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Gossip Survival Not Specific to Gender

Cristina Bistricean

Department of Psychology, Boise State University

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Gossip makes up to 70% of all conversation (van Niekerk, 2008). This artful technique served as a means to control an outcome and sometimes without regard to another's unfortunate circumstance. Gossip in its negative and positive form has been around as long as humans have. Gossip is a cunning tool. Since this form of communication has become embedded in our way of life, being able to properly deal with gossip is very important for emotional survival. Gossip tends to have negative undertones when it is used to ruin a person's reputation and to cause emotional harm. Anyone using this form of gossip may have unresolved issues (Zimmerman, 2008). When the emotional effects of gossip are felt by individuals, it is usually in the form of anger and sadness then followed by feelings of stress. The outcome anticipated from this research was that there would be more individuals who use a coping mechanism than not to deal with negative gossip. By focusing on if people consider certain strategies helpful I will be able to identify how often coping techniques are used.

Method

A sample of 79 student participants took part of the survey either for course credit or by volunteering. The participants were 35.9% female, 52.6% male and 11.5% did not indicate their gender. Some participants were recruited by a computer program called Exprimetrix or asked to volunteer to take the survey. All questions were, to the knowledge of the author, original. A pilot test was given prior to the survey given to the student participants. Participants tested in groups and were given 50 min to complete the survey, and about 45 to 50 min were used.

Results

Of the participants, 84.6% have been the subject of negative gossip. There is not a significant relationship between being the subject of negative gossip and trying to ignore it. $r(73) = .12$, n.s. There is not a significant relationship between being the subject of negative gossip and trying a stress reliever such as refocusing $r(71) = .07$, n.s. There is not a significant relationship between being the subject of negative gossip and visualizing a positive outcome $r(72) = -.02$, n.s.

There is no significant difference between men ($M = 3.37$, $SD = .99$) and women ($M = 3.43$, $SD = 1.03$) when each was the subject of gossip and they tried to ignore it $t(67) = .25$, n.s. There is not a significant difference between men ($M = 3.15$, $SD = .86$) and women ($M = 3.44$, $SD = .97$) when each was the subject of negative gossip and they tried to refocus $t(65) = 1.03$, n.s. There is not a significant difference between men ($M = 2.98$, $SD = .95$) and women ($M = 2.93$, $SD = 1.15$) when each was the subject of negative gossip and visualizing a positive outcome $t(66) = -.18$, n.s. There is not a significant relationship between age and being the subject of negative gossip and trying to ignore it $r(73) = -.06$, n.s. There is not a significant relationship between age being the subject of negative gossip and refocusing $r(71) = -.04$, n.s. There is not a significant relationship between age being the subject of negative gossip and visualizing a positive outcome $r(72) = -.16$, n.s.

Discussion

The anticipated result of the study was to find a significant difference between men and women who use coping mechanisms to reduce stress brought on by being the victims of negative gossip.

Abstract

The present research attempted to examine if coping techniques were used by individuals to help reduce stress, did it reduce stress and also if there was a significant difference in usage between males and females. The participants surveyed indicated that there was a general neutral feeling towards using coping techniques. There was not a significant difference between males and females. This suggests that there is not an overall high use of coping techniques or there maybe other methods used by the individuals. Gender did not seem to play a role in using coping techniques when coping with stress brought on by gossip. Further study would need to be made to see what the other methods are with coping with the stress of gossip. The importance of this study is to create awareness for deeper research into gossip and the specific techniques used for dealing with stress, therefore, creating heightened awareness and a better understanding of how gossip is dealt with individually.

No significant difference was found in the research. Responses were generally neutral indicating that maybe not much thought or emphasis is given to gossip. Even when 84.6% of the participants were subject to negative gossip, the overall reaction to the gossip was neutral. Some coping techniques were helpful to individuals who were victims of gossip but ignoring it was not one of them. The respondents did not try to ignore the gossip and therefore do not regularly use this coping technique. Men and women both were neutral about using coping techniques when they were the victims of negative gossip. Age also does not play a role on if coping techniques are used to relieve stress. My research will prompt further studies into gossip since it appears there is a wide gap between gossip and the long term affects of it. The average age of the participants was 22 and all were college students. Research should be expanded to include adolescents in school and sports. Participants of a younger age and different grade levels could have a harder time coping with gossip. Although the results from this study are not significant enough to establish a trend in dealing with gossip, it is a good platform to start since there seems to be little research in this area.