Managers' Feedback Seeking Propensities on their Intra- Personal, Inter-Personal and Leadership Skills: An Empirical Study.

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Abstract

Based on the idea that feedback seeking enhances job performance, the study was aimed at investigating managers' feedback seeking tendencies on their intra personal, interpersonal and leadership skills, and their preferred feedback sources: subordinates, peers and superiors. Using cross-sectional survey design, 156 managers selected from work organisations in Ghana completed questionnaires on their feedback seeking tendencies, the information sought and their preferred sources. Within-subjects ANOVA and post-hoc analysis of the data suggests that managers are less likely to seek feedback about their performance and if they do, they are most likely to seek it on their interpersonal skills, less likely on leadership skills and least likely on intrapersonal skills. Also, managers appear most likely to seek feedback from their colleagues, less likely from their supervisors and least likely from their subordinates. Organisations need to create favourable feedback environment where managers will feel psychologically safe to seek feedback to enhance their performance.

Key words: Active feedback seeking, Self regulation, Human competencies, Leader-manager, Psychological safety, Ghana.

Introduction

During the last three decades, the role of active feedback seeking in managerial self regulation and job performance effectiveness in organisational context has been acknowledged and investigated (Ashford, Blatt and Vande Walle, 2003; Ashford and Cummings, 1985; Fletcher, 2008; Kuvaas, 2011; Millward, Asumeng and McDowall, 2011). In organisations, active feedback seeking is a conscious effort to seek information about the accuracy and appropriateness of job performance (Iglen and Davis, 2000). The importance of active feedback seeking in relation to managerial job performance is based on the idea that an effective manager is good at self regulation (Ansell, Lievens and Levy, 2007; Ashford et al, 2003; De Shon and Tara, 2009; Porath and Bateman, 2006; Tsui and Ashford, 1994; Whitaker, Darling and Levy, 2007). That is, an effective manager would take a self-regulatory responsibility and thereby seek feedback about his or her job performance, and use the feedback diagnostic information for his/her development and performance improvement, suggesting feedback seeking-job performance link (Atwarter and Brett, 2006; Bailey and Austin, 2006; Fletcher,2008; Kuvaas, 2011; Morrison and Cummings, 1992). Although findings from studies on the effect of feedback on job performance in organisations appear inconsistent with some studies showing very little or no impact (De Nisi and Kluger, 2000; Jawahar, 2010; Kluger and De Nisi, 1996), many studies show that feedback has a positive impact on subsequent job performance (Atwarter and Brett, 2006; Bailey and Fletcher, 2002;

Chan and Leijter, 2012; Haittie and Timperly, 2007; Heslin and Lathan, 2004; Kuvas, 2011; London, 2003). This suggests that managers would actively seek feedback about their performance to enhance their effectiveness.

There is little evidence to date, however, in the extant literature on whether managers would actively seek feedback freely about their performance, the feedback information they are likely to seek, and their most preferred feedback sources in organisation. This situation makes feedback seeking an ill understood consideration from both managerial and psychological perspectives (Amah, 2009; Ansell et al, 2007; Ashford et al, 2003; Bailey and Austin, 2006; Chan and Leijter, 2012; De Nisi and Kluger, 2000; Hawkings and Hefin, 2011; Jawahar, 2010; Kluger and De Nisi, 1996; Millward et al, 2010). This study addresses these gaps in the empirical literature by examining the core questions whether managers will naturally and informally be most inclined to actively seek feedback about their performance, the information sought, and from whom they are most likely to seek feedback in an organisational setting?

How do employees get feedback about their performance in organisations?

Concerning feedback about performance in organisational settings, a distinction is made between 'intrinsic or internal feedback,' and 'mediated or external feedback'. Intrinsic feedback is concerned with feedback that a person entertains in himself or herself, arising out of completing a specific task. External

feedback which is obtained from other persons for example colleagues or supervisors or managers can be obtained as a consequence of actively seeking it, and/ or because its sources decide a person should have it. In active feedback seeking, a person makes a conscious effort to find out how appropriate his or her work behaviour or performance is (Ashford et al., 2003; Iglen, and Davis, 2000).

The formal post-appraisal interview or feedback, albeit an important one for professional managers, is a means through which external feedback occurs because its sources decide one should have it. However, Ashford and Tsui, (1994) have argued that a person may not get enough feedback when he or she waits for the source to decide when that person should have it, and also through monitoring direct and indirect organisational environmental cues for four reasons. Firstly, people are sometimes reluctant to deliver feedback especially when it is negative. Secondly, feedback recipients do not have enough control over the amount and timing of feedback received. Thirdly, there is the tendency for people to reject feedback when they have not requested it. Fourthly, seeking feedback by monitoring the situation and behaviour of others and inferring meanings from organisational environmental cues might not be accurate. Also, as Ashford and Cummings (1985) have pointed out, the amount of formal feedback given in an annual or traditional performance review through post-appraisal interview is insufficient for on-going self- regulation. Further, informal feedback from superiors and peers is also typically constrained because supervisors,

managers and superiors and other sources of feedback are often reluctant to give negative feedback. These reasons suggest that managers hardly receive enough and regular feedback to regulate their behaviour.

Managers may generate feedback about their behaviour in question by actively seeking it directly from sources such as peers, superiors/bosses and subordinates. People who actively seek feedback about their performance frequently are more likely to perform better in their jobs because active feedback seeking is related to accurate discrepancy detection and favourable evaluation of managers' effectiveness by superiors, subordinates, and peers (Ashford and Cummings, 1985; Cannon and Witherspoon, 2005). Active feedback seeking information influences managerial effectiveness for three main reasons (Ashford et al., 2003; Whitaker, Darling and Levy, 2007). Firstly, managers who seek information and feedback actively have a greater chance of knowing their constituents' expectations and opinions with some degree of accuracy, and if appropriate actions are taken to meet or manage those opinions, will be more effective. Secondly, active feedback seeking offers managers some control over the amount and timing of feedback received and increases the likelihood of it being received. Thirdly, by asking for feedback, managers obtain information that they can use to assess their capabilities, adjust their goal-directed behaviour, and enhance their performance. For these reasons, active feedback seeking is important for managerial performance effectiveness and

it is expected that managers would actively seek feedback about their performance.

Feedback Motives and Sources

Motives, in managerial feedback seeking, are the perceived benefits and perceived costs that they consider in order to decide whether or not to seek feedback. Managers are inclined to seek feedback if the perceived benefits outweigh the perceived costs (Ansell et al., 2007). Benefits include information to deal with a particular difficult and uncertain management situation, learning and skill development to increase efficacy for performance improvement (Maurer, Mitchel and Barbeite, 2002; Millward, et al., 2010). Costs include the possibility of losing self-esteem (Iglen and Davis, 2000; Illies, De Pater and Judge, 2007), and risks of exposing weaknesses especially in the eyes of subordinates and peers (Antonioni, 1996; Millward, et al., 2010). Some managers might seek feedback from more distal sources beyond the three most obvious constituencies in their organisations (i.e., superiors, peers and subordinates) including managers in other organisations (Ashford and Tsui, 1994). Thus, feedback seeking in a managerial context appears controversial, complex and a highly multi-dimensional self motivating process which warrants further investigation to enhance understanding of the process.

Managerial Intrapersonal, Interpersonal and Leadership skills

The specific performance criteria of interest in this study, in the managerial context are intrapersonal, interpersonal and leadership skills described as the human side of enterprise in the Domain Model of managerial competencies (Hogan &Warrenfeltz, 2003). The Domain Model of managerial competencies captures most generic models located in the literature such as: The Behavioural Model (Boyatzis, 1982; McCleland, 1998); Functional Model (Knasel & Meed, 1994); Job Competency Model (Mansfield & Mathews, 1985); Holistic Model (Cheetham & Chivers, 1996, 1998); Multi-dimensional Model (Le Deist, Delamaire & Winterton, 2005). Each of these models covers some elements of the generic competencies but not in whole. The Domain Model holistically covers the most generic competencies required for managerial performance and effectiveness: intra personal skills, interpersonal skills, business skills and leadership skills. Therefore, it was considered the most pertinent for current purposes.

Intrapersonal skills

Intrapersonal skills are defined as internalized standards of performance. Sample competencies include: courage and willingness to take a stand, career ambition and perseverance, resilience, integrity, ethics and values, patience, creativity, core self- esteem, generalized self- efficacy, internal locus of control, and emotional stability (low neuroticism)/self-control/emotional intelligence. Intrapersonal skills form the foundation on which management careers are built in that successful managers receive high scores on measures of intra personal skills (Bono and Colbert,2005; Hogan and Warrenfeltz, 2003).

Interpersonal skills

In the organisational processes, managerial interpersonal competence is concerned with initiating, building and maintaining relationships with different people such as subordinates, peers and superiors. It is a basic managerial skill and a predictor of managerial performance and effectiveness, employee job satisfaction, organisational commitment and contextual performance (Hogan and Hogan, 2001). Contextual performance is performance beyond formal task requirements which are extra role activities pursued by employees such as organisational citizenship and pro-social organisational behaviour (Arnold, 2005). The importance of interpersonal skills for managerial effectiveness is grounded in the Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) Theory of Leadership which focuses on the quality of interpersonal relationships between a manager and a subordinate as a primary determinant of managerial effectiveness (Elicker, Levy and Hall, 2006; Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995). Managers need to have good interpersonal skills with their subordinates and peers as poor interpersonal skills are some of the characteristics of failed managers, in essence managerial incompetence. Managers with poor interpersonal skills tend to be insensitive, arrogant, cold, aloof, and overly ambitious, unable to build a team and get work done at the team level (McCall and Lombardo, 1996).

The Business Domain

Business skills, defined by the cognitive abilities and technical knowledge needed for the job involve planning, monitoring budgets, forecasting costs and revenues, cutting costs, mapping strategies, for the most part can be performed in private. Sample competencies include: business acumen, quality decision making, intellectual capability, functional/technical skills, organizing ability, priority setting and developing an effective business strategy (Hogan and Warrenfeltz, 2003; Kotterman, 2006).

Leadership skills

In organisations, leadership is the process of influencing individuals or groups towards the achievement of organisational goals. It is about inter personal influence, persuasiveness, communication, goal setting and team building (Furnham, 2002). Sample competencies include: providing direction, support and standards for accomplishment; communicating a compelling vision; hiring and staffing strategically; motivating others; building effective teams; and managing diversity (Hogan and Warrenfeltz, 2003). Leadership behaviour and effectiveness have important implications for employee well being, job satisfaction, work attitudes and performance (Harter, Schmidt and Hayes, 2002). Therefore, managers need to demonstrated leadership qualities as there is the tendency for most organisations to be over-managed and under-led (Kotterman, 2006). Gardner (1990) used the term first class manager or leader-manager to describe a manager with leadership abilities, in contrast with routine manager who is more concerned with technical competencies. The Domain Model categorizes these four domains into two main dimensions; the 'non human' competencies, that is, business skills; and 'human' competencies comprising intra personal, inter personal and leadership

skills.

Despite the importance of 'human' competencies, that is, intra personal, interpersonal, and leadership skills, organisations select and evaluate managers on the basis of cognitive ability and business skills the so called 'non-human side' of enterprise believing these considerations to be more important for managerial performance. However, this approach ignores the fundamentally 'human side' of managerial competency (Hogan and Warrenfeltz, 2003). However, without reasonable human competencies, good business skills would not matter, that is, reasonable leadership skills are essential for business skills to be of any value.

The study focuses on this fundamentally human side of enterprise and managerial 'non-technical' competencies i.e., the human side of the managerial enterprise for three main reasons. Firstly, studies on management development and managerial competencies have been predominantly on technical competencies/business skills, hence the need to conduct studies on feedback against softer managerial performance criteria (Fletcher and Baldry, 2000; Hogan and Warrenfetz, 2003). Secondly, most feedback studies use 'nonhuman side' of enterprise, that is, technical competencies as the performance criteria neglecting the 'human' side of competencies (Hogan and Warrenfetz, 2003), limiting our understanding of feedback seeking in managerial context. Thirdly, findings from study on human competencies are more likely to be generalisable, compared to study on technical competencies. This is because 'human' managerial

competencies- intra personal, interpersonal, and leadership skills appear more generic, common to most occupations and span across most organisations, compared to technical skills which tend to be core job competencies which are specific to particular jobs and organisations (Lucia and Lesinger, 1999). Hence the adaption of human competencies as managerial performance criteria is considered appropriate, relevant and suitable for this study. Using human competencies as managerial performance criteria, and from the literature review, the study sought to address the following research questions:

Research questions
1) Are managers likely to seek feedback about their performance?
2) What performance feedback information are managers likely to seek?
3) From whom are managers likely to seek feedback about their performance?

Hypotheses
In order to address the research questions, the following hypotheses based on the literature review were formulated to guide the study.

1) Managers are likely to seek feedback about their performance.
2) If managers would seek feedback on their 'human' competencies, they are more likely to seek it on interpersonal, rather than leadership and intra-personal skills.
3) Managers are less likely to seek feedback from their subordinates, and more likely to seek it from their peers,

rather than their superiors.

Method
Design, Organisational context and Sample

Using cross sectional survey and within-subjects design, the study was conducted on 156 functional managers drawn from financial institutions, hospitality, manufacturing, non-governmental, private and public organisations in Accra-Tema metropolis in Ghana. They were asked to complete a self-report questionnaire on their feedback seeking propensities and preferred sources. The managers comprised 110 males (71%) and 46 females (29 %) with ages ranging from 30 to 60 years (mean$\geq$ 42.25 years, SD $\geq$ 5.46 years) with an average fulltime work experience of 17.50 years (SD $\geq$5.45 years, range $\geq$ 4 to 35 years). The managers had held managerial positions in their current and other organisations between 3 to 20 years (mean $\geq$ 7.25 years, SD $\geq$ 2.70 years).

Survey Measures
Feedback seeking propensities and information sought:

Three items in the scale asked managers to indicate the likelihood of seeking feedback about their intra personal skills, interpersonal skills, and leadership skills respectively (Tuckey, Brewer and Williamson, 2002). Sample item: *'How likely is it that you will seek feedback on your leadership skills?' (*a*$= 0.86$)*

Feedback sources

Three items in the scale asked managers to indicate their likelihood of seeking feedback from the three main organisational sources: immediate boss/supervisor; colleague; and subordinate respectively (Tuckey et al., 2002). Sample item: *'How likely is it that you will seek feedback from an employee who reports to you (your subordinate)?' ($\alpha = 0.83$).*

For each item, managers rated their feedback seeking behaviour along a 7-point rating scale from 'extremely likely to ask'(coded 7) to 'extremely unlikely to ask' (coded 1); a target level of higher than '4'was chosen as the cut- off and criterion level to be described as 'more feedback' (Bailey and Fletcher, 2002).

Data collection procedure

After seeking organisational access and informed consent of managers who voluntarily agreed to participate in the study, questionnaires in envelopes were distributed personally to the managers in the organisations by the researcher and his assistants. The questionnaires covered the introductory part explaining the purpose of the study, instructions for completing the questionnaires, the demographic details of participants and the study measures. Participants were assured of their anonymity and confidentiality of their responses. Data collection lasted for six weeks. Altogether, 230 questionnaires were distributed and 156 were completed, sealed in envelopes and collected personally by the researcher and his assistants. Response rate of 156/230, that is, 67 per cent is within the acceptable range of 60 +/- 20 norm (Baruch, 1999).

Results

Managers' feedback seeking propensities and information sought.

Descriptive data for average feedback ratings obtained from managers on their feedback seeking tendencies and the information sought are presented in Table 1. All the variables were normally distributed as the skewness and kurtosis values were between -1/+1. Therefore the data were amenable to the appropriate parametric statistical analysis.

Mean values indicated that on the average managers perceived they were meeting the criterion levels of feedback seeking behaviour on the various skills (as indicated by values of '4' or higher). However, the low mean rating score of 4.62 just the cut off point, suggests that in general, managers are likely to seek very little feedback about their performance or competence on these skills, contrary to prediction. Therefore, the first hypothesis which predicted that *managers are likely to seek feedback about their performance* was not fully supported. A one-way within subjects (repeated measures) ANOVA was conducted to investigate the effect of feedback type /information on feedback seeking because each manager indicated his/her feedback seeking tendency under three conditions: intrapersonal, interpersonal and leadership skills.

The main results presented in Table 2 showed a significant difference in the mean feedback type scores (F $\geq$ 28.764, df$\geq$2, p< .001). The value of partial eta squared obtained was .18, which according to the generally accepted criteria (.01 $\geq$ small, .06 $\geq$ moderate, .14 $\geq$ large effect, Cohen, 1988; Tabachnick

and Fidell, 2001) indicates a large effect size suggesting highly significant differences in feedback seeking behaviour on feedback type: interpersonal, intra personal and leadership skills.

Results of post-hoc tests showing which feedback types differed are presented in Table 3. Significant differences were found between all the feedback types: between interpersonal and intra personal feedback types (p<.001), between interpersonal and leadership skills feedback types (p<.01) and between intrapersonal and leadership skills feedback type (p<.001). Inspection of the mean values indicates that managers are most likely to seek feedback on their interpersonal skills, less likely on leadership skills and least likely on intrapersonal skills as predicted in hypothesis two.

Managers' Feedback seeking Sources

Descriptive data showing managers' most preferred feedback sources are presented in Table 4. All the measures were normally distributed as the skewness and kurtosis values were between -1/+1. A one-way within-subjects ANOVA was conducted to investigate the differences in managers' feedback sources.

The main results presented in Table 5 revealed a   significance difference in the mean feedback sources scores given by the managers (F $\geq$ 5.10, df$\geq$2, p<.01). The value of partial eta squared obtained was .03 which indicates small effect size, suggesting slight differences in managerial preferred feedback sources.

Post hoc tests showing significant

differences between the feedback sources are presented in Table 6.

Bonferroni post-hoc test showed significant difference between feedback sources from peers and subordinates. There were no significant differences between bosses and subordinates and between peers and bosses as the more preferred source of managerial feedback. However, given the small effect of feedback source on feedback seeking behaviour, and inspection of preferred feedback source mean scores, managers will most likely prefer colleagues as source of feedback information, and less likely from bosses and least from subordinates. Therefore, the third hypothesis which predicted that managers are less likely to seek feedback from their subordinates, and more likely to seek it from their peers, rather than their superiors was supported. Noteworthy is the preferred feedback source mean rating score of 4.40 which suggests that generally, managers are not keen to seek feedback from these sources.

Table 1: Descriptive data: average feedback ratings on managerial feedback information sought, obtained from managers.

Raters	Feedback type	Mean	SD	Kurtosis	Skew
Managers (N≥156)	Intrapersonal	4.18	1.41	-0.36	0.21
	Intrapersonal	5.04	1.42	-0.33	-0.48
	Leadership	4.65	1.40	-0.58	-0.21

Table 2: One-way within-subjects ANOVA showing the effect of feedback type on feedback seeking.

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Feedback type	202.115	2	101.058	28.764	.000
Error	1089.123	310	3.513		

Table 3: Post-hoc Comparisons of feedback types

Feedback type	Compared with	Mean diff	S.E.	Sig.[a]
Interpersonal(1)	2	.86*	.12	.000
	3	.38*	.12	.006
Intrapersonal(2)	1	-.86*	.12	.000
	3	-.48*	.11	.000
Leadership (3)	1	-.38*	.12	.006
	2	.48*	.11	.000

Key: *mean difference significant at .05 level. a. Adjustment for multiple comparisons: Bonferroni.

Table 4: Managers preferred feed back sources (N=156)

Feed back Source	Mean	SD	Kurtosis	Skew
Bosses	4.35	1.41	-0.41	-0.16
Colleagues	4.65	1.47	-0.58	-0.29
Subordinates	4.19	1.60	-0.86	0.02

Table 5: Within-subjects ANOVA showing the effect of feedback sources on feedback seeking

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Feedback type	248.523	2	124.262	5.10	.004
Error	7553.218	310	24.365		

Table 6: Post-hoc Comparisons of managers' feedback sources

Feed back Source		Compared with	Mean diff	S.E.	Sig.[a]
Bosses	(1)	2	-.30	.15	.15
		3	.16	.14	.78
Colleagues	(2)	1	.30	.15	.15
		3	.46*	.15	.01
Subordinates	(3)	1	-.16	.14	.78
		2	-.46*	.15	.01

Key: mean difference is significant at .05 level.

Discussion And Organisational Implications

The purpose of this investigation was to examine whether managers would actively seek feedback about their intra personal, interpersonal and leadership competencies. It also explored from whom managers are most likely to seek feedback: their supervisors, colleagues or subordinates. The results revealed four noteworthy points. Firstly, managers appear to actively seek very little feedback about their performance. Secondly, if managers would seek feedback, they are most likely to seek it on their interpersonal skills, more likely on leadership skills and least likely on intrapersonal skills as hypothesized. Thirdly, managers will most likely prefer to seek feedback from their colleagues, less likely from their supervisors and least likely from their subordinates as hypothesized. Fourthly, generally, managers are not keen to seek feedback from these organisational sources suggesting that they would probably seek it from outside organisational sources.

Managers' feedback seeking propensities and information sought.

Noteworthy is that in organisational

contexts, it appears managers are unlikely to seek feedback about their performance, specifically on their 'human' competencies or people side of enterprise contrary to the prediction of the first hypothesis. If managers would seek feedback, however, they are more likely to seek it from other sources rather than their subordinates probably outside organisational sources. The implication is that managers may probably find it more difficult to handle feedback that could be construed as highly personal such as intrapersonal, interpersonal and leadership competencies. The findings suggest that managers are most likely to seek feedback on their interpersonal skills, less likely on leadership skills and least likely on intrapersonal skills which are highly personal as predicted in hypothesis two. Managers may probably find it difficult to handle feedback which is construed as highly personal because it is potentially very threatening to self-efficacy and self-esteem (Ashford and Tsui, 1994; Ilies, et al., 2007; Tuckey et al., 2002).

To secure feedback about matters of personal styles such as interpersonal, leadership, and particularly intra personal styles for example, may be 'risky' for a manager to entertain. From a manager's perspective, seeking such feedback from either subordinates and/or seniors could potentially undermine their perceived credibility (e.g., by revealing personal insecurities) putting the legitimacy of their job at risk. It is likely to be easier to seek feedback on technical competencies and task matters because it is more 'issue' oriented than person-based intra personal, inter personal and leadership competencies. The use of job specific and technical competencies performance

criteria might alternatively have yielded different results.

From whom are managers likely to seek feedback about their performance?

The findings suggest that managers are unlikely to seek feedback on their performance, least of all from their subordinates as predicted in hypothesis three, supporting previous studies that managers often resist subordinate appraisal (Antonioni, 1996; Ashford and Tsui, 1994; Millward et al., 2010; Nemeth, 1997). This may be due to the perceived risk associated with seeking feedback from subordinates: subordinates may start to question managerial efficacy and hence their status legitimacy. Thus in organisational settings, managers may realize that there are costs to both holding an inaccurate view of themselves about their performance for not seeking feedback, on one hand , and the risk of exposing weaknesses by seeking feedback on the other.

Feedback is likely to be sought from non threatening credible remote sources largely outside the organisation (from a peer, mentor or a coach) where there is less risk to undermining their capability among their personnel, with the intention to minimize the risk of being invalidated as incompetent managers in relation to subordinates and peers (Ansell et al., 2007; Millward et al., 2010). The source of feedback is crucial to its usability. Managers are likely to seek feedback only to the extent that they feel that the benefits of feedback seeking to increase efficacy, and minimize incompetence could be undertaken without jeopardizing their identity as competent managers, and

exposing their weaknesses in the eyes of their subordinates and peers (Ashford et al., 2003; Morrison & Bies, 1991). Studies have found some resistance among managers' to subordinate feedback on performance matters (Millward et al., 2010; Nemeth, 1997) despite findings that subordinates feedback has positive impact on managers' development and performance improvement (Atwarter & Brett, 2006; Haittie & Timperly, 2007; Heslin and Lathan, 2004; London, 2003). This could probably be attributed to unfavourable feedback seeking work environments and organisational contexts. Feedback seeking implies weakness or insecurity as managers feel 'psychologically unsafe' to seek it in organisational context.

Creating psychologically safe feedback seeking work environment

Vande Walle (2003) cautions organisations to be very careful with the kind of feedback environment they create. It appears that managers are likely to seek feedback in a 'psychologically safe' work environments and organisational contexts (Edmonson, 2004) where they would derive the benefits without suffering the emotional esteem-related costs such as shame, disappointment, dejection and general discomfort (Iglen and Davis, 2000; Illies, et al., 2007), exposing their weaknesses in the eyes of their subordinates and peers, and being seen as incompetent managers. To create psychologically safe work environment which will enhance manager's active feedback seeking, organisations need to improve the quality of interpersonal relationships between managers and their

subordinates, within the Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) Theory of Leadership (Elicker, Levy and Hall, 2006; Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995). In a study of 170 subordinate- supervisor/manager dyads, Whitaker, Darling and Levy (2007) found that an open and cooperative feedback policy among supervisors/managers led to increasing active feedback seeking behaviour. This corroborates the importance of good interpersonal relationships in creating psychologically safe and feedback environment in organisational settings. Organisations need to have an open and cooperative feedback policy, and create a favourable feedback environment that will encourage the use of active feedback seeking particularly, in managerial domain.

Conclusion, limitations and direction for future research

The study provides insight into managers' feedback seeking propensities on their intra personal, interpersonal, and leadership competencies in an organisational context. However, it is exploratory as it did not measure managers' actual intra personal, interpersonal and leadership skills thereby limiting our understanding of the extent to which these skills would influence feedback seeking propensities. Future studies in this area can further measure these skills among managers, and investigate how variations in their levels, self-efficacy, and job insecurity perceptions would either moderate or mediate managers' feedback seeking tendencies. This would provide mechanistic explanation and enhance our understanding of feedback seeking in psychological and managerial

perspectives. Also, managers' feedback seeking propensities could be understood better with a process perspective using qualitative study and analysis (Hamlin, 2004) on why or why they would not seek feedback and under what organisational environments or situations.

In conclusion, managers appear to seek very little feedback about their intrapersonal, interpersonal and leadership skills in organisational context probably because they feel psychologically unsafe to so, and might seek it outside from organisational sources in order to protect their efficacy perceptions in the eyes of their peers and subordinates. In organisational settings, serious questions can be raised about whether managers feel able to seek performance feedback without feeling threatened in their capability as managers. Organisations need to create a favourable feedback environment where managers would feel psychologically safe to seek feedback to enhance their job performance and effectiveness.

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