

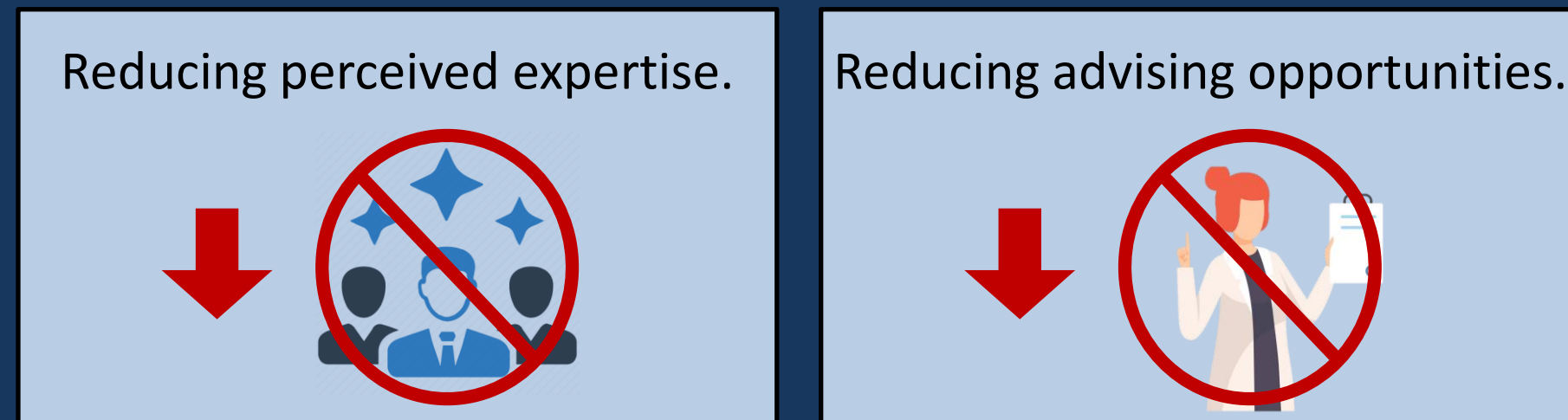
Gossip, Power, and Advice: Gossipers are Conferred Less Expert Power

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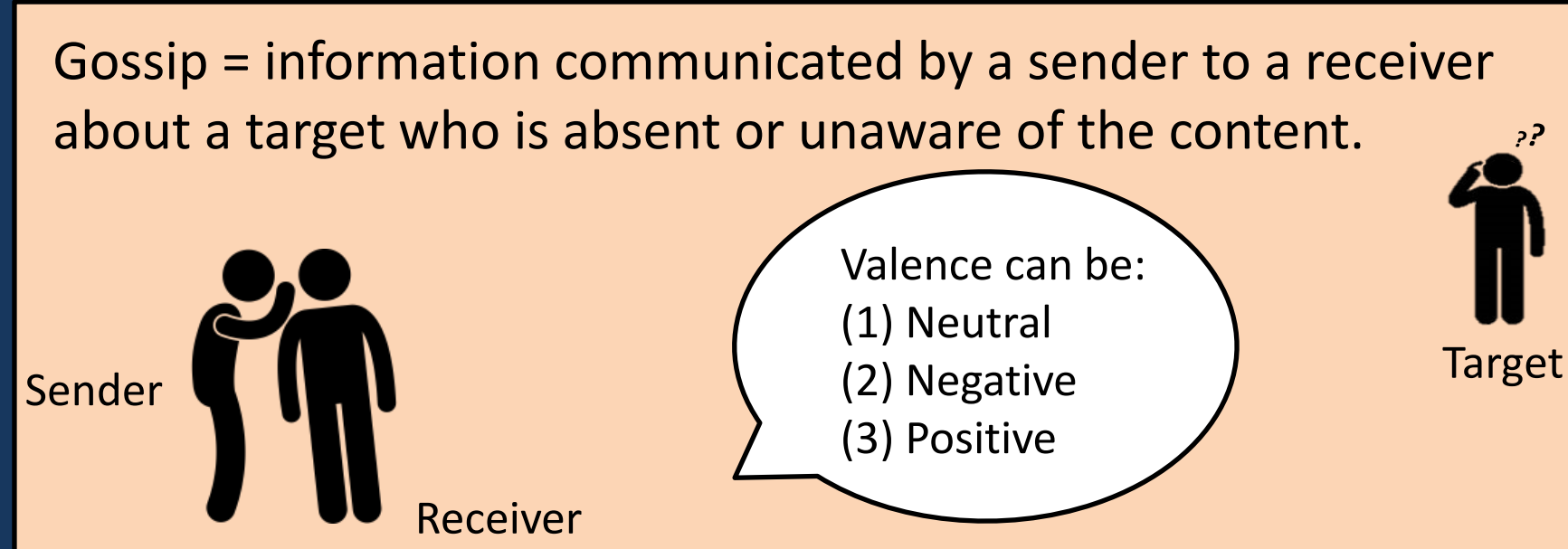


Background:

- Power** is the ability to exert influence over others through the control of valuable resources, e.g., knowledge, rewards, and punishments.
- Expert power** is the power that stems from being perceived superior knowledge or insight.
- We find that a **reputation for gossip** reduces **expert power** by:



- People will be reluctant to seek advice from gossipers because they worry that they may **gossip about their advice seeking—particularly in a negative way—and harm their reputations.**

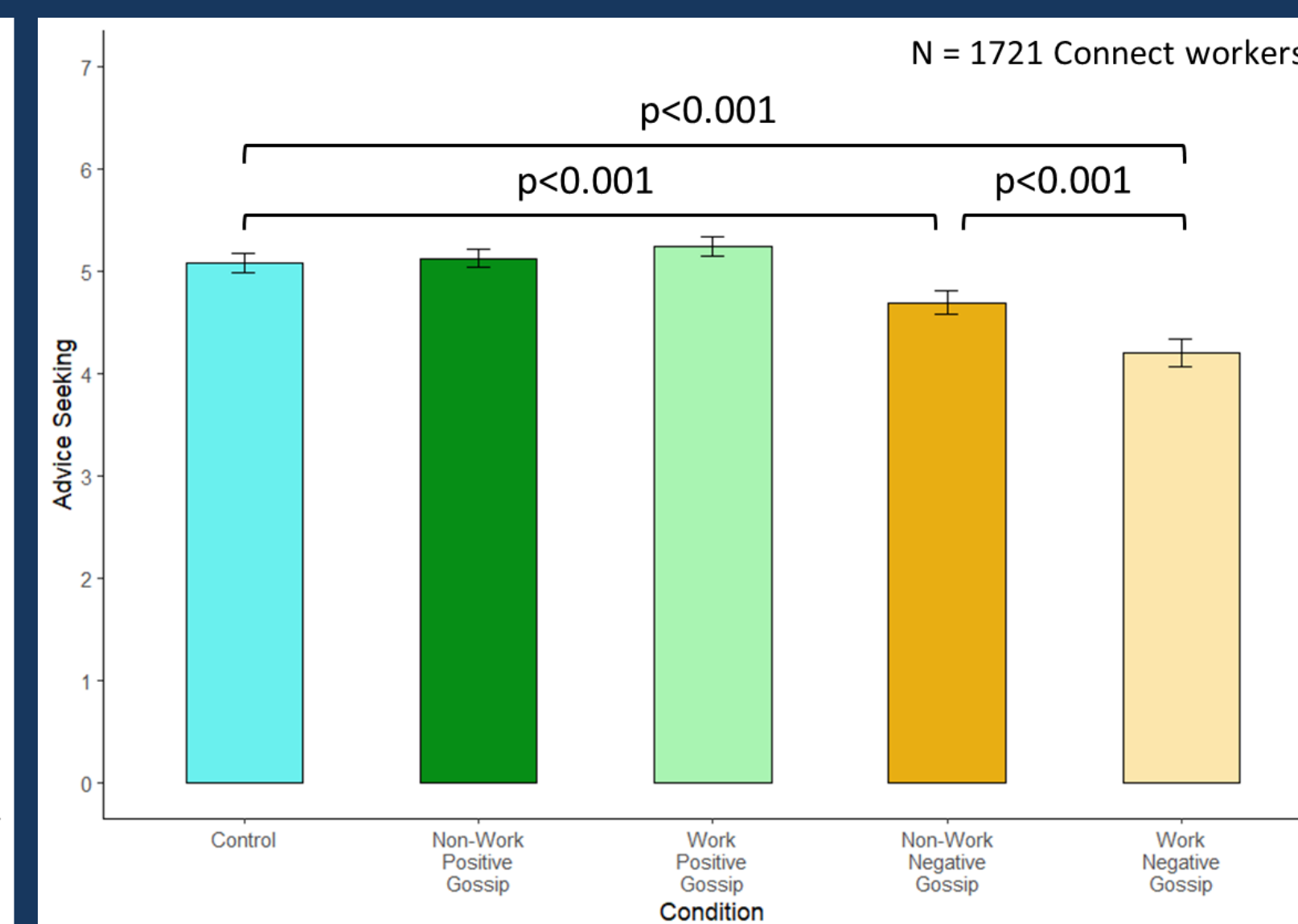
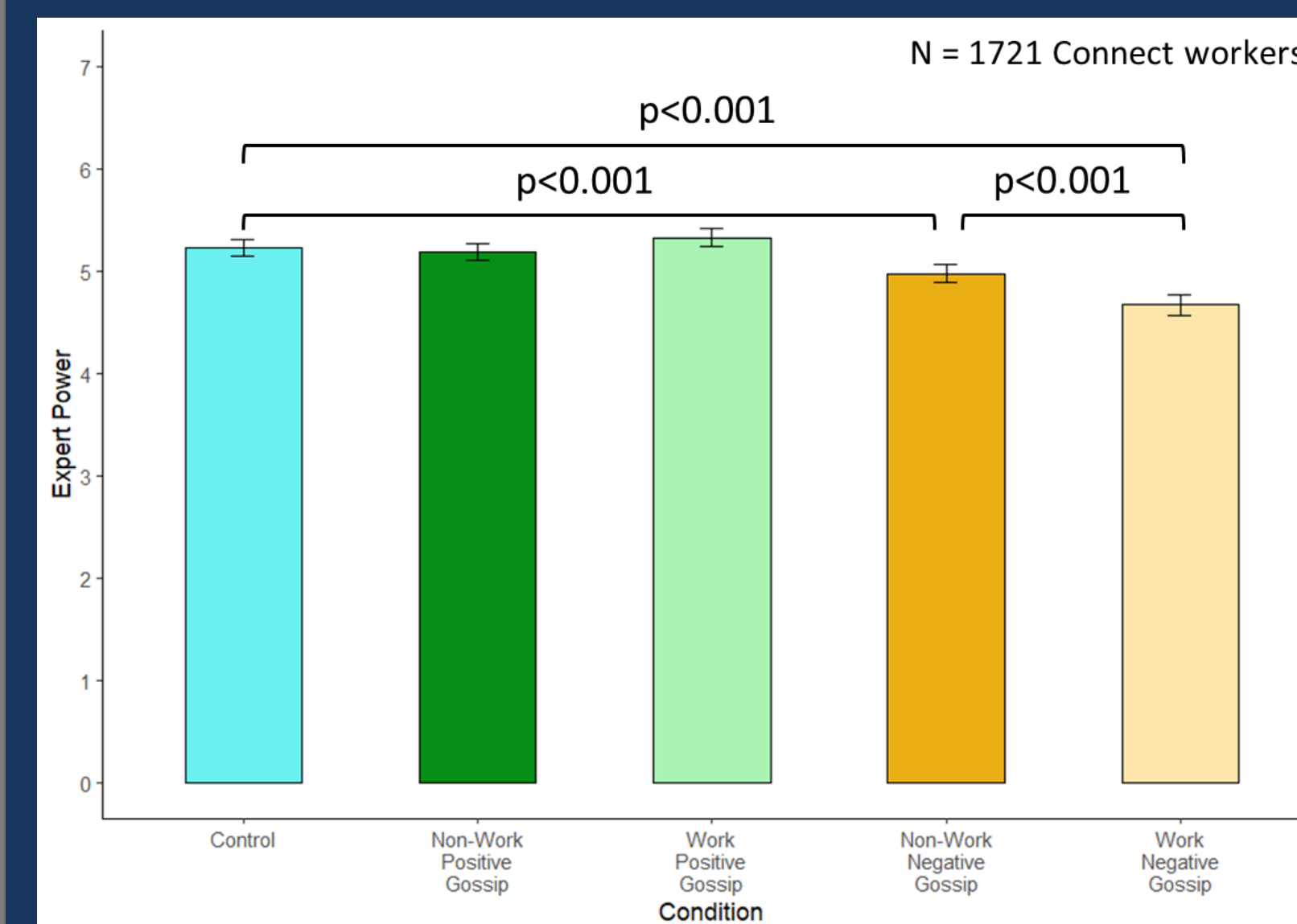
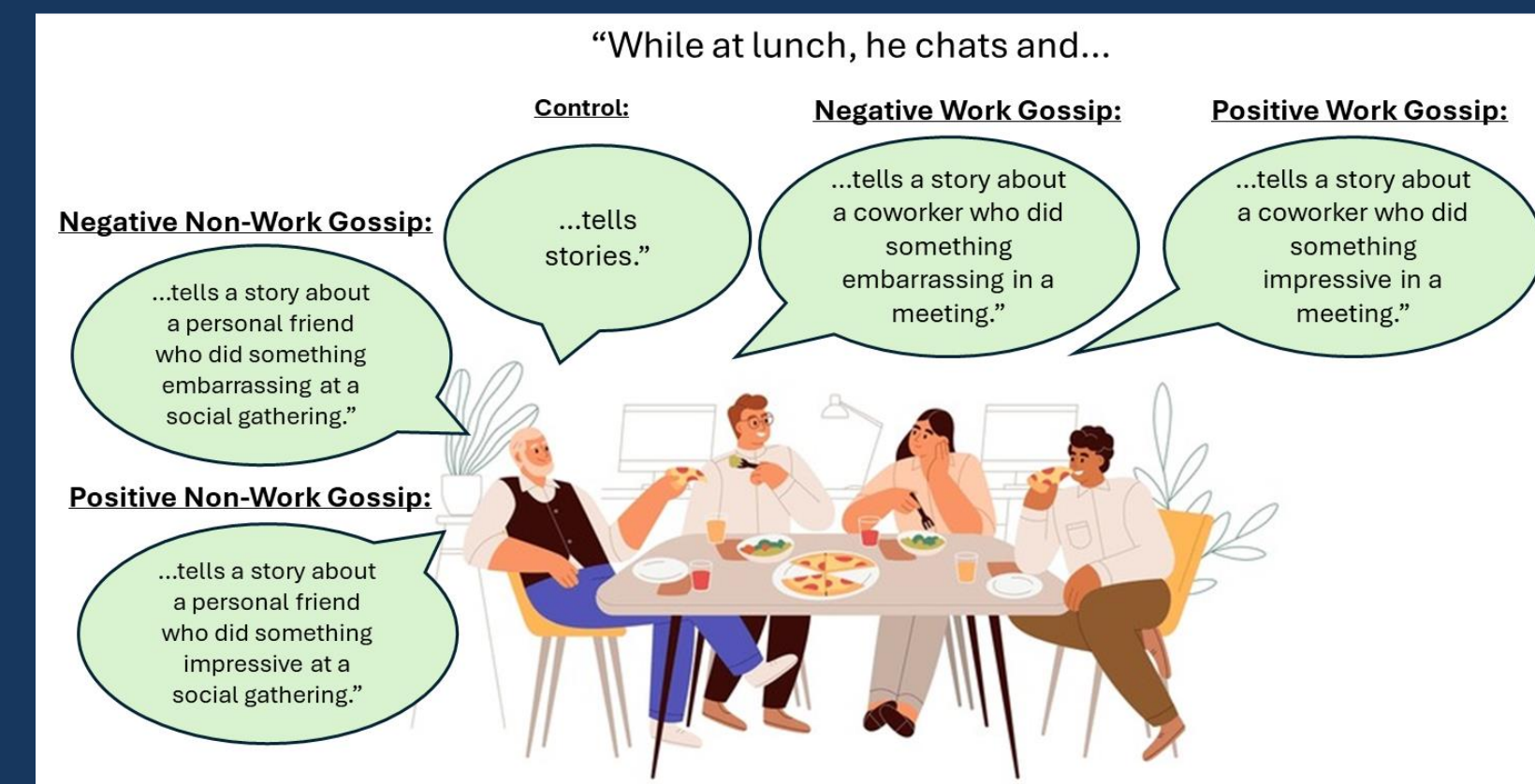


Study 1:

Participants read about joining a coworker, Mark, for lunch. We manipulated Mark's tendency to gossip by describing Mark's behavior at lunch.

Study Design:
2 (Positive vs. Negative Gossip) x 2 (Work-Relevant vs. Non-Work-Relevant Gossip) + Control between-subjects design

Participants read one of the following about Mark:



Study 2:

Participants were assigned to 1 of 3 conditions from Study 1: Positive Work-Relevant Gossip, Negative Work-Relevant Gossip, or Control.

We found that negative (but not positive) gossip:

- Decreased Mark's perceived knowledge ($\beta = -1.84$, $z = -20.44$, $p < .001$), and
- Decreased participants' willingness to ask him for information when he was said to be highly competent ($\beta = -2.34$, $z = -22.53$, $p < .001$).



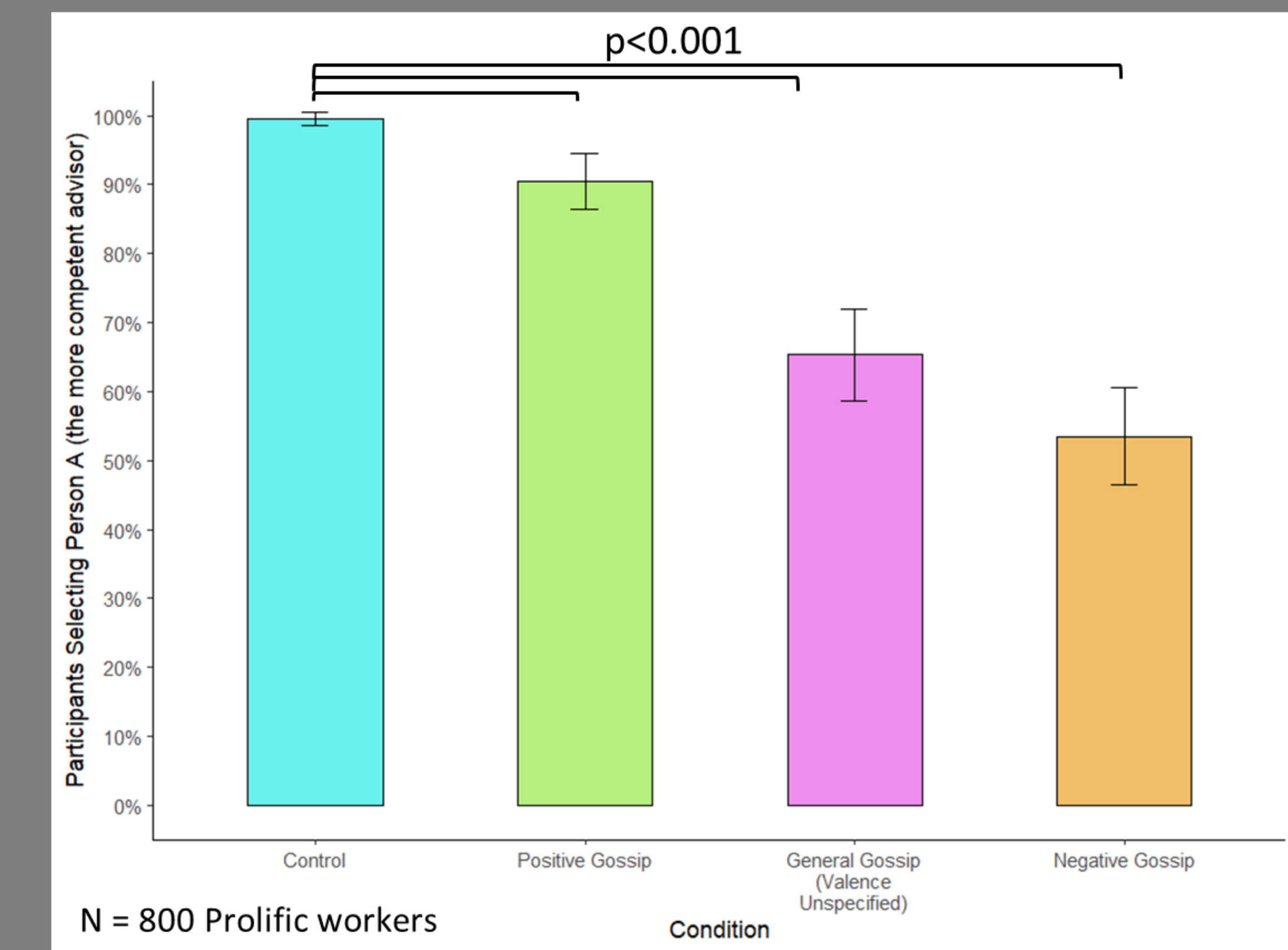
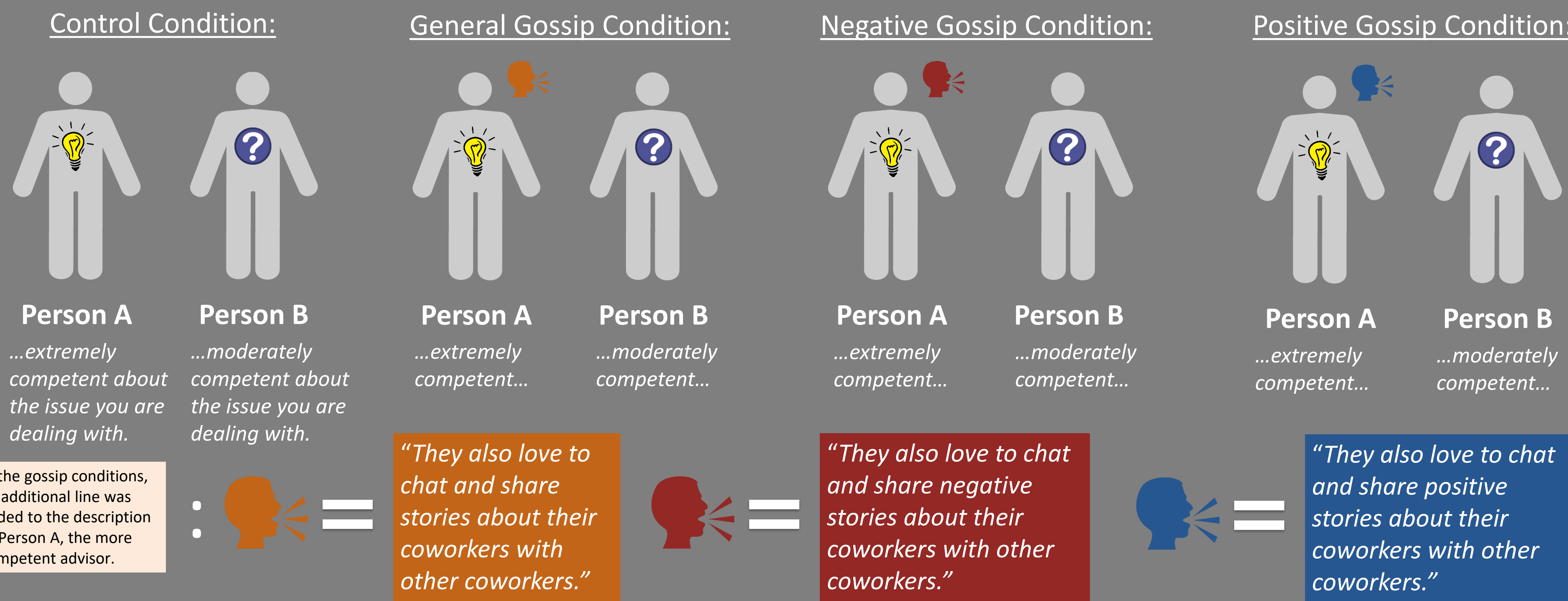
Across a variety of work-relevant topics: workplace norms, workplace social dynamics, technical work issues, moral dilemmas, and career advancement.

Study 3:

How does a reputation for gossip impact the selection of a more competent advisor over a less competent advisor?

Study Design:
Each participant was assigned to 1 of 4 conditions, read about a work-related issue, and selected which of two advisors they would ask for advice.

Imagine you are a consultant at a large consulting firm, and you are having an issue with one of your clients. You think that others would expect you to know how to handle this issue on your own, but you want to ask a coworker for advice on how you should deal with the situation. You have two options for who to ask for advice: **Person A** and **Person B**.

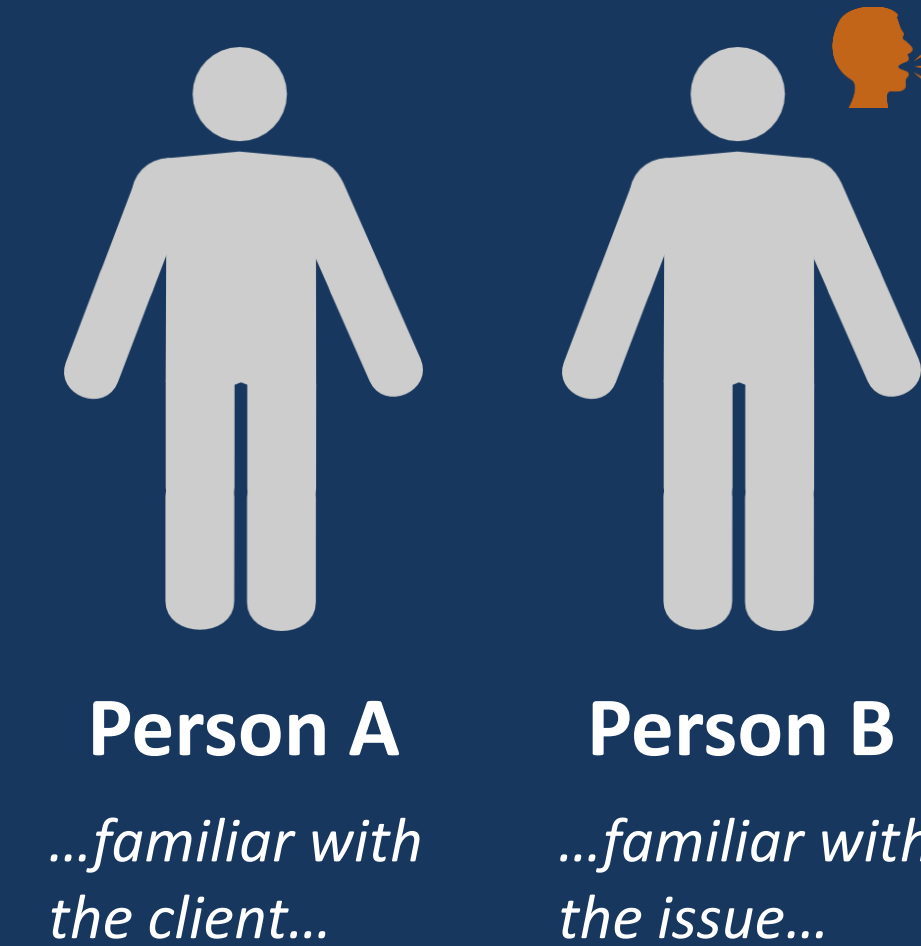


Study 4:

We look at the moderating role of gossip valence consistency.

Study Design:
2 (Usually vs. Always) x 3 (Positive vs. Neutral vs. Negative) + Control + Generic Gossip between-subjects design.

Participants read the same issue description from Study 2 and selected which of two advisors they would ask for advice.



General Gossip Condition:
"They also love to chat and share stories about their coworkers with other coworkers."

In the 6 gossip valence conditions, participants were also told that the stories that Person B tells are "usually" or "always", "positive", "negative", or "neutral".

