

# Work Place Gossips Boon or Curse for Organizational Functions: A Conceptual View

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## ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** The importance of information sharing in an organisation has increased recently, which has led to increased scholarly attention. The majority of employees actually actively share their knowledge with their coworkers, but many of them decide to keep it with themselves, which is concerning because a lot of subjects are discussed at work place. This study aims to explore whether workplace gossips influence organizational function or not and discusses whether there is any relationship between both organizational function and workplace gossips or not.

**Design/methodology/style:** Based on rich organizational experience, the researcher has tried to explore that whether there is any influence of work place gossips in the functional activities of organization. The research has reviewed 20 studies on the issue and discover the influence of the workplace gossips on various activities of the organization.

**Findings:** The findings revealed that, there is positive, negative and miscellaneous influence of work place gossips on the functional activities of the organization. Various authors have taken many aspects during their studies such as psychological contract violation and cynicism, work enthusiasm, work motivation, informal information dissemination channels, employees' psychology and work status, innovative behavior, employee loyalty, task dependency, trust in thinking, mental fatigue, and internet use behaviours among employees, among other things.

**Originality/value:** This study has tried to check relation between workplace gossips and organizational functional activities. Besides, this study adds to scholars' to understand which kind of influence the gossips have on the organizational functional activities. This conceptual study demonstrated that the workplace gossips has not been touched by many studies which delivers a foundation for submission of this subject in forthcoming time.

**Keywords:** Negative work place gossip, Negative work place gossip, Organization, Functional Activities.

## 1. Outline

Depending on context, term "organisation" can indicate several things. For example, it might refer to a structured collection of individuals who collaborate to accomplish particular aims or objectives, such as businesses, non-profits, governments, or community groups. a well-organised organisation with well defined roles, procedures, and resources to effectively manage work and accomplish corporate goals. For instance, a business or corporation. the process of efficiently and methodically organising thoughts, actions, or objects. the organised placement of components within a living thing to carry out particular

tasks, like organ systems. Static engagement metrics and practices need to alter to reflect the ever-evolving workforce, businesses, and employee expectations.

## 2: Employee Gossips

Gossip in the workplace refers to informal, and often speculative, conversations between employees about topics such as colleagues' personal lives, job changes, or company decisions. While some gossip is harmless, it can sometimes lead to misunderstandings, decreased morale, or conflicts.

### Types of Employee Gossip

**Positive Gossip:** Sharing achievements or good news about others.

**Negative Gossip:** Rumors that harm reputations or spread negativity.

**Miscellaneous Gossip:** Casual talks with no particular harm or benefit.

### Effects of Gossip in the Workplace

**Positive Effects:** Builds social bonds when not malicious. Helps employees stay informed about organizational dynamics.

**Negative Effects:** Reduces trust and productivity. Creates tension and resentment among coworkers. Damages reputations and team cohesion. How to Manage Workplace Gossip.

## 3. Theoretical Aspects of Employee Gossips and Organizational Functional Activities

Employee gossip can influence various functional activities within an organization, either positively or negatively. Understanding how gossip affects areas such as communication, performance, and decision-making can help organizations better manage this common phenomenon. Gossip often acts as a secondary channel for information dissemination, sometimes filling gaps left by formal communication. Employees may gain insights into organizational changes or best practices informally. Harmless gossip can foster relationships and social cohesion within teams. Shared informal conversations contribute to building a sense of belonging. Gossip may reveal employee concerns that management was unaware of, providing informal feedback. Further, Misinformation spread through gossip can lead to confusion and distortion of organizational messages. It reduces the credibility of formal communication. Excessive gossip consumes time and distracts employees from their primary duties. Focus shifts from task completion to social speculation. Malicious gossip may lead to strained relationships, reduced cooperation, and hostility among colleagues. Persistent gossip creates a toxic work environment, reducing trust and employee engagement. Recruitment, performance appraisals, and employee retention may be negatively affected when gossip influences perceptions of colleagues or leaders.

### Functional Activities Affected by Gossip

Activity	Positive Impact	Negative Impact
Communication	Faster information flow	Misinformation and rumors
Employee Relations	Team bonding	Conflict and mistrust
Performance Management	Informal feedback	Distraction from tasks
HR Management	Cultural insights	Harmful stereotyping
Decision-Making	Valuable informal info	Distorted perceptions

#### 4: Review of Literature

In their study, Ellwardta, *et al.* (2012) came to the conclusion that in order to comprehend why workplace gossip can sometimes result in high employee integration and cohesiveness within the information network and other times in low integration and structural flaws, it is imperative that we concentrate on the subjects of the gossip. It has been observed that the antecedents of being the subject of gossip vary based on whether the talk is constructive or destructive. A systematic differentiation between positive and negative gossip would also be beneficial for studies about the consequences of gossip at work. Workplace gossip has either positive (like boosting collaboration and social support) or negative (like lowering the well-being of harmed employees) consequences on an organization. Simultaneous good and negative effects are possible. As we proceed with this investigation, it will probably be beneficial to take into account.

According to Pathak's (2014) examining work gossip is among the most common deviances that employees engage in is gossiping. Although it is hard to completely eradicate talking from any organisation, it is possible to maintain it at some healthy levels because the study also found that gossiping during breaks can enable one to refuel and, to some extent, increase productivity. Regarding the drawbacks, the results above indicate that there is little to no variation in the prevalence of workplace gossiping by gender, age group, and other demographic factors; therefore, the same remedies and actions can be implemented for all groups to eradicate this political aberration.

Although workplace gossip is common, however little has been known about how it's impacts on employees, according to a study by Kuo *et al.* (2015). This study employed social information theory and social cognition theory to evaluate many works on gossip and tested theories regarding some of its antecedents in order to better understand relationship between workplace gossip and employee behaviour. The findings demonstrated that job-related rumours predicted employee cynicism and acted as a mediator in relationship between cynical and contractual violations. Non-work-related rumours had a comparable, but lesser, impact on employee pessimism. A validated scale was established and identified two previously undocumented categories of gossip such as job-related gossip and non-job-related gossip were studied. The impacts of these different types of gossip on employee behaviour have been shown to be vary in various aspects. According to a study by Ogaboh *et al.* (2017), female employees frequently engage in workplace gossip. According to the study, workplace gossip is fuelled by a lacklustre management/leadership style, a weak communication system, inactivity, and insufficient duties. It also demonstrated how workplace rumours impact formal organisations' overall performance, information sharing, and working relationships. Bai and associates (2019) in their study stated that most people believe that workplace gossip is a bad habit that has an adverse effect on workers' productivity. But we contend that this pessimistic perspective is lacking. The researchers looked at how supervisors' bad gossip affects employee performance through reflective learning, based on the cultural understanding perspective of gossip and socialisation theory. Based on multi-source, cross-sectional designs, it was observed that supervisor negative gossip encourages reflective learning and future performance at work after controlling for two different sets of theory-relevant components. Furthermore, through reflection, the cross-wrapped panel design provides additional evidence of the directional relationship between the staff member's work performance and the supervisor's unfavourable rumours. In their study, Cui (2020) noted that investigated impact of unfavourable workplace rumours on the OCB of marked employees. This study, which was constructed on the communal conversation philosophy, discovered that the undesirable link between OCB and unfavourable workplace gossip is

mediated by employees' affective commitment. In particular, unfavourable workplace rumours reduce the affective commitment of target employees, which in turn damages their OCB. Furthermore, the findings imply that the unintended influence of unfavourable speculation at work on OCB is mitigated by employees' autonomous self-perception. In other words, the indirect impact of adverse workplace gossip on OCB is mediated by emotional commitment, which is negatively impacted by negative gossip at work. Employees with poor independent self-perception will therefore be more impacted than those with high independently self-perception.

In their research, Yao and Zhang (2020) found a undesirable association among knowledge hiding and unfavourable workplace gossips. In the affiliation described above, relational identification and interpersonal trust act as mediators connecting intelligence hiding and harmful occupational gossip and accordingly, both factors serve as good intermediaries. Forgiveness Climate also mitigates the harmful effects of Negative Workplace Gossips on Relational Identification, which in turn moderates the chain mediation between Adverse Workplace Gossips and Information Hiding and between Relational Identification and Interpersonal Trust. According to Bencsik & Juhasz's (2020) research, the main pillars of organisational trust are cooperation, mutual aid, open communication, respect for coworkers, and freedom of expression. The free exchange of information and expertise was then brought up as a crucial element in building trust. Thus, it is possible to describe above the most significant attributes as stated by the respondents, which serve as the foundation for organisational trust and are backed by the facts from previously theoretically established literature. The expected and experienced trust features of the respondents' organisations, however, differed significantly. Organisational trust is highly variable by nature, thus the methods for fostering it are derived in part from the foundation and in part from additional organisational traits. The findings indicate that the best methods for fostering trust are cooperation, group discussions, information exchange, conflict resolution, and candid problem-solving. The similarities speak for themselves, and in this instance, the value of exchanging knowledge grew. This indicates that it is crucial for foundation, construction, and upkeep. According to Yan and Zhang's (2021) research, employees' motivation to work would be positively impacted by favourable workplace gossip. In their capacity managers must to understand the advantages of informal avenues for sharing knowledge and make use of them to obtain a bottom understanding of the psychology and working conditions of their staff. Managers can then construct a positive organisational culture by using official networks to generate optimistic work gossip refrains. Furthermore, the study's findings indicate that unfavourable workplace rumours will lower workers' motivation for their jobs. With the one side, the organisation can appropriately implement pertinent instructions to prevent the detrimental consequences of negative gossip in the workplace. It has created healthy corporate culture and offer employees a decent communication environment. Since the greatest strategy to prevent, it is important to speak in an honest manner when engaging in bad gossip at work. Steps should be done to put an end to rumours as soon as possible in order to prevent additional harmful impacts. In their study, Sun *et al.* (2022) came to the conclusion that they had compiled the various methodological approaches and inclusive theoretical viewpoints of gossips, documented the points at which the organization literature overlapped and diverged from emotional study on gossip, and identified a number of useful experiential and hypothetical research directions that future researchers could follow to further and significantly expand the gossip fictions. In their review, they compiled the results of previous studies into exchange of information, ego-boosting, integration into society, and social isolation are the four categories of conversation functions. The three types of gossip implications include the effects on gossip

senders/receivers, gossip targets, and those outside the triads. Additionally, there are three new categories of gossip antecedents: intrapersonal communication, interpersonal, and the organization prior events.

The researcher believed that by identifying prospective research areas using their integrated nomological model, they would further scholarship on the significant, widespread, and influential practice of workplace gossip. Bad gossip is common in the workroom and is a unique and significant form of relational message inside employees' organisational self-esteem, according to Song and Guo's (2022) research on the topic. The effects of negative workplace rumours on employees' organizational self-esteem was examined in the present research using data from 228 worker surveys and a mediating model based on the self-consistency theory. The findings demonstrated that negative workplace rumours had a major effect on employees' organizational self-esteem. Working exclusion acted as a perfect mediator between unpleasant workplace rumours and organizational self-esteem. The idea of a unique atmosphere acts as a partial mediating factor in the relationship between negative workplace rumours and workers' organizational self-esteem. On the one hand, this study offers theoretical support for future research into the mechanism of organisational self-esteem development in the context of a negative cultural milieu, while also helping to unlock the mystery of how negative gossip influences the workplace. In her study on workplace gossip in the hospital sector, Hassona (2022) noted that there is workplace gossip and a positive affiliation between workplace misconduct and employee behaviour as well as between workplace gossip and employee performance. Additionally, the study suggests fostering trust among the most important things one can do to create a positive work atmosphere noticed to establish an atmosphere of trust. In their study, Dai *et al.* (2022) noted that in order to maintain a grasp on China's position, they studied the impacts of positive gossip and developed a model for moderated mediation from the perspective of the gossip sender. The results showed that PWG has a very positive effect on employees' creativity and that employee loyalty acted as a mediator in the relationship between PWG and inventive behavior. Organizational Theory promoted employee loyalty, which lessened PWG's indirect influence on creative behavior. The aforementioned research findings have important implications for management theory and practice. According to Estévez *et al.* (2022), gossip is a common occurrence in workplaces, leading to many people knowing second-hand knowledge about their coworkers. It is not quite clear, though, if it is used to guide decisions about forming, maintaining, or ending friendships for that matter. Positive chatter promotes receiver-target bonds while undesirable gossip hinders them, according to stochastic actor-oriented models. They discovered the proof that unfavourable rumours had to come from multiple senders in order to harm relationships. Positive chatter about many targets tended to hinder friendships with colleagues, but negative discourse about many targets led to diverging patterns. Overall, the study demonstrated that second-hand knowledge has an impact on the growth of affective interactions. In their study, Khan and Chaudhary (2023) discovered a substantial relationship between narcissism and both positive and negative workplace gossip (NWG and PWG). Conversely, Core Self Evaluation (CSE) only demonstrated a substantial correlation with Negative Workplace Gossip NWG. Additionally, it was discovered that the association between narcissism and PWG was moderated by perceived organisational politics, or POP. For the objective The authors first provide personality variables as NWG and PWG predictors using social comparison theory. Second, the authors consider the most prevalent but little-studied aspect influencing gossip behaviour in organisations by examining POP as the border condition.

According to Qian *et al.* (2023), WNGA has a favourable impact on employees' cyberloafing behaviours. These behaviours are mediated by employees' emotional weariness and cognitive trust, respectively. Additionally, task interdependence has been identified as a moderator that modifies the associations between WNGA and emotional tiredness as well as between WNGA and cognitive trust. This study offers some management recommendations for organisations and expands the frame of information in the part of workplace gossip and cyberloafing. According to a study by Gao *et al.* (2024), anxiety modulates the link between NWGS and proactive work behaviour, while negative workplace gossip lowers employees' proactive work behaviour. Furthermore, the association between anxiety and NWGS is strengthened by neuroticism. These findings present a fresh viewpoint on the negative effects of rumours in the service industry. In his study, Liu (2024) examined the effects of undesirable workplace gossip, pointing out that previous investigate has mostly concentrated on the detrimental effects of such talk on employees' good behaviours or performance. This tendency has caused the academic community to ignore the good links with negative behaviours and instead highlight the negative relationship between positive behaviours and negative chatter at work. This disparity in the study may make it more difficult to fully comprehend how workplace gossip affects businesses. Because "every coin has two sides," there are instances in which unfavourable workplace rumours can be positively linked to certain unfavourable employee behaviours. Negative workplace rumours have the potential to incite rivalry and conflict among coworkers or even cause some to act aggressively. Negative employee behaviours can cause organisations to suffer irreversible losses and have extremely harmful effects. Therefore, in order to obtain a more accurate and comprehensive understanding and help organisations develop effective intervention strategies, research on workplace negative gossip should thoroughly examine its relationship with employee negative behaviours. Furthermore, prior research on bad workplace gossip as well as employee attitudes and behaviours has tackled the topic from viewpoints including social information processing theory and resource conservation theory. To understand the intricate mechanics underlying workplace negative gossip, it is necessary to investigate its impact mechanisms from fresh theoretical angles. Ultimately, it might be argued that the boundaries around negative talk at work are insufficiently thorough. The moderating influence of human characteristics in the connection between office adverse gossip and employee behaviour has not received enough attention, despite the fact that organisational and environmental factors play a part.

### **5.1: Research Gap**

For a thorough literature assessment, previous research books and a number of databases have been consulted. There is a tone of research on the various aspects related to gossips and what is importance of studying employee gossips and it's influence on organizations in India. There is not a lot of work on this issue. Therefore, there is gap in research. Accordingly, the very topic has been selected for knowing the influence of employee gossips on organizational function.

## **6: Research Methodology**

The study's main objective was to ascertain the influence of employee gossips on functional activities of organizations.

### **6.1: Objectives of the Study**

**Accordingly, following objectives have been formulated:**

**To Study Influence of employee gossips on functional activities of organizations.**

## 6.2: Research Design

Research design is to be called the blue print for a study which basically comprises of various techniques regarding which and how required information is collected by using an appropriate method of investigation efficiently. Since, the study is conceptual in nature, so the methodology used in the study is based on reviewing various research studies, articles, dissertations (Published/unpublished), text books by various authors in different geographical areas. Accordingly, interpretations have been drawn and conclusion has been made.

## 7: Discussion and Conclusion

From the above reviewed literature, the research came across the following influence of the Employee Gossips on organizational functional activities:

### (A). Positive Influence

The study demonstrate that while negative workplace gossip significantly reduces employees' job enthusiasm, positive workplace gossip significantly increases it (Kuo *et al* 2015). In their capacity as managers, they seen aware of the benefits of informal channels for information sharing and use them to gain a grassroots understanding of the psychology and working conditions of their staff. It created a positive corporate culture and offer employees a good communication environment (Yan & Zhang 2021). PWG has a positive impact on employee innovative behaviour, and the relationship between PWG and employee innovative behaviour found mediated by employee loyalty (Dai et al., 2022). There is positive relationship between workplace gossip and employee behaviour as well as between workplace gossip and employee performance (Hassona, 2022). The friendships between the recipients and the gossip targets seen impacted when they get gossip from numerous senders (and about multiple targets). Models based on stochastic actors show that although bad gossip impairs receiver-target friendships, positive chatter fosters them. They also found evidence that damaging gossip needs to originate from several senders in order to damage relationships (Estévez et al. 2022). Employees' cognitive trust and emotional tiredness acted as mediators between WNGA and cyberloafing behaviours, while WNGA has a favourable impact on these behaviours (Qian et al. 2023).

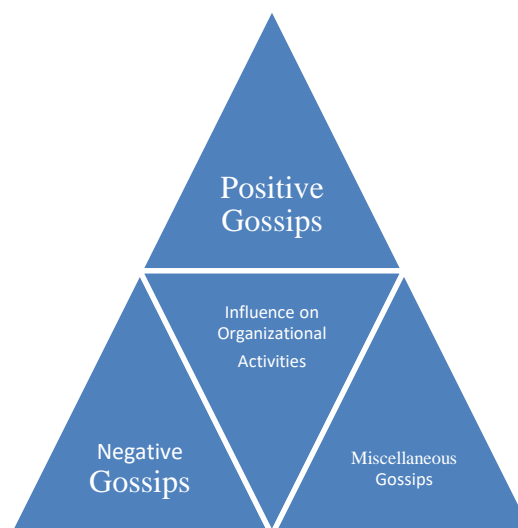
### (B). Negative Influence

The findings demonstrate that while excellent real-world professional knowledge transmission and sharing promoted confidence building, workplace gossip has opposite and detrimental impact on organisational performance (Bencsik & Juhasz, 2020). Knowledge hiding has a negative correlation with unfavourable workplace gossip. Negative workplace gossip and knowledge are mediated by interpersonal trust and relational identification (Hiding Yao and Zhang 2020). The organisational self-esteem of employees impacted by bad workplace gossip. Negative workshop rumours and organisational self-esteem were completely mediated by workplace exclusion and association between bad workplace gossip and employees' organisational self-esteem seen mediated by the sense of a distinct climate (Song and Guo, 2022). The border circumstances of undesirable conversation in the workplace are not thoroughly examined. The moderating function of human attributes in the association among workplace adverse gossip and employee behaviour has not received enough attention, despite the fact that organisational and situational factors play a part (Liu (2024).

### (C). Miscellaneous Influence

Depending on how positive or bad the rumors, systematic differentiation between good and bad gossip might beneficial for the employees and organization (Ellwardta et al., 2012). Gossiping activities during

breaks can help one to refresh and thus increasing the productivity to some level. Talking about negative aspects, there is not much of the significant difference between type of age as well as gender and other demographical variables on engagement in gossip activity at workplace (Pathak, 2014). The functioning of formal organisations as a whole, information sharing, and work relations are all impacted by workplace gossip (Ogaboh, 2017). Supervisor's negative gossip promotes thoughtful knowledge and succeeding job performance based on multi-source, cross-sectional designs which offers more proof of the directional association between bad gossip from supervisors and employee work performance (Bai *et al.* 2019). Negative link between OCB and unfavourable workplace gossip seen mediated by employees' affective commitment. In particular, unfavourable workplace rumours reduced affective commitment of employees, which in turn damaged their OCB (Cui, 2020). Through Psychological research on gossip, number of useful empirical and theoretical research avenue that in future scholars may extend methodological approaches and inclusive theoretical perspectives of gossips (Sun *et al.* 2022). Narcissism was found related with Negative Work place Gossips as well as Positive Work place Gossips. Core Self Evaluation showed association with Negative Work place Gossips NWG only. Further, Perceived organizational politics was found with moderate relationship between self-absorption and PWG (Khan and Chaudhary, 2023). Negative employee behaviours can have extremely harmful effects on organisations, leading to irreversible losses. Nervousness facilitates the connection between gossips in negative way and active work behaviour, while negative workplace gossip lowers employees' proactive work behaviour (Gao *et al.* 2024).



Developed by Researcher

Accordingly, Objective of the Study “*To Study Influence of Employee Gossips on Organizational Functions in India*” has been achieved.

### Recommendations for Future Researchers

Following the above-mentioned discussion, it was determined that employee gossips are the most crucial elements of organisational function so there is a instant need of policy framework on the issue. However, in order to enhance employees' creative performance, managers can effectively handle and stop unfavourable rumours in the workplace. Additionally, the study suggests fostering trust. Building a culture of trust is one of the greatest things you can act to create a positive work environment. It also emphasises how current theories about the many (and possibly conflicting) emotional devices behind



about of the pragmatic impact.

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