

Leader Arrogance and Subordinate Outcomes: the Role of Feedback Processes

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Abstract

Purpose The purpose of this study was to investigate the association between leader arrogance on subordinate outcomes of feedback seeking, morale, and burnout through its relationships with subordinate feedback environment perceptions. Additionally, perceived organizational support and subordinate feedback orientation are examined as moderators that influence the degree to which leader arrogance exerts its effects on these outcomes.

Design/Methodology/Approach Survey data were obtained from 302 participants on Amazon's Mechanical Turk website and analyzed using Hayes' (2013) PROCESS in SPSS.

Findings Subordinates with more arrogant supervisors reported less favorable feedback environment perceptions, and subsequently, lower levels of feedback seeking, morale, and higher levels of burnout. Perceived organizational support and feedback orientation were identified as significant moderators in these relationships. Subordinates were less vulnerable to the negative outcomes of leader arrogance when they experienced higher levels of perceived organizational support. Finally, subordinates with favorable feedback orientations exhibited lower levels of feedback seeking in the face of the unfavorable feedback environments associated with arrogant leaders.

Implications Given these findings, leader arrogance should be of great concern to organizations, as subordinates exposed to arrogant leaders are likely to experience adverse outcomes. Supplementing perceptions of organizational support may help alleviate some of these effects. Additionally, subordinates with favorable feedback orientations may be particularly vulnerable to the effects of leader arrogance on outcomes of feedback seeking and morale.

Originality/Value This study is the first to demonstrate the interpersonal implications of leader arrogance for subordinates, as well as explore mediators that play a role in these relationships.

Keywords Workplace arrogance · Leadership · Feedback environment · Mediation

Our experiences in the workplace are strongly influenced by our leaders and supervisors. Research has shown that supervisor behaviors and leadership styles can have a profound impact on a wide range of outcomes for subordinates, including their feedback-seeking behavior, burnout, morale, job satisfaction, and commitment to their organization (Jackson, Rossi, Hoover, & Johnson, 2012; Locke, 1976; Levy, Cober, & Miller, 2002; Seltzer & Numerof, 1988; Vandenberghe, Bentein, & Stinglhamber, 2004). Furthermore, according to Maertz and Kmitta (2012), poor management and manager conflicts are two of the most frequent reasons that employees decide to leave organizations—as the saying goes, employees don't quit their company, they quit their boss. Given the influential role of leaders in determining these outcomes, it is critical to understand what types of behaviors define effective and ineffective leadership, as well as the specific outcomes associated with various leader behaviors and characteristics.

Workplace arrogance is of particular importance in the study of leadership. Though largely unexplored in the empirical

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literature, arrogance has been identified as a significant problem in the American workforce (Silverman, Johnson, McConnell, & Carr, 2012). Further, as Ma and Karri (2005) point out, it is relatively common for leaders in various organizations to exhibit high levels of workplace arrogance, which can often lead to personal and organizational failures. Anecdotal evidence suggests that these individuals' behaviors cause interpersonal stress for colleagues and can have a pervasive negative impact on employees' experiences in the workplace (Silverman et al., 2012).

A recent study conducted by Johnson et al. (2010) defined workplace arrogance and identified some outcomes involving arrogant individuals themselves; however, no research to date has examined how other individuals in the workplace are affected. Therefore, the current study aims to expand on the findings of Johnson et al. (2010) by examining how the behaviors of arrogant leaders predict important outcomes for their subordinates. Specifically, a model is proposed in order to determine the extent to which leader arrogance predicts employee morale, feedback seeking, and burnout through feedback environment perceptions (see Fig. 1). Additionally, perceived organizational support and subordinate feedback orientation are examined as potential moderators in the association between leader arrogance and these outcomes.

Workplace Arrogance

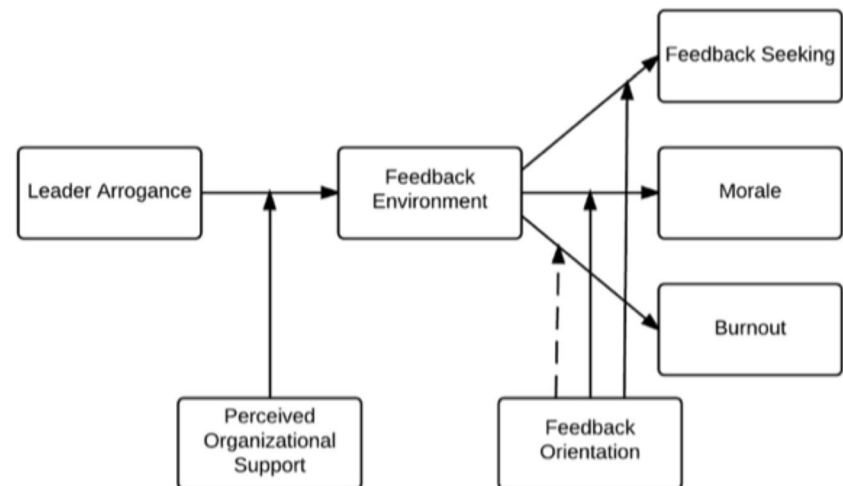
Johnson et al. (2010) define workplace arrogance as an individual's tendency to engage in behaviors that convey an exaggerated sense of superiority. For example, arrogant

individuals place little value on other people's ideas and input, discount feedback, claim to be more knowledgeable than others, and sometimes publicly belittle and disparage those around them to exaggerate their own self-importance. Additionally, even though their behaviors appear to express their inflated self-concepts, such behaviors are unwarranted, as these individuals tend to exhibit lower levels of self-esteem, cognitive ability, and job performance (Johnson et al., 2010).

Arrogance is defined by its tendency to manifest itself in interpersonal interactions (Johnson et al., 2010; Silverman et al., 2012). Research has shown that highly arrogant individuals tend to exhibit higher levels of dominance, anger, superiority, vanity, and entitlement, and lower levels of humility and agreeableness than their non-arrogant counterparts (Johnson et al., 2010). It is generally difficult and uncomfortable to communicate or interact with these individuals, and research has indicated that arrogance provokes negative reactions from other people. Specifically, arrogant individuals are less likely to be respected or liked, and their peers are more inclined to perceive them as deserving of failure (Johnson et al., 2010; Kowalski, Walker, Wilkinson, Queen, & Sharpe, 2003; Leary, Bednarski, Hammon, & Duncan, 1997).

It is important to note that workplace arrogance is fundamentally defined by a constellation of work-related behaviors (Johnson et al., 2010). The construct was initially developed based on focus groups in which participants were asked to describe the various behaviors in which coworkers engage. Workplace arrogance is therefore primarily behavioral in nature, and the measure was developed specifically for arrogance that is exhibited in the workplace and not arrogance in general. The behavioral basis of workplace arrogance distinguishes it from

Fig. 1 Visual representation of the proposed model



Note: —→ Supported hypothesized relationship
 - - -> Unsupported hypothesized relationship

Hypothesis 3b, predicting that feedback orientation moderates the feedback environment-morale relationship was not significant ($p = .051$).

other similar constructs. Johnson et al. (2010) showed that workplace arrogance was positively related to dominance ($r = .56$ and $.46$ in the student and employee samples, respectively, $p < .01$) and anger ($r = .44$ for both, $p < .05$), and negatively related to humility ($r = -.28$ and $-.30$, $p < .01$) and agreeableness ($r = -.57$ and $-.51$, $p < .01$). In general, arrogance tended to be positively yet weakly related to the narcissism subscales: superiority ($r = .22$ and $.14$, $p < .05$), entitlement ($r = .17$, $p < .05$, and $.08$, *ns*), vanity ($r = .17$ for both, $p < .05$), authority ($r = .03$ and $-.06$, *ns*), self-sufficiency ($r = .03$ and $.02$, *ns*), and exploitiveness ($r = .21$ and $.13$, $p < .05$). Arrogance was negatively related to individual-directed organizational citizenship behaviors (OCB-I; $r = -.35$ and $-.31$, $p < .01$) and organization-directed organizational citizenship behaviors (OCB-O; $r = -.50$ for both, $p < .01$). Furthermore, using regression analyses, it was found that arrogance accounted for significant incremental variance in OCB-I and OCB-O beyond narcissism.

Additionally, as pointed out by Silverman, Shyamsunder, and Johnson (2007), arrogance is less clinical, narrower, and more interpersonal in nature than narcissism. Arrogance lacks the clinical connotations denoted by narcissism. Narcissism is typically assessed using Raskin and Hall's (1979) Narcissistic Personality Inventory, which was developed based on the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM III). Arrogance, on the other hand, reflects more commonplace yet more frequent workplace manifestations of inflated self-importance. Thus, while narcissists may tend to exhibit interpersonal behaviors that are likely to undermine subordinate feedback-seeking processes, arrogant leaders are defined specifically by their tendency to engage in aversive interpersonal behaviors. In this sense, workplace arrogance is therefore likely to have a stronger impact on subordinate outcomes compared to narcissism.

Additionally, workplace arrogance can be distinguished from the construct of abusive supervision. In particular, while arrogant leaders may sometimes exhibit abusive behaviors, abusive supervision encompasses only one small subset of the behaviors associated with arrogant leadership. Specifically, while both abusive supervisors and arrogant leaders may exhibit behaviors such as ridiculing or criticizing someone in front of others or belittling employees publicly, arrogant leadership may manifest itself in a variety of behaviors completely independent of abusive supervision (Johnson et al., 2010; Tepper, 2000). For example, arrogant leaders may be seen as acting in ways that convey their belief that they know better than everyone else in any given situation, making decisions that impact others without listening to their input, asserting authority in situations where they lack the required information, and disregarding constructive feedback (Johnson et al., 2010). In this sense, leader arrogance can manifest itself in much more subtle ways compared with abusive supervisors, whose behaviors include more overt interpersonal behaviors, such as ridiculing others, telling someone their thoughts or feelings are stupid, invading one's privacy, preventing subordinates from interacting with coworkers, and lying (Tepper, 2000).

Given the aversive behaviors associated with leader arrogance, it is not hard to imagine the difficulties faced by employees working under the supervision of an arrogant leader. Furthermore, these interpersonal conflicts and negative interactions could contribute to subordinate burnout. However, these relationships have not yet been evaluated in the empirical literature. Therefore, the current study aims not only to identify implications of leader arrogance for employees, but also to identify mediators implicated in these relationships. Specifically, we anticipate that leader arrogance will predict lower levels of feedback seeking and morale, and higher levels of burnout in subordinates, through the feedback environment (see Fig. 1). These relationships will be discussed further in the following sections.

Leader Arrogance, Subordinate Outcomes, and the Role of the Feedback Environment

Leader Arrogance and the Feedback Environment

Steelman, Levy, and Snell (2004) define the feedback environment as the contextual and situational aspects of daily feedback processes occurring within supervisor-subordinate or co-worker-co-worker dyads, which determine the manner in which individuals pursue, react to, and use feedback they experience at work. Several studies have shown that it is important to cultivate favorable feedback environments by demonstrating the positive outcomes associated with these climates. Favorable feedback environments are associated with higher levels of role clarity, job satisfaction, higher quality supervisor-subordinate relationships, higher quality coaching relationships, and increased workplace well-being; employees tend to engage in more organizational citizenship behavior towards coworkers and the organization, exhibit higher levels of affective commitment to the organization, are absent from work less frequently, exhibit lower levels of turnover intentions, and generally receive higher performance ratings (Anseel & Lievens, 2007; Gregory & Levy, 2011; Norris-Watts & Levy, 2004; Peng & Chiu, 2010; Rosen, Levy, & Hall, 2006; Sparr & Sonnentag, 2008; Whitaker, Dahling, & Levy, 2007).

The theoretical and empirical work outlined above suggests that favorable feedback environments are related to a variety of desirable outcomes. For this reason, it is important to understand what factors contribute to the formation of a positive feedback environment. When developing the Feedback Environment Scale, Steelman and colleagues identified separate co-worker and supervisor factors that constitute the feedback environment, which are manifested in seven distinct facets: (1) the perceived credibility of the feedback source, (2) the quality of the feedback that is available, (3) the tactfulness of the feedback delivery, (4) the frequency of favorable feedback, (5) the frequency of unfavorable feedback, (6) the extent to which the feedback source is

available and accessible, and (7) the source's promotion and encouragement of feedback seeking.

Research suggests that leader arrogance could be an important factor associated with the favorability of the feedback environment. First, research has indicated that arrogant individuals have a negative attitude towards feedback. They are likely to disregard the feedback of those around them and avoid seeking feedback from others (Johnson et al., 2010). They are also less likely to engage in extra-role behaviors directed towards others, such as helping others or mentoring junior colleagues (Silverman et al., 2012). This suggests that arrogant individuals might be less inclined towards giving feedback or emphasizing developmental activities, which would be reflected in employee perceptions of a negative feedback environment.

Second, the interpersonal difficulties associated with arrogance tend to make interactions with these individuals especially uncomfortable. According to Silverman and colleagues, arrogant individuals are "likely to cultivate poisonous social climates" (2012, p. 24), which could be expected to make feedback processes unpleasant. Furthermore, the qualities and behaviors that characterize those who are arrogant could be expected to influence the factors that contribute to the feedback environment.

For example, employees tend to rate the feedback environment as being more favorable when they perceive their supervisor as providing high quality feedback in a tactful and considerate manner (Steelman et al., 2004). Employees are also more likely to perceive the feedback environment positively when they view their supervisor as credible, trustworthy, and fair. However, arrogant individuals tend to exhibit poor performance and low cognitive ability (Johnson et al., 2010) which may detract from the extent to which their subordinates perceive them as being credible or capable of providing high quality feedback. Similarly, arrogant leaders tend to deliver feedback that publicly belittles employees, rejects others' ideas, and makes unrealistic demands of others, which could minimize the extent to which subordinates trust them (Johnson et al., 2010). Ultimately, the behaviors associated with workplace arrogance could be expected to relate negatively to the factors that contribute to the development of the feedback environment.

Subordinate Outcomes

Additionally, through its association with the feedback environment, leader arrogance is likely to indirectly predict subordinate outcomes that have been identified as critical to organizational effectiveness. In particular, arrogant leadership likely predicts lower levels of feedback seeking and morale, and higher levels of burnout among subordinates.

Feedback Seeking According to Ashford and Cummings (1983), feedback guides skill development and provides diagnostic performance information in a way that directs employees'

energy towards organizational goals. However, individuals are not passive recipients of feedback, but rather, they actively seek information about their performance available within their environments. Specifically, according to Ashford and Cummings (1983), individuals consciously and actively compare the costs and benefits of feedback seeking when deciding whether to seek. Ultimately, if the benefits outweigh the costs, it is more likely that an individual will seek feedback.

In this sense, arrogant behaviors such as public criticism and belittlement of others would likely make seeking feedback from an arrogant leader be perceived as having a high cost, as feedback from these individuals will likely provide upsetting, emotionally charged information, damage one's ego, and embarrass the recipient. Therefore, feedback from arrogant leaders is likely to be perceived as inherently costly. Additionally, theory and research suggest that individuals are more likely to seek feedback from sources they perceive as credible (Ashford, Blatt, & Vandewalle, 2003; Hays & Williams, 2011; Vancouver & Morrison, 1995). Arrogant leaders are likely to be perceived as especially unreliable sources of performance information, as these individuals exhibit poor performance and low cognitive ability themselves (Johnson et al., 2010). Ultimately, this likely contributes to perceptions of arrogant leaders as unable to provide valuable developmental information.

Finally, extensive research has shown that individuals seek feedback from their supervisor and coworkers less frequently if they are working in an unfavorable feedback environment (Dahling, Chau, & O'Malley, 2012; Steelman et al., 2004; Whitaker et al., 2007). As described above, theory suggests that leader arrogance will be negatively associated with subordinate perceptions of the supervisor feedback environment. Additionally, employees who are exposed to feedback environments characterized by infrequent, tactless, and overly harsh feedback from supervisors that lacks diagnostic value are likely to perceive feedback seeking as highly costly and of minimal value. Therefore, subordinates working for an arrogant supervisor will likely exhibit lower levels of feedback seeking.

Morale In addition to its impact on subordinate feedback seeking, leader arrogance also likely predicts subordinate morale through the feedback environment. Morale is typically conceptualized as a combination of two employee attitudes (Harrison, Newman, & Roth, 2006; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Paine, & Bachrach, 2000; Rosen et al., 2006). The first component of morale, affective commitment, is generally defined as one's "identification with, involvement in, and emotional attachment to the organization" (Allen & Meyer, 1996, p. 253). Morale also encompasses job satisfaction, or the enjoyable, positive affective state that results from the assessment of one's job or experiences at work (Locke, 1976). It is important to understand the association between leader arrogance and subordinate morale, because morale is of paramount

importance to organizations and has been shown to predict a variety of positive outcomes. For example, Harrison et al. (2006) demonstrated that morale significantly predicted overall performance effectiveness among employees, conceptualized as their in-role and extra-role performance, as well as withdrawal behaviors of lateness, absenteeism, and turnover.

Given the outcomes associated with morale in the workplace, it is important to understand how leader arrogance may hinder its development. Specifically, Job Characteristics Theory suggests that feedback from the job itself is supplemented by feedback from others and provides employees with knowledge of the results of their efforts at work, and therefore predicts organizational commitment and job satisfaction (Hackman & Oldham, 1975; Humphrey, Nahrgang, & Morgeson, 2007), the two major components of morale in the workplace (Harrison et al., 2006). Although employees would likely prefer to be told how well they are performing, feedback that they are not achieving their goals and specifics about what to do or change to improve performance is valued and can lead to satisfaction (especially with goal progress improvement). Thus, frequent feedback (positive or negative) can be motivational and satisfying (Gregory & Levy, 2015; Sommer & Kulkarni, 2012). Additionally, Humphrey et al. (2007) demonstrated that both motivational characteristics identified by Hackman and Oldham, as well as these social characteristics predict the two components of morale: job satisfaction and organizational commitment. It therefore stands to reason that a supportive feedback environment characterized by frequent feedback, as well as supportive and congenial interactions surrounding those feedback exchanges would predict higher levels of morale among employees.

Research has supported this proposition, identifying the importance of feedback environment in predicting higher levels of morale in the workplace. For instance, Rosen and colleagues determined that supportive feedback environments predict higher levels of morale (Rosen et al., 2006). Similarly, research has shown that the feedback environment also predicts each of the components of morale individually, with favorable feedback environment perceptions predicting higher levels of affective organizational commitment (Norris-Watts & Levy, 2004) and job satisfaction (Anseel & Lievens, 2007; Sparr & Sonnentag, 2008). Therefore, the unfavorable supervisor feedback environment associated with arrogant leaders will likely predict lower levels of morale among employees.

Burnout Lastly, theory suggests that the feedback environment associated with arrogant leaders should have negative implications for subordinate burnout. Burnout is a type of chronic strain that results from extended exposure to high stress working conditions (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001). Those who experience burnout tend to exhibit emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment.

Employees who experience burnout are more vulnerable to health problems, including headaches, cardiovascular

problems, and stomach aches (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). These individuals are also absent from work more frequently, exhibit lower levels of job performance, and report overall lower levels of life satisfaction (Bakker, Demerouti, de Boer, & Schaufeli, 2003; Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2003; Bakker, Demerouti, & Verbeke, 2004; Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001).

We conceptualize the feedback environment as a critical precursor to burnout, as it may alleviate job demands and supplement job resources. Specifically, favorable feedback environments are purported to make employees' work less stressful and demanding, thus alleviating their experience of burnout. Employees exposed to favorable feedback environments experience higher levels of role clarity, lower levels of role ambiguity, and lower levels of perceptions of politics within the workplace (Peng & Chiu, 2010; Rosen et al., 2006). Additionally, they have access to supervisor support and favorable relationships, coaching, as well as frequent useful feedback that serves as a resource in coping with stressors, therefore protecting against burnout (Anseel & Lievens, 2007; Gregory & Levy, 2011; Steelman et al., 2004). Furthermore, Peng and Chiu (2010) assessed this relationship directly, demonstrating that employees who perceived a high quality supervisor feedback environment reported experiencing lower levels of role stressors and lower levels of burnout.

Based on the above evidence, we propose that leader arrogance predicts less favorable levels of feedback-seeking behavior, morale, and burnout through the feedback environment. As previously discussed, although no clear empirical evidence exists, theory does suggest the potential for leader arrogance to negatively predict feedback environment perceptions, which in turn, have been shown to predict lower levels of feedback seeking and morale, and higher levels of burnout among subordinates (see Fig. 1). Therefore, the following is hypothesized:

Hypothesis 1: Perceptions of the feedback environment mediate the relationships between leader arrogance and (a) feedback seeking, (b) morale, and (c) burnout among subordinates.

The Role of Perceived Organizational Support

According to Organizational Support Theory, perceived organizational support is a product of individuals' tendencies to personify and ascribe humanlike attributes to the organization within which they work (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Ultimately, these beliefs manifest themselves in what is referred to as perceived organizational support (POS), or the extent to which employees believe that the organization values their contributions and is concerned with their well-being (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986). Typically associated with Blau's Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964), the concept of POS is based on the idea that

when employees believe that the organization is committed to them, they are more inclined to reciprocate by promoting the interests of the organization and working to fulfill its goals (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002).

In support of this notion, POS has been shown to predict a variety of positive organizational outcomes. Specifically, when employees perceive that their organization supports them, they are more likely to alter their behavior in response to negative feedback, exhibit high levels of in-role performance, and to engage in organizational citizenship behaviors (Chiang & Hseis, 2012; McCarthy & Garavan, 2006; Neves & Eisenberger, 2012). POS is also associated with lower levels of absenteeism, turnover intentions, turnover, and withdrawal behavior (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Eisenberger, Stinglhamber, Vandenberghe, Sucharski, & Rhoades, 2002; Newman, Thanacoody, & Hui, 2012; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002; Tuzun & Kalemci, 2011).

However, the positive effects of POS have not been limited to the organization. In fact, POS has been shown to predict the psychological state of individual employees. Specifically, employees who report high levels of POS are more likely to identify with, trust, and remain affectively committed to the organization (DeConinck, 2010; Edwards & Peccei, 2010; Newman et al., 2012). These individuals also generally report being in a more positive mood, more satisfied with their job (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002) and with their career as a whole (Karatepe, 2011). They are also more likely to expect positive outcomes as a result of their hard work (Eisenberger et al., 1986), and they are less likely to experience emotional exhaustion and depersonalization (Jawahar, Stone, & Kisamore, 2007).

Given the favorable correlates of POS, research has begun to shed light on the various factors that promote POS within an organization. According to Levinson (1965), employees personify the organization, perceiving the behaviors of various organizational representatives as behaviors of the organization itself. With that in mind, the supervisor is one of the most significant contributors to employee perceptions of the organization as a whole, and therefore, to POS (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002; Neves & Eisenberger, 2012). However, it is also important to note that even though individuals are generally more likely to perceive the organization as supportive when their supervisors are communicative and cooperative, supervisor behaviors do not always influence POS. For example, if employees do not identify the leader with the organization, then the leader's behaviors may have little or no influence on POS (Eisenberger et al., 2002). Therefore, employees may look to other indicators of POS within the organization (Eisenberger et al., 2002). For example, research has shown that individuals are more likely to experience POS if the organization is smaller in size, when they receive organizational rewards, promotions, and recognition, experience favorable job conditions, have a sense of job security and autonomy, and when they have access to training and development opportunities (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Therefore, employees

can experience high levels of POS regardless of supervisor misbehavior or maltreatment, as they may be able to glean other sources of support and feedback in the form of developmental opportunities, pay or promotions, recognition, or favorable relationships with other non-arrogant coworkers and superiors.

This suggests that POS may act as a buffer that minimizes the association between leader arrogance and problems at work. In line with this idea, a number of studies have demonstrated that POS buffers against the negative effects of a variety of stressors occurring within organizations. For example, POS may reduce the extent to which emotional labor predicts job dissatisfaction and lower performance (Duke, Goodman, Treadway, & Breland, 2009). Similarly, a recent study conducted by Miner, Settles, Pratt-Hyatt, and Brady (2012) demonstrated that POS minimizes the negative association between workplace incivility and employee job satisfaction, life satisfaction, and physical health.

Furthermore, there is evidence suggesting that POS may offset some of the negative effects of having an unsupportive supervisor. A study conducted by Tuzun and Kalemci (2011) examined how perceived supervisor support and POS interact to determine turnover intentions. Their findings demonstrated that employees who experience low levels of supervisor support, but high levels of organizational support have lower levels of turnover intentions. In other words, POS can protect against the negative association between having an unsupportive supervisor and outcomes such as turnover.

This evidence suggests that POS may moderate the association between leader arrogance and the feedback environment. Specifically, arrogant leaders can be expected to be less supportive, as they tend to alienate their peers and subordinates, act disrespectfully, and degrade and belittle those around them (Johnson et al., 2010). As discussed previously, this is likely to contribute to an unfavorable feedback environment. However, employees may not identify the leader with the organization, or they may be exposed to other members of the organization who do provide them with the support that they need in the form of feedback, developmental opportunities, or recognition. Ultimately, these higher levels of POS could counteract the negative implications of having an arrogant leader.

Hypothesis 2: The effect of leader arrogance on the feedback environment is conditional on POS, such that the negative relationship between leader arrogance and feedback environment perceptions will be weaker for subordinates who experience high levels of POS.

The Role of Feedback Orientation

Up to this point, we have focused on the various organization-level factors that contribute to whether an individual pursues

feedback, as well as whether one experiences burnout or low levels of morale. These factors include leaders' arrogant behaviors, the levels of perceived organizational support, and the favorability of one's feedback environment. However, as Renn and Fedor (2001) point out, it is often the case that supportive supervisors and coworkers successfully create a favorable feedback environment, and yet employees do not experience the full range of benefits of this environment. In this sense, they proposed that there are individual differences that predict whether employees benefit from favorable feedback environments in terms of their feedback-seeking behavior, as well as their ensuing levels of burnout and morale.

As discussed previously, favorable feedback environments are primarily characterized by an abundance of useful, task-focused feedback that is consistently delivered in a thoughtful and considerate manner (Steelman et al., 2004). However, individuals vary in the extent to which employees value this feedback, are interested in receiving this feedback, and feel comfortable and confident using and responding to this feedback at work (Dahling et al., 2012; Linderbaum & Levy, 2010). This concept manifests itself in the individual difference variable of feedback orientation, which describes individuals' overall receptivity to feedback (London & Smither, 2002).

London and Smither (2002) conceptualize feedback orientation as "a construct consisting of multiple dimensions that work together additively to determine an individual's overall receptivity to feedback and the extent to which the individual welcomes guidance and coaching (pp. 82–83)." They suggest that feedback orientation encompasses the degree to which a person positively appraises feedback, processes feedback mindfully, is aware of the way they are perceived by others, and feels accountable to utilize the feedback received (London & Smither, 2002). Linderbaum & Levy (2010) synthesized these dimensions in their development of the Feedback Orientation Scale (FOS), which evaluates the extent to which individuals value feedback (utility), feel obligated to respond to and act on feedback (accountability), use feedback to inform them of others' views of them and to be sensitive to those views (social awareness), and are confident in their ability to interpret and use feedback (self efficacy).

Previous research has indicated that those with favorable feedback orientations are more likely to value and seek feedback at work. Specifically, research has shown that those who have a favorable orientation towards feedback are more likely to engage in feedback-seeking behavior compared to those with unfavorable feedback orientations (Linderbaum & Levy, 2010). Dahling et al. (2012) later replicated this finding by demonstrating that high levels of feedback orientation predict higher levels of feedback inquiry, which in turn, predicted supervisor performance and leader-member exchange ratings. Research has also identified a link between feedback orientation and perceptions of the feedback environment. Specifically, those with more favorable feedback orientations

are more likely to perceive their feedback environment as favorable and supportive (Dahling et al., 2012; Linderbaum & Levy, 2010). Ultimately, this research supports the notion that those with favorable feedback orientations are more likely to believe in the importance and value of the feedback within the feedback environment, devote more energy to seeking it, and generally place more of an emphasis on feedback and development in the workplace. It therefore stands to reason that those who are strongly oriented towards feedback will be more conscious of and in tune with the feedback environment. For this reason, these individuals may be more susceptible to the effects of feedback environment quality.

For example, if an individual has a favorable feedback orientation, he or she will value feedback to a greater extent and feel more personal responsibility to seek out and utilize feedback. However, if the feedback environment is unfavorable, and does not support the person's overall values and efforts, this might be particularly distressing, discouraging future feedback seeking, reducing morale, and increasing the likelihood that the person will experience burnout. Conversely, if someone has an unfavorable feedback orientation and is generally unconcerned and uninterested in receiving feedback, he or she may not be as affected by an unfavorable feedback environment, and therefore avoid experiencing any negative effects regarding feedback seeking, morale, or burnout.

In support of this notion, Gabriel, Frantz, Levy, and Hilliard (2014) demonstrated that subordinate feedback orientation moderates the relationship between the supervisor feedback environment and subsequent subordinate empowerment. Specifically, they showed that the feedback environment has a strong positive association with employee empowerment, but only among those with favorable feedback orientations, who are naturally more aware of and sensitive to minor differences in the feedback environment. Therefore, both research and theory suggest that while the supervisor feedback environment generally predicts positive outcomes for employees, including higher levels of feedback seeking (Steelman et al., 2004), higher levels of morale (Rosen et al., 2006), and lower levels of burnout (Peng & Chiu, 2010), individual differences in feedback orientation may moderate these relationships. The current study, therefore, expands upon the work of Gabriel and colleagues, examining the potential role of feedback orientation as a moderator in the association between feedback environment and its outcomes variables. Specifically, the following is hypothesized:

Hypothesis 3: The effect of the feedback environment on subordinate outcomes will be conditional on feedback orientation, such that the feedback environment's positive effect on (a) feedback seeking and (b) morale, as well as its (c) negative effect on burnout will be attenuated by negative feedback orientation.

Method

Participants

Participants were recruited through Mechanical Turk (MTurk). MTurk is an Amazon-based website, which has been identified as a cutting-edge tool for recruiting a large and diverse group of participants and for quickly collecting high quality, low-cost data (Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011; Johnson & Borden, 2012; Paolacci, Chandler, & Ipeirotis, 2010). Therefore, the current study utilized MTurk to recruit participants. Participants received \$1.00 in exchange for completing the study. The MTurk platform also allows researchers to selectively sample individuals with certain pre-specified characteristics, such as age or location. To participate, it was required that participants worked at least 25 h per week, were at least 18 years of age, and were US residents. These requirements were presented to potential participants prior to completing the survey and screening items were also employed as a check. If participants reported that they did not meet either of these requirements, they were dropped from the study. Additionally, MTurk allows those who post assignments to accept or reject MTurk workers' assignments depending on the quality of their work. Each MTurk worker has an approval rating that indicates how effective he or she has been in completing previous MTurk assignments. This rating indicates the frequency with which the respondent's data was accepted as valid by previous researchers, depicted in terms of a percentage. Therefore, participants with higher approval rating percentages have been shown to be more reliable in completing their previous assignments, and have been rejected less frequently as a result of their ability to follow instructions or read through items and respond in a mindful way. As a result, participants were required to have at least a 95% approval rating on their previously submitted MTurk assignments.

These qualifications resulted in 353 workers submitting the survey. We did not accept surveys from a total of 51 respondents because their data indicated that they did not meet the study's qualifying criteria or rushed through the questions. Specifically, three of Meade and Craig's (2011) items (e.g., "I have never spoken to anyone who was listening") were used to detect careless responding among participants. Specifically, items were embedded within primary survey items, and respondents were asked to rate them on a Likert-type agree-disagree scale. In this way, respondents were flagged if their responses did not make sense (e.g., if they disagreed with the statement "I am using a computer currently," or strongly agreed with the statement "I do not understand a word of English"). Each survey contained three of these items (listed above), and if a participant missed more than one of them, their data was excluded from the analyses.

This resulted in a sample of 302 participants between the ages of 18 and 64 ($M = 35.39$, $SD = 10.44$) who worked

between 25 and 60 h per week ($M = 39.54$, $SD = 6.51$). Seventy-nine percent of participants identified as Caucasian or White, 9% identified as African American, 6% as Hispanic, 4% as Asian, and 2% as multiracial. Fifty-five percent of the 302 participants were female. Participants had been working with their organizations for an average of 5.54 years ($SD = 7.66$), in their position for an average of 4.11 years ($SD = 6.85$), and with their supervisors for an average of 3.20 years ($SD = 3.83$). Participants were sampled from regions across the USA. Participants also spanned various industries, with 33% indicating their job fell within the consumer products industry, 24% within information technology, 16% within financial services, 11% in the health industry, 8% in food processing, 3% in aerospace and aviation, 2% in automotive, 2% in energy, and 1% in polymers. Additionally, .3% reported having less than a high school-level education, 32.2% reported completing high school or some college, 10% had an Associate's degree, 42% reported having a bachelor's degree, and 15.5% had completed a graduate degree.

Measures

Leader Arrogance In order to assess leader arrogance, the Workplace Arrogance Scale (WARS; Johnson et al., 2010) was administered to subordinates and their supervisors. This measure was developed and validated by Johnson et al. (2010) using four studies. In studies 1 and 2, the authors developed the WARS and found support for its convergent and discriminant validity (e.g., arrogance related in expected ways to narcissism and humility across diverse samples). In study 3, the WARS was included as part of a 360-degree performance feedback survey. Results revealed that there was satisfactory agreement between self- and other-ratings of arrogance. Arrogance was significantly negatively related to task performance and cognitive ability. The authors also found that arrogance was negatively related to self- and other-rated task performance. In addition, study 4 used a larger and more diverse sample of employees. Arrogance was significantly related to task performance and cognitive ability, and all relationships were in the negative direction. A negative relationship was also found between arrogance and self-esteem ($r = -.39$, $p < .01$).

Specifically, participants recruited on MTurk rated their supervisor's arrogance using the WARS. The WARS questionnaire asks subordinates to respond along a five-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*) to 26 items, including "My supervisor makes decisions that impact others without listening to their input" and "My supervisor criticizes others." The 14 positive items (e.g., "Gives others credit for their ideas"; "Puts organizational objectives before his/her personal agenda") were reverse scored so that high scores coincide with higher levels of workplace

arrogance. A composite score was then computed by averaging all 26 items ($\alpha = .97$).

In order to gather an additional source of leader arrogance data, participants were also given the option of providing us with their supervisors' email. These supervisors were then contacted and asked to fill out a self-report measure of the WARS ($\alpha = .93$). We chose to do this because the other primary study variables were assessed with subordinate surveys. In particular, we wanted to be able to examine the correlation between self- and subordinate-rated arrogance, thereby assessing the likelihood that common method bias is the source of the relationship between our primary study variables. Therefore, the measure administered to supervisors was identical to the one filled out by subordinates, except supervisors were asked to rate themselves on each item (e.g., "I make decisions that impact others without listening to their input" and "I criticize others").

Feedback Environment The shortened version of the Feedback Environment Scale (FES; Steelman et al., 2004; Rosen, 2006; Rosen et al., 2006) was used to assess subordinate perceptions of the supervisor component of the organization's feedback environment. Rosen et al. (2006) created the shortened form of the FES by eliminating semantically redundant or negatively worded items from the original 32-item scale. Additionally, Rosen et al. (2006) compared the reliability and validity of the shortened measure to that of the original version by examining Cronbach's alphas of the measure's subscales, as well as by calculating the correlation coefficients between the shortened scale and external criteria. These analyses revealed that the shortened measure exhibited similar levels of reliability and validity as the original FES and has been used often in the literature (e.g., Dahling et al., 2012; Dahling, O'Malley, & Chau, 2015; Whitaker, 2011).

This shortened 21-item measure uses a seven-point Likert-type scale (1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*) to assess respondent perceptions of the seven feedback environment facets (supervisor credibility, feedback quality, feedback delivery, frequency of favorable feedback, frequency of unfavorable feedback, supervisor availability, and promotion of feedback seeking). Sample items include the following: "My supervisor is familiar with my performance on the job" (source credibility), "My supervisor gives me useful feedback about my job performance" (feedback quality), "When my supervisor gives me performance feedback, he or she is considerate of my feelings" (feedback delivery), and "My supervisor tells me when my work performance does not meet organizational standards" (unfavorable feedback). The three negative items (e.g., "The performance information I receive from my supervisor is generally not very meaningful") were reverse scored so that high scores coincided with more favorable perceptions of the feedback environment. A composite score was then computed by summing across all 21 items ($\alpha = .95$).

Perceived Organizational Support The shortened six-item Survey of Perceived Organizational Support ($\alpha = .91$; SPOS; Eisenberger et al., 1986; Shanock & Eisenberger, 2006) was used to assess subordinate perceptions of POS. The SPOS uses a seven-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*) to indicate the extent of respondents' agreement with items including "My work organization really cares about my well-being," "My work organization values my contributions to its well-being," "My work organization is willing to help me when I need a special favor," "My work organization takes pride in my accomplishments at work," and "My work organization strongly considers my goals and values." The one negative item ("My work organization shows little concern for me") was reverse scored so that higher scores reflect higher levels of POS. A composite score was calculated by summing across items.

Feedback Seeking In order to measure feedback seeking, subordinates completed the seven-item measure used by Dahling et al. (2012). The measure was devised by combining the four-item measure from Ashford and Black (1996) and the three-item measure from Williams and Johnson (2000). The items were distributed to participants within subordinate positions, who were then instructed to rate each item (e.g., "Sought feedback on your performance after completing assignments," "Asked your boss how well you are performing on the job") on a five-point, Likert-type scale ranging from 1 = *never* to 5 = *very frequently* ($\alpha = .91$).

Morale In the extant literature, morale is conceptualized as a combination of job satisfaction and affective organizational commitment (Harrison et al. 2006; Rosen et al., 2006). Therefore, morale was measured by standardizing and combining scales assessing these two constructs. First, the organizational commitment component of subordinate morale was measured using Allen and Meyer's (1990) eight-item Affective Commitment Scale. Participants in subordinate positions rated their responses on a seven-point Likert-type scale (1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*) to items such as "I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to my organization." The four negative items (e.g., "I do not feel like 'part of the family' at my organization") were reverse scored, and a composite commitment score was calculated by averaging across items so that higher scores reflect higher levels of organizational commitment.

Next, participant job satisfaction was assessed using three items devised by Cammann, Fichman, Jenkins, and Klesh (1983) as part of the Michigan Organizational Questionnaire. Participants rated their responses on a seven-point Likert-type scale (1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*) to items such as "All in all, I am very satisfied with my job." The one negative item (e.g., "In general, I don't like my job") was reverse scored so that higher scores reflect higher levels of job

satisfaction. A composite score was then computed by averaging across items. Additionally, the combined organizational commitment and job satisfaction items demonstrated sufficient internal consistency to warrant their combination ($\alpha = .94$). Therefore, these two scales were standardized and averaged to compute a composite morale score for each participant.

Burnout Participant burnout was assessed using the two-item measure developed by West, Dyrbye, Satele, Sloan, and Shanafelt (2012). West et al. developed this measure from the Maslach Burnout Inventory (Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1997). Participants are asked to rate how often they experience emotional exhaustion (“I feel burned out from my work”) and depersonalization (“I have become more callous toward people since I took this job”) when it comes to their work. Responses are rated from 0 (*Never*) to 6 (*Daily*) on a seven-point Likert-type scale ($\alpha = .74$).

Feedback Orientation Participant feedback orientation was assessed using the 20-item FOS (Linderbaum & Levy, 2010). The scale includes five items for each of the four dimensions of feedback orientation: perceived utility of feedback ($\alpha = .90$), accountability to use feedback ($\alpha = .76$), social awareness ($\alpha = .87$), and self-efficacy for dealing with feedback ($\alpha = .84$). Participants rated items on a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*. Overall feedback orientation was determined by summing across these 20 items, including “Feedback contributes to my success at work” and “I feel self-assured when dealing with feedback” ($\alpha = .91$).

Procedure

As part of the MTurk data collection process, each participant completed the online survey on a computer. After reading a short description of what the study entailed on the MTurk page, they clicked a link that directed them to the online survey on the Qualtrics website. On the opening screen of the survey, participants read the informed consent form. If participants did not give their consent, they were re-directed to the Qualtrics website. If they consented, they were directed to the instructions page, which asked them to make sure to read all instructions before beginning each task, to avoid distractions, to complete the survey in its entirety without interruptions, to close other programs or windows, and to turn off their cell phones. They then completed the leader arrogance measure, followed by the measures of feedback environment, job satisfaction, affective organizational commitment, feedback seeking, burnout, perceived organizational support, feedback orientation, and lastly, the demographic questionnaire.

Since the primary focus of the current study is leader arrogance, participants were also asked to provide the email of

their direct supervisor so that they could be contacted to fill out a self-reported version of the WARS. Though this was optional for participants, they were told that if they provided us with an email, they would be entered into a raffle for a \$100 gift card. The supervisors were then sent a link to a survey by email, which assessed their self-reported leader arrogance and demographic information. We thought it would be valuable to have supervisor self-assessments of arrogance as a way to rule out alternative explanations for our results (e.g., Common Method Variance). However, we were only able to gather data from 24 supervisors which, of course, limits what we can do with those data. Therefore, we focus on the subordinate reports of leader arrogance throughout our paper. It is interesting, however, that the correlation between supervisor self-reports ($n = 25$) of arrogance and their subordinates’ arrogance ratings was .61. This is even stronger than what Johnson et al. (2010) reported in their study ($r = .35$). Although our n was too small to use the supervisor data, we are pleased that we were able to replicate the Johnson et al. findings indicating convergence of self and subordinate ratings of leader arrogance.

Results

Table 1 reports means, standard deviations, reliabilities, and correlations for all primary study variables. Results indicated that the only demographic characteristics that were significantly related to the primary study variables were organizational and supervisor tenure (see Table 1). Therefore, all statistical analyses were initially conducted controlling for these variables; however, including organizational and supervisor tenure in each model did not alter the findings. These variables were excluded from any further analyses, as research has suggested that the inclusion of unnecessary control variables may bias estimates and reduce statistical power (Becker, 2005).

Leader Arrogance, Subordinate Outcomes, and the Role of the Feedback Environment

In the empirical literature, a variety of methods have been used to test models that incorporate both mediational and moderational hypotheses; however, recent research has indicated that using a bootstrap approach is superior to other alternative methods. In particular, research has shown that bootstrapping can tolerate non-normal sampling distributions and provides more accurate confidence intervals (Hayes, 2013; MacKinnon, Lockwood, & Williams, 2004). Therefore, Preacher and Hayes’ (2008) bootstrapping technique was used as the framework for testing the hypotheses in the current study. Specifically, analyses were carried out using the SPSS macro PROCESS from Hayes to generate 95% confidence intervals using 10,000 bootstrapped samples.

Table 1 Means, standard deviations, reliabilities, and correlations for study measures

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.
1. Leader arrogance	2.48	.89	.97						
2. Feedback environment	5.16	1.12	-.78**	.95					
3. Feedback seeking	2.91	.78	-.15**	.27**	.91				
4. Morale	–	.95	-.54**	.63**	.22**	.94			
5. Burnout	3.32	1.76	.50**	-.49**	-.09	-.70**	.74		
6. Feedback orientation	3.81	.52	-.26**	.41**	.43**	.43**	-.25**	.91	
7. Perceived organizational support	4.54	1.50	-.53**	.63**	.19**	.82**	-.62**	.45**	.91
8. Org. tenure	66.52	91.89	-.09	.05	-.09	.12*	-.08	-.01	.11
9. Position tenure	49.29	82.23	-.09	.06	-.08	.09	-.07	-.02	.11
10. Supervisor tenure	38.39	46.00	-.13*	.11	-.07	.14*	-.07	-.03	.20**

Coefficient alpha reliability estimates of internal consistency are indicated on the diagonal in italics

p* < .05 (two-tailed); *p* < .01 (two-tailed)

Hayes refers to moderation as conditional effects within this framework and we will use both terms throughout the manuscript to refer to what has traditionally been labeled as moderation. First, Hypothesis 1a–c predicted that leader arrogance would have an indirect effect on subordinate feedback seeking, morale, and burnout, via feedback environment perceptions. As recommended by Preacher and Hayes (2008), we used bootstrapping procedures and estimated the indirect effects using unstandardized coefficients. In particular, Model 4 in SPSS PROCESS (Hayes, 2013) was used to test the three hypothesized indirect effects of leader arrogance on subordinate feedback seeking (Hypothesis 1a), morale (Hypothesis 1b), and burnout (Hypothesis 1c) through the feedback environment. As depicted in Table 2, simple mediation analyses using ordinary least squares path analysis indicated that the 95% bias-corrected bootstrapped confidence intervals did not contain zero and are statistically significant for the indirect effects of leader arrogance on subordinate feedback seeking (*ab* = -.26), on morale (*ab* = -.43), and on burnout (*ab* = .37).

In addition, for the mediation analyses, Preacher and Kelley’s (2011) kappa-squared measure of effect size was examined, which expresses the magnitude of the indirect effect in terms of a ratio to the maximum possible indirect effect that

could have been found. A small *k*² value is .01 or smaller, whereas .09 is considered medium, and a large effect is .25 or higher. Preacher and Kelley’s kappa-squared statistic indicated a medium-sized effect for subordinate feedback seeking, with 18.94% of the possible variance in feedback seeking accounted for by this indirect effect (*k*² = .189, *CI*₉₅ .100, .280). For morale, the kappa-squared statistic indicated a large effect size, with 30.23% of the possible variance in morale accounted for by this indirect effect (*k*² = .302, *CI*₉₅ .199, .389). Finally, for burnout, results indicated a medium effect size (*k*² = .135, *CI*₉₅ .031, .244), with 13.5% of the possible variance in burnout accounted for by this indirect effect. Therefore, Hypotheses 1a–c were fully supported, suggesting that leader arrogance is negatively related to subordinate feedback seeking and morale, and positively related to their experience of burnout and that these relationships are carried through the feedback environment.

The Role of Perceived Organizational Support Next, PROCESS Model 1 (Hayes, 2013) was used to examine the moderating role of POS (Hypothesis 2). Hypothesis 2 predicted that POS would attenuate the negative association between leader arrogance and feedback environment. Results supported the interactive effect of POS and leader arrogance

Table 2 Indirect effect paths of leader arrogance through feedback environment perceptions

Dependent variable (DV)	Path <i>a</i> (LA → FE)	Path <i>b</i> (FE → DV)	Path <i>c</i> (total effect)	Path <i>c</i> ' (direct effect)	<i>αβ</i>	LL	UL
Feedback seeking	-.99 (.05)**	.27 (.06)**	-.13 (.05)*	.13 (.08)	-.26	-.41	-.13
Morale	-.99 (.05)**	.44 (.06)**	-.58 (.52)**	-.15(.08)	-.43	-.56	-.29
Burnout	-.99 (.05)**	-.38 (.12)*	.99 (.09)**	.63 (.16)**	.37	.08	.71

Ninety-five percent bias-corrected confidence intervals based on 10,000 bootstrap samples reported for indirect effects. Path *b* values denote the effects after controlling for leader arrogance. Parentheses include standard error values.

LA leader arrogance, FE feedback environment, DV dependent variable, UL upper level confidence interval, LL lower level confidence interval

p* < .01; *p* < .001



($B = .059$, $t = 2.551$, $p = .011$, $CI_{95} .013, .104$) on feedback environment perceptions, $F(3, 298) = 211.359$, $p < .001$. The Johnson-Neyman (J-N) technique was then utilized to further characterize the nature of the conditional effect, as this technique identifies values of the moderator variable where the effect of the predictor on the outcome changes from statistically significant to nonsignificant. The J-N technique indicated that the relationship between leader arrogance and feedback environment is significant and negative for all values of POS, but that this relationship is stronger for those who have low levels of POS and weaker for those with high levels of POS (see Fig. 2). In particular, the J-N technique showed a difference in the strength of the effect of leader arrogance on feedback environment perceptions, but no changes in significance. Therefore, Hypothesis 2 was fully supported.

The Role of Subordinate Feedback Orientation

Hypotheses 3a–c predicted that the relationship between feedback environment and feedback seeking, morale, and burnout would be conditional on levels of feedback orientation. In support of Hypothesis 3a, analysis using Model 1 from PROCESS (Hayes, 2013) indicated that the interaction term ($B = .151$, $t = 2.736$, $p < .006$, $CI_{95} .042, .259$) between feedback orientation and feedback environment on feedback seeking was significant, $F(3, 298) = 26.917$, $p < .001$. The J-N technique indicated that the moderating effect of feedback environment on feedback seeking transitioned from significant to nonsignificant at a feedback orientation score of 3.812 ($B = .078$, $SE = .039$, $t = 1.968$, $p = .05$, $CI_{95} .000, .155$). Specifically, there was a significant positive relationship between feedback environment and feedback seeking above this threshold and a nonsignificant relationship for

feedback orientation scores below this threshold. In other words, the relation between feedback environment and feedback seeking becomes weaker when feedback orientation scores are lower (see Fig. 3). Therefore, Hypothesis 3a was fully supported.

Feedback orientation was also proposed to moderate the relationship between feedback environment and morale (Hypothesis 3b). However, the interaction between feedback orientation and feedback environment was not significant ($B = .111$, $t = 1.958$, $p = .051$, $CI_{95} -.001, .222$), with a p value of .051, though the pattern was as expected.

Additionally, it was anticipated that feedback orientation would also amplify the negative relationship between feedback environment and burnout. However, results did not support the interactive effect of feedback orientation and feedback environment ($B = -.138$, $t = -1.132$, $p = .259$), as the 95% bias-corrected bootstrap CI $[-.377, .102]$ included zero. Therefore, results failed to support Hypothesis 3c.

Conditional Mediation Analyses

As discussed previously, the earlier results highlighted several mediating and moderating effects between the primary study variables. Together, these findings suggest the potential existence of conditional indirect effects. As a result, the final phase of data analyses involved testing for the conditional indirect effects of leader arrogance on subordinate outcomes. Specifically, conditional process analyses were carried out in order to consider the possibility of a significant indirect effect depending on the value of the moderator variable or variables that emerged as significant moderators in the earlier stages of the analyses.

First, using SPSS PROCESS Model 21 (Hayes, 2013) we examined a model in which feedback environment mediated

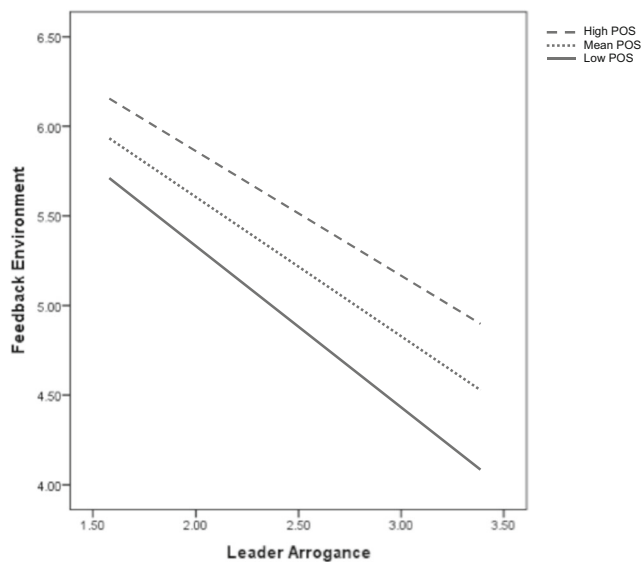


Fig. 2 The effects of the interaction between perceived organizational support (POS) and leader arrogance on feedback environment perceptions

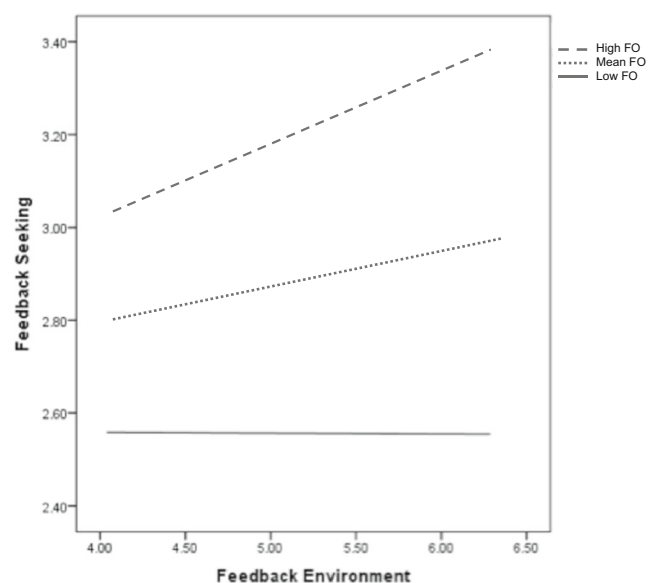


Fig. 3 The effects of the interaction between feedback orientation (FO) and feedback environment (FE) on feedback seeking

the effects of leader arrogance on feedback seeking, POS moderated the effects of leader arrogance on feedback environment perceptions, and feedback orientation moderated the effects of feedback environment on feedback seeking. Specifically, we estimated the conditional indirect effect of leader arrogance on feedback seeking through the feedback environment at both high and low levels of POS and high and low levels of feedback orientation. As seen in Table 3, results

indicated significant interactions between leader arrogance and POS in predicting feedback environment ($B = .06, t = 2.55, p < .05$) and between feedback environment and feedback orientation in predicting feedback seeking ($B = .15, t = 2.75, p < .01$), providing evidence of conditional mediation at both points in the hypothesized causal pathway. This suggests that the mediated relationship between leader arrogance, feedback environment, and feedback seeking

Table 3 Coefficient estimates for the conditional mediation model for subordinate outcomes

Variable	First stage (dependent variable = FE)					Second stage (dependent variable = FSB)				
	<i>B</i>	SE	<i>t</i>	LL	UL	<i>B</i>	SE	<i>t</i>	LL	UL
Constant	6.84**	.36	19.03	6.13	7.55					
LA	-1.04**	.11	-9.40	-1.26	-.81					
POS	.07	.07	.97	-.07	.20					
LA × POS	.06*	.02	2.55	.01	.10					
Constant						2.71*	1.12	2.42	.50	4.91
LA						.08	.07	1.08	-.07	.22
FE						-.45*	.22	-2.08	-.88	-.02
FO						-.18	.28	-.63	-.74	.38
FE × FO						.15**	.06	2.75	.04	.26
Model <i>R</i> ²			.68**					.22**		
Variable	First stage (dependent variable = FE)					Second stage (dependent variable = morale)				
	<i>B</i>	SE	<i>t</i>	LL	UL	<i>B</i>	SE	<i>t</i>	LL	UL
Constant	6.84**	.34	19.03	6.13	7.55					
LA	-1.04**	.11	-9.40	-1.26	-.82					
POS	.07	.07	.97	-.07	.20					
LA × POS	.06*	.02	2.55	.01	.10					
Constant						-.79	1.14	-.69	-3.03	1.46
LA						-.18*	.07	-2.45	-.33	-.04
FE						-.07	.22	-.32	-.51	.36
FO						-.14	.29	-.49	-.71	.43
FE × FO						.11	.06	1.93	-.002	.219
Model <i>R</i> ²			.68**					.44**		
Variable	First stage (dependent variable = FE)					Second stage (dependent variable = burnout)				
	<i>B</i>	SE	<i>t</i>	LL	UL	<i>B</i>	SE	<i>t</i>	LL	UL
Constant	6.84**	.34	19.03	6.13	7.55					
LA	-1.04**	.11	-9.40	-1.26	-.82					
POS	.07	.07	.97	-.07	.20					
LA × POS	.06*	.02	2.55	.01	.10					
Constant						1.99	2.41	.83	-2.75	6.73
LA						.65**	.16	4.15	.34	.96
FE						.19	.47	.40	-.73	1.10
FO						.35	.61	.57	-.85	1.55
FE × FO						-.13	.12	-1.09	-.36	.10
Model <i>R</i> ²			.68**					.28**		

Ninety-five percent bias-corrected confidence intervals based on 10,000 bootstrap samples are reported for unstandardized regression coefficients.

UL upper level confidence interval, LL lower level confidence interval

* $p < .01$; ** $p < .001$



depends on levels of POS and feedback orientation. Table 4 shows the magnitude of each indirect effect and confidence intervals for high (90th percentile) and low (10th percentile) values of POS and feedback orientation. Consistent with previous findings, Table 4 shows that the indirect effect (−.204) is strongest when feedback orientation is high and POS is low, and weakest (−.019) at high levels of POS and low levels of feedback orientation. However, it is also important to note that when feedback orientation is low, the confidence interval for the indirect effect includes zero regardless of whether POS is high (−.019) or low (−.025). This implies that while both POS and feedback orientation play a role in this process, feedback orientation is the stronger determinant of the conditional indirect effect of leader arrogance on subordinate feedback seeking.

Next, we examined an identical model; however, this time we tested morale as an outcome. Again, as shown in Table 3, results indicated a significant interaction between leader arrogance and POS predicting feedback environment ($B = .06, t = 2.55, p < .05$), whereas the interaction between feedback environment and feedback orientation in predicting morale did not reach levels of statistical significance ($B = .11, t = 1.933, p = .054$). Although the feedback environment-feedback orientation interaction yielded a p value of .054, we chose to examine the confidence intervals for the indirect effects at various combinations of high and low levels of both moderators. As seen in Table 4, the confidence intervals did not include zero, suggesting that leader arrogance has a significant indirect effect on morale through feedback environment regardless of levels of POS and feedback orientation.

However, consistent with our initial theoretical rationale, this effect (−.374) is strongest when POS is low and feedback orientation is high, and weakest (−.185) when POS is high and feedback orientation is low.

Finally, we examined the conditional indirect effect of leader arrogance on subordinate burnout, with both POS and feedback orientation as moderators. As shown in Table 3, results indicated a significant conditional indirect effect, but only for the first-stage POS moderator. Specifically, the interaction between POS and leader arrogance significantly predicted feedback environment perceptions ($B = .06, t = 2.55, p < .05$), but the interaction between feedback environment and feedback orientation did not significantly predict burnout ($B = −.13, t = −1.09, p = .28$). Since only POS emerged as a significant moderator in this conditional indirect effect, confidence intervals were examined for the indirect effect at high and low levels of POS. As can be seen in Table 4, the positive indirect effect of leader arrogance on burnout through feedback environment perceptions was significant at all values of POS; however, this effect was stronger among those with lower levels of reported POS (.341), and weaker among those who reported high levels of POS (.256).

Discussion

Considering the prevalence of the belief that working with arrogant colleagues is unpleasant, and even harmful, it is somewhat surprising that only one empirical study to date has examined arrogance within an organizational context

Table 4 Bootstrap results for the conditional indirect effects of leader arrogance on feedback seeking, morale, and burnout through feedback environment perceptions

Feedback seeking model				
Moderator	Indirect effect	SE	Boot LL 95% CI	Boot UL 95% CI
Low POS, low FO	−.025	.073	−.158	.133
Low POS, high FO	−.204	.081	−.367	−.056
High POS, high FO	−.153	.077	−.322	−.034
High POS, low FO	−.019	.058	−.132	.094
Morale model				
	Indirect effect	SE	Boot LL 95% CI	Boot UL 95% CI
Low POS, low FO	−.246	.069	−.379	−.108
Low POS, high FO	−.374	.070	−.513	−.239
High POS, high FO	−.281	.056	−.413	−.188
High POS, low FO	−.185	.055	−.305	−.087
Burnout model				
	Indirect effect	SE	Boot LL 95% CI	Boot UL 95% CI
Low POS	.341	.142	.076	.635
Moderate POS	.285	.130	.058	.566
High POS	.256	.127	.048	.536

Low POS (10th percentile) = 2.33; moderate POS (50th percentile) = 4.83; high POS (90th percentile) = 6.17. Low FO = 3.15; high FO = 4.45. Bootstrap sample size: 10,000

POS perceived organizational support, FO feedback orientation

(Johnson et al., 2010). For this reason, many of the repercussions of workplace arrogance remain unclear. The current study addressed this gap in the literature by examining the association between leader arrogance and subordinates' behaviors and attitudes in the workplace, examining the feedback environment as a potential link through which leader arrogance may predict problems for subordinates, and also sought to identify moderators that attenuate the relationship between working for an arrogant supervisor and problematic outcomes. Therefore, the current study not only expands our understanding of the correlates of leader arrogance, but it also contributes to the existing knowledge of the feedback process and the formation of workplace attitudes.

The current study contributes to the literature by expanding and confirming previous findings in several ways. First, our results broaden the current understanding of the problems associated with leader arrogance. Johnson et al. (2010) found that highly arrogant individuals exhibit lower levels of cognitive ability and task performance. We expand on this research by highlighting additional problems faced by subordinates who work for these individuals. In particular, our results indicated that subordinates with more arrogant leaders tend to rate their feedback environment less favorably, report engaging in less feedback seeking, and experience lower levels of morale and higher levels of burnout than those working for non-arrogant leaders. These findings provide further support to the notion that workplace arrogance is associated with problems for organizations.

The current study also contributes to our understanding of mediators in the association between leader arrogance and employee behaviors and attitudes. Our findings identified feedback environment as a mediator in the relationship between leader arrogance and employee feedback seeking, morale, and burnout. Though additional research in this area is needed to determine causality, our results suggest that leader arrogance may be associated with negative employee outcomes as a result of their tendency to create unfavorable feedback environments.

Importantly, the current study also contributes to the literature by identifying POS as a boundary condition that mitigates the extent to which this mediational chain unfolds. It appears that individuals who experience high levels of POS are the least vulnerable to arrogant leadership. These individuals are less likely to report unfavorable feedback environment perceptions, and subsequently, to experience burnout, lower levels of morale, and to withhold feedback-seeking behavior. These findings are consistent with previous literature, which has demonstrated that POS protects against the negative effects of organizational stressors on outcomes such as job performance, job satisfaction, and turnover (Duke et al., 2009; Miner et al., 2012; Tuzun & Kalemcı, 2011). However, these findings are new in highlighting the importance of POS in determining whether the interpersonal stress of working for

an arrogant leader manifests itself in an unfavorable feedback environment, which, as already noted, manifests itself in negative subordinate outcomes.

Our findings also identified feedback orientation as a factor that determines the strength of the indirect effect of leader arrogance on subordinate feedback seeking. Specifically, it appears that subordinates who value feedback are the most vulnerable to leader arrogance. Our findings suggest these individuals are more likely to respond negatively to the unfavorable feedback environments associated with arrogant leaders in terms of their feedback seeking. These findings replicate previous research indicating that favorable feedback environment perceptions predict high levels of subordinate feedback seeking (e.g., Norris-Watts & Levy, 2004; Rosen et al., 2006; Sparr & Sonnentag, 2008; Steelman et al., 2004; Whitaker et al., 2007); however, our results are novel in demonstrating that these predictive effects depend on individual differences in feedback orientation. Specifically, it appears that feedback environment is a stronger predictor of feedback seeking for individuals with favorable feedback orientations, but may not be as important for those who place less value on feedback.

While our results supported the hypothesized moderating role of subordinate feedback orientation in the relationship between feedback environment perceptions and feedback seeking, our results did not support the hypothesized role of feedback orientation with regards to morale. While the pattern of results was consistent with our prediction, the effect was not statistically significant. One possible explanation for these results is that morale may be more of a function of processes within the workplace that are unrelated to feedback. Alternatively, it is possible that the nonsignificant result occurred because of insufficient statistical power. Future research should explore this possibility using larger sample sizes.

The conditional effect of the feedback environment on feedback seeking is, to our knowledge, only the second study to suggest that the feedback environment may not always be associated with positive outcomes, and, more specifically, may depend on the feedback orientation of the individual. A recent study conducted by Gabriel et al. (2014) found that for those with favorable feedback orientations, having a positive feedback environment was strongly related to various dimensions of psychological empowerment. However, individuals with unfavorable feedback orientations responded negatively in terms of their competence and self-determination in response to favorable feedback environments.

The Gabriel et al. (2014) paper is the first to propose and find boundary conditions for the feedback environment. In short, their results suggest that there are situations (e.g., where participants are low on feedback orientation) when a favorable feedback environment not only does not have the expected positive effect, but actually has a negative effect. The current

study corroborates this notion by showing that the feedback environment does not lead to more feedback seeking all the time; in fact, when one is low on feedback orientation, the indirect effect of arrogance on feedback seeking through feedback environment disappears. Although previous research has tended to promote the idea that more favorable feedback environments are better, and they probably are in most circumstances (e.g., Sparr & Sonnentag, 2008; Steelman et al., 2004), the current study highlights a boundary condition and the notion that this may not be the case for employees who do not find feedback useful and valuable.

Our results indicate that the indirect effect of leader arrogance on feedback seeking is only apparent for subordinates with favorable feedback orientations. Alternatively, individuals with unfavorable feedback orientations, who are largely unconcerned with feedback, do not experience the indirect effect of leader arrogance on their feedback seeking through the feedback environment mediator. In this sense, only individuals with favorable feedback orientations tend to be vulnerable to leader arrogance in terms of their feedback seeking. While these individuals may benefit from higher levels of POS, they generally still exhibit lower levels of feedback seeking in response to arrogant leaders as compared to those who do not have arrogant leaders. These findings contribute to the literature by showing that individual differences in feedback orientations are a much more important determinant of whether individuals seek feedback in the face of the unfavorable feedback environments associated with arrogant leaders.

Limitations and Future Directions

Whereas these findings make several important contributions to our understanding of the effects of leader arrogance on subordinates, several limitations regarding the current study should be noted. First, the current study utilized self-report measures completed by subordinates for all of the primary study variables. Therefore, it is possible that common method bias obscured some of our findings. However, we attempted to address this issue by administering a self-report version of the leader arrogance scale to 24 of our participants' supervisors in order to examine the correlation between our participants' ratings of their supervisors' arrogance and the supervisors' self-reported arrogance. Our results indicated a strong correlation of .61 ($p < .01$) between self-reported ratings of arrogance and participants' ratings of their supervisors' arrogance. Additionally, supervisors' ratings were significantly related to subordinate ratings of the feedback environment ($r = -.63$, $p < .001$). In other words, a leader's self-report of arrogance is related to his or subordinates' perceptions of the feedback environment. This suggests that the results of the current study may have been replicated using other sources for data collection, or more specifically, having supervisors self-report their arrogance. However, the small n limits our analyses of these

data. Furthermore, research has indicated that common method bias is not likely to result in finding support for a priori interactions, and may even make interactions more difficult to identify (Siemsen et al., 2010). Therefore, we believe that these findings are not likely a result of common method bias, but rather, they likely reflect the true relationships between leader arrogance and these outcomes as they occur in organizations. Nonetheless, future research should seek to replicate these findings using multiple sources in order to definitively rule out the effects of common method bias in these relationships.

A related limitation of this study also stems from our use of survey data. Specifically, the current findings are based on correlational concurrent data, and therefore our design does not allow us to draw causal inferences. In this sense, we cannot definitively conclude that arrogant leaders create unfavorable feedback environments, and therefore, reduce subordinates' feedback seeking, morale, and burnout. Future studies should examine these relationships in the context of an experimental or quasi-experimental setting in order to be able to better establish whether arrogant leaders truly cause these unfavorable outcomes for their subordinates.

Additionally, the current study utilized Amazon's Mechanical Turk as its primary mode of recruitment. A potential concern regarding MTurk-based data collection is the comparability of MTurk samples with the general working population. The current study compensated for this by implementing data screening criteria requiring participants to be US residents and having an approval rating of at least 95%. Furthermore, MTurk has been identified as a viable tool for optimizing generalizability to the general working population (Landers & Behrend, 2014). Nevertheless, future research should examine whether these findings remain consistent when data is collected in a laboratory, as well as in organizational settings.

Lastly, a potentially useful avenue for future research may involve exploring other moderators that mitigate the association between leader arrogance and problems with subordinates, regardless of employees' feedback orientations. For example, other factors that moderate this relationship might include certain individual differences, such as employee resilience (Masten & Reed, 2002), self-efficacy (Wood & Bandura, 2007), and mindfulness (Good et al., 2016) with regards to their work performance (Wood & Bandura, 2007). Alternatively, it is possible that leader arrogance might not have a strong impact for employees who have low engagement (Rich, LePine, & Crawford, 2010; Schaufeli, Bakker, & Salanova, 2006) or low job involvement (Diefendorff, Brown, Kamin, & Lord, 2002). And finally, future research should look at the incremental validity of arrogance on important work outcomes over and above other important constructs (e.g., narcissism, abusive leadership).

Practical Implications

Although there is a clear need for future research on leader arrogance, the current study has several important implications for practice. First, even though the current findings do not verify causality between leader arrogance and subordinate outcomes, they do indicate that leader arrogance is associated with several adverse outcomes for subordinates. Subordinates working under arrogant leaders perceive the feedback environment unfavorably, and therefore engage in less feedback seeking, experience lower levels of morale, and higher levels of burnout. This is of concern because these outcomes have been shown to predict employee development, learning, motivation, job performance, and withdrawal behaviors (Ilgen, Fisher, & Taylor, 1979; Whitaker et al., 2007). It is likely that subordinates working under arrogant leaders are not receiving the kinds of feedback they need to develop and perform, and their negative attitudes about work might make them likely to leave the organization or engage in other withdrawal behaviors.

Given the potential negative implications of having an arrogant leader, organizations should take steps to reduce arrogant behaviors within the workplace. This could take the form of devising specific selection procedures aimed at screening out candidates who exhibit arrogant leader behaviors. As suggested by Johnson et al. (2010), it would also be possible to include measures of workplace arrogance in performance management systems. This would allow the organization to link arrogant leaders' behaviors with more desired outcomes, thereby motivating them to stop engaging in problematic behaviors. Additionally, the workplace arrogance measure could serve as a diagnostic tool to help organizations identify arrogant leaders and intervene.

It has also been suggested that training or interventions could provide a potential solution to this problem. According to Silverman and colleagues, "Arrogance is a cluster of changeable behaviors, driven by relatively malleable beliefs" (2012, p. 26). This suggests that there might be specific steps organizations can take to change the beliefs and behaviors associated with workplace arrogance. Specifically, leaders who have been identified as being arrogant could undergo training aimed at replacing arrogance with more appropriate behaviors, such as humility (Silverman et al., 2012). Silverman et al. also suggest that interventions targeting basic leadership and social interaction skills may provide a potential solution to the so-called arrogance problem. This could involve activities aimed at increasing interpersonal awareness and giving subordinates a sense of voice in the feedback process.

Additionally, previous research has suggested that training could also be used to help those in the subordinate role. Specifically, it might be helpful to train

subordinates to seek feedback from other trusted sources within the company, such as peers or other superiors within the organization. This strategy might be particularly effective for employees with favorable feedback orientations, who are more vulnerable to the effects of leader arrogance on feedback seeking. This would ensure that even if these subordinates choose not to seek feedback from arrogant leaders, they might find other avenues for receiving the performance information that they need to succeed on the job.

As discussed previously, future research is needed to identify other factors that buffer against leader arrogance, particularly for those with favorable feedback orientations. However, the current study also indicated that increasing levels of perceived organizational support among subordinates may serve a protective effect. This suggests that organizations could convey that it values employees' contributions and well-being. This might involve targeting factors which have been shown to foster these perceptions, such as enhancing reward, promotion, and recognitions systems, improving job conditions, giving employees a sense of autonomy, and providing them with access to training opportunities (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002).

Conclusion

Although future research in this area is needed, the current study highlights the potential organizational problems posed by leader arrogance. The current study demonstrated that arrogant leadership is related to lower levels of subordinate feedback seeking, morale, and higher levels of burnout via its negative association with the feedback environment, and that these mediational chains depend on individual differences in feedback orientation and perceptions of organizational support. We encourage future research to examine additional subordinate outcomes, such as turnover and performance as well as other mediational mechanisms shown to relate to motivation, such as job demands and resources, which may better predict subordinate burnout (Demerouti et al., 2001). Additionally, future research should seek to identify other moderators, particularly those that protect against leader arrogance for individuals who are positively oriented towards feedback, as these individuals were shown to be most sensitive to the indirect effect of leader arrogance on feedback-seeking behavior. Despite the need for additional experimental work, we believe that the current study provides a strong foundation from which future research can build in order to address the issues associated with arrogant leaders in organizations.

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