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Development and Validation of a Chinese Version of the Attitudes Towards Gossip Scale

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A sample of 504 Taiwanese participants (312 women, 192 men) responded to a pool of translated Attitudes Towards Gossip (ATG) scale items. Factor analyses identified two factors reflecting attitudes about gossip's Social Value (SV) and Moral Value (MV), which provided the basis for constructing a 10-item Chinese (C) ATG scale. C-ATG scale scores were negatively correlated with social approval needs; the SV subscale was positively associated with self-reports of being good at influencing other people, while both SV and MV scores were negatively related to perceptions of how successfully coworkers interacted with others, indicative of self-enhancement.

Keywords: gossip, personality, social desirability, ingratiation tendencies

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Gossip refers to unverified information about other people or events that is shared informally between individuals. Across cultures, gossip is a common element of everyday social interaction (Beisner, 1989; Brenneis, 1984; Cox, 1970; Emler, 1994), important for establishing friendships, providing entertainment, and exchanging knowledge (Dunbar, 1996; Suls, 1977). However, gossip is also used to attack and defame individuals (Galen & Underwood, 1997; Schachter & Burdick, 1955), to create social discord, and even to incite panic (Allport & Postman, 1947; Prasad, 1950; Rosenthal, 1971). Because of gossip's potential for considerable misuse, gossiping is generally regarded as a socially undesirable and prohibited activity (DiFonzo & Bordia, 1997; Oakley, 1972). Nevertheless, despite gossip's reputation for causing more harm than good, several studies have found that some individuals have highly positive attitudes about gossip and consider it to be a useful and valid form of information exchange (Ben-Ze'ev, 1994; Leaper & Holliday, 1995; Wilson, Wilczynski, Wells, & Weiser, 2000).

To assess individual differences in people's thoughts and feelings about gossip, Litman and Pezzo (2005) developed the Attitudes Towards Gossip (ATG) scale, which measures the degree to which gossip and rumor are viewed positively. The ATG comprises two subscales that assess distinct, but correlated, attitudinal dimensions: Attitudes about the Social Value (SV) of gossip and attitudes about the Moral Value (MV) of gossip. The SV subscale inquires about gossip's "social capital," which is to say its usefulness for forming social relationships (e.g., "Gossip is a good ice-breaker") and its merit as a source of information capable of stimulating one's interest (e.g., "I love to know what is going on in other people's lives"); thus, the SV scale assesses attitudes involved in using gossip to one's advantage. The MV scale is concerned with views on the appropriateness of transmitting gossip to others (e.g., reverse-scored item, "It is wrong to talk about others when they aren't around") and on the reliability of gossip as a source of information (e.g., "Gossip is often true").

Consistent with the view that gossip is generally considered socially unacceptable, positive gossip attitudes, as measured by ATG scale scores, are found to be negatively correlated with social approval needs (Litman & Pezzo, 2005, 2007). In addition, ATG scores predict intentions to take interest in and transmit *negative* gossip, suggesting that individuals who view gossip positively are more likely to attend to and share gossip that has the potential to harm others. By contrast, measures of self-reported

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tendencies to simply engage in the act of gossiping fail to distinguish between those more likely to spread negative over positive gossip (Litman & Pezzo, 2005). Although the ATG scale items were selected on the basis of separate factor analyses for women and men, to minimize gender differences in interpretations of the items, there are significant gender differences in ATG scale scores with men generally displaying stronger positive gossip attitudes than women (Litman & Pezzo, 2005); these results suggest that men may be more likely to use gossip to their advantage and to view the information contained within gossip to be valid as compared to women.

The Present Study

Currently, research on individual differences in ATG is limited to English speakers; given that gossip is an important aspect of social interaction across cultures (e.g., Brenneis, 1984), it would be desirable to expand research on ATG to include other languages. In keeping with this goal, we set out to develop a valid and reliable Chinese version of the ATG scale. As with other cultures, gossip and "small talk" play an important role in the traditional exchange of ideas, news, and stories in Chinese and other Asian cultures (Chan, 1997; Link, 1993), and in Asian financial markets gossip has been identified as a key source of information in making decisions about investments (Bauman, 1989). Moreover, because social discourse in Chinese and other Asian cultures tends to be constrained by efforts to avoid sensitive or private topics that may threaten one's public image (i.e., face), gossip plays an especially important role in facilitating the expression of people's true feelings, especially negative judgments of others (Bond & Lee, 1981; Gao, 1998). Accordingly, gossip is often used to shame norm violators and indirectly inhibit others from engaging in similar proscribed behaviors (Tittle, Bratton, & Gertz, 2003). However, despite gossip's punitive and cautionary uses, because gossip frees individuals from the traditional limitations of public dialogue in Asian cultures, gossip also plays a significant part in affirming strong alliances with those who are deemed close and trustworthy (Gao, 1998). Thus, as in English-speaking cultures, in Chinese and other Asian cultures gossip appears to be broadly recognized for its dual role in shaming adversaries as well as maintaining friendships.

To facilitate the empirical study of how gossip is used and regarded in Chinese-speaking cultures, we translated the items of the ATG scale

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into Chinese and examined their factor structure separately for women and men with the goal of developing a valid and reliable Chinese version of the ATG scale (C-ATG). Given the important role of gossip in the successful management of interpersonal relationships (e.g., Gao, 1998), we evaluated the validity of our newly developed instrument on the basis of its association with measures of phenomena related to gossip and social interaction, such as self-presentation behaviors and perceptions of how successfully the self and others formed advantageous social relationships.

We hypothesized that clear SV and MV factors, similar to those found for the original ATG scale, would be found for responses to our translated items, from which internally consistent C-ATG measures could be developed. In keeping with methods employed in past research on gossip attitudes (Litman & Pezzo, 2005), we examined the factor structure of the C-ATG items separately for women and men to ensure that the final set of items selected for the C-ATG scale were relatively unbiased by gender. We expected scores on our newly developed C-ATG scales to be negatively related to concerns about social acceptance, as found in previous research (Litman & Pezzo, 2005, 2007).

Given that positive gossip attitudes reflect the view that gossip is generally acceptable and reliable and particularly useful for securing advantageous social relationships, we expected C-ATG scales scores to correlate positively with self-reports of how skillful respondents believed they were at forming advantageous social relationships. We further hypothesized that due to self-enhancement tendencies C-ATG scale scores would be correlated *negatively* with perceptions of how successfully *other* people socially interacted (Gaertner, Sedikides, & Chang, 2008; Sedikides, Gaertner, & Toguchi, 2003).[1]

Method

Participants

A total of 504 individuals (312 women, 192 men) from a broad sample of university students and working adults participated in this study. The students (130 women, 92 men) were undergraduates, ranging in age from 18 to 25 (M = 20.25, SD = 1.30), recruited from five universities in Taiwan, who were enrolled in general education, business management, or engineering courses. The working adult participants were salespeople (182 women, 100 men), ranging in age from 19 to 73 (M = 35.66, SD = 9.58),

recruited from 10 top-tier insurance companies in Taiwan. All participants were thanked for their time and provided with additional information about the study after they completed responding to the materials.

Instruments

Translated ATG items. To develop a Chinese translation of the ATG scale, each item was translated into Chinese by a native bilingual speaker. ATG items that included idiomatic expressions (e.g., "Gossip is a good ice-breaker") were translated into two different items with similar meaning to empirically determine the better translation; thus, although the English ATG scale comprised 12 items, a total of 15 translated items were developed. These items were reviewed by a second native bilingual Chinese speaker, who then back translated them into English. Back translations were evaluated by one of the original authors of the ATG scale, compared to the original versions for equivalency, and revised as needed. This translation process ran through several iterations until each item was determined to be an acceptable and accurate translation of the original. Participants were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with each item statement on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*. The full listing of the original ATG items and each item's back translation from Chinese are presented in Table 1.

In addition, two measures that assess self-presentation behaviors and two scales that measure perceptions of other people's ability to facilitate positive and advantageous relationships through the use of social capital (i.e., knowledge sharing and social networking) were administered to the 282 working adults.[2] Individual differences in self-presentation behaviors were assessed with the Ingratiation Scale (IS; Lee, Quigley, Nesler, Corbett, & Tedeschi, 1999) and the Social Desirability Scale (SDS; Reynolds, 1982). Although both scales assess self-presentation tendencies, they differ considerably in their foci. The IS assesses self-perceived ability to exert influence over others, whereas the SDS measures concerns about being viewed as a "good" person to be accepted (Lee et al., 1999). Perception of the ability of others to facilitate positive relationships was measured with two social capital (SC) instruments. The first SC scale assessed attitudes about other people's use of Knowledge Sharing (SC-KS; Subramaniam & Youndt, 2005); the second scale assessed views about other people's use of Social Networking (SC-SN; Yli-Renko, Autio, & Sapienza, 2001). Details on each scale follow.

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Table 1 The 12 Attitudes Towards Gossip Scale items and their back translations from Chinese

Dimension	Original item statement	Item no.	Back translation from Chinese (BTC)
SV	Gossip is a good ice-breaker.	BTC-1	Gossip can help us to start up a conversation with unfamiliar people who is first met.
		BTC-2	Gossip is a good ice-breaker.
MV	Rumors are hardly ever true. (R)	BTC-3	Rumors are rarely true. (R)
SV	It's fun to talk about other people.	BTC-4	It's very enjoyable to talk about other people.
MV	It is wrong to talk about others when they aren't around. (R)	BTC-5	It's wrong to talk about others behind their back. (R)
SV	I love to know what is going on in other people's lives.	BTC-6	I love to know what's happening to other people's lives.
MV	You can't trust gossip. (R)	BTC-7	Gossip is not worth trusting. (R)
SV	I always mind my own business instead of gossiping. (R)	BTC-8	I think prying into the affairs of others is improper. (R)
		BTC-9	Take care of one's business than others' privacies. (R)
MV	You should never mention rumors even if you think they're true. (R)	BTC-10	Regardless of whether a rumor is true or not you should never mention it. (R)
SV	Gossiping is a great way to pass the time.	BTC-11	Gossiping is a great way to while away time.
MV	I have never known gossip to be helpful to anyone. (R)	BTC-12	Talk about other people or to defame them behind their backs is fearful thing. (R)
		BTC-13	People's gossip is fearful. (R)
SV	I like to share what I hear about others.	BTC-14	I like to share the things (about others) I hear.
MV	Gossip is often true.	BTC-15	Gossip is often true.

SV = Social Value; MV = Moral Value. (R) indicates a reverse-scored item.

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IS. The IS is An eight-item measure that assesses tendencies to engage in self-presentation behaviors aimed at convincing others to like the respondent (e.g., flattery, performing favors) to gain some advantage or control over them or to form complimentary social relationships (e.g., "I use flattery to win the favor of others"). Respondents were asked to indicate how often they engaged in the activity each item described using a 5-point Likert-type scale, ranging from *very infrequently* to *very frequently*. Alpha for the IS was .87.

SDS. The SDS is a 13-item measure that assesses concerns about how socially acceptable others view the respondent (e.g., "I am always courteous, even to people who are disagreeable"). Participants indicated whether each item statement was true or false for them. In the present study alpha for this scale was somewhat lower than desirable; thus, four items with poor item-total correlations (< .20) were dropped to improve alpha to a somewhat more acceptable level of .60 (Cortina, 1993). In past research using short-form measures of SDS with essentially the same items as those used in the present study, alphas ranging from .49 to .70 have been reported.

SC-KS scale. The SC-KS is a five-item measure of respondents' perceptions about the overall ability of their organization's coworkers to share and leverage knowledge among employees, customers, and other business associates (e.g., "Our employees share information and learn from one another"). Participants were asked to indicate the extent to which each item statement described their coworkers on a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*. Alpha for this measure was .86.

SC-SN scale. The SC-SN is a seven-item measure of individuals' perceptions about the ability of their coworkers to develop and maintain cooperative social relationships with customers of their organization (e.g., "Maintain close social relationships with this customer"). Participants reported the degree to which each item described their coworkers on a Likert-type scale ranging from *do not agree* to *completely agree*. Alpha for this measure was .77.

Procedure

Questionnaire data were collected from student participants in group testing sessions held in their classrooms. At the beginning of each test session, a research assistant introduced himself or herself to the

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participants and indicated that the goals of the study were to learn about their feelings and attitudes. For the working adults, the questionnaires were distributed at the respondent's place of business by two research assistants who explained the aforementioned study goals. About 30 minutes was required to participate.

Results

To determine whether the translated items formed two or more separate factors and also to determine which items best defined each factor, iterated principal axis factor analysis was conducted using the squared multiple correlation as the communality estimate. In keeping with Litman and Pezzo (2005), these analyses were carried out separately for women and men as well as for the combined sample to identify items with minimal gender bias.[3] In determining the correct number of factors to extract, the scree plot of the eigenvalues, a parallel analysis with 95% quantile intervals (Hays, 1987), and the amount of common variance the factors explained were reviewed. Because the ATG factors were expected to be correlated, oblique (promax) rotation was used (Russell, 2002).

For each subsample of participants, two large factors emerged that accounted for 87% to 93% of the common variance, most of which was explained by the first factor; the scree plots and results of the parallel analysis also indicated there were two large factors. On the basis of these findings and the expectation that two C-ATG factors would emerge with rotation, two factors were extracted. Rotated loadings for each two-factor solution are reported in Table 2. For all three groups, 14 of the 15 items had dominant salient loadings ($\geq .30$) on a single factor. As noted in Table 2, Factor I was defined primarily by items designed to assess attitudes about the MV of gossip, with loadings $\geq .58$ and no salient dual loadings. Two items that were designed to assess attitudes about the SV of gossip also had strong loadings on this factor; these two items were deleted from further consideration, and the remaining five items were selected to form a C-ATG MV subscale. Factor II consisted of six items that assessed attitudes about the SV of gossip and one item that referred to beliefs about gossip's MV, which was omitted from further consideration. Of the remaining six items, two were alternate versions of the same SV item; given that the item back translated as "Gossip is a good ice-breaker" was closer in content to the original English item, the duplicate item was deleted and the remaining five were selected to form a C-ATG SV subscale.

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Table 2. Rotated factor loadings for 15 Chinese Attitudes Towards Gossip Scale items

	Women (n = 312)		Men (n = 192)		Combined (n = 504)	
Item no. (dimension)	I	II	I	II	I	II
BTC-10 (MV)	**.86**	.00	**.77**	.15	**.82**	.05
BTC-5 (MV)	**.81**	.04	**.76**	.07	**.79**	.05
BTC-13 (MV)	**.80**	.08	**.69**	.23	**.75**	.13
BTC-8 (SV)	**.77**	–.01	**.75**	–.05	**.77**	–.03
BTC-7 (MV)	**.66**	.02	**.62**	–.22	**.65**	–.07
BTC-3 (MV)	**.62**	–.06	**.28**	–.04	**.49**	–.04
BTC-9 (SV)	**.58**	–.10	**.61**	–.21	**.60**	–.15
BTC-12 (SV)	(.18)	.00	(.22)	–.07	(.20)	–.04
BTC-1 (SV)	–.10	**.79**	–.02	**.66**	–.06	**.74**
BTC-2 (SV)	–.12	**.73**	–.14	**.71**	–.13	**.72**
BTC-4 (SV)	.02	**.69**	.02	**.63**	.01	**.67**
BTC-11 (SV)	.16	**.67**	.06	**.74**	.11	**.71**
BTC-14 (SV)	.16	**.51**	–.04	**.55**	.07	**.53**
BTC-15 (MV)	.03	**.40**	–.03	**.38**	.00	**.40**
BTC-6 (SV)	–.07	**.32**	–.14	**.32**	–.11	**.32**
Interfactor r	.35		.23		.32	

SV = Social Value; MV = Moral Value. Items are listed in descending order of magnitude of dominant loadings for women; refer to Table 1 for item statements. Salient factor loadings are in bold.

To assess the fit of the two-factor C-ATG model, responses to the 10 items identified as the best indicators of SV and MV were submitted to confirmatory factor analysis, separately for women, for men, and for the combined sample, using maximum likelihood estimation. Two sets of models were tested; the first set tested a one-factor C-ATG model, given that a one-factor model would have accounted for most of the variability in the data set. The second set tested a two-factor C-ATG model comprising the correlated five-item SV and MV factors.

Several goodness-of-fit (GOF) indices were examined, including chi-square, comparative fit index (CFI), non-normed fit index (NNFI), McDonald's fit index (MFI), root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), and parsimony fit index (PFI). In determining model fitness, although a nonsignificant chi-square is desirable, smaller values still

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indicate superior fit. Values greater than or equal to .90 for MFI and greater than or equal to .95 for CFI and NNFI indicate very close fit, while values close to .90 are acceptable (Hu & Bentler, 1999; Raykov, 1998). An RMSEA less than or equal to .06 indicates close fit, although values less than or equal to .08 are acceptable (Browne & Cudeck, 1992; Hu & Bentler, 1999). For PFI, values greater than .50 are acceptable, with higher values being desirable (James, Mulaik, & Brett, 1982).

GOF indices for each analysis are reported in Table 3; chi-squares were significant for all five models. However, the chi-squares were smaller for all two-factor models, indicating superior fit. As expected, the other fit indices for the two-factor models were also superior to those for the one-factor models and generally indicative of excellent fit, with the exception of a slightly lower than ideal CFI for men. Estimates for the interfactor correlation, standardized loadings, and error variance for each of the two-factor C-ATG models are presented in Table 4; the common path diagram is presented in Figure 1. The two factors were moderately correlated ($M\ r = .40$). All of the factor loadings were significant ($p < .001$) and were all strong ($\geq .38$), with the exception of item BTC-6 overall and item BTC-3 for the men; however, these items were retained, as their omission would have reduced alpha.

Table 3. Confirmatory factor analysis goodness-of-fit (GOF) indices for one- and two-factor Chinese Attitudes Towards Gossip Scale models

GOF index	One-factor models			Two-factor models		
	Women (n = 312)	Men (n = 192)	Combined (n = 504)	Women (n = 312)	Men (n = 192)	Combined (n = 504)
x^2	333.60	225.41	522.74	74.13	65.63	106.46
df	35	35	35	34	34	34
Comparative fit index	.752	.660	.721	.967	.944	.959
Non-normed fit index	.681	.681	.641	.967	.945	.945
McDonald's fit index	.609	.604	.609	.936	.920	.929
Root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA)	.170	.169	.168	.07	.06	.06
95% confidence interval of RMSEA	.149–.192	.152–.185	.156–.181	.04–.09	.04–.08	.05–.08
Parsimony fit index	.49	.57	.55	.71	.67	.71

All chi-square statistics are significant ($p < .001$).

Table 4. Standardized confirmatory factor loadings and error variance coefficients for each two-factor Chinese Attitudes Towards Gossip Scale structural model

		Women (n = 312)		Men (n = 192)		Combined (n = 504)	
	Item no.	Standardized loading	Error variance	Standardized loading	Error variance	Standardized loading	Error variance
Social Value	BTC-11	**.83**	.56	**.85**	.53	**.83**	.55
	BTC-4	**.74**	.68	**.72**	.69	**.73**	.68
	BTC-14	**.66**	.75	**.49**	.87	**.58**	.81
	BTC-2	**.47**	.88	**.50**	.86	**.49**	.87
	BTC-6	**.27**	.96	**.29**	.96	**.28**	.96
Moral Value	BTC-10	**.88**	.47	**.84**	.53	**.87**	.49
	BTC-13	**.88**	.47	**.87**	.49	**.88**	.48
	BTC-5	**.84**	.53	**.82**	.57	**.83**	.55
	BTC-7	**.62**	.79	**.38**	.93	**.53**	.85
	BTC-3	**.52**	.85	**.20**	.98	**.41**	.91
Interfactor r		.45		.35		.41	

Items are listed in descending order of magnitude of estimated loadings for women. Salient factor loadings are in bold. All loadings and interfactor rs significant, $p < .001$.

Psychometric Characteristics of the C-ATG Scale and Subscales

Means, standard deviations, and reliability indices for the C-ATG measures are reported in Table 5. Alphas for the C-ATG total scale and both subscales were generally good (≥ .70), especially considering their brevity. Standard errors for the alphas were all quite low (< .1), indicating that the items were homogeneous (Duhachek & Iacobucci, 2004). Correlations between the two subscales were positive, as would be expected, and small to moderate in size, which is consistent with the view that each C-ATG scale assesses different, but related, sets of attitudes about gossip and rumor. No significant gender differences were found.

Means and standard deviations for the C-ATG scales and scales that assessed social presentation behaviors and perceptions of SC use by coworkers are reported in Table 6 for the 282 working adults. As for the larger sample, no gender differences were found for the C-ATG scales or for either of the SC scales or for the SDS. However, IS scores were significantly higher for men (d = .31).

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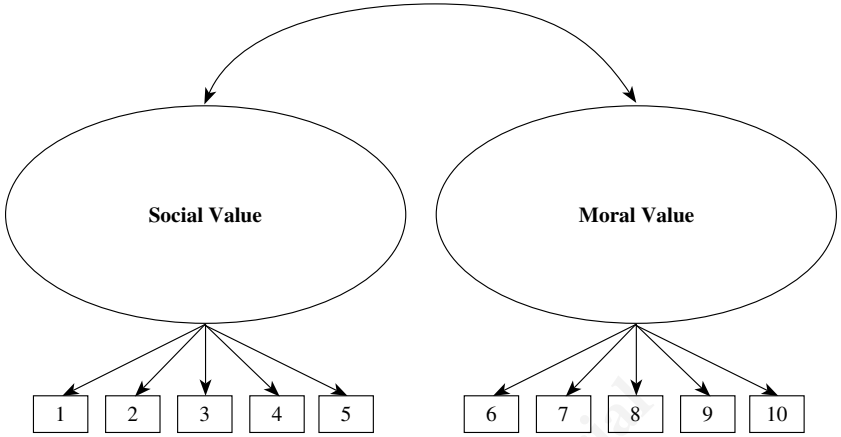
Figure 1. Path diagram of the two-factor Chinese Attitudes Towards Gossip Scale structural model.



	Social Value Items			Moral Value Items	
1.	Gossiping is a great way to while away time.	談論八卦是消磨時間的好方法	6.	Regardless of whether a rumor is true or not you should never mention it.(R)	不管謠言是真或假，我都不該散播
2.	It's very enjoyable to talk about other people.	談論別人的私事很有趣	7.	People's gossip is fearful.(R)	人言可畏
3.	I like to share the things (about others) I hear.	樂於和朋友分享(討論)別人的私事	8.	It's wrong to talk about others behind their back.(R)	在別人背後說長道短是不對的
4.	Gossip is a good ice-breaker.	八卦有助於打破沈默	9.	Gossip is not worth trusting.(R)	八卦不值得相信
5.	I love to know what's happening to other people's lives.	喜歡知道別人的生活近況	10.	Rumors are rarely true.(R)	謠言很少是真的

Loadings and error terms are reported in Table 4 for women, men, and the combined sample. (R) indicates reverse scoring.

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Table 5. Means, standard deviations, reliability indices, correlations, and *t* tests of gender differences among the Chinese Attitudes Towards Gossip Scale (C-ATG) measures

		Women (n=312)	Men (n=192)	Combined (n=504)	t_{WM}
C-ATG total scale	M(SD)	29.37 (6.87)	30.32 (6.06)	32.48 (4.97)	1.57 *ns*
	$_{\alpha}(SE_{\alpha})$	.83 (.010)	.74 (.025)	.80 (.015)	
	95% CI_{α}	.81–.85	.69–.79	.77–.82	
C-ATG Social Value	M(SD)	15.98 (3.36)	16.29 (3.39)	16.12 (3.36)	1.02 *ns*
	$_{\alpha}(SE_{\alpha})$	.74 (.022)	.71 (.031)	.73 (.018)	
	95% CI_{α}	.69–.78	.65–.77	.69–.76	
C-ATG Moral Value	M(SD)	13.39 (4.95)	14.03 (4.42)	16.36 (4.76)	1.44 *ns*
	$_{\alpha}(SE_{\alpha})$	.87 (.010)	.78 (.020)	.84 (.010)	
	95% CI_{α}	.85–.89	.74–.82	.82–.86	
	r_{SVMV}	.35	.18	.29	

Table 6. Means, standard deviations, and *t* tests of gender differences for the Chinese Attitudes Towards Gossip Scale (C-ATG) scales and other measures

	Women (n = 182)		Men (n = 100)		Combined (n = 282)		*tWM*
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	
C-ATG total scale	25.65	4.41	26.35	4.33	25.96	4.39	1.32, *ns*
C-ATG SV	15.07	3.23	15.24	3.38	15.15	3.26	0.50, *ns*
C-ATG MV	10.58	2.61	11.11	2.71	10.81	2.66	1.61, *ns*
SDS	18.50	2.12	18.67	2.02	18.51	2.09	0.67, *ns*
IS	26.64	5.54	28.30	5.04	27.36	5.44	2.60**
SC-KS	29.94	3.81	30.39	3.28	30.09	3.65	1.05, *ns*
SC-SN	40.80	4.92	41.61	4.65	41.10	4.83	1.45, *ns*

SV = Social Value subscale of the C-ATG; MV = Moral Value subscale of the C-ATG; SDS = Social Desirability Scale; IS = Ingratiation Scale; SC-KS = Social Capital-Knowledge Sharing (coworker's use); SC-SN = Social Capital-Social Networking (coworkers' use).
**$p < .01$.

Correlations between the C-ATG scales and the social presentation and SC measures are reported in Table 7 for the working adult participants. For both women and men, the SV subscale (and, consequently, the C-ATG total scale) was significantly negatively correlated with SDS scores, indicating that individuals with strong positive attitudes about

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gossip's SV were less concerned with how favorably others viewed them. MV scores, by contrast, were uncorrelated to the SDS, presumably because attitudes about the appropriateness and reliability of gossip are simply unrelated to social acceptance needs.

Also for both women and men, SV scores were significantly positively correlated with the IS, which suggests that individuals who view gossip as useful for social interaction also consider themselves good at getting others to do what they want. Contrary to expectations, the MV scale was negatively correlated with ingratiation tendencies for both women and men, although the correlation was significant only for women. These findings suggest that people with strong positive attitudes about the appropriateness and truthfulness of gossip may feel that using gossip to influence others is a potential misuse of that information.

As predicted, for both women and men, SV and MV scores were negatively correlated with perceptions of SC use by coworkers. In light of the relationships found between C-ATG subscale scores and ingratiation tendencies, these findings indicate that individuals who value gossip may tend to believe they are *better* at social interaction than their coworkers. These relationships were generally stronger for women, particularly for the MV scale.

Discussion

As hypothesized, factor analyses of responses to the 15 C-ATG items identified two dimensions that reflected attitudes about the social (SV) and moral (MV) values of gossip. Based on item content and factor loadings for both women and men, a 10-item C-ATG scale was developed with 5-item SV and MV subscales; construct validity of the two-factor model was verified with confirmatory factor analysis. The C-ATG scale and subscales were found to have generally good internal consistency reliability. No gender differences in any C-ATG scale scores were found. While the results of the present study suggest that gossip attitudes may be validly and reliably assessed with minimal gender bias in Asian cultures, this study represents only the very early stages of research, and it will be important to further validate the two-factor ATG model with novel samples of individuals from Chinese and other Asian cultures in future research. Likewise, it will be equally important to further evaluate the internal consistency reliability of the C-ATG scales with novel samples in future research as well.

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Table 7. Correlations of the Chinese Attitudes Towards Gossip Scale (C-ATG) measures with other scales

		Women (n = 182)	Men (n = 100)	Combined (n = 282)
C-ATG Total	SDS	–.33***	–.32***	–.32***
	IS	.09	.12	.12*
	SC-KS	–.34***	–.15	–.27***
	SC-SN	–.36***	–.21*	–.30***
C-ATG SV	SDS	–.34***	–.36***	–.34***
	IS	.27***	.22*	.25***
	SC-KS	–.21**	–.07	–.16**
	SC-SN	–.18*	–.10	–.15*
C-ATG MV	SDS	–.06	–.06	–.05
	IS	–.18*	–.09	–.13*
	SC-KS	–.30***	–.13	–.23***
	SC-SN	–.34***	–.20*	–.28***

SDS = Social Desirability Scale; IS = Ingratiation Scale; SC-KS = Social Capital-Knowledge Sharing (coworkers' use); SC-SN = Social Capital-Social Networking (coworkers' use); SV = Social Value subscale of the C-ATG; MV = Moral Value subscale of the C-ATG. Correlations with each subscale reflect the partialing out of the other subscale.
*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.

The C-ATG SV subscale was found to be negatively correlated with social approval needs, indicating that individuals with positive gossip attitudes are less concerned about being perceived as a "good person." This finding is consistent with past research on the ATG in English-speaking cultures and suggests that Chinese cultures, like Western cultures, generally regard gossip as socially unacceptable. The SV subscale was positively associated with ingratiation tendencies, which is consistent with the view that individuals who recognize the value of gossip are skilled at interacting with others. However, unexpectedly, the MV subscale was negatively related to ingratiation, particularly for the women. Possibly, women who consider gossip acceptable and reliable feel that it is morally wrong to use gossip to influence people. That this relationship is minimal for men may point to an interesting gender difference in how Asian men and women differentiate between appropriate and inappropriate uses of gossip that will need to be examined in future research.

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Both C-ATG measures, especially MV for women, were negatively associated with perceptions of SC use by coworkers. These findings suggested that people with positive gossip attitudes tended to believe that their coworkers were less skillful in dealing with customers than they were, suggesting that individuals with higher positive gossip attitudes felt they had an edge over their coworkers. Given the importance of developing good customer relations to be successful in business and the degree of competitiveness inherent to the business world, this interpretation is highly consistent with research on self-enhancement, which has found that individuals tend to view others as inferior to themselves for characteristics deemed personally important (Gaertner et al., 2008; Sedikides et al., 2003). This too will be important to examine in further research on ATG, in both Western and Asian cultures. While the findings of the present study were generally supportive of the hypothesized relationships among ATG, self-presentation, and forming advantageous social relationships, it will be important in future research with the C-ATG to examine its relationships to other measures and outcomes such as spreading or taking interest in positive and negative gossip or tendencies to become interpersonally curious to further evaluate the convergent, divergent, and criterion validities of the C-ATG scales.

In summary, the findings of the present study have several important implications about how gossip is viewed and utilized in Chinese social contexts. First and foremost, the findings of the present study provide evidence that there is considerable similarity in ATG between English- and Chinese-speaking cultures, suggesting common ground in views on gossip across cultures. Second, the present study suggests that gossip may be viewed in Asian cultures as an important mechanism for promoting positive and advantageous social relationships (e.g., Gao, 1998) even though gossip is recognized as being socially unacceptable—indeed, there are numerous Chinese proverbs that describe gossip as a source of great harm (Rohsenow, 2003). Third, individuals with positive gossip attitudes felt they were more skillful in facilitating successful social interactions than their peers, suggesting that in Chinese and other Asian cultures being able to successfully utilize gossip may be viewed as an important skill (e.g., Sedikides et al., 2003).

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Notes

1. Although whether Asians self-enhance to the same extent as Westerners remains a controversial issue, there is generally good evidence of the universality of self-enhancement. See Sedikides, Gaertner, and Vevea (2007) for a recent discussion on this issue.
2. Details on the translation of these instruments into Chinese are reported in Huang (2009).
3. As previously noted, one of our major goals in analyzing the factor structure of the C-ATG items was to ensure we selected items that had minimal gender bias. However, splitting the samples on the basis of gender and group membership yielded very small samples; factor analytic methods require large samples to obtain stable estimates. Nevertheless, we conducted several preliminary analyses and did indeed find that the same factors emerged in analyses of responses by the student and working samples, and again when divided further into much smaller groups of men and women. The only difference was that each of these solutions yielded somewhat less clear simple structure, which reduced interpretability of the factors. Thus, in making our final selection of items, we consulted the analyses of responses by men and women for the combined sample of students and workers, which addressed our interest in selecting items with minimal gender differences while also enhancing interpretability of the factor structure.

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中文流言態度：量表的構建與效度建立

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摘 要

由504名台灣的參與者(312名女性，192名男性)組成的樣本對一組翻譯過的「流言態度 ATG」測量項目做出回應。因子分析確定了兩個因素：有關流言蜚語的社會價值(SV)和有關流言蜚語的道德價值(MV)。這為構建一個十項中文「流言態度」ATG量表提供了基礎。「中文流言態度C-ATG」量表的評分與社會認同的需要呈負相關；社會價值分量表與對旁人產生良好影響的自我報告是呈正相關；但是社會價值和道德價值的評分與同事之間互動的有效性的看法是負面關聯的，這顯示自我提高的意向。

關鍵詞：流言蜚語、性格、社會取向、迎合趨勢