

Why Does Seeking Feedback Not Always Lead to High Performance?

-Explanation Based on Seeking Motivation

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Abstract—In the past, the research of employee feedback seeking starts from a proactive perspective, and simply considers performance feedback or other positive effect. However, feedback seeking does not necessarily lead to high performance. As a result, by reviewing the relevant theories and literature, it is proved that self-motivation is also an important motivation for feedback seeking. Finally, the direction of future research is also pointed out.

Keywords—Feedback motivation; Self-motivation; Monitor; Inquiry; Leader feedback; Employee feedback

I. INTRODUCTION

In the past 30 years, feedback seeking is used to examine its role in feedback process from a positive perspective. According to the research, positive feedback could promote the employee involvement [Shagufta Sarwar & James Baba Abugre, 2013], enable individuals to correctly evaluate their abilities [Ashford& Tsui, 1991; Williams &Johnson, 2000], manage the impression during performance evaluation [Ashford & Northcraft, 1992], increase the effectiveness of future behavior [Renn & Fedor, 2001] and learn the skills of new work. However, with the change of organizational strategy, especially the development of information technology and multinational enterprises, it is obvious that it is difficult to meet the needs of improving the performance and self-development of employees by relying solely on the traditional top-down feedback. In view of this, Ashford [1986] provides a unique perspective for feedback research based on the theory of positive psychology. It is pointed out that employees can actively seek feed-back from their superiors or colleagues around them in order to obtain valuable information for themselves, thus promoting the development of individuals and organizations.

Feedback seeking does not necessarily lead to high performance, in special situations, positive feedback may have a negative effect and negative feedback may also play a positive role [Shagufta Sarwar, ames Baba Abugren, 2013].

There are few theories and researches on feedback seeking in our country, the motivation of direct review is only one [Xiangchangchun, Longlirong, 2012, In Chinese]. In order to fully understand the influence of feedback seeking, this paper introduces a new feed-back seeking motivation theory based on the classification and motivation of feedback seeking. From the original "three-point method" to "quadrilateral method", this paper reviews and analyzes the influencing factors and results sought by feedback in these years, discusses the lack of research and lay the future research direction.

II. THE CLASSIFICATION OF FEEDBACK SEEKING METHODS

Previous research divided the feedback seeking method into monitor and inquiry. Monitor is an individual who actively receives environmental in-formation by paying attention to the situation and the behavior of others; Inquiry is that individuals get feedback by asking others by asking. The perceived cost of seeking feedback through direct questioning is very high, and the cost of seeking goals for different feedback is different. So when you measure the intensity of the feedback sought by questioning, you should distinguish the goals of seeking feedback. And the cost of getting feedback from monitor is very low. And there is no significant difference in cost between different feedback seeking goals, so it is not necessary to distinguish the target sources sought by feedback. However, although a lot of research has been done on feedback seeking, In a meta-analysis of feedback seeking, it was found that the cost of seeking feedback was negatively correlated with the seeking of interrogative feedback, and had nothing to do with the seeking of observational feedback. Performance is positively correlated with interrogative feedback seeking, while observational feedback seeking is irrelevant to observational feedback seeking [Anseel, Lievens, Beattey, Shen, & Sackett, 2013]. Though some studies have explored the mechanism of a particular feedback seeking, the focus of attention is only interrogative feedback seeking, ignoring the role of observational feedback seeking, [e.g., Dahling, Chau, & O'

Malley, 2012; Lam, Huang & Snape, 2007; Linderbaum & Levy, 2010] For a society with a high power distance and a high face culture, perhaps employees are more likely to use observational feedback seeking methods. Therefore, in the future research, we should fully combine the two ways of research and analysis, and pay attention to the difference between the two kinds of feedback seeking and the different feedback seeking mechanism.

However, it is not complete to divide feedback seeking into monitor and inquiry, and the feedback environment and the feedback object should also be taken into account, so, there are also two ways to seek feedback: leadership feedback seeking and colleague / employee feedback seeking. According to the feedback seeking scale [Gongyaping, In Chinese], coworker feedback seeking is a motivated behavior, in reality, and colleagues also seek peer performance information, leading four types of feedback seeking: self denial, self affirmation, others negation and others affirmation. Self-denial seeks feedback in the field he or she seeks information, by querying and monitoring different sources, Information reports that he or she is not performing well. Others definitely seek feedback by querying and monitoring different sources in the field he or she seeks information, Peer information reporting with good performance. Negative feed-back seeking refers to information reports that are underperformed by querying and monitoring different sources in the field in which he or she seeks information. For leadership feedback seeking and coworker feedback seeking, previous studies have shown that, Constructive leadership psychology titer and feedback style can better promote knowledge sharing among employees. Good knowledge sharing in organizations can improve performance performance [Guquan Li, Youmin Xi, 2014, In Chinese]. Leader-employee exchanges (where efficient relationships between leaders and subordinates promote communication and reciprocity) presage a stronger willingness to seek negative feedback. A positive correlation between leadership credibility and professionalism and feedback seeking behavior [Vancouver & Morri-son,1995;Anseel, Lievens, Beattey, Shen, & Sackett, 2013]also found a high level of effective feedback among his college students, 80% of colleagues' re-views were considered valid, only 7% people could be hurt. Under appropriate conditions, peer feed-back is more efficient than leadership feedback.

III. THE DISCUSSION OF FEEDBACK SEEKING MOTIVATION

The motivation of feedback seeking could be di-vided into instrumental motivation, self-protection motivation and impression management motivation according to the previous research [Ashford & Cummings, 1983]. However, with the development of research, “three points” couldn’t reach a unanimous conclusion.

With regard to instrumental motivation, re-searchers have suggested that in an environment of uncertainty, instrumental motivation dominates feedback seeking [Ashford, Blatt, VandeWalle, 2003] , the degree of uncertainty affects the information value of feedback seeking [Ashford & Cummings, 1983], leading researchers to view such motivations as a motivation to reduce uncertainty. The importance and dominance of less un-certain motivation, empirical studies

have found conflicting conclusions. For example, Ashford [1986] found that there was a negative correlation between uncertainty and feedback seeking behavior. The study also showed that feedback seeking behavior did not always reduce uncertainty. Ash-ford [1988]found that in a changing environment, individuals seeking more feedback tend to suffer greater uncertainty related pressures after six months. These findings based on reducing uncertainty motivation are surprising and require a more comprehensive understanding of self-motivation. Feedback from others is not typically neutral for feedback recipients, because sometimes feedback can hurt a person's self-esteem. Individuals often resist seeking feedback [Anseel, Lievens, & Levy, 2007].

Therefore, the "three points" are beginning to be questioned. First, the question of the content and classification of feedback seeking motivation. Ac-cording to Ashford and Cummings [1983], instrumental motivation refers to the rational expectation of obtaining useful information. Self-protection motivation refers to the desire to protect oneself or self-esteem from evaluative information, and impression management motivation refers to the desire of individuals to control their image in front of others [Xiang Changchun, long Lirong, 2012a view that neglects self-verification motivation Swann et al. 19872007 / 2002]. In order to gain a sense of control and a sense of prediction, people constantly seek or generate feedback consistent with their self-concept, thus maintaining and reinforcing their original self-concept, a motivation deficit that Ashford and Cummings have ignored. Meanwhile, in the classification of feedback seeking motivation [Ashford & Cummings, 1983], instrumental motivation has both the purpose of reducing uncertainty and the purpose of achieving the desired goal. In fact, this is a combination of self-evaluation motivation and self-promotion motivation. Self-protection motivation and impression management motivation are actually two aspects of self-enhancement motivation. The role of different motivations in feed-back seeking. Ashford and Cummings [1983] emphasize the role of instrumental motivation in feedback seeking behavior. Morrison [1995] believes that the role of feedback seeking information is to reduce uncertainty and help people achieve their goals. The person pays too much attention to the instrumental motivation sought by feedback, considering the other two motivations as a complement to instrumental motivation limits the effect of feedback seeking on behavior. Because different people or situations affect themselves and impressions [Levy et al., 1995].All kinds of motivations jointly affect feedback seeking behavior and its results. It is one-sided to overemphasize the instrumental motivation of feedback seeking. The question of influencing factors of different motivations. Ashford and Cummings [1983] assume that different motivations are influenced by different factors. One factor has an effect on a feedback seeking motivation. For example, Morrison and Bies [1991] argue that, in addition to the motivation to obtain effective information, impression management and the motivation to protect self-esteem determine an individual's desire to seek feedback and the timing of seeking feedback. Goals and ways to prove that openness can influence impression- management motivation. In addition, feedback seeking motivation is the result of interaction between people and situations, the openness of seeking feedback may also

influence the instrumental motivation under certain conditions. From this point of view, it limits the scope of research and the scientific nature of feedback seeking.

From the above analysis, we can see that there are still many shortcomings in the study of feedback seeking behavior only from the perspective of management, but from a broader perspective of social psychology, we can more comprehensively reflect the nature of feedback seeking motivation. So we introduce self-motivation into the motivation of feedback seeking. The theory of self-motivation focuses on how motivation affects people's access to evaluation and the way of seeking information. It has a great influence in the field of social psychology [Sedikides & Strube 1997]. The theory holds that ego is the center of social cognition, emotion, motivation and social behavior. Self-motivation drives people to choose, process, memorize and react to such information [Banaji & Prentice 1994; Sedikides & Gregg 2003; Sedikides & Strube 1997].

Self-motivation theory divides people's motivation to obtain evaluation and seek information into four categories: self-validating motivation, self-reinforcing motivation, self-evaluation motivation and self-promotion motivation. Self-validating motivation is designed to enhance people's sense of prediction and control. Self-validation contributes to the formation of a stable self-concept, bringing others' views of us into line with ours, social inter-action becomes predictable and social interaction becomes smoother. New employees in the organization who actively seek feedback can better integrate into the new environment [Morrison, 1993], which also proves that self-validation motivations can promote the adaptation and socialization of employees to their jobs. People test themselves mainly through two ways. That is, to create a social environment for self-verification and subjective distortion of realistic information. Creating a social environment for self-verification involves the selection of partners and environments for communication and the intentional display of identity clues. Adopting communication strategies that can trigger self-validating feedback. Subjective distortion and inclusion of display information, selective attention, selective coding and extraction, and selective interpretation [Swann1987; Swann et al. 2002]. The purpose of self-enhancement motivation is to improve the good image of self. Self-protection is generated from negative evaluation information. Individuals with strong self-reinforcing motivation tend to evaluate positively rather than negatively, and prefer to have a strong social evaluation of them-selves. They put a lot of effort into thinking about the positive feedback [Sedikides et al. 2002, 2003]. Under the influence of self-assessment motivation, individuals show a preference for accurate external feedback, and they want to know about their appearance, their ability, An objective assessment of personality and trait, then frequently seeking feedback so as to be able to learn better and achieve higher goals [Yanagizawa, 2008], Brown [1991] believes that this motivation implies three considerations: first, people just want to reduce uncertainty. People want to know what they look like in order to get the joy of knowing what they are. People also think they have a duty to know who they really are. Existentialist philosophers believe that people have a moral obligation to reveal their true nature. Finally, knowing what

they are can sometimes help them achieve other goals. One of the goals is to survive. The motivation for self-improvement is to improve one's knowledge, ability, and skills, and tend to compare upward. This kind of comparison makes the individual learn how to achieve the goal, [Molleman et al. 1986], self-promotion motivation and the other three kinds of motivation are essentially different from the other three kinds of motivation, self-enhancement motivation care about self-concept maximization, self-enhancement motivation care ability real improvement; Self-test motivation is more concerned with the consistency with self-concept, self-promotion motivation is more concerned with the change of self-concept, self-evaluation motivation is concerned with the accuracy of self-cognition, self-promotion motivation is concerned with the development of self-concept to a better direction. Without concern for its accuracy.

This theory overcomes the deficiency of Ashford and Cummings's viewpoint of seeking motivation from the following three aspects. Firstly, feed-back seeking motivation is more comprehensive and scientific. Self-motivation model adds self-validating motivation in content and classifies it. The instrumental motivation is divided into self-evaluation motivation and self-promotion motivation, and the self-protection motivation and impression management motivation are integrated into self-enhancement motivation. Secondly, Self-motivation emphasizes the direct role of self-reinforcing motivation in achieving positive self-concept, and also emphasizes the indirect role in self-validation, self-evaluation and self-improvement, all kinds of motivation can work together to seek feedback and seek feedback [Sedikides & Strube 1997]. Thirdly, self-motivation emphasizes the study of feedback seeking motivation from a social perspective, unlike Ashford and Cummings [1983], external factors affect feedback seeking motivation on a one-to-one basis. The self-motivation model emphasizes that people and situational factors act together on different motivations [Bayer & Gollwitzer, 2005; Freitas et al. , 2001], different motivations can interact with the same factors. For example, the Katz and Beach [2000] found that individuals who were more attractive to their romantic partners had both self-validation and self-enhancement motivations, while those with low attractiveness had either self-validating motives or only self-enhancement motivations. Self-management motivation was added to feedback seeking motivation and expanded to four-part method.

In summary, self motivation theory provides a new perspective for the feedback seeking motivation theory, which emphasizes the dynamic relationship between motivation, emphasize individual, situational differences will also affect the different motives, so self motivation theory could be more comprehensive and scientific used for the feedback seeking research to provide a theoretical basis for the interpretation, seeking feedback and performance the relationship between a more accurate theoretical support.

IV. PROSPECTS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

First of all, it is necessary to dig deeply into the role of motivation in the process of seeking feed-back. Most of the previous researches on feedback seeking are based on the framework of feedback seeking motivation proposed by Ashford and Cummings [1983]. It is impossible to reach a consistent conclusion under this framework. The study of feedback based on the theory of self-motivation provides a theoretical basis for making up for the shortcomings of the above framework. The theory of self-motivation overcomes the deficiency of Ash-ford and Cummings [1983]. Feedback seeks a more comprehensive content of motivation, more scientific classification, more emphasis on the common role of motivation, China's high power distance and face culture make individual feedback seeking behavior unique. The effect of feed-environment on feedback seeking is only due to the limitation of [Dahling & O' Malley, 2011] application in China. It is of great practical significance in China to study feedback seeking behavior in organizations by combining individual self-enhancement and motivation verification. Because motivation is the product of a specific situation, how different situations affect different motivation is also a new field. For example, studies have pointed out that formal feedback may stimulate self-enhancement motivation, while informal feedback may trigger self-evaluation or self-promotion motivation [Anseel, lievens, &levy, 2007], and that different feedback sources may have different motivations. Leadership may stimulate self-enhancement motivation, coworkers may stimulate self-validation motivation, mentors may increase self-promotion motivation [Neiss et al., 2006]. From the perspective of leadership and other feedback sources, It is also important that leaders and other sources of feedback respond to employee feedback requests, So far, however, no research has been done on this aspect [Anseel, Lievens, Beattey, Shen, & Sackett, 2013]. Future studies should examine how leaders attribute their motivation to employee feedback seeking behavior and how different responses leaders respond to employee feedback seeking, for example, the leader-ship ascribes employee feedback to impression management, which can affect its ability to give useful feedback later on to de [De Stobbeleir, Ash-ford, & de Luque, 2010].

Second, under the framework of self-motivation, the relationship between feedback seeking and performance needs to be further explored. Previous studies have generally suggested that proactive behavior produces positive behavior outcomes [Ashford & Northcraft, 1992; Ashford & Tsui, 1991; Morrison & Weldon, 1990], but this is not the case. The positive impact of feedback seeking on performance is not obvious: [Anseel, Lievens, Beattey, Shen, & Sackett, 2013], sometimes nega-tive feedback can also have positive impact [ShaguftaSarwar, &, JamesBabaAbugre], and there are conflicting results among some studies [Ashford & Northcraft, 1992; Brown, Ganesan, & Challagalla, 2001], the literature shows that. Self-motivation that affects feedback seeking is critical in determining feedback responses. Two factors are particularly important in considering feedback responses: feedback processing and feedback acceptance. Feedback processing means the recipient cognitively processes the extent and accuracy of feedback from a known source. The study

found that self-motivation affects recall and processing of self-related information and processes [Sedikides & Strube, 1997]. Compared with self-reinforcing and self-validating, Self-evaluation and self-promotion motivations are more likely to be associated with [Swann & Schroeder, 1995] because of their deep processing of feedback. For example, individuals motivated by self-reinforcing motivations are more likely to remember positive feed-back. Instead of negative feedback, individuals spend more time getting information that is good for them, not bad information. Second, in order to have an impact on behavior, feedback must be accepted. For example, Individuals motivated by self-validating motives are more likely to think that self-negation feedback is imprecise and belittle the credibility of the source of self-negation. The uncertain relationship between feedback seeking and performance indicates that there are many internal and external factors that regulate the role of the two, especially individual motivation, leadership traits. Job characteristics [Anseel, Lievens, Beattey, Shen, & Sackett, 2015] all have an impact on whether feedback seeks to improve performance. The role of multiple factors in work is more complex. It is a necessary but lack of empirical research to explore the regulatory role of multi-level factors between the two factors.

Third, the positive and negative aspects of feed-back need to be paid attention. As discussed earlier, there are few studies on the impact of feedback seeking, which have been ignored by the majority of researchers over the positive effects of feedback. For example, there is a study to show that when employees lack situational judgment, they face more interpersonal conflicts [Harvey, Blouin, StStout, 2006], individual work matching, individual organization matching can guarantee the active role of initiative behavior [e.g., Griffin & Lopez, 2005]. The researchers also found that the individual 's continued active help behavior would bring pressure to increase , role overload , work family conflict , and active behavior decrease with time [e.g.,Bolino & Turnley, 2005; Grant, 2008a]. Therefore, in the future research, not only to verify the positive role of feedback, but also to focus on the negative aspect of feedback seeking, especially the feedback seek to destroy or deviate from the task, the specified role and the existing norm, the researcher may find that the feedback seeks to seek the positive and negative impact on the individual, group and organization level.

V. CONCLUSION

On the basis of analyzing the relevant theories and literature of feedback seeking, this paper analyzes and states the ways of feedback seeking from the level of feedback seeking motivation, which are leadership feedback seeking, colleague / employee feedback seeking, monitor and inquiry. The traditional feedback motivation is divided into instrumental motivation, self-protection motivation and impression management motivation, however, this has its limitations. This paper introduces the self-motivation theory into the feedback seeking motivation mechanism and demonstrates it, which breaks through the traditional framework of feedback seeking motivation analysis. Of course, there are some disadvantages. It is hoped that researchers can further explore the role of motivation in the process of seeking

feedback and the relationship between feedback seeking and performance. In addition, the study of positive and negative aspects of feedback seeking also needs to be paid attention to.

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