PRIMARY RESEARCH

Religion can Change Intentions: Interactive Effect of Abusive Supervision and Islamic Work Ethics on Workplace Gossip

Syed Danial Hashmi [1]*, **Khurram Khan** [2] , **Ikram Ullah** [3], **Saqib Gulzar** [4], **Ali Haider** [5]

[1] PHD scholar at COMSATS University, Wah Cantt, Pakistan

[1] Lecturer at Faculty of Management Sciences, Riphah International University, Islamabad, Pakistan

[2] Dean Faculty of Social Sciences, Associate Professor FMS, and Chairman, RCIB, Riphah International University, Islamabad, Pakistan

[3] Lecturer at FMS and Editorial Assistant of JIBM, Riphah International University, Islamabad, Pakistan

[4] Associate Professor at Department of Business Administration, COMSATS University, Wah Cantt, Pakistan

[5] Lecturer at FMS, International Islamic University, Islamabad, Pakistan

Abstract. Gossip at workplace can has serious implications for any organization. Knowing the reasons for existence of gossip can help in better management of gossip at workplace. This study examines the impact of abusive supervision on workplace gossip where gossip is divided into job related and non-job related gossip. Further, this study examines the moderating role of religion-driven work ethics i.e. Islamic work ethics on abusive supervision-workplace gossip relationship. Using convenience sampling technique, 144 individuals working in service sector of Pakistan were surveyed on adopted scales. Statistical techniques applied were correlation and moderated regression analysis. Results of the study show that abusive supervision is negatively related with both job and non-job related gossip. Further, it was found that Islamic work ethics moderate relationship of abusive supervision and job related gossip. We propose that managers may arrange special training sessions in organizations to enhance Islamic work ethics at workplace and minimize abusive supervision as both have important contributions towards lessening gossip at workplace.

KAUJIE Classification: H54, M84
JEL Classification: M12, M5

INTRODUCTION

Workplace gossip can said to be a sluggish conversation about fellows at workplace who are not present when conversation is taking place. It can be verbal or written communication about third party who is not present at the time of communication (Nevo, Nevo, Zehavi &

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*Corresponding author: Syed Danial Hashmi

†Email: danial.hashmi@riphah.edu.pk

Milton, 1993). The interaction between gossiper, listener, and target, i.e. the person who is being affected by gossip determines the effect of it (Michelson, Iterson & Waddington, 2010). Traditionally, gossip has been seen as a socially undesirable activity that has negative effects on the person that is the target of gossip (Grosser, Lopez-Kidwell, & Labianca, 2010; Luna, Garcia, Chou & Jackson, 2013). However, recent studies showed that gossip can be a positive thing at workplace as it may promote the formation of groups and also because it could be in response to the anti-social behavior (e.g. Feinberg, Willer, Steller & Keltner, 2012). Kuo, Chang, Quinton, Lu and Lee (2015) suggested that workplace gossip should be seen in context of two different aspects which are job-related gossip (JRG) and he one that is non-job-related gossip (NJRG). They contended that JRG and NJRG are different from each other as they are differently related with employee's behavior for different reasons.

Despite the importance gossip carries as a research subject, it has remained an under researched area in organizational management. Some researchers have called gossip as neglected area in managerial research (Michelson & Mouly, 2002, and 2004). Past research done on this area is mostly about the mechanistic nature of gossip with little research done on the consequences and causes of gossip in organizations. Among the research done previously on the antecedents of gossip, focus of the researchers had been on examining gossip regarding individual characteristics like demographics (Davis, 1997, Michelson & Mouly, 2000), attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavior control (Luna & Chau, 2013), and individual's relationships like lack of trust, non-friendly relationships and poor contact with managers (Ellwardt, Wittek & Wielers, 2012); and abusive supervision and psychological contract violation (Kuo *et al.*, 2015) as antecedents of gossip at workplace.

Supervisor's behavior at workplace plays a significant role in determining different attitudes and behaviors of employees. It is previously well established that abusive behavior of supervisor can lead to negative behaviors of employees at workplace like counter-productive work behaviors (e.g. An & Wang, 2016; Wei & Si, 2013). It is not always necessary that an employee facing abusive behavior reacts negatively (Decoster, Camps, Stouten, Vandevyvere & Tripp, 2013), and gets involved in counter-productive work behavior(s). Rather, employees may look for other things/mechanisms to respond such kind of supervisory behavior. Gossip can be one of such mechanisms. When employees are left with no other option, they will try to reduce their anger and frustration by gossiping. This relationship can be expected to be stronger in case of eastern cultures, where power distance is high which causes employees to refrain from counter productive work behaviors and they do not indulge in direct fight with supervisor. On empirical side, the only known study on the subject matter i.e. of Kuo *et al*. (2015) reported a significant positive relationship between abusive supervision and workplace gossip. More research is, however, required for generalizability of relationship. It is important to note that culture and work ethics can play an important role in determining how abusive supervision can lead employees to gossip. Work ethics, especially religion driven work ethics, would influence a person not to negatively gossip about work and supervisor irrespective of situations at workplace. Both Bible and Qur'ān (Holy books of two main religions of world) warn their believers not to gossip.

"Do not speak against one another, brethren He who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks against the law and judges the law; but if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge of it (James, 4:11) "

*"Do not concern yourself with things about which you have no knowledge. Verily, your hearing, sight, and heart – all of them will be called to account (*Qur'ān *17:36)."*

Thus the observance of religion-driven work ethics could have serious implications with regard to gossip and the relationship of different other organizational variables and gossip. Previous research is silent on this matter. This study aims to examine the impact of abusive supervision on gossip at workplace. Particularly, it aims at studying the role of religion driven work ethics in relationship of abusive supervision and gossip. Work ethic in Muslim communities is termed by Ali (1992) as "Islamic work ethic". Islam prohibits gossip and asks its followers not to indulge in any such activity. It is thus believed that presence of Islamic work ethics among employees would affect the intensity of gossip caused by abusive supervision.

Our contribution to the body of knowledge is twofold. Firstly, we explored relationship of abusive supervision and workplace gossip from perspective of religion i.e. we have examined the relationship in presence of religion driven work ethics. As mentioned, religion driven work ethics can act as buffer when employees face abusive supervision and may thus refrain from gossiping. Secondly, we have examined this relationship in eastern context especially in an Islamic country where majority of population follows Islam as a religion.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Workplace Gossip (Job-Related and Non-Job Related)

Gossip is defined by Foster (2004) as the process in which individuals involves in production, hearing or participation of evaluative comments about someone. Gossip in past has been seen as undesirable phenomenon at workplace (Noon & Delbridge, 1993). However, recent researchers have shown the positive aspect of gossip at workplace (Feinberg *et al.*, 2012). Researchers have noted that when a gossiper observes any wrongdoers behaving in workplace just for their self-interest, he/she will share this information with other group members and would warn them about such people. In this sense, gossip could become an effective tool of punishment so that individual's self-serving behavior can be minimized in future (Beersma & Van-Kleef, 2011). This makes gossip an effective way for learning and validating social guidelines and norms. Kuo et.al, (2015) suggested that gossip at workplace should rather be defined as two different constructs i.e. job-related gossip (JRG) and non-job-related gossip (NJG). They proposed that JRG and NJG are different. According to them, reasons are that gossip may not necessarily tell the truth and cause problems. Very likely, if non-job related gossip occurs about general social factors (such as employee's/boss relationship, children's problem at school), it may not be treated as seriously in the workplace and respondent may not respond to the source of gossip may it be colleagues or the organization. JRG thus shall have higher tendency (or possibility) to influence employee's

behavior, as JRG is directly associated with the job, and/or the workplace. This study also adopts the same method for studying gossip.

Abusive Supervision and Workplace Gossip

Abusive supervision represents the degree to which managers/supervisors are involved in unfriendly verbal and non-verbal practices towards employees (Tepper, 2000). Some examples may include fiery responses (like, crashing doors, abusing at someone else), using offensive language (e.g. 'idiot', 'useless'), and non-verbal behavior (e.g. ignorant attitudes or aggressive eye contact). Supervisor's behavior at workplace determines how an employee looks at his job, organization and his supervisor. Zellar, Tepper and Duffy (2002) found citizenship behavior of employees is negatively affected by abusive supervision. Zellar *et al.* (2002) added that when abusive supervision happens, employees have a tendency to malign the organization and cease from genuine social conduct at work. Continuing these lines, it can be argued that when faced with abusive supervision, employees may create negative state of mind against their managers and organization which might be translated into gossiping at workplace.

An abusive supervisor-employee relationship may also be explained by leader-member exchange theory (Deluga, 1998) which states that leaders build up a trade with their subordinates, and that the nature of these leader-member exchanges impacts the subordinates' obligation, impact over choices, access to assets and execution. In this way, the use of leader-member exchange theory to the current research would show that abusive supervision may identify with JRG and NJG, in light of the fact that abusive supervision has been found to create a feeling of incongruence between individual members and their organization, such a feeling of incongruence then advances and turns into an inspiration for gossip.

Researchers have noted that bullying at workplace causes manipulation of relationship and results in phenomena like gossip (Crick & Grotpeter, 1995). When victimization i.e. bullying occurs, people may resort to gossip (Crothers, Lipinski, & Minutolo, 2009). Research has also shown that abusive supervision leads to counter-productive work behaviors (An & Wang, 2016; Wei & Si, 2013). From social exchange perspective, employees exchange the behavior they learn at workplace. In an imbalanced power structure relation i.e. relationship of supervisor and employee, it can be argued that the frustration caused by the abusive behavior of supervisor will be exchanged by the employee by doing gossip with others rather than indulgence in direct fight with supervisor.

To summarize, when abusive supervision occurs, citizenship behavior of employees is minimized and they build negative attitude against their organization. This results in stress and disappointment. Consequently, the employees may gossip (both JRG and NJG) to cope with their negative emotions and feelings against their organizations by sharing their feelings with others at work. Thus, this study proposes the following hypotheses:

H1: Abusive Supervision has a significant positive relationship with job related gossip.
H2: Abusive Supervision has a significant positive relationship with non-job related gossip.

Islamic Work Ethics and Workplace Gossip

Islamic ethics bring distinction between good and evil in the context of Islamic background of the right focus (Beekun, 1997). Islamic work ethics are focused on hard work, dedication, commitment to work, cooperation and creative work (Yousef, 2001). IWE refer to the guidelines for one's behavior at workplace (Mohamed, Karim & Hussein, 2010), one element of which is social relationship (Rahman, Muhamad & Othman, 2008). With a close relationship to Allah, one would expect a person's behavior to be consistent with the rules and regulations laid down by Allah (SWT) (Ibrahim & Kamri, 2013). This means that presence of intention to get closer to Allah would affect the intentions to gossip at workplace.

Islamic work ethics are something more than the traditional or Protestant Work Ethics (PWE). It is a set of values or beliefs concerning work, derived directly from Qur'ān and sayings of Prophet (PBUH) (Ahmad & Owoyemi, 2012). IWEs refer to an orientation towards work (Ali, 1992). From this discussion, it becomes clear that Islamic work ethics do not only lead to hard work, but also go beyond it by including the concept of worship just to please Allah (SWT). In Qur'ān, Allah (SWT) says "*O you who believe! Avoid much suspicion, in deeds some suspicions are sins. And spy not neither backbite one another. Would one of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? You would hate it (so hate backbiting). And fear God, verily, God is the one who accepts repentance, Most Merciful*" (49: 12).

Islam asks its believers not to spread false news or even any news without its validation or confirmation by any solid sources. Islam considers lies, backbiting, gossip, suspicion and slander as most destructive of all the sins. This is because all of these cause enmity among people. They cause negative emotions between people within same house, same neighborhood, between friends and relatives. At many instances, Allah (SWT) and His Messenger (PBUH) have been reported to have warned Muslims from the sins of tongue. Islam asks its followers not to gossip or spread rumors. Qur'ān says in this context:

"*Do not concern yourself with things about which you have no knowledge. Verily, your hearing, sight, and heart – all of them will be called to account*" (17:36).

"*Why do not the believing men and women, whenever such [a rumour] is heard, think the best of one another and say, "This is an obvious falsehood"? When you take it up with your tongues, uttering with your mouths something of which you have no knowledge, you deem it a light matter, whereas in the sight of God it is an awful thing!*" (24:12-15).

Prophet of Allah, Muhammad (PBUH), has also advised Muslims to stay away from gossip and backbiting.

The Prophet (PBUH) said, "Do you know what backbiting is?" They said, "Allah and His Messenger know best." He then said, "It is to say something about your brother that he would dislike." Someone asked him, "But what if what I say is true?" The Messenger of Allah said, "If what you say about him is true, you are backbiting him, but if it is not true then you have slandered him." (Muslim)

An-Nawawi (1999) said while explaining back biting and gossiping, *"Mentioning about your brother something that he would dislike includes what concerns his body, his religious practice, his worldly station, his physical appearance, his moral character, his wealth, his*

parents, his children, his spouse, his servant, his clothing, his activities, his smiles and frowns and anything else that pertains to him. It does not matter if you mention it explicitly by word or implicitly by indication or a gestur... This includes the likes of saying" "O Allah, pardon us all!" "O Allah, forgive us!" "Allah keep us safe!" All of this is backbiting." (An-Nawawi, 1999)

In another *ḥadīth*, Prophet Muhammad has been reported to have said, "*He who abandons that which does not concern him is a good Muslim.*" *(Tirmidhi, Kitab al-Zuhd, 11).*

Renowned jurist, *Imām* Al-Shafi (n.d.) has been reported to have said: "If you wish to speak then it is upon you to think before you speak. If you think there is good in it then speak and if not, then do not speak." Based on above tenets from Qur'ān and Ḥadīth, it can be argued that presence of Islamic values at workplace would cause the individuals refrain from gossip regarding co-workers, boss and work irrespective of any circumstances/behaviors.

Previous researchers have shown IWE to be strongly related with positive attitudes at workplace (e.g. Rrokhman, 2010; Yousef, 2001) and have been found to decrease different negative feelings at work like workplace deviance (Bhatti, Alkahtani, Hassan, & Sulaiman, 2015). Thus, it can be argued that presence of IWE will negatively affect gossip. This discussion proposes that:

H3: Islamic work ethics have a significant negative relationship with job related gossip.

H4: Islamic work ethics have a significant negative relationship with non-job related gossip.

Moderating Role of IWE on Abusive Supervision-Workplace Gossip Relationship
When faced with abusive supervision, employees would require means that could help them to cope up with the negative feelings that might have aroused because of abusive behavior of the supervisor. Personal beliefs and values can be seen as one of such buffering means. As stated earlier, personal beliefs especially those which are religion driven restrict individuals to gossip and spread news with no authenticity. Religion driven values at workplace would stop individuals to gossip about their boss at workplace despite the abusive behavior of the boss. In Muslim societies, Islamic work ethics have to be guiding the behavior at workplace.

Previously, IWE have been found to create positive feelings like performance, commitment (Abdi, Noor & Radzi, 2014; Yousef, 2001), knowledge sharing behavior and organizational citizenship behaviors (Gulzar, Shahzad & Hashmi, 2017; Murtaza, Abbas, Raja & Roques, 2015). IWE have also been found to minimize negative feelings like deviance (Bhatti *et al.*, 2015). The presence of Islamic work ethics helps individuals to ignore unjust practices of organizations and focus on work which helps them in maintaining their satisfaction with job and commitment with organization (Khan, Abass, Gul & Raja, 2015). Thus it can also be argued that IWE can act as buffering means between different work related attitudes and behavior in a way that it absorbs the negativity caused by some behaviors at workplace.

Abusive supervision can cause feelings of unfair treatment at workplace. But those high on IWE believe that work is most important and achieving work goals is the primary task (Ali, 1992). Thus, such individuals high on IWE would not respond to unfair treatments (Khan *et al.*, 2015). This means that individuals high on IWE will have the capacity to

absorb negative feelings aroused because of abusive supervision and won't translate them into gossip. Islam asks its believers to be quiet and not to show anger in situations where a person is behaving badly. It asks its followers to let things go. Allah has announced rewards for those who behave in such a manner. Islam has given huge importance to this concept of letting things go and to behave with others in a good way even when others are not behaving well with you. It is important to care for others and love others no matter what the situation is demanding. Holy prophet has been reported to have said, "*You cannot enter heaven until you believe, and you will not truly believe until you (truly) love one another.*" *(Muslim, Al-Iman: 93)*

On social relations, Holy prophet said, *"Do not have ill-will towards one another, do not be envious of one another, do not turn your back on one another; O, servants of Allah, be brothers (and sisters). It is not permissible for a Muslim to remain angry with their brother [in religion] for more than three days. (Bukhari, Al-Adab: 57-58). On another occasion, Holy Prophet said, One who does not behave gently is considered to have been deprived of all their good deeds." [Muslim, Al-Birr (Virtue) 74]*

It is also important, therefore, to understand the situation of others and have a good opinion about them irrespective of their behavior. Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) has been reported to have said, *"Having good opinion [about others] is from good worship"* (Abi-Dawood, *ḥadīth* #4993, p.388). While elaborating this *ḥadīth*, Khan (n.d.) contends that to hold good opinion and avoid ill-suspicion about others is virtuous acts. This means that presence of such work ethics will change the intentions of a person to gossip despite the bad behavior of supervisor, as the former would be fearing Allah, and to get reward from Allah he won't be gossiping in result of supervisory behavior and would leave the matter of him and his supervisor to Allah SWT.

Further, Islamic work ethics promote trust in relationships at workplace. In Qur'ān Allah SWT says, *"Allah does command you to render back your trusts to those to whom they are due" (4:58).* This means that presence of Islamic work ethics will promote a culture of trust at workplace that fosters relationships. In such a culture it won't be possible for a person to be abusive at first instance and even if it happens, it won't be translated to gossip because of religious obligations of the person. Islamic work ethics promote the concept of justice at workplace in all aspects. Islam supports the idea of having divided workforce like managers, employees, etc; but doesn't permit managers/supervisor any privilege. Further, it gives employees a chance to express themselves using proper mechanisms. In Qur'ān, Allah says, *"It is We (God) who portion out between them their livelihood in the life of this world: and We raise some of them in ranks so that some may command work of others. But the Mercy of your Lord is better than the (wealth) which they amass" (43:32).* Further, *"stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to God, even against yourselves, or your parents, or your kin, and whether it be (against) rich and poor" (52:21).*

The first verse given above shows that the distinction between managers and workers is acceptable, while the second verse points out at the non-discriminatory work practices with no privilege to those with status at workplace. If any bad behavior occurs, Islam asks believers to stand for justice and claim it rather than to indulge in behavior like gossip that

causes harm to society. In this way, it can be argued that when faced with abusive behavior of supervisor, those being high on IWE would not resort to gossip.

H5: Islamic work ethics moderate the relationship between Abusive supervision and Job related gossip in such a way that the relationship would be weaker when IWE would be higher.

H6: Islamic work ethics moderate the relationship between Abusive supervision and non-Job related gossip in such a way that the relationship would be weaker when IWE would be higher.
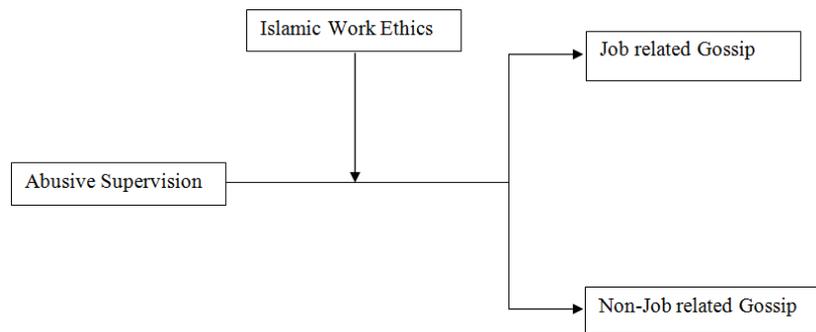

FIGURE 1. Theoretical framework of study

METHODOLOGY

Participants and Procedure

Data was collected from individuals working in service sector industry of twin cities i.e. Rawalpindi/Islamabad of Pakistan. Service sector was chosen for the collection of data as service sector industries of Pakistan are highly competitive and employees have to face stress while working. In such a scenario, employees are more prone to face abusive behavior from supervisor. Further, service sector involves dealing and working with people more than manufacturing sector, occurrence of gossip thus has more chances in service industry rather than in manufacturing industry. Participation of employees working in any service industry was thus ensured. Data was collected through a questionnaire. Respondent's anonymity and privacy were ensured. Using convenience sampling technique, 200 employees were contacted and questionnaires were distributed to them, out of which 114 were found to be usable for data analysis causing the response rate of the study to be 57%. It was ensured that all participants and their supervisors are Muslims as the study involved Islamic work ethics as a variable.

Demographic statistics of sample were: 56% were male, 44% were females. 48.6% respondents were in age bracket of 20-25, 29.2% were in the age bracket of 26-30 while remaining 22.2% were above 30 years. All respondents had minimum of 16 years of education: 23.6% had a Bachelor (Hons.) degree while 76.4% had a Master's degree. A vast majority of respondents i.e. 75.7% had 1-5 years of experience. 52.2% respondents were working on contractual jobs while 47.8% had permanent nature of job. All respon-

dents were working in service based industry, a vast majority in banking sector (82.6%) and telecommunication sector (12.3%). Whereas remaining 3.7% were working in project based organizations and 1.4% were from academic institutions.

Measures

Adopted scales were used to measure the responses of individuals. As the study is of causal nature and aims to test different hypotheses, different scales were adopted and a questionnaire was formulated. All responses were measured on a five-point likert scale where 1 represented strongly disagree and 5 represented strongly agree. Original scales in English language were used for collection of data as English is the medium of instruction in Pakistan from basic or primary education (Raja, Johns & Ntalianis, 2004).

Abusive supervision

15 items scale of Tepper (2000) was used to measure abusive supervision. One sample item of the scale is "*My Supervisor ridicules me*". The cronbach alpha value was 0.92.

Workplace gossip

Gossip (job related and non-job related) was measured by separate scales developed by Kuo et.al (2015). One sample item of job related gossip is "*Colleague's diligence and dedication to work.*" The cronbach alpha value for scale was 0.71. Sample item for non-job related gossip include "*Colleague's poor interaction with children.*" The cronbach alpha value for the scale was 0.73.

Islamic work ethics

In order to measure IWE, the study used the scale of Ali (1992) consisting of 17 items. Sample item includes "*Good work benefits both oneself and others.*" Cronbach alpha reliability of the scale was 0.89.

Control Variables

One-way ANOVA was conducted to measure the effect of demographic variables on gossip. No demographic variable was found to be causing any distortion in workplace gossip. Hence, no demographic variable was controlled.

RESULTS

The study employed descriptive, correlation and regression analysis to analyze the data. Table-1 summarizes the results for descriptive statistics, correlation and alpha reliability. Table 1 shows that abusive supervision is significantly and positively correlated with job related gossip ($r = 0.27$, $p < 0.05$). Similarly, abusive supervision is significantly and positively correlated with non-job related gossip ($r = 0.39$, $p < 0.05$). This provides initial support to hypothesis H1 and H2. For IWE, results show a significant and positive relationship between IWE and job related gossip ($r = 0.23$, $p < 0.05$), but a significant and negative relationship between IWE and non-job related gossip ($r = -0.19$, $p < 0.05$).

TABLE 1
Descriptive Statistics, Correlation and Alpha Reliability

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4
1.AS	2.22	0.81	(0.92)			
2.JG	3.05	0.60	0.27**	(0.71)		
3.NJG	2.88	0.62	0.39**	0.52**	(0.73)	
4.IWE	3.68	0.64	-0.10**	0.23**	-0.19**	(0.89)

$n = 144$, **$p < 0.05$, reliability is reported in parenthesis ()

These results thus provide support for hypothesis H4 but not for hypothesis H3. With the aim to find results for hypotheses, the study conducted regression analysis. Results for regression analysis are shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2
Results of Moderated Regression Analysis

Predictors	JG			NJG		
	β	$R2$	p	β	$R2$	p
AS	0.22		0.000	0.32		0.000
IWE	0.24	0.14	0.001	-0.25	0.22	0.001
AS*IWE	-0.26	0.18	0.007	-0.10	0.23	0.286

$n = 144$, JG = Job-Related Gossip, NJG = Non-Job Related Gossip, AS = Abusive Supervision, IWE = Islamic Work Ethics

Results as shown in table-2 indicate that there is a significant positive relationship between abusive supervision and job related gossip ($\beta = 0.22, p < 0.001$). This result supports hypothesis H1. Similarly, abusive supervision is significantly positively related with non-job related gossip ($\beta = 0.32, p < 0.001$). This result thus supports hypothesis H2. As in case of correlation analysis, results of regression analysis also shows a significant but positive relationship between Islamic work ethics and job related gossip ($\beta = 0.24, p < 0.001$) but significant negative relationship between Islamic work ethics and non-job related gossip ($\beta = -0.25, p < 0.001$). These results thus support hypothesis H4, but don't provide support for hypothesis H3 as the results indicate opposite direction of what was hypothesized.

For moderation analysis, firstly interaction terms were made. The results as indicated in table-2 show that presence of IWE as a moderator on relationship between abusive supervision and job related gossip weakens the positive relationship between the two. In fact, the relationship changes its sign and becomes negative ($\beta = -0.26, p < 0.01$). This result thus supports hypothesis H5. Graph as shown in figure-1 explains this result more appropriately.
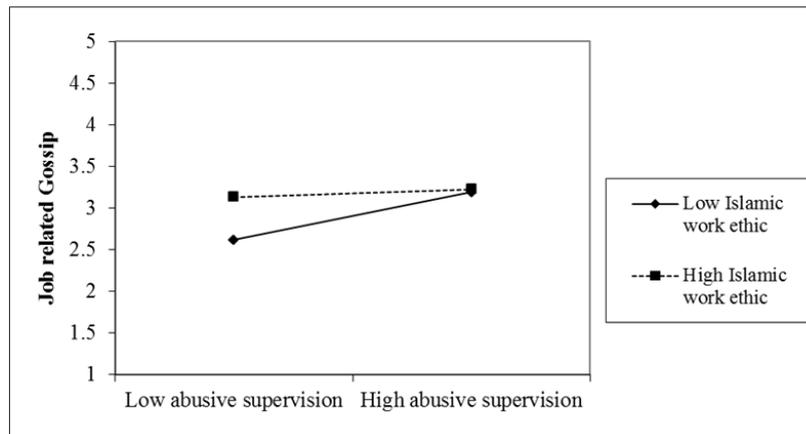
FIGURE 2. Moderation of IWE on Abusive supervision-Job related gossip relationship

However, presence of IWE as moderator on abusive supervision and non-job related gossip weakens the relationship between the two i.e. beta value declines but the relationship is insignificant i.e. p value is greater than 0.05 (β = -0.102, ns). This result thus doesn't support hypothesis H6.

DISCUSSION

The study examined the impact of abusive supervision on gossip at workplace with moderating role of Islamic work ethics. Overall, the results indicate that there is relationship between abusive supervision and workplace gossip. Results also indicate that presence of Islamic work ethics helps in reducing non-job related gossip at workplace, but doesn't help in reducing job related gossip. Results support the moderation of IWE on abusive supervision-job related gossip, but don't support the moderation of IWE on abusive supervision-non job related gossip.

Hypothesis 1 and 2 of the study were that abusive supervision has a significant positive relationship with job related gossip and non-job related gossip respectively. Results of the study support these hypotheses. This result is in line with the previous research done on this area e.g. Kuo *et al.* (2015) and Deluga (1998). When supervisor behaves abusively with subordinates, subordinates will develop feelings of enmity and would try to translate negative feelings towards organization. One such way to transfer the negative feelings is to share it with colleagues and talk about the negative aspects at work of supervisor and other colleagues and/or the life of supervisor and colleagues.

Hypothesis H3 of the study was that Islamic work ethics have a significant negative relationship with job related gossip. Results of the study don't support this hypothesis. Interestingly, the relationship is significant yet positive. Although the result is in opposite direction of what was hypothesized, yet previous research on Islamic work ethics has reported positive relationship between IWE and certain types of employees' extra role behaviors like knowledge sharing behavior (Murtaza *et al.*, 2015). This means that Islamic work ethics promote individuals to share their life experiences with other and transfer knowledge. Gossip and specifically job related gossip is a way by which individuals can do so. It can thus

be believed that Islamic work ethics provide an opportunity to employees to express their way of doing work with others and discussing the way of work of others. Hypothesis H4 of the study was that Islamic work ethics has a significant negative relationship with non-job related gossip. Results of the study support this hypothesis. Strong work ethics leads to minimization of negative attitudes of employees at work. Presence of Islamic work values at workplace would cause employees not to talk sluggish about work because Islam prohibits such acts.

Hypothesis H5 and H6 of the study were related to moderation of Islamic work ethics on abusive supervision-job related gossip relationship and abusive supervision-non job related gossip relationship respectively. Results of the study support H5 but no support for H6 was found. Results show that IWE moderates the relationship between abusive supervision and job related gossip. In fact, IWE when combined with abusive supervision makes the relationship between abusive supervision and job related gossip negative. When supervisor behaves abusively, the presence of religious values which are divine in nature would cause employees not to become personal and discuss the drawbacks in working style of boss or colleagues with other colleagues as it is not allowed in religious teachings. However, study hasn't found support for H6 i.e. moderation of IWE on abusive supervision-non job related gossip. This result though surprising can be because of the reason that the effects caused by abusive behavior of supervisor are so much strong that they can't be reserved even in presence of strong work ethics.

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

The study analyzed human behavior with regard to gossiping at workplace. The results suggest that policy makers in organizations should place strong religious value system in organizations and convey and transmit those values among employees because presence of such values causes less gossiping at workplace. In an Islamic society, managers should deal with their subordinates by keeping in view the concepts of Islamic work ethics. Further, efforts should be taken to minimize abusive behaviors of supervisors at work. Trainings should be organized for employees to teach and boost their Islamic work ethics. Organizations should keep an eye on bosses and supervisors. Employees should be surveyed regularly regarding the behavior of their boss with them. Separate grievance committees may be made for such purpose where employees can complain about such behavior of supervisors as this kind of behavior yields negativity at workplace in the form of gossip.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

One of the major limitations of the study is that it used convenient sampling because of which generalizability can't be claimed. It was because of lack of time and resources. It is recommended that the study should be done using large sample chosen by probability sampling. Study analyzed gossip at work place in relation with abusive supervision and work ethics. Future studies may incorporate other factors as antecedents of gossip at workplace

like personality traits. Organizational level variables may also be seen as antecedents of gossip. Like work ethics, culture can also play a vital role in determining the relationship between abusive supervision and gossip. Studies in future may examine moderation of culture on this relationship. Similarly, study has checked for IWE as moderator on abusive supervision-gossip relationship. Other types of religion driven work ethics like PWE may also be seen as moderator in this relationship so a concrete basis may be established on how religion can affect intentions to gossip.

CONCLUSION

This paper examined the impact of abusive supervision on workplace gossip (job related and non-job related). It also examined the relationship between the two variables within presence of Islamic work ethics. Overall, the results supported majority of the hypothesis with exception of hypothesis H3 and H6. Results showed that abusive supervision results in job related as well as non-job related gossip. Results also revealed that Islamic work ethics have significant negative relationship with non-job related gossip, but a positive relationship with job related gossip. Regarding the moderation of Islamic work ethics, results showed that IWE moderated the relationship between abusive supervision and job related gossip.

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