

Is More Feedback Seeking Always Better? Leader-Member Exchange Moderates the Relationship Between Feedback-Seeking Behavior and Performance

Long Wai Lam

University of Macau

Kelly Z. Peng

Hong Kong Shue Yan University

Chi-Sum Wong

Dora C. Lau

The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Feedback is information made available to employees in their work environment, whereas feedback-seeking behaviors (FSBs) help employees to evaluate proactively whether their work has met performance standards and their behavior is considered appropriate. Prior studies have provided a perspective on how the feedback-seeking contexts affect the emergence and development of FSBs. In this study, we extend that perspective by investigating when FSBs affect job performance so that we can understand whether more feedback seeking is always better. Adopting the relational view of leadership, we hypothesize that the FSB-performance relationship should be stronger for employees with low leader-member exchange (LMX) and in groups with low aggregate LMX and low LMX differentiation. Using a multilevel research design and a sample of 379 teachers in 25 groups, we find support for most of our hypotheses. We discuss the implications of the study for the FSB and the proactive behavior literature and suggest avenues for future research.

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Corresponding author: Kelly Z. Peng, Department of Business Administration, Hong Kong Shue Yan University, 10 Wai Tsui Crescent, Braemar Hill Road, North Point, Hong Kong.

E-mail: kelly.z.peng@gmail.com

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In the management literature, there are many studies that consider the effect of feedback on performance (e.g., Ammons, 1956; Jordan & Audia, 2012). Feedback contains information about how well employees are meeting their performance and nonperformance goals and how they are evaluated by others (Geister, Konradt, & Hertel, 2006; Hanser & Muchinsky, 1978). However, before 1983, studies of feedback focused mainly on the feedback received through formal organizational channels, such as performance-appraisal evaluations. Ashford and Cummings (1983) argued that employees go beyond formal organizational channels to seek feedback from multiple sources and use feedback information in their everyday work lives. This led to a new direction in feedback studies that examined feedback-seeking behaviors (FSBs) rather than feedback itself. FSB is defined as a “conscious devotion of effort toward determining the correctness and adequacy of behaviors for attaining valued end states” (Ashford, 1986: 466).

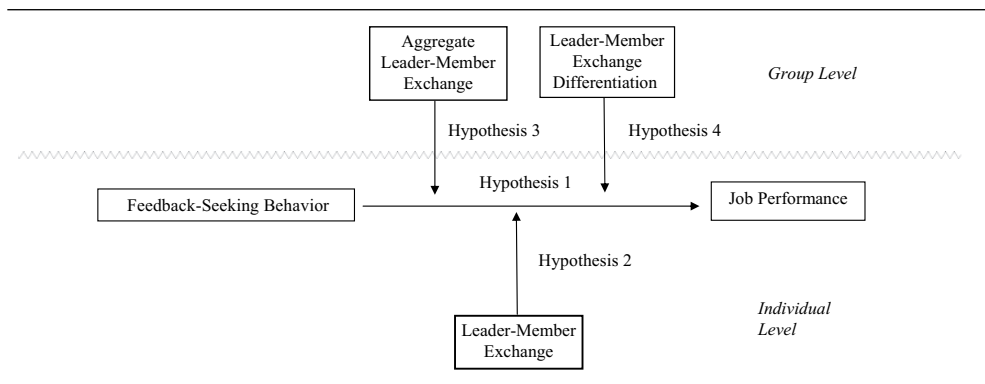
The primary objective of this study is to analyze the influence of the feedback-seeking context, defined as “the environment in which the feedback is sought and received” (Levy, Albright, Cawley, & Williams, 1995: 24), on the effectiveness of FSB. This study is motivated by two factors. First, although the major purpose of FSB is to collect feedback on the correctness and adequacy of one’s behavior, previous studies have tended to investigate feedback-seeking contexts in which FSB is common (e.g., Vancouver & Morrison, 1995; VandeWalle, Ganesan, Challagalla, & Brown, 2000), rather than contexts where FSB has made the most difference. Second, FSB is considered an important element of employees’ self-regulation (Ashford & Tsui, 1991) and proactive adaptation (Parker & Collins, 2010) because it allows them to obtain information that helps them to improve their performance and their fit with the organization. However, prior research on feedback has shown that one should not take its value as given (Kluger & DeNisi, 1996); instead, the value of feedback depends on how much it increases the recipients’ knowledge (Ilgen, Fisher, & Taylor, 1979). Thus, we contend that FSB is more useful when the feedback offers new information to the seekers and reduces their uncertainty and equivocality in the organizational environment (Daft & Lengel, 1986; Morrison, 1993).

To deduce the situations in which FSB leads to useful and valuable feedback, we analyze how leader-member exchange (LMX) moderates the FSB-performance relationship in individual and group contexts. In particular, we are interested in employees’ FSB toward leaders or supervisors. Extant research on FSB has shown that leaders and coworkers are the two primary sources for employees who proactively seek feedback (Morrison, 1993; Williams, Miller, Steelman, & Levy, 1999). In terms of employee feedback provision, leaders are clearly the more important source (Greller, 1992; L. W. Lam, Loi, & Leong, 2013; Larson, 1989), as they serve as the critical link in the organizational control system (Green, Fairhurst, & Snavelly, 1986). As FSB involves one person seeking and another person providing feedback, the context for FSB is often relational (Williams et al.). These previous findings allow us to postulate that LMX may determine when FSB toward supervisors is more likely to lead to feedback that improves job performance.

In addition to the individual context, we explore the group context of FSB by looking at the moderating roles of aggregate LMX and LMX differentiation in the FSB-performance relationship. Prior research has indicated that feedback seekers are sensitive to the group context in which FSB takes place (e.g., Northcraft & Ashford, 1990). Individuals also pay attention to leaders' varied treatment within-group and use this information to determine how to interact with each other in the group context (e.g., Lau & Liden, 2008). According to LMX theory, leaders maintain differentiated relations with followers, and the overall level and distribution of LMX varies among groups (e.g., Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Liden, Erdogan, Wayne, & Sparrowe, 2006; Nishii & Mayer, 2009; Sparrowe & Liden, 1997). Although some groups may offer high levels of leader support to most followers (i.e., a high aggregate LMX), in other groups, only some followers receive ample leader support and feedback (i.e., a high LMX differentiation). Thus, the availability of work-related information provided by leaders will also differ among groups according to the LMX theory. For this reason, we postulate that an individual's likelihood to acquire new and useful information from supervisors may also depend on the overall level and distribution of LMX within each group.

In fulfilling these research objectives, we intend to make the following contributions to the literature. First, this study enriches our understanding of the FSB-performance relationship by identifying the individual and group contexts (i.e., LMX, aggregate LMX, and LMX differentiation) in which FSB toward supervisors can provide seekers with new and useful information. Although FSB may damage an employee's positive image (VandeWalle et al., 2000), it allows employees to acquire otherwise unavailable job-related knowledge and information and to master their jobs more effectively (Morrison, 1993). Therefore, the FSB-performance relationship is an important one (Ashford, Blatt, & VandeWalle, 2003), and it would be useful to identify the contextual conditions in which this relationship is expected to hold. There are also important theoretical reasons for exploring the influence of context on the FSB-performance relationship. FSB has been discussed as a personal proactive strategy for adapting to adversity and uncertainty within an organizational environment; it allows employees to achieve a better fit with their job and advance their career (De Stobbeleir, Ashford, & Buyens, 2011; Parker & Collins, 2010). To better understand how FSB can achieve this aim, we adopt an interactionist perspective of the concept of fit in this study, such that the interaction between a person and a situation is expected to have a pronounced effect on outcomes (Schneider, 2001). Second, by studying the effect of the interaction of FSB and LMX on job performance, we shed light on how employees can adapt to job contexts characterized by low LMX (Erdogan, Kraimer, & Liden, 2004; Rosen, Harris, & Kacmar, 2011). As low LMX poses a challenge to employees (Bolino & Turnley, 2009), there is still much to be learned about how such employees can achieve better performance in contexts characterized by limited access to information (Rosen et al.). Prior studies, for instance, have shown that low-LMX employees will monitor organizational-level information more carefully in order to overcome feelings of uncertainty (e.g., Erdogan et al.; Rosen et al.). Our study thus enriches this line of the LMX research by analyzing whether low-LMX employees can improve their performance by being proactive in directly searching for information. Drawing on LMX processes operating in individual and group contexts, we designed a multilevel study to provide a more complete picture of the feedback-seeking context that shapes the FSB-performance relationship. Figure 1 illustrates our conceptual model and the hypothesized relationships.

Figure 1
Conceptual Model of Feedback-Seeking Behavior, Leader-Member Exchange, and Job Performance



Development of Hypotheses

FSB and Job Performance

Essentially, feedback is information made available to employees in their work environment (Hanser & Muchinsky, 1978). Its most important function is to regulate behavior by helping employees work toward designated goals. FSB therefore can improve job performance primarily because it leads to the acquisition of technical, role, and evaluative information (Morrison, 1993). This information helps employees to perform effectively and to determine whether their work has met performance standards and their behavior is considered appropriate (Ashford & Cummings, 1983; Hanser & Muchinsky; Tuckey, Brewer, & Williamson, 2002). In an organizational context that lacks such information, employees can use FSB toward supervisors to learn how to perform their roles effectively. Morrison's study revealed that supervisors are a better source of technical information and performance feedback than coworkers. De Stobbeleir et al. (2011) argued that FSB is related to creative performance because it allows employees to directly solicit information from distant sources in organizations. Consistent with our contention, Renn and Fedor's (2001) results showed that the FSB in a large U.S. automotive parts company has an indirect effect on work quality and quantity through the establishment of personal goals. Brown, Ganesan, and Challagalla (2001) found that role clarification mediates the relationship between active information seeking and self-rated job performance. These reasons lead us to propose that as a result of the value of additional work information, FSB toward supervisors should be associated with improved job performance.

FSB also enhances people's ability to control their own work (Ashford et al., 2003; Chen, Lam, & Zhong, 2007; Larson, 1989) and can ease discomfort in uncertain and equivocal environments that afford them little control (Daft & Lengel, 1986). In particular, Ashford and Black (1996) argued that increases in the availability of information (i.e., knowledge of what is appropriate and expected) through FSB improve an employee's sense of job control. Ashford and Cummings (1983) also discussed how a person's sense of competence is developed and sustained through FSB. With a greater sense of control over their own jobs,

employees' sense of efficacy may be strengthened, which will in turn have a positive effect on their job performance (Judge, Jackson, Shaw, Scott, & Rich, 2007). Empirical evidence has shown that employees obtain a more accurate view of their own abilities and deficiencies after seeking feedback (Ashford & Tsui, 1991; Chen et al.). All of this indicates that employee performance may be influenced through FSB as a result of the availability of more performance-related information and a greater sense of control. We thus propose the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: FSB has a positive effect on employees' subsequent job performance.

Leaders as Feedback-Seeking Context

Feedback is valuable for employees because it provides them with information that allows them to correct mistakes and attain work goals. However, some employees refrain from seeking feedback because doing so may signal a lack of competence and jeopardize their self-esteem (Ashford et al., 2003) and may affect their confident and self-assured image (Goffman, 1959). To discern why employees pursue FSB under these circumstances, researchers in previous studies have investigated how individual's FSB motives (i.e., the goals the feedback seekers wish to achieve, such as instrumental or image enhancement) affect their FSB patterns (i.e., the decisions feedback seekers must make when obtaining feedback information, such as method and target). Although these studies have shed much light on the development of FSB (e.g., Ashford & Northcraft, 1992; Morrison, 1993; VandeWalle et al., 2000), Ashford et al. called for research "to move beyond individual factors and focus on the context in which feedback seeking takes place" (783).

Previous studies of contexts in which employees feel more at ease in seeking feedback (Madzar, 1995) have focused on the perceived costs of FSB. Researchers have argued that seeking feedback may damage the seeker's ego and desire to maintain a positive impression, and this makes individuals reluctant to engage in such proactive behavior (e.g., Ashford et al., 2003; Northcraft & Ashford, 1990), especially if they must do so publicly (Levy et al., 1995; Williams et al., 1999). Prior research has used this line of reasoning to discuss the effect of leadership context, which may encourage employees to seek feedback by decreasing its perceived costs (Madzar). The leadership characteristics that have been shown to be conducive to FSB include transformation leadership behaviors (Levy, Cober, & Miller, 2002), leader accessibility and supportiveness (Vancouver & Morrison, 1995; Williams et al.), and leaders' consideration for employees (Levy et al., 2002; VandeWalle et al., 2000). Some researchers have proposed that the supervisor-subordinate relationship can enhance the contextual favorability of FSB (e.g., Chen et al., 2007; Vancouver & Morrison). However, its effect may not be a simple one. Under a poor supervisor-subordinate relationship, employees may be reluctant to conduct FSB because of the perceived image costs of probing for feedback proactively in front of supervisors (Northcraft & Ashford; Williams et al.). However, this may also be a context in which FSB is particularly valuable as a means of obtaining additional performance-related information. In contrast, although a good relationship can decrease the perceived costs of FSB to subordinates and, thus, make them willing to engage in FSB (e.g., Chen et al.), a good supervisor-subordinate relationship may also indicate that a supervisor has already provided adequate feedback information to the subordinate and, thus, the value of FSB should diminish (Tuckey et al., 2002).

In a recent review of employees' proactive behavior, Parker and Collins (2010) argued that through FSB, individuals can achieve a better fit within the organizational environment by actively gathering information about job demands and thereby perform more effectively (see also Ashford & Tsui, 1991). Given that fit is also one of the most persuasive conceptual forces in the field of organizational behavior (Schneider, 2001), using fit to understand how FSB interacts with organizational environment has the potential to advance the theory of proactive feedback seeking. As leaders are the key sources of feedback information, we concentrate on them in our attempts to deduce the context in which supervisor-directed FSB helps employees gain the information necessary to improve their work performance. Specifically, we adopt the interactionist perspective of fit to analyze how supervisor-directed FSB interacts with LMX in affecting job performance (Schneider). In the following sections, we develop hypotheses for how LMX may moderate the effect of FSB on performance in individual and group contexts.

The Moderating Role of the LMX Relationship

According to LMX theory, leaders develop individualized relationships with each subordinate rather than having one type of relationship with all of their subordinates (Sparrowe & Liden, 1997). This theory postulates that leaders hold different role expectations for each of their followers and pursue various exchange relationships with them (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Liden et al., 2006; Sparrowe & Liden). Low LMX is characterized by economic exchanges in which leaders and followers concentrate only on compliance with contractual requirements and obligatory duties. High LMX, in contrast, is based on a social exchange relationship populated by feelings of mutual obligation, trust, and respect (Liden, Sparrowe, & Wayne, 1997). Because leaders have more frequent interactions and share more information with high-LMX followers, we expect that subordinates in such relationships receive more performance-related information than low-LMX followers. In support of our contention, prior research has often shown that in high-LMX relationships, leaders facilitate better follower performance (Green et al., 1986) by providing verbal support and encouragement to followers beyond what is normally expected in employment contracts (Gerstner & Day, 1997; Liden et al., 2006; Sparrowe & Liden). Studies of organizational communication have offered evidence that supervisors' communication with their subordinates varies between in-group and out-group members (e.g., Baker & Ganster, 1985), such that conversations conducted by supervisors with high-LMX members are richer in information and adopt a more supportive and cooperative tone (Fairhurst & Chandler, 1989). Employees with a high LMX should therefore receive more feedback information from their supervisors, which would help them to understand their work goals and the means used to accomplish them. A recent study conducted by Hsiung and Tsai (2009) has also shown that high-LMX employees developed better understanding of their job responsibilities and supervisors' expectations as a result of extensive information sharing within high-LMX dyads. In contrast, as low-LMX employees meet with their supervisors less often, they receive less performance feedback (Bolino & Turnley, 2009; Hochwarter, 2005). Without the continuous support and encouragement of leaders, employees with low LMX lack the necessary information and are likely to experience greater uncertainty in their work (Ashford et al., 2003; Audia & Locke, 2003; Larson, 1989).

In developing Hypothesis 1, we suggested that FSB allows employees to obtain additional performance-related information that can resolve uncertainty and equivocality in an organizational environment (Daft & Lengel, 1986). We expect that the value of such additional performance-related information resulting from the FSB of high-LMX subordinates may be lower than that of low-LMX subordinates for two reasons. First, according to the information-ceiling effect, an injection of new information is less useful to information-rich individuals than to information-poor individuals (Ettema & Kline, 1977; Sama, Kopelman, & Manning, 1994). As high-LMX subordinates receive ample performance-related information from their leaders as a result of extensive information sharing within high-LMX dyads (Baker & Ganster, 1985; Fairhurst & Chandler, 1989; Hsiung & Tsai, 2009), they may reach an information ceiling so that additional information collected through FSB toward supervisors will be less valuable to them. The second reason is the redundant information provided through strong ties. According to social network analysis studies, although strong ties are characterized by higher relationship quality in terms of duration, intimacy, and reciprocity, they usually provide repeating rather than novel information (Granovetter, 1973; Sparrowe & Liden, 1997). As high-LMX subordinates have stronger ties with their leaders, they are less likely to receive drastically new information from this source even when they directly ask for additional feedback. Previous studies have suggested that weak ties are more probable sources of new and innovative information than strong ties (e.g., Burt, 1997; Granovetter; Hansen, 1999). Therefore, as low-LMX subordinates have weaker ties with their leaders, they are more likely to obtain valuable information from their supervisors through FSB.

Hence, we present the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2: The positive effect of FSB on employees' subsequent job performance is moderated by LMX. This effect is stronger for employees with low LMX.

The Moderating Role of Aggregate LMX and LMX Differentiation

In addition to investigating LMX at the individual level, prior research has conceptualized LMX as a group-level concept (e.g., Erdogan & Bauer, 2010; Ford & Seers, 2006; Gerstner & Day, 1997). Group-level LMX differs from individual LMX in two ways. First, leaders may form high-quality relationships with most or even all of their followers in some groups and low-quality relationships in others. We refer to this arrangement as "aggregate LMX" (e.g., Ford & Seers; Liden et al., 2006; Nishi & Mayer, 2009). Second, whereas some leaders may maintain similar LMX levels with all of their followers, other leaders may have much more differentiated relationships with individual followers (Sparrowe & Liden, 1997) so that they have high-quality relationships with some followers but low-quality relationships with others (Gooty & Yammarino, 2016). We refer to this arrangement as "LMX differentiation" (e.g., Boies & Howell, 2006; Liden et al.). Previous studies have shown that both aggregate LMX and LMX differentiation are meaningful group-level constructs that relate to important group-level outcomes, such as team potency, team conflict (Boies & Howell), team performance (e.g., Liden et al.; Stewart & Johnson, 2009), team turnover rate (Nishii & Mayer), and member agreement on team climate (Ford & Seers).

In this study, we expect aggregate LMX to affect the value of the information resulting from FSB toward supervisors. When aggregate LMX is high, leaders build strong and intense relations with the majority of their followers (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Liden et al., 2006).

According to LMX theory, leaders are a crucial source of valuable resources for followers. Thus, in groups of high aggregate LMX, team members' perceptions of the work environment will probably converge because they share a similar source, the supervisor, for support, guidance, and resources. In support of this argument, Ford and Seers (2006) found that teams with a high average LMX experience a higher agreement on team climate, including values of supportive management and employee contribution, than low-average LMX teams. Given the convergence of perception in this group context, FSB is likely to lead to information that employees are already aware of (i.e., redundant information). In this context, feedback from supervisors in particular is less likely to provide new information as every team member has already used this source for guidance in performing his or her work.

In addition, prior research has shown that members of high aggregate LMX groups work together more often (Boies & Howell, 2006; Cogliser & Schriesheim, 2000) and engage in interpersonal sharing (Nishi & Mayer, 2009). In such a context, we can expect employees to have acquired plenty of work role-related normative information from their coworkers (Morrison, 1993). Consequently, owing to the information-ceiling effect, even when supervisor-directed FSB leads to new information, it does not lead to drastic job performance improvement for employees (Ettema & Kline, 1977; Sama et al., 1994). The sharing of information among coworkers also weakens the value of FSB conducted toward supervisors. Trinh and Mitchell (2009) showed that when individuals obtain sufficient information from a particular source, the value of the information from an alternative source decreases. In a context in which coworkers share information extensively in groups of high aggregate LMX, the FSB conducted toward the supervisor may not generate additional useful information.

However, when the aggregate LMX is low, team members' information and perception probably diverge. With different perceptions and information, FSB will in general yield useful and performance-enhancing information that employees have not yet heard. There is also less interpersonal sharing in low aggregate LMX groups. In such a context, the predominant mode of exchange between leaders and followers is economic rather than social (Nishi & Mayer, 2009; Sparrowe & Liden, 1997). As such, we expect that most subordinates will concentrate on shorter-term and specified contributions and will be less willing and resourceful in terms of knowledge sharing and interpersonal helping. As there is relatively little interpersonal sharing among coworkers in groups with low aggregate LMX (Nishi & Mayer), performance-related information is less plentiful. Thus, the value of the information gathered from supervisors through FSB increases in low aggregate LMX groups, and a more positive FSB-performance relationship may be expected.

On the basis of the above arguments, we offer the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3: The positive effect of FSB on employees' subsequent job performance is moderated by aggregate LMX. This effect is stronger for employees in groups with low aggregate LMX.

LMX differentiation represents the extent to which leaders have differentiated exchange relationships with individual followers. In groups of high LMX differentiation, leaders maintain high-quality relationships with some followers and low-quality relationships with other followers, whereas in low LMX differentiation, group leaders maintain similar LMX levels with all of their followers. As mentioned before, FSB can generate new information to improve individual performance, and research has suggested that newly obtained information may help

employees to perform comparatively better than their coworkers (Northcraft & Ashford, 1990). Under low LMX differentiation, subordinates receive the same treatment from supervisors in terms of support and resources. In this group context, every individual is given similar work information and equal access to resources when performing his or her job, and this maintains the perception of an equal playing field among employees (Erdogan & Bauer, 2010). Under this circumstance, employees may be able to perform *comparatively* better if they have access to information or resources that other group members lack. We thus expect the value of the information derived from FSB to be contingent on the degree of LMX differentiation. On the basis of these reasons, we postulate the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 4: The positive effect of FSB on employees' subsequent job performance is moderated by LMX differentiation. This effect is stronger for employees in groups with low LMX differentiation.

Method

Research Design, Sample, and Data Collection

We adopted a time-lagged design to analyze the effect of FSB on subsequent job performance. We measured the LMX, FSB, and control variables at Time 1 at the beginning of a performance period. Job performance data were collected later at Time 2, that is, the end of the performance period. We chose to study schoolteachers, whose work takes place in very well-defined semesters, because this allowed us to study employees within the same performance period and to minimize any extraneous influence on job performance due to differences in time frames. Therefore, collecting FSB data at the beginning of the semester (Time 1) and evaluating the performance at the end of the semester (Time 2) fit our research purpose.

The schoolteachers in our target sample worked within the nontertiary education system of Macao, a special administrative region located in southern China. In Macao, nontertiary education refers to kindergarten, primary education, junior secondary education, and senior secondary education. We selected 38 kindergartens, primary, and secondary schools at random from the directory of schools in Macao. We then asked the principals of the schools whether they were interested in participating in the study. Eighteen schools (9 public and 9 private) agreed to participate in the two rounds of data collection, providing a sampling frame of 952 teachers.

To mitigate the potential influence of common method variance, we collected the FSB, LMX, and performance data from three different sources. In one survey, the teachers' supervisors (vice principals, heads of departments, or subject heads, depending on the specific school arrangements) rated the teachers' FSB. In another survey, the teachers responded to a series of work-related questions, including questions about LMX with their supervisors. In the cover letter, we explained that the survey aimed to understand the teachers' work environments. We also assured respondents that all of the data collected would remain confidential; to ensure protection of the data, we provided the teachers with stamped envelopes so they could mail their answers directly to the researchers. Of the 952 teachers surveyed, 532 (55.9%) responded. To evaluate whether FSB leads to subsequent job performance, we obtained school records of the teachers' performance evaluations at the end of the semester,

that is, about 6 months after the first two surveys were completed. Of the questionnaires returned, 379 teacher and supervisor surveys from 13 schools were successfully matched with the school records, representing 25 groups of teachers and their supervisors and a 40% effective response rate. Among the 13 schools, 9 had 1 group of teachers and supervisors and others had multiple groups. The schools with 1 group were usually smaller in terms of number of classes and students, with their teachers reporting to vice principals. Schools with multiple groups were usually larger, and teachers were grouped together functionally by subjects. The average group size was 14.6 teachers.

Measures

We prepared the original questionnaire in English. However, since Chinese is the native language of almost all Macau residents, we translated the scales into Chinese using the standard back-translation procedure (Brislin, 1980).

FSB. We used the five-item scale developed by VandeWalle et al. (2000) to measure the frequency with which teachers seek feedback from their supervisors on technical aspects of their jobs, role expectations, work performance, school's values, and so forth. Supervisors rate the frequency from 1 (*almost never*) to 5 (*very frequently*). W. Lam, Huang, and Snape (2007) also adopted this scale when asking supervisors to rate their employees' FSB. The Cronbach's alpha for this scale was .92.

LMX. We used Graen and Uhl-Bien's (1995) 5-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree*; 5 = *strongly agree*) to measure the LMX. The Cronbach's alpha for this scale was .91. A sample statement intended to secure LMX information read as follows: "My supervisor understands my job's problems and needs."

Aggregate LMX and LMX differentiation. The aggregate LMX represents the average quality of exchange that leaders extend to their followers. Following Liden et al. (2006), we used the within-group median of the individual LMX scores to operationalize the aggregate LMX. LMX differentiation, on the other hand, reflects the extent of the differential treatment leaders extend to their followers. Following Liden et al. and Nishii and Mayer (2009), we used the within-group variance in the individual LMX scores to measure the LMX differentiation.

Unlike group-level constructs that require direct consensus, the aggregate LMX is a summary index construct, whereas LMX differentiation is a dispersion construct. According to Chan (1998), there is no need to demonstrate within-group agreement for both summary index and dispersion constructs (also see Kozlowski & Klein, 2000). Furthermore, LMX theory states that leader-member relationships will vary in quality within groups (Chen et al., 2007; Henderson, Liden, Glibkowski, & Chaudhry, 2009; Liden et al., 2006) so that not every member will enjoy the same quality of relationship with his or her supervisor. Therefore, researchers would not expect to find agreement within-group on individual-rated LMX scores (Ford & Seers, 2006). For this theoretical reason, researchers have used central tendency scores of individual LMX scores to measure group-level LMX constructs without demonstration of within-group agreement (e.g., Ford & Seers; Liden et al.; Nishii & Mayer,

2009). On the other hand, although LMX theory suggests differentiated relationships between leaders and followers (i.e., within-group variability or variance), there should also be a sufficient amount of between-group variance to justify the use of a group-level aggregation of LMX measure. Following Gooty and Yammarino (2016), we thus calculated the intraclass correlation, or ICC(1), of LMX at the group level. The ICC(1) of LMX is .14 in our study, and according to Bliese (2000) and James (1982), there is sufficient amount of between-group variance to warrant group-level tests involving aggregated LMX measures.

Job performance (Time 1). Job performance of teachers is evaluated by how well they handle instructional activities in schools. As mentioned before, we conducted a survey of teachers' supervisors (i.e., vice principals, heads of departments, or subject heads) at the beginning of semester. In that survey, there was one item asking the effectiveness of teachers' instructional performance on a 5-point scale. Since our study's objective is related to whether FSB affects subsequent job performance, we controlled for the teachers' job performance (i.e., Time 1) based on supervisors' ratings of this item. Doing so can rule out the impact of dispositional or relatively stable factors (e.g., personality, ability, school support and policies) influencing teachers' instructional performance level.

Job performance (Time 2). At the end of the semester, we measured teachers' job performance for the semester using data from the school records (completed by the schools' principals at the end of each semester). There is a single item in these records in which the schools used a Likert-type scale (ranging from 1–10) in their evaluations: "How well this teacher has conducted *instructional* activities inside the school."

Other control variables. In addition to job performance (Time 1), we controlled for the teachers' gender (with females coded as 0 and males as 1), professional training (with no specialized training in education coded as 1, a diploma as 2, a bachelor's degree as 3, and a master's degree or above as 4), and school tenure (number of years), as these variables may affect teacher performance. Since principals and supervisors may be more accessible in smaller schools, we also controlled for school size in terms of number of teachers.

Analytical Approach

Our design included both individual- and group-level constructs that might have affected the dependent variable. In a one-way analysis of variance, we found that the between-group variance for job performance (Time 2) was 15% and was significant ($p < .01$), and according to Hofmann (1997), hierarchical linear modeling (HLM) needs to be used to account for any group-level effect. Specifically, we analyzed our data using HLM 6 (Raudenbush, Bryk, & Congdon, 2004) and followed the analytical procedures outlined by Hofmann, by Bliese (2000), and by Zhang, Zyphur, and Preacher (2009). We created a Level 2 data set with the LMX median and LMX differentiation as group-level constructs (i.e., Level 2 variables) in addition to a Level 1 data set with FSB, LMX, and job performance as individual-level constructs (i.e., Level 1 variables). In each of the estimated HLM models, all of the variables at Level 1 were grand-mean centered, according to the suggestion of Hofmann and Gavin (1998).

Table 1
Correlations, Reliabilities, Means, and Standard Deviations for the Study Variables

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Individual Level									
1. Gender	—							0.23	0.42
2. Professional Training	.05	—						2.73	1.22
3. School Tenure	-.03	-.12*	—					9.50	8.00
4. Feedback-Seeking Behavior	.04	.07	.12*	(.92)				2.56	0.75
5. LMX	-.03	.08	-.00	.05	(.91)			3.26	0.63
6. Job Performance (Time 1)	.13**	-.01	.12*	.23*	.11*	—		3.23	0.67
7. Job Performance (Time 2)	.03	-.09†	.10†	.22**	-.01	.38**	—	7.86	1.18
Group Level									
1. Number of Teachers	—							81.12	36.94
2. LMX Median	.09	—						3.32	0.23
3. LMX Differentiation	.28	.32	—					0.58	0.17

Note: $N = 379$ (individual) and 25 (group). Cronbach's alphas are reported on the diagonal in parentheses. Per a reviewer's suggestion, we ran a correlation analysis involving the number of members with leader-member exchange (LMX) scores below/above group median and group LMX median. The correlations were .05 (n.s.) and .12 (n.s.), respectively, suggesting that LMX median is not affected by the number of low- and high-LMX members in a group.

† $p < .10$.

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

To analyze Hypothesis 1, we used the random coefficient model as recommended by Hofmann (1997) to regress job performance onto FSB, LMX, and the control variables (i.e., lagged performance, gender, professional training, and school tenure). To analyze Hypothesis 2, we added an interaction term ($FSB \times LMX$) into the previous model. According to Hofmann, evaluating Hypotheses 3 and 4 required the use of the slope-as-outcome model so that the LMX median and differentiation could be modeled to affect the Level 1 relationship between FSB and performance (i.e., cross-level moderation). To estimate the explanatory power of the Level 1 and Level 2 independent variables on the dependent variable, we calculated $R^2_{\text{within-group}}$ (the proportion of within-group variance explained by the Level 1 variables) and $R^2_{\text{between-group}}$ (the proportion of slope variance explained by the Level 2 variables) following Hofmann's suggestion.

Results

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics and correlations among the variables across the levels. As expected, the job performance measures at Times 1 and 2 are significantly correlated ($r = .38, p < .01$), and those at Time 1 are also significantly correlated with LMX and FSB ($r = .23$ and $.11$, respectively, $p < .05$). As expected, FSB is also significantly correlated with job performance at Time 2 ($r = .22, p < .01$).

Hypothesis 1 states that FSB (Time 1) is positively related to job performance (Time 2). To test this hypothesis, we ran a random coefficient regression model (Hofmann, 1997) and included the Level 1 control variables and lagged job performance. The HLM results are

Table 2
Hierarchical Linear Modeling Results for the Main Effects of Feedback-Seeking Behavior (FSB) and Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) on Job Performance (Time 2)

	Hypothesis 1			Hypothesis 2		
	Coefficient	Standard Error	<i>t</i> Ratio	Coefficient	Standard Error	<i>t</i> Ratio
Intercept β_0						
Intercept γ_{00}	7.63	0.18	43.44**	7.60	0.19	40.40**
Group-Level Control Variable						
Number of Teachers γ_{01}	0.00	0.00	1.33	0.00	0.00	1.31
Individual-Level Control Variables						
Gender β_1	-0.05	0.09	-0.56	-0.06	0.09	-0.66
Professional Training β_2	-0.02	0.03	-0.53	-0.01	0.03	-0.36
School Tenure β_3	0.00	0.01	0.12	0.00	0.01	0.41
Job Performance (Time 1) β_4	0.50	0.12	4.07**	0.50	0.12	4.16**
Independent Variables						
FSB β_5	0.27	0.13	2.13*	1.13	0.27	4.18**
LMX β_6	0.09	0.05	1.72	0.75	0.22	3.49**
FSB $\times$ LMX β_7	—	—	—	-0.25	0.08	-3.03**

Note: $N = 379$; two-tailed.

* $p < .05$.

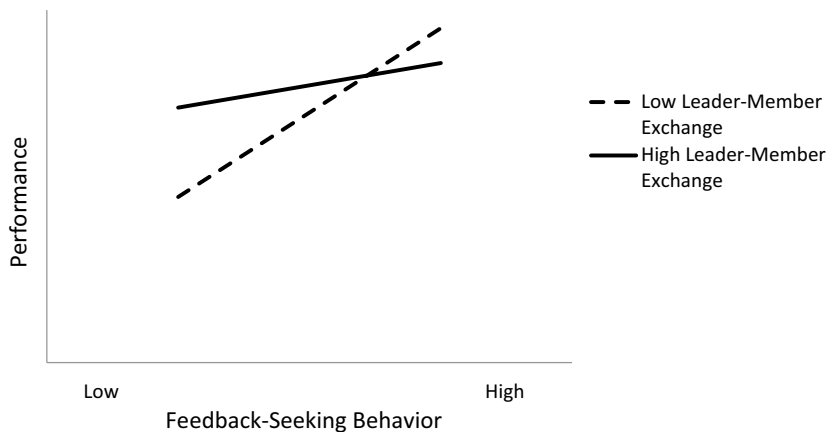
** $p < .01$.

indicated in Table 2. As the table shows, after controlling for job performance at Time 1, we found that FSB remains significantly related to job performance at Time 2 ($\beta = 0.27$, $SE = 0.13$, $p < .05$). We also followed Hofmann's procedures to compute the Level 1 job performance variance (Time 2) determined by the Level 1 variables; the result shows that $R^2_{\text{within-group}}$ is 30%. Overall, Hypothesis 1 is supported.

In Hypothesis 2, we predict that LMX moderates the effect of FSB on job performance. To test this hypothesis, we added a Level 1 interaction variable (FSB $\times$ LMX) into the previous regression model. The result of the interaction term reported in Table 2 suggests that LMX significantly moderates the relationship between FSB and job performance at Time 2 ($\beta = -0.25$, $SE = 0.08$, $p < .01$) after controlling for job performance at Time 1. In terms of the Level 1 explained variance, $R^2_{\text{within-group}}$ shows that the Level 1 interaction term (FSB $\times$ LMX) accounts for 2% of variance in job performance (Time 2). We then followed Aiken and West's (1991) study and calculated the simple slope at high LMX (1 SD above the mean LMX score) and low LMX (1 SD below the mean LMX score). The results in Figure 2 clearly indicate that the effect of FSB on job performance is more positive at low LMX ($\beta = 1.44$, $SE = 0.37$, $p < .01$) than at high LMX ($\beta = 0.81$, $SE = 0.18$, $p < .01$). These results support Hypothesis 2.

In Hypothesis 3, we predict that the LMX median moderates the effect of FSB on job performance. Because we argue that the LMX median group serves as a unique contextual variable in addition to the individual LMX, the Level 1 regression model contains FSB, LMX, LMX $\times$ FSB, and other control variables. In evaluating Hypothesis 3, we added the LMX median as a Level 2 variable to predict the intercept of the Level 1 regression model in

Figure 2
Moderation of Leader-Member Exchange on the Relationship Between Feedback-Seeking Behavior and Job Performance



Hypothesis 2 (main effect model in Table 3) and then estimated a slope-as-outcome model to evaluate the moderating effect of the LMX median (Level 2 variable) on the Level 1 relationship between FSB and LMX (moderation model in Table 3). In the slope-as-outcome model, HLM first estimates the relationship between FSB and job performance (see γ_{70} under FSB in Table 3), and the results show that the relationship is significant in both the main effect and moderation models ($\gamma_{70} = 0.82$ and 0.84 , respectively, $p < .01$). HLM then treats the slope between FSB and performance as an outcome of the LMX median (a Level 2 predictor), and the effect of cross-level moderation is represented by γ_{71} . The result indicates that the LMX median significantly moderates the relationship between FSB and job performance at Level 1 ($\gamma_{71} = -0.98$, $SE = 0.47$, $p < .05$). We also followed Hofmann's (1997) procedure to calculate the additional slope variance of the FSB-performance relationship accounted for by the LMX median. Our analysis calculated $R^2_{\text{between-group}}$ at 10%. Figure 3 shows the form of the interaction using 1 *SD* above and below the average LMX median score. As the plot shows, the FSB-performance relationship is more positive when the LMX median is low. The simple slope test also confirms this form of interaction. The simple slope of FSB is statistically significant at a low LMX median ($\gamma = 1.17$, $SE = 0.35$, $p < .01$) but insignificant at a high LMX median ($\gamma = 0.35$, $SE = 0.22$, n.s.). Therefore, Hypothesis 3 is supported.

In Hypothesis 4, we predict that LMX differentiation moderates the effect of FSB on job performance. We followed the same procedure used to test Hypothesis 3 and estimated a slope-as-outcome model in HLM to evaluate the moderating effect of LMX differentiation (Level 2 variable) on the Level 1 relationship between FSB and performance (Hofmann, 1997). As shown in Table 4, the slope between FSB and job performance is significant in both the main effect and moderation models ($\gamma_{70} = 0.81$ and 0.80 , respectively, $p < .01$). Although the negative moderating effect of LMX differentiation is consistent with our expectation ($\gamma_{71} = -1.14$, $SE = 0.61$), its effect on the slope between FSB and performance is not statistically significant. Therefore, Hypothesis 4 is not supported.

Table 3
Hierarchical Linear Modeling Results for the Main and Moderating Effects of the Leader-Member Exchange Median on Job Performance (Time 2)

	Hypothesis 3					
	Main effect			Moderation		
	Coefficient	Standard Error	<i>t</i> Ratio	Coefficient	Standard Error	<i>t</i> Ratio
Intercept β_0						
Intercept γ_{00}	7.47	0.14	54.58**	7.48	0.14	53.94**
Group-Level Control Variables						
Number of Teachers γ_{01}	0.01	0.00	2.51*	0.01	0.00	1.77
LMX Median γ_{02}	-0.46	0.49	-0.95	-0.54	0.51	-1.05
Individual-Level Control Variables						
Gender β_1	-0.07	0.09	-0.75	-0.08	0.09	-0.83
Professional Training β_2	-0.02	0.03	-0.51	-0.01	0.03	-0.46
School Tenure β_3	0.00	0.01	0.48	0.00	0.01	0.57
Job Performance (Time 1) β_4	0.47	0.13	3.79**	0.47	0.13	3.73**
Independent Variables						
LMX β_5	0.52	0.15	3.46**	0.50	0.15	3.40**
FSB $\times$ LMX β_6	-0.16	0.06	-2.67*	-0.15	0.06	-2.68*
FSB β_7						
Intercept γ_{70}	0.82	0.24	3.36**	0.84	0.24	3.47**
LMX Median γ_{71}	—	—	—	-0.98	0.47	-2.08*

Note: $N = 379$; two-tailed. FSB = feedback-seeking behavior; LMX = leader-member exchange.

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

Figure 3
Cross-Level Moderation of the Leader-Member Exchange Median on the Relationship Between Feedback-Seeking Behavior and Job Performance

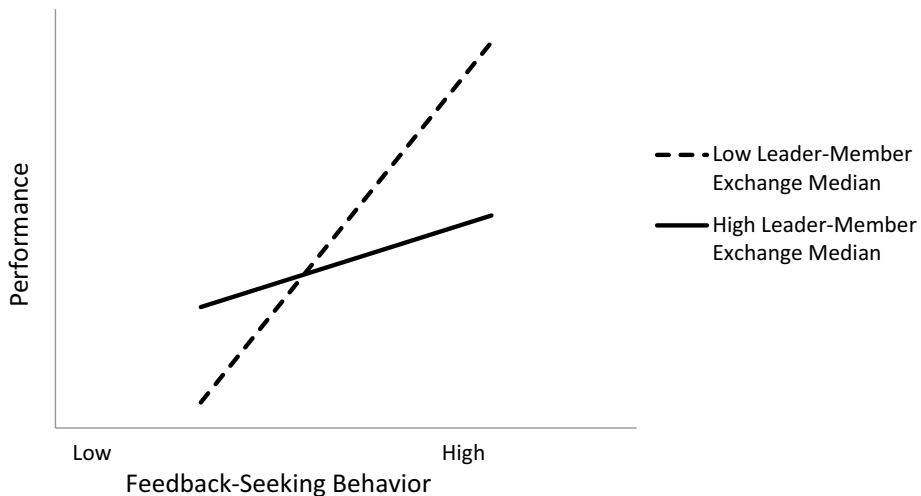


Table 4
Hierarchical Linear Modeling Results for the Main and Moderating Effects of
Leader-Member Exchange Differentiation on Job Performance (Time 2)

	Hypothesis 4					
	Main Effect			Moderation		
	Coefficient	Standard Error	<i>t</i> Ratio	Coefficient	Standard Error	<i>t</i> Ratio
Intercept β_0						
Intercept γ_{00}	7.47	0.14	54.80**	7.46	0.14	55.31**
Group-Level Control Variables						
Number of Teachers	0.01	0.00	2.35*	0.01	0.00	2.37*
LMX Differentiation γ_{01}	0.03	0.78	0.04	-0.07	0.79	-0.09
Individual-Level Control Variables						
Gender β_1	-0.07	0.09	-0.77	-0.07	0.09	-0.79
Professional Training β_2	-0.02	0.03	-0.50	-0.02	0.03	-0.50
School Tenure β_3	0.00	0.01	0.47	0.00	0.01	0.50
Job Performance (Time 1) β_4	0.47	0.13	3.73**	0.47	0.12	3.79**
Independent Variables						
LMX β_5	0.51	0.15	3.39**	0.51	0.15	3.48**
FSB $\times$ LMX β_6	-0.16	0.06	-2.56*	-0.15	0.06	-2.48*
FSB β_7						
Intercept γ_{70}	0.81	0.26	3.13**	0.80	0.26	3.10**
LMX Differentiation γ_{71}	—	—	—	-1.14	0.61	-1.87

Note: $N = 379$; two-tailed. FSB = feedback-seeking behavior; LMX = leader-member exchange.

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

Discussion

The goal of FSB is to obtain feedback information that is unavailable to employees through regular organizational channels. As long as FSB allows employees to acquire quality feedback information, employees can be expected to use it to change their work behavior and thereby attain their work goals and improve their job performance (Ashford & Tsui, 1991). This study adopts the interactionist perspective of fit to examine the influence of the context of FSB on its effectiveness in helping employees improve their performance. Using LMX theory and considering the information-ceiling and strong-ties effects, we are able to explain why LMX relations manifested at both individual and group levels affect the FSB-performance relationship. We find evidence to support our contention that because individuals who already report high LMX may have ample information from supervisors, they are limited by the information-ceiling effect in affecting their job performance through FSB. Their strong ties with supervisors also suggest that although they obtain information from supervisors through FSB, the information is more likely to be redundant rather than novel; thus, its effect on performance is minimal. In groups with high aggregate LMX, individual efforts to search for new information through FSB may be unsuccessful as a result of the convergence of viewpoints among team members. In such a context, we also find FSB to be

less effective in influencing job performance. However, our study shows that when the feedback information is generally less abundant, as in contexts characterized by low LMX and low aggregate LMX, FSB is an effective strategy for significantly influencing job performance. Although we contend that when LMX differentiation is low, FSB can help employees obtain information to gain a competitive edge over their coworkers, our empirical evidence does not support this contention.

Limitations of Our Study

Before the contributions and implications of this study can be discussed further, its limitations must be noted. First, we were unable to monitor FSB during the semester. Some teachers might have actively sought feedback after the beginning of the semester, which would potentially affect the validity of our results. However, the majority of our respondents were experienced teachers with an average tenure of 9.5 years. They received formal performance feedback at the end of the previous semester and knew where they stood at the beginning of the semester under investigation, that is, the most crucial time for them to consider how to improve their performance. Indeed the low-average value of FSB in our study (2.56 on a 5-point scale) is also consistent with prior research findings regarding individuals' reluctance to engage in such proactive behavior to avoid damaging their self-image (e.g., Ashford et al., 2003; Levy et al., 1995; Northcraft & Ashford, 1990; Williams et al., 1999). Thus, although we were unable to monitor their FSB during the semester, we believe our results remain valid. In addition, as a result of the voluntary nature of our study, we had little control over the teachers who participated in the survey. However, there is no reason to expect that the teachers' participation was affected by their school performance, as we collected their instructional ratings 6 months after they completed the surveys.

Second, we examined job performance as a dependent variable only. Although job performance is clearly the most important dependent variable in the feedback and FSB literature, we may not be able to generalize the results of this study to other job outcomes. Future research may usefully investigate the potential effect of FSB on other outcomes, such as job satisfaction, turnover intention, and contextual performance. Feedback quality is another variable worth considering when examining the effectiveness of FSB. As FSB involves both feedback seekers and providers, the quality of the feedback should also depend on the ability and willingness of the providers when employees engage in the proactive strategy of obtaining new information.

Third, to analyze whether FSB affects job performance, we used the schools' teaching performance records, which are single-item measures, and we cannot calculate the internal consistency reliability estimate. Fortunately, we were able to obtain additional performance data of some schools, which allowed us to estimate the reliability of our performance measure collected at Time 2. Specifically, in this smaller sample ($n = 179$), principals rated an item concerning the "overall contribution to the school" of individual teachers over the same period of our study. We computed the correlation between this item and the Time 2 performance measure of teachers. The correlation is .90, which is an indication that our Time 2 performance measure is reliable. Furthermore, we believe our single-item performance measure should offer good validity for the following reasons. According to Newman, Kinney, and Farr, performance-rating accuracy refers "to the degree to which the judgment made by

a rater represents the actual performance of the target” (2004: 375-376). These authors further suggest that the accuracy of a performance evaluation provided by raters depends on their opportunities to observe the ratees’ behavior, their familiarity with the performance domain and rating format, their understanding of the behavior that comprises performance, and the accountability of the ratings. In our sample, the teachers’ job performance was rated by principals, who certainly had ample opportunities to observe the teachers’ behavior and had a good understanding of teachers’ instructional performance. Because these ratings are important parts of the teachers’ personnel records, the principals are held responsible (i.e., high accountability). For these reasons, we expect principals to provide accurate performance ratings for teachers. Future research, however, may consider using multi-item measures and multisource ratings of job performance to evaluate the effectiveness of FSB (for a review of multisource ratings, see Atwater, Ostroff, Yammarino, & Fleenor, 1998; Braddy, Gooty, Fleenor, & Yammarino, 2014).

Finally, as mentioned previously, we controlled for Time 1 job performance in our analyses in order to rule out the impact of dispositional factors on Time 2 job performance. Since we had principals’ ratings of teachers’ job performance at the end of the semester only (i.e., Time 2 job performance), we used supervisors’ ratings at the beginning of the semester as a measure of teachers’ job performance in Time 1. Such design limitation (performance ratings from different sources) may introduce additional error variance in our estimation and result in more conservative tests of the statistical estimates. Thus, we reason that the significant findings of our study are less likely to be affected by this limitation. Moreover, although the sources of ratings were different, both principals and teachers’ immediate supervisors were asked to evaluate the same aspect of teachers’ job performance in terms of instructional activities. Supervisors and principals were required to hold regular visits to classrooms and examine students’ assignments and tests every semester. Thus, we expect both supervisors’ and principals’ ratings to be accurate measures of teachers’ job performance at Time 1 and Time 2, respectively, according to the Newman et al. (2004) criteria of performance-rating accuracy. While we expect our results to hold despite this design limitation, we will still encourage future research of FSB to consider asking same raters to provide job performance ratings in multiple time periods if researchers are interested in changes of job performance over time.

Implications of This Study and Future Research

Despite these limitations, we believe our results make several contributions to the literature. First, our findings enrich our understanding of how FSB affects job performance. The primary goal of FSB is to obtain useful feedback, which is essentially information used by employees to correct mistakes and accomplish work goals. The need for information is particularly salient when individuals face uncertainty and equivocality in the work environment (Daft & Lengel, 1986; Morrison, 1993). By considering the information-ceiling and strong-ties effects, our study shows when FSB can close the information gap for employees and when employees can get the most out of new information. As long as these conditions are met, FSB will be an effective information-seeking strategy for employees, allowing them to enhance their job performance (De Stobbeleir et al., 2011; Morrison; Renn & Fedor, 2001).

By identifying when FSB can influence job performance positively, our study also demonstrates that the FSB-performance relationship is contextual rather than universal; it depends on the extent of LMX and aggregate LMX. Such findings enhance our understanding of when FSB can help individuals to achieve fit in the organization through information seeking and better performance. Parker and Collins (2010) recently argued that FSB belongs to a class of strategic behavior that allows employees to proactively scan their environment and change their individual fit to match the organizational environment. By relating FSB to fit, Parker and Collins provided a theoretical underpinning for why FSB can help individuals to adapt their personal and career development, an important area of the FSB literature (Ashford et al., 2003). Our study contributes to this research by specifying the individual and group contexts in which FSB helps individuals to ensure a fit between themselves and their organizational environment when there is insufficient information.

In addition to the relationship between supervisors and subordinates, our examination of aggregate LMX shows how group context can be another important feedback-seeking context for employees who are considering using FSB to improve their job performance. Groups are unique in terms of information seeking and processing because group members exchange viewpoints and shape others' perceptions through interpersonal sharing (Nishi & Mayer, 2009). When teams are able to reach a consensus through shared perceptions, they can collaborate and work together effectively (e.g., Bliese & Britt, 2001). However, our findings show that an individual's FSB in such a context is actually less effective, as it may not lead to any novel information as a result of perception convergence (Ford & Seers, 2006). By defining the social contexts in which FSB is more effective at acquiring new and useful information, our study's findings are useful for employees who are considering adopting this proactive strategy (De Stobbeleir et al., 2011; Parker & Collins, 2010).

Our findings also contribute to the LMX literature. Although Bolino and Turnley (2009) reasoned that employees with low LMX can engage in proactive behavior to overcome their deprived status, there has been little empirical evidence to support their contention. Compared with high-LMX employees, low-LMX employees face a daily work context characterized by less resource-based support and information flow from their direct supervisors (Harris, Li, & Kirkman, 2014; Sparrowe & Liden, 2005) so that they may experience considerable uncertainty about their value and future in organizations (Sparrowe & Liden). Prior research has shown low-LMX employees to be particularly sensitive to organizational-level information, such as work-value congruence (Erdogan et al., 2004) and organizational justice/politics (Rosen et al., 2011). Although both studies suggested that low-LMX employees will attend to organizational information more (i.e., monitoring), our study goes one step further by showing that in such contexts, employees can improve their performance by proactively and directly seeking for information (i.e., inquiry).

Despite the empirical support for the moderating role of LMX and aggregate LMX, we find little evidence to support the moderating effect of LMX differentiation, perhaps because of the specific situation of our sample. Our hypothesis is based on the deduction that in groups of low LMX differentiation, FSB towards supervisors may allow employees to perform comparatively better because they have access to information that others do not have. However, this comparative advantage may be less important for teachers because unlike occupations in which there are high levels of competition among employees, teachers do not compete directly with each other. Thus, LMX differentiation may have a smaller effect on

our sample than on others. A careful examination of our results indicates that although it is not statistically significant, the interaction term is in the expected direction.¹ Instead of ruling out this hypothesis, future research should reconsider the effect of LMX differentiation in work settings in which there are high levels of competitive intensity (e.g., sales representatives). Under such circumstances, the additional information employees obtained from FSB may have a stronger impact on their job performance.

Finally, our study points to an important practical implication: On the basis of our results, we believe that employees who have low LMX with their supervisors can overcome this disadvantage if they proactively seek feedback information and concentrate on using the information to improve their performance. In addition, supervisors should provide accurate feedback to low-LMX employees when they ask for it. For such employees, concentrating on job-related feedback is a practical way to improve not only their immediate performance but also the supervisor-subordinate relationship and trust in the long run (L. W. Lam et al., 2013).

Conclusions

FSB is a personal proactive strategy to obtain job-related information that would otherwise be unavailable. When such information is required, proactive feedback seeking can be beneficial for employees, allowing them to fit themselves to the organizational environment. In this study, we investigate individual and group LMX and show that leader-member relationships are an important aspect of feedback-seeking contexts and can determine when FSB is an effective information-seeking strategy for employees seeking to improve their job performance.

Note

1. Liden et al. (2006) suggested that there is a need to account for LMX median when analyzing the impact of LMX differentiation. When we removed the control of LMX and replaced it with LMX median in the relevant HLM equations, the interaction term of LMX Differentiation $\times$ FSB became marginally significant ($\gamma_{71} = -1.52, p < .10$). We thank the reviewer for offering this suggestion.

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