How Social Contexts Influence Feedback Seeking Behaviour and Job Performance:

An Integration of Balance Theory and Power-Dependence Theory

Abstract

Drawing on balance theory and power-dependence theory, this study explains how and when incongruence among leader-member exchange (LMX), team member exchange (TMX), and leader-teammates exchange (LTX) influence focal employees' feedback seeking behavior (FSB), which in turn affects their job performance. We conducted a moderated polynomial regression analysis of three-wave multi-source data from 147 team members and their leaders (from 45 work teams). The results revealed that, when leader-teammates relationship quality is high, LMX-TMX incongruence facilitates FSB. However, when leader-teammates relationship quality is low, LMX-TMX incongruence reduces FSB. Similarly, when there is a high level of task interdependence, LMX-TMX incongruence facilitates FSB. When there is a low level of task interdependence, LMX-TMX incongruence reduces FSB. We also found an asymmetrical incongruence effect that individuals are more likely to seek feedback when LMX is worse than TMX, as compared with when LMX is better than TMX. This differential effect is strengthened by high LTX quality and high task interdependence. Finally, the interplay of LMX, TMX, LTX, and task interdependence has an indirect effect on job performance (via FSB).

Keywords: leader-member exchange; team member exchange; leader-teammates exchange;

incongruence; feedback seeking behavior; task interdependence.

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Feedback seeking behavior (FSB) is a key self-regulatory tactic through which

employees seek evaluative information from supervisors and coworkers, in order to

diagnose problems and improve performance (e.g., Ashford, 1986; Ashford & Tsui, 1991;

Chen, Lam, & Zhong, 2007; Lam, Peng, Wong, & Lau, 2015; Renn & Fedor, 2001;

Whitaker, Dahling, & Levy, 2007; Whitaker & Levy, 2012). As seeking feedback is always

accompanied by costs, such as threatening the ego or being viewed as incompetent (Anseel,

Beatty, Shen, Lievens, & Sackett, 2015; Ashford & Cummings, 1983; VandeWalle,

Ganesan, Challagalla, & Brown, 2000), previous research has pointed out that social

contexts, especially relationship quality with leaders (i.e., leader-member exchange, LMX),

play critical roles in predicting FSB (e.g., Chen et al., 2007; Williams, Miller, Steelman, &

Levy, 1999). While focusing on the effect of only a certain type of dyadic relationship (i.e.,

LMX) on FSB, these studies implicitly assumed that other dyadic relationships, such as

team member exchange (TMX) or leader-teammates exchange (LTX), remain constant.

However, in reality, feedback seekers usually consider not a single type of dyadic

relationship but different types of relationships (i.e., LMX, TMX, LTX) within a group

simultaneously, in order to evaluate the costs and benefits of FSB (Lam et al., 2015). Yet,

prior research has rarely discussed how individuals modify their desire to seek feedback

under a triadic relationship among LMX, TMX, and LTX.

Studying the effect of social contexts on FSB from such a triadic perspective is both

meaningful and needed. First, focusing on a single dyad (i.e., LMX-FSB or TMX-FSB)

tends to produce contradictory predictions on FSB decisions. For example, while some

studies argued that high LMX facilitates FSB by providing a supportive feedback

environment and thus reducing the perceived cost of FSB (e.g., Chen et al., 2007; Chun,

Choi, & Moon, 2014), other studies found that high LMX prohibits FSB because employees

have already obtained ample feedback from extensive interactions and information sharing

with the leader, which makes FSB less valuable (e.g., Baker & Ganster, 1985; Lam et al.,

2015). These contradictory findings reflect the insufficiency of the extant literature in

noticing that employees' perceptions of FSB costs and benefits are always activated and

operated simultaneously in determining FSB (Anseel, Lievens, & Levy, 2007; Ashford,

Blatt, & VandeWalle, 2003; Park, Schmidt, Scheu, & DeShon, 2007). In short, FSB occurs

only when employees' perceived benefits outweigh the perceived costs and not simply due

to a cost reduction or a value increase. We argue that it is inappropriate to predict FSB

relying on a single dyad because we cannot tell whether or not employees' perceived

benefits of seeking feedback outweighs the costs in a single relationship dyad (either it is of

high or low quality). Specifically, a high quality relationship, such as high LMX, while reducing employees' perceived FSB costs, will also diminish the feedback value (Tuckey, Brewer, & Williamson, 2002), Similarly, a poor quality relationship, while signaling a high image-cost of seeking feedback, also implies a good chance of getting additional valuable performance-related information (Lau et al., 2015).

Second, as some researchers have pointed out, the social structure of a group context, rather than the relationship quality of a single dyad, determines FSB (e.g., Lam et al., 2015; Northcraft & Ashford, 1990). Ashford and Cummings (1985) indicated that individuals would engage in more FSB when they experience greater contextual uncertainty, as "feedback helps clarify behavior-outcome links and to resolve a stressful state" (p. 69). It is employees' relative social standing within a group that determines their perceived costs and benefits of FSB. For example, employees who have a poor relationship with both the leader and their teammates may initially be inactive in seeking feedback because of the high cost of doing so (i.e., negative feedback that is ego-hurting). However, if their teammates all have good relationships with this leader, they may be driven to seek information from all possible sources, to improve the undesirable and uncomfortable social context, despite the potential costs associated with doing so. In contrast to this, if their teammates also develop poor relationships with this leader, they may feel comfortable with this social situation and

stay inactive in seeking feedback. In summary, only by considering the dyadic relationships among all three parties of the group (i.e., LMX, TMX, and LTX) can we clearly understand the focal employees' social positions, which eventually determine how they assess and weigh the costs and benefits of seeking feedback.

Drawing on balance theory (Heider, 1958), which argues that some combinations of dyadic relationships are "imbalanced" under triadic scenarios and the focal party tends to have strong psychological tensions before taking action, to make the combinations become "balanced", we propose that the imbalanced combinations of LMX, TMX, and LTX will lead to more FSB, in order to create balance. Balance theory implicitly assumes the equal importance of all dyadic relationships (in our case, LMX, TMX, and LTX; Tse, Lam, Lawrence & Huang, 2013). However, as leaders are usually more powerful and can provide more resources than teammates (e.g., Farh, Lanaj, & Ilies, 2016; Liao, Liu, & Loi, 2010; Venkataramani, Green, & Schleicher, 2010), leaders tend to be the more important party in determining FSB (Greller, 1992). From a power-dependence perspective (Emerson, 1962), which argues that people are more likely to depend on the more powerful party, we propose an asymmetrical incongruence effect of LMX-TMX on FSB in two different incongruent situations (i.e., LMX better versus worse than TMX). Furthermore, we posit that task interdependence, "the extent to which an individual team member believes that he or she

depends on other members of the team to be able to carry out his or her job" (Van der Vegt

& Janssen, 2003, p. 731), is an important moderator because it can affect the relative power

potency of LMX and TMX by increasing individuals' power dependency on coworkers.

Finally, as there is evidence showing the effects of FSB on job performance (e.g., Whitaker

et al., 2007; Whitaker & Levy, 2012), we further propose that the interplay of LMX, TMX,

LTX, and task interdependence also has an indirect effect on job performance via FSB.

Figure 1 shows the overall theoretical model.

Insert Figure 1 about here

Our study aims to make three contributions to the literature. First, the most unique aspect

of our study is the utilization of balance theory to explain the effect of triadic relationships

among focal employees, their leaders, and their teammates on their organizational behaviors

(i.e., FSB) and job performance. Although Tse et al. (2013) and Sherony and Green (2002)

have applied balance theory in organizational settings, they only examined situations

involving two supervisor-coworker dyads, instead of the triadic relationship in a team, which,

without examining all actors in a team, is not enough to capture the overall effect social

context has on focal employees' reactive attitudes and behaviors. Second, as power and group

structures are the two most central topics of social exchange theory (Blau, 1964; Emerson,

1962, 1972), the two themes have to be studied simultaneously to avoid theoretical flaws

(Cook & Emerson, 1978). Our study achieves this goal by combining balance theory with power-dependence theory. More importantly, our integration of these two theories will ensure each largely benefits and enriches the other, especially in regard to balance theory. By imposing the influence of asymmetric incongruence power effect, we extend balance theory by applying it to a situation in which the actors are not equal in power potency, which we believe is more proximate to the real-life phenomenon.

Third, while Hays and Williams' (2011) study firstly examined the interaction effect of feedback seeking costs and values on FSB, our study, although it does not measure the perceived costs and benefits of FSB directly, contributes to the multiple-motive study of FSB by exploring how different motives are activated, evaluated, and weighed in a specific context involving various levels of relationship quality (i.e., LMX, TMX, or LTX) and task characteristics.

Empirically, the present study utilized polynomial regression analysis and a response surface methodology (Edwards & Parry, 1993) to address the triadic relationships. The complexity of the situation precludes the use of ordinary interactions among the three dyadic relationships to explain their combined effect. Mathematically, the congruence test actually involves explanatory power above and beyond ordinary interactions because all the interaction terms have already been included in the regression analyses for the congruence test. If the

congruence test shows no additional explanatory power, this means, as a more parsimonious

way to describe the reality, the ordinary interactions are sufficient. Thus, the significant results

found for congruence analyses reveal the necessity of going beyond ordinary interactions to

explain the more complicated phenomenon occurring. This method may provide some

implications for future research in regard to testing the combinations of more than two dyadic

relationships.

Theory and Hypotheses Development

Balance Theory

Social exchange literature suggests that work teams are embedded in interpersonal

exchange relationships among three parties: leaders, subordinates, and teammates (Henderson,

Wayne, Shore, Bommer, & Tetrick, 2008; Venkataramani et al., 2010). Since the exchange

quality of each dyad is formed in parallel and independently, it is inevitable for each person

to develop a different level of relationship quality with each party. Specifically, LMX

literature indicates that leaders naturally develop differentiated relationship quality with

followers (e.g., Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Liden, Erdogan, Wayne, & Sparrowe, 2006;

Sparrowe & Liden, 1997). TMX literature also assumes that the focal employee maintains

different levels of exchange quality with other team members (Liden, Wayne, & Sparrowe,

2000).

Although independently developed, in an actual organizational group, multiple dyadic

relationships often operate simultaneously to influence the individuals' behavior (Cartwright

& Harary, 1956). In investigating whether or not and how such multiple dyadic relationships

of a focal individual influence one another, prior research, based on social comparison theory

(Festinger, 1954), has proven the additional variance accrues from the comparison of

different dyadic relationships (e.g., Henderson et al., 2008; Vidyarthi, Liden, Anand, Erdogan,

& Ghosh, 2010). Each independent dyad is found to be of interest to each other (Ferrin, Dirks,

& Shah, 2006); thus, "social comparison of one dyad with other dyads is both innate and

ubiquitous" (Liden, Anand, & Vidyarthi, 2016; p. 144). Since there is no objective criterion

with which to evaluate the quality of each dyadic relationship, members of dyads normally

evaluate and modify relationship quality using their other dyadic relationships as references

(Liden et al., 2016; Vidyarthi, Erdogan, Anand, Liden, & Chaudhry, 2014). For example, the

relationship between A and C may serve as a reference for A to consider the relationship

between A and B.

Moreover, several different dyadic relationships will also serve as the reference for a

particular dyadic relationship. For example, the relationship quality between A and B may

depend on both A-C and B-C relationships (Heider, 1958; Sherony & Green, 2002; Tse et al.,

2013). According to this notion, Sherony and Green (2002) demonstrated that two

subordinates will develop positive (negative) coworker exchange quality (CWX) when they have similar (dissimilar) LMX experiences. Tse and colleagues (2013) further showed that, when employees hold a high social comparison orientation, LMX similarity between coworkers A and B will increase coworker A's feelings of contempt for coworker B and decrease coworker A's perception of help received from coworker B.

Despite this research on the contextual conditions of dyadic relationships, we still know little about how group relationship structures impact focal employees' reactive behaviors in regard to balancing the whole social network, rather than just the relationship quality with a certain party. Social network scholars posit that one's behavior is not driven solely by one's personal attitudes, but also by the characteristics of relationships and the networks of relationships (Scott, 2000). People detect and analyze these social relationship structures to understand their relative social standing in the group (Hogg, 2000; Gardner, Gabriel, & Hochschild, 2002; Wood, 1996) and decide the appropriate behavior to respond to the given situation. One effective way for a focal employee to figure out his or her relative standing in a group is to study the interplay of three dyadic relationships within the group: LMX, TMX, and LTX. TMX is a concept adapted from LMX and represents the focal employee's overall perception of exchange quality with other team members, not as unique individual coworkers, but in their shared role as team members (Banks, Batchelor, Seers, O'Boyle, Pollack, &

Gower, 2014; Liden, et al., 2000). Similarly, LTX represents the exchange relationship

between the focal employee's teammates and the group leader.

Balance theory (Heider, 1958) is a theory devoted to examining individuals'

psychological and behavioral reactions toward the balance or imbalance of a triadic

relationship. It dictates that socialized human beings need to establish and maintain balanced,

harmonious, and consistent orientations toward the self, others, and the environment. Failure to

achieve such consistency leads to psychological tension, discomfort, or distress (Rosenberg &

Abelson, 1960; Simon & Holyoak, 2002), which in turn motivates people to take action to

modify the inconsistent elements (Simon & Holyoak, 2002). We propose that employees will

be driven to seek more feedback under the imbalanced conditions than in balanced conditions,

because FSB is an important action for employees to have a better understanding of and to

improve their social standing in the network. The LMX-TMX-LTX imbalance reflects

serious person-environment fit problems, which trigger psychological discomfort and drives

the individual to take a proactive role in increasing his or her level of person-environment fit,

such as by seeking feedback information from other actors in the situation (Morrison, 1993).

Parker and Collins (2010) have identified FSB as a 'proactive person-environment fit

behavior' for adapting to adversity and uncertainty within an organizational environment.

They argued that, by seeking feedback, employees will achieve a better fit with their

surrounding environment by collecting information about their job performance; they will

therefore perform more effectively and satisfactorily. Employees frequently seek feedback

from all possible sources, regardless of relationship quality, to gain greater clarity about what

others expect from them so they can better adapt to the situation (Ashford & Black, 1996). This

feedback may suggest how to improve their less positive, or even negative, dyadic

relationships within the group. In this way, employees can achieve better compatibility with

their environment and perform more effectively within the context (De Stobbeleir, Ashford, &

Buyens, 2011).

LMX, TMX, LTX, and FSB

Table 1, Figures 2 and 3 represent a straightforward prediction from balance theory

concerning the focal employee's FSB under the eight possible combinations of the three dyadic

relationships. According to balance theory (Heider, 1958), there are only two situations in

which the triadic relationships are balanced. They are (1) when all three dyadic relationships

are positive (see (a) in Table 1 and Figure 2) and (2) when there is one positive and two

negatives in the three dyadic relationships (see (b), (g), and (h) in Table 1 and Figure 2). All

other combinations of the three dyadic relationships are not balanced (see (c), (d), (e), and (f)

in Table 1 and Figure 3).

Insert Figure 2, Figure 3, and Table 1 about here

When LTX is high (i.e., positive in balance theory), both of the LMX-TMX congruent conditions are the balanced situations. Congruence at high levels belongs to the balanced situation of three positive dyadic relationships (*condition a*) and congruence at low levels belongs to the balanced situation of one positive and two negative dyadic relationships (*condition b*). Both of the LMX-TMX incongruent conditions, either when LMX is better than TMX (*condition c*) or when LMX is worse than TMX (*condition d*), are imbalanced situations. When teammates have good relationships with the leader, focal employees feel comfortable, as long as they develop the same (either high or low) level of relationship quality with both the leader and teammates. The balanced situations lead to a weak driving force for FSB. If they have different levels of relationship quality with the leader and teammates (regardless of whether LMX is better or worse than TMX), they feel imbalanced and stressed, leading to a strong driving force for FSB.

In contrast to this, when LTX is low, the two LMX-TMX congruent conditions (congruence at high levels, *condition e*, and congruence at low levels, *condition f*) are imbalanced situations. In other words, when teammates have poor relationships with the leader, focal employees feel psychological imbalance if their relationship quality with the leader and teammates is at the same level, resulting in a strong driving force for FSB. On the contrary, the two LMX-TMX incongruent conditions (LMX is better than TMX, *condition g*,

and LMX is worse than TMX, *condition h*) belong to the balanced situations with one positive and two negative dyadic relationships, resulting in a weak driving force for FSB. That is, the inconsistency of LMX and TMX could be fine for focal employees, as long as the leader has poor relationships with teammates. More specifically, even when focal employees have a good exchange relationship with teammates but a bad exchange relationship with their leader, psychological balance could still be achieved if the teammates also have poor exchange relationships with the leader. Therefore, we posit the following hypothesis.

> ***Hypothesis 1: LTX will moderate the effect of LMX-TMX incongruence on FSB.***
>
> ***When LTX quality is high, employees' LMX-TMX incongruence will be high, and***
>
> ***the focal employees will engage in more FSB. When LTX quality is low, employees'***
>
> ***LMX-TMX incongruence will be high, and the focal employees will engage in less***
>
> ***FSB.***

One weakness of balance theory is that it implicitly assumes that the leader and teammates have the same degree of influence on the focal employee's psychological state (Heider, 1958; Tse et al., 2013). In reality, however, leaders usually play a more instrumental role in the focal employee's psychological state because they determine employees' monetary rewards (De Stobbeleir & Ashford, 2014; Fedor, Rensvold, & Adams, 1992; Vancouver & Morrison, 1995) and possess unique feedback information (Wilson, Sin, & Conlon, 2010).

Teammates influence the focal employee mainly by providing vicarious experiences and

effective skills and strategies for managing job demands (Farh et al., 2016; Liao et al., 2010).

From a power-dependence perspective (Emerson, 1962), subordinates are generally

more dependent on leaders than on teammates because of the administrative power

supervisors wield; thus, the relational incongruence when the LMX quality is worse than the

TMX quality means losing the support of the high-power party. This situation should be

detrimental for the focal employee and create a greater drive for FSB. In contrast to this,

LMX-TMX incongruence, such that LMX is better than TMX, is less likely to motivate

individuals to seek feedback. A combination of high LMX with low TMX constitutes a

situation in which employees are trusted and liked more by the high-power party. This

provides employees with a stronger sense of security and reduces their anxiety about meeting

the requirements of the organization. What is more, high LMX indicates frequent and good

interactions with supervisors, which may imply that employees obtain sufficient and

goal-relevant feedback information (Bauer & Green, 1998; Lam et al., 2015; Wilson et al.,

2010). Therefore, we posit the following hypothesis.

Hypothesis 2: Under LMX-TMX incongruence, employees are more likely to seek

feedback when LMX is worse than TMX, as compared with when LMX is better

than TMX.

We propose next that this asymmetric incongruence effect (Hypothesis 2) will be stronger when LTX is high. As discussed in the first hypothesis, when teammates have good relationships with the leader, LMX-TMX incongruence leads to imbalanced conditions. Employees will have a strong driving force to engage in FSB. In contrast to this, when LTX is poor, LMX-TMX incongruence leads to balanced conditions in which employees have a weak driving force to engage in FSB. While Hypothesis 2 demonstrated that relational incongruence when LMX is worse (versus better) than TMX brings the focal employee greater uncertainty and stress, high (versus low) LTX would probably exacerbate this unfavorable situation because teammates have good relationships with the leader. This may result in stronger motivation for the focal employee to engage in FSB. Thus, we hypothesize the following.

> *Hypothesis 3: The differential effect between (1) LMX worse than TMX and (2) LMX better than TMX on FSB is moderated by the level of LTX quality. Specifically, this differential effect will be stronger when LTX quality is high versus low.*

LMX, TMX, Task Interdependence, and FSB

Based on Emerson's (1962) power-dependency theory, employees depend more on leaders than on teammates because of the higher economic and social status of leaders (Krackhardt, 1993; Wilson et al., 2010). However, we argue that this "power gap" between

leaders and teammates will be reduced when employees work in teams with high levels of

task interdependence, because task interdependence requires the interdependent actors to

share materials, information, expertise, and resources in order to complete their tasks

(Cummings, 1978; Susman, 1976). Employees who work in teams with high levels of

task-interdependence are evaluated and rewarded not only for their ability to carry out their

own individual tasks but also for their contributions to the completion of the tasks that their

coworkers perform (Griffin, Neal, & Parker, 2007). When there is a high level of task

interdependence, teammates can informally reward the focal employee by prioritizing his or

her work over that of others, by sharing important information with him or her, or by

punishing him or her by not doing so (De Stobbeleir & Ashford, 2014). In other words, when

task interdependence is high among team members, the power dependence on teammates will

increase and LMX and TMX will become equally important.

As mentioned in Hypothesis 2, the differential effect of LMX-TMX incongruence is due

to the way in which employees in general depend more on their leaders than on their teammates.

However, as task interdependence will decrease the difference in power dependence between

leader and teammates, the differential effect of LMX-TMX incongruence will be moderated by

task interdependence. Thus, we hypothesize the following.

Hypothesis 4: The differential effect between (1) LMX worse than TMX and (2)

LMX better than TMX on FSB is moderated by the level of task interdependence.

Specifically, this differential effect will be weakened when there is a high level of

task interdependence.

FSB, Job Performance, and LMX-TMX (In)congruence

FSB helps employees to evaluate their own competence, monitor their performances,

solve performance problems, and, more importantly, set progressive goals and take action to

improve their work performance (e.g., Lam, Huang, & Snape, 2007; Lam et al., 2015;

Morrison, 1993; Renn & Fedor, 2001). Individuals who seek feedback can develop a more

accurate view of their own skills and abilities, and can obtain more information with which to

set improvement goals (Renn & Fedor, 2001). Combining our previous hypotheses regarding

the combined effect of LTX, LMX, and TMX on FSB, and the aforementioned relationship

between FSB and job performance, we contend that the interplay between LMX and TMX

has an indirect effect on job performance through the mediating role of FSB and that this

indirect effect will be moderated by LTX and task interdependence. Therefore, we posit our

final hypotheses as follows.

Hypothesis 5: There is a positive indirect effect of LMX-TMX incongruence on job

performance via FSB and this indirect effect is stronger when LTX is high.

Hypothesis 6: There is a positive indirect effect of LMX-TMX incongruence on job

performance via FSB and this effect is stronger when task interdependence is high.

Method

Sample and Procedure

We collected three waves of data at one-month intervals from employees of a large

Chinese hotel chain. After a batch of newcomers had been working for the hotel for 10

months, we began to collect data; we did not conduct our survey immediately after they were

employed because they needed some time to experience, cultivate, and initially develop their

relationships with supervisors and coworkers. Besides the questionnaires for the hotel

employees, we also created a survey for their immediate team leaders, in order to evaluate the

employees' job performance.

At Time 1, we distributed the first set of questionnaires on LMX, TMX, task

interdependence, and control variables to 282 participants of 54 teams. We received valid

responses from 262 participants of 51 work teams. One month later (Time 2), we distributed

the second set of questionnaires to the 262 employees to measure FSB and received valid

responses from 203 participants of 45 work teams. Finally, one month later (Time 3), we

asked the immediate supervisors of the 203 employees to rate their subordinates' job

performance. Data regarding 147 employees in 45 teams could be matched with their

supervisors' responses and this constitutes our final sample of the focal employees. This

represents an effective response rate of 52.1%. Of this final sample, 66% of employees were female, 10.8% had a college or postgraduate degree, and the mean age was 27.68 years (SD = 8.06); 60.5% of the supervisors were female, 20.7 % had a college or postgraduate degree, and the mean age was 30.24 years (SD = 5.41).

Measures

The questionnaires were presented in Chinese. All the scale items were translated by two bilingual academic translators fluent in both Chinese and English, using a back-translation procedure (Brislin, Lonner, & Thorndike, 1973).

Leader-Member Exchange (LMX). The quality of LMX was measured by means of Graen and Uhl-Bien's (1995) seven-item scale. Sample items are: "I have an effective working relationship with my supervisor" and "My supervisor understands my job problems and needs".

Team Member Exchange (TMX). We measured TMX by means of a nine-item scale developed by Seers et al. (1995). Sample items are: "I am willing to help finish work assigned to others" and "Other members of my team understand my problems and needs".

Leader-Teammates Exchange (LTX). As the focal employees were working in teams, we used the average ratings of LMX of all their teammates (excluding the focal employee) as a measure of LTX relationships. We followed the formula provided by Huo, Lam, and Chen

(2012). Specifically, we summed the LMX scores of all team members, then subtracted the

focal employee's LMX, and finally divided the score by team size minus 1. The specific

formula of LTX is:

$$\overline{X}_i = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{n_i} X_i - X_i}{n_i - 1}$$

Where $X_i = $ LMX of the focal employee i. $n_i = $ the team size of the focal the

employee i. $\overline{X}_i = $ the average score of LMX of the teammates of the focal employee i

excluding him/herself.

Task Interdependence. To measure task interdependence, we used Van der Vegt and

colleagues' (2001) three-item instrument. Sample items include "I need to work closely with

my colleagues in order to do my job properly" and "In order to do our jobs, my colleagues

and I need to exchange information and advice".

Feedback Seeking Behavior (FSB). We measured feedback seeking behavior sing

Ashford and Black's (1996) four-item scale. Sample items include: "To what extent do you

seek from others (including your coworkers and supervisor) feedback on your performance

while you are completing assignments?" and "To what extent do you seek from others

(including your coworkers and supervisor) feedback on your performance after you have

completed an assignment?"

Job Performance. Supervisors were asked to rate their subordinates' performance by responding to Farh and Cheng's (1999) scale. Sample items are: "This subordinate always completes the tasks specified in his or her job description" and "This subordinate meets all the formal performance requirements of the job".

Control Variables. We controlled for team size because of its potential influence on the interaction effect of LMX-TMX on FSB (Banks et al., 2014). We also controlled for the participants' age, gender, education level, and negative affectivity, which we assessed sing Watson, Clark, and Tellegen's (1988) PANAS scales, because prior research has shown that these variables have significant effects on FSB (Finkelstein, Kulas, & Dages, 2003; Gervey, Igou, & Trope, 2005; Miller & Karakowsky, 2005).

Analytical Strategy

To test the hypothesized relationships, we integrated polynomial regression analysis, three-dimensional surface plot analysis (Edwards & Parry, 1993), and moderated mediation tests (Edwards & Lambert, 2007). As our conceptualization is about the relative positive and negative relationships among the three parties, to reduce multicollinearity (Aiken, West, & Reno, 1991) and to facilitate interpretation of the graphs, we use standardized scores in estimating the extent of good or poor relationships between the two parties (Wee, Liao, Liu, & Liu, 2017). To avoid any potential problems resulting from non-normal distributions, we used

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bias-corrected confidence intervals derived from 1,000 bootstrapped estimates for parameter

estimation. To determine the asymmetrical incongruence effect (Hypothesis 2), we regressed

FSB against the control variables and five polynomial terms, using the following equation:

$$FSB = a_0 + a_1 LMX + a_2 TMX + a_3 LMX^2 + a_4 LMX*TMX + b_5 TMX^2 + e \quad \text{(Equation 1)}$$

The slope and the curvature along the congruence line (LMX = TMX; slope: b1 + b2;

curvature: b3 + b4 + b5) and the incongruence line (LMX = -TMX; slope: b1 - b2; curvature:

b3 - b4 + b5) were calculated using equations specified by Edwards and Parry (1993). Then,

significance tests were conducted using procedures for testing linear combinations of

regression coefficients.

To test the moderated polynomial relationships (Hypotheses 1, 3, and 4), we needed to

estimate the equation below:

$$FSB = b_0 + b_1 LMX + b_2 TMX + b_3 LMX^2 + b_4 LMX*TMX + b_5 TMX^2 + b_6 W +$$

$$b_7 LMX*W + b_8 TMX*W + b_9 LMX^2*W + b_{10} LMX*TMX*W + b_{11} TMX^2*W + e$$

$$\text{(Equation 2)}$$

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where W represents the moderator (LTX or task interdependence). The slope and curvature of

the surface along the (in)congruence line at both high and low levels of the moderator were

computed by substituting 1 *SD* above and below the mean level of the moderator into this

equation. To test the conditional indirect incongruence effect (Hypotheses 5 and 6), we used

the following equation; this includes the polynomial terms, moderator W (LTX or task

interdependence), and mediator FSB.

$$JP = b_0 + b_1 LMX + b_2 TMX + b_3 LMX^2 + b_4 LMX*TMX + b_5 TMX^2 + b_6 W +$$

$$b_7 LMX*W + b_8 TMX*W + b_9 LMX^2*W + b_{10} LMX*TMX*W + b_{11} TMX^2*W +$$

$$b_{12} FSB + e \hspace{3cm} \text{(Equation 3)}$$

where JP represents the dependent variable (job performance). After substituting FSB in

Equation 2 into Equation 3 and then rearranging the equation, we derived the following

equation:

$$JP = (b_0 + b_{12}a_0) + (b_1 + b_{12}a_1)LMX + (b_2 + b_{12}a_2)TMX + (b_3 + b_{12}a_3)LMX^2 + (b_4 +$$

$$b_{12}a_4)LMX*TMX + (b_5 + b_{12}a_5)TMX^2 + (b_6 + b_{12}a_6)W + (b_7 + b_{12}a_7)LMX*W + (b_8 +$$

$$b_{12}a_8)TMX*W + (b_9 + b_{12}a_9)LMX^2*W + (b_{10} + b_{12}a_{10})LMX*TMX*W + (b_{11} +$$

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$b_{12}a_{11})TMX^2 * W + e$ (Equation 4)

Following the procedure outlined above, we computed the slope and curvature, representing

the indirect effects of LMX-TMX (in)congruence on job performance along the line of

incongruence at high (1 SD above) and low (1 SD below) levels of the moderator. All the

calculation materials we used are provided by Edwards on his personal website

(http://public.kenan-flagler.unc.edu/faculty/edwardsj/downloads.htm).

Results

Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics, the correlations among the variables, and the

reliability coefficients. LMX was positively related to TMX ($r = .45, p < .01$), task

interdependence ($r = .32, p < .01$), LTX ($r = .29, p < .01$), and FSB ($r = .23, p < .01$). TMX

was also positively related to task interdependence ($r = .48, p < .01$) and FSB ($r = .50, p$

$< .01$). Task interdependence was positively related to LTX ($r = .30, p < .01$) and FSB ($r = .31,$

$p < .01$).

Insert Table 2 about here

We conducted confirmatory factor analyses to examine the distinctiveness among the

substantial variables. The results show that our hypothesized five-factor model ($\chi^2(367) =$

$626.71, p < .001$, CFI = .92, RMSEA = .06, SRMR = .08) fits the data better than an

alternative four-factor model in which LMX and TMX are combined ($\chi^2(367) = 795.84$, p

< .001, CFI = .88, RMSEA = .10, SRMR = .10) and better than the single-factor model

($\chi^2(377) = 11096.37$, $p < .001$, CFI = .79, RMSEA = .13, SRMR = .12).

Hypothesis 1 concerns the interactive effects of LMX-TMX incongruence and LTX

on FSB. Model 3 (see Table 3) shows the results of the relevant regression analysis. As Table

4 shows and Figure 4 illustrates, there is a significant and negative curvature of the surface,

$q_{curvature}$ = -1.20, 95% CI [-2.64, -.70], along the incongruence line (a concave surface) when

there was a low level of LTX. There is a significant and positive curvature, $q_{curvature}$ = 0.84,

95% CI [.55, 2.81], (a convex surface) when there was a high level of LTX. This pattern

suggests that LMX-TMX incongruence, combined with a lower level of LTX, has a negative

effect on FSB, but that LMX-TMX incongruence, combined with a higher level of LTX, has

a positive effect on FSB. Thus, Hypothesis 1 is supported.

Insert Table 3, Table 4, and Figure 4 about here

Hypothesis 2 posits that employees seek feedback less frequently when their LMX

relationships are better than their TMX relationships, and seek feedback more frequently

when their TMX relationships are better than their LMX relationships. Model 1 in Table 3

shows the results of the polynomial regression analysis, as well as the slope and curvatures

along the incongruence line. Figure 5 is a graph of the response surface. The significant

negative slope ($b = -.58$, $SE = .20$, $p < .01$) and the insignificant curvature ($b = .08$, $SE = .19$,

$p > .05$) along the incongruence line (LMX = -TMX) support Hypothesis 2. This

asymmetrical congruence effect is also shown in Figure 5, in which the value of FSB is lower

at the corner on the right (where there is a high value of LMX and a low value of TMX) than

at the corner on the left (where there is a high value of TMX and a low value of LMX) of the

plotted surface.

Insert Figure 5 about here

Hypothesis 3 is also supported. As Table 4 shows, the slope of the surface along the

incongruence line is not significant when there was a low level of LTX, $q_{slope} = -.36$, 95% CI

[-.78, .26], but the slope is significant when there was a high level of LTX, $q_{slope} = -.77$, 95%

CI [-1.63, -.46]. These results show that, when a leader-teammates relationship is poor, there

was, with respect to the effects on FSB, no significant difference between LMX-TMX

incongruence when (1) LMX was better than TMX and (2) TMX was better than LMX.

However, there was a significant difference when leader-teammates relationship quality is

high. The difference in this asymmetrical congruence effect at different levels of LTX is

illustrated in Figure 5.

Hypothesis 4 concerns the interactive effects of LMX-TMX congruence and the level

of task interdependence on FSB. Table 5 shows the results of the relevant regression analysis.

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As Table 4 shows and Figure 6 illustrates, the slope of the surface along the incongruence

line is significant at both low (q_{slope} = -.75, 95% CI [-1.45, -.49]) and high levels of task

interdependence (q_{slope} = -.50, 95% CI [-1.19, .14]). This result shows that, when task

interdependence is higher, there was, with respect to the effects on FSB, a smaller difference

(which is indicated by a smaller effect size) between LMX-TMX incongruence when (1)

LMX was better than and (2) TMX was better than LMX. Thus, Hypothesis 4 is supported.

Insert Table 5 and Figure 6 about here

Hypothesis 5 posits that the indirect effect of LMX-TMX incongruence on job

performance (via FSB) is moderated by the level of LTX. Table 3 shows the relevant

regression results. FSB is positively related to job performance (β =.16, SE = .06, p <.01)

when all the moderated polynomial terms are included. For the bootstrapped conditional

indirect effect, as Table 4 shows, when LTX is high, the curvature along the incongruence

line (this curvature representing the indirect effect of LMX-TMX incongruence on job

performance via FSB) was significant and positive ($q_{curvature}$ = .42, 95% CI = [.47, .47]).

When LTX is low, the curvature representing the indirect effect was not significant ($q_{curvature}$

= -.89, 95% CI = [-.89, .08]). This suggests that the positive indirect effect of LMX-TMX

incongruence on job performance via FSB is stronger when LTX is high. Thus, Hypothesis 5

is supported.

Hypothesis 6 posits that the indirect effect of LMX-TMX incongruence on job

performance via FSB is moderated by the level of task interdependence. Table 5 shows the

relevant regression results. FSB is positively related to job performance (β =.13, SE = .06, p

< .05) when all the moderated polynomial terms are included. For the bootstrapped

conditional indirect effect, as Table 4 shows, when there was a low level of task

interdependence, the curvature along the incongruence line (this curvature representing the

indirect effect of LMX-TMX incongruence on job performance via FSB) was significant and

positive ($q_{curvature}$ = .06, 95% CI = [.12, .63]). When there was a high level of task

interdependence, the curvature representing the indirect effect was also significant but

indicated a stronger positive effect ($q_{curvature}$ = .38, 95% CI = [.51, .54]. This suggests that the

indirect effect of LMX-TMX incongruence on job performance (via FSB) is stronger when

there is a high level of task interdependence. Thus, Hypothesis 6 is supported.

Discussion

In the last 30 years, organizational behavior scholars have put a great deal of effort into

examining the effect of social contexts on feedback seeking behavior. Despite the progress

made, prior research tends to focus only on a single dyad and argues either from a cost

reduction perspective or from a value-increase perspective, producing inconsistent or even

opposite conclusions on the association between social contexts and FSB. Feedback seeking

behavior, as an effective tactic of proactive adaptation, aims to better fit into the surrounding

environment (Ashford & Tsui, 1991; Parker & Collins, 2010). In our opinion, to accurately

examine how social context drives employees' FSB, we first need to figure out their social

position within the environment, which determines how they assess and weigh the costs and

benefits of seeking feedback and whether or not the benefits outweigh the costs of doing so.

Apparently, investigating their relative social standing within a group requires us to

consider all three types of dyadic relationships (i.e., LMX, TMX, and LTX). In this study, we

explored how the interplay among LMX, TMX, LTX, and task interdependence influences

the focal employee's FSB and job performance. We found that, when LTX is good, the

greater the LMX-TMX incongruence, and the more FSBs the focal employee will engage in.

When LTX is poor, the greater the LMX-TMX incongruence, and the less FSB the focal

employee will engage in. Similarly, when task interdependence is high, the focal employee

will seek more feedback when LMX-TMX incongruence is greater. When task

interdependence is low, the focal employee will seek less feedback when LMX-TMX

incongruence is greater. We also found that the incongruence that occurs when LMX is worse

than TMX drives more FSB than the incongruence that occurs when LMX is better than

TMX, and this asymmetric incongruence effect is stronger when LTX is high versus low.

Moreover, the levels of LTX and task interdependence significantly moderate the indirect

effect of LMX-TMX incongruence on subsequent job performance through FSB.

It should be noted that we do not specify from whom the focal employee is seeking

feedback. When we are examining the effects of triadic relationships on employee FSB, the

basic premise is that employees are trying to get information to improve their work behavior.

Both leaders and teammates are valuable sources of information. With the consideration of all

three dyadic relationships, it is not appropriate to assume that employees will seek information

only from a party with which they have a good relationship. The drive to seek information

causes the imbalance of the three dyadic relationships. Employees will seek information from a

target even when they have a negative relationship with this target, so far as the information

can be useful. Therefore, we only include overall feedback seeking behavior instead of

separating them into different targets. Conceptualizing FSB toward a specific target based on

the relationship with that target is still a conceptualization at the dyadic level. When all three

dyadic relationships are considered, it is more appropriate to consider the total amount of

feedback seeking behaviors, which in turn increase job performance.

Theoretical Contributions

Our study provides the following contributions to the literature. First, we contribute to

the social exchange literature by integrating balance theory and power-dependence theory to

offer more nuanced explanations for the triadic relationship among the focal employee, the

leader, and the teammates. According to Emerson's (1962, 1972) early work on exchange

theory, the relationship between power and social structure is central to social exchange

theory. Both power and social structure would "lose their fundamental social meaning if their

outcomes converge, as we have shown in the case of isolated two-party exchange" (Cook &

Rice, 1978, p. 724). Therefore, they are more likely to be studied in systems larger than the

dyadic exchange. In line with these early conceptual works, we simultaneously examine the

role of power and group triadic structure in influencing a focal employee's proactive behavior

(i.e., FSB). Although a great deal of knowledge has been accumulated on dyadic relationships,

employee behaviors that involve triadic relationships have seldom been investigated in

organizational behavior research. We believe that the examination of the effect of the triadic

relationship is a unique contribution to the extant literature.

Second, we extend the literature on FSB by providing a deeper and more integrated

understanding of how leaders, teammates, and task characteristics simultaneously activate

competing FSB motives and how individuals weigh the costs and benefits of each context.

Traditional FSB studies have treated contextual factors independently and have explained

how each factor activates a certain kind of motivation (related to the imagined costs or

instrumental benefits) of engaging in FSB. Yet, as we pointed out, FSB is a result of the

consideration of multiple competing motives together. Moreover, these motives do not have

equal influence in determining FSB. Individuals tend to place more weight on the

instrumental value motive than on the cost reduction motive (Hays & Williams, 2011).

Therefore, to investigate how employees weight various motives in deciding whether or not

to seek feedback within the social context in question, it is the configuration of social context

rather than each isolated contextual factor that matters. We believe that this study will be

helpful for future research to predict the effect of social context on other kinds of proactive

behaviors, especially behaviors that may involve employees weighing costs and benefits (e.g.,

organizational citizenship behavior or deviant behavior).

Our third contribution is exploring the moderating role of task interdependence in the

relationship between LMX-TMX incongruence and FSB and job performance. In their annual

review of dyadic relationships in OB literature, Liden and colleagues (2016) called for future

researchers to investigate how task interdependence influences individuals' attitudes and

actions toward their colleagues with whom they have a low exchange quality. The findings of

the present study, as a response to this call, demonstrate that the level of task interdependence

can affect the relative importance of LMX and TMX and increase individuals' perceived

importance of TMX. Thus, our study concurs with prior research suggesting that leaders are

not always overriding team members in terms of power in all contexts. We extend this work

by articulating that the task interdependent conditions that increase individuals' perceived

importance of TMX and peer FSB will change the power structure at hand. Moreover, while

previous studies have mainly treated social context and job characteristics as independent

contextual predictors (Parker, Williams, & Turner, 2006), our study reveals that task

interdependence can serve as a moderator that influences the effects of social context on

employee outcomes.

Practical Implications

Our findings demonstrate that LMX-TMX incongruence, especially when LMX is

worse than TMX, has a negative effect on individuals' FSB. Organizations need to monitor

and evaluate employees' LMX and TMX relationships and develop training programs aimed

at aligning LMX and TMX in order to improve employees' proactive behavior.

With regard to individuals, our findings shed light on the importance of their FSB

when adjusting themselves to different social environments. FSB is important because it

mediates the effect of the interplay between LMX and TMX on job performance. Specifically,

increasing levels of FSB mitigate the negative effects of LMX-TMX incongruence on job

performance. Therefore, employees are advised to take the initiative and seek any

information that might help them improve their job performance and adapt to their

organizations.

This study also highlights the importance of work design in a team context. Firms

need to take into account the effects of task characteristics, especially ones that could change

the power-dependence structures of workplace relationships, when considering the influence

of the quality of relationships. For example, increasing the level of task interdependence can

amplify the positive effects of LMX and TMX and foster a more effective work environment

by facilitating employees' proactive behaviors, such as FSB (Oldham & Hackman, 2010).

Limitations of the Study and Future Research

This study has several limitations. First, we used self-reported measures of LMX, TMX,

and FSB. This may have introduced common method bias. To avoid this problem, it would be

better to have also asked the focal employees' coworkers or supervisors to rate the quality of

LMX and TMX. However, this approach may have reduced the power of the polynomial

regression. Employees' attitudes are largely formed by and their behaviors driven by their

own perceptions (Lewin, 1936; Weber, 1991). Thus, comparing the LMX and TMX

relationships using data from the same source guarantees that the participants' FSB indeed

resulted from their perceptions of LMX-TMX congruence. Common method bias may be less

salient in our polynomial regression analyses because, in the first step, we included the two

independent variables. This should have accounted for the common method variances

between the independent and dependent variables. As the polynomial regression analyses

requested incremental explanatory power over the independent variables, the threat of

common method variances may be minimized. Nevertheless, we recommend that future research be conducted with ratings from multiple sources in order to cross-validate our findings. Second, although we contended, based on social exchange literature, that LMX, TMX, and LTX relationships are developed independently and in parallel, it is still quite possible that these three types of dyads affect each other in varying degrees. For example, when a leader develops a good relationship with the focal employee (high LMX) and bad relationships with the teammates (low LTX), those teammates may envy and try to isolate the focal employee, resulting in low TMX for the focal employee. We would suggest future research explores the reciprocal relationships among LMX, TMX, and LTX and how the dynamics of triadic relationship change over time.

Third, we did not investigate the employees' feedback seeking strategies (monitoring or inquiring), the content of the feedback they received (positive or negative), or who they approached (supervisors or coworkers). Such detailed investigations should be relevant and interesting. Feedback inquiry entails more imagined costs than feedback monitoring (Northcraft & Ashford, 1990). Thus, we expect that, when LMX and TMX are highly congruent, employees are more likely to engage in feedback inquiry. It is likely that they also engage in feedback monitoring more frequently when there is an LMX-TMX incongruence. Furthermore, when LMX is better than TMX, employees might seek more feedback from

their supervisors than from their coworkers (Ashford & Tsui, 1991). The content of feedback

matters as well. When there is a high degree of congruence between LMX and TMX,

employees are more likely to seek negative feedback (Chen et al., 2007). Future research

could identify and examine the different strategies employees use in their FSB, the FSB

content, and who they approach when seeking feedback.

Fourth, the generalizability of the results may be affected by the cultural context of

the study. Recent studies have discussed how cultural differences between the East and the

West influence predictions of employees' FSB or other information seeking behavior (e.g.,

Chen et al., 2007; Li, Harris, Boswell, & Xie, 2011). The high power distance orientation of

Eastern culture may reduce employees' FSB with supervisors (Hofstede, 1980). However,

empirical findings have shown no significant country-level differences in the effects of power

distance on job outcomes (e.g., Kirkman, Chen, Farh, Chen, & Lowe, 2007). Nonetheless,

replication in other cultural contexts would increase the generalizability of the conclusions

drawn in this study.

Conclusion

In response to recent calls for an examination of the interplay between LMX and TMX,

this study integrates balance theory and power dependence and provides a more

comprehensive understanding of the effect of triadic group relationships (LMX, TMX, and

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LTX) on FSB and job performance. Our findings suggest that it is critical to examine

congruence among LMX, TMX, and LTX, rather than considering these different types of

relationship separately, in order to better predict employees' FSB. Furthermore, we find that

task interdependence plays a moderating role in the interplay of LMX, TMX, FSB, and job

performance.

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SOCIAL CONTEXTS AND FSB

Table 1

Triadic Relationships among LMX, TMX, and LTX, According to Balance Theory

LTX		LMX	TMX	LMX-TMX Congruence or Incongruence	Balance or Imbalance Triangle	Driving Force for FSB
High (+ve)	(a)	High (+ve)	High (+ve)	Congruence	Balance	Weak
	(b)	Low (-ve)	Low (-ve)	Congruence	Balance	Weak
	(c)	High (+ve)	Low (-ve)	Incongruence	Imbalance	Strong
	(d)	Low (-ve)	High (+ve)	Incongruence	Imbalance	Strong
Low (-ve)	(e)	High (+ve)	High (+ve)	Congruence	Imbalance	Strong
	(f)	Low (-ve)	Low (-ve)	Congruence	Imbalance	Strong
	(g)	High (+ve)	Low (-ve)	Incongruence	Balance	Weak
	(h)	Low (-ve)	High (+ve)	Incongruence	Balance	Weak

Note: LMX = leader-member exchange; TMX = team member exchange;
LTX = leader-teammates exchange; FSB = feedback seeking behavior.

SOCIAL CONTEXTS AND FSB

Table 2

Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations

Variables	*M*	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Age (in years)	27.68	8.06											
2. Gender	.66	.48	.04										
3. Education level	2.29	.87	-.16	.02									
4. Negative Affectivity	2.30	.75	-.15	.04	.13								
5. Team Size	4.31	2.10	-.18*	.33**	-.13	-.07							
6. LMX	3.67	.64	-.12	-.10	.22*	-.24**	.02	(.83)					
7. TMX	4.02	.49	.02	-.04	.12	-.33**	.16*	.45**	(.87)				
8. LTX	3.65	.56	-.05	.01	.34**	-.10	.07	.29**	.16+	—			
9. Task Interdependence	3.89	.66	.02	.04	.22**	-.14	.02	.32**	.48**	.30**	(.70)		
10. FSB	5.27	1.05	.06	-.09	.08	-.13	-.08	.23**	.50**	.06	.31**	(.84)	
11. Job Performance	5.77	.61	-.16+	-.08	.25**	-.03	-.13	.16+	-.04	.03	.07	.15+	(.69)

Note. N = 147. Cronbach's alpha coefficients are in parentheses.

LMX = leader-member exchange; TMX = team member exchange; LTX = leader-teammates exchange; FSB = feedback seeking behavior.

+ $p < .10$. *$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. Two-tailed.

SOCIAL CONTEXTS AND FSB

Table 3

Polynomial Regressions of FSB and Job Performance on LMX-TMX (In)congruence and Team Peers' LMX

Variables	FSB			Job Performance
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	
Constant	5.20*** (.095)	5.16*** (.13)	5.20*** (.14)	5.10*** (.31)
Controls				
Age	.01 (.01)	.00 (.01)	.00 (.01)	-.09(.06)
Gender	-.20 (.21)	-.06 (.19)	-.06 (.19)	.01 (.05)
Education level	.17 (.12)	.09 (.11)	.07 (.11)	.05(.06)
Negative Affectivity	-.25$^+$ (.14)	.00 (.13)	-.04 (.13)	-.06(.06)
Team Size	-.01 (.05)	-.06 (.05)	-.07 (.05)	-.09 (.06)
Polynomial Terms				
LMX		-.06 (.11)	.01 (.12)	.11 (.07)
TMX		.53*** (.12)	.57*** (.12)	-.18* (.08)
LMX^2		.14 (.10)	.08 (.12)	-.10 (.10)
LMX $\times$ TMX		.02 (.15)	.18 (.16)	.11 (.10)
TMX^2		-.04 (.09)	-.09 (.09)	-.03 (.05)
Moderator				
LTX			-.37* (.18)	-.02(.11)
LMX $\times$ LTX			-.14 (.16)	-.01(.10)
TMX $\times$ LTX			.07 (.16)	.06(.10)
LMX$^2 \times$ LTX			.22$^+$ (.13)	-.10(.08)
LMX $\times$ TMX $\times$ LTX			-.51* (.19)	.08(.12)
TMX$^2 \times$ LTX			.28* (.13)	.03(.08)
Mediator				
FSB				.16**(.06)
F	1.29	4.64***	3.75***	1.77*
R^2	.05	.29	.36	.22
ΔR^2		.24***	.07$^+$	.05**
Incongruence Line (LMX = -TMX)				
Slope			-.58** (.20)	
Curvature			.08 (.19)	

Note. $N = 147$. FSB = feedback seeking behavior; LMX = leader-member exchange;
TMX = team member exchange; LTX = leader-teammates exchange;
Standard errors are in parentheses.
$^+ p < .10.$ *$p < .05.$ **$p < .01.$ ***$p < .01.$ Two-tailed.

SOCIAL CONTEXTS AND FSB

Table 4

Tests of the Response Surface along the Line of LMX-TMX Incongruence at Low and High Levels of Task Interdependence

Dependent Variables	Level of LTX	Incongruence Line (LMX = -TMX)	
		SLOPE	CURVATURE
FSB	Low	-.36 [-.78, .26]	-1.20**[-2.64, -.70]
	High	-.77* [-1.63,-.46]	.84**[.55, 2.81]
Job Performance (via FSB)	Low	-.28** [-.38, -.36]	-.22 [-.89, .08]
	High	-.01 [-.45, .13]	.42** [.47, .47]
	Level of Task Interdependence	Incongruence Line (LMX = -TMX)	
		SLOPE	CURVATURE
FSB	Low	-.75** [-1.45, -.49]	-.52* [-1.30, -.13]
	High	-.50* [-1.19, -.14]	1.08** [.98, 1.88]
Job Performance (via FSB)	Low	-.02 [-.52, .06]	.06* [12, .63]
	High	-.10* [-.30, -.22]	.38** [.51, .54]

Note. $N = 147$. The 95% bias-corrected confidence intervals were derived from 1,000 bootstrapped estimates. FSB = feedback seeking behavior; LMX = leader-member exchange; TMX = team member exchange.

$^{*}p < .05$. $^{**}p < .01$. Two-tailed.

SOCIAL CONTEXTS AND FSB

Table 5

Polynomial Regressions of FSB and Job Performance on LMX-TMX (In)congruence and Task Interdependence

Variables	FSB	Job Performance
Constant	5.13^{***} (.13)	5.23^{***} (.32)
Controls		
Age	.00 (.01)	-.08(.06)
Gender	-.22 (.19)	-.01 (.05)
Education level	.01(.11)	.03(.06)
Negative Affectivity	-.01(.12)	-.04(.06)
Team Size	-.05 (.04)	-.07 (.06)
Polynomial Terms		
LMX	-.11 (.12)	.07 (.07)
TMX	$.51^{***}$ (.13)	$-.18^{*}$ (.09)
LMX^2	.10 (.11)	$-.16^{*}$ (.07)
$LMX \times TMX$	-.08 (.15)	.15 (.10)
TMX^2	.10 (.09)	-.03 (.06)
Moderator		
Task Interdependence (TI)	-.17 (.13)	.02 (.08)
$LMX \times TI$	.04 (.13)	.02 (.08)
$TMX \times TI$	-.09 (.011)	-.01 (.07)
$LMX^2 \times TI$	$.28^{**}$ (.10)	.04 (.07)
$LMX \times TMX \times TI$	$-.35^{*}$ (.16)	-.02 (.10)
$TMX^2 \times TI$	$.17^{**}$ (.06)	.01 (.04)
Mediator		
FSB		$.13^{*}$ (.06)
F	4.39^{***}	1.75^{*}
R^2	.40	.20
ΔR^2	$.11^{**}$	$.04^{*}$

Note. $N = 147$. FSB = feedback seeking behavior; LMX = leader-member exchange; TMX = team member exchange. Standard errors are in parentheses.
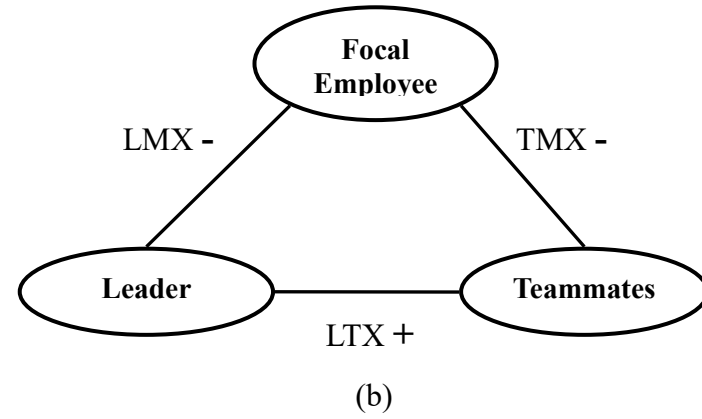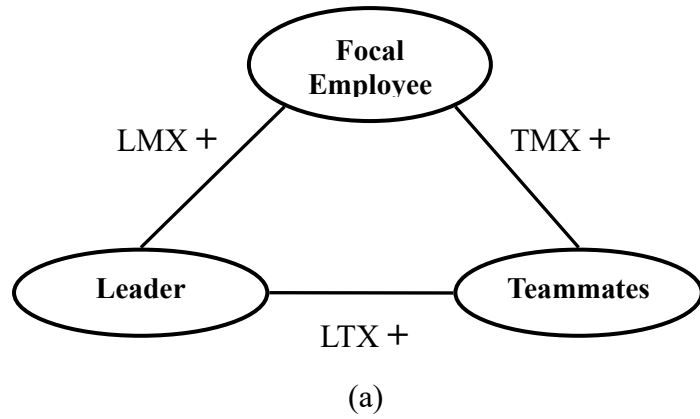
$^{+} p < .10$. $^{*} p < .05$. $^{**} p < .01$. $^{***} p < .01$. Two-tailed.
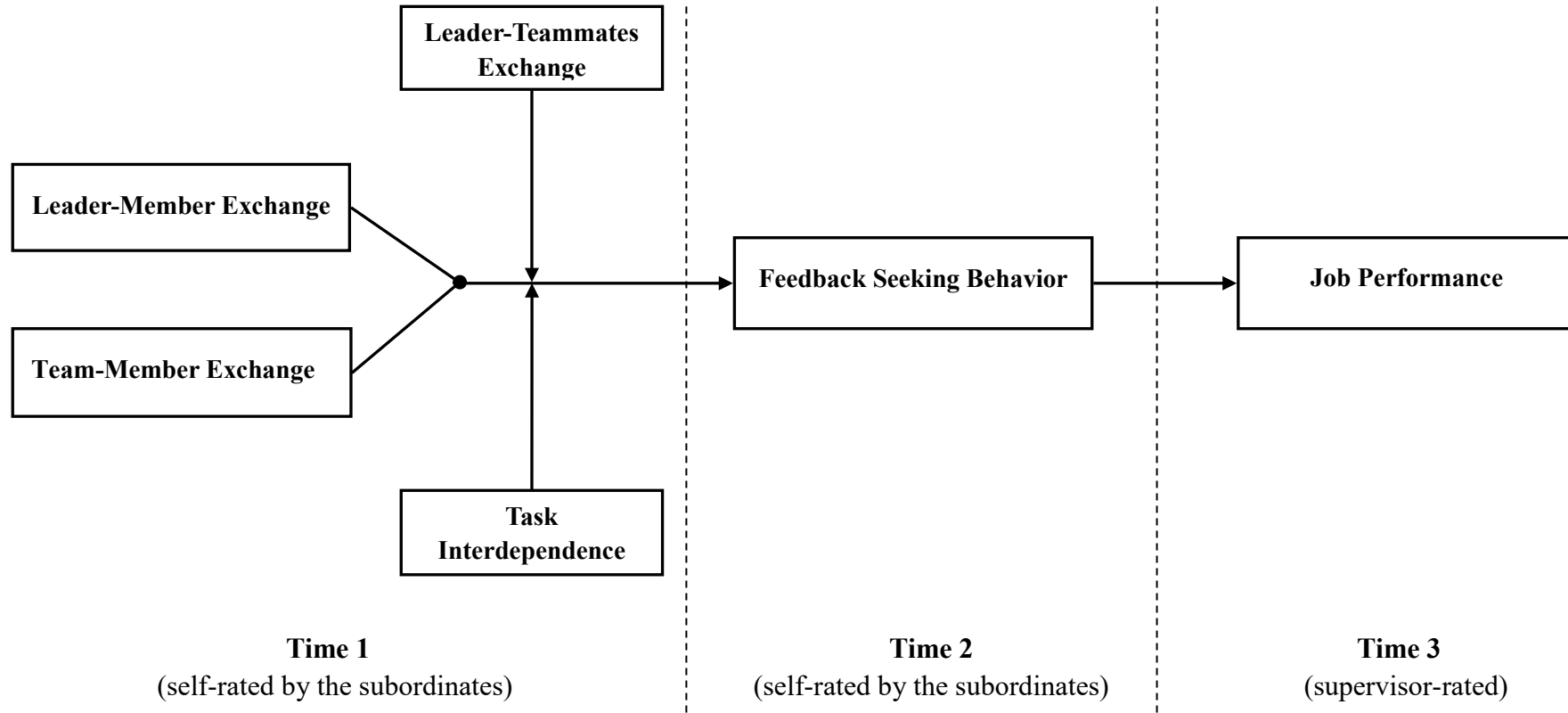
Figure 1. Conceptual model.

SOCIAL CONTEXTS AND FSB

(a)

(b)

(g)

(h)
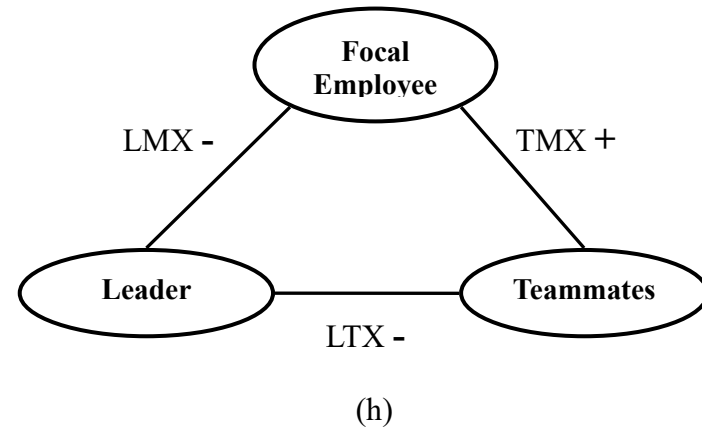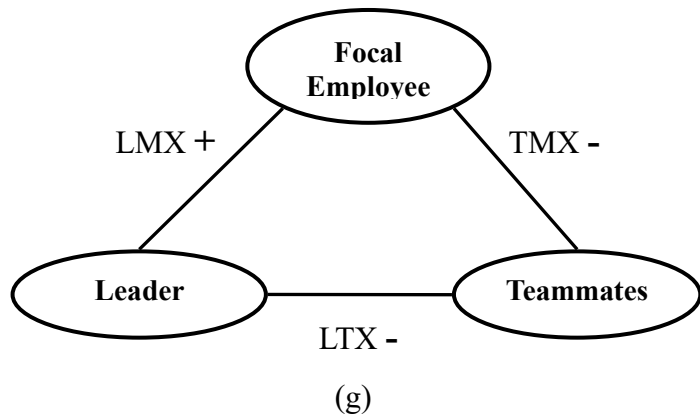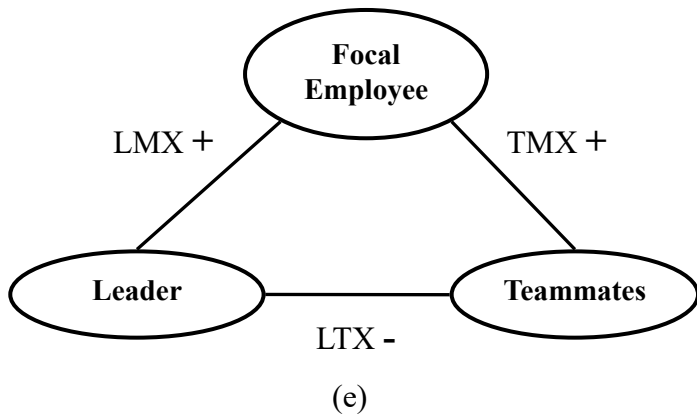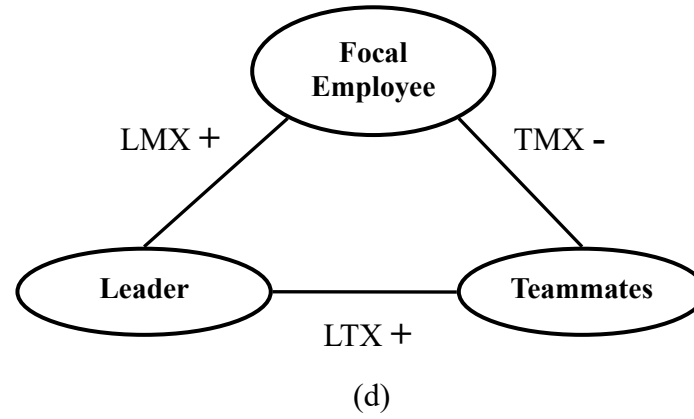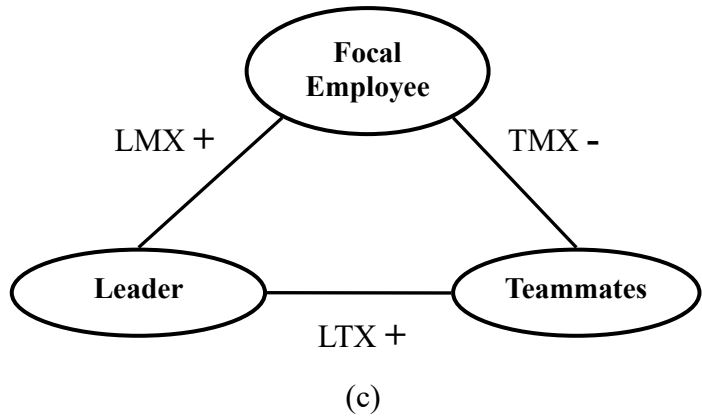
SOCIAL CONTEXTS AND FSB

Figure 2. Four Balanced LMX-TMX-LTX Triads. LMX = leader-member exchange; TMX = team member exchange; LTX = leader-teammates exchange. The + sign refers to positive relationships and the – sign refers to negative ones.
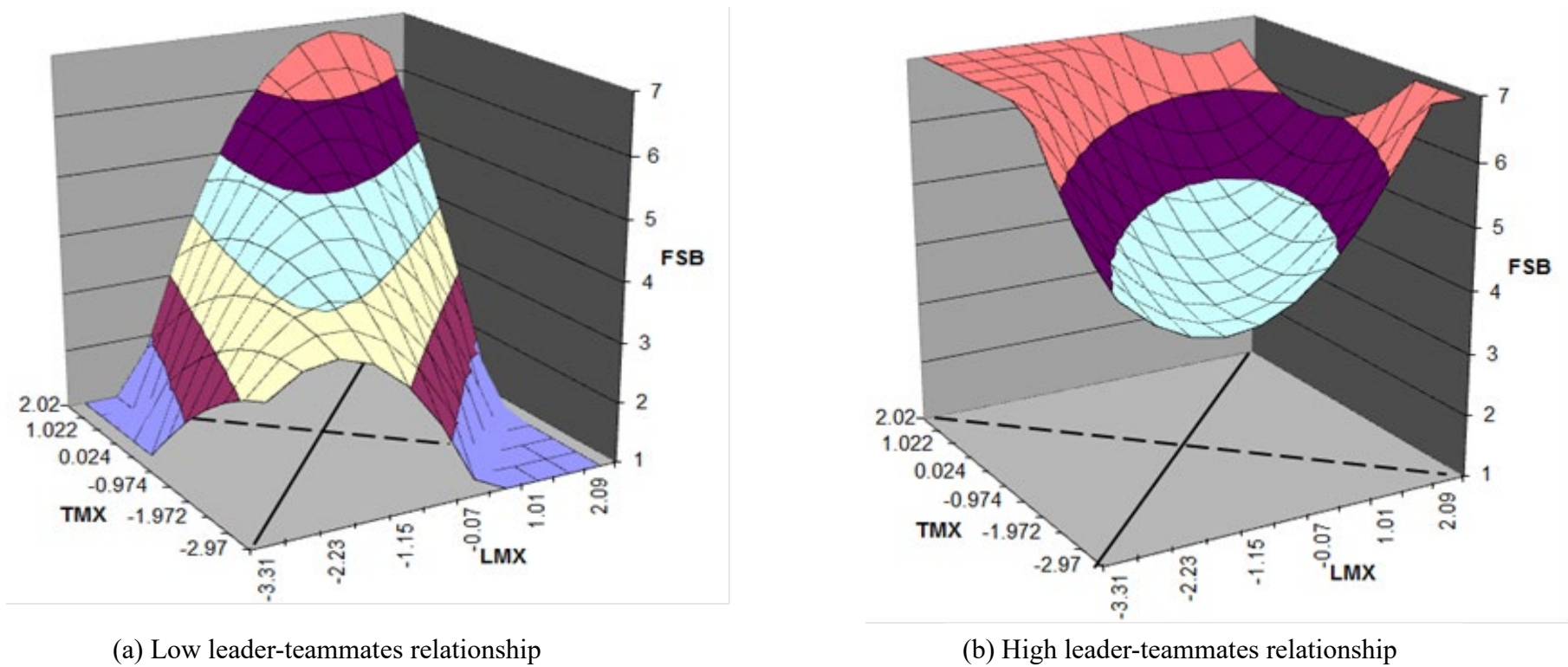
SOCIAL CONTEXTS AND FSB

(c)

(d)

(e)

(f)
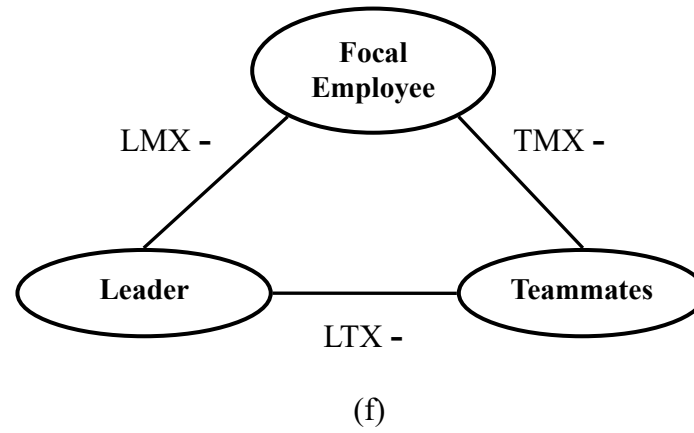
SOCIAL CONTEXTS AND FSB

Figure 3. Four Imbalanced LMX-TMX-LTX Triads. LMX = leader-member exchange; TMX = team member exchange; LTX= leader-teammates exchange. The + sign refers to positive relationships and the – sign refers to negative ones.

SOCIAL CONTEXTS AND FSB

(a) Low leader-teammates relationship   (b) High leader-teammates relationship

Figure 4. Relationships between LMX-TMX (in)congruence and FSB at different levels of leader-teammates relationship.

FSB = feedback seeking behavior; LMX = leader-member exchange; TMX = team member exchange.

The dashed diagonal on the base of the graph represents LMX-TMX incongruence; the solid diagonal represents LMX-TMX congruence.
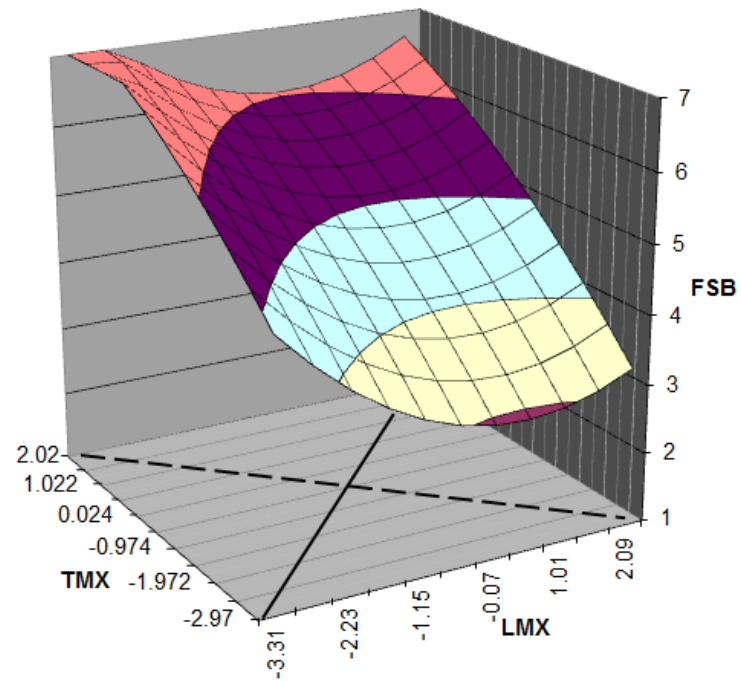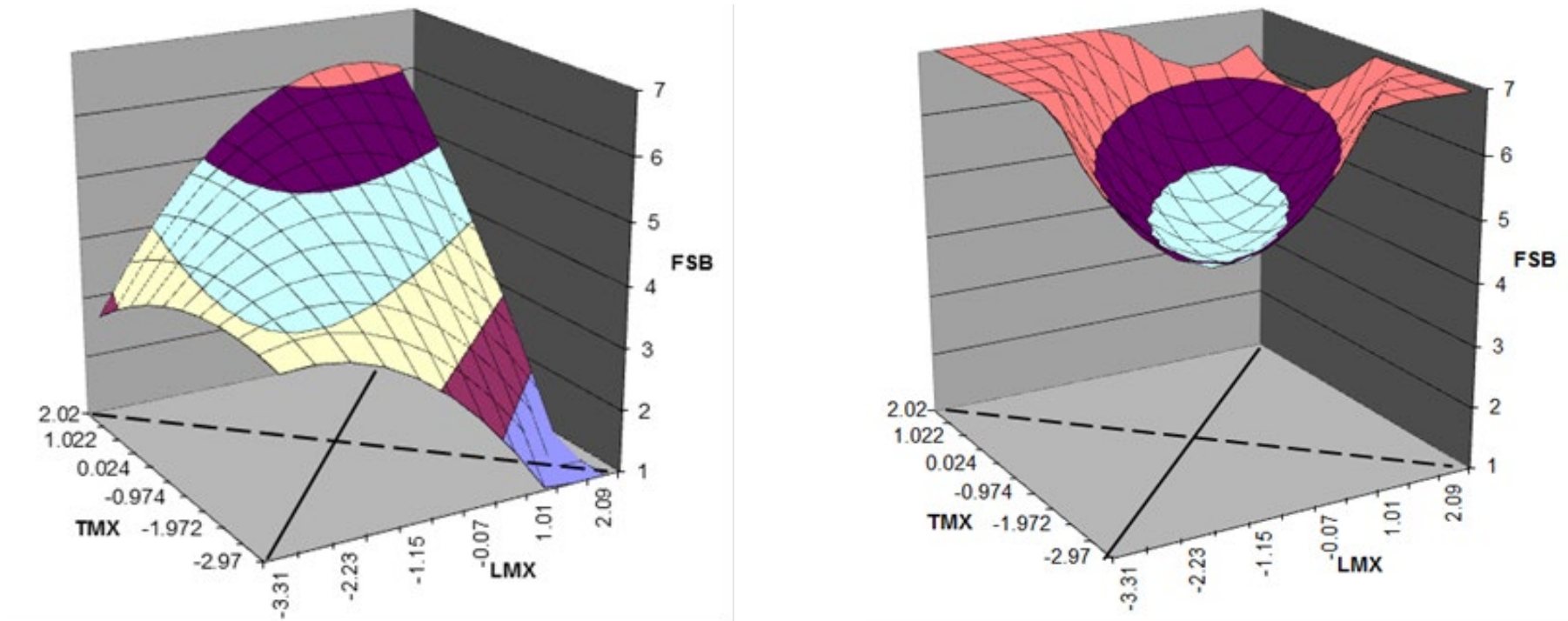
SOCIAL CONTEXTS AND FSB

Figure 5. Relationships between LMX-TMX (in)congruence and feedback seeking behavior.

FSB = feedback seeking behavior; LMX = leader-member exchange; TMX = team member exchange. The dashed diagonal on the base of the

graph (the line *y* = -*x*) represents LMX-TMX incongruence; the solid diagonal (the line *y* = *x*) represents LMX-TMX congruence.

SOCIAL CONTEXTS AND FSB

(a) Low level of task interdependence   (b) High level of task interdependence

Figure 6. Relationships between LMX-TMX (in)congruence and FSB at different levels of task interdependence.

FSB = feedback seeking behavior; LMX = leader-member exchange; TMX = team member exchange.

The dashed diagonal on the base of the graph represents LMX-TMX incongruence; the solid diagonal represents LMX-TMX congruence.