TOWARD UNDERSTANDING THE MOTIVATIONAL INFLUENCE OF THE TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADER ON EMPLOYEE CREATIVITY: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF FEEDBACK SEEKING BEHAVIOR AND THE DISCUSSION OF MODERATING VARIABLES

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ABSTRACT
We examined the proposition that transformational leadership behaviors enhance their feedback seeking behavior, and, therefore, motivates them to exhibit higher employee creativity. We argued that transformational leadership behaviors would be positively related to employee creativity, with feedback seeking behaviors mediating this relationship. Besides, we also noted that transformational leadership behaviors would be more strongly related feedback seeking behaviors while employees exhibit higher level of LMX (leader-member exchange) quality with the supervisor. Further, we also noted that feedback seeking behaviors would be more strongly related to employee creativity when the supervisor attribute employees’ motives to be performance enhancement motives, and that feedback seeking behavior would be more weakly related to employee creativity when the supervisor attribute employees’ motives to be performance impression management motives. Finally, we discuss
practical and theoretical implication.

**Key words, transformational leadership behaviors, feedback seeking behaviors, and employee creativity.**

**INTRODUCTION**

Employee creativity has been regarded as important for organizational survival and competitiveness (Baer, Leenders, Oldham, & Vadera, 2010; Farmer, Tierney, and Kung-Mcintyre, K. 2003; Gong, Huang, and Farh, 2009; Grant and Berry, 2011; Hirst, Van Knippenberg, Chen, and Sacramento, 2011; Hirst, Van Knippenberg, and Zhou, 2009; Liao, H., Liu, D., & Loi, R. 2010; Oldham, G. R., & Cummings, A. 1996; Perry-Smith, J. 2006; Shin and Zhou, 2003; Taggar, 2002; Zhang and Bartol, 2010; Zhou and George, 2001). Scholars have defined “employee creativity” as the extent to which employees generate novel and useful ideas concerning jobs’ procedures and processes (Farmer, Tierney, and Kung-Mcintyre, K. 2003; Gong, Huang, and Farh, 2009; Hirst, Van Knippenberg, Chen, and Sacramento, 2011; Zhang, X., & Bartol, K. M. 2010). While employee creativity has been confirmed to be beneficial for organizational success, researchers should pay more attention on the possible antecedents that may foster employee creativity (Farmer, Tierney, and Kung-Mcintyre, K. 2003; Gong, Huang, and Farh, 2009).

Leadership scholars have noted that leader behaviors may influence employee creativity when a leader exhibit higher degree of transformational leadership behaviors (Zhang and Bartol, 2010; Farmer, Tierney, and Kung-Mcintyre, K. 2003; Gong, Huang, and Farh, 2009). Transformational leadership has been emerged as a kind of major leader behaviors that can influence followers’ attitudes, behaviors and outcomes, including organizational commitment (Bycio, Hackett, and Allen 1995; Bono and Judge, 2003; Dumdum, Lowe, and Avolio 2002), job satisfaction (Barling, Weber, and Kelloway, 1996), intention to quit (Bass, 1999), performance (Colbert, Kristof-Brown, Bradley, and Barrick, 2008; Yukl, 1999), organizational citizenship behaviors (Wang, Law, Hackett, Wang, and Chen, 2005), and employee creativity (Zhang and Bartol, 2010; Farmer, Tierney, and Kung-Mcintyre, K. 2003; Gong, Huang, and Farh, 2009). Although the positive association between transformational leadership behaviors and employee creativity has been explored by previous research, the mechanism by which transformational leadership behaviors influence employee creativity, have not been explored in a system manner, and scholars also argued that researchers should pay greater attention on exploring of how the influencing process occurs in transformational leaders.
This article is an attempt to explore the possible mechanism by examining feedback seeking behavior as a mediator. Feedback seeking behavior has been defined as the extent of which individual seek input into their performance by directly asking others for feedback (Brutus and Cabrera, 2004; De Stobbeleir, Ashford and Buyens, 2011; Lam, Huang, and Snape, 2007). Feedback seeking behavior has been regarded central to employee creativity (De Stobbeleir, Ashford and Buyens, 2011). Hence, it appears to be necessary to explore the antecedents that may facilitate feedback seeking behavior. Further, organizational literature has noted that researchers should pay more attention to examine whether and how different moderators may influence on different parts of the link from independent variable to mediator to dependent variable (Bauer, Preacher and Gil, 2006; Edwards and Lambert, L. S. 2007; VandeWalle, Ganesan, Challagalla, and Brown, S. P. 2000; Venkataramani and Tangirala, 2010). Thus, the main objective of this study is to explore the underlying mechanism that transformational leadership behaviors may influence employee creativity. In this study, we first argued that transformational leadership behaviors may influence employees’ feedback seeking behaviors and, ultimately, lead to beneficial employee outcomes, such as employee creativity. Secondly, we also examined three constructs that have been noted to moderate the intermediate process of the link from transformational leadership behaviors to feedback seeking behavior to employee creativity, including leader-member exchange (LMX), supervisor-attributed performance enhancement motives, supervisor-attributed impression management motives. We argued that leader-member exchange (LMX) may strengthen the relationship between transformational leadership behaviors and feedback seeking behavior. Meanwhile, we also noted that supervisor-attributed performance enhancement motives would strengthen the relationship between feedback seeking behavior and employee creativity while supervisor-attributed impression management motives may weaken the relationship between of both feedback seeking behavior and employee creativity.

This study may contribute literature in the ways. Firstly, previous argue that transformational leadership behaviors may help employees develop higher creativity. However, the mechanism by which transformational leadership behaviors may influence employee creativity still be unclear. In this respect, this study may contribute to literature of transformational leadership behaviors. Secondly, although feedback seeking behavior has been confirmed be effective on changing employee creativity, few studies explore the possible antecedents that may develop higher feedback seeking behavior. Based on transformational leadership theory and social learning theory, we noted that transformational leadership behaviors may facilitate employees’ feedback seeking behaviors, which would contribute to the knowledge of feedback seeking literature. Thirdly, this study is the first study to propose an integrated model to link transformational leadership behaviors, feedback seeking behavior, employee creativity, leader-member exchange (LMX),
supervisor-attributed performance enhancement motives and supervisor-attributed impression management motives, and examine the causal relationship among them. We carefully examined the intermediate mechanism that transformational leadership behaviors influence employee creativity and explored the boundary conditions of each of the link in our conceptual framework, which would contribute to the understanding of underlying processes of transformational leadership behaviors that may influence employee creativity and advance knowledge of leadership theory, feedback seeking literature, and employee creativity research. Finally, to verify our hypotheses, we plan to collect survey data from different sources among professional-level employees (such as engineers and new product developers) in Taiwanese Information Technology (IT) companies. Informational Technology (IT) industry is knowledge intensive and employee creativity is critical to these Informational Technology (IT) companies’ survival and success. In so respect, our study may contribute and advance the knowledge of how leader behavior may help professional-level knowledge workers to exhibit higher degree of creative knowledge and ideas in Informational Technology (IT) industry.

In the pages that follow, we discuss our conceptual model and present the details of our study. Based on transformational leadership theory (TFL theory), social learning theory, feedback inquiry seeking behaviors, and creativity literature, we proposed an integrated model relating transformational leadership behaviors, feedback seeking behaviors, employee creativity, leader-member exchange (LMX), supervisor-attributed performance enhancement motives, supervisor-attributed impression management motives. We argued that feedback seeking behaviors mediate the relationship between transformational leadership behaviors and employee creativity while leader-member exchange(LMX), supervisor-attributed performance enhancement motives, supervisor-attributed impression management motives play the moderating roles in above relationships.

THEORY AND HYPOTHESES

Transformational leadership behaviors and feedback seeking behavior

Transformational leadership theory (TFL theory) argued that successful leader behaviors may influence, change, and transform employee minds, attitudes, and behaviors (Colbert et al., 2008). In this study, we argue that transformational leadership behaviors (TFL) would nurture higher level of feedback seeking behavior. Firstly, idealized influence refers to the degree to which leaders can behave in charismatic ways that induce employees to trust, admire, and identify with them (Barling et al., 1996). In other works, idealized influence can nurture higher degree of personal identification of employees to their organization (leader) and the increase of personal identification would facilitate employees to internalize their leaders’
values, beliefs, and objectives, including the collective sense of mission or a compelling vision (Griffin, Parker, and Mason, 2007). Due to the higher trust and personal identification, employees trust their leader and will increase their willingness to ask the related suggestions and helps regarding works, which results in higher degree of feedback seeking behavior. Further, transformational leader communicate a vision of the future of the organization that may provide the basis and beginning of the performance-feedback process. In other words, transformational leader communicate, understand, and interact with their followers, through the common vision, which helps employees enhance their willingness to seek useful suggestions and ideas from their leaders and thus lead to higher feedback seeking behavior. Secondly, inspirational motivation refers to the degree of which leaders articulate a compelling vision that is appealing to employees (Wang et al., 2005). Meanwhile, by encouraging employees to perform beyond exception and pursue the attractive future, inspirational motivation also would help employees to nurture a higher feedback seeking behavior. Transformational leaders always motivate members to pursue the attractive future and guide them to see the bright side of future success (Colbert et al., 2008; Gong, Huang, and Farh, 2009), which would facilitate members’ moods and attitudes toward better performance and thus enhance feedback seeking behavior. Transformational leaders use the inspirational motivation ways to encourage followers to pursue the organizational objectives and achieve better performance, which helps employees increase their efforts toward goals and increase their willingness to inquiry, understand, check whether their performance has achieved the expected goals, which would lead to higher feedback seeking behavior. For example, a leader always encourages followers to achieve a better performance and employees thus tend to seek useful suggestions and ideas from their leader to understand and confirm whether they already achieved the expected objectives.

Thirdly, intellectual stimulation refers to the degree of which leaders encourage employees to challenge their assumptions and solicit their thoughts or ideas (Nemanich et al., 2009; Rowold et al., 2007). Transformational leaders always stimulate employees to question their work-related assumptions and reframe problems from multiple perspectives while employees face questions, difficulties, and challenges in work context, which would help employees to develop higher degree of feedback seeking behavior. Through the behaviors of intellectual stimulation, transformation leader encourage followers to challenge their assumptions from multiple sources and perspectives. They encourage followers to think, solve problems, and seek useful suggestions and ways from others to improve their performance, including asking comments and ideas from their supervisor, which thus lead to higher feedback seeking behavior. Finally, individual consideration refers to the degree of which leaders attend to employees’ needs, act as coaches, and listen to employees’ concerns (Bono et al., 2003; Hunt, 1999). Transformational leaders help employees to develop more specific knowledge and
abilities and enhance employees’ confidences in their abilities to accomplish organizational tasks and convince employees that they are capable of achieving desirable outcomes (Gong et al., 2009), which also would enhance feedback seeking behavior. Transformational leaders help employees to solve work-related problems, assist the unique growth of each employee (Colbert et al., 2008), which would help employees to increase their willingness to ask the beneficial suggestions and ways from their supervisors, and thus enhance feedback seeking behaviors. Transformational leaders concern each follower’s needs and difficulties, including the situation of followers’ performances. They try to assist and provide conductive suggestions to each individual, which help followers to enhance their willingness to seek beneficial suggestions and ideas from their leaders and thus lead to higher feedback seeking behavior. In this study, we propose that transformational leadership is associated with higher of feedback seeking behavior. Several of the behaviors characteristic of transformational leader provide the association. Therefore, we hypothesize:

**Hypothesis 1: Transformational leadership behaviors are positively related to feedback seeking behavior.**

**Feedback seeking behavior and employee creativity**

Research has noted that the competitiveness of organizations depends on employees’ efforts to improve their work outcomes (Ashford and Black, 1996; Morrison, 1993; Morrison and Phelps, 1999; VandeWalle, Ganesan, Challagalla, and Brown, 2000). Employee may want to understand their work outcomes by seeking feedback from their supervisors while they want to improve their work performance and achieve higher organizational goal (VandeWalle, Ganesan, Challagalla, and Brown, 2000; Lam, Huang, and Snape, 2007). Previous studies has noted that that feedback seeking behavior is critical to employees’ creativity in organization and reported the positive association between feedback seeking behaviors and employee creativity (Zhou, 2008; Madjar, N., Oldham, G. R., & Pratt, M. G. 2002; ). Literature noted that more frequent feedback seeking behavior may develop higher level of employee creativity (De Stobbelein, Ashford and Buyens, 2011; Zhou, 2008). The creativity researchers pointed that diverse input and knowledge may help employee exhibit higher level of creativity (Lam, Huang, and Snape, 2007). While employees seek information more frequently from other individuals within and outside the organization (such as their supervisor), they tend to be more creative. Due to the variety of insights and information of multiple sources, they can inquiry, understand about what is going well, what is right, what they should be improving, and so forth (Brutus and Cabrera, 2004; De Stobbelein, Ashford and Buyens, 2011). In other words, The diversity of multiple source of suggestions and ideas provide individuals greater change to come up these conductive insights into their thinking about new ideas and ways (De Stobbelein, Ashford and Buyens, 2011; Zhou, 2008). Based on
above assumption and the literature of creativity, we hypothesize:

_Hypothesis 2: Feedback seeking behavior is positively related to employee creativity._

**Feedback seeking behavior mediates the relationship between transformational leadership behaviors and employee creativity**

As mentioned earlier, transformational leadership theory argued that successful leader behaviors may influence, change, and transform employee minds, attitudes, and behaviors (Colbert et al., 2008). On the other hands, social learning theory (Bandura, 1986; Brown, Trevino, and Harrison, 2005; Davis and Luthans, 1980; Hirst, Van Knippenberg, and Zhou, 2009) also noted that individuals can learn via direct experiences and others’ behaviors. Social learning theory argued that individuals can learn what behaviors are expected, rewarded, and punished via role modeling by experiencing a series of psychological matching process, such as observing, imitating, and identifying with others’ behaviors. Leader’s behavior is one of the most important sources of role modeling (Brown, Trevino, and Harrison, 2005; Clapp-Smith, Vogelgesang, and Avey, 2009). In this study, we propose that transformational leadership theory and social learning theory as the theoretical basis for understanding the reason why transformational leadership behaviors can influence feedback seeking behavior. In term of the concepts of transformational leadership, the idealized influence dimension has viewed transformational leaders as core source of role modeling (Gong et al., 2009), which emphasized that transformational leaders can behave in charismatic ways that induce individuals to trust, admire, and identify with them (Colbert et al., 2008). Other dimensions of transformational leadership such as inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration also mentioned that transformational leaders can encourage, motivate, and help individuals to learn and engage in more efforts to change their status quo. These dimensions also are the patterns of role modeling and they also influence individuals’ social learning processes (Gong et al., 2009). While a transformational leader play a modeling role via internalizing a shared values and beliefs, building a future-orientation goal, encouraging a different perspectives’ thinking, and coaching as a consulter to followers, the followers tend to enhance their willingness to seek useful suggestions and ideas to improve their status quo, including asking the beneficial comments and ways from their supervisors. Thus, through observing, imitating, identifying with, and learning from the leaders’ behaviors, individuals’ feedback seeking behavior will thus enhance and changed, and individuals thus can exhibit a higher degree of willingness to seek useful suggestions and ideas from their leaders. Thus, extending form above discussion, we propose that transformational leadership behaviors (TFL) influence employee creativity through their influence on feedback seeking behavior. While the positive association between transformational leadership behaviors and employee creativity has been demonstrated by
prior literature, the role of feedback seeking behavior is still unclear. Previous research did not explain the theoretical reason why transformational leadership behaviors may influence employee creativity. In this study, we emphasize that feedback seeking behavior plays a central role to explain why transformational leadership behaviors can influence employee creativity. Through four primary behaviors such as idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration, transformational leadership behaviors (TFL) may help individuals develop higher level of feedback seeking behavior, which in turn, lead to superior employee creativity. Following above argument, hypothesize:

**Hypothesis 3: Feedback seeking behavior will mediate the relationship between transformational leadership behaviors (TFL) and employee creativity.**

**The moderating role of leader-member exchange (LMX) for transformational leadership behaviors and feedback seeking behavior**

Besides the independent effects of transformational leadership behaviors on feedback seeking behavior, we also predict that there are likely to be interaction effects while individuals tend to be high in LMX. Research has argued that leader-member exchange may play an important role on individual reaction to their leader (Dulac, Coyle-Shapiro, Henderson, and Wanyne, 2008; Watson, Clark, and Tellegen, 1988). LMX theory argued that leaders can develop different social exchange relationships with different followers (Chen, Lam, and Zhong, 2007; Diener and Liden, 1986; Graen and Schiemann, 1978; Lee, 2005). High-quality LMX relationships are characterized by mutual respect, commitment, trust, and obligation (Brower, Schoorman, and Tan, 2000). Leaders in high LMX quality would be able to encourage followers to undertake more responsible behaviors than they otherwise would. Individuals in high-quality LMX relationships interact frequently with their leaders and can get their leaders’ assistances, encouragements, and supports, and hence they tend to take on more responsibility and play a more important role in accomplishing work-related tasks (Erdogan and Endsers, 2007). In contrast, low-quality LMX relationships are characterized by formal set of rules, organizational role-defined employment contract, and economic exchange behaviors. In this study, we predict that individuals high LMX tend to be more likely to response the behaviors of their leaders, and thus tend to exhibit higher willingness to seek useful suggestions and ideas from their leaders. Due the mutual trust, affect, and respect (high LMX), individuals will more likely ask conductive comments and perspectives from their leaders. In contrast, individual low in LMX will less likely seek helps and suggestions from their leaders. Thus, we predict that individuals high in LMX would more likely to perceive their social relationship with their leaders. In contrast, individuals low in cognitive style would more likely to perceive their social relationship with their leaders. We predict that
the relationship between transformational leadership behaviors and feedback seeking behavior to be stronger while individuals develop higher leader-member exchange (LMX) with their leaders. Under high leader-member exchange condition, individuals tend to be more likely to response these leader behaviors. Thus, we predict that leader-member exchange (LMX) will moderate the relationship between transformational leadership behaviors and feedback seeking behavior. Following above argument, hypothesize:

**Hypothesis 4:** Leader-member exchange (LMX) will positive moderate the relationship between transformational leadership behaviors and feedback seeking behavior: the relationship is stronger for individuals who have higher LMX.

The moderating role of supervisor-attributed motives for feedback seeking and employee creativity

Regarding the relationship between feedback seeking behavior and employee creativity, we also predict that there are likely to be interaction effects while supervisor attribute feedback seeking behavior of employees” to different feedback seeking motives (Dienesch and Liden, 1986; Green and Mitchell, 1979; Kelley, H. H. 1967; Lam, Huang, and Snape, 2007). Feedback seeking literature has stated that supervisor may make attribution regarding employees’ behavior and such attribution would influence work outcomes of these individuals (Green and Mitchell, 1979; Kelley, 1967; Lam, Huang, and Snape, 2007). In this study, we predict that the positive association between transformational leadership behaviors and feedback seeking behavior would be stronger while supervisor attribute “feedback seeking behavior” to performance enhancement motive. While a leader interprets the motivation behind a employee’s feedback seeking behaviors as performance enhancement and regard the employee as intending to meet a high standard in accomplishing work tasks, employee would thus get more supports, engagements, and helps and thus tend to exhibit higher willingness to utilize these useful information and knowledge into their work, which is thus conductive to higher employee creativity. Further, we also noted that if a leader attributes employees’ feedback seeking behaviors into impression management motives, they tend to provide less support, engagement, and helps to such employees, which is likely to weaken employees’ willingness to utilize these useful knowledge and ideas to their works, which would lead to lower employee creativity. Following above argument, hypothesize:

**Hypothesis 5a:** The positive association between feedback seeking and employee creativity is stronger the more that supervisors interpret the behavior as driven by performance enhancement motives.

**Hypothesis 5b:** The positive association between feedback seeking and employee creativity
is weaker the more that supervisors interpret the behavior as driven by performance impression management motives.

METHOD

Sample and procedure

We plan to collect data in the information technology (IT) companies listed as members of the Taiwan information technology association. The entire survey would be translated from English into Chinese and also would be back-translated into English by at least two independent bilingual individuals to ensure equivalency of meaning of questionnaires. We would adapt the employee-subordinate dyads to conduct the study. Employees who participate in this study would be professional-level employees, including professional engineers and new product developers. These professional-level employees need higher level of creativity in order to perform better outcomes in informational technology industry. Two sets of questionnaires would be used in the study: one for employees and another for their immediate supervisors. We plan to visit all of these participants in person and tell them about the meaning and purpose of the study. Meanwhile, we also would explain the procedure to conduct this survey. We would give different participants (employees and their immediate supervisor) a questionnaire, a return envelops, and a letter explaining this survey. In order to match employees’ questionnaires with their immediate supervisors’ evaluation, we would code each questionnaire with a researcher-assigned identification number. We also would ask participants to seal the completed questionnaires in the envelope and return them directly to us. Further, supervisor would rate feedback seeking behaviors, employee creativity, supervisor-attributed performance enhancement motives, and supervisor attributed impression management motives while employee would rate transformational leadership behaviors (TFL) and the quality of leader-member exchange (moderator). Completed surveys would be returned directly to researchers in sealed and preaddressed envelopes. Besides, above process would be followed by an e-mail reminder, and finally, a telephone reminder.

By collecting measures of the independent and dependent variables from different data source, we should be able to limit the problems related to common method variance (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003).

Questionnaire Design and Measurement

Employee creativity

We would measure “employee creativity” with a seven items scale adapt from Oldham and Cumming (1996), and Gong, Huang, and Farh (2009). This measure has shown adequate levels of reliability and construct validity in previous research (α= .93; Gong, Huang, and
Farh, 2009). Example of items used include: “This person often develops creative custom-made product/service packages for clients”; “This person often develops creative methods for promotion and sales”.

**Feedback seeking behavior**

We would measure “feedback-seeking behavior” with a five items scale adapted from Vande Walle et al., (2000). This measure has shown adequate levels of reliability and construct validity in previous research ($\alpha = .92$; Lam, Huang, and Snape, 2007). Example of items used include: “how frequently did the subordinate ask for feedback from the supervisors regarding overall work performance”; “how frequently did the subordinate ask for feedback from the supervisors regarding overall work performance””. We asked the supervisors how frequently their subordinates asked for feedback from the supervisor regarding their performance (1 _ “never,” 5 _ “always”).

**Transformational leadership behaviors**

We would use the Multifactor Questionnaire (MLQ Form 5 X.; Bass & Avolio, 1995; 2000) to assess the four dimensions of transformational leadership, including idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration. The MLQ assesses idealized influence with an eight-item scale, and the other three behaviors remain four-item scales, respectively. Previous research has shown that the four dimensions of transformational leadership are very highly associated and thus empirically hard to separate from each other. (Judge & Piccol, 2004; Liao and Chuang, 2007). Accordingly, this measure also has demonstrated adequate levels of reliability and construct validity in previous research ($\alpha = .94$; Liao and Chuang [2007] ) thus, employees response the degree of which each item described their leader’s behaviors using a five-point Likert response scale ( 1=”strongly disagree, “ 5= “ strongly agree”). In other words, the transformational leadership scale focus on followers’ perception of their leader’s behaviors. Example of items used include: “The leader in this company emphasizes the importance of having a collective sense of mission” (idealized influence); “The leader in this company articulates a compelling vision of the future” (inspirational motivation); “The leader in this company articulates a compelling vision of the future”.

**Leader-member exchange (LMX)**

We would measure leader-member exchange with a 11 item scale adapt form Liden and Maslyn (1998). The scale includes four dimensions: Affect, loyalty, contribution and professional respect. The LMX scale assesses contribution with an two-item scale, and the other three constructs remain three-item scales, respectively. This measure has shown
adequate levels of reliability and construct validity in previous research ($\alpha= .81$; Wang, Law, Hackett, Wang, and Chen [2005]) Wang, Law, Hackett, Wang, and Chen [2005] conducted a second-order CFA to assess the LMX scale and found that the fit index for four first-order factors plus second-order factor fell within an adequate range, which shown that the four dimensions of leader-member exchange are very highly correlated and empirically hard to separate from each other. Example of items used include: “My supervisor is the kind of person one would like to have as a friend.”(affect); “My supervisor defends my work actions to a superior, even without complete knowledge of the issue in question.” (loyalty); “I do work for my supervisor that goes beyond what is specified in my job description.” (contributions); “I am impressed with my supervisor's knowledge of his/ her job.” (Professional respect); T

**Supervisor-attributed performance enhancement motives**

We would measure “supervisor-attributed performance enhancement motives” with a two item scale developed from Lam, Huang, and Snape (2007). This measure also has demonstrated adequate levels of reliability and construct validity in previous research ($\alpha= .80$; Lam, Huang, and Snape [2007]). Items used include “Desire to discover what his or her responsibilities are” and “Desire to discover exactly what is expected of him or her.

**Supervisor-attributed impression management motives**

We would measure “supervisor-attributed impression management motives” with a six item scale developed from Allen and Rush (1998), and Lam, Huang, and Snape [2007]. This measure also has demonstrated adequate levels of reliability and construct validity in previous research ($\alpha= .81$; Lam, Huang, and Snape [2007]). Items used include “Desire to enhance his or her image” and “Desire to capture my attention on him or her.

**Control variables**

Due to the potential effects of various demographic variables on the dependent variables in feedback seeking behavior literature, we would control for gender, age, education level, and organizational tenure (Cohen, 1992; Cotton & Tuttle, 1986). Gender would be dummy-coded as 1, “male” and 0, “female” (Farh, Hackett, and Liang, 2007). Age and organizational tenure would be self-reported in years while education has four categories: middle school and under middle school, high school, university, and graduate school. Further, prior research has noted that employee’s tendency to seek feedback in part dependent on the length of their work experience ( Lam, Huang, and Snape, 2007), and other feedback seeking studies also noted that job tenure may be important to understanding employees’ feedback seeking behaviors (VandeWalle, Ganesan, Challagalla, and Brown,
2000). Thus, we also control the role of job tenure. Finally, following previous creativity literature (Zhou, 2003), we also control the variable of organizational position. Finally, we also would examine the length of the dyadic relationship between subordinate and supervisor (De Stobbeleir, Ashford, and Buyens, 2011; Lam, Huang, and Snape, 2007).

**DISCUSSION**

The primary goal of this study is to examine the mediation mechanism between transformational leadership behaviors and employee creativity. We aim to extend the literature in two ways. Firstly, although previous research has explored the positive effect of transformational leadership behaviors on employee creativity, they have not systematically examined the mediating role of feedback seeking behavior in the organizational context. In this study, our prediction is that transformational leadership behaviors will enhance employee creativity indirectly, through its increase in feedback seeking behavior. In this respect, our research contributes to explore mediation mechanism that underlies the influence of transformational leader on employee creativity and help explicate the process through which transformational leadership behaviors influences employee outcomes (Bass, 1999; Yukl, 1999).

Secondly, previous research noted that feedback seeking behavior may nurture higher level of employee creativity, but the possible antecedent is still unclear. Based on transformational leadership theory and social learning theory, we noted that transformational leadership behaviors will develop higher feedback seeking behavior, which will contribute to literature of feedback seeking behavior and supplement the knowledge of lack about how to nurture higher feedback seeking behavior. Further, organizational literature has noted that researchers should pay more attention to examine whether and how different moderators may influence on different parts of the link from independent variable to mediator to dependent variable. Based on so reasoning, in this study, we also carefully examined boundary conditions of each of the link in our conceptual link by noting that LMX strengthen the relationship between transformational leadership behaviors and feedback seeking behavior, and that supervisor-attributed motives strengthen the relationship between feedback seeking behavior and employee creativity, which would contribute to the LMX and supervisor-attributed motives literature.

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