



Who is Whispering?

A Qualitative Analysis of Whisper Networks and Their Information Sources

Josselyne Saenz, Abby Patterson, Blaine R. Peters, Elizabeth Odom, Rose L. Siuta, and Dr. M. E. Bergman
Texas A&M University



Abstract

This study focuses on the participants involved in whisper networks and aims to explore the factors that define who becomes a source of information in these networks. The purpose of this study is to identify sources of information in WN. These findings revealed that *sources of information* were reported from interpersonal relationships, those lacking power, and from personal experiences; while those that were not reported were associated with similar *sources of information*. Identifying the *sources of information* can help determine the effect of factors that are involved in WN participation, as well as provide insight to the origin and transfer of information in WN.

Introduction

- Whisper networks (WN) refers to the transfer of information about sexual harassment and perpetrators of harassment occurring in a community or industry
- Women in industries that feel that they cannot speak out, such as those that fear retaliation, are likely to participate in WN to warn others
- Fewer than two in ten women (20%) ever file a formal report
- It is important to identify all parties involved in WN because informal reporting and disclosure of sexual harassment occurs within these networks, which can allow institutions, agencies, and industries to develop interventions to address these behaviors



Research Question:

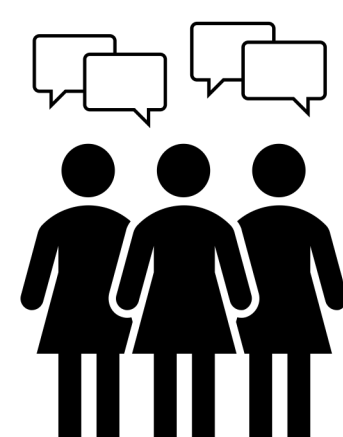
Who becomes a source of information in whisper networks?

Are victims or bystanders of sexual harassment more likely to participate in whisper networks (WN)?

Method

Participants

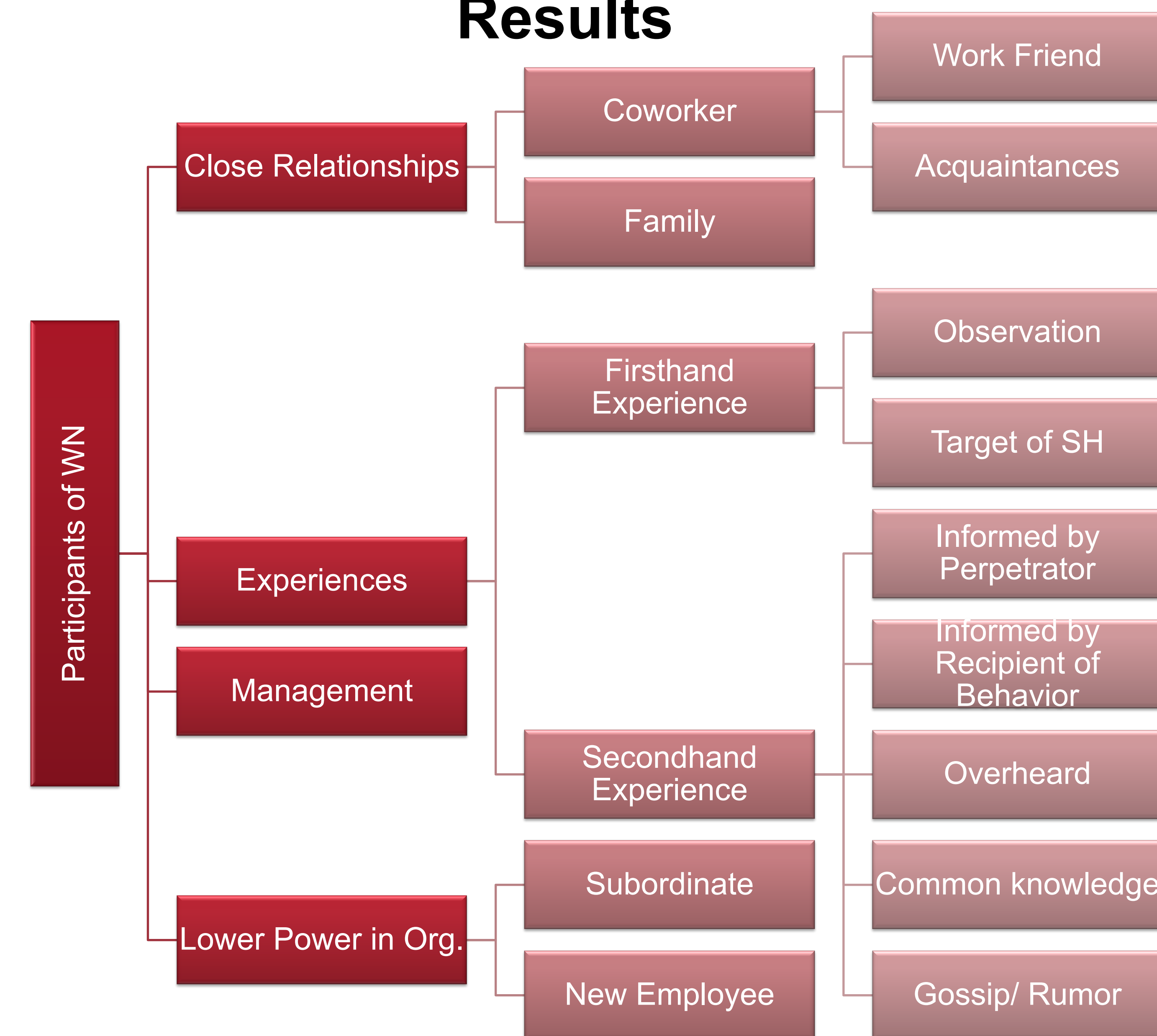
- Amazon's Mechanical Turk
- 88 participants
 - Over age 18
 - Employed in the US
- Gender
 - 41 women (46.59%)
 - 46 men (52.27%)
 - 1 Non-binary (1.14%)



Measures

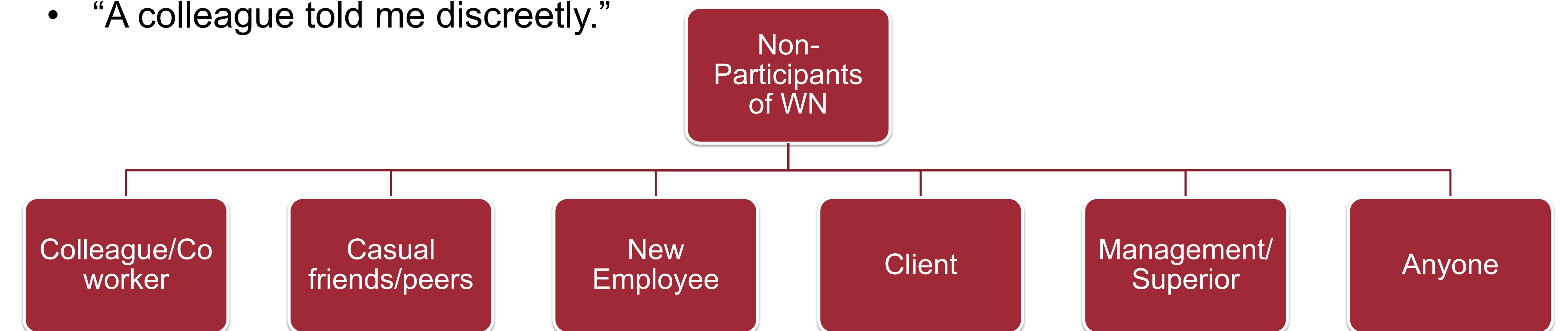
- Survey on Amazon Mechanical Turk
 - What information did you share?
 - Describe how you learned this information.
 - Describe your relationship to the person(s) you shared this information with.
- Sexual Harassment Experiences
- Warned/ Did Not Warn Others
- All gathered data was analyzed through conventional content analysis
- A consensus between all coders was generated
- ATLAS.ti was then utilized for further analysis

Results



Sources of Information for Participants of WN

- Close Relationships
 - "The first time when when this one girl was telling me that he keeps asking her out, even though she had already told him no several times."
 - "A colleague told me discreetly."



Sources to Not Share Information With for Non-Participants of WN

- Colleague/Coworker
 - "The person I didn't share the information with was a colleague who I did not know very well."
 - "The person i didn't share this information with was a coworker who had just started but didn't know very well."

Discussion

- Sources of information* were primarily reported from interpersonal relationships and personal relationships
- Sources of information* can help determine the effect of relational factors involved in WN participation
- Sources of information* can also provide insight to the origin and transfer of information in WN