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The Impact of Source Credibility and Feedback Delivery on Feedback Acceptance and its subsequent Effect on Employee Behavior.

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BUSINESS SCHOOL

Department of Human Resources and Organizational Behavior

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Resumo

Embora a investigação sobre os processos de feedback do desempenho esteja bem estabelecida, este estudo centra-se na forma como a entrega de feedback modera a relação entre a credibilidade da fonte e a aceitação do feedback, e como esta aceitação afecta subsequentemente o Comportamento de Cidadania Organizacional (CCO) e o Comportamento de Trabalho Contraproducente (CWB). Um estudo de vinhetas 2x2 irá explorar quatro cenários para compreender em que condições é mais provável que o feedback negativo seja aceite e como influencia o comportamento no local de trabalho. A fundamentação teórica analisa o papel da credibilidade da fonte, a entrega do feedback e os impactos comportamentais resultantes, estabelecendo as bases para quatro hipóteses relacionadas com o feedback em contextos organizacionais. O estudo recorre à análise estatística para examinar estas hipóteses e utiliza um desenho de inquérito transversal com 233 inquiridos de diferentes indústrias, estando a maioria deles localizados na Europa, especificamente na Alemanha.

Os resultados apoiam as proposições de que a credibilidade da fonte influencia positivamente a aceitação do feedback e que esta relação é moderada pela entrega do feedback. Além disso, verificou-se que a aceitação do feedback promove os comportamentos de cidadania organizacional (OCB) e reduz os comportamentos de trabalho contraproducentes (CWB). Uma análise de moderação-mediação revelou ainda que a entrega de feedback positivo diminuiu o papel da credibilidade da fonte na aceitação do feedback, salientando que a qualidade da entrega pode ultrapassar a credibilidade da fonte na promoção da aceitação do feedback.

Palavras-chave: Feedback de desempenho, credibilidade da fonte, fornecimento de feedback, aceitação de feedback, comportamento de cidadania organizacional, comportamento de trabalho contraproducente

Abstract

While the research on performance feedback processes is well established, this study focuses on how feedback delivery moderates the relationship between source credibility and feedback acceptance, and how this acceptance subsequently affects Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) and Counterproductive Work Behavior (CWB). A 2x2 vignette study will explore four scenarios to understand under what conditions negative feedback is most likely to be accepted and how it influences workplace behavior. The theoretical background reviews the role of source credibility, feedback delivery, and the resulting behavioral impacts, setting the foundation for four hypotheses related to feedback in organizational settings. The study uses statistical analysis to examine these hypotheses and uses a cross-sectional survey design with 233 respondents from different industries, whereas most of them are located in Europe, specifically in Germany.

The results support the hypotheses that source credibility positively influences feedback acceptance and that this relationship is moderated by feedback delivery. Additionally, feedback acceptance was found to promote organizational citizenship behaviors (OCB) and reduce counterproductive work behaviors (CWB). A moderation-mediation analysis further revealed that positive feedback delivery diminished the role of source credibility in feedback acceptance, highlighting that delivery quality can outweigh source credibility in promoting feedback acceptance.

Keywords: Performance Feedback, Source Credibility, Feedback Delivery, Feedback Acceptance, Organizational Citizenship Behavior, Counterproductive Work Behavior

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1. Introduction

Performance feedback is essential and important for organizations as it not only affects organizational performance over time but also employees' overall well-being and motivation (Piening et al., 2013). However, there are several variables that affect the effectiveness of performance feedback. Steelman et al., (2004) emphasize the importance of comprehending the contextual aspects in the feedback performance process, termed the "feedback environment" (p. 165). They suggest that effective training for managers and others in providing meaningful feedback requires a focus on the day-to-day dynamics of supervisor-subordinate and coworker-coworker interactions, as opposed to formal performance appraisal sessions (Steelman et al., 2004). Furthermore, in order for employees to actually change or improve their behavior after a performance feedback conversation with e.g. their supervisor, they first need to accept the feedback and perceive it as fair and correct (London & Smither, 2002). Feedback acceptance plays a critical role in shaping organizational behavior, as employees who perceive feedback as fair and relevant are more prone to act in constructive behaviors, such as organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), while those who reject feedback may exhibit counterproductive work behaviors (CWB) (Steelman et al., 2004).

How a person perceives feedback is influenced by various aspects, amongst other things the person's feedback orientation, the nature of the feedback e.g., how specific and relevant it is as well as how it is being delivered by the feedback provider. This could be either in a positive and kind way or in a negative and threatening way (London & Smither, 2002). Recent research underscores that employees are more likely to engage with feedback when it is perceived as constructive, actionable, and trustworthy (Baker et al., 2013).

However, how the feedback is being delivered is not the only important aspect. Source credibility also plays a crucial role in the effectiveness of performance feedback, as demonstrated in various academic studies. For instance, research in higher education has shown that feedback from credible sources significantly influences whether individuals accept and act upon the feedback they receive. Credible feedback is more likely to lead to greater awareness, motivational intentions, and subsequent behavior change, as supported by structural equation models examined in feedback research (Jellicoe & Forsyhte, 2019). Moreover, in the context of workplace performance, feedback from trusted and knowledgeable sources can lead to higher levels of trust and a more constructive integration of feedback into performance improvements (Schleicher et al., 2019). Effective feedback delivery, therefore, must consider not only the

content but also the delivery style and credibility of the feedback source, as these elements can significantly affect employees' receptivity and response (Steelman & Wolfeld, 2018). Credible feedback sources are seen as competent, trustworthy, and supportive, which can reinforce an employee's confidence in the feedback and drive positive change (Anseel et al., 2015). However, if either the source is perceived as untrustworthy or the delivery style lacks empathy and respect, feedback may be dismissed or viewed with skepticism, leading to resistance rather than improvement (Ilgen et al., 1979).

In this dissertation, it will be examined how feedback delivery can moderate the relationship between source credibility and feedback acceptance. Furthermore, the consequential effects of feedback acceptance on organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) and counterproductive work behavior (CWB) will be examined. Based on this, the research question for this study will be the following:

"How do source credibility and feedback delivery influence the recipients' acceptance of feedback and how does this subsequently lead to their behavior (OCB or CWB) within organizational settings?".

To address this, a 2x2 vignette study was conducted. Thus, there were four different scenarios presented to the participants. By randomly presenting them with a scenario in which negative feedback was provided to them, source credibility and feedback delivery were manipulated, and feedback acceptance, OCB and CWB were measured.

1.1 Managerial and Academic Relevance

Exploring the interplay between source credibility, feedback delivery and feedback acceptance and its subsequent effect on organizational behavior has considerable academic and managerial relevance. From an academic perspective, this dissertation adds to the performance feedback literature and extends it by specifically focusing on the effect of source credibility on feedback acceptance with the moderation role of feedback delivery. From a management perspective, understanding these relationships is essential for organizations to improve their performance feedback processes and support the professional development of their employees. Mone and London (2018) suggest that "performance management, effectively applied, will help you to create and sustain high levels of employee engagement, which leads to higher levels of performance" (p. 227).

By providing empirical support to this area of research, this dissertation seeks to provide managers with actionable insights to enhance the effectiveness of performance feedback systems, fostering a workplace environment that promotes feedback acceptance and constructive behaviors. Ultimately, this research contributes valuable insights to the field of organizational behavior, emphasizing feedback as a lever for both individual and organizational growth.

1.2 Structure of the Dissertation

This dissertation follows the classic empirical research format. It starts with an introduction that states the relevance of the topic as well as the research question. Followed by the theoretical background of the relevant literature on feedback acceptance, source credibility, feedback delivery and organizational behavior. Chapter 3 of this dissertation presents the research methodology, including the survey structure, the sample and procedure as well as the variable operationalization. The next Chapter displays the empirical findings of this study. Lastly, Chapter 5 discusses the results in the context of existing research, deriving theoretical and practical implications, and recognizing study limitations. The dissertation concludes with a summary of findings and practical takeaways for management professionals. In the following section, the theoretical background will introduce the main characteristics of feedback acceptance and talk about its relevance in in the performance feedback process. Next, it will explain the variable source credibility and examine its influence on feedback acceptance. Followed by that, the variable that moderates the relationship between source credibility and feedback acceptance, which is feedback delivery, will be presented and explained. Lastly, the theoretical background will provide an overview of the terms OCB and CWB and how they can be measured. The hypotheses that were formulated for this study will also be introduced within the theoretical background.

2. Theoretical Background

The core component of many organizational procedures, such as performance reviews, 360-degree evaluations, and individual assessments, is feedback. Companies provide employees feedback with the ultimate intention of influencing their behavior in a way that it will change towards the positive. It has been observed that a fundamental psychological mechanism supporting feedback in organizations is firstly the acceptance of feedback (Bell & Arthur, 2008). Therefore, it is crucial for any performance feedback process.

According to London and Smither (2002), feedback acceptance is measured by an “individual's overall receptivity to feedback, including comfort with feedback, the tendency to seek feedback and process it mindfully, and the likelihood of acting on the feedback to guide behavior change” (p. 2).

In the following, there will be a more detailed description of the role of feedback acceptance in the performance management processes and what other variables are influencing it. Furthermore, the influence of source credibility on feedback acceptance and the moderating role of feedback delivery will be introduced. Lastly, the theoretical background provides insights into the concepts of Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) and Counterproductive Work Behavior (CWB).

2.1 Feedback acceptance

Recently, research on performance feedback has shifted from a more static perspective that focused only on the immediate effects of feedback to a more dynamic perspective that also takes into account the way in which recipients receive the feedback (Smither & London, 2002). Ilgen et al. (1979) defined feedback acceptance as "the recipient's belief that the feedback is an accurate portrayal of his or her performance" (p. 356), whether this belief itself is correct or not (Ilgen et al., 1979). Researchers in the field of performance feedback concur that before feedback can be used, it needs to be understood and accepted (Bell & Arthur, 2008). Furthermore, research by Bell and Arthur (2008) underscores that feedback acceptance is a key psychological process within organizations. They found that feedback interventions, particularly those aimed at development, such as assessment centers, are only effective if participants believe in the accuracy of the feedback. Without feedback acceptance the feedback itself has no or a relatively low influence on the recipient and its behavior. Therefore, it is of great importance to find out what influences this variable and what the consequences are if there is no acceptance of feedback. The necessity of feedback acceptance is further supported by Anseel and Lievens (2009), who investigated in the mediating role of feedback acceptance. They found out that individuals who accept feedback are more likely to experience positive changes in both their attitude and subsequent performance and emphasize that acceptance of feedback is critical to whether feedback leads to real behavior change (Ansel & Lieven, 2009). However, several factors determine whether an individual will accept feedback or not.

According to Ilgen et al. (1979), the type of the feedback message, the recipient and the source all have an impact on whether the feedback is accepted by the recipients. Firstly, the nature of feedback can be either positive or negative and in general, positive feedback is more

likely to be accepted by their recipients. In terms of the recipient there are several things that can affect the feedback acceptance such as their age or their self-assessment. Finally, the source may also affect the recipient's acceptance of the feedback, either by being perceived as credible or not (Ilgen et al., 1979). In this dissertation, the focus will be on how feedback acceptance depends on the source, more specifically the source credibility. This relationship will be examined more in detail in the following section.

2.2 The Influence of source credibility on feedback acceptance

Source credibility, as the word says, describes whether the feedback recipient thinks the feedback provider is credible. The belief whether they are credible or not can be measured based on their expertise and trustworthiness, according to Giffin (1967).

Source credibility is one variable of the "Feedback Environment Scale (FES)", developed by Steelman & Levy (2004). Their scale offers a tool to managers that helps them provide performance feedback in an efficient way. Perceived source credibility can be shaped by a variety of factors. Understanding the feedback recipient's job requirements, being aware of the recipient's real job performance, and possessing the capacity to assess that performance appropriately are all examples of source expertise. Trustworthiness, as self-explanatory, is based on whether the feedback recipient trusts the feedback provider to give accurate information about its performance (Steelman & Levy, 2004). When individuals receive their feedback provider as credible, there will be higher chance that the individual will actually change their behavior. On the other hand, when they do not think the source is competent enough to provide feedback and their motives for feedback cannot be trusted, then the influence on their behavior will be lower (Steelman & Levy, 2004).

This goes along with the research of Ilgen et al. (1979). They state that the source of the feedback may often have the most impact on how much the recipients accepts the feedback. This appears to be caused by the recipients' perception of the sources' level of credibility. Consequently, a deeper comprehension of the source's credibility is required in order to comprehend the impact of the source on feedback acceptance (Ilgen et al., 1979). In a study by Klein et al., (1971), employee satisfaction with feedback was found to be higher when employees thought that the individual providing the feedback had extensive knowledge about the job or unit in issue. The recipients were considerably less pleased with the feedback process if the person was located far away from the receiving unit. In this case, the person's satisfaction is equal to their acceptance of the feedback and those who provided it (Klein et al., 1971).
Based on the information provided, the first hypothesis of this study states the following:

H1: Source credibility influences feedback acceptance.

2.3 The moderating role of feedback delivery

Another factor that needs to be taken into consideration when it comes to performance feedback is the feedback delivery. An individual's likelihood of accepting and reacting to feedback increases, the more considerate the feedback provide is (Ilgen et al., 1981). According to Ilgen at al., (1981), having consideration in giving feedback is linked to a positive feedback session atmosphere, helpful performance feedback, and satisfaction with the feedback. The feedback provider should be mindful not only of the message content but also of the conveyed intentions in their delivery process and appearance. In addition, according to Sommer & Kulkarni (2012), negative feedback requires more careful management by the feedback provider since it is more likely to cause the employee to become hostile or withdraw in comparison to a favorable one. In addition, research by Leung et al., (2001) demonstrates that feedback perceived as respectful and considerate leads to greater acceptance, especially for negative feedback. Baron (1988) further suggests that feedback, when delivered constructively with actionable guidelines, can mitigate negative emotions typically associated with criticism. Moreover, Sparr & Sonnentag (2008) highlight that perceptions of fairness in the delivery of feedback, including politeness and respect, are crucial for maintaining positive relationships between employees and supervisors. These positive perceptions enhance the likelihood of feedback being accepted and integrated into performance behaviors. Constructive delivery is, therefore, essential in not only reducing negative reactions but also in fostering a culture of feedback receptivity within organizations.

Based on the existing literature on feedback delivery and feedback acceptance, this dissertation suggests that when the delivery of feedback is done in a more considerate and respectful way, the positive influence of source credibility on feedback acceptance increases. On the contrary, when feedback is delivered in a disrespectful and inconsiderate way, the positive effect of source credibility on feedback acceptance decreases.

Derived from this, the second hypothesis of this dissertation will be the following:

H2: Feedback delivery moderates the relationship between source credibility and feedback acceptance.

2.4 Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB)

OCB is prosocial behavior which includes helping behavior, sportsmanship and civic virtue within an organizational setting (Podsakoff & MacKenzie, 1997). According to Van Dyne et al. (1994), OCB may also be characterized as the actions that employees take outside of their official job descriptions in order enhance organizational functioning. Thus, it can improve organizational performance and increase an organization's ability to recruit and retain the most talented and efficient employees. Many of the best employees enjoy working in a positive environment with a close group of colleagues. By encouraging teamwork and a sense of belonging, OCB may directly contribute to such an atmosphere and make the company a more desirable place to work (Podsakoff & MacKenzie, 1997).

Organ (1988) proposed a five-dimensional model of OCB consisting of "altruism, courtesy, conscientiousness, civic virtue, and sportsmanship" (p.312). Podsakoff et al. (1990) extended the work of Organ (1988) by creating sub-dimensions for each of the five proposed dimensions. However, the multidimensional model by Organ (1988) is a widely recognized and commonly used model for understanding OCB.

Altruism refers to voluntary acts of helping others within an organization. Thus, it involves assisting new employees, supporting overloaded co-workers and in general guiding others through challenging tasks. Smith et al., (1983) specify that altruism includes voluntary assistance in completing tasks under unusual circumstances.

Courtesy, as described by Organ (1994), involves proactive gestures to prevent interpersonal problems in the workplace, such as notifying colleagues' off-schedules or consulting before taking drastic action. Therefore, courteous employees actively prevent problems, reducing the need for crisis management. Research suggests that courtesy reduces intergroup conflict, minimizing time spent on conflict resolution (Ocampo et al., 2018).

The third dimension describes conscientiousness. Currall and Organ (1988) characterizes conscientiousness as a commitment to work that goes beyond formal requirements, such as adhering to rules, avoiding extra breaks and exceeding working hours. This characteristic extends to exemplary attendance, punctuality and a general sense of responsibility within the organization. Individuals with a high sense of conscientiousness are considered responsible and require minimal supervision (Ocampo et al., 2018).

The definition of civic virtue consists of being involved in the organization's political process and positively impacting it through attending meetings, speaking openly and honestly about one's views and talking with coworkers about organizational concerns. Civic virtue is the

action of an individual that demonstrates that they are a responsible member of the company's life and actively participate in it (Ocampo et al., 2018).

Lastly, sportsmanship involves not complaining when being confronted with the inevitable inconveniences of doing a job. It means being positive and tolerant of problems at work and tolerating minor and temporary inconveniences at work without complaints, grievances, objections, accusations or protests. This helps to save organizational energy for coping with tasks and largely relieves managers of unnecessary stress (Ocampo et al., 2018). Podsakoff and MacKenzie (1997) proclaimed that good sportsmanship would improve employee morale in the workplace and consequently reduce turnover. Overall, Kumari and Thapliyal (2017) argue that the five OCB dimensions collectively enhance organizational performance and efficiency by underscoring the importance of employees' voluntary contributions.

However, to understand how OCB can be increased, Kluger & DeNisi (1996) argue that when employees accept feedback, it can trigger positive affective responses, leading to proactive and innovative behaviors. These behaviors are integral to OCB, as they reflect employees' willingness to go beyond their formal duties, thereby reinforcing the positive cycle of enhanced organizational performance through motivated, engaged actions
In this study it is suggested that the more accepted the feedback by the recipient is the more probable it is that OCB will occur. Thus, the third hypothesis of this study states the following:

H3: Feedback acceptance positively influences OCB.

2.5 Counterproductive Work Behavior (CWB)

In general, CWB is defined as intentional behavior that harms or intends to harm organizations and their members (Spector et. al., 2005). Many studies on CWB have their origins in the examination of human aggression. These theories often connect CWB to adverse emotions like anger and frustration, which arise as a response to environmental conditions (Spector et al., 2005). According to Spector et al. (2005), the five dimensions of CWB include Abuse against others, Production deviance and sabotage, Theft and Withdrawal.

Abuse encompasses harmful actions aimed at coworkers that cause physical or psychological harm by threatening, making disparaging comments, neglecting, or undermining the person's capacity to perform. Stress and negative situations can lead to hostile behavior, encompassing both physical pain and psychological discomfort. Research has shown links between work stress and CWB directed at others (Spector et al., 2005).

Production deviance refers to the intentional failure to carry out job duties in an efficient and effective manner, while Sabotage is the act of damaging or vandalizing an employer's tangible property. According to some studies, sabotage can occur as a reaction to hostility and anger as well as for instrumental motives. Although these two forms seem rather distinct, since Production Deviance is more of a passive behavior and sabotage more active, they might be linked with the same underlying causes.

According to Mustaine and Tewksbury (2002), the three main reasons for theft are economic need, job dissatisfaction, and perceived injustice. Among these, injustice has received extensive research attention, showing a clear link with theft. While injustice is often seen as a stressor leading to theft through negative emotions, it may also operate through more instrumental means, where individuals steal to achieve equity or desired economic gains. The prevailing assumption is that theft is more instrumentally motivated than hostile.

The concept of withdrawal in organizational behavior encompasses behaviors that deliberately reduce the time spent working below organizational requirements. This includes absenteeism, arriving late, leaving early, and exceeding authorized break durations. While various forms of withdrawal have been examined, absenteeism has received the most attention in early models, often associated with workplace dissatisfaction. Unlike the other presented harmful behaviors, withdrawal is defined by a desire to flee or avoid situations or circumstances rather than purposefully inflicting harm. Individuals may seek to escape stressors, injustice, dissatisfaction, or situations evoking negative emotions (Spector et al., 2006).

As mentioned in the paragraph before, accepting constructive criticism can result in good emotional reactions, which lessen the stress and frustration that frequently cause CWB, according to Kluger & DeNisi (1996). According to the stress-emotion model, CWB is less common when negative emotions are lessened by providing fair and helpful feedback (Kluger & DeNisi, 1996)

In this study, it is hypothesized that when employees do not accept their feedback and might be frustrated and angry and feel injustice it can lead to such behavior.

Thus, the fourth hypothesis of this study states the following:

H4: Feedback acceptance negatively influences CWB.

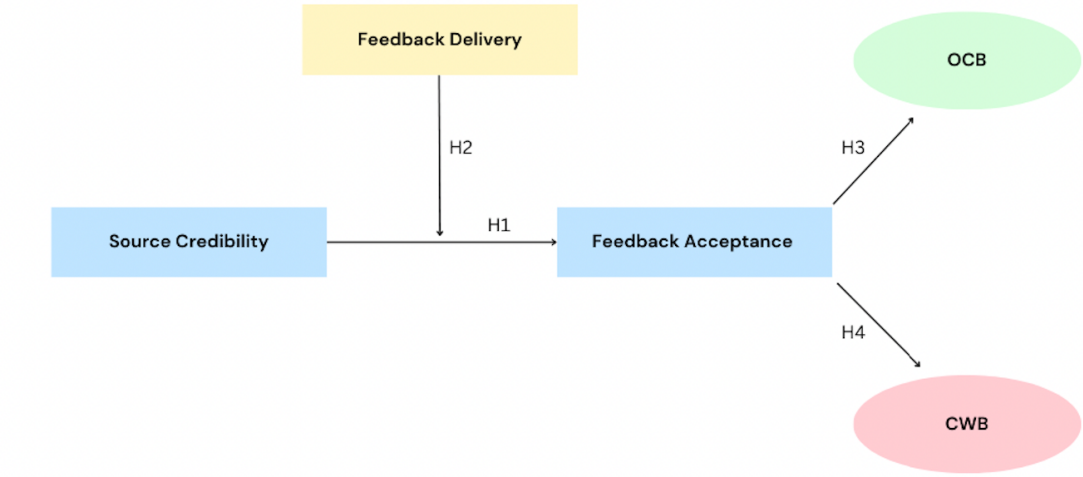
2.6 Conceptual Model

As seen below, the model used in this study is a preliminary model, which aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between source credibility and feedback

acceptance. Furthermore, it shows the subsequent influence of feedback acceptance on OCB and CWB and visually presents the hypotheses that were put forward for this study.

The first hypothesis states that the sources credibility has a direct influence on the extent to which the feedback is accepted by the feedback recipient. Building on this, the second hypothesis states that the relationship between source credibility and feedback acceptance is moderated by the way in which the feedback is delivered by the feedback provider. The third hypothesis goes beyond this and states that the acceptance of feedback contributes positively to engagement in the context of Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB). On the other hand, the fourth hypotheses states that the acceptance of feedback is associated with a negative influence on the probability of counterproductive work behavior (CWB), thus, when feedback acceptance increases the occurring of CWB reduces.

Figure 1: Conceptual Model



Note. Own illustration

3. Research Methodology

For this dissertation vignette studies were implemented. Vignette studies utilize brief descriptions (vignettes) of situations or people presented to survey respondents to gather judgments. They are carefully crafted to represent various scenarios, and respondents are asked to provide judgments or responses based on the information presented in these vignettes. Thus, the key characteristic of vignette studies is the systematic variation of specific features within the vignettes to examine how these variations influence respondents' perceptions, attitudes, or decision-making (Atzmüller & Steiner, 2010). Due to the extensive number of possible vignette combinations, each participant typically encounters only a subset, which can be randomly or systematically selected based on experimental design principles (Atzmüller & Steiner, 2010). In this dissertation these subsets were chosen randomly, following the factorial survey tradition. The main benefit of a vignette study is that it combines experimental designs, more specifically a vignette experiment, with traditional surveys. Traditional surveys offer high external validity due to their claim of representativeness and comprehensive measurements. However, they have low internal validity because of multicollinearity and passive measurements. On the other hand, classical experiments boast high internal validity but suffer from low external validity due to their nonrepresentative and oversimplified settings. Vignette studies aim to overcome these limitations by combining the strengths of traditional surveys and vignette experiments (Atzmüller & Steiner, 2010).

To create the vignettes, a 2x2 matrix was being utilized. Thus, there were four different scenarios (vignettes) presented to the survey respondents. However, each respondent only got presented with one scenario and as already mentioned they were randomly distributed.

3.1 Survey Structure

The survey was divided into four sections, with the introduction not being included. In the first section of the survey the different scenarios were presented. As already mentioned, a randomizer was used to evenly present the different scenarios to the participants. The four scenarios each consisted of a description of a manager and the actual feedback that was delivered to the participant. After each description of the manager, a manipulation check was conducted for the variable Source Credibility by asking the participants how credible they perceive this manager to be. Another question they needed to answer immediately after the scenario is, what gender they associate with the manager presented in the scenario. After that, the participants read the feedback that was being delivered.

In the second section of the survey, the participants were asked to assess their agreement with a set of statements related to the Feedback Delivery, which serves as another manipulation check. Additionally, there were statements addressing more negative perceptions, such as whether the feedback was delivered thoughtlessly or if the respondent felt mistreated. The questions items that are being used are from a study by Steelman, Levy & Snell (2004). Subsequently, respondents were asked to evaluate the feedback they received, focusing on their perceptions of its accuracy, impact, and personal agreement with the content, thus the feedback acceptance.

Lastly, the participants were asked to assess their likelihood of engaging in various organizational behaviors based on their current attitude towards the manager. The behaviors listed encompassed both positive and negative actions, falling under the categories of Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) and Counterproductive Work Behavior (CWB).

By incorporating both OCB and CWB, this section aimed to assess the respondent's likely behavioral outcomes in future interactions with the manager and it allowed for a more comprehensive understanding of how feedback experiences may shape subsequent actions within the workplace.

The third section of the survey collected demographic data, including gender, nationality, age and the highest level of education earned by the participants. A control question followed, asking the participants whether they are currently employed or have been employed at some point. For respondents who had never been employed, the survey concluded at this point. Those who are or have been employed proceeded to the final section, where job related questions were being presented, including industry, tenure and if they have ever received performance feedback from their manager.

3.2 Sample

The sample for this study consists of people with different professional experience, different nationalities and includes both male and female participants. The age range is from 16 years and above to ensure a broad representation of adulthood. The aim is to capture a variety of perspectives and insights from individuals who have been through different stages of their working lives. However, no prior work experience or experience receiving performance feedback from a manager is required to participate in this survey. The scenarios are designed to help participants envision themselves in such situations, even without direct experience. This inclusive approach to sample selection is intended to improve the generalizability and applicability of the study findings to a broad range of individuals.

3.3 Procedure

The procedure of the study is carefully structured involving the execution of a vignette study encompassing four distinct scenarios organized within a 2x2 matrix. The study was conducted through Qualtrics, providing a user-friendly and efficient platform for data collection. The scenarios/vignettes included variations in source credibility (high vs. low)
and feedback delivery (positive vs. negative), however, the feedback itself was negative in all four scenarios. This way it was examined in which scenario the feedback recipient is most accepting of negative feedback.

The first scenario involved high source credibility paired with a positive feedback delivery, followed by a scenario with also high source credibility but a negative feedback delivery. Then, in the third scenario source credibility was low alongside positive feedback delivery, while in the fourth scenario source credibility was also low paired with negative feedback delivery. Each participant was presented with only one scenario which was assigned to them randomly and the aim was to have 80 participants for each scenario. Once the data was collected, it was being analyzed using regression analyses together with moderation-mediation analyses using Hayes' procedure and the hypotheses were being tested.

3.4 Variable Operationalization

Source credibility and feedback delivery:
These two variables were manipulated by the vignette study.
The Likert scale for feedback delivery offers five response options ranging from "Strongly disagree" to "Strongly agree." The items focused on the interpersonal qualities of the feedback process, such as the manager's supportiveness, consideration of the respondent's feelings, and tactfulness.
The reliability analysis for the feedback delivery scale showed a high level of internal consistency with a Cronbach's Alpha is 0.909.

Feedback acceptance:
Feedback acceptance was measured with five items and the items that are being used are from a study by Nease et al., (1999). Sample items are "The feedback I received was an accurate evaluation of my personality" and "I do not agree with the feedback provided". As for feedback delivery, a five-point Likert scale was used, ranging from "Strongly disagree" to "Strongly agree," to capture the extent of agreement with each statement. This aimed to discover whether the respondents accept the feedback or not.

The results of the reliability analysis showed that the Cronbach's Alpha has value of 0.715, indicating an acceptable level of internal consistency for the scale.

OCB:

This concept was assessed using four items from the scale developed by Williams and Anderson (1991). Sample items are: "Help your manager with heavy workload." and "Go out of your way to help your manager." Participants responded using a five-point Likert scales from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree.

The results from the reliability analysis for the OCB scale show a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.802, which indicates a good level of internal consistency, meaning the four items reliably measure the same construct of OCB.

CWB:

This was measured using items a study by Neuman & Keashly (2002). Sample items are: "Withhold information from your manager.", and "Avoid returning a phone call to your manager.". Respondents will respond using a five-point Likert scale from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree.

Lastly, a reliability analysis for the scale CWB was conducted. The results show a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.795, indicating a good level of internal consistency. This suggests that the four items used to measure counterproductive behaviors are adequately reliable in assessing the construct. Overall, these results highlight the robustness of the questionnaire and the consistency of the responses, allowing for a reliable analysis of the collected data. Table 1 shows the results:

Table 1

Cronbach's Alpha

Block	Number of items	Scale	Cronbach's Alpha
Feedback Delivery	5	5-point Likert	0.909
Feedback Acceptance	4	5-point Likert	0.715
OCB	4	5-point Likert	0.802
CWB	4	5-point Likert	0.795

Note. Own illustration

4. Results

In the following section, the analysis of the collected data is presented. It includes descriptive statistics of the sample, reliability analyses, regression analysis and a moderation mediation analysis by Andrew Hayes. Lastly, the proposed hypotheses are tested. Within the feedback delivery scale and the feedback acceptance scale, some items were designed to be reverse scored. To maintain consistency across the scale, these items were recoded accordingly.

4.1. Sample Characterization

The survey received a total of 318 responses of which 85 responses were excluded from the analysis as they did not meet the criteria of the target sample. These criteria included a specific time that the participants should have spent reading the scenarios in order to thoroughly understand their content. Furthermore, they had to completely finish the survey.
Thus, 233 valid responses remained for the analysis with an almost even gender distribution: 56.7% of participants identified as male (n = 132), while 41.6% identified as female (n = 97). A small proportion of the sample (1.3%) identified with other gender categories. This indicates that the sample is slightly male-dominated, though there is a near balance between male and female respondents, allowing for gender-related analyses.

Participants were also asked to report their highest level of education. The majority of respondents (40.8%) held a Bachelor's degree, which was the most common education level reported. Another 28.3% had completed high school or an equivalent qualification, while 17.6% had attained a higher level of education, such as a Master's degree. Only 2.1% of respondents had doctoral or professional degrees. This distribution suggests that the sample is relatively well-educated, with a large proportion of respondents having completed tertiary education.

In the final section of the survey, participants were asked whether they are currently employed or have ever been employed. As a result of this control question, industry-related employment data was available for 201 respondents, indicating the sectors in which they are currently working or have previously worked. Participants represented a wide range of industries, with the most common being "Technology, Media, and Telecommunications" (16.4%, n = 33), followed by "Retail and Consumer Goods" (12%, n = 28) and "Health Services" (11.2%, n = 26). However, the highest proportion were not employed in any of these categories and chose the answer option “others”. The least represented industries included "Sports Businesses," with only one respondent, and "Pharmaceuticals and Life Sciences" and "Real Estate," each with two respondents. Overall, the participants reflected a diverse range of professional backgrounds.

4.2 One-way ANOVA

To determine whether the manipulation of the scenarios presented to participants was effective, a one-way ANOVA analysis was conducted for source credibility and feedback delivery. For source credibility, the analysis compared perceptions of credibility between two groups: participants who received the "Low Source Credibility" version of the text and those who received the "High Source Credibility" version.

The group LSC (Low Source Credibility) had a total of 113 participants with a mean of 1.13 and a standard deviation of 0.77. The group HSC (High Source Credibility) had a total of 120 participants with a mean of 4.10 and a standard deviation of 0.70. These results suggest that participants exposed to the high source credibility text rated the manager as much more credible, on average, compared to those exposed to the low source credibility text. The clear gap in the means indicates a strong potential effect of the manipulation. The ANOVA results indicate whether the manipulation of source credibility had a statistically significant impact on participants' credibility ratings: $F(1, 231) = 692.867$, $p < .001$. This result shows a highly significant effect of source credibility on the perceived trustworthiness of the manager. The F-value is quite large, indicating a strong effect size, and the p-value being less than 0.001 confirms that the differences between the two groups (low source credibility and high source credibility) are statistically significant.

Next, a one-Way ANOVA was conducted to see if the manipulation for feedback delivery was effective. There was a total of 114 participants who received negative feedback, with a mean of 2.007 and a standard deviation 0.815. The other group, which received positive feedback, had a total of 119 participants, a mean of 4.193 and a standard deviation of 0.699. These results also indicate a clear difference between the groups. Participants who received positive feedback rated it significantly higher than those who received negative feedback, suggesting that the manipulation had a strong effect. The ANOVA was conducted to assess the significance of the difference between the two groups: $F(1, 231) = 483.533$, $p < .001$ This highly significant result indicates that the manipulation of feedback delivery (positive vs. negative) had a statistically significant impact on participants' perceptions. The large F-value further reinforces the strength of this effect.

4.3 Bivariate Correlations

Bivariate correlation is a statistical method that quantifies the strength and direction of the relationship between two variables, which are typically measured by Pearson’s correlation coefficient for linear relationships (Schober et al., 2018). To see a comprehensive overview of

all the correlations among the studied variables refer to Table 2 as it provides the detailed correlation coefficients for each pair of variables. With regards to the significant correlations involving feedback acceptance (i.e., the dependent variable in this study), there is a strong positive relationship between feedback acceptance and feedback delivery (r=0.663, p<0.001), indicating that the quality of feedback delivery plays a crucial role in whether feedback is accepted by individuals. Additionally, feedback acceptance is moderately correlated with source credibility (r=0.349r, p<0.001) implying that individuals are more inclined to accept feedback when they perceive the source as credible and trustworthy. Lastly, feedback acceptance also has a positive association with OCB (r=0.312, p<0.001). This suggests that individuals who are receptive to feedback tend to engage more in positive, voluntary behaviors that benefit the organization, such as helping colleagues and going beyond their job requirements. Contrary, a significant negative relationship between feedback acceptance and OCB (r=-0.302, p<0.001) indicates that feedback acceptance increases, the occurrence of counterproductive behaviors, such as actions that harm the organization or disrupt the work environment, tends to decrease. The correlations between feedback acceptance and age (r=−0.028, p=0.666), tenure (r= 0.049, p=0.492) and gender (r=-0.031, p=0.636) are non-significant.

Table 2

Bivariate Correlations for Study and Demographic Variables

	Variable	1	2	3	.4	5	6	7	8
1	Feedback delivery	--							
2	Source credibility	.155*	--						
3	Feedback acceptance	.663**	.349**	--					
4	OCB	.683**	.312**	.623**	--				
5	CWB	-.416**	-.302**	-.454**	-.538**	--	--		
6	Age	-0.033	0.028	-0.004	.175**	-.145*	0.041		
7	Gender	-0.057	0.06	-0.038	.	0.007	.664**	--	
8	Tenure	-0.064	-0.018	-0.094	.	-0.06		0.091	

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

4.4. Hypothesis Testing

To answer the research question of this study – "How do source credibility and feedback delivery influence the recipients' acceptance of feedback and how does this subsequently lead to their behavior (OCB or CWB) within organizational settings?" – four hypotheses were formulated based on the findings of the literature review. To validate these hypotheses, statistical analyses including a multiple regression analysis and a moderation-mediation analysis using Hayes' PROCESS macro for SPSS (Hayes, 2018) were being conducted.

4.4.1 Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

In the first model of the Multiple Linear Regression Analysis, feedback acceptance was chosen as the dependent variable. The analysis reveals that source credibility has a positive effect on feedback acceptance. The unstandardized coefficient (B) for source credibility is 0.124, which suggests that for each unit increase in perceived source credibility, feedback acceptance is expected to rise by 0.124 units. The standardized coefficient (Beta) is 0.211, indicating a moderate positive impact of source credibility on feedback acceptance. This effect is statistically significant ($p<0.001$), which confirms that source credibility plays an essential role in promoting feedback acceptance. In other words, feedback from a credible source is more likely to be well-received. Therefore, H1 ("Source credibility influences feedback acceptance. ") is supported. For feedback delivery, the unstandardized coefficient (B) is 0.401, ceteris paribus, implying that each unit increase in the quality of feedback delivery corresponds to a 0.401 increase in feedback acceptance. With a standardized coefficient (Beta) of 0.627, feedback delivery quality has the strongest influence on feedback acceptance among the predictors analyzed. This predictor is also highly significant ($p<0.001$), highlighting the importance of effective feedback delivery in fostering acceptance. Furthermore, the results indicate that tenure, age, and gender have minimal and statistically insignificant relationships with feedback acceptance. This suggests that demographic factors such as years of work experience, age, and gender do not have a meaningful impact on how likely individuals are to accept feedback within this model.

In the regression output, the R-squared value is 0.506, meaning that approximately 50.6% of the variance in feedback acceptance is explained by the predictors included in the model. This indicates a moderate level of explanatory power, suggesting that these predictors collectively account for a substantial portion of the variation in feedback acceptance.

Table 3

Coefficient Table Model 1

Model	Unstandardized B	Coefficients Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant) 1	1.587	0.241		6.593	<.001
Source Credibility	0.124	0.031	0.211	4.068	<.001
Feedback Delivery	0.401	0.033	0.627	12.092	<.001
Tenure	-0.009	0.006	-0.096	-1.417	0.158
Age	0.007	0.007	0.066	0.984	0.326
Gender	0.025	0.077	0.017	0.325	0.745

a. Dependent Variable: Feedback Acceptance

In the second regression model, OCB was selected as the dependent variable. The results show that source credibility has an unstandardized coefficient of 0.083, indicating that for each unit increase in source credibility, OCB increases by 0.083 units. The standardized coefficient, or Beta, is 0.131, suggesting a moderate positive effect of source credibility on OCB. This effect is statistically significant ($p=0.009$). Feedback delivery also shows a strong positive relationship with OCB, with an unstandardized coefficient of 0.354. This means that improved feedback delivery quality leads to a 0.354 increase in OCB. The standardized Beta for feedback delivery is 0.511, the highest among all predictors, underscoring its substantial impact on fostering OCB. This predictor is highly significant ($p<0.001$) reinforcing the importance of effective feedback delivery in encouraging positive, constructive behaviors within the organization. The unstandardized coefficient for feedback acceptance is 0.251, and the standardized coefficient (Beta) is 0.232, both of which are positive. This means that higher feedback acceptance is associated with an increase in OCB. This positive relationship indicates that as feedback acceptance increases, so does the likelihood of engaging in positive, constructive behaviors that benefit the organization. The relationship is statistically significant ($p<0.001$), confirming that feedback acceptance plays a meaningful role in promoting OCB in this model and thus, H3 ("Feedback acceptance positively influences OCB"*)* can also be confirmed. As in the previous model, the demographic factors including Tenure, Age, and Gender show no meaningful effects. The R-squared value is 0.580, suggesting that approximately 58% of the variance in OCB can be explained by this set of predictors. This indicates a substantial level of explanatory power, meaning these factors collectively account for a significant portion of the variation in OCB.

Table 4

Coefficient Table Model 2

Model	Unstandardized B	Coefficients Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	0.432	0.266		1.625	0.106
Source Credibility	0.083	0.032	0.131	2.622	0.009
Feedback Delivery	0.354	0.044	0.511	8.059	<.001
Tenure	-0.01	0.006	-0.094	-1.497	0.136
Age	0.03	0.007	0.258	4.136	<.001
Gender	-0.033	0.077	-0.02	-0.43	0.668
Feedback Acceptance	0.251	0.072	0.232	3.503	<.001

a. Dependent Variable: OCB

Lastly, in the third regression model, CWB was designated as the dependent variable. The analysis shows that source credibility has a significant negative effect on CWB. The unstandardized coefficient (B) is -0.107, indicating that each unit increase in source credibility corresponds to a 0.107 unit decrease in CWB. The standardized coefficient (Beta) of -0.172 suggests a moderate negative impact, and this effect is statistically significant (p=0.009). This finding implies that feedback perceived as coming from a credible source is associated with reduced levels of counterproductive behavior. Similarly, feedback felivery also shows a significant negative relationship with CWB. The unstandardized coefficient (B) is -0.156, meaning that higher quality in feedback delivery is linked to a 0.156 unit reduction in CWB. With a standardized coefficient (Beta) of -0.228, feedback delivery emerges as the strongest negative predictor of CWB in this model. This relationship is statistically significant (p=0.006), highlighting that effective and well-delivered feedback can play a crucial role in minimizing counterproductive behaviors in the workplace. Additionally, feedback acceptance has an unstandardized coefficient (B) of -0.270, with a standardized coefficient (Beta) of -0.254. This shows that greater acceptance of feedback is associated with a further decrease in CWB. This relationship is also statistically significant (p=0.003) indicating that individuals who are more open to accepting feedback are less likely to engage in counterproductive behaviors. Therefore, H4 (“Feedback acceptance negatively influences CWB) is supported.

Gender and tenure are not statistically significant as in the previous models, however, for age the unstandardized coefficient (B) is -0.022, and the standardized coefficient (Beta) is -0.192, indicating a weak negative association with CWB. This predictor is statistically significant (p=0.019) suggesting that older individuals may exhibit slightly lower levels of

counterproductive behaviors, though the effect is modest.The R-squared value is 0.299, which means that approximately 29.9% of the variance in CWB can be explained by the predictors in this model.

Table 5

Coefficient Table Model 3

Model	Unstandardized B	Coefficients Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	4.361	0.338		12.884	<.001
Source Credibility	-0.107	0.04	-0.172	-2.656	0.009
Feedback Delivery	-0.156	0.056	-0.228	-2.79	0.006
Tenure	0.002	0.008	0.024	0.294	0.769
Age	-0.022	0.009	-0.192	-2.375	0.19
Gender	0.029	0.098	0.018	0.301	0.764
Feedback Acceptance	-0.27	0.091	-0.254	-2.968	0.003

a. Dependent Variable: CWB

4.4.2 Moderation Analysis using Hayes' procedure

To examine whether feedback delivery moderates the effect of source credibility on feedback acceptance, a statistical analysis was conducted using Hayes' PROCESS macro for SPSS (Hayes, 2018). Firstly, the model summary shows a F value of 84.670, which indicates that the overall model is highly significant. In regard to the hypothesis that is being tested, there was a significant interaction between source credibility and feedback delivery (b= -0.0638, p = 0.007). This negative coefficient for the interaction suggests that as feedback delivery quality increases, the positive effect of source credibility on feedback acceptance decreases. Thus, when feedback is delivered effectively, the impact of source credibility becomes less critical for feedback acceptance. The analysis also showed how the effect of source credibility on feedback acceptance varies at different levels of feedback delivery. When feedback is delivered negatively (1.4), source credibility has a strong positive effect on feedback acceptance (b = 0.253, p < .001). At a moderate level of feedback delivery (3.4), the effect of source credibility is weaker (b= 0.126, p < .001). Most interesting, when feedback is delivered positively (4.6), the effect of source credibility becomes non-significant (b=0.049, p =.198). Consequently, H2 ("Feedback delivery moderates the relationship between source credibility and feedback acceptance") can be validated by the results.

Table 6

Hayes Process Model 1

Moderation Analysis

	Feedback Acceptance (Y)	
Variables	**b (SE)**	**p**
(Constant)	1.1685 (0.1998)	0.0000
Source credibility	0.3425 (0.0634)	0.0000
Feedback Delivery	0.5773 (0.0615)	0.0000
Sourc credibility x Feedback delivery	-0.0638 (0.0185)	0,0007

Note: n=232

4.4.3 Mediation Analysis using Hayes Procedure

The results of Table 7 show that source credibility has no significant direct effect on OCB (b=0.0647, p=0.0594). On the other hand, feedback acceptance demonstrates a highly significant effect on OCB (b=0.6624, p=0.000), highlighting that feedback acceptance plays a strong positive role in enhancing OCB. While source credibility doesn't have a significant effect on OCB, but feedback acceptance has a significant effect on OCB. This shows that there is an indirect effect, between source credibility and OCB which happens through feedback acceptance, thus it is a full mediation. Age also shows a significant, though smaller, positive effect on OCB (b=0.0210, p=0.0006), indicating that older participants tend to report higher levels of OCB.

The indirect effect analysis, crucial for understanding mediation, reveals that the mediation path from source credibility to OCB through feedback acceptance is significant. In the second model with CWB as the outcome (Table 7), source credibility has a significant negative direct effect on CWB (b=−0.0956, p=0.0105) suggesting that higher source credibility reduces CWB directly. Feedback acceptance also plays a significant role, showing a negative effect on CWB (b=−0.04259, p=0.000). This indicates that greater feedback acceptance is associated with lower levels of counterproductive behavior. Age also shows a significant negative effect on CWB (b=−0.0162, p=0.0140 suggesting that older participants tend to report lower levels of CWB. The analysis of the indirect effect in the CWB model shows that feedback acceptance mediates the relationship between source credibility and CWB. While source credibility doesn't have a significant effect on OCB, but feedback acceptance has a significant effect on OCB.

This shows that there is an indirect effect, between source credibility and OCB which happens through feedback acceptance, thus it is a full mediation.

Table 7

Hayes PROCESS Model 4

	Mediation effect of Feedback accpetance on OCB				**Mediation effect of Feedback accpetance on CWB**			
	Feedback Acceptance (M)		**OCB (Y)**		**Feedback Acceptance (M)**		**CWB (Y)**	
Variables	**b (SE)**	**p**	**b (SE)**	**p**	**b (SE)**	**p**	**b (SE)**	**p**
(Constant)	2.8355 (0.2084)	0.0000	0.3666 (0.2549)	0.1518	2.8355 (0.2084)	0.0000	4.2342 (0.2762)	0.000
Source credibility	0.1989 (0.0352)	0.0000	0.0647 (0.0342)	0.0594	0.1989 (0.0352)	0.0000	(-) 0.0956 (0.0370)	0.0105
Feedback Acceptance			0.6624 (0.0601)	0.000			(-) 0.04259 (0.0651)	0.0000
Age	(-) 0.0015 (0.0066)	0.8170	0.0120 (0.0060)	0.0006	(-) 0.0015 (0.0066)	0.8170	(-) 0.0162 (0.0065)	0.0140
Direct Effect (X-Y): c'= 0.0647, 95% , CI= (-0.0026 ; 0.1321) Indirect Effect (X-M-Y): ab= 0.1317, 95%, CI= (0.0824 ; 0.1846)					Direct Effect (X-Y): c'= -0.0956, 95%, CI= -0.1685 ; -0.0226) Indirect Effect (X-M-Y): ab= -0.0847, 95%, CI= -0.1274 ; -0.0483)			
Note: n=232					*Note*: n=232			

4.4.4 Moderated Mediation Analysis

In terms of coefficients, source credibility had a coefficient of 0.0647 with a p value of 0.0594, which is significant. Feedback acceptance showed a strong, positive effect on OCB (b=0.6624, p<0.001p) highlighting its significant influence. For the direct and indirect effects, the direct effect of Source credibility on OCB was not statistically significant (p=0.0594). However, when analyzing the conditional indirect effects (moderated mediation), the results varied based on the level of the moderator, feedback delivery. At feedback delivery (1.4), there was a significant effect with a bootstrapped confidence interval that did not cross zero. At feedback delivery (3.4), the effect remained significant. At feedback delivery (4.6000), the effect was not significant.

The relationship between source credibility and CWB is partially mediated by feedback acceptance, and this mediation is moderated by the level of feedback delivery. The significant negative direct effect of source credibility on CWB (b=-0.0956, p=0.015) suggests that as source credibility increases, CWB decreases. However, the indirect pathway through feedback acceptance indicates that this mediation effect depends on feedback delivery, with the mediation effect weakening as feedback delivery increases. The analysis confirms that at lower levels of feedback delivery, the mediating effect of feedback acceptance is stronger and significant. As feedback delivery increases, the mediation effect remains significant but weaker. At higher levels of the moderator, the effect becomes non-significant, indicating that the mediation effect is ultimately reduced.

Table 8

Hayes PROCESS Model 7

	Moderated Mediation effect of Feedback accpetance on OCB				Moderated Mediation effect of Feedback accpetance on CWB			
	Feedback Acceptance (M)		**OCB (Y)**		**Feedback Acceptance (M)**		**CWB (Y)**	
Variables	**b (SE)**	**p**	**b (SE)**	**p**	**b (SE)**	**p**	**b (SE)**	**p**
(Constant)	1.0820 (0.2508)	0.0000	0.3666 (0.2549)	0.1518	1.0820 (0.2508)	0.0000	4.2342 (0.2762)	0.0000
Source credibility	0.3455 (0.0638)	0.0000	0.0647 (0.0342)	0.0594	0.3455 (0.0638)	0.0000	-0.0956 (0.0370)	0.0105
Feedback delivery	0.5814 (0.0621)	0.0000	/	/	0.5814 (0.0621)	0.0000	/	/
Source credibility x feedback delivery	-0.0649 (0.0187)	0.0006	/	/	-0.0649 (0.0187)	0.0006	/	/
Feedback acceptance	/	/	0.6624 (0.0601)	0.0000	/	/	-0.4259 (0.0651)	0.0000
Age	0.0028 (0.0049)	0.5728	0.0210 (0.0060)	0.0006	0.0028 (0.0049)	0.5728	-0.0162 (0.0065)	0.0140
Index of moderated mediation: -0.043, 95%, CI = (-0.0675 ; -0.0183)					Index of moderated mediation: 0,0277, 95%, CI = (0.0108 ; 0.0460)			

Note: n=232

Note: n=232

5. Discussion

The primary objective of this study was to examine the relationship between source credibility and feedback acceptance with the moderating role of feedback delivery. In addition, the subsequent effect of feedback acceptance on organizational behavior was examined. To test this, four hypotheses were formulated and tested through multiple regression and moderation-mediation analyses. However, before the hypotheses were being tested, a one-way ANOVA analysis confirmed the effectiveness of the scenario manipulations and each scales' consistency was verified through Cronbach's Alpha coefficients, which guaranteed the reliability of the measures (Peterson,1994).

H1 proposed that source credibility influences feedback acceptance. H1 was supported, as the study reveals that source credibility positively impacts feedback acceptance. This confirms that credible feedback sources play a crucial role in enhancing acceptance, underscoring the importance of establishing credibility in managerial feedback interactions. The support for H1 aligns with existing research, as studies have shown that individuals are more likely to accept and act on feedback from credible sources, especially if the feedback provider is perceived to have expertise relevant to the recipient's job and is seen as trustworthy (Ilgen et al., 1979; Steelman et al., 2004).

H2 suggested that feedback delivery moderates the relationship between source credibility and feedback acceptance. The moderation-mediation analysis by Hayes procedure confirmed this hypothesis, revealing a significant interaction. The findings show that the impact of source credibility on feedback acceptance decreases when feedback is being delivered more positively. Contrary, when feedback is delivered negatively, the impact of source credibility on feedback acceptance is stronger. Therefore, positive feedback delivery reduces the dependency on source credibility, making feedback more readily accepted regardless of the perceived credibility of the source. Conversely, when feedback is delivered in a more negative way, the credibility of the source becomes essential for feedback acceptance.

In conclusion, both Source Credibility and Feedback Delivery significantly influence how feedback is accepted. However, Feedback Delivery moderates this relationship: the more positive the feedback delivery, the less important Source Credibility becomes. When feedback is delivered negatively, participants rely more on the credibility of the source to accept the feedback, whereas with positive feedback, the delivery style outweighs the influence of source credibility. This moderation effect highlights the dynamic interaction between how feedback is delivered and the perceived trustworthiness of the source.

H3 proposed that feedback acceptance positively influences OCB, which can also be confirmed by the study. These results suggest that feedback acceptance encourages employees to go beyond their formal job requirements, contributing positively to the organizational environment. By fostering feedback acceptance, organizations can potentially enhance OCB, which supports a collaborative and productive workplace. Christensen-Salem et al. (2018) found that meaningful feedback interactions increase employees' sense of belonging and commitment, further motivating OCB. This study highlights that employees who accept feedback feel valued and supported, leading them to engage in positive behaviors that benefit their colleagues and the organization at large. This reciprocal dynamic aligns with Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964), which posits that high-quality exchanges—such as feedback that is constructive and accepted—generate positive responses, including behaviors that transcend job descriptions, like OCB.

Lastly, H4 stated that feedback acceptance negatively influences CWB. As the previous hypotheses, this was also supported by the study. The results indicatated that higher acceptance of feedback is associated with lower levels of counterproductive behavior. This finding is consistent with previous studies that suggest openness to feedback can mitigate negative workplace behaviors. It implies that when individuals are more accepting of feedback, they are less likely to engage in actions that disrupt the work environment or harm the organization. Encouraging feedback acceptance within teams and departments can thus be a strategic approach for reducing CWB and fostering a healthier organizational culture.

In addition to the primary hypotheses, the results provide insights on how source credibility and feedback delivery compare in terms of their impact. The analysis reveals that while both factors significantly impact feedback acceptance, feedback delivery has a stronger effect compared to source credibility. This suggests that the way in which feedback is delivered holds more weight in fostering acceptance than the perceived credibility of the source. For organizations, this emphasizes the need for training in effective feedback delivery techniques, as even credible sources may fail to achieve high acceptance if feedback is poorly conveyed. Moreover, the results indicated that demographic variables such as tenure, age, and gender showed no meaningful impact on feedback acceptance, OCB, or CWB, except for a modest negative association between age and CWB. This indicates that individual demographic factors may be less influential in feedback dynamics, reinforcing that organizational practices around feedback should focus on enhancing credibility and especially delivery quality.

5.1. Limitations and Future Research

The empirical findings provide valuable insights into the interplay of source credibility, feedback delivery and feedback acceptance within a performance feedback process. It also shows how this relationship affects OCB and CWB. Nevertheless, it must be recognized that this study has several limitations. One limitation includes that the data was gathered at a single point in time and as a result, it is impossible to analyze changes over time. A longitudinal field study could be useful in future studies to evaluate the effects of source credibility and feedback delivery on feedback acceptance and its subsequent effect on organizational behavior. Furthermore, the use of self-reporting may introduce bias since respondents may give answers that are socially acceptable or may not be aware of their own character traits and behaviors. To avoid this type of limitation, future research could consider incorporating information from multiple sources, including friends and family, work colleagues or supervisors of respondents. In addition, there are also contextual limitations. Since the presented scenarios in the survey are hypothetical, participants might react differently in real workplace situations. The artificial nature of the scenarios in a survey cannot fully capture the complexity of the real feedback exchange, thus, future research could be field studies.

Finally, the sample size of this study presents a limitation. Although the sample size is adequate for basic statistical analyses, the results may not be broadly applicable because it is not representative of the general population. This can be explained by the sample's high proportion of German participation and a rather small age range, which impacts the generalizability of the findings. To enhance the robustness and external validity of the research findings, future studies could use larger and more diverse samples. Also, in this study there is a limited scope of variables. Further research could consider other potential moderators or mediators to strengthen the theoretical framework of the study.

5.2. Practical Implications for Organizations and Managers

Organizations should prioritize in giving managers' and supervisors' training in effective feedback delivery methods, since it has a greater effect on feedback acceptance than source credibility. Managers who are able to provide constructive feedback are more likely to encourage feedback acceptance, which in turn promotes OCB and lowers CWB.

Offering managers trainings on delivering clear, tactful, and supportive feedback can maximize the likelihood of feedback being accepted, regardless of the source’s perceived credibility. Although feedback delivery holds more weight, source credibility still plays a significant role in feedback acceptance, especially when feedback is delivered in a negative

way. Managers should work to establish credibility over time by being consistent, knowledgeable, and fair, which will ensure that employees are more receptive to feedback even when it's critical or challenging. As the study shows, that feedback acceptance positively promotes OCB and reduces CWB, organizations should focus on building structures that encourage feedback acceptance, such as regular check-ins and feedback-friendly policies.

6. Conclusion

This study explored how source credibility and feedback delivery affect feedback acceptance and, in turn, how feedback acceptance impacts positive and negative workplace behaviors, such as positive organizational behavior (OCB) and counterproductive actions (CWB). The analysis confirmed that both source credibility and feedback delivery play important roles in feedback acceptance, but feedback delivery has a stronger effect. Notably, while credible sources help increase acceptance of feedback, this effect is more critical when the feedback is delivered in a negative way; with positive feedback, good delivery matters more than the source's credibility. Additionally, higher feedback acceptance encourages positive behaviors (OCB) and reduces negative ones (CWB), suggesting that well-delivered, credible feedback can foster a supportive work environment. These insights highlight that organizations should focus on training managers to deliver feedback effectively and build trust to enhance the positive impact of feedback on employee behavior.

Thus, this study contributes to the understanding of feedback dynamics, providing actionable insights for improving organizational climate and employee behavior through strategic feedback practices. Organizations benefit from refining feedback practices by focusing on both the skill of the feedback delivery and the establishment of credible, trust-based relationships between managers and employees. Training programs for managers on feedback techniques—such as delivering feedback constructively, clearly, and respectfully—can play a major role in boosting feedback acceptance. This is especially valuable for feedback on areas needing improvement, where acceptance can be lower. Additionally, although delivery style has the strongest impact on feedback acceptance, source credibility still plays a role, particularly for critical or challenging feedback. Managers can work to build this credibility over time through consistency, fairness, and transparency, which helps create a foundation of trust. When managers are both credible and skilled in feedback delivery, employees are more likely to accept feedback and integrate it into their work positively as well as reduce contra productive work behaviors.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Qualtrics Survey

Introduction

Dear Participant,

As a Master's student at ISCTE Business School, I am conducting research to explore the impact of feedback on employee behavior. Your participation in this survey is invaluable and will contribute significantly to advancing our understanding of this important topic. Your participation is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw from the study at anytime, during or after the completion of the survey. By participating, you have the opportunity to win an Amazon gift card of 15€ as a token of appreciation for your involvement. The survey will take approximately 7 minutes to complete. Your responses will remain confidential and the aggregated data will be used solely for academic purposes. If you have any questions or comments regarding the survey, please feel free to contact me at ekkla@iscte-iul.pt.

Thank you for your participation and support in this research endeavor. Elena Knichel

Do you agree to participate in this survey?

- Yes
- No

Block 1: Scenarios

Scenario 1

Imagine you work at Company X and your manager gives you feedback on your work performance on a particular project he/she has assigned to you. In the following section, you will first read a brief description of your manager, followed by the actual feedback he/she gives you on your job performance. Please pay attention while reading the short description of the manager and how the manager is presenting the feedback.

Your manager is generally familiar with your performance on the job and the people who work with him/her respect his/her opinion about their job performance. In addition, your manager is

fair when evaluating the job performance of his/her employees and people have confidence in the feedback he/she gives.

How credible (trustworthy) do you think this manager is?

- Not at all
- Somewhat credible
- Credible
- Quite Credible
- Highly Credible

What gender do you associate this manager with?

- Male
- Female
- Non-binary / third gender
- Prefer not to say

In the performance feedback discussion, the manager is saying the following to you:

"Hi, I would like to give you feedback regarding your latest project. I am not entirely satisfied with the work you have delivered, and I have found some errors in it. However, I can see that you worked hard, and your dedication and efforts were really impressive. I appreciate it and I am sure we can manage to fix these errors and improve the project."

Scenario 2

Imagine you work at Company X and your manager gives you feedback on your work performance on a particular project he/she has assigned to you. In the following section, you will first read a brief description of your manager, followed by the actual feedback he/she gives you on your job performance. Please pay attention while reading the short description of the manager and how the manager is presenting the feedback.

Your manager is generally familiar with your performance on the job and the people who work with him/her respect his/her opinion about their job performance. In addition, your manager is fair when evaluating the job performance of his/her employees and people have confidence in the feedback he/she gives.

How credible (trustworthy) do you think this manager is?

- Not at all
- Somewhat credible

- Credible
- Quite Credible
- Highly Credible

What gender do you associate this manager with?

- Male
- Female
- Non-binary / third gender
- Prefer not to say

In the performance feedback discussion, the manager is saying the following to you:

“Hi, I would like to give you feedback regarding your latest project. Unfortunately, I am not entirely satisfied with the work you have delivered. Frankly, I am disappointed with the number of errors I found, and it is important that we fix them immediately. With some serious adjustments, we may be able to salvage the quality of your work. I don't know why you couldn't manage this by yourself though?!"

Scenario 3

Imagine you work at Company X and your manager gives you feedback on your work performance on a particular project he/she has assigned to you. In the following section, you will first read a brief description of your manager, followed by the actual feedback he/she gives you on your job performance. Please pay attention while reading the short description of the manager and how the manager is presenting the feedback.

Your manager is often unfamiliar with your performance on the job, and the people who work with him/her don't respect his/her opinion about their job performance. Moreover, your manager is unfair when evaluating the job performance of his/her employees, and people lack confidence in the feedback he/she gives.

How credible (trustworthy) do you think this manager is?

- Not at all
- Somewhat credible
- Credible
- Quite Credible
- Highly Credible

What gender do you associate this manager with?

- Male

- Female
- Non-binary / third gender
- Prefer not to say

In the performance feedback discussion, the manager is saying the following to you:

"Hi, I would like to give you feedback regarding your latest project. I am not entirely satisfied with the work you have delivered, and I have found some errors in it. However, I can see that you worked hard, and your dedication and efforts were really impressive. I appreciate it and I am sure we can manage to fix these errors and improve the project."

Scenario 4

Imagine you work at Company X and your manager gives you feedback on your work performance on a particular project he/she has assigned to you. In the following section, you will first read a brief description of your manager, followed by the actual feedback he/she gives you on your job performance. Please pay attention while reading the short description of the manager and how the manager is presenting the feedback.

Your manager is often unfamiliar with your performance on the job, and the people who work with him/her don't respect his/her opinion about their job performance. Moreover, your manager is unfair when evaluating the job performance of his/her employees, and people lack confidence in the feedback he/she gives.

How credible (trustworthy) do you think this manager is?

- Not at all
- Somewhat credible
- Credible
- Quite Credible
- Highly Credible

What gender do you associate this manager with?

- Male
- Female
- Non-binary / third gender
- Prefer not to say

In the performance feedback discussion, the manager is saying the following to you:

“Hi, I would like to give you feedback regarding your latest project. Unfortunately, I am not entirely satisfied with the work you have delivered. Frankly, I am disappointed with the number of errors I found, and it is important that we fix them immediately. With some serious adjustments, we may be able to salvage the quality of your work. I don't know why you couldn't manage this by yourself though?!"

Block 2: Questions

Feebdack Delivery

Based on what you read, to what extent do you agree with the following statements: (Strongly disagree; Somewhat disagree; Neither agree nor disagree; Somewhat agree; Strongly agree)

- This manager was supportive while giving the feedback.
- This manager was considerate of my feelings while giving the feedback.
- This manager was tactful while giving the feedback.
- This manager provided the feedback in a thoughtless manner.
- This manager was not treating me very well when giving the feedback.

Feedback Acceptance

Based on what you read, to what extent do you agree with the following statements: (Strongly disagree; Somewhat disagree; Neither agree nor disagree; Somewhat agree; Strongly agree)

- The feedback I received was an accurate evaluation of my performance.
- It is hard to take the feedback seriously.
- I do not agree with the feedback provided.
- The feedback I received will influence my effort in future trials.

Organizational Behaviour

Some time has passed and now the manager comes to you with a new project. Based on the attitude you have towards this manager, to what extent would you engage in the following actions: (Strongly disagree; Somewhat disagree; Neither agree nor disagree; Somewhat agree; Strongly agree)

- Help your manager with heavy workload.
- Withhold information from your manager.
- Avoid returning a phone call to your manager.
- Go out of your way to help your manager.
- Take time to listen to your manager’s problems and worries.
- Delay actions on matters that are important to your manager.
- Pass along information to your manager.
- Fail to respond to memos or e-mails from your manager.

Block 3: Demographics

Gender: What gender do you identify with?

- Female
- Male
- Non-binary / third gender
- I prefer not to say

Nationality: What is your nationality?

- (Text Option)

Age: How old are you?

- (Text Option)

Education: What is the highest level of education that you have completed?

- No school completed
- High School
- Apprenticeship
- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree
- PhD degree
- Other (text option)

Block 4: Employment

Control Question: Are you currently employed or have you been employed in the past?

- Yes
- No → Survey ends.

Industry: In which industry are you currently employed or have been employed?

- Energy, Utilities and Resources
- Government and Public Sector
- Educational Services
- Health Services
- Pharmaceuticals and Life Sciences
- Sport Businesses
- Financial Services
- Real Estate
- Manufacturing
- Retail and Consumer Goods
- Technology, Media and Telecommunications
- Other (text option)

Tenure: How many years of work experience do you have in total?

- (Text Option)

Performance Feedback: Have you ever received performance feedback from your manager?

End of Survey
Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Your feedback is invaluable and I highly appreciate your effort and insights.

If you have any further comments or suggestions, please feel free to reach out to me via E-mail (ekkla@iscte-iul.pt).

Appendix B: PROCESS Model 1

```
Run MATRIX procedure:

***************** PROCESS Procedure for SPSS Version 4.2 *****************

          Written by Andrew F. Hayes, Ph.D.       www.afhayes.com
    Documentation available in Hayes (2022). www.guilford.com/p/hayes3

**************************************************************************
Model  : 1
    Y  : FeAc
    X  : SC_MC
    W  : FeDe_MC

Sample
Size:  233

**************************************************************************
OUTCOME VARIABLE:
 FeAc

Model Summary
          R       R-sq        MSE          F        df1        df2          p
      ,7252      ,5259      ,3333    84,6701     3,0000   229,0000      ,0000

Model
              coeff         se          t          p       LLCI       ULCI
constant     1,1685      ,1998     5,8491      ,0000      ,7749     1,5622
SC_MC         ,3425      ,0634     5,4053      ,0000      ,2177      ,4674
FeDe_MC       ,5773      ,0615     9,3857      ,0000      ,4561      ,6985
Int_1        -,0638      ,0185    -3,4459      ,0007     -,1003     -,0273

Product terms key:
 Int_1    :        SC_MC    x        FeDe_MC

Covariance matrix of regression parameter estimates:
           constant      SC_MC    FeDe_MC      Int_1
constant      ,0399     -,0111     -,0112      ,0030
SC_MC         -,0111      ,0040      ,0030     -,0011
FeDe_MC       -,0112      ,0030      ,0038     -,0010
Int_1          ,0030     -,0011     -,0010      ,0003
```

```
Test(s) of highest order unconditional interaction(s):
       R2-chng          F        df1        df2          p
X*W      ,0246    11,8744     1,0000   229,0000      ,0007
----------
    Focal predict: SC_MC    (X)
          Mod var: FeDe_MC  (W)

Conditional effects of the focal predictor at values of the moderator(s):

    FeDe_MC     Effect         se          t          p       LLCI       ULCI
     1,4000      ,2532      ,0412     6,1487      ,0000      ,1720      ,3343
     3,4000      ,1256      ,0267     4,7020      ,0000      ,0729      ,1782
     4,6000      ,0490      ,0380     1,2911      ,1980     -,0258      ,1238

Data for visualizing the conditional effect of the focal predictor:
Paste text below into a SPSS syntax window and execute to produce plot.

DATA LIST FREE/
   SC_MC      FeDe_MC    FeAc       .
BEGIN DATA.
     1,0000     1,4000     2,2299
     3,0000     1,4000     2,7363
     4,5600     1,4000     3,1312
     1,0000     3,4000     3,2569
     3,0000     3,4000     3,5080
     4,5600     3,4000     3,7039
     1,0000     4,6000     3,8731
     3,0000     4,6000     3,9711
     4,5600     4,6000     4,0475
END DATA.
GRAPH/SCATTERPLOT=
 SC_MC    WITH     FeAc     BY       FeDe_MC  .

************************ ANALYSIS NOTES AND ERRORS *************************

Level of confidence for all confidence intervals in output:
  95,0000

W values in conditional tables are the 16th, 50th, and 84th percentiles.
```