

Have you heard that—“gossip”? Gossip spreads rapidly and influences broadly

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Abstract

This study examines the impact of negative workplace gossip (NWG) on employee political acts (PA) and the role of ego depletion (ED) as a mediator. We also examined the indirect impact of NWG on PA through ED controlled by emotional intelligence (EI). A three-wave time-lagged study (paper-pencil based) was performed with 277 employees from various private organisations in Islamabad, Pakistan. The current data were gathered in three phases to reduce common method bias. Study results indicate that NWG positively affects employees' PA. The authors also found ED as a potential mediator in the association between NWG and PA. In addition, the results also indicate the indirect effect of NWG on targets' PA via ED is reduced by targets' EI, with the result that this connection is weak when targets' EI is high. Because this research is limited to a single region of Pakistan, particularly Islamabad, its findings cannot be comprehensive. Future studies should use a larger sample size to accomplish the same study. Future studies may include more organisations (that is, Public) to conduct a comparative analysis of the public and private sectors. This article, based on the affective events theory (AET), argues that EI should be utilised to mitigate the effects of NWG. Along with our significant and relevant theoretical contributions, we provide novel insights into the body of knowledge on how managers may prevent or minimise such PA. The current study results support all direct and indirect hypothesised connections, with important implications for theory and practice. A review of the existing literature indicates that EI may be associated with a reduction in employees' ED; however, EI has not been used as a moderator in mitigating the influence of NWG, ED, and PA in the past. © 2021 by the authors. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland.

Author keywords

AET; Ego depletion; Emotional intelligence; Negative workplace gossip; Political acts