Is ‘How’m I Doin’?’ a Universal Question?

Unpackaging Cultural Differences in Feedback Seeking

by

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“Is ‘How’m I Doin’?’ a Universal Question? Unpackaging Cultural Differences in Feedback Seeking”

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ABSTRACT

TITLE: Is ‘How’m I Doin’?’ a Universal Question? Unpacking Cultural Differences in Feedback Seeking

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The feedback literature is based on the premise that given a favorable context and a drive to reduce uncertainties, all individuals should seek self-relevant performance information. However, this framework has only been empirically examined using Western samples and has failed to consider the influence of the broader context, with the exclusion of Sully de Luque and Sommer’s (2000) cultural framework. The purpose of this project was to integrate extant culture theory into the feedback seeking literature for a more comprehensive framework, and a more global understanding of cultural contingencies surrounding the feedback seeking process. Findings revealed the universality of feedback seeking. Cross-cultural differences in the frequency of feedback seeking were a factor of the feedback environment facilitated by the supervisor as well as personal feedback seeking motives, made salient by specific features of the sociocultural context (e.g., Tightness-Looseness, Need for Harmony, and Relation to Broad Environment). The contributions of this research to theory, the practical implications of such findings, and ideas for future research were discussed.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF FIGURES</td>
<td>VIII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF TABLES</td>
<td>IX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEDICATION</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT</td>
<td>xi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER I</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LITERATURE REVIEW</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Culture</strong></td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture: The ‘What’ and ‘How’?</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theories of Culture</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Ecological/Materialist Approach</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Cognitive-Idealist Approach</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Dynamic Approach</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common Controversies in Cross-Cultural Research</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodological Issues</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposed Solutions</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conceptual Issues</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposed Solutions</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposed Working Definition and Approach to Culture</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The National Context</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Global Properties: Ecological and Historical Features</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Shared Property: Cultural Value-Based Dimensions</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Organizational Context</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Individual Context</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Feedback Seeking</strong></td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Cultural Model of Feedback Seeking</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linkage A: Effect of National Context on Feedback Seeking</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecological and Historical Features</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Value- Based Dimensions</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linkage B + C: Indirect Effect of National Context through Organizational Context</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback Environment</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback Environment: Mediating the Effect of National Context</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Study 2: Unpackaging Study

### Participants

### Measures
- Tightness-Looseness
- Need For Harmony
- Relation to Broad Environment
- Feedback Environment
- Feedback Seeking Motives
- Feedback Seeking Frequency
- Control Variable: Trait Positive and Negative Affect

### Demographics
- National Properties

### Procedure

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**CHAPTER 4**

### RESULTS

**Study 1: Test of Conceptual Equivalence**

### Study 1a: Interview-Based Qualitative Survey

### Study 1b: Scenario-Based Qualitative Survey

**Study 2: Unpackaging Study**

### Preliminary Analyses

### Confirmatory Factor Analysis

### Hypothesis Testing

- Regression Analyses
- Mediation Analyses
- Serial Mediation Analyses
- Exploratory Analyses

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**CHAPTER 5**

### DISCUSSION

**Summary of Major Findings**

- To what extent does the sociocultural context influence individuals’ tendency to seek feedback?
- How does the sociocultural context influence individuals’ tendency to seek feedback?
- Tightness-Looseness: Managing Scrutiny and Expectations
- Need for Harmony: Preserving Favorable Social Connections
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1- White’s (1949) Pyramid of Cultural Systems .............................................234
Figure 2. Tsui et al.’s (2007) Polycontextual Framework to Cross-National, Cross-
Cultural Organizational Behavior Research ..........................................................235
Figure 3. Conceptual model of the proposed cultural system effect on individual
level outcomes ...........................................................................................................236
Figure 4. Unpacking national context’s influence on feedback seeking ............237
Figure 5. Cultural Dimensions Measurement Model (Standardized Solution) ......238
Figure 6. Feedback Seeking Process Measurement Model (Standardized Solution)
..................................................................................................................................239
Figure 7. Modified Feedback Seeking Process Measurement Model (Standardized
Solution) ....................................................................................................................240
Figure 8. Results of the serial mediation model for the effect of Tightness-
Looseness on feedback seeking frequency through feedback environment and
image-defense motive .................................................................241
Figure 9. Results of the serial mediation model for the effect of Tightness-
Looseness on feedback seeking frequency through feedback environment and
instrumental motive ..................................................................................................242
Figure 10. Results of the serial mediation model for the effect of Need for Harmony
on feedback seeking frequency through feedback environment and image-defense
motive ............................................................................................................................243
Figure 11. Results of the serial mediation model for the effect of Relation to Broad
Environment on feedback seeking frequency through feedback environment and
instrumental motive .................................................................244
Figure 12. Results of the serial mediation model for the effect of Relation to Broad
Environment on feedback seeking frequency through feedback environment and
ego-defense motive ....................................................................................................245
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Linking cultural value-based dimensions to previous cultural frameworks .................................................................................................................................................. 246
Table 2. Frequencies of Demographics (Study 1a) .......................................................................................................................................................................................... 249
Table 3. Operational Definitions of Feedback Seeking Motives ................................................................................................................................. 251
Table 4. Frequencies of Demographics (Study 1b) .......................................................................................................................................................................................... 252
Table 5. Demographics Frequencies (Study 2) .......................................................................................................................................................................................... 255
Table 6. National Properties for Nations with more than 25 Participants ........................................................................................................................................................................... 262
Table 7. Study 1a: Feedback Seeking Personal Perspective Sample Responses ..................................................................................................................... 263
Table 8. Study 1a: Frequency of Theme Occurrence for Personal Perspectives on Feedback Seeking ................................................................................................................................. 265
Table 9. Study 1a: Feedback Seeking Cultural Perspective Sample Responses ..................................................................................................................... 266
Table 10. Study 1a: Frequency of Theme Occurrence for Cultural Perspectives on Feedback Seeking ................................................................................................................................. 267
Table 11. Study 1b: Terms Descriptive of Feedback Seeking Across Cultures ..................................................................................................................... 268
Table 12. Study 1b: Frequency of Hits versus Misses in Identified Motives by Scenario ..................................................................................................................... 269
Table 13. Study 1b: Frequency of Endorsement of Feedback Seeking Behaviors Described in Scenarios ........................................................................................................................................................................... 270
Table 14. Study 2: Correlations and Descriptive Statistics .......................................................................................................................................................................................... 273
Table 15. Confirmatory Factor Analysis Fit Indices .......................................................................................................................................................................................... 274
Table 16. Regression Results for the Effect of Cultural Value-Based Dimensions on Feedback Seeking Frequency ........................................................................................................................................................................... 275
Table 17. Model Coefficients for Feedback Environment as Mediator .......................................................................................................................................................................................... 276
Table 18. Model Coefficients for Feedback Seeking Motives as Mediator .......................................................................................................................................................................................... 277
Table 19. Regression Coefficients, Standards Errors, and Model Summary Information for the Tightness-Looseness Serial Mediation Model .......................................................................................................................................................................................... 279
Table 20. Regression Coefficients, Standards Errors, and Model Summary Information for the Need for Harmony Serial Mediation Model .......................................................................................................................................................................................... 280
Table 21. Regression Coefficients, Standards Errors, and Model Summary Information for the Relation to Broad Environment Serial Mediation Model .......................................................................................................................................................................................... 281
DEDICATION

This dissertation is lovingly dedicated to the best cheerleaders in my life. My mother, Alice. She has instilled in me such admirable qualities, taught me about hard work, persistence, self-respect, and how to be independent. She has been a great role model of resilience, strength and character. I really wish one day I will become half the mother she is; her unconditional support, encouragement, and constant love have sustained me throughout my life. To my grandfather (Jeddo) Georges, thank you for always believing in me and being the first and only to call me Doctorah for the past five years.
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xv
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INTRODUCTION

Globalization, immigration, shifts in demographics, and mergers and acquisitions pose challenges to organizations as they manage increasingly diverse employees (e.g., national origin, cultural values, etc.). To retain an edge over their competition, multinational organizations must work to ensure the development of their global high potentials and leaders by leveraging their talent towards the overall attainment of organizational goals and bottom line profitability.

Organizations have been gradually acknowledging that any development of their leaders or employees begins by encouraging an open and honest self-reflection regarding ones’ strengths and weaknesses (Murphy & Cleveland, 1995). Identified as a necessary skill for sense-making within culturally diverse contexts, self-awareness is an important contributor of global success, especially among leaders (Wildman, Skiba, Armon, & Moukarzel, 2012).

Feedback seeking, defined as the active elicitation of information as a means to reduce uncertainty surrounding the acceptability of one’s performance (Steelman, et al., 2004; Whitaker, Dahling, & Levy, 2007), is an inherent part of attaining and maintaining self-awareness as well as enhancing future effectiveness (Anseel et al., in press; Ashford, 1986; Ashford & Cumings, 1985). In work settings, employees have been reported to frequently and proactively seek feedback from their supervisors when needed (Ashford et al., 2003; Ashford & Cummings, 1983). A cost-value framework is the basis for employees’ decision to seek
feedback (Ashford, 1986; Ashford & Cumings, 1985). Employees weigh their desire to reduce uncertainty about acceptable performance standards against the costs associated with this behavior (e.g., being perceived as incompetent; Anseel et al., in press; Anseel & Lievens, 2007). Research has identified contextual and individual factors that can influence employees’ cost-value analysis, and consequently the likelihood of feedback behaviors occurring (e.g., Ashford et al., 2003; Levy & Williams, 2004; Steelman et al., 2004).

Primarily a self-evaluative behavior, the extent to which individuals engage in feedback seeking is impacted by the drives or motives behind this behavior (Anseel, Lievens, & Levy, 2007; Ashford et al., 2003; Sedikides & Strube, 1997). To explain the motivational dynamics of feedback seeking, scholars have called for the use of an integrative framework of self-evaluation motives (e.g., Anseel et al., 2007; Anseel et al., in press). Specifically, the Self-Concept Enhancing Tactician Model (SCENT; Sedikides & Strube, 1997) which is based on the fundamental assumption that four motives drive individuals to seek self-relevant information: (a) the desire to confirm existing self-views (self-verification), (b) the drive to improve and protect one’s ego or self-esteem (self-enhancement), (c) the desire to obtain accurate self-relevant information (self-assessment), and (d) the drive to develop and improve self-relevant characteristics (self-improvement; Anseel et al., 2007).

Although integrative, the SCENT model primarily focuses on self-motives and does not consider socially influenced motives for feedback seeking (e.g., impression management). In fact, organizational research has identified and
consistently examined three primary motives impacting feedback seeking, namely the instrumental motive (i.e., desire for useful information and uncertainty reduction), the ego-based motive (i.e., desire to maintain and protect one’s ego or self-esteem), and the image-based motive (i.e., the desire to maintain and protect one’s public image; Ashford et al., 2003).

Evidence also suggests that the context in which feedback is sought—referred to as the feedback environment—is an important determinant of the frequency of feedback seeking behaviors (Levy, Albright, Cawley, and Williams, 1995; Steelman et al., 2004). Researchers have been interested in the impact of the social and contextual factors surrounding the communication of feedback on a day-to-day basis by supervisors and/or co-workers on feedback seeking behaviors (Anseel et al., in press; Steelman et al., 2004; Whitaker et al., 2007). Specifically, the feedback environment influences employees’ cost-value analysis, and in due course their feedback behaviors.

Although research has argued that people are inherently motivated to ask “How’m I doin?” cultural differences may impact the type, source, and ways feedback is sought (e.g., Anseel et al., 2007; Ashford et al., 2003; Sully de Luque, 2000). Societal culture has a powerful impact on a wide range of behaviors within organizations (Gelfand, Erez, & Aycan, 2007). Yet, with the exclusion of Sully de Luque and Sommer’s (2000) cultural framework, little attention has been given to the influence of the cultural context on the feedback process and its antecedents (motives and feedback environment). The increase in workplace diversity and the
globalization of business activities have made the understanding of how culture influences employees’ behavior in organizational settings a strategic necessity—rather than just a scientific curiosity (Sagie & Aycan, 2003). Therefore, with the continuing focus on effective global performance management (Claus & Briscoe, 2009), the act of feedback seeking, as well as the processes surrounding it, may need to be considered within a broader cultural context.

Organizational researchers have been challenged to develop theory that can clearly define and clarify organizational phenomena based on the emerging multicultural face of organizations (Chao & Moon, 2005). Scholars have called for research that systematically examines how individual and situational antecedents interact to activate psychological processes and predict individual behaviors (e.g., Aycan, 2000; Brockner, 2003; Cooper & Denner, 1998; Leung & van de Vijver, 2008; Schaffer & Riordan, 2003; van de Vijver & Fischer, 2009). In fact, Aycan (2000) states that:

Theories in cross-cultural I/O psychology should adopt a multidisciplinary and interactionist perspective because behavior takes place in complex systems (i.e., the organization) that operate under the influence of multiple environmental forces that are both internal and external to the organization (p. 111).

The current trend toward defining and viewing Culture as an amalgamated system of contexts at multiple levels (e.g., Erez & Gati, 2004; Gelfand, Nishii, & Raver, 2006; Tsui, Nifadkar, & Ou, 2007) brings organizational researchers the potential to address diversity in psychological processes and behaviors by looking
at the interrelationships of individuals and contexts. No study to date has directly explored and measured the effect of the sociocultural context on feedback seeking. Therefore, I sought to address this deficit in the extant feedback seeking literature. The core assumption of my research project is that cultural influences on feedback seeking are multifinal, in that Culture affects feedback seeking through multiple pathways; it can affect the psychological processes (i.e., self-motives) and organizational context (i.e., feedback environment) influencing the frequency of this behavior. In other words, through this manuscript I seek to answer the following research question: *To what extent and how does the sociocultural context influence individuals’ tendency to seek feedback?*

Following a review and integration of theories and models spanning multiple disciplines, I conceptualize Culture as manifested at the national context (e.g., ecological, historical, and value-based characteristics), the organizational context (e.g., organizational culture), and individual context (e.g., psychological processes). Additionally, I identify five cultural value-based dimensions upon which societies can differ at the national level. Together, these dimensions were synthesized from the wide-ranging and diverse culture values literature and consolidated into a more parsimonious categorization usable for theory testing. Specifically, I explore (1) the strength of social norms and the degree of sanctioning (i.e., tightness vs. looseness); (2) the degree to which power, status, and individuality are accepted (i.e., relationships among people); (3) the need to save face and maintain status quo (i.e., need for harmony); (4) the degree to which
achievement and performance are valued (i.e., activity); and (5) the degree to which interdependence, and interrelatedness are valued (i.e., relation to broad environment).

The purpose of this research project is two-fold: first, to examine the universality of the existing feedback seeking process; and second, to empirically test the influence of societal culture on individuals’ feedback seeking frequency via feedback motives and feedback environment. To satisfy the first goal of this project, a two-part qualitative study was conducted to assess the conceptual equivalence of feedback seeking, its underlying cost-analysis framework, and related motives. Following initial support for the feedback seeking process across cultures, three of the five cultural value-based dimensions, namely Tightness-Looseness, Need for Harmony, and Relation to Broad Environment were examined as predictors of cultural differences in feedback seeking. This choice was based on current research gaps, lack of empirical support, and theoretical implications to the overall proposed framework.

By putting forth a comprehensive framework that fully integrates Culture into the theories and findings of feedback seeking, this research contributes to disentangling the effect of the cultural context from other internal and external forces. As a result, this research provided insights about the specific aspects (what) of the cultural context presumed to cause observed differences in the frequency of feedback seeking and the mechanisms (how) through which the sociocultural context affected differences in feedback seeking across cultures. Findings of this
research project help advance feedback seeking theory and research towards a more global understanding of cultural contingencies. It also provides practical implications for multinational organizations in their attempt to not only improve the development of their diverse leaders and high potentials but also understand what drives diverse people to engage in or avoid the act of seeking feedback as they work toward managing their performance.
CHAPTER I

Literature Review

Culture

What differentiates an American, Chinese, Brazilian, Arab, German, and South African from one another? Taken at face value, each one of these individuals speaks a different language, thinks and behaves using deeply engrained communication patterns, as well as interacts and forms relationships with people in unique ways. In other words, they are of and have distinct cultures.

Defining Culture is no easy task. In the words of Lonner (1984), “[it] has been examined, poked at, pushed, rolled over, killed, revived, and reified ad infinitum” (p. 108). The fields of cross-cultural psychology, cultural psychology, and psychological anthropology have relied on different approaches to defining Culture. The following section unfolds the concept of Culture by providing a thorough review of the different theories and approaches to understanding its nature, the issues surrounding its study, and accordingly the working definition of and approach to Culture for the current manuscript.

Culture: The ‘What’ and ‘How’?

The distinction between the major approaches to defining Culture is well illustrated using the Leslie White pyramid (1949; see Figure 1). At the core of any
cultural system are three fundamental subsystems, constituting the layers of the pyramid; the technological, the sociological, and the ideological.

White (1949) suggested that the foundation, and determinant, of any and all civilization is the sources of energy which it controls. These sources are embedded within the technological layer of the culture. The technological subsystem is formed of all the physical, mechanical, biological, and chemical means available to individual members of a Culture, in the intention of controlling their environment. As such, a Culture can only exist, survive, and satisfy its basic needs (e.g., food, shelter, protection, companionship) by relying on its technology. The sociological subsystem is comprised of the many interpersonal relationships between members of a culture. It is displayed utilizing shared as well as distinct patterns of behavior, psychology, and modes of social conduct. Therefore, White (1949) assumed that societal processes are “powered” by these sources of energy. In fact, the effectiveness of a society’s power, influence, and socioeconomic prosperity have been historically linked to its available resources, derived from its environment (Wallace, 2009). Finally, the ideological subsystem is formed mainly of the concrete representation of ideas, beliefs, attitudes, and knowledge through the philosophical, artistic, scientific, and epistemological modes specific to a culture. In other words, philosophical systems provide meaning and matches the technological and social experience of a Culture. Similarly, Schwartz (1992) advanced a theory that proposed three universal requirements of human existence to which all individuals and societies adhere, namely biological needs,
fundamentals of organized social and interpersonal interaction, and survival and welfare needs of groups.

Following White’s pyramid, Schein (1992) proposed an additional dimension of Culture related to the visibility of its elements. Making use of the iceberg metaphor, Schein (1992) described the most external level of Culture - the tip of the iceberg - as including the visible and audible behavioral patterns, as well as the constructed physical and social environment. The deepest level - the invisible part of the iceberg - includes the basic assumptions and beliefs about human nature and the relationship to the environment.

All models of Culture view the interaction between the subsystems as bidirectional, lower layers condition top layers and top layers have the ability to condition lower layers. Thus, a culture, broadly speaking, is the product of its energy source and technology which can adapt to its ever changing needs. In the words of Leslie White:

Culture confronts us as an elaborate thermodynamic, mechanical system. By means of technological instruments energy is harnessed and put to work. Social and philosophic systems are both adjuncts and expressions of this technologic process. The functioning of culture as a whole therefore rests upon and is determined by the amount of energy harnessed and by the way in which it is put to work (White, 1949, pp. 367-368).
Theories of Culture

For the most part, culturists have taken one of two approaches to defining culture; viewing the emergence of a culture based on a bottom-up or top-down influence of the three subsystems. In this section, I compare and contrast the major theories of Culture, determining what the key driving elements are for each.

The Ecological/Materialist Approach

The ecological/materialist view of Culture takes a bottom-up approach to explaining the emergence of culture. Specifically, culture is seen as external to the person and based on objective and concrete ‘artifacts.’ Culture is a phenomenon that occurs above and beyond the individual person (Berry, 1997; Schwartz, 2014). It emerges from the mode of productions and reproductions within that culture and is transmitted across generations through the social structure (e.g., politics and domestic economy). Culture is understood as the manifestations of the basic assumptions, expectations, and values shared by people who exist and interact in the same context (Gibson, Maznevski, & Kirkman, 2008; Heine, 2008; Schwartz, 2014).

Within this approach, culture is a group-level construct. Knowledge of a collective’s or society’s culture is only derived and deduced by examining individual level expressions of the values, norms, and expectations (Schein, 1984). In other words, people are the product of culture. Their behaviors are explained based on quasi-rational decisions; they are affected by the cultural context. For example, an ecological/materialist researcher would hold that individuals are poor
because of the situation that is surrounding them; they aren’t the sole reason for their condition. Research supporting an ecological/materialist approach has, for the most part, taken a theory-driven etic approach to understanding behavior, where Culture is seen as the cause of behavioral differences. Thus, it looks at behaviors from outside the system, provides explanations to phenomena based on the researcher’s own cultural expectations and assumptions, and imposes constructs and explanations that are external to the phenomena at hand (Berry, 1997).

The Cognitive-Idealist Approach

The individual as influencer or producer of Culture is the stance taken by the cognitive-idealist approach. Within this metatheoretical view, culture is seen as an emergent process using a top-down approach. Culture is thus internal to the person and is defined as the shared beliefs, norms, values, and habits that are transmitted through learning (Heine, 2008). In other words, people are cultural (Brown, 1991). To that extent, individuals’ behaviors are explained based on socialization; shared customs are transmitted across and within generations. A cognitive idealist researcher would hold that individuals are poor because of their own doing; they shape the environment in which they live. In this sense, a society’s social structure, economic and political strategies as well as the mode of production and reproduction are the product of individuals’ own beliefs and values (Berry, 1997).

Research supporting a cognitive-idealist perspective is more perceptual-driven, empirical in nature, and takes on an emic approach to understanding
behavior where phenomena and behaviors are seen as unique across settings. In other words, individual behaviors are looked at from inside the system and explanations to phenomena and behaviors are based on the internal structure, values, and norms of a culture (Berry, 1997). Hofstede’s (1980) cultural values taxonomy is the dominant typology of within this approach to culture. More recent attempts at exploring cultural differences based on a cognitive-idealistic perspective exist. For example, Project GLOBE (House et al., 1999) focuses on the external and visible level of culture as it is reflected in actual behaviors and practices. Underneath this level lie the values reflecting assumptions about and perceptions of the nature of reality, and what ought to be done to successfully deal with reality. Likewise, Leung and colleagues (2002) identified five pan-cultural social axioms (social cynicism, social flexibility, reward for application, spiritual consequence, and fate control) in an attempt to uncover the deepest level of culture.

**The Dynamic Approach**

Classified as being a middle ground between the two major approaches is the view of Culture as an affective, non-homogenous, and dynamic shared system which evolves with the person (Chiu & Hong, 2006). Triandis (1994), a major supporter of this approach, stated the need to look at individuals’ norms, beliefs, and values as evolving with the environment as well as influencing the environment. This is akin to an interaction between the individual and the environment in shaping behavior. In this approach, Culture is seen as a moderator of the relationships between different variables. Building upon Triandis’ (1994)
approach, Kitayama (2002) proposed a systems view for understanding the dynamic nature of Culture. This view suggests that the psychological processes driving individual behavior are contingent upon the cultural systems of practices and public meanings surrounding such behaviors. Hence, these processes are organized to actively match with one’s behaviors as determined by the socio-cultural context. In other words, “culture is the meaning which people create, and which creates people, as members of societies” (Hannerz, 1992, p. 3).

Models embedded in such an approach have emphasized the contextual effects of culture, the awareness of Culture as a multi-level construct, and the reciprocal relationship between its various levels (e.g., Berry, 1997; Erez & Gati, 2004; Gelfand, Nishii, & Raver, 2006; Tsui et al., 2007). One such model is John Berry’s ecocultural model which looks at individual/group differences and similarities in behaviors as being the product of the ecological, biological, and socio-political contexts, through their respective proximal variables. To that extent, psychological behaviors are seen as the product of the complex background one is immersed in and the processes through which it is transmitted to the individual. Berry (1997) accepts the idea of a feedback loop where culture is a dynamic process that evolves with the individual. As such, the ecocultural model deviates from being a pure ecological/materialist model as it acknowledges the fact that the individual is, in turn, able to influence the background or environment.

Specifically focusing on work behaviors, Erez and Gati (2004) proposed a multi-level model of culture in which Culture, as a shared meaning system and
ecological concept, is formed at the individual, group, organizational, national, and global level. The multi-level model of culture views higher levels as stimulating a process of adaptation and change at lower levels (Erez & Gati, 2004). Each cultural level serves as the context to the cultural levels below it and examines different aspects of a culture. Global culture- a product of globalization- is the top layer of culture (macro level) affecting nested levels of culture below (i.e., national, organizational, group, and individual) through a top-down process of socialization (Erez & Gati, 2004). Reciprocally, the macro level is affected by lower levels through bottom-up processes of shared values (Erez & Gati, 2004).

More recently, Schwartz (2014) re-conceptualizes culture as a latent variable reflective of the context in which individuals live. Specifically, he states that “culture underlies and is expressed in the functioning of societal institutions, in their organization, practices, and policies. […] these institutions mediate the effects of culture on individuals” (p. 6). Schwartz (2014) proposes multiple pathways through which societal culture (as expressed by the normative value system of the society) can influence individuals. These include the social contingencies, language norms, interpersonal and personal expectations and roles, institutional policies and regulations, and national ecological factors. Finally, the extent to which individuals are influenced by the societal culture is a factor of their unique personal characteristics.

In summary, theories of Culture differ in their focus on what constitutes Culture and its various “layers.” As a result, many conceptual and methodological
challenges have impinged on cross-cultural and cultural research, alike. In the section that follows, I discuss the common controversies surrounding cultural research to provide a basis for the model proposed in this study.

**Common Controversies in Cross-Cultural Research**

Many methodological and conceptual problems have been reported to affect cross-cultural research (e.g., Aycan, 2000; Brockner, 2003; Gelfand et al., 2007; Leung & van de Vijver, 2008; Tsui et al., 2007). They correspond to two categories of issues: (1) the definition of Culture and (2) making cultural ‘causal’ attributions. I provide a thorough overview of those issues and discuss the proposed practices advanced as solutions.

**Methodological Issues**

Perhaps the most fundamental controversy affecting cross-cultural research is the lack of systematic examination of the concept of Culture (Erez & Gati, 2004; Gelfand et al., 2007; Smith, Fischer, & Sale, 2001; Tsui et al., 2007). Culture is a developing system of individuals, relationships, material and social contexts, and institutions (Cooper & Denner, 1998). However, most cross-cultural research treats Culture as a global property, uses nation as a proxy for Culture, and does not operationalize the psychological dimensions used to explain cultural differences (Brockner, 2003; Tsui et al., 2007). Other cross-cultural research relies on Hofstede’s approach (1980, 1991) and uses Hofstede’s derived mean scores of culture values rather than empirically measuring culture (Tsui et al., 2007). In other
words, most studies explain differences based on what is expected if cross-cultural differences in Individualism or Collectivism existed without directly assessing Individualism or Collectivism. By doing so, research has lacked empirically based explanations and justifications for culture’s influence on employee behaviors in different national contexts and has suffered from threats to its internal validity (Leung & van de Vijver, 2008). Although the use of experiments has been advanced as a research approach to testing causal inferences, it is impossible to conduct experiments in cross-cultural research because random assignment of people to different cultural groups is impossible (Leung & van de Vijver, 2008).

Despite the fact that Culture is an ecological concept, Smith et al.’s (2001) review of the state of cross-cultural organizational research described it as ‘reductionist;’ most studies have examined the influence of culture at the individual level. In fact, in a recent review of the extant cross-cultural research, Tsui et al. (2007) indicated that a surprising 84% of studies have focused on theorizing and testing culture effects at the individual level. This result is mainly due to the overreliance of research on Hofstede’s nation level mean scores of culture values to predict individual level outcomes. As such, research has ignored issues of variability within nations, as well as the role of the individual in shaping their own behaviors. This follows Smith’s (2004) warning that Hofstede’s value dimensions should not relied on to derive explanations at the individual level. Although derived from an aggregation of individual scores, the current state of Hofstede’s dimensions does not reflect similar understanding of a phenomenon at both levels.
In fact, aggregation (deriving meaning at the population level from individual-level phenomena) or disaggregation (deriving meaning at the individual level from population-level phenomena) cannot occur except when isomorphism at both levels exists (Kozlowski & Klein, 2000). As a result, current cross-cultural research often suffers from the ecological fallacy when researchers interpret the national level effect of culture on individual experiences at the individual level (Smith, 2004). Equally controversial is the lack of focus on the cross-level nature of cultural effects (Tsui et al., 2007). As illustrated in Berry’s (1997) ecocultural model, culture emerges from the interaction of the historical, technological, and socio-political contexts of a nation. In turn, these contexts can affect individual level behaviors through impacting more proximal variables (e.g., psychological processes, group dynamics). The focus on Hofstede’s framework has led research to ignore more complex approaches to examining cultural research questions. As a result, scholars have called for research to advance theories examining effects across levels of analyses (e.g., Kozlowski & Klein, 2000; Tsui et al., 2007).

Cross-cultural and cultural research has also fallen prey to the threats of statistical conclusion validity—concerned with error and the appropriate uses of statistical tests. One major source of error that affects the comparability of results across cultures is response biases (e.g., Leung & Bond, 1989; Smith, 2004). Cultural variation exists in aspects of responding (Watkins & Cheung, 1995), suggesting that response tendencies rather than proposed theoretical linkages might affect correlations between measures of constructs. As such, data comparisons
should not occur across cultures without testing for configural (i.e., structural equivalence- equality of factor structures) and metric (i.e., scalar equivalence- equality of factor-loading parameters) equivalence (Leung & van de Vijver, 2008; Tsui et al., 2007). It is important to determine if the instruments used to measure the constructs of interests are actually measuring the same psychological construct across cultures and are directly comparable across cultures. However, cross-cultural studies have rarely examined and ensured measurement equivalence before testing theoretical relationships (Tsui et al., 2007).

Finally, given that most research is conducted and comes out of the Western part of the world (Northern America and Europe), cross-cultural research has been criticized for overly relying on the etic approach to examining constructs across cultures (Schaffer & Riordan, 2003). In other words, research has mostly examined the extent to which other nations differ from the USA, for example, on certain societal phenomena. As such, studies have viewed measurement criteria as common absolutes (universals) applied across cultures, therefore failing to consider culture-specific factors that can provide additional explanations (Berry, 1997; Schaffer & Riordan, 2003). Moreover, this approach to research has led to studying issues of low relevance to other cultures rather than examining and understanding relevant phenomena in those cultures (Gelfand et al., 2007, 2008; Tsui et al., 2007).
Proposed Solutions

In order to overcome these methodological issues, researchers propose adhering to the following best practices (Brockner 2003; Leung & van de Vijver, 2008; Schaffer & Riordan, 2003; van de Vijver & Fischer, 2009):

(1) Go above and beyond documenting that country differences exist by showing why such differences emerge. This means that researchers should explicitly examine the psychological factors suggested to mediate cultural differences and any potential trends in scale responding that could explain those differences.

(2) Base the study of cross-national differences on theoretical foundations. Theory will help inform the predictions and assist in the interpretation of results of cross-cultural differences.

(3) Avoid using country as a proxy for Culture, rather collect evidence from several cultural groups and cultural contexts, as well as operationalize the psychological dimensions expected to explain between-country differences. This will allow researchers to identify and empirically assess cultural differences rather than simply assume they exist. This will also decrease threats of internal validity by providing other explanations (methodological and conceptual) to account for country differences.

(4) To minimize internal validity threats, match samples on as many characteristics as possible (e.g., demographics and/or environmental characteristics such as topography) to rule out sample differences as
alternative explanations for results. If matching is too difficult or not feasible, statistically control for the remaining differences.

(5) Avoid theorizing and conducting research at the individual or the national level only. In order to understand cross-cultural differences in individual outcomes, build cross-level models which aim to estimate the effect of higher-level characteristics (e.g., culture) on a lower-level outcome (e.g., individual behaviors; Kozlowski & Klein, 2000).

(6) Rely on multiple research methods (e.g., surveys, experiments, longitudinal studies) to help reduce confounding influences of cultural differences in research situations, procedures, and materials. Give preference for methods that demonstrate a temporal relationship between causes and effects.

(7) Combine the emic and etic approaches into a derived etic approach (Triandis, 1994). First, examine and gain knowledge of all constructs from an emic perspective- usually via observation/participation- for all the cultures in the study. Then, determine if the emerging dimensions for each construct are unique to one culture or comparable and/or overlapping across cultures.

**Conceptual Issues**

Culture is a fuzzy concept that includes multiple facets (Leung & van de Vijver, 2008). At the conceptual level, the most fundamental controversy affecting cross-cultural research is the proliferation of cultural frameworks solely focusing on values to highlight differences across cultures (Gelfand et al., 2006). These
frameworks have been criticized due to the overlapping nature of their dimensions and inconsistencies in measurement (Gelfand et al., 2007; Tsui et al., 2007). In fact, following Hofstede’s seminal work in the field other, somewhat similar, cultural frameworks emerged (e.g., Triandis, Schwartz, Singelis, Trompenaars, and GLOBE). In a review of cross-cultural literature, Tsui et al. (2007) reported that many of the proposed cultural values across these different cultural frameworks overlap, yet the terminology used to refer to the different cultural values was inconsistent. In addition, a lack of consensus exists regarding the measurement of many of the cultural values; 15 unique forms of measurement were found for individualism-collectivism alone (Tsui et al., 2007).

Culture is not the only construct suffering from inconsistencies in definitions and dimensions. Cross-cultural studies have failed to examine all constructs for equivalence across cultures. Although certain cultural constructs are very similar, their operational definitions might differ which can affect the meaning and interpretation of results (Leung & van de Vijver, 2008). In other words, cross-cultural research suffers from lack of construct validity.

Proposed Solutions

Given a critical need for a more consolidated and parsimonious categorization of cultural values, scholars have called for examining Culture as a configuration of cultural values rather than a set of independent dimensions (e.g., Tsui et al., 2007). In other words, societies differ in the extent to which particular cultural dimensions or values interact to form specific patterns characteristic of that
society. Consolidating cultural values and developing a configurational model can therefore increase clarity on the concept of Culture.

In order to ensure construct equivalence across samples, Schaffer and Riordan (2003) proposed considering both insiders’ and outsiders’ perspectives when developing instruments and translating – back-translating them. However, Farh, Cannella, and Lee (2006) stated the translation and back-translation procedure (Brislin, 1980) is a necessary but not sufficient method to ensure the validity of measures across cultures. Rather, they suggest three other approaches, namely adaptation, decontextualization, and contextualization (Farh et al., 2006). Adaptation of existing measures amounts to a translation and back-translation process with changes in any appropriate items or measures. This option is only utilized when the items in the source and target languages adequately cover the construct without any bias (van de Vijver & Fischer, 2009). The latter two approaches involve the development of new scales. Through decontextualization, context-free measures are developed for use in many cultures, while through contextualization, context-specific scales (meaningful in one culture but not in another) are developed. Van de Vijver and Leung (2011) supported the use of decontextualization – or what they refer to as cultural decentering – in dealing with construct bias. They suggest removing particulars from measures and formulating items in a way that the appropriateness of the item content is maximized for all cultural groups involved.
In addition, to provide evidence for equivalence of concepts across cultures, researchers suggest either conducting covariance structure analyses to determine whether similar factor structures are present across cultural groups or item response theory to determine whether scale item characteristics are the same or differ by more than sampling error across cultural groups (Schaffer & Riordan, 2003; van de Vijver & Leung, 2011).

**Proposed Working Definition and Approach to Culture**

Recommendations for multilevel theory building (Kozlowski & Klein, 2000) provide a good theoretically-based framework for examining culture that acknowledges cross-level differences and the influence of other societal characteristics. Therefore, scholars have recommended switching away from the focus on Hofstede’s (1980) dimensions and instead view cultural influences as dynamic and occurring at different levels, as well as encourage a focus on a configuration approach to culture (e.g., Gelfand et al., 2006; Tsui et al., 2007). In fact, recent approaches to Culture have emphasized examining other national contextual effects for a more valid analysis of the influence of culture (e.g., Tsui et al., 2007). For example, the religiosity and the rigor of the legal system of a nation were suggested to influence the emerging values of a culture (e.g., Gelfand et al., 2006, 2011; Tsui et al., 2007). The core idea is that multiple contexts provide different sources of meaning. The goal is to push cross-cultural research to a *polycontextual* approach to Culture (Tsui et al., 2007). Research needs to incorporate multiple contexts for a holistic and valid understanding of any
phenomenon using a cultural lens. Models including the influence of multiple contexts at multiple levels can provide for better theory development, stronger inference of culture effects, and improved application of best practices for cultural research.

Specific to cross-cultural Industrial/Organizational psychology, scholars called for future research to adopt a multidisciplinary cross-level perspective in examining the role of the sociocultural context on organizational phenomena, as they take place in highly complex contexts of interacting forces (e.g., Aycan, 2000; Chao & Moon, 2005; Johns, 2006). Johns (2006) defines context as a combination of situational opportunities and constraints that can affect the emergence of organizational behaviors. Context exists at two levels of analysis for organizational research, namely the omnibus and discrete levels. The omnibus level refers to the context broadly considered and includes the many features of that context. The discrete level refers to the more particular and proximal features of a context that shape behaviors. Consequently, the discrete context is nested within the omnibus context; it mediates the effects of the omnibus context (Johns, 2006).

Integrating approaches from various scholars, Tsui et al. (2007) put forth a framework to cross-national, cross-cultural research in which they listed multiple contexts relevant in analyzing organizational behavior in different nations (see Figure 2). This framework provides a broader focus and understanding of the national differences that come across due to geographic, historical, and social environments, ultimately creating different cultures, which in turn influence
individuals’ attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors (Blagoev, 2010; Tsui et al., 2007). In other words, it views Culture as a dynamic “composite of many cultural manifestations” (p. 464) which, in combination with noncultural factors, make up a unique nation (Tsui et al., 2007). Additionally, this framework lends itself to cross-level research and integration into Johns’ (2006) distinction between omnibus and discrete context. It examines the effects of national level contexts on individual level outcomes through the meaning of work or organization.

The current paper borrows from Erez and Gati’s (2004) multi-level model of culture and Tsui et al.’s (2007) polycontextual framework to develop its working definition and approach to Culture. I define Culture as a developing system of individuals, relationships, material and social contexts, and institutions, conceptualized across multiple levels. Specifically, I focus on Culture as manifested at the national context (e.g., ecological, historical, and value-based characteristics), the organizational context (e.g., organizational culture), and the individual context (e.g., psychological processes). Integrating the focus of this paper into Johns’ (2006) context taxonomy, I conceptualize the omnibus context as the national context and the discrete context as the organizational context. A description of Culture, as examined in this paper, at each one of these levels follows.

**The National Context**

Cross-cultural research has commonly relied on nations and national level culture as a proxy to examine the culture of certain groups (e.g., Hofstede, 1980;
House et al., 1999; Schwartz, 1992). Such a wide practice is based on the assumption that there is a shared agreement on the desired values, or existing values in the society, by the collective forming the nation (Erez & Gati, 2004). In other words, a nation’s culture is a representation of the values agreed upon by each and every individual, group, or organization of that nation. Tsui et al.’s (2007) polycontextual approach to cross-national and cross-cultural research suggests that national culture is also the major feature that separates one nation from another based on the interaction of the physical, historical, political, economic, and social environment surrounding it. These environments form a nation's global property-objective and concrete characteristics of a society that do not emerge or originate from the perceptions of individual members of that nation (Tsui et al., 2007).

Therefore, I define the national context as the manifestation of both the global (ecological and historical) and shared (value-based) properties of a nation.

**The Global Properties: Ecological and Historical Features**

It is well recognized that a nation’s global property and its culture (value-based shared property) do not completely overlap; nations differ in many aspects beyond cultural values (Tsui et al., 2007). As Schneider (1989) aptly stated “[…] many nations are multicultural and many cultures are multinational” (as cited by Mueller, 1994, p. 409). For that reason, research has called for examining the extent to which differences in global characteristics such as ecology and history can drive differences in organizational behavior across nations (e.g., Busenitz, Gomez, & Spencer, 2000; Erez & Earley, 1993; Gelfand et al., 2006; Tsui et al., 2007).
More specifically, there is a need to include such global properties in order to isolate and provide a more valid examination of the influence of national cultural factors (Tsui et al., 2007). Commonly examined indicators of a nation’s ecological and historical features have been: Gross Domestic Product (GDP; World Bank, 2013), Human Development Index (HDI; UNDP, 2013), and Risk of Political Instability (RPI; Economist Intelligence Unit, 2014).

The Shared Property: Cultural Value-Based Dimensions

I reviewed a comprehensive body of literature in the fields of cross-cultural management and psychology to answer the call for a configuration approach to cultural values (Tsui et al., 2007). From this review, I identified five value-based dimensions that can help to explain cross-cultural differences in behavior, namely: (1) Tightness vs. Looseness (i.e., the strength of social norms and the degree of sanctioning); (2) Relationships Among People (i.e., the degree to which power, status, and individuality are accepted); (3) Need for Harmony (i.e., the need to save face and maintain status quo); (4) Activity (i.e., the degree to which achievement and performance are valued); and (5) Relation to Broad Environment (i.e., the degree to which interdependence, and interrelatedness are valued). While the first and second dimensions are present and more familiar in the literature, the last three dimensions were generated based on my review of the diverse literatures. Together, these cultural value-based dimensions represent a categorization that was synthesized from the wide-ranging and diverse culture values literature. The purpose of synthesizing the literature to create this taxonomy is to consolidate the
different value frameworks into a parsimonious categorization usable for theory testing, as called for by Tsui et al. (2007). Table 1 provides a summary of the dimensions and links them to other popularly cited value terminology.

**Tightness vs. Looseness (T-L)**

The first cultural dimension identified is Tightness vs. Looseness (T-L) which refers to the strength of social norms (i.e., clarity and pervasiveness of norms) and the degree of sanctioning within societies (i.e., degree of tolerance for deviance from norms) (Gelfand et al., 2006; Triandis, 1994). Initially proposed by Triandis (1994), the cultural dimension of T-L recently re-introduced by Gelfand et al. (2006) captures unique cultural variance that is distinct from other cultural dimensions and takes into consideration likely variability in the degree of external constraints within societies, regions, and cultures. At the macro level, tight versus loose societies differ on the amount of accountability for behavior or the strength of societal constraints on behavior (Gelfand et al., 2006; Tetlock, 1985). Tight societies are characterized by strong norms and monitoring; low range variation of behaviors among individuals; and high shared cognitions (Gelfand et al., 2006). Consequently, tight societies show a preference for order and efficiency, conformity, and low rates of change. In contrast, loose societies are characterized by weak social norms and monitoring; wide range variation of permissible behaviors; and high tolerance of deviant behavior (Gelfand et al., 2006). As a result, loose societies show a preference for disorganization, innovation, and openness to change.
**Relationships among people**

The second cultural dimension focuses on the extent to which a society perceives social interactions and relationships to (a) emphasize an ordered position of power and status and (b) give primacy to the goals and welfare of a collective versus the individual (Hofstede, 1980; Hofstede et al., 1998; Maznevski, et al., 2002; Schwartz, 1992; Triandis, 1994; Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998). Previous literature has examined the two aspects of this dimension under different but similar terms such as power distance, hierarchy vs. egalitarianism, status identity, individualism-collectivism, individualism vs. communitarianism, and achievement–ascription (e.g., Hofstede, 1980; Hofstede et al., 1998; House et al., 1999; Schwartz, 1992; Sully de Luque & Sommer, 2000; Triandis, 1994; Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998). This dimension complements research by Triandis and colleagues (e.g., Triandis, 1972, 1988; Triandis, Chan, Bhawuk, Iwao, & Sinha, 1995) which consider that individuals not only differentiate between the self and others (individualism versus collectivism) but also implicit in this distinction is the consideration of power and status (power distance). In fact, Triandis (1989) stated that it is common to view collectivists as accepting of power differentials and more likely to distinguish between in-group versus out-group relationships.

**Need for harmony**

Societies have also been distinguished based on their focus on preserving harmonious interpersonal relationships, as part of their view of relationships among
people. This is reflected in the extent to which it is customary and normative to avoid the discussion of personal accomplishments (e.g., Hofstede, 1980; Hofstede et al., 1998; Schwartz, 1992; Triandis, 1994). This norm is based on the underlying idea of conflict avoidance within personal relations (Bond, Wan, Leung, & Giacalone, 1985). As social animals, humans are concerned with maintaining a positive public image (saving face; Zane & Yeh, 2002) and avoiding confrontations with others (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998). Although primarily a Confucian philosophy (Yin Yang), the need for harmony dimension focuses on the degree to which a culture values saving face and maintaining status quo. This dimension has been shown to have an effect on a large range of social activity (King & Bond, 1985).

Following the Chinese Culture Connection value survey (CVS; 1987), Hofstede (1991) revised his national cultural framework and introduced a fifth dimension ‘Confucian dynamism’ also known as Long-term orientation. At the heart of this dimension are Confucian values, one of which relates to the concept of losing face (i.e., having a sense of shame; Fang, 2003). In addition, both Schwartz (1992) and Project GLOBE (House et al., 1999) identified a cultural dimension that parallels the notion of harmony within a culture’s social relationships. Specifically, Conservatism, described as the degree to which a society values harmony, focuses on the importance given to maintaining a favorable public image (i.e., saving face) and self-discipline. Humane orientation, a related construct, refers to the degree to
which societies encourage and promote fairness, altruism, generosity, and kindness to others in an attempt to avoid conflict (House et al., 1999).

**Activity**

The Activity category helps distinguish societies based on the degree to which performance and achievement of success are valued. In Hofstede’s values framework, national cultures were characterized as either Masculine or Feminine based on a respective preference for achievement, competition, heroism, assertiveness and material reward for success as opposed to a preference for cooperation, consensus, modesty, caring for the weak and quality of life (Hofstede, 1980; Hofstede et al., 1998). Similarly, Schwartz (1992) distinguished between cultures valuing stimulation versus conformity. To the extent that a society values achievement and performance, Maznevski et al. (2002) distinguished between three primary aspects of cultural performance and achievement expressed at the individual level, namely (a) to become (a spontaneous yet organized and systematic performance tendency), (b) to do (a continuous and concrete performance tendency), and (c) to reflect (a rational and calculative performance tendency). Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998) distinguished between neutral versus emotional national cultures, such that neutral cultures focus on efficiently achieving objectives through instrumental means, while emotional cultures focus on the relational aspect surrounding work by underlining the emotional basis for interpersonal relationships.
**Relation to broad environment**

The fifth cultural dimension explored distinguishes societies based on the degree to which they value interdependence and interrelatedness with their broad environment. At the heart of this dimension is the focus on (a) the manner in which information is cognitively and contextually processed (Sully de Luque & Sommer, 2000) and (b) the way the relationship with the surrounding environment is conceptualized (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998). Previous research has utilized terms such as specific vs. holistic cultures (Sully de Luque & Sommer, 2000) or internal vs. external cultures (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998). National cultures that value interdependence and interrelatedness view the individual and environment as blended together rather than separate (Sully de Luque & Sommer, 2000). Additionally, nature, or the environment, is viewed as controlling individuals who must work with it to achieve goals (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998). These cultures have also been characterized for having nonlinear high context communication (Sully de Luque & Sommer, 2000). In other words, the meaning of messages is indirect, implicit, and embedded in the person and the context surrounding them. On the other hand, national cultures that value independence and isolation view the individual and environment as separate entities that do not overlap (Sully de Luque & Sommer, 2000). Moreover, these cultures believe that people can control nature, or their environment, to achieve goals (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998). Finally, these cultures are characterized by linear, instrumental, and low context communication; messages
are explicit and direct (Sully de Luque & Sommer, 2000). In other words, the meaning of messages is contained primarily in transmitted communication.

**The Organizational Context**

At the core of the organization is the organizational culture which is defined as the shared norms, values, and beliefs that are transmitted across an organization through the symbols, languages, practices, policies, procedures, and myths/stories (Schein, 1992; Schneider, Salvaggio, & Subirats, 2002). Organizational culture is formed by three components: (a) artifacts - what can be seen (e.g., language, symbols, procedures, etc.); (b) espoused values - the agreed upon values, mission, and vision; and (c) the assumptions - the initial vision of the organization set by the founder. As a result, an organizational culture is the “way of knowing,” upon which the meaning of work (attitude and values) and organizational behaviors and practices are based (Fischer et al., 2005; Tsui et al., 2007; Verbeke et al., 1998). Hofstede et al. (1990) argue that organizational practices are closely related to organizational culture and examined at different organizational levels. Specifically, practices emerge as micro-organizational phenomena (e.g., emotions, attitudes, cognitions), meso-organizational phenomena (e.g., selection, performance appraisal, training), and macro-organizational phenomena (e.g., organizational structure). Therefore, I define the organizational context as the manifestation of an organization’s culture through its practices (at the meso-organizational level).

Following a multi-level approach to Culture, I advance that the national context can influence and determine the organizational context, and consequently
organizational practices at all levels of the organization. Aycan (2000) highlights three theories that can explain variations in organizational practices due to the national context: contingency theory (with a focus on specific contextual aspects such as industrialization and technology), political-economy theory, and societal effect theory. Given the definition of national context put forth in this paper, I draw on the societal-effect approach (SEA; Maurice, 1979; Mueller, 1994; Sorge, 1991) as it lends a better and more thorough view of this cross-level effect, as well as helps uncover larger contextual patterns. The SEA posits that organizational practices are phenomena within a society. Consequently, scholars should abandon the organization-environment distinction. In other words, this approach considers that an organization and its practices are influenced by the societal fabric in which it operates. To investigate the societal effect, both global and shared properties of a nation should be considered, specifically the historical and ecological, as well as value-based characteristics (Aycan, 2000; Mueller, 1994). Therefore, it is expected that an organization and its practices parallel the practices and values of a society (Aycan, 2000; Maurice, Sorge, & Warner, 1980).

The Individual Context

Conceptualized at the individual level, culture is characterized as all aspects of social and cultural motivation as represented and emerging in the self (Triandis, 1989; Triandis & Gelfand, 1998). Attitudes, beliefs, intentions, norms, roles, and values are all aspects of the self (Blagoev, 2010; Triandis, 1989) and characteristics of the psychological processes (e.g., information processing) driving individuals’
behaviors (Berry, 1997). Therefore, I define the individual context as the manifestation of the self (e.g., attitudes, beliefs, and values) through psychological processes.

Kitayama, Markus, Matsumoto, and Norasakkunkit (1997) argue that psychological tendencies are not only the product of a person’s maturation but also the product of a given cultural system in which a person is embedded. In other words, these psychological processes are the outcome of the national and organizational contexts within which they are nested. As such, individuals are socialized and adhere to the local culture, thus integrating similar values and beliefs and behaving accordingly (Erez & Gati, 2004; Gelfand et al., 2011). In addition, they define themselves as members of an organization (Schneider, 1989) wherein organizational practices (also impacted by culture as discussed above) predict and influence their work attitudes and behaviors (Fischer et al., 2005). Therefore, individuals’ psychological processes are naturally attuned to, and supportive of, the situational demands in the cultural system (Kitayama et al., 1997).

Additionally, Kitayama et al. (1997) advanced that the extent to which an individual acquires and maintains certain psychological processes (e.g., information processing) within a certain national context is mediated by the practices of a collective in a given social setting (e.g., work). In other words, individuals’ information processing tendencies result in part from the prevalence of organizational practices that are conducive to this type of psychological process as influenced by the value-based and global properties of a society.
Summary

Following the proposed approach to Culture, I advance that cultural influences on feedback seeking are multifinal, in that Culture affects feedback seeking through multiple pathways. A conceptual model of how the cultural system affects the process of feedback seeking is presented in Figure 3. Each pathway is labeled with a letter A through F.

Linkage A suggests a direct effect of the national context (ecological, historical, and value-based dimensions) on feedback seeking. Linkage B suggests that national context has a direct effect on the organizational context surrounding feedback seeking (i.e., feedback environment), and linkage C indicates that this organizational context in turn predicts feedback seeking. Thus, taken together, linkages B and C suggest the first indirect pathway through which the national context can affect feedback seeking. Linkage D suggests that national context has a direct effect on the psychological processes/individual context surrounding feedback seeking (i.e., feedback seeking motives), and linkage E indicates that these psychological processes in turn predict feedback seeking. The second indirect pathway for the effect of national context is therefore identified by taking linkages D and E together. Finally, linkage F suggests that the organizational context has a direct effect on the psychological processes. As a result, I identify the third and last proposed indirect pathway for the effect of the national context onto feedback seeking (a multiple mediated path in which national context impacts organizational
context, organizational context impacts individual context, and individual context impacts feedback seeking).

In the remainder of this chapter, I will first thoroughly define and describe feedback seeking. Then, I will discuss theory and research providing support for the linkages put forth starting by reviewing support for the first linkage— that is, that feedback seeking is a societal phenomenon.

**Feedback Seeking**

Feedback is a work environment indication of how much an individual is meeting his/her goals in the organization (Rosen, Levy, & Hall, 2006). Through feedback employees can determine the behaviors that are desired by their organization, as well as their supervisor’s evaluation of their relevant work behaviors (London, 2003; Steelman et al., 2004). Ashford and Cummings’ (1983, 1985) influential work highlighted people’s natural drive to know “how they are doing” especially in instances of uncertainty. In fact, feedback is not only provided by managers to direct the work of their subordinates toward a specific goal but can also be proactively sought out by employees. As a result, the idea that employees are not passive, but rather active agents in the feedback process has been widely accepted (Ashford et al., 2003).

Steelman (1997) defined feedback seeking as “the process of reducing uncertainty through the active elicitation and monitoring of feedback on a day to day basis” (p.35). It is viewed as an individual’s proactive effort towards
determining the accuracy and correctness of his/her performance and goal-attainment (London, 2003). Hence, feedback seeking is an inherent part of attaining and maintaining awareness of one’s performance (Ashford et al., 2003; Anseel et al., in press) by regulating one’s behavior (Ashford et al., 2003; Morrison & Weldon, 1990), gaining a better assessment of one’s capabilities (Ashford & Tsui, 1991; Williams & Johnson, 2000), and ‘learning the ropes’ (Morrison, 1993).

Given that feedback seeking is a conscious self-initiated process, research has focused on understanding what, when, how, how often, and from whom individuals ask for feedback (Ashford et al., 2003). At the heart of the feedback seeking process is a cost-value framework; employees make a conscious assessment of the costs and values associated with such behavior (Anseel et al., 2007; Ashford et al., 2003). In other words, the extent to which an employee will actually engage in feedback seeking results from an internal cost-value analysis: does the value associated with seeking feedback outweigh the costs of seeking feedback? Ashford and Cummings (1983) suggested three major benefits of feedback seeking: (a) accurate representation of expectations, importance, and standards regarding various goals; (b) reduced uncertainty surrounding goal attainment; and (c) strong basis for self-improvement plan. On the other hand, the key costs associated with feedback seeking are: (a) effort costs- costs incurred in obtaining the relevant information; (b) inference costs- costs incurred in interpreting the information obtained; and (c) face loss costs- the personal and social-psychological costs associated with receiving potentially negative feedback.
or with being perceived as incompetent. Thus, the net outcome of a comparison between the benefits and costs of seeking feedback in a specific situation will determine the extent of actual feedback seeking.

Two mutually nonexclusive proactive feedback seeking strategies have been identified as consistently relied on by employees: monitoring and inquiry (Anseel et al., in press; Ashford & Cummings, 1983; Ashford et al., 2003; Williams & Johnson, 2000). Monitoring is a method of observing the environment and others’ reactions to one’s behaviors as a means for collecting and inferring information about one’s performance. On the other hand, inquiry is a more direct method of asking for feedback information. The benefits, and, more particularly, the costs, of feedback seeking depend to some extent on the type of feedback-seeking strategy adopted (Ashford et al., 2003). In fact, although feedback seeking through inquiry provides, on average, a more accurate representation of expectations and information, it leads to greater effort costs and potentially greater face loss costs. Conversely, feedback seeking through monitoring provides lower effort and face loss costs yet leads to higher inference costs. In a recent review of the extant literature, Anseel et al. (in press) reported on a differential relationship between the two feedback seeking strategies and performance; inquiry, but not monitoring, can predict increases in job performance. Given the practical implications of such results for the development of leaders, this study will focus on feedback seeking through inquiry (referred to as feedback seeking in the remainder of this paper).
Extant feedback literature has argued, as I argue in this manuscript, the benefits and costs of feedback seeking depend not merely on the strategy relied on but also on individual and situational factors which either directly influence the perception of feedback value or reflect a cost inherent in the feedback seeking act (Ashford, 1986). Feedback seeking is impacted by the context or environment surrounding it (Ashford et al., 2003; Levy & Williams, 2004). Commonly identified contextual factors are organizational situational factors, such as an organization’s climate or culture (e.g., Levy & Williams, 2004; London & Smither, 2002; Steelman et al., 2004), the structure of an organization (e.g., Gupta, Govindarajan, & Malhotra, 1999), and organizational practices (e.g., perceived organizational support; Ashford, Rothbard, Piderit & Dutton, 1998). Furthermore, there has been a growing interest in examining broader contexts (e.g., cultural context; Anseel et al., 2007; Ashford et al., 2003; Sully de Luque & Sommer, 2000).

Cultural differences are relevant for understanding the frequency of feedback seeking. Yet, relatively little research has explored the effect of culture on the manifestation of feedback seeking. At the macro level, two studies explored the effect of broad exogenous variables (e.g., multinational corporation organizational culture, economic incentives, and national culture) on the feedback seeking behavior of subsidiary top managers (Barner-Rasmussen, 2003; Gupta, et al., 1999). At the micro level, studies have mostly focused on examining cross-cultural differences in the motives driving feedback seeking (MacDonald, Sulsky, Spence,
& Brown, 2013; Morrison, Chen, & Salgado, 2004). Finally, only one theoretical paper (i.e., Sully de Luque & Sommer, 2000) has, to date, proposed a cross-cultural model for understanding the acts of feedback giving and seeking by managers and employees, respectively. Therefore, feedback seeking research has yet to fully integrate culture into its theories and findings.

Given the focus of this manuscript on an improved understanding of feedback seeking tendencies within a cultural system, I provide an overview of the different contexts (e.g., national, organizational, and individual), put forth in my cultural model, in relation to feedback seeking behavior (see Figure 4).

**The Cultural Model of Feedback Seeking**

**Linkage A: Effect of National Context on Feedback Seeking**

Following the cultural model I advanced, Culture as manifested at the national context is a combination of the global properties (e.g., ecological and historical) and shared properties (e.g., value-based) characteristic of a nation.

**Ecological and Historical Features**

Although the feedback literature lacks research examining the influence of the global properties of a nation on feedback seeking, the cross-cultural literature provides some support for the pursuit of such link. A survey study of managers in 84 nations by Van de Vliert and Smith (2004) demonstrated that the extent to which leaders rely on subordinates for information is affected by a nation’s development (a combined index of per capita income, educational attainment, and
life expectancy) and harshness of climate, even after controlling for the effect of a
nation’s cultural values. Moreover, research has indicated that higher
socioeconomic development provides a populace with more personal and societal
resources to focus on and strive for personal growth and development. In such
environment, individuals should perceive value in requesting and seeking self-
relevant diagnostic information. It follows that high socioeconomic societies
provide a favorable national context where feedback seeking behaviors is more
likely to occur.

**Cultural Value-Based Dimensions**

*Tightness vs. Looseness (T-L)*

Tightness-Looseness (T-L) is an indication of the strength of social norms
and degree of sanctioning within a society (Gelfand et al., 2006). The extent to
which a society fosters normative expectations of being held answerable for one's
actions, and as a result receiving consequences, has implications for individuals’
behaviors (Tetlock, 1985). Tight societies, in comparison to loose societies, foster
expectations of strict obedience to norms and regulations increasing the tendency
for individuals to frequently monitor not only their own behavior but also that of
other (e.g., peers and figures of power; Gelfand et al., 2006, 2011) in an attempt to
avoid deviating from mandated rules and regulations. Because of the higher degree
of evaluation and sanctioning in tight societies, individuals experience heightened
felt accountability. In other words, individuals in tight societies perceive higher
level of scrutiny of their behaviors and expect to more harsh sanctioning if they
deviate from prescribed norms, as compared to individuals in loose societies (Gelfand et al., 2006). As a result, individuals in tight societies tend to exhibit a clear view of their normative ought self which is driven by a prevention regulatory focus (Gelfand et al., 2006; Higgins, 1996). Given the strength and prevalence of normative requirements in tight societies, individuals develop a better view of their responsibilities which they strive to accomplish by engaging in behaviors that would reduce risk of failure. In contrast, in loose societies, individuals perceive lower accountability; they embrace a positive attitude toward errors and are more prone to taking risks (Gelfand et al., 2006). As a result, they form a clear view of the person they aspire or hope to be (i.e., their ideal self; Higgins, 1996). In an attempt to bring themselves closer to this self-view, individuals will embrace a promotion regulatory focus and engage in behaviors that will increase achieving their goals (Baumeister & Heatherton, 1996).

Feedback seeking has been conceptualized as a proactive self-regulation strategy (Ashford & Cummings, 1983; Ashford & Tsui, 1991; De Stobbeleir, Ashford, & Buyens, 2011). Through feedback seeking individuals are able to reduce uncertainties surrounding performance standards and expectations. The more individuals gain clarity regarding their responsibilities and normative requirements, the more likely it is that they will attain their set goals (Anseel et al., in press; Ashford et al., 2003). In addition, feedback allows individuals to adjust their behaviors and performance over time, to match the demands and norms of their setting (Anseel et al., in press). By engaging in proactive self-regulatory
tactics, such as feedback seeking, individuals are able to develop their skills and master tasks (Vandewalle et al., 2000). As such, individuals with a promotion regulatory focus – holding a belief that greater effort will increase their chance of attaining their goals – will more likely engage in feedback seeking than those with a prevention regulatory focus (Porath & Bateman, 2006). In fact, because feedback information is inherently evaluative and provides an overview of individuals’ standing as compared to standards and expectations, it holds the cost of portraying individuals as incompetent. As such, individuals attuned to the prospect of potential failure (prevention regulatory focus; tight society) will tend to avoid collecting failure-relevant information (Elliott & Harackiewicz, 1996).

**Relationships among people**

The Relationships Among People dimension focuses on the societal values surrounding social interactions and relationships. These values relate to the acceptance of hierarchy and authority and the primacy given to the collective versus the individual during interactions. Although viewed as separate dimensions of a culture by Hofstede (1980), cultural scholars (e.g., Bond, 2002; Triandis, 1989, Triandis et al., 1995) have argued for examining both power distance and individualism-collectivism simultaneously as one overall representation of societal preference for understanding interpersonal relationships. The value of power-status differential across groups of individuals within a culture closely relates to the distinction between in-group versus out-group relationships (Hofstede, 1980;
Triandis, 1989); precedence of the self and close ties (e.g., family, friends, and spouse) over others (e.g., acquaintances).

Differences in values surrounding social relationships are specifically reflected in the distribution of information among individuals, at the societal level (Shackleton & Ali, 1990; Triandis, 1990). In a society that values inequality in power and status, information is distributed unequally among individuals; with those individuals in higher power status positions having more privileged access to information not afforded to the less powerful (Triandis, 1990; Sully de Luque, 2000). Because of the power differential in such cultures, constraints surround the sharing of information (Sully de Luque & Sommer, 2000). In fact, individuals perceive communicating and interacting with others across different levels of power and status as a nuisance (for the privileged) or a struggle (for the less powerful). This increases effort costs associated with information seeking. Within hierarchical level, people perceive more ease and willingness in sharing information and are more likely to identify with that group and its goals and needs (Sully de Luque & Sommer, 2000; Triandis, 1994). As a result, individuals prioritize and value the advancement, growth, and accomplishment of the collective to which they belong, a behavior characteristic of a collectivist social identity (Erez & Earley, 1993; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Pepitone & Triandis, 1988).

On the other hand, in a society that values equality in power and status, cooperation and information sharing across hierarchical levels is fostered (Triandis, 1990). Given the lack of distinction between what constitute in-group versus out-
group interactions in such a society, individuals are more likely to characterize their relationships with others based on individual characteristics and features rather than group membership (Triandis, 1994). In other words, social identification occurs based on the view of one’s relation to the individual rather than the whole (i.e., individualist social identity; Erez & Earley, 1993; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Pepitone & Triandis, 1988) As a result, in such society, social relationships will prioritize the advancement, growth, and accomplishment of the individual as an entity.

The values that surround social interactions within a society have a number of implications for individual behaviors. In a society where social relationships are bound by power-status differentials and group membership, research has suggested that performance feedback is more likely conveyed through a top-down process, wherein information is restricted to a certain group of privileged individuals and only shared with others if it benefits the group (Sully de Luque & Sommer, 2000). Although feedback information can provide a strong basis for individual or group goal attainment (Ashford & Cumings, 1985), inherent in the act of seeking feedback are costs associated with the effort and public perception incurred when obtaining the valued information from the source holding it (Ashford & Cumings, 1985). As such, requesting and receiving performance information from those in power roles is viewed as challenging and potentially compromising the hierarchical and accepted nature of relationships. As a result, individuals will likely view the costs of seeking self-relevant performance feedback as too high and, consequently
avoid such request. On the other hand, in a society that values egalitarian interaction among others and has a focus on the interest of the individual as opposed to the collective, job performance information is shared freely across levels of the organization and is not restricted, as it is perceived to benefit individual goal attainment (Sully de Luque & Sommer, 2000). Because little emotional distance exists between individuals and valued sources of feedback, individuals will perceive little effort cost in inquiring about their performance. Consequently, they should be more willing to seek feedback in egalitarian cultures.

In fact, a study by Morrison et al. (2004) demonstrated that individuals operating in a low power distance individualistic culture (i.e., lack of power-status inequality and preference of the individual over the collective) were more likely to actively inquire about their performance based on the ease of interaction and solicitation of the information and its benefit for self-development. In contrast, individuals operating in a high power distance collectivist culture (i.e., power-status inequality and preference of the collective over the individual) were less likely to inquire about their performance, hesitant to confront higher ups with a request for input or advice, implying less emphasis on self-development.

**Need for harmony**

The need for harmony dimension focuses on the degree to which a society values saving face and maintaining status quo within interpersonal relationships. Face has been regarded as one of the central elements of interpersonal relations (Bond, 1991), and most examined in the feedback seeking literature (Sully de
Luque & Sommer, 2000). Face is defined as the reputation, respect, and credibility one has earned in a social network (Ho, 1976). On the other hand, maintaining status quo is derived from a culture’s pressure to attenuate any interpersonal conflicts rooted in differences in opinions between individuals. In a society that emphasizes the need for harmony, people are likely to take into consideration the consequences of their behaviors in relation to their public image and others’ opinion (Hwang, Ang, & Francesco, 2002). In other words, before engaging in a certain behavior (e.g., feedback seeking), individuals will weigh the cost of their behavior in terms of face loss and disapproval from others. In this context, not seeking feedback should result in saving face and maintaining the acceptance of others. However, this consideration is less likely prevail in a society that does not emphasize a need for harmony amongst its members (Hwang et al., 2002).

Scholars have consistently reported on the reluctance of individuals from nations with a high face loss concern (e.g., Far East) to voice concerns or seek information in public settings (e.g., classroom; Dougherty & Wall, 1991; Hwang et al., 2002). Moreover, Sully de Luque and Sommer (2000) proposed that individuals from such cultures will less likely engage in active feedback inquiry strategies but rather more likely to rely on monitoring or indirect feedback inquiry, characterized by lower face loss costs. Empirical examination of the relationship between need for harmony (saving face and maintaining status quo) has been scarce. The few existing studies demonstrate that individuals from cultures with a high face loss concern (of self or other) were less likely to seek feedback (Hwang et al., 2002;
MacDonald et al., 2013) due to the perceived face loss cost accompanying the act of seeking.

*Activity*

The Activity value-based dimension distinguishes societies based on the degree to which they value achievement and performance. At a broader level, cultural differences in the value of performance and achievement can relate to a culture’s beliefs in the fluidity of people’s traits and abilities which is predictive of the amount of effort one will put towards completing a task. Cultures differ in the manner in which they conceive of the self. Specifically, research has distinguished between cultures with “entity” versus “incremental” beliefs. Entity cultures believe that the self is defined by a set of relatively fixed inner attributes; people cannot change or change these attributes (Dweck et al., 1995). Conversely, incremental cultures see the self as mutable and flexible, leading to an emphasis on efforts toward self-improvement (Heine et al., 2001). Differences between these cultures are specifically reflected in the expected benefit of engaging in behaviors promoting the development and growth of individuals.

The values that surround performance and achievement beliefs within a society have a number of implications for individual behaviors. Societies with incremental beliefs, in contrast to societies with entity beliefs, are more likely to view self-improvement as possible; they foster a preference towards performance and achievement (Heine et al., 2001). As such, individuals are more likely to value engaging in behaviors that would aim to support or maximize their pursuit of
change (Beer, 2000). Individuals may show interest in interacting with others in order to receive information aimed at controlling and regulating their behaviors, if it is framed around the probability of achieving personal success and self-improvement (Brutus & Cabrera, 2004). In other words, individuals within cultures that value performance and achievement will more likely seek feedback. In contrast, societies with entity beliefs, view ability as static, unmalleable, and predetermined. As a result, individuals will perceive small to no benefit in engaging in behaviors that would help enhance their performance and develop them. Rather, they are more likely to value behaviors that would support their ability (Beer, 2000). In other words, individuals will engage in behaviors that confirm their self-regard, while avoiding behaviors that are challenging and where failure is a possibility.

Empirical research has demonstrated that individuals from cultures with incremental beliefs sought more information about themselves than their counterparts; they attach more value to such information due to its instrumentality in their development and growth (Heine & Lehman, 1997; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Taylor & Brown, 1988). More recently, MacDonald et al. (2013) reported that in cultures that value the achievement of performance goals (i.e., incremental belief), individuals’ desire for evaluative performance feedback was greater, as compared to individuals in cultures with an entity belief.
Relation to broad environment

Finally, the relation to broad environment value-based dimension distinguishes societies based on the degree to which they value interdependence with or independence from their broad environment. At the heart of this dimension is the focus on the manner in which cultures cognitively and contextually process information (Sully de Luque & Sommer, 2000) as well as conceptualize their relationship with the environment around them (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998). Societies that value interdependence and interrelatedness show a preference for high context communication (i.e., information is tacit and embedded within the environment) and view the individual and environment as blended together rather than separate (Sully de Luque & Sommer, 2000; Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998). Alternatively, societies that value independence and separation focus on low context communication (i.e., information is explicit and direct) and an overall view of the individual and environment as separate entities (Sully de Luque & Sommer, 2000; Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998).

Following such cultural differences, individual variations are expected in the ability to interpret and attend to received information. In interdependent cultures the meaning of performance messages is indirect, implicit, and subtle, embedded in contextual cues (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998). Therefore, such a culture is more likely to foster higher individual ability to interpret and correctly infer meaning from the environment surrounding them. Sully de Luque and Sommer (2000) suggested that individuals within interdependent cultures will
show a preference for indirect inquiry and intensive monitoring strategies, rather than active public inquiry. In contrast, independent cultures are characterized by linear and instrumental communication; messages are explicit and direct (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998). In other words, the meaning of message is contained primarily in transmitted communication. Individuals exposed to such a culture will perceive higher effort in interpreting performance feedback if it is not clearly and directly communicated. In fact, individuals from low context cultures (i.e., independent cultures) show a preference for more direct inquiry tactics compared to the high context cultures (i.e., interdependent cultures) (Kung & Steelman, 2003; Sully de Luque & Sommer, 2000).

**Linkage B + C: Indirect Effect of National Context through Organizational Context**

Given the multi-level nature of Culture, I suggest that, in addition to direct effects, the national context may exert indirect effects on feedback seeking frequency through the work or organizational context. Specifically, linkages B and C in Figure 4 suggest that the ecological, historical, and value-based dimensions of a nation may affect an organization’s feedback environment, which will in turn impact feedback seeking. In the following section, I will first describe evidence for feedback environment as an antecedent to feedback seeking, and then I will examine the national context dimensions that may have an indirect effect on feedback seeking frequency.
Feedback Environment

The feedback culture of one’s organization plays an important role in determining the extent to which feedback seeking occurs as well as the understanding of the how and when feedback is sought (Levy & Williams, 2004). London and Smither (2002) first coined the term feedback culture, and described a favorable feedback culture as valuing, supporting, and promoting the provision and use of high quality feedback across the organization.

This notion was updated by Steelman et al. (2004) who used the term feedback environment and defined it as the socio-cultural factors associated with the feedback process. This notion of the feedback environment presented by Steelman et al. (2004) includes the informal day-to-day feedback received from both supervisors and co-workers. In fact, employees have reported that their supervisor and coworkers are the most practical and relevant sources of feedback (Ashford, 1986). For that reason, supervisor and co-workers were specified as the necessary sources of information in an employee’s feedback environment. Within each of these feedback sources, seven distinct dimensions were identified as commonly relied on by the employee to judge the feedback process. These dimensions are described as: (1) the credibility and competency of the sources of feedback which is determined through the trustworthiness and expertise of the sources, (2) the quality of the feedback provided which is based mainly on the employee’s perception of consistency and usefulness of the feedback being received, (3) the delivery of feedback which refers to how considerate the feedback
provider is of the recipient’s feelings at the time of delivery, (4) the favorability and
(5) unfavorability of feedback which refers to the extent to which the employee
receives positive and negative feedback and perceives it to accurately portray
his/her performance, (6) the overall availability of the feedback source which is
determined through the ease with which feedback is obtained from one’s
supervisor/co-workers, and finally, (7) the promotion of feedback seeking which
refers to the extent to which employees are encouraged to seek feedback by their
organization, supervisor or co-workers (Steelman et al., 2004). Combining these
seven dimensions, or the perceptions that an employee has of these dimensions,
helps identify the favorability or unfavorability of the feedback environment. As
explained by Steelman et al. (2004), a favorable feedback environment is one in
which the performance feedback received by employees is constructive (i.e., both
positive and negative), specific, accurate, and readily available. On the other hand,
an unfavorable feedback environment is associated with a perception of feedback
as less useful, provided thoughtlessly, with low levels of consideration and
empathy, and little support for the use of feedback as a basis for personal
development and growth as well as improved performance.

The feedback environment is an important contextual factor that impacts the
frequency of feedback seeking behaviors (Levy et al., 1995; Steelman et al., 2004).
Based on this, one can assume that the whole feedback process can and is affected
by one’s perception of the feedback context. Studies examining the impact of the
feedback environment on feedback seeking behaviors have demonstrated that
individuals seek feedback more often when the source of the feedback is perceived as more supportive (Williams, Miller, Steelman, & Levy, 1999) and when the environment is perceived as favorable (Anseel et al., in press; Grozman, Steelman, & Masztal, 2009; Steelman et al., 2004; Whitaker et al., 2007). In other words, an environment that encourages inquiring about one’s performance and promotes the provision of high quality feedback, that is useful for development and goal achievement, increases the likelihood that individuals will seek feedback. More recently, van der Rijt, van de Wiul, Van den Bossche, Segers, and Gijselaers (2012) underlined the importance of a supportive and psychologically safe environment in encouraging employees to seek constructive feedback. These results are consistent with the findings of Levy et al. (1995); individuals may opt not to seek feedback in an unfavorable environment because it is anxiety provoking. Hence, the nature of the feedback environment influences the extent to which individuals seek feedback.

**Feedback Environment: Mediating the Effect of National Context.**

An organization is an open system and therefore is influenced by the society in which it is embedded (Katz & Kahn, 1978). Following the societal-effect approach, an organization and its practices will parallel the practices and values of a society (Aycan, 2000; Maurice et al., 1980). For example, a society’s focus on personal growth and development, as reflected in a nation’s educational attainment or income per capita, is likely to influence the emergence of organizational practices that promote and support job performance and goal attainment (e.g., favorable feedback environment).
Brutus and Cabrera (2004) suggested that an organization’s feedback environment differs based on the cultural value system in which it is embedded. They distinguished between traditional value driven societies and stimulation value driven societies. Traditional societies are similar to tight societies in that they show a preference for order and efficiency. Gelfand et al. (2006) argued that tight societies foster highly developed systems of monitoring and sanctioning. As such, organizational practices will reflect cultural preferences for high accountability by focusing on building a system for rich and precise feedback information (Brutus & Cabrera, 2004). Exposure to such an organizational context should lead to a greater valuing of feedback and encourage employees to self-regulate. On the other hand, stimulation societies reflect similar values as loose societies in that they show a preference for innovation and novelty. Therefore, organizations in stimulation/loose societies will foster an environment supportive of discretionary behaviors (i.e., low constraints and accountability). In other words, organizations in loose societies are characterized by weakly developed systems of monitoring and sanctioning (Gelfand et al., 2006). Given the lack of structure promoted by such societies, Brutus and Cabrera (2004) suggested that organizations will lack formal feedback giving practices and will less likely provide high-quality feedback. Exposure to such an organizational context would increase employees’ perception of the cost of seeking feedback, thus decreasing the likelihood of the behavior occurring.
VandeWalle et al. (2000) proposed that organizations that operated in a national culture that supports preserving uniform interpersonal relationships among people (i.e., preference for low power and status differences) were more likely to promote transformational leadership styles. As such, leaders’ consideration creates an atmosphere of respect and mutual trust promoting the considerate delivery of performance feedback. Exposure to such an environment should decrease employees’ perceived costs of feedback seeking and increase the likelihood of the behavior occurring. In contrast, national cultures that support power and status differentials in relationships among people are more likely to promote leaders who are status and class-conscious, elitist, and domineering (House et al., 1999). These cultural attributes may negatively impact the endorsement of participative behaviors, availability of the leader, and the considerate delivery of performance feedback information. In turn, employees are more likely to perceive costs in seeking feedback, impacting the likelihood of the behavior occurring. However, Sully de Luque and Sommer (2000) proposed that high power status cultures will foster a favorable environment for seeking feedback across lateral levels of the organization (i.e., co-workers). Given the promotion of a favorable co-worker environment, perceived costs of seeking would decrease, and hence increase the likelihood of employees seeking feedback from that particular source.

Research suggests that a society’s degree of individuality and communality promote organizational environments focusing on the advancement, needs, and goals of the individual and collective, respectively (Hofstede, 1991; Sully de Luque
& Sommer, 2000; Triandis, 1994). Although cultures differ in the target of their focus (i.e., individual versus collective) in regards to the performance and developmental information individuals seek, they appear to equally encourage and value feedback (Heine & Lehman, 1997; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Sully de Luque & Sommer, 2000; Taylor & Brown, 1988). Nevertheless, the likelihood of the behavior occurring will depend on whether the information being sought matches cultural preferences (Sully de Luque & Sommer, 2000).

Additionally, the extent to which a culture promotes the need for harmony (i.e., the need to save face and maintain status quo) has been related to organizational preferences for publicness or privateness of performance feedback communications (e.g., MacDonald et al., 2013; Sully de Luque & Sommer, 2000). Triandis (1994) stated that cultures promoting the need for harmony focus on preserving harmonious interpersonal relationships by avoiding discussing personal accomplishments. This suggests that individuals will less likely promote an environment supportive of proactive information seeking regarding one’s performance. Although most research examining the concept of face and feedback seeking has focused on the feedback seeker, Sully de Luque and Sommer (2000) suggested that the supervisor might incur face loss costs if approached by their subordinates for feedback. As such, organizations within high need for harmony societies might less likely promote and encourage their employees to seek feedback, consequently decreasing the likelihood of such behavior occurring.
Cultural preferences for achievement and performance can also be reflected in organizational practices promoting high performance and employee development (Hofstede, 1983; Murphy & Cleveland, 1995). Cultures that are motivated by a desire to achieve and excel are more likely to promote organizational environments that allow their employees to achieve, challenging them and enriching their jobs (Hofstede, 1983). An organization characterized by effective performance management processes is expected to promote an environment supportive of goal attainment and performance development (Murphy & Cleveland, 1995). Consequently, exposure to such an environment should lead to a greater valuing of feedback and encourage employees to seek it.

Finally, interdependent and independent cultures differ in the ways and means through which information is conveyed. Given the focus on high context communication in interdependent cultures, the context will more likely convey information and performance feedback rather than one’s supervisor (Sully de Luque & Sommer, 2000). Consistent with such expectations, Kung and Steelman (2003) reported low frequencies of supervisory feedback interaction in an East Asian (i.e., high-context culture) organization. Given that the supervisor is not the primary source of feedback information in interdependent cultures, organizations will less likely promote a feedback environment (supervisor source). Lack of such an environment would likely decrease feedback seeking behaviors. On the other hand, independent cultures focus on low context communications. Sully de Luque and Sommer (2000) proposed that, in low context cultures, organizations would
promote the direct communication of messages (e.g., performance information) and establish supportive systems. Consequently, exposure to such an environment should encourage employees to seek feedback.

In summary, consistent with Johns’ (2006) arguments, the national (omnibus) context will have an indirect impact on employees’ feedback seeking behaviors through its influence on an organization’s feedback environment (discrete).

**Linkage D + E: Indirect Effect of National Context through Individual Context**

Following recent calls by scholars to document why country differences in individual behaviors exist (e.g., Brockner 2003; Leung & van de Vijver, 2008; Schaffer & Riordan, 2003; van de Vijver & Fischer, 2009), I suggest that the national context may exert indirect effects on feedback seeking frequency through the psychological processes surrounding such behavior. Specifically, linkages D and E in Figure 4 suggest that the global and shared properties of a nation may affect individuals’ motives, which in turn impact feedback seeking. In the following section, I will first describe evidence for motives as an antecedent to feedback seeking, then I will discuss the role motives play in mediating the effect of national context dimensions on individuals’ feedback seeking frequency.

**Feedback Seeking Motives**
Ashford and colleagues (2003) summarized the three major motives that have been proposed and generally agreed upon, by previous research, as driving feedback seeking (e.g., Ashford & Cummings, 1986; Morrison & Bies, 1991; Tuckey, Brewer, & Williamson, 2002). Although terminology somewhat differs across studies, I will maintain the terms used by Ashford et al. (2003). Specifically, I will describe the instrumental, ego-based, and image-based motives.

**Instrumental Motive**

The instrumental motive suggests that individuals seek feedback because it is valuable and conveys information that facilitates the regulation of performance and the attainment of goals (Ashford, 1986; Ashford et al., 2003; Ashford & Cummings, 1983; Ashford & Tsui, 1991). Individuals are motivated to obtain accurate evaluations of themselves (Trope, 1980; Trope & Pomerantz, 1998). Performance feedback information provides individuals with an accurate, objective, and constructive evaluation of one’s standing in reference to various goals and standards of performance (Ashford & Cummings, 1983; Murphy & Cleveland, 1995). Individuals driven by an instrumental motive should see value in seeking such feedback, consequently affecting the likelihood of them engaging in feedback seeking.

Studies have consistently demonstrated that the perceived value of and desire for feedback is related to individuals’ feedback seeking behavior. Empirical evidence suggests that the instrumental motive increases the frequency of feedback seeking (e.g., Gupta et al., 1999; Tuckey et al., 2002). For example, Fedor,
Rensvold, and Adams (1992) reported that in uncertain, dynamic, and novel situations individuals value diagnostic information, and therefore are likely to seek feedback. Moreover, studies looking at newcomers suggest that employees who are new to the organization are more likely to seek feedback than their longer-tenured counterparts, presumably because information is more valuable to newcomers as they learn the ropes (Anseel et al., in press; Ashford, 1986; Ashford & Cummings, 1983; Brett, Feldman, & Weingart, 1990). Callister, Kramer, and Turban (1999) demonstrated that as people become more comfortable in their new environment their feedback seeking frequency declines. This supports the idea that novel situations bring the instrumental motive for seeking feedback to the forefront. Furthermore, laboratory studies that specifically manipulate situational ambiguity have demonstrated that participants perceive more value from feedback in ambiguous situations (e.g., VandeWalle & Cummings, 1977).

**Ego-based Motive**

Given that feedback information is about the self, and people are motivated to defend and protect their egos from any negative information (Baumeister, 1999; Sedikides, Herbst, Hardin, & Dardis, 2002), an *ego-based motive* was identified as a second motive for feedback seeking. The ego-based motive is more salient in situations of threat, failure or blows to one's self-image (Ashford et al., 2003). Northcraft and Ashford (1990) reported that employees with low performance expectations sought less feedback as compared to their counterparts, most probably as a means to avoid hurting their ego due to expectations of negative feedback.
Extant literature has identified two strategies that individuals use to enhance their sense of personal worth. Individuals were reported to either avoid, distort, and discount feedback (ego-defense motive) or seek feedback to confirm a favorable self-image (ego-enhancement motive; Ashford et al., 2003; Sedikides & Gregg, 2008; Tuckey et al., 2002). That is, individuals can either enhance the positivity of their self-view or reduce the negativity of their self-view.

Researchers have suggested that self-esteem is related to ego-defense concerns in that employees with high self-esteem are not afraid to receive unfavorable feedback and consequently are more likely to seek it, while those with lower self-esteem are concerned about the ego costs associated with feedback and are less likely to seek it. However, findings on the relationship between self-esteem and feedback seeking have been inconsistent. Fedor et al. (1992) found a negative relationship between self-esteem and direct feedback seeking (inquiry) but not between self-esteem and indirect feedback-seeking (monitoring). Yet, other studies (e.g., Anseel et al., in press; Ashford, 1986; Morrison, 1993; Levy et al., 1995) found no relationship between the two constructs.

In an attempt to maintain a positive self-image, individuals show a preference for favorable information about themselves (Baumeister, 1999). The ego-enhancement motive has been related to individuals’ choice of comparison referent (upward or downward) when assessing themselves to others (Festinger, 1954), such that people will choose a referent who will emphasize their positive self-view (Mussweiler et al., 2000; Wood, 1989; Wood, Michela & Giordano,
Research shows, however, that ego-defense strategies are more common as individuals have a higher tendency to avoid negativity than seek out positivity (Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Finkenauer, & Vohs, 2001).

**Image-based Motive**

The final motive identified is the image-based motive. Public image is a pertinent concern that motivates feedback choices. In fact, active feedback seeking often occurs in a public setting and involves an audience; other people can observe the results of a feedback request, and feedback is frequently sought from supervisors and other high-status individuals (Morrison & Bies, 1991). Similar to the ego-based motive, research indicates that image concerns can both encourage employees to seek feedback as a means to enhance their public image (image enhancement motive; Morrison & Bies, 1991; Moss, Valenzi, & Taggart, 2003) and to avoid feedback to protect or control their public image (image defense motive; e.g., Ashford & Northcraft, 1992; Roberson, Deitch, Brief, & Block, 2003; Williams et al., 1999). In such case, feedback seekers have a dilemma between obtaining useful information and at the same time maintaining a positive public image or not “looking bad” (Morrison & Bies, 1991).

The image defense motive is characterized by the need to protect one’s public self-presentation by reducing unfavorable perceptions (Ashford & Cummings, 1983; Morrison & Bies, 1991). In general, people are concerned about the views others hold of them and strive to maintain a favorable public image. A basic premise in the feedback seeking literature is that seeking feedback may make
individual look bad in the eyes of others because the behavior connotes uncertainty, incompetence, and insecurity. To avoid these face loss costs, people will refrain from seeking feedback. Consistent with this perspective, research finds that people are less likely to seek feedback when they are engaged in defensive impression management (Tuckey et al., 2002); when they think others expect them to be competent and confident (Ashford, 1986); in public contexts (Ang & Cummings, 1994; Levy et al., 1995); or when their peers are not seeking feedback (Ashford & Northcraft, 1992; Williams et al., 1999). Additionally, when individuals expected receiving public negative feedback, they were more likely to forgo the instrumental benefits of that feedback to protect their image (Ashford & Northcraft, 1992; Northcraft & Ashford, 1990), and this tendency is likely to increase over time (Levy et al., 1995).

Image considerations need not be strictly defensive; feedback seeking can enhance one’s public image. The image enhancement motive is characterized by the need to control how one appears to others by increasing favorable perceptions (Ashford et al., 2003). Morrison and Bies (1991) proposed that individuals will sometimes attempt to enhance their image by seeking positive feedback even if it has no informational value. Empirical evidence exists supporting the contention that people seek feedback to portray a positive image. For instance, Moss et al. (2003) found that high performing individuals sought more positive feedback, presumably for impression management reasons or to look good in front of others. Ashford and Tsui (1991) reported that managers who sought negative feedback
were viewed as more effective by their supervisors, subordinates, and peers. They interpreted these results to suggest that seeking negative feedback created an image of effectiveness and attentiveness to one’s job, as well as caring for the opinion of others.

Although not explicitly examined, scholars in the feedback literature have suggested an interrelation between the three motives, with the instrumental motive being the most dominant (e.g., Ashford, 1986; Morrison, 1995). In other words, the assumption has been that the ego- and image-based motives play the role of inhibitor or enhancer of the instrumental motive. In fact, Levy et al. (1995) demonstrated that although employees might have been initially motivated to seek feedback for instrumental reasons, they refrained from doing so or changed their strategy due to certain individual and/or situational factors that made the ego- and image-based motives more salient. More recently, Hays and Williams (2011) examined the interaction between the feedback seeking motives and supported the dominance of the instrumental motive over and above the ego- and image-based motive. Specifically, when the perceived value of feedback seeking is high, the tendency to seek is primarily driven by the instrumental motive, regardless of perceived costs. However, in situations where the perceived value is low, ego- and image-based motives will become more salient and affect the tendency to seek. In other words, situational factors can make one motive more or less dominant. In the following sections, I discuss contextual factors that should affect the weight the three motives have on feedback seeking decisions.
Feedback Seeking Motives: Mediating the Effect of National Context

There is growing evidence that the cost-benefit analysis framework and the motives driving feedback seeking may differ across cultures (e.g., Ashford et al., 2003; MacDonald et al., 2013; Morrison et al., 2004; Sully de Luque & Sommer, 2000). Specifically, what may serve as a justification and motive for seeking feedback by an employee born or trained in one cultural context may not be equivalent or as salient for another employee born or trained in a different context.

To illustrate, nations with a high socioeconomic development provide a populace with more personal and societal resources to focus on and strive for personal growth and development. The tendencies that individuals learn when being socialized into their cultures can in turn influence individual-level factors such as individuals’ psychological processes (e.g., Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Following this, exposure to a high socioeconomic society may influence the emergence of a drive for improvement and development of the self. This implies that individuals will strive for self-relevant information that can clarify and reduce uncertainty regarding their performance and other valued end states. Given that, individuals will perceive feedback as a valuable basis for growth and development and, in turn, seek the information.

Gelfand et al. (2006) suggested that a society’s tightness-looseness can impact individual psychological factors. Specifically, individuals born in or exposed to a tight culture tend to have a high regulatory strength (i.e., monitor their behaviors frequently, more attentive to norm discrepancies, and more intense
negative self-reactions when behaviors don’t fit standards; Gelfand et al., 2006, 2011). To the extent that individuals perceive high social constraints and expectations of accountability, they will develop heightened concern for acting in ways that fit dictated norms and expectations as well as provide them with social approval (Ferris, Munyon, Basik, & Buckley, 2008). Evidence suggests that people with a concern for their sense of personal worth and others’ approval or regard are driven by ego- and image-based motives (Ashford et al., 2003). In fact, Sedikides, Holcomb, and Dardis (1996) demonstrated that high accountability contexts induce a relatively high fear of evaluation and, subsequently, a disproportionate attentional focus on one’s weaknesses. As such, individuals in tight societies are driven by an attempt to reduce the negativity of their self-view (ego-defense motive) as well as others’ perceptions (image-defense motive). Consequently, both motives will discourage them from seeking diagnostic feedback that might highlight failure and discrepancies between their performance and acceptable standards. On the other hand, individuals born in or exposed to a loose society were suggested to perceive less accountability for their behaviors as well as exhibit a promotion regulatory focus (i.e., positive attitude to errors and more prone to take risks; Gelfand et al., 2006, 2011). Sedikides et al. (1996) reported that individuals exposed to an “unaccountable” context showed less fear of evaluation. That is, they perceived lower costs surrounding the act of seeking. Research indicates that given an environment conducive to taking risks, individuals will more likely seek information that will help them improve (i.e., instrumental motive; Harlow &
Cantor, 1995; Sedikides & Strube, 1997). This supports the idea that in low cost situations, the instrumental motive trumps both ego- and image-based motives (e.g., Hays & Williams, 2011).

The degree to which a society values the individual over the collective influences the extent to which individuals are driven by instrumental motives. Individualistic cultures cultivate the motivation to maintain positive self-regard (Morrison & Cummings, 1992; Tuckey et al., 2002). More specifically, Sully de Luque and Sommer (2000) postulated that, in cultures where the individual and protecting oneself is paramount, feedback seeking will more likely be the product of image-enhancement motives (Morrison & Bies, 1991; Wayne & Liden, 1995) or ego-defense motives (Larson, 1989). Empirical support was provided by Morrison et al. (2004) who identified self-assertiveness as the psychological process through which cultural individuality is expressed. More recently, MacDonald et al. (2013) demonstrated that individuals shaped by cultural individualism endorsed higher ego-based motivation. Members of a collectivist culture exhibit less self-serving bias as compared to members of individualistic cultures (Heine & Lehman, 1995; Isozaki & Takahushi, 1988; Kashima & Triandis, 1986; Sedikides & Strube, 1997). Rather, individuals within a collectivist society accept and strive for constructive feedback regarding their performance over and above favorable information in order to better the group (Takata, 1992). Therefore, they are primarily driven by instrumental motives.
Heine et al. (2001) suggested cultures that value performance and achievement foster individual perceptions of the self as mutable. Individuals are concerned with self-improvement as they prioritize advancement, growth, and accomplishment. Consequently, they will perceive value in diagnostic information and, in turn, more likely seek feedback given its instrumentality in improving their performance (Heine et al., 2001). On the other hand, cultures that see less value in performance and achievement promote the view of the self as possessing relatively permanent inner attributes (Heine et al., 2001). Such beliefs strongly motivate individuals to maintain a positive self-view through concerns for one’s ego (i.e., ego-enhancement motive; Heine et al., 2001). Therefore, individuals may prefer to seek performance feedback information that supports and maximizes their self-view, rather than helps them improve their performance (Heine et al., 2001).

The cultural preference for harmony encompasses strategic implications for interpersonal relationships and communication; it increases individuals’ willingness to negotiate, compromise, and avoid confrontation or competition (Li, 2006). The notion of saving face sustained within the need for harmony influences the emergence of an individual conception of embarrassment and shame (Hwang et al., 2002). In other words, a society high on need for harmony promotes individuals’ need to protect their reputation and public image, exhibited through image-defense motives. Consequently, individuals are expected to focus more on the face loss cost of feedback seeking, and less on its value, due to the possibility of embarrassment and blow to their credibility as they engage in this behavior. Research indicates that
individuals’ face loss concerns, in turn, lead to a decrease in the likelihood and frequency of feedback seeking (Hwang et al., 2002; MacDonald et al., 2013).

Finally, a society’s relation to the broad environment determines the extent to which individuals perceive the context surrounding them as blended (interdependent) or separate from their self-view (independent) (Sully de Luque & Sommer, 2000; Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998). An interdependent culture where information is only understood within the context it is embedded, encourages individuals to perceive the environment as controlling of the achievement of their goals and necessary for their success (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998; Sully de Luque & Sommer, 2000). Since implicit cues within the environment are the primary source of diagnosis, people will worry about protecting their ego from potential negative information. Individuals will exhibit an ego-defense motive and, as a result, will avoid seeking feedback given its likelihood for unfavorable implications for the individual (Sedikides, 1993; Sedikides & Strube, 1997). On the other hand, independent cultures, in which information is directly and clearly communicated by a specific source, promote the view of the self as unaffected and not controlled by the environment (Sully de Luque & Sommer, 2000; Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998). In other words, individuals perceive themselves in control of their own success and self-conception. It follows that people will worry about obtaining an accurate and objective picture of themselves. Individuals who strive to reduce uncertainty are driven by instrumental motives (Ashford et al., 2003), and therefore perceive value
in obtaining self-relevant information. That is, they will directly seek feedback through social interactions (Anseel et al., 2007).

In summary, I contend that the cultural characteristics of a nation indirectly impact the frequency of feedback seeking, through its influence on the perceived value of feedback seeking (instrumental motive) as compared to ego- and image-based motives. Consistent with Markus and Kitayama’s (1991) arguments, the national context (the global and shared features of a nation) will influence the emergence of psychological processes (e.g., motives), through which it will have an indirect impact on employees’ feedback seeking behaviors.

**Linkages B + F + E: Indirect Effect of National Context through Organizational and Individual Context**

The final linkages in the model tie national context to feedback seeking through both organizational context and individual motives.

*The National Context Driven Mediation Chain to Feedback Seeking*

Ashford et al.’s (2003) review suggests that feedback seeking motives are also affected by the context in which seeking feedback takes place. An organization’s feedback environment is the context within which performance feedback information (positive or negative) is communicated (Herold & Parsons, 1985) and is made up of the various feedback sources (Steelman et al., 2004). Studies have demonstrated that the relational aspect of the feedback environment (i.e., characteristics of the supervisor, quality of interaction with the supervisor)
impacts employees’ decision to seek feedback (e.g., Levy, Cober & Miller, 2002; VandeWalle et al., 2000; Williams et al., 1999).

For instance, a context that is highly uncertain (e.g., one where feedback sources are unavailable or not accessible) will make more salient the instrumental motive for seeking (Walsh, Ashford, & Hill, 1985; Ashford et al., 2003). Although an organization’s promotion of feedback seeking does not influence perceived risks associated with the behavior (Ashford & Northcraft, 1992), image concerns are a factor of the organization’s overall regard and support (Ashford et al., 2003). Perceived organizational support decreased perceived image costs related to seeking feedback (Ashford et al., 1998). Based on the self-enhancement perspective (Sedikides & Strube, 1997), ego-based motives are a factor of the expected favorability and unfavorability of performance diagnosis a feedback environment fosters. The expectation of positive feedback increases employees’ motivation to maintain a positive self-view (ego-enhancement motive), whereas the expectation of failure diagnosis increases individuals’ concern for their self-image and is a blow to their ego (ego-defense motive; Sedikides & Strube, 1997; Trope, 1979; Trope & Brickman, 1975). Additional studies have examined the accuracy (validity) of the performance diagnosis information. In situations where positive and credible feedback was expected, individuals were driven by an instrumental motive for seeking feedback, while they showed concern for their image when the feedback expected was negative and from a credible source (Brown, 1990).
As previously discussed, organizational processes and practices, such as performance management systems, are highly influenced by and reflect the practices and values of a society (i.e., societal-effect approach; Aycan, 2000; Maurice et al., 1980). Additionally it has been suggested that supervisors will promote a feedback environment that is consistent with their own personal needs for feedback (Levy & Thompson, 2010). These preferences for feedback are impacted by cultural norms (Sully de Luque & Sommer, 2000). This means that the cultural dimensions discussed in this research can shape supervisors’ values and norms and, in turn, influence the feedback environment they facilitate.

**Conclusion**

Based on my review of the extant research surrounding each of the linkages proposed in my cultural model, four major research gaps were identified. First, research focusing on empirically testing the effect of broad social contextual variables on feedback seeking has been scarce. Second, although scholars have called for research to examine national contextual effects other than the shared properties of a nation (i.e., culture) for a more valid analysis of the influence of Culture (e.g., Tsui et al., 2007), no attempt has been made in the feedback literature to examine how, for example, the socioeconomic features of a nation can influence the extent to which individuals seek feedback. Third, studies investigating cultural differences in feedback seeking have relied on one or two cultural values (e.g., individualism-collectivism; power distance) and ignored other relevant cultural value-based dimensions (e.g., need for harmony). Finally, past studies have failed
to empirically capture how and why any differences occurred, focusing merely on national value score differences or differences in nationality amongst participants.

To address these research gaps, I propose to investigate the factors and processes that may influence cultural differences in the tendency to seek feedback. Based on the assumption that the effect of Culture on feedback seeking is multi-faceted, I will explicitly and empirically test some of the direct and indirect pathways suggested in my model. In the next chapter, I present the analytical framework upon which this research project is based and develop my hypotheses.
CHAPTER 2

The Current Study and Hypotheses

Organizations have become increasingly aware of the role feedback seeking plays in attaining and maintaining self-awareness of performance, especially among leaders (Anseel et al., in press; Ashford et al., 2003). Feedback seeking, the process of actively eliciting self-relevant performance feedback from one’s work environment, is typically viewed as a process driven by an implicit or explicit cost-benefit analysis (Ashford & Cummings, 1985; Ashford et al., 2003). There is growing evidence that the extent to which individuals perceive value or cost in seeking feedback is a factor of the sociocultural system surrounding them (e.g., Ashford et al., 2003; MacDonald et al., 2013; Sully De Luque & Sommer, 2000). Moreover, researchers argue that behaviors are influenced, adhere to, and match the national context within which individuals have been socialized (Erez & Gati, 2004; Gelfand et al., 2011; Kitayama et al., 1997).

Implicit in this research is the idea that understanding feedback seeking within the sociocultural context necessitates understanding the contextual variables and mechanisms that are common across the board (etic), as well as more culturally-specific (emic). In other words, although feedback seeking may be a universal behavior, the weight of costs and benefits determining the behavior may differ significantly across culturally diverse individuals. Scholars have called for research examining the effect of the sociocultural context on organizational
phenomena, specifically recommending a multilevel and polycontextual approach to measuring and explicitly testing the role of this context (e.g., Aycan, 2000; Chao & Moon, 2005; Johns, 2006; Tsui et al., 2007). Following such a call, this study sought to answer the following research question: *To what extent and how does the sociocultural context influence individuals’ tendency to seek feedback?*

I approach this research question using an unpackaging study. Unpackaging studies are extensions of basic cross-cultural comparisons in which the cultural context (e.g., national or organizational) presumed to cause observed differences in psychological processes (i.e., individual context) is directly measured and explicitly tested for its role in explaining some outcome (e.g., feedback seeking; Smith, 2002; Whiting, 1976). By proposing an unpackaging study, I seek to identify the theoretical factors and processes that may cause cultural differences in feedback seeking, as well as explicitly and empirically test the proposed processes. With culture defined as a developing system of individuals, relationships, social contexts, and institutions conceptualized and manifested across multiple levels (e.g., national, organizational, and individual), I base this proposed study on the core assumption that the influence of the sociocultural context on feedback seeking frequency is multi-faceted. Four paths (one direct and three indirect) can help understand the impact of the sociocultural context; Path 1 (linkage A) assumes a direct on feedback seeking frequency; Path 2 (linkages B + C) suggests an indirect effect through the organizational context; Path 3 (linkages D + E) suggests an indirect effect through the individual context; and finally, Path 4 (linkages B + F +
D) suggests a lineal indirect effect through the organizational and individual context.

Following a thorough exploration of both the cross-cultural management and psychology research, five cultural value-based dimensions were identified as features of the sociocultural context, potentially influencing individuals’ tendency to engage in feedback seeking. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the first and second dimensions (i.e., tightness-looseness and relationships among people) are based on familiar concepts in extant literature, while the third, fourth, and fifth (i.e., need for harmony, activity, and relation to broad environment) represent an integration of themes from the various literatures. To facilitate the discussion, I will investigate only three of the five cultural value-based dimensions, namely Tightness-Looseness, Need for Harmony, and Relation to Broad Environment. Although each of the five cultural value-based dimensions is expected to add value to the examination of cultural differences in feedback seeking, I selected these three on several grounds. First, although embedded in these dimensions are factors that have the potential to affect the cost-value framework of feedback seeking, evidence-based understanding of individual differences in feedback seeking tendency, based on each of these dimensions, is lacking. Second, literature surrounding Tightness-Looseness, Need for Harmony, and Relation to Broad Environment have proposed a spillover of the values embedded in these dimensions at the national context to the organizational and individual context. In other words, these cultural dimensions can impact the emergence of organizational processes, as well as psychological
processes, therefore providing implications for the model being tested. Finally, these dimensions capture unique cultural variance that is distinct from commonly examined dimensions in cross-cultural research, as such offering a contribution to extend new knowledge on the dynamic nature of Culture. Consequently, I expect that the investigation of these dimensions will provide feedback research with a strong theoretical and empirical basis for understanding feedback seeking frequency among culturally diverse individuals.

Research has supported that the feedback environment influences the cost-benefit analysis of feedback seeking, therefore impacting the frequency of feedback seeking behaviors (Anseel et al., in press; Levy & Thompson, 2010; Levy et al., 1995; Steelman et al., 2004). Specifically, individuals were more likely to seek feedback when the environment was perceived as favorable as opposed to unfavorable (Anseel et al., in press; Grozman et al., 2009; Steelman et al., 2004; van der Rijt et al., 2012; Whitaker et al., 2007). Steelman et al. (2004) identified two potential sources of feedback (supervisor and co-worker) and seven dimensions of the feedback environment, as contributing to the favorability or unfavorability of the feedback environment. Miller and Jablin (1991) demonstrated that employees are more likely to seek evaluative performance information from their direct supervisor as opposed to their coworkers. Moreover, Levy and Thompson (2010) stated that supervisor feedback environment is more influential in maintaining a successful performance management system and in shaping employees’ attitudes and behaviors as compared to the coworker feedback
environment. Given the focus of this research project on understanding individuals’
tendency to seek feedback to increase self-awareness of their performance, I opt to
focus on the supervisor source of the feedback environment.

Furthermore, research has suggested that the assessment of costs versus
benefits of feedback seeking is colored by different motivations (Ashford et al.,
2003). Three main motives affect individuals’ drive to seek feedback, namely an
instrumental motive focused on a desire for useful information and uncertainty
reduction, an ego-based motive focused on a desire to maintain and protect one’s
ego or self-esteem, and an image-based motive focused on a desire to maintain and
protect one’s public image (Ashford et al., 2003).

Extant feedback literature states that an organization’s feedback
environment as well as individuals’ feedback seeking motives are influenced by the
surrounding cultural value system (e.g., Anseel et al., 2007; Brutus & Cabrera,
2004). Even though such effects have been theoretically postulated, no study to
date has tested them empirically. Consequently, I explored the impact of each of
the three cultural value-based dimensions on (a) the feedback environment and/or
(b) the saliency of one feedback seeking motive, over and above others, in
predicting the extent to which individuals seek feedback.

In the following sections, for each of the three value-based dimensions, I
will begin by discussing the rationale behind the proposed direct effect on
frequency of feedback seeking (path 1) and then discuss the proposed indirect
effects through the feedback environment, feedback seeking motives, and both
combined (paths 2, 3, and 4, respectively). Figures 5-7 illustrate the hypotheses tested.

**Tightness-Looseness**

**Direct Effect on Feedback Seeking Frequency**

Tightness-Looseness (T-L) takes into consideration variability in the strength of social norms and degree of sanctioning within a culture (Gelfand et al., 2006, 2011; Triandis, 1994). A common theme in the T-L and feedback seeking literature is that of accountability. Research has demonstrated that cultural contexts in which normative expectations surround people’s actions have implications on individuals’ tendency to self-regulate and regulate others’ behaviors (Brutus & Cabrera, 2004; Gelfand et al., 2006, 2011; Tetlock, 1985). The value of feedback information is closely related to the extent to which individuals of a certain culture are expected to strictly obey societal norms and regulations. A culture’s value of accountability is determined by the degree to which a culture directs and controls the conduct of its members (Beu & Buckley, 2001).

Tight cultures foster expectations of strict obedience to norms and regulations increasing the tendency for people to frequently monitor their own behavior in an attempt to avoid deviating from mandated rules and regulations (Gelfand et al., 2011). The primary benefit of feedback relates to the reduction of uncertainty and inferences surrounding expectations and standards of behaviors (Ashford & Cumings, 1985). Inherent to the act of feedback seeking is a strong
signaling element; the behavior can be interpreted positively as an attempt or motivation to improve or negatively as a sign of weakness and incompetence (Ashford, 1986; Ashford et al., 2003). The need to manage high levels of scrutiny of one’s actions can increase the risk of a negative interpretation of seeking feedback amongst individuals of a tight culture (e.g., Person “A” should know this already or Person “A” must have made a mistake). As a result, individuals should more likely perceive high self-presentation costs related to feedback seeking, and, therefore, would less likely seek information that could enable them to fulfill their expected roles and reduce the risk of failure. In contrast, loose cultures are tolerant of a wider range of behaviors; they impose less stringent sanctioning for behaviors that do not fit expectations (Gelfand et al., 2006, 2011). Individuals exposed to a loose culture were reported to embrace a positive attitude towards errors and were more prone to taking risks (Gelfand et al., 2011). Given that loose cultures foster the pursuit of innovation and novelty, individuals would perceive little self-presentational cost associated with inquiring about their performance. These individuals should seek feedback, if it is not readily available or shared with them.

Given the above, I advance that individuals’ tendency to seek feedback is a factor of the degree of accountability within a culture, reflected by a culture’s T-L. Therefore, I propose the following:
H1: Tightness-Looseness will be related to individuals’ feedback seeking frequency, such that the tighter the culture the less frequently individuals engage in feedback seeking.

**Indirect Effect on Feedback Seeking Frequency**

**Feedback Environment**

Given that tight cultures show a preference for order and efficiency, they influence the emergence of highly developed systems of monitoring and sanctioning, at the organizational level (Gelfand et al., 2006, 2011). An organization’s performance evaluation system is the mechanism through which an organization holds individuals accountable (Ferris et al., 2008). The feedback environment refers to the organizational context in which informal performance information is communicated by a supervisor to his/her employees on a day-to-day basis (Steelman et al., 2004). To reflect cultural preferences for high accountability, organizations in tight cultures will embrace practices that foster a system for rich and precise feedback information (Brutus & Cabrera, 2004; Earley, 1997). In other words, given that a tight culture encourages individuals to frequently monitor not only their own behavior but also that of others, individuals may be better feedback-givers and be more cognizant of their duty to help others self-regulate. As such, tight cultures are more likely to support the emergence of a strong, constructive supervisor feedback environment. Because supervisors will constantly monitor
performance and provide feedback to bring employees back in line, employees should have little need to actively seek out feedback; the act of feedback seeking is less instrumental in this context.

In contrast, looser cultures place fewer constraints on individuals and their behaviors and support the emergence of organizational practices that value individual discretion (i.e., low accountability; Gelfand et al., 2006, 2011). Given the lack of structure promoted by such culture, organizational practices will lack formality and include more weakly developed systems of monitoring and sanctioning (Brutus & Cabrera, 2004; Earley, 1997; Gelfand et al., 2006). In addition, since a loose culture encourages individuals to embrace a more positive attitude towards errors, supervisors may provide less constructive feedback and be less cognizant of their duty to help others self-regulate. It follows loose cultures are more likely to support the emergence of a weak supervisor feedback environment. Since individuals do not expect to be consistently monitored and brought back in line if their behaviors deviate from standards and expectations, individuals should perceive more instrumentality in seeking feedback from their supervisor as they strive to achieve their goals.

Consistent with this argument, I suggest that a culture’s T-L (i.e., degree of accountability) influences with the characteristics of an organization’s feedback environment, and a culture’s T-L will work through the feedback environment to predict individuals’ tendency to seek feedback.
H2: Tightness-Looseness will be related to an organization’s feedback environment, such that the tighter the culture the more favorable the feedback environment.

H2a: The feedback environment will mediate the relationship between Tightness-Looseness and feedback seeking frequency.

Feedback Seeking Motives

A culture’s Tightness-Looseness has the potential to impact individual psychological processes. The amount of accountability that exists at the societal level is represented at the individual level by people’s response to perceptions of accountability (i.e., felt accountability; Lewin, 1936, Frink & Kilmoski, 1998; Gelfand et al., 2006). As a psychological mechanism, felt accountability encompasses the extent to which external constraints are internalized and influence individuals’ behaviors.

Given that in a tight culture individuals are expected to more closely and frequently monitor their behaviors, they are more attentive to discrepancies between their performance and the accepted standards and react more intensely and negatively when their behaviors don’t fit those standards. In other words, individuals in tight cultures have high felt accountability and tend to have high regulatory strength, more specifically a prevention regulatory focus (Ferris et al., 2008; Gelfand et al., 2006, 2011). Driven by a fear of evaluation and a need to reduce risk of failure, individuals will develop heightened concern for acting in
ways that fit dictated norms and expectations as well as provide them with social approval (Ferris et al., 2008). This motivation for protecting one’s social image parallels the image-based feedback motives, specifically image-defense, which characterizes individuals motivated to protect their public image (Ashford et al., 2003). Under this motive, individuals are more likely to avoid collecting information (Elliot & Harackiewicz, 1996) that might highlight discrepancies between their performance and acceptable standards. Consequently, I advance that a culture’s tightness, one in which felt accountability is high, is associated with higher levels of the image-defense motive, and a culture’s tightness will work through the image-defense motive to predict individuals’ tendency to seek feedback.

**H3:** Tightness- Looseness will be related to individuals’ image-defense motive, such that the tighter the culture the stronger the image-defense motive.

**H3a:** The image-defense motive will mediate the relationship between Tightness-Looseness and feedback seeking frequency.

In contrast, a loose culture promotes an environment that is more tolerant of ambiguity and accepting of a wider range of behaviors (Gelfand et al., 2006, 2011). Individuals exposed to such an environment tend to perceive less accountability for their behaviors. By showing a positive attitude to errors and being accepting of change, they exhibit a promotion regulatory focus (Gelfand et al., 2006, 2011).
Individuals who embrace a promotion regulatory focus are driven by a need to bring themselves closer to the person they aspire or hope to be (i.e., their ideal self; Higgins, 1996). They hold a belief that greater effort will increase their chance of attaining their goals (Porath & Bateman, 2006). This drive to develop oneself as well as attain valued end states parallels the instrumental feedback motive that characterizes individuals motivated to achieve improved performance (Anseel et al., 2007; Ashford et al., 2003). Under this motive, individuals are more likely to pursue constructive self-relevant information that will increase the likelihood of achieving their goals (Baumeister & Heatherton, 1996; Harlow & Cantor, 1995; Sedikides & Strube, 1997). Consequently, I advance that a loose culture, one in which felt accountability is low, is associated with higher levels of the instrumental motive. I also predict that a culture’s looseness will work through the instrumental motive to predict individuals’ tendency to seek feedback.

H4: Tightness-Looseness will be related to individuals’ instrumental motive, such that the looser the culture the stronger the instrumental motive.

H4a: The instrumental motive will mediate the relationship between Tightness-Looseness and feedback seeking frequency.

Feedback Environment and Feedback Seeking Motives

As discussed previously, cultural tightness supports the emergence of a strong supervisor feedback environment exposing individuals to a highly
accountable context. To the extent that individuals expect others to verify or evaluate their performance, consistently monitor them, and address potential conflicting expectations through constructive feedback, research has indicated that they should perceive less instrumentality in seeking feedback but rather more motivation to protect their social image (Ferris et al., 2008). In other words, such feedback environment will make more salient individuals’ self-presentational concern, therefore motivating them to protect their public image from potential diagnosis information that portray them as acting in “socially deviant ways” (Gelfand et al., 2006). Hence, to maintain a favorable public image, people will refrain from seeking feedback.

On the other hand, cultural looseness leads to the emergence of a weaker supervisor feedback environment, where a less formal accountability process exists. Employees do not expect others to monitor their performance (Gelfand et al., 2006, 2011). Given the absence of a reliable evaluative system drawing attention to individuals’ deviation from their set goals, individuals will perceive more benefit in obtaining diagnostic information that reduce uncertainty surrounding their goal attainment. Therefore, such a feedback environment will make more salient individuals’ instrumental motive, increasing the likelihood of feedback seeking (Ashford et al., 2003; Tuckey et al., 2002).

Following this, I suggest that the tightness and looseness of a culture described by the degree of accountability can impact the characteristics of the feedback environment to which individuals are exposed in an organization. In turn,
the feedback environment can influence individuals’ felt accountability, making salient specific feedback seeking motives. These motives inform the cost versus benefits consideration that triggers the extent to which people seek or don’t seek feedback. That is, I propose that cultural Tightness-Looseness will work through the feedback environment and feedback seeking motive to predict individuals’ tendency to seek feedback. Therefore, I hypothesize the following:

H5: Tightness-Looseness will be related to individuals’ feedback seeking frequency via serial indirect effects, such that its relationship to seeking frequency will be mediated by the feedback environment and individuals’ feedback seeking motives (image-defense and instrumental motives).

H5a: The feedback environment will mediate the relationship between Tightness-Looseness and feedback seeking frequency.

H5b: The image-defense motive will mediate the relationship between Tightness-Looseness and feedback seeking frequency.

H5c: The feedback environment and the image-defense motive will mediate the relationship between Tightness-Looseness and feedback seeking frequency.

H5d: The instrumental motive will mediate the relationship between Tightness-Looseness and feedback seeking frequency.
H5e: The feedback environment and the instrumental motive will mediate the relationship between Tightness-Looseness and feedback seeking frequency.

Need for Harmony

Direct Effect on Feedback Seeking Frequency

Need for Harmony focuses on the degree to which a culture values preserving harmonious interpersonal relationships by avoiding conflict (maintaining status quo) and/or undermining others’ or one’s reputation or image (saving face; Bond et al., 1985; Goffman, 1967; Ho, 1976; Hwang et al., 2002; Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998). Inherent in this dimension are values related to the concept of face (i.e., having a sense of shame; Fang, 2003). The extent to which a society values saving face and shows a concern for face loss is determined by the degree to which that society has a strong need for harmony (House et al., 1999). Given that risks for face loss are inherent in the process of inquiring about and requesting self-relevant performance information, individuals exposed to a culture that embraces a need for harmony should perceive high costs surrounding the active elicitation of feedback. In fact, studies have consistently reported on the reluctance of individuals from cultures with a high face loss concern to seek feedback information (Dougherty & Wall, 1991; Hwang et al., 2002; MacDonald et al., 2013). Cultures that are less concerned about preserving
harmony are likely to attach less importance to maintaining status quo and a favorable reputation during social interactions (Hwang et al., 2002). Individuals exposed to such culture are less likely to consider beforehand how their behaviors might affect their or others’ public image (Hwang et al., 2002). As such, concern with potential face loss costs should decrease (Sully de Luque & Sommer, 2000).

Thus, the value of feedback seeking is influenced by the emphasis a culture puts on saving face. It follows that individuals’ feedback seeking is a factor of a culture’s need for harmony. Hence, I propose the following:

**H6: Need for Harmony will be negatively related to individuals’ feedback seeking frequency.**

**Indirect Effect on Feedback Seeking Frequency**

**Feedback Environment**

In a culture that promotes the need for harmony, both a seeker and a source risk losing face in the feedback seeking process. To preserve harmony a supervisor might avoid discussing performance information that would make an individual stand out or in other ways promote discord (MacDonald et al., 2013). People operating in cultures that are less concerned with harmony and face loss should promote a favorable feedback environment and the discussion of individual accomplishment (Sully de Luque & Sommer, 2000; Triandis, 1994).
Therefore, the cultural value of Need for Harmony should manifest itself in the practices of an organization relative to the presence of an environment supportive of proactive information seeking. Hence, I contend that cultural need for harmony will work through the feedback environment to predict individuals’ tendency to seek feedback.

H7: Need for Harmony will be negatively related to an organization’s feedback environment

H7a: The feedback environment will mediate the relationship between Need for Harmony and feedback seeking frequency.

Feedback Seeking Motives

At the individual level, a culture’s emphasis on maintaining harmonious relationships is reflected in a personal concern for embarrassment and shame (Hwang et al., 2002). That is, individuals are more likely to attach importance to maintaining a favorable reputation. They are driven by a need to avoid losing face and protect their image, thus making the image defense motive more salient.

Inherent in the act of seeking performance feedback is the major cost of potentially being viewed as incompetent by others (Ashford & Cummings, 1983). Individuals with a strong image-defense motive will try to reduce others’ unfavorable perceptions by avoiding inquiring and requesting self-relevant diagnostic information (Ashford & Northcraft, 1992; Roberson et al., 2003;
Williams et al., 1999). Individuals concerned about incurring embarrassment and blows to their credibility will perceive high risks of face loss in seeking feedback, consequently leading them to avoid engaging in this behavior.

Therefore, I hypothesize that cultural need for harmony indirectly impacts individuals’ tendency to seek feedback through the extent to which individuals exhibit a desire for protecting their image, characteristic of an image-defense motive.

H8: A society’s Need for Harmony will be positively related to individuals’ image-defense motive.

H8a: The image-defense motive will mediate the relationship between Need for Harmony and feedback seeking frequency.

Feedback Environment and Feedback Seeking Motives

In summary, cultures that promote harmony in interpersonal relationships should facilitate an organizational context that is less supportive of individual-based performance information and therefore, a more unfavorable feedback environment. In this context, protecting one’s public image is salient suggesting an image-defense motive and less frequent feedback seeking. Alternatively, cultures that place less emphasis on harmony encourage individuals to discuss their accomplishments and performance. This should promote, in turn, a more favorable
feedback environment that encourages feedback seeking behaviors by diminishing any image-related concerns. Following this, I hypothesize:

H9: Need for Harmony will be related to individuals’ feedback seeking frequency via serial indirect effects, such that its relationship to the seeking frequency will be mediated by the feedback environment and individuals’ image-defense motive.

H9a: The feedback environment will mediate the relationship between Need for Harmony and feedback seeking frequency.

H9b: The image-defense motive will mediate the relationship between Need for Harmony and feedback seeking frequency.

H9c: The feedback environment and image-defense motive will mediate the relationship between Need for Harmony and feedback seeking frequency.

Relation to Broad Environment

Direct Effect on Feedback Seeking Frequency

Cultures differ in the manner in which individuals cognitively process contextual information as well as conceptualize their relationship with the environment around them (Sully de Luque & Sommer, 2000; Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998). Inherent in this dimension are expected differences in the norms and patterns of communication and information processing. Cultural
differences have been observed in the degree to which information is considered
tacit and embedded within the environment (Sully de Luque & Sommer, 2000;
Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998). Societies that view themselves as
interdependent with the environment tend to communicate tacitly and indirectly
whereas societies that are more independent from the environment tend to
communicate directly (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998).

Reflected in interdependent cultures are expectations that the context carries
with it meaning of the communication (Sully de Luque & Sommer, 2000;
Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998). A focus on indirectness and implicitness
becomes the expected cultural norm (i.e., high context communication;
Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998). Individuals exposed to such a culture will
match the indirect nature of the society with indirect, rather than direct requests for
feedback (Sully de Luque & Sommer, 2000). In fact, Kung and Steelman (2003)
demonstrated that individuals from cultures with high context communication
patterns (i.e., interdependent culture) were less likely to actively inquire about their
performance.

Alternatively, independent societies value separation from the broad
environment and focus on low context communication (Sully de Luque & Sommer,
2000; Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998). In other words, the meaning of
messages is contained primarily in the transmitted communication and will not
require much inference in its interpretation. Communication is based on the
expectation of directness; the message is transmitted in a straightforward manner
without being overstated or toned down. Individuals exposed to such a culture will tend to match the directness of the culture with direct feedback inquiry.

It follows that individuals’ tendency to seek feedback is associated to the norms and patterns of communication within a culture, as determined by culture’s Relation to Broad Environment. Given this, I propose to test the following:

H10: Relation to Broad Environment will be negatively related to individuals’ feedback seeking frequency.

**Indirect Effect on Feedback Seeking Frequency**

**Feedback Environment**

The ways and means through which information is conveyed within the broad context of a society can also be mirrored within organizations, specifically the feedback environment they facilitate. The focus of interdependent cultures on high context communication is reflected feedback being predominantly conveyed implicitly through the context (e.g., work environment) rather than directly through one’s supervisor (Sully de Luque & Sommer, 2000). In fact, research reports that employees in a high context culture are less likely to directly seek feedback from their supervisors, yet more likely to monitor their environment for such information (Kung & Steelman, 2003). In other words, the supervisor is not the primary source of feedback information and is less likely to foster a formal and concrete system of
communication. Hence, I contend that, embedded in such a culture, organizations are less likely to promote a favorable feedback environment which in turn will decrease individuals’ likelihood of directly requesting feedback.

In contrast, independent cultures encourage an environment where information is transmitted through direct and concrete lines of communication and no inferences are required to interpret the message (Kung & Steelman, 2003; Sully de Luque & Sommer, 2000; Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998). Organizations embedded in such a culture are more likely to foster a supportive communication system that promotes the provision of high quality diagnostic information (i.e., favorable feedback environment). Consequently, individuals should feel comfortable directly inquiring for feedback.

Based on this, the cultural dimension of Relation to Broad Environment should indirectly affect individuals’ tendency to seek feedback as it manifest itself in the practices of an organization relative to the feedback environment.

H11: Relation to Broad Environment will be negatively related to an organization’s feedback environment.

H11a: The feedback environment will mediate the relationship between Relation to Broad Environment and feedback seeking frequency.
Feedback Seeking Motives

Interdependent societies foster the perception of individuals’ self-view as blended with the context surrounding them (Sully de Luque & Sommer, 2000; Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998). Individuals view the achievement of their goals, and consequently their own success, as dependent on the information and knowledge blended within the environment surrounding them. People who attempt to select and carry out behaviors are most often subject to interference or control by others. The simple fact of being held responsible by another person - even when that person lacks the power to control rewards or outcomes - increases individuals’ concern for their self-conception (Fisher, 1978; Sedikides, 1993; Sedikides & Strube, 1997). Individuals perceive that their self-esteem, sense of control, certainty, and sense of progress are tied to the information and actions of the environment (Sedikides & Strube, 1997). In an attempt to increase one’s self-esteem, Sedikides and Strube (1997) argued that individuals will exhibit a drive towards self-enhancement. Individuals are more likely to enhance their sense of personal worth by avoiding negativity than seeking out positivity (Arkin, 1981; Baumeister et al., 2001). Therefore, being exposed to an interdependent culture, individuals will exhibit a self-protection motive (i.e., ego-defense motive; Ashford et al., 2003; Tuckey et al., 2002), and as a result, refrain from obtaining self-relevant information that could carry unfavorable diagnostic implications (Anseel et al., 2007; Sedikides, 1993; Sedikides & Strube, 1997). Consequently, I propose that the tendency to seek feedback for individuals influenced by an interdependent
culture is indirectly affected by the extent to which they exhibit a desire to protect their ego.

H12: Relation to Broad Environment will be positively related to individuals’ ego-defense motive.

H12a: The ego-defense motive will mediate the relationship between Relation to Broad Environment and feedback seeking frequency.

On the other hand, independent societies foster the perception of individuals’ self-view as separate from the context surrounding them (Sully de Luque & Sommer, 2000; Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998). Given that, individuals are more likely to view the achievement of their goals and their success as distinct from, not affected or controlled by the environment. Individuals who perceive control over the behaviors they carry out and the evaluation of their performance are more likely to strive for self-improvement (Fisher, 1972), proactively obtain an accurate and objective picture of their self, and reduce uncertainty regarding their abilities and characteristics (Sedikides, 1993; Sedikides & Strube, 1997). Therefore, motivated by instrumental motives, they will perceive value in obtaining self-relevant information (Anseel et al., 2007; Ashford et al., 2003). Consistent with theory and past research, individuals’ tendency to seek feedback is indirectly affected by individuals’ instrumental motive. Therefore, I hypothesize the following:
H13: Relation to Broad Environment will be negatively related to individuals’ instrumental motives.

H13a: The instrumental motive will mediate the relationship between Relation to Broad Environment and feedback seeking frequency.

Feedback Environment and Feedback Seeking Motives

As previously discussed, in interdependent societies information is more likely embedded within the broader context rather than directly provided by a specific source (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998). It follows that such a culture will less likely promote the emergence of a favorable feedback environment in organizations. The absence of a system that provides high quality concrete information will decrease the likelihood that individuals receive clear, credible, and objective diagnostic information (Steelman et al., 2004). A study by Vancouver and Morrison (1995) revealed that the quality of the feedback seeking relationship influenced the extent to which self-esteem concerns affected feedback seeking. That is, perceptions of threat to one’s self-esteem increased when the context in which feedback is sought was unfavorable. Accordingly, individuals’ concerns for their ego is more salient, decreasing the likelihood of them seeking self-relevant information.

In contrast, the value that independent societies attach to low context communication should facilitate the emergence of a favorable feedback
environment, where performance information is shared through direct and concrete communication. Due to the presence of a supportive communication system which promotes the provision of high quality diagnostic information (Steelman et al., 2004), individuals should perceive higher value for such information and a stronger instrumental motive, ultimately increasing their tendency to seek feedback.

Consistent with previous arguments, the feedback environment has the potential to carry the more proximal effect of a society’s Relation to Broad Environment on individuals’ feedback seeking, through its influence on individuals’ feedback seeking motives. Therefore, I hypothesize the following:

H14: Relation to Broad Environment will be related to individuals’ feedback seeking frequency via serial indirect effects, such that its relationship to the seeking frequency will be mediated by the feedback environment and individuals’ feedback seeking motives (instrumental and ego-defense).

H14a: The feedback environment will mediate the relationship between Relation to Broad Environment and feedback seeking frequency.

H14b: The instrumental motive will mediate the relationship between Relation to Broad Environment and feedback seeking frequency.

H14c: The feedback environment and instrumental motive will mediate the relationship between Relation to Broad Environment and feedback seeking frequency.
H14d: The ego-defense motive will mediate the relationship between Relation to Broad Environment and feedback seeking frequency.

H14e: The feedback environment and ego-defense motive will mediate the relationship between Relation to Broad Environment and feedback seeking frequency.
CHAPTER 3

Methodology

Study 1: Test of Conceptual Equivalence

This study is grounded in the core assumption that the understanding of feedback seeking tendencies within a global context necessitates determining the extent to which the feedback process (i.e., cost-value framework) is common across the board (universal) versus culturally-specific. Despite its wide acceptance, Ashford and colleagues’ cost-value framework as the basis for employees’ decision to seek feedback (e.g., Ashford, 1986; Ashford & Cumings, 1985; Ashford et al., 2003) has not been confirmed across cultures. In other words, although the act of seeking feedback may look similar across culturally diverse individuals, the process and meaning of feedback seeking might differ significantly. Similarly, cross-cultural research that examined feedback motives (e.g., MacDonald et al., 2013; Morrison et al., 2004) failed to investigate the cross-cultural equivalence of feedback seeking motives. Following best practices, the purpose of Study 1 and Study 1b was to test for the cross-cultural equivalence of the feedback process. These studies were designed to begin to answer the question: “How well does the established cost-value framework and feedback seeking motives describe the feedback seeking process of culturally diverse individuals?”
Study 1a: Interview-Based Qualitative Survey

Participants

To maximize the chance of including a diverse perspective, participants were sampled from different cultures. A snowball sampling approach was relied on. This sampling technique has been identified as providing practical advantages for qualitative, explorative, and descriptive research (Hendricks, Blanken, & Adriaans, 1992). Interested participants were identified in multiple countries (e.g., United States, Italy, Lebanon, Netherlands, and Australia) who were then used to refer additional respondents within that country. Fifty-seven participants were reached through email and requested to complete a short survey targeting the understanding of the factors (personal and cultural) affecting individuals’ motivation to seek or not seek feedback at work. The final sample consisted of 21 diverse individuals (43% male and 57% female) from a total of 15 countries, of which half (52%) indicated identifying with another culture other than their own. The average age was 25 (SD= 2.84 years) and ranged from 20 to 30 years. The majority of participants (66%) were full-time students, more specifically graduate students (52%). The second highest represented group was full-time employees (19%) who worked in various countries and industries and held a variety of positions. Frequencies for the demographics, including type of industry and job function represented, can be found in Table 2.
Procedure

After completing a set of online demographic questions, interviewees were automatically redirected to BlogNog™ for the interview (http://www.blognog.com/). The BlogNog™ - specialized for qualitative research and focus group interviews - was designed by research professionals to simulate traditional face-to-face qualitative research by providing the researcher with the option to probe with additional questions, while decreasing the cost and challenges of such methodology (Rubenstein & McDowell, 2012). Given the need for culturally diverse participants, BlogNog™ provided the ability to interact with respondents from around the world. Specifically, the BlogNography™ feature was utilized for this study; it provides the researcher and participants the opportunity to communicate directly with each other asynchronously fostering an in-depth interviewing process and exchange (Rubenstein & McDowell, 2012). In the recruiting email, each participant was provided with a unique username and password to access their set of questions on BlogNog™ and respond confidentially, without sharing any personal information at that stage. Username information was used to match participants’ answers on the demographic survey with their interview answers.

To improve the validity of the sampling and data collection procedures, discrepant data and negative cases were identified and analyzed as suggested by Maxwell (2012). Participants were not selected based on frequency of feedback seeking, which provided for respondents who frequently seek feedback (feedback
seekers) and less frequently or do not seek feedback (non-feedback seekers) to be included. Additionally, both feedback seeking and feedback avoidance instances were collected for each participant, which provided for discrepant evidence. Therefore, inconsistencies in account or responses can be detected and sufficient valid results can be collected (Maxwell, 2012). Finally, each participant first responded using their own perspective to the presented questions and then using the perspective of individuals in their country. This provided for both subjective and “objective” evidence.

Measures

All interviewees responded to five questions. The first two questions asked the participants to discuss the instances during which feedback seeking occurs in their countries, specifically addressing the personal as well as cultural reasons behind its occurrence or non-occurrence. These questions were similar across participants. Next, each participant was randomly presented with one of three sets of questions (three in total) that cover the primary costs and benefits of feedback seeking. Respondents were asked to comment on the extent to which the cost-benefit analysis described matches a) their personal approach to feedback seeking and b) the general (national) approach to feedback seeking in their country (See Appendix A).

Analysis

A directed content analysis approach was used to analyze the data (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). This approach relies on existing theory or prior research in
identifying key themes for an initial coding attempt. Following recent calls by scholars for the use of an integrative framework to examining feedback motives (i.e., SCENT; Anseel et al., 2007; Anseel et al., in press), results were initially mapped onto that model. Even though the SCENT model identifies four different motives for individuals’ seeking of self-relevant information, it did not allow for an all-inclusive categorization of all the possible feedback seeking motives and reasons provided by participants (particularly relevant to impression management). Upon further consideration of the data, Ashford and colleagues’ (2003) motives framework was selected as a more inclusive model for feedback seeking motives; it reflects that individuals have more than just self-evaluation motives when inquiring about their performance.

As a first step, operational definitions of the three feedback seeking motives categories (instrumental, ego-based, image-based) as well as the costs and benefits related to the decision of seeking feedback were reviewed and synthesized from extant literature (e.g., Anseel et al., in press; Ashford et al., 2003; Morrison & Bies, 1991; Tuckey et al., 2002) (Table 3). Next, responses were independently analyzed by two raters who have an extensive background in the feedback seeking literature. Each rater reviewed all responses carefully, making note of all text that appeared to describe a motivation, a cost, or a benefit of seeking feedback. Responses were also categorized based on whether respondents identified themselves as feedback seekers or non-feedback seekers. All noted text was mapped onto the predetermined categories previously identified in the literature, wherever possible.
Text that was not coded into one of these categories was provided another label that captured the essence of the motive, cost, or benefit described. After completing their separate coding, the raters discussed coding discrepancies and came to agreement on the coded category for each statement. The initial inter-rater reliability was 80% as determined by the consistency of identified motives by rater.

Raters reexamined the new labeled data to determine the need for subcategories or new categories (potential need for a culturally decentered model of feedback seeking) to maximize the understanding of the process across culturally diverse individuals. Finally, raters evaluated the extent to which the data was supportive of Ashford et al.’s (2003) framework for feedback seeking. From a statistical sense, the mention of themes relevant to the feedback seeking framework was calculated respectively for the feedback seekers and non-feedback seekers.

In summary, Study 1a sought to examine the universality of the feedback seeking concept across a culturally diverse group of individuals. The open-ended interview approach used in this study provided an opportunity to sample both universal and indigenous conceptualizations of feedback seeking from participants. Given that individuals are influenced by their cultural schemas when interpreting behaviors and the motives behind them, I further analyze the universality of feedback seeking motives and the cost-value framework in Study 1b.
Study 1b: Scenario-Based Qualitative Survey

Participants & Procedure

Additional assessment of the conceptual equivalence of the feedback process was collected using a scenario-based survey. The online survey was conducted with participants recruited using a snowball sampling approach. Sixty individuals were invited to complete the short survey. Methods to improve validity of sampling and data collection were similarly carried out as described in Study 1a.

The final sample consisted of 48 diverse individuals (40% male and 60% female) from a total of 14 countries, of which only 37.5% indicated identifying with another culture other than their own. The average age was 27 (SD= 8.13 years) and ranged from 19 to 58 years. The majority of participants (48%) were full-time students, more specifically graduate students (63%). The second highest represented group was full-time employees (29%) who worked in various countries and industries and held a variety of positions. Frequencies for the demographics, including type of industry and job function represented, can be found in Table 4.

Measures

Two matching sets of four scenarios were generated based on the operational definitions of the three feedback seeking motives categories (instrumental, ego-based, image-based) developed in Study 1a and Dahling et al.’s (2011) feedback seeking motives scale. The instrumental motive was illustrated by two scenarios; one scenario focused on the need to reduce uncertainty aspect of the
motive while the other focused on the value of accurate, objective, and constructive information. The ego-enhancement motive was exemplified by two scenarios which tapped into individuals’ attempt to enhance their egos by either (1) seeking positive feedback or (2) requesting feedback after good performance. To describe individuals’ image-enhancement motive for feedback seeking, two scenarios were used; one focused on seeking positive feedback while the other focused on increasing favorable perceptions through seeking negative feedback. Finally, the ego-defense and image-defense motive were each illustrated using one scenario. Participants were randomly directed to one of the two scenario sets. Scenarios included description of both feedback seeking and feedback avoidance instances and were collected for each participant. Following each scenario, participants were asked to respond to both open-ended and forced-choice questions regarding the feedback seeking behaviors described, as well as the motives and the context surrounding it (See Appendix B).

**Analysis**

Consistent with Study 1a, a directed content analysis approach was conducted (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). This encompassed an approach that was a combination of prior-research driven and data-driven methods. The same two raters again worked independently to code all collected open-ended responses and discussed any discrepancies. An 80% or above inter-rater reliability was achieved. Uncategorized text was noted and further discussed in regard to potential need for new unique categories. During the coding process, cross-comparisons were done.
for matching scenarios across sets to establish the analysis and coding logic. Additionally, for each scenario, raters compared responses of feedback seekers and non-feedback seekers to confirm the validity of the feedback seeking motives.

The purpose of Study 1b was to further examine and validate the cultural equivalence of the motives and thought processes surrounding feedback seeking. Therefore, the key question for this study was whether individuals could identify with currently suggested feedback seeking motives and the cost-value framework, regardless of cultural background. Overall, the two-part qualitative study sought to provide initial support for the examination of the feedback seeking concept across cultures; is feedback seeking as a process and behavior understood and identified in different cultures? However, Study 1(a-b) does not provide for a specific examination of the impact of sociocultural factors on the feedback seeking process, a point I develop further in Study 2.

**Study 2: Unpacking Study**

The purpose of Study 2, the unpackaging study, was to empirically assess the proposed focal relationships among cultural values, organizational context, and individual differences on feedback seeking frequency.

**Participants**

In order to assure the participation of a culturally diverse sample of respondents, participants were recruited through Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk) - an online marketplace for work which includes over 500,000 MTurk
workers (MTurkers) from 190 countries (Barger, Behrend, Sharek, & Sinar, 2011; Pontin, 2007). To ensure diversity in the sample, MTurk’s qualification features were used; access to the survey was restricted to no more than 100 individuals per nation and to MTurkers with over 95% of their completed assignments on Human Intelligence Tasks (HITs) accepted by previous requesters. This latter qualification is a proxy for characterizing the quality and attentiveness with which MTurkers complete their work (Mason & Suri, 2011).

The final sample consisted of 303 diverse participants (46% male and 54% female) from a total of 53 countries. The average age was 34 (SD=9.59 years) and ranged from 18 to 68 years. Respondents held a variety of positions and worked in a variety of industries, organizations, and countries. The majority of respondents were front line employees (69%), held their current job for more than two years (37% reported 2-5 years tenure and 32% reported more than 5 years tenure), and worked with the same supervisor for more than one year (34% reported 1-2 years and 28% reported 2-5 years). Eighty percent of respondents indicated interacting with their supervisor at least once a day. Demographics information of participants is reported in Table 5.

**Measures**

Different scales were utilized to assess each of the variables in the proposed model. All the measures described in this section are listed in Appendix C. Participants responded to all the measures, unless stated otherwise, using a Likert-type scale ranging from (1) “strongly disagree” to (6) “strongly agree.”
Tightness-Looseness

Cultural tightness or looseness was assessed using Gelfand et al.’s (2011) Tightness-Looseness (T-L) 6-item scale. The T-L scale measures the degree to which social norms are pervasive, clearly defined, and reliably imposed within nations. Higher scores indicate an orientation toward tightness as opposed to looseness in a society. A sample item from this scale is “In this country, there are very clear expectations for how people should act in most situations.” Gelfand et al. (2011) reported good reliability of the scale at the national level ($\alpha = .85$) and structural equivalence (i.e., similarity in factor structures) across nations. In this study, the scale yielded low internal consistency estimate ($\alpha = .57$).

Need For Harmony

To measure cultural need for harmony, six items were adapted from Hwang et al.’s (2002) Face Concern measure which evaluates cultural concerns of face-gain and face-loss. The structure of the scale was validated in an Asian sample (Chinese, Indians, and Malay) and showed acceptable internal consistency ($\alpha = .74$). Additionally, two items from the Environment cultural orientation of Maznevski et al.’s (2002) Cultural Perspective Questionnaire 8 (CPQ8) were used. Specifically, these items discuss harmony in the context of interpersonal relationships which match my conception of Need for Harmony in this study. Maznevski et al. (2002) reported acceptable goodness of fit indices and good factor structure of the overall scale across a sample of five nations. Goodness of fit indices (GFI) ranged from .89 to .91 for aggregated data on the Environment
dimension, while GFI ranged from .84 to .90 for within-country data. Additionally, Maznevski, Chui, Athanassiou, and Wäger (2013) reported an internal consistency coefficient of .89 for the dimension based on data from 47 countries. In order to utilize these scales as measures of an overall cultural preference, items were reworded to describe the behavior of the people of a country rather than reflecting the respondents’ own behavioral tendencies. Sample items from each of the measures are “People in this country fear making mistakes in public,” “In this country, it is important to be thought of as a decent individual,” and “It is critical to maintain harmony in social situations.” High scores on all items indicate a preference for need for harmony.

**Relation to Broad Environment**

The Relation to Broad Environment cultural value-based dimension was measured using 13 items from the Environment orientation of Maznevski et al.’s (2002) CPQ8. Specifically, items related to the Mastery sub-dimension which measures beliefs surrounding the degree to which individuals are separated from the world around them, and their role in influencing and controlling the environment and the Subjugation sub-dimension which measures the degree to which individuals put effort into changing the basic direction of the broader environment around them, and allow themselves to be influenced by that environment (Maznevski et al., 2013; Maznevski et al., 2002). Maznevski et al. (2013) reported an internal consistency coefficient of .72 for the sub-dimensions based on data from 47 countries. Sample items are: “People should realize they do
not have control over events in their lives,” “People can fix almost any problem they face if they use the right methods,” and “It is important for people to be in control of the events around them.” The remaining items measuring this cultural dimension were developed based on the concept of high versus low context communication described by Hall (1976). Similar to the Need for Harmony items, all items were reworded to describe the behavior of the people of a country rather than reflecting the respondents’ own behavioral tendencies. A total of seven items were included. A sample item reads “People in this country explicitly state what they really mean when communicating with others (R).”

**Feedback Environment**

Employees’ rating of the feedback environment in their organization was measured using the FES- Supervisor factor which includes 21 items covering the 7 dimensions of the feedback environment. Sample items from this scale are “My supervisor is generally familiar with my performance on the job” and “The performance feedback I receive from my supervisor is helpful.” Studies have reported a mean Cronbach’s alpha of .96 for this scale (Anseel et al., in press).

**Feedback Seeking Motives**

Dahling, O’Malley, and Chau’s (2011) scales were utilized to measure employees’ feedback seeking motives. This scale includes a five-item measure of the instrumental motive, a five-item measure of the ego defense motive, a seven-item measure of the ego enhancement motive, a six-item measure of the image defense motive, and a six-item measure of the image enhancement motive. Sample
items are “I seek feedback when I am uncertain about my role in the organization,”
“Asking for feedback is threatening to my ego,” and “Requesting feedback can
communicate to others that I am a good, responsible worker.”

**Feedback Seeking Frequency**

Employees’ tendency to seek feedback was measured using a 16-item scale
developed by McDonald and Sully de Luque (personal communication, August,
2013). Items were rated on a 6-point Likert type scale ranging from 1 (never) to 6
(always). Participants were asked to report on the frequency of specific feedback
seeking experiences from a supervisor or boss in their most recent job. Sample
items are: “I ask my supervisor if I am meeting all of my job requirements,” and “I
pay attention to how my boss acts towards me in order to understand how he or she
perceives and evaluates my work performance.”

**Control Variable: Trait Positive and Negative Affect**

Respondents’ affectivity has been reported to have an effect on their
specifically, negative affectivity – the propensity of respondents to view themselves
and the world around them in generally negative terms – was found to affect self-
reports of generally negative features of the work situation (e.g., stressors; Burke,
Brief, & George, 1993). On the other hand, positive affectivity – the propensity of
respondents to view and report about themselves and the world around them in
generally positive terms – affects responses regarding positive features of one’s
work situation (e.g., job satisfaction, supervisor support; Burke et al., 1993).
Therefore, the 10-item International PANAS short form (I-PANAS-SF) (Thompson, 2007) was used to assess trait positive and negative affect. The scale consists of words demonstrated suitable for cross-cultural English-based studies. Words describe different feelings and emotions, with 5 tapping into the negative affectivity dimension (e.g., afraid, nervous) and 5 tapping into the positive affectivity dimension (e.g., active, inspired). In accordance with procedures outlined by Watson, Clark, and Tellegen (1988), respondents were asked to indicate to what extent they generally feel the affect on a Likert response scale ranging from 1 (very slightly or not at all) to 5 (always).

**Demographics**

Participants were asked to report on their age, gender, English proficiency, job/organization tenure, job level, country of birth, countries of residence and length of stay, the countries/cultures they most closely identify with, the work relationship with their supervisor, and the location of their organization.

**National Properties**

The global properties of the nations represented in the sample with more than 25 participants (Canada, India, and United States) were gathered for additional exploratory analyses. Specifically, Table 6 provides rankings for each nation on Gross Domestic Product (GDP; World Bank, 2013), Human Development Index (HDI; UNDP, 2013), and Risk of Political Instability (RPI; Economist Intelligence Unit, 2014). The HDI measures a nation’s social and economic development by combining indicators of life expectancy, educational attainment, and income into a
composite score, expressed as a value between 0 and 1. The score indicates a country’s standing in relation to a predetermined minimum and maximum for each of the examined dimensions of human development (UNDP, 2013). The RPI assesses long-term trends or characteristics of country as related to its human rights record, resource security, and vulnerability to natural hazards. The index also takes into account a country’s social resilience, including any long-term impact from past conflict. The RPI uses a seven-level ranking index. In ascending order of risk, these are: A1, A2, A3, A4, B, C and D (Coface, 2014).

**Procedure**

Prior to completing the survey, all participants were required to answer qualifying questions; participants must be currently employed, report to a supervisor, and be at least minimally proficient in English. Once qualified, participants were presented with a detailed informed consent clearly describing the study, the level of effort required, payment details, and the contact information of the researcher. Payment rates were determined based on the length of the survey; 75 American cents for 20 minutes of survey time. Since the measures utilized to test the framework may be affected by socially desirable responding and common method bias, they were counterbalanced leading to two versions of the full questionnaire, both ending with demographic questions. Questionnaire versions were randomly presented to employees depending on their birth day, which was reported after the informed consent. Odd numbers directed participants to Version A of the questionnaire and even numbers to Version B.
Scholars have recently warned about the effect of a response set called Insufficient Effort Responding (IER) on the validity of survey measures by increasing the probability of Type-I error (Liu, Bowling, Huang, & Kent, 2013). Described as the tendency of respondents to “answer[s] a survey measure with low or little motivation to comply with survey instructions, correctly interpret item content, and provide accurate responses” (Huang, Curran, Keeney, Poposki, & DeShon, 2012, p.100), IER has been consistently reported to be prevalent among paid online samples (e.g., MTurk) using online survey platforms (Liu et al., 2013). Given that this study utilized such a sample and method of data collection, IER detection approaches were implemented. First, the survey included quality check items (e.g., I was born on February 31st, I eat cement occasionally; Huang et al., 2013). Liu et al. (2013) stated that all or mostly all honest and attentive participants should respond to these items in a similar manner. Participants were made aware that if these items are not responded to correctly, their surveys will be rejected and would lead to nonpayment for the HIT. Barger et al. (2011) suggested that such an approach can be used as an incentive for workers to produce high quality data. Second, using a repeated-item approach, participants were asked to report the number of hours they work in a week at the beginning and end of the survey. IER was identified when respondents provided different answers to the same question (Liu et al., 2013). Finally, respondents who completed the survey faster than the average completion time across respondents were removed as insufficient effort responders (Liu et al., 2013).
CHAPTER 4

Results

Study 1: Test of Conceptual Equivalence

Existing theories of feedback seeking identify contextual, organizational, and individual factors that might impact the cost-value framework upon which employees’ decision to seek feedback is based (Anseel et al., in press; Ashford et al., 2003). Although some have suggested that the feedback seeking concept is universal (Sully de Luque & Sommer, 2000), no study to date has solely explored this statement. In this section, I inductively explore the motives, costs, and benefits for feedback seeking from a diverse sample of individuals, and further examine the similarities and differences in the meaning of feedback seeking across cultures. Therefore, the consideration of distal factors (contextual and organizational factors) is beyond the scope of this study and will be examined in Study 2.

Qualitative comments were coded into categories reflecting the feedback seeking motives, the content of the categories was analyzed and interpreted, and sample comments are provided for each category. Conceptual equivalence would be suggested if qualitative responses from people shaped by divergent cultural values reflect the same concepts (Hiu & Triandis, 1985). In other words, a construct is recognized as being conceptually equivalent cross-culturally if it can be meaningfully discussed in each of the cultures concerned. Respondents in Study 1a
were categorized into seven regions: Africa (N=2), North America (N=1), South America (N=1), Asia (N=4), Australia (N=2), Europe (N=9), and Middle East (N=2). Five regions were represented in Study 1b as follows: North America (N=10), South America (N=3), Asia (N=5), Europe (N=14), and Middle East (N=16).

**Study 1a: Interview-Based Qualitative Survey**

Participants were initially asked to indicate (a) whether they usually ask for advice, opinion or evaluation regarding their work (at school/work) and (b) why they engage in this behavior (Question 1). Table 7 presents sample quotes illustrating respondents’ stated frequency and reasons for seeking feedback. Results were categorized by feedback seekers (respondents who report frequently seeking feedback) (N=16) versus non-feedback seekers (respondents who report not or less frequently seeking feedback) (N=5) and further identified by country of origin.

Eight relevant themes emerged from the directed content analysis approach to the question “do you ask for feedback at work, why or why not?” The first four themes revolved around feedback seeking motives and could be mapped onto four of the five motives put forth by Ashford et al. (2003), namely instrumental, ego-enhancement, image-defense, and image-enhancement motives. The next four themes reflected enhancing and suppressing boundary conditions to feedback seeking: (a) novelty, the unfamiliar nature of a task or situation; (b) depends on context, the features of the environment surrounding the decision to seek feedback; (c) depends on person, the personality characteristics; and (d) monitoring, the
preference for deductive observation. The frequency of these themes as reported by feedback seekers and non-feedback seekers are presented in Table 8. The responses analyzed varied in the level of detail and explanation provided; one participant could have made multiple comments and multiple motives could have been coded for one response. This accounts then for coding frequencies that exceed the sample size (N=21).

**Instrumental Motive.** Overall, regardless of cultural background, the instrumental motive was reported as the primary motive behind seeking feedback for both feedback seekers (N=16, 100%) and non-feedback seekers (N=3, 60%) who were spread across the following regions: Africa (N=2), South America (N=1), Asia (N=4), Australia (N=1), Europe (N=9), and Middle East (N=2). This theme reflected respondents’ motivation to request information and inquire about their performance with the goal of learning and improving, diagnosing if they are on track and performing up to par, reducing uncertainty, and double checking their work. Respondents also valued feedback information because it challenges them to push their limits and provides them with differing viewpoints. Even if participants did not typically seek feedback, they saw value in requesting help and advice.

**Image-enhancement & Image-defense Motive.** Image-based motives were identified as secondary motives to engaging in feedback seeking across respondents (N=4, 20%) who were from Europe (N=3) and the Middle East (N=1). Apart from its instrumental value, respondents reported seeking feedback in an attempt to control how they appeared to others. By inquiring about their
performance or requesting advice and help about areas of improvement, they reported they are able to create a professional, competent, composed, and well-informed image of themselves (i.e., image-enhancement motive). Nevertheless, respondents expressed their concern about others perceiving them to be weak or vulnerable because they ask for feedback (i.e., image-defense motive).

**Ego-enhancement Motive.** The last feedback seeking motive to be reported was ego-enhancement. Only one participant, from Europe (N=1, 5%), indicated that “boosting [my] self-esteem [and] self-assurance in the task” (Slovakia) was a personally motivating factor for seeking feedback.

**Novelty.** Nineteen percent of respondents (N=4; two from Europe, one from Africa, and one from South America) indicated that the instrumentality or value of the feedback received was, for the most part, a factor of their unfamiliarity with a task (e.g., “the topic of work is new to me” (Italy), “I do only ask for advice for all those things I’m not familiar with” (Spain), “new assignment” (Algeria) or situation (e.g., “when contacting a professor for the first time” (Brazil)). This supports extant literature which found that the novelty of a context (Callister, Kramer, & Turban, 1999), a job (Ashford et al., 2003; Morrison, 1993) or role (Ibarra, 1999) enhances the salience of the instrumental motive and, subsequently, feedback seeking.

**Depends on Context.** In general, five respondents (24%; Africa (N=1), Asia (N=1), Europe (N=2), and Middle East (N=1)) saw in the context surrounding feedback seeking features that could serve as enhancers or suppressors for seeking
feedback. Consider the following responses: “It highly depends on the context […]
I ask for advice from all those people I personally consider better than me on a
specific matter” (Spain), “Given that I work as researcher in the university, I
believe that it is very important to have others' opinion and suggestions in order to
have different points of view on the issue I'm working on.” (Italy), “I’ve been used
to being with people who tell me how they feel about my work without having to
ask” (Algeria), and “I never ask for advice, opinion, or evaluation unless forced”
(China). It appears that the characteristics of others (e.g., credibility, knowledge)
enhance the likelihood of feedback seeking by creating more of an instrumental
need for feedback. On the other hand, the consistent and constant provision of
feedback seems to suppress the value of requesting feedback. These observations
match the work of Williams et al. (1999) and some of the dimensions of the
feedback environment explored by Steelman et al. (2004). Moreover, the type of
setting (e.g., university) influenced the meaning of inquiry. Even though asking for
feedback from colleagues would have provided critical and instrumental
information, the expectation is that it would be construed as a sign of insecurity. As
such, image concerns are more likely to drive one’s decision to seek feedback,
supporting previous findings by Ashford and Northcraft (1992) and Ashford and
Tsui (1991). Finally, normative features of the environment (e.g., rules or
requirements) played the role of external motivators for feedback seeking. The
responses in this category correspond to what scholars have called for over the past
30 years; there is a need to move beyond individual factors and focus on features of the context that could impact the decision to seek feedback.

**Depends on Person.** Respondents from the Middle East also expressed that their decision to seek feedback is bound by their personality (N=2, 10%). Describing themselves as conscientious and driven individuals, they expressed that these traits play an important role in their tendency to seek or not seek feedback. Krasman (2010) demonstrated that an individual’s personality makeup can partially determine their feedback seeking tendencies. Highly conscientious individuals were more likely to seek feedback from supervisors than were less conscientious employees. This is illustrated, in this study, by the following response: “I am usually a conscientious person, so I want to make sure I am doing my job the best I can” (*Lebanon*). Still, certain personal attributes play a suppressor role, as this other participant from Lebanon indicated:

No, I usually do it on my own. I try to understand as best as possible the work I have to do the first time it’s explained to me. It’s a personal thing. I like to demonstrate competence by appearing to be as independent as possible. It’s important for me to feel like I can do so, given that solitude is a very important factor for me.

**Monitoring.** Previously seen as an automatic processing of feedback, whereby individuals absorb cues about their performance from the surrounding environment (Gilbert, Giesler, & Morris, 1995), some aspects of monitoring have been argued to occur consciously (Ashford et al., 2003). For example, individuals
actively observe others, are aware of the cues, compare themselves to others, and
deduce what others think about their performance. Individuals with a preference for
monitoring are less likely to directly seek feedback. In fact, as the respondent from
Australia points out: “Oftentimes one can deduce the feedback that would be
provided by observing what becomes of the work that is produced. […] Also,
simply by listening to the words of the person giving you feedback upon submitting
[the work] can suffice.”

Participants were also asked to indicate (a) whether it is common in their
country of birth for people to ask for advice, opinion or evaluation regarding the
work they are doing and (b) why they engage in this behavior (Question 2). Sample
quotes illustrating participants’ responses are presented in Table 9 and identified by
country of origin.

Five relevant themes emerged from the directed analysis of the content of
each response to these questions. The first two revolved around feedback seeking
motives and could be mapped onto two of Ashford et al.’s (2003) feedback seeking
motives, namely instrumental and image-enhancement. Similar to Question 1, the
next three themes related to boundary conditions that either enhance or suppress the
tendency to seek feedback: (a) collective, the need to benefit the group; (b) depends
on context, the features of the environment surrounding the decision to seek
feedback; and (c) depends on person, the personality characteristics of the
individual seeker. The frequency of reference of each theme is presented in Table
10.
**Instrumental Motive.** The instrumental motive was reported as the primary motive behind seeking feedback across most cultures represented in the sample (N=11, 61%), as follows: Africa (N=2), South America (N=1), Asia (N=2), Australia (N=2), Europe (N=3), and Middle East (N=1). This theme reflected a common motivation to learn and improve, and receive different viewpoints, help, and advice. Respondents also reported a common tendency to actively inquire about their performance as they valued having their work diagnosed against set standards and expectations.

**Image-enhancement Motive.** The other motive that emerged was image-enhancement. It was identified by a respondent from India (N=1, 6%) who indicated that other reasons to request feedback include impression management.

**Collective.** A number of respondents (N=7, 39%), spanning the regions of Africa (N=2), South America (N=1), Asia (N=2), Europe (N=1), and Middle East (N=1), also indicated that the decision to seek feedback was, for the most part, a factor of the collective and collectivism. That is, feedback seeking was seen as an attempt to gather and share information among group members. For example: “our culture is more of group oriented, thus, getting others’ opinions and advice is common and is a sign of respect for groups you’re belonging in” (Ethiopia) and “Probably because the culture is based on collectivistic values […] they wouldn’t seek for competitive reasons” (Lebanon). The culture value of power distance was also implied in a few responses. For example: “there is a high distance of power between employer and employee, so it is not so common to ask for the supervisor’s
opinion” (*Italy*); and “Due to the high power distance […], people usually seek advice, opinions, and evaluations from superiors” (*India*).

These statements support what Sully de Luque and Sommer (2000) previously suggested. As cultures support greater distance between superiors and subordinates, individuals are less inclined to directly seek feedback, and consequently, peers become more important sources of feedback. Additionally, in collectivist cultures, individuals are more likely to seek feedback that would benefit the group rather than the self.

**Depends on Context.** Seven respondents (39%) from Africa (N=1), Australia (N=2), Europe (N=3), and the Middle East (N=1) reported that the social and organizational contexts could enhance or suppress seeking feedback. Consider the following responses:

- “In Canada, Quebec, it is more common to have people asking questions and looking for advice. People actually get mad if you seem too shy to ask” (*Algeria*).
- “If the situation is one which requires someone to ask for help, or one is which asking for help could [be] beneficial then yes” (*Lebanon*).
- “My work setting is quite atypical because I’m working at the university, so it is necessary to have the supervisor opinion on the work I’m doing” (*Italy*).
- “Feedback is widely encouraged by HR and the ultimate power-heads.” (*Australia*).
It is apparent that the organizational context as well as other social norms can sometimes supersede cultural tendencies in promoting feedback seeking. Therefore, this reveals the need to consider again the role of external motivators for feedback seeking that go above and beyond a culture’s preferences.

**Depends on Person.** One respondent from Italy indicated that individuals’ decision to seek feedback is not only a factor of their culture, but is also bound by their personality: “I wouldn’t say it is common, but I wouldn’t say it’s uncommon either. I guess it comes down to the individual’s personality traits.” This statement highlights what cultural scholars have consistently called for, in that cross-cultural research should not ignore variability within nations.

The remaining interview questions addressed currently accepted motives/reasons behind feedback seeking and avoidance. Participants were asked to indicate whether they personally would engage in feedback seeking/feedback avoidance for those reasons, and whether individuals from their country would engage in these behaviors as well. Following an analysis of responses, both raters came to the conclusion that participants were not clear on how to answer Questions 3-5. Therefore, results will not be reported for these questions.

In summary, these results suggest that, regardless of their cultural identity, participants recognized and meaningfully discussed similar drivers and boundary conditions affecting both theirs’ and others’ tendency to engage in feedback seeking. Additionally, the themes that emerged mapped onto the feedback seeking motives previously identified by Ashford and colleagues (2003). They also
matched personal and situational conditions identified in the extant feedback seeking literature, and cross-cultural research, as creating boundary conditions for feedback seeking. Thus, these findings provide initial evidence that feedback seeking is conceptually equivalent cross-culturally.

**Study 1b: Scenario-Based Qualitative Survey**

The main focus of Study 1b was to determine whether individuals could identify with currently suggested feedback seeking motives and the cost-value framework, regardless of cultural background. The scenarios presented to participants focused on one specific feedback seeking motive or aspect of a motive. Following each feedback seeking scenario, participants were asked to think of a term or terms in their native language that would relate to the behavior described in the scenario. Proposed terms fell into a total of eight categories: (a) feedback seeking, (b) asking for advice, (c) asking for clarification, (d) proactivity, (e) conscientiousness, (f) communication, (g) impression management, and (h) self-affirmation. Table 1 provides a summary of the terms identified by participants. It is interesting to note that these categories mirror extant definitions of feedback seeking (categories a-c) and feedback seeking motives (category g= image-based motive; category h= ego-based motive).

Participants were also asked to provide their opinion, in open-ended format, about the reason(s) that drove the protagonist in each of the scenarios to seek feedback. As described in Chapter 3, each scenario was developed with a specific feedback seeking motive in mind. Scenarios 1 and 2 described situations in which
feedback was sought based on the instrumental motive. Scenarios 3 and 8 described instances where feedback seeking was driven by an image-enhancement motive. Scenarios 4 and 6 illustrated the ego-enhancement motive, while scenarios 5 and 7 respectively exemplified the ego-defense and image-defense motives. Rater 2, blind to the scenario categorization, analyzed each open-ended comment and identified the feedback seeking motive denoted. Next, Rater 1 coded responses as hits (correct identification of the feedback seeking motive illustrated) or misses (incorrect identification of the feedback seeking motive illustrated). Results are presented in Table 1. An analysis of the data first suggests that there was no difference in responses across cultural background. Second, participants were most successful at correctly identifying image-defense (82%) and instrumental motives (77%), and least successful at identifying ego-defense (35%). Both ego-enhancement and image-enhancement motives were identified correctly and incorrectly with equal frequency.

Additional insights into the equivalence of the feedback seeking motives come from asking respondents to specify the likelihood of engaging in the same behavior as the scenario characters: “If you were in the place of X, will you do the same?” Respondents were asked to further discuss the reasoning behind their behavior/answer (Table 13).

*Instrumental Motive Scenario.* Overall, the majority of participants exposed to the instrumental motive scenarios (N=21, 68%) agreed they would seek feedback under this motive. Regardless of their cultural identity, respondents
referred to the behavior as a proactive attempt at (a) understanding the standards by which one is being evaluated, (b) reducing uncertainties surrounding one’s performance, and (c) developing and improving. Consider the following response which summarized very well the three drivers identified above: “If I am not sure whether I am performing up to par, then I would certainly ask my boss for his/her comments regarding my strengths and weaknesses. How can one improve upon their performance if they never receive feedback by way of assessment?” (Lebanon). Others perceived instrumental value in seeking feedback in that it would help them avoid making mistakes (e.g., “In order to make sure I know what I will be doing, and I am capable of doing it, and avoid mistakes due to misunderstanding” (Germany). Still others saw their behavior as predominantly dependent on the context and a factor of their relationship with their supervisor or peers. For example, a respondent from the UK indicated the following: “It depends on the context and my relationship with the manager […] if the manager is a friend or someone whom I look to for advice and guidance in my work I might ask [for feedback]”. Finally, two participants (one from Lebanon and one from Norway) described the behavior as simply a polite behavior; an individual’s attempt at being accommodating to his/her supervisor.

Ego-based Motives Scenarios. Regardless of their cultural identity, the majority of participants exposed to both the ego-defense motive (N= 11, 61%) and ego-enhancement motive (N=14, 54%) scenarios indicated that they were less certain about their willingness to seek feedback when it is driven by the need to
maintain, protect, or enhance their ego. Rather, many participants stated that they would prefer to avoid actively seeking feedback or avoid seeking feedback completely. For example, one respondent from Lebanon indicated that she would avoid seeking feedback because of the probability of receiving negative performance feedback: “I might be afraid that a negative comment might affect how much I like my work and could affect my self-esteem thus my performance.” This corresponds to the findings of Roberson, Deitch, Brief, and Block (2003) who demonstrated that it is more difficult for individuals to disregard feedback that they actively solicited. Therefore, they are less likely to inquire about their performance if there’s chance the feedback will be unfavorable. Another respondent from Germany stated that she would avoid seeking positive feedback after good performance as it would probably backfire on her: “because I knew that the boss is happy with me. Why say it again and again? It is like ‘fishing for compliments’, if I were the boss I wouldn't like that kind of behavior from my employees, so that's why being [an] employee, I wouldn't do it either.”

It was apparent that many respondents worried about losing face if they appeared to be seeking feedback not for its informational value but rather to be praised for their good performance and feel good about themselves. Other respondents appeared to be more calculative when deciding to engage in feedback seeking based on ego-based motives; they explored their options based on the context surrounding them (organization, supervisor, and peers). Consider this response from a participant from the United States: “It would depend on the
manager. If I had seen the manager give extremely negative feedback to other employees I would not want to expose myself to that. But if the manager gives constructive criticism to other employees, I would be willing to hear their opinion on my work.” Although not referred to by name, the feedback environment, as described by Steelman and colleagues (2004), appeared to play the role of a moderator in respondents’ decision to seek feedback under ego-based motives.

**Image-based Motives Scenarios.** Finally, participants indicated they were least inclined to seek feedback given image-based motives. More specifically, none stated that they would seek feedback to protect their public image or to reduce unfavorable impressions others may hold (i.e., image-defense motive). On the other hand, a few respondents (N=5, 24%), from Europe (N=3) and the Middle East (N=2), were willing to seek feedback in an attempt to increase others’ favorable perceptions and create an image of effectiveness and attentiveness to one’s job, as well as demonstrate caring for the opinion of others (i.e., image-enhancement motive). This is well illustrated by the sample quote presented in Table 13. Yet again, the context played an important role in some respondents’ (N=3, 14%; Europe (N=1) and Middle East (N=2)) decision-making process; it helped them weigh the benefits against the costs of engaging in seeking feedback given image-based motives. This is well illustrated in the following response:

> It depends on the context and my relationship with the manager. For example if the manager is a friend or someone who I look to for advice and guidance in my work I might ask. If I know I have been slacking I would try
to make up for it with great work that albeit late would produce respect but I would probably not go to the boss to ask for time management directions which I probably would not take (*Lebanon*).

In summary, the findings of Study 1b suggest that, regardless of their cultural identity, participants recognized and meaningfully discussed feedback seeking. The themes that emerged mapped onto extant feedback seeking definitions as well as matched drivers and motives identified by Ashford and colleagues (2003). Additionally, the content analysis indicated that respondents were able to successfully identify most feedback seeking motives, as described in the scenario(s). Finally, it was apparent that participants were aware of different boundary conditions that affect their decision to engage in feedback seeking given certain motives. The described boundary conditions matched social and situational factors recognized in the extant feedback seeking literature. Therefore, the results of Study 1b provide secondary evidence that the feedback seeking process is conceptually equivalent across cultures.

**Conclusion**

The purpose of the two-study qualitative approach was mainly to examine the universality of the feedback seeking concept and validate the currently accepted feedback seeking process and motives across a culturally diverse group of individuals. Results from Study 1a suggest conceptual equivalence of Ashford et al.’s (2003) feedback seeking motives framework as opposed to the SCENT model. This finding suggests that across cultures individuals have more than just self-
evaluation motives when inquiring about their performance. That is, the study provides evidence for socially influenced motives for feedback seeking (e.g., impression management), across national borders. On the other hand, Study 1b sought to further examine and validate the cultural equivalence of feedback seeking. Results not only reveal the universality of the feedback seeking concept, but the various approaches to defining feedback seeking also highlight differences in the drivers for engaging in, as well as avoiding, seeking feedback. Furthermore, there was no difference across regional categorization of the identification and endorsement of the different motives and drivers for feedback seeking.

The open-ended format approach used in both studies provided an opportunity to sample both universal and indigenous conceptualizations of feedback seeking from participants and provide more valid ground to conclude from the results that feedback seeking is a universal and equivalent concept across cultures. While previous studies have focused on comparing employees based on national affiliation (e.g., MacDonald et al., 2013; Morrison et al., 2004), overall findings of Study 1a and Study 1b revealed no response trend specific to one country versus another, but rather heterogeneity across respondents of the same country. In fact, results point to a contextual (organization, supervisor) and personal (motives, personality) influence on the distribution of feedback seeking frequency within a nation.

These studies also provide insight into the boundary conditions (different motives and factors) surrounding the decision to seek within cultures. There was a
general consensus among respondents that feedback seeking is viewed as a sign of proactivity as related to enhancing one’s performance and having a clear understanding of supervisor expectations. At the same time, participants failed to distinguish between ego/image defense and enhancement motives. One potential interpretation is that our results, although not having explicitly examined this, simply confirm that between the three motives, the instrumental motive is the most dominant (e.g., Ashford, 1986; Morrison, 1995). In fact, what we found was respondents endorsed adopting an instrumental motive in situations where ego- and image-based motives would have been exhibited. One implication is that there is a genuine, strong need for accurate, objective, and constructive job-related feedback information. However, the general lack of endorsement of ego-based motives by participants may be a factor of social desirability responding or even self-deception.

Another direction to interpreting the results lies in the makeup of the samples for both studies; students were widely represented in the samples as opposed to full-time employees. It could be that given the majority of respondents’ status as students, who are surrounded by a learning environment, ego-based and image-based motives were less salient as compared to being exposed to a work environment where performance and achievement are more valued.
Study 2: Unpackaging Study

Preliminary Analyses

In preparing the data for analysis, all incomplete cases and those with more than 20% of the data missing were first removed. The data was then screened for univariate outliers; scale raw scores were converted into z-scores. Any score larger than the absolute value of 3.29 was identified as an outlier and evaluated for removal (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Moreover, multivariate outlier analysis was conducted; Malahanobis distance (Malahanobis d) was calculated. Cases with a p < .001 for Malahanobis d were identified as multivariate outliers and removed from further analysis (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

Visual inspection of the data showed a slightly positively skewed distribution for the ego-defense motive, image-defense motive, and negative affectivity. That is, respondents lower levels of defensive feedback seeking motives and overall negative affect traits. On the other hand, the supervisor feedback environment had a slightly negative skewed distribution; most respondents reported more favorable supervisor facilitated feedback environment. However, none of the skewness descriptives exceeded an absolute value of 1.8. Based on Curran, West, and Finch (1996), skewness values below an absolute value of 2.0 should not be a concern for non-normality. Thus, subsequent analyses assumed normality of the data.
Scale reliabilities were examined using Nunnally’s (1978) proposed acceptable level of internal consistency (i.e., $\alpha \geq .70$). As reported earlier, all of the scales, except Tightness-Looseness, had acceptable alphas and were consistent with previous reliability results. Cortina (1993) noted that the value of alpha depends on the number of items on the scale. Specifically, as the number of items in the scale increases so does alpha. Further exploration of items statistics indicated that item 3 of the Tightness-Looseness measure (i.e., People agree upon what behaviors are appropriate versus inappropriate in most situations in this country) was slightly negatively correlated with all other items on the scale with an item-total correlation of -.05. This is due to the lower overall rating mean for that item across participants ($M = 2.48; SD = 1.13$). Based on this, the factorability of the six Tightness-Looseness items was examined. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was .74, above the commonly recommended value of .6 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007), and Bartlett’s test of sphericity was significant ($\chi^2 (15) = 241.14, p < .05$). The diagonals of the anti-image correlation matrix were all over .5, except for item 3 ($r = .39$). Field (2005) advised excluding items with an anti-image correlation value below .5 from analysis. Item 3 was therefore discarded and the Tightness-Looseness measure was reduced to five items ($\alpha = .70$).

A matrix reporting descriptive statistics, correlations, and reliabilities for all scales can be examined in Table 14. Correlation analysis suggested that no correlation was high enough as to imply the presence of multicollinearity (Tabacknick & Fidell, 2007). A review of the scale means suggests that, overall,
participants reported high levels of cultural tightness, a high cultural tendency for harmony, and high cultural interdependence with their environment, across all represented countries. Respondents reported favorable perception of the feedback environment, as facilitated by their supervisor. Instrumental motive was reported, on average, as the most common driver of feedback seeking, followed by the ego-enhancement and image-enhancement motives. The image-defense and ego-defense motives were, on average, less frequently endorsed motives for feedback seeking. Additionally, individuals indicated, on average, moderately engaging in overall feedback seeking behaviors; direct feedback seeking ($M=3.72; SD=1.18$) and indirect feedback seeking ($M=3.69; SD=.95$). Finally, respondents described themselves overall as possessing positive trait affect as opposed to negative trait affect.

In order to assess common method bias or social desirability within the results, survey versions were compared with respect to respondents’ demographics and scale scores. In total, 148 participants completed Version 1 and 155 completed Version 2 of the survey. No significant mean differences were found across versions of the survey, in terms of participants’ demographic characteristics. Mean comparisons between versions indicate that respondents in Version 1 ($M=4.60; SD=0.58$) reported significantly higher cultural need for harmony ($F(1,301) = 7.02, p<.01$) than respondents in Version 2 ($M=4.42; SD=0.59$). Moreover, participants were significantly different in the extent to which they were driven by instrumental motives ($F(1,301) = 5.94, p<.05$) and ego-enhancement motives ($F$
Specifically, Version 2 respondents were significantly more driven by an instrumental motive ($M= 4.95; SD=0.60$) and ego-enhancement motive ($M= 4.02; SD=1.06$) than Version 1 respondents (instrumental: $M= 4.78; SD=0.66$, ego-enhancement: $M= 3.72; SD=1.20$). Further exploration of the order of each measure in Version 1 and Version 2 showed that need for harmony, instrumental motive, and ego-enhancement scale items were preceded and followed by the same items across versions of the survey. Therefore, order effect can be discarded as potentially impacting the results. Additionally, since only three of twelve measures significantly differed across survey versions, it is unlikely that method bias is the primary reason for this difference (Spector, 2006). Nevertheless, caution should be taken when interpreting results relying on the overall sample.

**Confirmatory Factor Analysis**

The factor structure of all scales used in this study was submitted to a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) using LISREL (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 2006). Two structural models were tested: the cultural dimensions model (hereafter referred to as the culture model) and the feedback process model (hereafter referred to as the feedback model) as illustrated in Figure 5 and Figure 6. Suggested as a potential source for common method bias, respondents’ trait affectivity (positive and negative) was included in the two models to partial out its effect on scale responses (e.g., Podsakoff et al., 2003). Following common practice for running CFA, scale items were grouped to form composite variables – or item parcels – for their respective scales, when applicable (e.g., Hall, Snell, & Foust, 1999; Landis,
Beal, & Tesluk, 2000). Two composites were created to reflect the two subdimensions of trait affectivity (positive affectivity and negative affectivity). Both models were identified by setting any latent factor means to 0 and latent factor variances to 1, such that all item intercepts, factor loadings, and residual variances were estimated.

For the culture model, the exploratory factor analysis (EFA) method was the basis for creating item parcels. A principal component analysis was performed on each scale. The factor structure of the three cultural value dimension measures was determined using Kaiser’s criterion and the scree plot. The analysis returned a single-factor solution for the Tightness-Looseness 5-item measure. As such, each item was defined as one parcel; Tightness-Looseness had five parcels. Both Need for Harmony and Relation to Broad Environment returned with a three-factor solution. The item parcels for each scale were formed by summing the items that loaded onto each factor; each scale had three parcels. For the feedback model, the content-oriented strategy which relies on the apparent dimensionality of the scales was utilized to create composites. This resulted in seven composites for Feedback Environment Scale; five composites for Feedback Seeking Motives; and three composites for Feedback Seeking. Composites were formed by summing the items that make each scale’s subdimension.

Research has recommended reporting multiple measures of goodness-of-fit in a CFA, namely Goodness of Fit Index (GFI), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), and Root Mean Square Error (RMSEA) (Kelloway, 1998). The GFI accurately
measures absolute fit for large sample sizes (Bentler, 1990) while the CFI tests the theorized model against some null model to support the enhancement of fit. For both GFI and CFA, a general conventional threshold indicating a good model fit is .90, with higher scores indicating better fit (Kelloway, 1998). The RMSEA is an indication of fit discrepancy between the original and the reproduced matrices (Steiger, 1990). A value of less than .10 indicates a good fit as determined by RMSEA (Kelloway, 1998).

Overall fit statistics for both models are presented in Table 15. The culture model, which included four latent constructs representing the three cultural dimensions and trait affectivity, indicated good model fit. All path coefficients were statistically significant and in the hypothesized direction. Modification indices indicated that better fit could be achieved if 5 error covariance paths between the observed variables are allowed. No modifications were made at this time because all indices suggested a change in my theory; the need to explore the interactive effect rather than individual effect of cultural dimensions. On the other hand, the feedback model, which included four latent constructs representing the supervisor feedback environment, feedback seeking motives, feedback seeking frequency, and trait affectivity, indicated poor model fit. A total of 16 error covariance paths were suggested to improve modification indices, if allowed. The initial model was modified to allow for 10 of the error covariance paths linking parcels from the same latent variable, as these supported current theory. This resulted in good fit (CFI=
Furthermore, all path coefficients were statistically significant and in the hypothesized direction (Figure 7).

**Hypothesis Testing**

All the analyses controlled for the effect of respondents’ positive or negative affectivity. Based on Carlson and Wu’s (2012) discussion, mood state is a theoretically meaningful variable and was therefore entered first in analyses to partial out its impact on feedback seeking frequency. In addition, all variables were mean centered prior to analyses (Aiken & West, 1991).

**Regression Analyses**

The impact of each of the cultural value-based dimensions (Tightness-Looseness, Need for Harmony, and Relation to Broad Environment) on the frequency of feedback seeking was hypothesized to occur directly (H1, H6, and H10). Regression analyses were conducted to determine the relationship among each of the cultural variables and feedback seeking (see Table 16). H1 stated that there is a negative relationship between the tightness of a culture and the frequency of feedback seeking. The overall regression model was significant ($F_{(3, 299)} = 20.72, p<.01$). This model helped explain 17% of the variance in individuals feedback seeking frequency and the addition of Tightness-Looseness significantly predicted variance in feedback seeking above and beyond respondents’ trait affect ($\Delta R^2=.02, p<.01$). Beta weights indicated that PA ($\beta = .35, p<.01$) but not NA ($\beta = -.05, p>.05$) accounted for variance in reported frequency of feedback seeking. Contrary to expectations, Tightness-Looseness was positively related to feedback seeking
frequency ($\beta = .15, p<.01$); the tighter the culture the more frequently individuals sought feedback. Thus, H1 was not supported. Further analyses indicated that cultural tightness significantly predicted higher frequency of indirect feedback seeking amongst respondents ($\Delta R^2 = .02, p<.01; \beta = .15, p<.01$), while no significant relationship was found with direct feedback seeking ($\Delta R^2 = .01, p=.052; \beta = .11, p=.052$). Hence, the tighter the culture the more frequently individuals indirectly inquired about their performance.

H6 stated that cultural Need for Harmony and feedback seeking frequency will be negatively related. The overall regression model significantly explained 20% of the variance in individuals feedback seeking frequency ($F_{(3, 299)} = 24.49, p<.01$). The addition of Need for Harmony significantly predicted variance in feedback seeking above and beyond respondents’ trait affect ($\Delta R^2 = .05, p<.01$). Beta weights indicated that PA ($\beta = .32, p<.01$) but not NA ($\beta = -.07, p>.05$) accounted for variance in reported frequency of feedback seeking. Need for Harmony was positively related to feedback seeking frequency ($\beta = .22, p<.01$); the higher the cultural need for harmony the more frequently individuals sought feedback. Given that this result was contrary to expectations, H6 was not supported. Additional analyses indicated that cultural need for harmony significantly predicted higher frequency of both direct ($\Delta R^2 = .02, p<.05; \beta = .14, p<.05$) and indirect ($\Delta R^2 = .05, p<.01; \beta = .23, p<.01$) feedback seeking amongst respondents. All other variables being equal, results demonstrate that individuals more frequently rely on the indirect feedback seeking strategy.
Similarly, a test of H10 indicated that the overall regression model \(F(3, 299) = 46.54, p<.01\) significantly explained 32% of the variance in feedback seeking frequency. Relation to Broad Environment significantly predicted variance in feedback seeking above and beyond trait affect \(\Delta R^2=.17, p<.01\). PA \((\beta = .25, p<.01)\) but not NA \((\beta = -.08, p>.05)\) accounted for variance in reported frequency of feedback seeking. Relation to Broad Environment was positively related to feedback seeking frequency \((\beta = .43, p<.01)\); the more interdependent the cultural relationship to the broad environment the more frequently individuals sought feedback; H10 was not supported. As previously indicated, the Relation to Broad Environment measure utilized in this study is a factor of three sub-dimensions, namely high/low context, control, and fatalism. Further analyses indicated that a cultural preference for high context communication significantly predicted higher frequency in both direct \(\Delta R^2=.01, p<.05; \beta = .11, p<.05\) and indirect \(\Delta R^2=.02, p<.01; \beta = .15, p<.01\) feedback seeking amongst respondents. Similarly, cultural preference for control predicted higher frequency of both the direct \(\Delta R^2=.08, p<.001; \beta = .30, p<.001\) and indirect \(\Delta R^2=.08 p<.001; \beta = .30, p<.001\) feedback seeking strategy. Finally, the more fatalistic a culture the more frequently individuals sought feedback via direct strategies \(\Delta R^2=.04 p<.001; \beta = .19, p<.001\) and indirect strategies \(\Delta R^2=.09 p<.001; \beta = .30, p<.001\). All things being equal, results demonstrate that individuals more frequently rely on the indirect feedback seeking strategy when exposed to or embedded in an a culture that is highly interdependent with its environment.
Mediation Analyses

The influence of each of the cultural value-based dimensions was proposed to occur indirectly through (a) the feedback environment and (b) feedback seeking motives. That is, feedback environment and feedback seeking motives were proposed as mediators accounting for the relation between each of the cultural dimensions and feedback seeking frequency (Baron & Kenny, 1986). Although, the causal step approach and Sobel test are commonly used methods for examining mediation, Preacher and Hayes (2004) recommended using an alternate approach that involves bootstrapping - a resampling strategy for estimation and hypothesis testing. Preacher, Rucker, and Hayes (2007) suggest setting the number of bootstrap between 1,000-5,000 as it helps in estimating the sampling distribution, as well as a bias corrected and accelerated (Bca) confidence intervals for both the total and specific indirect effects. Using this approach, mediation was tested by examining (1) whether or not a direct effect between X and Y exists and (2) the significance of the indirect effect between X and Y. Researchers recommend making inferences of indirect effects on an explicit quantification of the indirect effect itself (Hayes, 2013). Significance values and coefficients for each of the mediation hypotheses was calculated using the PROCESS SPSS macro (model=4) (Hayes, 2013): the number of bootstrap was set to 5,000 and a 95% Bca confidence interval was specified for each of the models. If the confidence intervals do not include a 0, then the specific indirect effect is significant (Preacher & Hayes, 2004).
Feedback environment as mediator. Summary of results for the feedback environment as a mediator between the cultural values and feedback seeking are presented in Table 17.

H2a stated that the feedback environment will mediate the relationship between Tightness-Looseness and feedback seeking frequency. The indirect effect ($\beta = .02$) was not statistically different from zero, with a 95% confidence interval that contained 0. Therefore, H2a was not supported. Further analyses revealed that the supervisor feedback environment did not mediate the relationship between Tightness-Looseness and direct feedback seeking or the relationship between Tightness-Looseness and indirect feedback seeking. Moreover, Tightness-Looseness was not related to perceptions of the supervisor feedback environment ($\beta = .08, p > .05$); H2 was not supported.

Hypothesis 2 suggested that in tight cultures, a constructive supervisor feedback environment is more likely to emerge. One predominant feature of tight cultures is that feedback is provided when behavior or performance falls out of alignment with expectations, this suggests that veridical negative feedback may be characteristic of tight cultures. Therefore, the unfavorable feedback dimension of the FES was examined as a mediator of the relationship between Tightness-Looseness and feedback seeking frequency. Results revealed that Tightness-Looseness was significantly positively related to unfavorable feedback ($\beta = .15, p < .05$); the tighter the culture the more veridical unfavorable feedback. Moreover, the bootstrapped estimate of the indirect effect was between .009 and .078 with a 95%
CI. Since the 95% CI excluded zero, we conclude that unfavorable feedback mediated the relationship between cultural tightness and feedback seeking. Results also revealed that the unfavorable feedback dimension was a significant mediator of the relationship between cultural tightness and direct feedback seeking ($\beta=0.03$; 95% Bca [.006, .066]) and the relationship between cultural tightness and indirect feedback seeking ($\beta=0.03$; 95% Bca [.007, .074]).

H7a stated that feedback environment mediates the relationship between Need for Harmony and feedback seeking frequency. Further examination of the indirect effect ($\beta=0.03$) revealed a 95% bootstrapped estimate that is entirely above zero. This means that individuals from cultures with a high need for harmony reported a more favorable feedback environment and subsequently great feedback seeking. H7a was supported. Furthermore, the supervisor feedback environment as mediator held true only for direct feedback seeking ($\beta=0.05$; 95% Bca [.012, .097]). This makes sense since a favorable feedback environment promotes direct feedback seeking (Steelman et al., 2004). However, contrary to expectations, Need for Harmony was positively related to the feedback environment ($\beta=0.16$, $p<0.01$); the more concerned a culture is to maintaining harmony and saving face the more favorable the supervisor feedback environment. Thus, H7 was not supported.

H11a predicted that feedback environment will mediate the relationship between Relation to Broad Environment and feedback seeking frequency. Results first revealed no significant relationship between Relation to Broad Environment and supervisor feedback environment ($\beta=0.10$, $p=0.05$); H11 was not supported. The
95% confidence interval of the indirect effect ($\beta = .02\), [.001, .050]) excluded zero; H11a was supported. This means that individuals from highly interdependent cultures reported a more favorable feedback environment and subsequently greater overall feedback seeking.

Further analysis of the sub-dimensions of Relation to Broad Environment revealed that the effect of control on direct feedback seeking was significantly mediated by the supervisor feedback environment ($\beta = .07\); [.028, .130]), such that the higher the cultural preference for control the more favorable individuals perceived the feedback environment facilitated by their supervisor ($\beta = .31, p<.001$) and subsequently the more frequent their overt request for feedback. Finally, only the effect of fatalism on both indirect feedback seeking ($\beta = -.05; [-.103, -.014]$) and direct feedback seeking ($\beta = -.06; [-.120, -.016]$) was significantly mediated by the feedback environment. Individuals from cultures that hold fatalistic beliefs reported perceiving less favorable supervisor feedback environment ($\beta = -.22; p<.001$) and subsequently less overall feedback seeking.

**Feedback seeking motives as mediator.** Summary of results for the feedback seeking motives as a mediator between the cultural values and feedback seeking are presented in Table 18.

The relationship between Tightness-Looseness and feedback seeking frequency was proposed to be mediated by the image-defense motive (H3a) and instrumental motive (H4a). Both motives were examined simultaneously as mediators. Initial results revealed that Tightness-Looseness did not significantly
predict an increase in the image-defense ($\beta = .08$, $p > .05$); H3 was not supported. Contrary to expectation, the tighter the culture the stronger the instrumental motive for feedback seeking ($\beta = .14$, $p < .05$); H4 was not supported. The examination of the indirect effect of the image-defense motive ($\beta = .02$) and the instrumental motive ($\beta = .04$) revealed that only the instrumental motive was a significant mediator of the relationship, supporting H4a. The 95% bootstrapped estimate for the image-defense included zero; H3a was not supported. The instrumental motive was also the only significant mediator when inspecting direct feedback seeking ($\beta = .03$) and indirect feedback seeking ($\beta = .04$), as separate outcomes.

At the individual level, one predominant feature of tight cultures is high felt accountability; individuals develop a better view of their responsibilities and understanding of what others want them to be (i.e., their ought self; Higgins, 1996). In an attempt to bring themselves closer to others’ view, individuals typically embrace a promotion regulatory focus under which they engage in behaviors that would make them look good, this suggests that impression management may be salient in tight cultures. Therefore, the image-enhancement motive for feedback seeking was examined as an additional mediator of the relationship between Tightness-Looseness and feedback seeking frequency, in conjunction with the instrumental motive. Results revealed that Tightness-Looseness was significantly positively related to image-enhancement ($\beta = .18$, $p < .01$); the tighter the culture the more impression management. The examination of the indirect effect of the image-enhancement motive ($\beta = .07$), in conjunction with hypothesized motives,
revealed that both the instrumental motive and image-enhancement motive fully mediated the relationship between cultural tightness and feedback seeking frequency, outweighing the effect of image-defense motives. In fact, the direct effect of Tightness-Looseness on feedback seeking was no longer significant. Pairwise comparisons between indirect effects were examined as they provide additional evidence for understanding the motive presenting the largest mediating effect. Both instrumental motives and image-enhancement motives explained unique variance, yet their mediating effects did not significantly differ. These results held true when examining direct feedback seeking and indirect feedback seeking as separate outcomes.

The relationship between Need for Harmony and feedback seeking frequency was hypothesized to be mediated by the image-defense motive (H8a). Results indicated that the total effect ($\beta = .20, p < .01$) and direct effect ($\beta = .21, p < .01$) were significant. The total effect indicate that individuals from cultures with a higher need for harmony reported more frequently seeking feedback, while the direct effect indicate that that individuals in high need for harmony culture, but who equally have a concern for their public image, reported frequent feedback seeking. Contrary to expectations, Need for Harmony was not significantly related to the image-defense motive ($\beta = -.01, p > .05$). Thus, H8 was not supported. Further examination of the results revealed no indirect effect ($\beta = .00$). H8a was not supported; image-defense motive did not mediate the relationship between Need for Harmony and feedback seeking. These results held true for both the Need for Harmony and feedback seeking frequency.
Harmony-direct feedback seeking and Need for Harmony-indirect feedback seeking relationships.

One predominant feature of cultures high in need for harmony is a focus on maintaining a positive reputation during social relationships, this suggests that impression management may be salient in these cultures. Therefore, the image-enhancement motive for feedback seeking was examined as an additional mediator of the relationship between Need for Harmony and feedback seeking frequency. Results revealed that Need for Harmony was significantly positively related to image-enhancement ($\beta = .18$, $p < .01$); the more cultural concern with harmony in relationship the more impression management. The examination of the indirect effect of the image-enhancement motive ($\beta = .08$) revealed that the motive is a mediator of the relationship between Need for Harmony and feedback seeking frequency; the 95% bootstrapped estimate excluded zero. An examination of direct feedback seeking and indirect feedback seeking as separate outcomes revealed that image-enhancement was a mediator of the relationship between Need for Harmony and each of the outcomes ($\beta = .08$ and $\beta = .05$, respectively).

Looking at the relationship between Relation to Broad Environment and feedback seeking frequency, I advanced that the ego-defense motive (H12a) and instrumental motive (H13a) will act as mediators of the relationship. Results indicated that Relation to Broad Environment was positively related to the ego-defense motive ($\beta = .22$, $p < .01$), supporting H12. More specifically, the fatalism dimension was primarily the driver of higher ego concerns ($\beta = .43$ $p < .001$).
However, contrary to expectations, the instrumental motive was positively related to Relation to Broad Environment ($\beta = .17 \ p < .01$); high cultural preference for interdependence with the environment predicted higher informational need for feedback. Thus, H13 was not supported. Further analyses indicate that cultural preference for control ($\beta = .31 \ p < .001$) and high context communication ($\beta = .25 \ p < .001$) predicted the increase in instrumental motives for feedback seeking. The fatalism dimension, however, predicted a decrease in this motive ($\beta = -.17 \ p < .01$).

An examination of the indirect effect for the ego-defense motive ($\beta = .04$) and the instrumental motive ($\beta = .05$) revealed that H12a and H13a were supported. The 95% Bca for ego-defense motive and for instrumental motive excluded zero; both motives mediate the relationship between Relation to Broad Environment and feedback seeking. Results indicated that the pairwise comparison between the ego-defense and instrumental motives was not significant ($\beta = -.01; [-.058, .037]$). This implies that no one motive presents a larger mediating effect than the other; both motives explain unique variance and provide practical significance to understanding the relationship between Relation to Broad Environment and feedback seeking.

Further analyses explored both motives as mediators of Relation to Broad Environment dimensions-direct feedback seeking and Relation to Broad Environment dimensions-indirect feedback seeking. The effect of the high/low context dimension of Relation to Broad Environment on indirect feedback seeking ($\beta = .06; [.027, .123]$) and direct feedback seeking ($\beta = .06; [.024, .124]$) was only
significantly mediated by the instrumental motive. Results also revealed that the
effect of the control dimension of Relation to Broad Environment on indirect
feedback seeking ($\beta = .07; [.029, .119]$) and direct feedback seeking ($\beta = .06; [.022,
.118]$) was only significantly mediated by the instrumental motive. This suggests
that individuals experience higher informational need for feedback in cultures with
a preference for high context communication and control, which in turn is reflected
in more frequent direct and indirect seeking. Finally, the fatalism dimension of
Relation to Broad Environment influenced the frequency of indirect feedback
seeking through both the ego-defense motive ($\beta = .11; [.064, .166]$) and the
instrumental motive ($\beta = -.05; [-.101, -.016]$), with the ego-defense motive
presenting a significantly larger mediating effect than the instrumental motive. Yet,
the instrumental motive was the only significant mediator of the fatalism-direct
feedback seeking relationship ($\beta = -.05; [-.098, -.016]$).

**Serial Mediation Analyses**

The final set of hypotheses (H5, H9, and H14) stated that cultural value-
based dimensions will impact individuals’ feedback seeking frequency through an
association between the feedback environment and feedback seeking motives.
These hypotheses can be conceptualized into a model configuration referred to as a
serial multiple mediator model (Hayes, 2013). Although all hypotheses may be
tested individually for the significance of each path in the model, testing individual
paths is insufficient for establishing serial multiple mediation effects, but rather
testing the overall model for significance is required (Hayes, 2013). The PROCESS
specification \texttt{model=6} macro was used to test the serial two-mediator model (Hayes, 2013). The number of bootstrap was set to 5,000 and a 95% Bca confidence interval was specified for each of the models. Using this approach, the mediation effect was tested by (1) examining the total indirect effect (e.g., show that the set of mediators carries the effect of the independent variable to the dependent variable) and (2) exploring the specific indirect effect related to each hypothesized mediator (Preacher, Rucker & Hayes, 2007). Bias-corrected bootstrap confidence intervals were utilized to assess significance for each of the indirect effects, the total indirect effect, and all possible pairwise comparisons between indirect effects. Pairwise comparison provides additional evidence for understanding the pathways presenting the largest influence of each of the cultural-value based dimensions on individuals’ feedback seeking behaviors. Confidence intervals excluding zero specify significance of effects or comparisons.

\textit{Tightness-Looseness Model.} As proposed in H5, the relationship between Tightness-Looseness and feedback seeking frequency was hypothesized, via serial indirect effects, to be related to feedback seeking through the feedback environment and the image defense and instrumental motives. Given that each of the feedback seeking motives was hypothesized to have a unique mediating effect with Tightness-Looseness, two models, one for each feedback seeking motive, were tested. The model summary for the effect of Tightness-Looseness on feedback seeking is presented in Table 19.
Results of the first serial mediation, depicted in Figure 8, revealed that the direct effect of Tightness-Looseness on feedback seeking frequency was significant and positive ($\beta' = .11, p<.05$), indicating that cultural tightness was related to individuals’ feedback seeking frequency independent of the effect of the feedback environment and the image-defense motive. Four indirect effects were estimated. The first specific indirect effect was the effect of Tightness-Looseness on feedback seeking through the feedback environment. This indirect effect was not significant ($\beta_1 = .02; [-.010, .068]$); H5a was not supported. The second indirect effect was the specific effect of Tightness-Looseness on feedback seeking through the feedback environment and image-defense motive in serial, with the feedback environment modeled as affecting image-defense motives, which in turn influences feedback seeking frequency. This indirect effect was not significant ($\beta_2 = -.01; [-.028, .005]$). Therefore, H5c was not supported. The specific indirect effect of Tightness-Looseness on feedback seeking through only the image-defense motive was significant ($\beta_3 = .03; [.001, .075]$), supporting H5b. Those who perceived high cultural tightness experienced high image-defense motives, and this increased concern for their public image was associated with an increased feedback seeking frequency, independent of the supervisor feedback environment. The total indirect effect which estimates the sum of all the specific indirect effects for this model was significant ($\beta_T = .049; [.008 to .095]$). Finally, the pairwise comparisons between specific indirect effects revealed that the difference between the indirect effect of Tightness-Looseness on feedback seeking through the image-defense motive was
statistically different from the indirect effect of Tightness-Looseness on feedback seeking through both the feedback environment and image-defense motive (C₃ = - .04; [-.091, -.008]). Because these indirect effects have a different sign, this contrast is interpreted to mean that cultural tightness has a larger effect on feedback seeking frequency through image-defense motive in isolation than it does through its serial effect on the feedback environment and image defense motive. The confidence intervals for the other two contrasts (C₁ = feedback environment vs. feedback environment and image-defense and C₂ = feedback environment vs. image-defense motive) included zero, meaning those specific indirect effects are not statistically different from each other.

Figure 9 depicts the results of the second serial mediation for Tightness-Looseness. The direct effect of Tightness-Looseness on feedback seeking frequency was significant and positive (β’ = .12, p < .05), indicating that cultural tightness is related to individuals’ feedback seeking frequency independent of the effect of the feedback environment and the instrumental motive. Similar to the aforementioned model the effect of Tightness-Looseness on feedback seeking through the feedback environment was not significant. The specific effect of Tightness-Looseness on feedback seeking through the feedback environment and instrumental motive in serial was not significant. This prediction, H5e, was not supported. The third indirect effect was the specific indirect effect of Tightness-Looseness on feedback seeking through only instrumental motive. This effect was not significant (β₃ = .01; [-.001, .043]); H5d was not supported. The total indirect
effect which estimates the sum of all the specific indirect effects for this model was
significant ($\beta_T = .027; [.002, .064]$). This suggests the presence of another omitted
mediator of matching sign in the “direct” path from Tightness-Looseness to
feedback seeking.

In conclusion, the results of the serial mediation for Tightness-Looseness
revealed that the effect of cultural tightness on feedback seeking frequency was
largest through image-defense motive only ($H5b$ supported). That is, the effect was
not mediated by the feedback environment ($H5a$ not supported), the feedback
environment and the image-defense motive ($H5c$ not supported), the instrumental
motive ($H5d$ not supported), or the feedback environment and the instrumental
motive ($H5e$ not supported). Therefore, $H5$ was partially supported. Further
examination of the Tightness-Looseness with direct feedback seeking and indirect
feedback seeking as separate outcomes revealed similar results.

**Need for Harmony Model.** $H9$ predicted a serial indirect relationship
between Need for Harmony and feedback seeking via the feedback environment
and the image-defense motive (see Table 20 and Figure 10).

Results revealed that the direct effect of Need for Harmony on feedback
seeking frequency was significant and positive ($\beta' = .18, p<.01$), indicating that
cultural preference for harmony within relationships was related to individuals’
feedback seeking frequency independent of the effect of the feedback environment
and the image-defense motive. The effect of Need for Harmony on feedback
seeking through the feedback environment ($\beta_I = .05; [.012, .099]$) was significant;
H9a was supported. Those who perceived high cultural need for harmony perceived a favorable supervisor feedback environment and subsequently greater feedback seeking, independent of the image-defense motive. The second indirect effect is the specific effect of Need for Harmony on feedback seeking through the feedback environment and image-defense motive in serial, with the feedback environment modeled as affecting image-defense motives, which in turn influences feedback seeking frequency. Results revealed a negative indirect effect, supporting H9c (\( \beta_2 = -.0; [-.043, -.006] \)). Cultural need for harmony was associated with favorable perceptions of the supervisor feedback environment, which in turn decreased image-defense concerns, and this translated into more frequent feedback seeking. The specific indirect effect of Need for Harmony on feedback seeking through only image-defense motive was not significant (\( \beta_3 = .02; [-.156, .054] \)); H9b was not supported. The total indirect effect which estimates the sum of all the specific indirect effects for this model was significant (\( \beta_T = .042; [.004, .086] \)), suggesting that the model omitted a mediator of matching sign in the “direct” path from Need for Harmony to feedback seeking. Finally, the pairwise comparisons between specific indirect effects revealed that the difference between the indirect effect of Need for Harmony on feedback seeking through feedback environment was statistically different from the indirect effect of Need for Harmony on feedback seeking through both the feedback environment and image-defense motive (\( C_1 = .07; [.018, .134] \)). Because these indirect effects have different signs, this contrast is interpreted to mean that cultural need for harmony has a larger effect on feedback
seeking frequency through the feedback environment in isolation than it does through its serial effect on the feedback environment and image-defense motive. Moreover, the difference between the indirect effect of Need for Harmony on feedback seeking through image-defense motive was statistically different from the indirect effect of Need for Harmony on feedback seeking through both the feedback environment and image-defense motive ($C_3 = -.04; [-.079, -.003]$). Because the specific indirect effects for this contrast have different signs, it indicates that cultural need for harmony has a larger effect on feedback seeking frequency through its serial effect on the feedback environment and image-defense motive than it does through the image-defense motive in isolation. Finally, the confidence interval for last contrast ($C_2 = \text{feedback environment vs. image-defense motive}$) included zero, meaning those specific indirect effects are not statistically different from each other.

In conclusion, the results of the serial mediation for Need for Harmony revealed that the effect of cultural need for harmonious relationships on feedback seeking frequency was largest through the feedback environment ($H9a$ supported) as well as through the feedback environment and the image-defense motive ($H9c$ supported). The effect was not mediated by the image-defense motive alone ($H9b$ not supported). Therefore, $H9$ was partially supported.

Further analyses revealed the effect of cultural need for harmony on indirect feedback seeking as an outcome was largest through the feedback environment ($\beta_1 = .04; [.001, .086]$) as well as the serial effect of the feedback environment and
image-defense motive ($\beta_2 = -.02; [-.046, -.001]$). The effect was not mediated by the image-defense motive alone ($\beta_3 = .02; [-.017, .124]$). On the other hand, the effect of cultural need for harmony on direct feedback seeking as an outcome was largest through the feedback environment ($\beta_1 = .06; [.014, .116]$) as well as the serial effect of the feedback environment and image-defense motive ($\beta_2 = -.01; [-.026, -.002]$). The effect was not mediated by the image-defense motive alone ($\beta_3 = .01; [-.005, .035]$). The total effect was significant ($\beta_T = .05; [.017, .107]$); a mediator of matching sign in the “direct” path from Need for Harmony to direct feedback seeking was omitted.

Relation to Broad Environment Model. Hypothesis 14 predicted a serial indirect relationship between the cultural value of Relation to Broad Environment and feedback seeking frequency via the feedback environment and the instrumental motive and the ego-defense motive. Given that each of the feedback seeking motives was hypothesized to have a unique mediating effect with Relation to Broad Environment, two models, one for each feedback seeking motive, were tested (see Table 21 and Figure 11).

Results of the first serial mediation, depicted in Figure 15, revealed that the direct effect of Relation to Broad Environment on feedback seeking frequency was significant and positive ($\beta' = .41, \ p < .01$), indicating that cultural interdependence with the environment was related to feedback seeking frequency independent of the effect of the feedback environment and the instrumental motive. Specific indirect effects were also estimated. The specific indirect effect of Relation to Broad
Environment on feedback seeking through the feedback environment was not significant ($\beta_1 = .01; [-.0003, .0426]$); H14a was not supported. The specific effect of Relation to Broad Environment on feedback seeking through the feedback environment and instrumental motive in serial was also not significant ($\beta_2 = .004; [.0007, .015]$). Therefore, H14c was not supported. There was no specific indirect effect of Relation to Broad Environment on feedback seeking through only the instrumental motive ($\beta_3 = .01; [-.002, .037]$); H14b was not supported. The total indirect effect which estimates the sum of all the specific indirect effects for this model was significant ($\beta_T = .028; [.005 to .063]$), suggesting the presence of another omitted mediator of matching sign in the “direct” path from Relation to Broad Environment to feedback seeking.

These results held when further examining the effect of Relation to Broad Environment on indirect feedback seeking as an outcome. However, the effect of cultural interdependence with the environment on direct feedback seeking as an outcome was significantly mediated by the feedback environment ($\beta_1 = .03; [.004, .065]$), but not the instrumental motive ($\beta_3 = .01; [-.005, .038]$) or the serial effect of the feedback environment and instrumental motive ($\beta_2 = .003; [-.002, .014]$). The total effect was significant ($\beta_T = .04; [.005 .078]$) indicating that other mediators of the relationship were omitted.

Figure 12 illustrates the results of the second serial mediation for Relation to Broad Environment. The direct effect of Relation to Broad Environment on feedback seeking frequency is significant and positive ($\beta' = .35, p<.01$), indicating
that cultural interdependence with the environment is related to individuals’ feedback seeking frequency independent of the effect of the feedback environment and the ego-defense motive. As previously mentioned, Relation to Broad Environment did not influence feedback seeking through the feedback environment. The effect of Relation to Broad Environment on feedback seeking also did not occur through the feedback environment and ego-defense motive in serial ($\beta_2 = -.01; [-.027, .000]$); H14e was not supported. The specific indirect effect of Relation to Broad Environment on feedback seeking through only ego-defense motive ($\beta_3 = .06; [.032, .106]$) was significant; H14d was supported. Those who perceived high cultural interdependence with the environment experienced high concerns for their ego, and this increased need to protect their ego was associated with an increased feedback seeking frequency, independent of the supervisor feedback environment. The total indirect effect for this model ($\beta_T = .08; [.043, .129]$) suggests the presence of another omitted mediator for the “direct” path from Relation to Broad environment to feedback seeking. Results were similar when examining the effect of Relation to Broad Environment on direct feedback seeking and indirect feedback seeking as separate outcomes.

In conclusion, the results of the serial mediation for Relation to Broad Environment revealed that the effect of cultural interdependence on feedback seeking frequency was largest through ego-defense motive only ($H14d supported$). That is, the effect was not mediated by the feedback environment ($H14a not supported$), the instrumental motive ($H14b not supported$), the feedback
environment and the instrumental motive (*H14c not supported*), or the feedback environment and the ego-defense motive (*H14e not supported*). Therefore, H14 was partially supported.

A separate examination of the each Relation to Broad Environment sub-dimensions indicated that only the effect of cultural preference for fatalism on indirect feedback seeking was significantly mediated by the feedback environment ($\beta_1 = -0.03; [-0.0758, -0.0003]$), the instrumental motive ($\beta_3 = -0.02; [-0.062, -0.001]$), and the serial effect of the feedback environment and instrumental motive ($\beta_2 = -0.02; [-0.042, -0.005]$). A significant total effect ($\beta_T = -0.07; [-0.124, -0.028]$) indicates that other mediators of the relationship were omitted. Similar results were found for direct feedback seeking. Yet, pairwise comparisons revealed that the indirect effect through the feedback environment explained more variance in direct feedback seeking than the serial effect of the feedback environment and instrumental motive. Further analyses indicated that the effect of cultural preference for control on direct feedback seeking was only significantly mediated by the feedback environment ($\beta_1 = 0.08; [0.020, 0.122]$).

Additional analyses revealed that the high/low context dimension did not affect individuals' feedback seeking frequency. However, results indicated that cultural preference for high context communication was significantly directly related to an increase in indirect feedback seeking. None of the hypothesized indirect paths were significant. Furthermore, no other mediators of the relationship were omitted; the total effect was not significant ($\beta_T = 0.01; [-0.044, 0.052]$). The effect
of cultural preference for control on direct feedback seeking was mediated by the feedback environment ($\beta_1 = .09; [.045, .162]$) and the serial effect of the feedback environment and ego-defense motive ($\beta_2 = -.02; [-.049, -.009]$). The mediation effect was stronger through the feedback environment alone than through the serial effect of the feedback environment ($C_{1} = .12; [.057, .201]$). These results held when examining the effect of control on indirect feedback seeking. On the other hand, the effect of cultural fatalism on direct feedback seeking was mediated by the feedback environment ($\beta_1 = -.09; [-.153, -.039]$) and the serial effect of the feedback environment and ego-defense motive ($\beta_2 = .01; [.0003, .020]$). Pairwise comparisons revealed that the mediation effect was stronger through the feedback environment than the serial effect of the feedback environment and the ego-defense motive. The total effect was not significant ($\beta_T = -.04; [-.118, .035]$); no other mediators of the relationship were omitted. Finally, the effect of fatalism on indirect feedback was significant through the feedback environment ($\beta_1 = -.06; [-.122, -.025]$), the serial effect of the feedback environment and ego-defense motive ($\beta_2 = .02; [.008, .035]$), and the ego-defense motive ($\beta_3 = .11; [.064, .162]$). Pairwise comparisons revealed that the mediation effect was stronger through the ego-defense motive alone than through the feedback environment or the serial effect of the feedback environment and the ego-defense motive. No other mediators of the relationship were omitted; the total effect was not significant ($\beta_T = .06; [.007, .124]$).
**Exploratory Analyses**

The feedback literature lacks research examining the influence of the global properties of a nation on feedback seeking. The relationship between three national properties (e.g., GDP, HDI, RPI) and feedback seeking frequency was examined only for those countries with more than 25 participants (i.e., Canada, India, and the United States). First, overall feedback seeking frequency was calculated based on country of origin. Results revealed that individuals from India sought more frequently ($M= 4.22$, $SD= .67$), than those from Canada ($M= 3.63$, $SD= .92$) and the United States ($M= 3.61$, $SD= 1.00$). Next, each national property was regressed separately onto overall feedback seeking. Results indicated that the higher a nation’s GDP ($\beta=0.30$, $p<.001$) the more frequently individuals sought feedback. Similarly, the lower the political risk (high RPI) the more frequent feedback seeking ($\beta= 0.38$, $p<.001$). However, the more developed socially and economically a nation (i.e., high HDI) the less frequent feedback seeking ($\beta= -1.59$, $p<.001$).
CHAPTER 5

Discussion

Feedback seeking is a proactive self-regulation strategy through which individuals are able to adjust their behaviors and performance over time to match the standards critically important to their organization as well as their supervisor’s expectations (Anseel et al., in press; De Stobbeleir et al., 2011; Vandewalle et al., 2000). Extant literature has demonstrated that the tendency to engage in feedback seeking is driven by personal factors (e.g., feedback seeking motives; Ashford et al., 2003) and the context in which the feedback exchange occurs (e.g., supervisor feedback environment; Steelman et al., 2004). The feedback seeking literature, with the exclusion of Sully de Luque and Sommer’s (2000) cultural framework, has failed to consider the influence of the broader cultural context on the overall feedback seeking framework. In other words, the universality of the premise: *All individuals should seek self-relevant performance information if they are motivated to reduce uncertainties and are exposed to a favorable context*, has not been tested. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to develop a more comprehensive framework of the factors influencing individuals’ decision to seek feedback across cultures. To that end, this research project first shed light on the cross-cultural conceptual equivalence of the feedback seeking process, as it is currently defined, in a two-part qualitative study (Study 1a and Study 1b). In Study 2- an unpackaging study- the impact of sociocultural factors on the feedback seeking process was
empirically examined. Based on a thorough review of extant cross-cultural and feedback seeking literature, this study tested part of the proposed framework wherein the influence of three value-based cultural dimensions (Tightness-Looseness, Need for Harmony, and Relation to Broad Environment) on feedback seeking frequency was suggested to occur via certain feedback motives and the supervisor feedback environment.

In the next sections, I will summarize the major findings for this research project as related to the universality of the feedback seeking concept (Study 1a and Study 1b) and cultural differences in feedback seeking frequencies (Study 2). Following this, theoretical contributions and practical implications of this project will be explicated. Finally, strengths, limitations, and future directions will be discussed.

**Summary of Major Findings**

**Study 1: Test of Conceptual Equivalence**

Feedback seeking or the process of inquiring and requesting self-relevant information from credible sources has been suggested as one approach through which individuals can achieve self-awareness (Ashford & Cummings, 1983). Scholars have argued that people’s decision to seek feedback is primarily a factor of their motivation to reduce uncertainty surrounding their self-concept (e.g., Ashford, 1986; Anseel et al., in press). Across the life span, all individuals struggle to understand and evaluate themselves. As such, extant literature suggests that
performance feedback is universally welcomed and that employees will actively seek it out if it is not readily provided, in their quest for self-awareness (Ashford & Cumings, 1985). No study to date has, however, examined the validity of this contention. Therefore, using a two-part qualitative study approach, I explored whether the established feedback seeking process holds across culturally diverse individuals. Specifically, I was interested in knowing if (a) the concept of feedback seeking is cross-culturally equivalent and (b) currently agreed upon drivers and antecedents of feedback seeking play similar roles in predicting feedback seeking frequency across cultures.

Findings of both studies provided evidence that regardless of their cultural identity, participants recognized and meaningfully discussed the concept of feedback seeking, its drivers, and the boundary conditions that affect personal and cultural tendencies to engage in the act of seeking feedback. Moreover, the themes that emerged during the interview-based and scenario-based studies were consistent with the feedback seeking motives, personal characteristics, and social and situational factors recognized by extant literature as antecedents and/or moderators of feedback seeking. All things considered, it can be concluded from the results of Study 1 that feedback seeking as a concept and process is equivalent cross-culturally. Still, additional interpretations can be made from the content analysis of responses in both studies.
Study 1a: Interview-Based Qualitative Survey

In Study 1a, participants were asked to indicate the extent to which it is common for them (people in their country) to ask for advice, opinion, or evaluation of their work, as well as discuss the reason behind engaging in this behavior. Individuals primarily saw feedback seeking not only as a means to increase self-awareness, but also as a self-regulation tool through which they could determine if they are living up to or are up to par with others’ (their supervisors’) expectations and standards of performance. This extends the idea of feedback seeking as a proactive self-regulation strategy across cultures.

On the other hand, the lack of mention of ego-based motives across respondents could also suggest that individuals typically put higher value on their public image, or derive their self-worth based on others’ opinion of them. In fact, research indicates that people often set and adopt self-image goals with the intent to gain others’ approval by creating desired self-images in others’ eyes (e.g., Baumeister, Tice, & Hutton, 1989; Leary & Kowalski, 1990). This interpretation is highly plausible. Firstly, some respondents viewed the act of feedback seeking as part of a larger social interaction, whereby the employee engages his/her supervisor or others to maintain open lines of communication. One respondent from Australia stated: “It is important to seek feedback not just in terms of making sure you are on the right track but also to make sure there’s ongoing communication with regards to the progression of the project and what you’re doing aligns with the bigger frame of things.” Secondly, this idea is emphasized more when considering that many
respondents related feedback seeking to a cultural tendency for communality. In fact, collective, or the need to benefit the group, was one of the themes that emerged from the content analysis of Question 2. Feedback seeking was seen as means to communicate information between others. To that end, respondents indicated a higher tendency to seek feedback that would benefit the group rather than the self.

Furthermore, it was clear that the context plays an important role in individuals’ decision to request feedback, regardless of cultural background. In fact, it was the most commonly cited additional theme. The overall organizational environment, represented by the climate, policies and norms, support, and supervisor feedback environment, was identified as a boundary condition to the frequency with which individuals engage in feedback seeking. Participants indicated that the more favorable, supportive, and reinforcing the organizational environment, the more likely and frequently they sought feedback. This reiterates the need identified by Levy and Williams (2004) to explore more of the social context surrounding performance appraisal, of which feedback seeking is one element. The feedback environment contains characteristics that display considerable similarity to the dimensions of context discussed by respondents. Therefore, it appears that, across cultures, individuals recognize and identify with various feedback environment facets, which in turn provide them with the context conducive to feedback seeking.
Ultimately, my findings indicate that from a broad cultural perspective feedback seeking is identified as instrumentally valuable for the information it provides, bounded by some cultural and social contextual factors. Nonetheless, from a personal perspective, individuals identified feedback seeking as a means to satisfy other drives such as image-based and ego-enhancement motives.

**Study 1b: Scenario-Based Qualitative Survey**

In the first part of the study, participants were asked to describe, in their own words/native language, the behaviors illustrated in each of the scenarios that were presented to them. Through a content analysis of responses, the terms reported were classified under eight categories. In line with Study 1a and extant literature, respondents conceptualized feedback seeking as a self-regulation strategy rooted in social interaction and communication through which individuals can achieve self-awareness, request help and advice, gather information, and maintain a favorable self and public image. Of the eight categories identified, two stand out the most: *proactivity* and *self-affirmation*. When Ashford first introduced the concept of feedback seeking in her dissertation, she conceptualized it as a proactive effort by individuals to “use their environment to assess how well they are doing” (italics retained from original statement) (Ashford, 1986, p. 479). In this study, respondents from a variety of cultural backgrounds perceived the act of feedback seeking as ambitious and a reflection of individuals’ initiative taking. Yet, it was apparent that a number of respondents perceived the act of seeking as a factor of high self-confidence; individuals look to boost their self-esteem. On the other hand,
avoiding seeking was identified as due to a lack of self-esteem. Researchers have consistently discussed self-esteem in relation to feedback seeking (e.g., Ashford et al., 2003; Anseel et al., in press). In fact, inherent in the act of requesting self-referent job performance feedback is the concern that the personal information might pose a threat to one’s self-confidence (Tuckey et al., 2002). Although empirical findings on the relationship between self-esteem and feedback seeking have been conflicted, it appears that key aspects of feedback seeking, as it was originally conceptualized, were recognized and meaningfully discussed across cultures. In summary, when asked to describe the behaviors illustrated in the instrumental and image-/ego-enhancement scenarios, proactivity was the most commonly reported theme, while self-esteem was most commonly reported by respondents as describing the behavior illustrated in the image-/ego-defense scenarios.

Findings of this study mirror those of Study 1a in that respondents successfully identify feedback seeking as driven by an instrumental need for diagnostic information and self-awareness. Therefore, the idea advanced by Ashford (1986) that feedback is seen a resource by individuals holds true across cultures. Additionally, participants were most successful at recognizing when the act of avoiding feedback seeking was motivated by a need to protect one’s public image, yet least successful when it was motivated by ego-based motives, and more specifically ego-defense motives. Rather than attributing the lack of proactive request of performance feedback to a concern for one’s self-image (ego-defense
motive), a number of participants suggested that self-esteem and personality traits as well as the feedback seeking environment influenced that decision. On the other hand, a couple of the respondents who were presented with the image-defense scenario attributed the feedback seeking avoidance not only to the character’s concern with maintaining a favorable public image but also with protecting his self-image. This supports that the avoidance of feedback seeking is motivated by a combination of image-based needs, ego-based needs, and personality characteristics, as argued by Moss and Sanchez (2004).

Finally, one idea stood out from the content analysis; two participants (one from Lebanon and the other from Norway) described the act of requesting feedback performance as polite. The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines the polite as having or showing behavior that is respectful and considerate of other people. Krasman (2010) suggested that agreeableness – one of the Big 5 personality traits which describes people high on altruism, compliance, and empathy – would be related to frequent feedback seeking by individuals high on the trait. However, results of the study indicated that individuals’ decision to seek feedback was not predicted by their level of agreeableness. Krasman (2010) explained the results as factor of the cost-value analysis, such that individuals did not perceive enough value in seeking feedback just for the purpose of satisfying their innate concern for others’ interest. In other words, people did not seek feedback just to be polite. Even though the relationship was not empirically supported in a sample of American business students, future research might want to examine whether cultural value
dimensions such as Need for Harmony affect the relationship or help explain the findings of Study 1b.

**Study 2: Unpackaging Study**

Even though the findings of Study 1 provide evidence for the universality of the feedback seeking behavior, the determinants and drivers of the behavior may differ significantly across culturally diverse individuals. In fact, there is growing evidence that individuals’ evaluation of the costs versus benefits of seeking feedback is influenced by the sociocultural system surrounding them (e.g., Ashford et al., 2003; MacDonald et al., 2013; Sully De Luque & Sommer, 2000). This implies that understanding feedback seeking cross-culturally necessitates understanding the contextual variables and mechanisms that will predict the behavior across the board (regardless of culture), as well as those that are culturally-specific. To that end, I sought to answer the following research question: *To what extent and how does the sociocultural context influence individuals’ tendency to seek feedback?*

I approached this research question using an unpackaging study; a study in which the cultural context presumed to cause observed differences in psychological processes is directly measured and explicitly tested for its role in explaining the outcome of interest (i.e., feedback seeking; Smith, 2002). In Chapter 1, I defined culture as a developing system of individuals, relationships, social contexts, and institutions conceptualized and manifested across multiple levels (e.g., national, organizational, and individual). It follows that the influence of the sociocultural
context on feedback seeking frequency is multi-faceted. At the national level, three cultural value-based dimensions (i.e., Tightness-Looseness, Need for Harmony, and Relation to Broad Environment) were identified. The feedback environment was proposed as embedding features of the sociocultural context at the organizational level, while feedback seeking motives were its manifestation at the individual level. Therefore, the aim of this study was to increase our knowledge of these factors by testing the different paths through which the sociocultural context can impact individuals’ feedback seeking frequency.

Although not all the hypothesized relationships were fully supported, the remainder of this section will discuss interesting findings regarding the direct and indirect effect of cultural value dimensions on feedback seeking frequency.

**To what extent does the sociocultural context influence individuals’ tendency to seek feedback?**

As the results of this study show, feedback seeking frequency was affected by all three cultural value-based dimensions, albeit in the opposite direction than hypothesized. After controlling for individuals’ trait affectivity, the amount of variability explained in the frequency of feedback seeking by each dimension was 2% for Tightness-Looseness, 5% for Need for Harmony, and 17% for Relation to Broad Environment. These results indicate that a person’s feedback seeking is partially attributable to cultural values of accountability, preservation of harmony within interpersonal relationships, and interdependence with the surrounding environment, to which he/she is exposed. A strength of this study is that it
considered and directly measured separately features of the cultural context presumed to cause observed differences in feedback seeking rather than attribute these differences to national origin. This gives greater precision to the findings because the specific drivers and determinants of feedback seeking that the cultural value-based dimensions influence can be identified.

Another contribution of this study is that it is the first to give empirical attention to the influence of global national properties on feedback seeking, in the feedback seeking literature. Extant cross-cultural literature provides some support for the pursuit of such link (i.e., Gelfand et al., 2011; Tsui et al., 2007). In this study, the effect of three national properties (e.g., GDP, HDI, RPI) on feedback seeking frequency was examined only in countries with more than 25 representatives (i.e., Canada, India, and the United States). Previous research by Van de Vliert and Smith (2004) suggested that high socioeconomic development - reflected in high GDP, high HDI, and low RPI - provided for more frequent feedback seeking. Surprisingly, the findings of this study revealed that the frequency of feedback seeking was highest in India - the country with the lowest GDP, lowest HDI, and highest RPI (amongst those examined). It appears that focus on and striving for personal growth and development (through feedback seeking) is more salient in a country where personal and societal resources are not as abundant. Further research should consider the mechanisms through which national properties impact feedback seeking frequency. It is also possible that these results were influenced by an acquiescent response style. Johnson, Kulesa, Cho, and Shavitt
(2005) stated that the acquiescent response style is associated with collectivistic, low uncertainty avoidant, and feminine cultures, descriptive of the Indian culture. The process of feedback seeking is based on a cost-value framework wherein an individual weighs the costs versus benefits of seeking. In this study, each of the cultural value-based dimensions made salient a unique value for seeking feedback: managing scrutiny and expectations for Tightness-Looseness, preserving favorable social connections for Need for Harmony, and enhancing personal awareness of the self for Relation to the Broad Environment. Thus, another contribution of this study is that it raises the attention to the different benefits that people attribute to feedback seeking based on the sociocultural context in which they are embedded. It is interesting to note that the identified benefits relate more to image-based and ego-based drivers of the behavior, as opposed to the informational objective. Although scholars in the feedback literature have suggested that the instrumental value of feedback is the most dominant driver of the behavior (e.g., Ashford, 1986; Morrison, 1995), it appears that specific cultural factors make more salient individuals’ need to preserve and maintain a favorable self-image as well as public image. It follows that the more a culture scrutinizes performance, focuses on face saving, and communicates implicitly through cues, the less frequently individuals seek feedback for its informational value. Rather, it seems that feedback’s value for reaching self-image and impression management goals that trumps in this cultural context.
How does the sociocultural context influence individuals’ tendency to seek feedback?

To facilitate this discussion, I will review the results for the multifaceted influence of each cultural value-based dimensions on feedback seeking frequency based on four paths (one direct and three indirect). It is important to note that testing each path in the model individually to determine its significance yielded, in some cases, inconsistent results compared to testing the overall model for significance. These differential results demonstrate the problems of model misspecification. In fact, Hayes (2013) stated that testing individual paths is insufficient for establishing serial multiple mediation effects, but rather all relevant variables should be considered when testing a complex model for more a comprehensive interpretation. As such, the following discussion is based on results of the full serial mediation.

Tightness-L looseness: Managing Scrutiny and Expectations

Tightness-Looseness or the strength of a culture’s social norms and degree of sanctioning (Gelfand et al., 2006) was predicted to decrease feedback seeking because of its perceived self-presentation cost. In other words, in a culture that fosters expectations of strict obedience to norms and regulations (i.e., tight culture), the act of seeking feedback can be interpreted negatively as a sign of weakness and incompetence. Instead, results indicated that individuals were more likely to seek feedback the tighter the culture, independent of other factors. It could be that the
degree of accountability within a culture and the need to manage high levels of scrutiny of one’s actions actually increases the tendency for people to frequently monitor their own behavior in an attempt to avoid deviating from mandated rules and regulations. This idea is further supported given that individuals were more likely to rely on indirect feedback seeking than direct feedback seeking the tighter the culture. Indirect inquiry involves asking for feedback in a sly manner (Miller & Jablin, 1991). In other words, in tight cultures individuals were more likely to ask their supervisor questions in such a way that it doesn’t appear like they are inquiring about their performance, hoping to get a sense of how they are doing in relation to performance standards and expectations. It seems at first glance that individuals perceive value in requesting performance information, even if indirectly, as it could enable them to fulfill their expected roles, reduce the risk of failure, and protect their image.

Further examination of how accountability at the societal level impacted people’s response to perceptions of accountability (i.e., feedback seeking motive) indicated that the instrumental motive for feedback seeking did not mediate this relationship. Individuals were motivated to protect their public image, as reflected by the image-defense motive significantly mediating that relationship. Yet, contrary to what the feedback seeking literature has consistently demonstrated (e.g., Ashford et al., 2003; Elliot & Harackiewicz, 1996), this motivation to protect one’s social image (image-defense motive) was associated with an increase in feedback seeking frequency, specifically indirect feedback seeking, independent of the organizational
context in which it occurred. As such, the reason for frequent feedback seeking under high felt accountability lies in individuals’ motivation to protect their public image. This finding supports that indirect feedback seeking is a “face saving” strategy through which individuals can request information without the potential cost of being perceived negatively (Miller & Jablin, 1991). Through this strategy, people can compare themselves to standards and expectations while preserving their face. Given that individuals in tight cultures typically tend to have high prevention regulatory strength (Ferris et al., 2008; Gelfand et al., 2006, 2011), feedback seeking might work as a check-in for individuals who worry more about managing others’ scrutiny and expectations than for its informational value.

Another possible explanation is that there is a general concern for one’s image, be it defensive or assertive, in tight cultures. Because of the high felt accountability in tight cultures, individuals develop a better view of what others want them to be (i.e., their ought self; Higgins, 1996). This consequently leads them to embrace a promotion regulatory focus under which they engage in behaviors that would help them match others’ expectations, suggesting that impression management may be salient in tight cultures. In fact, further exploration of the data revealed that in a culture where behaviors are closely and frequently monitored individuals were motivated to enhance their public image, and consequently more frequently inquired about their performance directly and indirectly from their supervisor. This supports that in a culture where behaviors are more closely and frequently monitored, individuals are more concerned about
acting in ways that fit dictated norms and expectations as well as provide them with social approval (Ferris et al., 2008). It would be also interesting to further examine whether the value of feedback information is closely related to other personal characteristics (e.g., performance level, self-esteem, personality, feedback orientation). For example, Moss et al. (2003) found that high performers are more likely to engage in impression management based feedback seeking behaviors.

Based on Gelfand et al.’s (2006) framework, I had advanced that a strong constructive feedback environment through which supervisors can monitor and hold individuals accountable and provide veridical negative feedback is more likely to emerge in tight cultures. This in turn should decrease employees’ feedback seeking because their supervisors would provide them with constant feedback to bring them back in line. Interestingly, the influence of Tightness-Looseness on feedback seeking frequency was not facilitated by the supervisor feedback environment, either alone or in conjunction with the feedback seeking motives (image-defense and instrumental). The constructive aspect of the feedback environment is reflected in the extent to which a supervisor provides accurate negative feedback. This in turn is measured by the unfavorable feedback dimension of Steelman et al.’s (2004) feedback environment scale. Additional exploration of the data indicated that the tighter the culture the more veridical unfavorable feedback is provided, and the more frequently individuals sought feedback, directly and indirectly from their supervisor. This implies that, although performance is being regularly monitored in tight cultures and is regulated through constructive
negative feedback from one’s supervisor (e.g., Brutus & Cabrera, 2004; Earley, 1997), people still saw value in feedback. In fact, results indicated that instrumental motives mediated part of that effect. In this cultural context, individuals may have opted for directly seeking feedback because it is an efficient way to request specific information needed to self-regulate, while they may have opted for the indirect strategy to seek information they already fairly know (i.e., double check) without putting themselves under the spotlight.

Need for Harmony: Preserving Favorable Social Connections

Need for Harmony defined as a cultural concern for preserving harmonious interpersonal relationships by avoiding conflict (maintaining status quo) and/or undermining others’ or one’s reputation or image was predicted to decrease people’s feedback seeking. Contrary to expectations, people exposed to a culture that values saving face and shows a concern for face loss sought feedback more frequently. This is surprising given that risks for face loss are inherent in the process of inquiring about and requesting self-relevant performance information (Ashford et al., 2003). Moreover, studies have consistently reported on the reluctance of individuals from cultures with a high face loss concern to seek feedback information (Dougherty & Wall, 1991; Hwang et al., 2002; MacDonald et al., 2013). Additional analyses indicated that individuals used both direct and indirect feedback seeking strategies; yet report relying more frequently on the indirect feedback seeking strategy. This makes sense given that indirect feedback seeking is characterized as a “face saving” option through which individuals can
request information from high status individuals without embarrassing themselves or their supervisor (Brown & Levinson, 1978; Miller & Jablin, 1991). It follows that through this strategy people from a culture that embraces a need for harmony can gain insights into their performance while preserving their and other’s face. Additional insights into the reason behind increased feedback seeking in this cultural context comes from exploring mediators of the relationship.

Even though the provision and discussion of performance information would make an individual stand out or in other ways promote discord between individuals (MacDonald et al., 2013), the predicted negative relationship between Need for Harmony and the feedback environment was not supported. Instead, it appeared that in a culture that promotes the need for harmony supervisors were more likely to facilitate a favorable feedback environment and the discussion of individual accomplishment. A possible explanation is that the feedback environment contains characteristics that display similarity to maintaining harmonious relationships, specifically as it relates to building trust (Moukarzel, Steelman, Young, & Monnot, under review). Moreover, the cultural preference for harmonious relationships might make salient to supervisors the need to be benevolent or have good intentions when they deliver feedback in an interpersonally sensitive manner. My results also indicated that the influence of a favorable feedback environment on individuals’ decision to seek feedback in a culture high in Need for Harmony was strong, independent of individuals’ concern with losing face. Nevertheless, the favorable feedback environment was associated
with a decrease in face loss concerns which translated into more frequent feedback seeking (direct and indirect). In fact, Miller and Jablin (1991) argued that individuals are more comfortable directly requesting feedback when they perceive the source of the feedback to be understanding and open, which decreases their concern about any social costs associated with the behavior.

The cultural Need for Harmony was not reflected in a personal concern for embarrassment and shame. Therefore, individuals were not driven by a need to avoid losing face and protect their image (i.e., image-defense motive). Instead, Need for harmony made more salient individuals’ need to look good in the eyes of their supervisor (i.e., image-enhancement motive) which in turn led to more frequent feedback seeking on their part. Further research should consider why individuals exposed to a culture that values preserving reputation (saving face), promotes instead face gain. A possible explanation is the predominant focus on maintaining a positive reputation during social relationships, suggesting that impression management may be salient in these cultures. Consequently, people more frequently sought feedback using both direct and indirect strategies, with a preference for indirect feedback seeking. In this context, the use of direct feedback solicitation may come in an attempt to portray themselves as doing a good job, and in turn, create an advantageous relationship with their supervisor (Miller & Jablin, 1991).

Previous research mostly explored the concept of guanxi and harmony in Asian cultures. It could be that this cultural value expresses itself differently when
explored in non-Asian cultures, such as some of the countries represented in this study. Along the same line, the expression of cultural Need for Harmony at the individual level contains characteristics that display considerable similarity to the personality domain of Agreeableness. Individuals characterized as agreeable show concern and sympathy for other people’s interest (Costa & McCrae, 1992). Krasman (2010) argued that agreeable individuals should be more likely to seek feedback as a means to show interest in other people’s thoughts, ideas, and opinions. This could be a plausible explanation for the findings of this study.

Therefore, it follows that the potential face loss cost associated with seeking feedback is outweighed by the social value inherent in the act of seeking feedback. Given that the feedback seeking process can be conceptualized as a dyadic social interaction between an employee and his/her supervisor, feedback seeking, in high need for harmony cultures, might work more as a means to preserve favorable social relationships than for its informational value.

*Relation to the Broad Environment: Enhancing Personal Awareness of the Self*

Relation to the Broad Environment is a culture’s perception of individuals as blended (interdependent) or distinct (independent) from the context surrounding them. Contrary to expectations, in a culture where individuals are perceived to be interdependent with the environment and in which information is communicated tacitly and indirectly, people sought feedback more frequently. Additional analyses indicated that individuals used both direct and indirect feedback seeking strategies,
yet rely more frequently on the indirect feedback seeking strategy. Sully de Luque and Sommer (2000) had suggested that individuals matched the indirect nature of communication in their culture. The findings of this study supported this contention, in that individuals were more likely to frequently indirectly seek feedback when exposed to a culture with a preference for high context communication. More specifically, this effect was independent of any other more proximal drivers (e.g., feedback environment, feedback seeking motives). A possible explanation is that this preference for communication style is in of itself a cognitive process and its effect can be observed easily at the person-level. Therefore, the influence of this cultural value-dimension does not require more proximal factors to mediate its effect.

Additionally, results revealed that frequent indirect feedback seeking was driven by a cultural preference for control and fatalism. This is interesting since these dimensions are conceptually opposite; control focuses on the cultural perception of individuals/businesses as having control over the environment and their success, while fatalism reflects cultural belief in the power of destiny/supernatural. A possible explanation is the predominant focus on acquiring and controlling knowledge and information about oneself in cultures that value control over the environment. In fact, cultural preference for control primarily also predicted employees’ frequent use of the direct seeking strategy. On the other hand, in fatalistic cultures individuals view their success/failures as a product of “higher powers.” It follows that individuals would experience lower self-efficacy and
beliefs in external control (Gecas, 1989). Therefore, it could be that, in an attempt to increase one’s self-efficacy, individuals are seeking personal relevant diagnostic information. Furthermore, by relying on the indirect seeking strategy, they retain the cultural preference for fatalism. As such, results do not support previous findings that individuals from interdependent cultures are less likely to actively inquire about their performance (e.g., Kung & Steelman, 2003). Further insights into the different feedback seeking strategies used in this cultural context comes from exploring mediators of the relationship.

The frequency of direct feedback seeking within a culturally interdependent society was mostly driven by a direct and indirect influence of cultural preference for control and fatalism. Results revealed that the more control over the environment a culture supports the more frequently individuals overtly seek feedback, while the more fatalistic a culture the less likely it is for individuals to engage in this strategy. In combination, these two features describe a culture that perceives individuals to be independent from their environment. Consequently, individuals exposed to such a culture might have opted for this strategy in an attempt to increase self-awareness and/or to obtain information. However, findings indicated that the instrumental motive was not a driver of the behavior. Rather, in support with extant literature (e.g., Steelman et al., 2004), the presence of a favorable supervisor feedback environment facilitated people to proactively and overtly solicit information. This make sense in that a favorable feedback environment is facilitated by a supervisor’s availability to provide veridical
diagnostic information that helps promote better self-awareness, and consequently motivates more frequent feedback seeking. Furthermore, results revealed that a favorable supervisor environment decreases ego threat concerns made salient in interdependent cultures (i.e., high in fatalism beliefs), and consequently increases direct feedback seeking.

The more common feedback seeking strategy in this cultural context (i.e., indirect feedback seeking) was primarily driven by a culture’s belief in fatalism. More specifically, individuals were more likely to engage in this strategy when they perceived an unfavorable feedback environment and were less concerned by the informational value of feedback seeking, also made less salient by an unfavorable feedback environment. This makes sense given that the indirect feedback seeking strategy is predominantly used by individuals as a means to avoid any costs to their self- and public image (Miller & Jablin, 1991). In fact, results demonstrated that within a fatalistic culture individuals were more concerned about potential threats to their ego, and subsequently more likely to rely on the indirect seeking strategy. It could be that individuals are not only interested in protecting their ego but also attempting to implicitly acquire confirmation about their self-image. Further research should examine the possible interplay between the ego-defense and ego-enhancement motives, within a culture that believes in fate.

It also appears that given a cultural preference for control, individuals’ feedback seeking (direct and indirect) frequency was primarily a factor of the feedback environment facilitated by their supervisor rather than personal feedback.
seeking motives. This finding indicates that a culture’s view of individuals/businesses as having control over the environment and their success translates at the organizational level, in that a supervisor promotes the provision and seeking of performance information. In turn, employees are more likely to request self-diagnostic information using predominantly the direct feedback seeking strategy.

Independent of the supervisor feedback environment, results supported my contention that cultural interdependence (i.e., high cultural fatalism) increases individuals’ concern for their self-conception. Contrary to what was hypothesized, this increased need to protect their ego was associated with an increased feedback seeking frequency (for both strategies). Given a preference for indirect feedback seeking, a possible explanation is that individuals view this strategy as less threatening to their self-view. In fact, this tactic is based on noninterrogative questions through which an individual attempts to interpret cues and implicit references from his/her supervisor (Miller & Jablin, 1991). For example, an employee would rely on interpreting his/her boss’ reactions to determine standards of performance (Sully de Luque & Sommer, 2000).

Nonetheless, direct feedback seeking was also a factor of individuals’ ego-defense motive. Further research should consider why individuals exposed to such a cultural context, and experience heightened concern for their ego, still frequently seek feedback. It could be that the potential ego cost associated with seeking feedback is outweighed by the instrumental value inherent in the act of seeking
feedback. In high interdependent cultures, it appears that individuals might view overtly requesting feedback more so as a means to achieve self-awareness, notwithstanding potential threats to the ego inherent in the behavior. This is a plausible explanation since results revealed that when ego-defense motives and instrumental motives were explored in conjunction, only instrumental motives mediated the relationship between Relation to Broad Environment and direct feedback seeking.

Finally, previous research suggested that the focus of interdependent cultures on high context communication would translate into information being predominantly conveyed implicitly through the context (e.g., work environment) rather than directly through one’s supervisor (Sully de Luque & Sommer, 2000). Findings of this study support a negative relationship between Relation to Broad Environment and the feedback environment, more specifically between the fatalism dimension and feedback environment. In contrast, it appeared that in cultures with a preference for control (independent cultures) supervisors were more likely to foster a formal and concrete system of communication in which information is transmitted through direct and concrete lines of communication and no inferences are required to interpret the message. Nonetheless, one aspect of the Relation to Broad Environment – cultural preference for communication style – was unrelated to the feedback environment a supervisor fosters. A possible explanation is that the feedback environment is typically one part of an organization’s larger performance management process and strategy (Levy & Williams, 2004). That is, it is highly
unlikely in today’s organizations that supervisors avoid fostering some sort of
formal and/or concrete system of communication regarding their subordinates’
performance, regardless of its favorability. In fact, findings of this study indicate
that overall individuals perceived favorable supervisor feedback environment,
across all represented countries.

**Limitations Future Directions**

While this research was not without interesting findings, it does have some
theoretical as well as methodological limitations.

First, respondents’ positive affectivity trait, but not their negative affectivity
trait, was found to explain significant variance in all explored results. This trait
describes individuals who tend to view and report about themselves and the world
around them in generally positive terms (Burke et al., 1993). In fact, the sample
was made up of mostly optimistic respondents as indicated by the results. Due to
the disproportion in representation of both affectivity traits in this sample,
interpretation of results should be made with caution and findings are not
completely generalizable. Further research should attempt to replicate this study
with other samples.

Second, because of the cross-sectional nature of the measurement of all
constructs, it is not possible to draw causal inferences about the direction of the
relationships between variables (Shadish, Cook, & Campbell, 2002). An ideal
design would have been longitudinal, which could offer some support for the
proposed causal relationships. Nonetheless, I plan on remedying the issue by further following-up with respondents who indicated an interest in participating in part 2 of the study to collect time-separated data for the dependent variable (feedback seeking frequency). Data collection is planned for one month following completion of this project.

The third limitation lies in the method of data collection, specifically for Study 2, as all constructs were measured via single-source online data-collection tactics. This means that there is a chance responses provided were biased; respondents may have reported what they felt was the right answer or what would make them look good rather than the truth (Podsakoff et al., 2003). In order to reduce the likelihood of this occurring, Podsakoff et al. (2003) recommended informing respondents prior to completing a survey that there are no right or wrong answers and that they should answer all the items honestly. Consistent with their recommendation, this information was included in the instructions to the survey. Along the same line, given the diverse nature of respondents, neutral and/or acquiescence responding might be a concern (Smith, 2004). Following suggestions by Gelfand et al. (2011), a 6-point scale was used in place of the traditional 7-point to improve the validity of the questions and reduce the neutral bias that occurs with respondents answering in the middle. In other words, by forcing the respondents to take a side (even if is to only “slightly” agree or disagree), the results should be more indicative of the polarized opinions around each of the measured variables. As for acquiescence bias, most scales in the survey employed a balance of
positively and negatively keyed items. Data was also screened for multivariate outliers. Only one such case was detected and deleted from further analyses. Despite the procedural remedies taken, self-report bias may still have occurred.

Another limitation of the study is that common method variance (CMV) and insufficient responding effort (IER) may have had an impact on the results. If both CMV and IER were severe, then the likelihood of finding statistically significant indirect effects would have been very low (Hayes, 2013; Liu et al., 2013). The use of two counterbalanced versions of the survey as suggested by Podsakoff et al. (2003) and IER detection approaches suggested by Liu et al. (2013) (e.g., check items and completion times) should have reduced the impact of CMV and IER. It is also important to note that it would not be possible to gather data on the frequency of use of feedback seeking tactics (direct and indirect seeking) without self-reporting. Despite these remedies, common method bias and IER may still have occurred.

Finally, a common limitation of cross-cultural and cultural research relates to the comparability of concepts across cultures (e.g., Leung & Bond, 1989; Smith, 2004). To determine if the concepts and instruments used in this project are actually measuring the same psychological construct across cultures and are directly comparable across cultures, structural equivalence (i.e., equality of factor structures) and conceptual equivalence (i.e., similarity of meaning across cultures) of the data was examined as suggested by Leung and van de Vijver (2008). Study 1 determined cross-cultural equivalence of the concept of feedback seeking and
feedback motives as identified by current literature (e.g., Ashford et al., 2003). The structural equivalence of the scales used in Study 2 was determined by a confirmatory factor analysis. Results indicated that the factor structure of all variables, except Tightness-Looseness, matched currently validated factor structures. The Tightness-Looseness scale was reduced to a 5-item scale and used as such in further analyses.

**Theoretical Contributions**

Regardless of these limitations, this study contributes to theory in several ways. Primarily, it addresses a deficit in the extant feedback seeking literature by directly exploring and measuring the effect of the sociocultural context on feedback seeking. Following cross-cultural research best practices and scholars’ call for more parsimonious view of culture, this study conceptualized Culture at the societal level as manifested in a nation’s ecological, historical, and value-based characteristics. To that end, five cultural value-based dimensions were synthesized from the wide-ranging and diverse culture values literature, providing for better theory testing. Three of the five cultural value-based dimensions, namely Tightness-Looseness, Need for Harmony, and Relation to Broad Environment, were empirically examined as predictors of cultural differences in feedback seeking. The first of its kind, this research expands our understanding of the mechanism through which culture can influence feedback seeking by examining more proximal variables at different levels of context, through serial mediation. As such, it answers a call for
research that provides a more comprehensive framework to explain the *why* and *how* for predictors of feedback seeking, across cultures (Anseel et al., in press). Findings supported feedback seeking frequency is a factor of the sociocultural features of the context, also manifested at the organizational (supervisor feedback environment) and individual level (feedback seeking frequency), to which individuals are exposed. Therefore, this project confirms and extends previous theoretical work by Sully de Luque and Sommer (2000).

Moreover, this study further examined the feedback seeking tactics used by employees across sociocultural context, specifically indirect and direct feedback seeking. The indirect feedback seeking strategy was previously introduced by Miller and Jablin (1991) and theoretically proposed to emerge in certain cultures given specific cultural values (e.g., Sully de Luque & Sommer, 2000). Although both strategies share common qualities, a recent metaanalysis by Anseel et al. (in press) demonstrated the two strategies to be distinct from each other. In fact, this study provided initial empirical evidence of the conditions under which, and the frequency with which, each strategy is exhibited. For example, the stronger the cultural norms and degree of sanctioning the more frequently individuals relied on indirectly seeking feedback, as opposed to the direct strategy. Given the broad knowledge we have about direct feedback seeking, future research should continue to explore the drivers and boundary conditions surrounding indirect seeking.

Finally, this research demonstrated that, across cultures, feedback seeking behaviors and motives can be identified and similarly discussed. Based on that, I
view this study as cross-culturally supporting Ashford et al.’s (2003) process model of feedback seeking. That is, it provides evidence for the universality of the concept, strategies, and drivers of feedback seeking, building on extant work in the feedback seeking literature (e.g., Ashford & Cumings, 1985; Miller & Jablin, 1991; Steelman et al., 2004).

**Practical Implications**

Several practical implications can be taken away from this research. As the Harvard Business Review reported: “The world of work has changed dramatically over the past decade.” Companies are increasingly going global and their workforce is more diverse than ever before. Recent trends toward doing business internationally have also increased. As a “manager” of culturally diverse individuals, or a global leader, understanding the sociocultural characteristics discussed in this research and how they impact the frequency and type of feedback seeking behaviors will help you identify what can be expected from people exposed to different cultural contexts. This will in turn serve as a means to review your organization’s existing performance management practices and highlight gaps and opportunities for improvement. To some extent, you can expect more frequent overall feedback seeking from subordinates of high socioeconomic development nations.

It may appear at first glance that individuals in/from cultures that value accountability and hold strong social norms and regulations, show a need to
maintain harmony and favorable reputation within relationships, and/or perceive the individual as embedded in the environment are less likely to seek feedback. Yet, these individuals tend to prefer indirectly requesting information about their performance by asking implicit questions in such a way that it doesn’t appear like they are directly inquiring about their performance (i.e., to save face). Given that they rely on this tactic in the hopes of getting insight into how they are doing in relation to performance standards and expectations, one recommendation for supervisors is to manage how they behave around these employees and monitor the way they communicate information to ensure that they are sending the message intended. Moreover, they should learn to distinguish between informal conversations and conversations during which employees actually requesting feedback, albeit indirectly. Once identified as an instance of indirect feedback seeking, managers can then engage the employee in a more direct and private feedback conversation if needed.

Nonetheless, individuals from cultures high in the need for harmony and/or that conceptualize the individual as interdependent with the environment overtly sought feedback, as determined by a favorable supervisor environment and an instrumental drive to gain insights into their performance. In order to increase the use of constructive feedback seeking tactics among employees (e.g., direct feedback seeking) and reduce the use of unconstructive tactics (e.g., indirect feedback seeking), I recommend leaders facilitate a favorable feedback environment that supports the veridical sharing of negative feedback in a
considerate, non-threatening approach to shape, develop, and manage culturally diverse employees. Managers can refer to evidence-based recommendations on how to match or adapt feedback provision and promotion of a feedback environment mindful of cultural differences and preferences, drawn from Moukarzel and Steelman (under review). It is important to note that individual feedback seeking motives (e.g., image-based and ego-based motives) can represent complicating factors to the promotion of proactive requests for performance diagnosis from subordinates. In attempt to influence and decrease these motives, it would be beneficial for organizations to set up an effective performance management system in which employees feel empowered, are recognized for their achievements, are cared for, and engage in regular formal and informal performance discussions with their supervisor (Pulakos & O’Leary, 2011).

**Conclusion**

It all started in 1980s, in the New York City Subways. A popular figure at the time, Ed Koch rode the subway and stood at street corners greeting passersby with the slogan “How’m I doin’?” in reference to his performance as Mayor of New York. His behavior – uncommon at the time - caught the attention of the press and became the inspiration to one of the earliest researchers in the field- Susan Ashford who introduced the term Feedback Seeking in her dissertation, thirty years ago. The birth of feedback seeking switched the conversation from performance information
as solely given by managers and supervisors to it being sought out and requested by employees/individuals.

To this day, research has provided us with evidence that feedback seeking operates differently across different individuals and cultures. However, in the current study, I demonstrated for the first time how the sociocultural context influences directly and through more proximal variables (e.g., feedback environment and feedback seeking motives) the frequency with which individuals seek feedback (directly and indirectly). Findings suggest that feedback seeking is universally identified and accepted as an instrumental behavior. Yet, differences lie in the meaning the behavior takes within specific cultural settings.

As such, supervisors and organizations operating internationally or managing culturally diverse individuals need to be aware that feedback seeking can be seen by some as a means to manage scrutiny and expectations, by others as a way to preserve favorable social connections, and still by others as an attempt to enhance personal awareness. At the same time, they should remember that, although in some instances they might not observe their employees overtly requesting feedback, it does not mean employees are not attempting to implicitly inquire about and privately monitor their performance.

There is still more to learn about the impact of other sociocultural contexts, and it is my hope that further research will extend my results as well as examine my proposed framework using other diverse samples. Because as Georges Clemenceau once said: “Everything I know I learned after I was thirty.”
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207


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Figure 1. White’s (1949) Pyramid of Cultural Systems
Figure 2. Tsui et al.'s (2007) Polycontextual Framework to Cross-National, Cross-Cultural Organizational Behavior Research

National Contexts
- Physical Context
  - Typology/geography
  - Climate/temperature
  - Habitat
- Historic Context
  - Sovereignty
  - Colonization
  - Language
- Political Context
  - Political System
  - Legal System
  - Business Laws
- Social Context
  - Educational system
  - Family structure
  - Religion
- Economic Context
  - Economic System and Development
  - Technology
  - Business Systems
  - Industrial policies
- Cultural Context
  - Beliefs
  - Values

Ways of Knowing
- Physical
  - Space
  - Time
- Communication
  - Verbal
  - Non-verbal
- Sensory
  - Visual
  - Auditory
  - Kinesthetic
- Psychological
  - Cognitive
  - Affective
  - Emotive
- Philosophical
  - Spiritual
  - Aesthetic
  - Moral

Meaning of Work or Organization
- Leadership
- Rewards
- Performance
- Evaluation
- Feedback
- Conflict
- Influence
- Commitment
- Fairness
- Delegation
- Teamwork

Employment Outcomes
- Attitudes and Behaviors at work
Figure 3. Conceptual model of the proposed cultural system effect on individual level outcomes
Figure 4. Unpacking national context’s influence on feedback seeking
Figure 5. Cultural Dimensions Measurement Model (Standardized Solution)
Figure 6. Feedback Seeking Process Measurement Model (Standardized Solution)

Chi-Square=306.91, df=119, P-value=0.00000, RMSEA=0.146
Figure 7. Modified Feedback Seeking Process Measurement Model (Standardized Solution)

Chi-Square=404.87, df=104, P-value=0.00000, RMSEA=0.098
Figure 8. Results of the serial mediation model for the effect of Tightness-Looseness on feedback seeking frequency through feedback environment and image-defense motive.

*: \( p < .05 \); **: \( p < .01 \)
Figure 9. Results of the serial mediation model for the effect of Tightness-Looseness on feedback seeking frequency through feedback environment and instrumental motive.

*: p<.05; **: p<.01
Figure 10. Results of the serial mediation model for the effect of Need for Harmony on feedback seeking frequency through feedback environment and image-defense motive.

*: p < .05; **: p < .01
Figure 11. Results of the serial mediation model for the effect of Relation to Broad Environment on feedback seeking frequency through feedback environment and instrumental motive.

*: p<.05; **: p<.01
Figure 12. Results of the serial mediation model for the effect of Relation to Broad Environment on feedback seeking frequency through feedback environment and ego-defense motive.

* \( p < .05 \); ** \( p < .01 \)
Table 1. Linking cultural value-based dimensions to previous cultural frameworks

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value-Based Dimension</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Matched Framework</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tightness vs. Looseness</td>
<td>Strength of social norms and the degree of sanctioning within a society. Tightness= strong norms and monitoring; low range variation of behaviors; and high shared cognitions. Looseness= weak social norms and monitoring; wide range variation of permissible behaviors; and high tolerance of deviant behavior.</td>
<td>Tightness-Looseness (Gelfand et al., 2006; Triandis, 1994) Uncertainty Avoidance (Hofstede, 1980)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Relationships Among People</td>
<td>Encompasses cultural values surrounding effective relationships among people within a specific culture. Values relate to the degree of acceptance of hierarchy and authority, and individuality.</td>
<td>Relationships among people (Maznevski et al., 2002) High vs. Low status identity (Sully de Luque &amp; Sommer, 2000) Power Distance (Hofstede, 1980; Hofstede et al., 1998; Schwartz, 1992)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Value-Based Dimension</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Matched Framework</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Individualism vs. Collectivism (Hofstede, 1980; Sully de Luque &amp; Sommer, 2000; Triandis, 1994; Trompenaars &amp; Hampden-Turner, 1997)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Hierarchy vs. Egalitarianism (House et al., 2000)</td>
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<td>Individualism vs. Communitarianism (Trompenaars &amp; Hampden-Turner, 1998)</td>
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<td>Need for Harmony</td>
<td>Degree to which the need to save face and maintain status quo is valued.</td>
<td>Face (Trompenaars &amp; Hampden-Turner, 1998)</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
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<td>Confucian Dynamism/ Long-term Orientation (Hofstede, 1991)</td>
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<td>Humane Orientation (House, 1999)</td>
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<td>Conservatism (Schwartz, 1994)</td>
</tr>
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<td>Matched Framework</td>
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<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Encompasses the values surrounding the underlying motive of individuals’ behaviors within a specific culture. Relates to the degree to which achievement and performance is valued.</td>
<td>Masculinity vs. Femininity and Uncertainty Avoidance (Hofstede, 1980) Doing/Thinking/Being (Maznevski et al., 2002) Neutral vs. Emotional (Trompenaars &amp; Hampden-Turner, 1998)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Relation to Broad Environment</td>
<td>Encompasses cultural values surrounding effective interaction with the broad environment. Relates to the degree to which interdependence or independence is valued.</td>
<td>Specific vs. Holistic (Sully de Luque &amp; Sommer, 2000) Internal vs. External (Trompenaars &amp; Hampden-Turner, 1997)</td>
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**Employment Status**

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<tr>
<td>Part time employee</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Part time student</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-employed</td>
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**Business/Industry**

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<td>33%</td>
</tr>
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<td>Hospitality/Entertainment/Recreation</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>17%</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quick Service and Utilities</td>
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<td>0</td>
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**Job Function**

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<th>Total</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<td>17%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Educator/Teacher</td>
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<td>17%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Resources/Training</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research and Development</td>
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**Country of Employment**

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<tr>
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<td>1</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>17%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
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<tr>
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*Note: N=21; n seeker= 16; n non-seeker=5*
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motive</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tr>
<td>Instrumental</td>
<td>Seeking feedback because of its value in conveying information and accurate, objective, and constructive evaluation that facilitates the regulation of performance and the attainment of goals, in reference to various goals and standards of performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ego-Defense</td>
<td>Motivation to defend and protect one's egos from any negative information and situations of threat, failure or blows to one's self-image by either avoiding, distorting, and/or discounting feedback.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ego-Enhance</td>
<td>Motivation to protect one's ego by seeking (positive) feedback to confirm a favorable self-image.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image-Defense</td>
<td>Need to protect one’s public self-presentation by reducing unfavorable perceptions others hold of them and maintaining a favorable public image in situation where one engages in defensive impression management; thinks others expect him/her to be competent and confident; in public contexts ; or when peers are not seeking feedback.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image-Enhance</td>
<td>Need to control how one appears to others by increasing favorable perceptions through seeking positive (or even negative) feedback even if it has no informational value to create an image of effectiveness and attentiveness to one’s job, as well as caring for the opinion of others.</td>
</tr>
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Table 4. Frequencies of Demographics (Study 1b)

<table>
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Note: N=48
### Table 5. Demographics Frequencies (Study 2)

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<td>Percent</td>
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<td>------------------------------</td>
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<td>Belgium</td>
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<tr>
<td>Belize</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bosnia and Herzegovina</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
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<td>Bulgaria</td>
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<td>Canada</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>China</td>
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<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
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<td>0.7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ghana</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
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<td>Country</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percent</td>
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<td>---------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Peru</td>
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<td>0.3%</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Portugal</td>
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<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republic of Korea</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Romania</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
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<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovenia</td>
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<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
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<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taiwan</td>
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<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Yugoslavia</td>
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</tr>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Countries Lived in (Excluding Country of Origin)</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
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<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>246</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>39</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
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<table>
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<th>Currently Residing in Country (Other than Country of Origin)</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
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<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>257</td>
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<table>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 6 months</td>
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<tr>
<td>6 months 1 year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 year 2 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 years 5 years</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tenure with Supervisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 6 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 months 1 year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 year 2 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 years 5 years</td>
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<tr>
<td>More than 5 years</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Interact with Supervisor</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
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<tr>
<td>Once a day</td>
<td>241</td>
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<tr>
<td>Once a week</td>
<td>56</td>
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<td>Once a month</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less frequent than once a month</td>
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<td>0.3%</td>
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<td>I work in an office setting</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>I work from home</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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<td>Front line employee</td>
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<th>Percent</th>
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<td>Consulting</td>
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<td>Customer Service</td>
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<tr>
<td>Industry</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percent</td>
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<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Human Resources/Training</td>
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<tr>
<td>Manufacturing/Assembly Line</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing/Communications/Advertising/Public Relations</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Law Medical etc.</td>
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<td>6.3%</td>
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<td>Research and Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sales</td>
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<td>Service Worker</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Skilled Trade/Craftsman</td>
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<tr>
<td>Technical /ITIS</td>
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<td>Nonprofit/Membership Organization</td>
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<td>Public Administration/Government</td>
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<td>Other</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Local</td>
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<td>Multinational</td>
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*Note: N=303*
Table 6. National Properties for Nations with more than 25 Participants

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<td>16,244,600</td>
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<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1,841,710</td>
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<td>1,821,424</td>
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<table>
<thead>
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<th>Ranking</th>
<th>HDI</th>
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<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>3</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>136</td>
<td>0.554</td>
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<td>0.911</td>
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<table>
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<th>RPI</th>
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<td>A2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>A4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>A1</td>
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Note: GDP= Gross Domestic Product; HDI: Human Development Index; RPI: Risk of Political Instability. N= 95, United States; N= 72, India; N= 26, Canada.
<table>
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<th>Theme(s)</th>
<th>Sample Quotes</th>
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<td><strong>Feedback Seeker</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INST IE</td>
<td>• Yes, at my internship I do. I always ask for feedback, advice, point of improvement etc. To show my 'professionalism' and to improve of course! – <em>Netherlands</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INST EE ID</td>
<td>• Yes, I often seek advice from others who I feel comfortable and confident I can confide with. I do this because I don't want to be seen as vulnerable in my job and school. When I seek this advice, I often seek them out directly and ask if they are willing to help/give me some advice. I do this to make sure I am doing the right thing or as a way to boost my self-esteem/self-assurance in the task. – <em>Slovakia</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INST Person</td>
<td>• Yes - I try to seek feedback regularly from my supervisors and professors. I also ask whether I am doing things correctly, am on the right track, and ask if they can give me direct suggestions to support my work. I am usually a conscientious person, so I want to make sure I am doing my job the best that I can. I also realize that supervisors and professors know more than I do, so why not take advantage of that? – <em>Lebanon</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INST ID Context</td>
<td>• Yes, I do. Usually I prefer ask for general opinions, because I'm afraid that my questions might be interpreted as a sign of weakness by my colleagues. Given that I work as researcher in the university, I believe that it is very important to have others’ opinion and suggestions in order to have different points of view on the issue I'm working on. Moreover, usually my colleagues treat different topics using different methodologies, so they can give me new ideas and hints. It is fundamental for me being judged and have others' opinions in my work, especially if they know very well my field of analysis. In this way I can have some critical observations on my analyses and new ideas. – <em>Italy</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme(s)</td>
<td>Sample Quotes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Feedback Seekers</td>
<td>• Sometimes. It depends whether I feel confident on the product and the consequences of having an improved version (e.g., I may not seek feedback in a class paper when I already have a high grade in the course, whereas I will be very likely to seek advice from colleagues when contacting a professor for the first time regarding a job opportunity). As I briefly explained in the previous question, I ask for advice, opinion or evaluation when I have great interest in learning about a specific process or having a positive outcome. - Brazil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• No, I usually do it on my own. I try to understand as best as possible the work I have to do the first time it’s explained to me. It’s a personal thing, I like to demonstrate competence by appearing to be as independent as possible. It’s important for me to feel like I can do so, given that solitude is a very important factor for me. If I feel like demonstrating my competence would help me at the work place, then from time to time I would ask for help in order to show how capable I am. If a situation arises during which I need help I would do so without hesitation given that putting it aside could compromise my work in the long run if I don’t perform early on. However, I would do my best to appear as composed and as informed as possible. - Lebanon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring</td>
<td>• Not particularly. Oftentimes one can deduce the feedback that would be provided by observing what becomes of the work that is produced. For example, if your work is produced to the client largely unamended from what you submitted, then it is safe to assume that it was good work. The converse is true also. Also, simply by listening to the words of the person giving you work upon submitting it can suffice: &quot;thanks that's great&quot;, &quot;thanks, that's exactly what I needed&quot; &quot;perfect&quot; etc...If the person asks you to attempt the task again, you know you didn't do the best job the first time. Another reason I never asked for feedback is because I was very confident in my skills and my commitment to a job well done. – Australia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Instrumental Motive = INST; Ego-Defense Motive = ED; Ego-Enhance Motive = EE; Image-Defense Motive = ID; Image-Enhance Motive =
Table 8. Study 1a: Frequency of Theme Occurrence for Personal Perspectives on Feedback Seeking

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motives</th>
<th>Additional Antecedents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INST</td>
<td>ED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Sample (N=21)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Frequency</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Percent</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback Seekers (N= 16)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Feedback Seekers (N= 5)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Instrumental Motive = INST; Ego-Defense Motive = ED; Ego-Enhance Motive = EE; Image-Defense Motive = ID; Image-Enhance Motive = IE.
Table 9. Study 1a: Feedback Seeking Cultural Perspective Sample Responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample Quotes</th>
<th>Country</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Yes, very common. Two heads are smarter than one. That is my culture. Among a crowd of people, there is always someone to learn from. –Brazil</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Yes, although there is an high distance of power between employer and employee, so it is not so common to ask for the supervisor's opinion I answered &quot;yes&quot;, but my work setting is quite atypical because I'm working at the university, so it is necessary to have the supervisor opinion on the work I'm doing work and to enrich them with new ideas - Italy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Yes absolutely! In Canada, Quebec, it is more than common to have people asking questions and looking for advice. People actually get mad if you seem too shy to ask. Having questions and asking for help or for explanations is a way to acknowledge and assimilate the informations and so it is normal to act that way. - Canada</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Yes, it is. Due to high power distance in my country of origin, people usually seek advices, opinions, and evaluations from superiors (e.g., elderly people or people up in the hierarchy). Various reasons: for improvement, impression management, as a norm - India</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• I wouldn't say it is common, but I wouldn't say it's uncommon either. I guess it comes down to the individual's personality traits. - Italy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• It is common, but it is not the norm. I would say that it is dependent on the context rather than saying that it is normative. If the situation is one which requires someone to ask for help, or one in which asking for help could beneficial then yes, asking for advice or an opinion could be quite beneficial. If I had to choose between it being a norm or not, I wouldn't be able to choose. A situation in which a professor hates being asked questions would see students hesitate to put themselves out there. Another situation in which a different professor loves being asked questions would see a class with questions being the dominant theme. - Lebanon</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 10. Study 1a: Frequency of Theme Occurrence for Cultural Perspectives on Feedback Seeking

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motives</th>
<th>Additional Antecedents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INST</td>
<td>ED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Frequency</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Percent</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: N=18. Instrumental Motive = INST; Ego-Defense Motive = ED; Ego-Enhance Motive = EE; Image-Defense Motive = ID; Image-Enhance Motive = IE.*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feedback Seeking</th>
<th>Asking for Advice</th>
<th>Asking for Clarification</th>
<th>Proactivity</th>
<th>Conscientiousness</th>
<th>Communication</th>
<th>Impression Management</th>
<th>Self-Affirmation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feedback Vragen (Dutch)</td>
<td>Yatloub Irshadad (Arabic)</td>
<td>Uitleg vragen (Dutch)</td>
<td>Taking Initiative</td>
<td>Gewissenhaft (German)</td>
<td>Ehrlich (German)</td>
<td>een wit voetje halen (Dutch)</td>
<td>Bekreftte (Norwegian)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absicherung (German)</td>
<td>Spørre, Fundere (Norwegian)</td>
<td>Confirmation</td>
<td>Ambitious</td>
<td>Responsible</td>
<td>Inquisitive</td>
<td>Strategisch (German)</td>
<td>Recognition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mouraja'a (Arabic)</td>
<td>Guidance</td>
<td>Istifsar (Arabic)</td>
<td>Perfectionist</td>
<td>Konfrontation-svermeidend (German)</td>
<td>Autostima (Italian)</td>
<td>Bestätigung-ssuchend (German)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Double Checking Evaluation</td>
<td>Undersøke (Norwegian)</td>
<td>Inquiring</td>
<td>Professional</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>Etlob l moussa3ada (Arabic)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 12. Study 1b: Frequency of Hits versus Misses in Identified Motives by Scenario

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scenario</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hit</td>
<td>Miss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instrumental</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ego-Defense</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ego-Enhancement</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image-Defense</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image-Enhancement</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 13. Study 1b: Frequency of Endorsement of Feedback Seeking Behaviors Described in Scenarios

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Sample Quote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instrumental Motive Scenario(s)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>I really would not ask/bother my manager for every small task or achievement on how I am doing. I may ask if he likes the report, if it needs some changes to attend to the client needs, nothing more. –Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maybe</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>I will do the same in case I’m not really sure about the process and the way of building my report or if I have a lack of information, details or other factors that can affect my report. Otherwise if everything is clear and I’m sure from the outcome I would take the ownership by keeping my manager in the loop of what I’m delivering. –Participant from Lebanon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>Clear communication is the hallmark of a successful work environment, among other things. Employees should understand exactly what is expected of them, at a minimum, in order to do their jobs well. –Participant from Netherlands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ego-Defense Scenario(s)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>I would ask directly about my performance in order to have a clear perspective of the goals and expected achievements. Even though my supervisor’s opinion could be not be the same as mine, it would be absolutely necessary to understand his/hers expectations. And I don’t feel my feelings threatened by assumptions or opinions that differ from mine (I may get bothered, though). –Brazil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maybe</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>Maybe I wouldn’t ask directly for feedback, but not because the answer would affect the way I see myself. I find it somehow immature to ask ‘Have I done well?’ in my opinion an adult person should do the best way he/she can, and then the result has to stand by itself. If the boss has critics, he will let me know and if he likes the work and says it, then it’s good.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>Sample Quote</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>It's also possible that I would try to figure out his opinion via other signs such as nonverbal reactions etc., especially if I knew that the boss is from another culture that has maybe not as direct communication as the German one. – Germany</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Ego-Enhancement Scenario(s)**

| Yes               | 5         | 19%     | If you all now you did well, you do not need to ask someone to confirm that. – United States                                               |
| Maybe             | 14        | 54%     | It depends on my relationship with the manager. Do I value their opinion, do I think they are more knowledgeable on the topic than I am? If my manager knows nothing about what I'm doing (Something that happens a lot as a freelance social media manager) I would not care what they thought or what direction they may give me. – United States |
| Yes               | 7         | 27%     | I think that if you are doing a good job it can be good to hear positive feedback. It encourages you to continue doing a good job. If you don't get any recognition for your work, it can be easy to not work as hard because you are getting no reward. – Sweden             |

**Image-Defense Scenario(s)**

| Yes               | 5         | 56%     | I would see it as one way in which I'm compromising my work and success. If there is a chance I'm doing something wrong, I should address it and as early as possible. The way in which others see me is irrelevant and should not impede my success. – Lebanon |
|                  |           |         | Because in this case it is a new software; I then would consider it more useful to complete the task correctly for that eventual errors won't occur in the future than on what the others think of me. But if the task was familiar, I wouldn't ask for feedback, because I also think it's important that the colleagues have an image of you as a competent person, otherwise they might perceive you as incompetent and abuse it in the future. – Saudi Arabia |
|                  | 0         | 0%      | N/A                                                                                                                                        |

**Image-Enhancement Scenario(s)**

| Yes               | 9         | 43%     | I would probably ask for feedback but for different reasons. If I were to ask, it would be in private and for my own personal growth. – United States |


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Sample Quote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maybe</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>I would ask some personal thing if the person whom I send the mail is personally close to me. I hope otherwise S/he might get mad with me. and of course I would ask to change something in the context as the superiors can see the things in different perspectives.(If they are really (sic) superiors equipped (sic) with Knowledge and practice) – <em>Sri Lanka</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>I would also make sure to involve my superiors when I am not doing well to show my willingness to improve and how I am committed to improving my performance – <em>Netherlands</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: N=48*
Table 14. Study 2: Correlations and Descriptive Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Overall Feedback</th>
<th>Indirect Feedback</th>
<th>Direct Feedback</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Seeking</td>
<td>Seeking</td>
<td>Seeking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(α=.94)</td>
<td>(α=.93)</td>
<td>(α=.92)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>M= 3.70</td>
<td>M= 3.69</td>
<td>M= 3.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>SD= 0.93</td>
<td>SD= 0.95</td>
<td>SD= 1.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tightness-Looseness</td>
<td>4.54 0.63 .70</td>
<td>.20**</td>
<td>.20**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need For Harmony</td>
<td>4.51 0.59 .71</td>
<td>.28**</td>
<td>.29**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relation To Broad Environment</td>
<td>4.08 0.48 .77</td>
<td>.49**</td>
<td>.48**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback Environment</td>
<td>4.39 0.66 .89</td>
<td>.28**</td>
<td>.21**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instrumental Motive</td>
<td>4.87 0.63 .79</td>
<td>.25**</td>
<td>.22**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ego Defense Motive</td>
<td>2.53 1.06 .88</td>
<td>.18**</td>
<td>.23**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ego Enhance Motive</td>
<td>3.87 1.14 .93</td>
<td>.54**</td>
<td>.55**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image Defense Motive</td>
<td>2.67 1.07 .91</td>
<td>.16**</td>
<td>.21**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image Enhance Motive</td>
<td>3.85 1.17 .94</td>
<td>.51**</td>
<td>.52**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Trait Affect</td>
<td>3.85 0.62 .78</td>
<td>.39**</td>
<td>.36**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative Trait Affect</td>
<td>2.03 0.66 .76</td>
<td>-.17**</td>
<td>-.13*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: N= 303. *: p<.05; **: p<.01.
### Table 15. Confirmatory Factor Analysis Fit Indices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Culture</th>
<th>Feedback</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>df</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fit Index</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFI</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>0.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GFI</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>0.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RMSEA</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 16. Regression Results for the Effect of Cultural Value-Based Dimensions on Feedback Seeking Frequency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor</th>
<th>$\beta$</th>
<th>$SE$</th>
<th>Effect size (Cohen’s $f^2$)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PA</td>
<td>0.35***</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NA</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tightness-Looseness</td>
<td>0.15**</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model $R^2 (\Delta R^2)$</td>
<td>0.17*** (0.02**)</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor</th>
<th>$\beta$</th>
<th>$SE$</th>
<th>Effect size (Cohen’s $f^2$)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PA</td>
<td>0.32***</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NA</td>
<td>-0.07</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need for Harmony</td>
<td>0.22***</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model $R^2 (\Delta R^2)$</td>
<td>0.20*** (0.05***)</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor</th>
<th>$\beta$</th>
<th>$SE$</th>
<th>Effect size (Cohen’s $f^2$)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PA</td>
<td>0.25***</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NA</td>
<td>-0.08</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relation to Broad Environment</td>
<td>0.43**</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model $R^2 (\Delta R^2)$</td>
<td>0.32*** (0.17***)</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: All tests are one-tailed. * $p<.05$. ** $p<.01$. *** $p<.001$. 

275
### Table 17. Model Coefficients for Feedback Environment as Mediator

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Antecedent</th>
<th>M₁ (Feedback Environment)</th>
<th>Y (Feedback Seeking)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Outcome</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coeff.</td>
<td>SE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tightness-Looseness</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M₁</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Affect</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative Affect</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>i₁</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need for Harmony</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>0.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M₁</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Affect</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative Affect</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>i₁</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relation to Broad Environment</td>
<td>a₁</td>
<td>0.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M₁</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Affect</td>
<td>---</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative Affect</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>i₁</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
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</table>
Table 18. Model Coefficients for Feedback Seeking Motives as Mediator

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Antecedent</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>M1 (Instrumental Motive)</th>
<th>M2 (Image-Defense Motive)</th>
<th>Y (Feedback Seeking)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coeff.</td>
<td>SE</td>
<td>(P)</td>
<td>Coeff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tightness-Looseness</td>
<td>(a_1)</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>&lt; .05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M1</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M2</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PA</td>
<td>---</td>
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<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NA</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>(i_{M1})</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(R^2 = .02)</td>
<td>(R^2 = .01)</td>
<td>(R^2 = .27)</td>
<td>(F (5, 297) = 22.26, (p&lt;.001)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need for Harmony</td>
<td>(a)</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>&lt; .01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M1</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M2</td>
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<tr>
<td>PA</td>
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<td>---</td>
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<tr>
<td>NA</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>(i_{1})</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(R^2 = .03)</td>
<td>(R^2 = .38)</td>
<td>(F (1, 301) = 10.08, (p&lt;.01)</td>
<td>(F (4, 298) = 45.12, (p&lt;.001)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relation to Broad Environment</td>
<td>(a_1)</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>&lt; .01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M1</td>
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<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M2</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ego-Defense Motive</td>
<td>(b_1)</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>&lt; .001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback Seeking</td>
<td>(b_2)</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>&lt; .001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>--------</td>
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<td>PA</td>
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<td>NA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>$i_1$</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$R^2 = .03$  
$F(1, 301) = 10.08, p<.01$

$R^2 = .05$  
$F(1, 301) = 14.66, p<.01$

$R^2 = .38$  
$F(5, 298) = 35.81, p<.01$

*Note: PA= Positive Affect. NA= Negative Affect*
Table 19. Regression Coefficients, Standards Errors, and Model Summary Information for the Tightness-Looseness Serial Mediation Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Antecedent</th>
<th>M1 (Feedback Environment)</th>
<th>M2 (Image-Defense Motive)</th>
<th>Y (Feedback Seeking)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coeff.</td>
<td>SE</td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tightness-Looseness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a1</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M1</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M2</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PA</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>NA</td>
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<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>iM1</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.06</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

R² = .01  R² = .17  R² = .28
F (1, 301) = 2.01, p = .16  F (2, 300) = 31.54, p < .001  F (5, 297) = 23.06, p < .001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Antecedent</th>
<th>M1 (Feedback Environment)</th>
<th>M2 (Instrumental Motive)</th>
<th>Y (Feedback Seeking)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coeff.</td>
<td>SE</td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tightness-Looseness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a1</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M1</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M2</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PA</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
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<tr>
<td>NA</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>iM1</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.06</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

R² = .01  R² = .21  R² = .21
F (1, 301) = 2.01, p = .16  F (2, 300) = 40.88, p < .001  F (5, 297) = 16.15, p < .001

Note: PA = Positive Affect. NA = Negative Affect.
Table 20. Regression Coefficients, Standards Errors, and Model Summary Information for the Need for Harmony Serial Mediation Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Antecedent</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>M₁</th>
<th>M₂</th>
<th>Y</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Need for Harmony</td>
<td></td>
<td>( a₁ ) 0.16 0.06 &lt;.05</td>
<td>( a₂ ) 0.06 0.05 &lt;.05</td>
<td>( c' ) 0.18 0.05 &lt;.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( M₁ )</td>
<td></td>
<td>--- --- ---</td>
<td>( d_{21} ) -0.41 0.05 &lt;.001</td>
<td>( b₁ ) 0.28 0.06 &lt;.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( M₂ )</td>
<td></td>
<td>--- --- ---</td>
<td>--- --- ---</td>
<td>( b₂ ) 0.31 0.05 &lt;.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PA</td>
<td></td>
<td>--- --- ---</td>
<td>--- --- ---</td>
<td>--- --- ---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NA</td>
<td></td>
<td>--- --- ---</td>
<td>--- --- ---</td>
<td>--- --- ---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>( i_{M₁} )</td>
<td>0.00 0.06 1.00</td>
<td>( i_{M₂} ) 0.00 0.05 1.00</td>
<td>( i_y ) 0.00 0.49 1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ R^2 = .03 \quad R^2 = .16 \quad R^2 = .30 \]

\[ F (1, 301) = 8.05, p < .05 \quad F (2, 300) = 29.55, p < .001 \quad F (5, 297) = 25.59, p < .001 \]

*Note:* PA = Positive Affect. NA = Negative Affect
Table 21. Regression Coefficients, Standards Errors, and Model Summary Information for the Relation to Broad Environment Serial Mediation Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Antecedent</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>$M_1$ (Feedback Environment)</th>
<th>$M_2$ (Instrumental Motive)</th>
<th>Y (Feedback Seeking)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coeff.</td>
<td>SE</td>
<td>$P$</td>
<td>Coeff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relation to Broad Environment</td>
<td>$a_1$</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$M_1$</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>$d_{21}$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$M_2$</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PA</td>
<td>---</td>
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<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NA</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>$i_{M1}$</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$R^2 = .01$  
$F (5, 297) = 31.92, p<.001$

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Antecedent</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>$M_1$ (Feedback Environment)</th>
<th>$M_2$ (Ego-Defense Motive)</th>
<th>Y (Feedback Seeking)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coeff.</td>
<td>SE</td>
<td>$P$</td>
<td>Coeff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relation to Broad Environment</td>
<td>$a_1$</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$M_1$</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>$d_{21}$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$M_2$</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PA</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NA</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>$i_{M1}$</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$R^2 = .23$  
$F (5, 297) = 38.11, p<.001$

Note: PA= Positive Affect. NA= Negative Affect
APPENDIX A

Study 1a

Recruiting Email

Dear participant, we are researchers at Florida Institute of Technology currently exploring feedback processes in organizations. More specifically, we are trying to better understand factors such as personal motives and contexts that impact individuals’ feedback behaviors. You are invited to participate in a one-on-one online focus group-type of survey. If you agree to participate, you will be first asked to provide some general information about yourself. Then, you will be directed to another website where you will be asked to login using the credentials provided to you in the email you have received. In the second link, you will be asked a set of questions about your own behaviors and motives as well as that of the culture/society you relate most to. Data obtained from this focus group will be used for research purposes only and will be completely confidential. This focus group is expected to take no more than forty-five (45) minutes to complete.

QuestionPro Survey

Before beginning this survey, please take the time to answer a couple of questions to help us determine whether you qualify for this study.

1. Please enter the Username you have been provided with in the email:

2. Please indicate your country of origin:

3. Do you identify with another culture other than your culture of origin?
4. Please indicate the other culture you identify with:

5. Please indicate your gender:

6. How old are you (in years)?

7. Which of the following best describes your employment status?
   1. Full-time employee
   2. Part-time employee
   3. Full-time student
   4. Part-time student
   5. Self-employed
   6. Unemployed

8. Which of the following best describe you as a student?
   1. Freshmen
   2. Sophomore
   3. Junior
   4. Senior
   5. Graduate Student

9. Which of the following best describes your job function?
   1. Administrative Support
   2. Consulting
   3. Customer Service
   4. Engineering
   5. Finance/Accounting
6. Human Resources/Training
7. Manufacturing/Assembly Line
8. Marketing/Communications/Advertising/Public Relations
9. Professional (Law, Medical, etc.)
10. Research and Development
11. Sales
12. Service Worker
13. Skilled Trade/Craftsman
14. Technical (IT/IS)
15. Other __________________________________________________

10. Which one of the following best describes the organization you work for?

1. Agriculture/Forestry/Fishing
2. Business Services (Printing, Shipping, etc.)
3. Communications
4. Computer and Data Processing Services
5. Construction
6. Consulting and/or Accounting Firm
7. Education
8. Financial Services/Insurance
9. Health Services
10. Hospitality/Entertainment/Recreation
11. Manufacturing
12. Non-profit/Membership Organization
13. Personal Services
14. Public Administration/Government
15. Real Estate
16. Retail
17. Telecommunications
18. Transportation
19. Utilities
20. Other ___________________________________________________________________

11. Please indicate the country in which you are currently employed.

You have now successfully completed the first set of questions. By clicking continue, you will be directed to another link which will open in the same window.

Please make sure to read and follow the directions you have received by email.

Thank you.

**BlogNog Questions**

**Questions to ALL participants**

1- Do you usually ask for advice, opinion or evaluation regarding the work you are doing (at school/work)?

Follow-up or Probe Question:
If “Yes” (above): Why do you ask for advice, opinion or evaluation regarding the work you are doing (at school/work)?

Who would you ask for advice, opinion or evaluation regarding the work you are doing (at school/work)?

If “No” (above): Why don’t you ask for advice, opinion, or evaluation regarding the work you are doing (at school)?

2- Is it common in [insert country] for people to ask for advice, opinion or evaluation regarding the work they are doing?

Follow-up or Probe Question:

If “Yes” (above): Why do people ask for advice, opinion, or evaluation in [insert country] (at school/work)?

Who do people ask for advice, opinion, or evaluation in [insert country] (at school/work)?

If “No” (above): Why don’t people ask for advice, opinion, or evaluation in [insert country] (at school/work)?

Question Set #1

1- People ask for advice, opinion or evaluation of their work to know if they are doing a good job.

   a. Would you do the same? Follow-up question: Why or Why not?

   b. Would others in [insert country] do the same? Follow-up question: Why or Why not?
2- People ask for opinion or evaluation of their work to know if what their manager thinks of them.
   a. Would you do the same? *Follow-up question:* Why or Why not?
   b. Would others in [insert country] do the same? *Follow-up question:* Why or Why not?

3- People ask for advice on their work to know what they are supposed to do.
   a. Would you do the same? *Follow-up question:* Why or Why not?
   b. Would others in [insert country] do the same? *Follow-up question:* Why or Why not?

*Question Set #2*

1- People ask for opinion or evaluation of their work so that they can do better next time.
   a. Would you do the same? *Follow-up question:* Why or Why not?
   b. Would others in [insert country] do the same? *Follow-up question:* Why or Why not?

2- People ask for advice, opinion or evaluation of their work to make sure they are doing as well as they think they are.
   a. Would you do the same? *Follow-up question:* Why or Why not?
   b. Would others in [insert country] do the same? *Follow-up question:* Why or Why not?

3- People avoid asking for advice, opinion or evaluation of their work because they don’t want to be hurt or disappointed with themselves.
a. Would you do the same? Follow-up question: Why or Why not?

b. Would others in [insert country] do the same? Follow-up question: Why or Why not?

Question Set #3

1- People ask for evaluation of their work because it makes them feel good about themselves.

   a. Would you do the same? Follow-up question: Why or Why not?

   b. Would others in [insert country] do the same? Follow-up question: Why or Why not?

2- People avoid asking for advice or evaluation of their work so that others don’t think they are not good at what they do.

   a. Would you do the same? Follow-up question: Why or Why not?

   b. Would others in [insert country] do the same? Follow-up question: Why or Why not?

3- People ask for advice or evaluation of their work so that others know that they are responsible and good at their work.

   a. Would you do the same? Follow-up question: Why or Why not?

   b. Would others in [insert country] do the same? Follow-up question: Why or Why not?
APPENDIX B

Study 1b

Scenario Set # 1

SCENARIO 1
Paul recently started working on a new project. He is not really sure what his manager expects him to work on or what he will have to do on the project. He decides to go ask his manager about this.

SCENARIO 2
Xiaofei has been working on a report for a client. Before submitting the final version of the report, she decides to send it to her manager for review. In her email, Xiaofei asks her manager how she has been doing. She also wants to know if she has to make any changes.

SCENARIO 3
Devon has been doing poorly at his job; he was not able to send his manager his work on time. Devon asks his manager for help and advice on how to better manage his time and submit his work by the deadline.

SCENARIO 4
Mohammed is one of the best at his job. His team told him he did a really good job on the program they created. But, Mohammed wanted to also know what his manager thought about his work. He decides to go ask her.

289
**Scenario Set # 2**

**SCENARIO 1**
Sara thinks that she has been doing a good job at work. Compared to others on her team, Sara does not always ask her manager how she has been doing. She is afraid that if her manager said something negative about her work it will hurt her feelings and change the way she sees herself.

**SCENARIO 2**
Charles just completed a report for his manager. He knows that he’s been doing a good job lately and that his manager is happy about his work. As he submits his final report, Charles asks his manager for an evaluation of the work knowing that it will make him happy and feel good about his work.

**SCENARIO 3**
Jian’s company has just started using new software for collecting customer’s complaints. After entering a couple complaints into the software, Jian wonders if he has been doing a good job. He does not want to ask his manager because he is afraid others would think he is not capable to do his job well enough.

**SCENARIO 4**
Every time Maria completes a task her manager assigned to her, she asks for her manager’s opinion and evaluation of the work. She knows that doing this will let her manager and others know that she is a good, responsible, and successful employee.
**Survey Questions**

1- Can you think of a word or words in your own language which could describe the behavior this employee is doing? If yes, please write the word and explain what it means.

2- Why do you think [NAME] behaved like this? Be as detailed as you can.

3- If you were in the place of [NAME], will you do the same?
   1. Not at all
   2. Maybe
   3. Yes, of course

If you answered “not at all”, please explain the reason why. Be as detailed as you can.

If you answered “maybe”, please explain the reason why. Be as detailed as you can.

If you answered “yes, of course”, please explain the reason why. Be as detailed as you can.
APPENDIX C

TIGHTNESS-LOOSENESS (Gelfand et al., 2011)

Instructions: The following statements refer to YOUR COUNTRY as a whole.

Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements using the following scale.

Note: The statements sometimes refer to "social norms," which are generally agreed upon standards for how members should behave in a given context. Social norms have two dimensions: (1) how much behavior is exhibited and (2) how much the society approves of that behavior.

1. There are many social norms that people are supposed to abide by in this country.
2. In this country, there are very clear expectations for how people should act in most situations.
3. People agree upon what behaviors are appropriate versus inappropriate in most situations this country.
4. People in this country have a great deal of freedom in deciding how they want to behave in most situations. (R)
5. In this country, if someone acts in an inappropriate way, others will strongly disapprove.
6. People in this country almost always comply with social norms.
NEED FOR HARMONY (Hwang et al., 2002; Maznevski et al., 1994)

Instructions: The following statements refer to YOUR COUNTRY as a whole.

Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements using the following scale.

1. People in this country fear making mistakes in public.
2. In this country, people fear the ridicule of others.
3. People in this country take note of other’s mistakes.
4. In this country, it is important for people to be thought of as a decent individual.
5. Above all, people in this country want to be treated with respect.
6. Above all, people in this country want to be treated with dignity.
7. It is critical for people in this country to maintain harmony in social situations.
8. If things are going well, people should not upset the harmony.

RELATION TO BROAD ENVIRONMENT (Hall, 1976; Maznevski et al., 1994)

Instructions: The following statements refer to YOUR COUNTRY as a whole.

Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements using the following scale.

1. People in this country indirectly communicate the meaning of their message to others.
2. In this country, people expect others to understand what they mean even though they do not say it overtly.

3. People in this country agree that what is not being said can carry more meaning than what is said.

4. People in this country will explicitly state what they really mean when communicating with others (R).

5. In this country, to understand what is said by others, people need to know the situation in which it is said.

6. In this country, people expect others to understand the underlying meaning in what they say.

7. In this country, people must pay attention to what others say, and how they say it, to know what they mean.

8. Given enough time and resources, people can do almost anything.

9. The most successful businesses control their own environment.

10. People can fix almost any problem they face if they use the right methods.

11. The most successful businesses are always changing things, even if performance is satisfactory already.

12. Good performance comes from tight control over business processes.

13. Good managers take active control of problem situations and resolve them quickly.

14. Businesses that do not change enough will end up with lower performance.

15. It is important for people to be in control of the events around them.
16. People need to fulfill the role meant for them, rather than try to determine their own destiny.

17. Organizational success is largely determined by natural or supernatural forces.

18. People should realize they do not have control over events in their lives.

19. No matter how hard people work towards a goal, they will only achieve it if it is their destiny.

20. The outcomes of most events are predetermined.

**FEEDBACK ENVIRONMENT (Steelman et al., 2004)**

**Supervisor feedback environment 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. My supervisor is fair when evaluating my job performance.

**Feedback Quality**

4. My supervisor gives me useful feedback about my job performance.

5. The feedback I receive from my supervisor helps me do my job.

6. The performance information I receive from my supervisor is generally not very meaningful. (R)
Feedback Delivery

7. When my supervisor gives me performance feedback, he or she is considerate of my feelings.
8. My supervisor generally provides feedback in a thoughtless manner. (R)
9. My supervisor is tactful when giving me performance feedback.

Favorable Feedback

10. I seldom receive praise from my supervisor. (R)
11. My supervisor generally lets me know when I do a good job at work.
12. I frequently receive positive feedback from my supervisor.

Unfavorable Feedback

13. On those occasions when my job performance falls below what is expected, my supervisor lets me know.
14. On those occasions when I make a mistake at work, my supervisor tells me.
15. I frequently receive negative feedback from my supervisor.

Feedback Availability

16. My supervisor is usually available when I want performance information.
17. My supervisor is too busy to give me feedback. (R)
18. The only time I receive performance feedback from my supervisor is during my performance review. (R)
**Promotes Feedback Seeking**

19. My supervisor is often annoyed when I directly ask for performance feedback. (R)

20. I feel comfortable asking my supervisor for feedback about my work performance.

21. My supervisor encourages me to ask for feedback whenever I am uncertain about my job performance.

**FEEDBACK SEEKING MOTIVES (Dahling et al., 2011)**

**Instrumental Motive**

1. I can learn more about the performance expectations that others set for me by asking for feedback.

2. My job-related skills can be improved if I ask for feedback.

3. I ask for feedback to help me “learn the ropes” when new performance goals and expectations are set for me.

4. I seek feedback when I am uncertain about my role in the organization.

5. When I ask for feedback, I do so because I want information related to my duties in the organization.

**Ego-Defense**
6. I tend to not ask for feedback because it might be negative and make me feel bad about myself.
8. The amount of feedback that I ask for depends on whether or not I think it will hurt my feelings.
9. I am reluctant to seek feedback because it might negatively influence the way I see myself.
10. Asking for feedback is threatening to my ego.
11. Being judged could change the way I see myself, so I tend to avoid feedback.

**Ego-Enhance**

12. I sometimes ask for feedback because I know the reply will help me feel better about myself.
13. I like seeking feedback because it improves the way I see myself.
14. I sometimes ask for feedback when I know the reply will be positive because it makes me feel good.
15. I ask for feedback that I know will be positive when I need an ego boost.
16. Feedback can really improve the way that I feel about myself, so I try to seek it out.
17. I ask for feedback when I anticipate that it will be positive because it lets me give myself a “pat on the back.”
18. I look for opportunities to seek feedback that I know will be positive because it improves my self-image.
**Image-Defense**

19. I dislike asking for feedback because it can make me look incompetent to others.

20. I am careful about seeking feedback in public because I do not want to look bad.

21. I want to control the way that others see me, so I am reluctant to seek feedback that could damage my image.

22. I avoid asking for feedback at work because I don’t want people to think poorly of me.

23. Asking for feedback at work is a risk to my public image that I don’t like to take.

24. Others might think less of me if they know that I am not an expert and that I need feedback.

**Image-Enhance**

25. I like to ask for feedback because it gives me a good opportunity to remind others of my accomplishments.

26. Asking for feedback is a good way to emphasize my good qualities to others.

27. I ask for feedback at work because I know it will enhance the way that others see me.

28. Requesting feedback can communicate to others that I am a good, responsible worker.
29. I can make a good impression on others by asking for feedback on tasks that I know I have performed well on.

30. I can appear very competent if I ask for feedback from the right people.

**FEEDBACK SEEKING FREQUENCY (McDonald & Sully de Luque, Personal Communication, August, 2013)**

*Instructions*: Using the scale provided, indicate the extent to which each statement about feedback seeking from a supervisor or boss matches the experiences you've had in your most recent job. (Scale: 1= Never, 2=Rarely or Infrequently, 3= Sometimes, 4= Frequently, 5=Very Frequently, 6=Always).

1. I observe what performance behaviors my boss rewards and use this as feedback on my own performance.

2. I ask my supervisor if I am meeting all of my job requirements.

3. I gain valuable feedback about my performance by paying attention to how my supervisor acts toward me.

4. I ask my supervisor questions in such a way that it doesn’t seem like I’m asking questions about my performance.

5. I talk with my supervisor about broad topics hoping to get a sense of how he or she thinks I am performing.
6. I ask my supervisor how I am doing.

7. I make subtle references to my performance and wait for my supervisor to continue discussing it.

8. I pay attention to how my boss acts towards me in order to understand how he or she perceives and evaluates my work performance.

9. From watching my supervisor’s reactions to what I do, I can tell how well my supervisor thinks I am doing.

10. Because of the reactions I receive from my boss, I can tell whether I am doing the things that should be done.

11. I observe the characteristics of employees who are rewarded by my supervisor and use this information to evaluate my own performance.

12. I let my supervisor know in a roundabout manner that I would like information about my performance.

13. I engage in discussions with my supervisor about work in general hoping to hear comments on my particular work performance.

14. I ask my supervisor open-ended questions about work hoping to hear information about the quality of my work performance.

15. I ask my supervisor how well he or she thinks I am performing.

16. I ask my supervisor if I am doing a good job.
I-PANAS-SF (Thompson, 2007)

Instruction: Use the following scale to record your answers.

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  

Never  
Always

Thinking about yourself and how you normally feel, to what extent do you generally feel:

1- Upset
2- Hostile
3- Alert
4- Ashamed
5- Inspired
6- Nervous
7- Determined
8- Attentive
9- Afraid
10- Active

DEMOGRAPHICS

1. Are you a U.S. born citizen? If not, in what country were you born?
2. Please indicate countries of residence and length of stay in each

3. Please indicate the culture you most closely identify with

4. Please indicate the country in which you currently work

5. Please indicate your gender:

6. How old are you (in years)?

7. Marital Status:
   - Single
   - Married
   - Divorced
   - Separated
   - Living Together

8. How long have you worked in your current job (in years)?
   - Less than 6 months
   - 6 months - 1 year
   - 1 year – 2 years
   - 2 years – 5 years
   - More than 5 years

9. How long have you worked with the same supervisor (in years)?
   - Less than 6 months
   - 6 months - 1 year
   - 1 year – 2 years
   - 2 years – 5 years
More than 5 years

10. How often do you interact with your supervisor?

   Once a day
   Once a week
   Once a month
   Less frequent than once a month

11. What of the following categories best describes your position?

   Management
   Supervisor
   Front line employee

12. How many years of work experience do you have?

   _____ Non-management experience in years
   _____ Management experience in years
   _____ Total years

13. Which of the following best describes your job function?

   Administrative Support
   Consulting
   Customer Service
   Engineering
   Finance/Accounting
   Human Resources/Training
   Manufacturing/Assembly Line
Marketing/Communications/Advertising/Public Relations

Professional (Law, Medical, etc.)

Research and Development

Sales

Service Worker

Skilled Trade/Craftsman

Technical (IT/IS)

Other

14. Which one of the following best describes the organization you work for?

Agriculture/Forestry/Fishing

Business Services (Printing, Shipping, etc.)

Communications

Computer and Data Processing Services

Construction

Consulting and/or Accounting Firm

Education

Financial Services/Insurance

Health Services

Hospitality/Entertainment/Recreation

Manufacturing

Non-profit/Membership Organization

Personal Services
Public Administration/Government
Real Estate
Retail
Telecommunications
Transportation
Utilities
Other
15. Which one of the following best describes the organization you work for?

    Local
    National
    Multinational

16. How many hours do you work per weeks?

17. Please select the option that applies the most:

    I work in an office setting
    I work from home