

9.5. Outcomes of workplace gossip for targets

About whom the gossip sender shares the evaluative contents with the gossip receiver in his/her absence is known as a gossip target in extant literature. The target of gossip is the actual aggrieved party documented by scholars and most of the existing literature on workplace gossip revolves around the target's perspective. Workplace gossip both positive and negative exerts a profound impact on its targets, affecting their cognitive, emotional, and behavioral responses. When employees become the target of negative gossip, they often experience psychological strain, emotional distress, and changes in their workplace behavior.

9.6. Cognitive effects of workplace gossip

Cognitive effects refer to how gossip influences the target's thought processes, perceptions, and psychological resources. It includes heightened stress, mental fatigue, and threats to self-esteem. Negative workplace gossip triggers various cognitive reactions in target leading to substantial psychological strain (Ye et al., 2022). The victims of gossip often experience ego depletion (Ullah et al., 2021), psychological distress (Liu, Kwan, & Zhang, 2020; Liu, Wu, et al., 2020), self-esteem threat (Kaur, Maheshwari, & Varma, 2025; X. Wang, Xia, & Bi, 2025; Ye et al., 2022), ego depletion (A. G. Khan, Li, Akram, & Akram, 2023; Y. Zhang, Liu, Zhang, Akhtar, & Wang, 2025; Zhu & Cheng, 2025), psychological resources (Xing, Xia, Zhao, & Lan, 2021), harmonious passion (Tian, Song, Kwan, & Li, 2019), sense of belonging and connection (Liu, Liu, Cafferkey, & Jia, 2022), self-control resources (He & Wei, 2022), self-monitoring (Xie, Huang, Wang, & Shen, 2019a), psychological distress (Cheng et al., 2023), organizational trust (Zou, Chen, Chen, Luo, & Liu, 2020), psychological contract breach (He, Feng, Xiong, & Wei, 2023), and psychological distress (Ye et al., 2022).

9.7. Emotional effects of workplace gossip

Extant literature highlighted that workplace gossip induces various emotional reactions in its target. In response to negative gossip targets experience fear of losing face (Zong, Xu, et al., 2021), negative mood (Babalola et al., 2019), negative emotions (Ahmad et al., 2019; Cao et al., 2025; Naeem et al., 2019), and emotional exhaustion (Wu, Birtch, et al., 2018; Zeng, Zhao, & Li, 2022). This highlights the need for organizations to provide resources and training focused on emotional intelligence, equipping employees to manage their emotions and navigate workplace stressors effectively.

9.8. Behavioral effects of workplace gossip

Previous studies have highlighted a series of varying behavioral responses of the gossip target. For example, negative gossip is linked with reduced work engagement (Ugwu, Onyishi, Anozie, & Ugwu, 2022), job performance (Xing et al., 2021), OCB (Martinescu et al., 2021), and feedback-seeking behavior (Mu, Mao, Huang, & Yuan, 2022). Furthermore, negative workplace gossip is found to increase political acts (Ullah et al., 2021), abusive supervision (Ye et al., 2022), knowledge hiding (Hameed, Shaheen, & Younas, 2025; Zhao, Khalid, Karim Khan, & Ma, 2024; Zhao, Ma, & Chen, 2024), social undermining (Zong et al., 2024), service sabotage (Lyu, Wu, Ye, & Fan, 2024; Y. Zhang et al., 2025), deviant behavior (B. Cheng, Zhang, & Peng, 2024), quiet quitting (Srivastava, Saxena, Kapoor, & Qadir, 2024) and turnover among its targets (He & Wei, 2022).

9.9. How gossip receivers shape outcomes for targets

The consequences of both negative and positive workplace gossip extend beyond simply being its target. The impact of gossip is far-reaching. Research shows that individuals who are the targets of negative gossip often suffer additional harm from the way receivers of the gossip respond to it. Gossip has the power to shape how people perceive and judge others. As a result, targets first experience the direct emotional and professional consequences of being gossiped about, and then face a second layer of outcomes—those arising from how receivers interpret and act upon the gossip they hear. For example, it is found that receiving negative gossip is found to have unfavorable outcomes for the target from the gossip receiver’s side, including support withdrawal, exclusion, and the receiver’s negative gossiping shaped by the receiver’s judgments about the target’s deservingness (X. Zhou et al., 2021). On the other hand, positive gossip can enhance receiver’s friendships with the target, fostering collaboration among colleagues, while negative gossip tends to undermine these relationships with the target (Estévez & Takács, 2022). Furthermore, gossip can serve to make or break the trust and relationship of gossip receiver with gossip target via pro-social, self-serving, or genuine motives of gossip sender (Greenslade-Yeats et al., 2023). These studies reveal the influential power of gossip in shaping the dynamics between gossip receiver and gossip target.

10. Workplace gossip typology: a triadic and hierarchical approach (Step-10)

Existing literature has categorized gossip based on various dimensions, such as valence and formality (Dores Cruz, Nieper, et al., 2021), valence and work-relatedness (S. H. Lee & Barnes, 2021), and valence and the hierarchical status of the target (Brady et al., 2017). Among these, scholars largely agree on the importance of the valence of gossip, distinguishing it as either positive or negative, which is a widely accepted and valid dimension of this complex construct. However, consensus has yet to be reached regarding other dimensions. While previous classifications of workplace gossip have distinguished between formal and informal gossip (Dores Cruz, Nieper, et al., 2021) or work-related and non-work-related gossip (S. H. Lee & Barnes, 2021). On the other hand, (Brady et al., 2017) introduced a more nuanced perspective by emphasizing the role of organizational hierarchy, particularly the formal hierarchical status of the gossip target, such as whether the gossip concerns a supervisor or a co-worker. However, their framework primarily focuses on the hierarchical status of the target, without fully accounting for the complexities introduced by the other participants in the gossip triad—the sender and the receiver. Building on this premise, we propose a typology that expands the scope of existing conceptualization by incorporating the hierarchical positioning of all three participants presented in Table 7—the sender, receiver, and target—along with the valence of the gossip, such as each type of gossip can be positive and negative.

This approach allows for a more comprehensive understanding of how positive and negative gossip unfolds within organizations, whether among individuals at the same hierarchical level, across different levels, or in mixed-hierarchy interactions. Current gossip literature recognizes its triadic nature and emphasized the critical role of all three parties involved: the sender, receiver, and target (Sun et al., 2023). This shift underscores the need for a more comprehensive perspective that does not overlook any of the key actors. For instance, Lee and Barnes (2021) provided an in-depth analysis of how gossip receivers attribute motives to gossip senders. Their work highlights key factors such as the credibility of the sender, the credibility of the gossip message, the hierarchical status of the target, and the perceived trustworthiness of the sender along with several types of gossip, all of which shape the gossip receiver’s reaction. These prepositions reinforce the argument that a complete understanding of workplace gossip must incorporate the perspectives of all involved parties along with its valence. Therefore, to conceptualize gossip comprehensively within an organizational context, it is imperative to consider the hierarchical positioning of all three actors along with its valence.

10.1. Horizontal gossip

This type of gossip occurs when all three members of the gossip triad (sender, receiver, and target) belong to the same hierarchical level. It can occur at the lower levels, such as between subordinates about subordinates and at a higher hierarchical levels, such as

Table 7
Workplace Gossip Typology: A Triadic and Hierarchical Approach.

Gossip Type	Subcategory	Sender	Receiver	Target	Description
1. Horizontal Gossip	Subordinates’ Gossip	Low	Low	Low	Gossip among employees at the same low level.
	Supervisors’ Gossip	High	High	High	Gossip among at same high-ranked individuals.
2. Vertical Gossip	Subordinates Gossip about Supervisors	Low	Low	High	Gossip among lower-ranked employees about supervisors (high-ranked employees).
	Supervisors Gossip about Subordinates	High	High	Low	Gossip among higher-ranked individuals about low-ranked employees subordinates.
3. Mixed-Hierarchy Gossip	Subordinate-Supervisor Gossip about Subordinate	Low	High	Low	A lower-ranked and higher-ranked individual gossiping about a low-ranked individual.
	Subordinate-Supervisor Gossip about Supervisor	Low	High	High	A lower-ranked and higher-ranked individual gossiping about a high-ranked individual.
	Supervisor-Subordinate Gossip about Subordinate	High	Low	Low	A higher-ranked and lower-ranked individual gossiping about a low-ranked individual.
	Supervisor-Subordinate Gossip about Supervisor	High	Low	High	A higher-ranked and lower-ranked individual gossiping about a high-ranked individual.

between supervisors about supervisors.

10.1.1. Subordinates' gossip (low-level employees talking about low-level employees)

Consider a situation where two junior employees engage in a conversation about another junior co-worker's workplace conflict, potential promotion, or personal life events, such as a divorce or marriage. This form of gossip occurs among employees at the same hierarchical level and is shaped by their shared work environment and social dynamics. Subordinates' gossip has distinct antecedents and consequences, as the motivations behind gossiping behavior at lower levels of the hierarchy differ from those at higher levels. Additionally, when lower-level employees become the targets of gossip, their emotional responses, coping mechanisms, workplace interactions, and reactions may vary significantly.

10.1.2. Supervisors' gossip (high-level employees talking about high-level employees)

In many workplaces, senior employees frequently exchange informal evaluative discussions about their senior-level peers, often revolving around leadership decisions, strategic choices, work, and non-work behaviors. For example, two senior managers might discuss a fellow manager's approach to handling a crisis, their chances for an executive promotion, or even their ability to maintain workplace relationships. This type of gossip occurs exclusively among individuals at the same hierarchical level, shaping perceptions of leadership, power dynamics, and career trajectories. Supervisors' gossip has distinct drivers and consequences, as high-ranking employees often engage in this gossip not just for social bonding but as a strategic tool for assessing alliances and reinforcing authority. Unlike lower-level employees, they may use gossip to subtly influence organizational narratives, gain insight into colleagues' strengths and weaknesses, or position themselves favorably in workplace politics. Additionally, when high-level employees become gossip targets, their responses may differ significantly from those of lower levels, as they have greater access to resources, networks, and reputational safeguards to counteract negative gossip.

10.2. Vertical gossip

Vertical gossip occurs when the gossip triad involves individuals from different levels of the organizational hierarchy. This type of gossip typically occurs between high-level employees about a lower-level employee and between lower-level employees about a higher-level employee, affecting the power dynamics and communication within the organization. The motivations, dynamics, and impacts of gossip within vertical relationships can differ significantly from those observed in horizontal gossip.

10.2.1. Subordinates gossip about supervisors

This form of gossip occurs when lower-level employees engage in informal evaluative discussions about higher-level employees. It may arise from dissatisfaction, frustration, curiosity about managerial decisions, leadership styles, and personal attributes. For instance, subordinates talk about a supervisor's handling of a difficult situation, their perceived fairness in evaluating performance, or personal traits that influence their leadership. Such gossip can emerge from feelings of powerlessness, as employees seek ways to process or influence the behaviors of those in higher positions of authority. The implications of subordinates gossiping about supervisors can be far-reaching, as it can influence employee morale, trust in leadership, and overall organizational culture. When supervisors become aware of such gossip, it can lead to efforts aimed at repairing relationships, improving communication, addressing grievances or abusive supervision, and career-related sanctions. However, when unchecked, this type of gossip may foster a negative work environment, erode trust, and destabilize hierarchical relationships.

10.2.2. Supervisors gossip about subordinates

This category involves gossip among senior employees about their subordinates, where higher-level employees such as managers or leaders exchange views on the behavior of lower-level employees. Supervisors gossip about subordinates about their work ethic, personal conduct, or professional aspirations. For example, two senior managers might discuss an employee's prospects for a promotion or evaluate how effectively a team member contributed to a recent project. While supervisors' gossip about subordinates may serve as a tool for decision-making or team management, it can also be used to reinforce power dynamics. Depending on the nature of the gossip, it can either motivate employees to perform better or foster feelings of alienation and unfairness if employees believe they are being judged or misunderstood without the opportunity for direct feedback. Furthermore, such gossip may lead to a selective distribution of opportunities, as the gossip might shape the way employees are viewed or treated by management.

10.3. Mixed-hierarchy gossip

Mixed-hierarchy gossip occurs when members of different hierarchical levels within an organization engage in informal evaluative discussions about colleagues who may be positioned at either the same level or a different rank. Unlike vertical gossip, which strictly follows an upward or downward direction, mixed-hierarchy gossip involves a blend of hierarchical positions, creating a more complex dynamic in terms of influence, power, and consequences. This type of gossip can serve multiple functions, from fostering workplace alliances and information sharing to reinforcing existing power structures or generating divisions among employees. Depending on the context and intent, mixed-hierarchy gossip may lead to enhanced collaboration and understanding or contribute to workplace tension and exclusion.

10.3.1. Supervisor-subordinate gossip about subordinate

This type of gossip occurs when a supervisor engages in informal evaluative discussions with a subordinate about another subordinate. In such cases, the supervisor, who holds a position of authority, initiates the conversation, sharing opinions, observations, or concerns regarding an employee’s performance, behavior, or professional conduct. For example, a manager might confide in a trusted team member about another employee’s perceived lack of dedication, potential disciplinary issues, suitability for an upcoming promotion or some personal life-related events. The implications of this gossip are particularly complex due to the power imbalance inherent in the exchange. When a supervisor shares gossip about a subordinate with another team member, it may foster an environment of favoritism, as the subordinate receiving the information might feel privileged or gain a sense of exclusivity in their relationship with the supervisor. However, such interactions can also undermine trust within the team, especially when other employees suspect that their manager discusses them behind their backs. Furthermore, this form of gossip may lead to biased perceptions, as the subordinate receiving the gossip could develop preconceived notions about their targeted co-worker based on the supervisor’s perspective rather than his/her own first-hand experience.

10.3.2. Subordinate-supervisor gossip about supervisor

In certain cases, a lower-level employee starts an informal evaluative discussion with their supervisors regarding another senior-level employee such as a supervisor. These discussions may involve opinions about that supervisor’s leadership style, decision-making abilities, or management style. For instance, a team member discussed with his department head about another senior manager’s approach to a policy change or a particular incident involving his work or personal life. This dynamic can create a complex web of influence, as the subordinate-supervisor pair may form a bond through these shared discussions, leading to a sense of solidarity. However, such gossip can be risky, as it may be perceived as disloyalty or undermine the cohesion of the supervisory structure. It can also encourage unhealthy comparisons and power struggles within the leadership ranks.

10.3.3. Subordinate-supervisor gossip about subordinate

This form of gossip occurs when a subordinate and supervisor engage in informal discussions about another lower-level employee. In such instances, the subordinate engages in informal evaluative discussion with his supervisor about a lower-level employee. For example, a team member informally shares concerns about a colleague’s work ethic, interpersonal behavior, potential conflicts within

Table 8
Future research agenda with sample questions.

Research agenda	Research questions
Agenda#1: Understanding the Multi-Level Influences on Gossiping Behavior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do personal dispositions (e.g., narcissism, Machiavellianism) interact with interpersonal dynamics to shape gossip behavior in the workplace? • Are certain combinations of personal traits and interpersonal relationships more likely to result in positive or negative gossip? • To what extent do organizational factors, such as workplace culture and leadership styles, interact with personal and interpersonal factors to shape gossip behavior? • How can organizations design interventions that address gossip holistically by integrating personal, interpersonal, and structural factors?
Agenda#2: Workplace Gossip and Its Expanding Impact: A Triadic Perspective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In what ways do gossip receivers influence the psychological and behavioral outcomes of gossip targets and gossip senders? • How do gossip receivers amplify or mitigate the impact of negative workplace gossip on the target’s psychological well-being and workplace behavior? • What role does the target’s response (e.g., retaliation, withdrawal, resilience) play in shaping the long-term consequences for gossip senders? • How do gossip receivers’ reactions (e.g., reinforcing, rejecting, or spreading gossip) influence the intensity and duration of gossip-related workplace conflicts?
Agenda#3: Workplace Gossip Across Hierarchies: A Multi-Level Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the antecedents and consequences of gossip occurring between employees at the same hierarchical level compared to cross-level gossip exchanges and about the same hierarchical level compared to cross-hierarchical levels? • How does the receiver perceive and respond to gossip initiated by individuals at higher versus lower organizational levels and about higher versus lower organizational level targets? • What ethical and managerial challenges arise from gossip occurring across hierarchical levels, and how can organizations effectively manage them?
Agenda#4: Reframing Workplace Gossip: The Need for an Overarching Theoretical Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How shared reality theory (SRT) can be integrated with workplace gossip frameworks to provide a more comprehensive understanding of its antecedents, processes, and consequences? • How does gossip help in creating a shared social reality in the workplace? • How does the alignment or misalignment of shared realities influence workplace cohesion and conflict among the gossip triad?
Agenda#5: From Whispered Rumors to Digital Echoes: Rethinking Workplace Gossip in the Age of Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What types of workplace gossip (positive and negative) are more prevalent in digital versus face-to-face settings? • What role does perceived anonymity on digital platforms play in shaping employees’ willingness to participate in workplace gossip? • To what extent does the traceability and permanence of digital gossip increase reputational risks for gossip sender and target?

the team, or any significant personal life event with his supervisor. These types of talks about a subordinate influence managerial decisions—such as project assignments, performance evaluations, or disciplinary actions—may lead to unfair treatment, workplace tension, and reputational damage for the targeted employee. Conversely, when approached with caution and professionalism, such exchanges may serve as an informal feedback mechanism, helping managers understand team dynamics and address workplace concerns effectively.

10.3.4. Supervisor-subordinate gossip about supervisor

This type of gossip occurs when a supervisor and a subordinate engage in informal discussions about another supervisor within the organization. Unlike “Subordinate-Supervisor gossip about a supervisor,” where lower-level employees engage in informal evaluative discussion with a supervisor about another supervisor, this form of gossip involves the supervisor being the sender of gossip with a lower-level employee about a higher-level employee. Such discussions may focus on a higher-ranking manager’s leadership approach, decision-making, or personal characteristics. For instance, a department supervisor is involved in an informal evaluative discussion with their team member about how a senior executive handled a recent organizational change, how approachable they are, or whether their leadership style aligns with company goals. The implications of this gossip can be complex. If the supervisor encourages or participates in negative gossip about another leader, it can undermine authority, weaken professional boundaries, and create a culture of mistrust. Subordinates may feel emboldened to challenge authority in unproductive ways, while the targeted supervisor’s reputation could suffer based on subjective or exaggerated accounts.

11. Knowledge gaps and future research agenda

In this section, we outlined a structured research agenda to guide future studies by identifying key emerging areas and proposing directions for the advancement of workplace gossip research. Our agenda focuses on examining the multi-level factors influencing gossip behavior, expanding the scope of workplace gossip research to a triadic hierarchical perspective, and integrating fragmented insights into a comprehensive theoretical framework. Additionally, we highlight the evolving nature of gossip in digital environments, urging researchers to reconsider its dynamics in technology-driven workplaces. Each set of research questions is aligned with the relevant agenda in [Table 8](#), offering a roadmap for refining theoretical perspectives and exploring contextual variations in workplace gossip.

11.1. Agenda #1: understanding the multi-level influences on gossiping behavior

The existing gossip literature on antecedents of workplace gossip is comprised of three categories, personal, interpersonal, and organizational ([Sun et al., 2023](#)). Personal factors shape an individual’s predisposition to engage in gossip; however, they do not operate in isolation. Unlike interpersonal factors, which are rooted in social dynamics ([Yu et al., 2024](#)), personal factors and motives drive gossip at an individual level ([Beersma & Van Kleef, 2012](#); [Dores Cruz et al., 2019](#)), often independent of external relationships. For instance, personal dispositions, such as narcissism, can amplify interpersonal gossip, especially when individuals use it to assert social dominance. In the same way, while organizational factors set the broader stage for gossip through workplace culture and norms, they do not directly dictate individual behavior in the way personal traits do. However, some personal motives, such as emotional venting ([Dores Cruz et al., 2019](#)), may be heightened in unsupportive organizational climates ([Kim et al., 2019](#)), illustrating the interplay between individual tendencies and structural conditions. Therefore, while personal antecedents primarily focus on why individuals gossip, interpersonal and organizational factors influence how and in what context gossip manifests. Therefore there is a need to study the interconnection or interplay between these factors.

Horizontal interpersonal antecedents, driven by workplace friendships and trust, are largely a function of peer relationships ([De Clercq, 2022](#); [Hughes et al., 2023](#)), whereas vertical interpersonal antecedents often stem from power struggles and leadership behaviors ([S. Li et al., 2024](#)). These social drivers differ from organizational factors as well, which create the structural conditions that either enable or suppress gossip but do not directly influence specific interactions. However, there is an overlap, personal motives can intensify interpersonal gossip, and organizational culture can reinforce or mitigate the effects of social relationships on gossiping behavior. Understanding this interaction underscores the complexity of gossip and the need for multi-level interventions to manage it effectively. Moreover, with the recent shift in the literature toward the attribution of gossip receiver’s perspective it is also important to investigate how gossip receiver would view the gossiping activity that emerged from horizontal or vertical factors and what implications it has for the interpersonal relationship between gossip triad ([Greenslade-Yeats et al., 2023](#); [S. H. Lee & Barnes, 2021](#)).

Organizational factors provide the structural foundation for workplace gossip, distinguishing them from personal and interpersonal factors ([Agina et al., 2023](#)). While personal and interpersonal factors focus on individual motives and social dynamics, organizational influences create the broader climate that facilitates or restricts gossip is yet to be investigated ([Yu et al., 2024](#)). For instance, perceptions of unfairness and job insecurity may push employees toward gossiping, but whether they engage in it depends on their personal disposition and social relationships is not clear. Additionally, while interpersonal gossip arises from specific interactions, organizational factors dictate the overall norms surrounding gossip, determining whether it is an accepted form of communication or a discouraged practice is a missing piece of information in the literature. Interestingly, the boundaries between these categories are not rigid; personal traits may influence how employees perceive organizational policies, and strong interpersonal networks may amplify the effects of organizational injustice on gossiping behavior. Therefore, understanding workplace gossip requires a holistic view that integrates personal, interpersonal, and organizational factors rather than treating them in isolation.

11.2. Agenda #2: workplace gossip and its expanding impact: a triadic perspective

The consequences of gossip are complex and extend beyond a single party, affecting all members of the gossip triad (Zhong et al., 2025; Zhong, Tang, & Lee, 2023). Each party influences and is influenced by the others, creating a dynamic interplay of effects presented in Fig. 1. The gossip sender, in particular, faces managerial and interpersonal sanctions (Kakarika et al., 2024), social repercussions (Outlaw & Baer, 2024), and shifts in informal power dynamics (L. Shirley) Zhang, Liu, et al., 2024). These consequences are not solely a result of the sender's actions but are also shaped by the reactions of the gossip receiver and target (S. H. Lee & Barnes, 2021; Zong et al., 2024). Initially, the sender may gain social leverage; however, the receiver's response plays a critical role in determining whether this advantage is reinforced or undermined (Greenslade-Yeats et al., 2023). If the receiver rejects or ostracizes the sender due to negative gossip, it can result in long-term damage to the sender's workplace relationships and standing.

These interconnections highlight a reciprocal process: the sender's behavior influences the receiver's reaction, which in turn shapes the sender's position within the organization. Thus, the sender's outcomes are not merely a product of their own actions but also depend on how others perceive and respond to them. The gossip sender is not only affected by the gossip receiver but may also provoke a backlash from the target, further complicating their situation. The target may engage in behaviors such as abusive supervision (Naem et al., 2019) or social undermining (Zong et al., 2024) creating a reinforcing cycle of negative interactions. This reinforcing cycle is crucial as it demonstrates how gossip can trigger a chain reaction that disrupts workplace harmony.

The psychological strain experienced by workplace gossip targets is a direct consequence of being subjected to negative gossip (Kaur et al., 2025). However, the reactions of gossip receivers can further intensify these effects (X. Zhou et al., 2021). For example, the target's cognitive distress may escalate when gossip receivers withdraw support or reinforce negative perceptions, leading to heightened self-doubt and social anxiety. Similarly, while negative gossip directly causes emotional distress, its impact is amplified when receivers isolate the target or contribute to the spread of negative gossip. Moreover, gossip targets often modify their behavior in response to negative gossip (Cheng, Dong, et al., 2022), but these changes can be shaped further by the social dynamics created by gossip receivers. For instance, exclusion by receivers may push targets toward withdrawal and disengagement, whereas a more supportive or neutral response can encourage pro-social behavior and resilience.

Based on these interconnected dynamics within the gossip triad, we recommend that the outcomes for workplace gossip should be studied accordingly. First, the direct consequences of both positive and negative gossip should be systematically examined to understand their distinct impacts on each involved party. Second, the perspectives of all other parties involved, such as how gossip receivers and targets subsequently behave toward other involved parties should be investigated to capture the full canvas of this phenomenon. By analyzing how gossiping activity can either harm or benefit each member of the triad, we gain a more comprehensive view of its effects. Furthermore, assessing these consequences from each party's perspective allows us to deepen our understanding of how gossip not only exerts direct effects but also amplifies and intensifies these outcomes through secondary social interactions. This approach provides valuable insights into the strength of gossip as a social force and its role in shaping workplace dynamics and helps organizations to build more effective strategies to deal with it.

11.3. Agenda #3: workplace gossip across hierarchies: a multi-level analysis

Formal hierarchical positions are important dimensions in social interactions at work. Scholars have examined workplace gossip through the lens of hierarchical differences, primarily focusing on how gossip targets are positioned within organizational hierarchy (Brady et al., 2017). However, emerging evidence suggests that gossip is not confined to specific hierarchical targets but rather permeates all involved actors in the gossip triad. Research indicates that gossip occurs across all hierarchical levels, including both lower and higher-level employees. Extant literature underscores the pervasiveness of gossip as a prevalent mode of communication, transcending formal hierarchies. Studies highlighted that over 90 % of employees engage in some form of workplace gossip. Furthermore, (Bai et al., 2020) illustrate that supervisors can serve as gossip senders while subordinates function as receivers, an example of supervisor-subordinate gossip about subordinates. Their study reveals that negative gossip from supervisors fosters vicarious learning among subordinates, ultimately enhancing their performance. This aligns with one of the dimensions formally introduced in our typology, supervisor-subordinate gossip about subordinates, reinforcing the necessity of a more nuanced classification that captures the complexity of gossip beyond existing hierarchical distinctions (Brady et al., 2017).

If a supervisor can engage in gossip with his subordinate about another subordinate then it is also likely that a supervisor can engage in gossip with another supervisor about a lower-level employee, or a supervisor can engage in gossip with a lower-level employee about a higher-level employee. Given these insights, it is imperative to move beyond viewing hierarchical levels solely in terms of gossip targets and instead consider the hierarchical positioning of all actors within the gossip triad—senders, receivers, and targets. Understanding how hierarchical differences shape the roles and interactions of each participant in gossip exchanges will provide a more comprehensive framework for analyzing workplace gossip dynamics. While existing research offers fragmented perspectives on the roles of different organizational actors in gossip exchanges, a comprehensive framework that systematically accounts for these interactions remains absent. We propose a refined typology grounded in hierarchical levels within the gossip triad, providing a structured approach to studying gossip as a multidimensional construct. Future research should investigate the mechanisms through which gossip operates at various hierarchical levels with distinct roles such as sender, receiver, and target, the unique antecedents to each type of gossip and their outcomes, the contextual factors influencing its prevalence, and its broader implications for organizational functioning. By advancing a more holistic understanding of workplace gossip, scholars can better illuminate its role in shaping social dynamics, power relations, and workplace culture.

11.4. Reframing workplace gossip: the need for an overarching theoretical framework

Workplace gossip research has employed over 50 theoretical frameworks, reflecting its complexity and multifaceted nature. Among these, conservation of resources (COR) theory has emerged as the most widely used framework, particularly in examining gossip's effects on targets (Ye et al., 2022; Y. Zhang, Liu, et al., 2024). COR theory explains how gossip depletes or enhances an individual's resources, making it a valuable lens for studying targets' experiences (Hobfoll, 1989). Social exchange theory follows as another frequently applied perspective, highlighting gossip as a social transaction with both benefits and risks (Chen, Weng, Popelnukha, & Jiang, 2024; Martinescu et al., 2021). Other influential frameworks, such as affective events theory (AET) and social information processing theory, focus on gossip's emotional and cognitive influences (Babalola et al., 2019; P. Li et al., 2023), while social comparison theory is often used to explore how employees assess their workplace standing through gossip (Chang et al., 2021; Yu et al., 2024). While these theories provide valuable insights, their application is often narrowly focused on specific aspects of workplace gossip, leaving critical gaps in understanding its full scope.

For instance, COR theory has primarily been used to examine gossip from the target's perspective, emphasizing its role in resource depletion and stress (Srivastava et al., 2024). Similarly, AET has been instrumental in explaining how gossip influences the targets' emotions and behavioral reactions (Babalola et al., 2019), while social exchange theory has largely focused on the relational costs and benefits of gossip (Outlaw & Baer, 2024), and attribution theory is focused on understanding the receiver's attribution and subsequent behavior (S. H. Lee & Barnes, 2021). Despite the richness of these frameworks, they collectively cover only isolated dimensions of workplace gossip, rather than offering a holistic account of its multifaceted nature. As workplace gossip is a triadic construct, its effects are complex and far-reaching rather than straightforward. Moreover, understanding a single dimension of such a construct is insufficient for capturing its full conceptual and practical significance. To attain a comprehensive and authentic understanding, it is essential to examine and integrate all constituent dimensions, as each is not only unique but also interdependent with the others in shaping the overall phenomenon.

Therefore, to advance a more complete understanding of workplace gossip, a broader and overarching theoretical framework is necessary—one that unifies fragmented insights and accounts for the construct's full complexity. Such a framework should move beyond examining isolated components to encompass the antecedents, processes, and consequences of gossip as a dynamic social phenomenon. A unified theoretical foundation would enable scholars to explore how gossip simultaneously affects multiple actors—senders, receivers, and targets—highlighting the interdependencies and reciprocal influences among them. Relying solely on the perspective of one party risks producing a narrow and incomplete account. Understanding workplace gossip by focusing exclusively on the sender, receiver, or target is akin to interpreting a theatrical performance by analyzing a single character's dialogue in isolation. Just as the full meaning of a play emerges through the dynamic interactions among all characters, the complexity of gossip is revealed through the interplay within the gossip triad. Without integrating the perspectives of all three roles, researchers are likely to overlook the broader social mechanisms through which gossip exerts its influence within organizations. Thus, a comprehensive and integrative framework that conceptualizes the gossip triad as an interconnected system is essential for capturing the true nature of workplace gossip and its far-reaching implications.

To address this gap, we propose Shared Reality Theory (SRT) as a promising theoretical foundation for examining the construct of workplace gossip. SRT posits that individuals engage in social interactions to construct a common understanding of reality, particularly about others within organizational settings (Hardin & Higgins, 1996). In this context, gossip functions as a mechanism for collective meaning-making, enabling employees to co-create shared perceptions about their colleagues, reinforce workplace norms, and shape collective beliefs (Baumeister et al., 2004). The gossip process typically begins with a sender-receiver interaction, wherein the sender selectively frames information about a target to influence the receiver's perception or to seek validation for their viewpoint. The receiver, in turn, may either align their beliefs with the sender—contributing to a shared cognitive reality—or challenge the sender's account, potentially reshaping the sender's perception. Through repeated gossip exchanges, these interactions gradually construct socially shared narratives about the target, shaping their workplace reputation, image, and social standing.

While negative gossip can strengthen relational bonds between the sender and receiver—fostering trust, intimacy, and friendship (Estévez et al., 2022)—it may simultaneously harm the target's relationship with both parties (X. Zhou et al., 2021). Conversely, positive gossip may enhance the target's standing and positive workplace behaviors (Dai et al., 2022). Importantly, gossip not only influences interpersonal relationships but also embeds specific narratives into the collective mindset of employees, thereby reinforcing organizational norms and relational dynamics within the gossip triad (Hardin & Higgins, 1996). Thus, shared reality theory offers a robust lens for understanding how workplace gossip contributes to the co-construction of social reality and shapes complex interrelationships among gossip triad. For example, how workplace gossip shapes shared perceptions, influences decision-making, and contributes to workplace dynamics over time. Scholars should investigate the conditions under which gossip fosters a cohesive shared reality versus when it leads to misinformation and conflict. Additionally, research should examine how individual and contextual factors—such as trust, personality, power dynamics, relational quality, and organizational norms—moderate the effects of positive and negative gossip simultaneously on gossip sender, receiver, and target.

11.5. From whispered rumors to digital echoes: rethinking workplace gossip in the age of technology

In today's digitally connected and technologically-centered era, the nature and dynamics of workplace gossip are undergoing significant transformation (Murtaza, Neveu, Khan, & Talpur, 2023). The advent of advanced communication technologies, including instant messaging, social media platforms, and collaborative tools—has dramatically reshaped how employees interact, share information, and form social bonds. Unlike traditional face-to-face gossip, which was bounded by proximity and time, digital

communication allows gossip to travel faster, reach wider audiences, and persist over time in written form. These technological advancements blur the boundaries between formal and informal communication, making workplace gossip more pervasive, traceable, and potentially more impactful (Khalid, Weng, Luqman, Rasheed, & Hina, 2022, 2023). As organizations increasingly operate in virtual or hybrid environments, understanding how gossip functions in these digitally mediated contexts becomes crucial. This shift calls for a renewed theoretical and empirical investigation into the role of gossip, not only as a social process but also as a technologically influenced phenomenon embedded in the broader digital transformation of organizational life.

Despite this shift, workplace gossip research remains predominantly focused on face-to-face interactions, neglecting the growing role of telecommunication technologies in shaping gossip dynamics. This gap in the literature calls for urgent scholarly attention to explore how digital mediums influence the nature, spread, and consequences of workplace gossip. The integration of telecommunication technologies has not only expanded the reach of workplace gossip but has also altered its dynamics. Unlike face-to-face gossip, digital gossip is often asynchronous, allowing employees to engage in gossip at any time, regardless of their physical location (Wang et al., 2020). This shift raises critical questions about how the absence of immediate feedback in digital communication influences the impact of gossip on social relationships and organizational culture.

In face-to-face interactions, gossip recipients are expected to respond in real-time, often signaling agreement, disapproval, or neutrality through verbal and non-verbal cues. However, in technology-mediated environments—such as emails, messaging apps, or social media—the response time of the gossip recipient is no longer immediate. This delay allows for more cognitive processing, strategic decision-making, or even disengagement from the conversation. As a result, the role of the gossip recipient may be fundamentally reshaped. Rather than serving as a passive or reactive participant, the recipient becomes a more autonomous and potentially influential actor who can choose how and when to respond. This transformation in response dynamics not only alters the trajectory of gossip exchanges but also has broader implications for relational dynamics, trust formation, and the diffusion of informal narratives within the organization.

Moreover, the perceived anonymity and security offered by digital communication platforms may encourage more frequent and uninhibited gossip, potentially amplifying both its occurrence and its consequences. Negative gossip, in particular, often requires a sense of confidentiality, as being overheard or exposed can pose social or professional risks for the gossipier. In this regard, digital platforms provide an additional layer of perceived safety by enabling private, asynchronous, and often encrypted exchanges. Such environments allow individuals to engage in sensitive or critical discussions without the immediate threat of surveillance or unintended exposure.

Additionally, gossip conducted through technology-supported platforms introduces new risks; as such communication can be easily documented, forwarded, and widely disseminated with unprecedented speed. This capability increases the potential for rapid and far-reaching reputational harm. While the primary risk may appear to lie with the gossip target—whose image can be damaged swiftly across social and organizational networks—advanced communication technologies also expose the gossip sender to significant vulnerability. If the gossip is perceived as malicious or unethical and becomes widely circulated, the sender's reputation and standing within the social network may be jeopardized. Thus, while digital platforms offer convenience and perceived security, they also heighten the stakes of gossip by increasing both its reach and potential consequences for all involved parties. By expanding the scope of workplace gossip research to include digital interactions, scholars can develop a more comprehensive understanding of how gossip functions in modern organizations, ensuring that theoretical advancements align with contemporary workplace realities.

12. Limitations

Despite having several contributions to the present study, the readers should consider the following limitations. First, this study only includes articles published in the English language, and studies published in other languages were not considered. Therefore, future researchers can overcome this limitation to include the relevant studies published in other languages. Second, we only selected two databases (Web of Science and Scopus) to limit our process for the identification and selection of published articles on workplace gossip. Hence, studies published in other databases have a fair chance of exclusion. Therefore, future researchers can overcome this limitation by including articles from other databases. Third, although we have developed and utilized a comprehensive search string, some relevant studies that used slightly different terminologies may have been missed. The literature on workplace gossip is quite diverse and uses various terminologies. Therefore, we suggest future researchers use more synonymous and interchangeable terminologies referring to gossip such as informal communication, counter-knowledge, and grapevine.

13. Conclusion

This study presents a state-of-the-art bibliometric-systematic literature review of workplace gossip research, analyzing 258 research articles for bibliometric indicators and 183 articles for synthesizing key insights into a comprehensive framework. Beyond synthesis, we developed the gossip triad model, which conceptualizes the interplay between gossip senders, receivers, and targets, and introduced a gossip typology based on triadic and hierarchical perspectives. Additionally, we provided a future research agenda, addressing existing knowledge gaps and offering a structured path for advancing the field. Given the fast growing and fragmented nature of workplace gossip literature, this study serves as a foundational resource, offering clarity, integration, and a strategic research agenda. By presenting a unified perspective, we aim to stimulate further scholarly inquiry and encourage researchers to explore this evolving domain with greater coherence and depth.

Appendix A. A systematic review of workplace gossip research

A.1. Author statement

Sr. No	Contribution Role	1st Author Junaid Khalid	2nd Author Prof. Qingxiong Derek Weng	3rd Author Hafiz Muhammad Usman Khizar
1	Conceptualization	Equal	Equal	Equal
2	Data curation	Equal	Supervising	Equal
3	Formal analysis	Leading	Supporting	Supporting
4	Funding acquisition	No	Leading	No
5	Investigation	Leading	Supervision	Supporting
	Methodology	Leading	Supervision	Supporting
	Project administration	Leading	Supervision	Supporting
	Resources	Leading	Supervision	Supporting
	Software	Leading	Supervision	Supporting
	Supervision	Following	Leading	Following
	Validation	Equal	Leading	Equal
	Visualization	Leading	Supervision	Supporting
	Writing – original draft	Leading	Supervision	Supporting
	Writing – review and editing	Leading	Supervision	Supporting

Appendix A. Supplementary data

Supplementary data to this article can be found online at <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.hrmr.2025.101092>.

Data availability

Data will be made available on request.

Center for open science (OSF) [A Bibliometric-Systematic Review of Workplace Gossip Research \(Original data\)](#)

References

- Adamska, K. (2023). Organizational Cynicism and Communication: “Onstage” and “Offstage.” *Roczniki Psychologiczne*, 26(2), 95–113. doi:10.18290/rpsych2023.0006.
- Agina, M., Khairy, H., Abdel Fatah, M., Manaa, Y., Abdallah, R., Aliane, N., ... Al-Romeedy, B. (2023). Distributive injustice and work disengagement in the tourism and hospitality industry: Mediating roles of the workplace negative gossip and organizational cynicism. *Sustainability*, 15(20), 15011. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su152015011>
- Ahmad, B., Tariq, H., Weng, Q., Shillamkwe, S. S., & Sohail, N. (2019). When a proximate starts to gossip: Instrumentality considerations in the emergence of abusive supervision. *Employee Relations: The International Journal*, 41(5), 851–875. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ER-08-2018-0225>
- Akunduz, Y., Sanli Kayran, S. C., & Metin, U. (2023). The background of restaurant employees' revenge intention: Supervisor incivility, organizational gossip, and blaming others. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-12-2022-1614>
- Babalola, M. T., Ren, S., Kobinah, T., Qu, Y. E., Garba, O. A., & Guo, L. (2019). Negative workplace gossip: Its impact on customer service performance and moderating roles of trait mindfulness and forgiveness. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 80, 136–143. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2019.02.007>
- Bai, Y., Wang, J., Chen, T., & Li, F. (2020). Learning from supervisor negative gossip: The reflective learning process and performance outcome of employee receivers. *Human Relations*, 73(12), 1689–1717. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726719866250>
- Bashir, M., Shabbir, R., Saleem, S., Abrar, M., Saqib, S., & Gill, S. H. (2020). Job-related and nonjob-related gossips among low-ranked employees in unionized service organization. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 11, 994. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.00994>
- Baumeister, R. F., Zhang, L., & Vohs, K. D. (2004). Gossip as cultural learning. *Review of General Psychology*, 8(2), 111–121. <https://doi.org/10.1037/1089-2680.8.2.111>
- Beersma, B., & Van Kleef, G. A. (2011). How the grapevine keeps you in line: Gossip increases contributions to the group. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 2(6), 642–649. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1948550611405073>
- Beersma, B., & Van Kleef, G. A. (2012). Why people gossip: An empirical analysis of social motives, antecedents, and consequences: Why people gossip. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 42(11), 2640–2670. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1559-1816.2012.00956.x>
- Ben-Hador, B. (2019). Social capital levels, gossip and employee performance in aviation and shipping companies in Israel. *International Journal of Manpower*, 40(6), 1036–1055. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJM-12-2017-0321>
- Blau, P. (1964). *Exchange and power in social life*.
- Brady, D. L., Brown, D. J., & Liang, L. H. (2017). Moving beyond assumptions of deviance: The reconceptualization and measurement of workplace gossip. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 102(1), 1–25. <https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0000164>
- Burt, R. S., & Knez, M. (1995). Kinds of third-party effects on trust. *Rationality and Society*, 7(3), 255–292. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1043463195007003003>
- Cao, W., Chen, L., Tang, R., Zhao, X., Mattila, A. S., Liu, J., & Qin, Y. (2025). When customers become scapegoats: How negative gossip about organizational change can cause negative emotions and displaced aggression. *Personnel Review*, 54(1), 256–283. <https://doi.org/10.1108/PR-11-2023-0941>
- Caputo, A., & Kargina, M. (2022). A user-friendly method to merge Scopus and web of science data during bibliometric analysis. *Journal of Marketing Analytics*, 10(1), 82–88. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41270-021-00142-7>
- Chang, K., & Kuo, C.-C. (2021). Can subordinates benefit from manager's gossip? *European Management Journal*, 39(4), 497–507. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.emj.2020.09.009>
- Chang, K., Kuo, C.-C., Quinton, S., Lee, I., Cheng, T.-C., & Huang, S.-K. (2021). Subordinates' competence: A potential trigger for workplace ostracism. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 32(8), 1801–1827. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2019.1579246>
- Chen, L., Weng, Q., Popelnukha, A., & Jiang, H. (2024). Mixed feelings about supervisors: The effect of LMX ambivalence on supervisor-directed behaviors. *Journal of Business Ethics*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-024-05710-2>

- Cheng, B., Dong, Y., Zhang, Z., Shaalan, A., Guo, G., & Peng, Y. (2022). When targets strike Back: How negative workplace gossip triggers political acts by employees. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 175(2), 289–302. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-020-04648-5>
- Cheng, B., Peng, Y., Tian, J., & Shaalan, A. (2024). How negative workplace gossip undermines employees' career growth: From a reputational perspective. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-02-2023-0234>
- Cheng, B., Peng, Y., Zhou, X., Shaalan, A., Tourky, M., & Dong, Y. (2023). Negative workplace gossip and targets' subjective well-being: A moderated mediation model. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 34(9), 1757–1781. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2022.2029931>
- Cheng, B., Zhang, Z., & Peng, Y. (2024). Linking negative workplace gossip to deviant workplace behavior: A social cognitive perspective. *Current Psychology*, 43(7), 6613–6626. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-023-04854-0>
- Cheng, J., Usman, M., Bai, H., & He, Y. (2022). Can authentic leaders reduce the spread of negative workplace gossip? The roles of subordinates' perceived procedural justice and interactional justice. *Journal of Management & Organization*, 28(1), 9–32. <https://doi.org/10.1017/jmo.2021.32>
- Dai, Y., Zhuo, X., Hou, J., & Lyu, B. (2022). Is not workplace gossip bad? The effect of positive workplace gossip on employee innovative behavior. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13, 1017202. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.1017202>
- De Clercq, D. (2022). Exposure to workplace bullying and negative gossip behaviors: Buffering roles of personal and contextual resources. *Business Ethics, the Environment & Responsibility*, 31(3), 859–874. <https://doi.org/10.1111/beer.12436>
- De Clercq, D., Fatima, T., & Jahanzeb, S. (2021). Gossiping about an arrogant leader: Sparked by inconsistent leadership, mitigated by employee resilience. *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 57(3), 269–289. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0021886320917520>
- Decoster, S., Camps, J., Stouten, J., Vandevyvere, L., & Tripp, T. M. (2013). Standing by your organization: The impact of organizational identification and abusive supervision on followers' perceived cohesion and tendency to gossip. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 118(3), 623–634. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-012-1612-z>
- Dijkstra, M., Beersma, B., & Van Leeuwen, J. (2014). Gossiping as a response to conflict with the boss: Alternative conflict management behavior? *International Journal of Conflict Management*, 25(4), 431–454. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCM-08-2014-0059>
- Ding, C., Zhang, Z., Zhao, S., & Zhang, G. (2023). The impact of idiosyncratic deals on coworkers' interactive behavior: The moderating role of developmental human resource management practices. *Sustainability*, 15(18), 13843. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su151813843>
- Dores Cruz, T. D., Balliet, D., Sleebos, E., Beersma, B., Van Kleef, G. A., & Gallucci, M. (2019). Getting a grip on the grapevine: Extension and factor structure of the motives to gossip questionnaire. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 10, 1190. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.01190>
- Dores Cruz, T. D., Nieper, A. S., Testori, M., Martinescu, E., & Beersma, B. (2021). An integrative definition and framework to study gossip. *Group & Organization Management*, 46(2), 252–285. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1059601121992887>
- Dores Cruz, T. D., Thielmann, I., Columbus, S., Molho, C., Wu, J., Righetti, F., ... Balliet, D. (2021). Gossip and reputation in everyday life. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences*, 376(1838), 20200301. <https://doi.org/10.1098/rstb.2020.0301>
- Ellwardt, L., Steglich, C., & Wittek, R. (2012). The co-evolution of gossip and friendship in workplace social networks. *Social Networks*, 34(4), 623–633. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socnet.2012.07.002>
- Ellwardt, L., Wittek, R., & Wielers, R. (2012). Talking about the boss: Effects of generalized and interpersonal trust on workplace gossip. *Group & Organization Management*, 37(4), 521–549. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1059601112450607>
- Erdogan, B., Bauer, T. N., & Walter, J. (2015). Deeds that help and words that hurt: Helping and gossip as moderators of the relationship between leader-member exchange and advice network centrality: PERSONNEL PSYCHOLOGY. *Personnel Psychology*, 68(1), 185–214. <https://doi.org/10.1111/peps.12075>
- Estévez, J. L., & Takács, K. (2022). Brokering or sitting between two chairs? A group perspective on workplace gossip. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13, Article 815383. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.815383>
- Estévez, J. L., Wittek, R., Giardini, F., Ellwardt, L., & Krause, R. W. (2022). Workplace gossip and the evolution of friendship relations: The role of complex contagion. *Social Network Analysis and Mining*, 12(1), 113. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13278-022-00923-7>
- Farley, S. D., Timme, D. R., & Hart, J. W. (2010). On coffee talk and break-room chatter: Perceptions of women who gossip in the workplace. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 150(4), 361–368. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00224540903365430>
- Gao, C., Shaheen, S., & Bari, M. W. (2024). Workplace gossip erodes proactive work behavior: Anxiety and neuroticism as underlying mechanisms. *BMC Psychology*, 12(1), 464. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40359-024-01966-5>
- Gordon, A. D., & Schweitzer, M. E. (2024). Gossip, power, and advice: Gossipers are conferred less expert power. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 115, Article 104655. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2024.104655>
- Greenslade-Yeats, J., Cooper-Thomas, H., Corner, P. D., & Morrison, R. (2024). A paradox-constitutive perspective of organizational gossip. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 26(2), 187–210. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijmr.12345>
- Greenslade-Yeats, J., Cooper-Thomas, H., Morrison, R., & Corner, P. D. (2023). How workplace gossip shapes interpersonal relationships: A qualitative study from the gossip recipient's perspective. *Group & Organization Management*, 10596011231184685. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10596011231184685>
- Grosser, T. J., Lopez-Kidwell, V., & Labianca, G. (2010). A social network analysis of positive and negative gossip in organizational life. *Group & Organization Management*, 35(2), 177–212. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1059601109360391>
- Guang, X., Shan, L., Xue, Z., & Haiyan, Y. (2024). Does negative evaluation make you lose yourself? Effects of negative workplace gossip on workplace prosocial behavior of employee. *Current Psychology*, 43(15), 13541–13554. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-023-05419-x>
- Guo, G., Gong, Q., Li, S., & Liang, X. (2021). Don't speak ill of others behind their backs: Receivers' ostracism (sender-oriented) reactions to negative workplace gossip. *Psychology Research and Behavior Management*, 14, 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.2147/PRBM.S288961>
- Hameed, F., Shaheen, S., & Younas, A. (2025). What drives ostracised knowledge hiding? Negative work place gossips and neuroticism perspective: VINE JOURNAL OF INFORMATION AND KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS. <https://doi.org/10.1108/VJKMS-11-2023-0311>
- Hardin, C. D., & Higgins, E. T. (1996). Shared reality: How social verification makes the subjective objective. In , Vol. 3. *Handbook of motivation and cognition* (pp. 28–84). The Guilford Press.
- He, C., Feng, T., Xiong, J., & Wei, H. (2023). The relationship between negative workplace gossip and thriving at work among Chinese kindergarten teachers: The roles of psychological contract breach and bianzhi. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 14, 1198316. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1198316>
- He, C., & Wei, H. (2022). Negative workplace gossip and turnover intention among Chinese rural preschool teachers: The mediation of ego depletion and the moderation of bianzhi. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13, 1034203. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.1034203>
- He, C., & Wei, H. (2022). Negative workplace gossip and turnover intention among Chinese rural preschool teachers: The mediation of ego depletion and the moderation of bianzhi. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13, 1034203. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.1034203>
- Hobfoll, S. E. (1989). Conservation of resources: A new attempt at conceptualizing stress. *American Psychologist*, 44(3), 513–524. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.44.3.513>
- Hu, D., Deng, Y., Song, Y., Lian, H., Daniels, S. R., Yang, M., & Chen, W. (2024). Gossiping the (recipient's) day away: The impact of supervisor-directed gossip on recipients' rumination, sleep quality, vitality, and work outcomes. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 109(8), 1311–1326. <https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0001181>
- Hughes, I. M., Lee, J., Hong, J., Currie, R., & Jex, S. M. (2023). They were uncivil, and now I am too: A dual process model exploring relations between customer incivility and instigated incivility. *Stress and Health*, 39(4), 766–781. <https://doi.org/10.1002/smi.3221>
- Jalil, D., Xu, X., Jiang, L., & Wang, H. (2022). Do not ask, but you shall still receive: Newcomer reactions to receiving negative gossip. *Stress and Health*, 38(5), 989–1000. <https://doi.org/10.1002/smi.3150>
- Jeuken, E., Beersma, B., Ten Velden, F. S., & Dijkstra, M. T. M. (2015). Aggression as a motive for gossip during conflict: The role of power, social value orientation, and counterpart's behavior. *Negotiation and Conflict Management Research*, 8(3), 137–152. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ncmr.12053>
- Jiang, L., Hu, S., Náswall, K., López Bohle, S., & Wang, H.-J. (2020). Why and when cognitive job insecurity relates to affective job insecurity? A three-study exploration of negative rumination and the tendency to negative gossip. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 29(5), 678–692. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1359432X.2020.1758669>
- Jiang, L., Xu, X., & Hu, X. (2019). Can gossip buffer the effect of job insecurity on workplace friendships? *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 16(7), 1285. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph16071285>

- Kakarika, M., Taghavi, S., & González-Gómez, H. V. (2023). Don't shoot the messenger? A morality- and gender-based model of reactions to negative workplace gossip. *Journal of Business Ethics*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-023-05355-7>
- Kakarika, M., Taghavi, S., & Gonzalez-Gomez, H. V. (2024). Don't shoot the messenger? A morality- and gender-based model of reactions to negative workplace gossip. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 189(2), 329–344. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-023-05355-7>
- Kaur, A., Maheshwari, S., & Varma, A. (2025). The digital escape: Examining the impact of cyberloafing on gossip-induced emotional exhaustion and the mediating role of self-esteem. *EVIDENCE-BASED HRM-A GLOBAL FORUM FOR EMPIRICAL SCHOLARSHIP*. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EBHRM-12-2023-0344>
- Khalid, J., Weng, Q. D., Ghani, U., Usman, M., Asim, M., & Batool, M. (2025). Supervisor negative gossip and target's helping behavior: The role of emotional exhaustion and Islamic work ethics.
- Khalid, J., Weng, Q. D., Luqman, A., Rasheed, M. I., & Hina, M. (2022). After-hours work-related technology use and individuals' deviance: The role of other-initiated versus self-initiated interruptions. *Information Technology & People*, 35(7), 1955–1979. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ITP-03-2020-0136>
- Khalid, J., Weng, Q. D., Luqman, A., Rasheed, M. I., & Hina, M. (2023). After-hours work-related technology use and individuals' deviance: The role of interruption overload, psychological transition and task closure. *Kybernetes*, 52(1), 158–181. <https://doi.org/10.1108/K-05-2020-0304>
- Khan, A., & Chaudhary, R. (2023a). Gossip at work: A model of narcissism, core self-evaluation and perceived organizational politics. *International Journal of Manpower*, 44(2), 197–213. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJM-09-2021-0559>
- Khan, A., & Chaudhary, R. (2023b). Perceived organizational politics and workplace gossip: The moderating role of compassion. *International Journal of Conflict Management*, 34(2), 392–416. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCM-07-2022-0121>
- Khan, A. G., Li, Y., Akram, Z., & Akram, U. (2023). Why and how targets' negative workplace gossip exhort knowledge hiding? Shedding light on organizational justice. *Journal of Knowledge Management*, 27(5), 1458–1482. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JKM-12-2020-0930>
- Khizar, H. M. U., Iqbal, M. J., Khalid, J., & Adomako, S. (2022). Addressing the conceptualization and measurement challenges of sustainability orientation: A systematic review and research agenda. *Journal of Business Research*, 142, 718–743. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2022.01.029>
- Kim, A., Gabriel, A. S., Kim, Y., Moon, J., & Rosen, C. C. (2023). How Does Workplace Gossip Benefit Gossip Actors? The Impact of Workplace Gossip on Power and Voluntary Turnover. *Group & Organization Management*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10596011231203758>
- Kim, A., Moon, J., & Shin, J. (2019). Justice perceptions, perceived insider status, and gossip at work: A social exchange perspective. *Journal of Business Research*, 97, 30–42. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2018.12.038>
- Kim, A., Shin, J., Kim, Y., & Moon, J. (2021). The impact of group diversity and structure on individual negative workplace gossip. *Human Performance*, 34(1), 67–83. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08959285.2020.1867144>
- Kim, K., & Kyong Lee, S. (2023). From Organizational Gossip to a Corporate Crisis: A Network Analysis of Anonymous Online Communication on the Blind Application. *International Journal of Business Communication*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/23294884231217084>
- Kiran, F., Zubair, A., Shahzadi, I., & Abbas, A. (2018). Internet-based digital marketing strategies for data-rich environments: A social network perspective to study gossips. *The Bottom Line*, 31(2), 98–113. <https://doi.org/10.1108/BL-03-2018-0012>
- Kong, M. (2018). Effect of perceived negative workplace gossip on employees' behaviors. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 9, 1112. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.01112>
- Kulik, C. T., Bainbridge, H. T. J., & Cregan, C. (2008). Known by the company we keep: Stigma-by-association effects in the workplace. *Academy of Management Review*, 33(1), 216–230. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2008.27752765>
- Kuo, C.-C., Chang, K., Quinton, S., Lu, C.-Y., & Lee, I. (2015). Gossip in the workplace and the implications for HR management: A study of gossip and its relationship to employee cynicism. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 26(18), 2288–2307. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2014.985329>
- Kuo, C.-C., Wu, C.-Y., & Lin, C.-W. (2018). Supervisor workplace gossip and its impact on employees. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 33(1), 93–105. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JMP-04-2017-0159>
- Kurland, N. B., & Pelled, L. H. (2000). Passing the word: Toward a model of gossip and power in the workplace. *The Academy of Management Review*, 25(2), 428. <https://doi.org/10.2307/259023>
- Lee, S. H., & Barnes, C. M. (2021). An attributional process model of workplace gossip. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 106(2), 300–316. <https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0000504>
- Li, P., Huang, Z., Wang, R., & Wang, S. (2023). How does perceived negative workplace gossip influence employee knowledge sharing behavior? An explanation from the perspective of social information processing. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 113, Article 103518. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2023.103518>
- Li, S., Ma, B., & Radivojevic, I. (2024). Employee moral evaluation of supervisor leniency for coworkers' misconduct: The role of attributed altruistic and instrumental motives. *Journal of Business Ethics*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-024-05809-6>
- Lian, H., Li, J., Pan, J., Du, C., & Zhao, Q. (2023). Are gossipers looked down upon? A norm-based perspective on the relation between gossip and gossiper status. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 108(6), 905–933. <https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0001056>
- Litman, J. A., & Pezzo, M. V. (2005). Individual differences in attitudes towards gossip. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 38(4), 963–980. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2004.09.003>
- Liu, T., Liu, L., Cafferkey, K., & Jia, Y. (2022). Assessing the impact of negative workplace gossip on family satisfaction: Evidence from employees in China. *Current Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-022-03241-5>
- Liu, T., Wu, L., Yang, Y., & Jia, Y. (2020). Work-to-family spillover effects of workplace negative gossip: A mediated moderation model. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 11, 1612. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.01612>
- Liu, X. Y., Kwan, H. K., & Zhang, X. (2020). Introverts maintain creativity: A resource depletion model of negative workplace gossip. *Asia Pacific Journal of Management*, 37(1), 325–344. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10490-018-9595-7>
- Locklear, L. R., Taylor, S. G., & Ambrose, M. L. (2021). How a gratitude intervention influences workplace mistreatment: A multiple mediation model. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 106(9), 1314–1331. <https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0000825>
- Lu, L., Duan, J., Wu, W., & Ma, G. (2024). Exploring the dual impact of workplace gossip on employee voice behavior: A social identity perspective. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 227, 112711. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2024.112711>
- Luna, A. (2013). Drivers for workplace gossip: an application of the theory of planned behavior. 17(1), 115–130.
- Lyu, Y., Wu, L.-Z., Ye, Y., & Fan, Y. (2024). Do you feel angry when you are gossiped about? Understanding the mechanism underlying negative workplace gossip and service sabotage. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 122, Article 103865. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2024.103865>
- Majeed, M., Fatima, T., & Irshad, M. (2023). A wolf in sheep's clothing: The perils of exploitative leadership. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, ejsp.2970. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.2970>
- Martinescu, E., Jansen, W., & Beersma, B. (2021). Negative gossip decreases targets' organizational citizenship behavior by decreasing social inclusion. A multi-method approach. *Group & Organization Management*, 46(3), 463–497. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1059601120986876>
- Marzi, G., Balzano, M., Caputo, A., & Pellegrini, M. M. (2025). Guidelines for bibliometric-systematic literature reviews: 10 steps to combine analysis, synthesis and theory development. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 27(1), 81–103. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijmr.12381>
- Mills, C. (2010). Experiencing Gossip: The Foundations for a Theory of Embedded Organizational Gossip. *Group & Organization Management*, 35(2), 213–240. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1059601109360392>
- Mu, X., Mao, J.-Y., Huang, R., & Yuan, S. (2022). How employees with a depressogenic attributional style respond to negative workplace gossip: Evidence based on a survey and a scenario experiment. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 189, Article 111500. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2022.111500>
- Murtaza, G., Neveu, J., Khan, R., & Talpur, Q. (2023). Gossip 2.0: The role of social media and moral attentiveness on counterproductive work behaviour. *Applied Psychology*, 72(4), 1478–1505. <https://doi.org/10.1111/apps.12449>
- Naeem, M., Weng, Q., Ali, A., & Hameed, Z. (2019). An eye for an eye: Does subordinates' negative workplace gossip lead to supervisor abuse? *Personnel Review*, 49(1), 284–302. <https://doi.org/10.1108/PR-05-2018-0174>
- Ni, D., Yang, M., & Chen, W. (2024). A dual-path model of observers' responses to peer voice endorsement: The role of instrumental attribution. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 45(1), 39–56. <https://doi.org/10.1002/job.2754>

- Nieper, A. S., Beersma, B., Dijkstra, M. T. M., & Van Kleef, G. A. (2022). When and why does gossip increase prosocial behavior? *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 44, 315–320. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2021.10.009>
- Noon, M., & Delbridge, R. (1993). News from behind my hand: Gossip in organizations. *Organization Studies*, 14(1), 23–36. <https://doi.org/10.1177/017084069301400103>
- Outlaw, R., & Baer, M. D. (2024). What you say matters: Moving beyond gossiping extent to explore the positive effects of gossip truthfulness and gossip interestingness. *Personnel Psychology*, 77(2), 527–554. <https://doi.org/10.1111/peps.12552>
- Şantaş, G., Uğurluoğlu, Ö., Özer, Ö., & Demir, A. (2018). Do gossip functions effect on organizational revenge and job stress among health Personnel? *Journal of Health Management*, 20(1), 64–72. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0972063417747724>
- Sethi, S., & Srivastava, S. (2024). Something to talk about! Testing the antecedents and consequences of workplace romance in Indian hotel industry. *Business and Professional Communication Quarterly*, 23294906231225136. <https://doi.org/10.1177/23294906231225136>
- Shoukat, M. H., Selem, K. M., Khan, M. A., & Shehata, A. E. (2024). The dark side of co-worker friendship in the restaurant context: Roles of gender and promotion focus. *European Journal of Management and Business Economics*. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EJMBE-05-2023-0149>
- Simsek, Z., Fox, B., & Heavey, C. (2023). Systematicity in organizational research literature reviews: A framework and assessment. *Organizational Research Methods*, 26(2), 292–321. <https://doi.org/10.1177/109442812111008652>
- Srivastava, S., Saxena, A., Kapoor, V., & Qadir, A. (2024). Sailing through silence: Exploring how negative gossip leaves breeding grounds for quiet quitting in the workplace. *International Journal of Conflict Management*, 35(4), 733–755. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCM-07-2023-0139>
- Sun, T., Schilpzand, P., & Liu, Y. (2023). Workplace gossip: An integrative review of its antecedents, functions, and consequences. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 44(2), 311–334. <https://doi.org/10.1002/job.2653>
- Tan, N., Yam, K. C., Zhang, P., & Brown, D. J. (2021). Are you gossiping about me? The costs and benefits of high workplace gossip prevalence. *Journal of Business and Psychology*, 36(3), 417–434. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10869-020-09683-7>
- Thoroughgood, C. N., Sawyer, K. B., Kong, D. T., & Webster, J. R. (2024). Oppositional courage for racial and ethnic minorities: A source of white employees' upward moral comparison. *Journal of Management*, 01492063241241312. <https://doi.org/10.1177/01492063241241312>
- Thorpe, R., Holt, R., Macpherson, A., & Pittaway, L. (2005). Using knowledge within small and medium-sized firms: A systematic review of the evidence. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 7(4), 257–281. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2370.2005.00116.x>
- Tian, Q., Song, Y., Kwan, H. K., & Li, X. (2019). Workplace gossip and frontline employees' proactive service performance. *The Service Industries Journal*, 39(1), 25–42. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02642069.2018.1435642>
- Tranfield, D., Denyer, D., & Smart, P. (2003). Towards a methodology for developing evidence-informed management knowledge by means of systematic review. *British Journal of Management*, 14(3), 207–222. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8551.00375>
- Uçan, F., & Avci, S. B. (2023). How does abusive supervision affect Organisational gossip? Understanding the mediating role of the dark triad. *Behavioral Sciences*, 13(9), 730. <https://doi.org/10.3390/bs13090730>
- Ugwu, F. O., Onyishi, E. I., Anozie, O. O., & Ugwu, L. E. (2022). Customer incivility and employee work engagement in the hospitality industry: Roles of supervisor positive gossip and workplace friendship prevalence. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Insights*, 5(3), 515–534. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JHTI-06-2020-0113>
- Ullah, R., Zada, M., Saeed, I., Khan, J., Shahbaz, M., Vega-Muñoz, A., & Salazar-Sepúlveda, G. (2021). Have you heard that—"GOSSIP"? Gossip spreads rapidly and influences broadly. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 18(24), 13389. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph182413389>
- Varty, C. T., Barclay, L. J., & Brady, D. L. (2021). Beyond adherence to justice rules: How and when manager gender contributes to diminished legitimacy in the aftermath of unfair situations. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 42(6), 767–784. <https://doi.org/10.1002/job.2482>
- Waddington, K., & Fletcher, C. (2005). Gossip and emotion in nursing and health-care organizations. *Journal of Health Organization and Management*, 19(4/5), 378–394. <https://doi.org/10.1108/14777260510615404>
- Walter, J., Kreutzer, M., & Kreutzer, K. (2021). Setting the tone for the team: A multi-level analysis of managerial control, peer control, and their consequences for job satisfaction and team performance. *Journal of Management Studies*, 58(3), 849–878. <https://doi.org/10.1111/joms.12622>
- Wang, B., Liu, Y., & Parker, S. K. (2020). How does the use of information communication technology affect individuals? A work design perspective. *Academy of Management Annals*, 14(2), 695–725. <https://doi.org/10.5465/annals.2018.0127>
- Wang, X., Xia, B., & Bi, W. (2025). Keeping silent or playing good citizen? Differential mechanisms of negative workplace gossip on targets reactions. *Personnel Review*, 54(1), 150–173. <https://doi.org/10.1108/PR-07-2023-0618>
- Wu, L.-Z., Birtch, T. A., Chiang, F. F. T., & Zhang, H. (2018). Perceptions of negative workplace gossip: A self-consistency theory framework. *Journal of Management*, 44(5), 1873–1898. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206316632057>
- Wu, X., Kwan, H. K., Wu, L.-Z., & Ma, J. (2018). The effect of workplace negative gossip on employee proactive behavior in China: The moderating role of traditionalism. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 148(4), 801–815. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-015-3006-5>
- Xiao, J., Wang, Y., Cheng, B., & Wei, J. (2024). The mixed blessing of dancing with star employees: A social-comparison-based analysis of the effects of star employees on non-stars. *Journal of Business and Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10869-024-09976-1>
- Xie, J., Huang, Q., Wang, H., & Shen, M. (2019a). Coping with negative workplace gossip: The joint roles of self-monitoring and impression management tactics. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 151, Article 109482. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2019.06.025>
- Xie, J., Huang, Q., Wang, H., & Shen, M. (2019b). Perish in gossip? Nonlinear effects of perceived negative workplace gossip on job performance. *Personnel Review*, 49(2), 389–405. <https://doi.org/10.1108/PR-10-2018-0400>
- Xie, J., Huang, Q., Yan, M., & Liang, Y. (2024). It is Tough to Detach from Gossip: The Impact of Perceived Negative Workplace Gossip on Life Satisfaction. *Journal of Business and Psychology*, 39(2), 497–511. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10869-023-09894-8>
- Xing, M., Xia, Y., Zhao, M., & Lan, Y. (2021). Perceived negative gossip of coworkers: Effect on newcomers' work outcomes during social adjustment. *Social Behavior and Personality: An International Journal*, 49(4), 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.2224/sbp.9817>
- Yao, Z., Luo, J., & Zhang, X. (2020). Gossip is a fearful thing: The impact of negative workplace gossip on knowledge hiding. *Journal of Knowledge Management*, 24(7), 1755–1775. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JKM-04-2020-0264>
- Ye, C., He, B., & Sun, X. (2022). Subordinates' negative workplace gossip leads to supervisor abuse: Based on the conservation of resources theory. *Chinese Management Studies*, 16(2), 315–333. <https://doi.org/10.1108/CMS-09-2020-0387>
- Yu, W., Li, M., & Qin, X. (2024). Employees high in political skill viewed as role model or gossip target? Linking political skill to coworker envy, observational learning and negative gossip, and the moderating role of workplace friendship. *Applied Psychology*, 73(4), 1699–1727. <https://doi.org/10.1111/apps.12524>
- Zeng, H., Zhao, L., & Li, J. (2022). Why does subordinates' negative workplace gossip lead to supervisor undermining? A moderated mediation model. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13, Article 981539. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.981539>
- Zhang, H., & Zheng, J. (2024). Unraveling the role of external social support in coping with negative workplace gossip. *Social Behavior and Personality: An International Journal*, 52(3), 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.2224/sbp.13092>
- Zhang, Y., Liu, Y., Zhang, J., Akhtar, M. N., & Wang, Y. (2024). How and when negative workplace gossip influences service sabotage behavior? A study among hotel frontline employees in China. *Chinese Management Studies*. <https://doi.org/10.1108/CMS-02-2023-0086>
- Zhang, Y., Liu, Y., Zhang, J., Akhtar, M. N., & Wang, Y. (2025). How and when negative workplace gossip influences service sabotage behavior? A study among hotel frontline employees in China. *Chinese Management Studies*, 19(1), 99–115. <https://doi.org/10.1108/CMS-02-2023-0086>
- Zhao, H., & Ma, Y. (2025). How is it going to end? Negative workplace gossip about coworkers, compensatory ethics and gossipers helping behavior toward coworkers. *Personnel Review*, 54(2), 557–580. <https://doi.org/10.1108/PR-04-2024-0316>
- Zhao, H., Ma, Y., & Chen, Y. (2024). The double-edged sword of negative workplace gossip: When and how negative workplace gossip promotes versus inhibits knowledge hiding. *Current Psychology*, 43(25), 21840–21856. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-024-05954-1>
- Zhao, L., Khalid, M., Karim Khan, A., & Ma, Y. (2024). Negative workplace gossip and knowledge hiding: Roles of duty orientation and psychological entitlement. *Knowledge Management Research & Practice*, 22(2), 198–209. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14778238.2023.2297070>

- Zhong, R., Tang, P. M., & Lee, S. H. (2023). The gossiper's high and low: Investigating the impact of negative gossip about the supervisor on work engagement. *Personnel Psychology*, *peps.12571*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/peps.12571>
- Zhong, R., Tang, P. M., & Lee, S. H. (2024). The gossiper's high and low: Investigating the impact of negative gossip about the supervisor on work engagement. *Personnel Psychology*, *77*(2), 621–649. <https://doi.org/10.1111/peps.12571>
- Zhong, R., Yu, L., Zhu, J., & Zhu, L. (2025). Combat poison with "poison": Leader-targeted negative team gossip mitigates the detrimental team consequences of abusive supervision climate. *JOURNAL OF APPLIED PSYCHOLOGY*. <https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0001268>
- Zhou, A., Liu, Y., Su, X., & Xu, H. (2019). Gossip fiercer than a tiger: Effect of workplace negative gossip on targeted employees' innovative behavior. *Social Behavior and Personality: An International Journal*, *47*(5), 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.2224/sbp.5727>
- Zhou, X., Fan, L., Cheng, C., & Fan, Y. (2021). When and why do good people not do good deeds? Third-party observers' unfavorable reactions to negative workplace gossip. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *171*(3), 599–617. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-020-04470-z>
- Zhu, Q., & Cheng, K. (2025). The work-family spillover and crossover effects of negative workplace gossip. *Service Industries Journal*, *45*(3–4), 407–425. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02642069.2023.2247341>
- Zhu, Q., Martinescu, E., Beersma, B., & Wei, F. (2022). How does receiving gossip from coworkers influence employees' task performance and interpersonal deviance? The moderating roles of regulatory focus and the mediating role of vicarious learning. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, *95*(2), 213–238. <https://doi.org/10.1111/joop.12375>
- Zhu, Q., Martinescu, E., Beersma, B., & Wei, F. (2024). The double-edged sword of negative supervisor gossip: When and why negative supervisor gossip promotes versus inhibits feedback seeking behavior among gossip targets. *Human Relations*, *77*(6), 864–886. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00187267231165885>
- Zhu, Q., Wei, F., & Moin, M. F. (2024). Supervisor negative gossip and employees' thriving at work. *The Service Industries Journal*, *44*(11–12), 900–917. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02642069.2022.2117301>
- Zong, B., Martinescu, E., Beersma, B., Xu, S., & Zhang, L. (2023). How multi-source gossip affects targets' emotions and strategic behavioral responses. *Journal of Business Ethics*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-022-05322-8>
- Zong, B., Martinescu, E., Beersma, B., Xu, S., & Zhang, L. (2024). How multi-source gossip affects targets' emotions and strategic behavioral responses. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *189*(2), 385–402. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-022-05322-8>
- Zong, B., Xu, S., Zhang, L., & Qu, J. (2021). Dealing with negative workplace gossip: From the perspective of face. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *12*, Article 629376. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.629376>
- Zong, B., Zhang, L., Chu, X., & Qu, J. (2021). Does positive workplace gossip help socialize newcomers? A dual-pathway model based on network ties. *PsyCh Journal*, *10*(5), 767–776. <https://doi.org/10.1002/pchj.468>
- Zou, X., Chen, X., Chen, F., Luo, C., & Liu, H. (2020). The influence of negative workplace gossip on knowledge sharing: Insight from the cognitive dissonance perspective. *Sustainability*, *12*(8), 3282. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12083282>
- Zupic, I., & Cater, T. (2015). Bibliometric methods in management and organization. *Organizational Research Methods*, *18*(3), 429–472. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1094428114562629>