

Motivational Differences in Feedback-Seeking

Intentions: A Cultural Analysis

by

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ABSTRACT

Two studies examined cultural differences in the propensity to seek performance feedback using an experimental policy-capturing design. Findings demonstrated differences between Euro-Canadians and Chinese participants in the importance of contextual and individual variables in predicting feedback-seeking intentions. In particular, Euro-Canadians were more motivated than Chinese participants to seek individual feedback when it was positive versus negative (feedback valence). Further, the ego-based motive (ego-defensiveness) predicted the relationship between feedback valence and feedback-seeking intentions for Euro-Canadians, whereas the motive did not predict the relationship for Chinese participants. Results indicated that both Euro-Canadians and Chinese participants were less likely to seek feedback when feedback seeking occurred in public versus private. This finding was qualified by a significant interaction between culture and the image-based motive (defensive impression management) in predicting the relationship between publicness of feedback seeking and feedback-seeking intentions. Specifically, the image-based motive predicted the relationship between the publicness of feedback seeking and feedback-seeking intentions for Chinese participants but did not predict this relationship for Euro-Canadians. Findings also revealed cultural differences in the propensity to seek feedback from different sources. Euro-Canadians were significantly more likely than Chinese participants to seek feedback when it came from a supervisor versus a peer. Contrary to prediction, the relationship between the mean beta weight for the Source cue was not predicted by the instrumental motive for Euro-Canadians. In support of prediction, power distance predicted the relationship between feedback source and feedback-seeking

intentions for Chinese participants. Overall, the two studies provide evidence for differences in the motivation to seek feedback between East Asian and Western individuals. Study limitations and future research directions are discussed, as well as practical and theoretical implications of the current findings.

DEDICATION

Dedicated to the people who believed in me and supported me throughout.

My mother, Mary Anne, who has always been proud of my accomplishments and (ironically) encourages me to take a break once in a while.

My fiancé, Lorne, whose jokes I pretend not to like, but who makes me feel good about myself no matter how difficult life gets.

My supervisor, Doug, who has been both a mentor and friend. Thanks for your great insights, sense of humour, and encouragement.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The importance of performance feedback for individual and organizational performance is well established (Hackman & Oldham, 1976; Ilgen, Fisher, & Taylor, 1979; Kopelman, 1986). Traditionally, the feedback literature has mainly focused on giving feedback as part of a formal appraisal system in which the sender conveys a message to the recipient, with the latter portrayed as relatively passive (Ilgen et al., 1979). However, in their seminal paper, Ashford and Cummings (1983) challenged this view by proposing that employees have some degree of control over the feedback they receive and may actively seek feedback rather than passively wait for it to be delivered to them. Since this pioneering article, feedback seeking has received much attention and has become one of the most active research domains in organizational behavior (Anseel, Lievens, & Levy, 2007).

Feedback seeking is a valuable behavior for many employees, given that the flow of feedback within organizations is often constrained (Ashford & Northcraft, 1992). Formally-reviewed performance feedback is rarely given to employees more than once a year and individuals at all levels may be reluctant to give feedback informally (Ashford & Northcraft, 1992; Levy, Albright, Cawley, & Williams, 1995; Northcraft & Ashford, 1990). Since unsolicited feedback from others is often not forthcoming, feedback seeking takes on great importance (Larson, 1989). For many employees, the only way that they will receive performance feedback is to actively seek it from others (Ashford & Tsui, 1991; Levy et al., 1995). By actively seeking feedback, individuals can clarify their role expectations, evaluate the adequacy of their work behavior, and adjust their

performance strategies as necessary (Ashford, 1989; Ashford & Tsui, 1991; Morrison, 1993; Renn & Fedor, 2001).

The literature distinguishes between two different methods of seeking feedback – eliciting and monitoring (Ashford & Cummings, 1983). Eliciting occurs when an employee directly asks for feedback, whereas monitoring involves an employee observing the environment for potential performance cues (Ashford & Cummings, 1983). These methods can yield significantly different amounts and types of information. Asking for feedback will provide information that a source is willing to share and monitoring requires the recipient to infer performance information from cues such as a supervisor's nonverbal behavior (Fedor, Rensvold, & Adams, 1992). Active feedback seeking through direct inquiry also gives recipients some control over the amount and timing of feedback received (Levy et al., 1995; Northcraft & Ashford, 1990) and increases the likelihood of it being accepted (Ashford, 1989). The focus of the present research is the direct method of feedback inquiry.

An important rationale for seeking feedback is the desire to obtain useful information about one's performance to reduce uncertainty (Ashford, 1986) and improve task performance (Butler, 1993). Despite the value of feedback seeking, however, employees may forgo opportunities to seek feedback due to the costs associated with the behavior (Morrison, 2002; VandeWalle & Cummings, 1997). Performance feedback is evaluative information about one's self and self-protective concerns are found to affect patterns of feedback seeking (Fedor et al., 1992; Morrison & Cummings, 1992; Northcraft & Ashford, 1990). For example, when performance feedback is negative, it may potentially damage one's self-esteem, and the desire to protect or maintain a positive

self-view can deter feedback-seeking behavior (Morrison & Cummings, 1992; Northcraft & Ashford, 1990). Employees are often faced with a conflict between the need to obtain accurate information and the need to protect the self (Morrison & Bies, 1991; Morrison, 2002). As a result of this conflict, employees may not obtain the information they need to assess their work behavior and improve performance (Morrison & Bies, 1991).

Although much has been learned about the feedback-seeking process (Ashford & Northcraft, 1992; Ashford & Tsui, 1991; Levy et al., 1995; Morrison & Cummings, 1992), most research has not considered whether, and to what extent, culture influences feedback seeking. Like other research domains in organizational behavior, most feedback-seeking research has been conducted in a Western context using Western samples. A number of researchers have acknowledged the potential importance of examining the link between culture and feedback seeking, but few studies have been undertaken which look specifically at the relationship (Ashford, Blatt & Vandewalle, 2003; Morrison, 2002; Sully de Luque & Sommers, 2000).

Preliminary evidence suggests that feedback seeking may vary from one cultural context to the next (Bailey, Chen, & Dou, 1997; Morrison, Chen, & Salgado, 2004). For example, Morrison et al. (2004) reported differences between the feedback-seeking behaviors of American and Hong Kong participants. Further, a growing body of research in cross-cultural psychology suggests that the general motivational systems to initiate, terminate, and persist in actions are affected by culture (Heine, 2007; Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Relevant theory and research from cross-cultural psychology may be used to understand and predict potential cultural differences in the motivation to seek

feedback. Moreover, if the motivational basis of feedback seeking is found to be different across cultures, then it is important to identify the factors related to these differences.

The objective of the present research was to examine cultural variation in feedback-seeking intentions between individuals with a Western or East Asian cultural orientation using policy-capturing methodology. To this end, Canadians of European heritage identifying with Canadian culture (Euro-Canadians) were compared with individuals of Chinese ethnicity. Individuals from these two cultural backgrounds were chosen because many studies have shown cultural differences in motivation between East Asians and Westerners (cf. Heine, 2007). For example, research indicates that the motivation for consistency (Hamamura, Heine, & Paulhaus, 2007; Peng & Nisbett, 1999; Suh, 2002) and the motivation to self-enhance (Heine & Hamamura, 2007) differ between individuals with East Asian and Western cultural orientations. There are also practical reasons why individuals of Chinese ethnicity were included in the current research. Individuals of Chinese heritage are Canada's largest visible minority group (Statistics Canada, 2006) and the largest Asian minority group in the U.S. (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). As such, understanding feedback seeking among Chinese individuals has implications to a large percentage of the North American workforce.

Based on the model of Ashford and Cummings (1983), as well as extensions of the model (Ashford, 1989; Ashford et al., 2003; Levy et al., 1995; Morrison, 2002), the current research examines potential cultural variations in feedback seeking in association with three primary motives used to understand and encourage feedback seeking. The motives represent the values or costs associated with feedback seeking and include the instrumental motive (i.e., the desire to reduce uncertainty, improve performance, and

achieve goals), the ego-based motive (i.e., the desire to protect or enhance one's ego), and the image-based motive (i.e., the desire to maintain a favorable image in the eyes of others). The three motives are widely discussed in the literature and researchers generally agree that these particular motives underlie the feedback-seeking process. In addition, a number of studies provide direct and indirect evidence that the motives underlie the feedback-seeking process (cf. Ashford & Northcraft, 1992; Levy et al., 1995). An important extension of the literature is to examine whether the motives predict differences in feedback-seeking intentions across cultures. To my knowledge, this is the first study to investigate cultural differences in feedback seeking using a motives framework.

In the following sections, the conceptual foundation for testable hypotheses is built by (a) reviewing the three primary motives purported to underlie the feedback-seeking process, and (b) discussing potential cultural variation in the motives based on a review of theory and research from both feedback-seeking and cross-cultural psychology literature. Following this, I present the findings from two studies using a policy-capturing methodology, which compared the motivation to seek feedback between Euro-Canadian and Chinese individuals. In Study 1, I investigated the motivational differences in feedback-seeking intentions between Euro-Canadians and Chinese-Canadians by manipulating contextual information related to the three primary motives. In Study 2, I provided a stronger test of the hypotheses by including a priming manipulation, and by having a sample of Chinese individuals in Beijing complete the study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: STUDIES 1 AND 2

Review of Research on Feedback Seeking

According to Ashford and Cummings (1983) information seeking is a motivated process whereby an individual decides whether to allocate energy toward information seeking based upon the anticipated benefits and costs of obtaining that information. The model delineates three primary motives underlying the feedback-seeking process including the ego-based motive, instrumental motive, and image-based motive (e.g., Ashford & Cummings, 1983; Ashford et al., 2003; Levy et al., 1995; Morrison, 2002). Each of these motives is proposed to affect patterns of feedback seeking, both alone and in interaction (Ashford et al., 2003).

Ego-based motives. The information disclosed through feedback seeking is not neutral to the feedback seeker, but rather is evaluative self-relevant information (Ashford et al., 2003; Morrison, 2002). As such, feedback information has the potential to hurt or enhance the recipient's feelings of self-worth. The ego-based motive suggests that individuals are motivated to protect or enhance their egos in light of performance feedback (Ashford, 1983; Larson, 1989; Morrison, 2002). Although accurate self-relevant information is useful to attain performance goals, individuals have an overwhelming preference for favorable information to help them maintain positive self-views (Ashford et al., 2003). In contrast, the possibility of receiving negative information about oneself may be threatening and thus may deter individuals from seeking feedback (Ashford, 1986; Larson, 1989; Morrison, 2002; Northcraft & Ashford, 1990). Negative self-relevant information may highlight inadequacies of the individual

such as the ability to be self-sufficient and autonomous (Heine, Kitayama, & Lehman, 2001). Accordingly, one of the basic hypotheses in feedback-seeking research is that employees will refrain from seeking feedback when the feedback is potentially threatening to their egos (Ashford et al., 2003; Morrison, 2002). Consistent with this logic, Northcraft and Ashford (1990) found that individuals with low performance expectations were less likely to seek feedback as compared to individuals with high expectations, presumably to avoid the drop in self-image associated with negative feedback. Similarly, individuals are less likely to seek feedback after receiving negative performance ratings (Abraham, Morrison, & Burnett, 2006; Waldman & Atwater, 2005) or when they are motivated by ego-defense concerns (Tuckey, Brewer, & Williamson, 2002).

Image-based motives. Feedback seekers may also be faced with a conflict between the need to obtain useful information and the need to present a favorable image to others. As a result of this conflict, individuals may not obtain the information they need to assess and regulate their work behavior (Morrison & Bies, 1991). The image-based motive (i.e, impression management) is characterized by the need to control how one appears to others (Ashford & Cummings, 1983; Morrison & Bies, 1991). A number of feedback-seeking researchers suggest that there is a self-presentational component to feedback seeking such that seeking feedback may undermine one's desire to present a positive, self-assured image to others (Ashford & Northcraft, 1992; Larson, 1989; Morrison & Bies, 1991; Northcraft & Ashford, 1990; Levy et al., 1995). For example, a need for feedback may be interpreted as a sign of weakness, uncertainty, or a lack of self-confidence, or can reveal a feedback seeker's ignorance about their own performance

(Ashford et al., 2003; Ashford & Northcraft, 1992). Consistent with this idea, research demonstrates that feedback seekers inquire less when they are engaged in defensive impression management (i.e., behavior intended to avoid creating an unfavorable image) or when others expect them to be competent and confident (Morrison, 1993; Tuckey et al., 2001).

The image-based motive is most clearly invoked when feedback seeking occurs in public (Ashford & Northcraft, 1992; Ashford & Tsui, 1991; Levy et al., 1995; Northcraft & Ashford, 1990). Although direct feedback inquiry is not truly private insofar as the feedback giver is aware of the behavior, social concerns are more likely to arise when a crowd is present. In a public context, employees are quite strongly motivated not to engage in behaviors that could be evaluated negatively by others and impression management is offered as a plausible explanation for why individuals do not seek feedback as often in public as they do in private (Levy et al., 1995; Morrison & Bies, 1991). Thus, when individuals fear that seeking feedback will hurt their image in the eyes of others, they may forgo the potential benefits of feedback seeking (Ashford & Northcraft, 1992; Levy et al., 1995; Morrison & Bies, 1991; Northcraft & Ashford, 1990).

Instrumental motives. The instrumental motive is characterized by the desire to obtain useful information about one's performance to reduce uncertainty and improve performance (Ashford, 1986; Ashford & Cummings, 1983; Ashford & Tsui, 1991). Ashford (1986) suggested that feedback seeking occurs frequently in organizations and is strongly driven by the motive to obtain useful information to help employees meet their goals and regulate their behavior. Research also indicates that as the perceived diagnostic

value of feedback increases, individuals are more likely to actively seek it (Ashford, 1986; Morrison & Cummings, 1992; Tuckey et al., 2002). Further support for the instrumental motive has been obtained from research examining factors believed to evoke the instrumental motive (Anseel et al., 2007). For example, a number of studies have demonstrated that people are more likely to seek feedback when they experience role uncertainty in order to reduce the uncertainty (Ashford & Black, 1996; Ashford & Cummings, 1985; Fedor et al., 1992). Feedback information may also be particularly valuable when employees are new to an organization or job. Newcomers are found to engage in higher levels of feedback seeking than longer-tenured employees, presumably to foster adaptation to the new work environment (Ashford, 1986; Ashford & Cummings, 1983; Brett, Feldman, & Weingert, 1990; Callister, Kramer, & Turban, 1999; Morrison, 1993; Morrison et al., 2004).

The instrumental motive may also dictate from whom people seek feedback (Ashford & Tsui, 1991; Brett et al., 1990). In general, individuals prefer to seek feedback from credible sources because their feedback is perceived as more diagnostic and valuable (Fedor et al., 1992; Vancouver & Morrison, 1995). Moreover, employees may prefer to seek feedback from their superiors rather than from their peers or subordinates, presumably because their feedback is more instrumental to successful organizational adaptation (Brett et al., 1990; Ashford & Tsui, 1991; Morrison, 1993). Although employees depend on their peers and subordinates to varying degrees, all employees depend on their superiors (managers, supervisors) for resources and rewards (Ashford & Tsui, 1991). For instance, employees are dependent on superiors for salary increases and promotions and due to this strong dependence, they may be especially motivated to seek

feedback from this source. Ashford and Tsui (1991) proposed that feedback from superiors is useful insofar as it allows employees to understand their superiors' goals, expectations, and ongoing evaluations of performance. Consistent with this logic, Brett et al. (1990) found that following a transition, inquiry to peers declined over time while inquiry and monitoring of supervisors remained high. Similarly, Ashford and Tsui (1991) reported that employees were more active in seeking feedback from superiors than from peers or subordinates because of the instrumental value of the feedback. The employees in their study perceived superiors' evaluations of their work as more accurate than evaluations from peers or subordinates.

Cultural Differences in Feedback Seeking

Overall, there is empirical support for the three primary motives underlying the feedback-seeking process. It is important to note, however, that the bulk of feedback-seeking research has been conducted in a Western context utilizing Western samples. As such, whether findings pertaining to the specific feedback-seeking motives generalize to other cultures remains an important research question. In the following section, I review research and theory from both feedback-seeking and cross-cultural psychology literatures to delineate potential cultural differences in feedback-seeking motives. Further, the motives are discussed in connection with specific feedback-related parameters or factors found to evoke the motives: (a) the ego-based motive and feedback valence (b) the image-based motive and publicness of feedback seeking, and (c) the instrumental motive and feedback source.

Ego-based motivation and feedback valence. Feedback-seeking research and theory suggests that individuals are motivated to defend or protect their egos in light of

self-relevant performance feedback (Ashford et al., 2003; Levy et al., 1995; Morrison, 2002; Morrison & Cummings, 1992; Northcraft & Ashford, 1990). Further, our current understanding of ego-based motivation hinges on the notion that people (typically North Americans) have a need to maintain positive self-views. The acquisition of positive self-referenced information aids in establishing a person's accomplishment, self-sufficiency, and distinctiveness from others (Elliot, Chirkov, Kim, & Sheldon, 2001). In contrast, negative self-relevant information may be detrimental to one's self-worth and is therefore avoided (Heine, 2007).

Research in cross-cultural psychology demonstrates that the need to maintain a positive self-view is far weaker among people from East Asian cultures than it is among Westerners (e.g., Heine, 2007; Heine & Hamamura, 2007; Heine, Kitayama, & Lehman, 2001; Heine & Lehman, 1997; Heine, Lehman, Markus, & Kitayama, 1999; Heine, Takata, & Lehman, 2000).¹ In general, findings suggest that Western individuals are motivated to maintain or enhance a positive self-view, whereas East Asians are motivated to be viewed favorably by significant others (Heine, 2007; Heine & Lehman, 1999; Heine et al., 2000; Markus & Kitayama, 1991). A heightened concern over the views of others is conceptualized as "face" (i.e., the amount of social value or respect that others grant you) among East Asians and is proposed to have a strong influence on behavior (e.g., Ho, 1976).

¹ A recent meta-analysis by Heine and Hamamura (2007) indicates that overall, research provides converging evidence that East Asians do not have as strong a desire as Westerners to view themselves positively (i.e., to self-enhance). An exception is studies using the "better-than-average effect" paradigm (e.g., Brown & Kobayashi, 2002; Sedikides, Gaertner, & Vevea, 2005). Using this paradigm, participants are asked to make a comparative judgment between themselves and a generalized target and it is found that East Asians possess self-enhancing tendencies in domains that are sufficiently important to them. The methods of the current study do not evoke comparative responses; therefore, self-enhancement among East Asians is not expected.

For East Asians, maintaining face is ensuring that one is not acting in a way that can lead to others' negative evaluations. This involves adopting a very cautious strategy and being vigilant of any information that can lead to face loss (Heine, 2005). In East Asian cultures, if one can identify potential weaknesses and work toward correcting them by improving oneself, this should decrease the chance that others would view one negatively (Heine et al., 2001). In the context of feedback seeking, face concerns may motivate feedback seekers to ask for negative performance information insofar as it gives them information that they can use to improve and maintain face with others (Heine, 2007; Heine et al., 2001; Heine et al., 1999; Heine et al., 2000). Consistent with this idea, past cross-cultural studies provide evidence that East Asians seek and value negative feedback information (Gelfand et al., 2002; Kitayama, Markus, Matsumoto, & Norasakkunkit, 1997).

The act of seeking negative (versus positive) individual feedback may also be consistent with the Eastern social norm of behaving modestly or in a self-effacing manner (cf. Bond, Leung, & Wan, 1982). Seeking feedback about oneself when one expects the feedback to be critical may be perceived as extending humility, which is looked upon favorably in Eastern cultures (Akimoto & Sanbonmatsu, 1999; Bond et al., 1982). In contrast, an individual who knowingly seeks positive individual feedback may be perceived as behaving immodestly and stands lose the respect of others (Bailey et al., 1997; Heine & Lehman, 1997; Heine et al., 1999). The behavior can be seen as an attempt to inflate perceptions of the individual's competence and ability, and doing so

may lead to unfavorable evaluations by others (Heine et al., 1999). Based on the above theory and research, the following hypothesis is offered.²

Hypothesis 1: Euro-Canadians will be more motivated than Chinese-Canadians to seek individual feedback when it is positive.

As previously discussed, ego concerns may be salient among Western individuals in the context of seeking evaluative performance information (Ashford et al., 2003; Morrison, 2002; Levy et al., 1995; Morrison & Cummings, 1992; Northcraft & Ashford, 1990). In contrast, seeking positive feedback and avoiding negative feedback to protect one's ego is proposed to be inconsistent with the need to improve and maintain face among East Asian individuals (Heine et al., 1999; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Markus, Kitayama, & Heiman, 1996). An Eastern cultural orientation to fit in and maintain harmonious relationships seems better served by seeking negative feedback rather than positive self-referenced information (Gelfand et al., 2002; Heine & Lehman, 1997; Heine et al., 1999; Lehman, Chiu, & Schaller, 2004; Kitayama et al., 1997). In the current study, I hypothesized that ego-based motivation would be more predictive of the relationship between feedback valence and feedback-seeking intentions for Euro-Canadians as compared to Chinese participants. Based on a review of the literature, the following hypothesis was offered:

² . In a preliminary pilot study (see Appendix A), I found evidence suggesting that Chinese-Canadians were more likely to seek feedback as the probability increased that the feedback would be positive. However, this finding is difficult to interpret, because a low probability of positive feedback did not necessarily imply the feedback would be negative (i.e., it could have been neutral in valence). Asking research participants to rate the likelihood of feedback seeking based upon probabilistic information was not ideal from the standpoint of addressing the possibility that some Chinese-Canadians may have preferred seeking negative feedback.

Hypothesis 2: The ego-based motive will be more predictive of the relationship between feedback valence and feedback-seeking intentions for Euro-Canadians as compared to Chinese-Canadians.

Image-based motivation and the publicness of feedback seeking. The image-based motive underlying feedback seeking suggests that people have a desire to maintain a favorable image in the eyes of others. Further, research indicates that this motive is most clearly invoked when feedback seeking is done in a public context when others may be judging the behavior. Although in most situations feedback seeking is never truly private insofar as the feedback giver is privy to the behavior, social concerns are more likely to occur when a number of individuals beyond the feedback giver are present. Thus, being in a crowded conference room with one's coworkers is a very different situation than being alone with one coworker in a private office. As such, feedback seeking is considered "public" when other employees beyond the recipient and feedback giver are present when feedback seeking occurs. In contrast, "private" situations are those in which only the recipient and feedback giver are privy to the feedback-seeking behavior.

The reluctance of individuals to seek feedback in public situations has been explained by image concerns (Ashford & Northcraft, 1992; Morrison & Bies, 1991). More specifically, defensive impression management (i.e., desire to protect one's public image) concerns develop because individuals are concerned that others may view their feedback-seeking behavior as an indication of uncertainty or insecurity (Ashford & Cummings, 1983; Ashford & Northcraft, 1992; Levy et al., 1995).

One limitation of research examining the influence of public settings on feedback-seeking behavior is that it has been conducted using Western samples. This is a limitation insofar as findings and theory from cross-cultural research suggest that the magnitude and nature of social concerns in public situations may differ between East Asians and Westerners (e.g., Heinrichs, Rapee, Alden, Bogels, Hofmann, Oh, & Sakano, 2006; Hwang, Ang, & Francesco, 2002; Paulhus, Duncan, & Yik, 2002; Reisinger & Turner, 1998; Singelis & Sharkey, 1995). Although past research suggests that Westerners may be self-conscious in public feedback-seeking situations, findings from cross-cultural research indicate that these tendencies may even be greater among East Asians. For example, Singelis and Sharkey (1995) found that East Asians reported feeling more embarrassed than Westerners in social situations because the former were more concerned about how others viewed their social behavior. Similarly, East Asians are found to report greater levels of social anxiety (Kleinknecht, Dinnel, Kleinknecht, Hiruma, & Harada, 1997) and shyness (Zhang, Lee, Liu, & McCauley, 1999) in social situations as compared to Westerners.

In general, researchers suggest that an emphasis on maintaining interpersonal relationships and group harmony leads to greater social concerns in public situations among individuals from East Asian versus Western cultures (Heinrich et al., 2006; Hwang et al., 2002; Singelis & Sharkey, 1995). In public situations, there are certain rules and norms governing individual behavior, which help maintain interpersonal and group harmony among East Asians (Heinrichs et al., 2001). Engaging in public individual behaviors that break these norms may result in strong social sanctions for individuals (e.g., rejection by others) (Heinrichs et al., 2001). For example, public

displays of criticism, talking about sensitive issues, or even displaying positive feelings in public may be regarded as disruptive and inappropriate among East Asians because the center of attention is on the individual rather than the group (Reisinger & Turner, 1998). Public displays of such behavior serve to distinguish the individual, which goes against the East Asian orientation to “fit in” with others (Elliot et al., 2001; Paulhus et al., 2002). Similarly, past research indicates that East Asians consider social withdrawal and attention-avoiding behaviors as more appropriate than socially-extraverted behaviors in public situations (Heinrichs et al., 2006). A preference for attention-avoiding behaviors among East Asians is also consistent with research demonstrating that Asians are more likely to adopt avoidance personal goals (i.e., a focus on negative outcomes and staying away from that outcome) than non-Asian participants (Elliot et al., 2001).

In contrast, the act of seeking individual feedback in public situations is expected to be less disconcerting for individuals from Western culture. Overt expressions of individuality that cause an individual to “stand out” from others are more consistent with the Western values of individuality and uniqueness (Elliot et al., 2001). Further, the negative social outcomes that can result when one engages in feedback seeking may be less severe for Westerners than East Asians. Although Western feedback seekers may be reluctant to seek feedback because they fear that others will negatively evaluate the behavior, there is no theory or research suggesting that public displays of feedback seeking can lead to any serious social sanctions (e.g., rejection or ostracism) for Western individuals. In fact, there are feedback-seeking researchers who propose that the act of feedback seeking can convey an image of concern and conscientiousness to others, and therefore can result in a positive image (e.g., Ashford & Tsui, 1991; Morrison & Bies,

1991). Empirical support for this perspective is limited; however it is consistent with the notion that seeking feedback publicly may be perceived as a less risky behavior for Westerners as compared to East Asians.

In sum, a review of research and theory suggests that the East Asians are more motivated than Westerners to avoid public displays of feedback seeking. Past feedback-seeking research provides evidence that Westerners are generally reluctant to seek feedback in public versus private situations (e.g., Ashford & Northcraft, 1992; Ashford et al., 2003; Levy et al., 1995). However, cross-cultural research also demonstrates a stronger avoidance orientation and a great concern for others' evaluations in public situations among East Asians as compared to Westerners (e.g., Elliot et al., 2001; Heinrichs et al., 2001; Singelis & Sharkey, 1995). Based on cross-cultural research and theory, the social risks associated with seeking feedback in public are predicted to be greater for East Asians than Euro-Canadians. As a result of these risk perceptions, East Asians are expected to be more strongly motivated than Euro-Canadians to refrain from seeking feedback when the behavior is public versus private. Based on these ideas, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 3: Chinese-Canadians will be less motivated than Euro-Canadians to seek feedback when feedback seeking occurs in public.

Image concerns are also expected to be more predictive of the decisions to seek feedback in public situations for Chinese individuals than Euro-Canadians. As discussed, past research using Western samples supports the idea that image concerns underlie the reluctance of individuals to seek feedback in public settings (e.g., Ashford & Northcraft, 1992; Levy et al., 1995; Northcraft & Ashford, 1990); however these concerns are

expected to be less predictive of feedback-seeking decisions for Euro-Canadians as compared to Chinese participants. Specifically, the social risks associated with asking for individual feedback in public are expected to be less salient among Westerners because overt displays of behavior, in which the individual is the center of attention, may be more acceptable in Western culture (Elliot et al., 2002). Because the behavior may be perceived as more acceptable, how others evaluate the behavior should be less of a concern for Western individuals (Hwang et al., 2002). In contrast, feedback seeking in public can be perceived as breaking social norms among East Asians, which may result in serious social sanctions. The importance of belonging and being accepted by one's group in Eastern culture suggests that how others' perceive the feedback-seeking behavior is a more salient concern for East Asians. Based on this logic, the following hypothesis is posited:

Hypothesis 4: The image-based motive will be more predictive of the relationship between the publicness of feedback seeking and feedback-seeking intentions among Chinese-Canadians as compared to Euro-Canadians.

Instrumental motivation and feedback source. The instrumental motive suggests that people desire feedback that helps them reduce uncertainty and achieve performance goals (Ashford et al., 2003). As such, employees are found to prefer feedback from sources that are perceived to provide the most accurate and useful performance information (Vancouver, & Morrison, 1995; Morrison & Vancouver, 2000). For example, employees are found to seek feedback from superiors rather than peers, presumably because their feedback is perceived as having higher instrumental value (Ashford & Tsui, 1991; Brett et al., 1990).

Among members of Eastern cultures, in contrast, decisions to seek feedback from different sources may be better explained by status identity concerns (Morrison et al., 2004; Sully De Luque & Sommers, 2000). In Western societies (Canada, U.S.) relationships among organizational members are characterized by low power distance, in which there is a more equal sharing of power and information among employees (Hofstede, 1980; Morrison et al., 2004; Sully de Luque & Sommers, 2000). In contrast, Eastern societies (China, Japan) are characterized by high power distance, in which power is distributed unequally and power differences are accepted and respected among organizational members (Hofstede, 1980, 1993; Morrison et al., 2004; Sully de Luque & Sommers, 2000). Hofstede (1991) proposed that in high power distance cultures, subordinates feel hesitant to confront their superiors with questions and are more accepting of top-down styles of management. East Asians may be reluctant to ask superiors for performance information because it could be interpreted as an indirect criticism of the superior's or the organization's effectiveness (Sully de Luque & Sommers, 2000). Thus, asking for supervisory feedback is avoided among members of Eastern cultures as it can indicate disrespect for power differentials.

The recent findings of Morrison et al. (2004) provide evidence for cultural differences in manager-focused feedback seeking. Specifically, they found that Chinese newcomers to an organization in Hong Kong were significantly less likely to rely on manager-focused feedback for reducing uncertainty and managing performance than Western newcomers in a U.S. organization.³ Further, the reluctance of Chinese newcomers in seeking feedback from managers was related to status identity concerns.

³ Findings from the preliminary pilot study (see Appendix A) provide support for the predicted cultural differences in feedback seeking as a function of source. That is, as expected, Euro-Canadians were more motivated than Chinese-Canadians to seek supervisory versus peer feedback.

Based on past theory and research, I expect Chinese individuals and Euro-Canadians to differ in their likelihood of seeking feedback from a supervisor or a peer, and the following hypothesis is offered:

Hypothesis 5: Euro-Canadians will be more motivated than Chinese-Canadians to seek feedback when it comes from a supervisor.

The underlying motivation to seek feedback from a supervisor or a peer is also expected to vary between Euro-Canadians and Chinese individuals. Western individuals are predicted to be more motivated to seek supervisory versus peer feedback because a supervisor's evaluations of one's work may be seen as having more instrumental value (e.g. more accurate and reliable) than a peer's evaluation (Ashford & Tsui, 1991). In contrast, Eastern individuals may be reluctant to seek feedback from a superior because it may be seen as disrespectful to confront and ask questions of a person in authority (Hofstede, 1980). Based on these ideas, the following hypothesis is posited:

Hypothesis 6: The instrumental motive will be more predictive of the relationship between the source of feedback and feedback-seeking intentions for Euro-Canadians than Chinese-Canadians.

Group versus individual performance feedback. Past cross-cultural research suggests that an individual's cultural orientation may guide the type of information he or she attends to and samples (Bailey et al., 1997; Earley, 1994; Earley, Gibson, & Chen, 1999; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Triandis, 1989). Accordingly, the values of independence, autonomy, and distinction may motivate individuals with a Western cultural orientation to learn about individual performance, whereas the values of interdependence and harmony may motivate individuals with an Eastern cultural

orientation to seek feedback about group performance (Bailey et al., 1997). In addition, seeking feedback about individual performance may be perceived as admirable among Western individuals, whereas it could be seen as a self-centered display among East Asians (Bailey et al., 1997).

Past cross-cultural research shows that members of Eastern and Western cultures attend to and sample different types of information from the environment (Bailey et al., 1997; Earley, 1994; Earley et al., 1999; Triandis, 1989). For example, Earley (1994) found that Chinese participants sampled and used group-referenced training information to a greater extent than U.S. participants. In contrast, U.S. participants sampled and used individual-referenced training information to a great extent. In a subsequent study, Earley et al. (1999) demonstrated that Chinese individuals were more likely than U.S. participants to sample group-related performance information in forming perceptions of self-efficacy. In contrast, U.S. participants based their perceptions of self-efficacy solely upon individual performance information. Based on past findings, group-related performance feedback may be perceived as particularly valuable among members of Eastern cultures, whereas individual feedback may be preferred by individuals with a Western cultural orientation.

In the current study, participants were asked to imagine working as part of a team when completing the policy-capturing task, and therefore some Euro-Canadian participants could be inclined to seek group versus individual feedback given this context. Nonetheless, it was expected that on average, Euro-Canadians would seek group performance feedback to a lesser extent than the Chinese participants as a result of

different cultural orientations. Based on research and theory, the following was hypothesized:

Hypothesis 7: Chinese-Canadians will be more motivated than Euro-Canadians to seek feedback when it pertains to group performance.

CHAPTER 3

STUDY 1

Method

Analytic Approach

The current study employed a policy-capturing methodology, which has been widely and effectively used in studies of clinical judgments, personnel selection, financial decision making, and social policy judgments (e.g., Fritzsche & Brannick, 2002; Fritzsche, Finkelstein, & Penner, 2000; Stevenson, Busemeyer, & Naylor, 1990). A typical policy-capturing study involves (a) presenting raters with a series of profiles in which the independent variables are manipulated, (b) obtaining raters' judgments about the dependent variable, and (c) using multiple regression analysis to compute the relative importance of each independent variable. The end product is a statistical equation for each rater that represents an expression of how the rater combines and weights information contained in each profile to arrive at a judgment (Rotundo & Sackett, 2002).

First, I developed individual profiles whereby information concerning each of the independent variables was presented. For each profile, raters were required to rate the likelihood they would seek feedback – based upon the independent variable information. The information for each independent variable was manipulated such that 4 pieces of categorical information (termed “cues”) were presented within each profile (Valence, Source, Public, and Type cues) (see Method section for an elaboration of this point). In sum, based upon the information contained within a profile, raters provided a likelihood rating of seeking feedback.

In Study 1, 16 distinct profiles were presented; therefore, each rater provided 16 distinct likelihood ratings (i.e., one for each profile). From an analytic standpoint, it is possible to conduct an idiographic regression analysis whereby the 16 feedback-seeking ratings are regressed on the independent variable values obtained from the profiles. Assuming the independent variables are uncorrelated across the profiles (and they were set up to ensure orthogonality), the standardized beta weight for a given independent variable is descriptively equal to the correlation between that independent variable and the dependent variable. In sum, for each participant, it is possible to obtain the standardized beta weight for each independent variable based upon the participant's idiographic multiple regression analysis (i.e., each participant will have a mean beta weight for the Valence, Source, Type and Public cues).

Once calculated, each beta weight can be used in a full-sample regression analysis as a dependent variable to test for possible between-group differences in the mean beta weight values. Prior to the analyses, however, the beta weights for each participant must be transformed to z-scores because of the skewed distributional properties associated with the non-transformed weights (i.e., correlations). The transformation allows the correlations to be used as dependent variables in the regression analyses (Kline & Sulsky, 1995).

Participants

As part of a general packet of questionnaires, students answered questions in which they indicated their place of birth, their ethnicity, whether and how long they lived outside of Canada, and their first language. Based on their responses, participants were selected for the study. Participants included 89 undergraduate students enrolled at a large Central Canadian university who took part for course credit or \$10. Forty-five (25 women, 20 men) of the participants were born in Canada of European heritage. Forty-four participants (23 women, 21 men) were of Chinese ethnicity born in Mainland China (26), Hong Kong (14), and Taiwan (4). Collectively, they had lived in Canada for an average of 6.8 years (ranging from 1 year to 15 years).⁴ The mean age of participants was 20.65 (range: 18-30) and did not differ significantly between cultural groups.

Stimulus Materials and Measures

Policy-capturing task. Participants were asked to read and respond to 16 unique profiles and three duplicate profiles for a total of 19 profiles (Appendix B). The three duplicates were used to assess test-retest reliability ($r = .87$ for this sample).⁵ The order in which the information was presented within each profile was randomized across profiles to help control for potential order effects. Profile order was held constant across participants, with the duplicate profiles appearing as the last three profiles.

⁴ In addition to the demographic variables, cultural identification among Chinese-Canadian participants was measured using the Suinn-Lew Asian Self-Identity Acculturation Scale (SL-ASIA) (Suinn, 1987). For each participant, a mean score was computed across 21 items ranging from 1 = *low acculturation* to 5 = *high acculturation*. “Bicultural” reflects a SL-ASIA score of 3. Scores ranged from 1.33 to 3.94 and the mean score across all participants was 2.46 indicating that on average, participants indicated that they were ‘Chinese-identified’. Correlation analyses demonstrated that scores on the SL-ASIA did not significantly relate to any of the study variables and therefore, were excluded from subsequent analyses.

⁵ Test-retest reliability was computed by correlating the original and duplicate profiles across participants, rather than averaging the mean test-retest reliability computed for each participant.

For each profile, four pieces of categorical cue information were provided: That (a) the feedback was either positive or negative (Valence), (b) that feedback came from a supervisor or a peer (Source), (c) that feedback seeking occurred in public or in private (Public), and (d) that the feedback pertained to group performance or individual performance (Type). The cue values were set up such that they were uncorrelated across the profiles.

Dependent variable. For each profile, participants were asked to rate the likelihood of asking for performance feedback based upon the cue information provided. A 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 = *not at all likely* to 5 = *extremely likely* was used for this rating task.

Feedback-seeking motives. Feedback-seeking motives were measured using a scale developed by Tuckey et al. (2002) (Appendix B). All scale items were rated on a 6-point Likert-type scale (1 = *extremely untrue*, 6 = *extremely true*). Three subscales were used to measure the relevant motives including *instrumental motivation* (i.e., the desire for useful information) (8 items, e.g., “It is important to me to obtain useful information about my performance”); *defensive impression management* (i.e., avoid creating a negative impression) was used to measure image-based motivation (8 items, e.g., “I’m concerned about what people would think of me if I were to ask for feedback”), and *ego-defensiveness* (i.e., the desire to protect one’s ego and self-esteem from the threat of negative feedback) was used to measure ego-based motivation (7 items, e.g., “I worry about receiving feedback that is likely to be negative because it hurts to be criticized”). The coefficient alpha reliabilities for the subscales were as follows: instrumental motive ($\alpha = .87$), defensive impression management ($\alpha = .78$), and ego-defensiveness ($\alpha = .91$).

Procedure

The study was a two-part web-based study and the experimenter contacted participants via email with links to each part of the study. The participants were told that the purpose of the study was to examine the relationship between social and personal factors and performance feedback seeking at work. For part one, participants completed a series of questionnaires which measured their general beliefs and values, including the Motives Scale. Part one of the study took approximately 20-25 minutes to complete.

Two days after completing part one of the study, participants were sent a link for the last part of the study. Part two included the policy-capturing task. For the policy-capturing task, participants were first presented with instructions asking them to read and provide a rating for each of 19 profiles in the order that they were presented (Appendix B). Before beginning the actual rating task, participants were given two practice profiles to complete. The practice profiles were duplicates of profiles taken directly from the actual rating task and were excluded from subsequent analyses. After completing the policy-capturing task, Chinese-Canadian participants were asked to complete the 21-item SL-ASIA (acculturation scale), which was presented as a measure of 'historical background'. A debriefing sheet, which included a more detailed description of the study and hypotheses, was presented to participants at the end of the study. Part two of the study took approximately 20-30 minutes to complete.

Results

Preliminary analyses reveal that gender did not significantly relate or interact with any of the study variables. The results reported are collapsed across this factor.

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics and correlations for the cues and feedback-seeking motives separately for each cultural group. Because of the distributional properties of standardized beta weights for each participant, it was necessary to transform them for each participant – prior to the full-sample analysis. Specifically, the beta weights for each participant were transformed to z-scores using Fisher's r to z transformation formula (Kline & Sulsky, 1995) prior to analysis. Hypotheses pertaining to the Valence, Public, and Source cues make predictions about seeking individual performance feedback, so the mean beta weights for these cues (presented in Table 1) were computed using only scenarios in which the feedback being sought pertained to individual performance.

Hypothesis 1 predicted that Euro-Canadians will be more motivated than Chinese-Canadians to seek individual feedback when it is positive versus negative. Contrary to prediction, mean beta weights for the Valence cue were not statistically different between the two cultural groups, $t(87) = .11, p > .05$. Further, one sample t-tests indicated that the mean beta weights were positive and significantly different from zero for both Chinese-Canadians (.52) and Euro-Canadians (.51) ($ps < .01$). Findings failed to support Hypothesis 1 and indicated that both Euro-Canadians and Chinese-Canadians were more motivated to seek individual feedback when it was positive versus negative.

Table 1

Means, standard deviations, and correlations between the cues and motives for Euro-Canadians (and Chinese-Canadians in parentheses)

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	5	6	7
1. Source Cue	.18** (.03)	.28 (.33)	-.18 (-.18)	.02 (.14)	.04 (.07)
2. Valence Cue	.51** (.52**)	.60 (.66)	.33* (-.26)	-.17 (.27)	.14 (-.24)
3. Type Cue	.11** (.13**)	.22 (.28)	-.14 (.29)	.11 (-.16)	-.21 (.51**)
4. Public Cue	-.64** (-.28**)	.51 (.58)	.21 (-.25)	-.32* (.18)	.16 (-.28)
5. Ego-Defensiveness	2.99 (3.21)	1.02 (.83)		-.02 (-.40**)	.58** (.38*)
6. Instrumental Motivation	4.97 (4.69)	.76 (.63)			-.07 (-.19)
7. Defensive Impression Management	2.85 (3.41)	.77 (.74)			

Note: Public cue (0 = Private; 1 = Public); Source cue (0 = Peer; 1 = Supervisor); Type cue (0 = Individual; 1 = Group); Valence cue (0 = Negative; 1 = Positive).

Means for cues are the z-transformed mean beta weights representing the relationship between the cue and the likelihood of seeking feedback.

** $p < .01$, mean beta weight is statistically significantly different from zero.

* Correlation is significant at $p < .05$, ** Correlation is significant at $p < .01$ (two-tailed).

Hypothesis 2 predicted that the ego-based motive will be more predictive of the relationship between feedback valence and feedback-seeking intentions for Euro-Canadians than Chinese-Canadians. To test the interactions between culture and the individual motives, a moderated regression analysis was conducted by first computing the conditional relationship term for each participant (i.e., motive X cultural group membership)⁶. Then, I tested the incremental variance of the conditional relationship term above and beyond the two predictors comprising the conditional relationship term. Moderated regression analysis yielded a statistically significant conditional relationship between cultural group and ego-defensiveness for the mean beta weight of Valence, $t(85) = -2.78, p < .01$ (Table 2).

In support of Hypothesis 2, follow-up simple slope tests (with a Bonferroni adjusted $\alpha = .025$) indicated that the relationship between ego-defensiveness and the mean beta weight for the Valence cue was statistically significant for Euro-Canadians, $t(43) = 2.13, p < .025$. In contrast, the relationship was not statistically significant for Chinese-Canadians, $t(42) = -1.20, p > .05$. Results demonstrated that as ego defensiveness increased among Euro-Canadians, they were more likely to seek individual feedback when it was positive versus negative. Results for Hypothesis 2 are shown in Figure 1.

The third hypothesis predicted that Chinese-Canadians will be less motivated than Euro-Canadians to seek feedback when feedback seeking occurs in public as opposed to

⁶ Due to the correlations between the motives (see Table 1), the motives were controlled for in the moderated regression analyses. For example, in testing Hypothesis 2, mean scores on instrumental motivation and defensive impression management were placed in block 1, culture and ego-defensiveness in block 2, followed by the conditional relationship (culture X ego-defensiveness) in block 3.

Table 2

Hierarchical regression results with culture, ego-defensiveness, and the interaction (culture X ego-defensiveness) regressed on the mean beta weight for the valence cue.

Variable	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β
Instrumental Motive	.03	.10	.03	.04	.10	.05	-.01	.10	-.01
Defensive Impression Management	-.03	.09	-.03	-.08	.10	-.11	-.10	.10	-.11
Culture				.06	.15	.04	1.33	.48	1.07**
Ego-Defensiveness				.08	.08	.12	.24	.10	.36*
Culture X Ego-Defensiveness							-.41	.15	-1.12**
R^2		.002			.01			.10	
<i>F</i> for change in R^2		.11			.49			7.82**	

*Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.*

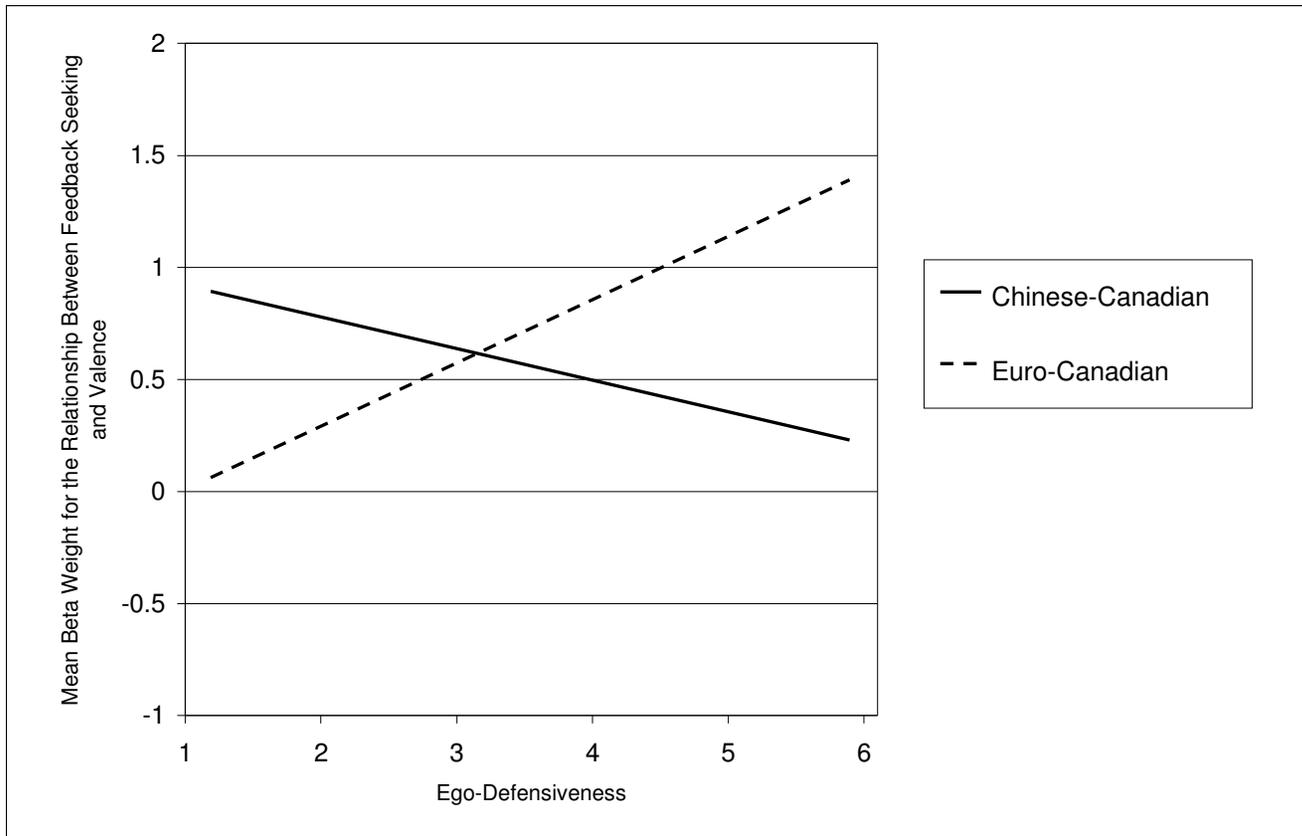


Figure 1. Interaction of cultural group by ego-defensiveness for the mean beta weight of the valence cue.

private. Findings demonstrated that the mean beta weight for the Public cue was statistically significantly different between Euro-Canadians (-.64) and Chinese-Canadians (-.28), $t(87) = 3.17, p < .01$. Further, the mean beta weight for the Public cue was negative and significantly different from zero ($p < .01$) for both cultural groups – indicating that both groups were less likely to seek feedback when feedback seeking occurs in public as opposed to private.

Contrary to prediction, however, the mean beta weight for the Public cue was larger for Euro-Canadians than Chinese-Canadians demonstrating that the strength of the relationship between feedback-seeking intentions and the publicness of feedback seeking was greater for Euro-Canadians. The findings failed to support Hypothesis 3.

The fourth hypothesis predicted that the image-based motive will be more predictive of the relationship between the publicness of feedback seeking and feedback-seeking intentions for Chinese-Canadians as compared to Euro-Canadians. Findings via moderated regression analysis indicated that there was a statistically significant conditional relationship between culture and defensive impression management for the mean beta weight of the Public cue, $t(85) = -2.31, p < .05$ (Table 3).

Consistent with Hypothesis 4, follow-up simple slope analyses ($\alpha = .025$) revealed that the relationship between defensive impression management and the mean beta weight for the Public cue approached significance for Chinese-Canadians, $t(42) = -1.97, p = .03$, however the relationship was not significant for Euro-Canadians, $t(43) = 1.09, p > .05$. The pattern of findings suggested that as defensive impression management increased among Chinese-Canadians, they were less likely to seek feedback when feedback seeking occurred in public versus private. In contrast, Euro-Canadians were less likely to seek feedback

Table 3

Hierarchical regression results with culture, defensive impression management, and the interaction (culture X defensive impression management) regressed on the mean beta weight for the public cue.

Variable	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β
Instrumental Motive	-.12	.09	-.14	-.07	.09	-.09	-.09	.08	-.12
Ego-Defensiveness	-.02	.07	-.03	-.01	.07	-.02	-.04	.07	-.07
Culture				.38	.13	.33**	1.49	.50	1.31**
Defensive Impression Management				-.05	.09	-.07	.13	.12	.18
Culture X Defensive Impression Management							-.36	.15	-1.11*
R^2		.02			.12			.17	
<i>F</i> for change in R^2		.88			4.57*			5.34*	

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

when seeking occurs in public versus private, regardless of their level of defensive impression management. Figure 2 illustrates the findings.

Hypothesis 5 predicted that Euro-Canadians will be more motivated than Chinese-Canadians to seek feedback when it comes from a supervisor versus a peer. In support of Hypothesis 5, the mean beta weights for the Source cue were significantly different between Euro-Canadians (.18) and Chinese-Canadians (.03), $t(87) = 2.27, p < .05$. In addition, one-sample t-tests revealed that the mean beta weight for Euro-Canadians was positive and statistically different from zero ($p < .01$), whereas the mean beta weight was non-significant for Chinese-Canadians. Interpretation of the mean beta weights indicated that Euro-Canadians were more likely to seek feedback from a supervisor as opposed to a peer, whereas feedback source did not significantly predict feedback-seeking intentions for Chinese-Canadians.

Hypothesis 6 predicted that the instrumental motive will be more predictive of the relationship between feedback source and feedback-seeking intentions for Euro-Canadians than Chinese-Canadians. Moderated regression analysis demonstrated that the conditional relationship between culture and instrumental motivation for the mean beta weight of Source was not statistically significant, $t(85) = -.50, p > .05$ (Table 4). Results failed to support the sixth hypothesis.

The seventh hypothesis predicted that Chinese-Canadians will be more motivated than Euro-Canadians to seek group versus individual performance feedback. Contrary to predictions, the mean beta weights were not significantly different between Chinese-Canadians (.13) and Euro-Canadians (.11), $t(85) = -.15, p < .05$. Further, the mean beta

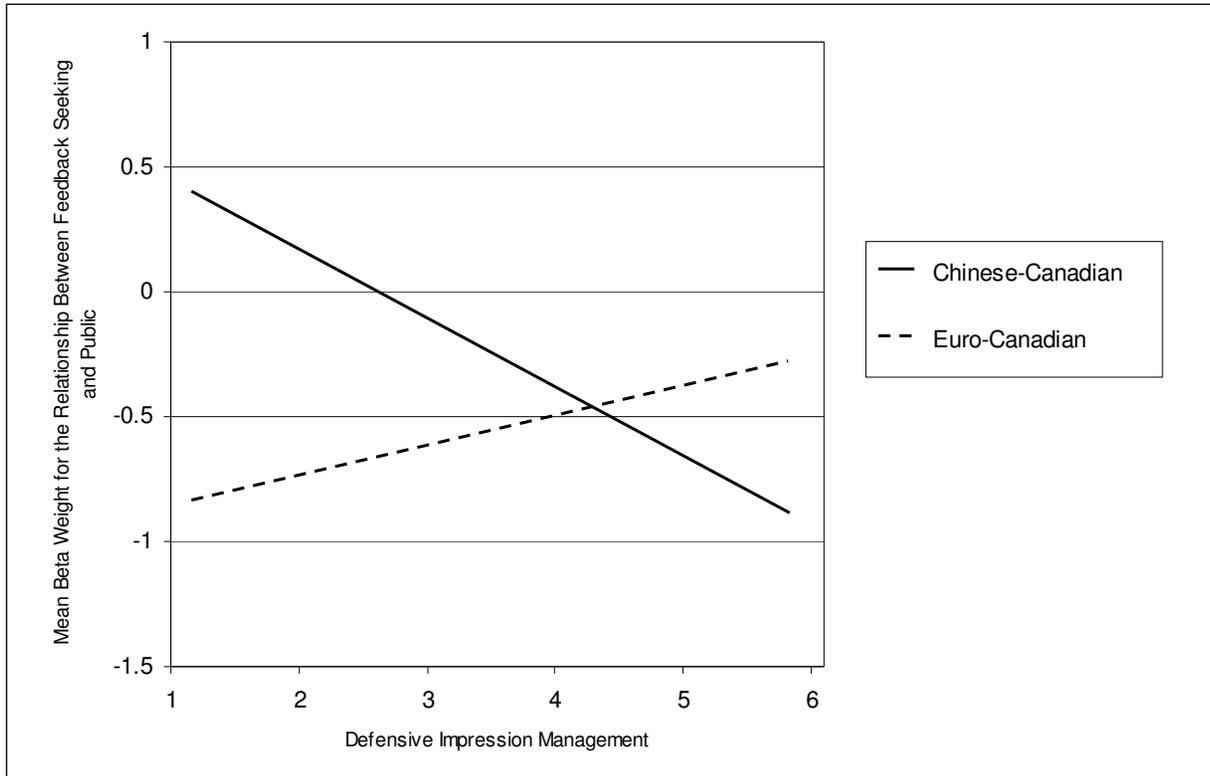


Figure 2. Interaction of cultural group by defensiveness impression management for the mean beta weight of the public cue.

Table 4

Hierarchical regression results with culture, the instrumental motive, and the interaction (culture X the instrumental motive) regressed on the mean beta weight for the source cue.

Variable	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β
Ego-Defensiveness	-.08	.04	-.24*	-.08	.04	-.25*	-.08	.04	-.24*
Defensive Impression Management	.03	.05	.09	.08	.05	.20	.08	.05	.19
Culture				-.17	.07	-.26*	-.33	.47	-.54
Instrumental Motive				.03	.05	.06	.06	.12	.15
Culture X Instrumental Motive							-.02	.05	-.30
R^2		.04			.11			.11	
<i>F</i> for change in R^2		1.99			3.25*			.14	

*Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$*

weights for each group were positive and statistically significant from zero ($ps < .01$ for both tests). The pattern of findings failed to support Hypothesis 7 and indicated that both Euro-Canadians and Chinese-Canadians were more likely to seek feedback when it related to group versus individual performance.

Discussion

Study 1 was designed to investigate whether the motivational basis of feedback-seeking is culturally conditioned. Some of the hypotheses were not supported; however there was evidence of motivational differences in feedback-seeking intentions between Euro-Canadians and Chinese-Canadians.

Contrary to prediction, Euro-Canadians were not significantly more motivated than Chinese-Canadians to seek feedback when it was positive versus negative. In contrast, both Euro-Canadians and Chinese-Canadians were motivated to seek positive versus negative feedback. This is inconsistent with research and theory suggesting that East Asians are less motivated than Westerners to seek out positive information about the self (Heine, 2007; Heine & Hamamura, 2007). In addition, the relationship between ego-defensiveness and the mean beta weight for the Valence cue was significant for Euro-Canadians, whereas it was not for Chinese-Canadians. As ego-defensiveness increased among Euro-Canadians, they were more likely to seek positive versus negative individual feedback. The finding is consistent with the notion that Western individuals are motivated to protect their egos when seeking performance feedback (Levy et al., 1995; Morrison & Cummings, 1992; Northcraft & Ashford, 1990). Results also support research and theory from cross-cultural psychology suggesting that individuals with a Western cultural orientation are motivated to regard the self positively – to identify positive attributes of the self and avoid negative self-relevant information to maintain positive self-views

(Heine et al., 1999; Heine et al., 2001; Kitayama et al., 1997; Markus & Kitayama, 1991). The non-significant relationship between ego-defensiveness and the Valence cue among Chinese-Canadians supports the idea that members of Eastern cultures are not motivated to protect their egos in light of self-relevant information (Heine & Lehman, 1997; Heine et al., 1999). Rather, the act of seeking positive feedback among East Asians may be motivated by concerns that are more social in nature such as securing the approval of others (Heine & Lehman, 1997).

Findings demonstrated that both Euro-Canadians and Chinese-Canadians were significantly less motivated to seek feedback when feedback seeking occurred in public versus private. Contrary to prediction, however, Euro-Canadians were significantly less motivated than Chinese-Canadians to seek feedback in public. Although Chinese-Canadians were generally less deterred than Euro-Canadians to seek feedback in public, this finding is qualified by a significant interaction which supports the prediction. Specifically, the defensive impression management motive was more predictive of the relationship between the publicness of feedback seeking and feedback-seeking intentions for Chinese-Canadians as compared to Euro-Canadians. This latter finding is consistent with the idea that image concerns (i.e., how one is judged by others) are more salient for East Asians as compared to Western individuals in the context of public behavior (e.g., Heinrichs et al., 2001; Hwang et al., 2002; Paulhus et al., 2002; Singelis & Sharkey, 1995). For East Asians, there may be serious social risks associated with public displays of behavior, and an acute awareness or sensitivity to others' judgment helps ensure that one is not acting in a way that might lead to rejection by others (Heine, 2005).

In the current study, the likelihood of seeking feedback from different sources was found to differ between Euro-Canadians and Chinese-Canadians. Consistent with past research and theory, Euro-Canadians were significantly more likely than Chinese-Canadians to seek feedback

when it came from a supervisor as opposed to a peer (Morrison et al., 2004; Sully de Luque & Sommers, 2000). Although researchers have explained the preference for supervisory over peer-based feedback in terms of instrumental motivation (i.e., supervisory feedback may be perceived as more valuable or useful than peer feedback), the current findings did not support this idea. Rather, Euro-Canadians were more likely to seek feedback from a supervisor versus a peer, regardless of their reported level of instrumental motivation.

I did not find support for Hypothesis 7 predicting that Chinese-Canadians will be more motivated than Euro-Canadians to seek group versus individual performance feedback. Instead, findings indicated that both groups were more motivated to seek feedback when it pertained to group versus individual performance. This finding is inconsistent with past theory and research suggesting that individuals with a Western orientation tend to sample and use individual information (Triandis, 1989; Earley, 1994).

CHAPTER 4

STUDY 2

The main purpose of Study 1 was to provide a preliminary test of the hypotheses. Although some hypotheses were supported, a number of the findings were weak or null. The purpose of Study 2 was to overcome some of the limitations of Study 1 and allow for a stronger test of the hypotheses.

One possible explanation for the weak findings in Study 1 was that I tested cultural differences by comparing Euro-Canadians with Chinese-Canadians. Realistically, Chinese-Canadians cannot be culturally equated with members of their ethnic homeland because, clearly, they have been exposed to Western culture for some time. The saliency of Western beliefs and values among Chinese-Canadian participants may have attenuated the cultural differences between this group and Canadian-born individuals. Therefore, I deemed it necessary to include a group of Chinese participants residing and studying in China who presumably have less exposure to Western culture. This group affords a stronger test of cross-cultural differences in feedback-seeking intentions between individuals from Western and Eastern cultures.

Another possible explanation for the weak findings in Study 1 was that Chinese-Canadians had completed the study in English rather than in their native language. Research suggests that bicultural individuals (e.g., Chinese-Canadians) extensively exposed to both Eastern and Western cultures internalize contrasting cultural beliefs, and their feelings and judgments should vary depending on the relative accessibility of the different cultural beliefs (Ross, Xun, & Wilson, 2002). Further, language is found to be a situational factor that can activate a set of cultural beliefs adopted in rendering judgments and self-assessments (e.g., Bond,

1983; Hong, Morris, Chiu, & Benet-Martinez, 2000; Ross et al., 2002; Trafimow, Silverman, Fan, & Law, 1997).

For example, Ross et al. (2002) found that Chinese cultural views were increased among bilingual Chinese-born participants who completed their experiment in the Chinese language, whereas, Chinese-born participants differed little from Euro-Canadians in self-descriptions when they completed the experiment in English. Conceivably, in Study 1, a Western cultural orientation was activated among Chinese-Canadian participants completing the study in English, thereby affecting some of the study results.

In Study 2, language was used to shift or activate the cultural frame adopted by Chinese-Canadians by having half of the Chinese-Canadian participants complete the study in English, whereas half completed the study in Chinese. It was predicted that a Chinese-language version of the study would activate a Chinese cultural orientation among Chinese-Canadians, making them a more optimal group for testing the hypothesized cultural differences in feedback seeking.

Study 2 Hypotheses

For the purposes of replication, I retested the hypotheses from Study 1, examining the cultural differences in feedback-seeking intentions between Euro-Canadians and Chinese participants in terms of the four study cues (Valence, Public, Source, and Type) and the feedback-seeking motives (ego-based, image-based, and instrumental-based motives). In addition, the hypotheses were reworded to reflect general differences between Euro-Canadians and Chinese individuals. Specifically, “Chinese” in the following hypotheses refers to all participants of Chinese ethnicity including both Chinese-Canadian and Beijing Chinese participants. The hypotheses for Study 2 were reworded as follows:

Hypothesis 1: Euro-Canadians will be more motivated than Chinese participants to seek individual feedback when it is positive versus negative.

Hypothesis 2: The ego-based motive will be more predictive of the relationship between feedback valence and feedback-seeking intentions for Euro-Canadians as compared to Chinese participants.

Hypothesis 3: Chinese participants will be less motivated than Euro-Canadians to seek feedback when feedback seeking occurs in public as opposed to private.

Hypothesis 4: The image-based motive will be more predictive of the relationship between the publicness of feedback seeking and feedback-seeking intentions for Chinese participants as compared to Euro-Canadians.

Hypothesis 5: Chinese participants will be more motivated than Euro-Canadians to seek feedback when it pertains to group versus individual performance.

Hypothesis 6: Euro-Canadians will be more motivated than Chinese participants to seek feedback when it comes from a supervisor versus a peer.

Hypothesis 7: The instrumental motive will be more predictive of the relationship between feedback source and feedback-seeking intentions for Euro-Canadians as compared to Chinese participants.

As discussed in Study 1, status identity concerns are proposed to account for the reluctance of East Asians to seek feedback from superiors. Hofstede (1991) suggested that in high power distance societies (China, Japan), subordinates are hesitant to confront their superiors with questions or disagreements, and are more accepting of top-down styles of management (Morrison et al., 2004). Hwang et al. (2003) also proposed that among Chinese individuals, the act of questioning a superior is inappropriate as it implies a challenge to the knowledge and

authority of the one in power. A recent study by Morrison et al. (2004) provided support for this idea. They found that individuals from Hong Kong were more reluctant than individuals from the U.S. to seek supervisor-focused feedback and that this difference was accounted for by differences in power distance. Specifically, Hong Kong participants scored higher on perceptions of power distance than U.S. participants, which accounted for their reluctance to seek manager-focused feedback. Based on these ideas, the following hypothesis is added to Study 2:

Hypothesis 8: Power distance will be more predictive of the relationship between feedback source and feedback-seeking intentions for Chinese participants as compared to Euro-Canadians.

Method

Participants

Canadian participants. As part of a general packet of questionnaires, students in several courses completed questions asking their place of birth, whether and how long they lived outside of Canada, their ethnicity, and the languages they could speak, read and write. Based on their responses, participants were selected for the study. Participants included 129 undergraduate students enrolled at a large central Canadian university who took part for course credit or \$10. Forty-two (25 women, 19 men) participants were born in Canada of European heritage. Eighty-seven participants (48 women, 39 men) were of Chinese ethnicity born in Mainland China (49), Hong Kong (32), and Taiwan (6). Collectively, they had lived in Canada for an average of 7.6 years (ranging from 1 year to 14 years). The number of years that participants lived in Canada did not significantly differ between the two Chinese-Canadian groups.⁷ The proportion of women and men in the two Chinese-Canadian groups was as follows: Chinese-Canadians completing the study in English (24 women, 19 men) and Chinese-Canadians completing the study in Chinese (24 women, 20 men). The mean age of participants was 20.65 (range: 18-30) and did not differ significantly among the three Canadian cultural groups.

Beijing Chinese participants. Participants included 45 undergraduate students of Chinese ethnicity who were attending university in China (25 women, 20 men). Chinese participants took part for Chinese Yuan (equivalent to approximately \$3 Canadian) or a Canadian souvenir worth similar value. About half of the participants ($n = 23$) were enrolled in a business course at

⁷Similar to Study 1, cultural identification among Chinese-Canadian participants was measured using the Suinn-Lew Asian Self-Identity Acculturation Scale (SL-ASIA). For each participant, an average score was computed across 21 items ranging from 1 = *low acculturation* to 5 = *high acculturation*. “Bicultural” reflects a SL-ASIA score of 3. Scores ranged from 1.15 to 3.69 and the mean score across all participants was 2.32 indicating that on average, participants indicated that they were ‘Chinese-identified’. Correlation analyses demonstrated that scores on the SL-ASIA did not significantly relate to any of the study variables and therefore, were excluded from subsequent analyses.

a university in Beijing, P. R. China, whereas the remaining participants attended other universities in China. All participants were born in China and had remained in China their whole life. The mean age of Chinese participants was 20.85 (range 18-26) and did not differ significantly from the Canadian participants.

Stimulus Materials and Measures

Policy-capturing task. The policy-capturing task used in Study 1 was also used in Study 2. Participants were asked to complete 16 unique profiles and three duplicate profiles for a total of 19 profiles (Appendix B). For each profile, participants were asked to rate the likelihood of asking for performance feedback using a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = *not at all likely* to 5 = *extremely likely*). The coefficient alpha for the policy-capturing task in Study 2 was .81.⁸

Feedback-seeking motives. As in Study 1, feedback-seeking motives were measured using a scale developed by Tuckey et al. (2002) (Appendix B). For Study 2, the reliabilities of the three subscales were as follows: instrumental motive ($\alpha = .86$), defensive impression management ($\alpha = .80$), and ego defensiveness ($\alpha = .87$).

Power distance. Perceptions of power distance were assessed using a 7-item scale developed by Earley and Erez (1997) (Appendix C). Participants were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with each item or statement using a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly agree*). An example item was “In work-related matters, managers have right to expect obedience from their subordinates.” The reliability for the scale was .68.

Chinese cultural views. Chinese cultural views were assessed using items developed by Ross et al. (2002) (Appendix C). Participants were asked to read several statements (7 of which

⁸ Test-retest reliability was computed by correlating the original and duplicate profiles across participants, rather than averaging the mean test-retest reliability computed for each participant.

reflected Chinese cultural views) and indicate the extent to which they agreed with each statement using a 9-point Likert-type scale (1 = *very strongly disagree*, 9 = *very strongly agree*). An example statement or item was “Modesty leads to success, pride leads to failure.” The reliability for the items was .76.

Procedure

Recruitment. Canadian participants were recruited from a research pool coordinated by the Psychology Department at the University of Waterloo. The experimenter contacted the participants through email and provided the study link/URL. All email communications between Canadian participants and the experimenter were in English.

For Beijing Chinese participants, twenty-three participants were recruited (in Chinese) by an instructor during class. The instructor informed students that I was looking for participants to complete an online study examining feedback seeking in a work context and she provided the study link/URL. The instructor emphasized that the study was completely voluntary and would in no way have bearing on their course grade. Further, participants were informed that their responses would remain confidential and that they would not have to provide their names during the study. Participants were offered a small Canadian souvenir in exchange for their participation.

The remaining participants ($n = 22$) were recruited (in Chinese) by a Chinese colleague. These participants took part in the study for Chinese Yuan (worth approximately \$3 Canadian). During the recruitment phase, participants were told that the purpose of the study was to examine performance feedback seeking at work and were provided with the study link/URL. The recruiter emphasized that participant responses were to remain confidential and anonymous and that participant names would not be collected during the study.

Translation of study materials. All stimulus materials including consent form, instructions, questionnaires, policy-capturing task, and feedback sheet were translated into Chinese by three Chinese-born bilingual translators. The materials were translated into both simplified and traditional Chinese to accommodate the Chinese participants. Following the translation, two independent Chinese-born bilinguals who were unaware of the experimental hypotheses proofread the Chinese questionnaires for grammar and clarity. Two of the original translators corrected errors identified by the proofreaders. The corrected Chinese questionnaires were then given to two additional Chinese-born translators for back-translation. Inconsistencies that were found between the English and back-translated versions were resolved by either revising the translated versions or the original English version of study materials. In the final phase, three independent Chinese-born bilingual students completed the Chinese versions of the study and provided feedback on clarity, comprehension and grammar of study materials. Their feedback was positive and only very minor changes were made to the Chinese translations based on their feedback.

Study 2 was a two-part web-based study and all data were collected online. For the Canadian sample, Chinese-Canadian participants were randomly assigned to either the *prime* or *no prime* condition. In the *prime* condition, participants completed the study in Chinese, and in the *no prime* condition they completed the study in English. Forty-three Chinese-Canadians participants completing the online study in English and 44 completed the study in Chinese. For part one, Canadian participants went to a study link/URL and completed a series of questionnaires about their beliefs and values (including the Power Distance Scale). For Chinese-Canadian participants an acculturation scale was included among the measures. Part one took approximately 20-30 minutes to complete. Two days following the completion of part one of the

study, participants were contacted by the experimenter via email and provided the link/URL to part two of the study⁹. For part two, participants first completed the policy-capturing task, followed by items measuring Chinese cultural beliefs. The feedback-seeking motives scale was presented after the Chinese belief items. A debriefing sheet, which included a more detailed description of the study and its hypotheses, was provided at the end of the study. Part two of the study took approximately 20-30 minutes to complete.

⁹ For Beijing Chinese participants, the email message containing the link/URL for part two of the study stated (in Chinese): “You recently completed part one of my study which examines the act of asking for performance feedback at work. You can now complete part two of the study. The link is provided below. Thank you for participating in the study.”

Results

Preliminary analyses reveal that gender did not significantly relate or interact with any of the study variables. The results reported are collapsed across this factor. Table 5 and 6 presents the descriptive statistics and the correlations among the study variables separately for each cultural group. All hypotheses pertaining to the Valence, Source and Public cues make predictions about seeking individual performance feedback; therefore, the mean beta weights for these cues presented in Tables 5 were computed using only scenarios in which the feedback being sought pertained to individual-performance.

Manipulation Check: Endorsement of Chinese Cultural Views

If Chinese language activates a Chinese identity as intended, Chinese-Canadian participants completing the study in Chinese should evidence higher agreement with Chinese cultural views than do Chinese-Canadians completing the study in English. I averaged each participant's scores on the seven statements reflecting Chinese cultural views and conducted an ANOVA to examine the effect of condition. Results indicated that there was a statistically significant effect of condition, $F(2, 126) = 31.54, p < .001$. As shown in Table 5, Chinese-Canadians completing the study in Chinese (6.28) reported significantly higher agreement with Chinese cultural views than Chinese-Canadians completing the study in English (5.58, $p < .05$) or Euro-Canadians (4.35, $p < .001$). Further, Chinese-Canadians completing the study in English reported higher agreement with Chinese cultural views than Euro-Canadians, $p < .001$.¹⁰

¹⁰ Beijing Chinese participants evidenced significantly higher agreement with Chinese cultural views than Euro-Canadians ($p < .001$) and Chinese-Canadians completing the study in English ($p < .001$). Although Beijing Chinese participants reported higher agreement with Chinese cultural view than Chinese-Canadians completing the study in Chinese, the difference was not statistically significant ($p > .05$). Exploratory polynomial contrasts demonstrated a significant linear trend among the means for Chinese cultural views and that the means were in the expected order, $F(3, 170) = 111.98, p < .001$.

Table 5

Means and standard deviations for cues, feedback-seeking motives, power distance, and Chinese beliefs for Euro-Canadian, Chinese-Canadian, and Beijing Chinese groups

Variable	Cultural Group			
	Euro-Canadian (<i>n</i> =42)	Chinese-Canadian (English) (<i>n</i> =43)	Chinese-Canadian (Chinese) (<i>n</i> =44)	Beijing Chinese (<i>n</i> =45)
Valence Cue	.59 (.56)**	.62 (.47)**	.33 (.53)**	.00 (.45)
Public Cue	-.76 (.62)**	-.59 (.64)**	-.42 (.64)**	-.47 (.53)**
Type Cue	.12 (.24)**	.04 (.22)	-.02 (.27)	.09 (.26)*
Source Cue	.13 (.27)**	.00 (.25)	-.07 (.34)	-.11 (.42)*
Ego-Defensiveness	3.17 (.99)	3.31 (.95)	3.23 (.67)	3.16 (.81)
Defensive Impression Management	3.29 (.89)	4.12 (.74)	3.70 (.76)	3.87 (.88)
Instrumental Motivation	4.84 (.65)	4.83 (.70)	4.50 (.75)	4.82 (.63)
Power Distance	2.66 (.52)	2.67 (.51)	2.74 (.42)	2.95 (.45)
Chinese Cultural Views	4.35 (.98)	5.58 (1.21)	6.28 (1.22)	6.72 (.93)

Note: Public cue (0 = Private; 1 = Public); Source cue (0 = Peer; 1 = Supervisor); Type cue (0 = Individual; 1 = Group); Valence cue (0 = Negative; 1 = Positive). 'English' = Chinese-Canadians completing the study in English, 'Chinese' = Chinese-Canadians completing the study in Chinese. Standard deviations are shown in parentheses. Means for cues are the mean z-transformed beta weights.

* Mean beta weight is statistically significant at $p < .05$, ** Mean beta weight is statistically significant at $p < .01$ (two-tailed).

Table 6

Correlations of cues, feedback-seeking motives, and power distance for Euro-Canadian, Chinese-Canadian, and Beijing Chinese groups

Variable	Group	Source	Valence	Type	Public	Instrumental Motivation	Defensive Impression Management	Power Distance
Ego-Defensiveness	1	-.06	.53**	-.06	.23	-.62**	.34*	.17
	2	-.16	.16	-.21	.03	-.34*	.27	.19
	3	-.26	-.09	-.33*	.03	-.19	.08	.15
	4	.10	.13	.12	.02	-.22	.19	.19
Instrumental Motivation	1	.15	-.28	.00	-.39*	—	-.32*	-.32*
	2	-.01	.04	.15	.05	—	.03	-.19
	3	.22	-.12	.25	-.28	—	.20	-.37*
	4	-.04	.19	-.03	-.22	—	.25	.02
Defensive Impression Management	1	-.28	.14	.26	-.02	—	—	.11
	2	-.05	-.32*	.03	-.44**	—	—	.08
	3	-.11	.10	.12	-.48**	—	—	.22
	4	.09	.13	.11	-.57**	—	—	.23
Power Distance	1	.07	-.19	.08	-.04	—	—	—
	2	-.12	.15	.15	.23	—	—	—
	3	-.38*	.09	-.08	.05	—	—	—
	4	-.34*	.04	-.18	-.14	—	—	—

Note: For 'Group' 1 = Euro-Canadian completing the study in English, 2 = Chinese-Canadian completing the study in English, 3 = Chinese-Canadian completing the study in Chinese, and 4 = Beijing Chinese completing the study in Chinese.

Public cue (0 = Private; 1 = Public); Source cue (0 = Peer; 1 = Supervisor); Type cue (0 = Individual; 1 = Group); Valence cue (0 = Negative; 1 = Positive).

* Correlation significant at $p < .05$, ** Correlation significant at $p < .01$ (two-tailed). Tests of the differences in the correlations between each set of cues was conducted ($\alpha = .001$), and results indicated that none of the correlations between the cues were significantly different among the cultural groups.

Hypothesis 1 predicted that Euro-Canadians will be more motivated than Chinese participants to seek individual feedback when it is positive versus negative. To test cultural differences on the mean beta weight for the Valence cue, planned comparisons were conducted with a Bonferroni correction to the error rate ($\alpha = .02$)¹¹. Results indicated that the mean beta weight for Valence was not statistically significantly different between Euro-Canadians (.59) and Chinese-Canadians completing the study in English (.62), $t(170) = -.23, p > .05$. In addition, the mean beta weight for both of these cultural groups was positive and significantly different from zero ($ps < .01$). The pattern of findings comparing Euro-Canadians and Chinese-Canadians completing the study in English replicate the findings from Study 1 and indicated that both groups preferred to seek positive versus negative feedback. Findings also indicated that the mean beta weights were statistically different between Euro-Canadians and Chinese-Canadians completing the study in Chinese (.33), $t(170) = 2.40, p < .02$. The mean beta weight for Chinese-Canadians completing the study in Chinese was positive and significantly different from zero ($p < .01$) demonstrating that they preferred to seek positive versus negative feedback. Finally, the mean beta weights for Valence were statistically different between Euro-Canadians and Beijing Chinese participants (.002), $t(170) = 5.45, p < .001$, and the mean beta weight for Beijing Chinese participants was not statistically significant different from zero ($p > .05$). Whereas Euro-Canadians and Chinese-Canadians preferred to seek feedback when it was positive versus negative, Beijing Chinese participants (as a group) did not prefer to seek either positive or negative feedback (as indicated by a near zero beta weight for the Valence cue). Overall, the

¹¹ Three comparisons were conducted testing the cultural differences on the mean beta weights for each of the four cues ($.05 / 3 = .02$).

pattern of findings provided some support for Hypothesis 1 and demonstrated that Euro-Canadians were significantly more motivated than Chinese-Canadians completing the study in Chinese and Beijing Chinese participants to seek positive versus negative individual feedback.

The second hypothesis predicted that ego-defensiveness will be more predictive of the relationship between feedback valence and feedback-seeking intentions among Euro-Canadians as compared to Chinese participants. To test the interactions between culture and the individual motives, a moderated regression analysis was conducted by first computing the conditional relationship term for each participant (i.e., motive X cultural group membership). Then, I tested the incremental variance of the conditional relationship term above and beyond the two predictors comprising the conditional relationship term.¹²

The results replicated Study 1 findings and provided support for Hypothesis 2. Specifically, a statistically significant interaction was found between culture and ego-defensiveness for the mean beta weight of Valence, $F(3, 165) = 2.91, p < .05$. Follow-up simple slope tests ($\alpha = .012$)¹³ also revealed that the relationship between ego-defensiveness and the mean beta weight for the Valence cue was statistically significant for Euro-Canadians, $t(40) = 3.91, p < .001$. As predicted, Euro-Canadians were more likely to seek feedback when it was positive versus negative and ego-defensiveness significantly predicted this relationship. In contrast, the relationship between ego-defensiveness and the mean beta weight for the Valence cue was not significant for any

¹² As in Study 1, there were significant correlations between the motives (see Table 6) and therefore, the motives were controlled for in the moderated regression analyses.

¹³ Four simple slope tests were conducted ($05 / 4 = .012$).

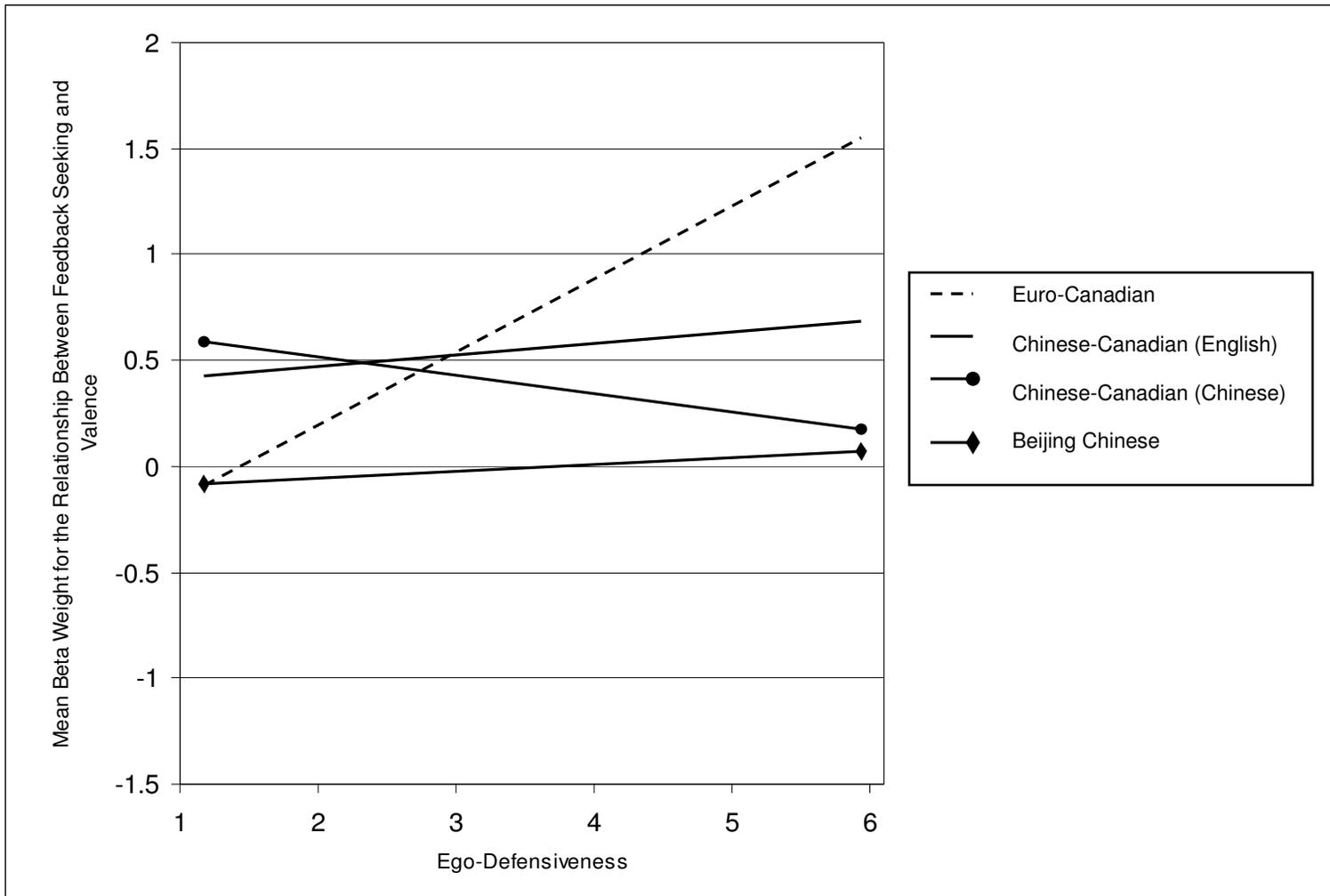


Figure 3. Interaction of cultural group by ego-defensiveness for the mean beta weight of the valence cue.

of the Chinese groups. A non-significant relationship between ego-defensiveness and the mean beta weight for Valence was found for Chinese-Canadians completing the study in English, $t(41) = 1.02, p > .012$. Similarly, the relationship was non-significant for Chinese-Canadian completing the study in Chinese, $t(42) = -.60, p > .012$, nor was it for Beijing Chinese participants, $t(43) = .83, p > .012$. Across the Chinese participant groups, ego-defensiveness failed to predict the relationship between feedback valence and the likelihood of seeking individual feedback. Figure 3 illustrates these findings.

The third hypothesis predicted that Chinese participants will be less motivated than Euro-Canadians to seek feedback when feedback seeking occurs in public as opposed to private. Planned comparison tests with a Bonferroni correction ($\alpha = .02$) demonstrated that the mean beta weight for the Public cue did not differ significantly between Euro-Canadians (-.76) and Chinese-Canadians completing the study in English (-.59), $t(170) = -1.25, p > .02$. Findings failed to replicate Study 1 results in which the Euro-Canadians and Chinese-Canadians has significantly different mean beta weights on the Public cue. In addition, mean beta weights for the Public cue were significantly different between Euro-Canadians and Chinese-Canadians completing the study in Chinese (-.42), $t(170) = -2.55, p < .02$. The difference between Euro-Canadians and Beijing Chinese participants (-.47) was also statistically significant, $t(170) = -2.24, p = .02$. Consistent with Study 1 findings, mean beta weights for the Public cue were significantly different from zero for all cultural groups (all $ps < .01$), indicating that across cultural groups, participants were less likely to seek feedback when feedback seeking occurred in public versus private. Contrary to prediction, Euro-Canadians were

more deterred than any of the Chinese groups to seek feedback when feedback seeking occurred in public versus private.

The fourth hypothesis predicted that the image-based motive will be more predictive of the relationship between publicness of feedback seeking and feedback-seeking intentions for Chinese participants as compared to Euro-Canadians. Findings supported this hypothesis and were consistent with the findings from Study 1. Moderated regression analysis demonstrated that there was a statistically significant interaction between culture and defensive impression management for the mean beta weight of Public, $F(3, 165) = 2.81, p < .05$.

Follow-up simple slope analyses ($\alpha = .012$) also revealed that the relationship between defensive impression management and the mean beta weight for the Public cue was not statistically significant for Euro-Canadians, $t(40) = -.15, p > .012$. In contrast, the relationship was statistically significant for Chinese-Canadians completing the study in English, $t(41) = -3.09, p < .01$ and for Chinese-Canadians completing the study in Chinese $t(42) = -3.54, p < .01$. The relationship between defensive impression management and the mean beta weight for the Public cue was also statistically significant for Beijing Chinese participants, $t(43) = -4.56, p < .001$. As predicted, defensive impression management was more predictive of the relationship between the publicness of feedback-seeking behavior and feedback-seeking intentions for Beijing Chinese and Chinese-Canadian participants as compared to Euro-Canadian participants. Further, as defensive impression management increased among the Chinese subgroups, they were less likely to seek feedback when feedback seeking occurs in public versus private. Findings are presented in Figure 4.

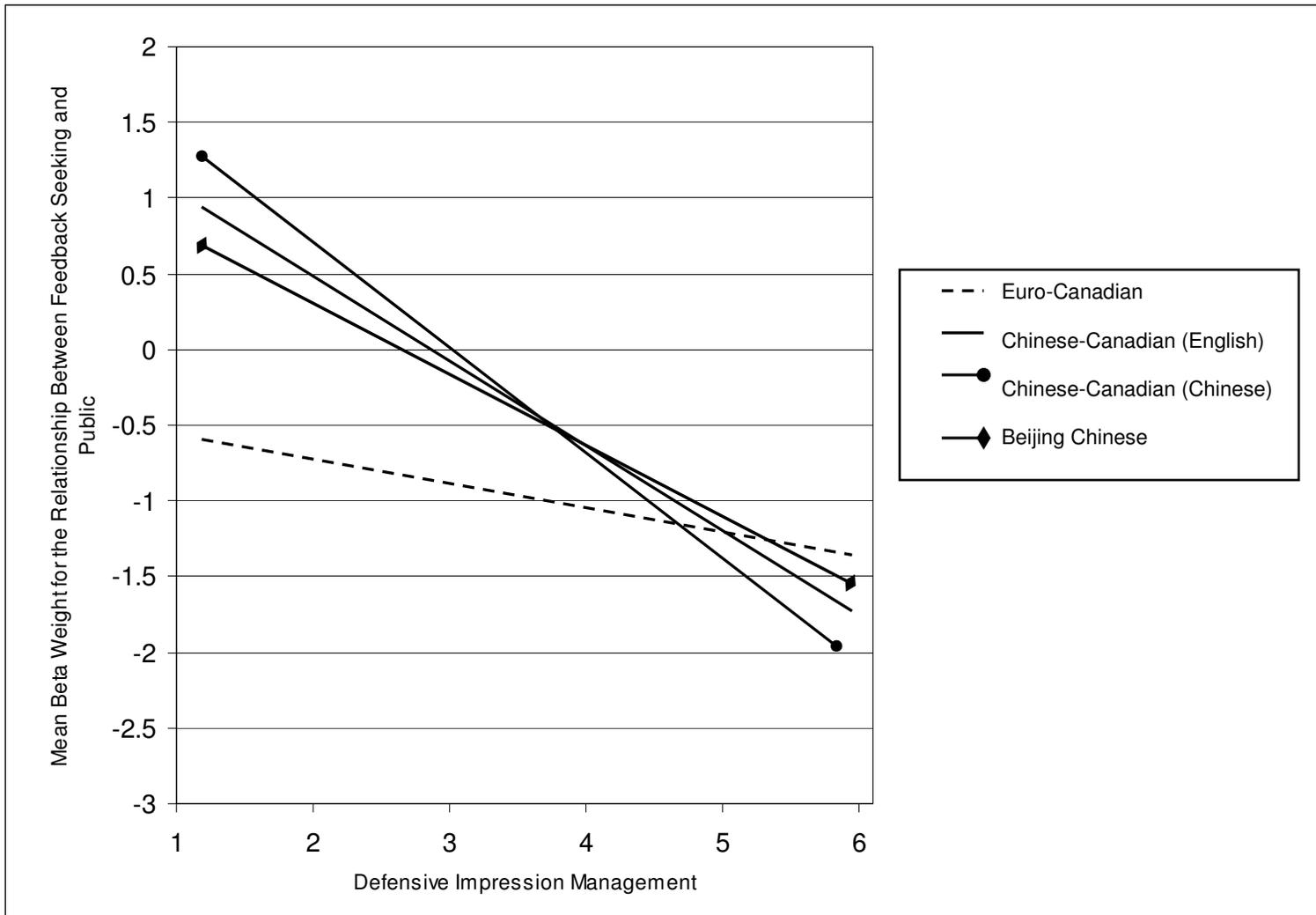


Figure 4. Interaction of cultural group by defensive impression management for the mean beta weight of the public cue.

Hypothesis 5 predicted that Chinese participants will be more motivated than Euro-Canadians to seek feedback pertaining to group versus individual performance. Contrary to predictions, planned comparisons ($\alpha = .02$) demonstrated that the mean beta weight for Euro-Canadians (.12) was not significantly different from the beta weight of Chinese-Canadians completing the study in English (.04), $t(170) = 1.54, p > .05$, nor was it significantly different from the mean beta weight for Beijing Chinese participants (.09), $t(170) = .60, p > .05$. The non-significant difference between Euro-Canadians and Chinese-Canadians completing the study in English was consistent with Study 1 findings. The mean beta weights between Euro-Canadians and Chinese-Canadians completing the study in Chinese (-.02) were significantly different, $t(170) = 2.66, p < .05$. However, the pattern of the difference was not as predicted. Both Euro-Canadians and Beijing Chinese participants had positive mean beta weights that were significantly different from zero ($p < .01$). In contrast, the mean beta weights for the Chinese-Canadian groups were not significantly different from zero. Findings failed to support Hypothesis 5 and suggested that Euro-Canadians and Beijing Chinese participants were motivated to seek group versus individual feedback. In contrast, Chinese-Canadians participants did not have a preference for seeking either group or individual feedback.

Hypothesis 6 predicted that Euro-Canadians will be more motivated than Chinese participants to seek feedback when it comes from a supervisor versus a peer. Consistent with Study 1 findings, paired comparison tests ($\alpha = .02$) revealed that the mean beta weights for the Source cue were statistically different between Euro-Canadians (.13) and Chinese-Canadians completing the study in English (.001), $t(82) = 2.24, p < .02$. Mean beta weights for the Source cue were also significantly different between Euro-Canadians

and Chinese-Canadians completing the study in Chinese ($-.07$), $t(82) = 2.98$, $p < .01$. A significant difference was also found between the mean beta weights for Euro-Canadians and Beijing Chinese participants ($-.11$), $t(76) = 3.20$, $p < .01$. The mean beta weight for Source was significantly different from zero for both Euro-Canadians ($p < .01$) and Beijing Chinese participants ($p < .05$), whereas it was non-significant for the Chinese-Canadian subgroups ($ps > .05$). Overall, these findings support Hypothesis 6 and converge with Study 1 findings indicating that Euro-Canadians were more likely than Chinese participants to seek supervisory versus peer feedback.

Hypothesis 7 predicted that the instrumental motive will be more predictive of the relationship between feedback source and feedback-seeking intentions for Euro-Canadians as compared to Chinese participants. Moderated regression demonstrated that the interaction between culture and instrumental motivation was not statistically significant for the mean beta weight of the Source cue, $F(3, 165) = 1.81$, $p > .05$. The findings failed to support Hypothesis 7 yet are consistent with Study 1 findings.

Hypothesis 8 predicted that power distance will be more predictive of the relationship between feedback source and feedback-seeking intentions for Chinese participants as compared to Euro-Canadians. Moderated regression analyses revealed that the interaction between culture and power distance was statistically significant for the mean beta weight of the Source cue, $F(3, 166) = 2.98$, $p < .05$.

Supporting Hypothesis 8, simple slope tests ($\alpha = .012$) indicated that the relationship between power distance and the mean beta weight for the Source cue was not statistically significant for Euro-Canadians, $t(40) = .43$, $p > .012$. The relationship was also non-significant for Chinese-Canadians completing the study in English, $t(41) = -.79$,

$p > .012$, whereas it was significant for Chinese-Canadians completing the study in Chinese, $t(42) = -2.70, p < .012$. Similarly, the relationship between power distance and the mean beta weight for Source was statistically significant for Beijing Chinese participants, $t(43) = -2.36, p < .012$. Interpretation of findings suggests that as power distance increased among Chinese-Canadians completing the study in Chinese and Beijing Chinese participants, they were less likely to seek feedback from a supervisor versus a peer. Figure 5 illustrates these findings. Table 7 presents a summary of the findings for both Studies 1 and 2.

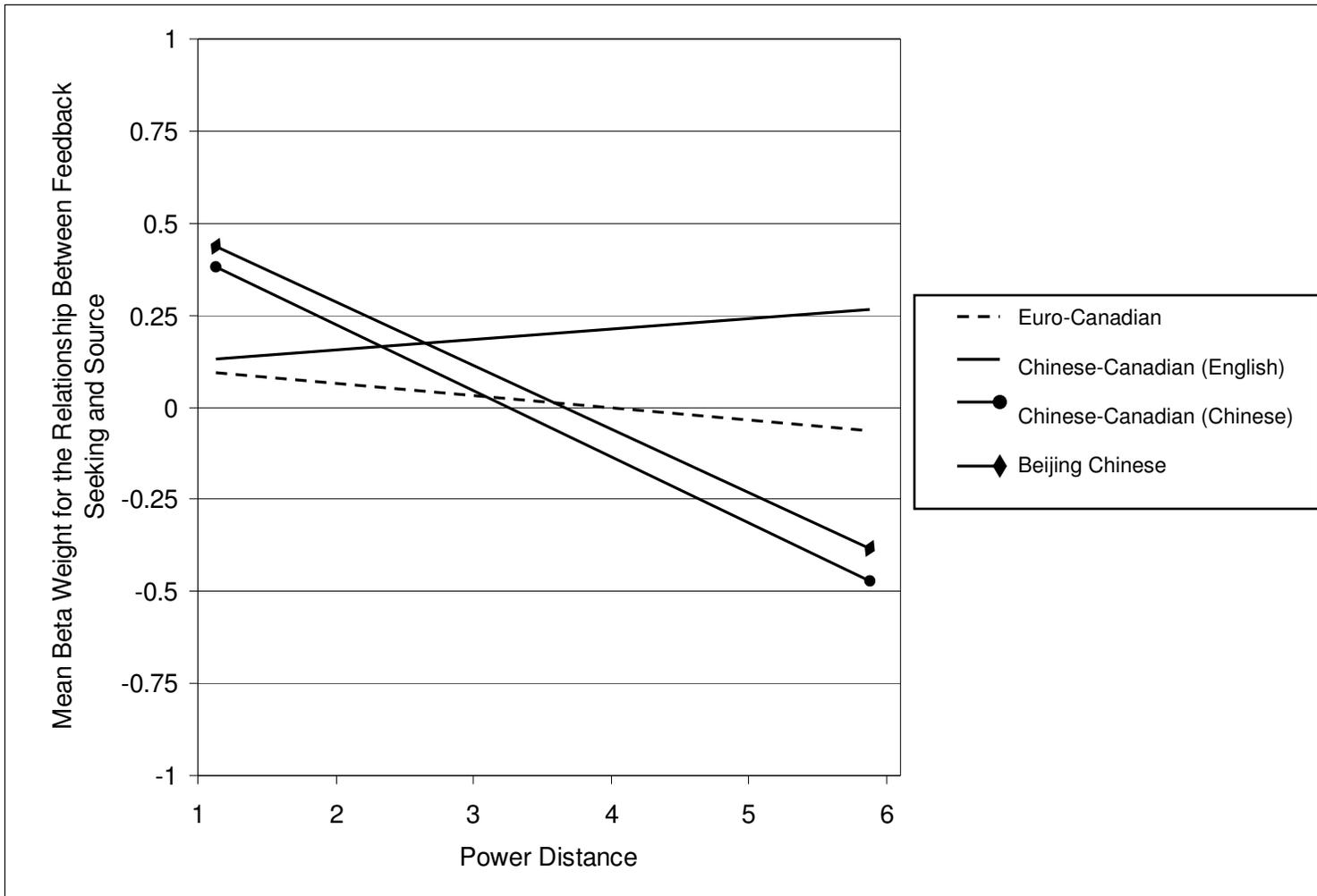


Figure 5. Interaction of cultural group by power distance for the mean beta weight of the source cue.

Table 7

Summary of findings for Studies 1 and 2

Hypothesis	Study 1 Finding	Study 2 Finding
Euro-Canadians will be more motivated than Chinese participants to seek individual feedback when it is positive versus negative.	Not supported: Euro-Canadians (.51) and Chinese-Canadians (.52), <i>ns</i> difference	Not supported: Euro-Canadians (.59) vs. Chinese-Canadians (no prime) (.62), <i>ns</i> difference Supported: Euro-Canadians (.59) vs. Chinese-Canadians (prime) (.33), significant difference Supported: Euro-Canadians (.59) vs. Beijing Chinese (.00), significant difference
The ego-based motive will be more predictive of the relationship between feedback valence and feedback-seeking intentions among Euro-Canadians as compared to Chinese participants.	Supported: Relationship between ego-defensiveness and mean beta weight for Valence significant for Euro-Canadians, yet not for Chinese-Canadians	Supported: Non-significant relationship for Chinese-Canadians (no prime) Supported: Non-significant relationship for Chinese-Canadians (prime) Supported: Non-significant relationship for Beijing Chinese
Chinese participants will be less motivated than Euro-Canadians to seek feedback when feedback seeking occurs in public as opposed to private.	Not supported: Euro-Canadians (-.64) and Chinese-Canadians (-.28), significant difference	Not supported: Euro-Canadians (-.76) and Chinese-Canadians (no prime) (-.59), <i>ns</i> difference Not supported: Euro-Canadians (-.76) and Chinese-Canadians (prime) (-.42), significant difference Not supported: Euro-Canadians (-.79) and Beijing Chinese (-.47), significant difference

Note: numbers in parentheses represent mean beta weights for each cultural group.

Table 7: (continued)

Hypothesis	Study 1 Finding	Study 2 Finding
The image-based motive will be more predictive of the relationship between the publicness of feedback seeking and feedback-seeking intentions for Chinese participants as compared to Euro-Canadians.	Supported: Relationship between defensive impression management and mean beta weight for Public significant for Chinese-Canadians, yet not for Euro-Canadians	Supported: Significant relationship for Chinese-Canadians (no prime) Supported: Significant relationship for Chinese-Canadians (prime) Supported: Significant relationship for Beijing Chinese
Chinese participants will be more motivated than Euro-Canadians to seek feedback when it pertains to group versus individual performance.	Not supported: Euro-Canadians (.11) and Chinese-Canadians (.13), <i>ns</i> difference	Not supported: Euro-Canadians (.12) and Chinese-Canadians (no prime) (.04), <i>ns</i> difference Not supported: Euro-Canadians (.12) and Chinese-Canadians (prime) (-.02), significant difference Not supported: Euro-Canadians (.12) and Beijing Chinese (.09), <i>ns</i> difference
Euro-Canadians will be more motivated than Chinese participants to seek feedback when it comes from a supervisor versus a peer.	Supported: Euro-Canadians (.18) and Chinese-Canadians (.03), significant difference	Supported: Euro-Canadians (.13) and Chinese-Canadians (no prime) (.00) significant difference Supported: Euro-Canadians (.13) and Chinese-Canadians (prime) (-.07), significant difference Supported: Euro-Canadians (.13) and Beijing Chinese (-.11), significant difference

Note: numbers in parentheses represent mean beta weights for each cultural group.

Table 7: (continued)

Hypothesis	Study 1 Finding	Study 2 Finding
The instrumental motive will be more predictive of the relationship between the feedback source and feedback-seeking intentions for Euro-Canadians as compared to Chinese participants.	Not supported: Relationship between instrumental motivation and mean beta weight for Public was not significant for Euro-Canadians	Not supported: Non-significant relationship for Euro-Canadians
Power Distance will be more predictive of the relationship between feedback source and feedback-seeking intentions for Chinese participants as compared to Euro-Canadians		<p>Not supported: Non-significant relationship for Chinese-Canadians (no prime)</p> <p>Supported: Significant relationship for Chinese-Canadians (prime)</p> <p>Supported: Significant relationship for Beijing Chinese</p>

CHAPTER 5

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Although several researchers have stressed the importance of approaching the feedback-seeking process from a cultural perspective, very few studies have examined the relationship between culture and feedback seeking. The current study was designed to investigate whether the motivation to actively seek feedback is culturally conditioned. In particular, I was interested in examining cultural differences in the three primary motives widely discussed in the feedback-seeking literature as driving feedback-seeking behavior, namely the ego-based, image-based, and instrumental motive.

Overall, findings from both Studies 1 and 2 revealed differences in the motivation to seek performance feedback between Euro-Canadians and individuals of Chinese ethnicity. The addition of a language manipulation and inclusion of a Chinese group in the second study allowed for a stronger test of the hypotheses and led to stronger support for the hypotheses as compared to Study 1. In the next section, I will review the findings and provide potential explanations for the pattern of findings.

Ego-based motivation and feedback valence. Although Study 1 findings did not support predictions, Study 2 provided support for the hypothesis that Euro-Canadians will be more motivated than Chinese participants to seek positive versus negative individual feedback. In both studies, Euro-Canadians did not significantly differ from Chinese-Canadians completing the study in English; however, Study 2 findings demonstrated that Euro-Canadians were significantly more likely than Chinese-Canadians (completing the study in Chinese) and Beijing Chinese participants to seek individual feedback when it was positive versus negative. Across both studies, results also showed that ego-

defensiveness significantly predicted the relationship between feedback valence and feedback-seeking intentions for Euro-Canadians, whereas it did not predict the relationship for any of the Chinese participant groups. Among Euro-Canadians, participants high in ego-defensiveness indicated that they were more likely to seek positive versus negative feedback as compared to those low in ego-defensiveness. The pattern of findings suggests that Euro-Canadian individuals who perceive negative feedback as particularly threatening to their egos are highly motivated to avoid it.

Overall, the results suggest that Euro-Canadians are more motivated than Chinese participants to obtain positive versus negative self-relevant feedback. These findings are consistent with past research and theory suggesting that the motivation for positive self-views is weaker for East Asians than it is for Westerners (Heine, 2007; Heine & Hamamura, 2007). Further, the findings that ego-defensiveness significantly predicted the relationship between feedback valence and feedback-seeking intentions for Euro-Canadians is consistent with the idea that (Western) individuals are motivated to protect their egos in light of self-relevant performance feedback (e.g., Ashford et al., 2003; Levy et al., 2005; Morrison, 2002; Morrison & Cummings, 1990; Northcraft & Ashford, 1990). That ego-defensiveness did not predict the relationship between feedback valence and feedback-seeking intentions for Chinese participants indicates that ego concerns may be less important among this group in the context of feedback seeking.

The idea that East Asians do not have as strong a desire as Westerners to seek out positive self-relevant information is explained by cultural variation in self-enhancement and self-improvement motivation (e.g., Heine, 2007). Specifically, researchers propose that Westerners are motivated to seek out positive information to maintain positive self-

views (i.e., self-enhancement), whereas East Asians are motivated to seek out potential weaknesses and work towards correcting them (i.e., self-improvement) (Heine, 2007).

Findings from the current study are consistent with the notion that Chinese participants are less motivated to view themselves positively as compared to the Euro-Canadians. However, evidence that the cultural group differences were accounted for by a self-improvement motive among Chinese participants was less forthcoming. For instance, Chinese-Canadian participants (across both studies) were significantly more motivated to seek positive versus negative individual feedback. In addition, the mean beta weight for Beijing Chinese participants was non-significant (.002) indicating that they did not have a preference to seek either positive or negative feedback. Inspection of individual mean beta weights for the Beijing Chinese group indicated that 42% of participants were more motivated to seek negative versus positive feedback, whereas 33% were more motivated to seek positive versus negative feedback. Twenty-four percent of Beijing Chinese participants did not have a preference for either positive or negative feedback (represented by a beta weight of nearly zero). Although self-improvement may have motivated some of the Chinese participants (particularly in the Beijing sample) to prefer negative versus positive feedback, it does not account for the preference among many Chinese participants to seek positive feedback. The question remaining is how might the mixed pattern of findings among Beijing Chinese participants be explained?

Possible explanations for the pattern of findings among Beijing Chinese participants come from research examining cross-cultural differences in learning and achievement motivation. Although this body of research is conducted within a learning

environment, learning and organizational environments may be more similar than different in terms of the goals and concerns that underlie individual behavior (Hwang et al., 2002). For example, both students and employees must interact with their peers and superiors to achieve specific learning objectives. Moreover, while participating in both the workplace and the classroom, individuals may experience the same self-esteem, instrumental, and image concerns. Thus, the factors that influence behaviors in the classroom are similar to those purported to influence feedback-seeking behaviors in organizational settings (Hwang et al., 2002). Based on these commonalities, research conducting in a learning context can be extended to the organization context.

Overall, studies on achievement goals indicate that the nature of motivated behavior among Chinese individuals is complex. For example, Ho, Hau, and Salili (2007) found that learning among Chinese individuals was characterized by two general orientations: either a negative failure-avoiding approach or a positive success-striving approach. An adoption of either approach may be quite adaptive in a Chinese learning or organizational context where both self-improvement and outperforming others are valued behaviors (Ho & al., 2007; Zusho & Njoku, 2007). In addition, both approaches are proposed to aid Chinese individuals in attaining valued social outcomes (e.g., belongingness with others, being viewed favorably by others) (Ho et al., 2007).

The failure-avoiding approach to learning reiterates the cross-cultural psychology literature on self-improvement and face (e.g., Heine, 2007). Specifically, an emphasis on being accepted by others and fitting in with the group may influence Chinese individuals to adopt failure-avoidance goals (Zusho & Njoku, 2007). Performance flaws may be viewed negatively insofar as they indicate that the individual is not living up to the

group's performance standards (Heine, 2007). In an effort to garner others' favorable evaluations, Chinese individuals may be motivated to identify performance flaws and work toward correcting them to improve future performance (Ho et al., 2007; Zusho & Njoku, 2007). In the current study, some Beijing Chinese participants may have adopted a failure-avoiding approach to feedback seeking, which would account for their preference to seek negative versus positive individual feedback.

A success-striving approach may also be an adaptive approach to learning and achievement among Chinese individuals in a competitive environment (Ho et al., 2007). In Chinese society, competition is a concept that is highly valued because it is believed to motivate and improve the performance of competitors (Watkins, 2007). As such, both the school and work environments in China are characterized by high standards of excellence and intense competition (Watkins, 2007). In a learning context, Chinese students compete with one another to attain limited access to the best universities (Watkins, 2007). Similarly, competition is the norm in Chinese organizations where employees compete for limited rewards and resources (Mo & Berrell, 2004). In a Chinese context where there is an emphasis on outperforming others, individuals are found to adopt a success-striving approach to learning and achievement (Ho et al., 2007). This would include seeking performance information that confirms one's strengths and competence (Ho et al., 2007). Further, positive feedback is associated with highly-valued rewards and upward mobility among Chinese individuals (both students and employees), and individual success can bring pride and prestige to one's social group (e.g., family) (Ho et al., 2007). In the current research, the adoption of a success-striving approach

among some of the Beijing Chinese participants may explain why they were motivated to seek positive versus negative performance feedback.

Across both studies, Chinese-Canadians preferred to seek positive versus negative performance feedback. Unlike the Beijing Chinese participants, however, these participants have had extensive exposure to both East Asian and Western cultures. Given this, a possible explanation for the preference among Chinese-Canadian participants for positive versus negative performance feedback is that they were accessing a Western identity when responding to the feedback valence information. However, if a Western identity was salient among Chinese-Canadians when they were responding to the valence information, then ego-defensiveness should have similarly predicted the relationship between feedback valence and feedback-seeking intentions among Euro-Canadians and Chinese-Canadians. Although it is possible that Chinese-Canadians accessed a Western identity when responding to the valence information but not when they completed the ego-defensiveness items (which could account for a non-significant relationship between ego-defensiveness and the mean beta weight for Valence), there is evidence that contradicts this logic. Namely, a number of the hypotheses were supported and provide evidence that Chinese-Canadians (both studies) were responding in accordance with an Eastern cultural orientation throughout the study.

Alternatively, there may be similar explanations for the preference among Chinese-Canadians and Beijing Chinese participants to seek positive versus negative feedback. Namely, Chinese-Canadian participants in the current research may have adopted a success-striving approach to feedback seeking, which resulted in a preference for positive versus negative feedback. This explanation seems reasonable given that

many of the Chinese-Canadian participants used in the current research had lived in Canada for less than 5 years. In addition, past research suggests that Chinese individuals have positive feelings about competition in their daily lives and in school because outperforming others leads to positive outcomes (Watkins, 2007). Chinese-Canadians in the current research, therefore, may have adopted a success-striving approach, which resulted in a preference for positive versus negative individual feedback.

Findings from both studies indicated that both Euro-Canadians and Chinese-Canadian participants preferred to seek positive over negative feedback. In addition, a number of Beijing Chinese participants preferred to seek positive feedback. Despite evidence for some similarities in feedback-seeking intentions among individuals from different cultures, the reasons why participants preferred to seek positive feedback may have varied across culture. Heine (2007) proposed that Western individuals are motivated to think positively of themselves, whereas East Asians are focused on whether significant others think they are doing well. Similarly, achievement motivation is found to be more social (and less individual) in East Asian culture than it is in Western culture (Kumar & Maehr, 2007). In the current research, Chinese participants may have preferred to seek positive versus negative feedback for more social reasons as compared to Euro-Canadian participants. Positive performance feedback may be rewarding to Chinese participants because attaining success can result in positive social outcomes including social status, praise, and pride to one's family (Ho et al, 2007). In contrast, findings suggest that the motivation among Euro-Canadians to seek positive versus negative feedback was more individually-oriented. Specifically, a significant relationship

between ego-defensiveness and the mean beta weight for the Valence cue among Euro-Canadians suggests that the motivation among Westerners was more individual in nature.

Image-based motivation and publicness of feedback seeking. Across both studies, findings demonstrated that both Euro-Canadians and Chinese participants were significantly less motivated to seek feedback when it occurred in public versus private. Contrary to prediction, however, Euro-Canadians were more deterred than Chinese participants from seeking feedback in public versus private (both studies). The latter result is inconsistent with past theory and research suggesting that East Asians are less likely than Westerners to engage in attention-getting behaviors in public situations (e.g., Heinrichs et al., 2001; Reisinger & Turner, 1998). Although Euro-Canadians indicated that they were less likely than Chinese participants to seek feedback in public versus private, results were qualified by a significant interaction supporting prediction. Specifically, defensive impression management predicted the relationship between publicness of feedback seeking and intentions to seek feedback for Chinese participants and not Euro-Canadians. As defensive impression management increased among Chinese participants, they were less likely to seek feedback when seeking occurred in public versus private.

Overall, findings suggest that image concerns were more salient for the Chinese participants as compared to the Euro-Canadians in the context of seeking feedback in public versus private. Results support past research and theory suggesting that evaluations of others have less of an impact on behavior in public situations for Western individuals as compared to East Asians (Heinrich et al., 2001; Hwang et al., 2002; Paulhus et al., 2002; Reisinger & Turner, 1998; Singelis & Sharkey, 1995). In East Asian

culture, public displays of behavior such as asking for feedback serve to distinguish the individual from the group, which goes against the expectation of “fitting in”. For East Asians, how one’s behavior may be judged by others is an important consideration, and an acute awareness or sensitivity to other’s judgment helps ensure that one is not acting in a way that might lead to others’ negative evaluations (Heine, 2005).

That defensive impression management was not related to the mean beta weight for the Public cue among Euro-Canadians was somewhat surprising given the past findings from feedback-seeking research (e.g., Ashford & Northcraft, 1992; Northcraft & Ashford, 1990; Levy et al., 1995). Moreover, the idea that impression management costs deter individuals from seeking feedback when an audience is present appears to be a widely-accepted assumption among feedback-seeking researchers (e.g., Ashford et al., 2003). A conclusion drawn from the current pattern of findings is that defensive impression management did not lead to a preference for private versus public feedback seeking among Euro-Canadians. In addition, examination of mean scores on defensive impression management revealed that Euro-Canadians scored lower on this motive as compared to any of the Chinese subgroups.¹⁴ Lower scores on defensive impression management for Euro-Canadians as compared to Chinese subgroups is consistent with past cross-cultural research and theory suggesting that Westerners are less concerned than East Asians about being negatively evaluated by others in public settings (Hwang, Francesco, & Kessler, 2003; Singelis and Sharkey; 1995). The question remaining is what, other than defensive impression management, may have motivated Euro-Canadian

¹⁴ Findings indicated that across both studies Euro-Canadians were significantly lower on defensive impression management as compared to any of the Chinese subgroups (all $ps < .05$).

participants to prefer seeking feedback when feedback seeking occurred in private versus public?

One potential explanation is that the responses among Euro-Canadians were based on their normative feedback-seeking experiences. In the school environment, students are rarely forced to ask for performance feedback when an audience is present, but rather have the option of asking for personal feedback from an instructor or teaching assistant in private. The feedback-seeking experiences of most employees are expected to be similar insofar as they can choose between seeking feedback publicly (in the presence of a number of their coworkers) or privately. Realistically, most employees opt to seek feedback from a supervisor or a peer in private suggesting that seeking feedback in public rarely occurs in organizations. According to this logic, Euro-Canadians may have preferred to seek feedback in private versus public because this is what they would typically do. Perhaps, seeking performance feedback in public (when many others are present) was not perceived as a realistic or necessary behavior for Euro-Canadians, which explains a preference for feedback seeking in private versus public.

Chinese participants (both Chinese-Canadians and Beijing Chinese) may have similar feedback-seeking experiences to Euro-Canadians, insofar as feedback-seeking in public is a low-frequency behavior. In Eastern cultures, however, engaging in low-frequency behaviors or behaviors that are not “normative” may be perceived as breaking social norms, which can result in being evaluated negatively by others. This would explain why image concerns (i.e., concerns about how others evaluate the behavior) were related to seeking feedback in public or private among Chinese participants.

Group versus individual performance feedback. The prediction that Euro-Canadians would prefer to seek individual feedback whereas Chinese participants would prefer to seek group-related feedback was not supported. In contrast, the majority of participants, regardless of cultural group, preferred to seek group versus individual feedback. Specifically, Euro-Canadians (Studies 1 and 2), Beijing Chinese participants (Study 2), and Chinese-Canadian participants (Study 1), had a clear preference to seek group versus individual feedback. Further, 63% of Chinese-Canadian participants (completing the study in English) in Study 2 preferred to seek group versus individual feedback (although the mean group beta weight was non-significant). In Study 2, the only group that did not show a preference for group feedback were Chinese-Canadians (completing the study in Chinese), who did not prefer to seek either group or individual feedback. Overall, findings are inconsistent with past research demonstrating that members of Eastern and Western cultures sample and use information in a culturally-compatible manner (Bailey et al., 1997; Earley, 1994; Earley et al., 1999; Triandis, 1989). In contrast, most participants regardless of culture preferred to seek group versus individual feedback. Moreover, results demonstrated that none of the participant groups in either study preferred to seek individual versus group feedback. A possible explanation for the pattern of findings relates to the context of the decision-making task. The general preference for group versus individual feedback among participants may have emerged because participants were asked to imagine working as part of a team when completing the feedback-seeking task. This may have biased participants to favor group versus individual feedback. A better test of the motivation to seek either group or

individual feedback may include having participants complete a decision-making task in which they are not informed whether they are working in a group or individually.

Instrumental motivation and feedback source. It was predicted that Euro-Canadians would be more likely than Chinese participants to ask for feedback from a supervisor versus a peer. Findings from both studies supported this prediction and are consistent with past research showing that individuals from Western culture are more motivated than East Asian individuals to seek supervisory feedback (Morrison et al., 2004). Also consistent with past research was the finding that Euro-Canadians were significantly more likely to seek feedback from a supervisor versus a peer (Ashford & Tsui, 1991; Brett et al., 1990). In comparison, Beijing Chinese participants were significantly more likely to seek feedback when feedback came from a peer versus a supervisor. The mean beta weights for Chinese-Canadian groups (prime and no prime group) were not significantly different from zero and demonstrated that they did not have a significant preference for either supervisory or peer-based feedback.

The prediction that the instrumental motive (i.e., the need for useful information) would be more predictive of the relationship between feedback source and feedback-seeking intentions among Euro-Canadians than Chinese participants was not supported in either study. Although Euro-Canadians across both studies preferred to seek feedback from a supervisor versus a peer, the mean beta weight for the Source cue was not significantly predicted by the instrumental motive. This outcome is inconsistent with the notion that Western individuals prefer to seek feedback from a supervisor versus a peer because supervisory feedback is seen as more useful and diagnostic (e.g., Ashford & Tsui, 1991; Brett et al., 1990).

A possible explanation for the finding is that the preference among Euro-Canadians for supervisory versus peer feedback was driven by factors other than a general need for useful performance information. Although performance feedback from supervisors is useful insofar as it provides accurate information to improve future performance, there are other attributes associated with supervisors that may motivate Euro-Canadians to seek feedback from this source. For example, Vancouver and Morrison (1995) suggested that feedback sources may differ among the dimensions of expertise (i.e., accuracy and usefulness of the source's feedback), accessibility (i.e., ease with which one can obtain information from the source), and reward power (i.e., source's ability to affect the outcomes). These specific dimensions are found to independently predict the motivation to seek feedback from different sources. For example, Vancouver and Morrison (1995) found that participants preferred to seek feedback from a source with reward power, irrespective of the source's ability to provide accurate information (i.e., credibility). By seeking supervisory feedback, the feedback seeker may convey to the supervisor that they are conscientious, responsible, eager, and show initiative, which in turn can lead to positive outcomes for the feedback seeker (e.g., promotion, praise, and bonuses). Thus, the motive to seek feedback from a superior may be instrumental, but not necessarily based upon a desire for accurate or expert-level information. Rather, the act of feedback seeking is instrumental for enhancing impressions which could result in positive rewards for the feedback seeker (Morrison & Bies, 1991). In the current study, Euro-Canadians may have been motivated to seek supervisory feedback because of the reward power associated with the source. However, this explanation remains speculative

and future research is needed to further examine the potential factors influencing the relative utilization of various feedback sources among individuals from different cultures.

Power distance and feedback source. Findings from Study 2 revealed that there was a significant interaction between power distance and the mean beta weight for the Source cue. The results supported prediction and demonstrated that power distance was more predictive of the relationship between feedback source and feedback-seeking intention among Chinese participants than Euro-Canadians. Power distance did not predict the relationship for Euro-Canadians or Chinese-Canadians completing the study in English. However, power distance significantly predicted the relationship between feedback source and feedback-seeking intentions among Beijing Chinese participants, as well as Chinese-Canadians completing the study in Chinese. Interpretation of the findings indicates that as power distance increased among Chinese participants, they were less likely to seek feedback when it came from a supervisor versus peer. This finding supports past research and theory suggesting that status identity concerns are related to the reluctance of Chinese individuals to seek feedback from superiors (Morrison et al., 2004; Sully De Luque & Sommers, 2000). In contrast, a non-significant relationship between power distance and the mean beta weight for the Source cue for Euro-Canadians indicates that status identity may be a less salient concern in the context of feedback seeking for Westerners.

Effects of the language prime and inclusion of a Beijing Chinese sample. Study 2 findings provide evidence that language increased the accessibility of a Chinese identity, thereby increasing the cultural differences in responses between Euro-Canadians and Chinese participants. First, the endorsement of Chinese cultural views was significantly

higher for Chinese-Canadians completing the study in Chinese as compared to Chinese-Canadians completing the study in English. The random assignment of Chinese-Canadians to either of these two conditions provides evidence that the language manipulation accounted for the difference between the Chinese-Canadian groups. Second, there was a significant difference in the mean beta weights for Valence between Euro-Canadians and Chinese-Canadians completing the study in Chinese, whereas across both studies the mean beta weights were not significantly different between the former group and Chinese-Canadians completing the study in English. Moreover, the mean beta for Valence among Chinese-Canadians completing the study in Chinese was significantly lower than the mean beta weight for Chinese-Canadians completing the study in English, providing further evidence for a priming effect.¹⁵ Overall, the pattern of findings suggests that the motivation to obtain positive self-relevant information was weaker among individuals with a stronger Chinese identity.

Third, there was a stronger relationship between power distance and the mean beta weight for the Source cue among Chinese-Canadians completing the study in Chinese than Chinese-Canadians completing the study in English. Specifically, the relationship was statistically significant for the former group, whereas it was non-significant for the latter group. Interpretation of the findings demonstrated that responses for Chinese-Canadians completing the study in Chinese more closely conformed to an East Asian cultural orientation, which provides evidence for a priming effect. In sum, a number of the current findings were consistent with the idea that Chinese and Western

¹⁵ I conducted a t-test comparing the mean beta weights on Valence for individual feedback scenarios between the two Chinese-Canadian groups. Results demonstrated a statistically significant difference between Chinese-Canadians completing the study in English (.62) and Chinese-Canadians completing the study in Chinese (.33), $t(85) = 2.67, p < .01$.

identities are stored in separate knowledge structures in bicultural individuals, with each structure activated by its associated language (Hong et al., 2000; Ross et al., 2002; Trafimow et al., 1997).

The cultural differences between Euro-Canadians and Beijing Chinese participants were generally greater than the differences between the former group and Chinese-Canadians participants. This makes sense given that Chinese participants born in China who have remained in China their whole life are chronically exposed to Eastern culture and have limited exposure to Western values. Although the priming manipulation may have made a Chinese identity temporarily more salient among Chinese-Canadian participants, findings suggested that a Chinese identity was stronger among monocultural individuals chronically exposed to East Asian culture.

Study Limitations and Future Research Directions

Although current findings are interesting and provide evidence for cultural variation in feedback-seeking intentions, there are limitations that need to be acknowledged in the research. First, a common criticism of experimental research is that the utilization of student samples limits the generalizability of the findings to natural work settings (Gordon, Slade, & Schmitt, 1986). This may be a limitation, however some researchers have argued that student-based research can in fact have some measure of generalizability to work settings (e.g., Locke, 1986). For example, feedback-seeking behavior is relevant to students as well as employees.

Another issue concerns the validity of decisions obtained from experimental policy-capturing studies. However, the goal of the current research was to gain a basic understanding of cultural variations in feedback-seeking decisions. To this end, policy-capturing was a suitable methodology. Specifically, it allowed the examination of how Western and East Asian individuals use information about different contextual variables (related to the primary feedback-seeking motives) to produce decisions about the likelihood of seeking feedback. Nonetheless, future research is needed to determine whether the current findings can be replicated using different methodologies.

As the samples were drawn mainly from two sets of students, each from mainly one university in one country, it is possible that the samples were not representative of their respective cultures. To increase generalizability of findings, future research is needed utilizing multiple samples (including actual workers) from different settings (e.g., multiple organizations) (Brown & Lord, 1999). Utilization of field samples from different organizations within China and North America will also allow the examination

of variables that are purported to influence the feedback-seeking process (e.g., organizational culture, type of job, work experience). These variables may interact with both culture and motivation to influence feedback seeking.

In the current studies, data were derived from web-based self-report measures, which may have led to common method or common source bias. Based on the findings, however, these biases were unlikely a problem. First, common method and common source bias can lead to inflated correlations between variables, but would not account for the mean differences between the cultural groups in the current studies (Morrison et al., 2004). Second, the study was divided into two parts separate by a number of days to minimize the potential influence of such biases.

Studies 1 and 2 directly measured feedback-seeking motives and they were found to be related to cultural differences in feedback-seeking intentions. However, an important next step is to employ stronger and more indirect experimental manipulations of contextual factors that influence the motives, rather than having participants read about contextual factors in hypothetical scenarios. Past studies have examined the defensive impression management motive by experimentally manipulating the publicness of the feedback-seeking context (e.g., Ashford & Northcraft, 1992; Levy et al., 1995). For example, Ashford and Northcraft (1992) created a public context by having others (beyond the feedback giver) present in the lab who evaluated the participant's feedback-seeking behavior. Alternatively, Levy et al. (1995) created a public context by having the experimenter read the feedback aloud to the feedback seeker when others were present in the laboratory. Feedback valence could also be manipulated by having participants complete work tasks of various difficulty in which the motivation to seek feedback is

high (e.g., rewards are given to participants for improved performance). Future studies that include strong experimental manipulations associated with primary feedback-seeking motives will further enhance our understanding of potential cross-cultural differences in feedback seeking.

In the current studies, I measured peoples' decisions to seek feedback. Given the paucity of the literature in this area, the examination of feedback-seeking intentions is a useful starting point. However, future research is needed to determine if the pattern of relationships found in the current studies are replicated when feedback-seeking behaviors (rather than intentions) are measured. Past studies demonstrate that behavioral intentions can predict many behaviors in organizations such as whistle-blowing (Somers & Casal, 1994), being absent (Johns, 1994), voluntary turnover (Tett & Meyer, 1993), and mentoring (Ragins & Scandura, 1994). Nonetheless, intentions and behaviors are unlikely to be perfectly correlated; and laboratory studies are needed in which feedback-seeking behaviors are systematically recorded (e.g., Levy et al., 1995).

As previously discussed, past research has shown cultural differences in learning and achievement motivation in a learning context. In the learning domain, research focuses on explaining how students' goal orientations influence how they approach, engage, and respond to achievement situations (Ames, 1992; Dweck & Leggett, 1988). A growing body of research and theory also suggests that goal orientation explains the motivational basis of feedback-seeking behavior in an organizational context (e.g., VandeWalle, Brown, Cron, & Slocum, 1999; VandeWalle, Ganesan, Challagalla, & Brown, 2000; VandeWalle & Cummings, 1997). For example, VandeWalle (2003) proposed that goal orientation influences the choices made for different dimensions of

feedback-seeking behavior including the frequency, type, source, method, timing, and sign preference. A potentially valuable direction for future research is to examine whether and to what extent goal orientation explains potential differences in feedback-seeking behavior between members of East Asian and Western cultures. Further insights can also be gained by determining whether the *reasons* for adopting certain goal orientations vary across cultures (e.g., social versus individual reasons).

A review of the cross-cultural literature indicates that the concept of face takes on special importance in East Asian cultures and significantly influences individual behavior (e.g. Earley, 1997; Heine, 2007; Ho, 1976; Ting-Toomey, 1994). More targeted research on face also indicates that face is a complex multifaceted construct within Chinese society (Hu, 1944). Given the importance of face to Chinese culture, it is important to investigate the relationship between face and feedback-seeking behaviors in cross-cultural research. Although face may be present in both Western and East Asian societies, researchers propose that it is manifested in very different ways in different cultures (e.g., Ting-Toomey, 1998; Hallan, Lee, & Herzog, 1997). For example, Hwang et al. (2003) found that American participants were more driven toward gaining face before others, whereas East Asian participants were more driven toward not losing face. Face concerns are likely to manifest in different feedback-seeking behaviors between East Asian and North American employees. Thus, it seems that the influence of face on feedback-seeking processes is a potentially fruitful area for future inquiry.

Theoretical Implications

Much of the existing feedback-seeking theory and research makes assumptions about feedback seekers that may be less valid in East Asian cultures (Morrison et al., 2004). One assumption is that people are motivated to maintain a positive self-view in light of self-relevant performance feedback. Another assumption implied by past research is that feedback seekers feel comfortable asking their supervisors for feedback. The results of the current studies provide some preliminary evidence that these ideas do not generalize to Eastern cultures. For example, findings demonstrate that members of Western culture may be more motivated than Chinese individuals to seek feedback when it is positive versus negative. Findings also suggest that feedback-seeking motives and cultural variables (power distance and Chinese cultural views) are related to cultural differences in feedback seeking. By identifying and assessing feedback-seeking motives and other cultural variables potentially related to the feedback-seeking process, researchers can gain a greater understanding of cultural differences in feedback seeking.

An integration of findings and theories from relevant areas outside of the organizational domain can also help guide and advance future feedback-seeking research and theory. In particular, decades of social psychological research have generated a substantial literature on culture and motivation that is highly-relevant to the study of culture and feedback-seeking in organizational settings. Moreover, a growing body of work examining the influence of culture on achievement motivation among students can help guide and advance future feedback-seeking research. Not only are these literatures useful in guiding future research, but they can also serve as a foundation for building a

comprehensive framework to conceptualize the link between culture and the feedback-seeking process.

Practical Implications

Organizations are often characterized by ambiguity and uncertainty, and an important way in which employees cope with these conditions is to seek performance feedback (Morrison, 2002). Feedback seeking can provide employees with role-clarifying information and evaluations of the adequacy of their work behavior, which can improve performance (Ashford & Tsui, 1991; Morrison, 1993). Gaining insight into the individual and contextual variables influencing feedback-seeking behavior is a necessary step in managing the environment in which feedback seeking takes place. In this regard, results of feedback-seeking studies can help managers' create an environment that stimulates effective feedback seeking and as a consequence, improves employee performance.

Current findings are particularly useful for Western managers assuming a job in China and Western managers overseeing Chinese employees in North America. Regardless of culture, performance feedback is a valuable resource for many employees that can lead to improved performance. Therefore, it is important for managers working in foreign cultures or in culturally-diverse organizations to understand cultural differences in feedback seeking so that they can create an environment that encourages effective feedback seeking. Failure to understand or sufficiently manage cultural differences in feedback seeking can create problems in job performance among employees that directly affects businesses' bottom lines (Copeland & Griggs, 1985).

A lack of understanding of Chinese employees' feedback-seeking decisions can also negatively impact the relations between Western managers and Chinese subordinates. For example, a Western manager who is sent to manage employees in Beijing may assume that Chinese employees (like their Western counterparts) feel comfortable directly approaching him or her if they need performance feedback. The reluctance of Chinese employees to seek performance feedback from the manager may make the manager feel anxious about the lack of initiative among the employees (Morrison et al., 2004). In contrast, a Western manager who understands that status identity concerns can keep Chinese employees from seeking manager-based feedback may encourage employees to seek peer-based feedback, or decide to approach the Chinese employees directly with performance feedback. By adapting to different behavioral orientations and expectations related to feedback seeking, a Western manager demonstrates that she or he is sensitive to the subordinates' needs, thereby promoting positive relations between subordinates and the manager. From a manager's perspective, therefore, there may be a tremendous interest in understanding cross-cultural differences in the feedback-seeking processes to avoid misunderstandings that may arise from such differences.

Current findings also have implications to the feedback exchanges between subordinates of different cultural backgrounds. For example, Chinese employees who value negative performance feedback to correct errors may become frustrated with Western colleagues who are reluctant to provide negative feedback. In addition, a Chinese employee with status-identity concerns may develop negative feelings toward Western colleagues who frequently ask the manager for feedback. The influence of

interpersonal dynamics on the feedback-seeking exchanges between employees of different cultural backgrounds provides yet another fascinating area for future research (Ashford et al., 2003).

Conclusion

Given the paucity of the literature in this area, the current studies provide an important beginning. They provide evidence for motivational differences in feedback-seeking intentions between members of East Asian and Western culture. Specifically, findings suggest that the need to protect the ego in light of evaluative individual performance feedback is a more salient concern for individuals with a Western cultural orientation, whereas image-based concerns may be a stronger determinant of feedback seeking among individuals with an Eastern cultural orientation in public feedback-seeking situations. Further, findings provide evidence that power distance concerns influence whether Chinese individuals seek feedback from a supervisor versus a peer. In contrast, results indicate that power distance may not predict the preference to seek feedback from either source among Western individuals. The findings, while preliminary, suggest that further inquiry into potential cultural differences in feedback seeking is warranted. Hopefully, these studies have set the stage for more research in this area.

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Appendix A

Pilot Study

Method

Participants

Participants included a sample ($N = 105$) of introductory psychology students enrolled at a large Central Canadian university who received course credit for participation in the study. The mean age of participants was 19.1 years ($SD = 1.8$).

Fifty-two participants were Chinese-Canadians born in China who all spoke English as a second language (25 females, 27 males). All of the Chinese-Canadian participants indicated that they identified primarily with Chinese culture. The Euro-Canadian participants ($n = 53$) included individuals who were born and resided in Canada their whole life, and who had only ever spoken the English language (31 females, 22 males).¹⁶

Participants were chosen from the university mass testing participant pool. The mass testing pool allows researchers to select participants for their studies based upon test scores. The mass testing database contains background information on each participant and allowed identification of participants suitable for participation in the current study (i.e., individuals with Chinese-Canadian or Euro-Canadian cultural backgrounds).

¹⁶ Cultural identification was measured by having each participant respond to two items. The first item asked “Which culture do you identify with the most?” Response options included: 1 = Canadian, 2 = Chinese, and 3 = other. Each participant was found to identify most with their cultural group. The second item asked participants to rate on a 5-point scale “To what extent do you identify with the culture?” (1 = *extremely identify* to 5 = *not at all identify*). Results indicated that there was not a significant differences between Euro-Canadians ($m = 1.8$) and Chinese-Canadians ($m = 2.0$) on mean responses for the second item, $t(104) = 1.42, p < .05$. Thus, each group identified equally with their own cultural group.

Stimulus Materials and Measures

Policy capturing task. Participants were given a packet containing 27 unique profiles and three duplicate profiles for a total of 30 profiles (thus achieving a ratio of 10 profiles per cue; see Kline and Sulsky, 1995). The three duplicates were used to assess test-retest reliability ($r = .80$ for this sample).¹⁷ The order in which the information was presented within each profile was randomized across profiles to help control for potential order effects. Profile order was held constant across participants, with the duplicate profiles appearing as the last three profiles (Appendix A).

Cue information. For each profile, three pieces of continuous quantitative information (termed “cues”) was provided: The probability that (a) the feedback was positive (Valence), (b) the probability that feedback came from a supervisor rather than a peer (Source), and (c) the probability that feedback seeking was made public such that all other employees beyond the feedback giver would know about the feedback seeking (Public). These three cues each took on one of three percentage values: 20%, 50%, or 80%. The cue values were set up such that they were uncorrelated across the profiles. Thus, the standardized beta weight for each cue was equal to the correlation between the cue and the likelihood of feedback seeking judgment. This was done to facilitate interpretation of the standardized beta weights as indices of relative predictive importance for each cue when rendering the likelihood judgments.

Dependent variable. For each profile, participants were asked to rate the likelihood of asking for individual feedback based upon the cue information provided. A

¹⁷ Test-retest reliability was computed by correlating the original and duplicate profiles across participants, rather than averaging the mean test-retest reliability computed for each participant.

5-point Likert-type scale ranging from *not at all likely* to *extremely likely* was used for this rating task.

Self-esteem. In previous feedback seeking research, self-esteem has served as a proxy for ego-based motivation (e.g., Northcraft & Ashford, 1990; Levy, Albright, Cawley, & Williams, 1995). Specifically, past studies have shown that there is a pervasive motivation to maintain positive self-esteem when seeking feedback (e.g., Levy et al., 1995). As such, Rosenberg's (1965) Self-Esteem Scale (SES) was used as a proxy for participants' ego-based motivation. The SES is a 10-item scale answered on a 9-point Likert-type scale. Scale anchors range from 1 (*very strongly disagree*) to 9 (*very strongly agree*). Example items include "All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure (reverse-coded)" and "I am able to do things as well as most other people." In the current study, the SES had a mean of 5.6 ($SD = .96$), and an acceptable coefficient alpha ($\alpha = .80$).

Procedure

Participants completed the SES prior to the study. The SES, along with a number of other questionnaires, was administered as part of a mass testing booklet at the beginning of the semester approximately one month before participants were contacted for this study.

Each participant was seated at a workstation in a psychology lab and was given a booklet containing the 30 profiles along with instructions on how to complete the rating task. Instructions asked participants to read about different work scenarios and for each scenario, rate the likelihood that they would ask for feedback about their individual performance (i.e., information about the quality of their work performance). For each

scenario, they were asked to circle the number on each rating scale to indicate their response to the question: “How likely would you be to ask for performance feedback under these circumstances?” The rating task took approximately 20-25 minutes to complete. Upon completion of the rating task, participants were asked to complete the cultural identification items. Once the cultural items were completed, they were debriefed by the researcher before they left the lab.

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: Increasing expectations that feedback is positive will increase the likelihood of feedback seeking for Euro-Canadians, whereas the same expectations will not motivate feedback seeking for Chinese-Canadians.

Hypothesis 2: Increasing expectations that feedback seeking occurs in public will decrease the likelihood of feedback seeking for both Chinese-Canadians and Euro-Canadians; however decreases in feedback seeking will be greater for Chinese-Canadians.

Hypothesis 3: Increasing expectations that feedback comes from a supervisor will decrease the likelihood of feedback seeking for Chinese-Canadians, while the same increased expectations will increase the likelihood of feedback seeking for Euro-Canadians.

Hypothesis 4: Self-esteem will be more predictive of the relationship between the feedback valence and feedback-seeking intentions for Euro-Canadians as compared to Chinese-Canadian participants.

Results

Table I presents descriptive statistics for the study variables across the cultural groups. Table II contains z-transformed mean beta weights for the Valence, Source, and Public cue for each cultural group. Because of the distributional properties of standardized beta weights for each participant, it was necessary to transform them for each participant – prior to the full-sample analysis. Specifically, the beta weights for each participant was transformed to z-scores using Fisher's r to z transformation formula (Kline & Sulsky, 1995) prior to analysis.

To compare the two cultural groups on the mean of a given z-transformed beta weight, I conducted a t-test of group differences. In essence, the t-test is a test to determine whether the mean beta weight is statistically significantly different between the two groups. Hypothesis 1 predicted that increasing expectations that feedback is positive will motivate feedback-seeking intentions for Euro-Canadians, whereas the same expectations will not motivate feedback-seeking intentions for Chinese-Canadians. An independent t-test indicated that the beta weights for the two groups were not statistically different for the Valence cue, $t(103) = -.72, p = .48$, and the beta weights for both groups were positive. Moreover, one-sample t-tests demonstrated that the mean beta weights were significantly different from zero for both cultural groups ($p < .01$ for both t-tests). Overall, findings suggest that increasing expectations that feedback is positive motivates feedback seeking for both Euro-Canadians and Chinese-Canadians, which failed to support Hypothesis 1.

Table I

Mean z-transformed beta weights, standard deviations and correlation results across the Euro-Canadian and Chinese-Canadian groups.

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Correlation with Self-Esteem ¹
Valence	.94**	.44	.13
Public	-.12**	.31	-.16
Source	-.01	.24	.05

Note. Means beta weights represent the relationship between the independent variable and the likelihood of seeking feedback.

*mean beta-weight different from zero at $p < .05$.

**mean beta-weight different from zero at $p < .01$.

¹ The correlation between the z-transformed mean beta weight for each cue and self-esteem.

Table II

Mean z-transformed beta weights and standard deviations for Euro-Canadians and Chinese-Canadians.

Cultural Group	Cue		
	Valence	Public	Source
Chinese-Canadian ($n=52$)	.90 (.38)**	-.06 (.31)*	-.07 (.25)*
Euro-Canadian ($n=53$)	.96 (.49)**	-.18 (.31)**	.06 (.20)*

Note. Standard deviations are shown in parentheses.

Group mean beta weight significantly different from zero, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

Hypothesis 2 predicted that increasing expectations that feedback will be made public will predict decreases in feedback seeking for both cultural groups, but that decreases in feedback seeking will be greater for Chinese-Canadians than Euro-Canadians. Results demonstrated a statistically significant difference in the mean beta weights between Euro-Canadian and Chinese-Canadian participants, $t(103) = 2.0, p < .05$. Further, the mean beta weight for the Public cue was statistically significantly different from zero for both groups ($p < .05$ for Chinese-Canadians; $p < .01$ for Euro-Canadians) – suggesting that for both groups, the likelihood of feedback seeking decreased as the expectation that feedback will be made public increased. Contrary to predictions, however, the strength of the relationship between the Public cue and feedback seeking intentions is not greater for Chinese-Canadians. As such, Hypothesis 2 is not supported.

Hypothesis 3 predicted decreases in feedback seeking among Chinese-Canadian participants (and increases among Euro-Canadians) when expectations increase that feedback comes from a supervisor as opposed to a peer. Consistent with prediction, there is a statistically significant difference in mean beta weights between Chinese and Euro-Canadian participants for the Source cue, $t(103) = -3.0, p < .01$. Findings indicate that there is a negative relationship between feedback seeking intentions and the Source cue for Chinese-Canadians ($\beta = -.07$) and a positive relationship for Euro-Canadians ($\beta = .06$), which are both statistically different from zero ($p < .05$). Overall, the findings suggest that Euro-Canadians are more likely than Chinese-Canadians to ask for feedback as the expectation that it comes for a supervisor increases, whereas Chinese-Canadians

are more likely to seek feedback as expectations that feedback comes from a peer increases. These results support Hypothesis 3.

Hypothesis 4 predicted that cultural group will significantly moderate the relationship between self-esteem and the beta weight for the Valence cue. The mean difference for self-esteem between Euro-Canadians ($m = 5.9$) and Chinese-Canadians ($m = 5.3$) was statistically significant, $t(78) = -2.5, p < .05$. To test Hypothesis 4, a moderated regression analysis was conducted by first computing a conditional relationship term for each participant (i.e., ego-based motive X group membership). Then, I tested the incremental variance of the conditional relationship term above and beyond the two predictors comprising the conditional relationship term. In support of Hypothesis 4, a moderated regression analysis yields a statistically significant conditional relationship between culture and the ego-based motive for the mean beta weight of Valence, $t(76) = 2.7, p < .05$. Results for the moderated regression analysis are shown in Table III.

Follow-up simple slope tests (with a Bonferroni adjusted $\alpha = .025$) indicate that the relationship between the ego-based motive and the mean beta weight for Valence is statistically significant and positive for Euro-Canadians, $t(39) = 2.4, p < .025$, however, it is not statistically significant for the Chinese-Canadians, $t(37) = -1.1, p > .05$. These results show that the relationship between the Valence cue and feedback seeking is conditional upon the ego-based motive for Euro-Canadians, but that the ego-based motive does not predict this relationship for Chinese-Canadians. The findings are pictorially depicted in Figure I.

Table III

Hierarchical regression results with culture, self-esteem, and the interaction (culture X self-esteem) regressed on the mean beta weight for the valence cue

Variable	Model 1			Model 2		
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β
Culture	.03	.05	.06	-.77	.30	-1.77*
Self-Esteem	.05	.05	.11	-.20	.11	-.44
Culture x Self-Esteem				.14	.05	2.08*
R^2		.02			.10	
<i>F</i> for change in R^2		.74			7.06*	

Note: * $p < .05$.

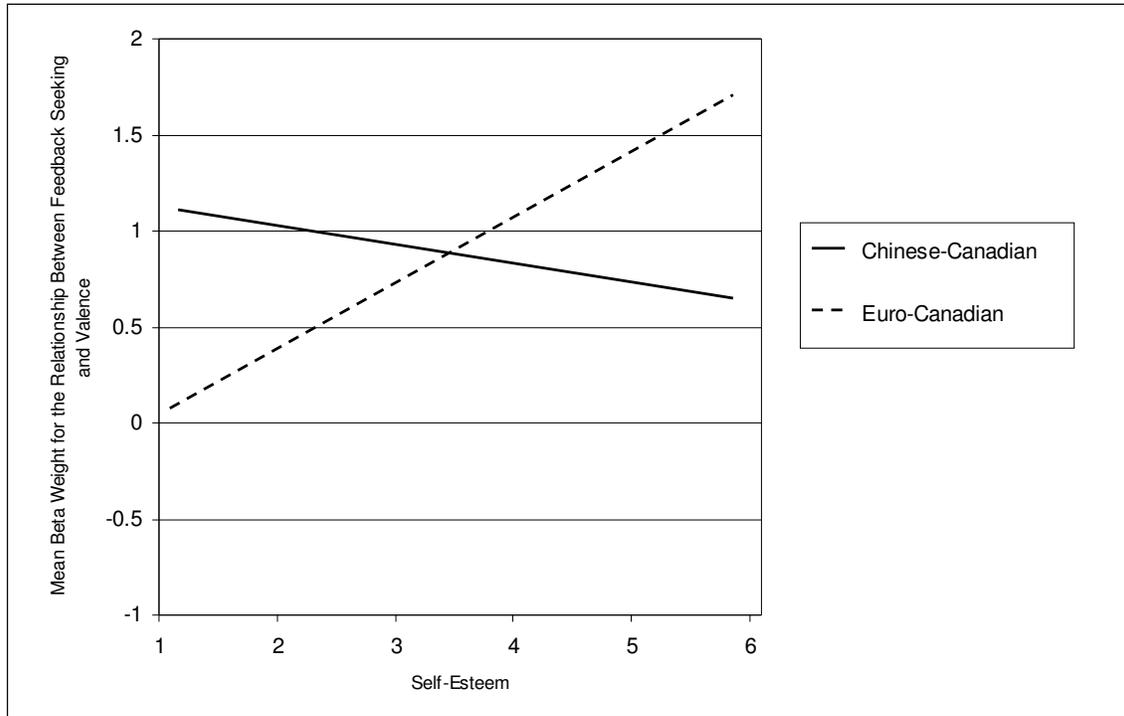


Figure 1. Interaction of cultural group by self-esteem for the mean beta weight of valence cue.

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Policy-Capturing Task for Pilot Study

Assume you are an employee who works full-time for an organization. Also assume that you are considering whether or not to seek performance feedback. For each of the following scenarios, rate the likelihood that you will ask for feedback using the following scale:

1	2	3	4	5
not at all likely	not very likely	somewhat likely	very likely	extremely likely

Consider the following “practice” scenario and circle the number corresponding to your response:

The probability that the feedback you receive will be positive is high (80%), the probability that the feedback will come from a supervisor instead of a peer is low (20%), and the probability that the feedback will be made public such that all employees will hear it is moderate (50%).

How likely would you be to seek out performance feedback under these circumstances?

1	2	3	4	5
not at all likely	not very likely	somewhat likely	very likely	extremely likely

For each of the following scenarios, please circle the number on each rating scale to indicate your response:

Scenario 1

The probability that the feedback you receive will be positive is low (20%), the probability that the feedback will come from a supervisor instead of a peer is low (20%), and the probability that the feedback will be made public such that all employees will hear it is low (20%).

How likely would you be to seek out performance feedback under these circumstances?

1	2	3	4	5
not at all likely	not very likely	somewhat likely	very likely	extremely likely

Scenario 2

The probability that the feedback will come from a supervisor instead of a peer is low (20%), the probability that the feedback will be made public such all employees will hear it is moderate (50%), and the probability that the feedback you receive will be positive is moderate (50%).

How likely would you be to seek out performance feedback under these circumstances?

1	2	3	4	5
not at all likely	not very likely	somewhat likely	very likely	extremely likely

Scenario 3

The probability that the feedback you receive will be positive is high (80%), the probability that the feedback will be made public such that all employees will hear it is low (20%), and the probability that the feedback will come from a supervisor instead of a peer is low (20%).

How likely would you be to seek out performance feedback under these circumstances?

1	2	3	4	5
not at all likely	not very likely	somewhat likely	very likely	extremely likely

Scenario 4

The probability that the feedback will come from a supervisor instead of a peer is moderate (50%), the probability that the feedback you receive will be positive is moderate (50%), and the probability that the feedback be made public such that all employees will hear it is high (80%).

How likely would you be to seek out performance feedback under these circumstances?

1	2	3	4	5
not at all likely	not very likely	somewhat likely	very likely	extremely likely

Scenario 5

The probability that the feedback will be made public such that all employees will hear it is moderate (50%), the probability that the feedback you receive will be positive is low (20%), and the probability that the feedback will come from a supervisor instead of a peer is moderate (50%).

How likely would you be to seek out performance feedback under these circumstances?

1	2	3	4	5
not at all likely	not very likely	somewhat likely	very likely	extremely likely

Scenario 6

The probability that the feedback will be made public such that all employees will hear it is moderate (50%), the probability that the feedback will come from a supervisor instead of a peer is moderate (50%), and the probability that the feedback you receive will be positive is high (80%).

How likely would you be to seek out performance feedback under these circumstances?

1	2	3	4	5
not at all likely	not very likely	somewhat likely	very likely	extremely likely

Scenario 7

The probability that the feedback you receive will be positive is low (20%), the probability that the feedback will come from a supervisor instead of a peer is high (80%), and the probability that the feedback will be made public such all employees will hear it is high (80%).

How likely would you be to seek out performance feedback under these circumstances?

1	2	3	4	5
not at all likely	not very likely	somewhat likely	very likely	extremely likely

Scenario 8

The probability that the feedback you receive will be positive is high (80%), the probability that the feedback will be made public such all employees will hear it is high (80%), and the probability that the feedback will come from a supervisor instead of a peer is low (20%).

How likely would you be to seek out performance feedback under these circumstances?

1	2	3	4	5
not at all likely	not very likely	somewhat likely	very likely	extremely likely

Scenario 9

The probability that the feedback will come from a supervisor instead of a peer is moderate (50%), the probability that the feedback will be made public such that all employees will hear it is low (20%), and the probability that the feedback you receive will be positive is moderate (50%).

How likely would you be to seek out performance feedback under these circumstances?

1	2	3	4	5
not at all likely	not very likely	somewhat likely	very likely	extremely likely

Scenario 10

The probability that the feedback will come from a supervisor instead of a peer is low (20%), the probability that the feedback you receive will be positive is moderate (50%), and the probability that the feedback will be made public such all employees will hear it is high (80%).

How likely would you be to seek out performance feedback under these circumstances?

1	2	3	4	5
not at all likely	not very likely	somewhat likely	very likely	extremely

Scenario 11

The probability that the feedback will be made public such that all employees will hear it is low (20%), the probability that the feedback you receive will be positive is moderate (50%), and the probability that the feedback will come from a supervisor instead of a peer is low (20%).

How likely would you be to seek out performance feedback under these circumstances?

1	2	3	4	5
not at all likely	not very likely	somewhat likely	very likely	extremely likely

Scenario 12

The probability that the feedback will be made public such that all employees will hear it is high (80%), the probability that the feedback you receive will be positive is high (80%), and the probability that the feedback will come from a supervisor instead of a peer is high (80%).

How likely would you be to seek out performance feedback under these circumstances?

1	2	3	4	5
not at all likely	not very likely	somewhat likely	very likely	extremely likely

Scenario 13

The probability that the feedback will be made public such that all employees will hear it is high (80%), the probability that the feedback will come from a supervisor instead of a peer is low (20%), and the probability that the feedback you receive will be positive is low (20%).

How likely would you be to seek out performance feedback under these circumstances?

1	2	3	4	5
not at all likely	not very likely	somewhat likely	very likely	extremely likely

Scenario 14

The probability that the feedback you receive will be positive is moderate (50%), the probability that the feedback will come from a supervisor instead of a peer is high (80%), and the probability that the feedback will be made public such all employees will hear it is low (20%).

How likely would you be to seek out performance feedback under these circumstances?

1	2	3	4	5
not at all likely	not very likely	somewhat likely	very likely	extremely likely

Scenario 15

The probability that the feedback you receive will be positive is low (20%), the probability that the feedback will be made public such that all employees will hear it is high (80%), and the probability that the feedback will come from a supervisor instead of a peer is moderate (50%).

How likely would you be to seek out performance feedback under these circumstances?

1	2	3	4	5
not at all likely	not very likely	somewhat likely	very likely	extremely likely

Scenario 16

The probability that the feedback will come from a supervisor instead of a peer is high (80%), the probability that the feedback will be made public such that all employees will hear it is low (20%), and the probability that the feedback you receive will be positive is high (80%).

How likely would you be to seek out performance feedback under these circumstances?

1	2	3	4	5
not at all likely	not very likely	somewhat likely	very likely	extremely likely

Scenario 17

The probability that the feedback will come from a supervisor instead of a peer is high (80%), the probability that the feedback you receive will be positive is moderate (50%), and the probability that the feedback will be made public such that all employees will hear it is moderate (50%).

How likely would you be to seek out performance feedback under these circumstances?

1	2	3	4	5
not at all likely	not very likely	somewhat likely	very likely	extremely

Scenario 18

The probability that the feedback will be made public such that all employees will hear it is low (20%), the probability that the feedback you receive will be positive is low (20%), and the probability that the feedback will come from a supervisor instead of a peer is high (80%).

How likely would you be to seek out performance feedback under these circumstances?

1	2	3	4	5
not at all likely	not very likely	somewhat likely	very likely	extremely likely

Scenario 19

The probability that the feedback will be made public such that all employees will hear it is high (80%), the probability that the feedback will come from a supervisor instead of a peer is high (80%), and the probability that the feedback you receive will be positive is moderate (50%).

How likely would you be to seek out performance feedback under these circumstances?

1	2	3	4	5
not at all likely	not very likely	somewhat likely	very likely	extremely likely

Scenario 20

The probability that the feedback you receive will be positive is low (20%), the probability that the feedback will come from a supervisor instead of a peer is low (20%), and the probability that the feedback will be made public such that all employees will hear it is moderate (50%).

How likely would you be to seek out performance feedback under these circumstances?

1	2	3	4	5
not at all likely	not very likely	somewhat likely	very likely	extremely likely

Scenario 21

The probability that the feedback you receive will be positive is moderate (50%), the probability that the feedback will be made public such that all employees will hear it is moderate (50%), and the probability that the feedback will come from a supervisor instead of a peer is moderate (50%).

How likely would you be to seek out performance feedback under these circumstances?

1	2	3	4	5
not at all likely	not very likely	somewhat likely	very likely	extremely likely

Scenario 22

The probability that the feedback will come from a supervisor instead of a peer is low (20%), the probability that the feedback will be made public such that all employees will hear it is moderate (50%), and the probability that the feedback you receive will be positive is high (80%).

How likely would you be to seek out performance feedback under these circumstances?

1	2	3	4	5
not at all likely	not very likely	somewhat likely	very likely	extremely likely

Scenario 23

The probability that the feedback will come from supervisor instead of a peer is high (80%), the probability that the feedback will be made public such that all employees will hear it is moderate (50%), and the probability that the feedback you receive will be positive is high (80%).

How likely would you be to seek out performance feedback under these circumstances?

1	2	3	4	5
not at all likely	not very likely	somewhat likely	very likely	extremely likely

Scenario 24

The probability that the feedback will come from a supervisor instead of a peer is high (80%), the probability that the feedback you receive will be positive is low (20%), and the probability that the feedback will be made public such that all employees will hear it is moderate (50%).

How likely would you be to seek out performance feedback under these circumstances?

1	2	3	4	5
not at all likely	not very likely	somewhat likely	very likely	extremely likely

Scenario 25

The probability that the feedback will be made public such that all employees will hear it is low (20%), the probability that the feedback you receive will be positive is low (20%), and the probability that the feedback will come from a supervisor instead of a peer is moderate (50%).

How likely would you be to seek out performance feedback under these circumstances?

1	2	3	4	5
not at all likely	not very likely	somewhat likely	very likely	extremely likely

Scenario 26

The probability that the feedback will be made public such that all employees will hear it is low (20%), the probability that the feedback will come from a supervisor instead of a peer is moderate (50%), and the probability that the feedback you receive will be positive is high (80%).

How likely would you be to seek out performance feedback under these circumstances?

1	2	3	4	5
not at all likely	not very likely	somewhat likely	very likely	extremely likely

Scenario 27

The probability that the feedback you receive will be positive is high (80%), the probability that the feedback will come from a supervisor instead of a peer is moderate (50%), and the probability that the feedback will be made public such that all employees will hear it is high (80%).

How likely would you be to seek out performance feedback under these circumstances?

1	2	3	4	5
not at all likely	not very likely	somewhat likely	very likely	extremely likely

Appendix B

Policy-Capturing Task for Studies 1 and 2

Assume you are an employee who works full-time for a medium-sized automotive manufacturing company. You work as part of an engineering team developing automotive products, and your team consists of 7 members. The work team has been together a number of years and reports to a supervisor/senior engineer who works closely with the team. Also assume that you are considering whether or not to seek performance feedback. You expect the feedback to be constructive. That is, if the feedback is positive, you will be praised for your current performance and given information on how to maintain your current level of performance. If the feedback is negative, you will be told that your performance is not satisfactory and given information to help improve your future performance.

For each of the following scenarios, rate the likelihood that you will seek feedback using the following scale:

1	2	3	4	5
not at all likely	not very likely	somewhat likely	very likely	extremely likely

Consider the following “practice” scenario and rate the likelihood of asking for feedback:

The feedback you receive comes from a peer on the work team, the feedback seeking occurs in public such that all team members hear you ask for it, and the feedback is positive and involves your individual performance.

How likely would you be to seek out performance feedback under these circumstances?

1	2	3	4	5
not at all likely	not very likely	somewhat likely	very likely	extremely likely

For each of the following scenarios, please circle the number on each rating scale to indicate your response:

Scenario 1: The feedback you receive comes from your supervisor, the feedback is negative and involves your individual performance, and the feedback seeking occurs in public such that all team members hear you ask for it.

How likely would you be to seek out performance feedback under these circumstances?

1 2 3 4 5
not at all likely not very likely somewhat likely very likely extremely likely

Scenario 2: The feedback seeking occurs in private such that other team members do not hear you ask for it, the feedback you receive is negative and involves your individual performance, and the feedback comes from your supervisor.

How likely would you be to seek out performance feedback under these circumstances?

1 2 3 4 5
not at all likely not very likely somewhat likely very likely extremely likely

Scenario 3: The feedback you receive comes from a peer on the work team, the feedback seeking occurs in private such that other team members do not hear you ask for it, and the feedback is negative and involves your individual performance.

How likely would you be to seek out performance feedback under these circumstances?

1 2 3 4 5
not at all likely not very likely somewhat likely very likely extremely likely

Scenario 4: The feedback is positive and involves the work group's performance, the feedback you receive comes from a peer on the work team, and the feedback seeking occurs in private such that other team members do not hear you ask for it.

How likely would you be to seek out performance feedback under these circumstances?

1 2 3 4 5
not at all likely not very likely somewhat likely very likely extremely likely

Scenario 5: The feedback seeking occurs in public such that all other team members hear you ask for it, the feedback you receive comes from your supervisor, and the feedback is positive and involves your individual performance.

How likely would you be to seek out performance feedback under these circumstances?

1	2	3	4	5
not at all likely	not very likely	somewhat likely	very likely	extremely likely

Scenario 6: The feedback you receive is negative and involves the work group's performance, the feedback seeking occurs in private such that other team members do not hear you ask for it, and the feedback comes from a peer on the work team.

How likely would you be to seek out performance feedback under these circumstances?

1	2	3	4	5
not at all likely	not very likely	somewhat likely	very likely	extremely likely

Scenario 7: The feedback you receive comes from a peer on the work team, the feedback seeking occurs in private such that other team members do not hear you ask for it, and the feedback is positive and involves your individual performance.

How likely would you be to seek out performance feedback under these circumstances?

1	2	3	4	5
not at all likely	not very likely	somewhat likely	very likely	extremely

Scenario 8: The feedback seeking occurs in public such that all other team members hear you ask for it, the feedback you receive is negative and involves your individual performance, and the feedback comes from your supervisor.

How likely would you be to seek out performance feedback under these circumstances?

1	2	3	4	5
not at all likely	not very likely	somewhat likely	very likely	extremely likely

Scenario 9: The feedback you receive comes from your supervisor, the feedback is positive and involves your individual performance, and feedback seeking occurs in private such that other team members do not hear you ask for it.

How likely would you be to seek out performance feedback under these circumstances?

1	2	3	4	5
not at all likely	not very likely	somewhat likely	very likely	extremely likely

Scenario 10: The feedback you receive is negative and involves the work group's performance, the feedback seeking occurs in private such that other team members do not hear you ask for it, and the feedback comes from your supervisor.

How likely would you be to seek out performance feedback under these circumstances?

1	2	3	4	5
not at all likely	not very likely	somewhat likely	very likely	extremely likely

Scenario 11: The feedback seeking occurs in private such that other team members do not hear you ask for it, the feedback you receive is negative and involves your individual performance, and the feedback comes from a peer on the work team.

How likely would you be to seek out performance feedback under these circumstances?

1	2	3	4	5
not at all likely	not very likely	somewhat likely	very likely	extremely likely

Scenario 12: The feedback you receive is negative and involves the work group's performance, the feedback comes from your supervisor, and the feedback seeking occurs in public such that all other team members hear you ask for it.

How likely would you be to seek out performance feedback under these circumstances?

1	2	3	4	5
not at all likely	not very likely	somewhat likely	very likely	extremely likely

Scenario 13: The feedback you receive is positive and involves your individual performance, the feedback comes from your supervisor, and the feedback seeking occurs in public such that all other team members hear you ask for it.

How likely would you be to seek out performance feedback under these circumstances?

1	2	3	4	5
not at all likely	not very likely	somewhat likely	very likely	extremely likely

Scenario 14: The feedback you receive comes from your supervisor, the feedback seeking occurs in public such that all other team members hear you ask for it, and the feedback is positive and involves the work group's performance.

How likely would you be to seek out performance feedback under these circumstances?

1	2	3	4	5
not at all likely	not very likely	somewhat likely	very likely	extremely likely

Scenario 15: The feedback seeking occurs in public such that all other team members hear you ask for it, the feedback you receive is negative and involves the work group's performance, and the feedback comes from a peer on the work team.

How likely would you be to seek out performance feedback under these circumstances?

1	2	3	4	5
not at all likely	not very likely	somewhat likely	very likely	extremely likely

Scenario 16: The feedback you receive is positive and involves the work group's performance, the feedback comes from your supervisor, and the feedback seeking occurs in private such that other team members do not hear you ask for it.

How likely would you be to seek out performance feedback under these circumstances?

1	2	3	4	5
not at all likely	not very likely	somewhat likely	very likely	extremely likely

Items from the Motives Scale (Tuckey, Brewer, & Williamson, 2002)

Instrumental Motivation Items

1. It is important to me to obtain useful information about my performance.
2. Receiving feedback about my performance helps me to improve my skills.
3. I would like to obtain more information to let me know how I am performing.
4. I would like to receive more useful information about my performance.
5. Obtaining useful feedback information is not very important to me. (R)¹⁸
6. Feedback is not really useful to help me improve my performance. (R)
7. I don't really require more feedback to let me know how I am performing. (R)
8. I'm not really concerned whether or not I receive useful information about my performance. (R)

Ego-Defensiveness Items

1. If I receive negative feedback I would have a negative attitude towards myself, so I try to avoid criticism.
2. Negative feedback doesn't really lower my self-worth, so I don't go out of my way to avoid it. (R)
3. Receiving negative feedback wouldn't really change the way I feel about myself. (R)
4. I try to avoid negative feedback because it makes me feel bad about myself.
5. I worry about receiving feedback that is likely to be negative because it hurts to be criticized.
6. Negative feedback doesn't really worry me because I still have a positive attitude toward myself. (R)

¹⁸ (R) = reverse-coded item.

7. It's hard to feel good about myself when I receive negative feedback.

Defensive Impression Management Items

1. I am not really worried what people will think of me if I ask for feedback about my performance. (R)

2. I'm concerned about what people would think of me if I were to ask for feedback.

3. I am worried about the impression I would make if I were to ask for feedback.

4. I don't really worry about what others would think of me if I asked for feedback. (R)

5. I don't really care if people know the type of feedback I get. (R)

6. If I sought feedback about my performance, I wouldn't want other people to know what type of feedback I received.

7. I am usually concerned about other people hearing the content of the individual feedback I receive.

8. It doesn't worry me if people know how I've performed at something. (R)

Appendix C

Items for Chinese cultural views (Ross, Xun, & Wilson, 2002)

- 1. I try to improve everyday, but people should not be especially proud of self-improvement.¹⁹**
2. It is more rewarding to know I am better than others than to know I have personally improved a lot.
3. It is more rewarding to know that I have personally improved a lot than to know that I am better than others.
- 4. When I feel that I am better than others, I would not admit it publicly.**
- 5. If people feel too much pride in themselves, it will make them less motivated to keep improving themselves.**
6. It is good to be around people who are better than you, because it will help you become better as well.
7. Associating with people who are superior to you will make you look worse in comparison.
- 8. You should always strive to be the best, but never feel like you have achieved it.**
9. It is more important to accurately evaluate myself than to feel good about myself.
10. Most of the time, I would prefer to feel good about myself and not to be critically evaluating myself.
- 11. Modesty leads to success, pride leads to failure.**
12. Team work is better than working alone, because each person has his/her own merit that is better than others.

¹⁹ Bolded items are those which represent Chinese cultural views.

13. You should not feel good about your own achievements, because there are many others who have achieved higher than you have.

14. For others to respect you more, you should often praise yourself.

15. You should be easy on others (praise others) and be hard on yourself (criticize yourself.).

16. You should always focus on other people's strengths and merits and not their weaknesses.

17. I feel very unsure about how I compare to other students from my university.

18. I cannot evaluate myself with certainty on many attributes.

Items for the Power Distance Scale (Earley & Erez, 1997)

1. In most situations managers should make decisions without consulting their subordinates.
2. In work-related matters, managers have a right to expect obedience from their subordinates.
3. Employees who often question authority sometimes keep their managers from being effective.
4. Employees should not express disagreements with their managers.
5. Managers should be able to make the right decisions without consulting their subordinates.
6. Managers who let their employees participate in decisions lose power.
7. A company's rules should not be broken even when the employee thinks it is in the company's best interest.