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Feedback Quality and Job Performance: The Roles of Feedback Seeking and Gender Similarity in Entrepreneurial Firms

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A B S T R A C T

This study investigates the relationship between feedback quality (FQ), feedback-seeking behavior (FSB), and job performance (JP), incorporating the moderating role of gender similarity. Considering samples from two industries, oil/petrochemical and banking in Iran, the organizations selected in these industries were among those that exhibited entrepreneurial behavior and could be considered entrepreneurial organizations. Also, using LISREL, Sobel, and SPSS

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software to analyze the data collected by questionnaires, four of the hypotheses of this research were confirmed. The findings show that high-quality feedback positively impacts job performance and enhances feedback-seeking behavior. Moreover, feedback-seeking behavior acts as a mediator between feedback quality and job performance. While gender similarity was hypothesized to moderate the relationship between feedback quality and feedback-seeking behavior, the results did not support this role; however, gender similarity independently influenced feedback-seeking behavior. These findings underscore the importance of providing high-quality, actionable feedback and fostering environments encouraging feedback-seeking for performance improvement. So, this study has clarified the complex relations between feedback quality, feedback-seeking behavior, job performance, and gender similarity and has contributed to a more accurate understanding of how these factors influence each other. From a practical perspective, designing feedback systems that emphasize quality, training managers to deliver constructive feedback, and addressing gender dynamics in workplace interactions can lead to improved job performance.

KEYWORDS: *performance management, feedback seeking behavior, feedback quality, job performance, gender similarity*

Introduction

Performance management is a widely recognized human resource management system aimed at enhancing individual and group performance. Decades of research in this field have revealed that the effectiveness of a performance management system relies not only on its technical and procedural components but also on human interactions and performance conversations. This issue has prompted a shift in performance management literature towards emphasizing the psychological aspects of manager-employee interactions in day-to-day performance management activities. A key component of such interactions is the conversations about performance feedback (Rabbani & Alavi, 2023). Feedback plays a crucial role in employees' performance by providing insights into how supervisors perceive their work, their performance, and what needs to be modified to achieve the expected goals. High-quality feedback (FQ) enhances employees' confidence and activates behavioral motivation systems, with positive feedback signaling rewards and negative feedback indicating potential punishment (Nae et al., 2015; Ilies et al., 2007). Providing feedback to improve performance is a common management practice (Drouvelis & Paiardini, 2022). FQ is characterized by specificity,

consistency over time, and clear information on behaviors and processes linked to goals and outcomes. When employees receive detailed, high-quality feedback, especially regarding their standing among peers—their performance improves compared to low-quality or absent feedback. Enriching feedback with task-related strategies and behaviors further strengthens its positive impact on performance (Whitaker & Levy, 2012). Additionally, effective feedback processes should allow active participation from the recipient (Lizzio et al., 2003). Previous research emphasizes the importance of employees actively seeking feedback in professional settings, which involves seeking information aimed at evaluating and reflecting on work processes and individual performance. Feedback-seeking behavior (FSB) demonstrates an individual's proactive efforts to assess the appropriateness of their behavior or performance to achieve a specific goal (Nae et al., 2015). Employees extend beyond official organizational channels to seek feedback from various sources and apply it in their daily work routines. This perspective has led to a new direction in feedback research towards exploring feedback-seeking behaviors rather than focusing solely on feedback content (Lam et al., 2017). FSB is defined as a "conscious devotion of effort toward determining the correctness and adequacy of behaviors for attaining valued end states" (Ashford, 1986). This behavior serves as a proactive individual tactic to achieve job-related insights that may not otherwise be available (Lam et al., 2017). Feedback-seeking has five key aspects, including how and when feedback is sought, its frequency, the goal behind seeking it, and the subject matter of the feedback. These aspects indicate an individual's choices when deciding whether to seek feedback (Crommelinck & Anseel, 2013). Over more than three decades, FSB has been linked to numerous positive outcomes, including enhanced performance, more accurate self-perception, and career advancement (Froehlich & Segers, 2021). It also supports social acceptance and adaptation, especially in uncertain environments (Vandenberghe et al., 2021). Therefore, employees' feedback seeking plays a pivotal role in performance conversations by providing opportunities to identify performance issues and potential solutions. The content of feedback-seeking has been investigated in depth in previous studies. Park et al. (2007) proposed three types of feedback individuals could seek: diagnostic, normative, and assurance. Diagnostic feedback guides behaviors and actions that require improvement to achieve performance targets. Normative feedback compares an employee's performance with that of peers, potentially highlighting underperformance, while assurance feedback

affirms correct actions or achieved goals, encouraging the repetition of desired behaviors. Feedback-seeking content reflects the type of questions asked, the expected outcomes, and whether the feedback sought is positive or negative and related to processes or outcomes (Rabbani & Alavi, 2023). Given the significance of feedback quality and FSB in performance management, numerous studies have examined their interrelation (Dahling & Whitaker, 2016; Gong et al., 2017; Whitaker & Levy, 2012; Zhang et al., 2020). Nae et al. (2015) found that beyond its direct effect on job performance, feedback quality also shapes the relationship between FSB and performance, strengthening it when perceived quality is high. The relationship between feedback and performance is stronger when perceived feedback quality is high. Prior studies have examined various moderators in this relationship, including employees' perceived feedback quality and trust in supervisors (Nae et al., 2015), feedback-seeking culture (Evans & Dobrosielska, 2021), political skill (Dahling & Whitaker, 2016), and leader–member exchange (Lam et al., 2017). Based on theoretical and empirical evidence, this study introduces a novel model exploring the relationship between feedback quality and work performance, the mediating role of feedback-seeking behavior (FSB), and the moderating role of gender similarity. Scientifically, the model advances understanding of the complex interactions among these variables and addresses gaps in the literature on organizational psychology and human resource management. From a practical standpoint, the findings can help organizations recognize the importance of delivering high-quality feedback and fostering FSB to improve performance. Examining gender similarity also offers insights into how gender dynamics shape workplace feedback processes, supporting the development of more inclusive feedback practices. The study focuses on entrepreneurial organizations, including those with substantial female participation, and is structured into six sections covering the theoretical background, research methods, results, hypothesis discussion, and conclusions.

Literature Review

In this section, the theoretical foundations of this research are investigated, and the hypotheses are presented accordingly.

Feedback Quality and Job Performance

According to Information theory (Shannon, 1948), an event, such as receiving or perceiving feedback, is only informative when there is initial uncertainty. This theory is based on the concept of entropy, a measure of uncertainty, which quantifies how much information is inherent in a message. So, high entropy indicates high uncertainty, and each new piece of information can reduce this uncertainty. In other words, if an individual is completely certain about the appropriate response and the potential evaluations of that response, then the feedback loses its informative value. So, feedback is only informative to the extent that it adds new knowledge or understanding (Ashford & Cummings, 1983). Moreover, considering the high signal-to-noise ratio and optimal channel capacity as basic elements of communication, other characteristics of high-quality feedback can be inferred. It should minimize irrelevant or distracting information, ensuring the main message is clear and actionable. It should also use an appropriate medium that can convey the necessary information. High-quality feedback has been utilized as one potential component of management strategies that can enhance productivity, and the relation between feedback quality and performance has been investigated in this regard. Drouvelis and Paiardini (2022) examined how varying the feedback quality causally affects performance when monetary incentives are ruled out. The study concluded that low-quality feedback can reduce employees' intrinsic motivation and lead to lower performance levels compared to situations where clear, high-quality feedback is provided. In addition, their research underscores the advantageous impact of high-quality feedback on productivity, implying that the quality of the feedback provided mainly matters in increasing job performance (JP) (Drouvelis & Paiardini, 2022). In another research by Nae et al. (2015), it was observed that though employees actively sought feedback from supervisors, if they perceived it as low-quality information or content, their work performance was not improved. Based on these findings, the first hypothesis of this study is formulated as follows:

H1: Feedback quality has a positive effect on job performance

Feedback Quality and Feedback-Seeking Behavior

The feedback quality construct has become a theoretically significant contextual factor influencing FSB and is consistently highlighted in the models linking feedback seeking to job performance. Whitaker and Levy

(2012) have shown that feedback quality is positively related to feedback seeking. They highlighted the importance of FQ in organizations that seek to increase FSB and improve job performance. By emphasizing the strong link between FQ and its utility, the results of their study suggest that low-quality feedback may significantly dampen feedback utility for most employees (Whitaker & Levy, 2012). On the other hand, the quality of feedback information to enhance the task performance is probably higher when an individual actively seeks feedback when needed. Feedback quality can enhance self-efficacy and the probability of using the feedback to improve job performance (VandeWalle, 2003). Therefore, the second hypothesis of this study is formulated as follows:

H2: Feedback quality has a positive and significant effect on FSB

Feedback-seeking Behavior and Job Performance

Feedback-seeking behavior (FSB) has notable implications for employees' adaptation, socialization, learning, creativity, and performance (Crommelinck & Anseel, 2013). Its relevance to job performance is often linked to self-regulation, as individuals who actively seek feedback are generally more effective. However, the feedback–performance relationship remains mixed, with some studies reporting positive, null, or even negative effects (Asumeng, 2013). FSB effectiveness depends on contextual factors. Leader-member relations play a critical role in determining whether FSB enhances job performance (Lam et al., 2017). Task characteristics also matter; moderate-difficulty tasks are preferred because they provide diagnostic feedback on ability without attributing outcomes solely to external factors. This aligns with achievement motivation theory, which emphasizes selecting tasks that inform self-assessment rather than those guaranteeing success (Atkinson & Feather, 1966). Such proactive behaviors are consistent with early conceptualizations of FSB (Ashford & Cummings, 1983) and contribute to employees assigning meaning to their work experiences (Vandenberghe et al., 2021). Accordingly, this study's third hypothesis examines the effect of FSB on job performance.

H3: FSB has a positive and significant effect on job performance

Quality of Feedback, Feedback-seeking Behavior, and Job Performance

Feedback provides employees with information to regulate behavior and achieve work objectives. Feedback-seeking behavior (FSB) enhances job performance by supplying technical, role-specific, and evaluative insights, helping employees perform tasks effectively and meet expectations. In the absence of sufficient guidance, employees often seek feedback from supervisors to reduce role ambiguity and organizational uncertainty. FSB is also linked to creative performance, as it facilitates access to diverse information sources (Lam et al., 2017). Feedback quality significantly influences FSB by enhancing perceived feedback utility (Whitaker & Levy, 2012). FSB subsequently affects task performance and organizational citizenship behavior through the mediating role of role clarity. Drawing on implicit person theory (Heslin et al., 2005), uncertainty reduction, and Korman's motivation theory (Korman, 2012), research shows that high-quality feedback strengthens FSB and indirectly improves task performance by engaging both self-enhancement and self-protective motivational systems (Whitaker & Levy, 2012). While FSB is central to performance management and can improve individual outcomes (Rabbani & Alavi, 2023), some studies question its direct effect on performance (Anseel et al., 2015). Therefore, this study further investigates the relationships between feedback quality, FSB, and job performance by proposing its fourth hypothesis.

H4: Feedback-seeking behavior has a mediating role in the relation between feedback quality and job performance.

Gender Similarity

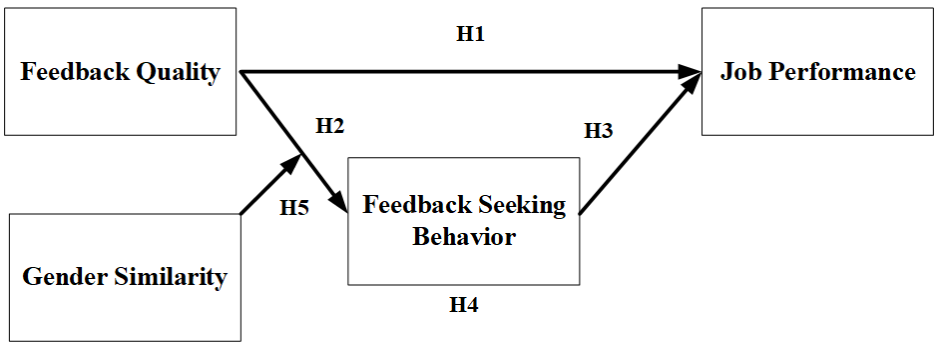
Similarity-attraction theory (Byrne, 1971) posits that individuals with similar characteristics are less likely to experience discomfort or conflict during interactions, fostering trust, credibility, and smoother communication. Such similarity enhances mutual understanding and the perceived value of feedback. Froehlich and Segers (2021) found that similarity among employees shapes feedback-seeking networks and, in turn, influences employability, suggesting that feedback-seeking behavior (FSB) is also affected by these dynamics. According to a meta-analysis by Anseel et al. (2015), FSB is especially beneficial for younger or less experienced employees, whereas organizational tenure, job tenure, and age correlate negatively with it. Individual factors such as learning orientation, external

feedback propensity, self-efficacy, and exposure to credible or positive feedback increase FSB. Situational elements, including transformational leadership and high-quality relationships, also serve as motivators (Anseel et al., 2015). Contextual moderators have been examined as well. Nae et al. (2015) reported that trust in supervisors does not moderate the FSB-performance link but interacts with feedback quality. Moreover, a feedback-seeking culture enhances the effect of positive feedback on task performance, with alignment between culture and practice yielding the best outcomes (Evans & Dobrosielska, 2021). Froehlich and Segers (2021) further noted that employees tend to seek feedback from colleagues and supervisors sharing similar age, tenure, role, or gender, with gender similarity positively associated with occupational expertise. Gender differences in feedback behavior also appear relevant: women often favor affiliative and indirect negotiation styles and adopt participative leadership, whereas men tend to favor directive approaches. Women also tend to exhibit higher social competence and interpersonal awareness (Lizzio et al., 2003). Based on these findings, this study hypothesizes that gender, particularly gender similarity, moderates the relationship between feedback quality and FSB.

H5: Gender similarity moderates the relation between feedback quality and employee feedback-seeking behavior.

Figure 1 depicts the conceptual model of this research based on the hypotheses presented in this section.

Figure 1: Research conceptual model



Source: Authors

Research Method

Study 1

Sample and Data Collection

The purpose of this study was to examine the relations between FQ, FSB, and JP in employees in the Energy industry across Tehran, Khozestan, and Bushehr, Iran. As mentioned in the introduction, an attempt has been made to ensure that the organizations under study in both selected industries are examples of entrepreneurial organizations and exhibit entrepreneurial behaviors. A postal survey was conducted to collect information from Iranian oil firms using an anonymous self-report questionnaire. It should be noted that the principle of confidentiality was respected, and respondents gave informed consent. To collect data from firms in different cities, 249 questionnaires were distributed, each accompanied by an explanatory letter and a return envelope. A pre-test with 30 participants was conducted. After removing 32 incomplete responses, 217 valid questionnaires were retained, yielding an 87% response rate. The sample consisted predominantly of men (84%), with participants aged 22–64 years, an average tenure of 14 years, and 94% having education beyond secondary school. Data analysis employed structural equation modeling (SEM) using LISREL 8.8 in two stages: first, assessing convergent validity; and second, testing the hypotheses. Measurement models for latent variables were examined via confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), followed by structural modeling and mediation analysis.

Questionnaire Measures

Independent variables: Feedback Quality (FQ)

Feedback Quality Questionnaire (FQQ-12, Strijobs, Pat-EI & Narcis, 2010) was used. The questionnaire includes sub-scales for fairness (FAIR) (e.g., I would be satisfied with this feedback), usefulness (USE) (e.g., I would consider this helpful feedback), acceptance (ACCEPT) (e.g., I would accept this feedback), and willingness to improve (WI) (e.g., I would be willing to improve my performance). Responses ranged from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree.

Mediating Variable: Feedback Seeking Behaviors (FSB)

We use the FSB with the Feedback Seeking Behaviors Questionnaire (FSBQ-7, Ashford, 1986) scale as the basis of measurement. This scale includes three sub-dimensions: "frequency of monitoring (FOM)" (e.g., how often do you compare your performance with others?) and "Frequency of inquiry (FOI)" (e.g., seek information from your co-workers about your work performance). The measuring items utilize a five-point Likert scale (1 = Never, 5 = Always).

Moderator Variable: Gender Similarity

Gender similarity between the feedback giver and the feedback receiver is measured by asking the employee's gender, as well as the employee's direct manager or supervisor.

Dependent Variable: Job Performance (JP)

JP was measured using the Job Performance Questionnaire (JPQ-10) developed by Koopmans et al. (2013). The scale was formed in terms of a Five-point response option from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. It was initially used to measure individuals' task accomplishments, update their knowledge and skills, and respond to challenges. This job performance scale was based on participants' self-reports. Sample statements include 'I manage to plan my work so it gets done on time,' 'I will work to update my job skills,' and 'I take on challenging tasks if I can.'

Results

Table 1 presents the means, standard deviations, and bivariate correlations of the study constructs. As expected, the bivariate correlations were consistent with the proposed relations.

Table 1: Means, standard deviations, internal consistencies, and intercorrelations

Variables	M	SD	Cronbach's α	1	2	3
FQ	3.95	0.60	0.79	1		
FSB	4.01	0.48	0.83	0.63**	1	
JP	4.10	0.39	0.70	0.40**	0.55**	1

*Note: **1% levels*

Source: Authors' calculation

Convergent Validity

This study uses the Convergent Validity for research scales. Three procedures have been proposed by Fornell and Larcker (1981) to evaluate the convergent validity of the research model, namely reliability of measures, construct composite reliability, and average variance extracted (AVE). According to Hair et al. (2006), a factor loading of 0.7 indicates that the validity of an item is acceptable. For the following index of convergent validity, AVE, according to Segars (1997), is considered adequate if the AVE is 0.5 or higher. This study uses Cronbach's alpha rather than composite reliability; it is considered adequate if Cronbach's alpha is 0.7 or higher (see Table 2).

Table 2: Results of convergent validity

Construct	Measure	Factor loading (>.70)	AVE (>.50)	Cronbach alpha (>.70)
FSB			0.59	0.79
	Supervision	0.7		
	Search	0.82		
FQ			0.68	0.83
	Fair	0.74		
	Use	0.73		
	Accept	0.76		
	Improve	0.7		
JP			0.54	0.7
	Task	0.71		
	Skill	0.74		
	Challenge	0.7		

Source: Authors' calculation

To evaluate the hypothesized model's fit, a two-step approach was used. First, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) assessed the relationship between observed and latent variables. Model fit was tested using recommended indices - χ^2, df, RMSEA, GFI, AGFI, NFI, and CFI-following Kline's (1998) guidelines, with RMSEA < 0.08, $\chi^2/df \leq 3$, and GFI, AGFI,

NFI, and CFI ≥ 0.90 indicating acceptable fit (Joreskog & Sorbom, 1996). Results (Table 3) confirmed that all fit indices were within acceptable thresholds, demonstrating the model's adequacy in explaining structural relationships.

Table 3: Measurement model fitting test

Measurement Model	**χ2**	**Df**	**RMSEA (<0/08)**	**GFI (>0/90)**	**AGFI (>0/90)**	**NFI (>0/90)**	**CFI (>0/90)**
FQ	17.34	6	0.046	0.93	0.90	0.90	0.91
FSB	4.78	2	0.052	0.97	0.91	0.95	0.96
JP	11.35	5	0.031	0.99	0.97	1.00	1.00

Note: All χ2, p < .001.

Source: Authors' calculation

Table 4: Results of hypothesis testing

Hypotheses	**Standardized coefficient**	***T* value**	**Result**
FQ → JP	0.32	2.06	Supported**
FQ → FSB	0.83	7.95	Supported**
FSB → JP	0.80	3.40	Supported**
χ2	96.04		
Df	34		
χ2/df (<3)	2.82		
RMSEA (<0/08)	0.048		
GFI (>0/90)	0.94		
AGFI (>0/90)	0.90		
NFI (>0/90)	0.98		
CFI (>0/90)	0.96		

*Note: ** P < 0.01. RMSEA root mean square error of approximation, GFI goodness-of-fit index, AGFI adjusted goodness-of-fit index, NFI Normed Fit Index, CFI Comparative Fit Index.*

Source: Authors' calculation

At the end of the analysis, the Chi-square measurement was found to be 96.04, and the degree of freedom (df) was 34 (/df = 2.82; p < 0.01); the

obtained results are: RMSEA = 0.048, GFI = 0.94, AGFI = 0.90, NFI = 0.98 and CFI = 0.96. Hypothesis 1 stated that FQ has a positive and significant effect on JP ($t = 2.06$; $p < 0.01$). Hypothesis 2 stated that FQ has a positive and significant effect on FSB ($t = 7.95$; $p < 0.01$). Hypothesis 3 stated that FSB has a positive and significant effect on JP ($t = 3.40$; $p < 0.01$). So, the FQ has a positive and significant effect on FSB, and FSB is a mediator of the relation between FQ and JP, as demonstrated by the analysis results (H4). The increase in the FQ positively affects his/her FSB and JP. According to Table 4, H1, H2, and H3 hypotheses were supported.

With respect to the mediating role of FSB, the FQ significantly and positively influences JP ($\beta = 0.43$, $p < 0.05$). FQ significantly and positively influences FSB ($\beta = 0.84$, $p < 0.05$). The study also tested the coefficient of FSB on JP ($\beta = 0.32$, $p < 0.05$). To determine whether FSB partially mediates the influence of the FQ on JP, we employed the Sobel test (Sobel test = 2.85, $p < .001$, Table 6) and found that H4, i.e., the mediating role of FSB, was supported. Based on the above, the direct effect of the FQ on JP is 0.52, and the indirect effect is 0.29. Thus, the total effect is 0.61 (see Table 5).

Table 5: Sobel test, direct, indirect, and total effects

Mediating path	**Sobel test**	**p-value**	**Indirect effect**	**Direct effect**	**Total effect**
FQ → FSB→ JP	2.85	< 0.001	0.29	0.52	0.61

Source: Authors' calculation

To examine the modere role of gender similarity, regression analysis was performed using SPSS. Gender similarity was calculated from employee and direct manager genders, and z-scores were computed for feedback quality and feedback-seeking behavior to standardize ranges. An interaction term (feedback quality × gender similarity) was created as the moderator variable. In the regression model, feedback quality, gender similarity, and the interaction term were independent variables, with feedback-seeking behavior as the dependent variable. Table 6 presents the regression results.

Table 6: Regression analysis results to test hypothesis 5

Construct	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t-value	p-value
	Beta	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	-0.1	0.069		-1.451	0.148
FQ (z-score)	0.544	0.075	0.544	7.211	0.000
Gender_Similarity (GS)	0.191	0.096	0.096	1.994	0.047
Interaction (FQ*GS)	-0.051	0.098	-0.04	-0.525	0.6

Note: Dependent variable: FSB (z-score)

Source: Authors' calculation

The results provided in Table 6 indicate that H5, which is the moderating role of gender similarity, is rejected, and gender similarity was disapproved as the moderator since the significance of this variable is 0.6 (p-value = 0.6 > 0.05). However, the p-value of gender similarity is 0.047, indicating a significant effect of gender similarity on FSB.

Study 2

Sample and Data Collection

The purpose of this study was to examine the relations between FQ, FSB, and JP in employees in the Banking industry across Tehran, Iran. A postal survey was conducted to collect information from Iranian banks using an anonymous self-report questionnaire. As mentioned in the previous section, in this sample, participants also provided informed consent, and the responses were anonymous. To collect data from banks, 400 questionnaires were distributed, each including an explanatory letter and a return envelope. A pre-test with 30 participants was conducted. After removing 32 incomplete responses, 322 valid questionnaires remained, yielding an 80.5% response rate. The sample consisted of 64% men and 36% women, aged 22–59 years, with an average tenure of 19 years, and 97% held an education beyond secondary school. Data were analyzed using structural equation modeling (SEM) via LISREL 8.8 in two stages: first, convergent validity testing; then, hypothesis testing through confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), structural modeling, and mediation analysis.

Questionnaire Measures

Independent Variables: Feedback Quality (FQ)

Feedback Quality Questionnaire (FQQ-12, Strijobs, Pat-EI & Narcis, 2010) was used. The questionnaire includes sub-scales for fairness (FAIR) (e.g., I would be satisfied with this feedback), usefulness (USE) (e.g., I would consider this helpful feedback), acceptance (ACCEPT) (e.g., I would accept this feedback), and willingness to improve (WI) (e.g., I would be willing to improve my performance). Responses ranged from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree.

Mediating Variable: Feedback Seeking Behaviors (FSB)

We use the FSB with the Feedback Seeking Behaviors Questionnaire (FSBQ-7, Ashford, 1986) scale as the basis of measurement. This scale includes three sub-dimensions: "frequency of monitoring (FOM)" (e.g., how often do you compare your performance with others?") and "Frequency of inquiry (FOI)" (e.g., seek information from your co-workers about your work performance). The measuring items utilize a five-point Likert scale (1 = Never, 5 = Always).

Moderator Variable: Gender Similarity

Gender similarity between the feedback giver and the feedback receiver is measured by asking the employee's gender, as well as the employee's direct manager or supervisor.

Dependent Variable: Job Performance (JP)

JP was measured using the Job Performance Questionnaire (JPQ-10) developed by Koopmans et al. (2013). The scale was formed in terms of a Five-point response option from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. It was initially used to measure individuals' task accomplishments, update their knowledge and skills, and conform to challenges. This job performance scale was based on participants' self-reports. Sample statements include 'I manage to plan my work so it gets done on time,' 'I will work to update my job skills,' and 'I take on challenging tasks if I can.'

Results

The table presented shows the means, standard deviations, and bivariate correlations of the study constructs.

Table 7: Means, standard deviations, internal consistencies, and intercorrelations

Variables	M	SD	Cronbach's α	1	2	3
FQ	3.69	0.71	0.81	1		
FSB	3.62	0.70	0.88	0.69**	1	
JP	4.06	0.46	0.76	0.43**	0.58**	1

*Note: **1% levels*

Source: Authors' calculation

Convergent Validity

This study uses the Convergent Validity for research scales. Three procedures have been proposed by Fornell and Larcker (1981) to evaluate the convergent validity of the research model, namely, reliability of measures, construct composite reliability, and average variance extracted (AVE). According to Hair et al. (2006), a factor loading of 0.7 indicates that the validity of an item is acceptable. For the following index of convergent validity, AVE, according to Segars (1997), is considered adequate if the AVE is 0.5 or higher. This study uses Cronbach's alpha rather than composite reliability; it is considered adequate if Cronbach's alpha is 0.7 or higher (see Table 8).

Table 8: Results of convergent validity

Construct	Measure	Factor loading (>.70)	AVE (>.50)	Cronbach alpha (>.70)
FSB			0.62	0.81
	Supervision	0.73		
	Search	0.85		
FQ			0.74	0.88
	Fair	0.79		
	Use	0.77		
	Accept	0.81		

Construct	Measure	Factor loading (>.70)	AVE (>.50)	Cronbach alpha (>.70)
JP	Improve	0.72	0.57	0.76
	Task	0.73		
	Skill	0.76		
	Challenge	0.72		

Source: Authors' calculation

To test the fit of the hypothesized model, the two-step approach was followed. First, to confirm that the observed variables were satisfactorily related to their respective latent variables, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), as one of the data analysis procedures, was applied to the measurement model. To test the fit of the measurement and structural models, Kline (1998) suggested that there should be a minimum of four tests that are acceptable and compatible with the model fit. These tests include chi-square ($\chi 2$), degrees of freedom (df), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI), Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index (AGFI), Normed fit index (NFI), and Comparative fit index (CFI). The results of this study are presented in Table 3. Hence, it indicates that the overall structure of the model can properly explain the structural relation of the data in this study.

In fit indices measures, RMSEA < 0.08 and $\chi 2 \leq 3$ of ideal values indicate a perfect fit. Likewise, GFI, AGFI, NFI, and CFI values of 0.9–0.95 or greater are considered indicative of acceptable overall fit (Joreskog & Sorbom, 1996). In this study, the values pertaining to fit indices have been at acceptable levels (see Table 9).

Table 9: Measurement model fitting test

Measurement Model	$\chi 2$	df	RMSEA (<0/08)	GFI (>0/90)	AGFI (>0/90)	NFI (>0/90)	CFI (>0/90)
FQ	14.19	7	0.039	0.95	0.91	0.91	0.93
FSB	3.96	2	0.051	0.99	0.97	0.97	0.99
JP	7.94	4	0.042	0.96	0.94	0.90	0.92

Note. All $\chi 2$, $p < .001$.

Source: Authors' calculation

At the end of the analysis, the Chi-square measurement was found to be 84.98, and the degree of freedom (df) was 41 (/df = 2.07; $p < 0.01$); the obtained results are: RMSEA = 0.038, GFI = 0.97, AGFI = 0.93, NFI = 0.99, and CFI = 0.95. Hypothesis 1 stated that FQ has a positive and significant effect on JP ($t = 3.70$; $p < 0.01$). Hypothesis 2 stated that FQ has a positive and significant effect on FSB ($t = 9.14$; $p < 0.01$). Hypothesis 3 stated that FSB has a positive and significant effect on JP ($t = 2.12$; $p < 0.01$). So, the FQ has a positive and significant effect on FSB, and FSB is a mediator of the relation between FQ and JP, as demonstrated by the analysis results (H4). The increase in the FQ positively affects his/her FSB and JP. According to Table 10, H1, H2, and H3 hypotheses were supported.

Table 10: Results of hypotheses testing

Hypotheses	**Standardized coefficient**	***T* value**	**Result**
FQ → JP	0.39	3.70	Supported**
FQ → FSB	0.69	9.14	Supported**
FSB → JP	0.28	2.12	Supported**
$\chi 2$		84.98	
Df		41	
$\chi 2$/df (<3)		1.85	
RMSEA (<0/08)		0.038	
GFI (>0/90)		0.97	
AGFI (>0/90)		0.93	
NFI (>0/90)		0.99	
CFI (>0/90)		0.95	

*** P < 0.01. RMSEA root mean square error of approximation, GFI goodness-of-fit index, AGFI adjusted goodness-of-fit index, NFI Normed Fit Index, CFI Comparative Fit Index.*

Results of Hypotheses Testing

With respect to the mediating role of FSB, the FQ significantly and positively influences JP ($\beta = 0.46$, $p < 0.05$). FQ significantly and positively influences FSB ($\beta = 0.89$, $p < 0.05$). The study also tested the coefficient of FSB on JP ($\beta = 0.34$, $p < 0.05$). To determine whether FSB partially mediates the influence of the FQ on JP, we employed the Sobel test (Sobel

test = 3.42, p < .001, Table 11) and found that H4, i.e., the mediating role of FSB, was supported. Based on the above, the direct effect of the FQ on JP is 0.57, and the indirect effect is 0.33. Thus, the total effect is 0.64 (see Table 11).

Table 11: Sobel test, direct, indirect, and total effects

Mediating path	Sobel test	p-value	Indirect effect	Direct effect	Total effect
FQ → FSB→ JP	3.42	< 0.001	0.33	0.57	0.64

Source: Authors' calculation

To assess the moderating role of gender similarity, regression analysis was performed in SPSS. Gender similarity was derived from employee and direct manager genders, and z-scores were calculated for feedback quality and feedback-seeking behavior to standardize variable ranges. An interaction term (feedback quality × gender similarity) was generated as the moderator. In the regression model, feedback quality, gender similarity, and the interaction term served as independent variables, with feedback-seeking behavior as the dependent variable. Table 12 reports the results of this analysis.

Table 12: Regression analysis results to test hypothesis 5

Construct	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t-value	p-value
	Beta	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	-0.345	0.149		-2.305	0.022
FQ (z-score)	0.550	0.106	0.550	5.170	0.000
Gender_Similarity (GS)	0.437	0.162	0.170	2.693	0.008
Interaction (FQ*GS)	-0.09	0.128	-0.071	-0.706	0.481

Note: Dependent variable: FSB (z-score)

Source: Authors' calculation

The results provided in Table 12 indicate that H5, which is the moderating role of gender similarity, is rejected, and gender similarity was disapproved as the moderator since the significance of this variable is 0.481 (p-value = 0.481 > 0.05). However, the p-value of gender similarity is 0.008, indicating a significant effect of gender similarity on FSB.

Discussion

This study investigated the effect of feedback quality on job performance, considering the mediating role of feedback-seeking behavior (FSB) and the moderating role of gender similarity. Two samples from Iran's oil and petrochemical and banking industries were selected due to differences in gender composition and organizational culture; the former had predominantly male managers and employees, while the latter had greater gender diversity. The results confirmed the first hypothesis: feedback quality positively affects job performance in both industries. High-quality feedback—characterized by fairness, timeliness, usefulness, ease of acceptance, and a developmental focus-enhanced employees' task performance, skill development, and ability to address challenges, aligning with prior research (Ashford & Cummings, 1983; Drouvelis & Paiardini, 2022; Nae et al., 2015). The second hypothesis was also supported: feedback quality positively influences FSB. Employees perceiving feedback as fair, useful, and oriented toward improvement were more likely to seek feedback from multiple sources, fostering a feedback culture (Whitaker & Levy, 2012).

The third hypothesis was confirmed: FSB positively impacts job performance by improving task execution, knowledge acquisition, and adaptability, consistent with earlier findings (Rabbani & Alavi, 2023; Lam et al., 2017). The fourth hypothesis demonstrated that FSB mediates the relationship between feedback quality and job performance. Employees receiving high-quality feedback engaged more in feedback-seeking, which in turn enhanced performance, regardless of industry (Lam et al., 2017; Whitaker & Levy, 2012). However, the moderating role of gender similarity in the feedback quality–FSB link was not supported. While it did not moderate the relationship, gender similarity had a direct positive effect on FSB, with employees more inclined to seek feedback from managers of the same gender - likely due to cultural factors.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

This study, grounded in Shannon's information theory (1948), provides a clearer picture of how feedback quality, feedback-seeking behavior (FSB), job performance, and gender similarity interact in organizational settings. It addresses the gap noted by Nae et al. (2015) regarding the limited empirical evidence on moderators in the FSB-performance relationship. By incorporating gender similarity into the conceptual model based on gender similarity attraction theory, our findings help explain how the feedback process functions and how gender dynamics can shape employees' willingness to seek feedback and ultimately their job performance. In addition to the theoretical implications, this study has practical implications for two important audiences: managers and human resource practitioners.

Managers can enhance employee performance by providing high-quality, constructive, and timely feedback, while fostering an environment where employees feel comfortable seeking it. Implementing regular feedback sessions, promoting open communication, and encouraging employees to seek feedback from supervisors and peers proactively all support professional growth and improved performance. HR professionals can strengthen organizational feedback practices by building a feedback-seeking culture centered on continuous learning and improvement. While gender similarity does not moderate the link between feedback and FSB, its positive effect on FSB suggests that organizations can benefit from training programs that help employees interpret and engage with feedback from supervisors of different genders. Additionally, evaluating feedback processes through surveys or focus groups provides insights for refining these systems and maximizing their impact on organizational performance.

Like many other studies, this research is not without limitations. One key limitation is the potential bias in self-report questionnaires, which may reflect self-enhancing tendencies rather than objective data. Future research is encouraged to use multiple sources of performance appraisal, such as formal performance records or supervisor evaluations, to mitigate this problem. Another limitation relates to the cross-sectional design, which limits the ability to infer causality between variables such as feedback quality, feedback-seeking behavior (FSB), and job performance. Future studies should consider longitudinal designs with data collected at multiple time points to establish stronger causal relationships. The sampling strategy also presents limitations. The data were collected exclusively from the banking, oil, and petrochemical industries of Iran, which may reduce the

generalizability of the findings to other sectors and cultural contexts. Furthermore, the gender composition of the sample was unbalanced, reflecting the patriarchal nature of the manufacturing and energy sectors compared to the service sector. Typically, the majority of employees in the energy industry in Iran, especially in the operational sector, are men. This is not the case in the banking industry. This gender imbalance and sector-specificity may limit the applicability of the results to more gender-diverse or demographically diverse industries. As Sally de Luc and Summer (2000) pointed out, cultural values such as power distance affect employees' trust in supervisor feedback, and the cultural context of Iran is different from Western countries (Hofstede, 2001). Therefore, future research should replicate the current model using gender-balanced and more diverse samples in different cultural settings or examine cultural values as a moderator.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that high-quality feedback improves job performance by encouraging active feedback-seeking, emphasizing the value of constructive and actionable input within supportive environments. While gender similarity did not moderate the relationship, it was associated with higher trust and communication, indirectly enhancing feedback effectiveness. The findings suggest that organizations should design feedback systems prioritizing quality, openness, and inclusivity, supported by training on gender dynamics. Future research should explore additional moderating factors and adopt longitudinal designs to clarify causal relationships. Cultivating a culture of quality feedback and proactive feedback-seeking can substantially boost performance and organizational success.

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