Exploring the Lived Experiences of Educators in Basic and Higher Education as Targets of Workplace Gossip: Basis for Developing a Psychological Intervention Strategy

Roldan E. Jullanda[1], Janeth Dauba[2], Michelle D. Punzalan[3]

[1]PhD Student in English Language and Literature, La Consolacion University Philippines, Malolos, Bulacan, Philippines

[2]PhD Candidate in English Language and Literature, La Consolacion University Philippines, Malolos, Bulacan, Philippines

[3]Program Chair, General Education, FEU-Pampanga

ABSTRACT

This study explores the lived experiences of educators in both basic and higher education who have faced workplace gossip, to develop a psychological intervention strategy. Using a qualitative phenomenological research approach, the study purposively selected 10 participants from the academic sector in the Philippines: five educators from public basic education schools, and five faculty members from private higher education institutions. Data were collected through individual, semi-structured interviews, allowing participants to express their personal experiences using their own language. Thematic analysis was utilized on the interview transcripts, allowing identification of recurring patterns, emotions, and meanings associated with being subjected to workplace gossip. Ethical considerations, such as informed consent, confidentiality, voluntary participation, and the right to withdraw, were strictly observed to protect the dignity, privacy, and welfare of every participant. Results indicate that gossip in educational settings goes beyond simple social exchange and represents a notable professional risk. It damages trust, erodes collegial relationships, and negatively impacts the mental well-being of educators. The persistence of gossip cultivates a detrimental work environment characterized by isolation, distrust, and emotional strain, which ultimately undermines teamwork, academic quality, and institutional performance. Many educators turn to passive coping strategies, reflecting a workplace culture that discourages direct confrontation and inadvertently allows gossip to persist. In the absence of organizational interventions like encouraging open communications, enhancing conflict resolution mechanisms, and fostering a supportive and respectful work environment, gossip can escalate into a persistent type of workplace harassment. This not only undermines personal resilience but also threatens the overall integrity of educational institutions, emphasizing the urgent need for a structured psychological intervention strategy.

Keywords: Lived Experiences, Workplace Gossip, Educators, Psychological Intervention, Basic Education, Higher Education

INTRODUCTION

In today's educational environment, where teamwork, communication, and relationships greatly influence both job effectiveness and organizational culture, an often-neglected issue persists that is both widespread and potentially damaging: workplace gossip. Often described as casual, evaluative conversation regarding those not present, gossip can possess neutral, positive, or negative connotations (Ellwardt et al., 2020). Although frequently dismissed as innocuous or even advantageous to social interaction, gossip, especially when it is negative, can significantly impact the emotional and psychological well-being of educators.

For many individuals, gossip creates an atmosphere of suspicion, isolation, and emotional instability. The harmful aspect of gossip is its capacity to gradually undermine professional relationships, impacting not only

the subjects but also those spreading the rumors and observers. Martinescu et al. (2022) state that individuals subjected to gossip frequently suffer from emotional exhaustion, anxiety, and depressive symptoms, whereas those participating in or observing gossip might struggle with guilt, fear of consequences, and internal conflict (Wu & Wang, 2021). These psychological experiences are seldom considered in institutional interventions, but they create enduring effects on personal well-being and workplace dynamics.

While gossip can fulfill social and informational roles, assisting educators in understanding norms, building alliances, and interpreting organizational dynamics (Foster & Sloto, 2021), it may also transform into a means of exclusion, manipulation, and control. For recipients, the experience can include emotions of embarrassment, degradation, powerlessness, and isolation (Zhang et al., 2023). These emotional weights frequently result in changes in behavior like isolating from colleagues, higher rates of absenteeism, or even quitting. Even with increasing recognition of its harmful effects, institutional actions often focus only on superficial solutions like complaint processes or conduct rules, neglecting the more profound psychological damage gossip can cause.

Recent studies often analyze workplace gossip through structural or performance-based lenses, highlighting its effects on team unity and organizational effectiveness (Chung & Kim, 2021). Nevertheless, a significant gap persists in the research concerning how educators individually encounter gossip and its impact on their emotional and psychological health. Limited research examines the intricate, lived experiences of those impacted, nor do they investigate the intricate relationships among emotions, professional identity, and resilience within these situations.

This study aims to fill the gap by exploring the lived experiences of educators who have faced workplace gossip, with the goal of understanding how these encounters influence their emotional and psychological well-being. Through a qualitative approach, the study will emphasize the stories, emotions, and viewpoints of participants, revealing the profound significance they associate with gossip and its repercussions. It will also explore how these findings can guide the creation of adaptable psychological intervention approaches that enhance resilience, ensure emotional safety, and reduce the negative impacts of gossip in educational settings.

Understanding the emotional and psychological aspects of workplace gossip is especially important in the current educational environment, where external pressures like economic instability, post-pandemic transitions, and digital fatigue are already challenging the mental well-being of educators (World Health Organization, 2022). Additionally, the transition to remote and hybrid teaching models has led to new types of digital gossip and exclusion (Foster & Sloto, 2021), stressing the necessity of analyzing these changing dynamics from the perspective of individual experiences.

This study enhances the ongoing discussion about mental well-being in educational environments by prioritizing the perspectives of educators and exploring the emotional realities associated with workplace gossip. It emphasizes the necessity for targeted, psychologically informed interventions that go beyond institutional policies and address the underlying emotional impacts of gossip. This research aims to shed light on how educators interpret their experiences and how educational institutions can more effectively support their emotional and psychological well-being.

Statement Of The Problem

This study aims to explore the lived experiences of educators in basic and higher education as targets of workplace gossip as a basis for developing a psychological intervention strategy.

Specifically, it seeks to address the following research questions:

1. How do educators describe their personal experiences of being targeted by or exposed to workplace gossip?

2. What emotional and psychological impacts do educators associate with workplace gossip within their organizational setting?

3. How do educators perceive the coping strategies they have employed to address the effects of workplace gossip?

4. In what ways do educators believe workplace gossip influences their behavior, professional relationships, and sense of psychological safety at work?

5. Based on the findings of this study, what psychological intervention strategy may be developed?

Scope and Limitations of the Study

This research explored the lived experiences of educators in both basic and higher education regarding workplace gossip, focusing specifically on its emotional and psychological impact. The research focus was confined to specific educators, and the findings were mainly derived from personal narratives that provide in-depth insights into individual perspectives.

Although these narratives provided useful insights, the study faced several limitations. First, there was potential for subjective bias since it depended significantly on individual narratives that might not have fully represented broader patterns within educational institutions. The emotional aspects of lived experiences added complexity to attempts to generalize the findings or to define a clear causality between workplace gossip and psychological outcomes.

Second, incorporating both basic and higher education settings posed challenges in aligning the diverse contexts, institutional cultures, and professional experiences of educators across these levels. This two-pronged approach could lead to inconsistencies in the interpretation of experiences that varied considerably based on the educational context.

Lastly, the proposed psychological intervention strategy relied exclusively on limited qualitative findings. Consequently, it might have lacked empirical precision and quantifiable effectiveness, making its broader applicability and long-term validation more difficult to determine. These limitations emphasized the necessity for future research that included larger samples, quantitative validation, and comparative analysis across diverse institutional settings.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In a qualitative research conducted by Greenslade Yeats, Cooper Thomas, Morrison, and Corner (2023), individuals who received gossip provided in-depth written accounts and follow-up interviews detailing their experiences with both favorable and unfavorable workplace gossip. From the perspective of those affected, being the subject of harmful gossip caused significant emotional distress, decreased trust in peers, and strained personal connections. Participants described emotions of shame, betrayal, and social isolation, which weakened their sense of belonging in teams. These emotional scars persisted, influencing future interactions and gradually eroding professional confidence.

Building on these findings, Cheng, Kuo, Chen, Lin, and Kuo (2022) carried out a three-wave quantitative study involving Taiwanese tourism workers to assess individual experiences with workplace gossip and its relationships with psychological capital and mental well-being. Their results revealed that people who encountered negative gossip reported lower self-efficacy, hope, resilience, and optimism—key aspects of psychological capital—which in turn predicted worse mental health outcomes, including heightened stress, anxiety, and depression symptoms.

Similarly, Aydın Küçük, Üçok, and Konuk (2025), employing a mixed-methods approach in Turkish companies, discovered that those subjected to negative organizational gossip frequently experienced increased loneliness, perceived violations of psychological contracts, reduced emotional commitment, and greater intentions to leave. These findings echo earlier accounts of exclusion and marginalization, where feeling emotionally unsettled diminished employees' dedication to their roles.

Furthermore, additional research grounded in the Conservation of Resources theory emphasizes that exposure to workplace gossip depletes emotional and psychological resources. In collectivist contexts, for instance, frontline service employees subjected to negative gossip reported heightened anxiety and resource depletion, which reduced their proactive behaviors and engagement—effects that were particularly pronounced among women with elevated neuroticism.

In a related vein, recent empirical studies have demonstrated that perceived negative gossip from acts of supervisors is a potent workplace stressor. For example, Cheng, Wang, and Kuo (2025), using a time-lagged, multi-wave design with 406 full-time employees, found that such gossip encourages impression management behaviors aimed at shaping how others perceive the target, which in turn leads to increased emotional exhaustion. Importantly, task interdependence moderated these effects, buffering the relationship between gossip, impression management, and burnout. Complementing this, Guo and colleagues (2024) in BMC Psychology reported that negative workplace gossip diminished proactive work behavior, with anxiety fully mediating the link. Employees high in neuroticism were especially vulnerable, experiencing stronger anxiety reactions that accelerated resource depletion and behavioral withdrawal.

Consistent with these trends, Kaur, Maheshwari, and Varma (2025), applying Conservation of Resources theory, demonstrated that workplace gossip undermines self-esteem, thereby increasing emotional exhaustion—a process exacerbated by cyberloafing, where excessive online distractions weaken self-esteem as a protective resource. Similarly, research informed by cognitive dissonance theory suggests that employees who engage in gossip may subsequently reduce their trust in the organization to justify their actions, which then lowers their willingness to share knowledge. This effect is weaker among employees with high self-efficacy.

From an Affective Events Theory perspective, prior work by Weiss and Cropanzano has shown that negative gossip often triggers unpleasant emotions such as frustration and anger, which hinder both in-role and customer service performance, particularly among individuals with lower mindfulness or forgiveness. Reinforcing this, a mixed-methods study by Aydın Küçük et al. (2025) published in the Journal of Management & Organization found that harmful organizational gossip in private-sector workplaces with high job insecurity heightened loneliness, weakened affective commitment, and increased turnover intentions.

Moreover, research on coping strategies reveals that workers employ a range of direct and indirect methods to manage the emotional and psychological toll of gossip. For instance, a 2024 Frontiers in Psychology study found that targets of negative gossip often experience decreased psychological safety, which may increase turnover intentions; in response, some engage in proactive coping, such as setting boundaries, initiating open dialogue with supervisors, or seeking credible information to counter false claims. In addition, a 2024 analysis of harmful supervisor gossip identified impression management as a common coping tactic, with employees emphasizing achievements, demonstrating extra collegiality, or curating their professional image to mitigate reputational harm. However, this sustained image maintenance can lead to emotional fatigue.

Avoidance and disengagement are also prevalent strategies, as reported in a 2023 Journal of Organizational Behavior study, where employees distanced themselves from gossip-prone colleagues or social events to avoid further harm. While this may offer short-term relief, it can also foster isolation and alienation. Conversely, some employees seek social support by confiding in trusted colleagues, supervisors, or HR representatives, which not only provides emotional comfort but may also prompt formal organizational responses, as noted in a 2024 report from the Center for Workplace Studies.

Lastly, evidence from BMC Psychology (2024) and Emerald (2023) reiterates that negative workplace gossip diminishes proactive behavior and may even foster counterproductive acts such as service sabotage, often through mechanisms like anxiety and ego depletion. High psychological resilience can buffer these effects, while low resilience exacerbates them. Likewise, Frontiers in Public Health (2025) underscores that gossip from supervisors intensifies stress and emotional fatigue, particularly in low-interdependence work environments. Interestingly, qualitative insights from Greenslade Yeats et al. (2023) suggest that in some contexts, gossip perceived as authentic and supportive can foster trust and intimacy among colleagues, though such positive effects are rare and context-dependent. Nevertheless, as research in Sustainability (2020) and Frontiers in Public Health (2022) affirms, the detrimental impact of gossip on organizational trust, psychological capital, and mental

health remains consistently evident—particularly for individuals with low self-efficacy or limited developmental job experiences.

METHODOLOGY

This research utilized a qualitative phenomenological design, considered suitable for exploring and understanding the lived experiences of educators who have been directly impacted by workplace gossip. Creswell and Poth (2018) state that phenomenology effectively captures and interprets the core of shared experiences as conveyed by participants. Ten participants were purposively chosen from the academic field in the Philippines, consisting of five public school educators in basic education and five faculty members from private higher education institutions, representing both Basic Education and Higher Education contexts. All participants had a shared experience of being the subject or topic of gossip in their respective organizations.

To gather in-depth insights into their emotional and psychological experiences, the researcher conducted individual, semi-structured interviews, allowing participants to express their experiences in their own words. Furthermore, the researcher also observed the school environment where the interviews took place, assessing if the physical settings and social interactions indicated a climate favorable for gossip. This contextual observation offered additional insights into the organizational culture and the subtle environmental signals that could sustain gossip.

The data gathered from the interviews were subjected to thematic analysis, allowing the identification of recurring patterns, emotions, and meanings associated with being targeted by workplace gossip. Throughout the research process, ethical considerations, which include informed consent, confidentiality, voluntary participation, and the right to withdraw at any time, were strictly observed to ensure the dignity, privacy, and well-being of all participants.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

SoP # 1. How do educators describe their personal experiences of being targeted by or exposed to workplace gossip?

The narratives of the educators indicate that being targeted by or exposed to workplace gossip is profoundly distressing, affecting them emotionally, psychologically, and professionally. Across participants, there is a common theme of emotional distress, betrayal of trust, and diminishing self-esteem. Gossip is characterized as not just the spreading of false or exaggerated stories but also fostering an unseen rift in the workplace, resulting in feelings of isolation, exclusion, and a diminished sense of dignity.

Many educators compared the experience to being under constant scrutiny, as if walking on eggshells, which fosters heightened awareness in their behaviors and engagements. This increased awareness, although a protective measure, also indicates a diminished feeling of psychological safety. Gossips are seen as harmful and detrimental to professional relationships, commonly associated with organizational politics, competition, and personal attacks, which escalates tension in the workplace.

A significant number of participants indicated unfavorable mental health effects, such as anxiety, feelings of shame, and emotional fatigue. Some educators reported a decline in their productivity, as their focus shifted from teaching and academic responsibilities to dealing with the personal and social repercussions of gossip.

From these narratives, workplace gossip appears not just as simple social interaction but as a serious occupational risk that undermines educators' mental well-being, professional identity, and ability to perform successfully. It fosters a harmful organizational environment where trust is damaged, teamwork is hindered, and emotional strength is constantly challenged. The continuous issues of social isolation, lack of trust among individuals, and mental distress imply that if not addressed with specific measures, gossip may develop into a prolonged type of workplace harassment, threatening both personal health and organizational integrity. Supporting this, Greenslade Yeats, Cooper Thomas, Morrison, and Corner (2023) note that exposure to negative gossip causes significant

emotional damage, reduces trust in professional relationships, and creates substantial pressure on interpersonal relationships.

SoP # 2. What emotional and psychological impacts do educators associate with workplace gossip in their organizational setting?

The responses from participants consistently indicate that gossip in the workplace leads to significant emotional and psychological effects on educators. The most commonly reported effects are stress and anxiety, with depression, reduced self-esteem, and diminished motivation. Many educators expressed a widespread feeling of anxiety both regarding being evaluated and potentially being the next subject of gossip, which results in disengagement from social relationships, a decrease in trust among peers, and experiences of loneliness. Many educators described a pervasive sense of fear both of being judged and of becoming the next target of gossip, which results in disengagement from social relationships, a decline in trust among colleagues, and feelings of isolation. The reports emphasize that gossip harms morale, diminishes dignity, and weakens the feeling of safety in the workplace. Over time, these impacts can escalate into more significant mental health issues, such as burnout, making it difficult for educators to preserve their personal well-being and professional performance

Workplace gossip in educational settings acts as a major psychosocial stressor that erodes interpersonal trust, damages morale, and cultivates a negative organizational atmosphere. A hostile environment undermines the mental well-being of educators and diminishes their motivation and ability to participate effectively, potentially affecting teaching quality and student outcomes. The continuous emotional pressure from gossip can eventually cause long-term psychological damage, higher faculty turnover, and overall decline in institutional effectiveness. In support of this, Cheng, Wang, and Kuo found that workplace gossip frequently compels employees to participate in impression management behaviors, intentional attempts to influence how others view them, which greatly increases emotional exhaustion. Significantly, their research indicated that task interdependence can act as a barrier, influencing the relationship between gossip, impression management, and burnout, which in turn lessens its negative impact on well-being and performance.

SoP # 3. How do educators perceive the coping strategies they have used to deal with the effects of workplace gossip?

Educators primarily utilize strategies such as avoidance, emotional self-regulation, and selective engagement with colleagues to manage workplace gossip. The typical reactions involve staying quiet, avoiding gossip-related conversations, and focusing on teaching responsibilities. Most participants also highlight the significance of personal resilience practices like prayer, meditation, self-care routines, and upholding a healthy way of life. A consistent pattern is the deliberate limitation of trust; educators thoughtfully choose to whom to share their concerns with and frequently minimize their social networks to prevent exposure to gossip. While a few consider confronting gossip directly, most prefer the strategies that reduce confrontation to avoid further emotional distress. Acceptance, letting go, and mentally distancing from gossip are viewed as strategies for maintaining emotional stability.

Educators frequently depend on passive, defensive coping strategies when faced with workplace gossip, indicating a work culture that discourages or views confrontation as risky. Although these strategies might provide momentary emotional comfort, they do not address the underlying issues of gossip or lessen its broader effect on workplace relationships and psychological safety. Over time, sustained reliance on avoidance and withdrawal can undermine collaboration, diminish team unity, and perpetuate mistrust within the organization. This highlights the necessity for organizational interventions that promote transparent communication, efficient conflict management, and a nurturing professional environment. Significantly, a 2024 study published in Frontiers in Psychology discovered that people subjected to negative gossip frequently feel reduced psychological safety, leading to heightened intentions to leave their jobs.

SoP # 4. In what ways do educators believe workplace gossip influences their behavior, relationships, and sense of psychological safety at work?

Educators indicate that gossip in the workplace greatly alters their behavior, relationships, and sense of psychological safety. A prevalent behavior is social detachment; many become more reserved, limit conversations, and carefully choose whom to interact with. Gossip undermines trust, leading educators to feel unsafe and judged, which subsequently harms workplace relationships and reduces cooperation. This defensive attitude often leads to emotional consequences like anxiety, overthinking, and feelings of isolation. In certain instances, educators directly address gossip by confronting it or reporting it, but the prevailing response is increased caution and reduced openness. Gossips also weaken morale, motivation, and productivity, creating a stressful, unfriendly workplace atmosphere

Gossip in educational workplaces acts as a significant social stressor, altering interpersonal dynamics and undermining the psychological safety essential for transparent communication and effective teamwork. Such erosion frequently causes withdrawal and distrust, which not only diminishes individual well-being but also impedes professional collaboration, possibly jeopardizing teaching quality and institutional culture. In the absence of focused organizational measures like fostering trust, establishing transparent reporting mechanisms, and promoting respectful dialogue, these detrimental patterns are likely to solidify, maintaining ongoing cycles of division and apathy among educators. Empirical findings highlight these issues: a 2024 study of BMC Psychology showed that harmful workplace gossip greatly diminished proactive behaviors among frontline service workers, influenced entirely by increased anxiety, where those with high neuroticism faced intensified anxiety and further reductions in proactivity. Likewise, a study of Emerald (2023) revealed that detrimental gossip heightened service sabotage actions due to ego depletion, while elevated psychological resilience acted as a protective factor.

SoP # 5. Based on the findings of this study, what psychological intervention strategy may be developed?

Psychological Intervention Strategy for Addressing Workplace Gossip in Educational Institutions

I. Rationale

Workplace gossip in educational institutions is more than a trivial social exchange; it serves as a damaging source of workplace stress that negatively affects the emotional health, professional connections, and sense of psychological security of educators. Results from the study indicate that gossip promotes mistrust, social isolation, diminished morale, and anxiety, leading to decreased productivity and teamwork.

If not dealt with, gossip can escalate into a type of harassment in the workplace, leading to long-term psychological damage and issues within the organization. This intervention strategy aims to address challenges by fostering trust, transparency, open communication, and a nurturing school environment that protects the mental well-being of educators.

II. Relevance

This strategy is highly relevant as it addresses the lived experiences of educators in both basic and higher education. By reducing the psychological and professional impacts of gossip, the intervention will foster workplace harmony, elevate teaching standards, and support in retaining educators, ultimately benefiting both students and staff.

III. Legal Bases

In the Philippines, several laws and policies protect the welfare and rights of employees, especially within educational institutions. Republic Act No. 11036, also known as the Mental Health Act of the Philippines, ensures the protection and promotion of mental health in work settings, highlighting the obligation of organizations to create a nurturing atmosphere for the psychological wellness of their employees. In addition to this, Republic Act No. 7877, known as the Anti-Sexual Harassment Act, includes measures designed to ensure a safe and respectful work environment, protecting employees from harassment and promoting a culture of respect. The Civil Service Commission (CSC) enhances these protections through various Memorandum Circulars that establish guidelines for workplace behavior, employee discipline, and grievance processes to resolve disputes efficiently. Furthermore, the Department of Education (DepEd) and the Commission on Higher

Education (CHED) have implemented policies that highlight ethical conduct, respectful communication, and employee welfare, reinforcing the importance of professionalism and mutual respect in academic settings.

IV. Objectives

General Objective

To foster a respectful, collaborative, and psychologically safe educational workplace by reducing the occurrence and impact of workplace gossip

Specific Objectives

1. To raise awareness among educators of the detrimental impacts of gossip on mental well-being, professional relationships, and organizational culture.

2. To establish clear policies, reporting mechanisms, and accountability frameworks for managing gossip-related issues.

3. To provide coping strategies and resilience training that assist educators in handling the emotional and psychological impacts of gossip.

4. To promote an environment of open communication, mutual trust, and professional respect among employees.

V. Action Plan

Activity	Description	Schedule	Persons Involved	Expected Output
Orientation regarding RA 11036 (Mental Health Act)	Conduct an orientation to enhance employee awareness regarding their mental health rights and the support options available at work.	1st Quarter	School Head, Guidance Counselor, OSA, HR Officer	Employees are made aware of mental health protections and available resources.
Seminar on RA 7877 (Anti-Sexual Harassment Act)	Conduct a workshop to educate employees on recognizing, preventing, and reporting sexual harassment at work.	2nd Quarter	School Head, Legal Officer, Gender and Development (GAD) Focal Person	Heightened awareness and prevention of sexual harassment incidents.
Dissemination of CSC Memorandum Circulars	Distribute documents and explanations regarding CSC policies on employee conduct, disciplinary actions, and complaint procedures.	3rd Quarter	HR Officer, Department Heads	Employees are aware of workplace regulations and appropriate complaint procedures.
Policy Review and Reinforcement (DepEd & CHED Policies)	Review and deliberate on organizational regulations regarding ethics, respectful communication, and employee well-being.	4th Quarter	Vice President for Administration, School Head, Faculty, and Staff	Strengthened commitment to ethical principles and enhanced workplace relations.

VI. Participants

❖ Basic Education Teachers (Public Schools)

- ❖ College Faculty Members (Private Higher Education Institutions)

- ❖ School Administrators such as Vice President for Administration

- ❖ Office of Student Affairs (OSA)

- ❖ Guidance Counselors

- ❖ HR/Personnel Staff

VII. Activities

- ❖ Gossip Awareness Workshops – Share research findings and psychological implications.

- ❖ Team-Building Retreats – Foster cooperation and confidence.

- ❖ Peer Support Groups – Secure environments for exchanging experiences and coping strategies.

- ❖ Communication Skills Development – Encourage respectful dialogue and constructive criticism.

- ❖ Policy Dissemination and Signing – Official pledge to maintain respectful workplace practices.

VIII. Requirements

- ❖ Venue for training and workshops

- ❖ Printed educational materials (brochures, policy handouts)

- ❖ Resource speakers and facilitators

- ❖ Counseling and mental health resources

- ❖ Monitoring and evaluation tools (surveys, feedback forms)

IX. Monitoring And Evaluation

- ❖ Short-term: Surveys before and after the intervention regarding trust levels, psychological safety, and gossip prevalence.

- ❖ Long-term: Yearly evaluations of climate and HR documentation on complaints concerning gossip.

- ❖ Modify approaches according to feedback and quantifiable progress metrics.

CONCLUSION

Workplace gossip in educational settings goes beyond being a minor social interaction; it poses a significant professional risk that undermines trust, deteriorates professional relationships, and jeopardizes the mental health of educators. Its continual existence cultivates a toxic organizational atmosphere characterized by isolation, distrust, and emotional strain, eventually undermining teamwork, educational standards, and institutional performance. Educators often turn to passive coping strategies, highlighting a work culture that discourages confrontation, which enables gossip to continue unaddressed and exacerbate its harmful consequences. In the absence of intentional organizational actions like promoting open communication, enhancing conflict resolution strategies, and nurturing a respectful and supportive work atmosphere, gossip may develop into a persistent type of workplace harassment, harming individual resilience and the overall integrity of the institution.

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