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The Search for Feedback: Matching Personal Values with Organizational Support

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The Search for Feedback: Matching Personal Values with Organizational Support

by
Lisa Plant

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
through the Department of Psychology
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the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the
University of Windsor

Windsor, Ontario, Canada

2018

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The Search for Feedback: Matching Personal Values with Organizational Support

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AUTHOR'S DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

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ABSTRACT

The present study introduced and examined a theoretical framework, based on person-organization fit theory, to explain how the feedback environments leaders create impact the way their employees value feedback and the extent to which they will look and ask for feedback in the workplace. A sample of 408 employed participants were recruited through multiple online recruitment services originating from various locations mainly including Canada (17.9%) and the United States of America (74.8%). Participants' average age was 36.2, 33.8% males and 65.7% females, and average salary was \$65 000 (M salary = \$64 628). The majority indicated a full-time work status (78.2%), and 66.2% reported working in a non-management role. Job roles spanned industries including education, healthcare, retail, government, restaurant-hospitality, information technology, and business finance. Participants completed an online self-report questionnaire assessing perceptions of their feedback environment, feedback orientation, person-organization fit, work engagement, and feedback-seeking. Analyses revealed that the feedback practices leaders engage in can actually predict how useful their employees see feedback and how able and likely they are to apply it to their work and seek it more often. Both a supportive feedback environment and strong feedback orientation positively predicted that employees would feel their values, needs, and abilities are being met by what their organizations expect and that this perceived fit would predict increased work engagement. These findings suggest that leaders have a real opportunity to influence how their employees see the value in feedback by the practices they choose to engage in and that these actions can predict how strongly employees feel they fit within their organization and how engaged they are in their work. Results help to clarify that leaders play a role in how often their employees will ask for evaluative and developmental feedback through the meaning they help their employees ascribe to it.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Performance feedback in the workplace has been a topic of interest for much of the last century. Feedback is the ongoing exchange of information about one's work and can be used to direct, correct, motivate, support, and regulate work behaviours (Ashford & Cummings, 1983; Lee, 2007; Kluger & DeNisi, 1996; Murphy & Cleveland, 1995; Steelman & Rutkowski, 2004). Feedback has been heavily researched in the context of work and learning by human resource specialists, industrial and organizational psychologists, business management experts, and organizational behaviour researchers (van der Rijt et al., 2012; Mulder & Ellinger, 2013). The benefits of well-designed feedback approaches are widespread (Baker et al., 2013) such that giving people feedback can improve their learning (Ilgen, Fisher, & Taylor, 1979), motivation (Kluger & DeNisi, 1996), and performance (London, 2003). People benefit from feedback because it enhances self-awareness (Silverman et al., 2005) and reduces uncertainty about the quality of their performance and goal progress. When feedback indicates goal progress or attainment it can also increase feelings of competence (Ashford & Cummings, 1983; Bernichon, Cook, & Brown, 2003; London, 2003). Ideally, informal day-to-day performance feedback allows for both managers and employees to work together towards meeting clear task expectations (London & Smither, 2002).

Current Issues with Feedback

Despite the intuitive idea that performance information ought to be useful for improving performance, research examining different feedback interventions has found that feedback may not always lead to positive outcomes (Alvero, Bucklin, & Austin, 2001; Kluger & DeNisi, 1996). Depending on individual and contextual factors (Mulder & Ellinger, 2013), feedback can help or

hinder a person's motivation and performance. A poor understanding of such factors has led to a workplace reality where both informal and formal feedback are often considered to be a negative experience. Feedback is frequently delivered using nonconstructive approaches that lead to unproductive outcomes (Baker et al., 2013). Therefore, even though feedback can be a valuable method to improve work performance, it nevertheless continues to be one of the most underused and misused tools by managers and supervisors in organizations today (Romero, 2012).

Limited or absent feedback can lead employees to create unrealistic views of themselves. A mistakenly favourable view of one's work performance, can lead to actual performance levels reaching a plateau and even declining over time. By contrast, an unrealistically negative view of one's work—a less common but nonetheless problematic situation—can lead to high levels of self-criticism; undue stress and pressure; lower motivation; and underused strengths (Silverman et al., 2005). Although organizations have, on the whole, a poor record of providing appropriate and timely feedback, the rapidly changing nature of the contemporary workplace has exacerbated this state of affairs. Currently, employees are often working remotely or from home and in diverse or multicultural settings, thus opportunities for informal feedback exchanges have become scarce and/or unpredictable (Rau & Hyland, 2002; van Knippenberg, De Dreu, & Homan, 2004). Consequently, it has become difficult for employees to gauge how others view their performance or to obtain feedback unless feedback is sought directly and proactively (Ashford, Blatt, & Vandewalle, 2003). *Feedback-seeking* refers to the proactive search by individuals for informal, day-to-day performance feedback information (Kluger & DeNisi, 1996; Krasman, 2010). Given this situation, it has become important to understand what individual and contextual factors can lead or impede employees to seek feedback when they need it. Without understanding these factors, organizations risk providing too little or too late performance

information which can result in poor communication along with misaligned employee and organizational performance goals. Limited research exists that helps to determine whether or not employees will ask and look for feedback based on current feedback practices in their environment. The current study proposes a framework to better understand the mechanisms at play in how feedback practices leaders engage in can potentially impact and predict the likelihood in which employees will ask for feedback when they need it.

Feedback and the Environment

Attempting to consider the numerous situation-specific factors that influence feedback practices in the workplace can be considered akin to trying to control for all economic, political, and environmental factors when studying an initiative or practice in a specific community versus another; it is nearly impossible. This is partially why researchers have mainly focused on studying feedback characteristics (i.e., timing, frequency, and specificity of the feedback itself) in experimental isolation (Dahling & O'Malley, 2011; Krasman, 2013; London, 2003; Mulder & Ellinger, 2013; Rosen, Levy, & Hall, 2006; van der Rijt et al., 2012). However, the tendency to neglect understanding the context, environment, and culture in which feedback initiatives are implemented has led to ineffective feedback techniques (Dahling & O'Malley, 2011). For example, employees can be offered feedback that is specific and timely; however, if this feedback is not given in a supportive way and its content and giver are not respected, it no longer matters if the feedback itself was accurate and timely. Furthermore, a feedback initiative that, in theory, contains all the components for success is not a guarantee of its effectiveness in any given workplace; contextual factors can make or break the success of the initiative. Therefore, research has shifted towards examining the role of the feedback context more specifically and in terms of feedback practices (Anseel & Lievens, 2007; Baker et al., 2013; London & Smither,

2002; Steelman, Levy, & Snell, 2004; Whitaker, Dahling, & Levy, 2007) with the assumption that this context is more within the organization's control and ability to change and improve, unlike every single piece of individual feedback or its specific characteristics.

The context in which feedback takes place has been termed the *feedback environment* where a supportive feedback environment is characterized by the availability of valid and valuable feedback that is provided in a constructive way and on a regular basis (Linderbaum & Levy, 2010). Organizations that foster supportive feedback environments will likely see their employees' performance improve while also enhancing career development opportunities for employees (Cheramie, 2013; Mayo, 2000). Therefore, initial research seems to support the creation of a supportive feedback environment to benefit employees and managers alike.

Feedback: A consideration of both the individual and the environment

The conclusion that a supportive feedback environment can lead to beneficial outcomes, nevertheless, may be premature, as it lacks the consideration of the personal dispositions of employees towards the feedback they receive (Gabriel, Frantz, Levy, & Hilliard, 2014).

Feedback orientation refers to an individual's overall receptivity to feedback including liking feedback, feeling accountable to use given feedback, and the general belief in the utility of feedback (London & Smither, 2002). This positive disposition towards feedback could potentially enhance the likelihood of a supportive feedback environment leading to successful feedback initiatives. However, the form of the linkages between these two constructs remains unclear which inhibits our ability to appropriately consider their impact when designing feedback interventions and predicting their success. Therefore, it is important to explore these person-in-context interactions (i.e., feedback orientation and feedback environment) as they relate to

favourable reactions to feedback (Ashford & Northcraft, 2003; Linderbaum & Levy, 2010; London & Smither, 2002; Smither et al., 2005; Silverman et al., 2005).

Currently, a guiding framework to explain and predict such person-in-context interactions with respect to feedback has yet to be identified. The absence of a guiding framework could explain why there is limited research investigating the interaction between the feedback environment and feedback orientation or how this interaction—if it exists—can predict motivational states and work outcomes (Dahling, Chau, & O'Malley, 2012; Gabriel et al., 2014). Further, a framework that considers both individual and environmental factors could help to more accurately predict whether or not people will feel compelled to seek feedback in their workplace.

Fortunately, much research has been done in the area of person-environment fit that can help to elucidate these relationships. *Person-environment fit* (P-E fit) is the idea that peoples' behaviours and attitudes are determined jointly by personal and environmental conditions (Kristof-Brown & Jansen, 2007). When people perceive a match between their personal attitudes, needs, and abilities, and what their environment favours, provides, and expects, it results in benefits toward motivation, job satisfaction, and work outcomes. Given that feedback orientation represents the extent to which an employee perceives and applies feedback (i.e., person) and that the feedback environment represents how the organization provides feedback (i.e., environment), the current study contends that one could view and further understand this relationship from a person-environment fit standpoint.

Person-Environment Fit, Work Engagement, and Feedback-Seeking

Theoretically, employees who see components of their work as consistent with their personal values will be more motivated in their work because they see a fit between themselves

and their environment (Macey & Schneider, 2008). When a match exists between employees' values and those of their organization, it results in improved work attitudes and performance, along with reduced stress and fewer work withdrawal behaviours (i.e., distancing self from work physically or psychologically by being absent, late, or absent-minded; Kristof-Brown & Guay, 2011). Though a strong fit has been found to reduce work withdrawal behaviours, the question remains as to whether a strong fit can, in turn, increase work engagement. *Work engagement* is a motivational affective state that is conceptualized as a fulfilling and positive view of one's work characterized by absorption, vigour, and dedication (Schaufeli et al., 2002). More specifically, people can become *absorbed* or immersed in their work and experience time "flying by." During this time, they experience *vigour* or energy, an increased determination to apply to their work, and are more resilient in the face of obstacles. Lastly, through this experience, people can become more *dedicated* to their work meaning they are committed and keen to participate in their work. As a result, people who are engaged in their work are invigorated by and enthusiastic about their work (Menguc, Auh, Fisher, & Haddad, 2013).

Even though work engagement is an important motivational component for self-regulation and performance improvement, it has scarcely been studied in the context of feedback (Menguc et al., 2013). Work engagement is characterized by high levels of personal investment in work tasks performed on the job (Rich, LePine, & Crawford, 2010; Schaufeli et al., 2002; Christian, Garza, & Slaughter, 2011). Extrapolating to feedback, a personal investment in one's work tasks may manifest itself in a dedication towards improving one's work and thus seeking necessary feedback to reach this goal. Though untested, it is plausible that a relationship exists between work engagement - people who are dedicated to their work and apply themselves with vigour in their task - and feedback-seeking. Based on their conceptual definitions, and research

that has shown their positive relationship (Mone et al., 2011; Christian et al., 2011), it can be inferred that engaged people who are more dedicated and invested in their work would desire feedback as they apply themselves towards performance improvement. This means developing an understanding of the factors that lead to feedback-seeking could also simultaneously inform and predict work engagement, a motivational mechanism organizations today are highly interested in fostering and enhancing in their employees. The current study proposes a framework that models the relationship between how both organizations' and employees' approaches to feedback can predict and influence employees' engagement in their work and their search for performance-related information that can improve it.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Feedback is a dynamic communication process that occurs between two people where information regarding the receiver's work performance is shared (Baker et al., 2013). Organizations play an important role in the feedback process because their approach to sharing feedback can enhance or detract from learning and information sharing (London & Smither, 1999; Kahmann & Mulder, 2006). Increasingly, managers and supervisors in the workplace are expected to provide their employees with developmental opportunities. They typically do so through the use of resources that include different forms of feedback and/or coaching (Steelman, Levy, & Snell, 2004). Creating an environment that supports such opportunities for feedback and coaching has been found to have a positive impact on employees' personal perception of their career development (Van der Sluis & Poell, 2003). Only recently have researchers and leaders considered feedback from this wider perspective (Dahling & O'Malley, 2011) where the feedback process (i.e., how feedback is sought, perceived, processed, accepted, used, and reacted to) is affected by the broader context in which feedback occurs (Whitaker & Levy, 2012).

Feedback Environment

Early works attempting to specify the psychological processes that mediate the behavioural response to feedback in work settings (e.g., Ilgen et al., 1979) determined that such processes were affected by feedback-specific individual and organizational characteristics alike (Walsh, Ashford, & Hill, 1985). Individual employees are faced daily with the task of actively processing multiple types and sources of information (Ashford et al., 1986) and reacting to them. This information enables employees to engage in the process of determining how well they are performing, to make sense of their environment, and from this to create personal meaning

relevant to their personal goals and purposes (Walsh et al., 1985; Farr, 1989). Thus, feedback in and of itself has been examined for the many ways, shapes, and forms it can take and how these impact the performance of the people who receive them.

Alongside the performance appraisal and rating literature, the general performance feedback literature identified a need to move beyond studying isolated issues of feedback formatting, timing, and utilization. From this, a shift towards examining the social context in which the feedback process takes place (Bretz, Milkovich, & Read, 1992; Ilgen, Barnes-Farrell, & McKellin, 1993; Murphy & Cleveland, 1991, 1995; Whitaker, Dahling, & Levy, 2007) and empirically investigating the feedback context was highlighted (e.g., Levy & Williams, 2004; Norris-Watts & Levy, 2004; Williams, Miller, Steelman, & Levy, 1999). This shift was merited in order to capture the full range of factors that impact reactions to feedback and its effectiveness. The drive towards focusing on the context in which feedback takes place has also stemmed from the ease with which an organization's overall feedback practices can be changed in comparison to attempting to change the multiple and varied ways each individual employee prefers to give and receive feedback on a day-to-day basis. Researchers have thus worked towards examining a comprehensive definition of the feedback context (Levy & Williams, 2004) along with an appropriately multifaceted and refined measure that not only includes the types and sources of feedback but also the social context where feedback is shared (Steelman et al., 2004; Norris-Watts & Levy, 2004).

A *feedback environment* that is perceived as highly supportive by employees is characterized by the availability of useful and credible feedback that is provided in a constructive way on a regular, day-to-day, basis (Levy & Williams, 2004). In a highly supportive feedback environment, useful (i.e., valid and constructive) feedback is accessible to and shared with

people who want it or need it (Morrison, 1995). This feedback environment is seen as supportive because the shared feedback helps employees understand and reach their performance goals. An unsupportive feedback environment, on the other hand, refers to an environment where there is little feedback available or shared and the feedback that is provided is meaningless and/or delivered poorly (Linderbaum & Levy, 2010). Feedback obstruction occurs when elements of the environment make it difficult for employees to obtain feedback on their behavior and work performance (Walsh et al., 1985). Often, communication barriers that hinder formal performance management interventions in the workplace can be avoided or overcome in contexts where managers have created a consistently supportive feedback environment where constructive feedback exchanges take place (Dahling & O'Malley, 2011). Thus, the level of support perceived in one's feedback environment plays an influential role in the way employees seek, receive, process, accept, and use feedback messages (Anseel & Lievens, 2007).

Dimensions of the feedback environment. The construct of feedback environment is composed of several contextual aspects surrounding the transmission of day-to-day supervisor-subordinate and coworker-coworker feedback (Steelman et al., 2004). This construct is made up of employee perceptions of several dimensions: the feedback source's credibility (supervisor or coworker), feedback quality, feedback delivery, favourable and unfavourable feedback, source availability, and promoting feedback-seeking (Steelman et al., 2004). Source credibility encompasses the receiver's perception of the feedback giver's expertise and trustworthiness in terms of providing accurate feedback. Feedback quality refers to the perceived usefulness and consistency of the feedback information. Feedback delivery is characterized by the receiver's perception of the source's intention and consideration in the delivery process. Favourable and unfavourable feedback consist of the receiver's perception that the positive or negative feedback

is warranted given the corresponding performance. Source availability describes how available and approachable the source is deemed to be by the feedback receiver. Lastly, the promotion of feedback-seeking dimension indicates the degree to which the source values feedback-seeking by encouraging, supporting, and rewarding when employees engage in such behaviours.

Assessing these dimensions as part of the feedback environment as a whole serves to provide a detailed understanding of feedback processes and to identify ways to enhance feedback interventions in organizations (Anseel & Lievens, 2007). Consistent with other research studies on the feedback environment (e.g., Anseel & Lievens, 2007; Norris-Watts & Levy, 2004; Sparr & Sonnentag, 2008), this study will focus on employee perceptions of the feedback environment their supervisor creates (not their coworkers) because the supervisor's role offers more opportunities for organizational intervention (e.g., training managers to adopt specific behaviours to enhance the feedback environment; Anseel & Lievens, 2007). Overall, examining this conceptualization of the feedback environment combined with feedback orientation offers more nuanced and contextual insights into the relationship between feedback and work-related outcomes (Sparr & Sonnentag, 2008).

Empirical findings. A feedback environment is conceptualized as the perception an employee has of the support for feedback they see in their environment. Initial research examining this conceptualization of the feedback environment has demonstrated that when people see support for feedback sharing in their environment they are more likely to experience positive attitudes. Researchers have found positively related attitudes, specific to feedback, include employee motivation to use and seek feedback, employee satisfaction with the feedback (Steelman et al., 2004), and feedback orientation (i.e., one's receptivity to feedback; Dahling, Chau, & O'Malley, 2012). Behaviourally, and specific to feedback, researchers have found that

people who see support for feedback in their work environment are more likely to look and ask for feedback (Whitaker et al., 2007).

In their work and job, people who perceive their supervisor has created a supportive feedback environment report higher levels of affective commitment (i.e., one's positive emotional attachment to the organization; Norris-Watts & Levy, 2004; Steelman & Levy, 2001), employee morale, job satisfaction (Anseel & Lievens, 2007; Rosen et al., 2006), personal control, well-being (Sparr & Sonnentag, 2008), role clarity, and demonstrate higher levels of emotional intelligence (Dahling, Chau, & O'Malley, 2012). These people have also been found to have higher performance ratings (Whitaker et al., 2007). From this, we can see that people who see support for feedback in their work environment also tend to be more content in their job, have a better understanding of their role and what they can do in it, as well as how to interact with others based on the awareness they gain of both themselves and others.

Individual perceptions and attitudes have been found to impact outcomes of a supportive feedback environment. Employees who see support for feedback sharing in their work environment also tend to have lower perceptions that organizational decisions are politically driven (and thus potentially uncontrollable, threatening, or unfair) and higher morale, which can ultimately enhance work outcomes such as job satisfaction and satisfaction with supervisory ratings of job performance (Rosen et al., 2006). Furthermore, a supportive feedback environment is positively related to employees' personal feelings of control and negatively related with their feelings of helplessness. Ultimately, these outcomes have positive effects on employee well-being such as advancement opportunities, managerial and physical workplace, physical and psychological health at work (Sparr & Sonnentag, 2008).

Building upon work that delineates variables associated with a supportive feedback environment, researchers have also endeavoured to better understand what is influenced by it. Researchers have found that organizations would benefit from creating a supportive feedback environment as it is positively related to affective commitment which can in turn lead to decreased absenteeism, and higher levels of organizational citizenship behaviours (OCBs; i.e. behaviours that are not formally expected or rewarded but contribute to effectiveness on the job or in the workplace; Norris-Watts & Levy, 2004; Steelman & Levy, 2001). More recently, research has demonstrated that through a positive relationship with person-organization fit and organizational commitment, the feedback environment is indirectly and positively related to the extra-role behaviours employees exhibit to help their organization and the people in it (i.e., OCBs) (Peng & Chiu, 2010). This research also demonstrated that through negative relationships with role stressors and job burnout the feedback environment indirectly influences OCBs (Peng & Chiu, 2010). Through increased feedback-seeking and role clarity, the degree of support perceived in one's feedback environment has been found to predict greater supervisor ratings of task performance and to be related to stronger feedback orientation and emotional intelligence (Dahling, Chau, & O'Malley, 2012). Further, the quality of leader and employee relationships has been found to be a significant mediator between the feedback environment and levels of job satisfaction (Anseel & Lievens, 2007). Thus, the cumulative research demonstrates that the feedback environment is both directly and indirectly associated to the many outcomes organizations seek to foster through their performance management systems (Dahling & O'Malley, 2011). Performance management systems typically involve a continuous process where leaders and their employees plan, monitor, and review together employee work objectives

and goals that contribute to the organization's success. Organizations put performance management systems in place to improve and promote employee effectiveness.

These findings indicate that some intermediary mechanisms are operating between the feedback environment and work outcomes; however little attention has been paid to feedback-specific motivational mechanisms that may be useful in understanding what drives the feedback environment-outcomes' relationship (Anseel & Lievens, 2007). One's personal perceptions of feedback initiatives can be influential working with or against the benefits of a supportive feedback environment on motivation and thus are worth exploring.

Feedback Orientation

Individuals vary in their *feedback orientation*; their willingness and ability to receive, process, and use feedback (Ashford & Northcraft, 2003; Dahling, Chau, & O'Malley, 2012; Gregory & Levy, 2012; Linderbaum & Levy, 2010). Feedback orientation is assessed on a continuum where people can vary from a strong feedback orientation (i.e., receptive to and appreciative of feedback) to a weak feedback orientation (i.e., less receptive to and appreciative of feedback; Linderbaum & Levy, 2010). People who have a strong feedback orientation are more likely to recognize the value of feedback as they strive for self-awareness and self-improvement (London & Smither, 2002). Feedback orientation is generally considered as a stable individual difference although it is possible that it, like many other perceptions and preferences, could change over longer periods of time as the individual encounters varying experiences with feedback (Linderbaum & Levy, 2010; London & Smither, 2002). However, no longitudinal work has been conducted to date to determine the malleability of this construct and thus it remains to be explored whether and to what extent one's feedback orientation can change over time. For the purposes of the current study, feedback orientation will be examined as a

relatively stable construct in order to understand its relationship to other constructs. Thus, it will be important to consider changes in these relationships and their implications if future research is conducted that supports that levels of feedback orientation can change over time.

Based on Ilgen's perspective of feedback as a process, London and Smither's (2002) theoretical model suggests that the degree to which people are receptive to feedback influences how feedback is anticipated, received, processed, and used. From this, they outlined the construct of feedback orientation made up of six key components that work together additively. These components include (1) a positive view of and lack of apprehension toward feedback, (2) a cognitive tendency to mindfully process feedback, (3) an awareness of how others' view oneself, (4) a belief in the value of feedback and the ability of feedback to lead to other valued outcomes, (5) feeling accountable for acting on or responding to the feedback they receive, and (6) a propensity to seek feedback (Dahling et al., 2012; Gregory & Levy, 2012; Linderbaum & Levy, 2010).

Dimensions of feedback orientation. From this theoretical work, Linderbaum and Levy attempted to address the limitations in the area and build on London and Smither's (2002) construct by creating and validating a new and more nuanced measure of this feedback-specific individual difference (i.e., Feedback Orientation Scale; 2010). In this measure, the construct of feedback orientation has been defined as a cognitive reaction to feedback measured by four dimensions; 1) utility, which refers to one's beliefs in the usefulness of feedback information for informing methods to achieve goals or obtain desired outcomes, 2) feeling accountable or a sense of obligation for reacting to feedback, 3) social awareness regarding feedback, which involves being sensitive to how others' view oneself, and 4) feedback self-efficacy which refers to one's perceived competence to interpret and respond to feedback appropriately (Linderbaum & Levy,

2010). This new measure since left behind one of the dimensions from London and Smither's original theory of the construct (2002), that of propensity to seek feedback. Rather, the construct of feedback seeking is seen as conceptually distinct from feedback orientation, which refers to the perception and value of feedback, whereas feedback seeking represents a behaviour that results from this perception. In accordance with this distinction, and in order to avoid possible conflation with the construct of feedback-seeking, the current study will use the concept of feedback orientation as measured by the above-mentioned four dimensions and not include propensity to seek feedback as the original theory had initially suggested.

Empirical findings. The construct of feedback orientation is relatively new (Linderbaum & Levy, 2010) and consequently few empirical investigations including it have been conducted. To date, research has demonstrated that feedback orientation is positively related to individual characteristics such as having a focus on making gains and opportunities for advancement (i.e., promotion regulatory focus; Gregory & Levy, 2008), learning goal orientation, Protestant work ethic (i.e., value attached to hard work and efficiency), general self-efficacy, positive affect, self-monitoring (Linderbaum & Levy, 2010), emotional intelligence (Dahling et al., 2012), incremental implicit person theory, and achievement motivation (Braddy et al., 2013). From this, it is evident that the construct of feedback orientation is inherently related to learning, training, and development (Gregory & Levy, 2012) and the positive outcomes that are involved throughout them such as effort, self-awareness, and motivation.

Feedback orientation also relates positively to how employees see the support in their organization through perceived organizational support (Gregory & Levy, 2008), the quality of their coaching relationship with their supervisor (Gregory & Levy, 2012), their supervisor's performance, how they rate the quality of the exchanges they have with their leader, and the level

of support for feedback they see in their work environment (Dahling et al., 2012; Linderbaum & Levy, 2010). These connections to employees' leaders make intuitive sense given that the perceptions of a feedback environment involve the extent to which they respect the feedback giver's competency and credibility which could then inform the perceived utility and value of feedback accounted for in feedback orientation.

Combining the related aspects of learning focus, work motivation, effort, and support, research has shown that feedback oriented individuals tend to experience higher self-reported job involvement and role clarity (Linderbaum & Levy, 2010), they react more favourably to 360-degree feedback and performance appraisal or rating sessions (Braddy et al., 2013; Linderbaum & Levy, 2010), and tend to engage in more feedback-seeking behaviors (Linderbaum & Levy, 2010). Thus, research has demonstrated that feedback orientation not only plays an important role in how employees seek, receive, interpret, and use information from feedback but also that it indirectly predicts the performance outcomes that managers seek when they invest their time in providing feedback (Dahling et al., 2012). Therefore, feedback orientation is a significant contributor to understanding how performance management initiatives can be successful. Research has identified that the benefits of a supportive feedback environment can be enhanced or inhibited depending on their interaction with employee's feedback orientation (Gabriel et al., 2014). However, it remains unclear how this interaction can be predicted and meaningfully understood as a predictor of work outcomes.

Examining the Interaction between the Feedback Environment and Feedback Orientation

Recently, researchers studied the importance of people's motivation with respect to feedback as it impacts employee empowerment (i.e., autonomy in their work and decision-making; Gabriel et al., 2014). This study found that peoples' personal dispositions towards

feedback, namely feedback orientation, can influence the extent to which a feedback environment is perceived as supportive and empowering (Gabriel et al., 2014). More specifically, the study found that perceptions of the level of support in one's feedback environment combined with varying degrees of strength of one's feedback orientation differentially affected sub-dimensions of employee empowerment (Gabriel et al., 2014). An example of this is when participants had a weak feedback orientation; the positive effects of a supportive feedback environment on empowerment were attenuated and even deleterious (Gabriel et al., 2014). This study took a first look at feedback orientation as a moderator of the relationship between the feedback environment and employee empowerment and resulted in important and unpredicted interactions being unearthed (Gabriel et al., 2014). This study found that people who accord less value to receiving and using feedback could find regular and constructive feedback to detract from their sense of empowerment. This result would suggest that a supportive feedback environment is not always beneficial, and its effects are impacted by employees' feedback orientation. Nevertheless, the authors concluded that it is difficult to make generalizable predictions of the forms that this interaction can take given the limited theoretically-based empirical research on the constructs as a whole. Further, research has yet to propose a theoretical framework to explore potential explanatory mechanisms as to how this relationship operates to specify the role of feedback orientation in general not only as it impacts empowerment.

However, London and Smither (2002) have proposed, but not tested, a person-environment interaction view of the feedback process that focuses on how individual (feedback orientation) and environmental (feedback culture) characteristics shape the impact of supervisory feedback on employees. Based on this view, other conceptual models and frameworks have been proposed (e.g., Mulder & Ellinger, 2013; Dahling et al., 2012) but only recently have empirical

investigations of this person-by-context interaction emerged. One study has demonstrated that the influence of the feedback environment on work outcomes (e.g., feedback inquiry) was only beneficial when combined with a strong feedback orientation (Dahling et al., 2012) suggesting that feedback orientation may operate as a mediator.

From this, and the work of Gabriel and colleagues (Gabriel et al., 2014), it is unclear as to whether feedback orientation influences the outcomes of feedback practices that make up a feedback environment or if it is impacted by feedback practices and therefore is changed by them. The current study seeks to explore and clarify this relationship using a person-environment framework. Fortunately, much work has been done on understanding person-by-context situations in the workplace through well-established and extensive person-environment fit research. Person-environment fit (P-E fit) theory stems from the idea that peoples' behaviours and attitudes are determined jointly by personal and environmental conditions (Kristof-Brown & Jansen, 2007). Thus, the current study will make use of the person-environment fit research to clarify and advance the understanding of how feedback orientation and the feedback environment are related and together predict outcomes that will influence the benefits of the feedback process.

Person-Organization Fit

Based in interactional psychology, person-environment fit (P-E fit) theory describes work outcomes as a result of the relationship between both the person and the environment (Edwards, 1996; Magnusson, 1999). Compatibility, or fit, occurs when individual and work environment characteristics are well matched (e.g., congruence between individual and organizational values, needs/supplies, and abilities/expectations) (Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005). This affective reaction known as fit yields important positive outcomes such as increased job

satisfaction, job performance, and work quality as well as decreased turnover intentions (Ostroff & Schulte, 2007).

In workplace research, the concept of P-E fit has been used as an umbrella term that refers to compatibility with many aspects of the work environment (Jansen & Kristof-Brown, 2006). Most relevant to the present study is the sub type of P-E fit known as *person-organization fit* (P-O fit). First based on Chatman's model of person-organization fit, P-O fit is the degree of compatibility (fit) between personal characteristics and values of an employee and the organization's culture, which is made up of the norms, values, and expectations in the workplace (Chatman, 1989; O'Reilly, Chatman, & Caldwell, 1991). Research in this area has pointed out that since perceptions of fit are considered as more proximal determinants of behaviour, they are better predictors of people's future choices and behaviours than the actual congruence between people and their environments (Cable & Judge, 1997; Endler & Magnusson, 1976; Kristof, 1996). Therefore, perceptions of fit will be examined in this study. While other types of person-environment fit exist, namely person-person fit, and person-group fit, person-leader fit, person-organization fit is chosen for the current study as it captures a broader perspective of fit that can transcend specific coworkers and specific jobs. Person-organization fit, from a more macro perspective, plays a larger role in predicting long term retention as it does not rely solely on fit to a job that can change or people that come and go within the organization.

The construct of perceived fit has been conceptualized as involving three key dimensions such that: (1) Values-congruence fit refers to the consistency between individual values and organizational values (2) Demands-ability fit refers to the extent of the fit between an employee's perception of his or her abilities and organizational work requirements and (3) Supply-needs fit refers to the degree to which organizational supply meets individual needs

(Cable & DeRue, 2002). Fit is a multidimensional construct most frequently assessed by its value-congruence dimension which involves an alignment between organizational and employee values (Kristof, 1996). Specific to feedback, one study has examined the feedback environment as a predictor of perceived fit (Peng & Chiu, 2010). In this study, researchers highlighted that supervisors are responsible for monitoring employee performance and if this responsibility is not undertaken diligently, employees end up misinformed or uninformed regarding evaluations and expectations of their past and present work. This would not be perceived as in the best interest of the employee nor the organization (Lovelace & Rosen, 1996). On the other hand, when a supervisor provides direct and constructive feedback to employees, which helps them understand and reach their performance goals, it is seen as supportive behaviour. This support would then increase perceived fit between an employee's values and the values they perceive their organization to have (Peng & Chiu, 2010). Thus, the level of support in one's feedback environment can predict employees' perceived fit with their organization. Similar parallels can be drawn between feedback and the other dimensions of P-O fit that include congruence between the needs and abilities of employees and the supplies and expectations of organizations. Employees who see a need for feedback and are supplied with it likely experience a stronger sense of alignment with their organization. Employees who feel supported to be able and accountable to apply feedback likely perceive a stronger sense of alignment between their ability and their organizations' expectations. Therefore, the multidimensional construct of P-O fit is adopted within the current study as it most effectively captures the multiple impacts of performance feedback in providing supplies, exhibiting organizational values around supporting performance improvement, and informing demands with respect to performance expectations.

Within these relationships, psychological mechanisms are likely at work that would help to explain how feedback practices lead to a personal sense of alignment with one's organization. Given feedback orientation's close link to the feedback environment, it is proposed that employee *perceptions* of the utility of feedback may play a role that helps to explain these linkages. For example, when supervisors provide a supportive feedback environment they showcase the value of feedback. Employees who appreciate and value feedback would see their values aligning in such an environment. Recent research considering how individual differences such as how one values feedback operate in the feedback process, has made evident that a person-by-context interaction is taking place in the feedback process (e.g., Gabriel et al., 2014). This research has also shown that a supportive feedback environment by itself may not be influential enough to lead to positive work outcomes for all employees. However, no guiding theoretical framework has been proposed to explain and predict this feedback specific person-by-context interaction. The current study builds on these lines of research to create a framework of fit and feedback by adopting a P-O fit perspective.

Empirical findings.

Much evidence exists demonstrating that the multidimensional construct of perceived P-O fit predicts employee work outcomes including organizational commitment, job satisfaction, turnover intentions, willingness to recommend their organization to others (Cable & Judge, 1996), and extra-role behaviors (Lauver & Kristof-Brown, 2001). Consequences can be grave if employees do not find similarity between their values, needs, and abilities and what their organization provides and expects. P-O fit research has shown that employees who perceive low levels of fit with their organization will be less likely to identify with the organization, less trusting in the motives of the organization, less willing to contribute extra-role efforts to help the

organization, and ultimately less likely to stay in the organization long-term (Cable & DeRue, 2002). Therefore, research ought to consider the mediating mechanisms between employee perceived fit and their organizational environment to better predict work outcomes.

One study has found that the supervisor feedback environment influences employees' organizational citizenship behaviours indirectly through P-O fit and organizational commitment (Peng & Chiu, 2010). Other than this first study, limited research has investigated the relationship of P-O fit specific to feedback. Nevertheless, if we consider the concept of person-organization fit with respect to feedback and assign feedback orientation as the individual (i.e., person) characteristic and the feedback environment as the organizational characteristic we can begin to explore the likely relationships that will form. To better understand how a person's feedback orientation interacts with their feedback environment to affect work outcomes, the current study is the first to adopt a P-O fit perspective into a theoretical framework that examines fit as a mechanism to explain this interaction as it impacts people's motivation to engage in the feedback process. Outcomes positively influenced by feedback include improvements on work performance and motivational aspects such as organizational commitment, creativity, and job motivation. Within the feedback process, the motivational mechanisms that lead from feedback to these positive outcomes remain unclear (Mulder & Ellinger, 2013). As such, research is needed to determine the role work motivation plays in the feedback process (e.g., Peng & Chiu, 2010).

Work Engagement

Leaders are increasingly recognizing the benefits of focusing on employee development and continuous learning, often with the use of regular feedback, as it serves to engage and retain employees (Linderbaum & Levy, 2010). The existence of motivational mechanisms in the

feedback process have been proposed (e.g., Baker et al., 2013; Mulder, 2013; Peng & Chiu, 2010) but remain mostly untested aside from the motivation to use feedback (Steelman et al., 2004) and employee empowerment (Gabriel et al., 2014). The current study addresses the lack of empirical research that explains—rather than speculates—how motivation represented by work engagement can play a role in the feedback process. *Work engagement* is commonly conceptualized as the degree to which people exhibit high levels of personal investment in their work tasks (Rich et al., 2010; Schaufeli et al., 2002; Christian et al., 2011). Employees who are engaged in and dedicated to their work contribute positively to the overall performance goals of their organization.

Work engagement is characterized as a persistent, positive affective-motivational state or attitude towards one's work. This positive attitude manifests itself in three combined ways including one's absorption in, vigour in, and dedication to their work (Woocheol, Kolb, & Kim, 2012; Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001; Schaufeli et al., 2002). Absorption represents the cognitive component of engagement and refers to being immersed and content with one's work or task in such a way that time is perceived to pass more quickly (Menguc et al., 2013). Absorption indicates a strong level of involvement in work that can lead to difficulty in moving away from or detaching oneself from the work one is so deeply involved in (Salanova et al., 2005). Vigour is characterized by a willingness and determination to apply energy and effort in one's work and to be resilient and persistent when obstacles present themselves (Menguc et al., 2013). Lastly, dedication represents the emotional component of engagement and refers to finding purpose and meaning in one's task or work and being invigorated, enthusiastic, and proud of one's work (Menguc et al., 2013).

The role of work engagement in the feedback process largely remains an unexplored direction for study (Wollard & Shuck, 2011). Researchers have highlighted conceptual linkages between the intrinsic motivation that comes from external sources of feedback (e.g., sincere recognition and encouragement on the job) as an antecedent to engagement, little empirical evidence exists on the linkage (Wollard & Shuck, 2011). Recent research has identified that feedback from supervisors is positively related to work engagement (Menguc et al., 2013; Mone et al., 2011; Christian et al., 2011), however the specific mechanisms leading from feedback practices to work engagement have not been tested. Nevertheless, several plausible predictions as to how feedback practices can predict work engagement can be made. First, when employees perceive sufficient feedback, they gain accurate guidance on how to become more effective (Jaworski & Kohli, 1991), they share more instances of communication with their leader and align on ways to improve performance (Ashford & Cummings, 1983); all components that likely can enhance employee dedication and investment in their work. Researchers have also posited that employees can sense their leader's interest in their growth, learning, and development from the candid and accurate developmental feedback they receive (Menguc et al., 2013). Therefore, when employees receive helpful feedback that reinforces or redirects their efforts to enhance their effectiveness they could become more engaged and invested in their work (Menguc et al., 2013). On the other hand, when employees do not receive sufficient feedback, they are more likely to encounter ambiguity, conflict, and confusion about what is expected of them (Jaworski & Kohl, 1991), which can lead to stress and lower role clarity. Without developmental feedback, employees can experience a lack of stimulation, fewer opportunities for innovation and change, and less enthusiasm, energy, passion, and inspiration regarding their job (Menguc et al., 2013).

According to the job-demands-resource model of work engagement, work engagement has a structural relationship between antecedents (e.g., job resources and personal resources) and consequences (e.g., performance and turnover intention) (Woocheol et al., 2012) as one tends to come before the other. Particularly, job resources (including feedback) that act as motivators appear to cause work engagement (Baker et al., 2013) and engaged employees have more positive job attitudes, experience good mental health, and perform better than those who are less engaged (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003). Further, research has shown that supportive management and managers who create a supportive climate contribute towards creating conditions for enhanced engagement (Dollard & Bakker, 2010). As such, the current study explores how work engagement conceptualized as a multifaceted attitude is influenced by both individual perceptions and environmental factors related to feedback to predict involvement in the feedback process.

Given that feedback and the feedback process has only recently been recognized as a broader and more overarching developmental tool, its link to the broader motivational state of work engagement has not been investigated. It remains empirically undetermined how work environments that promote growth, such as a supportive feedback environment, can foster work engagement. However, studies have underlined the importance of the mediating role of engagement in the relationship between the work environment and organizational outcomes (Simpson, 2009). Making use of performance feedback in a way that effectively addresses individual differences can make a work environment more engaging. Thinking about the feedback environment, its supportiveness can serve to encourage motivation and signal appropriate regulation of employee behavior (Peng & Chiu, 2010). A supportive feedback environment could also reduce work withdrawal behaviours as employees have the resources

they need to complete their work effectively (Woocheol, Kolb, & Kim, 2012) and thus leave more room for its conceptual opposite, which researchers have commonly suggested is work engagement, to increase.

Taking these concepts together, the relationship between the feedback environment and feedback orientation elucidated by P-O fit could influence work engagement in many ways. A first connection between these constructs is their shared emphasis on performance and motivation flourishing in environments that are supportive of employee development and continuous learning. Likewise, both person-organization fit and work engagement have been found to lead to increased organizational commitment and organizational citizenship behaviour and thus the idea that a relationship between the two variables exists as a reflection of their similar effects is plausible. Second, demonstrating a willingness to process feedback and to change behaviours accordingly suggests that people with a strong feedback orientation are responsive and invested in improving their performance (Dahling et al., 2012). Similarly, employees with a strong feedback orientation are often more self-aware, open to introspection, interested in learning about themselves, and determined to improve their performance (Linderbaum & Levy, 2007; London, 2003; London & Smither, 2002). Thus, an important connection between feedback orientation and work engagement is the willingness to invest one's efforts into work performance. Taken in sum, it is expected that work engagement will play a role in the relationship between person-organization fit and its work outcomes.

Empirical findings. Researchers have proposed that when employees see their work as consistent with their personal values they are likely more engaged in it (Macey & Schneider, 2008). To test this assumption, it is proposed in the current study that work engagement may operate as a result of perceived person-organization fit leading to positive work outcomes. Using

the value-congruence dimension of P-O fit as an example to demonstrate this relationship, as employees evaluate their circumstances and determine that their values are congruent with the values of their environment, their affective reaction should be positive (Carver & Scheier, 1998; Gabriel et al., 2011; Gabriel et al., 2014; Illies & Judge, 2005). Conversely, if a discrepancy (or misfit) between employees' values and their organization's values exists, a negative affective reaction would result because employees' values are not matched by those of their organization. Implied here is that fit will lead to a positive influence on work engagement whereas misfit will not.

Work engagement is an important motivational factor for leaders to consider as it influences many valued work behaviours. Engagement has implications for all areas of human resource development practices including organizational development, training and organizational learning, career development, performance management, and strategic change processes. Research has found that employees who are engaged in their work show enhanced job and task performance, increased productivity and OCB's, discretionary effort (i.e., effort that is above the minimal requirements) and both affective and continuance commitment (i.e., wanting to and feeling one has to stay with the organization respectively). Employees who are engaged in their work are also less likely to leave their job or burnout (i.e., experience exhaustion and detachment from work due to chronic excess stress) (Wollard & Shuck, 2011).

An organization further benefits from having engaged workers as they contribute to an improved psychological climate, increased extra role behaviours (i.e., going above what is expected in one's role) and customer service, fewer accidents on the job, higher overall safety ratings, higher levels of profit, and overall revenue generation and growth (Wollard & Shuck, 2011). People who are engaged in their work tend to be more satisfied with their career

progression and promotion opportunities (Mone & London, 2009) which means that when managers provide engaging work opportunities that lead to career advancement, employees are likely to feel more engaged (Seijts & Crim, 2006). Overall, levels of work engagement in the workplace can serve as an indicator of employees who might be expected to contribute more effort in their work (Woocheol et al., 2012). Considering this effort in the feedback process, sharing, receiving, and accepting feedback are the first parts and applying feedback is the next. However, effort does not need to end there. Rather than passively awaiting for the next time their supervisor shares feedback, employees can make the effort to proactively seek the feedback they need when they need it and thus perpetuate or continue to reap the benefits of the feedback process.

Feedback-Seeking

Workers today are expected to take more ownership and responsibility for their own personal growth, learning, and development in order to retain their employability (Grant, Parker, & Collins, 2009; Kim, Hon, & Crant, 2009; London, Larsen, & Thisted, 1999). It has become evident that, in today's ever-changing and agile marketplace, organizations are restructuring and reducing their workforce to remain sustainable and competitive; the needs of today are not necessarily the needs of tomorrow. This also means that people can no longer plan to stay in an organization for their entire career nor expect this organization to take full responsibility for their own career development. Thus, employees who desire career advancement, particularly those who want it quickly, understand the need to make efforts to be proactive in the opportunities they seek or receive.

A key component of this proactive or self-initiated behaviour, as it appears in the workplace, is feedback-seeking (van der Rijt et al., 2012). *Feedback-seeking* behaviour refers to

employees' proactive search of informal, day-to-day performance feedback information (Kluger & DeNisi, 1996; Krasman, 2010). Employees engage in feedback-seeking in attempt to reduce their uncertainty about how others perceive their performance and to determine the adequacy of their performance towards attaining specified goals (Ashford, 1986; Ashford & Cummings, 1983). Feedback obtained is an important resource as it serves to inform employees on how to respond to their work environment (Ashford & Cummings, 1983). In the past, employees were perceived as passively awaiting annual performance reviews in order to catch a glimpse of the organization's impression of their performance. This perception is no longer accurate; many employees now take the initiative to seek feedback during casual day-to-day interactions at work to determine their level of performance, areas they can improve, and to have more control over the outcomes of their work behaviour (Ashford et al., 2003; Ashford & Cummings, 1983; Crant, 2000; Grant & Ashford, 2008).

Feedback-seeking typically takes two forms: inquiry and monitoring. Inquiry is the active and direct request for feedback whereas monitoring involves observing cues in the work environment that would indicate one's level of performance (e.g., supervisor in a good or bad mood, attendees at a meeting smiling and nodding during a presentation, compliments or criticisms from coworkers or supervisors, few or no comments on a report etc.). The feedback inquiry form of feedback-seeking has been more heavily researched as it has shown clear benefits for the individual and the organization (Whitaker, Dahling, & Levy, 2007) such as increased job satisfaction, employee learning, and motivation (e.g., Morrison, 1993; Murphy & Cleveland, 1995). Both strategies of feedback-seeking have been found to increase employee self-awareness, a skill that has been gradually recognized as highly valuable in the workplace

(Ashford et al., 2003) as it is associated with important predictors of success such as emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1998) and developmental disposition.

Empirical findings. Three main feedback-seeking motives have been identified and include instrumental motives towards achieving a goal, ego-based motives towards protecting one's ego, and image-based motives to enhance and protect one's image in the organization (Ashford et al., 2003). People can seek feedback to protect their ego and self-esteem by attempting to control the timing, content, and strategy used to obtain feedback (Ashford & Cummings, 1983; Larson, 1989; Steele, 1988). People can also seek feedback as a way to clarify previously given feedback (Fedor, Rensvold, & Adams, 1992), as a way to resolve lower personal tolerance for ambiguity (Ashford & Cummings, 1985), or as a way to manage the impressions they are making in their organization (Ashford & Cummings, 1983; Morrison & Bies, 1991).

Since the introduction of the concept (Ashford et al., 1983), multiple patterns of feedback-seeking have been studied and include the frequency (i.e., how often people seek feedback) (van der Rijt et al., 2012; van der Rijt et al., 2013), the method or strategy in which feedback is sought (e.g., inquiry or monitoring; Krasman, 2010; Renn & Fedor, 2001), the timing of feedback-seeking (van der Rijt et al., 2013), the target or source of feedback-seeking (Krasman, 2010), the quality of the feedback (e.g., van der Rijt et al., 2012), and the topic on which the feedback is sought (e.g., success versus failures; Ashford & Tsui, 1991) (see reviews by Anseel et al., 2015, Ashford et al., 2003, and Cheng et al., 2014).

Many individual and contextual antecedents can influence the likelihood that people will seek feedback and these components are part of a dynamic feedback-seeking process (Levy et al. 1995). Individual characteristics that influence feedback-seeking include goal orientation (Anseel

et al., 2015; Park et al., 2007; VandeWalle & Cummings, 1997; Whitaker & Levy, 2012), self-efficacy (Anseel et al., 2015; Ashford et al., 2003), self-confidence (Ashford, 1986), propensity to like and desire feedback (Fedor et al., 1992; Herold et al., 1996; Herold & Fedor, 1998; Renn & Fedor, 2001), tolerance of ambiguity (Ashford & Cummings, 1985; Bennett, Herold, & Ashford, 1990), self-esteem (Anseel et al., 2015; Levy et al., 1995; Northcraft & Ashford, 1990; Vancouver & Morrison, 1995), and personality (Krasman, 2010). Organizational tenure, job tenure, and age have been found to relate negatively to feedback-seeking behaviours (Anseel et al., 2015).

Whereas contextual antecedents that influence feedback-seeking behaviours include organizational norms on frequency of feedback-seeking (Ashford & Northcraft, 1992), organizational culture (Morrison et al., 2004; Quian et al., 2012), the feedback-seeking context (i.e., the type of environment in which feedback is sought and received; e.g., public versus private; Ashford & Northcraft, 1992; Levy et al., 1995; Northcraft & Ashford, 1990; Williams et al., 1999), the level of skill the job requires (Wanberg & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2000), the nature of previously obtained feedback (Morrison & Cummings, 1992), and situations where little feedback is offered (Ashford & Cummings, 1983; Fedor, Rensvold, & Adams, 1992).

Other contextual antecedents related to the sources of feedback include previous peer reactions to feedback-seeking (Williams et al., 1999), characteristics of the feedback source (e.g., credibility, expertise, feedback providers' mood; Ang et al., 1993; Morrison & Bies, 1991), the existing relationship quality with the feedback source (e.g., power to reward and supportiveness; Ang et al., 1993; Fedor, Rensvold, & Adams, 1992; Vancouver & Morrison, 1995; William et al., 1999), and leadership style (Anseel et al., 2015; Levy et al., 2002; Madzar, 2001; Qian et al., 2012).

The benefits of feedback-seeking are numerous and the most important ones for learning and performance are those that come from the actual performance information sought and received (Ashford et al., 2003). The dynamic process that occurs between seeking and receiving feedback is an important benefit of feedback-seeking as it creates an ongoing dialogue regarding performance and goal-setting and simultaneously increases feelings of personal control (Renn & Fedor, 2001). When asking for performance feedback, a performance and often coaching conversation is initiated during which efforts and goals are recalibrated, and performance can be enhanced. Therefore, the current study aims to determine how these valuable feedback-seeking behaviours can be predicted and from this understanding explore how leaders can encourage their employees to ask and look for feedback when they need it.

Feedback-seeking and the feedback environment. Though the feedback environment is largely created from the top down sharing of performance information, employees also share information with each other and in a bottom up fashion with their supervisors. Therefore, the feedback environment ought to be considered as a dynamic rather than static aspect of an organization as the individuals who work in it continuously shape it (Ashford, 1993; Becker & Klimoski, 1989; Herold & Fedor, 1998). Based on social exchange theory and more specifically leader-member exchange, research shows that when support is shown from supervisors in providing their employees with career development opportunities, these employees are likely to reciprocate with increased commitment towards improving their work by seeking feedback (Chen et al., 2007; Cheng et al., 2014; Eichhorn, 2009). From this perspective, research is needed that closely investigates the interplay between the feedback environment and feedback-seeking (Ashford & Northcraft, 2003).

The context for feedback-seeking often lies in relational characteristics (Williams et al., 1999). By examining employees as operating within their company context, image costs of asking for feedback have been found to be both socially constructed and socially affected as likely part of the organization's culture and the norms within it (Ashford et al., 2003; Ashford & Northcraft, 1992). Researchers have investigated whether a supervisor can enhance or inhibit the likelihood of their employees seeking feedback (Levy, Cober, & Miller, 2002; Miller & Levy, 1997; Vancouver & Morrison, 1995; VandeWalle et al., 2000). For example, a supervisor's considerate leadership style could reduce anxiety around how it might seem to others (e.g., peers) when one asks for feedback or help (Madzar, 1995). By contrast, seeking feedback in an environment that discourages asking for information or advice may introduce costs to one's reputation and even outweigh the benefits of feedback-seeking altogether (Morrison, 1995). Thus, research shows that perceived organizational support can operate as a mechanism by which leaders can reduce employees' hesitations to seek feedback (Ashford et al., 1998; Eisenberger, Fasolo & Davis-LaMastro; 1990; Eisenberger et al., 1986).

Conceptually, researchers have discussed environmental factors that can promote informal feedback sharing such as fostering a supportive and psychologically safe environment for employees to seek feedback (van der Rijt et al., 2012). From this, the influence of support in the work environment for feedback-seeking has been studied and researchers have found that the quality of the feedback sought and received positively affects perceived career development (van der Rijt et al., 2012). Lastly, research has revealed that a supportive context (i.e., supportive feedback source and positive peer relations) predicts increased feedback-seeking (Williams et al., 1999). From this, it is evident that a better understanding of *how* a supportive context predicts

feedback-seeking would provide meaningful avenues to further foster feedback-seeking behaviours.

Feedback-seeking considering both the feedback environment and feedback orientation. The question of why certain individuals naturally seek feedback more often than others is an interesting one that researchers have only just started to explore. Thus, research is needed to specifically examine the individual characteristics that predict rather than simply relate to feedback-seeking (van der Rijt et al., 2012). The debate between personal and contextual influences on the feedback process has made its way in the area of feedback-seeking where research has separately investigated individual (Ashford et al., 2003) and contextual factors (Levy et al., 1995; Levy & Williams, 1998; Williams et al., 1999) predicting feedback-seeking. Nevertheless, researchers continue to note that empirical work on feedback-seeking behaviour and its contextual antecedents still remains scarce (Ashford et al., 2003; Anseel et al., 2007; Krasman, 2010; Levy & Williams, 2004; Murphy & Cleveland, 1995; Steelman et al., 2004; van der Rijt et al., 2012) and limited knowledge exists on how to influence and develop feedback-seeking. Thus, from previously mentioned environmental considerations for the feedback process, an understanding of both individual and contextual factors would best serve to promote feedback-seeking behaviour in the workplace (Krasman, 2013; Cheramie, 2013).

Limitations of Past Research

Researchers have found that feedback on its own does not guarantee success and thus have moved towards understanding the context around feedback that enhances or inhibits its effects. Recently, a similar conclusion was drawn regarding the feedback environment. Findings highlight that a supportive feedback environment is not always beneficial as it can detract from employees' feelings of empowerment and control over their work (Gabriel et al., 2014). To

explain this finding, the researchers demonstrated that the extent to which employees are receptive to feedback (i.e., find it valuable and useful) will help or hinder the impact of feedback sharing. This suggests that a person-in-context effect is at play where both feedback sharing and receiving predict the impact feedback will have. This finding, however, was unexpected as it has been generally assumed that if people see support for feedback in their environment positive outcomes will ensue. Limited work has been done to explain the relationship between perceptions of feedback sharing and receiving and no guiding theoretical framework exists that takes into account and predicts how the two interact. While preliminary work by Gabriel and colleagues (2014) was insightful and informed how the relationships can operate, the work was conducted within a specific population of employees in a particular industry (i.e., employees of a correctional facility). As such, their findings ought to be replicated in a broader and more generalizable sample to validate their accuracy and more robustly inform theoretical framework building.

A framework that explains the linkages between perceptions of feedback sharing and receiving would shed light on how leaders can understand and encourage their employees' participation in the feedback process. Employees can play an active role in the feedback process through seeking feedback when they need it however it is currently unclear how leaders can encourage their employees to engage in this proactive behaviour. Leaders can play a role in creating a supportive feedback environment however this places little ownership on the employee nor guarantees that employees feel they are getting what they need when they need it. Employees do play a role in shaping their feedback environment by the way they perceive it, however this understanding is currently limited. Although the two are positively related, research has not found a supportive feedback environment, as perceived by employees, to directly predict

the likelihood that they will look and ask for feedback when they need it (Dahling et al., 2012). Therefore, it is currently unclear what factors directly motivate employees to seek feedback, nor what leaders can do to encourage it. Research is needed to investigate how the feedback process can be initiated by employees through feedback-seeking (Ashford & Northcraft, 2003).

Lastly, research is needed that takes a closer look at the motivational mechanisms behind the feedback process that explains why people who value feedback would feel compelled to ask and look for feedback more often. It is proposed in the current study that employees who are more engaged in their work (i.e., dedicated, committed, and involved) and who see feedback as useful will desire to enhance their performance through actively asking for performance information when they need it.

Present Study

Researchers have made a necessary shift away from studying feedback in isolated components towards more complex models that account for several factors—both individual and contextual—that more realistically capture feedback dynamics in the workplace (London & Smither, 2002). Nevertheless, these more complex relationships are mostly assumed rather than tested (London & Smither, 2002). Recently, a study unexpectedly found initial evidence showing that the benefits of a supportive feedback environment could be enhanced or inhibited depending on the interaction with employees' feedback orientation (Gabriel et al., 2014). However, no theoretical foundation was relied upon to predict this finding nor was it initially expected and so it remains unclear how this interaction can be theoretically predicted and meaningfully understood as a predictor in relation to work outcomes. The purpose of the present study is to address this issue by testing a theoretical framework to first, aid in understanding how these

relationships operate and second, to elucidate our ability to make predictions based on the forms this relationship may take.

Fit as a framework for feedback. Currently, researchers have posited two differing theoretical propositions, one that examines the effects of a supportive feedback environment as operating through its combination with one's feedback orientation (i.e., feedback orientation as a moderator) and the other that proposes its effects directly influence one's feedback orientation (i.e., feedback orientation as a mediator). Limited research exists to support these possible linkages and this is partly due to the lack of a guiding theoretical framework to facilitate predictions. Therefore, both possibilities will be tested in competing models to establish which specific linkages best explain the relationships at play in creating a guiding theoretical framework moving forward.

To better understand how a feedback environment created by leaders relates to people's feedback orientation to affect work outcomes, the present study proposes to adopt a person-organization fit (P-O fit) perspective into a theoretical framework. Accordingly, the present study will conceptually assign feedback orientation (i.e., how strongly one values feedback) as representing the "person" component, and the perceived feedback environment (i.e., the degree to which the work environment supports the use and value of feedback) as representing the "organization" component. The environmental component in a fit relationship typically carries the most weight and is more influential than the person component alone. This is because the perception of the environment comprises the affective cognitive reaction of the rater when perceiving fit, which influences the impact of the environment itself and produces an additive effect combining the influence of the reaction and the environment (Kristof-Brown & Guay, 2011). This example demonstrates that a positive person-organization fit can result from varying

levels of perceived fit with individual and environmental components and that from this perception of fit, outcomes can more easily be predicted. More specifically, P-O fit theory suggests that as people see a match between their own values, needs, and abilities and the values, supplies, and demands of their organization, they will perceive a closer alignment between themselves and their organization. Applying this theoretical orientation to feedback, it is predicted that when people see their organization values and provides feedback through creating a supportive feedback environment and they themselves value feedback, they will perceive a stronger level of fit within their organization.

The theory of person-environment fit indicates that positive outcomes result from the correspondence between person and environment components. For example, when a person highly values a resource and, likewise, the environment values and provides this same resource, they are said to be congruent, which should lead to positive outcomes. Congruence can also occur when a person accords little value to a resource and the environment does the same. This second scenario, congruence between two weak values, may also lead to positive outcomes though research would suggest these outcomes may not have as great of an impact compared to congruence between two strong values (Kristof-Brown & Guay, 2011).

Past research has supported that feedback orientation moderates the effects of the feedback environment. One study has found that feedback orientation can play the role of a moderator as it enhanced or inhibited the influence of a supportive feedback environment on employee empowerment (Gabriel et al., 2014). Thus, a supportive feedback environment may be perceived as beneficial only to those who strongly value feedback and conversely seen as detrimental for those who do not strongly value feedback. This work would suggest that the feedback environment and feedback orientation may have an interactive effect (i.e., moderation).

To examine this first possibility, the Hypothesized Model will test feedback orientation as a moderator. As such, it is expected that the positive relationship between perceptions of support in the feedback environment and perceptions of person-organization fit will be stronger when feedback orientation is strong and lower when feedback orientation is weak (see Figure 1).

Hypothesis 1: Feedback orientation moderates the relationship between the feedback environment and person-organization fit.

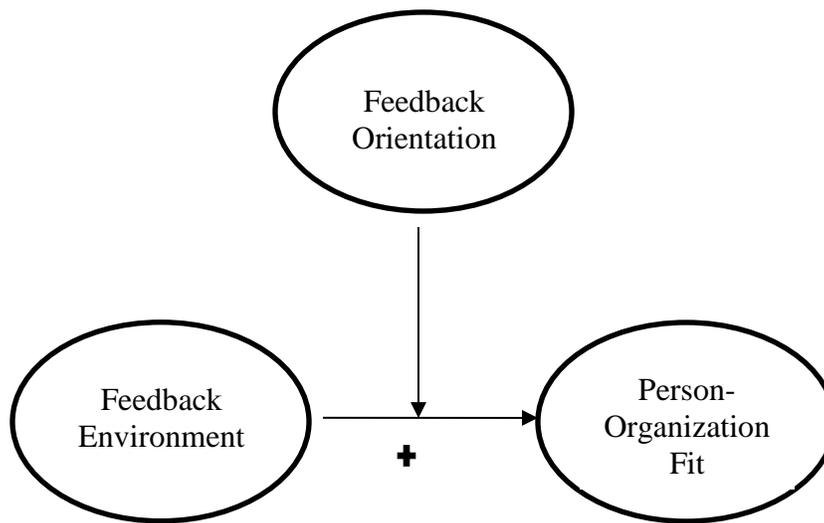


Figure 1. Hypothesized moderated relationship between the feedback environment and feedback orientation on person-organization fit.

Researchers have also posited, but not tested, the possibility that feedback orientation mediates the relationship between the feedback environment and its outcomes. Therefore, there is a possibility that feedback orientation as a mediator better explains the relationships at work in the larger framework being established in the current study. Thus, this possibility will be tested with a first alternate model to compare it to the first form of the framework tested with the hypothesized model. Though previous research has demonstrated that feedback orientation can play a moderating role to the impact of the feedback environment on employee empowerment (e.g., Gabriel et al., 2014), there is also evidence that it may play a mediating role between the

feedback environment and feedback-seeking (Dahling et al., 2012). One study has demonstrated that the influence of the feedback environment on work outcomes (e.g., feedback inquiry) was only beneficial when combined with a strong feedback orientation (Dahling et al., 2012) suggesting that feedback orientation may operate as a mediator. Theoretically, though not empirically supported, as people have experiences with positive and reinforcing feedback resulting from a supportive feedback environment, they may also have a more favourable feedback orientation over time (Linderbaum & Levy, 2010; London & Smithers, 2002). Thus given varying research findings, it is a possibility that feedback orientation is predicted by its relationship to the feedback environment; rather than influencing its effect through moderation, it could be channeling it through mediation.

To test empirically whether feedback orientation plays a mediating role (vs. a moderator), Alternate Model 1 will examine an alternate to Hypothesis 1 and test feedback orientation as a mediator of the relationship between the feedback environment and person-organization fit. This alternate model is based on the notion that individual preferences toward feedback are potentially influenced by their experiences with it. These experiences are likely the result of the feedback practices their leaders have engaged in that influence how likely employees will see feedback as useful and themselves as able and accountable to apply it. According to this logic, feedback orientation could play a more crucial role as a mediator of the impact of the feedback environment rather than as a moderator. Thus, the current study will examine alternate models where feedback orientation acts as a mediator in the relationship between the feedback environment and person-organization fit. In the first alternate model, it is predicted that the feedback environment will be positively associated with feedback orientation, which, in turn, will be positively related to person-organization fit (See Figure 2 for illustration).



Figure 2. Feedback orientation mediating the relationship between the feedback environment and person-organization fit.

Fit leading to feedback-seeking. Building on the predicted relationship between the feedback environment and PO-fit with the aim of determining how leaders can encourage their employees to engage in the feedback process, further links can be examined. Although limited research has investigated the relationship of P-O fit specific to feedback, one study has found that the supervisor feedback environment influences employees' organizational citizenship behaviours indirectly through P-O fit and organizational commitment (Peng & Chiu, 2010). These findings suggest that when employees see support for feedback in their environment and are committed to their organization, they perceive their organization as providing needed feedback that is in their best interest for performance improvement and career development. Based on social-exchange theory, employees are then more likely to reciprocate feelings of support by helping their colleagues and going above and beyond their job description to serve the best interest of the organization (Norris-Watts & Levy, 2004; Peng & Chiu, 2010). They may also reciprocate by seeking feedback when they need it, not only to regularly improve their performance and thus contribute more to their organization, but also to play a more active role in their own personal learning and development.

Feedback-seeking can initiate the feedback process, and thus is an important feedback specific outcome to include in the current study's theoretical model. When employees perceive their needs, values, and abilities (including those with respect to feedback) are well matched by

what their organization offers and expects, positive outcomes should ensue (Carver & Scheier, 1998; Gabriel et al., 2011; Gabriel et al., 2014; Illies & Judge, 2005). Thus, it is expected, that the feedback environment will be positively associated with person-organization fit, which, in turn, will be positively related to feedback-seeking. This particular predicted link is consistently tested in each form of the framework proposed and the models testing them.

Hypothesis 2: Person-organization fit mediates the relationship between the feedback environment and feedback seeking.



Figure 3. Person-organization fit mediating the relationship between the feedback environment and feedback-seeking.

The role of work engagement. Although research has shown that PO-fit predicts the extent to which employees engage in OCBs (i.e., behaviours that are beyond their job description and ultimately help the organization) it remains untested what motivational mechanisms compel them to engage in such positive outcomes nor what these outcomes look like with respect to feedback. That being said, researchers have suggested that when employees see their work as consistent with their personal values, they will be more engaged in it (Macey & Schneider, 2008). As employees feel their values, needs, and abilities are well matched by what their organization provides and expects, it is predicted that they will feel more dedicated to their work and expend more effort to improve it. As such these employees are predicted to engage in

feedback-seeking more often as feedback gives them valuable information on goal progress and how they can improve the way they work.

The current study tests whether work engagement operates as a motivational force between how employees and their organizations view the utility of feedback and the likelihood that feedback will be sought as a result. Given that work engagement has not yet been directly studied in the context of the feedback process, the framework used in the present study will help to determine the specific role of work engagement in the relationship between person-organization fit and feedback-seeking. Specifically, it is predicted that person-organization fit will be positively associated with work engagement, which, in turn, will be positively related to feedback-seeking.

Hypothesis 3: Work engagement mediates the relationship between person-organization fit and feedback-seeking.

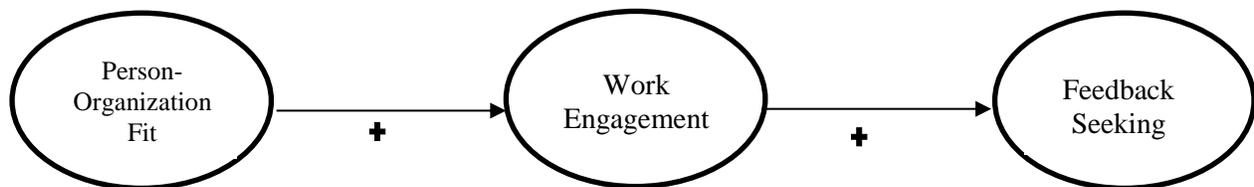


Figure 4. Work engagement mediating the relationship between person-organization fit and feedback-seeking.

Given the dearth of empirical research that exists on how these relationships may operate together, alternative explanations are plausible. Given that no strong theoretical basis nor guiding framework currently exists to predict this relationship and that work engagement has rarely been studied in the context of feedback, the present study tests competing models to determine if work engagement plays a mediating or moderating role in the relationship between person-organization fit and feedback-seeking.

Previous research has determined work engagement has a structural relationship between antecedents such as job resources (e.g., feedback) and consequences (e.g., performance) (Woocheol, Kolb, & Kim, 2012) meaning it plays an influential role in the feedback process. Currently, the type of role work engagement plays is unclear and as such it is plausible that work engagement plays a more conservative role in the predicted relationships and merely moderates the relationship between P-O fit and feedback-seeking. Thus, as an alternate to Hypothesis 3, the Alternate Model 1 will also test if work engagement moderates the relationship between person-organization fit and feedback-seeking (See Figure 5 for illustration). It is predicted that the positive relationship between person-organization fit and feedback-seeking will be stronger when work engagement is high and weaker when work engagement is low.

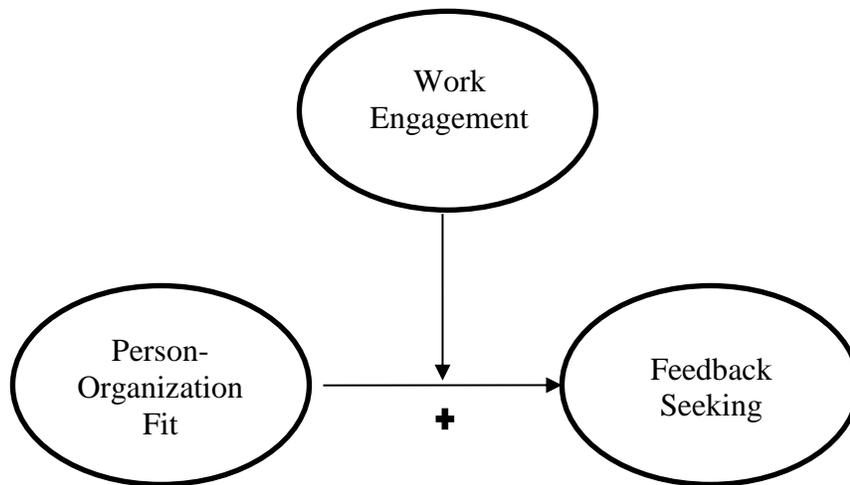


Figure 5. Work engagement moderating the relationship between person-organization fit and feedback-seeking.

Competing models.

Hypothesized model. Research has found that the positive benefits of a supportive feedback environment are influenced by the extent to which employees see feedback as valuable and useful (Gabriel et al., 2014). To explain this interaction and its impact, person-organization fit is included as its outcome. It is predicted that employees who perceive strong support for

feedback sharing in their environment will experience a stronger fit between their own needs, values, and abilities and what their organization is providing and expecting of them. The strength of this relationship is predicted to be influenced by the extent to which employees value feedback in the first place. Person-organization fit is then predicted to compel employees to invest further in their work by seeking feedback to improve it – this investment and effort channelled through work engagement.

Conversely, it is predicted that employees who perceive lower support for feedback sharing in the environment will experience lower fit with their organization. This relationship is predicted to be even weaker if these employees do not value feedback in the first place. This lower fit would then lead to lower work engagement and, in turn, to a lower likelihood of feedback-seeking. One additional link is featured in the Hypothesized Model, which is the direct positive relationship between feedback orientation and feedback-seeking as previous research has already found strong support for this direct link (Dahling et al., 2012). Employees who perceive the utility of feedback and feel able and accountable to use it are more likely to look and ask for feedback. The predicted relationships are summarized in the Hypothesized Model (see Figure 6).

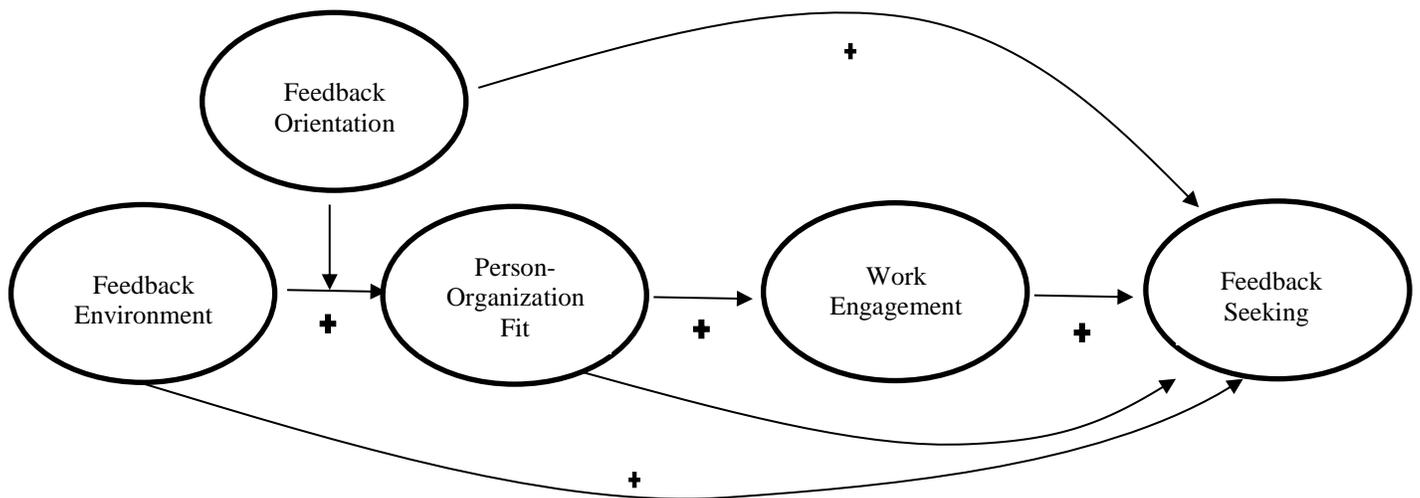


Figure 6. Hypothesized Model.

Alternate model 1. While attempting to elucidate the relationship between feedback practices in the feedback environment and their impact on predicting the extent to which employees will seek feedback, multiple causal paths are possible and thus tested with alternate models in this study. Alternate Model 1 posits that the extent to which employees perceive support for feedback in their environment will impact how oriented towards feedback they will perceive themselves to be. Supportive feedback practices are predicted to enhance employees' perceived utility and accountability towards feedback and from this, the extent to which they feel their organization is meeting their needs, values, and abilities with what they provide and expect. These employees are then predicted to seek feedback more often, particularly when they are more engaged in their work. All predicted paths are depicted in Figure 7.

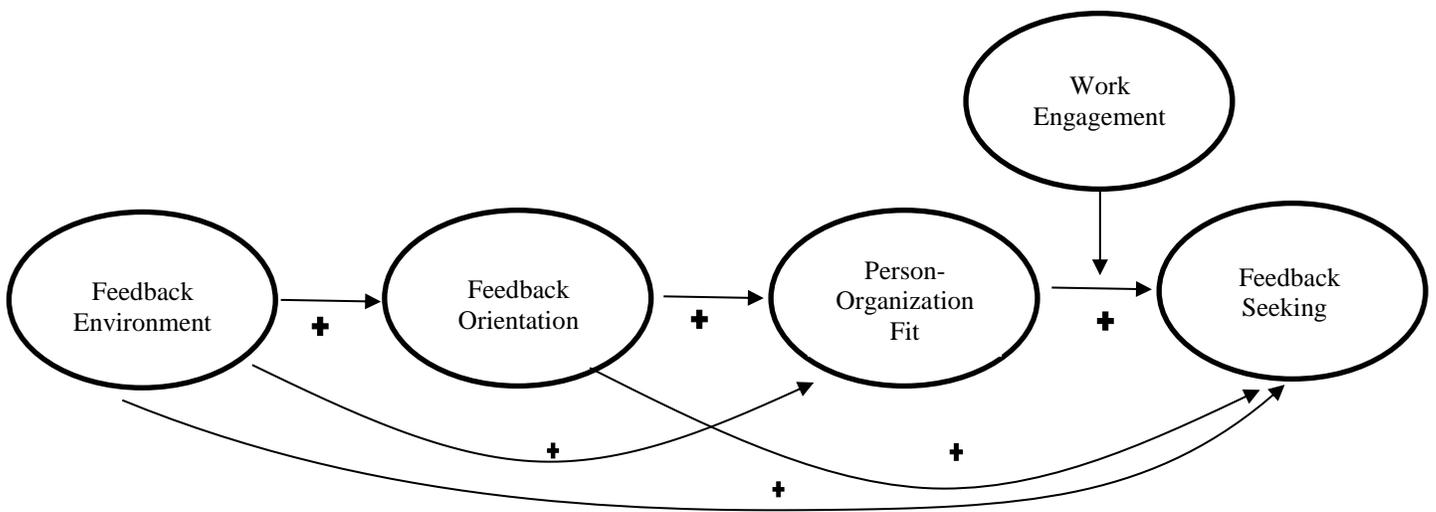


Figure 7. Alternate Model 1.

Alternate models 2 and 3. The two forms of the framework proposed were tested with the hypothesized model and the first alternate model which featured feedback orientation as a moderator and then as a mediator and work engagement as a mediator and then as a moderator, correspondingly. However, both variables may play the role of mediator or moderator within the same model (as shown in Figures 8 and 9 respectively). Thus, for the sake of completeness, two additional alternate models were tested in order to answer this question and to determine how to best explain the linkages between the variables of interest in the overall framework. Alternate model 2 includes feedback orientation and work engagement as mediators and Alternate model 3 includes feedback orientation and work engagement as moderators. No other predicted relationships were changed and the overall sequential order of the variables in the proposed framework remained the same throughout all tested models.

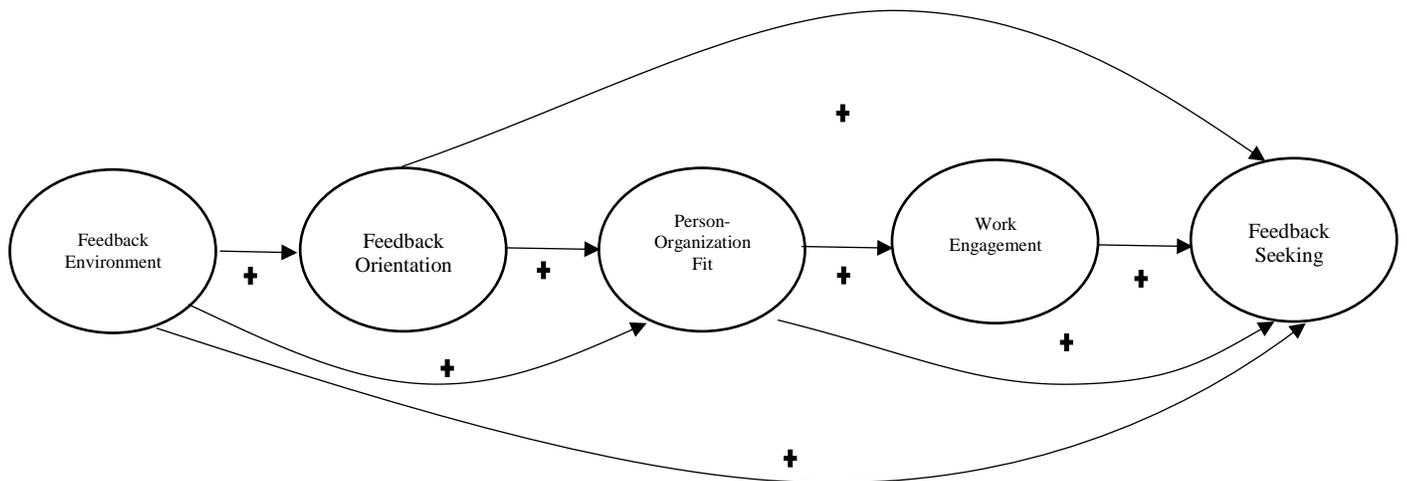


Figure 8. Alternate Model 2.

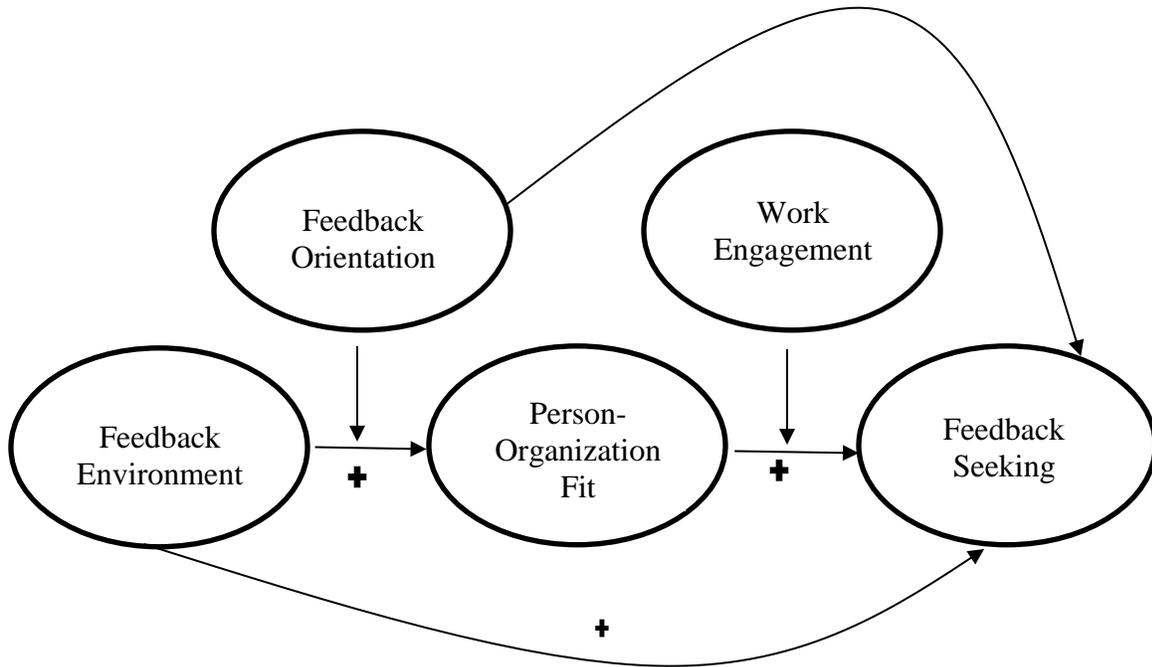


Figure 9. Alternate Model 3.

CHAPTER III

DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Participants

Participants were recruited using three different online participant recruitment websites, two based out of the United States and one based out of the United Kingdom (see Appendix A for detailed recruitment service descriptions and advertisement messaging). Briefly, two of the online recruitment services offered to advertise the research study namely “Call for Participants” (www.callforparticipants.com) and “Find Participants” (www.findparticipants.com). The third service offered the ability to source survey takers to complete the online survey namely “Cint Integration” through Fluid Surveys owned by Survey Monkey (www.fluidsurveys.com).

Multiple recruitment websites were used to acquire a diverse industries sample from which results obtained could represent and be applicable to the broader workplace. From a methodological standpoint, a diverse sample increases the external validity of the framework proposed and permits the generalizability of the results to a wider population of working employees. The inclusion criteria for this study included employees who worked full time or part-time, had a minimum age of 18, and worked under a direct supervisor or manager (i.e., were not self-employed).

Sample characteristics. An initial total of 728 people responded to participate in the study (Call for Participants – 92; Find Participants – 389; Cint Integration – 247). From this, a total of 428 responders completed the online survey for this study (i.e., completed a minimum of 95% of the survey items) (Call for Participants – 65, 65% of total responders; Find Participants – 200, 75% of total responders; Cint Integration – 158, 64% of total responders). Upon screening responses, 408 participants were retained as they provided meaningful responses (i.e., legibility

and variability in responses, adequate response time). From the final sample of 408 participants, 62 participants (15.2%) were recruited using “Call for Participants”, 190 (46.6%) from “Find Participants”, and 156 (38.2%) from “Cint Integration” through Fluid Surveys. All participants recruited were grouped into one sample and justification for this decision is outlined in the results section.

Participants ranged in age from 18 to 71 ($M = 36.20$, $SD = 11.10$), consisted of 33.8% males, and 65.7% females, and 0.5 % did not specify their gender. A majority of participants reported being located in the United States of America (74.8%), and majority of the rest reported being located in Canada (17.9%). 76% of the sample identified as Caucasian. Participants reported, on average, a salary of \$64 628, the majority indicated a full-time work status (78.2%), and 66.2% reported working in a non-management role. Participants worked in a wide range of industries including education, healthcare, retail, government, restaurant-hospitality, information technology, and business finance. See Appendix B for further demographic information of the sample and the questionnaire used to gather this information.

Procedure

This study used a cross-sectional design where information was collected through the use of an online, self-report, questionnaire. This questionnaire was accessed through the three recruitment services outlined earlier and was administered on Fluid Surveys (now owned by Survey Monkey) online survey platform licensed through the University of Windsor (Windsor, Ontario, Canada). All participants filled out the same online questionnaire.

For all three recruitment services, once participants met the criteria and chose to participate, they were given a link to access the online survey. Here, they first received a letter of information and then were given the option to consent to participate. Once participants

consented, they were taken to the questionnaire (i.e., demographics and measures). The questionnaire took approximately 20 to 30 minutes to complete and was considered at an easy readability level (83.1% Flesch Reading Ease Test) and to be understood by and accessible to people with a fifth grade education level and higher (Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level Test).

Following completion of the survey, participants were taken to a summary information letter and thanked for their time. Participants were also given the opportunity to enter into a draw for one of five \$50 amazon gift cards, as incentive for participating.

Measures

Featured variables measures. The following table (Table 1) summarizes the measures used in the current study and detailed descriptions of each are found in the following sections (See Appendix C for all measure items).

Table 1
Measure Descriptions for Variables of Interest

Variable	Measure	Authors	Items	Range ¹	α	Sample Item
Feedback Environment	Feedback Environment Scale (supervisor items)	Steelman et al., 2004	32	1-7	.94	“My supervisor encourages me to ask for feedback whenever I am uncertain about my job performance.”
Feedback Orientation	Feedback Orientation Scale	Linderbaum & Levy, 2010	20	1-5	.91	“Feedback contributes to my success at work.”
Person-Organization Fit	Perceived Fit Scale	Cable & DeRue, 2002	9	1-5	.91	“My personal values match my organization’s values and culture.”
Work Engagement	Utrecht Work Engagement Scale	Schaufeli et al., 2002	17	0-6	.94	“I find the work that I do full of meaning and purpose.”
Feedback-Seeking	Feedback-Seeking (adapted)	Ashford, 1986; adapted by van der Rijt et al., 2012	7	1-5	.87	“In order to find out how well you are performing in your job, how frequently do you seek information from your colleagues about your work performance?”
<i>Covariates</i>						
Job Complexity	Work Design Questionnaire (job complexity subscale)	Morgeson & Humphrey, 2006	4	1-5	.86	“The tasks on the job are simple and uncomplicated.”
Social Desirability	Social Adaptation Scale	Erdodi, 2015 (experimental measure)	13	True-False	.80	“I always wash an article of clothing before wearing it again.”

¹ Main variables and job complexity were measured using Likert-type scale response options.

Supervisor feedback environment. The Feedback Environment Scale (FES; Steelman et al., 2004) measures employees' perceptions of the feedback environment within their organization. Given that this study is primarily concerned with the supervisor feedback environment, only the 32 supervisor-focused items was used (i.e., the coworker items were excluded for this study). To represent the supervisor feedback environment, the measure identifies seven sub dimensions: (a) source credibility (5 items; for example, "I have confidence in the feedback my supervisor gives me."), (b) feedback quality (5 items; for example, "My supervisor gives me useful feedback about my job performance."), (c) feedback delivery (5 items; for example, "My supervisor is supportive when giving me feedback about my job performance."), (d) favourable feedback (4 items; for example, "I frequently receive positive feedback from my supervisor."), (e) unfavourable feedback (4 items; for example, "My supervisor tells me when my work performance does not meet organizational standards."), (f) feedback availability (5 items; for example, "My supervisor is usually available when I want performance information."), (g) promotes feedback-seeking (4 items; for example, "My supervisor encourages me to ask for feedback whenever I am uncertain about my job performance."). All questions were rated on a 7-point scale, from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*), and the internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha) for this scale was found to be high: $\alpha = .94$.

Feedback orientation. The Feedback Orientation Scale (FOS; Linderbaum & Levy, 2010) is a multidimensional measure that uses 20 items to assess employees' overall perceptions on receiving and utilizing feedback. This measure has four sub dimensions: (a) utility (5 items; for example, "Feedback contributes to my success at work."), (b) accountability (5 items; for example, "I feel obligated to make changes based on feedback."), (c) social awareness (5 items;

for example, “Feedback lets me know how I am perceived by others.”), and (d) self-efficacy (5 items; for example, “I feel self-assured when dealing with feedback.”). All questions were rated on a 5-point scale (from 1 = ‘strongly disagree’ to 5 = ‘strongly agree’) and internal consistency (Cronbach’s alpha) for this scale was found to be high: $\alpha = .91$.

Perceived fit. The nine items from Cable and DeRue’s (2002) perceived fit scale was used to assess P-O fit. Although a wide variety of fit measures exist, this particular measure was chosen to first get at the fuller picture of perceived fit through a multidimensional measure rather than a unidimensional view and second, to be able to replicate and further previous research using the same measure in the context of feedback (e.g., Peng & Chiu, 2010). The construct of perceived fit is three-dimensional such that: (1) Values-congruence fit refers to the consistency between individual values and organizational values (3 items; for example, “My personal values match my organization’s values and culture.”) (2) Demands-ability fit refers to the extent of the fit between an employee’s perception of his or her abilities and organizational work requirements (3 items; for example, “The match is very good between the demands of my job and my personal skills.”) and (3) Supply-needs fit refers to the degree to which organizational supply meets individual needs (3 items; for example, “There is a good fit between what my job offers me and what I am looking for in a job.”). All questions were rated on a 5-point scale, from 1 (not at all) to 7 (*completely*), and internal consistency (Cronbach’s alpha) for this scale was found to be high: $\alpha = .91$.

Work engagement. Work engagement was assessed with the widely used Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES; Schaufeli et al., 2002) consisting of 17 items grouped into three subscales that reflect the underlying dimensions of engagement: vigour (6 items: for example, “I can continue working for very long periods at a time.”), dedication (5 items: for example, “I find

the work that I do full of meaning and purpose.”), and absorption (6 items: for example, “It is difficult to detach myself from my job.”). All items were rated on a seven-point frequency rating scale from 0 (*never*) to 6 (*always*) and internal consistency (Cronbach’s alpha) for this scale was found to be high: $\alpha = .94$.

Feedback-seeking. Based on Ashford’s (1986) original work, and following adaptations by Gupta et al (1999), Barner-Rasmussen (2003), and van der Rijt et al. (2012), a seven-item feedback-seeking measure was used. This measure assesses how frequently employees engage in strategies to acquire performance feedback, using two strategies namely inquiry (4 items: for example, “In order to find out how well you are performing in your job, how frequently do you seek information from your colleagues about your work performance?”), and monitoring (3 items: for example, “In order to find out how well you are performing in your job, how frequently do you observe the characteristics of employees rewarded by your superiors and use this information?”). All items were rated on a five-point frequency scale ranging from 1 (*very infrequently*) to 5 (*very frequently*). Internal consistency (Cronbach’s alpha) for this scale was found to be within acceptable limits: $\alpha = .87$.

Controls.

Recruitment method. To take into consideration that one participant recruitment method involved a service that paid respondents to participate and the other two services did not, recruitment method was controlled for and included as a covariate in all analyses. For analyses, the recruitment method was dummy coded to represent two groups; participants coded as “0” represented the participants that did not receive payment for their contribution to the current study. Likewise, people who were paid to participate were coded as “1”.

Job tenure. Research in the area of feedback has shown that the need for feedback has been found to decrease as one's tenure in the job increases (Ashford, 1986; Ashford & Cummings, 1985; VandeWalle et al., 2000). For example, researchers have found that higher-level and longer-tenured employees are less likely to seek feedback because they feel it detracts from the expectations others have of them to be knowledgeable and confident in their role (Ashford & Cummings, 1985; Morrison, 1993). This means a person in a role for a significant length of time is expected to know their role well and not require as much regular feedback. As such, and as per related studies (e.g., Anseel & Lievens, 2007), job tenure was tested as a potential covariate in the current study. To test this, participants were asked to answer an open-ended question on how long they had been in their current job.

Job complexity. Job complexity refers to the degree to which tasks for a specific role or job are complex and difficult to perform (Morgeson & Humphrey, 2006). Job complexity may be influential in this study given that both constructs of feedback orientation and feedback-seeking behaviours are likely more useful for employees who work in very complex positions in comparison to simple positions. Additionally, people in complex and challenging positions often must be receptive to feedback, effective users of feedback information, and active self-regulators with the help of goal-setting and feedback information in order to succeed (Dahling et al., 2012). Therefore, the current study controlled for job complexity and treated it as a covariate in all analyses. Job complexity was measured with four items from the job complexity subscale of the Work Design Questionnaire (WDQ; Morgeson & Humphrey, 2006). Responses are indicated on a 5-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (*strongly agree*) to 5 (*strongly disagree*). A sample item is, "The tasks on the job are simple and uncomplicated." Higher mean scores indicate greater job complexity. Internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha) for this scale was found to be

within acceptable limits: $\alpha = .86$.

Social desirability. The 13-item, true-false, Social Adaptation Scale (SAS; Erdodi, 2015) was included to measure participants' tendency to engage in positive impression management. The purpose of including this measure was to determine if people were answering the self-report questionnaire in a socially desirable manner rather than an accurate one. Therefore, the current study controlled for positive impression management and treated it as a covariate in all analyses. Response options were true and false. Participants who endorsed 7 or more of the items in a socially desirable direction were considered unusually defensive about common shortcomings to which most people readily admit. Conversely, participants who endorsed less than 7 items were deemed to have responded in a way that is considered to be within normal limits. A sample item includes: "I always wash an article of clothing before wearing it again." Internal consistency for this scale was found to be good: $\alpha = .80$.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Data Cleaning and Diagnostics

Testing potential covariates. Three covariates were included in this study to account for potential methodological variance accounted for in the dependent variable, given the difference of methodology used for recruitment (unpaid and paid participants). Cint Integration, through Fluid Surveys, charged less than five American dollars per responder, this entire fee was for their responder sourcing and survey completion checking service. Although this fee did not go directly to responders, nor would it have been considered an influential incentive, participants were incentivized by Cint Integration for responding to the survey. On the other hand, participants who voluntarily completed the online survey may have done so for additional reasons including interest in the research topic, desire to contribute to research, or interest in entering the gift card draw. Participants who did not necessarily volunteer, could have had the same reasons to participate but the incentive from Cint Integration may have also played a role in their desire to participate. Therefore, possible differences between the paid and unpaid groups were examined as they related to the variables of interest in this study.

A one-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted to determine if methodology may have impacted participant responses on the variables of interest. This analysis was chosen as the dependent variables were known to be related, and a MANOVA allows for efficiency in analysis rather than conducting a series of T-tests. Groups recruited from the two online platforms (Find Participants and Call for Participants) were combined to form an “unpaid” group, and respondents ordered from Cint through Fluid Surveys formed the ‘paid’ group. Group differences were examined across the variables of interest, which included feedback

environment, feedback orientation, person-organization fit, work engagement, and feedback-seeking. Results demonstrated a significant effect of recruitment service (i.e., unpaid vs. paid; $F(5, 399) = 7.02, p < .01, \eta^2 = .081, \text{power} = .999$) where the paid sample indicated significantly higher scores on the variables of interest when compared to the unpaid sample. More specifically, post-hoc comparisons demonstrated that on all variables of interest the paid group yielded significantly higher means than both unpaid groups – no significant mean differences were found between the two unpaid groups. Therefore, it was deemed necessary for recruitment method (paid vs. unpaid) to be included as a covariate in subsequent analyses in order to statistically control for such differences when the groups were combined.

In addition to controlling for the recruitment methodology in all subsequent analyses, further investigation into group differences were conducted in order to ensure group combination was appropriate. When examining responses to demographic questions, both groups were similar with respect to age, ethnicity, education, tenure, work status (part-time vs. full-time), and industry. Variability was, however, seen in the group's gender split, location, position level split (management vs. non-management), and salary. More specifically, a few differences were found in that the unpaid group was less evenly distributed in gender, participants were not only from the United States of America but Canada and other locations, more participants indicated they held a non-management level position, and the salary average for the group was lower (See Table 2 for demographic information for both groups recruited through the unpaid and paid recruitment services). Overall, given the majority of demographic variables were not considerably discrepant across groups, and that the demographic variability within each group was similar, the groups were considered comparable in this first investigation which provides some support for combining them for subsequent analyses.

Table 2
Demographics - Results Split by Unpaid and Paid Groups

Recruitment Method:		Unpaid			Paid			
Variable	N	M	SD	%	N	M	SD	%
Sample Size	252			62.0	156			38.0
Age		36		Range 18-69		35		Range 19-71
Gender								
Male	66			26.2	72			46.2
Female	185			73.4	83			53.2
Race/Ethnicity								
Caucasian	197			78.2	113			72.4
Black	14			5.6	10			6.4
Hispanic/Latino	10			4.0	12			7.7
Asian	9			3.6	6			3.8
African	2			0.8	10			6.4
Location								
USA	149			59.1	156			100.0
Canada	73			29.0				
UK	6			2.4				
India	6			2.4				
Other	10			4.0				
Education								
High School/GED	25			9.9	32			20.5
College/Associates	35			13.9	32			20.5
Bachelor/University	85			33.7	58			37.2
Master's Degree	78			31.0	25			16.0
Medical Degree	6			2.4	4			2.6
Doctoral Degree	21			8.3	3			1.9
Tenure in Organization (yrs)		5.6	6.6			6.4	7.0	
Tenure in Position (yrs)		4.5	5.9			4.9	5.4	
Tenure with Supervisor (yrs)		3.1	4.5			4.5	5.7	
Work Status								
Full-Time	194			77.0	125			80.1
Part-Time	51			20.2	25			16.0
Seasonally	5			2.0	2			1.3
Position								
Non-Management	192			76.2	78			50.0
Management	59			23.4	75			48.1
Salary (USD)		58 870	34 013			74 713	48 601	
Type of Incentives (check all that apply)								
Fixed Salary	154			61.1	56			35.9
Payment for Output	56			22.2	61			39.1
Merit Pay	57			22.6	30			19.2
Commission	21			8.3	29			18.6
Profit Share	22			8.7	20			12.8
Industry								
Education	49			19.4	17			10.9
Healthcare	53			21.0	16			10.3
Retail	13			5.2	15			9.6
Government	15			6.0	4			2.6
Restaurant/Hospitality	10			4.0	11			7.0
Information Technology	9			3.6	15			9.6
Business/Finance	27			10.8	14			8.9

	Manufacturing	3	1.2	9	5.8
	Construction	3	1.2	9	5.8
Job Type					
	Administrative Assistant	14	5.6	7	4.5
	Assistant	12	4.8	4	2.6
	Clerk	17	6.7	10	6.4
	Coordinator	16	6.3	14	9.0
	Finance-related	14	5.6	5	3.2
	Labourer	0	0	7	4.5
	Professional	28	11.1	11	7.1
	Researcher	14	5.6	2	1.3
	Salesman	15	6.0	12	7.7
	Server	6	2.4	9	5.8
	Social Worker	19	7.5	1	0.6
	Teacher	28	11.1	15	9.6
	Technician	10	4.0	19	12.2
	Therapist	11	4.4	4	2.6

Second, once the groups were combined, correlations between the variables of interest and job complexity, job tenure, and social desirability were examined to determine if these factors significantly related to the variables of interest. Bivariate correlations demonstrated that indeed job complexity and social desirability were significantly related to all the variables of interest except feedback environment and thus likely to account for important variance worth controlling for (see Table 3 for Pearson Correlation results). As predicted, people who deemed their job to be more complex, also reported stronger feedback orientation, person-organization fit, work engagement, and feedback-seeking behaviours. Social desirability was also found to have a significant impact on the way people answered the survey questions. People who were found to answer questions in a more socially desirable way also indicated they were significantly more oriented towards feedback, they perceived a higher person-organization fit, they were more engaged in their work, and they sought feedback more often. Lastly, results from examining the impact of job tenure yielded no significant relationships to statistically justify including the additional variable of job tenure as a covariate in the tested models. Therefore, job tenure was

not included in the analyses as it would not remove any meaningful variance from the variables of interest. This finding will be explored in the discussion section.

Table 3
Correlations Between Modeled Variables and Covariates

	Job Complexity	Social Desirability	Job Tenure
Feedback Environment	.08	-.05	-.03
Feedback Orientation	.12*	.17**	-.01
Person-Organization Fit	.16**	.31**	.03
Work Engagement	.25**	.35**	.03
Feedback-Seeking	.13**	.22**	.02

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Testing assumptions. Prior to analyzing hypothesized relationships, the data set was examined to verify that participants had entered meaningful responses and that missing values were not considerable or concerning. To ensure participants provided meaningful responses, in addition to testing assumptions (see below for testing of normal distributions, variance, and outliers), the data were examined for response time and response sets. The average response time was 16 minutes and less than five percent of the sample completed their surveys in under five minutes. These faster responses were examined more closely for potential response sets to ensure variability in the data and no obvious response sets were found. Overall, less than 1.15% of the values were found to be missing in the data set and a missing value analysis (MVA) was conducted in order to determine the pattern of missing data. Results of the MVA indicated that the data were missing completely at random (Little's MCAR test; $\chi^2 = 11053.11$, $p = .31$).

Therefore, no action was needed to reconcile such a small and randomly distributed percentage.

Assumptions were then examined by screening the data for univariate and multivariate outliers. Four univariate outliers were found using a cut-off of $z = \pm 3.29$ (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2006) and eight multivariate outliers were identified with the use of $p < .001$ criterion for Mahalanobis Distance. The data were then screened for influential observations using Cook's Distance with a cut-off of 1 and DFFITS with a cut-off of 2. No influential observations were found. Analyses were thus conducted with and without outliers and no significant differences were observed. Therefore, all outliers were included in the final analyses.

The final sample for this study consisted of 408 participants and thus adheres to recommendations for an adequate sample size consisting of at least 10-15 cases per observed variable (Field, 2005, Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994, Stevens, 2009). Examination of residual plots confirmed the requirements for the assumptions of normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity of errors. Through examination of bivariate correlations, where no correlations between any variables were found to be greater than .70, and inspection of Variance Inflation Ratios (VIF) and Tolerance values for each variable, the assumption of multicollinearity was met (Field, 2005; Stevens, 2009). Descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) for all variables can be found in Table 4.

Table 4
Means and Standard Deviations for all Variables

Variable	Possible Range	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Feedback Environment	1 – 7	406	5.04	1.06
Feedback Orientation	1 – 5	408	3.92	.62
Perceived Organization Fit	1 – 5	407	3.76	.82
Work Engagement	0 – 6	408	4.12	1.11
Feedback-Seeking	1 – 5	408	3.44	.93
Job Complexity	1 – 5	408	3.65	1.05
Social Desirability	0 – 13	408	4.20	3.18

Data Analysis

Feedback orientation has been found in some research to play the role of a mediator (Dahling et al., 2012) and in other research to play the role of a moderator (Gabriel et al., 2014) of the effects of the feedback environment. To elucidate these relationships, two forms of the proposed framework were tested with multiple models in order to examine both possibilities and establish which form best explains the relationship between the feedback environment and feedback-seeking. Further, work engagement has not been studied in the context of these feedback-specific variables, and although the current study makes predictions as to how it may act as a mediator, the fact remains that the role of work engagement is currently unknown and little theoretical basis or empirical evidence supports a specific prediction. As such, possible linkages were tested empirically to explore whether work engagement can play the role of a mediator or moderator in the proposed framework, and thus multiple models were tested with

combinations of potential linkages.

The hypothesized model and three alternate models were tested regarding the relationships between the feedback environment, feedback orientation, person-organization fit, work engagement, and feedback-seeking behaviours as based on two conceptual pathways. The hypothesized model (Figure 10) tested feedback orientation as a moderator of the relationship between the feedback environment and person-organization fit. It also tested work engagement as a mediator of the relationship between person-organization fit and feedback-seeking behaviours.

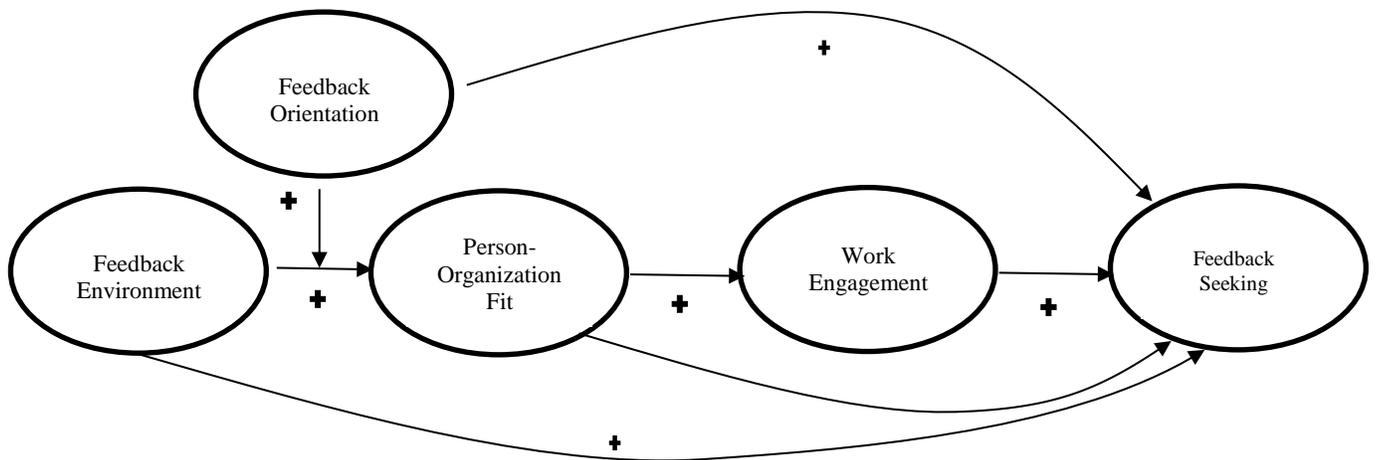


Figure 10. Hypothesized Model.

The first alternate model (Figure 11) tested feedback orientation as a mediator of the relationship between the feedback environment and person-organization fit as well as work engagement as a moderator of the relationship between person-organization fit and feedback-seeking behaviours. The second alternate model (Figure 12) tested feedback orientation and work engagement as mediators and the third alternate model (Figure 13) tested the two same variables as moderators.

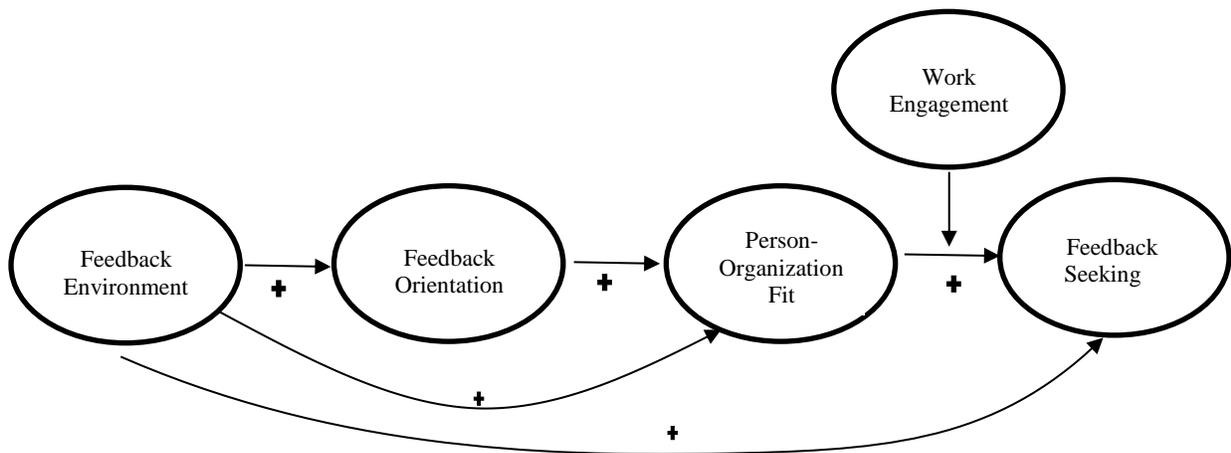


Figure 11. Alternate Model 1.

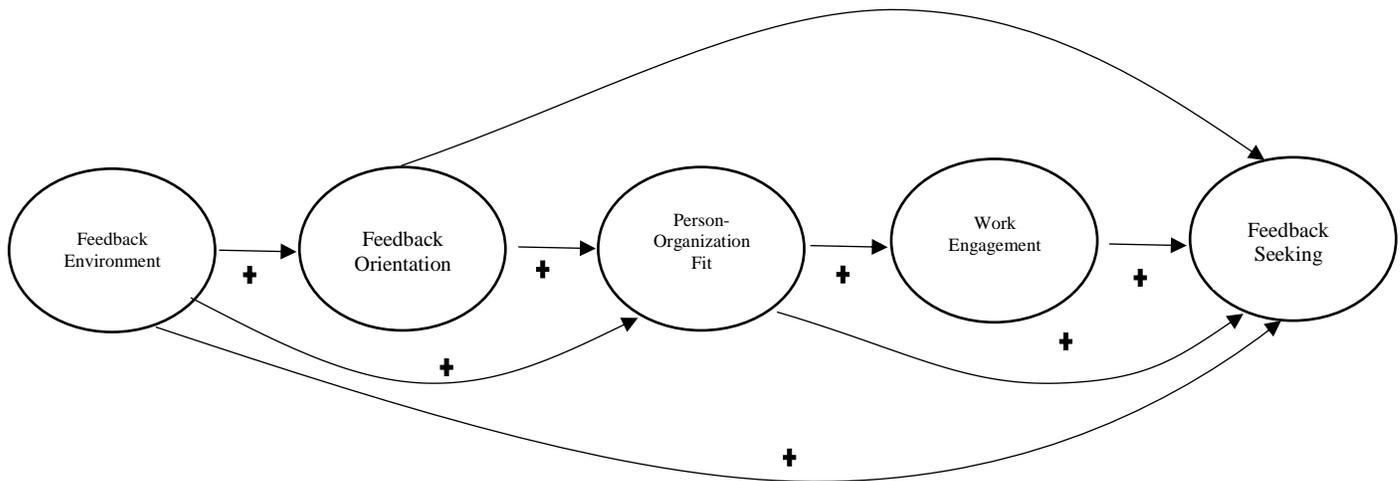


Figure 12. Alternate Model 2.

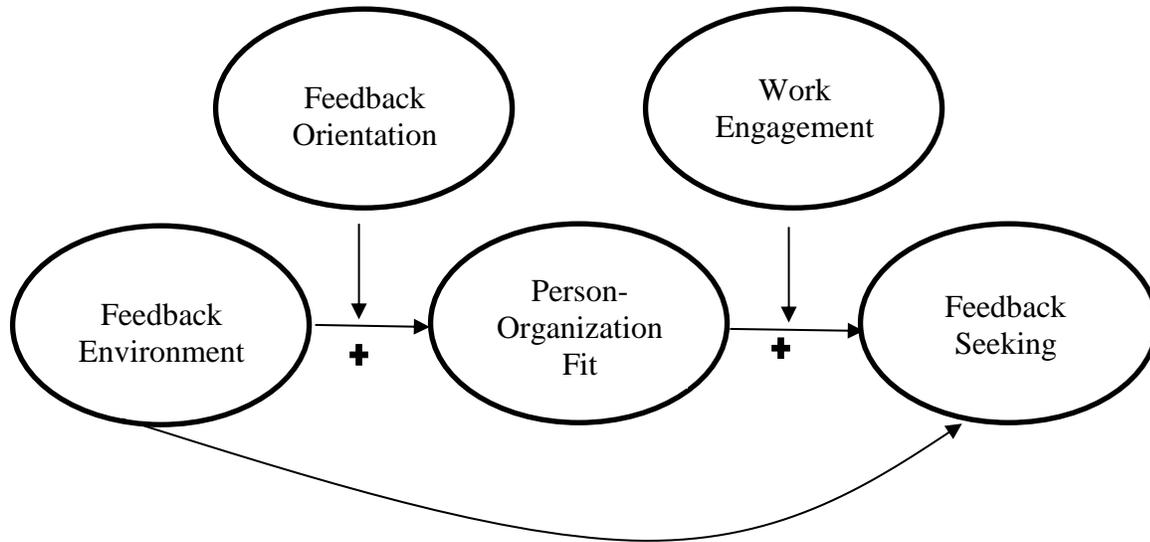


Figure 13. Alternate Model 3.

Hypothesized and alternate models. All paths in the hypothesized and alternate models were first tested with Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) using the software Mplus, version 5.1. SEM was chosen as a statistical technique to provide support for which form of the proposed framework would best explain the relationships in the collected data. Further, SEM allows for multiple relationships to be examined simultaneously which was ideal for testing the proposed framework where some variables were predicted to play the role of both independent and dependent variables simultaneously. Further, the tests for mediation and moderation in SEM are conducted in a way that provides strong empirical evidence for or against a mediation or moderation hypothesis, particularly because effects are corrected for measurement error. Lastly, SEM was chosen for its added ability to directly estimate indirect relationships (rather than infer them from a series of sequentially estimated regressions) and conduct direct statistical tests of the significance of the pathways modeled (Little et al., 2007).

The main variables in the present study were all latent, made up of the aggregate of the dimensions of each construct. Within SEM, the path coefficients for the dimensions loading on the latent variables and the relationships among the latent variables were all estimated

simultaneously in the full model. Additionally, three covariates; namely social desirability, job complexity, and recruitment method were included in all the tested models. Covariates were included as predictor variables with separate path coefficients being estimated for each covariate on all other variables in the model. More specifically, the covariates were entered as exogenous variables predicting all other endogenous variables and the location where the covariates were placed in the model did not change for any subsequent analyses or models. This means all paths were estimated simultaneously and independent of the effect of covariates and that variance associated with social desirability, recruitment method, and job complexity was held constant. Mplus software models both categorical and continuous types of predictor variables and therefore no issues were encountered when entering the categorical covariate of recruitment method.

Within SEM, the overall model fit was tested by using Chi-Square (χ^2) along with the model fit indices of the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), and the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR). According to Kline (2005) there are cut-offs for superior model fit (CFI greater than .95 and TLI greater than .90), close model fit (RMSEA less than .06), adequate or reasonable fit (SRMR less than .10 and RMSEA less than .08), and poor model fit (RMSEA greater than .10).

Preliminary analyses. Reliability coefficients of the variables, as well as correlations among all relevant exogenous and endogenous variables are presented in Table 5. Relationships found are consistent with previous research and in line with the current study's predictions. Particularly worth noting are the relationships revealed between all variables and work engagement. These relationships had not been previously studied and, as such, further advance

both fields of research, namely feedback and work engagement. The internal consistencies for each of the scales were found to be greater than .80.

Table 5
Correlations Between all Variables in the Model

	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>7</i>
1. Feedback Environment	<i>.94</i>	.34**	.36**	.21**	.28**	.08	-.05
2. Feedback Orientation		<i>.91</i>	.54**	.43**	.65**	.12*	.04
3. Person-Organization Fit			<i>.91</i>	.67**	.45**	.16**	.14**
4. Work Engagement				<i>.94</i>	.41**	.25**	.16**
5. Feedback-Seeking					<i>.87</i>	.13**	.21**
6. Job Complexity						<i>.86</i>	.10*
7. Social Desirability							<i>.80</i>

Note. Coefficient alpha reliability estimates are italicized and on the diagonal.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

In order to examine the factor structure of the variables of interest in the tested models, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was conducted using Mplus version 5.1 and using multiple-item composites as indicators (See Appendix D for the measurement model as well as detailed results of this analysis). Specifically, indicators for the feedback environment construct consisted of the seven relevant “supervisor feedback environment” subscale scores (source credibility, feedback quality, feedback delivery, favourable feedback, unfavourable feedback, source availability, promotes feedback-seeking). Indicators for the feedback orientation construct consisted of all four subscale scores (i.e., utility, accountability, social-awareness, feedback self-

efficacy). Indicators for the person-organization fit construct consisted of all three perceived fit subscale scores (i.e., values-congruence, supply-needs, demand-abilities). Indicators for the work engagement construct consistent of all three subscale scores (i.e., vigour, dedication, absorption). Finally, indicators for the feedback-seeking construct consistent of the two subscale scores (i.e., monitoring, inquiry). Upon verifying the measurement model for the five-factor model, the Chi-Square test of model fit revealed a significant value $\chi^2 (135) = 456.52, p < .001$, which was expected given the large sample size used in this study where relatively small differences are likely to be considered significant. Thus, additional measures of goodness of fit were consulted and indicated an adequately fitting model (CFI (.93), TLI (.91), RMSEA (.08), and SRMR (.07)). From this, it can be concluded that the measurement model provided an acceptable fit to the data and was therefore used for the current study's analyses (See Appendix D for measurement model and CFA results).

Evaluation of the hypothesized model and alternate models. The moderators were tested with SEM by creating new interaction term variables that are the product of the predictor variable whose influence is being moderated and the variable that is moderating. Within the SEM analysis, the path coefficients of these variables along with all others in the model are estimated simultaneously. For mediations, the indirect paths were estimated using a bootstrap method in Mplus. The bootstrapping approach was used with 1000 samples to estimate the indirect effects as well as the standard errors of the indirect path coefficients. For moderation, a Montecarlo integration method was used to obtain the interaction terms for the latent variables and subsequent path coefficients were obtained through the same bootstrapping procedure used for mediation (Muthén & Asparouhov, 2003).

Given the complexity of the measurement model in this study, the moderated solution in

the hypothesized model led to instabilities in the model analysis, which resulted in it being unable to converge on a set of final estimates. Only partial information was obtained from testing the hypothesized model and unstandardized coefficients resulting from this model are featured in Figure 14 below. Information criteria obtained from analyzing this model were retained for comparison with the alternate models and will be discussed in the corresponding sections.

Further, Alternate Models 1 and 3, which both included work engagement as a moderator, both failed to converge on a solution. Given the computational complexity prohibited the estimation of the moderator terms in SEM, the nature of the proposed relationships was examined by a proxy method namely Moderated Multiple Regression, and will be discussed in the post-hoc analyses section.

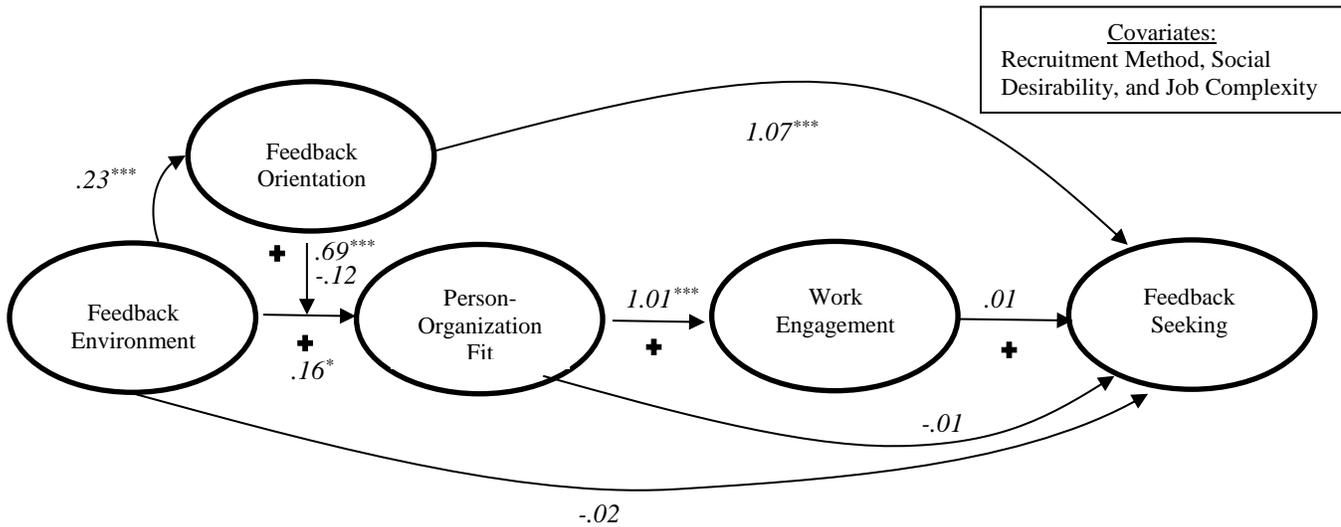


Figure 14. Hypothesized Model results.

Note. Entries are based on Unstandardized Path Coefficients and Coefficients of Determination.
 $*p < .05$. $**p < .01$. $***p < .001$.

Upon examination of Alternate Model 2, which included both feedback orientation and work engagement as mediators, a good model fit was revealed ($\chi^2(179) = 529.24, p < .001, CFI =$

.93, TLI = .91, RMSEA .07, SRMR .07). As such, of the four models tested Alternate Model 2 which revealed a good fit with the data collected, was used to evaluate the hypotheses of the current study. The standardized path coefficients for this model and the coefficients of determination for endogenous latent variables are presented in Figure 15 and Table 6, and all paths in the model as well as indirect effects found are presented in Table 7.

Hypothesis 1 posited that the degree to which people see feedback as useful and themselves as able and compelled to apply it would impact the extent to which support in their feedback environment predicts the degree to which they perceive their values, needs, and abilities are aligned with what their organization provides and expects. While this moderation could not be fully tested with the hypothesized model, Alternate Model 2 did result in a good fitting model and allows us to answer the alternate of this hypothesis, feedback orientation as a mediator. The alternate to *Hypothesis 1* predicted that the extent of support seen in the feedback environment could influence how employees see the utility of feedback and this perception could then impact the degree to which employees feel a sense of alignment and fit within their organization. Results from the analysis of this model revealed that feedback orientation partially mediated the relationship between the feedback environment and person-organization fit thus lending partial support to the alternate of *Hypothesis 1* (i.e., mediation vs. moderation). Predicted positive relationships between the variables involved in this hypothesis were all found to be significant.

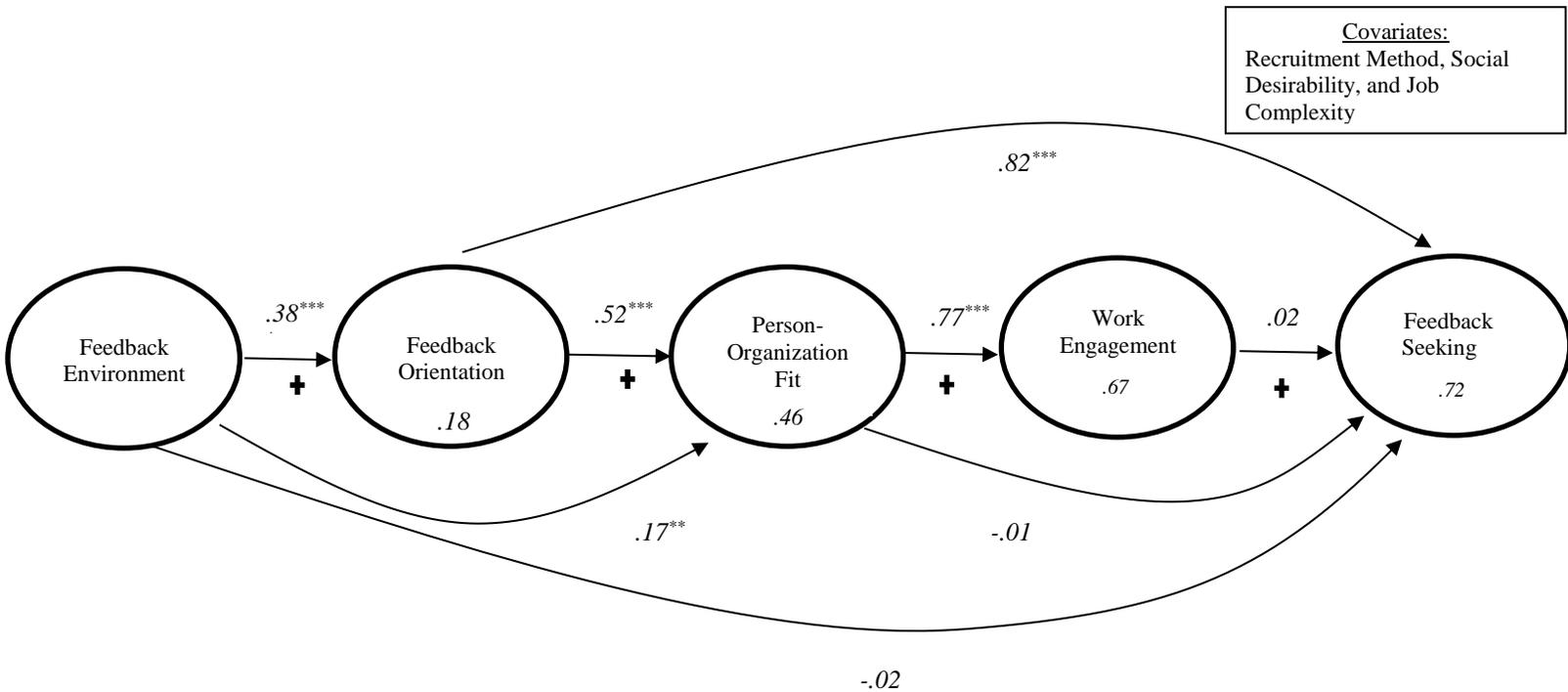


Figure 15. Alternate Model 2 results.

Note. Entries are Standardized Path Coefficients and Coefficients of Determination.
 $*p < .05$. $**p < .01$. $***p < .001$.

Table 6

Path Coefficients and Standard Errors for Alternate Model 2

Path	β	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>
Feedback Environment → Feedback Orientation	$.38^{***}$	.23	.05
Feedback Orientation → Person-Organization Fit	$.52^{***}$	.69	.05
Feedback Environment → Person-Organization Fit	$.16^{**}$	.13	.05
Feedback Environment → Feedback-Seeking	-.02	-.02	.05
Feedback Orientation → Feedback-Seeking	$.82^{***}$	1.08	.07
Person-Organization Fit → Feedback-Seeking	-.03	-.03	.11
Person-Organization Fit → Work Engagement	$.77^{***}$	1.02	.03
Work Engagement → Feedback-Seeking	.02	.01	.09

Note. $*p < .05$. $**p < .01$. $***p < .001$.

Table 7
Direct and Indirect Effects Found in Alternate Model 2

Path	β	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>
Feedback Environment → Feedback Orientation	.38***	.23	.05
Feedback Orientation → Person-Organization Fit	.52***	.69	.05
Feedback Environment → Person-Organization Fit	.16**	.13	.05
Feedback Environment → Feedback-Seeking	-.02	-.02	.05
Feedback Orientation → Feedback-Seeking	.82***	1.08	.07
Person-Organization Fit → Feedback-Seeking	-.03	-.03	.11
Person-Organization Fit → Work Engagement	.77***	1.02	.03
Work Engagement → Feedback-Seeking	.02	.01	.09
Indirect Effects			
H1 FE -> FO -> P-O Fit	.20***	.16	.03
H2 FE -> P-O Fit -> FS	-.00	-.00	.02
H3 P-O Fit -> WE -> FS	.01	.01	.07
Other indirect effect found			
FE -> FO -> FS	.32***	.25	.05

Note. FE – feedback environment, FO – feedback orientation, P-O fit – person-organization fit, WE – work engagement, FS – feedback-seeking, ns – non significant
* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Results from the analysis of Alternate Model 2 revealed that person-organization fit did not significantly mediate the relationship between the feedback environment and feedback-seeking as predicted. Therefore, no support was found for *Hypothesis 2*. However, predicted individual relationships among these variables were found to be positive and significant. Interestingly, the relationship between how one perceives the support in their feedback environment and their likelihood to engage in feedback-seeking behaviours was found to be mediated by feedback orientation instead of person-organization fit. As such, a mediation relationship was found leading from feedback environment to feedback-seeking through feedback orientation. These results will be explored in the discussion section.

Lastly, it was proposed in *Hypothesis 3* that the degree to which people are engaged in their work would positively impact the extent to which employees’ perceived fit with the

resources and values within their organization compels them to seek feedback more often. This question could not be answered within the hypothesized model and therefore no support was found for *Hypothesis 3*. However the alternate to *Hypothesis 3* was to examine whether employees who perceive a stronger alignment between their needs, values, and abilities and what their organization provides and expects are more engaged in their work and feel compelled to seek feedback more often as a result of this engagement. Despite finding that person-organization fit positively predicted work engagement, the results of Alternate Model 2 demonstrate that this engagement did not, in turn, predict feedback-seeking.

Examination of Control Variables

Examination of the standardized path coefficients for the control variables included in the Alternate Model 2 revealed that most (with the exception of P-O fit) of the paths leading from social desirability to the endogenous variables included in the model were not found to be significant (Relationships among covariates for Alternate Model 2 are presented in Table 8). This suggests that most of the relationships among variables did not differ based on social desirability suggesting most responses were not significantly affected by whether or not people tended to respond to self-reported measures in socially desirable ways. Both covariates of job complexity and recruitment method did, however, have an impact on the relationships in the model and as such justified their inclusion in effects controlled for in the model.

Table 8

Relationships Between Covariates and Endogenous Variables for Alternate Model 2

Endogenous Variable	Job Complexity	Social Desirability	Recruitment Method
Feedback Orientation	.11*	.05	.10
Person-Organization Fit	.10*	.11*	.17***
Work Engagement	.16***	.02	.02
Feedback-Seeking	.05	.07	.15**

Note. Entries represent standardized path coefficients.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$

Post-hoc model assessment

Upon examination of the results for Alternate Model 2 including the modification indices, it was apparent that the variable of feedback orientation as it directly related to the outcome of feedback-seeking represented significant variance in this outcome. In this model, predicted relationships between person-organization fit and both feedback-seeking and work engagement were not significant. Exploratory analyses were conducted to determine if these relationships were truly non-significant or if the other predicted effects at play were potentially masked by the significant variance accounted for by feedback orientation. To empirically explore this question, the model was evaluated again with this particular path from feedback orientation to feedback-seeking omitted.

This Modified version of Alternate Model 2 fit the data adequately, $\chi^2(180) = 641.01$ $p < .001$, CFI = .90, TLI = .88, RMSEA .08, SRMR .08 (see Figure 16 and Table 9 for the standardized path coefficients and the R-Square values for endogeneous latent variables and Table 10 for indirect effects). Noteworthy in these results is that a significant partial mediation emerged and indicated that work engagement partially mediates the relationship between person-

organization fit and feedback-seeking. This mediation effect had not been significant in the previous model when a direct path from feedback orientation to feedback-seeking was present. This means that when the effect of feedback orientation is forced to operate through the other constructs in the model, rather than directly predict feedback-seeking, person-organization fit is found to predict feedback-seeking both directly and through its impact on work engagement. Therefore, as people feel a closer sense of alignment between what they need, value, and feel able to do and what their organization provides and expects, they feel compelled to ask for feedback more often. Further, these partial mediation results suggest that as a result of their perceived fit between their own values and needs and the values and supplies of their organization, employees feel more invested, dedicated, and absorbed in their work. Counter to predictions, engaged employees were then found to seek feedback less frequently. Therefore, in the absence of feedback orientation's direct relationship to feedback-seeking, other factors are revealed to play a role in predicting the degree to which people will engage in feedback-seeking behaviours. These results will be examined in the discussion section.

The Modified Alternate Model 2 was then compared to the original Alternate Model 2 (see Table 11). A Chi-square difference test indicated that the Alternate Model 2 fit the data significantly better than the Modified Alternate Model 2, $\chi^2_{Diff}(1) = 117.77, p < .001$.² Thus, Alternate Model 2 was still found to be the best fitting model.

² The results of the best fitting model (i.e., Alternate Model 2) are worth comparing back to the initially hypothesized model that yielded incomplete results in order to validate the limited results that were found with this initial model. When comparing results, information criteria were examined and more specifically the Aikake (AIC) value was consulted as it is preferable for more complex models such as the one used in the current study rather than the Bayesian (BIC) value which is typically biased towards less complex models. The Hypothesized Model had 87 free parameters and an AIC value of 23702.31 and the Alternate Model 2 had 87 free parameters and an AIC value of 23409.61. The values were relatively close to one another, which provide support for the Hypothesized Model's accuracy despite being incomplete. Given that a lower AIC value indicates a better fit, we can thus more confidently conclude that the Alternate Model 2 is closest to the true model of the tested models.

Covariates:
Recruitment Method, Social
Desirability, and Job Complexity

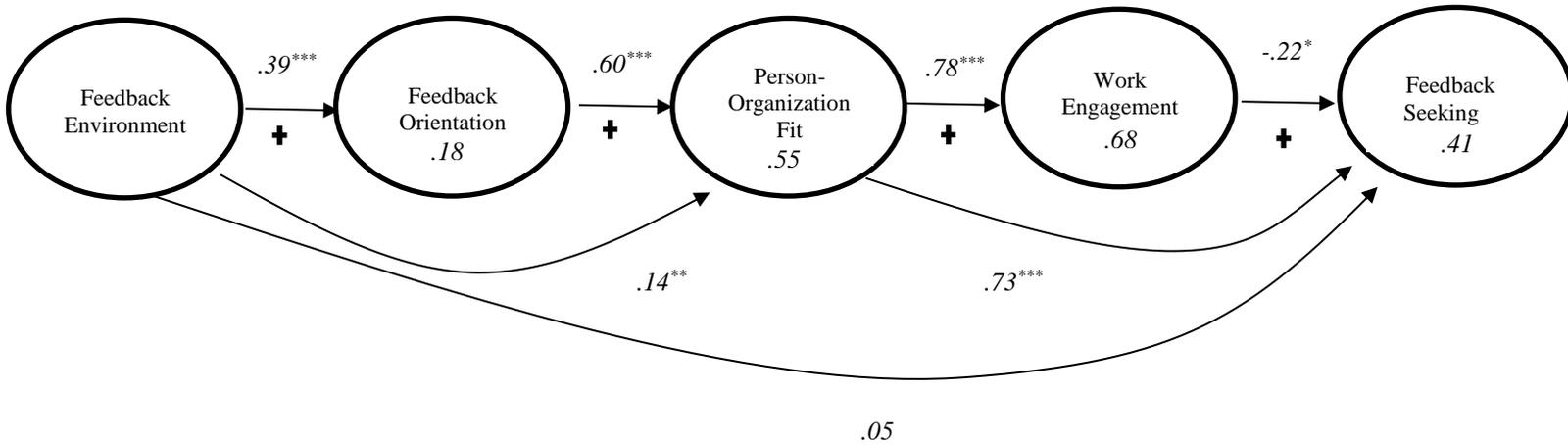


Figure 16. Modified Alternate Model 2 results.

Note. Entries are Standardized Path Coefficients and Coefficients of Determination.
* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Table 9

Path Coefficients and Standard Errors for Modified Alternate Model 2

Path	β	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>
Feedback Environment → Feedback Orientation	$.39^{***}$	.23	.05
Feedback Orientation → Person-Organization Fit	$.60^{***}$	.78	.05
Feedback Environment → Person-Organization Fit	$.14^{**}$	.11	.05
Feedback Environment → Feedback-Seeking	.05	.05	.06
Person-Organization Fit → Feedback-Seeking	$.73^{***}$	.82	.13
Person-Organization Fit → Work Engagement	$.78^{***}$	1.06	.03
Work Engagement → Feedback-Seeking	$-.22^*$	-.18	.11

Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Table 10
Indirect Effects Found in the Modified Alternate Model 2

Path	β	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>
Indirect Effects			
H1 FE -> FO -> POFit	.23***	.18	.04
H2 FE -> POFit -> FS	.10*	.09	.04
H3 POFit -> WE -> FS	-.17	-.19	.09
Other indirect effect found			
FE->FO->POFit->FS	.17***	.15	.04

Note. FE – feedback environment, FO – feedback orientation, P-O fit – person-organization fit, WE – work engagement, FS – feedback-seeking, ns – non significant
* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Table 11
Comparison of Alternate Model 2 and its Modified Version

Model	$\chi^2 (df)$	$\Delta \chi^2 (df)$	<i>CFI</i>	<i>TLI</i>	<i>RMSEA</i>	<i>SRMR</i>
Alternate Model 2:	529.24 (179)		.93	.91	.07	.07
Modified Alternate Model 2: removed path from feedback orientation to feedback-seeking	647.01 (180)	117.77***	.90	.88	.08	.08

*** $p < .001$

Post-hoc analyses: moderated hierarchical multiple regressions. Given the computational complexity of estimating the moderation terms using latent variables within the larger proposed models in SEM, the integration algorithms used in the planned analyses were unable to converge on a solution. Thus, these analyses did not yield information on whether feedback orientation and work engagement can play the role of moderators amongst the relationships of interest. Therefore, further exploratory analyses were conducted in an attempt to shed some light on the plausibility of feedback orientation and work engagement playing moderating roles in the proposed relationships. It is important to note that this proxy method is limited in its broader interpretation because it is examining the variables in isolation of the larger proposed model. As such, results from these analyses can only be taken as preliminary level evidence about the relationships in question.

Feedback orientation as a moderator. Given that testing each model that included moderations resulted in incomplete analyses with Structural Equation Modelling, moderated relationships were examined in isolation with Hierarchical Multiple Regression. First, the moderating effect of feedback orientation on the relationship between the feedback environment and person-organization fit was assessed. Interactions were examined according to guidelines, outlined by Cohen, Cohen, Aiken and West (2003), which recommend avoiding issues of multicollinearity by centering the variables around their means (Cohen, Cohen, Aiken, & West, 2003).

In the first step, the same covariates from previous analyses were included namely job complexity, social desirability, and recruitment method. Covariate variables were found to account for a significant amount of variance in perceived person-organization fit, $R^2 = .14$, $F(3, 401) = 21.68$, $p < .001$ (see Table 12). In the second step, feedback environment and feedback

orientation were added as predictors of person-organization fit and accounted for significant variance (40.1%; 39.3% adjusted) in perceived person-organization fit, $\Delta R^2 = .26$, $\Delta F(2, 399) = 86.98$, $p < .001$. Regression coefficients indicated that perceived support of the feedback environment and reported strength of one's feedback orientation correspondingly accounted for .22 and .40 of the variance in perceived person-organization fit. The interaction term between the feedback environment and feedback orientation was then added to the regression model and analyses found no support for the moderation proposed in *Hypothesis 1* ($\Delta R^2 = .01$, $\Delta F(1, 398) = 3.10$, $p = .08$).

Table 12

Moderated Multiple Regression Analysis for Feedback Environment and Feedback Orientation Predicting Person-Organization Fit

Variable	B	SE B	β	R^2	ΔR^2
Step 1				.14	.14***
Job Complexity	.14***	.04	.18		
Social Desirability	.07***	.01	.26		
Recruitment Method	.22*	.09	.13		
Step 2				.40	.26***
Job Complexity	.09**	.03	.11		
Social Desirability	.06***	.01	.22		
Recruitment Method	.15*	.07	.09		
Feedback Environment	.17***	.03	.22		
Feedback Orientation	.54***	.06	.40		
Step 3				.41	.01
Job Complexity	.08**	.03	.10		
Social Desirability	.05***	.01	.21		
Recruitment Method	.16*	.07	.09		
Feedback Environment	.16***	.03	.21		
Feedback Orientation	.54***	.06	.41		
FE X FO	-.08	.05	-.07		

Note. FE – feedback environment, FO – feedback orientation, P-O fit – person-organization fit, WE – work engagement, FS – feedback-seeking, ns – non significant
 * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Given that the significance value of the interaction between the feedback environment and feedback orientation had approached significance ($p = .09$) in the regression analysis, a follow-up analysis was conducted to test this moderation relationship with SEM. SEM was used to follow-up on this result to ensure the non-significant result was not merely an artefact of measurement error. With this analysis method, measurement error can be accounted for and the relationships between the constructs can become clearer. In this analysis, which included the same covariates as all other analyses, the moderation effect was revealed ($p < .01$) and results are presented in Figure 17. Thus, by using SEM the predicted moderation, in isolation, was revealed and indicates that when the three variables are examined in isolation, feedback orientation does influence the extent to which people who perceive their work environment as supportive of feedback will also view their own values, needs, and abilities as aligning with their organization's values, supplies, and demands.

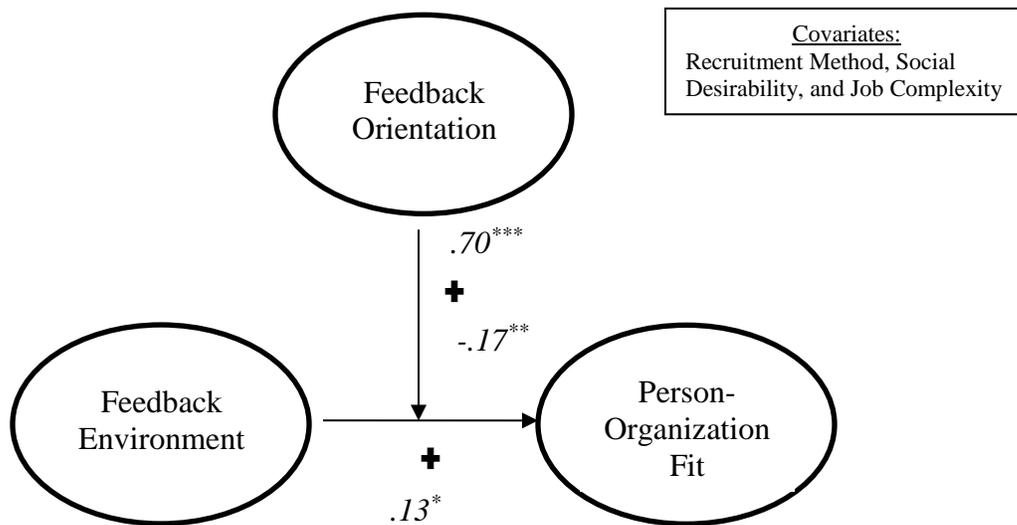


Figure 17. Feedback orientation moderating the relationship between the feedback environment and person-organization fit.

Note. Entries are based on Unstandardized Path Coefficients and Coefficients of Determination.
 $*p < .05$. $**p < .01$. $***p < .001$.

This finding lends some support for *Hypothesis 1*, though in isolation of the rest of the framework proposed. However, when comparing these results to the limited information yielded by the incomplete analysis of the Hypothesized Model, the values are fairly similar which could suggest that this relationship, although found in isolation, may also hold true in the bigger framework proposed. This result could also suggest that feedback orientation can play the role of both a mediator and moderator in relation to the feedback environment. To investigate the nature of this significant interaction, the simple slopes of the relationships were plotted and are featured in Figure 18.

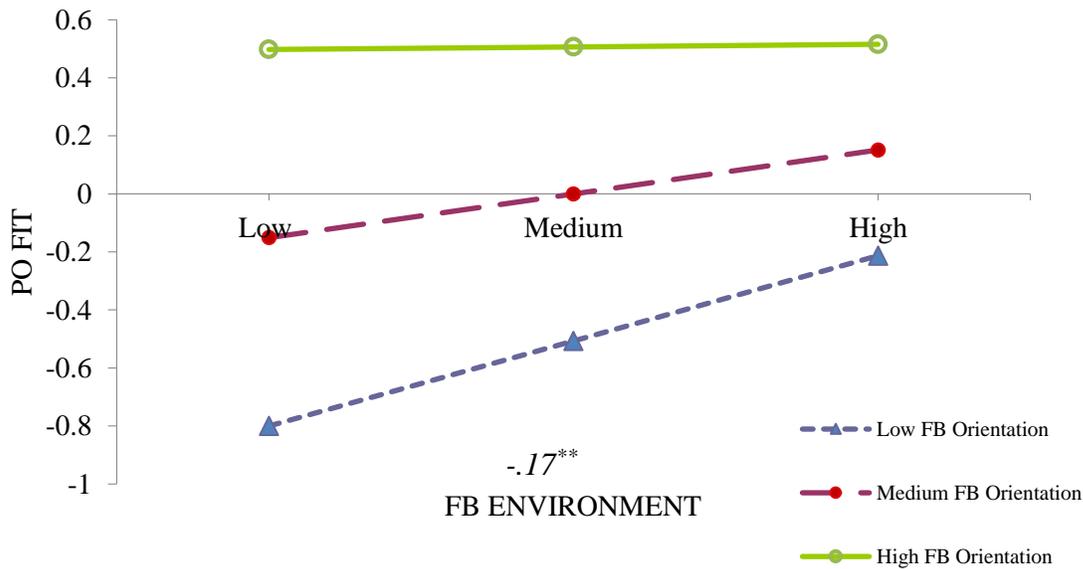


Figure 18. Simple slopes of feedback orientation moderating the relationship between the feedback environment and person-organization fit.

Upon examination of the simple slopes it appears that, overall, the higher employees’ feedback orientation, the higher they fit to the organization. Furthermore, as feedback orientation decreases, the feedback environment tends to be more predictive of P-O fit. In other words, it appears that feedback orientation is beneficial in terms of P-O fit regardless of the organization’s valuation of feedback; but as feedback orientation decreases, the feedback environment

increasingly plays a role in determining whether employees feel they fit to the organization — although it would appear that no matter how much an organization values feedback, it cannot compensate for employees' own personal valuation of feedback.

Interestingly, this sense of alignment or fit to their organization, for employees who strongly value feedback, is not impacted by the extent to which their leaders engage in supportive feedback practices. Based on previous findings in this study showing that employees who have a strong orientation to feedback tend to seek feedback more often, it may be the case that they are creating their own feedback environment rather than counting on the practices of their leaders. However, for both employees who moderately and minimally see the value in feedback, supportive feedback practices do have a positive impact on their feeling that their organization is meeting their needs, values, and abilities.

Work engagement as a moderator of the relationship between person-organization fit and feedback-seeking. Given that the moderation analyses yielded incomplete results in SEM for both Alternate Models 1 and 3, which included work engagement as a moderator of the relationship between perceived fit and feedback-seeking, the potential interaction was tested in isolation with Hierarchical Moderated Multiple Regression. Similar to the previous regression, the same steps were followed for this analysis and the same covariates were entered in the first step (job complexity, social desirability, and recruitment method). Person-organization fit and work engagement were entered as predictors of feedback-seeking into the second step, and then entered again along with the interaction term in the third step. Results from this moderated multiple regression analysis are featured in Table 13.

The first step, which only included the covariates, was significant and all variables in this model explained 8.1% (7.4% adjusted) of the variance in feedback-seeking, $R^2 = .08$, $F(3, 402) =$

11.82, $p < .001$ (see Table 13 for results). The second step with person-organization fit and work engagement added as predictors was also significant and explained 22.9% of the variance in feedback-seeking (21.9% adjusted), $\Delta R^2 = .15$, $\Delta F(2, 400) = 38.38$, $p < .001$. Covariates did not remain significant in this step. Regression coefficients indicated that both person-organization fit (.30) and work engagement (.17) significantly predicted feedback-seeking. This means that people who perceive a higher fit between their own values and needs and the values and supplies of their organization also reported seeking feedback more frequently. This finding is in line with the one found in the Modified Alternate Model 2, when the direct link from feedback orientation to feedback-seeking was omitted. People who reported higher levels of work engagement (i.e., dedication, absorption and vigour) in their work were also likely to report engaging in more frequent feedback-seeking behaviours. This finding is in the opposite direction than the one found when examining the results of the modified Alternate Model 2 where work engagement had a negative relationship with feedback-seeking. Therefore, this result could indicate again some evidence that although feedback orientation directly predicts feedback-seeking, work engagement could also play a role. This finding will be further explored in the discussion section.

Finally, the interaction was tested in the last step and was not significant ($\Delta R^2 = .00$, $\Delta F(1, 399) = 0.23$, $p = .63$) providing no evidence of a moderation effect and thus no support was found for the alternate of *Hypothesis 3*. All findings from the analyses conducted in the current study are summarized in Table 14.

Table 13

Moderated Multiple Regression Analysis for Person-Organization Fit and Work Engagement Predicting Feedback-Seeking

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β	<i>R</i> ²	ΔR^2
Step 1				.08	.08***
Job Complexity	.13**	.04	.15		
Social Desirability	.05**	.17	.16		
Recruitment Method	.27**	.10	.14		
Step 2				.23	.15***
Job Complexity	.04	.04	.05		
Social Desirability	.01	.02	.03		
Recruitment Method	.16	.09	.09		
Person-Organization Fit	.34***	.07	.30		
Work Engagement	.14**	.05	.17		
Step 3				.23	.00
Job Complexity	.04	.04	.05		
Social Desirability	.01	.02	.03		
Recruitment Method	.17	.09	.08		
Person-Organization Fit	.34***	.07	.30		
Work Engagement	.15**	.05	.18		
POFit X WE	.02	.04	.02		

Note. FE – feedback environment, FO – feedback orientation, P-O fit – person-organization fit, WE – work engagement, FS – feedback-seeking, ns – non significant

p* < .05. *p* < .01. ****p* < .001.

Table 14
Summary of Study Results by Hypothesis³

Hypothesis	Predicted Relationships	Analysis	Model	Finding	Description
Hypothesis 1	FO moderates FE → P-O fit	SEM	Hypothesized Model	ns	
			Alternate Model 3	Incomplete Findings	
	FO moderates FE → P-O fit	Regression	Isolated relationship	ns	
Alternate of Hypothesis 1	FO moderates FE → P-O fit	SEM	Isolated relationship	Significant	
			Alternate Model 1	Incomplete Findings	
			Alternate Model 2	Significant	Partial Mediation
Hypothesis 2	P-O fit mediates FE → FS	SEM	All Models	ns	
			Modified Alternate Model 2	Significant	Complete Mediation
Hypothesis 3	WE mediates P-O fit → FS	SEM	Hypothesized Model	ns	
			Alternate Model 2	ns	
Alternate of Hypothesis 3	WE moderates P-O fit → FS	SEM	Alternate Model 1	Incomplete Findings	
			Alternate Model 3	Incomplete Findings	
Additional Findings	FO mediates FE → FS	SEM	Alternate Model 2	Significant	Complete Mediation
	FO & P-O fit mediate FE → FS	SEM	Modified Alternate Model 2	Significant	Complete Mediation

³ FE – feedback environment, FO – feedback orientation, P-O fit – person-organization fit, WE – work engagement, FS – feedback-seeking, ns – non significant

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

People have an underlying need to understand how well they are doing at work.

Employees look for information about their performance as it helps them to feel in control of their work, get an accurate idea of what is expected of them, gauge their level of contribution, and judge how they can improve (Sparr & Sonnentag, 2008). Employees can enhance and improve their performance by learning how this can be done either through the feedback they receive or the feedback they ask for. The current study sought to determine and better understand how leaders can encourage their employees to play an active role in initiating the feedback process through asking for feedback.

To determine the extent to which employees will ask for feedback, competing forms of a theoretical framework were proposed and tested. After comparing models of the framework proposed, support was found for Alternate Model 2, where both feedback orientation and work engagement were tested as mediators. The form of the framework tested with this model examined the linkages between employee perceptions of feedback practices (i.e., the feedback environment) and their personal beliefs about the value and utility of feedback, and their desire and ability to apply it (i.e., feedback orientation). It was proposed in this model that perceptions of feedback practices would predict orientation towards feedback and that this orientation would predict the extent to which employees feel their needs, values, and abilities are being met by their organization. A stronger perceived fit was then predicted to motivate employees to feel more engaged in their work and, from this, more likely to seek feedback to improve it.

Indeed, it was found that both the feedback environment that leaders create through the feedback practices they engage in, and employees' perceptions of the utility of feedback and

their desire and ability to apply it, predict this sense of alignment (i.e., perceived fit). First, consistent with previous research (Peng & Chiu, 2010), it was found that the more employees see the feedback practices their managers use as supportive, the more strongly they feel their needs, values, and abilities are aligned with what their organization provides and expects. This finding suggests that if managers do not engage in supportive feedback practices, employees will be less inclined to judge that their organization is providing them with what they need and value or feel able to deal with.

While this finding showcases that feedback practices play a role in answering the bigger question as to what tangible activities leaders can engage in to ensure their employees are getting what they need, it does not help us to understand *how* and *why* this relationship occurs. For example, employees can see their manager as available, knowledgeable, and willing to share both negative and positive feedback, all elements of supportive feedback practices. However, these perceptions do not identify whether the feedback will be seen as useful nor if the employees will feel accountable or able to apply it. Therefore, to build on and better understand this finding, the framework tested explored the linkages between both contextual factors such as the feedback practices themselves and individual factors such as how employees feel about feedback.

It was predicted in the *first hypothesis* that the extent to which employees see feedback as useful and themselves as accountable and able to apply it would influence the degree to which the feedback support they are given predicts their feeling that their needs, values and abilities are being met. Findings from the current study elucidate the specific form of this relationship where not only are employee views about feedback important to consider when sharing feedback, but they are also influenced and predicted by the feedback practices leaders engage in. Results from

testing this first hypothesis demonstrate that an employee's orientation towards feedback does not necessarily enhance or inhibit the likelihood that feedback practices will meet the needs of employees (i.e., moderates), it explains and predicts it (i.e., mediates). It was found that the extent to which employees see their leader engage in what they see as effective and supportive feedback practices will positively predict the way they themselves see the utility of feedback and their ability and desire to apply it. This perceived utility, ability, and desire towards feedback will then predict the degree to which employees view their organization's values, resources, and expectations as aligned with their own needs.

Thus, exploring the link between the feedback environment and feedback orientation from a person-organization fit (P-O fit) standpoint assists in disentangling the roles of the feedback giver and receiver in the feedback process and the benefits and risks behind their actions. Rather than hoping for a match between manager and employee perceptions of the value of feedback, results from this study highlight that it is more about a process that is taking place creating a "feedback fit". The process that occurs is both objective in the actual tangible feedback practices leaders engage in and subjective in a more internal and psychological sense as employees derive meaning and motivation from these practices.

From an objective perspective, the frequency, accuracy, and methodology of feedback sharing all play a role in shaping perceptions of the utility of feedback. Feedback that is shared to explicitly communicate expectations and performance results has a clear utility and can meet an immediate need from a self-awareness standpoint. However, from a subjective perspective, employee perceptions of the credibility, availability, and approachability of their leader influence the extent to which the feedback practices will be seen as supportive and valuable (Steelman et al., 2004). Additional subjective components are involved in the interpretation of the feedback as

valuable and supportive such as one's felt ability and drive to apply it. Along with these perceptions, the extent to which employees feel their organization is meeting their needs, aligning with their values, and expecting what they are capable of delivering is impacted by what the employees feel make up these needs, values, and abilities. The current study demonstrates that these needs, values, and abilities can be predicted by the feedback practices leaders engage in. From this, the idea of fit is re-conceptualized from initially looking to unearth an alignment between interests to recognizing that it is a process of creating, shaping, and fulfilling perceptions and expectations with respect to feedback. As feedback informs employees on the extent to which their performance fits their organization's expectations, they can adjust accordingly and thus further calibrate their alignment with the help of the feedback.

Incomplete findings were yielded when testing the moderation version of this first hypothesis in the overall model and therefore the possibility of feedback orientation playing the role of a moderator was explored in isolation of the rest of the model. In this analysis, feedback orientation was found to moderate the relationship between the feedback environment and P-O fit, and therefore the form of this relationship was further explored graphically. In this isolated model, the perceived alignment between needs and values of the strongly oriented towards feedback employees and those of their organization were not impacted by the level of support for feedback in their environment. While this result was not found in the overall tested framework, the results were close to those of the partial output of the hypothesized model and therefore imply some possibility that this moderation finding could hold within the larger framework. Further, this first result is not in line with *Hypothesis 1* but can be informed by the relationship of feedback orientation to feedback-seeking. Employees who are strongly oriented towards

feedback tend to seek feedback more often and therefore may rely less on the feedback practices of their leaders to get the performance information that they need.

That being said, in this isolated model, it was found that employees with moderate or weak feedback orientation were more impacted by varying degrees of support for feedback in their environment as it played a role in their level of perceived fit within their organization. While these two groups, in general, saw their organization as less closely meeting their needs, values, and themselves able to fulfill expectations, than those strongly oriented towards feedback, feedback practices still factored into this sense of alignment. Reflecting on this finding in light of the previous mediation finding can inform the shape of this link and how to predict it. To employees who see less utility in feedback and themselves as less able or accountable to apply it, the feedback practices of their leaders can have a greater impact at ensuring they are getting the support they need and this need is predicted by these very practices.

While this first part of the framework proposed was aimed at understanding the relationships between the feedback environment and employees' feedback orientation on how employees derive meaning from feedback practices, the second part was meant to examine how they derive motivation to engage in the feedback process. Building upon this framework, as it describes the feedback process (i.e., giving, receiving, using, and asking for feedback), it was of interest to determine and understand how leaders can encourage their employees to ask for feedback as a key way to initiate the feedback process. It was predicted in the *second hypothesis* that the feedback practices employees see their leaders engage in would enhance their perceived alignment with their organization's values, supplies, and demands and that this alignment would compel them to look and ask for more information about their performance.

Despite supportive feedback practices directly predicting enhanced perceived fit, both variables did not directly predict frequency of feedback-seeking and thus the proposed mediation was not found in the best fitting model. This means that while support for feedback sharing helps employees see a closer alignment between what they want and have to give and what their organization provides and expects, it does not follow that these perceptions influence the extent to which an employee will *want* to ask and look for feedback more often. A reason for this finding could simply be that as employees feel they are getting the feedback they need, they do not feel compelled to seek feedback more frequently. This finding does not, however, answer the question as to how leaders can encourage their employees to ask and look for feedback more often aside from giving their employees the feedback they think they need in the first place.

Given that all the variables in the model were positively related to feedback-seeking, it was further explored as to how feedback-seeking can otherwise be predicted and promoted. Results would suggest that again the individual factor of employee perceptions of the utility of feedback, through feedback orientation, is the linking mechanism. Building upon the first finding that the extent to which employees see their supervisors engage in supportive feedback practices predicts their own views of the usefulness of feedback along with their ability and desire to apply it, these views were then found to predict frequency of feedback-seeking. Therefore, as leaders' behaviours can impact how their employees feel about feedback they also indirectly encourage them to feel compelled to look and ask for feedback more often. As such, employees need to value the feedback and feel able to use it to want more of it – and these needs, values, and abilities are all predicted by their leader's feedback practices. Results from the modified Alternate Model 2 also demonstrate a similar process as the feedback practices leaders engage in

were found to predict feedback-seeking behaviours indirectly through feedback orientation and P-O fit.

These results demonstrate that sharing meaningful feedback in the workplace is only half the battle in predicting that employees will engage in the feedback process and ultimately seek feedback more often in the future. The other half of this battle lies in understanding how feedback practices predict individual motivational and attitudinal perceptions towards feedback in order to predict whether feedback initiatives will be interpreted as worthwhile to engage in. This means that once people receive supportive feedback from their supervisor, feelings and motivations towards feedback are impacted through feedback orientation, which seems to act as a gatekeeper for what happens next. The extent to which someone perceives feedback as useful for developing skills, improving performance, and enhancing social awareness along with their motivation and felt efficacy towards applying the feedback all play a role in the frequency in which a person will ask for feedback when they need it. Essentially, we see that feedback orientation is the lens through which support in the feedback environment will be seen as influential (or not) towards enhancing the perceived utility and applicability of feedback. Examining feedback orientation as a mediator in the relationship between feedback practices and feedback-seeking allows us to see that a psychological and more motivational process occurs between the objective feedback practices and the subjective reaction to them. The more supportive feedback practices are, the more utility employees will see in feedback and feel compelled and able to apply it and from this feel more compelled to ask for feedback in the future.

The last purpose of this study was to explore the role of motivation in the feedback process and it was predicted that when employees perceive their organization as meeting their

needs, values, and abilities they would feel more engaged in their work. As engaged employees are more invested in their work, it was then predicted that they would be more likely to seek feedback to improve it and by doing so, initiate the feedback process. Outlined in the *third hypothesis* was the prediction that employees who perceive strong alignment with their organization would be more engaged in their work and from this enhanced dedication and involvement they would be more motivated to ask for feedback that would help them to improve it.

Consistent with previous research (Naami, 2011), employees who indicate a closer degree of alignment with their own needs, values, and abilities and what their organization provides and expects were found to be more dedicated and involved in their work and energized by it in comparison to those who reported less alignment. Conversely, this finding suggests that employees who feel less alignment between what their organization provides, values, and expects and what they need, value, and are able to do are likely to feel less engaged in their work. Stepping back to understand this finding in the overall framework tested, it was found that the feedback practices leaders engage in can predict how useful their employees find them and whether they will feel compelled to do something about the feedback they receive. In addition, their practices can also predict the needs employees will have, the extent to which they perceive their needs are being met, and indirectly how devoted and invested in their work they will be as a result. Examining the role of work engagement in the feedback process had been suggested however not empirically tested until now. Interestingly, work engagement was found to positively relate to all the variables of interest in the tested model and thus this study is among the first to establish clear empirical links between elements of the feedback process and work engagement. Therefore, these results provide evidence that how leaders and their employees

approach feedback through their practices and perceptions is positively related to work engagement.

Nevertheless, employees who reported higher levels of work engagement did not, in turn, report higher frequencies of feedback-seeking and therefore work engagement was not found to play the role of a mediator in the tested model. Despite the positive relationship predicted and found between work engagement and feedback-seeking, no evidence that one predicts the other was found. Taking a look at results from the modified Alternate Model 2, where the direct path from feedback orientation to feedback-seeking was omitted, sheds some light on this finding. In this model, the relationship between work engagement and feedback-seeking was found to be significant, but negatively so. This finding, taken alone, may simply mean that when employees are engaged in their work, they less frequently feel the need, desire, or make the time to seek feedback. However, this logic does not account for the positive correlation between the two constructs. Looking to understand this finding in the larger framework proposed, and the process taking place, it becomes clearer. It was found that when leaders engage in supportive feedback practices, they influence the extent to which their employees see feedback as useful and themselves as able to apply it. From this, employees see their own needs, values, and abilities more closely aligned to what their organization provides and expects. This felt closer alignment contributes to how engaged employees will be in their work as they have what they feel they need and are being asked what they feel capable to deliver. Based on this chain of events, it would follow that if employees are getting what they need with respect to feedback, they would not need to actively ask for feedback.

It is also possible that the other variables in the proposed framework better account for the motivational factor that leads employees to seek feedback than work engagement. Only when

the direct link between feedback orientation and feedback-seeking was omitted did work engagement negatively influence feedback-seeking. However, in the best fitting model, the degree to which employees find feedback useful directly predicted their likelihood to seek feedback and work engagement's impact was no longer present. It could be that feedback orientation simply better accounts for the motivational component that feedback orientation and work engagement have in common. This would then negate, or at least neutralize, work engagement's predictive influence on feedback-seeking. The strong and positive correlation found between these two constructs suggests that an underlying and likely motivational mechanism is operating in order to align responses to seemingly quite different variables. A question to explore is whether there is an overarching construct that ties the two together or simply that a significant overlap exists in the motivational responses assessed. It could be the case that a more macro level construct such as wanting to do well at work is compelling employees to fully invest themselves in their work and make the best use of any feedback they receive and this is the element predicting feedback-seeking. From this desire, perceptions and behaviours towards feedback likely better predict motivation to seek feedback than motivation in one's overall work, which can be impacted and tied to multiple other factors. Either way, working to understand the overarching construct at play amongst the two variables may inform how either or both can be enhanced.

That being said, the idea that a supportive feedback environment is always beneficial for employee performance and well-being has been generally accepted however recently disproved by Gabriel and colleagues (2014) and informed by the current study. These researchers suggested that a supportive feedback environment is only as beneficial as the person in that environment perceives it to be and this perception is impacted by how they value feedback in the first place.

The current study provides clear evidence that the extent to which people see support for feedback in their work environment predicts whether or not they themselves value feedback. From this, findings show that a supportive feedback environment does not predict feedback-seeking unless it is combined with feedback orientation's perceptual and motivational properties. For example, employees can be given copious amounts of quality and timely feedback however it cannot be assumed that this feedback will lead to improvements. This assumption would ignore the additional aspects of the feedback process (e.g., receiving, processing, applying feedback) that are dependent upon the feedback receivers' response. The receivers must *do* something with the feedback and what they do depends on their individual characteristics including their attitude, motivation, and ability. What this means is that without understanding their impact on feedback orientation, the benefits of a supportive feedback environment can be difficult to predict. Findings from the framework tested in the current study allow us to make more accurate predictions as to how the feedback process can unfold and the leader's role and impact within it. Leaders have the opportunity to better predict and influence how their employees will engage in the feedback process by enhancing their understanding of their own responsibility in predicting these behaviours by the feedback practices they engage in.

Theoretical Implications

Findings from this study reshape previous conceptions of feedback orientation where it was thought to be more of a stable and trait-like characteristic employees entered their work context with. Instead, it appears to be a combination of perceptions employees have that are predicted by personal experiences and observations of the feedback practices their leaders engage in. Recent research had proposed that feedback orientation could make or break the success of feedback initiatives and that the only solution to this threat was to tailor feedback

practices to the varying preferences of individuals, which were dictated by their personal levels of feedback orientation (Gabriel et al., 2014). The current research shows that success is more likely predicted by the quality and availability of feedback practices leaders engage in that influence how employees value feedback than if they tend to care for feedback in the first place. Therefore, the way employees perceive the use and value of feedback does not operate in a vacuum. These perceptions are predicted and influenced by the feedback practices that they see their leaders engage in.

Furthermore, while previous research had connected the feedback practices leaders engage in to P-O fit (Peng & Chiu, 2010), it was unclear how the feedback practices directly enhanced P-O fit. This previous research had not included the individual and motivational component operating within this relationship, that of feedback orientation. Adding the concept of feedback orientation in understanding this process, and knowing how it operates within it, helps to elucidate the linkages among the constructs. First, leaders represent the organization with the feedback practices they engage in that makeup the feedback environment and the current study's findings connect how these predict and influence feedback orientation and P-O fit. P-O fit in the current study was assessed with a measure that included three dimensions of fit namely values-congruence, needs-supplies, and demands-abilities. Feedback orientation's dimensions can be connected to these dimensions of P-O fit when considering feedback as useful (therefore valuable), wanting feedback as it provides enhanced social awareness (therefore it supplies a need), and feeling able and accountable towards applying the feedback (therefore feeling able to meet the demands of the organization).

Limited research has been conducted to understand and test the linkages between the feedback environment and feedback orientation as they both inform the feedback process. This

state of affairs is mainly due to the fact that no theoretical framework has been developed to help understand this relationship and therefore researchers have been unable to make informed predictions and test them. This study is the first to adopt a P-O fit perspective to create a framework to understand the linkages between the feedback environment and feedback orientation as a means to understanding how leaders' behaviours can predict the extent to which their employees will engage in the feedback process.

The P-O fit framework introduced and tested provides a theoretical foundation for the concept of "feedback fit". It was found that the value organizations place on feedback practices as portrayed by their leaders can predict the value employees assign to feedback. These feedback practices were also found to predict the extent to which employees feel their values, needs, and abilities are aligned with what their organization provides and expects. The current study supports that feedback orientation plays a key mediating role in the feedback process and provides evidence that it is impacted by the feedback practices leaders choose to engage in. P-O fit theory helps to disentangle how the feedback environment and feedback orientation are related. Using a multidimensional construct of perceived fit in the current study allowed us to understand the relationship using its three dimensions, which include values-congruence, needs-supplies, and abilities-demands. First, the feedback practices leaders engage in can showcase the way they value the performance and development of their employees by taking the time to share feedback. As they do so, their employees can learn about and better understand the benefits of feedback through gaining a better grasp of how they are performing compared to how they should be, and by being given the opportunity to course-correct. From this process, findings show that not only are these employees more strongly perceiving the value of feedback and their

receptivity to it but they are also feeling a stronger alignment between their own and their organization's values.

A second way of exploring this process is by viewing the supportive feedback practices of leaders as a supply or resource that is influencing and encouraging their employees to see the utility in the feedback being provided and therefore see more need for it. A third way of understanding the process is by looking at the supportive feedback practices of leaders as methods of helping their employees feel more able to apply the feedback and accountable towards acting on it. Alternatively, if feedback practices are seen as less supportive, employees may see feedback as less useful in giving them a good understanding of how they are performing which does not support their ability to apply the feedback and therefore does not signal to the employees that their organization's demands are in line with their own abilities. Therefore, based on all three dimensions, P-O fit can be used as a guiding theory to help understand how each element contributes to employees seeing a stronger alignment with their organization and as a result feeling more engaged in their work. This theoretical framework also highlights what possible factors contribute to the likelihood that employees will seek feedback when they need it, through the utility they see in it and the need their leaders encourage them to have for it.

A valuable theoretical implication from these findings is that the feedback environment, created by the feedback practices leaders engage in, plays a role in how employees perceive their sense of fit within their organization. While the importance of assessing and enhancing P-O fit is firmly established, along with the benefits and risks that come from its strength (or lack thereof), the role of feedback within it is not. Conceptually, feedback has been proposed as a meaningful element of organizational support (Christian & Slaughter, 2011; Gregory & Levy, 2008; Peng & Chiu, 2010) and a potential antecedent to work engagement (Menguc et al., 2013) but neither had

been tested. Furthermore, researchers who have suggested potential linkages between feedback, P-O fit, and work engagement mainly pointed to feedback as a single objective element rather than as a set of practices that can be perceived as supportive and that can impact and create a need and desire for feedback. The current findings demonstrate that feedback is indeed connected to P-O fit and through it to work engagement, and they also provide a theoretical framework of understanding how they are connected and can be meaningfully enhanced. This evidence provides theoretical avenues for further research as well as practical ones for leaders who seek to better understand how they can positively influence the multiple benefits and reduce the multiple risks that have been found to stem from varying levels of P-O fit and work engagement.

Engaged employees find their work to be more meaningful, self-fulfilling, and inspirational and thus become more dedicated, concentrated, and engrossed in their jobs (Menguc et al., 2013). Researchers have suggested that engaged employees see their job role from a broader perspective and, as such, expand the view of the activities involved in it (Menguc et al., 2013). As such, research has shown that engaged employees benefit the organization by exhibiting more proactive behaviour (Sonnentag, 2003) and extra-role behaviour such as organizational citizenship behaviour (Rich et al., 2010). The current study would suggest that feedback practices, as they impact perceptions of feedback overall, merit consideration as a key element for creating conditions for enhanced P-O fit and through it, work engagement. As an example, research has shown that a supportive organizational culture can enhance work engagement and given that organizational culture is often more in a leader's sphere of influence, a link is suggested between leader behaviour and engagement (Shuck & Herd, 2011).

Researchers have pointed out that based on the current body of literature on engagement, the

antecedents of work engagement are not process dependent, but rather that they are functions that usher in the conditions for the state of work engagement to develop (Wollard & Shuck, 2011). Drawing parallels to the current study's findings whereby perceptions of the feedback environment, which are strongly influenced by the leader's behaviour, predicted feedback orientation, so too was it found to be positively related to work engagement. As such, different organizations can create a culture that fosters engagement in many different ways, using different tools and strategies. As an avenue for leaders to influence the experience of their employees, future research should examine the feedback environment, as part of the organizational culture, and its power to influence work engagement and ultimately its numerous benefits.

Results from the current study inform a known gap in the literature as to how feedback orientation affects employee motivation. While research has shown that feedback orientation is positively related to motivation to use feedback (Seelman et al., 2004), employee empowerment (Gabriel et al., 2014), and personal control of decision-making and information (Sparr & Sonnentag, 2008), current findings show that the broader motivational construct of work engagement is worth considering alongside feedback research. Work engagement was positively related to all feedback constructs in the current study, none of which had been studied together before. Of further interest is the newly found relationship between feedback orientation and work engagement illuminating a new motivational component in the feedback process. Revealed in the Alternate Model 2, when compared to its modified version, was that work engagement no longer negatively predicted feedback-seeking when a predictive path was added from feedback orientation directly to feedback-seeking. This means that feedback orientation and work engagement have a strong connection, particularly as they predict feedback-seeking. This connection has not yet been made in the area of feedback research as we know it and merits

further study given the importance of feedback orientation specifically and work engagement more globally, to the workplace.

Furthermore, evidence was found to suggest that supportive feedback practices are positively related to work engagement, a new finding to the literature and support for the many claims of researchers that feedback is likely an antecedent to work engagement (Menguc et al., 2013). This finding has implications for the emerging research exploring ways organizations can enhance work engagement and informs future research and theory development in further understanding the linkages between feedback and work engagement. Current research has yet to thoughtfully examine *how* feedback and work engagement are potentially connected aside from supervisory feedback being positively related to work engagement (Menguc et al., 2013). The framework tested and the resulting process found in the current study sheds light on how the relationship between feedback and work engagement can operate through P-O fit and provides empirical evidence for how the constructs are connected. Further research and theory development are needed to provide much needed evidence and best practices as to how leaders can enhance engagement through feedback.

Results from this research have implications for how feedback orientation is thought of and understood in the literature. Further exploring the linkage between the feedback environment and feedback orientation allowed us to determine that one predicts the other which informs future theory development of the relatively new construct of feedback orientation (Linderbaum & Levy, 2010). Researchers had conceptualized feedback orientation as a fairly stable trait-like characteristic, more or less depicting it as something that does not change over time (London & Smither, 2002). While some researchers had suggested one's feedback orientation can change over longer periods of time through regular experiences with feedback (Dahling & O'Malley,

2011; Dahling et al., 2012; Linderbaum & Levy, 2010), no evidence exists to support this claim. However, results from the current research provide evidence that feedback orientation could be predicted by the feedback practices leaders engage in and therefore likely be malleable. While studies have begun to examine feedback orientation as akin or at least strongly related to personality, the current study's findings suggest that researchers may need to re-conceptualize feedback orientation as primarily a perception made up of both objective and subjective factors created and influenced by feedback sharers rather than as a personal characteristic. Granted, the way people feel about feedback as a means to knowing what others think of them and how they are impacting others can be much informed by their personality, so too is personality shaped over time particularly and mainly in formative years of people's lives. However, unlike personality known to be relatively stable over time during adulthood, behaviours can change and this research would suggest that so too can the perceptions that influence them. Therefore, future research should explore the extent to which feedback orientation can change over time, and informed by this research, should examine how these changes occur pre and post exposure to a new leader or new feedback practices.

Of interest for theory development and future research is the origin of feedback orientation. Based on the results of this study, feedback orientation can be predicted and influenced by the feedback practices leaders engage in. Stepping back to look at what elements come even before the feedback practices, the question remains as to what ultimately predicts the feedback practices leaders will engage in. It may be the case that leaders aggregate all feedback practices they have been exposed to and from this create their own sense of what a supportive feedback environment looks like. Another possibility is that while the feedback practices leaders are exposed to may influence their feedback orientation, so too may this orientation impact the

feedback practices leaders will subsequently engage in. Other individual factors may also play a role in the feedback orientation and practices of leaders such as personality dimensions (Krasman, 2010). Examples of these feedback-related personality dimensions could involve being perceptive and understanding of others, tendencies to analyze and be critical of the behaviours of others or themselves, desire and openness to know what others think of them, and ability to listen to and mindfully process feedback.

The feedback practices leaders engage in may also be influenced and predicted by the organizational cultures (Ahmad & Veerapandian, 2012) and location-specific cultures (Ashford et al., 2003; Tsui & Ashford, 1991; Sully de Luque & Sommer, 2000) where they work that impact how they share feedback the way they do. An organizational culture (Levy & Williams, 2004) that is supportive of feedback has been referred to as a *feedback culture* (London & Smither, 2002), a *feedback-oriented culture* (London, 2003; Peng & Chiu, 2010) or as a *feedback-friendly culture* (Baker et al., 2013). The idea that lies behind these terms is conceptually similar in essence to the concept of the feedback environment as they are both based on London and Smither's (2002) theoretical work. For example, the concept of a feedback-friendly culture advocates proactive feedback exchanges in the organization and the shaping of a safe feedback-sharing environment (London & Smither, 2002; Morin, Jawahar, & Boyer, 2011). Theoretically, a "strong" feedback culture involves employees and managers feeling comfortable exchanging feedback in an organization whose practices and interventions emphasize the importance of readily accessible feedback, supports the use of feedback, and advocates for the sharing of quality feedback (Baker et al., 2013; Levy & Williams, 2004; London & Smither, 2002; Morin, Jawahar, & Boyer, 2011).

Nevertheless, the value of a feedback culture on feedback outcomes is a recognized gap in the literature (Baker et al., 2013). The lack of theory development and validated feedback culture measures may have played a role in sustaining this gap. Some initial work has been conducted on creating a feedback culture measure (Morin et al., 2011) based on London and Smither's (2002) theory; however, this work is only in its preliminary stages which limits its use and further empirical examination. Despite this emerging work, no attempts at empirically reconciling the operationalization and definition between the two similar constructs of feedback culture and feedback environment have been made, and as a result the two terms have been used largely interchangeably.

Arguably, the concept of a "feedback culture" may, in essence, be a part of the greater organizational culture if not subsumed under it. Though researchers have conceptually discussed the idea of a feedback culture, they have largely borrowed from other areas of work in organizational culture such as learning, communication, values, and trust (e.g., Baker et al., 2013). Furthermore, when describing why the concept of feedback culture ought to be beneficial and implemented, researchers draw on empirical evidence from the area of feedback environment and other contextual antecedents to the feedback process to substantiate the claims for the benefits of creating a feedback culture. It may be that researchers are grasping at the idea of a feedback culture when what could be more insightful into the feedback process is understanding that the feedback environment created by supervisors and coworkers is influenced by the greater organizational culture that embodies an approach to work altogether. These questions require further research including theory development of a model that includes both the feedback environment and feedback orientation of leaders and testing of this model in a longer term setting that can examine the way feedback cultures are created by leaders and

employees alike based on their perceptions of feedback and the practices they engage in. The current study begins answering this question showing support that indeed feedback practices predict perspectives of feedback, in general, and perceived organizational fit as a whole.

Lastly, feedback-seeking can inform future research and practice as a potential measure of effectiveness of the feedback process. Currently, the ultimate goal of sharing feedback is to see the receiver implement the learnings from the feedback and improve their performance and development. As leaders look to create a feedback culture and development opportunities for their employees, they also have the opportunity to foster proactive behaviours in their employees to create their own development opportunities through seeking feedback. These reactions could specifically be repositioned as expected outcomes of effective feedback practices that possibly compel employees not only to be more receptive to feedback and able to apply it but also willing and desiring to ask for more feedback in the future. This concrete behavioural outcome of supportive feedback practices could potentially expand how the effectiveness of the performance management process is measured and theoretically understood (London & Smither, 2002).

Practical Implications

Findings show that when managers take the time to observe their employees work, give them quality guidance and information about their performance, make themselves available to their employees, and encourage them to ask for feedback, employees notice. When employees feel their managers can speak to their performance and give them meaningful guidance on how they are doing and can improve, employees see more utility in feedback and feel more inclined to apply it. As the information employees receive provides them with a clearer picture of their performance against expectations, employees can gain self-awareness and feel more in control of ways they can move forward to improve or leverage their performance. They then see feedback,

provided to them by their managers who represent the organization, as a resource they value as it helps them to know how to meet their organization's expectations.

Conversely, these findings show that if employees find their manager's feedback practices to be less supportive (e.g., infrequent, untimely, inaccurate, only unfavourable (or only favourable)) they will likely see feedback as less useful for providing them with a complete picture of how they are performing. Further, this type of unhelpful feedback would take away from employees' ability and desire to apply the feedback. As a result, these employees are more likely to perceive their organization as not meeting their needs to know how they are performing and how they can improve. Therefore, feedback practices leaders engage in can predict how their employees see the value in feedback and their ability to apply it. This more favourable perception of feedback contributes to their perception that their needs, values, and abilities are aligned with what their organization provides and expects. Although previous research demonstrated that the feedback environment and feedback orientation were related and ought to be studied in conjunction (Gabriel et al., 2014; Gregory & Levy, 2010; Linderbaum & Levy, 2010; London & Smither, 2002; Smither, London & Reilly, 2005), it was not clear until now that the first predicts the second and that both predict P-O fit.

Taking these considerations into an example, once feedback is shared it needs to be understood and applied. For this to occur, the employee must want to and know how to apply the feedback. If there is a disconnect in this process employees can feel dissatisfied in their role and as a result unhappy within their organization. Person-organization fit theory helps to understand that this disconnect can occur in several ways, one being that employees are not getting the performance information they need to know whether they are meeting expectations or to allow them to feel they are doing a good job. Another way a disconnect can occur is when employees

simply feel unable to meet the demands of their organization and are not being provided with meaningful avenues on how to do this through guiding and supporting feedback.

P-O fit theory and research has shown that the environmental component of understanding a person-environment situation takes precedence, as it is a more powerful influence particularly in an organization (Kristof-Brown & Guay, 2011). It is more likely that an organization, made up of multiple individuals with varying and entrenched values, beliefs, and behaviours will influence a person rather than one person alone with their beliefs, values, and behaviours will influence the entire organization. Knowing the power of the environment and the role of the organization, clear recommendations can be made as to how leaders can ensure they are engaging in supportive feedback practices. Therefore, leaders play a key part in influencing the role of feedback in their employee's work experience within their organization with the feedback practices they choose to, or not to, engage in.

Understanding that feedback practices impact how employees will view the utility of feedback as well as their own ability and desire to apply it can reframe how leaders think about the feedback practices they engage in. Researchers and practitioners have identified that leaders do not uniformly apply effective feedback practices and, in fact, are consistently misusing or underusing feedback not only as a performance management tool but also an opportunity to develop and motivate their employees (Baker et al., 2013). Creating a supportive feedback environment involves many elements and leaders need to understand that it includes more than just sharing accurate and timely feedback. The concept of creating a supportive feedback environment is multifaceted and the results of the current research suggest each and every one of these facets are worth investing time in as they impact direct and indirect outcomes leaders care about. Leaders would benefit from ensuring they share both positive and constructive feedback

and are seen as having sufficient knowledge and experience over the matter in which they are sharing feedback about as well as the ability to deliver quality feedback. While these elements are generally straightforward and well understood, there are two additional components to creating a supportive feedback environment that are perhaps less well known and thus less emphasized. Leaders need to be seen as available to their employees and genuinely open to having their employees ask for feedback in order to create an environment that looks and feels supportive of feedback sharing. These last two elements also create the opportunities for employees to take an active role in the feedback process outside of receiving and applying the feedback and that is of initiating a feedback opportunity when the need arises. Future research and practice would benefit from ensuring leaders enhance their overall understanding of what they can do to create a supportive feedback environment and why they should prioritize the time and effort in doing so.

Although it might seem obvious that leaders contribute to influencing how employees' think and feel about their work, until now, there was no empirical support that their influence extended to employees valuation and response to feedback. These findings can also inform situations where leaders feel that their employees do not use and ask for feedback when they should, and consider whether it is the leaders themselves that are inadvertently responsible for these behaviours. Perhaps through their actions such as not taking performance appraisals seriously or sharing feedback infrequently or inconsistently they convey to employees that feedback is not important or valued. From this assessment, they can work towards understanding how their own behaviour can contribute to (or detract from) creating an overall supportive feedback environment that compels their employees to see the utility in feedback. Further, if leaders see that their employees are not learning from the feedback they share, perhaps their

employees are unsure how to apply it nor feel the need to apply it, which are both influenced by their own practices. Recognizing that creating a supportive feedback environment involves more than merely sharing feedback can provide avenues for leaders to discover how else they can enhance their feedback practices to ensure support is felt by their employees. To provide more specific direction, future research should explore the relative importance of each element involved in creating a supportive feedback environment. It would be beneficial to further understand how each element in creating a supportive feedback environment can impact the extent to which employees perceive the utility in feedback, that their needs are being met, and how engaged they will feel in their work.

A supportive feedback environment, in common practice, has been referred to as a “feedback culture”. These work cultures foster an openness and receptivity to feedback, promote and support learning from feedback with the aim of increasing reflection and communication at work (Mulder & Elinger, 2013). Companies like Netflix, Adobe, IDEO, and Airbnb implement structures, processes, and practices that facilitate the sharing of continuous, timely, and meaningful feedback. Examples of these practices include equipping people with a common approach and language around sharing feedback (e.g., frameworks like Stop, Keep, Start or Situation, Impact, Behaviour), training people on how to give and receive feedback (e.g., with role plays, and in-the-moment feedback), making time for feedback a priority (e.g., establishing informal check-in moments, regularly gathering feedback before and after client or project meetings), and understanding the employee journey and sharing feedback during each key milestone rather than following a calendar approach.

Some researchers have also proposed that leaders can play a role in shaping a “feedback friendly culture” by role modeling a strong feedback orientation and frequent feedback-seeking

(Baker et al., 2013). Examples of this would be a leader role modeling how to be receptive to feedback, be accountable towards using it, show comfort in seeking feedback, and responding well when feedback is sought and shared. As employees see the benefits of seeking and sharing feedback outweighing the potential risks and image costs that can come from it (Krasman, 2013; Morrison, 1995), a culture of open communication and support can be fostered. It is ultimately beneficial for leaders to engage in activities that encourage their employees to seek feedback as it has been found to increase job satisfaction, job performance, and organizational citizenship behaviours, as well as decrease turnover intentions (Morrison, 1993; Renn & Fedor, 2001; Whitaker et al., 2007). All valuable outcomes leaders seek to influence and predict. Leaders have much to gain from making a conscious effort to cultivate a feedback culture because without it they risk having feedback improperly situated and delivered leading to missed opportunities to promote individual reflection, personal improvement, and engagement in informal learning. Without a feedback culture to frame this learning and encourage feedback-seeking, employee needs for personal and career development are less likely to be met.

One key purpose of the current study was to provide concrete avenues for leaders to encourage their employees to seek feedback when they need it in order for employees to take advantage of the multiple benefits that come from it. In the past, employees could count on an organization to guide them in their career paths and provide them with growth opportunities, and in return, employees would give them their long-term loyalty. Today, organizations are constantly changing and lifetime jobs have become obsolete. Therefore, opportunities for career growth have been less tangible or obvious for employees and for their leaders. More frequently, employees have become responsible for finding their own development opportunities to grow their careers, and seeking feedback is one of them. However, if employees do not see the utility

in feedback or feel able to apply it, they are not likely to seek feedback at all. Findings from this research help leaders to understand that they can encourage their employees to create their own development opportunities by investing their efforts into ensuring their employees value feedback and feel able and accountable to apply it and from this that they will ask for feedback when they need it.

Limitations

In order to confirm and further extend previous findings in this feedback-specific literature, and to test the framework proposed, a large and broad sample was required for the current study's purposes and planned analyses. Online recruitment services were utilized for this study that allowed advertisement to and recruitment of participants online. While this methodology allowed for a sufficient and varied sample to be acquired, certain limitations of this methodology must be considered. In order to determine if the sample gathered from the online recruitment services was of sufficient quality, both threats to external and internal validity were assessed using standards proposed by Berinsky and colleagues to evaluate subject pools (Berinsky, Huber, & Lenz, 2012).

First, an inherent lack of researcher control exists when administering questionnaires online. Most Internet-based methods can only exert a minimal level of control over survey responders' environments compared to lab studies. The quality of data may suffer to an unknown extent due to the absence of standardized, controlled testing conditions. Researchers have mentioned, however, that for studies that examine potentially sensitive or personal types of concepts, the data can potentially be of greater quality as online responders are less likely to engage in self-presentation biases, demonstrate demand characteristics, nor be subject to experimenter biases (Burhmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011). The current study examined

perceptions of feedback practices in the workplace as well as personal work engagement and fit. While fairly neutral concepts, compared to more sensitive topics typically studied in psychology, feedback and work performance can be considered quite personal. Employees often engage in impression management at work where they want to please and impress their leaders by doing good work. Given these factors to consider when researching feedback, an online recruitment methodology, not at all associated with their workplace, may have been ideal in order to limit the extent to which employees engage in impression management when they report on their feedback perceptions and behaviours. Further, the current study controlled for the impact of social desirability to account for the variance this factor may have still had in the sample despite the recruitment methodology. Lastly, despite the lack of control over the way the questionnaire was administered, very little data was found to be missing and the data that was missing was found to be at random. Thus, this supports the extent to which the quality of the responses was less likely impeded by a lack of researcher control.

With respect to demand characteristics and experimenter bias, participants completing surveys out of interest (voluntarily) or paying special attention (to earn their incentive) may exhibit experimental demand characteristics to a greater degree than would respondents in other subject pools. These participants may be attempting to divine the experimenter's intent and behave accordingly. Researchers have suggested to reduce demand effects that signaling to participants the specific aims of the study ahead of time should be avoided. Only general information about the study was presented at the onset of the current study's survey, and no intentional or potentially obvious deception was used. As such, demand concerns were likely reduced.

Second, using online recruitment methods serve the purpose of gaining either a broad

sample or a specific niche and difficult to access sample. While the current study used this methodology to acquire a sample that would more accurately reflect a broad range of working employees, it remains fact that the sample is not necessarily representative of the working population as a whole. Even though the current study's sample had a demographic profile that was significantly more diverse than traditional student or convenience samples used in psychology studies (e.g., undergraduate/college student participant pools), participants cannot be said to be representative of the North American population nor any other specific population for that matter. That being said, researchers using Amazon's Mechanical Turk (i.e., MTurk, is a Web-based platform for recruiting and paying subjects to perform tasks), for example, boast a more varied sample than typical Internet samples and the current study's sample had some similar characteristics (Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011). Demographic information gathered in this study demonstrates that the sample was older than the typical Internet sample, and had a slightly higher percentage of non-White participants. Further, demographic information outline that the sample came from varied industries and job types, as well as varying levels of education which can lend some support to demonstrating general workforce employees. Therefore, while this sample acquired through online recruitment services cannot be said to technically "represent" a type of workforce or location, it can inform future research looking at employees across workplaces and industries.

When comparing the results of the current study with other studies using the same tools and samples of interest, similarities were found. Correlations among the constructs were in the expected directions and similar to what previous research had found and overall means and standard deviations were fairly similar as well (e.g., Braddy et al., 2013; Dahling et al., 2012; Gabriel et al., 2014; Linderbaum & Levy, 2010; Peng & Chiu, 2010; Whitaker et al., 2012). This

suggests that this study's sample responded in a manner consistent with prior research and lends support for the external validity of this study's results. That being said, one particular finding deviates from previous research and that is the lack of correlation between job tenure and the constructs measured in the current study. Previous research has found that job tenure is negatively related to both feedback orientation and feedback-seeking (Anseel et al., 2015; Gregory & Levy, 2012). Given the average job tenure for this sample was fairly low ($M = 4.7$ years), this may explain why the relationship was not found. Other studies typically using participants from within a specific organization may have employees with a wider range of job tenure which may explain a more distinct finding of longer job tenure negatively relating to feedback-seeking. In this sample, this result was not replicated. Job complexity, however, was found as a significant factor impacting the constructs of interest and this finding is consistent with previous research. It appears that for this sample, job complexity influenced how people viewed feedback and the frequency in which they sought feedback whereas job tenure did not. As such, job complexity was used as a covariate for all analyses and job tenure was not. It may be that job complexity better captures the need and desire for feedback than simply time in role. Future research should investigate the relative importance and potential interaction of job complexity and job tenure on feedback-specific perceptions and practices.

Third, online studies afford participants total anonymity and could be considered a disadvantage with respect to creating potential deceptive responding. It is a distinct possibility that participants are being dishonest in their responses and that they may simply lie about themselves in a manner that goes undetected. This is a risk of most studies using self-report measures and a primary reason for including a measure of social desirability within the current study in order to account for people's natural tendency to respond in a way they believe they

should rather than truthfully. Researchers using an Internet sample have examined reasons as to why people participate in online studies for very little incentive (e.g., Amazon Mechanical Turk) and have found that they are primarily internally motivated by the enjoyment they get from participating (Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011). In this respect, an Internet sample may present less uncontrollable or undetected deceptive responding mainly because responders have no reason to deceive. On the other hand, participants gathered from a workplace sample, may provide deceptive responses for political or personal reasons that are more difficult to ascertain with a social desirability tool. Therefore, although Internet samples can provide dishonest answers, they may have less complex and more easily measured reasons to do so.

Fourth, one group that formed part of the sample (i.e., using the Cint Integration service through Fluid Surveys) was incentivized apart from the option to enter a draw for an Amazon.com gift card that the rest of the sample had the option to enter. Although only a small fee was paid for the service of acquiring responders and these fees were not directly awarded to responders however the responders were incentivized by Cint Integration. People receiving an incentive for their participation may be differently motivated while completing the survey than responders completing it voluntarily. Some researchers have proposed that responders who receive an incentive for their participation may pay greater attention to experiments and survey questions than do other subjects as they have an incentive to read instructions carefully and consider their responses (Beinsky et al., 2012). Cint Integration provided survey completion checks as they guaranteed and ensured the number of responses purchased were complete. To do this, they monitored the surveys submitted and did not end their data collection until a minimum of the number of purchased responses were delivered and complete.

On the other hand, participants who frequently respond to surveys and who receive an

incentive for participation may be inattentive and merely focus on completing the survey rather than filling it in thoughtfully. To examine this possibility, response time and potential response sets were examined as well as the internal consistency of the measures used. No significant or pervasive concerns were found with respect to response times and responses sets, and through examining assumptions, the data were normally distributed. Further, all measures yielded excellent internal consistency, similar to other studies using the tools (Anseel et al., 2015; Gabriel et al., 2014; Gregory & Levy, 2012; Peng & Chiu, 2010; Steelman et al., 2004), which suggests the measures were able to reliably assess the constructs of interest and that participants responded in a consistent manner overall.

Lastly, participants who are completing a survey merely for the incentive, both monetary and entering into a draw, may threaten the internal validity of the results by participating in the survey more than once. In attempt to thwart these efforts, Fluid Surveys tracks responders through IP address locators and these were examined prior to deriving a final sample. In instances of an IP address featuring more than once, repeated entries from each location were deemed questionable and thus removed.

A possible limitation of the current study relates to self-report measures and that is common method bias. Nevertheless, given the purpose of the current study was to study the impact of perceptions, self-report measures were appropriate. Further, researchers have argued that it is only through researching the subjective perception of feedback from individuals can feedback processes be described, understood, and measured (Mulder & Ellinger, 2013). That being said, to strengthen the external validity of the results, future research should consider a multi-method approach. Using a multi-method approach can introduce multiple and varied perspectives on the phenomena under investigation which can help to gain a more holistic

perspective and shed light on important further considerations. Different methodologies can introduce varied and even complementary strengths which can allow for more complete explanations of the constructs studied to be found and better understood within their context.

For example, the actual feedback environment aspect of creating a supportive feedback environment is certainly linked to the perceived support in one's feedback environment. It would be beneficial to understand the dynamics of what organizations consider supportive versus what individual employees perceive as support and could be key to enhancing the way organizations communicate to their employees (Wollard & Shuck, 2011). Future studies can collect data from additional sources that provide feedback (e.g., supervisor perceptions, informal feedback communications, performance reviews) to have data on the actual feedback provided to employees and employee's actual use and seeking of feedback at work. Outside of self-reported measures, it would also be of interest to examine whether people who say they seek feedback more often actually do, as well as what they do with the feedback they receive. Future research could look at behavioural indicators of performance improvement as a further outcome of feedback-seeking. As such, future research designs could include more objective behavioural outcomes such as improved performance, promotions, bonuses, and income.

A second limitation to be considered as a result of self-reported questionnaires is that they are subject to socially desirable responding. In attempt to control for this possibility, and improve upon much of the research in this area that ignores social desirability in self-report methods, a social desirability scale was included in the current study. Potential impacts were thus controlled for by including social desirability as a covariate in all main analyses.

Given the current study's purpose was to explore the proposed framework with the overall composite constructs, a deeper dive into individual dimensions of each construct was beyond the

purpose of the current study. It would be of interest to further explore and develop theory on precisely how the dimensions of the constructs examined in this study can predict the likelihood, types, and sources of feedback-seeking. For example, employees who have a strong feedback orientation, and more specifically reported strong perceptions that feedback enhances their social awareness (a sub dimension in the feedback orientation measure), may be more likely to seek feedback from both their supervisor and their coworkers rather than their supervisor alone in order gain insight on the span of their social impact. They may also enhance their seeking with both monitoring and inquiry equally as both techniques offer very different and valuable types of interpersonal and social types of information. Further, the new relationships found between work engagement and feedback specific constructs ought to be further examined to understand the predictive influence of each dimension of the feedback environment, feedback orientation, and perceived fit on each distinct dimension of work engagement. To do this, researchers will need to develop theory surrounding each dimension now that testing the relationships with the overall constructs has been done and ideas as to what relationships may exist can be suggested and tested.

With respect to measures, one consideration can be made regarding the feedback environment and how it was defined in the current study; focused only on the supervisor feedback environment. Organizations today are adopting more horizontal leadership structures and engaging in lean initiatives (e.g., job cuts and job consolidation) in order to stay competitive and profitable. This means there are less vertical layers of managers and supervisors in organizations and as such leaders are often responsible for more and more employees directly, indirectly, and remotely (Zander, Mockaitis, & Butler, 2012). Given these considerations, it may be the case that the feedback environment as defined in this study (i.e., created by one's

supervisor) was insufficient. Employees who have less face time with their direct supervisor may feel less compelled to reach out to them for feedback through email or phone and instead may turn to their more accessible peer, ask their direct-reports, or not ask for feedback at all and just count on the feedback they get on their deliverables through performance metrics or from client responses.

Future research should examine the role of coworkers in the feedback environment as included in the original measure created by Steelman and colleagues (2004). The current study only used the supervisor feedback environment given that supervisors are more likely to have consistent daily relationships with their subordinates whereas employees may interact with a variety of coworkers, but not necessarily the same ones every day. Further, the supervisor feedback environment was primarily examined in order to remain consistent with previous research in this area of work and be able to compare results and relationships found (e.g., Norris-Watts & Levy, 2004; Sparr & Sonnentag, 2008; Gabriel et al., 2014). That being said, it may be the case that today's employee works more closely with peers (e.g., teams and work groups) or clients than their supervisor and thus further predictive power could be found if the feedback environment included all feedback sources.

Although the current study empirically found mediation relationships and yielded a good fitting model, it does not rule out a wide range of possible alternatives. Other alternative models may be equally consistent with the data, yet may be quite different from the best fitting model found here. Because of the possibility that other equally plausible alternative models exist, some threats to the validity of the mediation analyses conducted must be considered (Little et al., 2007). The first is the existence of plausible equivalent models. Without strong theory development to describe the proposed relationships, the order of the predictive chain can be in

any combination. Although the results of the current study provide support for a mediation model, they do not provide support for this model over many other possible ones. Second, variables that were not modelled and could be correlated with those that were modeled (e.g., correlated with both the mediator and the outcome) may play a role and better explain the relationships under investigation. Third, a threat exists when measured variables are used as proxies for the true causal variables. Perceptions were investigated rather than objective indicators under the assumption that perceptions influence behaviour, however to understand and support the true causal nature of the relationships found, further evidence would be valuable. Lastly, a threat exists in differential reliability of measurement of the constructs when modeling mediation. However, the latent-variable SEM approach used in the current study to test mediation mitigates this threat given its ability to properly address the presence of measurement error in a statistical model and to ensure the constructs are measured equivalently (Little et al., 2007).

Related to statistical analyses chosen for the current study, the testing of the models with moderations yielded incomplete analyses in SEM. Thus, this leads the open possibility that better fitting models could exist using the same variables. The best way to still examine possible moderations in this case was by simplifying the model by only testing parts of the model in isolation using regression and SEM. These scenarios were not ideal given that in isolation the relationships were not examined the way they necessarily appear in a real workplace context. Further, while feedback orientation was found to play the role of a moderator when examined in isolation, it also appeared to play the role of a partial mediator when examined more broadly in the overall proposed framework. These follow-up analyses were useful in trying to get refinement on the overall bigger question of the role of feedback orientation, however future

research should be conducted to specifically tease the meaning of these apart. While the current research provides pointers in the right direction and gives guidance on next steps with this particular question of moderation and mediation in terms of “fit”, it also hints at both processes, operating as perception or reality, being worthy of follow-up research particularly with that of a manipulation type of study. Despite this, other models were proposed that were still in line with the processes under examination, and successfully tested. From this, valuable information was gathered that provided the ability to rule out some possibilities and inform the relationships that were found in the best fitting model.

Lastly, although perceived fit was found to directly predict the extent to which people are engaged in their work, this engagement in turn did not predict the frequency in which people will look and ask for feedback. From this, it may be the case that most of the positive impact of work engagement on feedback-seeking is better captured by the other motivational construct in the model, that of feedback orientation. Borrowing from the person-environment fit literature, a specific outcome should be predicted by a specific predictor (Kristof-Brown & Guay, 2011) and thus a feedback-specific motivational construct was found to better predict a feedback-specific outcome rather than a general motivational construct. Continuing with this line of reasoning, perceived person-organization fit was found to predict work engagement, which could potentially support the proposition that a general construct better predicts a general outcome. Future research should determine whether this is actually the case to inform the construction of theoretical frameworks that have corresponding predictors and outcomes.

Future Research Directions

Previous studies researching feedback components (e.g., frequency, quality, structure, and resulting performance) in isolation neglected the powerful impact of perceptions that are inherent

in the feedback process as a whole. To expand the understanding of the feedback process to include the perceptions of those impacted by the feedback and expected to apply it, the current study introduced a multi-component model that included both contextual and personal factors with respect to perceptions of feedback. Given the exploratory nature of the framework and predictions proposed, the variables represented in the current study are not all-encompassing of the contextual and individual constructs that impact perceptions of feedback and the feedback process. Thus, it is acknowledged that other elements may play a role in predicting the variables of interest. However, containing the model to specific relationships while including some further reaching and well-established variables was necessary and valuable in understanding how the relationships operate in the workplace.

Future research can work to determine the value of including other relevant variables that inform individual perceptions of feedback and feedback-seeking behaviours such as personality, goal orientation, growth-fixed mindset, developmental disposition, and self-awareness. These individual dispositions may impact the relationships found in the current study. People can seek feedback for various reasons including their desire for performance information, their need to know how others perceive them, their varying degrees of self-confidence and self-esteem, as well as their respect for the input of authority or others on their work. Given the variability in the likelihood that people will seek feedback, researchers have examined whether traits in one's personality will enhance or inhibit this likelihood. Indeed, research has shown that a person's feedback-seeking behaviour is partially attributable to his or her personality makeup (Krasman, 2010). More specifically, of the Big Five domains of personality (Costa & McCrae, 1992), it has been found that people who have higher levels of neuroticism, extraversion, and conscientiousness are more likely to seek feedback directly or indirectly from their supervisors

and coworkers. While these personality traits do not necessarily inform how a leader can impact their employees' feedback seeking behaviours, it does help to further explain and predict reasons as to why people seek feedback.

Building on this, the concept of feedback orientation can help to narrow in on people's perceptions of feedback, its value, and use and could help to draw an explanatory link between one's personality and how often and for what reasons they will seek feedback. For example, a high level of neuroticism could indicate that a person will be more self-conscious, prone to worry, and feel uncomfortable in uncertainty and ambiguity. Feedback orientation could then inform, and correspond to, the reasons as to why feedback is beneficial to this person such that it reduces uncertainty and provides role clarity. Therefore, future research should examine the linkages between the facets of personality and the potential explanatory power of feedback orientation as it provides a more complete explanation as to why and how likely individuals seek feedback.

This future research would also allow the framework and process revealed in the current study to be examined more broadly to explore what factors predict the feedback practices leaders will engage in such as their own personality or experiences with feedback. Results from the current research would suggest that the way leaders feel about feedback is likely influenced by the feedback practices their own leaders engage in or have used in the past. Alongside future research that could trace back the origins of leaders' supportive feedback practices, it would be of interest to examine leaders' personality and particular dimensions related to feedback and perceptions of the self and how the self is seen by others as they impact leaders' subsequent feedback sharing practices. Related to this, personality can inform the extent to which people are motivated by receiving positive and meaningful feedback and this motivation may impact the

feedback practices leaders choose to engage in such as giving positive feedback.

Theory development and future research should aim to explore if personal feelings about feedback, driven by personality and experiences with feedback, impact the feedback practices leaders feel are worth engaging in. Given the impact of employee feedback orientation in the current study, it may be of value to examine leaders' feedback orientation to determine whether it informs the practices they are perceived to engage in by their employees as well as the value employees ascribe to feedback. It may be the case that both a leader's feedback orientation and the feedback practices they engage in can predict the feedback orientation of their employees or it may be that a leader's feedback orientation can influence the practices they engage in which then impact the feedback orientation of their employees. Future research should examine this larger phenomenon that shapes feedback perceptions and practices in leaders as they could impact their employees' person-organization fit, work engagement, and their subsequent outcomes.

People who have a stronger orientation towards feedback presumably believe that feedback can help them improve their performance. However, not all people believe that ability and therefore performance can change and thus are motivated accordingly. The concept of a growth versus fixed mindset stems from implicit person theory, which posits that people who have a fixed mindset see ability as inflexible and unable to change or improve (Dweck, 1999; Dweck, 2007). People who ascribe to a performance goal orientation, or have a fixed mindset, see themselves as having a certain level of ability that cannot really change (Dweck, 1986). Whereas people who ascribe to a growth mindset believe that ability is malleable and incremental and that they can indeed learn how to improve. From this perspective, a suggestion may be to encourage a growth and learning mindset in order to foster greater self-insight. Investing efforts into helping

people to ascribe to a learning goal orientation by teaching people that ability is malleable and efforts to learn and improve through experience (Dweck, 1986) can be rewarding could lead to more accurate self-assessments through improved knowledge and skill (Ehrlinger et al., 2008). Research has revealed that goal orientation can be induced (e.g., Stevens & Gist, 1997) and thus managers providing supportive feedback could be able to activate a certain goal orientation in their employees (Culbertson et al., 2013). Therefore, as leaders engage in supportive feedback practices and enhance the utility their employees see in feedback, they may also help their employees to better identify their areas of strengths and opportunity and can foster an incremental, learning, and growth view of ability as well as imparting more knowledge on the work itself.

In considering the role of leaders, research has shown that employees can accurately identify the implicit person theory or mindset their leader ascribes to (Kam et al., 2014) and unknowingly to the leader, impact the perceptions of their employees. Leaders that believe ability is fixed may not invest in the development of the employees they see as having a lower level of ability. Therefore, when looking to encourage employees to have a growth mindset, so too should leaders examine their own beliefs. Just as feedback practices of leaders were found to potentially predict employee's felt ability with and perceived utility of feedback, so too could these practices predict the way employees see their ability and performance as changeable.

Given that feedback, by nature, is a longitudinal process and is often given and received more than once (Mulder & Ellinger, 2013), feedback research ought to be further studied using longitudinal study designs. Researchers have proposed that feedback orientation is a malleable quality over moderate periods of time (e.g., 6-12 months; Dahling & O'Malley, 2011) and as such people who have a weaker feedback orientation could become more receptive to feedback

over time (Dahling et al., 2012). This means that as people have more favourable experiences with feedback and find it helpful, their feedback orientation could become stronger (Linderbaum & Levy, 2010). Results from the current study inform these future research avenues as feedback practices were found to possibly predict feedback orientation. Furthermore, it has been assumed that perceptions precede feedback-seeking behaviour however the current study's cross-sectional methodology can only infer this causality from the relationships in the data. Future research should examine the hypotheses with a design (e.g., lab experiment or longitudinal field survey) that can more conclusively determine whether perceptions indeed caused feedback-seeking or whether feedback-seeking altered perceptions that then preceded future feedback-seeking behaviours. Based on attribution theory (Kelley, 1976), manager behaviours do not necessarily influence subordinates' job attitudes, unless those behaviours have an influence on employees' *perceptions* of their manager and workplace. As such, perceptions were important to examine in the current study and an important next step would be to determine the cause and effect to better predict actual behaviours resulting from perceptions.

In light of the findings presented here, further research should also examine the impact of broader contextual factors on the relationships found. For example, in reality feedback can come in many shapes and from varied sources and management characterizes only one source of feedback among many. Research has demonstrated that job characteristics such as feedback from the work itself, and jobs that require working closely with others do not predict less frequent feedback-seeking, (Krasman, 2013). However, future research should investigate whether other sources of feedback, such as organizational systems and formal performance appraisals (Northcraft et al., 2011), similarly impact employee's feedback orientation and predict more or less feedback-seeking behaviours. Research has shown that employees who have a job that

requires completion of a whole and identifiable piece of work (i.e., task identity) are better able to determine the outcome of their work and as a result will seek feedback less often (Krasman, 2013). As such, it would be of interest to determine whether job characteristics such as task identity versus the perceptions of feedback and support for it have a stronger predictive link to feedback-seeking behaviours. Future research can explore how such factors like job characteristics could impact the perceived utility of feedback more or less than the feedback practices leaders engage in.

Another important contextual variable is the organizational structure as it impacts feedback practices. More specifically, researchers have examined how the structure of an organization can impact the feedback-seeking behaviour that takes place within it (Krasman, 2011). This research demonstrated that standardization, which is when job performance has to meet specific requirements, enhances the value of feedback and the motivation to seek it. This research also showed that when supervisors have a wider span of control (i.e., are responsible for more subordinates and thus become less accessible to each) their employees are less likely to ask them for feedback. Third, formalization (organizations that are more formalized and thus have detailed documentation on performance) was found to increase feedback-seeking because employees can consult documentation to know how they are doing rather than ask their supervisor for feedback at the cost of impression management. Lastly, higher centralization (i.e., the level of hierarchy of authority) was found to increase the extent to which employees sought feedback such that the less power employees have to influence decisions regarding their own jobs, the more they seek feedback (Krasman, 2011). While elements of organizational structure were not examined in the current study, this research lends further support for examining the proposed framework and this study's findings within specific organizations as their particular structure will impact and help to

predict the likelihood that employees will engage in feedback-seeking. These parameters would also likely influence the feedback practices leaders are able to engage in which could have varying consequences on how employees' perceptions of feedback are shaped. This future research would further inform origins of feedback practices and the extent to which they can be supportive and impact the way employees feel about feedback, the feedback needs they have, and their abilities to engage in the feedback process.

Understanding that a broader context exists around the variables in the current study, an important next step would be to examine the impact of organizational culture on feedback practices. An organizational culture outlines a general shared set of values along with implied rules and regulations for how to behave in the organization and it builds a dynamic and unique identity for employees working within it (MacIntosh & Doherty, 2005; Mamatoglu, 2008; Schneider, Ehrhart, & Macey, 2013). As such, on a larger scale, an organizational culture may also influence the more specific feedback environment in terms of what types of feedback techniques are typically used and how employees tend to or ought to perceive feedback (London, 2003). Further, given the role of leaders in creating a supportive feedback environment, future research should examine how the organizational culture shapes the practices they will (or will not) engage in as well as what employees expect with respect to feedback support. It may also be the case that the feedback practices leaders engage in shape the organizational culture, particularly surrounding values and expected behaviours related to performance development, communication of expectations, reinforcement of successes, personal accountability and ownership. Theory development on organizational culture and the feedback environment has yet to transpire and as such the results of this research may inform some plausible research directions as feedback practices were found to predict perceptions of the value of feedback.

As previously mentioned, now that a general sample has been tested with respect to the relationships of interest, it will also be useful to now test this framework in a particular industry and environment to gather some evidence of how it may operate in a given workplace setting where specific work systems are in place and can be identified. This will give an indication of how the proposed framework can serve to explain how person-by-context interactions can take place in specific contexts. Lastly, while results found in the current study are insightful, caution is still warranted before generalization to the world of work is possible. Though some diversity was present in the current study's sample, majority of participants were Caucasian and working in a North American setting. Future research should examine whether the same phenomena occurs in workplaces across the world and in global organizations. For example, the concept of feedback-seeking may not necessarily be appropriate (Ashford et al., 2003) in certain cultures that favour a top-down approach to feedback sharing within organizations. It would be interesting to determine whether people who work in these organizations feel they are getting the feedback they need when they are not able to proactively acquire it themselves. Further, as organizations become more global and work teams more diverse, feedback sharing, orientation, and seeking can become crucial in order to ensure teams are communicating effectively and performance goals and objectives are clearly understood. When working in cross-cultural contexts, making assumptions can pose a heavy risk (Ashford et al., 2003) and jeopardize performance, and as such sharing and asking for feedback is imperative. Thus, it will be highly beneficial that leaders in these organizations understand the importance of creating a supportive feedback environment all the while knowing that their actions are impacting their employees views of feedback and abilities and desires to apply it.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

Researchers and practitioners have consistently highlighted the missed opportunities for leaders and employees to make effective use of feedback in the workplace. As a result of poor feedback approaches and subsequent negative reactions to feedback, many leaders and employees experience some discomfort around feedback sharing. Rather than seeing the feedback givers and receivers as two separate entities, results from the current study suggest that leaders feedback practices can predict the reactions and needs their employees will have with respect to feedback and ultimately the behaviours that result from it.

Findings show that not only can feedback practices predict the extent to which employees feel their needs, values, and abilities are being met by their organization, but also that their needs, values, and abilities can be predicted by feedback practices. As employees experience their leaders engaging in supportive feedback practices, they can see more value in feedback as a whole and feel supported to make effective use of it, they then become more likely to ask for feedback when they need it. These findings contribute to our understanding of why feedback practices can be effective and ineffective through the approaches used to share them. Leaders who engage in unsupportive, inconsistent, unhelpful feedback practices likely impact how their employees view feedback and their subsequent desire and ability to apply it. If employees see feedback as less useful, they are less likely to feel their needs are being met and feel less engaged in their work as a result. These linkages between the feedback environment created by leaders and work engagement are newly established in the current study and warrant attention knowing the significant effects of work engagement on motivation and performance in the workplace. Further, employees who see less value in feedback are less likely to ask for feedback when they

need it, an outcome with grave consequences potentially causing employee performance to suffer. Therefore, leaders have an important role to play when they engage in feedback practices and the framework established in the current study helps to understand why.

Researchers, along with the current study's findings, have demonstrated that feedback orientation not only can play an important role in how employees use feedback but also that it indirectly can be related to the performance outcomes that managers seek when they invest their time in providing feedback (Dahling et al., 2012) such as employee development, training, and performance (Gregory & Levy, 2012). Therefore, leaders and organizations have much to gain from placing greater emphasis and time into creating a supportive feedback environment that includes not only sharing both positive and constructive quality information regarding employee performance but also being available and approachable for their employees to ask for feedback.

Leaders can reap many valuable benefits through promoting feedback-seeking in the workplace as it has been found to increase job performance, job satisfaction, organizational citizenship behaviours, participation in upward appraisal programs, and decrease turnover intentions (Morrison, 1993; Whitaker et al., 2007). Further, results suggest that feedback practices play a role in predicting employees' perceived fit within their organization and indirectly influence the numerous outcomes associated with it such as job satisfaction, extra-role behaviours, organizational commitment (Cable & Judge, 1996; Lauver & Kristof-Brown, 2001), and work engagement (Naami, 2011). While it has been firmly established that feedback is valuable for performance improvement, employee development, and communication of expectations and goal-setting (Baker et al., 2013; Ilgen, Fisher, & Taylor, 1979; Kluger & DeNisi, 1996; London, 2003; Silverman et al., 2005), the current study extends the importance of approaches to feedback practices demonstrating that they can actually influence the way

employees feel about feedback as a practice in general. The feedback practices leaders are seen to engage in were found to possibly predict the extent to which their employees see the utility in feedback along with their own ability, desire, and felt responsibility to apply and seek it in the future. This means leaders have the opportunity to reposition the way their employees react to and capitalize on performance information through the feedback practices they choose to engage in.

From a practical perspective, sharing feedback in a timely way can be challenging for leaders, as it is difficult for them to know the exact moments on the job when each of their employees requires feedback or even desires feedback (Krasman, 2013). Rather than passively waiting for feedback on their performance from others, which can be ineffective (Krasman, 2013), employees ought to be encouraged to look and ask for feedback when they need it. Today's workplace sees employees shifting from an organization career to a "protean career" which states that people must seek out and take responsibility for directing and shaping their own career trajectory (Cheremie, 2013) through learning from experiences and relationships. Employees who do not heed or seek feedback to align themselves with a "protean career" (Hall & Mirvis, 1996) may miss opportunities for learning and development. Such opportunities enable employees to remain knowledgeable, skillful, and effective in their organizations (Mulder & Ellinger, 2013). Further, organizations that do not recognize the individual feedback needs of their employees along with the importance of creating a supportive feedback environment are not contributing to their employee's self-regulation needs and desire for development and thus risk their employees seeking elsewhere for such opportunities.

Findings from this study demonstrate what can be done through the feedback practices leaders engage in, and the influence these have on how employees view feedback practices and

are subsequently more engaged by it. Results from this research help leaders to understand that they play a key role in impacting the way feedback sharing is perceived by their employees and that this perception impacts subsequent motivational outcomes that can directly and indirectly impact valuable outcomes. Leaders who can foster and predict such perceptions in their employees will find themselves reaping mutual benefits when employees are motivated to seek and use the feedback they need to learn, develop, and improve their work performance.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A**Recruitment Service Websites**

Call for Participants is based out of the United Kingdom and is an online company that advertises research studies for researchers with the goal of assisting in the recruitment of participants to participate in academic research. More specifically, Call for Participants is a two-sided platform that allows researchers to create a landing page for their current research studies, and add both simple and customizable pre-screening questions to the landing page. These questions act as a match-making tool to automatically inform participants of the studies they qualify for, using the information they have chosen to save. Call for Participants also offers a variety of promotional tools which allow for the research study link to be shared on other websites (e.g., Google, LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, etc.). As promotional tools are selected, the Call for Participants website offers further and related promotional tips and tools based on how and where initial promotions are succeeding in captivating the interest of participants.

The sampling frame accessed through this service included registered participants located in 176 countries who self-select to participate in the research when they meet the criteria and requirements outlined by the researcher. Participants registered on this website typically participate in research because they want to support a good cause, they want to discover exciting research, and/or they want to earn some money. Other participants can access the research through its advertisements on sites such as Facebook, Google and LinkedIn. The sampling frame of these other participants cannot be qualified as it originates outside the service provided.

Find Participants is a participant recruitment company based out of the United States that provides a direct link between academic researchers, and research participants through a web-

based interface. For a small fee, Find Participants recruits a sample of participants that meet the study's screening criteria and allows the researcher to contact these participants through electronic mail to invite them to participate in their research. Find Participants also monitors what types of messages are successful in having recruited recipients to participate in the study.

The sampling frame accessible through Find Participants has participants spanning 124 countries, 14 ethnicities (e.g., 58% white, 13% black/african american, 6% hispanic/latino), ranging in ages from 14-85 ($M=35$, range 71), 37 spoken languages, and identifying 62% female and 33% male. Participants also span 8 education levels (e.g., 30% some college/no degree, 28% college graduate, 15% highschool/GED, 12% masters degree), 24 employment industries (e.g., 12% education, 9% human health/social work, 9% hospitality), and 8 employment statuses (e.g., 30% full-time, 24% student, 19% part-time, 13% unemployed).

Cint Integration, accessed through Fluid Surveys where the research survey was created, is an online platform operating as a recruitment service that enables a researcher to reach targeted respondents based on set criteria. Responses are ordered directly from Cint Integration through an application in Fluid Surveys. Cint Integration is responsible for recruiting respondents and ensuring complete responses are provided to the researcher. The researcher orders a number of respondents at a set price per participant. For this study, each response cost under five American dollars. A total of 150 responses were ordered. Participants were incentivized through Cint Integration and their panel providing partners through a revenue share model. Fees and incentives are determined by Cint Integration and are dependent upon the selection criteria (general versus specific), the niche type or location of responders, and the length of the responses required.

Cint connects community and panel owners to researchers, agencies, and brands, for the

sharing and accessing of consumer data. Registered members get invited regularly by researchers, agencies, and brands to participate in online research (surveys, polls, ad testing) and are given incentives to reward them for their time and participation while generating revenue for each panel and community owner. This sampling frame consists of over 10 million survey takers across 60 countries. Specific demographic details of the community and panel groups are not accessible as they are part of a third party working with Cint, not managed or accessible by Cint Integration itself. Cint, however, ensures all participants contacted meet the criteria set out by researchers.

Recruitment Advertisement

Recruitment Add for Websites

Performance Feedback and Work Engagement

Participate in an investigation of how people's receptivity to feedback and their organization's approach to feedback work together (or not).

Approx. 30 minutes, online survey

Compensation: Enter into a draw to win one in five \$50 Amazon gift cards.

Participation Criteria:

- part or full time employee
- have a direct supervisor (not self-employed)
- 18 years of age or older
- minimum three months within the same position and company

This research has been cleared by the University of Windsor Research Ethics Board.

Recruitment Invitation for E-mail (recruitment websites)

You are invited to participate in a research study examining how organizations feedback environments can serve to improve employee work engagement and proactive feedback-seeking behaviours.

I am inviting you to help me with my research by completing a brief online survey on your views of performance feedback and work engagement. This survey should only take approximately 30 minutes of your time, and you will have a chance to win one in five \$50 gift cards to Amazon's website.

The purpose of this study is to examine the benefits of ongoing, informal, feedback as the key to engaging employees in the workplace today.

Results from this research would help to gain a better understanding of how the level of work engagement felt by employees in an organization relates to how employees view the feedback environment at work meets their needs for performance information and developmental opportunities.

This research has been cleared by the University of Windsor Research Ethics Board.

Appendix B

Demographics

Table 15

Demographics for Overall Sample

Variable	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	%
Age (Range 18-71)	408	36.2	11.1	
Gender				
Male	138			33.8
Female	268			65.7
Not Specified	2			0.5
Race/Ethnicity				
Caucasian	310			76.0
Black	24			5.9
Hispanic/Latino	22			5.4
Asian	15			3.7
African	12			2.9
Others (under 2%)	22			5.2
Not specified	3			0.7
Location				
USA	305			74.8
Canada	73			17.9
UK	6			1.5
India	6			1.5
Other	10			2.4
Not specified	8			1.9
Education				
Grade School/No Diploma				0.2
High School/GED Diploma				14.0
College/Associates Degree				16.7
Bachelor/University Degree				35.0
Master's Degree				25.2
Medical Degree (MD)				2.5
Doctoral Degree (PhD)				5.9
Not Specified				0.7
Tenure in Organization		5.9	6.76	
Tenure in Position		4.7	5.72	
Tenure with Supervisor		4.67	5.01	
Work Status				
Full-Time	319			78.2
Part-Time	76			18.6
Seasonally	7			1.7
Not Specified	6			
Position				
Non-Management				66.2
Management				32.8
Salary	377	64 628(\$)	40 595(\$)	92.4
Type of Incentives (check all that apply)				

Fixed Salary	51.5
Payment for Output	28.7
Merit Pay	21.3
Commission	12.3
Profit Share	10.3
Industry	
Education	16.7
Healthcare	9.9
Retail	6.6
Government	6.6
Restaurant/Hospitality	6.1
Information Technology	5.8
Business/Finance	5.3
Other (less than 5%)	43.0

Demographic Questions

Please answer the following information about yourself:

Check one of the following three options

- female
- male
- other, please specify: _____

Age (in years): _____

Race/Ethnicity:

(check as many general categories that apply & specify on all if possible):

- African (*specify*) _____
- Asian (*specify*) _____
- Caucasian (*specify*) _____
- Hispanic/Latino (*specify*) _____
- Indian (India) (*specify*) _____
- Middle Eastern (*specify*) _____
- Aboriginal (*specify*) _____
- South American (*specify*) _____
- Other (*specify*) _____

Level of Education:

- Grade School (no diploma)
- High School Diploma / GED
- College/Associate`s Degree
- Bachelor/University Degree
- Master`s Degree
- Doctoral Degree (incl. MD)

Please answer the following questions about your residence:

Place of birth: (*city, province/state, & country*): _____

Place primarily raised: (*city, province/state, & country*): _____

Number of years you have lived in your current country: _____ years

Please answer the following questions about your employment:

Occupation: (*please specify title*): _____

Industry (*please specify the name of the industry you work in*): _____

Department (*please specify your area/department of work*): _____

Number of hours you work per week: _____

Approximate salary (pay for one year): _____

My compensation (pay) is primarily affected by my performance on the job:

- agree (entirely)
- agree (partially)
- disagree

Which of the following incentive elements of compensation are important in the pay you receive? (*check all that apply*)?

- payment for output (direct results)
- commission
- profit share
- merit pay (e.g., linked to management by objectives)
- none of the above – my pay is set by seniority or fixed salary grade

What is your work status?

- full-time
- part-time
- seasonal

Are you:

- management
- non-management

Please check which of the following individuals you primarily deal with:

- Supervisors (people above you)
- Coworkers (people at the same level as you)
- Subordinates (people below you)
- Customers/Clients

Control Questions

How long have you worked for your current supervisor? (in years and months)

_____ years & _____ months (e.g., 1 year and 3 months)

How long have you worked for your current employer/organization? (in years and months)

_____ years & _____ months (e.g., 1 year and 3 months)

How long have you worked in your current position? (in years and months)

_____ years & _____ months (e.g., 1 year and 3 months)

Appendix C

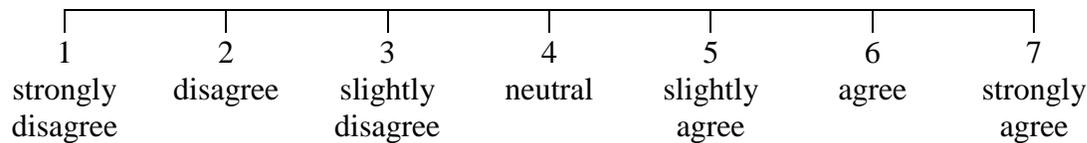
Measure Items

Feedback Environment Scale

(*Steelman et al., 2004*)

Feedback refers to information about your performance.

For each of the following items, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree, using the following scale:



Source credibility:

1. My supervisor is generally familiar with my performance on the job.
2. In general, I respect my supervisor's opinions about my job performance.
3. With respect to job performance feedback, I usually do not trust my supervisor.*
4. My supervisor is fair when evaluating my job performance.
5. I have confidence in the feedback my supervisor gives me.

Feedback quality:

6. My supervisor gives me useful feedback about my job performance.
7. The performance feedback I receive from my supervisor is helpful.
8. I value the feedback I receive from my supervisor.
9. The feedback I receive from my supervisor helps me do my job.
10. The performance information I receive from my supervisor is generally not very meaningful.*

Feedback delivery:

11. My supervisor is supportive when giving me feedback about my job performance.
12. When my supervisor gives me performance feedback, he or she is considerate of my feelings.
13. My supervisor generally provides feedback in a thoughtless manner.*
14. My supervisor does not treat people very well when providing performance feedback.*
15. My supervisor is tactful when giving me performance feedback.

Favourable feedback:

16. When I do a good job at work, my supervisor praises my performance.
17. I seldom receive praise from my supervisor.*

18. My supervisor generally lets me know when I do a good job at work.
19. I frequently receive positive feedback from my supervisor.

Unfavourable feedback:

20. When I don't meet deadlines, my supervisor lets me know.
21. My supervisor tells me when my work performance does not meet organizational standards.
22. On those occasions when my job performance falls below what is expected, my supervisor lets me know.
23. On those occasions when I make a mistake at work, my supervisor tells me.

Source availability:

24. My supervisor is usually available when I want performance information.
25. My supervisor is too busy to give me feedback.*
26. I have little contact with my supervisor.*
27. I interact with my supervisor on a daily basis.
28. The only time I receive performance feedback from my supervisor is during my performance review.*

Promotes feedback seeking:

29. My supervisor is often annoyed when I directly ask for performance feedback.*
30. When I ask for performance feedback, my supervisor generally does not give me the information right away.*
31. I feel comfortable asking my supervisor for feedback about my work performance.
32. My supervisor encourages me to ask for feedback whenever I am uncertain about my job performance.

* Reverse-coded items

Work Engagement Scale
(Utrecht Work Engagement Scale: Schaufeli et al., 2002)

The following 17 statements are about how you feel at work. Please read each statement carefully and decide if you ever feel this way about your job. If you have never had this feeling, indicate '0' (zero). If you have had this feeling, indicate how often you feel it by indicating the number (from 1 to 6) that best describes how frequently you feel that way.

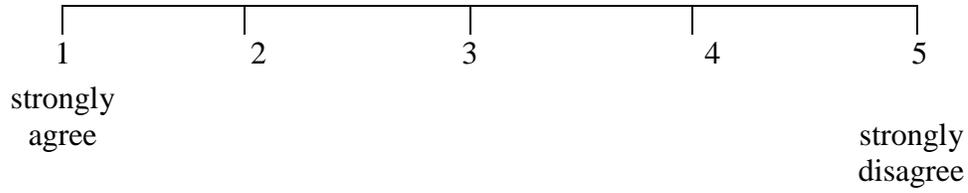
0	1	2	3	4	5	6
never	almost never or a few times a year or less	rarely or once a month or less	sometimes or a few times a month	often or once a week	very often or a few times a week	always or every day

1. At my work, I feel bursting with energy (VI)
2. I find the work that I do full of meaning and purpose (DE)
3. Time flies when I'm working (AB)
4. At my job, I feel strong and vigorous (VI)
5. I am enthusiastic about my job (DE)
6. When I am working, I forget everything else around me (AB)
7. My job inspires me (DE)
8. When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work (VI)
9. I feel happy when I am working intensely (AB)
10. I am proud of the work that I do (DE)
11. I am immersed in my work (AB)
12. I can continue working for very long periods at a time (VI)
13. To me, my job is challenging (DE)
14. I get carried away when I'm working (AB)
15. At my job, I am very resilient (VI)
16. It is difficult to detach myself from my job (AB)
17. At my work I always persevere, even when things do not go well (VI)

VI = vigour
DE = dedication
AB = absorption

Job Complexity

(Work Design Questionnaire: Morgeson & Humphrey, 2006)



1. The job requires that I only do one task or activity at a time (reverse scored).
2. The tasks on the job are simple and uncomplicated (reverse scored).
3. The job comprises relatively uncomplicated tasks (reverse scored).
4. The job involves performing relatively simple tasks (reverse scored).

Social Desirability
(*Social Adaptation Scale: Erdodi, 2015*)

This brief questionnaire was designed to assess the extent to which you follow social norms. Please indicate whether the statements below are an accurate description of you by circling *True* or *False*.

- | | | |
|---|------|-------|
| 1. I always read the entire fine print before agreeing to something | True | False |
| 2. I sometimes lie | True | False |
| 3. I always wash an article of clothing before wearing it again | True | False |
| 4. I sometimes feel annoyed by children | True | False |
| 5. I always make a complete stop at a stop sign | True | False |
| 6. I don't swear | True | False |
| 7. I sometimes drive over the speed limit | True | False |
| 8. I never drank under the legal age | True | False |
| 9. I don't gossip | True | False |
| 10. I always make healthy food choices | True | False |
| 11. I never laugh if I see someone trip and fall | True | False |
| 12. I sometimes use my cell phone while driving | True | False |
| 13. I never lie to get out of social obligations | True | False |

Appendix D

Figure 19. Measurement Model.

All Path Coefficients are Standardized
 Bolded Coefficients were fixed to set the scale and not estimated.

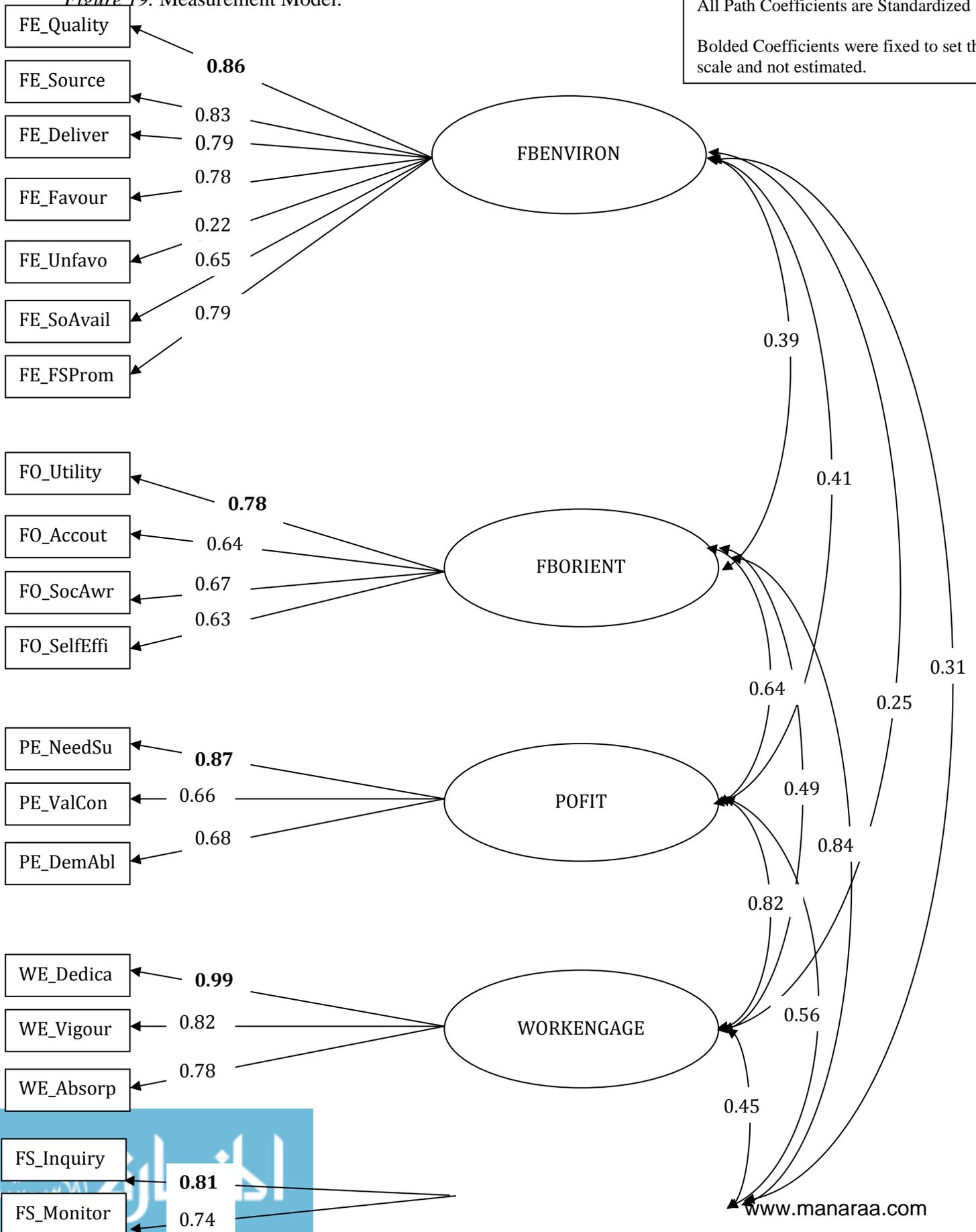


Table 16

Confirmatory Factor Analysis Results

Feedback Environment			
Indicator	Standardized Factor Loading	Residual Mean	Residual Variance
Feedback Quality	.86	3.65	.27
Source Credibility	.83	4.24	.31
Feedback Delivery	.79	3.80	.37
Favourable Feedback	.79	3.18	.38
Unfavourable Feedback	.23	4.32	.95
Feedback Source Availability	.66	3.23	.57
Promotes Feedback-Seeking	.80	3.50	.37
Feedback Orientation			
Utility	.79	4.15	.38
Accountability	.64	5.84	.59
Social Awareness	.67	4.78	.55
Feedback Self-Efficacy	.63	5.23	.61
Perceived Fit			
Need-Supply	.87	3.26	.25
Value-Congruence	.66	3.61	.57
Demand-Ability	.69	4.82	.53
Work Engagement			
Dedication	.99	3.27	.02
Vigour	.82	3.70	.33
Absorption	.78	3.41	.39
Feedback-Seeking			
Inquiry	.81	2.75	.34
Monitoring	.75	3.88	.45

Note. Mean non-specified and latent variances fixed to 1.

VITA AUCTORIS

Lisa Plant was born in 1988 in Saint John, New Brunswick, Canada. She graduated from École Samuel-de-Champlain high school (Saint John, New Brunswick) in 2006. She then attended the University of New Brunswick (Fredericton, New Brunswick) where she obtained a B.A. with Honours in Psychology and a minor in Business Marketing in 2010. From there, she went to the University of Windsor (Windsor, Ontario, Canada), where she completed her M.A. in Applied Social Psychology (Industrial and Organizational Psychology) in 2012. With the deposit of this dissertation, she will have completed all requirements for the Ph.D. in Applied Social Psychology (Industrial and Organizational Psychology) at the University of Windsor and will graduate in the Spring of 2018.