Spanish Translation and Validation of the Office Gossip Scale of Schmidt in a Sample of Workers in Puerto Rico

Abner Vélez Vega[1], Roberto González Valles[2]

Abstract

The aim of the research was to translate and validate the 10-item Office Gossip 7-point Likert-Scale by Schmidt (2010) English version to a Spanish version since there were no available studies and instruments to measure workplace gossip in Puerto Rico. The scale was translated using the Brislin's Back-Translation Method (1986), which two certified translators conducted the translation. The scale Spanish version was administrated to working adults in PR. The sample consisted of 150 participants, 21 years old and older, 41.3% (n = 62) work in the public sector and 58.7% (n= 88) in the private sector. The scale was tabulated using the SPSS computer software to explore the corrected item-scale correlation, reliability analysis, and applied an Exploratory Factor Analysis to select the items of the scale. The results show that the scale Spanish version was constructed into nine items and has a strong (α = .92) similar to the scale English version.

Keywords: Gossip, Translation, Validation, Cronbach's Alpha, Likert-Scale.

Traducción y Validación al español de la escala Schmidt de chismes en el trabajo en una muestra de trabajadores en Puerto Rico

Resumen

El objetivo del estudio consistió en traducir y validar La Office Gossip 7-point Scale de Schmidt (2010) versión en inglés a una versión en español. Debido a que no existen estudios e instrumentos para medir el chisme laboral disponibles para Puerto Rico. La escala fue traducida utilizando el Método Brislin (1986). Dos traductores certificados en PR llevaron a cabo la traducción. La versión en español fue administrada a 150 empleados, mayores de 21 años de edad y 41.3% (n = 62) del sector público y 58.7% (n = 88) del sector privado. Se procesaron los datos a través del software informático SPSS para explorar la correlación de los ítems de la escala y el análisis de la confiabilidad. Se realizó un análisis factorial exploratorio para seleccionar los reactivos de la escala. Los resultados muestran que la versión en español posee una confiabilidad (α = .92) similar a la versión en inglés.

Palabras clave: Chisme, Traducción, Validación, Alfa de Cronbach, Escala Likert.

In Roman mythology, Fama was the personification of rumor, and during Ancient Rome, when rumors plagued emperors, the emperors sent undercover informers to mingle with the citizens of Rome, and to retrieve feedback from the people of Rome, and to inform the

---

1   Doctor in Industrial Organizational Psychology. Pontifical Catholic University of Puerto Rico. E-mail: abnervelez@pucpr.edu

2   Doctor in Industrial Organizational Psychology. Pontifical Catholic University of Puerto Rico. E-mail: roberto_gonzalez@pucpr.edu

Rev. Interam. Psicol. Ocup. Vol. 34 No. 1/ enero-junio 2015 pp. 41-56/ ISSN: 2539-5238 - Medellín - Colombia.

41

emperors about the opinions of the citizens. The gossip of the day was considered a valuable source of information for the emperors because it was a way for the emperors to perceive a general idea of what were the citizens' opinions and sentiments. At the same time, the undercover informers were sent to launch counteroffensive rumors and if necessary to incite war, political propaganda, and even fear (Allport & Postman, 1947).

The historical perspective and the term of gossip have its origins from godsib, which means godparent of a child's parent or one's godchildren, and having a close relationship. The term godsib originated from the year 1014 AD. However, in Middle English, the letter d from godsib was removed and then later on changed as gossib. Afterward, gossib meant godparent, a drinking companion, and having a friendship with someone. The term gossip can be traced from the year 1811 AD; it was used to describe a woman who attended a birth along with a midwife, as well informs others about a birth of a baby (Waddington, 2014).

During the Medieval period in Europe, gossip was considered as an evil doing, many people were punished and tortured, and faced public shame because participating in gossip was an illegal activity and depicted as a mortal sin. Women were accused as witches and committed witchcraft, and neighbors falsely or intentionally accused other neighbors of gossiping. Waddington (2014), mentions what is known about gossip is because from other disciplines such as Psychology, Sociology, Anthropology, and in History.

From a religious point of view, in Judaism, talking badly about others is considered a sin, and that words can be very destructive, especially if there is no constructive purpose, and it is known as lashon hara in Hebrew. It is perceived as something demeaning for both parties, the person who is talking about gossip and talking behind the person's back. In Judaism, it is also wise in never to believe what others say about a person, and always give the benefit of the doubt. In Christianity, it is

advisable to stay away from gossip; it is seen as a sinful talk similar to murder or sexual immorality. While in Islam, people should walk away from gossip or renounced it (Waddington, 2014; & DiFonzo, 2008).

Definition of Gossip

Rosnow and Fine (1976) and Rosnow and Foster (2005), state that gossip has a derogatory connotation. They define gossip as news about the affairs of another, to one's memoirs or confessions, or to any hearsay of a personal nature, it can be positive or negative spoken or in print. Rosnow and Fine believe that gossip offers a recreational time for chitchat, and it helps to maintain the fluidity of communication patterns.

Noon and Delbridge (1993), also define gossip as a process of informal communications in value-laden information about members of a social group setting. They believe that gossip is a complex activity that involves individual decisions and groups dynamics that takes place in a particular social setting, thus regulated by both formal and informal rules. The individual may intentionally or in unintentionally distort the information and may influence the cohesion of a group.

According to Grosser, Lopez-Kidwell, and LaBianca (2010), define gossip as merely the exchange of information between two people about a third, absent person. Likewise, DiFonzo and Bordia (2013), define gossip as an evaluative social talk about individuals usually not present that arises in the context of social network formation, change, and maintenance of building group solidarity. Gossip serves as an essential social network function that includes entertainment, group membership and group norms, cohesiveness, and group power structure.

DiFonzo and Bordia (2013) believe that gossip tends to push and motivate individuals because humans are social creatures and have the necessity belonging to a group. Moreover, gossip also has

other functions as well it helps individuals inform others about a group and other group members, and it helps individuals to receive any new updates in their social network group. Also, gossip provides a form of entertainment and mutual enjoyment and establish relationships.

According to Bergmann (1993), in-group settings, gossip also has a moral indicator. The gossiper establishes what is considered an immoral behavior, the formal rules, makes sure the disapproval of deviant behavior and indirectly sets the norms, rules, values, and warns the gossip recipient (listener) what he or she is expected to behave within the group. However, for Bergmann gossip is a structural part of the private information, it is news about the personal affairs of another, and it serves as a communicative process in which is a transmission of specific news considered significant. In other words, it is an event for a group social gathering, and it is only shared among the same members of a group. By having group membership, it enables the person the right and privilege to be informed of any new gossip as well to inform other members of the same network of social relationships. Bergmann says that gossip draws a line between what a person does in public and what keeps in secret about a private affair of a person. When there is a group gossip conversation that talks about a person. Usually, the group excludes that person from the gossip activity. However, the person who is the target of gossip also has a type of a relationship or acquaintance with the group. As a result, the private affairs of the person becomes a source of information.

As Bergmann states, an individual who is the gossip producer can benefit from knowing the private affairs from others and posse knowledge about a scarce information which he or she uses the information as a transaction. A gossip producer may ruin his or her reputation because the gossip producer is a transgressor and crosses the line between what is public and what is private in the social group system. The gossip producer uses the information as a transaction as well brings out to the public eye of what was something considered to be internal and in secret in a group or about a person. In other words, the gossip producer brings news from the outside source originated from an inside group. Bergmann argues that when there is a gossip producer, there must be a gossip recipient who listens to the gossip, and it is necessary for communicating the information, since if there is no gossip recipient, there would be no gossip.

A relationship must exist between the gossip producer and gossip recipient based on the mutual acquaintanceship characterized by a special kind of information, which is transferred in their interaction. Bergmann claims that gossip possesses some relevant information only for a specific group and is within a fixed social network. Even more, gossip producers have the need to inform and transmit information to others and claims heard it from a valid and believable source. The gossip producer gossip may have the tendency to exaggerate some details, in a form of entertainment, use dramatization, mingling about the private affairs of a person, sometimes the private affairs of an individual may turn to into a subject of public interest as a form of a scandal. When a gossip producer exaggerates, the gossip producer wants to emphasize specific details and the reconstruction of the events about the gossip.

On the contrary, the gossip producer may run into danger by harming his or her reputation and will try to use strategies to try to prove that the gossip is true and believable, if not, the gossip producer may be called a slanderer. Bergmann mentions that the gossiper enjoys the joy of speculating about gossip, and have motives and a personal agenda in gossip activity such as they tend to use speculation, act mischief and that gossip producers find chit-chat, small talk, gossip has something always entertaining. However, in the end, the gossip producer will reinterpret the gossip, add more details, and reconstruct the story. Bergmann states that gossip is always a matter of

the simultaneous transgression and disrespect for boundaries between what is private and public; what is decent, immoral, and what is between truth and lies.

Furthermore, Litman, Huang, and Chang (2009), point out that in Chinese and other Asian cultures, gossip appeared to be more broadly and recognized for its dual role in shaming adversaries and maintaining a friendship. For DiFonzo (2008); Difonzo and Bordia (2013), says that gossip also has a social chatter derogatory about an absent individual's personal or private affairs. It results from a situation where people are building, changing, or preserving personal relationships or social status within a group. Moreover, DiFonzo argues that it help individuals to bond, it is a form of amusement, where there is exclusive information, where it transmit social norms, and it is an informal communication.

Another point of view, gossip informs on how to act properly in a social context, warns what is unacceptable behavior, and motivates to avoid the unacceptable behavior. An in-group setting, gossip is an act with close friends, and it shows affiliation. The difference in managing rumor from gossip, that gossip entails the systematic cultivation of allies in a social network (DiFonzo, 2008).

According to DiFonzo and Bordia (2013), gossip provides a form of social entertainment and because it is a mood enhancer provoking enjoyment of knowing of other people's wrong doings, sharing information stories and gossip helps relieve tension. On the other side, gossip also defines power relationships of a group, and it contributes to preserving or evaluate the gossiper's social status by condemning and criticizing others. Likewise, gossip is a form of moral orientation that forms, maintains, enforces, and propagates group norms. Thus, it helps to control and influence attitudes and behavior and educates individuals on how to behave effectively in a complex social environment. Grosser et al. (2010), say that

gossip may help to reduce individuals' anxiety and sometimes helps them handle uncertainty.

Schmidt (2011) says that the popular belief of gossip theory, gossip can have beneficial relational and informational purposes. Gossip can help to strengthen personal bonds between people and be a valuable source of informal information. On the other hand, Bergmann (1993), confirms that gossip has remained a marginal phenomenon in the sociological literature and less studied.

Difference between Gossip and Rumors

According to Rosnow and Foster (2005), argue that rumors can be defined as public communications that are infused with private hypotheses about how the world works and rumors serve in people to use sense-making and to cope with anxieties and uncertainties concerning of a public event. On the contrary, gossip shares its similarities with rumors, which gossip as Rosnow and Foster say that tends to have an inner-circleness, which is customarily passed between people who have a common history or shared interests, as in a popular way is known as small talk.

Likewise, Clegg and Iterson (2009), state that gossip is different from rumors regarding its functions, that rumors have been suggested to raise as a possible story for interpreting of a public event and to a larger audience of people, and an undefined or threatening situations. While gossip creates belongingness, entertainment, a social talk about other individuals that forms a social network, thus maintaining group norms, power structure relationships, and through participation creates a feeling of belonging to a group. Gossip is likely to occur in a more of a private context within friends and trusted members of a group.

Another perspective, Dunbar (2004) a British anthropologist and evolutionary psychologist theorized that gossip has its function in the role of human evolution and human social relationships. Dunbar (1998, 2004) and Conein

(2011) expressed that human language is a social tool that creates a conversational group activity through gossip, which language serves as a social coordination that the speaker coordinates and maintains a conversation with another individual. The speaker can instigate a conversation about third party relationships and social ties among distant and absent partners. It forms a type of a social bonding and group formation. DiFonzo and Bordia (2013) define rumor as an unverified information that is usually of local or current interest and intended use for a belief in people and rumors by definition states that are unconfirmed.

Theory on Gossip

Bergmann (1993) claims that gossip is a social form of discreet indiscretion communication and is a mechanism of socialization, and it is an indiscretion of a social network of friends and acquaintances, produces a social relationship with a degree of intimacy. It is not a control mechanism, but a social organizational of discreet indiscretions. Bergmann debates that gossip is a social form of discreet indiscretion. When a secret is revealed, and it is a form of gossip, however, only a mutual friend is initiated into the secret indiscreet communication, thus created a new secret. In other words, in gossip, someone must be careful to whom it is shared too, and a gossip is a form of indiscreet social behavior.

However, Gluckman (1963) the classical theory of gossip, theorized that gossip serves as a way to preserve social groups or the preservation of social group, and social functions, and view gossip as negative. In other words, gossip strengthens the identity and cohesion of a group, and its function is only to the group members. Gluckman says the more exclusive a social group is; the group members will face a concern about themselves with gossip and scandals.

Bergmann points out that Gluckman's theory on gossip that its primary function in the groups is to show by indirect disapproval of unacceptable behavior, enforce the group's ideas about values and morals as to strengthen the group's identity and integration. Gluckman points out that gossip has three elements and its purpose is to build morale in a group, set norms, and set values. On the other hand, Bergmann disapproves on Gluckman's theory on gossip, in which fails to recognize that a gossip producer or gossiper's behavior demonstrate a broken relationship with the moral values and rules. Also, ignores the gossip's specific form and internal organization and does not mention how gossip is communicated or gossip communications.

On the contrary, Baumeister, Zhang, and Vohs (2004), argue that gossip serves as a valuable source of information to the hearer about their culture and the society they live in. It does not only provides information, but promotes cultural learning. Gossip helps people learn about how to live in their culture and society through observational learning. Since gossip has anecdotes and stories about a particular person or story, it is a form of learning and knowing facts about other people and wrong doings serves as a moral lesson. In addition, gossip can be used for learning and positive purposes, since gossip has anecdotes and is a narrative form of communication rules, the hearer may be interested to listen because it contains valuable information about the rules, a potential danger, and some important advice. However, the individual transmitting gossip is motivated to transmit useful information to help others and believes acted as a leader, an informer, and a protector.

From an evolutionary anthropology point of view, Dunbar (2004) believes that social bonding from an evolutionary perspective and social cognition, that social grooming is familiar to similar, that language has evolved, and a gossip is a form of the social mechanism of bonding and maintenance of social relationships. Dunbar claims that the function of gossip has to do with the language that has evolved over an extended period, language is a way to facilitate the bonding

of a larger social group, and gossip has replaced social grooming similar to primates. Gossip enables to increase the amount of people in a network as a way to communicate either directly or indirectly and interchange information of what occurs within the same network. According to Dunbar, there are four functions in the language as follows: language helps to keep track of others within the same network. It helps others to ask for advice and help, aware of a friend's advantages/disadvantages, about an acquaintance, and other new members, or disadvantages of a rival, and policing 'free riders,' are individuals that can benefit from the information, however, do not contribute anything to the group. Dunbar argues that gossip in the broad sense of conversation about social and personal topics and it is fundamental and part of the human condition.

Gossip in Workplace Settings

Grosser et al. (2010), mention that gossip is recognized as a ubiquitous activity in many organizations, and it is still not fully studied the phenomenon. As well, Noon and Delbridge (1993), state that it is vital to explore the role of organizational gossip, the effects, and its implications that it may have for the organization, especially on managers, supervisors, and employees and the work production.

On the other hand, Schmidt (2011) defines office gossip as the exchange of information relevant to an organization and its employees among two or more people within an organization that is about a third party either a person, a group, even about the company, which is not present for the discussion. Schmidt believes that office gossip is another means of gaining information from others members through organizational socialization such as knowing information about other colleagues of an organization and other stories or events that have occurred within the organization. Members who engage in gossip would have information that is more knowledgeable or gossip about others and in an organizational setting, the individual with the information may use it as has a valuable source.

Schmidt says that gossip is a source of information for employees and as a way to make sense of organizational events.

Noon and Delbridge argue that in a corporate setting, gossip does not only contributes a group's rules, values, and morals. However, gossip may be helpful for the organization, which helps to channel the organization's traditions, values, and history to the newcomers (employees), and contributes to ease feelings of insecurity and anxiety on the newcomers.

According to Grosser et al. (2010), claim that gossip does not only has a negative side but a positive aspect, which they distinguish between what is positive gossip from negative gossip. Positive forms of gossip can play a major role in the organizations. It will depend on the level of analysis and the point of view from how gossip is examined. For example, a member inside from an organization who had heard negative remarks about another co-worker, even though it appears to be a negative activity from the individual perspective, may use the information to protect the group from a future harmful behavior. Grosser et al. (2010) believe that gossipers embedded in organizations do have a better understanding of the social surroundings and make judgments of the valence of the gossip in which they start and the gossiper determines to transmit the gossip will be positive or negative form. Negative gossip is much more of a sensitive and delicate form; it has a stronger form of affecting trust and that can be a relational precondition for transmission.

Meanwhile, positive gossip is not as delicate or harmful and does not require having trust as a prerequisite for exchange in gossiping. In other words, an individual spreading positive gossip has nothing to lose and does not have to fear public shame and embarrassment. Grosser et al. (2010) argue that gossiper also spread positive news about others; the listeners and gossip recipients may perceive that the gossiper will spread the good

news about them. It provides a reward system of power to the gossiper.

For Schmidt (2011), believes engaging in gossip may help an individual to understand who is who and who plays specific roles in an organizational setting. When an individual perceives ambiguity in the workplace, the individual may engage in office gossip as a way to understand what to do, how to act, how to work, and what to say in the organization, as well as what is valued within the organization. Further, uncertainty also plays a role increasing office gossip because the organizational politics of an organization's and the process of decision making and strategies may have an impact on its members to gossip. Gossip serves as a channel of communication to understand what may happen in the future concerning about their jobs, close co-workers, and friends, and about the organization.

Waddington (2014), says that organizational gossip is relational, reflexive, communicative process that people engage by sense making as a way to know things going around them. Organizational gossip is volatile, uncertain, complex, and an ambiguous phenomenon. Waddington points out that gossip, in essence, is an informal evaluative talk between at least two individuals, and one of the common ways of organizational gossip employees writes about it, however, is it the least common way, but usually, is it visual or in other words, employees visually observe gossip.

In visual gossip, that there are non-verbal traits of gossip such as gossiping in the hallways, in closed office doors, or bulletins displayed at the workplace are visual signifiers and materialities of gossip. Even more, gossip is a type of informal evaluative organizational communication that may occur in formal communicative contexts, for example, such as images or pictures used for a presentation, during meetings, and in unmanaged spaces where people may take short coffee breaks or open spaces that gossip may flow. In another perspective, emotions and gossip closely intertwined together

and a gossip is a form of relieving and expressing tensions and manage emotions, and it may help to understand better how employees' resilience and well-being at work (Waddington, 2014).

In 2008, an article in Hudson Valley Business Journal reported that The Creative Group, a marketing and advertising firm in the United States conducted an independent national study on office gossip and survey over 2,000 companies. The results show that 84% claim that is very common for employees to engage in office gossip. About 63% agreed that office gossip has an adverse effect on the workplace. The participants were asked, "Do you think office gossip has a positive or a negative effect on the workplace?" The results indicated that 1% said it was very positive; 9 % indicated somewhat positive, 27% reported that they were neutral, 38% said it was somewhat negative, and 25 % claimed it was very negative.

A study by Grosser et al. (2010) examined the social interactions in a branch office of a midsize company in the United States that specializes in food and animal safety product, and sales. They surveyed 30 employees, and about 57% were females, and 23 % were supervisors. The results show that there was a mixture of positive and negative gossip in 72% of the workplace gossip relationships, while positive gossip was 21%, and 7% was negative gossip. About 96% employees admitted to engaging in gossip and 7.4 % the supervisors had more gossip partners than non-supervisors of an average of (3.9).

Item Response Theory (IRT) for the Validation of the Office Gossip Spanish Version

The Item Response Theory formed part of the study and the process of validation of the Office Gossip Spanish version scale. Item response theory (IRT) is used for the design, analysis, scoring, and comparison of tests and also with other instruments as a way to measure unobservable characteristics of the individuals. The IRT proposes a standardization method for a set of test

items in a continuum of the latent trait of interests defined by an operational definition. It represents a standard score into a mathematical equation on the horizontal axis of a response curve of items that is usually used for matching test scores (Aiken & Groth-Marnat, 2005). The theory suggests that the item ratings are expressed into estimated test scores of a continuum of latent ability, proficiency, attitudes, traits, and other variables from a population. In other words, it is the degree of relationship between the ability or trait of interest on the psychometric instrument along with the items responses as well the construct measured by the items that were designed to measure what the instrument intended to test. Also, how the entire instrument relates to the latent trait. Since latent traits are difficult to measure directly, however, it can be quantified into an instrument.

IRT facilitates the process of determining the equivalent qualifications or matched different test scores. The IRT method also matches and searches a linear equation that transforms the parameters of the items which is the index of difficulty and index of discrimination from the first test version to a second test version. It can be used for scale development such as questionnaires, surveys, and Likert-type scales (Aiken & Groth-Marnat, 2005).

Statement of the Problem

Grosser et al. (2010) argue that gossip is not entirely studied, and it is understudied the phenomenon, as well as gossip, is an omnipresent human phenomenon in which it exists in many organizations. Nevertheless, Waddington (2014) believes that gossip in the organization is a sign of a deeper problem and that there is a serious organizational issue, and it can serve as a warning system for the management to perceive future disasters and failures within the organization and address the issues. Managers and leaders need to work seriously because gossip, especially negative gossip can be a dangerous substance and may harm in many ways, however, it can be a useful practice-based knowledge for managers that may help them

alert any imminent danger within the organization. Schmidt (2011), claims that there is a theory about gossip in the workplace, known as office gossip even though there are not many studies supporting it, however, there are vague studies that closely studies the impact of office gossip and the behavior on engaging gossip

Similarly, Noon and Delbridge (1993) mention that gossip has been under-researched, that it reveals an important role in the social organization of work, and it is part of the social process in which in a way helps exists an organization, it includes in the context of the intrinsic organizational life. Waddington says that gossip is neglected and seen as a taboo topic in many organizations, and even in research and in practice.

The Aim of the Research

The aim of the research was to back-translate and validate the 10-item Office Gossip 7-point Likert-Scale by Schmidt (2010) to a Spanish version since there were no available studies and instruments to measure workplace gossip in Puerto Rico.

Justification and Relevance

The Office Gossip Scale Spanish version is to understand workplace gossip in Puerto Rico. Since there are no previous studies on workplace gossip in other universities in Puerto Rico, especially in the academic program of Industrial-Organizational Psychology. According to Brown and Napier (2004), state that the business management does not seriously study gossip, and it is still a social phenomenon in the organizations.

In addition, the Office Gossip of Schmidt Spanish version may help to understand how gossip may have an impact on employees and the organizations in Puerto Rico. It is vital and necessary for the organizations, especially for Industrial-Organizational Psychologists, Human Resources Specialists, and the Business Management in Puerto Rico, can learn on how to manage gossip as an existing ubiquitous social-organizational

phenomenon as a serious topic. The organizations in Puerto Rico can benefit on how to implement new effective strategies and job training to reduce negative, harmful gossip as the primary source of information available to employees; instead, employees can have a trusting relationship with the organization, its members, and its leaders. In sum, the Office Gossip Spanish version can contribute significantly lead to new studies and help grow a keen interest on other social scientist-practitioners in Puerto Rico to continue to research this social phenomenon and understand that gossip is part of the organizational life.

Methodology

Description of the Sample

The participants in the sample consisted of 150 participants currently employed in the public or private working sector in Puerto Rico, and males and females legally 21 years old of age and older. The sample is a nonprobability sampling and selected upon availability. The researcher visited and requested the collaboration of workers from the public and private sector in Puerto Rico. The participants were asked to participate voluntarily in the study. Another method used to collect the data was the snowball method, also known has snowball sampling. Goodman (1961) defines snowball sampling as a random sample of individuals is drawn from a given finite population. It is used to make statistical inferences about various aspects of the relationships in present and in the population, and the population has the same probability of selection. The reason why a snowball sampling was used because the researcher confronted difficulty obtaining permissions from some of the organizations due to the delicate subject of the research that some of the organizations declined to participate. Further, the researcher conducted a field study and visited public spaces, and employed the word of mouth and asked participants to participate, and explained the purpose of the study; distributed a consent form in which the participants signed and agreed to take part in

the study. The participants were asked if they can recommend other participants whom they think might participate by using word of mouth, which is the snowball sampling. The participants received the questionnaires, and the researcher waited until the participants completed in answering the scales, or agreed on a date and a time to collect the scales according to the participant's convenience.

Instruments

The first instrument is the Sociodemographic Questionnaire created by the researcher. It was administrated to the participants and collected the following datum as follows: geographic workplace location, civil status, sex, age, which generation they belong to, working sector (private or public), the level of education, job position, and tenure.

The second instrument was the 10-item Office Gossip Scale (2010) created by Dr. Gordon Schmidt, to measure workplace gossip. All items were rated on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1= "hardly ever," to, 2= "rarely," 3= "once in a while," 4= "sometimes," 5= "often," 6= "very often," and 7 = "almost always." A few examples of the items of the scale are "Talk with co-workers about people's experiences with the boss."; "Swap stories about other people in the organization." and "Gossip with my co-workers." The Office Gossip Scale of Schmidt has a Cronbach's Alpha of (.93). However, the researcher used the Office Gossip of Schmidt Spanish version which went through a back-translation process by two certified bilingual translators translated the scale from English to Spanish.

Schmidt (2010) conducted a study of 277 undergraduate students from a large Midwestern University in the United States to develop and validate the Office Gossip Scale. The sample consisted of working adults, and 93.5 % were part-time workers, and 70 % of the participants were female, and the average age was 20 years old. The reliability of the scale was (.93). Schmidt performed a confirmatory factor analysis and employed a

principle axis factoring for extraction by using the IBM SPSS computer software to explore if the scale had one factor. There was evidence found in which revealed one factor contributing an Eigenvalue of 6.14, accounting for 61.43 % of the variance. A second factor had an Eigenvalue of .85, which showed a significantly low value and according to the rules of thumb for Eigenvalues is it preferred to have 1.0. The item loadings on the single factor ranged from .66 to .86, and all the items were above .60 of high loadings.

Procedure

The researcher contacted the author of the scale by via email in which Dr. Gordon B. Schmidt granted proper authorization in which signed the consent form document and emailed back to the researcher. In the document, the researcher had explained the purpose of using the scale and agreed that the researcher would back translate and validate the instrument from the English to the Spanish and according to the Puerto Rican culture.

First, to comply with the aim of the research and objectives and according to the code of ethics of the university's institutional guidelines, and the Intuitional Review Board (IRB). It requires a researcher to request permission before conducting research. It is important that all participants sign a consent form before participating in the study as required by the IRB. A consent form was handed out to the participants, which they were informed about the purpose of the investigation, their rights to volunteer and withdrawal from the investigation, the confidentiality, and when the results are available. Even more, it is required to request proper authorization from the authors when using a scale, a questionnaire, or any psychometric instrument before conducting research.

Two certified bilingual translators were recruited in Puerto Rico and had full knowledge of English and the Spanish language. The translators had translated the Office Gossip Scale of Schmidt from the English version to the Spanish version, especially taking into consideration the Puerto Rican Spanish language and culture. A translator is a person whose job involved translating in writing, or in a speech from one language to another. The purpose is to translate the scale due to there are many factors that can influence the quality of the translation in which depends on the translator knowledge and expertise, the back-translation process, the content of the language, and the aspect of the culture might affect the scale significantly. The interpreter's duty is to translate into the second language as close as possible to the meaning of the original language.

The Brislin Back-Translation (1970, 1986), offers a guideline and some recommendations on how to proper translate an instrument or a document. According to Brislin's method, minimum two bilingual persons who have full knowledge and education in targeting and translating in writing and a speech from one language to the second language is required during the back-translation process. In the literature review, the recommendations for back-translation are the following: First, translate the original instrument from the source language to target the language. Second, the blind back–translation in which the second translator has no idea of the original content and language of the scale translated by the first translator to Spanish. The second translator has the task to translate the scale back to English. Third, to repeat the steps one and step two, until the target language, which in this case is Spanish, is acceptable and equivalent to the original language of the scale in English. Fourth, make any final revisions and any modifications of the target language version by both translators.

The data for the statistical analysis was performed with the IBM SPSS program software version 22 to tabulate the descriptive statistics of the sociodemographic data, calculate the Cronbach's Alpha of the Spanish version scale using the Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha formula. Also, the Exploratory Factor Analysis to select

which of the items from the scale will remain. During the first phase, the selection of items was the analysis of the items by using the criterion of discrimination index greater than or equal to .30 (DeVellis, 2016). The items that complied with the criteria were selected and submitted in the second phase which was an exploratory factor analysis performed and a load factor greater than or equal to .30 was established as a criterion (Kline, 2000). The last phase was to compute the Cronbach's Alpha of the Office Gossip Spanish version scale.

Results

The sample of the study consisted of 150 participants and legally 21 years old and older and who currently work in the public sector or private sector in Puerto Rico. About 35.3 % were male, and 64.7% were female. The mean age of the participants was 36.55, and the age range was from 21 to 65 years old. The majority of the participants belongs to the Generation Y (1981-1999) was 48.7 % the Generation X (1965-1980) was 32%, and the Baby Boomers (1946-1964) was 19.3 %.

Regarding marital status, 48.0 % of the participants were single, Married was 30%, Widow 3.3%, Divorced 10%, Separated 1.3%, and Concubine 7.3%. The highest academic degree reported by the participants in which the majority indicated that 29.3% holds a Bachelor's degree. Elementary education was 0.7%, High School was 5.3%, Technical was 6.0%, Bachelor's degree with Master's degree credits was 17.3%, Master's degree

was 15.3%, Master's Degree with doctorate credits was 16.0%, Doctorate was 4%, and Postgraduate was 6.0 %. Most of the participants reported that 71% live in the Southern region of Puerto Rico. The North region was 6.0%, East region was 2.0%, West region was 6.0%, Central region was 4.0%, Northeast region was 1.3%, Southwest region was 1.3%, and Southeast region was 7.3%.

The participants reported that they work in the public sector 41.3 % and 58.7 % in the private sector. In tenure, the majority 44.8% worked 1 to 5 years in the organization. On the other hand, 21.7 % the participants reported that they hold a management position and 79 % of the participants hold a non-management position in the organization.

Once the Office Gossip Scale of Schmidt was translated to Spanish, the scale was administered to a sample of 150 participants. Each item of the Office Gossip Scale Spanish version underwent an item analysis called Item Scale Correlations that is the item-total correlation and the correlation between a question or how the items scores on a scale and the overall assessment score.

Item 2 revealed a discrimination index less than (.30). Therefore, the Office Gossip Scale Spanish Version constructed into nine items. The following table presents the results of the scale Spanish version discrimination index also known as the corrected item-total correlation.

Table 1. *Discrimination Index for each Item for the Office Gossip Scale Spanish Version*

Item	M	SD	DI	Item	M	SD	DI
1	2.94	1.688	.610*	6	1.80	1.376	.704*
2	2.91	1.554	.097	7	2.34	1.441	.807*
3	2.92	1.586	.752*	8	1.75	1.346	.716*
4	2.75	1.558	.710*	9	2.72	1.731	.723*
5	2.75	1.563	.708*	10	1.97	1.375	.663*

Note: * Selected items ≥ .30; M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation, DI= Discrimination Index

Rev. Interam. Psicol. Ocup. Vol. 34 No. 1/ enero-junio 2015 pp. 41-56/ ISSN: 2539-5238 - Medellín - Colombia.

51

To examine the construct validity and internal structure of the Office Gossip Scale Spanish Version, the researcher performed a few Exploratory Factor Analysis on the ten items that complied with the criteria discrimination index of (.30). These items underwent through an Exploratory Factor Analysis and used the extraction method of principal axis factoring as well an orthogonal and a rotation direct oblimin to explore the clusters of the items. Inspection of the correlation matrix revealed the presence of many coefficients of .30 and above. However, only a principal axis factoring with a direct oblimin rotation proved effective results. The Test Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin supports the adequacy from the sampling data for the analysis was KMO = .887. The Bartlett's test of sphericity shows a significant of $X2$ (36) = 932,226, p <.001, indicating that the correlation between the items was large enough to perform a factor analysis exceeding the recommended value of (.6). A principal axis factoring revealed the presence of one component with eigenvalues value exceeding one (1) explaining a 61.59% of the variance respectively. The scree plot suggests that the scale has only one factor (See Figure 1). The one component solution explained a total of 56.94% of the variance with Component one (1) contributing 56.94 %. A direct oblimin was performed to aid in the interpretation of the one component. The rotated solution showed a presence of a simple structure and a strong one factor loadings. The following table shows the factor loadings obtained by the items of the Office Gossip Scale Spanish version.
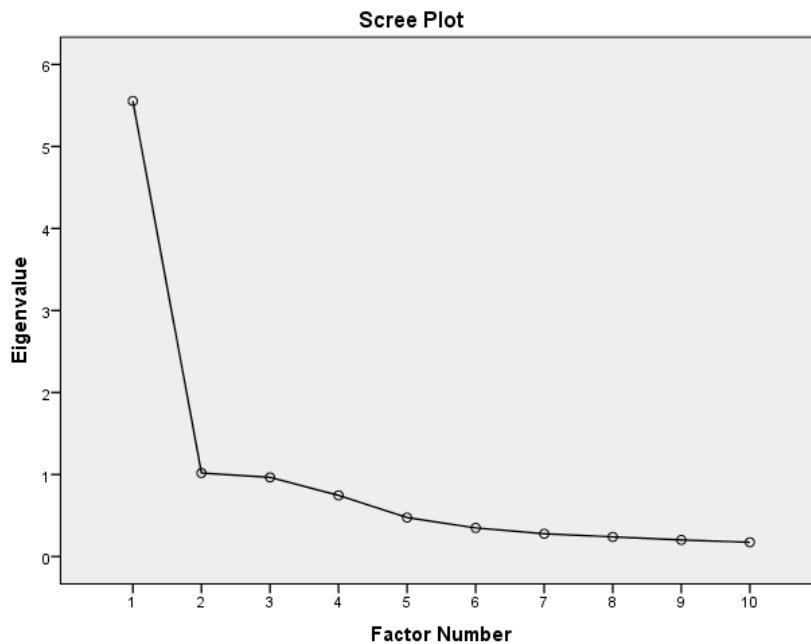

Figure 1

Table 2. *Factor Loadings and the Eigenvalues Explained and the Cumulative Percent of the Items belonging to the Office Gossip Scale Spanish Version with the Exploratory Factor Analysis of the Variance Performed*

Item	Factor 1	h^2
1	**.63**	.397
3	**.76**	.582
4	**.75**	.566
5	**.76**	.578
6	**.75**	.568
7	**.87**	.754
8	**.76**	.574
9	**.77**	.598
10	**.71**	.506
Eigenvalues	5.124	
% Variance Explain	56.94	
% Cumulative Variance	56.94	

Note: Factor loadings ≥ .30 are bolded and displayed for interpretation.

The results indicated that item 2 also did not meet the requirement of the discrimination index of .30 since the item 2 scored (.010) in the communalities matrix. As a result, with the initial discrimination index procedure along with the exploratory factor analysis, there was strong evidence to omit item 2 from the entire scale. Next, a reliability analysis, specifically an internal consistency was performed on the remaining nine items of the Office Gossip Scale Spanish version. The internal consistency is usually computed with Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha formula. A reliability index greater than or equal to .70 was used to determine the reliability of the scale. The result of the Coefficient Cronbach's Alpha of the Office Gossip Spanish version has a strong reliability of (.92) Addition, the standard of error of measurement was performed in the which scored (2.68). The raw sample scores of the Office Gossip Scale Spanish version were transformed into standardized scores which the mean was 19.53 and the standard deviation (9.49367).

Discussion

Brislin's back-translation method showed promising results in which Brislin (1970,1986), recommends that in cross-cultural studies, especially using an English version instrument to take into consideration the participant's cultural background. Therefore, the instrument and the study can produce consistent results, and the instrument can be valid for future research. The Brislin-back translation was the most important determinant factor in the entire research because of the proper translation conducted by the bilingual translators and following Brislin's guidelines; the Office Gossip Scale Spanish version was effective. According to Brislin, when a researcher uses a well-known and validated instrument, it does not guarantee it will have the same reliability and validity when it is applied in a study in another country with a different culture and language. One of the reasons why exploratory factor analysis was selected for the study due to the fact that once a

researcher translates a Likert scale from English to another language, the researcher compromised the instrument and may not know for sure, the final outcomes will be. It was the main reason why the researcher decided to apply an exploratory factor analysis since the culture and the Spanish language will be a determinant if the scale would provide effective results.

The results from of the discrimination index table, the researcher examined that the ten items were selected according to DeVellis (2016), says that a set of highly intercorrelated items may indicate that each item should correlate substantially with the entire remaining items of the scale. To compute an item-scale correlation, one of the first steps is to check the corrected item-scale correlation which is when an item is under study with the other rest of the items, but excluding itself with the rest of the items. The second step is to verify the uncorrected item scale in which searches if there is a correlation between an item with the other items, but including itself. In theory, the uncorrected value may mention how well an item is significant or representative from the entire scale.

Furthermore, when there are a few items, there will be a large difference in inclusion and exclusion of the item under consideration as well when the item is under construction forming part a new scale. It is wise to study the corrected item-total correlation, as well as an item that has a high value and how it correlates because it is more desirable to select it versus from a low-value item. The relationship in psychometric called discrimination in which it is how well an item differentiates and usually in research, a value of .30 or more is very common to establish which items in a scale will be valid. The item two of the scale was eliminated because it scored very low .30 in the corrected item-total correlation or the discrimination index (DeVilles, 2016).

The final version of the Office Gossip Spanish version consisted of nine items in which the original version constituted ten items. During the first phase, item 2 scored (.097) and it was removed because after calculating the Coefficient Cronbach's Alpha formula of the entire scale; it was determined that the item that does not measures the criteria greater than or equal of (.30). The final version of the scale also possesses a strong Coefficient Cronbach's Alpha of .92 closely similar to the English version. According to Anastasi (2000), states that the reliability of an instrument or a scale is the consistency of the scores obtained by the same subject or participant. The internal consistency reliability as the name implies a concern with the homogeneity of the items within a scale. The internal consistency is usually computed with the Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha formula. A reliability index greater than or equal to .70 was used to determine the reliability of the Office Gossip Scale Spanish version. According to DeVilles (2016), states that a scale should have a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient at least (.70). Therefore, the scales can be considered reliable; however, a punctuation of .80 or above are more preferable.

During the second phase, the Exploratory Factor Analysis, it indicated that item 2 also did not comply with the criteria because it scored very low (.010) in the factor loadings and according to Kline (2000), suggests that an item should score .30 or higher; therefore, it can be selected. In the initial EFA process, an orthogonal rotation (uncorrelated) factor solution was applied due to it is much easier for the researchers to interpret the results and to report it. However, the researcher may assume that the underlying constructs are independent or in other words not related. It is assumed that the information explained by one factor is independent of the information of the other factors. The two techniques orthogonal and oblique rotations (correlated) often may result in similar solutions, especially when the pattern of correlations of the items are clear. In the case of the Office Gossip Scale Spanish version, item 2 was omitted, then a principal axis factoring was utilized as a method with an oblique rotation

direct oblimin which the results indicated a simple structure or one-factor loading similar to Schmidt's (2010) study and final results which also indicated one factor. It may be possible that item 2, the participants may not have understood the question or the translation of the question lacked a clear translation and message which may have been a determinant factor for its elimination. In the standard error of measurement, the result revealed that the entire Office Gossip Spanish version scale scored low 2.68, however, the study indicates that the workers reported that there is gossip in the workplace. In other words, the higher the Cronbach's Alpha, the lower standard error of measurement. It may indicate that the scale and during its administration to the participants, there was likely fewer errors, especially it is confirmed by the Cronbach's Alpha score which may support that the scale measures the latent variable or the construct validity of the phenomenon of workplace gossip.

Limitations of the Study

One of the limitations of the study was the size of the sample which 150 participants may not generalize the results. Most of the participants reported that they work in the Southern region of Puerto Rico. There was no diversity of workplace region, and the results may not generalize if workplace gossip conducts the same manner in other workplace areas in Puerto Rico. Since there are no previous studies on workplace gossip in Puerto Rico, the researcher was limited to the literature review based on studies from the United States and international studies. It may be that the participants and the organizations in Puerto Rico are unaware and may not know how workplace gossip is a serious phenomenon in the organizations.

Recommendations

One the recommendations that the Office Gossip Spanish version scale should be administrated to a larger size sample to explore

the consistency and reliability as well if it measures what it supposed to measure. Also, to conduct new studies using the Office Gossip Scale Spanish version in other Spanish speaking countries to determine its validity and if there is a cultural difference between workplace gossip in Puerto Rico with other countries. Further, to perform a new study with a larger size sample with a confirmatory factor analysis to explore if the scale measures well the construct and if some the items are likely to be deleted, or rearranged into another factor loading solution, and if the Cronbach's Alpha may score higher.

Conclusion

The results of the study and the Office Gossip Scale Spanish version is a valuable contribution to the literature review, in the Industrial-Organizational Psychology in Puerto Rico and other academic areas in the social sciences, in Business Management, and Human Resources. The study may contribute to future academic investigations in Puerto Rico to understand the phenomenon in the workplace. In sum, the scale is a valid instrument available for the Puerto Rican workforce population, and it possesses a strong Cronbach's Alpha.

References

Aiken, L.R. & Groth-Marnat, G. (2005). Psychological Testing and Assessment. 12th ed. NY: Pearson Education

Anastasi, A. (2000). Psychological Testing. New York: MacMillan Publishing Company

Allport, G.W., & Postman, L. J. (1947). The Psychology of Rumor. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.

Baumeister, R.F., Zhang, L., & Vohs, K.D. (2004). Gossip as Cultural Learning. Review of General Psychology, 8(2), 111-121.

Bergmann, J. R. (1993). Discreet Indiscretions: The Social Organization of Gossip. New York: Aldine de Gruyter.

Brislin, R. (1970). Back-translation for Cross-Cultural Research. Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology, 1, 185-216.

Rev. Interam. Psicol. Ocup. Vol. 34 No. 1/ enero-junio 2015 pp. 41-56/ ISSN: 2539-5238 - Medellín - Colombia.

55

Brislin, R.W. (1986). The Wording and Translation of Research Instruments. In W. Looner & J. Berry (Ed), Field Methods in Cross-Cultural Research (pp. 137-164). Beverly Hills, Calif: Sage Publications.

Brown, M. & Napier, A. (2004). Knowledge Transfer and Rumour: Have we missed something? 1-3. Retrieved on November 23. 2013 from http;//www.academia.edu/1468285/

Clegg. S.R. & Iterson, A. (2009). Dishing the dirt: Gossiping in Organizations. Culture and Organization, 15(3-4), 275-289.

Conein, B. (2011). Gossip, conversations and group size: language as a bonding mechanism. Irish Journal of Sociology, 19(1), 116-131.

DeVellis, R.F. (2016). Scale development: Theory and applications. California: Sage. Fourht Edition.

DiFonzo, N. (2008). The Watercooler Effect: A Psychologist Explores the Extraordinary Power of Rumors. New York, NY: Avery.

DiFonzo, N., & Bordia, P. (2013). Rumor Psychology: Social and Organizational Approaches. Washington, D.C: American Psychological Association.

Dunbar, R. (1998). Grooming, Gossip, and the Evolution of Language. London: Faber & Faber.

Dunbar, R. (2004). Gossip in Evolutionary perspective. Review of General Psychology, 8 (2), 100-110.

Gluckman, M. (1963). Gossip and Scandal. Current Anthropology, 4(3), 307-316.

Goodman, M. (1963). Snowball Sampling. Annuals of Mathematical Statistics, 32(1), 148-170.

Grosser, T.J., Lopez-Kidwell, V, & Labianca, G. (2010). A Social Network Analysis of Positive and Negative Gossip in Organizational Life. Group & Organization Management, 35(2), 177- 212.

Kline, P. (2000). A psychometric primer. London: Free Association Books.

Litman, J.A., Huang, C.H., & Chang, H.T. (2009). Development and Validation of a Chinese Version of the Attitudes Towards Gossip Scale. Journal of Psychology in Chinese Societies, 10(2), 131-150.

Noon, M. & Delbridge, R. (1993). News from behind my hand: Gossip in Organizations. Organizations Studies, 14(1), 23-36.

Office Gossip-Prevalent and Harmful, According to New Survery. (2008). Hudson Valley Business Journal, 19 (44) 8.

Rosnow, R.L. & Fine, G.A. (1976). Rumor and gossip: The social psychology of hearsay. New York: Elsevier

Rosnow, R.L. (1988). Rumor as Communication: A contextualist approach. Journal of Communication, 38, 12-28.

Rosnow, R.L., Foster, E.K. (2005) Rumor and Gossip Research. Retrieved on September 22, 2013, from http://www.apa.org/science/about/psa/2005/04/gossip.aspx

Schmidt, G.B. (2011, August). Office Gossip as an Informational Source. Paper presented at the meeting of Academy of Management, San Antonio, TX.

Schmidt, G.B. (2010, April). The Effects of Office Gossip on Workplace Cognition and Behaviors. Paper presented at the meeting of Society of Industrial Organizational Psychology, Atlanta, GA.

Waddington, K. (2014). Gossip and Organizations. New York: Routledge.