



# Whisper Networks & Motivation:

## An Analysis of Motivation to Share or Withhold Information in A Whisper Network

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### Abstract

This study was designed to explore the motivating factors that determine whether one shares information regarding sexual harassment in a Whisper Network. Participants answered open-ended questions regarding their motivation behind sharing or not sharing information through whisper networks. Results indicated that there was a significant difference in motivations to share information as opposed to motivations to withhold information.

### Introduction

#### Whisper Networks Defined

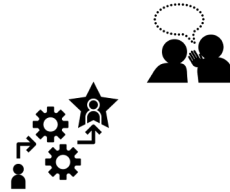
- Information sharing regarding sexual harassment
- Traditionally in a place of work
- Kept under the radar
- Does not involve formal reporting

#### Research Questions

- What motivates people to share information in a Whisper Network?
- What hinders people from sharing information in a Whisper Network?

#### Why Does This Happen?

- The formal reporting system clearly is failing those who need it most
- Many victims of sexual harassment still fear repercussions for themselves if they report



### Method

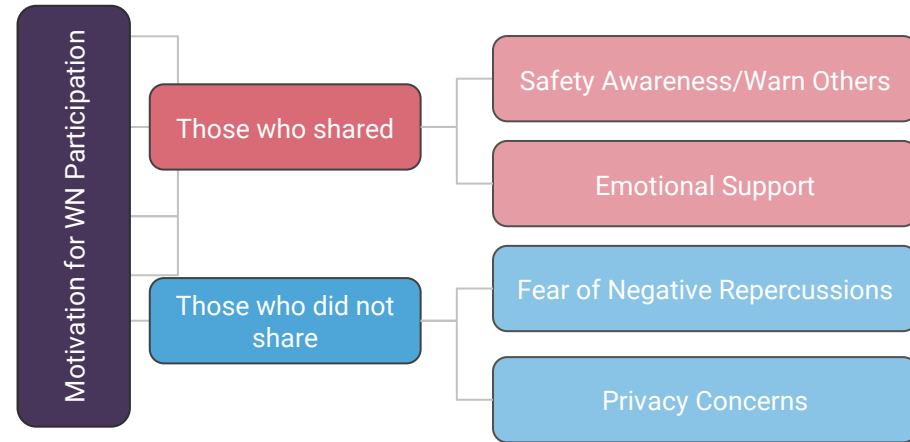
#### Participants

- 88 participants were found via Amazon's Mechanical Turk
- Must be 18 or older and a US resident
- Must be aware of a sexual harassment event that happened in the workplace
- Must work at least 30 hours per week

#### Measures

- Information the participant shared, did not share, or were warned of
- Why the participant chose to share or withhold such information
- The situation in which information was/was not shared, including the person with whom the participant spoke, their relationship, and the setting

### Results



- One participant who did not share due to fear of repercussions:
  - "He is very high up the corporate ladder. I did not want to lose my chance at [a] promotion"
- One participant who chose to share in order to protect others in the workplace:
  - "[I chose to share] so the women weren't left alone in the workplace with him during opening or closing hours."

### Discussion

- Formal reporting systems do not inspire much in the manner of sexual harassment notification. Clearly people are motivated by their own emotions, and beliefs, not an annual seminar or meeting with HR
- Many that do not share information fear repercussions on themselves. There is simply a lack of trust in some workplaces, that if improved, could help those who have been sexually harassed