Soliciting resources from others: An integrative review

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SOLICITING RESOURCES FROM OTHERS: AN INTEGRATIVE REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Resource seeking, or the act of asking others for things that can help one attain one's goals, is an important behavior within organizations due to the increasingly dynamic nature of work that demands collaboration and coordination among employees. Over the past two decades, there has been growing research in the organizational sciences on four types of resource seeking behaviors: feedback-, information-, advice-, and help-seeking. However, research on these four behaviors has existed in separate silos. We argue that there is value in recognizing that these behaviors reflect a common higher order construct (resource seeking), and in integrating the findings across the four literatures as a basis for understanding what we do and do not know about the predictors and outcomes of resource seeking at work. More specifically, we use conservation of resources (COR) theory as a framework to guide our integration across the four literatures and to both deepen and extend current understandings of why and when employees engage in resource seeking as well as how resource seeking behaviors may lead to both individual- and collective-level outcomes. We conclude with a discussion of future research needs and how COR theory can provide a fruitful foundation for future resource seeking research.

Keywords: feedback seeking; information seeking; advice seeking; help seeking; conservation of resources theory

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SOLICITING RESOURCES FROM OTHERS: AN INTEGRATIVE REVIEW

Employees often need resources from others to be effective and successful in their jobs. As these resources are in many cases not voluntarily provided, employees may need to proactively seek them from coworkers, supervisors, or other individuals. This may take the form of feedback seeking, where they ask others about how well they are performing or how they might improve. It may take the form of information seeking, where employees solicit information to better understand their work environment or to perform particular aspects of their work. It may take the form of advice seeking, where employees solicit the judgment of others before making a decision. Or it may take the form of help seeking, where employees ask others to assist or to contribute effort toward accomplishing a task.

These four types of resource seeking: feedback-, information-, advice-, help-seeking, have been studied in four distinct literatures. One might argue that these silos are appropriate, as the four behaviors have different definitions and operationalizations. Moreover, the four behaviors have different historical origins and theoretical roots, are elicited by different types of context, and have different foci and goals. However, a closer examination of the empirical literature suggests that there are important commonalities, and that by studying the four behaviors as separate constructs, we are "missing the forest for the trees". We see the conceptual and empirical commonalities as suggesting an important opportunity to integrate and transfer key insights across the four bodies of work.

In other words, we argue that the similarities among the four behaviors justify viewing them as forms of a higher order construct, *resource seeking*, and also suggest value in an integrative review with an emphasis on common and complementary findings. Our review aims to provide more clarity regarding theoretical and conceptual convergence, and overlapping

nomological networks, among these four behaviors. More specifically, the objective of this paper is to review the research on the antecedents and outcomes of the four primary resource-seeking behaviors that have been examined by organizational researchers (feedback seeking, information seeking, advice seeking, and help seeking). We do so by using conservation of resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1988; 1989) as an overarching framework, with the aim of providing conceptual integration, a fresh and more nuanced perspective on the literature, and a more theory-grounded agenda for future research.

Accordingly, our review contributes to the literature in two key ways. First, it highlights that the four resource seeking behaviors share important similarities even though they have emerged and developed in distinct literatures. Our systematic review of antecedents and outcomes points to nomological overlaps of these resource seeking behaviors, suggests areas where critical insights can be transferred from one literature to another, and thus broadens our understanding of the predictors and outcomes of resource seeking behavior. Second, our review leverages COR theory as a basis for framing and synthesizing insights from the four literatures. COR theory proposes that people are motivated to protect and conserve their current resources as well as to acquire new resources (Halbesleben, Neveu, Paustian-Underdahl, & Westman, 2014; Hobfoll, 1988; Hobfoll, Halbesleben, Neveu, & Westman, 2018). By utilizing COR theory's primary principles, we are able to integrate empirical findings across the different bodies of literature in a parsimonious way to explain why people seek resources and how resource seeking influences important work outcomes. Anchoring our review in COR theory also allows us to extend the literature by moving beyond the relatively static, between-person perspective of resource seeking found in most of the literature and bringing to light the dynamic within-person nature of this behavior.

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Our review is organized as follows. We begin by clarifying the conceptualizations of

resources and resource seeking, and briefly discuss the origins and conceptual foundations of

research on each of the four seeking behaviors that are included in our review. In doing so, we

highlight both key similarities between and differences. In the second section, we outline COR

theory's central principles of resource conservation, investment, and acquisition (Halbesleben et

al., 2014; Hobfoll, 1988; Hobfoll et al., 2018) and explain how they can be used to both guide

and extend current understanding of why and when employees engage in resource seeking. In the

third and fourth sections, we provide an integrative review of the antecedents that influence

resource seeking and the moderators that condition these effects. Next, we review the empirical

research on the positive and negative outcomes of resource seeking behavior. In the final section,

we discuss directions for future research, with an emphasis on how COR theory can provide a

fruitful foundation for dynamic within-person research on resource seeking. In addition, using

the lens of COR theory, we will highlight key areas that have been under-researched, as well as

suggest future studies aiming to reconcile inconsistent findings in the empirical literature.

RESOURCE SEEKING: ORIGINS AND CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS

Resources can be defined as anything perceived by individuals as helping them to attain

their goals (Halbesleben et al., 2014). It is important to note that a resource in and of itself is not

inherently valued, but rather, its value is derived from the outcomes it helps to achieve (Ashford

& Cummings, 1983). For example, information about why a presentation went badly can help

one to avoid repeating the mistake, or help from a colleague can enable one to meet an important

task deadline. In the workplace, common resources for employees include information,

assistance, support, tools, equipment, funding, and so forth. Employee *resource seeking* can be

defined as the act of asking others in the workplace for one or more of these resources in the

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course of doing one's job. Employees seek resources not only to complete specific tasks or attain

specific work-related goals, but more broadly, to manage their effectiveness at work as well as

various work-related opportunities and challenges. Employees may solicit a multitude of

resources at work, including information to better understand their work environment or how to

succeed within it, feedback about what they are doing well and not so well, advice about how to

resolve an interpersonal conflict at work or about how to achieve an optimal balance between

work and family, or help from a peer in order to meet an impending task deadline.

Below, we briefly discuss the emergence and development of the empirical research on

each of the four behaviors (feedback, information, advice, and help seeking). In doing so, our

goal is to highlight the similarities among these constructs, which enables us to generalize the

empirical findings from one form of resource seeking behavior to the other forms. However, we

do not overlook some of the ways in which the four types of resource seeking differ from one

another. Table 1 summarizes the conceptual comparisons among the four types of resource

seeking, highlighting both the similarities and differences across the four literatures.

One of the most robust literatures on resource seeking is the research on feedback seeking

behavior. This research is rooted in the seminal paper by Ashford and Cummings (1983) that

proposed that feedback about one's performance is an important *personal* resource for fulfilling

both performance and non-performance goals, and thus something that employees may

proactively seek. This was a rather radical perspective at the time, as prior to this paper, feedback

was viewed mainly as an *organizational* resource that managers could use to direct or motivate

the performance of their subordinates. Based on Ashford and Cummings' (1983)

conceptualization, feedback seeking was defined as "the conscious devotion of effort toward

determining the correctness and adequacy of behavior for attaining valued end states" (Ashford,

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1986, p. 466). Consistent with earlier models of information seeking within the communication

literature (e.g., Berger & Calabrese, 1975), Ashford and Cummings (1983) conceptualized

feedback seeking as a process of uncertainty reduction, with the individual deciding whether to

seek feedback based on the anticipated costs and benefits. Their paper highlights several motives

for feedback seeking, including self-evaluation and the quest for mastery. Over the past three

decades, a sizable body of empirical research has examined the antecedents and outcomes of

feedback seeking, as summarized in a number of reviews (Anseel, Beatty, Shen, Lievens, &

Sackett, 2015; Ashford, Blatt, & VandeWalle, 2003; Ashford, De Stobbeleir, & Nujella, 2016).

A related body of research has looked at information seeking more broadly (Bauer &

Green, 1998; Morrison, 1993a, 1993b, 2002). Information seeking refers to the act of seeking

information about one's job or work context to cope with uncertainty and engage in sense-

making (Miller & Jablin, 1991; Saks & Ashforth, 1997). The majority of this work has focused

on information seeking behaviors in the context of newcomer socialization, and how seeking

information about the job and organization improves newcomer adjustment and socialization

outcomes (Morrison, 1993a). Similar to research on feedback seeking, this literature largely

utilizes a cost-benefit analysis framework and is rooted in notions of uncertainty reduction

(Morrison & Vancouver, 2000; Vancouver & Morrison, 1995).

Advice seeking is defined as deliberate information exchange with other individuals as

part of the process of forming opinions, attitudes, and judgments (Bonaccio & Dalal, 2006).

Unlike research on feedback and information seeking, advice seeking has been mostly studied in

the strategic management literature (e.g., Alexiev, Jansen, Van den Bosch, & Volberda, 2010;

Cross, Borgatti, & Parker, 2001; McDonald & Westphal, 2003). The bulk of these studies

focuses on whether and how CEOs and top management teams seek input from different targets

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prior to making important strategic decisions, and the firm-level outcomes emergent from

soliciting advice. In this literature, there is less emphasis on uncertainty reduction or weighing of

costs and benefits, and more emphasis on the strategic nature of advice seeking based on one's

network and the value of advice that is solicited. To date, the literature on advice seeking has

neither been reviewed nor integrated with work on other forms of resource seeking behavior.

Help-seeking refers to the solicitation of emotional or instrumental assistance from others

to manage either work-related or personal problems that have bearing on one's job performance

(Bamberger, 2009). Because it is not strictly focused on informational resources, help-seeking

may appear to be different from the other three types of resource seeking behaviors. However, by

recognizing both informational and *non*-informational forms of assistance as critical resources

for employees, we argue that it is possible to apply insights across literatures in a way that will

provide a broader and integrated understanding. Similar to the feedback and information seeking

literatures, much of the literature on help seeking is grounded in a utility perspective, pitting the

instrumental benefits from resources acquired against the social and psychological costs of

securing them (Bamberger, 2009; Nadler, 1997). Implicit in the help seeking literature is also the

notion of reciprocity, whereby the help seeker is motivated to reciprocate by providing help to

the person who provided assistance (Gouldner, 1960; Spitzmuller, Van Dyne, & Ilies, 2008).

As shown in Table 1, the four forms of resource seeking differ from one another in some

important ways. For example, they are elicited by different types of contexts (e.g., uncertainty

for information seeking, a pending decision for advice seeking, or a problem for help seeking).

Furthermore, the foci and goals of the four seeking behaviors differ. Specifically, feedback

seeking focuses mainly on performance, information seeking focuses on information about one's

job or work context more broadly, advice seeking focuses on an impending decision or choice,

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and help seeking focuses on a work-related or personal problem. Moreover, whereas research on feedback, information, and help seeking are explicitly rooted in uncertainty reduction and cost-benefit theories, this theoretical foundation is more implicit in the advice seeking literature. In addition, only advice seeking has an explicit prescriptive aspect to it, and only help seeking evokes an expectation of reciprocity. These behaviors also differ in their temporal focus, with advice and help seeking being more future-oriented (prospective) and feedback seeking being more past-oriented (retrospective).

Despite these differences, the four behaviors also share a number of significant common attributes. All four behaviors are self-initiated, proactive behaviors that employee engage in to gain tangible and intangible resources from others that can help them achieve a desired goal (Grant & Ashford, 2008). Furthermore, a central ingredient across all four seeking behaviors is that they require an investment of personal resources in order to secure other valued resources. For example, each of the four behaviors requires an investment of time and energy, and each may have social costs associated with them, such as highlighting one's uncertainty or need for assistance. Furthermore as we will show, each of the four behaviors depends on the employee's current resource state and history of resource gains and losses. There is also some measurement convergence. For instance, researchers have sometimes borrowed and modified measures of feedback seeking to assess information seeking and vice versa. Given these common core elements, we propose that empirical insights gleaned from one literature may be useful for broadening and deepening the other three, and that there is value in conceptual integration by considering the four behaviors as manifestations of a higher order construct: resource seeking.

Insert Table 1 about here

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BRINGING COR TO THE FORE

Originally conceived as a theory of stress, COR theory has become recognized as a framework that can explain motivation and behavior more broadly. Inspired by its emergence as a primary theory for understanding motivation and behavior in the workplace, we use COR theory as an overarching theoretical and organizing framework to guide our integration of the four resource-seeking literatures. We chose COR theory, rather than other frameworks found in the four literatures (e.g., uncertainty reduction, cost-benefit analysis), for three reasons.

First, neither uncertainty reduction theory nor the cost-benefit framework takes into account the notion of resource investment, a fundamental principle of COR theory. From a cost-benefit framework, the energy and attention that resource seeking requires of the seeker are strictly resource losses, likened to sunk costs. In contrast, from the perspective of COR theory, these same resources can be viewed as investments that the seeker uses to acquire other resources (e.g., knowledge). Second, COR theory highlights the less conscious and less rational aspects of the decision to seek resources, going beyond the idea of a rational, calculative assessment of costs and benefits. A COR lens brings to light the heuristic nature of the decision. Specifically, people's current resource status may bias how they subjectively weigh potential gains and losses, and how they seek to maintain an optimal balance between resource conservation and acquisition, which affects whether and how they engage in resource seeking. In contrast, uncertainty reduction and cost-benefit models have not been explicit about how current resource status can bias how people perceive uncertainty and the costs and benefits of seeking resources and ultimately, the decision to seek resources. Third, as a dynamic theory, the application of COR to resource seeking opens up opportunities for areas of research that have hitherto been less examined. In particular, COR theory provides more nuanced theoretical

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insights into the temporal patterns of resource seeking, by (for example) elucidating how

resource gains and losses may spiral across multiple resource seeking episodes. In so doing,

COR theory highlights the dynamic and path-dependent nature of the resource seeking process.

COR theory also helps to parsimoniously explain why resource seeking results in beneficial or

detrimental outcomes, via both tangible and/or intangible resource gains or losses, and how these

outcomes can influence future research seeking via the generation of feedback loops.

The fundamental tenet of COR theory is that people "strive to obtain, retain, foster, and

protect those things that they centrally value," or more specifically, they seek to acquire and

conserve resources (Hobfoll et al., 2018). From this primary tenet emerge four central principles

of COR theory. The first is the primacy of loss principle, which states that resource loss is

disproportionately more salient than resource gain. The second is the resource investment

principle, or the idea that people must invest resources in order to gain resources as well as to

protect themselves against and recover from resource loss. The third is the gain paradox

principle, which states that resource gains become more salient and are weighted more when

people have experienced recent resource loss. Fourth, the desperation principle proposes that

resource deprivation drives people to become defensive, aggressive, and even irrational when

their resources are outstretched or exhausted. A corollary of this principle is that primary

resource loss can generate secondary resource loss, and even a spiral of increasing resource

depletion as individuals adopt maladaptive strategies of resource conservation and recovery.

These central principles imply that people are motivated to balance resource acquisition

against resource conservation when engaging in resource seeking, and that this process is a

function of current resource status as well as prior gains and losses. In other words, it is not

simply a matter of a rational utility calculus as implied in the current literature. Prior to investing

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efforts to acquire a particular resource, people's current resource status (i.e., whether one is

resource constrained or depleted) influences whether they are more motivated to conserve their

current resources (e.g., time, energy, image, status), or conversely, more motivated to invest

existing resources to acquire new resources.

Applying the key principles of COR theory to the context of resource seeking brings to

light three primary features of this behavior (see Table 2). First, the primacy of loss and resource

investment principles suggest that people consider not just the potential magnitude of the gains

and losses from resource seeking, but also the likelihood (i.e., expectancy) of those gains and

losses occurring. In other words, before seeking resources, people evaluate the probability of

accruing the anticipated benefits (e.g., obtaining actionable feedback on one's performance)

and/or incurring the potential costs (e.g., appearing insecure). COR theory suggests that people

are more likely to seek resources when both the perceived magnitude and likelihood of potential

gains (e.g., enhanced task performance, skill acquisition) from doing so exceed the perceived

magnitude and likelihood of anticipated resource investment or cost (e.g., effort expenditure,

being viewed negatively by others).

Second, the gain paradox and desperation principles imply that subjectivity and

heuristic considerations play an important role in the process of seeking resources. As suggested

by these principles, people's current resource state, especially after they have experienced

resource loss, affects how they subjectively weigh conservation and acquisition. Thus, two

individuals with different resource inventories, or where one has experienced recent resource

loss and the other has not, are likely to place different weights on the potential gains and losses

of resource seeking, and hence different emphasis on resource acquisition versus conservation.

Specifically, the gain paradox principle suggests that the individual whose current resource status

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is relatively lower, or who has suffered recent resource loss, is likely to place greater weight on

potential gains than losses, and thus be more motivated to acquire resources than conserve them.

Third, the desperation principle and its corollary imply that resource seeking is a

dynamic process. Initial resource loss or depletion can result in secondary resource loss, which

may be sustained due to inefficient and maladaptive responses to the initial resource loss. The

primary and secondary resource losses may potentially spiral into a cycle of increasing resource

deprivation from which the resource seeker may find it increasingly difficult to recover, thus

aggravating future resource seeking behavior (a negative spiral) and adversely affecting

performance.

Insert Table 2 about here

Scope of This Review

Our review focuses primarily on empirical articles published between 1997 and 2019,

although we do discuss some foundational conceptual and empirical articles published in the

prior two decades. More specifically, we review classes of antecedents, outcomes, and

moderators which have been examined across the four literatures. We gathered the articles for

the review through Google Scholar and an elaborate search of the EBSCO host database, which

covers the main domains for our review. We provide a detailed description of the search process,

and the journals covered in our review, in the Appendix.

ANTECEDENTS OF RESOURCE SEEKING

Using COR theory as our overarching theoretical framework, we organize the

antecedents of resource seeking according to the relative strength of the resource conservation

and acquisition motives. First, we review antecedents which are likely to operate by increasing

the relative salience and subjective weight of the resource conservation motive over the resource

acquisition motive, and thus are largely negatively associated with resource seeking. Next, we

review classes of antecedents which are likely to operate by increasing the relative salience and

subjective weight of resource acquisition over resource conservation, and thus are for the most

part positively associated with resource seeking. Our review of both sets of antecedents is

organized by levels of analysis: seeker characteristics, characteristics of the target and/or dyadic

relationships, and work and external environmental characteristics. We focus on antecedents that

have been most widely studied, across the four literatures, and with the strongest and most

consistent evidence base. In so doing, our review reveals that most of these antecedents have

been examined in two or more of the literatures, suggesting overlapping nomological network

and hence value in integrating these literatures. Table 3 provides a summary of the classes of

antecedents, indicating whether they have been examined in all four literatures or just a sub-set.

Insert Table 3 about here

Antecedents that Strengthen the Resource Conservation Motive

Characteristics of the seeker: Demographics and ego concerns. Empirical research

suggests that the seeker's demographics may affect the likelihood of resource seeking.

Specifically, factors such as gender, age, and tenure have implications for how one is viewed by

others (Berger, Rosenholtz, & Zelditch, 1980; Bunderson, 2003; Stamper & Van Dyne, 2001).

When these attributes imply higher knowledge or competence, individuals may be concerned

that the solicitation of resources may diminish others' impressions of them, prompting seekers to

place more weight on the potential costs of resource seeking and hence more value on resource

conservation than resource acquisition.

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Among these demographic characteristics, gender has been the most widely studied antecedent of resource seeking across all four literatures. Past research finds that men are generally expected to be more competent than women (Fiske, 1998; Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002; Ridgeway, 1997), suggesting that they place less value in resource seeking. Lee (2002) theorizes that whereas females are socialized to be other-oriented, build close relationships, and reduce interpersonal distances created by power, men are socialized to be power-oriented and reduce dependencies on others so that they can exercise power. Therefore, the social costs of resource seeking are likely higher for men, suggesting that men will place more weight on resource conservation over resource acquisition as compared to women, and as a result, are less likely to seek resources. Consistent with this logic, men report lower levels of feedback seeking (Wu, Parker, & De Jong, 2014), information seeking (Janssen & Prins, 2007), advice seeking (Kuhn, Galloway, & Collins-Williams, 2016), and help seeking (Bornstein, 1998; Lee, 1997, 2002) than women.

In a similar vein, employees who are older or more experienced are expected to have greater work knowledge, and may thus place heavy emphasis on protecting their "image of competence." This will prompt them to conserve resources rather than investing them in resource seeking, as the latter can signal a lack of competence. Supporting this idea, studies find that seeker age is negatively associated with feedback seeking (Anseel et al., 2015; Vandenberghe & Panaccio; 2012; van der Rijt, van de Wiel, Van den Bossche, Segers, & Giljselaers, 2012; Wu et al., 2014), information seeking (De Vos & Freese, 2011; Finkelstein, Kulas, & Dages, 2003; Janssen & Prins, 2007), and advice seeking (Kuhn et al., 2016). Similarly, feedback seeking (Anseel et al., 2015; Ashford, 1986), information seeking (Janssen & Prins, 2007; Vandenberghe & Panaccio, 2012; Wu et al., 2014), advice seeking (McDonald,

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Khanna, & Westphal, 2008), and help seeking behaviors (Friedman, Carmeli, & Dutton, 2018)

have been shown to decrease with organizational or job tenure.

Empirical evidence also suggests that ego or self-concept concerns are a key seeker-level

determinant of resource seeking. Building on the primacy of loss principle of COR theory,

resource loss is likely to be disproportionately more salient than resource gain for individuals

with greater concerns about the self. For such individuals, potentially losing "face" and being

perceived as weak by others may be weighted more heavily than gaining knowledge and skills,

which will result in lower likelihood of seeking resources. Indeed, people who fear negative

evaluation or desire to protect their ego/image have been shown to seek less feedback (Lu, Pan,

& Cheng, 2011; Northcraft & Ashford, 1990; Qian, Lin, & Chen, 2012), information (Tuckey,

Brewer, & Williamson, 2002), advice (Brooks, Gino, & Schweitzer, 2015), and help (Lee, 2002).

Characteristics of the relationship: Conflict. The nature of the dyadic relationship

between the seeker and target also plays an important role in affecting resource seeking. In

particular, when relational dynamics are unhealthy, there is a greater risk of the target declining a

seeker's request for resources, thus increasing the costs of resource seeking, and hence inducing

a greater emphasis on conserving resources than investing and acquiring resources. One such

factor that constitutes negative relational dynamics is conflict. In a study involving newcomers,

Nifadkar and Bauer (2016) demonstrate that relationship conflict, task conflict, and process

conflict, are all negatively related to information seeking from coworkers, effects that are

mediated by social anxiety. These findings suggest that conflict, and the social anxiety it evokes,

can deplete resources and heighten seekers' sensitivity toward losses and strengthen the resource

conservation motive, thereby reducing the likelihood of resource seeking. COR theory's

desperation principle also suggests that conflict may place employees in a position of actual or

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potential resource loss and prompt them to become more defensive in an effort to preserve their

existing resources. Instead of placing greater emphasis on resource gains and engaging in

resource seeking to protect themselves from further resource loss, employees who are

experiencing conflict may scale back on resource investment and conserve their resources,

thereby reducing their engagement in resource seeking. Interestingly, however, a recent study

reports that while relationship conflict is negatively associated with advice seeking, task conflict

may have a positive association with it (Marineau, Hood, & Labianca, 2018). Results from that

study also show that when individuals perceive both task and relationship conflict in the same

relationship, they are more likely to seek advice from that person, suggesting that despite the

potential for resource loss associated with relationship conflict, the instrumental benefits of

obtaining advice from someone who has different ideas on how to perform a given task (i.e., task

conflict) may be weighted more heavily.

>   ***Characteristics of the external environment: National culture.*** Research has also

examined how external environmental characteristics may inhibit resource seeking, and in

particular, the impact of national culture. Scholars suggest that a high power distance culture

may increase the perceived social costs associated with requesting resources from targets with

higher power or status (Hofstede, 2001; Liao & Bond, 2011). Consistent with this notion, several

studies indicate that in high power distance cultures, employees are less likely to seek feedback

(Morrison, Chen, & Salgado, 2004; Taras, Kirkman, & Steel, 2010). Cultures characterized by

collectivistic values may also exhibit less resource seeking. Specifically, Morrison and

colleagues (2004) find that Hong Kong Chinese employees report lower levels of feedback

seeking behavior than American employees. Collectivistic cultures dampen employees'

assertiveness, which may prompt them to be less confident, and thus place greater weight on the

potential costs of resource seeking (Morrison et al., 2004). Another study finds that relative to European Americans, Asians report less emotional help seeking in the face of stress (Taylor et al., 2004), implying that perceived social costs in the form of losing "face" and burdening others are higher in East Asian cultures than in Western cultures, which may discourage actively engaging one's social support network for help.

Summary. Across the four resource seeking literatures, the empirical evidence shows that employees who are male, older, with longer tenure, and with stronger ego concerns are less likely to engage in resource seeking. The literature also suggests that conflict decreases resource seeking behavior, as do the cultural dimensions of power distance and collectivism. Each of these antecedents is likely to decrease resource seeking by heightening seeker's sensitivity toward losses to their status and/or image, thereby prompting seekers to place more weight on resource conservation than resource acquisition. Furthermore, COR theory suggests that conflict may potentially deplete people's resources and place them in a state of resource constraint, which then induces them to become defensive and conserve their resources, instead of using them to acquire other resources as a means by which to stem resource depletion.

Antecedents that Strengthen the Resource Acquisition Motive

In this section, we review antecedents that are likely to increase the relative salience and subjective weight of the resource acquisition motive over the resource conservation motive, thereby increasing the likelihood of resource seeking. We first discuss seeker characteristics. This is followed by a summary of research on antecedents related to the target and the seeker-target relationship, and then a review of the research on contextual antecedents.

Characteristics of the seeker: Promotion focus dispositions. Building on self-regulatory theory (Higgins, 1997; 1998), promotion focus dispositions can be viewed as those individual

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dispositions associated with the desire for attaining positive outcomes (Higgins, Roney, Crowe, & Hymes, 1994; Shah, Higgins, & Friedman, 1998). There is robust empirical evidence that various promotion focus dispositions increase the likelihood of resource seeking. We argue that this occurs because a strong promotion focus increases the relative salience and significance of resource acquisition over resource conservation.

The promotion focus disposition that has received the most attention in the literature is learning goal orientation (LGO). Individuals with high LGO—those who place a higher weight on the value of acquiring and mastering new skills and adapting to new situations (Dweck, 1986)—have been shown to be more likely to seek both feedback (Anseel et al., 2015; Gong, Li, Qi, & Zhang, 2017; Parker & Collins, 2010; Payne, Youngcourt, & Beaubien, 2007; Tan, Au, Cooper-Thomas, & Aw, 2016; Tuckey et al., 2002; VandeWalle & Cummings, 1997) and information (Janssen and Prins 2007; Madzar, 2001) than those with low LGO. Empirical research has also provided direct support for the idea that individuals with high LGO emphasize acquiring resources over conserving them. Specifically, employees with high LGO have been shown to place greater weight on feedback, and in turn, seek more feedback (VandeWalle & Cummings, 1997; VandeWalle, Ganesan, Challagalla, & Brown, 2000). On the whole, research suggests that employees with high LGO (versus low LGO) are more likely to engage in resource seeking because they are more sensitive to, and assign greater weight to the benefits of resource seeking, and to that end, place greater emphasis on resource acquisition.

Empirical studies have also investigated the impact of the Big Five personality traits on resource seeking, and in particular openness to experience, which can also be viewed as a promotion focus disposition (Lanaj, Chang, & Johnson, 2012). For example, employees who are more open to experience seek more feedback, likely because they are more open to input from

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others and can better leverage that input, compared to those who are less open to experience

(Krasman, 2010; Wanberg & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2000). Relatedly, research finds that curious

individuals are more likely to seek feedback (Harrison & Dossinger, 2017) and information

(Harrison, Sluss, and Ashforth, 2011), compared to less curious individuals. Given that curiosity

captures a human "desire for knowledge" (Loewenstein, 1994), the link between curiosity and

resource seeking likely reflects curious individuals perceiving greater value in acquiring

knowledge through resource seeking.

Research has also consistently shown a link between extraversion and resource seeking,

another Big Five personality trait reflecting a promotion focus (Lanaj et al., 2012). Employees

with high (versus low) extraversion have been found to be more likely to seek feedback

(Krasman, 2010; Wanberg & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2000), information (Wanberg & Kammeyer-

Mueller, 2000), and help (Von Dras & Siegler, 1997). Underlying this robust relationship may be

that extraverts, being more sociable, assertive, and confident of building positive relationships

(Costa & McCrae, 1988; McCrae & Costa, 1999), have a higher expectancy that they will be

effective in gaining resources from another person. This higher expectancy prompts them to

assign greater weight to resource acquisition than resource conservation, thus increasing their

motive to seek resources.

Along with the Big Five, self-esteem and self-efficacy are deemed by most organizational

scholars as core dispositional factors (Judge, Piccolo, & Kosalka, 2009), and high self-

esteem/efficacy can be seen as reflecting a strong promotion focus (Keller, 2006; Lanaj et al.,

2012). Self-esteem and self-efficacy have also received particular attention in COR theory,

where they are viewed as key personal resources that can shift the individual's orientation from

resource conservation to resource acquisition (Chen, Westman, & Eden, 2009; Kammeyer-

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Mueller, Simon, & Judge, 2016). Studies have shown that individuals with high self-esteem are more likely to seek feedback (Bernichon, Cook, & Brown, 2003; Moss, Valenzi, & Taggart, 2003), and that employees with high self-efficacy are more likely to seek both feedback (Anseel et al., 2015; Dimotakis, Mitchell, & Maurer, 2017), and information (Gruman, Saks, & Zweig, 2006; Kossek, Roberts, Fisher, & Demarr, 1998).[1] Consistent with COR theory's resource investment principle, individuals with high (versus low) self-esteem are in a better position to invest resources to generate more resources, and thus may perceive higher utility in the resources that they hope to acquire and also lower costs. Similarly, individuals with high (versus low) self-efficacy have a stronger belief in their ability to execute a desired course of action. As a result, they may place greater weight on resource acquisition than conservation as they may attribute a higher likelihood that their resource solicitation will yield the desired benefits.

Additionally, studies suggest that individuals with a strong dispositional need to gain control of their environment, another indicator of being promotion focused (Molden & Higgins, 2004), engage in more resource seeking, and in particular, more information seeking (Ashford & Black, 1996). This is consistent with COR theory's resource investment principle, as individuals with high need for control are likely to place more value on acquiring resources as a means of gaining control in the face of uncertainty, and hence invest time and energy toward resource seeking. Further, individuals with high external feedback propensity—desire for obtaining feedback from an external source (Herold, Parsons, & Rensvold, 1996)—are more likely to seek feedback (Anseel et al., 2015; Fedor, Rensvold, & Adams., 1992; Moss et al., 2003; Renn & Fedor, 2001), as are those with a strong feedback orientation, or overall receptivity to feedback

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[1] While meta-analytic results (Anseel et al., 2015) provide support for the idea that self-efficacy is positively related to feedback seeking, it is worth noting that Sherf and Morrison (2019) found that the relationship can be either positive or negative, depending on the extent to which the seeker engages in perspective taking.

feedback (Anseel et al., 2015; Dahling, Chau, & O'Malley, 2012). Taken together, these findings

suggest that individuals who are more motivated to gain control, and/or more open to external

input, will weigh resource acquisition more than resource conservation.

Characteristics of the target: Warmth and competence. There is strong consensus in

social perception research that warmth and competence are fundamental dimensions of self and

other evaluation (e.g., Abele & Wojciszke, 2007; Fiske et al., 2002; Judd et al., 2005).

Perceptions of a target's expertise or credibility can be seen as reflecting competence judgments,

whereas perceptions of a target's accessibility and likeability can be seen as reflecting (at least in

part) judgments of warmth. These judgments, in turn, appear to affect the decision to seek

resources from a given target.

Perceived expertise of the target has been examined across the four literatures. It has been

shown to positively predict feedback (van der Rijt et al., 2013; Vancouver & Morrison, 1995),

information (Borgatti & Cross, 2003; Morrison & Vancouver, 2000; Mullen & Noe, 1999;

Nebus, 2006), advice (Keith, Demirkan, & Goul, 2017), and help seeking (Hofmann, Lei, &

Grant, 2009; Nadler, Ellis, & Bar, 2003). This is likely due to the perception that a target with

high expertise is very competent and will provide resources of high quality, thereby increasing

the weigh placed on resource acquisition as compared to resource conservation. However, this

effect may reverse when the target has lower status (e.g., a supervisor seeking resources from a

subordinate), as the social costs of resource seeking, such as being perceived negatively by

subordinates, may be more salient and weigh more than the benefits. This may result in

supervisors placing more emphasis on resource conservation than resource acquisition when

considering "downward" resource seeking. Supporting this idea, Chun and colleagues (2018)

find that leaders are less likely to seek feedback from subordinates whom they perceive to have

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higher (versus lower) expertise. Similarly, research on help seeking suggests that individuals are

hesitant to seek assistance from those with far more (or far less) expertise than they themselves

possess, preferring those closer to them in expertise (Doyle, Lount, Wilk, & Pettit, 2016; Lee,

1997).

The perceived credibility of the target also increases the likelihood of resource seeking

behavior. Specifically, Mahajan and Toh (2014) find that expatriates are more likely to seek

advice from coworkers whom they perceive as more credible. Studies have also demonstrated

that employees are more likely to seek feedback and information from targets perceived to be

more credible (Fedor, Rensvold, & Adams, 1992; Sias & Wyers, 2001). Similar to expertise,

perceived target credibility signals that the target is able to provide resources of high quality,

thus increasing the weight of resource acquisition in comparison to resource conservation.

In addition, studies have shown that the perceived accessibility of the target increases the

likelihood of resource seeking, as accessibility signals openness to others and implies that

resources can be obtained from the target with relative ease. For example, studies have shown

that people are more likely to seek feedback (van der Rijt et al., 2013; Vancouver & Morrison,

1995), information (Borgatti & Cross, 2003; Morrison & Vancouver, 2000; Nebus, 2006), and

help (Hofmann et al., 2009) when they perceive the target to be more accessible. Conversely,

when a target has rejected the seeker's request for help previously, the seeker is likely to

perceive that the target is less accessible, and hence is less likely to seek help from that person in

the future (Newark, Flynn, & Bohns, 2014).

Furthermore, the advice seeking literature suggests that the perceived likeability and

civility of the target, attributes related to warmth, increase the likelihood of seeking advice

(Mahajan & Toh, 2014; Porath, Gerbasi, & Schorch, 2015). Consistent with the notion of

attribute substitution (Kahneman, 2011), seekers may use implicit knowledge regarding a

potential target's likeability as a heuristic for driving assumptions about the potential costs of

soliciting resources from that individual, as well as the likelihood that a solicitation attempt will

be successful.

Lastly, there is also a sizable body of empirical research which suggests that leadership

styles can influence resource seeking behaviors. Research has largely focused on the influence of

transformational leadership, with studies indicating that people are generally more likely to seek

feedback (Anseel et al., 2015; Levy, Cober, & Miller, 2002), information (Madzar, 2001), and

advice (Bono & Anderson, 2005; Zhang & Peterson, 2011) from transformational rather than

non-transformational leaders. Transformational leadership also appears to have "trickle down"

implications on resource seeking, as Bono and Anderson (2005) find that employees are more

likely to seek advice from peers who have transformational leaders. These findings may be

explained on the basis of higher subjective weight of resource acquisition over resource

conservation. Employees are likely to view transformational leaders as better able to provide

high quality resources given that they are perceived to be more competent and effective than

transactional or non-transformational leaders (Avolio & Yammarino, 1990; Yammarino,

Dubinsky, Comer, & Jolson, 1997). Further, given that transformational leaders tend to pay more

attention to their employees' needs (Bass, 1995), resource seekers may also view these leaders as

being warmer and more accessible, and thus more likely to provide the resources that are

requested.

Characteristics of the relationship: Commitment. Just as negative relational dynamics

(e.g., conflict) can inhibit resource seeking, positive relational dynamics can enable it. A term

that can be used to capture these positive dynamics is relational commitment. Relational

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commitment refers to the strength and quality of the cognitive and affective attachment between

the seeker and the target (Kanter, 1968; Lawler, 2001). Relational commitment makes it more

likely that a target will agree to a seeker's request for resources, thus increasing the expectancy

that resource seeking will be successful, which increases the weight given to investing and

acquiring resources over conserving them.

One signal of relational commitment is the degree to which the relationship is

characterized by reciprocal obligations. From the perspective of social exchange theory (e.g.,

Blau, 1964; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005), those who have received resources from someone in

the past feel obliged to reciprocate in the future (Spence, Brown, Keeping, & Lian, 2014). Thus,

a history of resource exchange, and the associated reciprocity obligations, are likely to increase

the expectation that a potential target will agree to a request for resources. Consistent with this

argument, research shows that individuals are more likely to seek advice (Agneessens & Wittek,

2012) and help (Mueller & Kamdar, 2011; Nahum-Shani & Bamberger, 2011) from people to

whom they have previously given advice and help, and that the potential target is more likely to

agree to the request (Porath et al., 2015).

A second indicator of relational commitment that has been shown to increase the

likelihood of engaging in resource seeking is perceived similarity between the seeker and the

target, presumably because similarity increases the seeker's expectation that the target will

acquiesce to the request and the resources provided will be relevant and useful. In particular,

studies have shown that individuals are more likely to seek advice from peers who share similar

attributes and job duties (Siciliano, 2015), and similar characteristics such as ethnicity,

department, level in organization hierarchy, supervisor (Marineau et al., 2018), group

membership (Brennecke & Rank, 2016; Copeland, Reynolds, & Burton, 2008), and position in

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the social network structure (Copeland et al., 2008). Knowledge workers are also more likely to

seek help from those of similar organizational status (Doyle et al., 2016).

Another indicator of relational commitment is the perceived quality of the relationship

between the resource seeker and target. A considerable body of evidence suggests a positive

association between relationship quality and the likelihood of resource seeking. In most studies,

the logic underlying this association is that when seekers and targets share a high quality

relationship, seekers will have a higher expectancy that their request for resources will be

willingly met, that the resources will be of high quality, and/or that the cost of receiving

resources will be constrained by the nature of the reciprocity-based relationship. Such

perceptions are grounded in the assumption that the parties share an interest in maintaining the

goodwill necessary to ensure smooth, long-term social exchange (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005;

Lawler & Yoon, 1996). Supporting this argument, research finds that relationship quality

indirectly increases help seeking by reducing the perceived costs of this behavior (Anderson &

Williams, 1996). Meta-analytical research also shows that relationship quality is positively

related to feedback seeking behavior (Anseel et al., 2015). Furthermore, several studies have

shown that employees with high (versus low) quality leader-member exchange relations (LMX)

are more likely to seek feedback from their supervisors (Chen, Lam, & Zhong, 2007; Chun,

Choi, & Moon, 2014; Lee, Park, Lee, & Lee, 2007; Liao & Chun, 2016).

Given the connection between relationship quality and friendship (Niven, Hollman &

Totterdell, 2012), it is not surprising that research on friendship in dyadic relations suggests

similar effects. Fang and Shaw (2009) show that having a friendship tie in a network increases

one's intention to seek justice-related information. Further, having friendship ties is positively

related to the level of advice interactions on strategic issues (Westphal, 1999). Individuals are

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also more likely to seek advice from coworkers whom they consider to be friends (Siciliano, 2015).

In addition, studies have examined the effects of perceived supervisor support on employee resource seeking. Research shows that employees who believe that their feedback seeking is likely to be supported and accepted by their supervisor tend to seek feedback more often than those who do not (Whitaker, Dahling, & Levy, 2007; Williams, Miller, Steelman, & Levy, 1999). Furthermore, using time-lagged data from a sample of MBA students, Beneen, Pichler, and Levy (2017) find that the relationship between supervisor supportiveness and feedback seeking is mediated by proactive relationship building with the supervisor. Hopkins (2001) finds that employees' perceptions of their managers' support are positively related to the degree to which they tend to approach their managers for help with personal problems. Overall, empirical evidence shows that perceived supervisor support leads to greater resource seeking behavior. Perceived support should increase the expectancy that resource seeking will yield the desired benefits and decrease the expectancy of negative outcomes (e.g. embarrassment, looking weak), and hence should increase the weight placed on resource acquisition over resource conservation.

Finally, studies on advice seeking have shown that workgroup identification, which is reflective of commitment to the group (Cole & Bruch, 2006; Van Knippenberg & Sleebos, 2006), increases resource seeking, likely on account of higher expectancy that the solicitation request will not be turned down as well as higher perceived value of the resources that will be obtained. High workgroup identification fosters strong affective bonds (Riketta & Van Dick, 2005), which facilitate high quality resource exchange. Providing support for this idea, Copeland et al. (2008) find that workgroup identification increases advice seeking within groups. Further,

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Lomi, Lusher, Parttison and Robins (2014) report that organizational members who identified

more strongly with their subunits are less likely to seek advice outside of their subunits, while

organizational members who identified more strongly with the organization overall are more

likely to do so, lending support to the argument that identification is an important predictor of

resource seeking.

Characteristics of the work and external context: Demands, support and uncertainty.

Contextual demands are situational characteristics, and aspects of the task, which create

expectations for people to think, feel, or act in ways that are appropriate and acceptable in the

particular context (Blake & Davis, 1964; Pepitone, 1976). Certain contextual demands can create

conditions conducive for resource seeking, either by increasing the benefits associated with

resource seeking, reducing the likely costs, or increasing the likelihood that solicitation requests

will be acceded to.

One such contextual demand is task interdependence. Research has shown that when task

interdependence is high rather than low, individuals are more likely to seek feedback (De

Stobbeleir, Ashford, & Zhang, 2018), information (Major & Kozlowski, 1997) and help

(Anderson & Williams, 1996; Bacharach, Bamberger, & Vashdi, 2005; Cleavenger, Gardner, &

Mhatre, 2007). There are two likely reasons for these effects. First, when tasks are more

interdependent, coordination among employees depends on the exchange of information,

feedback, and assistance, thus heightening the potential return on resources invested in soliciting

information, feedback, or assistance. Second, heightened task interdependence tends to

"normalize" resource seeking, thus reducing the perceived costs of such activity, and increasing

the likelihood that solicitations will be positively considered (Bacharach et al., 2005).

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The organization's normative structure, and in particular, whether it has a climate that supports resource seeking, also influences resource-seeking activity. Organizational support for resource-seeking should increase expectancies regarding the effectiveness of this behavior, and should also reduce the weight that employees might otherwise place on potential costs. Several studies provide evidence supporting these ideas. For example, research finds that individuals are more likely to seek feedback (Ashford & Northcraft, 1992) and help (Cleavenger et al., 2007) when there are norms supporting feedback and help seeking. In addition, positive perceptions of the feedback environment have been shown to predict feedback inquiry (Dahling, Gabriel, & MacGowan 2017; Dahling, O'Malley, & Chau, 2015; Whitaker, 2011). Similarly, Whitaker (2011) finds that perceptions of a supportive coworker feedback environment are positively related to feedback inquiry from coworkers.

For newcomers, the types of formal socialization tactics used by the organization is a contextual factor that may impact resource seeking. For instance, studies have shown that institutionalized socialization tactics, which newcomers are socialized as a group and there is a clear structure to the process, positively predict both feedback and information seeking (Gruman et al., 2006; Kowtha, 2009). Another study finds the social component of organizational socialization—specifically, supervisors providing newcomers with social support and job-related information (Jones, 1986)—to be positively related to proactive information seeking (Beenen & Pichler, 2014). On the whole, these findings suggest that an organization's use of structured and supportive socialization strategies can encourage resource seeking, by helping newcomers understand what resources they need in order to adjust, which will increase the perceived value of resource acquisition (versus conservation). In addition, these socialization strategies will signal that the organization supports information and feedback exchange.

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Given the presumed importance of uncertainty in motivating resource seeking, it is somewhat surprising that only the feedback and advice seeking literatures have examined how uncertainty evoked by different work and external environmental characteristics influence engagement in resource seeking. Uncertainty is likely to obstruct the attainment of work-related goals, thereby heightening the seeker's motivation to seek resources. Consistent with COR theory's gain paradox principle, uncertainty may even cause people to risk significant resource loss, as they expend time and energy in order to understand the reasons underlying the uncertainty and learn how to reduce or cope with it. That is, when faced with uncertainty, people may place more weight on resource gains, which prompts them to seek resources to buffer against further resource loss.

Two types of uncertainty have been examined in the feedback seeking literature. One is contingency uncertainty which refers to uncertainty about the relationship between performance and valued outcomes (Anseel et al., 2015). The other is role ambiguity, which occurs when an employee is unsure about the role-related behaviors that are expected of him or her (Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek, & Rosenthal, 1964; King & King, 1990). In their seminal empirical study on feedback seeking, Ashford and Cummings (1985) report that both forms of uncertainty increased the frequency of feedback seeking, particularly for employees with low tolerance for ambiguity. Similarly, findings from a study involving subsidiaries of multinational companies show that the greater the role ambiguity facing a subsidiary president, the higher the level of feedback inquiry (Gupta, Govindarajan, & Malhotra, 1999). However, in their meta-analysis, Anseel et al. (2015) find a *negative* relationship between uncertainty and feedback seeking, and no relationship for role ambiguity. Anseel and Lievens (2007) similarly reported a *negative* relationship between uncertainty and feedback inquiry. These results suggest that the effect of

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uncertainty on resource seeking is, at best, more nuanced than previously thought. The negative

relationship does, however, make sense if considered through the lens of the primacy of loss

principle of COR theory. When there is high uncertainty evoked by the perception that job

demands exceed abilities, people over-weigh the image and ego costs of feedback (Ashford et

al., 2016), and thus scale back on resource investments and focus more on conservation.

Other findings are more supportive of a *positive* effect for uncertainty-related variables.

For example, there is evidence that poor person-job fit increases resource seeking, presumably

because lack of fit creates uncertainty about whether one can succeed in the job. Devloo, Anseel,

and Beuckelaer (2011) show that the larger the gap between job demands and the seeker's

abilities, the greater the likelihood of feedback seeking. Similarly, Yu and Davis (2016) theorize

that achieving better fit with one's work environment to reduce uncertainty is one of the primary

goals of proactive behavior (Parker & Collins, 2010), and consistent with this logic, find that the

greater the misfit between the seeker's personal needs and the job environment, the higher the

probability of seeking feedback and information. Hence, in line with COR theory, empirical

findings suggest that resource acquisition is weighted more heavily than resource conservation

under conditions of poor job fit, as the resources that may be obtained (e.g., information,

feedback) can help clarify job demands and how to better meet them.

Finally, strategic management research suggests that when the external environment

becomes more uncertain or dynamic, the perceived utility of resources, and hence the resource

acquisition motive, is likely to become more salient, as additional resources may be central to the

organization's ability to adapt to its changing and uncertain environment. Specifically, studies

have shown that as environmental dynamism and complexity increase, CEOs are more likely to

rely on informal advisory systems for information and advice in making strategic decisions

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(Dyer & Ross, 2008), and are also more likely to seek external advice (Alexiev, Volberda, Jansen, Van Den Bosch, 2019; Heyden, van Doorn, Reimer, Van Den Bosch, & Volberda, 2013).

Summary. In summary, empirical studies have examined a multitude of seeker characteristics, target and relationship characteristics, and contextual factors that positively predict resource seeking behavior. Specifically, there is evidence that promotion focused dispositions increase the likelihood of resource seeking. Individuals with more promotion focused dispositions, such as learning goal orientation and openness to experience, are likely to emphasize resource acquisition and de-emphasize resource conservation, which motivates them to invest their existing resources to acquire new resources. There is also robust empirical evidence that greater perceived usefulness of resources prompts individuals to seek more resources (e.g., Anseel et al., 2015; Asumeng, 2013; Choi, Moon, & Nae, 2014; Hays & Williams, 2011; Morrison & Vancouver, 2000).

A number of target characteristics also increase the likelihood of seeking resources, by signaling target competence and/or warmth. Furthermore, high relational commitment between the seeker and the target increase resource seeking. Aligned with COR's resource investment principle, these target characteristics are likely to serve as heuristics reducing the perceived social cost of seeking and increasing the expectancy that the resources provided will be of high quality, which prompts the seeker to place more emphasis on resource investment and acquisition and less on resource conservation.

In addition, contextual factors play an important role in driving resource seeking behavior. Contexts where resource exchange is expected or necessary in order to achieve work-related objectives, or where it is supported, reduce the social costs of seeking resources and increase the expectancy that solicitations will be favorably considered. Furthermore, there is

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empirical support for the idea that uncertainty increases resource seeking, although there is also

evidence, consistent with the primacy of loss principle, that high uncertainty may sometimes lead

to less seeking.

KEY MODERATORS

Although the discussion above focused largely on resource seeking antecedents with

relatively consistent effects within and across the four literatures examined, the impact of some

of these antecedents may vary, being contingent upon other individual, target, and contextual

factors. In this section, we summarize research that has examined key moderating effects, with

an emphasis on moderators that have been examined across multiple forms of resource seeking.

Similar to our review of resource seeking antecedents, we anchor our summary in COR theory,

explaining how the various moderators may alter the relative strength of resource conservation

and resource acquisition motives.

Moderators that Heighten the Salience of Resource Conservation Motive

A variety of seeker, target and task-related characteristics moderate the effects of specific

resource seeking antecedents in a way that suggests that they serve to amplify the salience of

resource conservation. For example, Anseel and Lievens (2007) report a stronger negative effect

of uncertainty about one's competence on feedback seeking among individuals with a high

(versus low) need for certainty. As the authors argued, those with a higher need for certainty are

motivated to self-verify. Building on COR's desperation principle, this suggests that for such

individuals, uncertainty about their competence is especially likely to sap their existing

resources, and in so doing, place them in a position of resource depletion. This may, in turn,

prompt them to behave defensively and place greater weight on resource conservation over

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resource acquisition, thus amplifying the adverse impact of competence-related uncertainty on feedback seeking.

Research on relational predictors of resource-seeking suggests that their impact may vary as a function of target characteristics, such as expertise. For example, in a study of employees from five large banking institutions in Korea, Chun et al. (2018) demonstrated that the positive relationship between LMX and leaders' tendency to seek negative feedback was weaker when the target (i.e., subordinate) was perceived to have higher expertise. Apparently when the subordinate had higher expertise, leaders were more driven by impression management concerns (e.g., not "losing face," Kim & Nam, 1998), than by the motive to obtain useful feedback, despite the high quality relationship. This suggests that, at least when the target is of lower status, high target expertise may amplify the potential social costs of soliciting resources from that target, and thus heighten the strength of the resource conservation motive.

In addition, research on how individual level factors such as occupation may affect resource seeking suggests that these effects may be sensitive to the broader task context. For example, task characteristics that heighten the visibility of resource seeking can make it costlier for certain categories of individuals to solicit resources, thus amplifying the saliency of resource conservation. Supporting this idea, in a study examining the association between occupational status (doctors vs. other health professionals in a hospital) and help seeking, Lee (2002) finds that nurses are more likely to seek help than physicians. However, her findings also indicate that physicians are more likely to seek help when the task is routine than when it is novel, whereas nurses show similar levels of help seeking regardless of the nature of the task. Explaining these findings, Lee argues that as novel tasks are more central to the mission of the hospital, soliciting assistance on such tasks is more noticeable than assistance solicited for more routine tasks. The

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upshot is that this visibility increases the perceived psychological costs of help seeking for those

in higher status occupations, and thus, by enhancing the salience of resource conservation,

amplifies a negative association between occupational status and resource seeking.

Similarly, Miller and Karakowsky (2005) explored whether the gender role congruency

of the task would interact with the gender of the feedback seeker and/or the gender composition

of the group, in determining whether individuals seek feedback from team members. They found

that in a group where the majority of members are male, men are less likely to seek feedback

when performing a gender role incongruent (i.e., "female") task than a gender role congruent

(i.e., "male") task. In contrast, women in a mostly male group are less likely to seek feedback

when performing a gender role congruent task than a gender role incongruent task. The authors

concluded that gender role congruency triggers different perceptions of the nature and level of

resource seeking costs for men and women, with men placing a greater emphasis on the

reputational costs of feedback seeking (ostensibly higher when performing a "female" task in a

group that is predominantly male), and women viewing the costs of seeking feedback about

performance on a "male" task to be lower.

Moderators that Heighten the Salience of Resource Acquisition Motive

Target, task-related and contextual characteristics may also moderate the effects of

various predictors of resource seeking by amplifying the salience of resource acquisition. As

such, these moderators are likely to strengthen the effect of antecedents positively associated

with resource-seeking by boosting perceptions of potential resource gain. For example, research

suggests that the target's level of experience may amplify the effects of other situational

characteristics on the probability of resource-seeking. More specifically, McDonald et al. (2008)

report a positive association between board monitoring of a CEO and the likelihood of the CEO

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soliciting advice from executives of other firms, with that association amplified as a function of those executives' prior executive experience. From a COR perspective, this amplifying effect likely operates by strengthening the signal to the advice-seeker that such executives can offer insights and suggestions more consistent with the interest of the firms' key stakeholders, thus heightening the salience of resource acquisition.

Similarly, task-related characteristics may also moderate the degree to which certain resource seeking antecedents drive resource seeking, again by increasing the salience of resource acquisition. Keith et al. (2017) demonstrated this effect with regard to the moderating impact of task uncertainty on the generally positive association between advice seeking and target characteristics suggesting openness to resource requests. In a study of project teams, they found that under conditions of high task uncertainty, the positive effect of amenable target characteristics such as agreeableness and extraversion was amplified. That is, the seeker's preference for seeking advice from those with more amenable personalities was greater under conditions of higher (relative to lower) task uncertainty. The researchers explained this effect by suggesting that the stressful nature of high task uncertainty (Odriscoll & Beehr, 1994) increases the perceived value of advice received from more open and approachable targets. In other words, by increasing the salience of resource gain, higher (versus lower) task uncertainty bolsters the generally positive effect of more amenable target characteristics on advice seeking.

Finally, organizational norms may serve as contextual moderators of the effect of individual-level variables on resource-seeking behavior. For example, Lee (1997) found an interaction between gender and collectivistic organizational norms in predicting help seeking. Specifically, male employees in hospitals characterized by collectivistic norms were more than twice as likely to seek help than male employees in hospitals characterized by individualistic

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norms, whereas the help seeking behavior of female hospital employees was not affected by these norms. These findings suggest that, for men (but not women), collectivistic norms may shift the focus away from the psychological costs of help-seeking and amplify the saliency of potential resource gain.

Summary. Empirical research has identified a number of variables, cutting across different levels of analysis, which condition the effects of various resource seeking antecedents. Although each of these moderators has tended to be studied in the context of a specific type of resource seeking behavior and a specific set of antecedents, their moderating effects may apply more broadly. It is also worth noting that certain critical *predictors* of resource seeking, such as uncertainty, target expertise, and organizational norms, also serve as key *moderators* of other predictors. In other words, these factors both directly influence resource seeking and condition the effects of other resource seeking antecedents. In both cases, the findings are consistent with the idea that both individual and contextual factors can shift the seeker's focus toward either resource acquisition or conservation.

OUTCOMES OF RESOURCE SEEKING

Resource seeking can have both positive and unintended negative outcomes, not just for the person engaging in the behavior, but also for the work unit or organization. We discuss those outcomes here. Similar to our review of resource seeking antecedents, we focus on outcomes that have been most commonly and widely studied, with the most robust empirical evidence base. We first discuss the positive outcomes of resource seeking, at the individual, team, and organization levels respectively, and then discuss negative outcomes at these different levels (see Table 4), in both cases highlighting potential contingency factors that may amplify, attenuate or even reverse these relationships.

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Insert Table 4 about here

Positive Outcomes

Individual-level. There is considerable empirical evidence showing resource seeking to be beneficial for the individual. Specifically, studies have shown all four forms of resource seeking to be associated with stronger objective performance (e.g., Ashford & Tsui, 1991; Chen et al., 2007; Cheramie, 2013; Lam, Huang, & Snape, 2007) and higher ratings of performance (e.g., Anseel et al., 2015; Ashford & Tsui, 1991; Chen et al., 2007; Dahling et al., 2012, 2015; Friedman et al., 2018; Huang, 2012; Lee & Duffy, 2019; Morrison, 1993b; Nifadkar & Bauer, 2016; Nifadkar, Wu, & Gu, 2019; Otte, Konradt, Garbers, & Schippers, 2017; Reio & Wiswell, 2000; Renn & Fedor, 2001; Srikanth & Jomon, 2013; Whitaker et al., 2007; Williams & Johnson, 2000; Wu et al., 2014). Adopting the lens of COR theory, these positive effects on performance may be viewed as downstream consequences stemming from primary resource gains. For example, the individual gains information that provides role clarity (Brown, Ganesan, & Challagalla, 2001; Nifadkar & Bauer, 2016; Whitaker et al., 2007), or assistance that facilitates task accomplishment, and these in turn contribute to better performance.

However, the literature also suggests that the positive association between resource seeking and performance ratings depends, at least in part, on the perceived motive of the seeker. Dahling et al. (2015) report that feedback inquiry has a strong positive relationship with task performance ratings only for employees with low image enhancement motives. Similarly, Lam et al. (2007) find that there is a positive relationship between feedback seeking and LMX quality, which in turn leads to higher performance ratings, but only when the seeker is viewed as having a strong performance enhancement motive (versus an image enhancement motive).

Target expertise is another variable that research suggests will moderate the relationship between resource seeking and positive outcomes for the seeker. Specifically, Brooks et al. (2015) find that advice seekers are evaluated as more competent by the target when the target views him/herself as an expert. In contrast, when targets view themselves as non-experts, advice seeking decreases the target's evaluation of the seekers' competence. In the domain of help seeking, Nadler and colleagues (2003) demonstrate that help seeking leads to more favorable performance evaluations when the target (i.e., help giver) is perceived as having more expertise, but less favorable performance evaluations when the target is perceived as having less expertise.

Research further suggests that the relationship between resource seeking and performance evaluations may not always be monotonic. At least in the context of help seeking, Nadler et al. (2003) show that the relationship may instead be curvilinear. They found that superiors are likely to positively evaluate the performance of employees who asked for help, but only up to a certain high level, beyond which evaluations become more negative. Indeed, COR theory suggests that excessive help seeking may result in resource losses, in the form of a less favorable image or reduced self-confidence. Excessive help seeking may also trigger negative evaluations by supervisors and peers because it draws them away from the tasks that they need to complete or creates a sense of inequity in reciprocal relations (Nahum-Shani & Bamberger, 2011).

Aside from examining the beneficial effects of resource-seeking on objective performance and task performance ratings, empirical studies have also examined its effects on employee creativity (De Stobbeleir, Ashford, & Buyens, 2011; Mueller & Kamdar, 2011; Sijbom, Anseel, Crommelink, De Beuckelaer, & De Stobbelier, 2018). For instance, in a study of engineers working in a large multinational refinery in India, Mueller and Kamdar (2011) report a positive association between employee help seeking and creativity. The authors argued that this

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positive effect may be explained by the fact that help seeking requires employees to engage in exploration and consideration of diverse perspectives. Findings regarding the association between feedback seeking and creativity-related outcomes are more nuanced. Liao and Chun (2016) report that whereas seeking feedback on outcomes is positively correlated with idea generation, seeking feedback about how one approaches work tasks is positively correlated with idea dissemination and implementation.

Research also suggests beneficial effects of resource seeking for employee turnover intentions. Soltis, Agneessens, Sasovova, and Labianca (2013) find that employees who are able to obtain advice from those not required to help have lower levels of turnover intentions than those less able to do so. Similarly, studies indicate that employees who seek feedback and information from their supervisor and coworkers are less likely to quit (Bauer, Bodner, Erdogan, Truxillo, & Tucker, 2007; Dahling et al., 2017; Nifadkar et al., 2019; Wanberg & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2000). One reason may be that resource seeking facilitates the attainment of positive career outcomes such as promotion, which may, in turn, motivate individuals to remain with their organizations (Dimotakis et al., 2017).

In addition, each of the four literatures has shown positive effects of resource seeking on job-related attitudes. Employees who seek more feedback and information have been shown to experience greater job and career satisfaction (Anseel et al., 2015; Asumeng, 2013; Bauer et al., 2007; Bauer, Perrot, Liden, & Erdogan, 2019; Saks, Gruman, & Cooper-Thomas, 2011; Wanberg & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2000). Employees who seek more feedback and information are also likely to have higher feelings of intrinsic motivation, task mastery, role clarity, social integration, person–job fit, person–organization fit, job self-efficacy, and organizational commitment (e.g., Anseel et al., 2015; Bauer et al., 2007; Bauer & Green, 1998; Dahling et al.,

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2017; Dimotakis et al., 2017; Ellis, Nifadkar, Bauer, & Erdgogan, 2017; Gruman et al., 2016;

Morrison, 1993a, 1993b; Nifadkar & Bauer, 2016; Saks et al., 2011; Vandenberghe et al., 2019;

Whitaker et al., 2007; Yu & Davis, 2016). In a study of expatriates, seeking advice from

coworkers was shown to be positively related to work and interaction adjustment (Mahajan &

Toh, 2014). Another study finds feedback seeking from supervisors to be positively related to

supervisor identification, and feedback seeking from coworkers to be positively related to

workgroup identification (Young & Steelman, 2014). Building on COR's resource investment

principle, these findings suggest that resource seeking facilitates the development of more

favorable workplace and job attitudes, which in turn provide the foundation for additional

resource investment and gain.

Resource seeking can also strengthen the quality of workplace relationships. For

instance, research suggests that employees who seek more feedback are likely to have higher

quality LMX (Dahling et al., 2012; Lam et al., 2007). Zheng et al. (2016) report similar effects

for newcomer information seeking. Specifically, they found that newcomers who engaged in

more information seeking experienced higher quality LMX with their new supervisor, which in

turn predicted lower psychological strain and turnover intention, and more extra-role behavior.

Team-level. Empirical research examining the positive effects of resource seeking at the

team level has been mostly conducted in the information seeking and advice seeking literatures.

Within those literatures, there is consistent evidence of a positive effect on team performance,

with studies suggesting team learning as the underlying mechanism contributing to better team

performance (Konradt, Otte, Schippers, & Steenfatt, 2016; Schippers, Homan, & Van

Knippenberg, 2013). For example, a network study finds that teams with leaders who are more

central in an advice network (i.e., those who seek and receive more advice from subordinates)

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perform better than teams whose leaders are less central (Balkundi, Kilduff, & Harrison, 2011).

Furthermore, leaders who seek and receive feedback from subordinates are perceived to have

more charisma, which in turn positively predicts team performance (Balkundi et al., 2011).

Another study finds that advice network density is positively related to team performance (Zhang

& Peterson, 2011). Otte et al. (2017) corroborate this pattern of results, showing that team

information-seeking is positively related to team learning and information sharing behaviors.

They also demonstrate that both the quantity and quality of team information-seeking is

positively related to team performance. Consistent with COR theory, these findings suggest that

resource seeking at the team level yields resource gains, in the form of team learning and

enhanced team capabilities, which may facilitate positive team-level performance outcomes.

   Organization-level. Relative to research on individual and team-level outcomes, there has

been less research on organizational level outcomes of resource seeking. One likely reason is that

the feedback, information, and help seeking literatures are rooted in the premise that employees

seek these as *personal* resources to help achieve *personal* goals. As such, studies have largely

focused on implications of resource seeking behavior for the individual seeker. It is mainly in the

literature on CEO and top management team (TMT) advice seeking that this behavior has been

framed as a firm-level strategic behavior with implications for the organization. It is also worth

noting that within the organizational literature more broadly, there is a relative scarcity of

research linking employee-level behaviors to macro-level outcomes, likely because of the

difficulty of conducting such cross-level research and of establishing causality across levels.

   Nevertheless, empirical research consistently demonstrates that top executive resource

seeking is positively associated with firm performance, with the primary mechanisms being team

potency—generalized beliefs about the team's capabilities across tasks and contexts (Gully,

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Incalcaterra, Joshi, & Beaubien, 2002)—and the acquisition of more diverse and useful

knowledge, which are different forms of resource gain. In a sample of CEOs and TMT members

from 65 firms, Ashford and colleagues (2018) find that CEO feedback seeking is positively

related to firm performance, with this effect mediated by TMT potency. In another study of 263

CEOs, Westphal (1999) finds that the amount of advice interactions is positively related to firm

performance, operationalized as return on equity and market-to-book value. According to the

author, this effect is driven by a greater breadth of knowledge and fresh perspectives derived

from advice seeking. Following the same logic, Dyer and Ross (2008) find that small business

owners who engage in more frequent advice seeking report more favorable business

performance.

Resource seeking's organizational-level effects also extend to innovation. For example,

research documents a positive effect of TMT external advice seeking on both the utilization of

external innovation practices and a firm's entrepreneurial orientation (Alexiev, den Hertog, &

van Dijk., 2012). In a study of Dutch employees from small and medium-sized firms across a

variety of industries, Alexiev et al. (2010) report that both internal and external advice seeking

contribute to exploratory innovation, although internal advice seeking has a stronger influence.

The authors argued that this difference may reflect in-group favoritism or out-group derogation

(Katz & Allen, 1982). Further, Alexiev et al. (2010) find that the relationship between internal

advice seeking and exploratory innovation is strengthened by top management team (TMT)

heterogeneity. The authors argue that these effects may occur because heterogeneous TMTs are

able to connect to a more diverse pool of potential advisors of varying expertise (Hambrick,

1994), and have greater absorptive capacity—the ability to filter, process, and assimilate new

information (Van den Bosch, Volberda, & de Boer, 1999; Zahra, Filatotchev, & Wright, 2009).

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Summary. A sizable body of research suggests that resource seeking is associated with positive individual-level outcomes. At the team level, resource seeking is related to enhanced team performance, most likely driven by improved team capabilities brought about through team learning and more efficient team processes and effective leadership behaviors. At the organization level, research shows that resource seeking can be associated with better firm performance and firm innovation, where these benefits are likely due to enhanced team potency and the leveraging of external networks and acquisition of more diverse knowledge. Thus, the positive effects of resource seeking extend across different levels. As suggested by COR theory, initial resource gains can propel future resource gains. Specifically, the resources obtained by individuals or teams may put them in a more favorable position to further invest their accrued resources to obtain additional resources that lead to positive downstream outcomes.

Negative Outcomes

Individual-level. Although most of the empirical evidence on resource seeking outcomes suggests positive effects, there are studies hinting that there may sometimes be negative effects for the seeker. Underlying such negative consequences is the fact that resource seeking requires resource investment. Accordingly, when people seek resources, they may incur primary resource loss, at least in the short run. These losses can be either intangible or tangible in nature. Intangible losses relate primarily to the resource seeker's reputation or interpersonal relations. For example, in a series of field and experimental studies, Rosette, Mueller, and Lebel (2015) find that help seeking by leaders may negatively influence others' perceptions of them as leaders. However, this backlash applied only to males, suggesting that reputation is negatively affected when resource seeking is incongruent with agentic traits typically associated with men, and thus interpreted as a sign of weakness or low competence (Good, Dell, & Mintz, 1989; Lee, 1997).

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A social network study by Agnessens and Wittek (2012) suggests that resource seeking may also engender negative relational outcomes. In particular, their findings indicate that active advice seekers are more likely to be avoided by active advice givers than by individuals who do not frequently provide advice. Active givers may be concerned that they have to allocate their time and effort to provide advice at the expense of their own work tasks, or at the expense of others who may need the advice more. Recent research also finds that people interpersonally penalize those who seek, but then fail to take, their advice (Blunden, Logg, Brooks, John, & Gino, 2019), and that such unhealthy dynamics can result in interpersonal strain.

Team-level. There is empirical evidence, albeit limited, suggesting that resource seeking may in some cases negatively impact team outcomes. For example, resource seeking by members of a team may limit the time and effort available for team tasks, which may impede team performance. Supporting this idea, Bamberger and Levi (2009) report that while help seeking may result in the enhancement of team members' capabilities, at least in the short run, with members soliciting and providing assistance to one another, the team pays a price with detriments in immediate team performance.

Summary. Although not as robust as the evidence for positive outcomes, there is evidence suggesting that resource seeking may sometimes result in negative outcomes for the seeker. Specifically, employees who seek resources may suffer primary resources losses, such as reputational and interpersonal harm or the depletion of time and energy. At the team level, there is some evidence suggesting that team performance may suffer, at least in the short run, following resource seeking. Consistent with COR theory, these findings suggest that resource investments directed toward resource seeking can be significant and may not necessarily allow

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one to reap benefits in the short term. However, the resource gains, if and when accrued from

resource investments, may outweigh the resource losses in the longer term.

Overall, our review supports the assumption within the four literatures that resource

seeking is a beneficial behavior. Nonetheless, there may be a "dark side," as highlighted in the

advice and help seeking literatures. Our conclusion from the review of the evidence is that

resource seeking involves trade-offs and does not unequivocally lead to positive outcomes. At

the individual level, seekers may incur unintended primary resource losses, such as reputational

and interpersonal costs. In the long run, these resource losses may affect subsequent decisions to

seek resources and potentially hinder people from acquiring resources. Although there is less

evidence of a negative impact of resource seeking on team outcomes, such outcomes cannot be

ruled out, as resources invested by team members in resource seeking and provision may be

shifted away from task-related activities. In addition, resource seeking by top executives may not

necessarily yield positive outcomes for their firm if such resource solicitation is directed towards

those with whom the executives have strong ties, as this can limit the firm's exploration of

diverse knowledge sources and place constraints on its strategic flexibility (McDonald &

Westphal, 2003).

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Our review, spanning across several decades of empirical research, has highlighted a

broad range of antecedents and outcomes of resource seeking behavior, as well as important

boundary conditions. In addition to integrating findings across the different bodies of literature,

we have used the main principles of COR theory to provide a more holistic and theoretically-

grounded view of resource seeking in the workplace. Yet COR theory also provides a basis for

examining several poorly understood aspects of resource seeking. In particular, as a dynamic

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theory, it provides a framework to better understand the path-dependent nature of resource-

seeking and how such behavior can vary as much within-persons as between persons. Moreover,

the heuristic considerations implied in COR theory offer a starting point for exploring questions

beyond just whether or how frequently resource seeking occurs, laying the groundwork for

research on the timing and targeting of such behavior. In addition, COR theory hints at some

ways to resolve some of the inconsistent findings in the literature.

Dynamic Within-Person Research

COR is a dynamic theory (Halbesleben et al., 2014), and its application brings to light the

dynamic nature of resource seeking, as employees try to maintain an optimal balance between

resource conservation and acquisition through a process of self-regulation. Building on this

foundation, we believe there is considerable opportunity for future research to adopt a dynamic,

within-person approach to examining resource seeking behavior. Qualitative studies may offer a

useful starting point for such research, with experiential sampling designs (e.g., Koopman, Lanaj,

& Scott, 2016) providing a means by which to explore self-regulation processes across multiple

resource seeking episodes. For example, even if resources such as information or advice are

sought and provided, significant uncertainty may still remain if the resources obtained are of low

quality or introduce ambiguity. In such situations, even though the solicitation effort yielded the

requested resources, the effort failed to achieve its overarching objective. If this occurs, resource

loss may become salient as the seeker has not only diminished his/her inventory of time and

energy, but may also have suffered the loss of more intangible resources such as self-efficacy

and/or reputation. In this case, COR theory suggests that employees may not only continue to

invest resources to secure the desired resource and recover from a situation of resource depletion,

but that they may do so in an increasingly maladaptive and inefficient manner, resulting in

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secondary resource loss. Such a dynamic can be explained by the desperation principle of COR theory, which suggest that sometimes efforts to recover from resource loss are driven by an increasing tendency to overweight the likelihood of additional resource loss. Such overweighting of potential resource loss can misguide further resource seeking, reduce the probability of success, and further deplete the resource seeker's pool of personal resources, generating resource loss spirals that can increase in momentum and magnitude (Hobfoll et al., 2018). Eventually, the seeking efforts are likely to subside, as the person's resources become depleted, but not without significant personal costs. The application of COR theory opens the door to capturing such spirals of resource losses. However, it is only by studying patterns of resource seeking over time and at the within-individual level can we begin to unravel such dynamic patterns.

Building on the argument that future research needs to adopt a more dynamic perspective of employee resource seeking, it is worth noting two feedback loops that have been suggested in the literature (e.g., Anseel et al., 2015; Grodal, Nelson, & Siino, 2015; Newark et al., 2014), and deserve greater research attention. First, the literature suggests a feedback loop at the dyadic level (Anseel et al., 2015), reflecting the bi-directional pattern of influence between seeker and target and the iterative nature of resource seeking. Whereas characteristics of the target, or of the relationship between the seeker and target, may affect resource seeking, resource seeking may in turn impact the target or the relationship, which may then have implications for subsequent resource seeking behavior. The feedback loop might be either positive (e.g., trust leads to more information seeking, and information obtained leads to even more trust), or negative (e.g., low LMX leads to less resource seeking, which in turn leads to diminished LMX, and so on).

The second feedback loop reflects how resource seeking can create and perpetuate a healthy cycle of mutual resource solicitation and provision through the reinforcement of

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reciprocity norms (Golan & Bamberger, 2015; Grodal et al., 2015). By exchanging resources,

both the seeker and target should expect to achieve an efficient exchange of resources in the long

term, because they learn about each other's underlying interests and values (Molm & Cook,

1995), thus enabling them to efficiently allocate resources over time (Flynn, 2003). These

positive feedback loops may also extend beyond the dyad to the team and even the organization

level (Hobfoll et al., 2018). Indeed, COR theory (Hobfoll et al., 2018) suggests that

organizational factors may foster and promote, or alternatively impede and block, resource

creation and sustenance. One question to consider, therefore, is how both individual and

collective performance might be enhanced in organizations with strong resource seeking and

giving routines. Organizations that facilitate the solicitation of valued resources, and thereby

foster sustained and regulated patterns of resource exchange (Bolino, Harvey, & Bachrach, 2012;

Burke & Weir, 1978), may develop more collaborative organizational cultures. In addition,

resource exchange at the team or organizational level may be fundamental to creating and

sustaining engaged and resilient teams and organizations (Hobfoll et al., 2018).

Timing and Targets of Resource Seeking

To date, there is relatively little empirical research that examines predictors or outcomes

of the timing of resource seeking. Yet timing—whether one immediately seeks or delays the

seeking of a given type of resource—may have important individual and organizational

implications. For example, when help seeking is delayed in the context of an urgent problem, it

could lead to that problem escalating (Vashdi, Bamberger, & Bacharach, 2012). Whether

employees seek resources to tackle an issue in its nascent stage or hold off until later, when it has

morphed into a more complex and multi-faceted issue, can have significant implications for

performance. On one hand, COR theory suggests that when people delay resource seeking, the

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problem may aggravate, thus threatening or even further depleting current resources. Further, if they eventually do decide to seek resources to address the problem, consistent with the corollary of the desperation principle, their already depleted personal resources may reduce the likelihood that they will do so in an effective and efficient manner, resulting in secondary resource losses and initiating or exacerbating resource loss spirals. On the other hand, when people encounter a problem and seek resources immediately, they may develop a dependent resource seeking logic which may stunt their ability to learn and gain mastery of the situation (Geller & Bamberger, 2012). As informed by the gain paradox principle, the seeker's current resource status may be a key factor determining the optimal timing of resource seeking. For example, when a potential seeker has experienced recent resource loss, he/she is likely to place greater emphasis on resource acquisition than resource conservation, and therefore promptly seek resources to resolve the problem, so as not to incur further resource losses by delaying resource seeking. Overall, future research should give more consideration to issues of timing and examine the boundary conditions that determine the optimal timing of resource seeking.

There is also a need for future studies to focus more on decisions about the target of resource seeking, and how seekers balance resource conservation and acquisition when making these decisions. Although our review has outlined how the characteristics of the target and the dyadic relationship between the seeker and the target impact resource seeking, there is relatively little research that examines how the seeker selects from among a pool of potential targets and the factors that influence these decisions. One important factor that is likely to affect this choice, by determining whether the seeker prioritizes resource acquisition over conservation, is the severity of the problem. For instance, when the problem is severe, people may be more likely to select a target with high expertise even if the target is not very accessible or might not comply,

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because the cost of not solving the critical problem is high, which should be weighted more

heavily than the cost of being rejected. Another key factor could be the seeker's current resource

state. Based on the gain paradox and desperation principles, when people have suffered recent

resource losses, they are more likely to overweigh potential gains, and may adopt inefficient

strategies of resource conservation and recovery, by for example selecting a target who lacks

expertise but is more likely to agree to the solicitation request. In sum, it would be useful to

investigate the factors that influence these decisions so as to better understand how resource

seeking can be more effective.

Resolving Inconsistent Findings

Although our review reveals strong evidence of positive effects of resource seeking, there

is also evidence suggesting the possibility of negative outcomes. For example, an employee may

invest resources into soliciting input or help, and then realize that the resources provided by the

target are neither useful nor of high quality, resulting in primary resource loss in the form of

reduced performance capabilities. COR theory's desperation principle and its corollary suggest

that this employee may also incur secondary resource losses due to inefficient allocation of

resources from an already reduced pool (Li, Wang, Yang, & Liu, 2016; van Woerkom, Bakker,

& Nishii, 2016). In addition, he or she may incur reciprocation costs (Mueller & Kamdar, 2011;

Siciliano, 2015). However, we do not have a very good understanding of the conditions that may

engender these negative outcomes. Thus, we encourage future research focused on understanding

when resource seeking is beneficial and when it is more harmful.

Our review unveiled some other areas with inconsistent findings that also call for

additional research. For example, performance goal orientation (PGO) is amongst the most

widely examined antecedents within the feedback seeking literature. PGO is characterized by an

emphasis on demonstrating and validating the adequacy of one's competence by seeking

favorable judgments and avoiding negative judgments about one's ability (Dweck & Leggett,

1988). Whereas some studies show that PGO is positively related to feedback seeking (e.g.,

Anseel et al., 2015; Parker & Collins, 2010; Tuckey et al., 2002), others show a negative effect

(e.g., VandeWalle & Cummings, 1997; Whitaker & Levy, 2012). We speculate that these mixed

findings stem from the failure to consider the two different facets of PGO: performance-prove

and performance-avoid (see Vandenberge et al., 2019, for an exception). Whereas the former

reflects the desire to demonstrate one's ability and to gain favorable evaluations about it, the

latter reflects the desire to avoid the disproving of one's ability and to avoid negative evaluations

about it (VandeWalle, 1997). Using a COR theory lens, we suggest that individuals with a

stronger performance-avoid orientation may prioritize resource conservation over resource

acquisition, which will reduce the likelihood of feedback seeking. To reconcile these discrepant

findings, future research should assess the two distinct dimensions of PGO. Research should

also examine whether these dimensions predict other forms of resource seeking.

Another commonly studied antecedent with equivocal empirical results is the status

difference between the seeker and the target. Underlying research on dyadic status relations and

resource seeking is the notion that status can be a double-edged sword (van der Rijt et al., 2013).

On one hand, people may weigh the perceived utility of resource seeking from higher status

targets as higher. Consistent with this idea, research shows that employees are more likely to

seek feedback (van der Rijt et al., 2013), information (Fang & Shaw, 2009), advice (Marineau et

al., 2018), and help (Lee, 1997, 2002) from higher status individuals than from lower status

individuals. Furthermore, employees are more likely to seek help from supervisors than from

coworkers (Nadler et al., 2003). On the other hand, if the hierarchical or status gap is too large,

the target may not be easily accessible and/or may be too far removed to provide appropriate

resources. Supporting this idea, Bono and Anderson (2005) find employees to be less likely to

seek advice from top managers than from lower level managers. One explanation may be that

employees ascribe higher expected utility to resources requested from those having an

organizational status similar to their own. Indeed, Doyle et al. (2016) show that individuals are

most likely to *provide* help to those at moderate status distances from themselves. These findings

point to the possibility of curvilinear effects of status difference on resource seeking. Future

empirical studies should test this possibility and also examine the tipping point at which the

resource conservation motive outweighs the resource acquisition motive.

CONCLUSION

Given the complex, dynamic, and uncertain nature of work and organizations, resource

seeking is recognized by organizational researchers as a critically important behavior for

enhancing individual and collective effectiveness. To date, organizational scholars have studied

four highly related forms of this behavior: feedback seeking, information seeking, advice

seeking, and help seeking. Despite commonalities across these four behaviors, research on them

has existed in largely distinct silos, making it difficult to appreciate the common threads or apply

insights from one literature to another. In this review, our goal has been to review the empirical

research on antecedents and outcomes of resource-seeking behaviors, in a way that provides not

only conceptual integration, but also a broader and more nuanced understanding. By utilizing

COR theory as our integrating framework, we have been able to more parsimoniously explain

when people are most likely to seek resources, how resource seeking influences work outcomes,

and why and when both sets of relationships may diverge from what would be expected on the

basis of uncertainty reduction and cost benefit models. In addition, we have demonstrated how

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COR theory offers important insights and directions for future theorizing and empirical inquiry

in the area of resource seeking.

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Table 1

Conceptual Comparison of the Feedback, Information, Advice, and Help Seeking Literatures

	Feedback Seeking	Information Seeking	Advice Seeking	Help Seeking
Definition	The "conscious devotion of effort toward determining the correctness and adequacy of behavior for attaining valued end states" (Ashford, 1986, p. 466).	The act of seeking job-related and organizational information to cope with uncertainty and engage in sense-making (Miller & Jablin, 1991; Saks & Ashforth, 1996)	The deliberate information exchange with other individuals as part of the process of forming opinions, attitudes, and judgments (Bonaccio & Dalal, 2006).	The solicitation of emotional or instrumental assistance to manage some problem either at or outside of work (Bamberger, 2009).
Dominant theoretical framework	Uncertainty reduction	Uncertainty reduction	Social network perspective	Cost benefit analysis

Measurement	• Most of the research has used an aggregate measure of feedback seeking
	• Others have distinguished between two distinct forms of feedback seeking: inquiry and monitoring (Anseel et al., 2015; Morrison, 1995).
	• Researchers have sometimes borrowed and modified measures from the information seeking literature.
	• Example items: seeking feedback about "overall work performance, technical performance on the job, supervisors' role expectations, social behaviors"
	• e.g., Lam et al. (2007), VandeWalle et al. (2000)
	• Example item for inquiry: "How frequently do you directly ask *NAME* for feedback about your work?",
	• Example item for monitoring: "How frequently do you pay attention to how *NAME* acts toward you in order to understand how he/she perceives and evaluates your work?"
	• e.g., Ashford (1986), De Stobbeleir et al. (2011)
		• The first empirically validated and commonly used measure was from Morrison's (1993) work.
		• VandeWalle et al. (2000) modified Morrison's (1993) scale and created a measure focused specifically on task-related information.
		• Researchers have sometimes borrowed and modified measures from the feedback seeking literature
		• Example items: seeking information about "Expected performance standards, technical aspects of the job, how to perform official tasks, how to solve task-related problems, the company's task-related expectations of you"
		• e.g., Brown et al. (2001), Major & Kozlowski (1997), Morrison (1993), Nifadkar & Bauer (2016), VandeWalle et al. (2000)
			• No common, widely used scale, but there are common items across different advice seeking measures.
			• Most studies use only 1-2 items because they gather social network data.
			• Example item: "How often during the past *X* months did you go to *NAME* if you needed advice for a work-related problem?"
			• e.g. Alexiev et al., (2010), Bono & Anderson (2005), Brooks et al. (2015), Lee & Duffy (2018), McDonald et al. (2008)
				• Measures are often tailored to experimental context or field setting, e.g., reporting actual number of people one sought help from, observational measures (e.g. Bohn et al., 2010; Cleavenger et al., 2007, Lee, 1997), or specific kind of help seeking (e.g. Hoffman et al., 2009)
				• Measures used in social network studies usually contain only 1-2 items
				  ○ Example item: "Indicate the extent to which you had sought task-related help (i.e., "assistance with technical or practical work-related problems") from *NAME*"
				  ○ e.g. Anderson & Williams (1996), Geller & Bamberger (2012), Lee (2002), Nadler et al. (2003), Rosette et al. (2015)
				• Another set of papers uses Anderson and Williams' (1996) scale to measure help seeking as rated by either seeker or giver.
				  ○ Example item: "*NAME* often asks me to assist her/him with certain tasks or projects",

Context/Motivator	Uncertainty	Uncertainty	A decision	A problem
Target of solicitation	Mostly supervisor, sometimes peers/coworkers	Mostly supervisor/mentor, sometimes peers/coworkers	Intraorganizational and extraorganizational peers	Mostly peers/coworkers, sometimes supervisor/leader

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	Improving performance	Reducing uncertainty	Making decision or choice	Solving a work or personal problem
Focus	Improving performance	Reducing uncertainty	Making decision or choice	Solving a work or personal problem
Exchange/reciprocity	Not necessarily	Not necessarily	Not necessarily	Yes
Prescriptive	Sometimes	Not generally	Yes	Not generally
Temporal focus	Retrospective	Retrospective/ Prospective	Prospective	Prospective
Considers future resource solicitation from the same target	Limited theory and limited empirical evidence, for exceptions see Anseel's et al. (2015)	Limited theory and no empirical evidence	Limited theory and limited empirical evidence, for exceptions see Blunden et al. (2019)	Limited theory and limited empirical evidence, for exceptions see Grodal et al. (2015) and Golan & Bamberger (2015).

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Table 2

COR Theory's Applications to Resource Seeking

Basic tenets of COR Theory	COR Theory Application to Resource Seeking
Principle 1: Primacy of loss principle- resource loss is more salient than resource gain	*COR Application 1:* Principles 1 and 2 imply that people consider not only the potential magnitude of gains and losses from resource seeking, but also the likelihood (i.e., expectancy) of those gains and losses occurring. People are more likely to seek resources when they perceive that the magnitude and likelihood of potential gains from doing so will exceed the magnitude and likelihood of anticipated resource investment or cost.
Principle 2: Resource investment principle—people must invest resources in order to gain resources, and also to protect themselves against and recover from resource loss	
Principle 3: Gain paradox principle—resource gains become more salient and are weighted more when people have experienced resource loss	*COR Application 2:* Principles 3 and 4 imply that the decision of whether to seek resources is not simply a rational utility calculus, but subjectivity and heuristic considerations play an important role. People's current resource status has a significant influence on how they subjectively assess potential gains and losses to maintain an optimal balance between resource conservation and acquisition.
Principle 4: Desperation principle—resource deprivation drives people to become defensive, aggressive and even irrational when their resources are outstretched or exhausted	
• A corollary of this principle is that primary resource loss, and the resource deprivation potentially caused by it, can generate secondary resource loss and even a spiral of increasing resource deprivation as individuals defensively adopt maladaptive strategies of resource conservation and recovery	*COR Application 3:* Principle 4 implies a dynamic within-person perspective of resource seeking, with cycles and spirals of resource loss, as well as feedback loops between outcomes and resource seeking.

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Table 3

Antecedents of Resource Seeking*

	Examined in all 4 literatures	Examined in 2 or 3 of the literatures	Examined in just 1 literature
	RESOURCE CONSERVATION > RESOURCE ACQUISITION		
Seeker characteristics			
Demographics	**Gender (-)** *male=1* 9 papers including: Vandenberge & Panaccio (2012), Janssen & Prins (2007), Kuhn et al. (2016), Lee, 1997	**Age (-)** 8 papers including: Anseel et al. (2015), De Vos & Freese (2011), Bono & Anderson (2005)	-
	Tenure (-) 6 papers including: Anseel et al., (2015), Janssen & Prins (2007), McDonald et al. (2008)	-	
Ego concerns	**Fear of negative evaluation/desire to protect image (-)** 5 papers including: Lu et al. (2011), Tuckey et al. (2002), Brooks et al. (2015), Chan (2013)	-	-
Target and/or Relationship Characteristics			
Relational dynamics	-	**Conflict (-)** 2 papers including: Nifadkar & Bauer (2016), Marineau et al. (2018)	-
Work and/or External Environmental Characteristics			
National culture	-	**Power distance (-)** 3 papers from FSB literature including: Chun et al. (2018), Morrison et al. (2004), Taras et al. (2010) **Collectivism (-)** 2 papers from the FSB literature including: Morrison et al. (2004) 1 paper from the HSB literature including: Taylor et al. (2004)	-

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RESOURCE ACQUISITION > RESOURCE CONSERVATION			
Seeker characteristics			
Promotion focus dispositions	-	**Learning goal orientation (+)** 9 papers including: Anseel et al. (2015), Janssen & Prins (2007) **Openness to experience/Curiosity (+)** 4 papers including: Wanberg & Kammeyer-Mueller (2000)/Harrison & Dossinger (2017), Krasman (2010) **Extraversion (+)** 3 papers including: Wanberg & Kammeyer-Mueller (2000), Krasman (2010), Von Dras & Siegler (1997) **Self-esteem/Self-efficacy (+)** 6 papers including: Bernichon et al. (2003)/Anseel et al. (2015), Gruman et al. (2006) **Perceived usefulness or importance of resource (+)** 12 papers including: Anseel et al. (2015), Morrison & Vancouver (2000) **Desire for control (+)** 5 papers from FSB literature including: Madzar (2001)	-
Target and/or Relationship Characteristics			
Warmth and Competence of Target	**Perceived expertise (+)** 11 papers including: Vancouver & Morrison, 1995, Borgatti & Cross (2003), Marineu et al. (2018), Hofmann et al., (2009) *This effect may reverse when a supervisor is seeking resources from a subordinate (e.g., Chun et al., 2018; Doyle et al., 2015).	**Perceived credibility (+)** 3 papers including: Fedor et al. (1992), Sias & Wyers (2001), Mahajan & Toh (2014) **Perceived accessibility of target (+)** 5 papers including: Vancouver & Morrison (1995), Borgatti & Cross (2003), Hofmann et al. (2009) **Transformational leadership (+)** 5 papers including: Levy et al. (2002), Madzar (2001), Bono & Anderson (2005)	**Perceived likeability (+)** 3 papers from ASB literature including: Mahajan & Toh (2014), Marineu et al. (2018), Porath et al. (2015)
Relational commitment	-	**Reciprocity (+)** 5 papers including: Agneessens & Wittek (2012), Mueller & Kamdar (2011) **Perceived similarity (+)** 5 papers including: Copeland et al. (2008), Doyle et al. (2015)	**Workgroup identification (+)** 3 papers from ASB literature including: Copeland et al. (2008)

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			Relationship quality (+) 2 papers including: Anseel et al. (2015), Anderson & Williams (1996)	
			Friendship ties (+) 4 papers including: Fang & Shaw (2009), Westphal (1999)	
			Perceived supervisor support (+) 4 papers including: Whitaker et al. (2007), Hopkins (2001)	
Work and/or External Environmental Characteristics				
Contextual Demands	-		**Task interdependence (+)** 5 papers including: Major & Kozlowski (1997), Cleavenger et al. (2007)	-
Support	-		**Support for resource seeking (+)** *Positive perceptions of environment, supportive norms, socialization tactics* 9 papers including: Dahling et al. (2017), Beenen & Pichler (2014), Cleavenger et al. (2007)	-
Uncertainty	-		-	**Role ambiguity (+)** 2 papers from FSB literature including: Ashford & Cummings (1985), Gupta et al. (1999) **Lack of person-environment fit (+)** 3 papers including: Devloo et al. (2011), Yu & Davis (2016) **Environmental uncertainty (+)** 4 papers from ASB literature including: Arendt et al. (2005), Dyer & Ross (2008), Heyden et al. (2013)

Notes:
*Some of the example cites in the table are meta-analyses or conceptual reviews, but most of the cites are stand-alone empirical papers.
(+) indicates positive influence on resource seeking, (-) indicates negative influence on resource seeking
FSB refers to feedback seeking behavior, ISB refers to information seeking behavior, ASB refers to advice seeking behavior, and HSB refers to help seeking behavior
Example cites are listed in this order: feedback seeking (FSB) literature, information seeking (ISB) literature, advice seeking (ASB) literature, help seeking (HSB) literature.

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Table 4

Outcomes of Resource Seeking*

	Examined in all 4 literatures	Examined in 2 or 3 of the literatures	Examined in just 1 literature
POSITIVE OUTCOMES			
Individual Level	**Work performance (+)** 18 papers including: Anseel et al. (2015), Nifadkar & Bauer (2016), Nadler et al. (2003), Lee & Duffy, (2018) *2 papers did not find a relationship between resource seeking and performance: Anseel et al. (2015), Harrison et al. (2011)	**Employee creativity (+)** 3 papers including: De Stobbeleir et al. (2011), Mueller & Kamdar (2011) **Turnover intentions (-)** 7 papers including: Dahling et al (2017), Bauer et al. (2007), Soltis, Agneessens, Sasvova, & Labianca (2013) **Job/Career satisfaction (+)** 6 papers including: Anseel et al. (2015), Bauer et al. (2006) *Most of the findings are from the FSB and ISB literatures.	**Other workplace and job attitudes** (intrinsic motivation, task mastery, role clarity, social integration, person–job fit, person–organization fit, job self-efficacy, and organizational commitment) **(+)** 10 papers from FSB literature including: Anseel et al. (2015), Dahling et al. (2017), Young & Steelman (2014), Yu & Davis (2016) 6 papers from ISB literature including: Gruman et al. (2016), Morrison (1993a, 1993b), Nifadkar & Bauer (2015) 1 paper from ASB literature: Mahajan & Toh (2014) **Perceived relationship quality (+)** 3 papers from FSB literature including: Anseel et al. (2015), Dahling et al. (2012), Lam et al. (2007)
Team Level	-	**Team performance (+)** 4 papers including: Balkundi et al. (2011), Zhang & Peterson (2011) *Most of these studies were network studies, and most did not demonstrate a direct effect, but an indirect effect via team coordination and team learning.	-
Organizational Level	-	**Firm performance (+)** 1 paper from FSB literature: Ashford et al. (2018) 3 papers from ASB literature including: Dyer & Ross (2008), Westphal (1999)	**Firm innovation (+)** 4 papers from ASB literature including: Alexiev et al. (2010, 2012)
NEGATIVE OUTCOMES			
Individual Level	-	-	**Reputation (-)** 1 paper from HSB literature: Rosette et al. (2015) **Interpersonal avoidance (+), strain (+)** 3 papers from ASB literature including: Agnessens and Wittek (2012), Blunden et al. (2019)

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Team Level	-	-	**Team performance (-)** 1 paper from HSB literature: Bamberger & Levi (2009)
Organizational Level	-	-	-

Notes:
(+) indicates resource seeking's positive influence on outcome, (-) indicates resource seeking's negative influence on outcome.
*Some of the example cites in the table are meta-analyses or conceptual reviews, but most of the cites are stand-alone empirical papers.
**Empirical studies in each of the four literatures examined unique set(s) of workplace and job attitudes but we grouped these findings under one broad category
Example cites are listed in this order: feedback seeking (FSB) literature, information seeking (ISB) literature, advice seeking (ASB) literature, help seeking (HSB) literature.

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Appendix: Search Procedure to Identify Articles for Inclusion in Review

To identify articles for inclusion in our review, we first identified the relevant search terms, which were help seeking, advice seeking, feedback seeking, and information seeking. Next, we identified a set of 150 journals by including all FT-50 journals and the top 50 journals in the business and management categories in the Journal Citation Reports (JCR, 2016). Given that a substantial number of articles on resource seeking are published in social and applied psychology journals, we also identified and included the top 20 social psychology and I/O psychology journals using JCR (2016). We conducted an initial exploratory search on the EBSCOhost database and eliminated journals that would be very unlikely to include studies of *employee* resource seeking (e.g., American Economic Review, Journal of Consumer Research). This left us with the 70 journals presented in the list at the end of this Appendix. After identifying this set of 70 journals, we searched EBSCOhost database in the period between 1997 and 2019 using the same relevant search terms in titles, abstracts, keyword or subject terms. Based on the search results, we identified 269 relevant articles. We also included in our review some foundational conceptual and empirical articles published in the prior two decades from 1977 to 1996, where these articles were amongst the first articles to be published in the respective areas of help seeking, advice seeking, feedback seeking, or information seeking and were highly cited. In our review, we focus on effects with substantial empirical support. As such, we do not cite or discuss all 269 articles.