



The Role of Informal Relationships in the Workplace following the COVID-19 Pandemic: The Implications on Gossip and Helping Behaviour

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Abstract

The ability to sustain organizational success is highly dependent on the understanding of workplace dynamics and its effects on employees. With the introduction of COVID-19, previous knowledge that focuses on interpersonal relationships, their influence on behaviour and its consequences on job performance should be revised to include all the additional impacts following the pandemic. This dissertation aims to identify how informal relationships can generate gossip, even while employees work remotely, and the eventual impact that this relationship can have on helping behaviour inside an organization.

The results found highlight a direct correlation between the existence of informal relationships and the level of gossip, negative or positive, that occurs between employees. Moreover, remote work was found to have no relevant effects on gossip, however, small positive impacts were discovered on informal relationships and helping behaviour. Additionally, gossip was also identified as a relevant factor in the levels of helping behaviour for employees in an organization.

As a consequence of this study, a link between informal relationships and helping behaviour of employees can be acknowledged to exist. This should demonstrate the necessity and importance, for those in management, to emphasize the social component in their workplace, as it will eventually benefit the working environment and the support between those employed.

Title: The Role of Informal Relationships in the Workplace following the COVID-19 Pandemic: The Implications on Gossip and Helping Behaviour

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Keywords: Interpersonal relationship; Informal relationship; Gossip; Helping Behaviour; Remote Work

Resumo

Sustentar o sucesso organizacional está dependente da capacidade de compreender as dinâmicas do local de trabalho e os seus efeitos nos colaboradores. Com a introdução da COVID-19, o conhecimento prévio sobre as relações interpessoais, a influência no comportamento, e as consequências no desempenho deve ser revisto para incluir todos os impactos adicionais resultantes da pandemia. Esta dissertação pretende identificar a correlação entre relações informais e *gossip*, mesmo durante o trabalho remoto, e o eventual impacto que esta relação pode ter no comportamento de ajuda dentro da organização.

Os resultados destacam uma correlação direta entre a existência de relações informais e o nível de *gossip*, negativa ou positiva, ocorrente entre colaboradores. Além disso, verificou-se que o trabalho remoto não tem efeitos relevantes na *gossip*, no entanto, foram identificados impactos positivos nas relações informais e no comportamento de ajuda. Adicionalmente, *gossip* foi também identificada como um fator relevante nos níveis de comportamento de ajuda dos colaboradores.

Como consequência deste estudo, pode reconhecer-se a existência de uma ligação entre relações informais e o comportamento de ajuda entre colaboradores. Este resultado deve demonstrar a necessidade e importância, para a hierarquia de gestão organizacional, de incentivar o desenvolvimento da componente social, com o objetivo de beneficiar o ambiente de trabalho e o apoio entre colaboradores.

Título: O Papel de Relações Informais no Local de Trabalho após a Pandemia da COVID-19: As Implicações sobre *Gossip* e Comportamento de Ajuda

Autor: Diogo Patrício

Palavras-Chave: Relações Interpessoais; Relações Informais; *Gossip*; Comportamento de Ajuda; Trabalho Remoto

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1. Introduction

1.1 Research Topic

The COVID-19 pandemic provided a distinctive challenge for employers, and employees, to transform, adapt and rethink multiple aspects of their social and professional life. Nevertheless, the sudden nature of these decisions has reduced our knowledge, especially when it comes to understanding the latest downfalls and opportunities associated with concepts that were formerly established in society.

With the accelerated implementation of remote work, the interpersonal relationships between co-workers have been radically impacted and are no longer solely dependent on the time employees spend together in the workplace. Instead, particularly for those working remotely, the day-to-day social interactions are often restricted to online communication, eliminating the opportunities to develop informal relationships during coffee breaks, lunch hours, co-working tables, or conversations along the corridor at the office.

The concept of remote work has existed for a long period of time, referred to as organizational work that is performed outside of the normal organizational boundaries of space and time (Olson, 1983). The new normal, established after the COVID-19 pandemic, has diversified the definition of normal organizational boundaries, accentuating the need to explore if these changes impact the interpersonal relationships between co-workers and, consequently, all the other social phenomena that originate from it, such as gossip and helping behaviour.

For managerial purposes, as a result of the pandemic, adapting to the new circumstances should be a priority. At the foundation of change management is the process of continually renewing an organization's direction, structure, and capabilities to serve the ever-changing needs of external and internal customers (Moran & Brightman, 2000). By looking at employees as internal clients, it is imperial to fully understand the impact that social interactions have on performance, whether those are obstructed by the lack of physical presence in the workplace, and, more comprehensively, if gossip and help can be factors that are linked to success via the ability to socialize informally.

The ties between co-workers are normally associated with the concept of interpersonal relationships, referred to as the connections and interactions, especially ones that are socially and emotionally significant, between two or more people (APA, 2021). Throughout the dissertation, the focus is to

narrow the existing concept and understand whether and how informal relationships are impactful, in the workplace, instead of evaluating the full spectrum of social relationships.

Informal relationships can be challenging to define due to their complex nature; hence, in this dissertation, an original definition was utilized to provide direct purpose to the research. Informal relationships refer to the connections, and interactions, that occur outside the context of organizational functions or professional intent. Additionally, throughout this research, gossip and help will also be key factors evaluated. Gossip is defined as an exchange of personal information, about a third party, that is conveyed in an evaluative manner (Foster, 2004), while helping behaviour is defined as an individual action intended to assist another person that involves an observable cost in time, resources, or effort (Lefevor et al., 2017).

This dissertation focuses on exploring how the different levels of informal relationships, between co-workers, impact the existence of gossip and eventually helping behaviour of co-workers in the workplace. In addition, throughout the study, the aim is also to identify how remote work moderates the relationship between informal relationships and gossip.

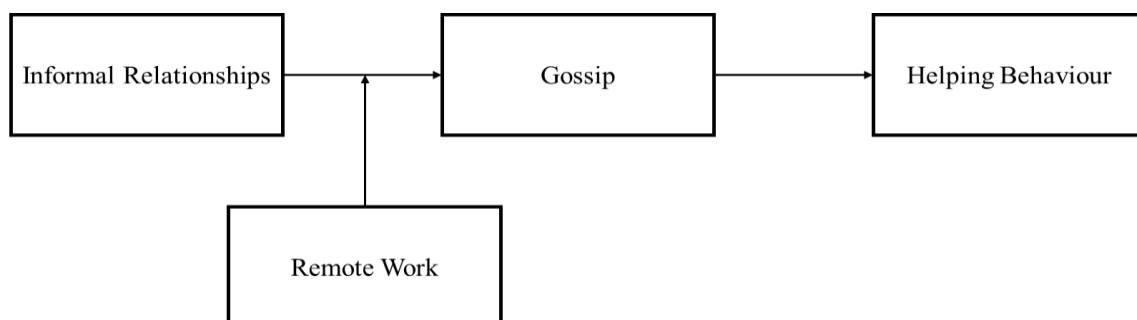


Figure 1: Dissertation Research Model

1.2 Research Problem

Following the COVID-19 pandemic, the existing research on the impact of informal relationships, for various working models, is limited. In this paper, the general emphasis is to attempt to understand how informal relationships influence the gossip, between co-workers, and consequently how that phenomenon affects the willingness and effectiveness of help provided. Another main focus, of this dissertation, is to contextualize whether being less physically present has decreased the ability to develop informal relationships and whether the shift contributes positively or negatively towards job performance. Thus, the main research questions discussed throughout the dissertation are:

RQ1: Interpersonal relationships can derive from strong informal connections and, as people become more comfortable around others, social phenomena like gossip should be considered. Throughout the investigation, it would be naive to disregard gossip simply as a negative aspect of socializing, so, and based upon previous research, it was necessary to explore if the possibility of gossip having positive impacts in the workplace exists and, additionally, how it translates according to proximity. Is gossip a phenomenon that occurs solely with co-workers, in proximity at the office, that have the opportunity to socialize informally face-to-face? And, importantly, can gossip be classified as an exclusively negative impact on job performance and job satisfaction?

In past research, the argument that gossip can deliver significant value for job satisfaction and job performance has been explored, ranging from motivation and relaxing employees, to being utilized as a method of daily support between co-workers (Chua & Uy, 2014). However, it is also regularly seen with a negative connotation due to the link between gossip and decrease in productivity, or distraction. Through the study, the identification of the impacts of gossip will be explored, and additionally, this dissertation will attempt to understand if gossip can still occur during remote work.

RQ2: Previous research has shown that, during the COVID-19 pandemic, employees working remotely faced various personal and professional difficulties in establishing informal relationships. Thus, it is important to understand, is the ability to form strong informal relationships directly correlated with the opportunities available to interact face-to-face during coffee breaks, lunch hours or coworking tables at the office?

The latest research has detailed how while working remotely, some employees faced difficulties in their day-to-day life with ineffective communication and loneliness in a professional setting (Wang et al., 2020). However, change in a professional setting is, more often than not, faced with resistance as employees prefer to maintain the status quo (Strebel, 1996). As a result, and since the impact of physical presence is being investigated in this paper, it is important to understand if remote work, and the reduced opportunities of socialization with fellow co-workers, has a significant impact on the informal relationships that can be established, in the workplace, and its effect on gossip.

RQ3: According to research, proximity in the office has been shown to increase the likeliness of co-workers collaborating and working together (Kraut et al., 2002). Nevertheless, there is no evidence suggesting how comfortability and informal relationships have the ability to impact the employee's helping behaviour towards others and its usefulness. By analysing if gossip, originating from the

existing informal relationships, impacts co-workers' ability to provide useful help, the study can explore how gossip can be a benefit associated with collaboration. Thus, it is crucial to this dissertation that it is determined if, and how, gossip, established by informal social situations, can directly impact the behaviour of co-workers to provide help to others.

Previous research has shown that proximity can encourage collaboration which would not occur otherwise (Kraut et al., 2002), however, it has not shown whether gossip can improve collaboration and availability of help when needed. The crucial aspect, of this research question, is to investigate and analyse the impact of gossip on helping behaviour for co-workers that were exposed to various levels of informal relationships within the organization.

1.3 Dissertation Structure

This dissertation has been structured into eight separate chapters. These chapters cover the main ideas, procedures and analysis that will be utilized throughout the various phases of the study. Chapter 1, titled Introduction, includes a brief description of the dissertation topic and the indication of which main problems, within that topic, will be addressed in this investigation.

Chapter 2, titled Literature Review, includes sub-chapters that cover a variety of empirical research, on focused issues, crucial for the understanding and context of the main topic discussed in this dissertation. Chapter 3 is Theorization, which defines the different overarching theories that will be utilized in the analysis of the results, and Chapter 4, is the Hypothesis that denotes the expected results, from future data collected, according to individual reasoning and empirical research.

Chapter 5 concerns Methodology, within this part of the dissertation the main research objectives and methods of data collection will be highlighted. Chapter 6 is a continuation of the process initiated in the previous chapter, titled Results. In this chapter, the results will be displayed in an organized and formatted manner, so that it facilitates the interpretation for readers. Chapter 7 covers the Discussion of the analysis, conducted from the data gathered and organized in the chapters Methodology and Results. The focus in this chapter is to evaluate how the results compare to the initial hypothesis, as well as, providing a conclusion that covers and summarises the essential arguments observed, in this dissertation, and how it can be of importance for managers and organizations. Lastly, Chapter 8 will detail how the dissertation findings were limited, or possibly affected during collection, and what my dissertation represents in terms of future studies.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Topic 1: Informal relationships in the Workplace

Organizations and managers are continually aiming to better understand their employees, and informal relationships are at the epicentre of this target. A suitable demonstration of the importance of informal relationships, in the workplace, can be witnessed as 90 percent of dismissals are the result of poor attitudes, inappropriate behaviour and difficulties with interpersonal relationships rather than deficient technical skills (Lozada, 1996). This research suggest that the emotional and social aspect of co-working plays a significant role within organizations and highlights the notion that working alongside co-workers might be as important, or more, than the individual skills an employee possesses. Moreover, research has shown that employees' perceptions of interpersonal treatment is an important construct in organizations, regardless of occupation or industry (Donovan et al., 1998). This idea is further supported by the findings on how employees, who experience bad atmosphere at work, tend to leave more quickly than those who experience a good atmosphere (Moerbeek & Need, 2003).

When evaluating past research, focused on relationships in the workplace, we can start by exploring the three main types of interpersonal relationships previously identified: Informational peer, Collegial peer, and Special peer (Kram & Isabella, 1985). According to the study, Informal peer is a relationship based around the "interchange or discussion about work" while Collegial peer is a co-worker that others can confide in for topics beyond work, considered a friend. Lastly, a Special peer involves a greater level of self-disclosure and self-expression, in its essence, it is the most intimate form of interpersonal relationship within a workplace (Kram & Isabella, 1985). In this study, informal relationships, would be aligned with the findings of both, Collegial and Special peers, as the scope of the relationship expands beyond the context of organizational functions and professional intent.

In addition, it is important to understand the nature of the informal relationships that occur within an organization. The network of informal relationships can be much more complex than the formal structure, expanding across vertical and horizontal borders of the organization and possessing a much more complex nature than assigned job titles and designated departments (Ringer & Robinson, 1966). One of the first methods, structured to measure the influence of informal relationships at work, was the job characteristic "Friendship Opportunity" (Hackman and Lawler, 1971), conceived to examine the degree to which employees establish informal relationships with those who they work with.

Nevertheless, the lack of existing research, both empirical and theoretical, into the topic of workplace friendships (Nielsen et al., 2000) is a noticeable finding when studying previous papers. This is further supported, in past research, by how workplace friendships are seen as a phenomenon that is rarely investigated (Zorn, 1995).

In fact, the emphasis of research appears to regularly focus on the relationship of superiors, leaders, or mentors with their employees, and never between those at the same corporate level, which leads to a significant difference in the number of research focused on leaders, in relation to co-worker (peer) influence at work (Raabe & Beehr, 2003). These types of relationships, between supervisors or mentors and their subordinates, can sometimes lack the voluntary aspect of informal relationship, and can be more easily identified as a formal relationship. This separation, is not meant to disregard the existing friendships at different levels of the organization, instead focuses on emphasizing that the aim is to identify the benefits, and downfalls, of friendships that are not prescribed or essential within the structure of an organization.

2.2 Topic 2: The COVID-19 Pandemic and the Impact of Remote Work

The COVID-19 pandemic has forever changed and adapted the way organizations, employees and managers interact and accomplish their work on a day-to-day basis. Although the impacts of change are different for everyone, it is crucially important to understand how the new necessity to utilize and accept remote work, as standard practise, has affected everyone involved.

Previously, to the pandemic, remote work was scarcely available to employees, and those who had the opportunity were usually higher-income earners in the private-sector (Desilver, 2020). COVID-19 transformed organizational models and, during the pandemic, around half of all employees admitted working from home, at least some time (Eurofound, 2020). However, organizations appeared to lack the ability to successfully establish home-working conditions or consider remote work a long-term solution, with only less than half (47%) of employees stating that their employer provided the required equipment to work from home efficiently (Eurofound, 2020). In addition, remote work was also previously a voluntary aspect for employees, which were able to decide if it was the correct method personally. As it became mandatory, focus has shifted towards how to get the most out of remote working, instead of the former dilemma, whether or not to implement it (Wang et al., 2020).

Moreover, remote work appears to divide opinion on how it affects employee's performance and satisfaction. On one hand, analysis on remote work has shown a perception of greater productivity and higher morale amongst employees, even if matched with longer hours of work (Hill et al., 2006). Nonetheless, employees who work remotely have also reported feeling more isolated, as well as, less likely to feel they are doing a useful job, when compared to those working from other locations (Eurofound, 2020).

Furthermore, as a result of remote work, another factor susceptible to change was communication between employees. Studies have shown that employees working remotely communicated less frequently with those outside their immediate teams, or with co-workers which they had low informal relationships, though it was also found that this pattern led to stronger connections between employees on the same team (Yang et al., 2021). Additionally, it was shown that employees spent, on average, 25% less of their time collaborating and decreased the number of new connections established within the organization (Yang et al., 2021).

2.3 Topic 3: Gossip in Organizations and its Employees

From past empirical evidence, it appears that gossip is still majorly studied as a negative component of behaviour in the workplace, and although it is realistic to analyse aspects of gossip in that manner, to entirely ignore the potential positive impacts of a significant component, in the relationship of co-workers, can reduce the true scientific and psychological understanding of employee behaviour. Nevertheless, recent articles have explored how gossip can be expanded, as a concept, from the very narrow subset studied so far, which is not reflective of true workplace gossip, describing how it can be positive or negative in nature, and serve important functions in organizations (Brady et al., 2017).

If exploring the relevance of gossip, for employees in the workplace, studies have shown that 14 percent of workplace coffee-break chat is gossip and 66 percent of general conversation is related to social talk about other co-workers (Cole & Dalton, 2009). The increased presence of gossip, amongst employees, and the difficulty in controlling it, is a factor that motivates managers to attempt to reduce it, mostly based on the fear that it can erode reputation and undermine the authority of those in charge (Noon & Delbridge, 1993).

Besides leaders and managers, employees can also suffer consequences from negative gossip. Scholars have shown that employees, surrounded by an elevated degree of negative gossip, find it harder to trust co-workers or establish good working relationships (Aquino & Thau, 2009). Also,

employees who are excluded from social networks, inside the organization, are normally less successful and ineffective as managers, contrary to co-workers belonging to those established social networks (Baumeister et al., 2004).

For positive gossip, in the workplace, it can be used by employees as a method of relieving tension and anxiety, especially in moments of organizational change (Michelson et al., 2010). Furthermore, gossip between co-workers can reinforce the social bonds of those involved (Noon & Delbridge, 1993), and shape individual behavioural norms that enable cultural and organizational learning (Baumeister et al., 2004).

It is also relevant to understand the motivations, behind negative and positive gossip in organizations, which dictate the various impacts that have been explored previously. Negative gossip is commonly used to target specific individuals, particularly concentrated on those of low informal status, while positive gossip, in contrast, is spread fairly evenly across the organizational social network (Ellwardt et al., 2012). Additionally, group-serving gossip is often correlated with financial, and non-financial, rewards while self-serving gossip is more likely to be met with disapproval (Kniffin & Wilson, 2010). Finally, it has also been unveiled that employees spread both, positive and negative, gossip about those in their own work group (Ellwardt et al., 2012).

2.4 Topic 4: Helping Behaviour between Co-workers

Helping behaviour is a component of workplace behaviour that is associated with co-worker interaction, and eventual job performance, that demands significant consideration from organizations and researchers. Helping behaviour can be separated into proactive and reactive dimensions, that affect employee's well-being differently (Duan et al., 2018). Reactive helping behaviour is the act of help, from an employee, originating from a request or evident need from others, while proactive helping behaviour was defined as behaviour that is most likely spontaneously initiated (Spitzmuller & Van Dyne, 2012).

As a voluntary behaviour, helping is seen to be influenced by organizational standards and culture. Data collected over time has described that employee exposure to workplace incivility diminishes helping behaviour through a sense of job dissatisfaction, in other words, rude co-worker treatment has a direct link to lower voluntary helping behaviour (De Clercq et al., 2019). Moreover, employees were found to still enjoy productive helping behaviour at work even when facing resource depletion from family obligations (De Clercq et al., 2017), highlighting the notion that events from inside the

organization hold stronger significance in dictating helping behaviour standards than those originating from outside.

Additionally, helping behaviour has also been associated with organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB), defined as behaviours that are outside the employee's formal role within the organization, and therefore not formally rewarded (Organ, 1988). This specific branch of helping was shown to be directly correlated with two main motivators of employee helping related behaviour, job security and need for respect (Glover, 2016), suggesting that there are intrinsic and extrinsic motivators associated with increased helping behaviour, even if not formally recognized or compensated.

Lastly, evidence of how job satisfaction has the capacity to increase helping behaviour, of employees, has been shown in past empirical studies. The degree to which satisfaction can affect the help provided is directly associated to employee's belief that their work activities are meaningful, emphasise collective over individual interests and that the employer cares about their well-being (De Clercq et al., 2019). This knowledge can be utilized as a source of strategic enhancement of voluntary assistance, between employees, through the manipulation, of these components, whenever feasible for an organization.

3. Theorization

In this dissertation, to contextualize the results gathered, one main psychological theory was used to guide the research, while another was chosen as a supportive element. These theories will be utilized to achieve a deeper understanding of the causes and consequences of the results gathered, specifically for behaviour of employees, and their interpersonal relationships, after the COVID-19 pandemic. The two overarching theories in this study are Social Information Processing theory (SIP) and Affective Events theory (AET).

The main overarching theory, throughout the study, will be Affective Events theory, which will support the implementation of methodology and the analyses of the results. Affective Events theory focuses on emphasizing that work events can be proximal causes of affective reactions (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). In other words, this theory will help explain how emotions of employees have a direct impact on job performance and satisfaction. The significance is that, in this dissertation, if informal relationships can generate emotions between co-workers, it can be directly associated with the effects on job satisfaction and consequently job performance, whether in face-to-face situations or remote work.

The support theory will be Social Information Processing theory, that offers a view on how, during computer-mediated communications (CMC), the lack of non-verbal cues, or face-to-face interactions, does not negatively impact the ability of those involved to develop strong interpersonal relationships (Walther, 1992). Computer-mediated communications is defined as the communication that takes place between two human beings via the instrumentality of computers (Herring, 1996). The theory SIP is of importance, to our research, due to the overlapping between computer-mediated communication and the regular need for employees to adapt to remote work. It will be crucial that existing knowledge is taken under consideration to better understand the motives behind survey answers and the mindset of co-workers.

4. Hypothesis

Initially, in this dissertation, two different hypotheses were established in accordance with the opening research questions proposed. These hypotheses were proposed using a combination of individual reasoning, acquired from personal experience, and information from multiple sources of empirical evidence that contradict, or uphold, the notions of what I expect to find when the results are thoroughly analysed.

H1: Remote work negatively impacts the positive relationship between Informal Relationships and Gossip.

Firstly, the belief that informal relationships, established during exchanges and breaks from work, will have an impact on gossip comes from the proposal that for co-workers to engage in gossip they must adhere to group norms, and those who do not will inevitably be the subject of it (Turcotte, 2012). As co-workers create stronger informal relationships and construct their social groups, with shared interests and norms, the presence of gossip will naturally increase in their daily activities.

Furthermore, looking at how remote work moderates the relationship between informal relationship and gossip, our hypothesis initially goes against concepts such as Social Information Processing theory which argue that during remote work the ability to develop interpersonal relationships, even with lack of non-verbal cues, should not be negatively impacted (Walther, 1992). However, the specific influence on gossip from informal relationships, developed during off-time at the office in which co-workers can socialize, will generate stronger interpersonal relationships than those developed working remotely. Also, by separating those that work remotely, and those present at the office, the organization has inadvertently created different social groups, which play an important

role in gossip as previously explored. As a result, the belief is that high levels of remote work will reduce gossip generated from informal relationships, mainly due to how remote work will limit socialization in separate coworking groups, lunch hours and coffee breaks amongst employees, and instead only allow for the development of interpersonal relationships through online channels.

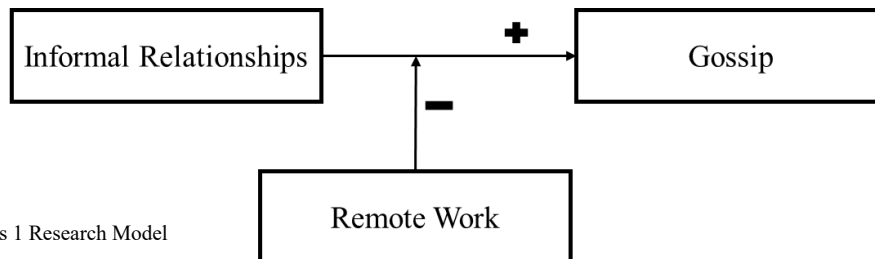


Figure 2: Hypothesis 1 Research Model

H2: Gossip has direct impact (positive correlation) on Helping Behaviour.

For this hypothesis, empirical research was taken into account that cited how gossip can be a means to gain additional information in a more efficient and indirect way than personal experience (Levin & Arluke, 1987). Moreover, the existence of gossip implies that an employee belongs to a social group, as investigated previously, which can eliminate the existence of intergroup anxiety. Intergroup anxiety is at the origin of the anxiety that people experience when interacting with outgroup members to fear of negative psychological or behavioural consequences for the self and, more importantly for this dissertation, the fear of negative evaluations by ingroup or outgroup members (Stephan & Stephan, 1985). From this empirical research, I concluded that with the comfortability and understanding, that originates from gossip, the perfect environment would be fostered for helping behaviour, eliminating the need for co-workers to surpass the social barriers usually present.

Additionally, gossip is seen as a way that co-workers can learn about the social environment from a cultural perspective (Baumeister et al, 2004). As a result, the increase of gossip will, once again, facilitate the interaction between co-workers and increase the helping behaviour amongst the organization.

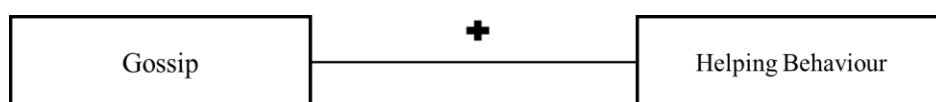


Figure 3: Hypothesis 2 Research Model

5. Methodology

5.1 Research Design

The main objective of this dissertation is to explore the impact that informal relationships have on gossip in the workplace, while using remote work as a moderator, but also, to identify whether the resulting gossip has a significant impact on helping behaviour between co-workers. For this purpose, it was important to design the research in a way that allowed the collection of employees data about their behaviour, as well as their day-to-day habits at work. The collected data will support this dissertation in identifying the employees' level of interpersonal relationships and the regularity in which they participate in specific social behaviours.

For the purpose of this dissertation, an online questionnaire was developed and distributed using the platform Prolific. This platform was chosen as a way to collect reliable data and filter the participants that were relevant for this research. The method, of an online questionnaire, was preferred due to its major strengths compared to other methods, primarily its ability to diversity the format of the questions included, convenience and controlled sampling of respondents (Evans & Marthur, 2005). Additionally, the online questionnaire method allowed for the opportunity to track the response rates, as well as reducing the time spent during data entry or any human errors that could occur throughout this process (Ilieva et al., 2001).

5.2 Questionnaire

The questionnaire, chosen for this dissertation, was made up of three main sectors for informal relationships, gossip and helping behaviour, while also containing an additional block of questions for background information and previous knowledge about employees working habits (Appendix 1). For the questions, utilized during research, the conscient decision was made to include quantitative questions rather than qualitative. This choice was originally made due to the knowledge that employees answers would be more accurately represented in this manner since no other factors, such as lack of motivation to write responses or difficulty in expressing desired message, would affect the data collected.

In the first block of questions, I began by recording the respondents age and gender. Although these statistics did not pertain directly to the research it was still important to understand the demographics of those involved, so that an analysis could be fully conducted into how the results applied to the real

world and which segments this dissertation primarily focused on. I also began by asking respondents about their habits previously to the COVID-19 pandemic, specifically remote working, and their current working preferences. This set of question would be used as a moderator to analyse how remote working affected the relationship studied between informal relationships and gossip in the workplace. Moreover, two questions of the same format, that focused on the study of informal relationships, were also added so that a direct evaluation could be made with the answers of remote work.

Following the introductory block, the first main sector in the questionnaire was used to test informal relationships in the workplace. In this sector the respondents were asked to, from personal experience, rate how they agreed with multiple statements that were rated on a 5-point Likert-type scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree (Sullivan & Artino, 2013). The seven statements chosen were based around the 12-item Workplace Friendship Scale (Nielsen et al., 2000) and were used to assess the opportunity for and regularity that employees had to establish informal relationships in the workplace. These statements included declarations such as “I view some of my co-workers as true friends” or “Interacting with my co-workers is one of the main reasons I look forward to my job”. Additionally, to the seven statements, an instructional manipulation check (Oppenheimer et al., 2009) was also included to screen out any inattentive or random responses to the questionnaire. The manipulation check indicated “Please answer strongly disagree for this statement” and was a necessary inclusion to guarantee the validity of our findings and increase the significance of its conclusions.

The second section of the questionnaire was used to gather data about gossip. For this portion, respondents were asked how often they talked about each of the ten areas displayed, that included statements such as “Other people’s excellent job performance” or “Other people’s poor interpersonal skills”, and rate it on a 5-point Likert-type scale from never to always (Sullivan & Artino, 2013). The ten statements chosen, for this question, were adapted from the section of Job-Related Gossip (JRG), originally shown in the Workplace Gossip Scale (Kuo et al., 2014). These statements were composed of 5 pairs of identical sentences split evenly for negative and positive descriptions. As an example, the pair, of the question initially shown for excellent job performance, would be “Other people poor job performance”.

For the last sector, the question focused on gathering the necessary data to analyse the component of helping behaviour. Respondents were asked to rate, on a 5-point Likert-type scale (Sullivan & Artino, 2013), how likely they were to engage in certain behaviours, from extremely unlikely to extremely likely. These behaviours were extracted from a survey for interpersonal helping behaviour (Den

Hartog et al., 2007) and included statements for how likely employees pictured themselves “Helping others when it is clear their workload is too high” or “Thinking of ways to improve collaboration within the organization”.

5.3 Procedure and Participants

The questionnaire was designed, and the data gathered, through the online platform Qualtrics. This allowed for an accurate tracking of the distribution and responses completed, as well as an initial analysis of the data collected from each individual question. Once sufficient responses were recorded, the data collected was structured and imported into the SPSS software for statistical analysis. For the various types of analysis necessary, and to test the hypothesis, the data collected was divided into relevant grouping for each of the main topics.

Initially, the questionnaire was distributed to 300 participants, identified to be working full-time jobs, without controlling for gender or age. From the initial sample, 41 participants failed the instructional manipulation check, representing a failure of 13.67% of the total pool of respondents, and therefore had their answers eliminated from the final data sample. From the final data set, now with 259 respondents, a breakdown for gender and age groups was completed so that the segment focus and significance of results, for the dissertation, could be correctly identified. When analysing the gender division, in our questionnaire, data showed that 57.92% (150) were male, 41.70% (108) were female and 0.39% (1) identified as other (Appendix 2), depicting a good sample balance from which to analyse the results without the existence of a bias in this particular variable.

For age, respondents were asked to choose between four different segments: < 25, 26 – 45, 35 – 46 and > 46 (Appendix 3). The majority of answers belonged to the age segments of < 25 and 26 – 45, with 32.43% (84) and 43.24% (112) respectively. This significantly large percentage of respondents from younger segments (75.67%), might originate as a consequence from the distribution, of the questionnaire, being done through an online platform and the levels of comfort and availability that those segments possess in relation to older segments of the working respondents. Still, roughly one third of the respondents were part of those two upper segments 35 – 46 (15.06%) and 46 > (9.27%), so even if the analysis, of the data collected, could be more relevant for those < 25 and 25 – 36, it should not be disregarded for those belonging to 35 – 46 and 46 >.

6. Results

6.1 Correlation Analysis

	Method	Informal Relationships	Remote Work	Gossip	Helping Behaviour
Informal Relationships	Pearson Correlation	1.000	0.149*	0.342**	0.457**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	-----	0.016	1.601E-08	8.498E-15
Remote Work	Pearson Correlation	0.149*	1.000	0.078	0.144*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.016	-----	0.213	0.020
Gossip	Pearson Correlation	0.342**	0.078	1.000	0.263**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	1.601E-08	0.213	-----	1.832E-05
Helping Behaviour	Pearson Correlation	0.457**	0.144*	0.263**	1.00
	Sig. (2-tailed)	8.498E-15	0.020	1.832E-05	-----

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 1: Correlations Analysis

The first step taken, in the analysis of the results, was to verify the correlations and the significance between each of the chosen variables for the general model. The Pearson correlation coefficient varies between 1 and -1, a value of 1 represents a strong positive correlation, while -1 represents a strong negative correlation. In other words, a positive value shows the tendency of one variable to increase or decrease due to variations from another variable, while a negative value depicts an increase, in a variable, as a result of a decrease in another variable and vice versa (Belyadi & Haghghat, 2021).

The significance, or p-value, represents the probability that the results, from the data collected, are caused by chance rather than correlation, meaning that the smaller the p-value the more certainty can be established that the relationship between the variables is not coincidental. A p-value of 5% or under is generally considered significant, but for even higher accuracy, the 1% or under significance can also be used for reference.

Firstly, looking at informal relationships, the correlation with remote work was found to be the weakest, providing a Pearson correlation coefficient close to zero (0.149), which, although still significant at the 0.05 level, portrayed a low correlation between these two variables. However, both gossip (0.342) and helping behaviour (0.457), showed stronger positive correlations with informal relationship at a significance level of 1%, suggesting that the impact, from the presence of informal relationships in the workplace, can generate a positive contribution in these two variables.

Moreover, looking at the relationship between gossip and helping behaviour, it represents a weaker positive correlation (0.263), although still highly significant at the 1% level. These findings demonstrate how, additionally to the impact witnessed between informal relationships and helping behaviour, gossip is also an important aspect to consider by organizations as it has direct impact in the helping factor amongst their employees.

Lastly, looking at the correlations with the variable of remote work, which is primarily used as a moderator in the hypothesis, no significant correlation was found with gossip, and weak positive correlations were identified with informal relationships (0.149) and helping behaviour (0.144) at a 5% significance level. As a result, even if a reduced impact is seen with the introduction of remote work, it is still important to state that it is relevant and provides a positive impact in these two variables of importance in this model.

6.2 Hypothesis Analysis

6.2.1 Hypothesis 1 – Informal Relationships, Remote Work and Gossip

For the next analysis, focused on hypothesis testing, a linear regression was generated for each individual model. To analyse the goodness of the fit, of each model, the coefficient of determination (R^2) will be utilized in addition to the regression line. The coefficient of determination can vary between values of 0.000 and 1.000, where the value of 1.000 represents the “perfect fit”, that can be accurately used to predict future values, whereas 0.000 indicates that the model fails to model the data precisely.

For H1, one of the expected findings, supported by previous literature and individual reasoning, was to discover a positive relationship between informal relationship and gossip.

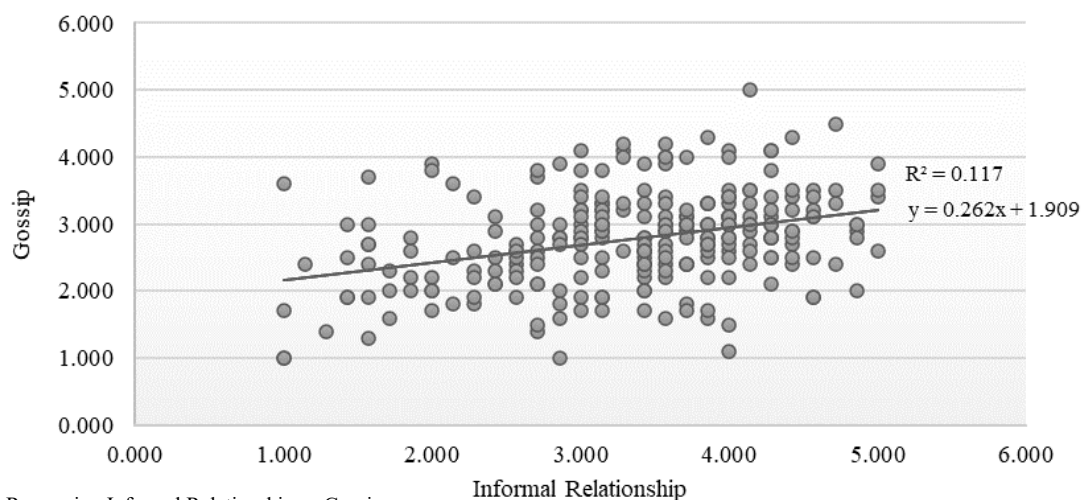


Figure 4: Regression Informal Relationship vs Gossip

With the regression model, the coefficients (Appendix 4) and the resultant linear regression equation were prepared for the relationship between the variables of informal relationship and gossip. The coefficient of gossip represents the value of the variable if no informal relationships were present and all other variables remained equal, which in this model was found to be in the lower part of the scale with a value of 1.909 out of 6.000. This initial finding can be used to interpret how informal relationships is an important component of workplace gossip as without its presence the starting value is significantly lower than the rest of the data collected.

However, if taken into consideration, the R^2 of this model is 0.117 (Figure 4), which highlights how the predicted values, using the variable of informal relationships, only accurately match 11.7% of the data found for the variable of gossip. This value suggests that, even if the results from this model are better than randomly selected data, there is still a high risk of unreliability.

Nevertheless, beyond the positive regression line found, if the Beta value of 0.342 (Appendix 4), is also taken into consideration, the evidence from the data collected strongly supports the assumption from the initially proposed hypothesis. Even with possibility reduced influence, over the variations of gossip, informal relationship does hold the potential to positively impact gossip in the workplace and amongst co-workers. This discovery is further highlighted by the fact that without the presence, of informal relationship, the expected value of gossip is also considerably lower than the rest of the data available in this study.

For the next part of hypothesis 1, focused on identifying the effects of remote work, a new variable was created from the product of informal relationship and remote work. The intended use, of the variable, is to allow for a detailed investigation into how different levels of remote work moderate the relationship between informal relationships and gossip, specifically through the coefficients calculated and the relevance of the model created.

The proposed outcome, supported by previous literature and personal knowledge, was to uncover a negative impact of remote work on this relationship, originally as a consequence of the decrease in opportunities to develop informal relationships. In other words, for this model it is proposed that an increase in the independent variable (Informal Rel * Remote Work) would have a negative effect on gossip.

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.651	0.329		5.015	0.000
	Informal Relationship	0.330	0.101	0.432	3.283	0.001
	Remote	0.130	0.144	0.177	0.901	0.369
	Informal Rel * Remote Work	-0.034	0.043	-0.194	-0.799	0.425

a. Dependent Variable: Gossip

Table 2: Coefficients of Informal Relationship with Remote Work vs Gossip

The table above gives us the necessary values to establish a regression line that applies for this hypothesis, enabling the evaluation of the coefficients for each variable, and consequently, the comparison with the model without remote work included. The equation found between the product variable and gossip is $y = -0.034x + 1.651$.

Firstly, it is relevant to emphasise how, in this model, the coefficient for gossip is lower than for the previous regression model (figure 4). This decrease suggests a lower expected value of gossip, for each employee, when controlling for those not using remote work, which goes against the original hypothesis proposed. If adapted specifically to the study, this finding depicts how, with no informal relationships, the initial expected value of gossip between co-workers is lower when remote work is not the chosen method of work during any day of the week.

Additionally, the negative coefficient of the informal relationship and remote work variable suggest a negative correlation with the variable gossip. As more remote work is utilized, even if along with a higher level of informal relationships established, the expected value of gossip amongst co-workers decreases.

Still, the significance found for the variable of the product term, between informal relationship and remote work, was 0.425 which is considerably larger than the threshold of 0.05 and therefore cannot be considered significant. As a result, even with the value of R^2 of 0.346 (Appendix 5), which illustrates that the model explains 34.6% of the variance in the variable of gossip, the results found in relation to this portion of the hypothesis should not be seen as true or accurate.

In the end, when evaluating hypothesis 1, it was concluded that informal relationship does possess a positive correlation with gossip, however, the same could not be found for the relationship between these variables when remote work was introduced as a moderator in the model, since no significance was found. The results found indicate that hypothesis 1 cannot be assumed to be true.

6.2.2 Hypothesis 2 – Gossip and Helping Behaviour

For the last hypothesis, in this dissertation, the analysis of the relationship between gossip and helping behaviour of co-workers was examined. In Hypothesis 2, according to previous literature and individual reasoning, it was anticipated that gossip would have a direct positive relationship with gossip.

From the previous analysis, a positive correlation of 0.263 was identified, with significance at the 1% level. This result supports the hypothesis by establishing that, even if not strongly, gossip does have a direct positive influence on the component of helping behaviour in the workplace.

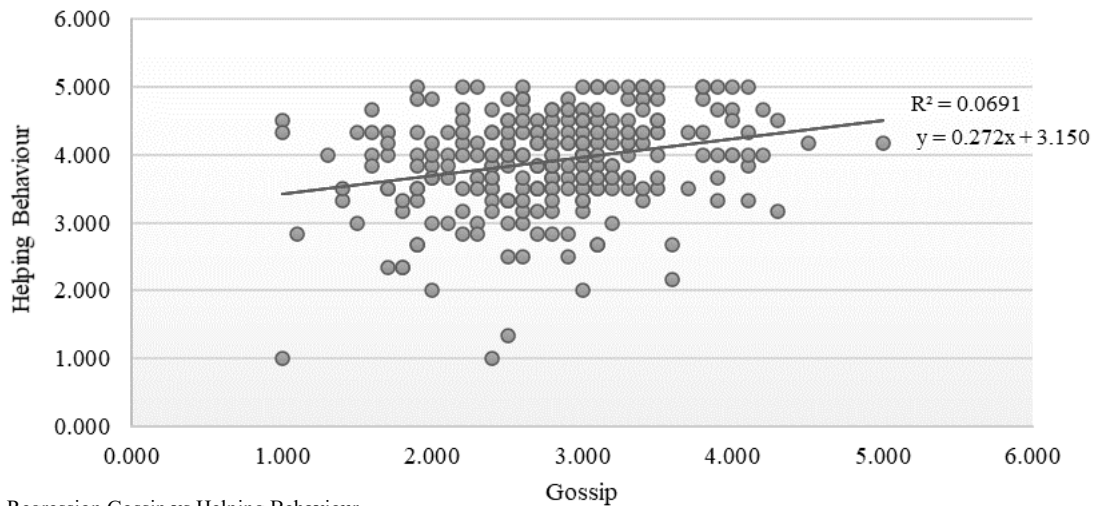


Figure 5: Regression Gossip vs Helping Behaviour

To further inspect the relationship, a linear regression model was composed for this model. The coefficients (Appendix 6) and regression equation were prepared as well as the R^2 for the variables.

The coefficient of helping behaviour, from the linear regression, was found to be 3.150, which is near the middle of the scale. This value represents the reality that, without accounting for gossip, helping behaviour is already widely present amongst co-workers, possibility originating from a variety of other sources. One possible influence is associated with informal relationships, which was demonstrated as a significant correlation, at the 1% level, during correlation analysis with a value of 0.457.

Nonetheless, the coefficient of gossip was shown to be 0.272 in the linear regression, depicting a positive relationship between the variables and showing the value of expected increase, in helping behaviour, for each unit increase of gossip in the data collected. Moreover, when calculated, the R^2

was 0.0691, or 6.91%, which represents the percentage of the values that can accurately be predicted for the dependent variable using this model. This percentage is considerably low and can originate from the complexity around the variable of helping behaviour and its dependency on more than one factor, suggesting the necessity to include multiple significant variables, in any model, that attempts to accurately predict the value of helping behaviour for employees.

However, and while analysing this relationship based on the effect of one variable alone, gossip on helping behaviour, the results from the data collected suggest a positive and significant relationship between the two variables. This interpretation aligns with the original hypothesis proposed, for this model, and concludes how gossip has a direct impact on helping behaviour, as well as informal relationship, that represents both, an indirect and direct influence on helping behaviour, as a consequence of its initial significant impact on gossip, but also the correlation with the variable of helping behaviour.

7. Conclusion and General Discussion

7.1 Summary of Findings

Throughout this dissertation, the study of the results focused on the identification of existing relationships between the variables established in the original research model. The emphasis on correlation helped identify the dependence each variable had on another, and the importance given to significance allowed the results to be seen as legitimate or, if above the 5% level, as inaccurate. The coefficient of determination (R^2) was also a method utilized, throughout our analysis, to highlight the accuracy of each model and how much of the variation in the dependent variable was attributed to the variables chosen to be included in the hypothesis.

For the impact of informal relationship on gossip, the results depicted a significant positive relationship between these two components of co-worker's behaviour, suggesting that, as originally proposed, co-workers that form relationships outside the scope of organisation and job-oriented necessities are increasingly prone to gossip amongst them. Additionally, and originally outside the scope of the research model, informal relationship was also seen to have a direct relevant relationship with helping behaviour, which would be expected as when employees gain confidence and comfort amongst each other, helping can become increasingly more regular. The outcomes uncovered in the model allowed for the hypothesis, that informal relationship would have positive relationship with gossip, to be found valid.

To further investigate hypothesis 1, and the impact of remote work on the first model, the product term of informal relationship and remote work was correlated against gossip. This model was seen to have no significance and, as a result, the hypothesis that proposed that remote work would negatively impact the positive relationship between informal relationship and gossip could not be supported.

Nevertheless, the data collected also provided the opportunity to consider how remote work impacted the other variables individually, having discovered significant positive correlations with helping behaviour, as well as informal relationship. These findings imply that remote work, as an individual variable, does not affect these two variables negatively and, in fact, increases the informal relationships amongst co-workers and their behaviour towards help. Contrary to these variables, a correlation between remote work and gossip was still not identified as significant.

Lastly, the analysis was focused on exploring the impacts of gossip on helping behaviour, and whether the data collected could support the hypothesis of an existing positive relationship between gossip and helping behaviour of co-workers. The model established, only using gossip to account for helping behaviour, was responsible for a small percentage in terms of the variance of helping behaviour, however, the correlation identified was positive and extremely significant, demonstrating that gossip does have a positive impact on how helping behaviour is shaped in organizations and that the proposed hypothesis can be understood to be valid.

The low coefficient of determination, but significant correlation, depicted a model which does not include all variables accountable for changes in helping behaviour. A model that accurately includes additional significant variables, such as informal relationship, would better represent the total impact on helping behaviour in an organization.

7.2 Theoretical and Practical Contributions

For the research and analysis of this dissertation to be successfully applied or studied, by those in organizations, the necessary implications associated with past theoretical knowledge, as well as employee practises, must be uncovered and detailed. In addition, to better understand the meaning of results achieved, a comparison against chosen psychological theories, prevalent in this area of study, should increase confidence in the importance of findings and highlight any outlying factors uncovered in results analysis.

Affective Events Theory (AET) explores how work events can be proximal causes of affective reactions (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996), which, specifically to this dissertation, could be simplified to how employee emotions have direct impact on job performance. When assessing the research model, the correlation of informal relationship with gossip, and consequently gossip with helping behaviour, demonstrate a link established between with emotional behavioural factors, like informal relationship and gossip, and impactful job performance attributes like helping behaviour. Thus, for those aiming to improve help amongst co-workers, the introduction of activities that motivate informal relationships should directly increase the regularly and willingness of help in employees during their day-to-day tasks.

Moreover, the Social Information Processing theory describes how the lack of non-verbal cues, or face-to-face interactions, does not negatively impact the ability of those involved to develop strong interpersonal relationships (Walther, 1992). During the analysis of results, the original hypothesis 1 proposed was not supported and instead, positive correlations between informal relationship, as well as helping behaviour, were identified with remote work. These findings explore the concept that when approached correctly, remote work can continue to operate and generate social benefits for the organization, and its employees, similar to office work. Empirical research also implies that the manner in which remote work is structured can directly impact the outcomes, demonstrating that factors such as job independence and perceived disruption from change are important predictors of employee adjustment, and that these are strongly moderated by communication (Van Zoonen, 2021).

In relation to gossip, it is also relevant to highlight that during data collection the distinction between negative and positive gossip was not relevant. From previous articles, it has been observed that employees spread both, positive and negative, gossip about those in their own work group (Ellwardt et al., 2012), therefore, the results achieved from the data are aligned with the realistic standards of organizational gossip. The significance of this method is that the positive correlation, as a result of informal relationship, and the positive impact on helping behaviour, cannot be directly associated with positive gossip and has to be seen as the impact of both, positive and negative, gossip between co-workers.

Nevertheless, the analysis of results is aligned with the empirical evidence previously studied, in which gossip is found to be a factor that can reinforce social bonds (Noon & Delbridge, 1993), observed in this dissertation as informal relationships, and enable organizational learning (Baumeister et al., 2004), observed as helping behaviour. On the other hand, results can also support the concept by which an elevated degree of negative gossip challenges the ability of employees to establish good

working relationships (Aquino & Thau, 2009) since the correlation of gossip and informal relationship is identified as positive, meaning that as one variable decrease so will the other one accordingly. This evidence should benefit organizations and managers respect the role of gossip in the workplace and understanding that, even if found to be a difficult behavioural factor to control, it can be utilized as a potential benefit for job performance and co-workers' interaction in some cases.

8. Limitations and Future Research

For this dissertation, an although significant results were obtained, and conclusions could be drawn from the analysis, some limitations were identified, during various phases of this study, and therefore should be considered for eventual future research. The discussion of challenges discovered, and possible improvements, aims to aid the continuous improvement of reliability and significance of results achieved in this area of study.

Firstly, an online questionnaire was the sole channel through which data collection was completed. As previously detailed, convenience, increased sample pool and attention control checks were all advantages taken into consideration, however, since this was the only method of data collection chosen, the downfalls linked to online questionnaires inevitably became the downfalls associated with the results of this study.

The advantage, linked to an increased sample pool, was ideal to diversify and attempt to eliminate any bias present in the study, nevertheless, this process can also be seen as convenience sampling, which recruits participants based on willingness to participate and low transaction cost, inevitably representing exclusively a selection of respondents from the target population that is “convenient” rather than an accurate representation of all members from the target population (Krupnikov, 2021). The bias generated from convenience sampling, in this dissertation, is associated with the degree of digital literacy necessary to complete a questionnaire on an online platform, in fact, respondents chosen through convenience sampling, rather than population-based sampling, were found to be younger, better educated, and performed better cognitively (Brodaty et al., 2014).

Moreover, the voluntary nature of any questionnaire, features the issue of self-selection bias, which portrays how results ignore the difference between individuals who self-select into voluntary programs (Hartman, 1988). Essentially, there will be a tendency for some respondents to participate

in the online survey, while others ignore it, which increases the systematic bias (Wright, 2006) by excluding individuals, not motivated to answer, from the sampling pool.

For future research, to counter and minimize the existing bias, different methods of collection should be utilized to diversify the sampling pool. Moreover, repetition of the survey could also be a method of verification that the data collected accurately represents the population studied.

Furthermore, another limitation observed, was the necessity to have respondents self-assess their behaviour during data collection. From past empirical evidence, self-assessment from employees in the workplace has been noted to lack accuracy and hold overly inflated self-views that are only discreetly related to actual performance (Dunning et al., 2004). Additionally, it has been shown that those with weaker abilities tend to overestimate while others, with high ability underestimate outcomes (Broud et al., 2014), suggesting that personal skill can distort the accuracy of self-assessment (McGrath et al., 2018). In relation to this dissertation, this depicts the possibility that employees with low helping behaviour might overestimate their behaviour, while others underestimate, as it depends entirely on the self-norm established by the individual.

For future research, to increase the accuracy of results, the structure of the study should be adapted to eliminate the need for employees to self-assess, their own behaviour, as the only source of data collection. The possibility of collecting data from superiors or employees, about their co-worker's performance, could establish a good database through which self-assessed data should be cross validated before advancing to statistical analysis.

Lastly, and although for this dissertation a substantial number of responses were gathered for analysis, it remains a priority, whenever possible, to increase the number of respondents. A larger sampling pool delivers the opportunity to continue diversifying the background, and individual characteristics, of employees for better representation of the population in the final results, as well as providing a more relevant theoretical, and practical, contribution to those in this field of study

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Appendix

Appendix 1 – Questionnaire

Dear Participant,

I am currently a Católica Lisbon SBE student enrolled in the Master's in Management with Specialization in Strategy and Entrepreneurship. This survey will be used for my dissertation titled "The role of informal relationships, in the workplace, following the COVID-19 pandemic: The influence of Gossip on Helping Behaviour".

It is important to highlight that every answer in this survey will be completely confidential.

This survey will take approximately 5min and I ask that you please answer honestly so that the final results can be accurate and realistic.

Thank you for taking the time to answer this survey!

Q0 What is your Prolific ID

Q1 Gender

- Male
- Female
- Other _____
- Prefer not to say

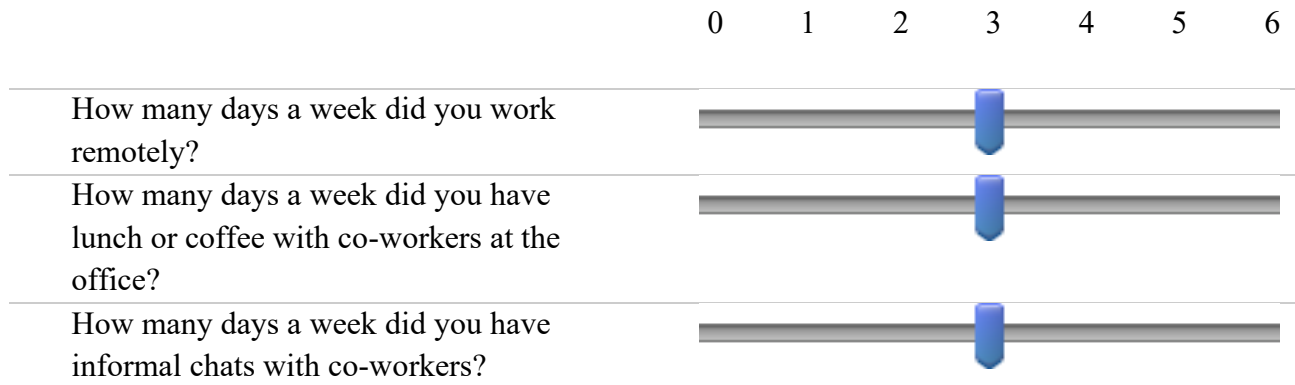
Q2 Age

- < 25
- 26 - 35
- 36 - 45
- 46 >

Q3 Did you have the option to work remotely before the COVID-19 pandemic?

- Yes
- No

Q4 In the past month, on average...



Q5 From your personal experience, please indicate to what extent you agree with each statement:

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
I talk about shared interests with my co-workers during my free time	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have formed strong friendships at work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I socialize with co-workers outside the workplace	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I can confide in people at work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Please answer strongly disagree for this statement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel I can trust my co-workers a great deal	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Interacting with my co-workers is one of the main reasons I look forward to my job	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I view some of my co-workers as true friends	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q6 At work, you may talk with co-workers about other people's performance, behaviors, or skills. How often do you talk about each of the following items?

	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Always
Other people's excellent job performance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other people's diligence and dedication to work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other people's credibility in job role and experience	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other people's good interpersonal skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other people's demonstration of job morality	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other people's poor job performance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other people's carelessness and poor work engagement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other people's inexperience and poor job knowledge	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other people's poor interpersonal skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other people's lack of demonstration of job morality	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q7 How likely are you to engage in these behaviors?

	Extremely Unlikely	Somewhat Unlikely	Neither Likely nor Unlikely	Somewhat Likely	Extremely Likely
Helping others when it is clear their workload is too high	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Taking the initiative to help orient newcomers in the organization even though it is not required	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Lending a helping hand to co-workers when needed	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Assisting others in meeting deadlines or requirements	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Thinking of ways to improve collaboration within the organization	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Working with others wherever possible to help improve the image of the group and organization	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Appendix 2 – Age

Gender	N	Percentage
Male	150	57.92%
Female	108	41.70%
Other (Non-Binary)	1	0.39%

Appendix 3 – Gender

Age	N	Percentage
< 25	84	32.43%
26 - 35	112	43.24%
36 - 45	39	15.06%
46 >	24	9.27%

Appendix 4 – Coefficients Informal Relationship and Gossip

Coefficients		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.909	0.155		12.297	1.220E-27
	Informal Relationship	0.262	0.045	0.342	5.837	1.601E-08
a. Dependent Variable: Gossip						

Appendix 5 – Correlation of Informal Relationship and Remote Work with Gossip

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.346 ^a	0.120	0.110	0.659

a. Predictors: (Constant), InformalRemote, Informal Relationship, Remote Work

Appendix 6 – Coefficients Gossip and Helping Behaviour

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.150	0.179		17.616	4.322E-46
	Gossip	0.272	0.062	0.263	4.366	1.832E-05

a. Dependent Variable: Helping Behaviour