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THE INFLUENCE OF SUBCLINICAL NARCISSISM ON EMPLOYEE FEEDBACK RECEPTIVITY
AND EMPLOYEE MOTIVATION TO USE FEEDBACK

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NEIL ERIK DEMPSTER

The Influence of Subclinical Narcissism on
Employee Feedback Receptivity and Employee Motivation to Use Feedback

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By

NEIL ERIK DEMPSTER

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Approval Page

The Influence of Subclinical Narcissism on
Employee Feedback Receptivity and Employee Motivation to Use Feedback

By

Neil Erik Dempster

Approved by:

Chair: Dr. Melanie Shaw, Ph.D.

Date

Certified by:

Dean of School: Dr. Robert Haussmann, Ph.D.

Date

Committee Members:

Dr. Peter Bradley, Ph.D.

Dr. Andrew Carpenter, Ph.D.

Abstract

While employees with narcissistic proclivities are characteristically prone to illusions of superiority, and emotionally vulnerable to any criticism that is inconsistent with the inflated view of their own self-worth, certain narcissistic characteristics, including having a sense of invulnerability, may actually be indispensable in job functions such as sales occupations. This creates a unique challenge for supervisors because employees who are not receptive to feedback are often difficult to manage. Supervisors must be able to identify those employees who have learned to suppress the maladaptive predispositions encompassing the narcissistic personality, and who are now more capable of embracing feedback. The purpose of this quantitative, non-experimental study was to determine whether any moderating influence exists between the adaptive and maladaptive narcissism subscales and feedback receptivity and motivation to use feedback. The sample was comprised of customer service sales agents within several domestic contact centers within the hospitality industry. Regression analyses were employed to determine the moderating effect of adaptive and maladaptive narcissism on employee feedback receptivity and employee motivation to use feedback. Significant results were obtained for the source credibility ($R^2 = .03$, $F[2, 107] = 4.90$, $p < .05$), feedback delivery ($R^2 = .04$, $F[2, 111] = 5.41$, $p < .05$), and motivation to use feedback ($R^2 = .05$, $F[2, 107] = 7.45$, $p < .05$) criterion variables. This study reveals that adaptive and maladaptive narcissism has a moderating influence on specific elements of feedback receptivity and motivation to use feedback. Future research with a larger sample size and less homogeneity will allow interaction effects to be tested thoroughly to further illuminate the narcissism nomological network as it pertains to feedback processes.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

In a typical workplace, supervisors can have a dramatic influence on employees' beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors (Best, 2010; Paarlberg & Lavigna, 2010), and one of the most frequent ways this influence is leveraged is through feedback mechanisms that communicate which behaviors are expected and appropriate and which behaviors are discouraged (Kuo, Li-An, Ya-Jung, & Chien-Ting, 2010; Rooney, Gottlieb, & Newby-Clark, 2009). While positive feedback for quality work is one element of the feedback process, occasionally a supervisor must communicate deficiencies in job performance (Dearstyne, 2010; Kondrasuk, 2011; McComb, 2009). Even though this constructive criticism is essential to ongoing learning (Martin, 2010), providing unfavorable feedback does not guarantee that feedback recipients will respond positively or use the information conveyed to make the desired corrections (Feys, Anseel, & Wille, 2011; Kaymaz, 2011).

While there are many reasons employees may reject feedback, including contextual factors surrounding the feedback process, such as *source credibility*, *feedback quality*, and *feedback delivery* (Peng & Chiu, 2010), the inability to tolerate criticism and utilize feedback constructively is also a common characteristic exhibited by individuals with narcissistic tendencies (e.g., people with grossly inflated views of their own self-worth) (Amernic & Craig, 2010; Madsen & Vance, 2009; Thomaes, Bushman, Orobio de Castro, & Stegge, 2009). These individuals are less open to development opportunities (Ferris, Lian, Brown, Pang, & Keeping, 2010; Galvin, Waldman, & Balthazard, 2010), and frequently fail to incorporate feedback from others (Levy, Chauhan, Clarkin, Wasserman, & Reynoso, 2009; Ouimet, 2010). Because contemporary organizations need employees who continue to learn and improve, and because constructive criticism is

an important contributor to growth and professional development (Govaerts, Kyndt, Dochy, & Baert, 2011; Iles, 1997; Martin, 2010), resistance to feedback and development indifference would typically be viewed as significant career limiters and cause for concern (Toegel & Barsoux, 2012).

Paradoxically, narcissistic personality traits are common among successful people in the workplace (Chen, 2010; Ouimet, 2010; Paunonen, Lönnqvist, Verkasalo, Leikas, & Nissinen, 2006), including Bill Gates, Jack Welch, Oprah Winfrey, and the late Steve Jobs (Holt & Marques, 2012). Some narcissistic attributes, such as an elevated sense of self-worth that allows individuals to feel they can overcome any obstacle and achieve any goal, may actually be indispensable for many roles within contemporary organizations (e.g., sales occupations that are highly independent with low reward interdependence) (Kets de Vries, 2012; Nevicka, De Hoogh, Van Vianen, Beersma, & McIlwain, 2011; Samier & Atkins, 2010, Starratt & Grandy, 2010).

While feedback receptivity and narcissistic personality traits are traditionally thought to be negatively related (Paunonen et al., 2006), one possible answer as to why some people with narcissistic tendencies achieve workplace success is that these individuals have developed an awareness of their proclivities and are able to suppress the many negative predilections contained in the narcissistic personality (Galvin et al., 2010; Kets de Vries, 2012; Ouimet, 2010). This is supported by the growing recognition that narcissism may be a multidimensional construct (Lau, Marsee, Kunimatsu, & Fassnacht, 2011), with evidence for both *adaptive* (e.g., balancing feelings of superiority with gratitude and concern) and *maladaptive* (e.g., infatuation with oneself, entitlement bias) domains (Godkin & Allcorn, 2011; Lau et al., 2011).

Background

The relationship between feedback mechanisms and performance improvement is not just a simple, positive, bivariate phenomenon, and, while the primary purpose of performance feedback (e.g., constructive criticism) is to reshape behavior to align with performance expectations (Kaymaz, 2011), confounding issues such as personality, trait-based self-efficacy, emotional stability, goal orientation, and affective disposition (Feys et al., 2011), intrinsic motivation levels (Guo, Liao, Liao, & Zhang, 2014), supervisor-subordinate relationship (Kaymaz, 2011), and age or generational differences (Stewart & Bernhardt, 2010), moderate the impact of feedback on the feedback recipient and, consequently, on performance. Indeed, while feedback has been shown to have a positive effect on performance, almost 40% of feedback delivered from supervisors to their respective employees has a negative impact on motivation and on performance (Baker, Perreault, Reid, & Blanchard, 2013; Kaymaz, 2011). This statistic is cause for concern and clearly demonstrates that feedback mechanisms, and the elements that influence feedback receptivity, are not fully understood by supervisors and, as a result, certain feedback mechanisms used in organizations may actually have a destructive influence on employee engagement, employee performance, and, consequently, on organization performance and competitive advantage.

To counter this troubling phenomenon, a myriad of research has been done to augment the understanding of feedback mechanisms and, most importantly, to enhance managerial sagacity for the contextual elements that moderate feedback receptivity (Baker et al., 2013; Baran, Shanock, & Miller, 2012; Feys et al., 2011; Gou et al., 2014; Kaymaz, 2011; Kernan, Watson, Fang, & Kim, 2011; Malik, 2013; Muo, 2013; Shunlong

& Weiming, 2012; Skiba & Rosenberg, 2011; Stringer, Didham, & Theivananthampillai, 2011). This research has led to sophisticated feedback systems that attempt to make the process less biased, more relevant, and fair and equitable to the employee (Brown, Hyatt, & Benson, 2010; Hargis & Bradley, 2011; Jain, 2010; Kline & Sulsky, 2009; Mulder & Ellinger, 2013; Rompho & Siengthai, 2012; Sharma & Djiaw, 2011). In contrast to the magisterial types of feedback that were prevalent in the past, these contemporary feedback mechanisms are more collaborative (e.g., a duologue) and are now being used as strategic tools for performance management and career advancement within organizations (Baker et al., 2013).

Many of these modern feedback mechanisms focus on external influences that can positively influence feedback receptivity (e.g., vocal tone; feedback environment), but it is also conceivable that differences in how employees react to feedback could be attributed directly to the *feedback recipient* (e.g., the employee who is receiving the feedback) (Farndale, Hope-Hailey, & Kelliher, 2011; Mitchell, 2010; Renn & Prien, 1995). For example, while research using the five-factor model (FFM) of personality (e.g., emotional stability, conscientiousness, openness to experience, extroversion, agreeableness) found little evidence that personality moderated reactions to negative feedback (Walker et al., 2010), other research suggest that individual characteristics, including self-esteem and narcissistic tendencies, play an important role in how employees react, and respond to, unfavorable feedback (Ferris et al., 2010; Underwood, Beron, & Rosen, 2011).

Paradoxically, narcissism incorporates both positive and negative effects for organizations (McCleskey, 2013), and for the supervisors within these organizations who

are responsible for aligning behaviors, actions, and attitudes with the organization's vision and strategic goals (Ashraf, Bashir, Bilal, Ijaz, & Usman, 2013). Several researchers now posit that certain narcissistic attributes may actually be indispensable for high-pressure and competitive roles within contemporary organizations (Kets de Vries, 2012; Nevicka et al., 2011; Starratt & Grandy, 2010), evinced by the significant overlap between success characteristics (e.g., strong sense of purpose, confident, tenacious, bored with routine, great visioning) and common narcissistic traits (e.g., daring, rebellious, sense of invulnerability, bold, ambitious, grandiose) (Galvin et al., 2010; Kets de Vries, 2012). Clearly, further clarification of the role of narcissism in the modern workplace is necessary, and will require additional empirical research (McCleskey, 2013).

Statement of the Problem

Certain narcissistic attributes may be advantageous for success in specific job functions such as sales and other high-pressure occupations (Galvin et al., 2010; Nevicka et al., 2011). This creates a unique challenge for supervisors responsible for the activities that ensure high-quality employee output in these job functions because feedback receptivity and narcissistic personality traits are traditionally thought to be negatively related. Indeed, people with narcissistic proclivities are known to be emotionally vulnerable to criticism and not receptive to feedback (Amernic & Craig, 2010). Because coaching feedback and constructive criticism are important contributors to productivity, growth, and professional development in the workplace (Govaerts, Kyndt, Dochy, & Baert, 2011), narcissistic characteristics such as resistance to feedback and development indifference would typically be viewed as significant career limiters and cause for concern (Toegel & Barsoux, 2012).

While a myriad of studies on narcissism exist, and the impact of the many narcissistic manifestations in the workplace are well documented, debates persist about its nomological network with much of contemporary research still generating correlates based on a *unidimensional* narcissism construct (Gentile et al., 2013; Kolisckak, 2012; Lau & Marsee, 2013; Lau et al., 2011). Because there is a growing recognition that narcissism may be a *multidimensional* construct, with evidence for both adaptive and maladaptive narcissistic domains, correlates established from a unidimensional measure are potentially misleading because they conflate the adaptive narcissism and maladaptive narcissism subscales, thereby disregarding the differential relations the subscales have with various criterion variables, including feedback receptivity and motivation to use feedback (Lau et al., 2011). Accordingly, a deeper understanding of the interactions between the adaptive narcissism and maladaptive narcissism subscales, as it pertains to feedback receptivity and motivation to use feedback to improve job performance, is necessary to further illuminate the narcissism nomological network, and to contribute to the understanding of feedback processes.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this quantitative, non-experimental study was to determine whether any influence exists between the adaptive narcissism and maladaptive narcissism subscales and employee feedback receptivity and employee motivation to use feedback to improve job performance. A power analysis (Faul, Erdfelder, Buchner, & Lang, 2009) determined the minimum sample size to be 109. The study sample was comprised of customer service sales agents within several domestic call centers within the hospitality industry. To ensure the minimum sample size was attained, invitations to partake in this

study were extended to several large hospitality organizations that, collectively, employ thousands of telephone and Internet customer service sales agents. The survey was closed after 123 surveys were collected. After data screening, nine surveys were discarded due to missing data, leaving 114 surveys for data analyses. The moderator predictor variables of adaptive and maladaptive narcissistic characteristics were measured using the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI) (Ackerman et al., 2011; Raskin & Hall, 1979a, 1979b; Raskin & Hall, 1981; Raskin & Terry, 1988). The Feedback Environment Scale (FES) was used to measure the main effect predictor variable of frequency of unfavorable feedback and the criterion variables of feedback source credibility, feedback quality, feedback delivery, and motivation to use feedback (Steelman, Levy, & Snell, 2004b).

A SurveyMonkey on-line survey (SurveyMonkey Inc., 2014f) was used to gather all pertinent data. Demographic data, including age, gender, race, tenure with organization, and tenure with supervisor, were recorded. The relationship between the main effect predictor variable (frequency of unfavorable feedback) and the moderator predictor variables (adaptive narcissism, maladaptive narcissism) was explored through a progression of hierarchical multiple regression analyses. Frequency of unfavorable feedback was entered into the regression equation first to establish what, if any, effect existed for source credibility, feedback quality, feedback delivery, and motivation to use feedback (Block 1). Adaptive narcissism was entered into the regression equation next to determine what, if any, effect existed for source credibility, feedback quality, feedback delivery, and motivation to use feedback, over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback (Block 2a). Next, the adaptive narcissism variable was removed

from the regression equation and maladaptive narcissism was entered into the regression equation to determine what, if any, effect existed for source credibility, feedback quality, feedback delivery, and motivation to use feedback, over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback (Block 2b).

Theoretical Framework

Contemporary workplaces are multifaceted and, therefore, very complex, so there are many overlapping and, potentially, conflicting theories that attempt to explain why, and to what degree, and in what direction, factors may influence employees' intentions to utilize constructive criticism. Several theories, including leader-member exchange (LMX) theory and vertical dyad linkage (VDL) theory (Shunlong & Weiming, 2012), equity theory (Skiba & Rosenberg, 2011), social exchange theory and organizational support theory (Baran et al., 2012), path-goal theory and contingency theory (Malik, 2013), achievement theory and expectancy theory (Muo, 2013), procedural justice theory (Flint, Haley, & McNally, 2013), attribution theory (Kernan et al., 2011), and reinforcement theory (Stringer et al., 2011), specifically address the multifaceted relationship between organization, supervisor, and employee.

Other theories look at the idiosyncratic characteristics specific to the emphasis of this research, namely the feedback recipient (e.g., employee), and include self-determination theory (SDT) (Albrecht, 2012), social learning theory (Kacmar, Andrews, Harris, & Tepper, 2013), and the five factor personality model (FFM) (Thomason, Brownlee, & Steiner, 2013). While the aforementioned theories all contribute to this research, in one way or another, those that are most relevant are expectancy theory,

procedural or interactional justice, social learning theory, as applied to rewards and punishment, and social learning theory, as applied to narcissism.

Expectancy theory addresses the decision-making schemes used when employees choose a strategy to accomplish a goal or perform a required action, and the theory postulates that any strategy chosen, and action taken, will be determined by what each individual expects will be the outcome or result of his or her effort (Belbin, Erwee, & Wiesner, 2012; Pazy, 2011). Expectancy theory is particularly relevant within the theoretical framework of this research study because positive reinforcement and constructive criticism are two of the more predictable outcomes of an employee's actions or behaviors. Therefore, it is likely that employees will make certain decisions about their work, such as delivering exceptional work in a timely fashion, in anticipation of positive feedback (e.g., approach motivation) and to eliminate the possibility of criticism if, conversely, the work is substandard or not completed on time (e.g., avoidance motivation).

While anticipating positive outcomes are critical to employee engagement, it is also necessary for employees to believe they are capable of successfully completing a task or goal before they are willing to expend the effort (Kealesitse, O'Mahony, Lloyd-Walker, & Polonsky, 2013). Expectancy theory proposes that supervisors must create a positive association between expectancy (i.e., positive outcomes such as favorable feedback) and instrumentality and valence to build self-efficacy and task-related confidence (Fearon, McLaughlin, & Morris, 2013; Muo, 2013). Indeed, the theory suggests that employees will be positively challenged and motivated when facing increased workload, job scope, task difficulty, and cognitive demands when they come to

believe that their efforts will result in valued outcomes (e.g., positive reinforcement, higher performance, development of new competencies) (Holman et al., 2012). Growth and stretch demands delivered by supervisors who provide consistent and veridical favorable reinforcement and constructive criticism are positively correlated with task motivation, performance, learning motivation, and learning performance (Holman et al., 2012).

Procedural or interactional justice contributes to the theoretical framework of this research because the extent to which fair and equitable procedures are used to form opinions, make decisions, or determine outcomes will shape employee perceptions of the credibility and value of managerial feedback (Flint et al., 2013; Suliman & Kathairi, 2013). Procedural or interactional justice also influence organizational commitment and job satisfaction (Sani, 2013), and impact voluntary turnover intentions (Flint et al., 2013). A procedurally fair and equitable performance-based appraisal system uses a similar system to that used within the legal system, namely adequate notice, a fair and impartial hearing, and judgment derived from evidence not conjecture (Clarke, Harcourt, & Flynn, 2013).

Adequate notice refers to explaining performance expectations and standards to employees, discussing why these expectations and standards must be met, what meeting the expectations and standards will mean to the employee (e.g., promotion, pay), and the process of providing timely and consistent feedback on performance (Gupta & Kumar, 2013). A fair hearing occurs when an informal or formal meeting takes place between a supervisor and an employee in which the employee is informed of a provisional evaluation of performance levels, as compared to performance expectations, and the

ensuing two-way communication allows the employee to clarify the nature of the evaluation, and any repercussions of the evaluation on various managerial decisions (Clarke et al., 2013). Judgment based on evidence simply means that supervisors are required to apply performance criteria consistently across all employees, while using honesty and fairness principles, without yielding to personal biases or prejudices or to external pressures (e.g., the opinions or perceptions of other employees) (Ismail et al., 2011).

Procedural injustice and unfair or inequitable treatment in the workplace has implications for employees and has been demonstrated to be predictive of various undesirable responses (Miller, Konopaske, & Byrne, 2012), including reduced commitment and job satisfaction (Gumusluoglu, Karakitapoğlu-Aygün, & Hirst, 2013). Because perceptions can influence employees' assessment and attitude towards particular phenomena, including feedback mechanisms, it is conceivable that employees might have diverse opinions about the quality and validity of any feedback received (Boachie-Mensah & Seidu, 2012). Employees are more likely to embrace and be receptive and supportive of feedback if they perceive the process as fair and equitable (Boachie-Mensah & Seidu, 2012).

Social learning theory is also relevant within the theoretical framework of this research study because, according to the theory, learning is a cognitive process that takes place through observation, direct interaction, and through the process of vicarious reinforcement (e.g., observation of rewards and sanctions delivered to others) (Homburg, Wieseke, Lukas, & Mikolon, 2011). As hypothesized in social learning theory, employees will observe the rewards provided to those following the rules, and the

punishments imposed on those who disobey the rules, and, by way of vicarious learning, these perceptions will ultimately become embedded into the organization's culture as norms (e.g., values, beliefs, and expectations) adopted among employees (Adnan, Jamil, & Nor, 2013; Fearon, McLaughlin, & Morris, 2013). In essence, as it relates to constructive feedback mechanisms within the workplace, social learning theory posits that human behavior is learned behavior, and frequently results from observing the consequences of other employees' behaviors (Ahmad, Jehanzeb, & Alkelabi, 2012). These observations provide a clear understanding of what might occur when behaving in one manner or another, and validates which behaviors will result in a positive outcome (e.g., approach motivation) and which behaviors will result in a negative outcome (e.g., avoidance motivation) (Ahmad et al., 2012).

The social learning theory, as applied to narcissism, is an extension of social learning theory, and is an important consideration within the theoretical framework of this research study because human behavior is also influenced through imagined participation in other people's lives, especially when observing celebrities and other influential role models who are admired (e.g., popular movie stars) (Ashe, Maltby, & McCutcheon, 2005), or who are credible (e.g., acclaimed business leaders) (Boddy, 2014). Just as individuals may purchase specific cars, or dress in particular ways, to brandish their social status, income, or membership in a social group (Langner, Hennigs, & Wiedmann, 2013), individuals will model their own behaviors after those they wish to be, or who they look up to or respect (Hunter, 2011).

Because dysfunctional and narcissistic actors, sports figures, and other celebrities are profiled so predominantly in modern society (e.g., on television; in celebrity

magazines), they can become role models for many individuals who learn negative and dysfunctional behaviors by observing and emulating those they have come to idolize (Boddy, 2014). In the workplace, successful business leaders with narcissistic proclivities may exhibit unhealthy narcissistic tendencies (e.g., arrogance, superiority, grandiosity, self-admiration) (Chen, 2010; Ouimet, 2010) and impressionable employees within those organizations may choose to embrace these traits as acceptable, appropriate, even desirable (Boddy, 2014).

There are vast differences between the three theoretical foundations identified within this research study, namely expectancy theory, procedural or interactional justice theory, and the two variations on social learning theory (rewards and punishment; narcissism). However, in terms of their nomological networks, there is significant overlap when the multidimensional aspects of day-to-day supervisor-employee interactions are considered.

Research Questions

Employees with narcissistic proclivities are emotionally vulnerable to constructive criticism and are not receptive to feedback (Baumeister, Smart, & Boden, 1996; Thomaes et al., 2009). Yet, there are certain narcissistic characteristics that uniquely equip individuals to succeed in demanding, competitive business environments, and it is only those who are unable to suppress negative narcissistic inclinations that limit their career growth (Barry, Frick, Adler, & Grafeman, 2007; Besser & Priel, 2010; Godkin & Allcorn, 2009; Watson, Trumpeter, O'Leary, Morris, & Culhane, 2006). This quantitative, non-experimental study answered the following research questions:

Q1. To what extent, if any, does adaptive narcissism and maladaptive narcissism

predict employee perceptions of feedback source credibility over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback?

Q2. To what extent, if any, does adaptive narcissism and maladaptive narcissism predict employee perceptions of feedback quality over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback?

Q3. To what extent, if any, does adaptive narcissism and maladaptive narcissism predict employee perceptions of feedback delivery over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback?

Q4. To what extent, if any, does adaptive narcissism and maladaptive narcissism predict employee motivation to use feedback over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback?

Hypotheses

Each research question resulted in two corresponding hypotheses, one addressing adaptive narcissism (a) and, the second, addressing maladaptive narcissism (b).

H1a₀. Adaptive narcissism, as measured by the NPI, does not significantly predict employee perceptions of feedback source credibility, as measured by the FES, over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback, as measured by the FES.

H1a₁. Adaptive narcissism, as measured by the NPI, does significantly predict employee perceptions of feedback source credibility, as measured by the FES, over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback, as measured by the FES.

H1b₀. Maladaptive narcissism, as measured by the NPI, does not significantly predict employee perceptions of feedback source credibility, as measured by the FES,

over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback, as measured by the FES.

H1b1. Maladaptive narcissism, as measured by the NPI, does significantly predict employee perceptions of feedback source credibility, as measured by the FES, over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback, as measured by the FES.

H2a0. Adaptive narcissism, as measured by the NPI, does not significantly predict employee perceptions of feedback quality, as measured by the FES, over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback, as measured by the FES.

H2a1. Adaptive narcissism, as measured by the NPI, does significantly predict employee perceptions of feedback quality, as measured by the FES, over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback, as measured by the FES.

H2b0. Maladaptive narcissism, as measured by the NPI, does not significantly predict employee perceptions of feedback quality, as measured by the FES, over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback, as measured by the FES.

H2b1. Maladaptive narcissism, as measured by the NPI, does significantly predict employee perceptions of feedback quality, as measured by the FES, over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback, as measured by the FES.

H3a0. Adaptive narcissism, as measured by the NPI, does not significantly predict employee perceptions of feedback delivery, as measured by the FES, over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback, as measured by the FES.

H3a1. Adaptive narcissism, as measured by the NPI, does significantly predict employee perceptions of feedback delivery, as measured by the FES, over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback, as measured by the FES.

H3b₀. Maladaptive narcissism, as measured by the NPI, does not significantly predict employee perceptions of feedback delivery, as measured by the FES, over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback, as measured by the FES.

H3b₁. Maladaptive narcissism, as measured by the NPI, does significantly predict employee perceptions of feedback delivery, as measured by the FES, over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback, as measured by the FES.

H4a₀. Adaptive narcissism, as measured by the NPI, does not significantly predict employee motivation to use feedback, as measured by the FES, over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback, as measured by the FES.

H4a₁. Adaptive narcissism, as measured by the NPI, does significantly predict employee motivation to use feedback, as measured by the FES, over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback, as measured by the FES.

H4b₀. Maladaptive narcissism, as measured by the NPI, does not significantly predict employee motivation to use feedback, as measured by the FES, over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback, as measured by the FES.

H4b₁. Maladaptive narcissism, as measured by the NPI, does significantly predict employee motivation to use feedback, as measured by the FES, over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback, as measured by the FES.

Nature of the Study

Employees with narcissistic proclivities are emotionally vulnerable to constructive criticism and not receptive to feedback (Thomaes et al., 2009), yet many researchers posit there are adaptive narcissistic characteristics that uniquely equip individuals to succeed in demanding, competitive business environments (Amernic &

Craig, 2010; Besser & Priel, 2010; Godkin & Allcorn, 2009). The purpose of this study was to determine whether adaptive and maladaptive narcissist characteristics moderate employee feedback receptivity, specifically, the contextual variables of feedback source credibility, feedback quality, and feedback delivery, as well as moderate employee motivation to use feedback, in a workplace setting.

The study sample was comprised of customer service sales agents within several domestic call centers within the hospitality industry. The hospitality industry contact center work environment is very competitive, with objective performance metrics (e.g., number of reservations booked; upselling revenue; talk-time; wrap-time), as well as performance-based incentive programs, so it was likely to attract personality characteristics tending toward high self-esteem and narcissism. To ensure the minimum sample size was attained, invitations to partake in this study were extended to several large hospitality organizations that, collectively, employ thousands of telephone and Internet customer service sales agents.

The moderator predictor variables of adaptive and maladaptive narcissistic characteristics were measured using the NPI (Ackerman et al., 2011; Raskin & Hall, 1979a, 1979b; Raskin & Hall, 1981; Raskin & Terry, 1988). The FES was used to measure the main effect predictor variable of frequency of unfavorable feedback and the criterion variables of feedback source credibility, feedback quality, feedback delivery, and motivation to use feedback (Steelman et al., 2004b). A SurveyMonkey on-line survey (SurveyMonkey Inc., 2014f) was used to gather all pertinent data. Demographic data, including age, gender, race, tenure with organization, and tenure with supervisor, were recorded.

Relationships between the moderator predictor variables and the main effect predictor variable were determined through a progression of hierarchical multiple regression analyses. Frequency of unfavorable feedback, the main effect predictor variable, was entered into the regression equation first to establish what, if any, effect existed for source credibility, feedback quality, feedback delivery, and motivation to use feedback (Block 1). Adaptive narcissism, one of the moderator predictor variables, was entered into the regression equation next to determine what, if any, effect existed for source credibility, feedback quality, feedback delivery, and motivation to use feedback, over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback (Block 2a). Next, the adaptive narcissism variable was removed from the regression equation and maladaptive narcissism, the second moderator predictor variable, was entered into the regression equation to determine what, if any, effect existed for source credibility, feedback quality, feedback delivery, and motivation to use feedback, over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback (Block 2b).

In this non-experimental, quantitative study, a correlation design was utilized to examine the predictive relationship between *frequency of unfavorable feedback*, the main effect predictor (independent) variable, and employees' perception of feedback *source credibility, feedback quality, and feedback delivery*, as well as their *motivation to use feedback*, the criterion (dependent) variables, and to determine whether *adaptive narcissism* or *maladaptive narcissism* moderate the relationships between the predictor variable and the criterion variables. An experimental research design was not possible for this study because some of the research variables are personality traits (e.g., adaptive narcissism; maladaptive narcissism) and cannot be manipulated or assigned to study

participants (Heiman, 2002). In addition, an experimental design creates an artificial study environment that does not occur naturally in the workplace and, because there is some interference introduced by the researcher (i.e., the researcher is randomly assigning predictor variables to study participants), there is, potentially, lower ecological and external validity (Heiman, 2002).

A quantitative, correlational research design was optimal for this study because numerous quantifiable measures were used and qualitative research does not generally utilize objective measures for analyses (Howell, 2010; Muijs, 2011). Categorical (nominal) scales were used within this research study to collect pertinent demographic information (e.g., age, gender, race, tenure with organization, tenure with supervisor). In addition, interval data from the FES psychometric assessment questionnaire (e.g., frequency of unfavorable feedback; feedback source credibility; feedback quality; feedback delivery; motivation to use feedback), and ratio data from the NPI psychometric assessment questionnaire (e.g., adaptive narcissism; maladaptive narcissism) were collected from the study participants. Statistical analyses requiring these types of measurement scales were utilized to determine whether, to what degree, and in what direction, a correlation existed between the variables being studied (Dues, 2011). The quantitative method provided a more objective assessment of the proposed interaction among variables due to its inherent capability to establish statistical relationships among numerically-coded variables using parametric procedures (e.g., hierarchical multiple regression analyses) (Heiman, 2002; Muijs, 2011).

Significance of the Study

Outside of the workplace one can avoid, or, at least, reduce to a minimum, having to deal with the socially toxic characteristics of the narcissist. However, people within organizations need to work together, often involuntarily, to accomplish the goals of the organization, so the impact of subclinical narcissistic manifestations, including grandiosity and extreme self-importance, a sense of entitlement, instability in mood, and hyper-sensitivity to criticism, can be especially deleterious. With the tremendous increase in levels of narcissism being reported (e.g., 16.7% increase in a 27 year study) (Brown, Akers, & Giacominio, 2013), the likelihood of working with a person with narcissistic tendencies is that much more conceivable in contemporary workplace settings.

One critical area where this impact is most pronounced is the supervisor-employee relationship. Because certain job functions might actually attract people with higher levels of narcissistic tendencies (e.g., sales occupations), supervisors over these occupations frequently find themselves dealing with narcissistic behaviors, especially as it pertains to the feedback discussions necessary to correct a performance deficiency. Employees with narcissistic proclivities are often emotionally vulnerable to constructive criticism, not receptive to feedback, and they frequently exhibit an almost-obsessive concern about how favorably they are viewed by others while rejecting any evidence to the contrary (Gardner & Pierce, 2011). These individuals feel very entitled, and this deeply embedded personal view has been correlated with a wide array of maladaptive behaviors, including, greed, selfishness, lack of self-control and aggression (Andrey et al., 2012; Brown et al., 2013; Campbell, Bonacci, Shelton, Exline, & Bushman, 2004;

Grubbs, Exline, & Twenge, 2014).

Employees with narcissistic tendencies significantly overestimate their level of, and contribution to, current performance, and take little responsibility for making the changes necessary to perform at higher levels (Gardner & Pierce, 2011; Nevicka et al., 2011). This creates a unique challenge for supervisors because while narcissistic attributes may be desirable for certain roles (Kets de Vries, 2012; Starratt & Grandy, 2010), employees who do not respond to constructive feedback are difficult to manage and can have an adverse impact on critical areas within the organization.

While a myriad of research exists relating to the subclinical behavioral manifestations of narcissism that may occur within members of the general population, and a moderate number of studies exist on subclinical narcissism within the workplace, no studies were found that examined the impact of the recently identified subscales of narcissism (e.g., adaptive narcissism; maladaptive narcissism) on employees' receptivity to constructive criticism and developmental feedback. The purpose of this study was to identify whether certain dimensions of subclinical narcissism have a moderating influence on employee perceptions of various aspects of work performance feedback, or on employee motivation to use feedback to improve performance in a workplace environment. A better understanding of how employees interpret and react to unfavorable work performance feedback will contribute to the existing body of knowledge on feedback mechanisms, improve workplace recruiting efforts (e.g., identify potential candidates who are more receptive to coaching feedback and continuous improvement), enhance performance coaching methods, and help supervisors deliver work performance feedback in a more effective manner.

Because supervisors are responsible for the activities that ensure high-quality employee output (Chalhoub, 2010; Ferris et al., 2010; Wolf, 2012), providing feedback to employees about how they are doing relative to expected behaviors and objectives is essential (Harms & Roebuck, 2010). For job functions that may benefit from people with narcissistic attributes, supervisors must be able to identify those individuals who are most likely to be adaptive narcissists, in essence, those that have a capacity for, or a tendency toward, behavioral adjustment or modification when a situation or interaction requires it (Clark, 2010), and who are more receptive to feedback, open to change, and who are able to suppress the many maladaptive predispositions encompassing the narcissistic personality.

Definition of Key Terms

This dissertation employs a number of terms that are unique and specific to the topic of subclinical narcissism as it pertains to feedback receptivity and motivation to use feedback. Some of these terms are conceptual, as the concepts compose the theoretical frameworks used to inform the design of this research study. Other terms are operational, as they relate to the variables being measured. Because issues of definition, classification, and interpretation constitute a significant part of this dissertation, some of the most important working definitions are provided here to assist the reader in understanding the study, and its relationship to the literature rendered in support of the research.

Adaptive narcissism. Adaptive narcissism refers to narcissistic traits, attributes, and characteristics that have a capacity for, or a tendency toward, behavioral adjustment or modification when a situation or interaction requires it (Clark, 2010). In adult

populations, narcissistic traits such as superiority, authority and self-sufficiency are considered relatively adaptive based on their connection with self-confidence and assertiveness (Barry et al., 2007). Adaptive narcissism is a subscale construct identified within the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI) (Raskin & Hall, 1979a; Raskin & Hall, 1981; Raskin & Terry, 1988; Ackerman et al., 2011). The adaptive narcissism composite score is derived by summing 11 items within the NPI (Ackerman et al., 2011).

Feedback. Feedback refers to the process of evaluating and discussing work performance (e.g., productivity, quality, KPIs), behavioral issues (e.g., attitude, tardiness, lack of teamwork), or strengths and weaknesses (e.g., growth and development opportunities) with employees (Harms & Roebuck, 2010). Feedback is also referred to as constructive criticism, developmental feedback, and coaching (Rego, Sousa, Marques, & Pina e Cunha, 2012).

Feedback delivery. Feedback delivery refers to the manner, style, and tone with which feedback is delivered by a supervisor to an employee and is represented by the theory of procedural or interactional justice (e.g., perceptions of fair interpersonal treatment) (Steelman & Rutkowski, 2004). The feedback delivery subscale represents a supervisor's supportiveness when providing feedback, and addresses elements such as tact, consideration and respect for the feedback recipient's feelings (e.g., not perfunctory or thoughtless) (Steelman, 1997; Steelman et al., 2004b; Steelman & Rutkowski, 2004). The feedback delivery composite score is derived from the arithmetic mean of five items within the Feedback Environment Scale (FES) (Steelman, 1997; Steelman et al., 2004b; Steelman & Rutkowski, 2004).

Feedback quality. Feedback quality refers to constructive criticism that is viewed by the feedback recipient as valid, accurate, and reliable (Steelman, 1997; Steelman et al., 2004b; Steelman & Rutkowski, 2004). Feedback quality concerns the information value of feedback, the consistency of the feedback (e.g., does not vary with the supervisor's mood), usefulness of the information provided (e.g., specific rather than general), whether the information provided will help the feedback recipient accomplish goals or tasks, and whether the information will decrease the feedback recipient's job-related uncertainty (Steelman, 1997; Steelman et al., 2004b; Steelman & Rutkowski, 2004). The feedback quality composite score is derived from the arithmetic mean of five items within the FES (Steelman, 1997; Steelman et al., 2004b; Steelman & Rutkowski, 2004).

Feedback receptivity. Feedback receptivity refers to the attitude feedback recipients have toward feedback, including their belief in the value of feedback, their feedback seeking propensity, their cognitive propensity to synthesize feedback thoughtfully, and their feelings of accountability to act on feedback received (Levy & Linderbaum, 2013). For the purposes of this research study, the conceptualized construct of feedback receptivity refers to the employee's perception of, or the interpretation deduced from, some form of feedback, specifically pertaining to the contextual elements of source credibility, feedback quality, and feedback delivery.

Frequency of unfavorable feedback. Frequency of unfavorable feedback refers to the amount of veridical constructive criticism that is received from the feedback recipient's direct supervisor (Steelman & Rutkowski, 2004). The frequency of

unfavorable feedback composite score is derived from the arithmetic mean of four items within the FES (Steelman, 1997; Steelman et al., 2004b; Steelman & Rutkowski, 2004).

Motivation to use feedback. Motivation to use feedback refers to the feedback recipient's drive, desire, and willingness to improve performance, or correct behavior, after feedback has been provided (Steelman, 1997; Steelman et al., 2004b; Steelman & Rutkowski, 2004). Motivation to use feedback is the extent to which the feedback affects the feedback recipient's goal-directed behaviors (i.e., if feedback identifies a gap in performance, and the feedback is accepted by the employee, the employee should adjust his or her work behaviors) (Steelman, 1997; Steelman et al., 2004b; Steelman & Rutkowski, 2004). The motivation to use feedback composite score is derived from the arithmetic mean of two items within the FES (Steelman, 1997; Steelman et al., 2004b; Steelman & Rutkowski, 2004).

Maladaptive narcissism. Maladaptive narcissism refers to narcissistic traits, attributes, and characteristics that have little capacity for behavioral adjustment or modification when a situation or interaction would normally call for it (Clark, 2010). In adult populations, narcissistic traits such as exploitativeness, entitlement, and exhibitionism are considered maladaptive and unhealthy based on their associations with poor social adjustment (Barry et al., 2007) and have been correlated with a wide array of maladaptive behaviors, including, greed, selfishness, lack of self-control and aggression (Andrey et al., 2012; Campbell et al., 2004; Grubbs et al., 2014). Maladaptive narcissism is a subscale construct identified within the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI) (Raskin & Hall, 1979a; Raskin & Hall, 1981; Raskin & Terry, 1988; Ackerman et al., 2011). The maladaptive narcissism composite score is derived by summing 14 items

within the NPI (Ackerman et al., 2011).

Narcissism. Narcissism is characterized by a pretentious sense of self-importance, excessive need for admiration, pervasive pattern of grandiosity, and a lack of empathy (Craig & Amernic, 2011), and is defined by the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* as a mental disorder when five or more of the nine identified narcissism diagnostic criteria (e.g., grandiosity, fantasies of power, belief he or she is special, excessive self-admiration, sense of entitlement, interpersonally exploitative, lacking empathy, extreme envy, arrogant) are present in a variety of contexts (4th ed., text rev.; DSM–IV; American Psychiatric Association, 2000).

Subclinical narcissism. Subclinical narcissism refers to the behavioral manifestations of narcissism (e.g., a sense of grandiosity and self-importance, a sense of entitlement, sensitivity to criticism) that may occur in members of the general population but not at a level necessary to warrant a clinical diagnosis (e.g., Narcissistic Personality Disorder) (Bergman, Westerman, & Daly, 2010).

Source credibility. Source credibility refers to the feedback recipient's view of the feedback source's expertise and competence (e.g., knowledge of the feedback recipient's job function, job requirements, actual job performance, and the ability to judge that job performance accurately) and trustworthiness (e.g., whether or not the feedback recipient trusts the feedback source to provide accurate performance information that is free of biases) (Steelman, 1997; Steelman et al., 2004b; Steelman & Rutkowski, 2004). The feedback source credibility composite score is derived from the arithmetic mean of five items within the Feedback Environment Scale (FES) (Steelman, 1997; Steelman et al., 2004b; Steelman & Rutkowski, 2004).

Summary

Although people with narcissistic proclivities are characteristically prone to illusions of superiority and emotionally vulnerable to any criticism that is inconsistent with the inflated view of their own self-worth, certain narcissistic characteristics, including being assertive, grandiose, and daring, and having a sense of invulnerability, may actually be indispensable for success in specific job functions such as sales and other high-pressure occupations. This creates a rather unique challenge for supervisors responsible for the activities that ensure high-quality employee output because while these narcissistic attributes may be advantageous in specific roles, employees who are not receptive to feedback, and resist or reject criticism, are often difficult to manage.

For job functions that may benefit from people with narcissistic attributes, supervisors must be able to identify those employees who have learned to suppress the many maladaptive predispositions encompassing the narcissistic personality and who have adapted to contemporary work environments. Employees with healthy, adaptive narcissistic tendencies are more capable of adapting to changing work environments, and more receptive to feedback.

The purpose of this quantitative, non-experimental study was to determine whether employees' adaptive and maladaptive narcissist characteristics moderate levels of employee feedback receptivity, defined as a conceptual construct for this research study, and comprised of employee perceptions of source credibility, employee perceptions of feedback quality, employee perceptions of feedback delivery, and employee motivation to use feedback to improve job performance. This information may help identify those who will be most likely to respond to, and use, coaching and

developmental feedback.

Various hierarchical multiple regression analyses were employed to determine the moderating effect of adaptive and maladaptive narcissistic characteristics on the feedback receptivity variables of source credibility, feedback quality, and feedback delivery, and the motivation to use feedback variable, over and above the effects of unfavorable feedback itself. The study sample was comprised of 123 customer service sales agents within several high-pressure, metrics-driven, domestic contact centers within the hospitality industry (e.g., airlines, car rental agencies, hotels).

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Human capital plays a critical role in organizational effectiveness and success, and managers in both the private and public sectors are under considerable pressure to meliorate performance in their respective teams and business units (Biron, Farndale, & Paauwe, 2011; Chalhoub, 2010; Nankervis, Stanton, & Foley, 2012). In the private sector, much of this pressure comes as a result of changing consumer expectations and purchasing modalities forcing organizations to become more innovative in a myriad of areas (Liu & Batt, 2010; Wichitchanya & Durongwatana, 2012). Examples include product development initiatives that enhance competitive advantage (Brühl, Horch, & Osann, 2010; Zhang, 2011; Wichitchanya & Durongwatana, 2012); new market exploration that improve brand management, overall customer relationships, and financial performance (Baird, Schoch, & Qi, 2012; Vorhies, Orr, & Bush, 2011); process improvements that increase quality at reduced costs, enhance workflow efficiency and effectiveness, and heighten the customer experience (Goksoy, Ozsoy, & Vayvay, 2012; Mahdi & Almsafir, 2012); and technology enhancements that elevate customer and supplier relations and modernize product, process, and workforce management (Mazzotta, Bronzetti, & Sicoli, 2012; Sánchez-Rodríguez & Martínez-Lorente, 2011).

Government and public sector customers (e.g., citizens; taxpayers; constituents) increasingly want greater governmental efficiency, better quality services, reduced costs, and increased responsiveness to their needs, questions, and concerns (Kealesitse, O'Mahony, Lloyd-Walker, & Polonsky, 2013). Policy makers and division heads within governmental agencies are increasingly expected to ensure that human resource activities

are better aligned with changing constituent expectations, and with shifting needs, to achieve better results and elevate the constituent experience (Baird, Schoch, & Qi, 2012).

Whether private sector or public sector, cohesive human resource performance management techniques engender organizational effectiveness and improve results (Nankervis, Stanton, & Foley, 2012; Roca-Puig, Beltrán-Martín, & Mercedes, 2012). In competitive business environments, a properly designed and executed performance management system can enhance brand identification and customer loyalty (Hargis & Bradley, 2011; Mohamed, Omar, & Ibrahim, 2013), and create long-term competitive advantage (Dobre, 2012; Thompson, Shanley, & McWilliams, 2013; Wichitchanya & Durongwatana, 2012). Performance management is an all-encompassing term used to describe the activities within organizations that improve the performance of individuals (Biron et al., 2011; Turkyilmaz, Akman, Ozkan, & Pastuszak, 2011) and enable organizations to better plan, measure and manage resources and tasks with the ultimate goal of enhancing organizational effectiveness (Baird, Schoch, & Qi, 2012; Raemdonck, van Rien, Valcke, Segers, & Thijssen, 2012). These activities include creating a set of objective, achievable, sustainable and tenable measures, as well as the corresponding and supporting process, procedures, and systems, which improve results and support the overall strategic vision and goals of the organization (Baird, Schoch, & Qi, 2012; Jaksic & Jaksic, 2013).

Because employee costs (e.g., recruiting, hiring, on-boarding, training and education, compensation, health care, and other benefits) represent a significant expense to an organization, often the largest single expense in the organization's budget, oversight of this expense, through solid human resource management practices, is necessary to

ensure each employee adds value back into the enterprise (Raemdonck et al., 2012; Schraeder & Jordan, 2011; Turkyilmaz et al., 2011). This value is typically realized only when employees are engaged in the work process and producing results that support the mission of the organization (Agarwal, Datta, Blake-Beard, & Bhargava, 2012). By creating a more transparent and vivid connection between employee achievements and overall business results, there is an increase in employee work motivation, enhanced creativity and innovation, and more pronounced development of core knowledge and competency levels (Fearon, McLaughlin, & Morris, 2013; Jaksic & Jaksic, 2013). Feedback to employees about their performance, especially when goals and objectives are not being met, is an essential step towards successful management of employee performance (Jaksic & Jaksic, 2013; Turkyilmaz et al., 2011).

Documentation

The vast majority of sources cited in this literature review were accessed using electronic search engines through the Northcentral University (NCU) Library system, specifically the Business, Psychology, and, to a lesser degree, Education, subject areas. Primarily due to ease of use and advanced search capabilities, two main online research databases, including their corresponding sub-databases, were utilized, namely ProQuest (e.g., ProQuest Research Library; ProQuest Education Journals; ProQuest ABI/INFORM Global; ProQuest Career and Technical Education; ProQuest Dissertations & Theses) and EBSCOhost (e.g., Business Source Complete; Education Research Complete; MEDLINE; OmniFile; PsycARTICLES; PsycINFO; PsycTESTS). When an article was not found through the aforementioned databases, various other electronic search engines were utilized, including Gale Academic OneFile, Mental Measurements Yearbook,

SAGE Journals Online, ScienceDirect, SpringerLink, Taylor & Francis Online, and Wiley Online Library. The search database parameters were set to full-text, peer-reviewed, and scholarly journals; search date parameters, for most of the literature reviews, were set to include articles published during the previous five years. The Internet search engine Google Scholar was used to find obscure articles that had been published, but were not found through the various online databases referenced earlier; once located, the NCU Interlibrary Loan facility was utilized. Keywords used to locate relevant literature included various authors who had completed seminal work in the field of self-esteem, narcissism, and feedback receptivity (e.g., Ackerman; Raskin; Rutkowski; Steelman) as well as pertinent, research-specific keywords (e.g., adaptive narcissism; maladaptive narcissism; self-esteem; Feedback Environment Survey; Narcissistic Personality Disorder; Narcissistic Personality Inventory).

Constructive Criticism and Feedback Receptivity

The role of constructive criticism in employee management.

Effective employee management is a key ingredient in the development of a positive learning atmosphere (Hsiung, Chen, & Chiu, 2010; Watson, Harper, Ratliff, & Singleton, 2010), in the creation of cooperative working environments that foster trust and collaboration in high-performance teams (Shuck, Rocco, & Albornoz, 2011), in cultivating higher levels of psychological empowerment and loyalty among employees (Yao, Chen, & Cai, 2013), in enhanced operational support systems and process control improvements (Zeng, Phan, & Matsui, 2013), in gaining competitive advantage (Vermeeren et al., 2014), and, ultimately, in an organization's profitable growth (Phipps, Prieto, & Ndinguri, 2013; Wolf, 2012). While the need for supervisor-employee

interaction varies with the complexity of the job, and with the skills and competencies needed by employees performing the task, supervision typically entails communicating with employees about job-related matters, including setting objectives, discussing task details, and providing feedback on how they are doing relative to expected objectives (Duff, 2013; Harms & Roebuck, 2010; Okoye & Ezejiofor, 2013; Pederson, Dresdow, & Benson, 2013).

Constructive criticism is a necessary aspect of supervising and is pivotal to an organization's success because employees' actions and behaviors play a major role in the organization's overall productivity, accomplishments, and prosperity (Ashraf et al., 2013), its survival (Ferris et al., 2010; Spangenberg & Theron, 2013), and, ultimately, helps to shape the corporate culture (Markos & Sridevi, 2010; Phipps et al., 2013). In essence, effective constructive criticism helps to align behaviors, actions, and attitudes with organizational vision and strategic goals which contribute to overall stability and focus (Angelis, Conti, Cooper, & Gill, 2011; Cooper & Sigmar, 2012), and positively influence work engagement (Agarwal et al., 2012; Rothmann & Welsh, 2013). Constructive criticism can also increase a supervisor's credibility and can positively influence employee confidence and overall capability by fulfilling some of the employee's psychological need for personal and professional growth (Cooper & Sigmar, 2012).

The social information processing theory posits that the extent to which work environments influence employee attitudes and behaviors parallels the degree to which employees' values and beliefs are consistent with the values and beliefs exhibited by those around them (Chuang & Liao, 2010). In typical work environments, it is

predominantly the supervisor who provides the information that shape employee beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors, and one of the most influential ways this occurs is through feedback mechanisms that inform employees about which behaviors are expected and appropriate and which behaviors are discouraged (Kuo et al., 2010). For example, when new, and often, impressionable, employees observe that supervisors confront, or otherwise engage, employees about performance issues using constructive criticism approaches designed to increase accountability for one's actions and behaviors, there is a validating effect that occurs within these new employees that can help shape and inform future thinking and behaviors (Cooper & Sigmar, 2012; Guo et al., 2014).

Indeed, consistently delivered favorable feedback and constructive criticism helps to isolate the specific areas when employees are most productive, and when employees perceive that their respective supervisors value their contributions, many feel obligated to reciprocate by continuing the actions and behaviors that produces the favorable feedback in the first place (Simosi, 2012). Constructive criticism can also help satisfy important individual employee needs for affirmation, affiliation, reputation, and approval at work by strengthening the employees' perception that increased performance will be recognized and, subsequently, rewarded (Simosi, 2012).

Effective supervisors use a multi-faceted coaching approach that is comprised of working with their employees to establish performance goals and objectives; encouraging, reinforcing, and removing obstacles to allow employees to achieve as part of the team; and, delivering constructive criticism, when warranted, that emphasizes the need for behavioral and attitudinal adjustments, better performance, and more efficient processes (Dearstyne, 2010; Robertson & Cooper, 2010). In essence, once targets and

expectations have been set, most of a supervisor's on-going interaction with employees is to help them achieve their respective performance plans by providing appropriate levels of positive reinforcement as well as course correction feedback in the form of constructive criticism (Aamir & Buckley, 2011; Mosca, Fazzari, & Buzzza, 2010; Guo et al., 2014; Swiercz, Bryan, Eagle, Bizzotto, & Renn, 2012).

To reduce role ambiguity and increase employee effort and commitment, feedback must be delivered in a relevant and timely manner (Judeh, 2011) and should alert the employee to any deficiency that may exist while bringing clarity to any behavior or attitudinal changes necessary to close gaps in performance (Kondrasuk, 2011). Conventional feedback methods often only provide employees evaluative information relating to a past behavior, or pertaining to some previous performance issue, which may not meet the psychological needs of a changing workforce (Guo, Liao, Liao, & Zhang, 2014) because many contemporary employees value the opportunity to grow and welcome supportive, developmental-focused feedback (Dixon, Mercado, & Knowles, 2013). To better align constructive criticism and unfavorable feedback with these changes in employees' values regarding feedback, a supervisor's feedback needs to leverage any current performance deficiencies into future development opportunities for the employee (Guo et al., 2014).

Providing unfavorable feedback, when work is inferior or deficient in some way, or when a behavior or action is inconsistent with expectations or outcomes, is frequently the weakest link in managing people in a workplace setting (Baker et al., 2013; Cooper & Sigmar, 2012; Marler, McKee, Cox, Simmering, & Allen, 2012; Rowland & Hall, 2012). Because employees view unfavorable feedback as less accurate and less desirable than

favorable feedback, supervisors must balance the need to improve employee performance with the negative reactions that might result from the intervention (Baker et al., 2013; Mulder & Ellinger, 2013). Frequently, the likelihood of a defensive or angry response from the feedback recipient keeps a supervisor from dealing with the performance issue in a timely manner (Cooper & Sigmar, 2012; Marler et al., 2012). In essence, supervisors, who may not have the temperament for conflict, or who lack the interpersonal communication skills required to effectively and constructively confront others in a professional and efficacious manner, may put off delivering important feedback; they may avoid the constructive confrontation altogether; or, when they do provide feedback, it is delivered in a way that escalates tensions, or in a way that makes the feedback more positive, thereby diminishing the value of the feedback (Cooper & Sigmar, 2012). Because employee behaviors and actions in the workplace are guided by employee perceptions of organizational normative patterns and expectations, and, because many of these normative patterns and expectations are shaped from the day-to-day interactions employees have with their own direct supervisor, it is critical that supervisors become more proficient in dealing with conflict and better equipped to provide critical feedback in a constructive manner (Marler et al., 2012).

Feedback mechanisms in the workplace.

Feedback in a business environment can be described as a dynamic communication process, most frequently occurring between a supervisor and an employee, that conveys information regarding the employee's performance and, in the majority of cases, focuses on proximal tasks and accomplishments, or recent behaviors, to inform employees of performance deficiencies and desirable behavior changes (Baker,

2010). While effective feedback mechanisms can generate stability and fluidity, boost creativity, increase trust, and enhance motivation in individuals (Mulder, 2013), unless organizations have developed constructive feedback mechanisms, and trained their supervisors on effective ways to deliver constructive criticism, feedback in the workplace is, frequently, delivered poorly to the employee, thereby making much of it unpleasant to receive and less than effective (Baker et al., 2013). Indeed, over one third of the feedback delivered in current work environments is deleterious to performance (Baker et al., 2013) with unintended consequences such as increases in stress levels for both the supervisor and the feedback recipient, increases in employee perceptions of subjective, biased, or unreliable measurements, and, ultimately, the formation of negative connotations about the entire feedback process (Mulder, 2013).

Many contemporary organizations recognize this phenomenon and have attempted to develop sophisticated feedback mechanisms that involve both the feedback provider as well as the feedback recipient as active participants to make the process less biased, more relevant, and, most importantly, fair and equitable (Mulder & Ellinger, 2013). These feedback mechanisms have become more of a strategic tool for facilitating performance improvement and career advancement within organizations as opposed to the magisterial versions of feedback that were prevalent in the past (Baker et al., 2013). Feedback mechanisms have been refined over the past few decades to accommodate new workplace structures, the increased need for continual improvement and innovation, and to better accomplish the true purpose and intention of feedback which is to improve human performance (Brown et al., 2010; Hargis & Bradley, 2011; Jain, 2010; Rompho & Siengthai, 2012; Sharma & Djiaw, 2011). The term *performance appraisal* is used

interchangeably with *performance evaluation*, *performance review*, *career development discussion* (CDD), *annual summary review*, or *employee appraisal* (Kondrasuk, 2012).

Organizations implement formal performance feedback mechanisms to achieve three objectives: strategic, administrative and developmental (Dobre, 2012). Strategic objectives focus on achieving the mission of the business by linking employees' behavior with organizational goals to help employees understand what is expected of them and how they will be measured (Baker et al., 2013; Dobre, 2012). Examples of the strategic approach to performance feedback include the annual, semi-annual, or quarterly performance reviews that evaluate and summarize the quality and effectiveness of employees' work against predetermined metrics, (e.g., measuring or evaluating an employee's performance against a set of key indicators or specific duties) (Ladyshevsky, 2010) with the expectation that, in the event targets are met, the supervisor will provide positive affirmation, and, if targets are not met, the supervisor will provide corrective feedback to allow employees to close gaps in performance (Baker et al., 2013; Clarke et al., 2013; Coon, 2012; Dobre, 2012; Kiprop, Okoth-Yogo, & Charagu, 2014; Schraeder & Jordan, 2011).

Most formalized feedback systems include a quantitative scale with measures, such as key performance indicators (KPIs) (e.g., use of a customer's name during a telephone interaction) in conjunction with qualitative feedback (i.e., critique of vocal tone and inflection when speaking with customers) to help convey where gaps exist in performance (Harms & Roebuck, 2010). Another example are *balanced scorecards* which can be used to translate an organization's mission into critical individual and team goals focusing on the customer's perspective, the internal business perspective, the

innovation and learning perspective, or the financial perspective (Rompho, 2011). The strategic objective is met when the formal appraisal form, or balanced scorecards, are correlated with organizational goals and when employees receive precise and timely feedback from their respective supervisors regarding areas where performance improvement is necessary (Baker et al., 2013; Dobre, 2012).

The administrative objective of formal performance feedback mechanisms refers to the use of information gathered during the aforementioned appraisals to make decisions regarding employee-specific items including wages, rewards, recognition, and bonuses, and promotion opportunities, if performance is exceptional, or termination or redeployment to another job or area, if corrective action measures have been unsuccessful (Dobre, 2012; Schraeder & Jordan, 2011). Many of these items are used as incentives to influence employee performance and behavior and can be either monetary or non-monetary (Schraeder & Jordan, 2011).

The third objective of formal performance feedback mechanisms is developmental, and information gathered during this type of employee assessment can be mapped against job-centric competency models to identify short- and long-term training and development needs (Dobre, 2012; Joo, Sushko, & McLean, 2012). The 180- or 360-degree employee assessment tools are popular examples of feedback mechanisms that are effective for development purposes because they offer a perspective beyond that of just the supervisor (i.e., a range of individuals the employee interacts with) (Baker et al., 2013). As a case in point, to provide a more comprehensive approach to development, most 360-degree systems look at various management functions above the position being assessed (i.e., the employee's direct supervisor; a manager in another area the employee

interacts with), as well as peers, co-workers, subordinates, and, less frequently, but still important in certain job functions, input from customers and vendors (Baker et al., 2013; Baughman, Brumm, & Mickelson, 2012; Buccieri et al., 2012; Dobre, 2012; Joo, Sushko, & McLean, 2012). Proponents of 360-degree feedback models believe that the use of multi-rater systems reduce problems associated with central tendency and positive skewness errors, halo effect, and single-rater biases, as well as allow the employee to have a voice and opinion (e.g., rating self as part of the assessment) (Boyd & Gessner, 2013).

In the majority of organizations, it is the human resource department that is responsible for setting up and managing the formal performance appraisal system, as well as for ensuring that feedback providers (e.g., supervisors) are competent in the skills necessary to deliver an appraisal in a fair and equitable manner (Dobre, 2012; Mulder & Ellinger, 2013; Rowland & Hall, 2012), and with a high degree of procedural justice (Boyd & Gessner, 2013; Clark, Harcourt, & Flynn, 2013; Khan, Khan, & Ahmed, 2013; Tuytens & Devos, 2012). While the duration between performance appraisals differ based on organization and need, the most common is the annual performance review which is often delivered at the same time for every employee (e.g., annualized reviews) or tied to an anniversary (e.g., anniversary of the employee's start date) (Siaguru, 2011). Ultimately, a properly designed and implemented formal performance feedback mechanism should enhance communication between supervisors and their direct reports, reward top performance, and help the lowest performers improve, or leave, if improvement is not possible (Dobre, 2012).

While formal feedback mechanisms are, typically, well-defined and easy to isolate within an organization's performance management system, most feedback occurs at an informal level (van der Rijt, Van den Bossche, & Segers, 2013) so must be included in any examination or evaluation of feedback mechanisms, especially feedback delivered from supervisors to employees (Baker et al., 2013). Informal feedback is delivered during day-to-day interactions and is much more valuable to organizations interested in improving performance, facilitating change, and enhancing employee learning because the feedback can be provided contextually, thereby making the feedback more relevant to the situation, and the feedback can be provided in a more timely fashion, thereby modifying the behavior before poor work habits are formed (Baker et al., 2013; van der Rijt, van de Wiel, Van den Bossche, Segers, & Gijsselaers, 2012). For example, when a supervisor helps an employee think through, and subsequently solve, a real-time, task-related problem, the informal coaching feedback becomes much more constructive because it is proximal learning (Baker et al., 2013).

Informal feedback mechanisms are very prevalent within organizations that have been identified as learning agile and success-driven (e.g., competitive business organizations) (van der Rijt et al., 2012). Each day, within contemporary work environments, there are numerous learning opportunities, and learning occurs through countless activities, including observing others, reading memorandum, or technical information pertaining to a task, collaborating with team members or peers, solving problems, or simply asking questions (Lloyd et al., 2014). Recognizing this, many progressive companies now expect employees to take more responsibility for their own learning and personal growth to enhance, possibly even protect, their employability (Le

Clus, 2011; Lloyd et al., 2014; Thomas, 2012). Informal feedback is increasingly being positioned as an important tool to cultivate and encourage employee learning and the type of development that results in increased efficiencies, productivity, and advancement (Mulder & Ellinger, 2013). Consequently, feedback mechanisms that position feedback recipients as passive receivers of feedback are being rejected by progressive, career-minded employees who are not comfortable simply waiting for annual performance appraisal feedback and now proactively seek feedback through daily interactions with various sources within the learning environment (e.g., supervisor; peers) (Mulder & Ellinger, 2013).

While the majority of formal and informal feedback mechanisms provide some form of developmental foundation, many are being used principally for administrative purposes (i.e., human resource departments require an annual performance appraisal for each employee; weekly coaching sessions to review performance against weekly goals; supervisors may use daily feedback to collect evidence during a progressive discipline action) (Steelman & Rutkowski, 2004) and primarily emphasize accountability for previous actions and results (Ladyshevsky, 2010). When the focus is, instead, on development, efficiency, and productivity, a distinction can be made between performance *appraisal* and performance *management* with the latter focusing on improving future performance through the informal, day-to-day coaching feedback mechanism (Steelman & Rutkowski, 2004). Ultimately, for organizations to be productive and innovative in the short- and long-term, human resource management systems need to be comprised of a high-potential employee base, competencies aligned with job functions, constituent empowerment, rewards and incentives commensurate with

work output, and feedback mechanisms that increase employee performance and development (Wichitchanya & Durongwatana, 2012).

The impact of feedback interventions on employee performance.

In work environments where supervisors deliver consistent performance coaching, there is a positive and prominent increase in overall performance (e.g., bottom-line financial results) (Westover, Westover, & Westover, 2010; Yu, 2013), a significant improvement in skills, motivation, and, ultimately, individual performance (Manzoor, 2012; Mendelson, Turner, & Barling, 2011; Schraeder & Jordan, 2011), and performance coaching is associated with higher employee commitment (e.g., a strong belief in organizational goals and values; a willingness to apply more discretionary effort on the organization's behalf), lower employee turnover rates (e.g., employees are less likely to quit or accept other job offers), and greater organizational citizenship (Behery, 2011; Springer, 2011). Effective constructive feedback mechanisms are also related to increased job and customer satisfaction, better workplace safety, lower waste and inefficiency, higher pride, trust, and respect (Mendelson et al., 2011), increased adaptability, innovation, empowerment, and motivation to participate (e.g., share ideas) (Baker et al., 2013; Dobre, 2012; Wichitchanya & Durongwatana, 2012), improved best practice transfer, better cultural awareness, increased comfort with initiative and risk taking (Hellqvist, 2011; Jauhari, Sehgal, & Sehgal, 2013; Kyvik, Zhang, & Romero-Martinez, 2012), less employee stress (Ansari, 2011; Berg & Karisen, 2013; Mofoluwake & Oluremi, 2013), and lower rates of sickness and absenteeism (Nankervis et al., 2012; Rothmann & Welsh, 2013). In essence, performance management activities that are aligned and functioning well allow the organization's subsystems (e.g., processes,

systems, people) to perform together in an optimum fashion (Jagoda, Lonseth, & Lonseth, 2013).

When a direct supervisor does not effectively manage employee performance and work-related behaviors, there is an increased probability that employees will be engaged in activities and behaviors that reduce efficiency, increase costs and expenses, and reduce quality (Jagoda, Lonseth, & Lonseth, 2013). For example, in work environments with ineffective employee management, 12.2% of employees fail to report trouble after recognizing that a problem exists, and approximately 15% of employees admit to letting sub-standard or poor quality work or products slip by on an occasional or frequent basis (Michael, Leschinsky, & Gagnon, 2006). In addition, ineffective employee management adversely impacts employee engagement (e.g., individual initiative and effort applied toward organizational goals) (Mone, Eisinger, Guggenheim, Price, & Stine, 2011), business growth, customer satisfaction, employee retention, and absenteeism (Kataria, Rastogi, & Garg, 2013), and commitment, job satisfaction and attachment (Robertson, Alex, & Cooper, 2012). Organizations that do not effectively manage the performance of their employees underperform on a wide array of financial and productivity measures compared to those who are effective (Biron et al., 2011; Harms & Roebuck, 2010).

While incorporating feedback mechanisms into the employee management process can have a positive influence on performance in many situations, providing constructive criticism about deficiencies in job performance does not guarantee feedback recipients will respond positively to the feedback and use it to make the appropriate corrections (Ashauer, 2010). Indeed, the effect of unfavorable feedback on employees has been contradictory and decidedly mixed (Raemdonck & Strijbos, 2013). For

example, while literature exists suggesting that employees receiving negative feedback embrace the feedback and improve performance to a greater degree than do employees who receive higher ratings (Marando, 2011), and that constructive criticism contributes significantly to organizational stability and direction, inspires respect and confidence in the supervisor, and promotes employee confidence and capability (Cooper & Sigmar, 2012), other literature exists suggesting employees become defensive and reject feedback (Chen & Eldridge, 2010; Cintrón & Flaniken, 2011; Fuchs, 2011), and that constructive criticism may result in negative effects almost 40% of the time (e.g., providing feedback impairs subsequent performance) (Kaymaz, 2011; Raemdonck & Strijbos, 2013). Indeed, 68.9% of supervisors report that they have experienced various forms of verbal aggression, including insults, profanity, and threats of retaliation, in response to negative performance evaluations (Penney & Spector, 2002).

This ostensive contradiction places significant pressure on supervisors and, even though most know that accurate and timely performance feedback is vital to improving individual performance and helping the organization succeed, the likelihood of adverse interpersonal repercussions frequently compel supervisors to defer, distort, or avoid altogether, providing unfavorable feedback to employees (Ashauer, 2010; Dibble & Levine, 2010). The procrastination or failure to deliver unfavorable feedback is known as the *mum effect* and manifestations include supervisors who avoid, or put off altogether, delivering the feedback; supervisors who intentionally distort the feedback to make it more palatable, or positive, for the recipient; and supervisors who delegate the responsibility of delivering negative information to someone else (e.g., to a human resources representative) (Marler et al., 2012).

Factors affecting feedback receptivity in a workplace setting.

It is commonly accepted that employees prefer to receive positive feedback over negative feedback (Millward, Asumeng, & McDowall, 2010) so it is reasonable to expect some negative reaction to unfavorable feedback (Brown et al., 2010; Merritt, Ryan, Mack, Leeds, & Schmitt, 2010; Mitchell, 2010; Mulder & Ellinger, 2013). Factors that can suppress or heighten the effect of unfavorable feedback on employees and have significant moderating effects on reactions to negative feedback and, ultimately, feedback receptivity, include contextual factors within the feedback environment (Peng & Chiu, 2010; Qian, Lin, & Chen, 2012; van der Rijt et al., 2013) and procedural justice issues (Clarke et al., 2013; Fein, Tziner, Lusky, & Palachy, 2013; Suliman & Kathairi, 2013).

Feedback environment contextual factors, such as source credibility, feedback quality, and feedback delivery are important considerations and salient to performance (Peng & Chiu, 2010). For example, feedback recipients are more motivated to incorporate coaching suggestions, change behaviors, and improve job performance based on unfavorable feedback from a direct supervisor, when the supervisor is perceived to be credible, when the information being provided is of high quality, and when the feedback is delivered in a respectful and considerate manner (Mulder & Ellinger, 2013). Indeed, employees are more receptive to feedback, and seek constructive feedback more frequently, if their direct supervisors are positively supportive, demonstrate mutual trust, have respect for employees' ideas, and demonstrate consideration of, and attentiveness to, employees' opinions and feelings (Miluwi & Rashid, 2012). Organizations with strong feedback cultures now use feedback outcomes as a diagnostic tool to identify the strengths and limitations (e.g., blind-spots) of supervisors (Boachie-Mensah & Seidu,

2012). For example, the feedback environment scale (FES) is a tool for measuring the feedback environment and furnishes information regarding how supervisors provide feedback and how employees receive, and utilize, feedback (Peng & Chiu, 2010).

Another major factor affecting feedback receptivity are procedural justice issues which are defined as the extent to which fair procedures are used to make decisions, including appraisal decisions, and this has come under scrutiny as a consequence of employee feedback that appraisals are biased and political, and that the entire appraisal process is irrelevant as a result (Clarke et al., 2013). A procedurally fair performance appraisal process is one that provides *adequate notice* to employees about how the organization's appraisal process works, and the factors that could affect them (e.g., advancement, pay, further development); a procedurally just process will also include a *fair hearing* which means that the feedback recipient has an opportunity to be involved in the discussion, to contest the accuracy of the ratings by offering alternate viewpoints, and to understand the repercussions of the final ratings; a final ingredient to ensure a procedurally just system is being utilized is that any *judgment is based on evidence*, and that all determinations are as objective, and as free of biases, as possible (Clarke et al., 2013; Fein, Tziner, Lusky, & Palachy, 2013; Suliman & Kathairi, 2013).

While contextual factors and procedural justice variables may influence feedback receptivity, it is also conceivable that differences in how employees accept feedback could be attributed to the individual who is receiving the feedback (Farndale, Hope-Hailey, & Kelliher, 2011; Mitchell, 2010). For example, attributes of learning goal orientation and developmental agility are recognized as significant predictors of coaching effectiveness, yet some employees may not have these attributes (Asumeng, 2013; Bozer,

Sarros, & Santora, 2013). Although research using the five-factor model (FFM) of personality (e.g., emotional stability, conscientiousness, openness to experience, extroversion, agreeableness) found little or no evidence that personality moderated reactions to negative feedback (Walker et al., 2010), other studies suggest that individual characteristics, such as narcissistic predilections, play an active role in how employees react to unfavorable criticism (Ferris et al., 2010; Underwood, Beron, & Rosen, 2011). Therefore, it is conceivable that people with narcissistic tendencies, who strive to be seen as better than everyone else, may become frustrated or angry by any information that conflicts with this objective (e.g., unfavorable feedback to the contrary), and end up less receptive to feedback (Maynard, Brondolo, Connelly, & Sauer, 2015; Penney & Spector, 2002).

Narcissistic Personality Disorder

According to the widely used professional handbook for diagnosing mental disorders, the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (4th edition, text revision), also known as the DSM IV-TR, narcissistic personality disorder (NPD) is considered a psychological condition, and is characterized by a pervasive sense of grandiosity and self-importance, a preoccupation with fantasies of power, intelligence, beauty, unlimited success, or ideal love, a sense of entitlement, extreme sensitivity to criticism, little or no empathy for others, by a strong need to be validated, and a need to obtain attention or admiration from others (American Psychiatric Association [APA], 2000). People exhibiting narcissistic tendencies typically exaggerate their skills, capabilities, and accomplishments, are vainglorious, believe themselves to be superior to others, fantasize about personal and professional success, feel they deserve special, if not

exceptional, treatment, and are greatly concerned about how well they are doing, especially in the context of how favorably they are perceived by others (Thomaes et al., 2009). Individuals with narcissistic proclivities tend to value other people only when those people can help them achieve their own self-centered goals (Thomaes et al., 2009), and are frequently selfish, devious, and manipulative (Nelson, 2013). Clinically relevant consequences of those diagnosed with NPD include aggression, self-aggrandizing, distorted self-presentation, failed relationships, unethical or illegal practices, cognitive biases, and internalizing and externalizing emotional dysregulation (Mullins-Sweatt, Bernstein, & Widiger, 2012; Ronningstam, 2011).

Differing views on the prevalence of NPD exist with the American Psychiatric Association reporting estimates from 2% to 16% in the clinical population and under 1% in the general population (American Psychiatric Association [APA], 2000) while more current research posits that the prevalence of NPD is much higher in the general population, with estimates just over 6%, and rates among college students at an all-time high (Larochelle, 2012; Pulay, Goldstein, & Grant, 2011; Traiser & Eighmy, 2011). Indeed, between 2002 and 2007, in race-corrected analyses, 59% of White students had higher levels of narcissism, as measured by the NPI, than the average White student in 2002 (Twenge & Foster, 2008; Twenge & Foster, 2010). Asian-Americans' NPI scores also increased significantly in the same time period with 57% scoring higher than the average Asian-American student in 2002 (Twenge & Foster, 2008; Twenge & Foster, 2010). Gender shifts in narcissism, during that same time period, were noted and females developed narcissistic tendencies at four times the rate of men (Brown et al., 2013).

When a U.S. population representative sample of 35,000 people were asked if they had ever experienced the manifestations of NPD in their lifetimes, older individuals (e.g., over 65) reported they had symptoms of NPD one-third less frequently (3.2%) compared to those who were younger (e.g., in their twenties) (9.4%) leading the researchers to conclude that a generational increase in narcissistic tendencies is occurring at a much faster rate than ever before (Twenge, Miller, & Campbell, 2014). By way of illustration, while only 12% of teenagers in 1952 agreed with the statement “I am an important person,” by 1989, that percentage had increased to 80%. To accommodate this shift to *I* and *me*, television shows between 1980 and 2000 switched programming away from community-type messages of *us* and *we* to be more focused on fame and celebrity-status (Twenge et al., 2014). Many contemporary researchers report that there is a significant increase in the prevalence of narcissism, or, at least, its correlates, and that the focus on individualism, combined with the absence of strong social support, plays an important role in this increase (Paris, 2014; Twenge & Foster, 2010; Twenge et al., 2014).

NPD is one of ten DSM IV-TR Axis II personality disorders, and is grouped, based on descriptive similarities, under Cluster B, dramatic, emotional, or erratic presenting styles (American Psychiatric Association [APA], 2000). The nine diagnostic criteria for NPD include: 1) a pretentious and grandiose feeling of self-importance (e.g., exaggerates and overinflates achievements and expects to be acknowledged for such); 2) absorbed by fantasies of unlimited power, success, charm, good-looks, and love; 3) believes that he or she is unique, distinctive, and significant and should only associate with other distinguished or high-status individuals; 4) demands or insists on generous

admiration; 5) has an extreme sense of privilege and entitlement; 6) very manipulative of others (e.g., uses people in order to achieve personal goals or personal gains); 7) lack of feeling or empathy for other individuals; 8) frequently jealous and envious and can believe that others are jealous and envious of him or her; and 9) exhibits arrogant, egotistical, pompous attitudes and behaviors (American Psychiatric Association [APA], 2000). To be properly diagnosed, five out of nine diagnostic criteria (e.g., symptoms) must be present (American Psychiatric Association [APA], 2000). There is a high level of comorbidity between narcissistic personality disorder and Axis I disorders, with proportions nearing 20% (Simonsen & Simonsen, 2011).

Males and females with narcissistic tendencies express their narcissistic traits in different ways with men exhibiting a greater sense of grandiosity, more interpersonal exploitativeness, higher levels of entitlement, and much lower levels of empathy, whereas women manifest more intense reactivity to insults, snubs, and slights from others (Bobadilla, Wampler, & Taylor, 2012; Karterud, Øien, & Pedersen, 2011). Due to gender norms regarding narcissistic behaviors, females may be more negatively impacted because narcissistic behaviors are more socially acceptable for males (Zhou, Li, Zhang, & Zeng, 2012). Narcissistic personality disorder characteristics are significantly associated with males, and it is males who represent 50% to 75% of the psychiatric inpatients diagnosed with NPD (Brown, Akers, & Giacomino, 2013; Karterud et al., 2011; Keiller, 2010). However, the accuracy of this male prevalence has been questioned because while males are more frequently diagnosed with NPD than are females, some sex stereotyping biases may exist that skew these data because clinicians are more likely to diagnose men with NPD than women even when patients present with approximately the

same symptoms (Karterud et al., 2011). Outcomes from correlational and experimental research with college undergraduates has found that individuals with narcissistic proclivities, regardless of gender, are more likely to exhibit a wide variety of prejudices, and are more likely to be involved in discriminatory behavior (Ashton-James & Tracy, 2012; Grubbs et al., 2014).

Narcissism is a construct that has been studied within a variety of disciplines including clinical, social-personality, and organizational-industrial psychology, and, up until recently, was thought to exist on a one-factor, unidimensional continuum marked by a grandiose sense of self-importance, feelings of privilege and entitlement, and a dominant and virulent interpersonal style (Gentile et al., 2013). However, an increasing number of researchers provide evidence demonstrating that narcissism is a two-factor heterogeneous construct comprised of covert or *vulnerable* and overt or *grandiose* dimensions and a meaningful and salient distinction has been made between the two (Gentile et al., 2013; Hopwood, 2013; Karterud, Øien, & Pedersen, 2011; Kealy & Rasmussen, 2012; Muñoz Centifanti, Kimonis, Frick, & Aucoin, 2013; Sosik, Chun, & Zhu, 2014).

Covert or vulnerable narcissists are described as self-absorbed introverts, susceptible to negative reactions and emotions such as contrition, which compel them to withdraw from other people, while overt or grandiose narcissists are self-absorbed extraverts, with a proclivity toward rejecting any negative experience that threatens their high self-regard, which leads them to lash out in anger or some other form of aggression against others (Kealy & Rasmussen, 2012). The vulnerable or covert narcissistic subtype can also be referred to as *closet*, *hypervigilant*, and *hypersensitive* narcissism and the

grandiose or overt narcissistic subtype can also be referred to as *oblivious* narcissism (Besser & Priel, 2010).

Attempts to diagnose the differences between these two factors can be complicated because the presenting behaviors of the vulnerable narcissist, who frequently reflects a defensive, albeit insecure, grandiosity in an attempt to hide feelings of inadequacy, incompetence, and negative affect, can emulate those of the grandiose narcissist, who exhibits traits such as grandiosity, aggression, and dominance (Miller, 2013). Indeed, while the two factors are thought to differ in regard to their relationship to the self-esteem and extraversion subscales, with vulnerable or covert individuals scoring low on the aforementioned traits and with grandiose or overt individuals scoring high, both factors are similar in the area of negative emotionality which can make accurate diagnoses challenging (Williams, Campbell, & Denton, 2013). While the authors of the DSM IV-TR are frequently criticized for this decision, the DSM IV-TR narcissistic personality disorder diagnostic criteria emphasizes the grandiose dimension, over the vulnerable dimension (Karterud, Øien, & Pedersen, 2011; Miller, 2013; Ronningstam, 2011), largely because the clinically relevant consequences of the grandiose or overt narcissist are much more pronounced and destructive (Miller, 2013).

One challenge in examining the aforementioned constructs is that while clinical and social-personality psychology research studies consistently demonstrate the existence of overt or grandiose and covert or vulnerable features in phenotypic descriptions of narcissism, prevailing literature describe wide variations in the phenotypic expression of both constructs (Fossati, Pincus, Borroni, Munteanu, & Maffei, 2014; Pincus & Roche, 2011). Indeed, contemporary researchers find the aforementioned two-dimensional

structure deficient and posit that there is, in fact, three subtypes of narcissistic personality disorder which more accurately isolate the phenotypic expressions of narcissistic pathology, better define the divergent relationships between the factors, and emphasize several psychological characteristics absent from DSM IV-TR, most notably interpersonal vulnerability, painful insecurity, and feelings of fraudulence (Russ & Shedler, 2013). After a Q-factor analysis, with a statistically significant population of narcissistic personality disorder patients identified using two different criterion (e.g., DSM-IV diagnostic criteria; narcissism construct ratings), three subtypes were isolated, namely, *grandiose/malignant*, *fragile*, and *high-functioning/exhibitionistic* (Russ & Shedler, 2013).

According to the researchers, grandiose/malignant narcissists exploit other people with little empathy for their feelings or welfare; they are largely oblivious to the impact they are having on others; they are characterized by seething anger, the pursuit of interpersonal control, exaggerated self-importance, and feelings of privilege; and, dissimilar to the other narcissistic subtypes, their grandiosity appears to be at a primary level versus secondary (e.g., genuine rather than defensive or compensatory) (Russ & Shedler, 2013). Fragile narcissists have divergent and contradictory feelings of grandiosity and inadequacy which suggests an exchange occurs between cognitive representations of one's self (e.g., feelings of superiority versus feelings of inferiority, inadequacy, smallness, anxiety, and loneliness) resulting in defensive grandiosity (e.g., a grandiosity that emanates during ego-dystonic interactions or when the individual's high self-regard is being threatened) (Russ, Shedler, Bradley, & Westen, 2008). High-functioning/exhibitionistic narcissists are grandiose, emulous and competitive; they have

an exaggerated sense of self-importance and seek constant recognition; they are sexually seductive or provocative; but they also have considerable and influential psychological strengths (e.g., articulate and persuasive, charismatic, energetic, interpersonally comfortable, goal oriented) so they are able to adapt and function in modern-day society and leverage their narcissism to win, especially within competitive business environments (Baskin-Sommers, Krusemark, & Ronningstam, 2014). Validity analyses illustrate explicit differences between the factors, most notably fragile narcissists experience the most angst, have inferior adaptive functioning, and the highest comorbidity with major depressive and anxiety disorders; grandiose/malignant narcissists have the highest prevalence of substance abuse and externalizing behavior (e.g., spousal abuse); high-functioning/exhibitionistic narcissists have reasonably good adaptive agility, can function reasonably well within society and many workplace settings, and have the least amount of psychiatric comorbidity (Russ & Shedler, 2013).

As is the case with other personality disorders, the exact source or cause of narcissistic personality disorder is unknown and although the diagnosis of personality disorders before a person reaches adulthood is frequently discouraged, primarily because identifiable traits are still developing during an individual's youth, and may not yet be steady or stable enough for a firm diagnosis (Muñoz Centifanti et al., 2013), narcissistic traits can be identified after a child reaches the approximate age of eight, when abstract reasoning develops in most children, allowing them to be cognizant of their self-views, conscious of how others perceive them, and build self-esteem (Fossati, Borroni, Eisenberg, & Maffei, 2010; Muñoz Centifanti et al., 2013). While the psychodynamic developmental origins and progression of narcissism are inadequately understood, and

further research is required to fully comprehend how and why narcissism forms and evolves (Muñoz Centifanti et al., 2013), the appearance of distinguishing narcissistic characteristics and attributes during early childhood or during adolescence may be the result of converging influential patterns in the life of a young person with an existing narcissistic diatheses (Muñoz Centifanti et al., 2013).

For example, it is normal and expected that most children and adolescents experience periods of vulnerability during their independence-seeking and self-determination developmental periods, and if narcissistic diatheses exist during these periods in conjunction with some dysfunctional influence (i.e., dysfunctional parenting practices such as excessive permissiveness and overindulgence, exorbitant praise or admiration, disproportionate pampering, extreme expectations, or coldness and emotional neglect), psychopathy-linked narcissistic behaviors such as gasconading, egocentricity, lying and exaggeration, and manipulation and exploitation of others, may develop (Muñoz Centifanti et al., 2013). Narcissistic diatheses may vary based on different temperaments, such as approach and avoidance motivation, and manifest in diverse patterns of narcissism (Fossati et al., 2010).

Although narcissism and narcissistic personality disorder have been the focus of many prominent personality theorists (e.g., Freud, Kernberg, Kohut, Millon), and despite its severity, prevalence, and stability, narcissistic personality disorder is one of the least researched personality disorders and has received little empirical attention (Huprich & Nelson, 2014; Laroche, 2012). Further studies that identify the most distinctive and characteristic features of the disorder, that help to isolate the various phenotypical subtypes of the disorder, and determine the degree of concordance between conceptually

similar constructs, is necessary to address the growing prevalence of narcissism in society (Larochelle, 2012).

Subclinical Narcissism

The self-esteem enigma.

Many prominent societal problems in the United States have been attributed to low self-esteem and significant research has been undertaken to better understand the steps that can be taken to reduce the burden these problems place on society (Auerbach et al., 2011; Friedman et al., 2011; McClure, Tanski, Kingsbury, Gerrard, & Sargent, 2010; Nyamathi et al., 2010). For example, low self-esteem plays a major role in areas such as suicidal ideation (Calder, Mcvean, & Yang, 2010), drug abuse (Buckner, Proctor, Reynolds, Kopetz, & Lejuez, 2011; Klein, Elifson, & Sterk, 2010; Nyamathi et al., 2010) and alcohol abuse (Niyonsenga et al., 2010). Treatment interventions designed to increase self-esteem and self-efficacy are able to produce moderate to significant improvement in many constituents within these, and other, targeted groups (Brackenreed, 2010; Maccio & Schuler, 2012).

This has led many psychologists, teachers, government officials, and parents to believe that high self-esteem is the antithesis to low self-esteem and if individuals have higher levels of self-esteem, they will enjoy life more, have fewer dysfunctions, and be more productive in their personal and professional lives (Stewart & Bernhardt, 2010). As a result, many people in contemporary workplaces were raised in home and school environments that placed less emphasis on the quality, accuracy, and timeliness of the work, and more emphasis on praise and other methods to build self-esteem to allow each

child to feel proud irrespective of the quality of the accomplishment (Lippmann, Bulanda, & Wagenaar, 2009).

Paradoxically, this focus on self-esteem has not increased the overall academic standings and psychological health of students (Zhang, 2011). In fact, according to many academic researchers, the outcome of a greater emphasis on generating self-esteem is marginal and has had a negative influence on the expectations and behaviors of many students (Barry & Wallace, 2010; Finney & Finney, 2010). Instead of understanding the high standards and type of excellence they will require to succeed in the world of life and work, many students now have a sense of entitlement that comes with earning praise or rewards for minimal effort (Finney & Finney, 2010; Stanley, 2006). This form of entitlement and exploitative attitude towards others is positively correlated with narcissism (Andrey et al., 2012; Cleary, Hunt, Walter, & Robertson, 2009) but not correlated with high self-esteem which supports the view that self-esteem and narcissism are not overlapping constructs (Gardner & Pierce, 2011).

Unearned worthiness and unwarranted high self-regard are now viewed as major contributors to the steady rise in narcissism levels among American college students (Neff, 2009; Paris, 2014; Twenge et al., 2014) with almost 66% of recent college students above the mean 1979–1985 narcissism score which reflects a 30% increase (Traiser & Eighmy, 2011). This trend may be an accurate reflection of the defining idiosyncrasies of the "me" generation, many of whom were nurtured in elementary and secondary schools where greater emphasis was placed on self-esteem over academic achievement (Lippmann et al., 2009). Indeed, self-esteem enhancing programs are now viewed by

contemporary researchers as one of the major contributors to the current rise in narcissistic tendencies (Paris, 2014; Twenge & Foster, 2010; Twenge et al., 2014).

Self-esteem in the workplace is also the subject of much interest because organizational behavior researchers are continually seeking the antecedents to improved employee productivity, engagement, and efficiency (Ferris et al., 2010). While many researchers are naturally drawn to study the impact high and low self-esteem has on motivation and, hence, on performance, Ferris et al. (2010) propose that low and high self-esteem are not the issues to be studied, but, instead, research should concentrate on self-esteem contingencies (i.e., the domains individuals use to measure their global sense of self-worth) because these contingencies are important moderators of both the main and moderating effects of self-esteem.

This may explain why organizational psychologists who have explored the value and potential impact of high self-esteem in workplace settings are finding incongruous and inconsistent research outcomes (Wildermuth & Pauken, 2008). While several studies demonstrate that self-esteem may operate on a continuum with phenomena typically attributed to low self-esteem (e.g., poor job performance, low job satisfaction, job search intentions) being reduced or eliminated as self-esteem is increased (Claus, Lungu, & Bhattacharjee, 2011; Olthuis, Leget, & Dekkers, 2007; Tsai, Chi, & Hu, 2009), many other studies have been unable to demonstrate this same outcome in a definitive manner (Wildermuth & Pauken, 2008). Indeed, even though research on the impact of low self-esteem is fairly conclusive, the impact of high self-esteem is frequently convoluted and contradictory with nonsignificant correlation coefficients or negative correlations (Wildermuth & Pauken, 2008). For example, researchers attempting to demonstrate that

high self-esteem is necessary for quality work found inconclusive proof and called for additional research (Wildermuth & Pauken, 2008); researchers found that the main effect of self-esteem levels on job performance was highly variable (Judge, Erez, Bono, & Thoresen, 2003); and a recent meta-analysis provided empirical and narrative reviews of the literature that suggest the absolute and moderating effects of self-esteem levels are weak to nonexistent (Ferris et al., 2010).

Other research to determine whether high self-esteem reduces the impact of job stressors that would otherwise sabotage workplace motivation and performance found a positive correlation between those with high self-esteem and low job stress but could not prove that self-esteem was, in fact, causal, leading the researcher to conclude that high self-esteem may not reduce levels of stress, but, conversely, low job stress might lead to better job performance and, ultimately, to improved self-esteem (Nurullah, 2010). Additional research demonstrates that while individuals with high self-esteem may perform better than their counterparts, the motivation to perform well may not be the result of high self-esteem, but, instead, may be attributed to a need to reduce any cognitive dissonance that may result from their high self-evaluations and high self-image (Kundu & Rani 2007).

In their seminal work on threatened egoism, Baumeister et al. (1996) posit that the focus on high self-esteem is misplaced, and that the widely accepted view that low self-esteem is responsible for myriad phenomena is often asserted even when there is no supporting evidence or when there is evidence to the contrary. Indeed, while many studies have demonstrated a relationship between low self-esteem and antisocial behaviors, the idea that low self-esteem is the catalyst in many of these situations is being

challenged (Ha, Petersen, & Sharp, 2008). When self-esteem programs are examined in the context of their impact on the thought processes, expectations, and behaviors of the program recipients, a wide array of maladaptive traits are identified, including entitlement attitudes, exploitativeness, narcissism, low standards, greed, aggression, lack of forgiveness, dishonesty, aggression, and violence, each of which can be manifested in various ways within a societal framework that frequently exacerbates, or, at minimum, reinforces, the narcissistic pathology (Greenberger, Lessard, Chen, & Farruggia, 2008; Twenge et al., 2014).

By way of illustration, the causes of violent and other antisocial behaviors have long been associated with low self-esteem but this conventional wisdom is being challenged by suggestions that egotism (i.e., inflated favorable self-appraisals) could actually be the cause of the violence, especially if the positive view of self is threatened in some way (Baumeister et al., 1996). In essence, unstable, highly favorable views of self that are questioned by others can lead to aggressive and violent behavior as the individual being threatened is forced to defend his or her viewpoint (Baumeister et al., 1996). Figure 1 demonstrates how this phenomenon occurs and introduces the concept of a *choice point* that predicates the actual behavioral response to the negative feedback (Baumeister et al., 1996). Research within prisons supports this viewpoint; researchers questioned whether it was *high* self-esteem or actually *unstable* self-esteem that was the catalyst in cases of aggressive or violent behavior and found that violence is more related to high, but unstable, self-esteem than it is to either high or low self-esteem individually (Cale & Lilienfeld, 2006).

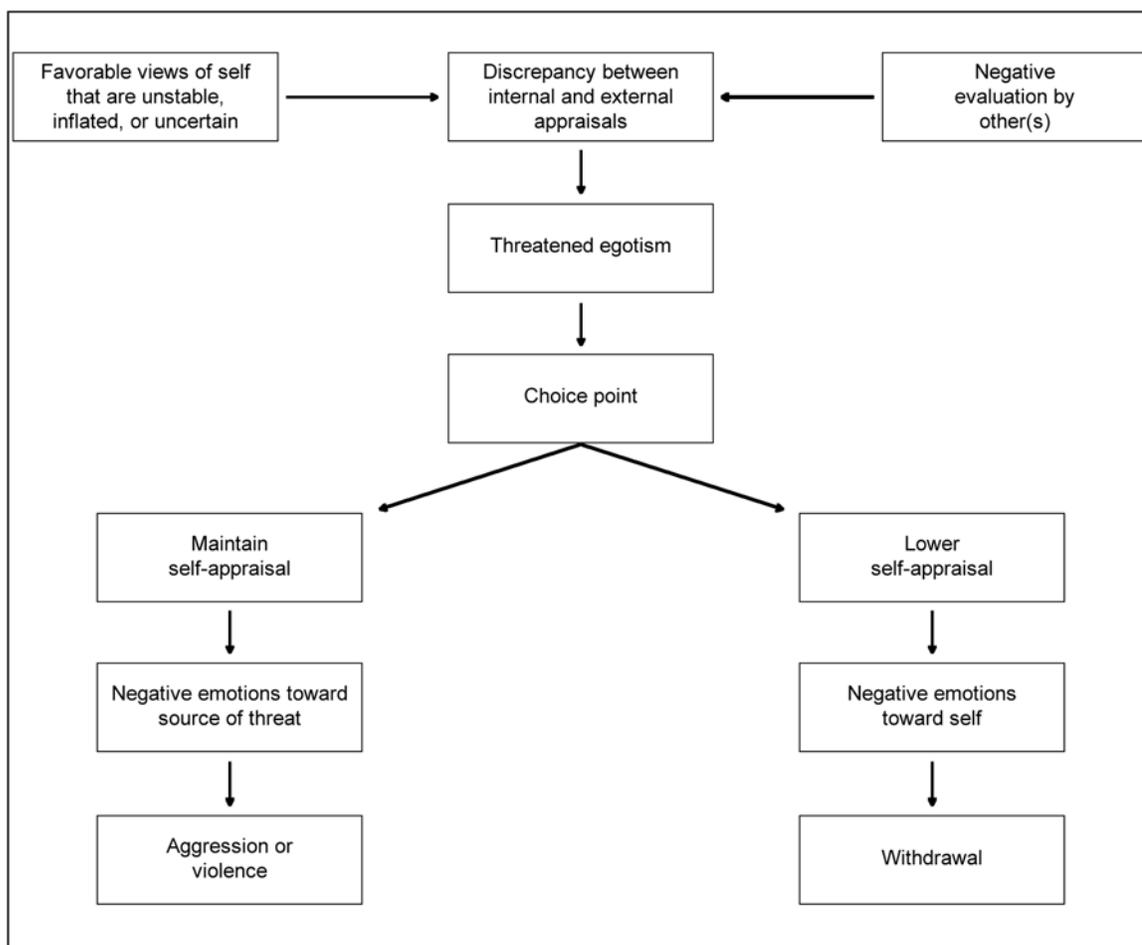


Figure 1. Schematic representation of the relationship of threatened egotism to aggressive or violent behavior.

Note. Originally from Baumeister, R. F., Smart, L., & Boden, J. M. (1996). Relation of threatened egotism to violence and aggression: The dark side of high self-esteem. *Psychological Review*, *103*(1), 5-33. doi:10.1037/0033-295X.103.1.5 (Penney & Spector, 2002)

A myriad of other research illustrates that egotism may be the root cause of aggressive behavior, including research looking for a relationship between self-esteem in adolescence and later violent behavior and hostility (Boden, Fergusson, & Horwood, 2007); among teenage males, there is evidence suggesting that narcissism is linked to sexism (Keiller 2010); studies looking for a connection between grandiosity and both aggressive and delinquent behavior (Calvete, 2008); and research into aggressive

behaviors in primary-grade classrooms (Sandstrom & Herlan, 2007). Even road rage (i.e., higher levels of aggressive behavior and anger when driving) has been attributed to an over-inflated level of self-worth (Britt & Garrity, 2006).

The etiology and advancement of subclinical narcissism.

According to the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, narcissistic personality disorder is characterized by a sense of grandiosity and self-importance, a preoccupation with fantasies of power, intelligence, beauty, unlimited success, a sense of entitlement, extreme sensitivity to criticism, and, to be properly diagnosed, five out of nine diagnostic criteria must be present (4th ed., text rev.; DSM–IV; American Psychiatric Association, 2000). Narcissistic personality disorder is considered a psychological condition defined as an intense affection for self, an exaggerated sense of self-regard and self-worth, an obsession with power and achievement, and is characterized by having little empathy for others, an extreme need for recognition and appreciation, as well as intense and unstable feelings and a distorted self-image (Horsley, 2012; Laroche, 2012). As is found with other personality disorders, the exact etiological roots of narcissistic personality disorder are unknown; however, causation may be related to a dysfunctional childhood that includes disproportionate levels of attention and pampering, abuse, neglect or very high expectations (Twenge & Foster, 2010; Twenge et al., 2014), but may also be attributed to psychobiology or genetics with evidence suggesting that neurodevelopment within the brain plays a role in the manifestation and development of the disorder (Horsley, 2012).

There is almost universal disapproval for the narcissist in society (Mick, Bateman, & Lutz, 2009) and this harsh viewpoint emerges primarily because most people tend to

associate the word “narcissist” with the extreme narcissist’s arrogant, grandiose, entitled, self-aggrandizing, ruthlessly self-absorbed, and interpersonally exploitative behaviors (Galvin et al., 2010; Kealy & Rasmussen, 2012). People typically find those behaviors disagreeable and irritating (Kealy & Rasmussen, 2012). This phenomenon becomes more pronounced when one considers the disturbing trend that people in their twenties are self-reporting symptoms of narcissistic personality disorder at a rate approximately three times higher than previous generations (Brown et al., 2013; Twenge et al., 2014). Notwithstanding the complexity and theoretical perplexities of narcissism, most people are certain they know a narcissist when they see one because the definition of a narcissist is practically ubiquitous in societal parlance, and the appellation is applied to individuals who provoke and irritate with a brazen expression of self-importance and entitlement, and who position themselves above the rules, customs, and protocol of accepted social conventions (Kealy & Rasmussen, 2012).

It may come as a surprise to most people, then, to discover that narcissism has been conceptualized as a *normal* personality dimension (Daig et al., 2010) and that all people exhibit some signs of narcissistic behavior (Starratt & Grandy, 2010). The levels of narcissism below those necessary for a clinical diagnosis of narcissistic personality disorder are referred to as *subclinical* and the dimensional traits for this construct can be measured in the general population by standardized self-report inventories (Thomaes et al., 2009). Subclinical narcissists exhibit similar manifestations as those identified with narcissistic personality disorder, albeit, at a reduced level, and it is this diminished level that allows them to function within society (Daig et al., 2010). It is theorized that subclinical narcissism is a dynamic form of personality (measured as dimensional traits),

and that it plays a role in every person's self-esteem regulation and psychological and interpersonal functioning (Thomaes et al., 2009).

Subclinical narcissism in the workplace.

When narcissism is examined in the context of a societal framework, a wide array of maladaptive traits are identified, including entitlement attitudes, greed, selfishness, exploitativeness, lack of self-control, aggression and bullying, lack of forgiveness, and dishonesty (Andrey et al., 2012; Brown et al., 2013; Campbell et al., 2004; Grubbs et al., 2014; Woodman, Roberts, Hardy, Callow, & Rogers, 2011). In the past, these traits would have been objectionable to most people, yet, today, these maladaptive traits are being popularized by movies and television programming filled with the dysfunctional behaviors of narcissistic celebrities and their grandiose lifestyles (Koliscak, 2012). Contemporary media are filled with reports on dramatic increases of narcissism and unbridled entitlement in almost every facet of modern society (Kealy & Rasmussen, 2012; Finney & Finney, 2010). The influence has been dramatic with 43% of middle-school girls now preferring to be an assistant to a celebrity over becoming a U.S. Senator or CEO of a large corporation, and over 50% of people 18 to 25 years old declaring "becoming famous" as an important personal goal to achieve (Kuruvilla, 2009).

The contemporary workplace is also experiencing the impact of employees with narcissistic inclinations, and while constraints within the workplace will naturally temper some of the more extreme characteristics associated with narcissism, narcissism is still very prevalent in organizations (Galvin et al., 2010). Employees with healthy narcissism (e.g., normal narcissism) have a realistic self-appraisal of their abilities and limitations, a balanced sense of entitlement, and are motivated to achieve, while employees with

unhealthy narcissism (e.g., destructive narcissism) have over-inflated and unwarranted self-regard, an expectation of preferential treatment, a pervasive pattern of grandiosity, strong reactions to criticism and threats to their self-image, and a sense of privilege or entitlement (Godkin & Allcorn, 2009).

Because employees with narcissistic tendencies have an inflated sense of self-worth and a powerful sense of entitlement, they are likely to perceive, and respond to, their work, their colleagues, and their respective supervisors and managers differently from employees who are less narcissistic (Maynard et al., 2015). With a high external locus of control, these employees are more likely to blame others and associate their mistakes and failures with forces beyond their control (Twenge & Campbell, 2008); they may fail to develop the critical strategies and self-managed approaches to achieve results (Andrey et al., 2012; Lessard, Greenberger, Chen, & Farruggia, 2011); they will continue to maintain an over-inflated self-image, even in the face of rejection or failure, which makes it difficult for them to accept constructive criticism (Lieber, 2010), even to the point that any feedback may be viewed as a personal attack rather than a development opportunity (Ivancevich, Ivancevich, & Roscher, 2009).

Employees with narcissistic tendencies exhibit an almost-obsessive concern about how favorably they are viewed by others while rejecting any evidence to the contrary (Campbell, Goodie, & Foster, 2004). These individuals significantly overestimate their level of, and contribution to, current performance, and take little responsibility for making the changes necessary to perform at higher levels (Gardner & Pierce, 2011; Nevicka et al., 2011).

While entitlement, and the corresponding maladaptive behaviors, have been forwarded as being part of the narcissistic construct (Campbell et al., 2004), other researchers suggest there is evidence to support different forms of entitlement, with the narcissistic tendency toward exploitative entitlement (e.g., believing he or she deserves more than others) being only one variant (Andrey et al., 2012; Lessard et al., 2011). The belief that one might deserve positive outcomes, but without feeling that the outcomes need to be by exploiting others, has been identified and positively correlated to higher levels of positive work orientations, and may be an indication that certain types of entitlement may be related to achievement orientation more so than the narcissistic domain (Andrey et al., 2012; Lessard et al., 2011).

While people with healthy self-esteem have developed realistic and tenable foundations for their feelings of self-worth that provide protection when presented with unfavorable feedback (Zeigler-Hill, Besser, & King, 2011), once levels of self-regard become overinflated to subclinical narcissistic levels, feelings of self-worth become more vulnerable to challenge, especially when information presented does not match personal views of self (e.g., ego-dystonic communication) (Lippmann et al., 2009). This overinflated perception of self-worth is quite fragile because it requires constant validation and depends on some degree of self-deception (Zeigler-Hill et al., 2011). The phenomenon of inflated or unwarranted favorable self-assessments that are confronted with an external evaluation that disputes this favorable self-view is referred to as *threatened egotism* (Baumeister et al., 1996). Threatened egotism can manifest as the *better-than-average* effect, which is the need to feel superior to other employees just to feel good about oneself and, because employees with narcissistic tendencies believe they

are smarter, more popular, and funnier than other employees, they must inflate themselves while putting others down to protect their self-image (Neff, 2009).

While most of the extant literature on narcissism concentrates on the negative behaviors associated with it (Besser & Priel, 2010), many researchers focusing on organizational effectiveness report that subclinical narcissistic personality traits are a common characteristic found within many successful people in the workplace (Chen, 2010; Ouimet, 2010). Holt and Marques (2012) refer to these individuals as *productive narcissists* and cite Bill Gates, Jack Welch, Oprah Winfrey, and the late Steve Jobs, as examples. Several researchers now assert that certain narcissistic attributes may actually be indispensable for many roles within contemporary organizations (Kets de Vries, 2012; Nevicka et al., 2011; Starratt & Grandy, 2010) and present the significant overlap between success characteristics (e.g., strong sense of purpose, confident, tenacious, bored with routine, great visioning) and common non-maladaptive narcissistic traits (e.g., optimistic, ambitious, and being daring, rebellious, bold, and grandiose) as partial evidence (Galvin et al., 2010; Kets de Vries, 2012).

Although the aforementioned traits may help large numbers of narcissists achieve success in the workplace (Galvin et al., 2010; Nevicka et al., 2011; Samier & Atkins, 2010), narcissists also manifest behaviors that are identified as dysfunctional and contribute to deleterious outcomes (Ouimet, 2010). For example, the literature suggests that narcissists have an inability to tolerate criticism and utilize feedback constructively (Amernic & Craig, 2010); they are less open to development opportunities and resist change efforts (Ferris et al., 2010; Galvin et al., 2010); and they frequently fail to incorporate feedback from others (Ouimet, 2010). Outside of the workplace, many

narcissistic individuals resist any form of psychotherapy because their symptoms are externalizing which allows them to form a personal view of themselves that any alleged narcissistic manifestations are about external influences (e.g., other people) (Twenge et al., 2014). When these narcissistic individuals do enter some form of therapy, the drop-out rate is extremely high, which, when compared to coaching interventions in the workplace, may help explain the resistance narcissists have to any form of advice or help (Twenge et al., 2014). Conversely, individuals with healthy workplace confidence and self-esteem have an ability to tolerate criticism and rejection and respond well to approval and praise (Godkin & Allcorn, 2009).

In response to the very public organizational failures that have occurred over the recent past, narcissistic personality disordered leaders have become the subject of scrutiny (Goldman, 2006). Researchers studying these leaders report that while narcissism appears to be an initial driving engine that propels many leaders, and can be the force that helps leaders achieve great results, the question as to what degree the narcissistic influence can also be a factor in impairing workplace, personal, and social functions must still be answered (Goldman, 2006). Indeed, a combination of charisma and narcissism has been associated by some researchers with manipulation, abuse of power, feelings of superiority, a drive for personal power and glory, and a self-centered orientation towards leadership (Galvin et al., 2010). Leaders who are *narcissistic charismatics* have been characterized as intimidating, almost frightening, because they can be simultaneously charming, manipulative, and cruel (Galvin et al., 2010). Extreme maladaptive narcissism in senior leaders (e.g., Chief Executive Officers) has been positively associated with unethical conduct (Amernic & Craig, 2010).

In sum, while employees with narcissistic proclivities are emotionally vulnerable to constructive criticism and not receptive to feedback, current research suggests there are adaptive narcissistic characteristics that uniquely equip individuals to grow in demanding, competitive business environments, and it is only those who continue to manifest their maladaptive narcissistic tendencies that experience career limitations (e.g., lack of growth opportunities or promotions) (Besser & Priel, 2010).

Adaptive and Maladaptive Narcissism

Adaptive and maladaptive conceptualizations of narcissistic traits.

Across a myriad of literature on personality and personality disorders, and within a variety of disciplines including clinical, social-personality, and organizational-industrial psychology, there is a growing consensus that both adaptive (e.g., self-sufficiency, competitiveness, superiority, sense of invulnerability) and maladaptive (e.g., exploitativeness, exhibitionism, entitlement) conceptualizations of narcissistic traits and characteristics are necessary to adequately understand narcissism, and, yet, there is still considerable debate as to the structure in which to integrate these dimensions of narcissism (Barry & Wallace, 2010; Clark, 2010; Koliscak, 2012; Lau & Marsee, 2013; Lau et al., 2011). Previous attempts at assimilating the various perspectives on integration led to a proposal that a single dimension exists on which normal (e.g., adaptive) and pathological (e.g., maladaptive) variants of narcissism reside, and that this hypothesized narcissism continuum delineated the relationship between self-esteem, and the adaptive and maladaptive aspects of self-regulation, by anchoring healthy self-esteem at the lower extreme, followed by adaptive (e.g., normal; constructive) narcissism, and ending with maladaptive (e.g., unhealthy; destructive) narcissism at the upper extreme

(Besser & Priel, 2010; Godkin & Allcorn, 2010). In essence, this unidimensional framework for narcissism proposed that adaptive and maladaptive typologies are absolute in that they occupy only a portion of this hypothesized continuum (i.e., each representing one third of the continuum) and that narcissistic levels are more quantitative in nature (e.g., differ by degree) rather than being more qualitative in nature (e.g., differ by type or in kind) (Gentile et al., 2013; Koliscak, 2012; Lau & Marsee, 2013; Lau et al., 2011).

In sharp contrast to the viewpoint that narcissism is a continuous trait, with levels of narcissism as points along a continuum (Gentile et al., 2013; Hopwood, 2013; Karterud, Øien, & Pedersen, 2011; Kealy & Rasmussen, 2012; Muñoz Centifanti, Kimonis, Frick, & Aucoin, 2013; Sosik, Chun, & Zhu, 2014), is research supporting the perspective that two distinct personality dimensions exist between healthy or normal (e.g., adaptive) and pathological (e.g., maladaptive) variants of narcissism (Kealy & Rasmussen, 2012; Russ & Shedler, 2013; Zeigler-Hill et al., 2011). This debate is partially driven by assessment and methodological concerns in the empirical research of narcissism (Huprich & Nelson, 2014; Kealy & Rasmussen, 2012; Pincus & Lukowitsky, 2010; Zeigler-Hill et al., 2011), and further supported by research demonstrating that grandiose or overt narcissists have equally high adaptive and maladaptive narcissism scores on narcissistic trait surveys (e.g., Narcissistic Personality Inventory; Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory-2), which presents a challenge to the single continuum theory because an individual could not exist, simultaneously, in both the adaptive or healthy spectrum and in the maladaptive or pathological spectrum (Ansell, 2005). In addition, according to the unidimensional continuum hypothesis that self-esteem and narcissism are highly overlapping constructs, high self-esteem should align with the high

adjustment category, overt narcissists should align with a more moderate adjustment category, and overt narcissism and high self-esteem should differ in mediating effect for the inverse relationship between depression and self-esteem. Yet, overt narcissists consistently show greater adjustment than people with high self-esteem (Lau et al., 2011), and neither overt narcissism nor self-esteem have any mediating effect on depression (Ansell, 2005).

The adaptive and maladaptive contrast has also been utilized to differentiate the vulnerable, or covert, and grandiose, or overt, narcissist subtypes of narcissism (Barry & Wallace, 2010; Lau & Marsee, 2013; Lau et al., 2011; Koliscak, 2012) with suggestions that both covert and overt narcissists would demonstrate exploitative and entitled behaviors (Lau et al., 2011; Koliscak, 2012), but only grandiose or overt narcissists would effectively compensate for their poor self-image through defensive self-enhancement (Ansell, 2005). Indeed, researchers using the Narcissistic Personality Inventory report that grandiose or overt narcissists possess both adaptive and maladaptive components of narcissism, while vulnerable or covert narcissists, who do not have the defense mechanisms used by grandiose narcissists to bolster self-image, possess maladaptive but no adaptive components of narcissism (Ansell, 2005). This supports the hypothesis that although both subtypes are interpersonally maladaptive (e.g., entitled, exhibitionistic, exploitative, and manipulative), a vulnerable or covert individual is intrapsychically maladaptive, and not equipped to adequately self-enhance, while a grandiose or overt individual is intrapsychically adaptive, and able to sufficiently self-enhance to defend his or her self-image (Lau et al., 2011; Koliscak, 2012).

Further evidence for the multidimensional characterization of the narcissism construct is evoked from the understanding that maladaptive dimensions of narcissism produce stronger associations with externalizing problems than do the adaptive components of narcissism with maladaptive narcissism exhibiting positive correlations, even after controlling for adaptive narcissism, with a wide range of antisocial and aggressive behaviors (e.g., overt aggression; relational aggression) (Golmaryami & Barry, 2010; Lau et al., 2011).

The aforementioned variations in correlational patterns for adaptive and maladaptive narcissism characteristics highlight and support researchers' assertions that these two constructs may not simply reflect two points along a unidimensional continuum, but rather represent two distinct constructs and evinces that adaptive and maladaptive forms of narcissistic functioning may, independent of each other, co-occur in people.

Isolating and measuring adaptive and maladaptive narcissism.

Many psychometric assessment surveys have been developed to identify narcissistic characteristics, but the most widely used measure in social psychological research is the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI) (Ackerman et al., 2011; Bobadilla et al., 2012; Brown et al., 2013; Gardner & Pierce, 2011; Graham & Cooper, 2013; Hamedoglu & Potas, 2012; Keiller, 2010; Keller et al., 2014; Lau et al., 2011; Rijsenbilt & Commandeur, 2013; Traiser & Eighmy, 2011). Since inception, and over a large number of years, dozens of studies have found the NPI to be a reliable and valid assessment of narcissistic proclivities in nonclinical populations (Bobadilla et al., 2012; Besser & Priel, 2010; Brown et al., 2013; Keiller, 2010; Traiser & Eighmy, 2011).

The NPI was originally built on the DSM-III Narcissistic Personality Disorder behavioral criteria to measure individual narcissism differences, in nonclinical populations, on several dimension of narcissism ranging from normal (e.g., healthy) personality to pathological (e.g., unhealthy) dysfunction (Ackerman et al., 2011; Bobadilla et al., 2012; Brown et al., 2013). While the assessment will measure normal or subclinical narcissism, including some common characteristics of the pathological phenotype (Ackerman et al., 2011), individuals scoring extremely high on the NPI are not necessarily diagnosed as having Narcissistic Personality Disorder, a clinical diagnoses, so the normal use of the instrument is in non-clinical applications (e.g., social/personality psychology) (Brown et al., 2013). For those instances when pathological narcissism needs to be measured (e.g., clinical), the Pathological Narcissism Inventory (PNI) is much better suited (Ackerman et al., 2011; Pincus et al., 2009; Pincus & Lukowitsky, 2010).

The original item pool for the NPI encompassed 223 rationally keyed items to capture the traits associated with NPD (Ackerman et al., 2011), namely: grandiose sense of self-importance; preoccupation with fantasies of success, power, beauty, or love; entitlement and interpersonal exploitativeness, relationships that vacillate between self-idealization and devaluation; a lack of empathy; and an inability to tolerate criticism, defeat, or indifference displayed by others (American Psychiatric Association [APA], 2000). The authors utilized dyadic pairs (e.g., forced-choice) of complementary statements, one non-narcissistic statement (e.g., "When people complement me I sometimes get embarrassed") and one narcissistic statement (e.g., "I know that I am good because everybody keeps telling me so.") (Ansell, 2005). In the subsequent item

analysis, 80 items were significant at the .05 level, and were then divided into the final format with 40 on Form A and 40 on Form B (Raskin & Hall, 1979a). Later versions of the original NPI reduced the number of items to 54, then to 47, and, finally, to the 40 item forced-choice measure that has demonstrated stable reliability (Netemeyer, Burton, & Lichtenstein, 1995), factorial validity (Woodman et al., 2011) and construct validity and internal consistency across numerous studies (Emmons, 1984, 1987; Raskin & Hall, 1981; Raskin & Terry, 1988).

The NPI is widely used today for social/personality psychology because of the linkages with numerous behavioral indices connected with the narcissistic personality (Bobadilla et al., 2012; Brown et al., 2013; Gardner & Pierce, 2011; Graham & Cooper, 2013; Hamedoglu & Potas, 2012; Keiller, 2010; Keller et al., 2014; Lau et al., 2011; Rijssenbilt & Commandeur, 2013; Traiser & Eighmy, 2011). The use of forced-choice dyads in the NPI questionnaire offers some protection from social desirability influences, and this supposition is supported by research demonstrating a lack of correlation between social desirable measures and the NPI scales (Traiser & Eighmy, 2011). Other researchers have reduced the NPI item pool even further, with respectable results, and a 37 item true-false version exists (Besser & Priel, 2010), based on factor analysis completed by Emmons (1987), and a 16 item forced-choice version exists (e.g., NPI-16), albeit with a caveat from the authors that they do not intend the shorter version to usurp the original and obscure the subcomponents of narcissism, or to diminish its capability to identify the various subscales in any way (Ames, Rose, & Anderson, 2006).

Despite all the strength and consistency of the NPI total score, many researchers hypothesized there may be potential sub-scale measures within the NPI that would permit

greater precision in the study of the facets of narcissism (Keller et al., 2014; Maxwell, Donnellan, Hopwood, & Ackerman, 2011). Indeed, because the total score derived from the NPI captures some combination of confidence in oneself, self-perceived leadership ability, and social potency, as well as socially toxic characteristics such as a sense of entitlement and a penchant toward exploiting others (Ackerman et al., 2011), researchers hoped that if they could tease out the different dimensions of personality from the NPI items, differential relationships with criterion variables being studied within narcissism research (e.g., aggression and hostility; self-esteem; moral development; anxiety) might be identified (Ackerman et al., 2011). Continued analysis revealed numerous possible constructs, and subsequent factor analyses isolated multiple dimensions, including, and listed chronologically, a four-factor model, extracted by Emmons (1984), a seven-factor model, extracted by Raskin, one of the original NPI authors, and Terry (1988) during an update of the NPI, and, more recently, a three factor model extracted by Ackerman et al. (2011).

Emmons' four-factor model identified *exploitativeness/entitlement* (EE), *leadership/authority* (LA), *superiority/arrogance* (SA), and *self-absorption/self-admiration* (SS) as factors (Besser & Priel, 2010; Bobadilla et al., 2012; Karterud et al., 2011; Zachar & Potter, 2010). After suggesting that Emmons' four factors were too conservative (Raskin & Terry, 1988), a seven-factor model was extracted identifying *authority* (e.g., exaggerated self-view of leadership capabilities), *entitlement* (e.g., the belief that one is owed the respect and admiration of others), *exhibitionism* (e.g., the tendency to draw attention to self), *exploitativeness* (e.g., the desire to manipulate others for personal gain), *self-sufficiency* (e.g., generalized self-efficacy), *superiority* (e.g.,

exaggerated self-view of competencies and capabilities), and *vanity* (e.g., self-admiration) as factors (Barry & Wallace, 2010; Brown et al., 2013; Freudenstein et al., 2012; Gardner & Pierce, 2011; Hamedoglu & Potas, 2012).

The fairly recent three-factor model was pursued, primarily, to address the decades-long debate over factor structure (Ackerman et al., 2011), and identified *leadership/authority*, utilizing 11 questions from the NPI, including “If I ruled the world it would be a much better place,” *grandiose exhibitionism*, utilizing 10 questions from the NPI, including “I know that I am good because everybody keeps telling me so,” and *entitlement/exploitativeness*, utilizing 4 questions from the NPI, including “I find it easy to manipulate people” as factors (Ackerman et al., 2011; Keller et al., 2014; Zeigler-Hill, Enjaian, & Essa, 2013). Internal consistencies of the three factors are reported to be $\alpha = .78$ for leadership/authority, $\alpha = .72$ for grandiose exhibitionism, and $\alpha = .46$ for entitlement/exploitativeness (Ackerman et al., 2011; Zeigler-Hill et al., 2013). While the lower alpha coefficient for the entitlement/exploitativeness scale ($\alpha = .46$) would normally be of concern, part of the explanation for this is there are only four items in this subscale so the lower coefficient may not be because of the content of the scale but, instead, resulting from the total number of items scored (Ackerman et al., 2011). To further support this theory, the average interitem correlation for this scale approached .20 in a series of iterative studies which is acceptable given the optimal average interitem correlation coefficient for a scale is recommended to be between .20 and .40 (Ackerman et al., 2011).

Although each of the aforementioned NPI factor structures are supported by significant research, extracting all factors with an eigenvalue greater than 1.0 (e.g., K1

heuristic), as is the case with Emmons' (1984) four-factor extraction, and with Raskin and Terry's (1988) seven-factor extraction, is not currently seen as the optimal strategy for identifying the number of constructs within sets of data because it can result in an overextraction of factors (Ackerman et al., 2011). To more accurately determine the nomological network of the narcissistic personality dimensions embedded within the NPI, Ackerman et al. (2011) followed contemporary recommendations for performing factor analytic work and utilized exploratory factor analysis (EFA) as the statistical method to determine the underlying NPI structure and the statistical relationships between variables. While they found little support for extracting two-, four-, five-, six-, and seven-factor solutions, the difference in eigenvalues between the third and fourth factors was significantly larger than all the others, and, ultimately, a three-factor solution was deemed most precise, most robust, and most easily interpretable (Ackerman et al., 2011).

The first extracted factor, Leadership/Authority, is represented by items relating to self-perceived leadership ability, social potency, and, to a lesser extent, dominance, and characterizes the more adaptive elements of the narcissistic personality captured by the NPI summary measures (Ackerman et al., 2011; Keller et al., 2014). This factor had few positive correlations with the Pathological Narcissism Inventory (PNI) which is consistent with other research demonstrating that the Leadership/Authority factor is largely unassociated with maladaptive personality traits (Ackerman et al., 2011). When compared to others, people with higher scores on this dimension have heightened self-awareness, higher levels of self-esteem, less discrepancy between actual- and ideal-self, lower social apprehension and anxiety, and less neuroticism, personal distress, and

depression (Ackerman et al., 2011; Lau et al., 2011). Adaptive elements of the narcissistic personality have been referred to as “normal” or “healthy” narcissism and, generally, allow a person with narcissistic tendencies to function in modern society (Ackerman et al., 2011; Pincus & Lukowitsky, 2010). A total of 11 questions, out of a possible 40 questions in the NPI, are used when calculating a score for adaptive narcissism (Ackerman et al., 2011).

The second extracted factor, Grandiose Exhibitionism, is represented by items reflecting a combination of self-absorption, exhibitionistic tendencies, vanity, emotional reactivity and brittleness, and superiority, and corresponds to the maladaptive elements of the narcissistic personality captured by the NPI summary measures (Ackerman et al., 2011). When compared to others, people with higher scores on this dimension tend to be more self-conscious, have lower levels of self-esteem and social desirability, have greater discrepancy between actual- and ideal-self, display a lack of empathy and concern for others, exhibit increased emotional intensity, mood variability, and neuroticism, and have higher scores on the Narcissistic Personality Disorder Scale (Ackerman et al., 2011).

The third extracted factor, Entitlement/Exploitativeness, is represented by items reflecting interpersonal entitlement behaviors, expectations of respect and admiration, and a propensity toward manipulation and the exploitation of others, and corresponds to the maladaptive elements of the narcissistic personality captured by the NPI summary measures (Ackerman et al., 2011; Besser & Priel, 2010; Keller et al., 2014; Zeigler-Hill et al., 2013). In sharp contrast to the Leadership/Authority factor, both the Grandiose Exhibitionism and Entitlement/Exploitativeness factors had many positive correlations with the PNI, including all the subscales relating to narcissistic grandiosity (Ackerman et

al., 2011). Because both the Grandiose Exhibitionism subscale and the Entitlement/Exploitativeness subscale correspond to the maladaptive (e.g., pathological) elements within the NPI, the combined 14 questions from both subscales are utilized when calculating a score for maladaptive narcissism (Ackerman et al., 2011; Keller et al., 2014).

As has been described earlier, while the internal reliability of the NPI total score is strong ($= .83$) (Raskin & Hall, 1981; Soyer, Rovenpor, Kopelman, Mullins, & Watson, 2001), using only the total score is potentially misleading because it conflates the adaptive narcissism and maladaptive narcissism subscales, thereby disregarding the differential relations the subscales have with various criterion variables (Ackerman et al., 2011; Hepper, Hart, & Sedikides, 2014). The three-factor solution, comprised of the Leadership/Authority factor, the Grandiose Exhibitionism factor, and the Entitlement/Exploitativeness factor is stable across multiple data sets (Ackerman et al., 2011) and demonstrate strong differential relations and criterion validity with various measures of narcissism and other theoretically pertinent constructs (Miller et al., 2014). These measures and constructs include psychopathy (e.g., fearless dominance; impulsive antisociality), as measured by the International Personality Item Pool (IPIP), machiavellianism, as measured by the Kiddie Mach (shorter version of the full MACHIV), self-esteem, as measured by the Rosenberg scale, behavioral inhibition system (BIS) and behavioral activation system (BAS), as measured by the Carver and White measure, self-control, as measured by the self-control Tangney et al. (2004) scale, counterproductive school behaviors and interpersonal deviance, as measured by the Bennett and Robinson (2000) workplace deviance measure, entitlement, as measured by

the Psychological Entitlement Scale, and pathological characteristics associated with narcissism, as measured by the Pathological Narcissism Inventory (Ackerman et al., 2011).

Figure 2 shows how the three-factor solution is derived from the NPI and identifies the various aspects of personality (e.g., observed associations) that align with the criterion variables (Ackerman et al., 2011).

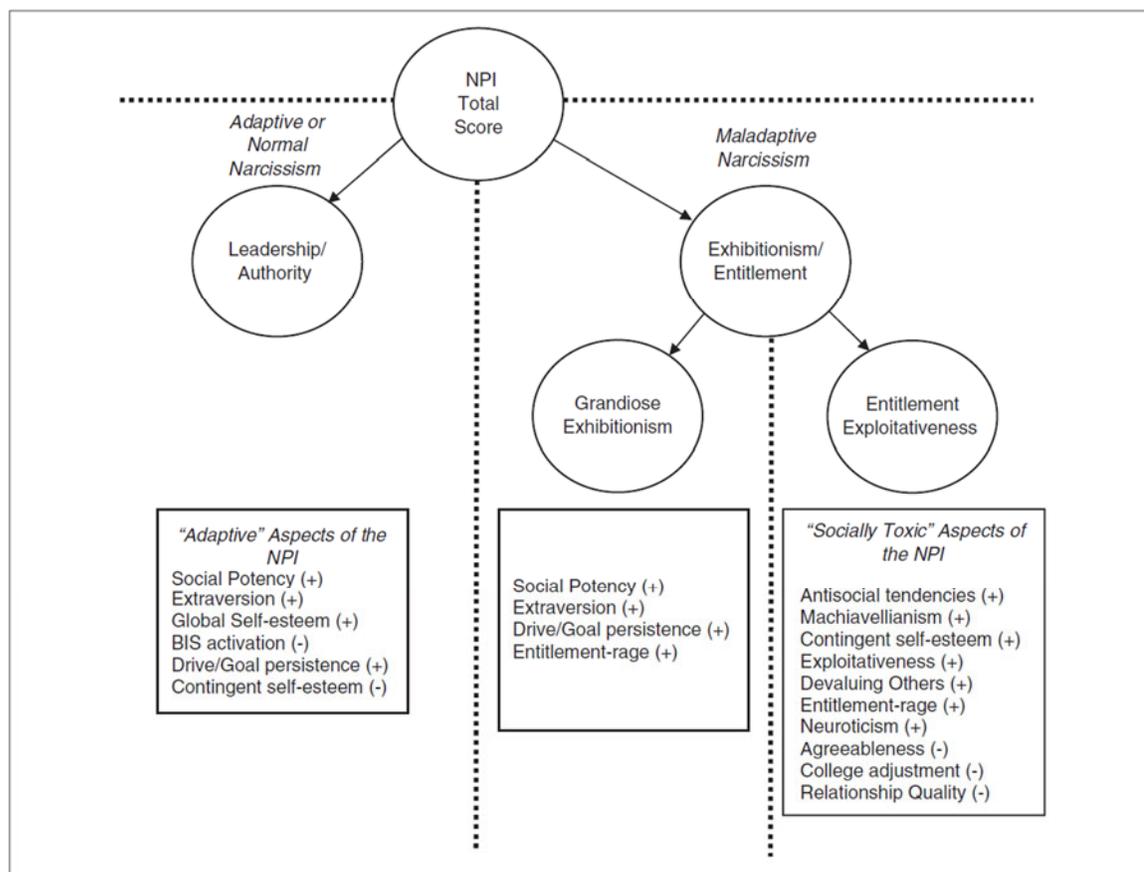


Figure 2. Proposed higher order structure for the narcissistic personality inventory and initial nomological network of corresponding dimensions. (Ackerman et al., 2011)

Summary

The prevailing view of narcissism is that, as with other personality traits, narcissistic tendencies are static and relatively permanent, yet recent research reports that

the narcissistic personality traits that supervisors are most likely to encounter in the workplace can be somewhat susceptible to influence from contextual factors, especially those found in progressive, results-focused organizations. Because the vast majority of workplaces are hierarchical in structure, there are certain natural, almost self-regulating, restraints that may curb or buffer some of the more extreme manifestations of the narcissistic personality. As reported earlier in this brief review of the literature, those with more adaptive narcissistic traits may also be able to perform a self-evaluation that prompts them to engage in certain attitude and behavioral shifts that align more effectively with the need of the work environment they operate in, and with the supervisor they report to. This dynamic and recursive self-regulatory evaluation model offers insight into the manifestations of narcissistic behaviors. For example, employees with maladaptive narcissistic tendencies project an immensely positive view of their self and resist any evidence to the contrary (e.g., unfavorable feedback), but their positive view of the self is also extremely fragile because it is not grounded in any substantive reality that can be defended with evidence to support the claim.

In sum, employees with healthy, adaptive narcissistic tendencies appear to be able to contribute to performance and have learned to tolerate criticism and rejection which allow them to experience significant periods of academic, personal, professional or creative growth. Some of this ability to suppress the negative predilections contained in the narcissistic personality may be influenced by the employee's perception of the credibility of the feedback source (e.g., direct supervisor's knowledge of the job or task being critiqued), the quality and accuracy of the feedback received and the way the feedback is delivered (e.g., supervisor's willingness to listen, understand, support, and

reinforce the employee's efforts). Indeed, the differences in how employees perceive these contextual elements can influence how receptive they are to the feedback, with evidence that similar, indistinguishable feedback from a single supervisor may result in a wide range of disparate responses from his or her employees. Individual characteristics, such as the aforementioned narcissistic predilections, can play an active role in how employees react to unfavorable criticism regardless of the credibility, quality, or way in which the feedback is delivered. It is feasible, then, that employees with healthy, adaptive narcissistic tendencies may have learned to suppress the many maladaptive predispositions encompassing the narcissistic personality and are more capable of adapting to contemporary work environments, more receptive to feedback, and more open to change.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Certain narcissistic attributes may be advantageous for success in specific job functions such as sales and other high-pressure occupations (Galvin et al., 2010; Nevicka et al., 2011). This creates a unique challenge for supervisors responsible for the activities that ensure high-quality employee output in these job functions because feedback receptivity and narcissistic personality traits are traditionally thought to be negatively related. Indeed, people with narcissistic proclivities are known to be emotionally vulnerable to criticism and not receptive to feedback (Amernic & Craig, 2010). Because coaching feedback and constructive criticism are important contributors to productivity, growth, and professional development in the workplace (Govaerts, Kynndt, Dochy, & Baert, 2011), narcissistic characteristics such as resistance to feedback and development indifference would typically be viewed as significant career limiters and cause for concern (Toegel & Barsoux, 2012).

While a myriad of studies on narcissism exist, and the impact of the many narcissistic manifestations in the workplace are well documented, debates persist about its nomological network with much of contemporary research still generating correlates based on a *unidimensional* narcissism construct (Gentile et al., 2013; Kolisak, 2012; Lau & Marsee, 2013; Lau et al., 2011). Because there is a growing recognition that narcissism may be a *multidimensional* construct, with evidence for both adaptive and maladaptive narcissistic domains (Lau et al., 2011), the aforementioned approach is problematic given that a unidimensional measure conflates the adaptive narcissism and maladaptive narcissism subscales thereby disregarding the differential relations the subscales have with various criterion variables, including feedback receptivity and

motivation to use feedback (Lau et al., 2011). Accordingly, a deeper understanding of the interactions between the adaptive narcissism and maladaptive narcissism subscales, as it pertains to feedback receptivity and motivation to use feedback to improve job performance, is necessary to further illuminate the narcissism nomological network and to contribute to the understanding of feedback processes.

The purpose of this quantitative, non-experimental study was to determine whether employees' adaptive and maladaptive narcissist characteristics moderate levels of employee feedback receptivity, defined as a conceptual construct for this research study, and comprised of employee perceptions of source credibility, employee perceptions of feedback quality, employee perceptions of feedback delivery, and employee motivation to use feedback to improve job performance. A power analysis (Faul, Erdfelder, Buchner, & Lang, 2009) determined the minimum sample size to be 109. The study sample was comprised of customer service sales agents within several domestic call centers within the hospitality industry. To ensure the minimum sample size was attained, invitations to partake in this study were extended to several large hospitality organizations that, collectively, employ thousands of telephone and Internet customer service sales agents. The survey was closed after 123 surveys were completed.

The moderator predictor variables of adaptive and maladaptive narcissistic characteristics were measured using the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI) (Ackerman et al., 2011; Raskin & Hall, 1979a, 1979b; Raskin & Hall, 1981; Raskin & Terry, 1988). The Feedback Environment Scale (FES) was used to measure the main effect predictor variable of frequency of unfavorable feedback and the criterion variables of feedback source credibility, feedback quality, feedback delivery, and motivation to

apply constructive criticism (Steelman et al., 2004b). A SurveyMonkey® on-line survey (SurveyMonkey Inc., 2014f) was used to gather all pertinent data. Demographic data, including age, gender, race, tenure with organization, and tenure with supervisor, was recorded.

The relationship between the main effect predictor variable (frequency of unfavorable feedback) and the moderator predictor variables (adaptive narcissism, maladaptive narcissism) was explored through a progression of hierarchical multiple regression analyses. Frequency of unfavorable feedback was entered into the regression equation first to establish what, if any, effect existed for source credibility, feedback quality, feedback delivery, and motivation to use feedback (Block 1). Adaptive narcissism was entered into the regression equation next to determine what, if any, effect existed for source credibility, feedback quality, feedback delivery, and motivation to use feedback, over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback (Block 2a). Next, the adaptive narcissism variable was removed from the regression equation and maladaptive narcissism was entered into the regression equation to determine what, if any, effect existed for source credibility, feedback quality, feedback delivery, and motivation to use feedback, over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback (Block 2b).

The purpose of this quantitative, non-experimental study was to determine whether any influence existed between the adaptive narcissism and maladaptive narcissism subscales and employee feedback receptivity and employee motivation to use feedback to improve job performance. The following research questions and

corresponding hypotheses guided the formulation of the study methods and subsequent analyses:

Feedback source credibility.

Q1. To what extent, if any, does adaptive narcissism and maladaptive narcissism predict employee perceptions of feedback source credibility over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback?

H1a₀. Adaptive narcissism, as measured by the NPI, does not significantly predict employee perceptions of feedback source credibility, as measured by the FES, over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback, as measured by the FES.

H1a₁. Adaptive narcissism, as measured by the NPI, does significantly predict employee perceptions of feedback source credibility, as measured by the FES, over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback, as measured by the FES.

H1b₀. Maladaptive narcissism, as measured by the NPI, does not significantly predict employee perceptions of feedback source credibility, as measured by the FES, over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback, as measured by the FES.

H1b₁. Maladaptive narcissism, as measured by the NPI, does significantly predict employee perceptions of feedback source credibility, as measured by the FES, over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback, as measured by the FES.

Feedback quality.

Q2. To what extent, if any, does adaptive narcissism and maladaptive narcissism predict employee perceptions of feedback quality over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback?

H2a0. Adaptive narcissism, as measured by the NPI, does not significantly predict employee perceptions of feedback quality, as measured by the FES, over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback, as measured by the FES.

H2a1. Adaptive narcissism, as measured by the NPI, does significantly predict employee perceptions of feedback quality, as measured by the FES, over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback, as measured by the FES.

H2b0. Maladaptive narcissism, as measured by the NPI, does not significantly predict employee perceptions of feedback quality, as measured by the FES, over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback, as measured by the FES.

H2b1. Maladaptive narcissism, as measured by the NPI, does significantly predict employee perceptions of feedback quality, as measured by the FES, over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback, as measured by the FES.

Feedback delivery.

Q3. To what extent, if any, does adaptive narcissism and maladaptive narcissism predict employee perceptions of feedback delivery over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback?

H3a0. Adaptive narcissism, as measured by the NPI, does not significantly predict employee perceptions of feedback delivery, as measured by the FES, over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback, as measured by the FES.

H3a1. Adaptive narcissism, as measured by the NPI, does significantly predict employee perceptions of feedback delivery, as measured by the FES, over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback, as measured by the FES.

H3b₀. Maladaptive narcissism, as measured by the NPI, does not significantly predict employee perceptions of feedback delivery, as measured by the FES, over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback, as measured by the FES.

H3b₁. Maladaptive narcissism, as measured by the NPI, does significantly predict employee perceptions of feedback delivery, as measured by the FES, over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback, as measured by the FES.

Motivation to use feedback.

Q4. To what extent, if any, does adaptive narcissism and maladaptive narcissism predict employee motivation to use feedback over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback?

H4a₀. Adaptive narcissism, as measured by the NPI, does not significantly predict employee motivation to use feedback, as measured by the FES, over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback, as measured by the FES.

H4a₁. Adaptive narcissism, as measured by the NPI, does significantly predict employee motivation to use feedback, as measured by the FES, over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback, as measured by the FES.

H4b₀. Maladaptive narcissism, as measured by the NPI, does not significantly predict employee motivation to use feedback, as measured by the FES, over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback, as measured by the FES.

H4b₁. Maladaptive narcissism, as measured by the NPI, does significantly predict employee motivation to use feedback, as measured by the FES, over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback, as measured by the FES.

Chapter three of this research study describes in detail the research method and design utilized. Discussion includes the appropriateness of the design, why the design was chosen over other designs, and how the design accomplished the study goals. A detailed description of the population and the instruments used in the study are provided. Study variables are operationally defined and each step in the data collection process, and analysis, are explained. This chapter concludes with a comprehensive discussion of the methodological assumptions, potential limitations, delimitating strategies, and an explanation of the ethical assurances utilized to ensure compliance with the standards for conducting research of this type.

Research Methods and Design

In this non-experimental, quantitative study, a correlation design was utilized to examine the predictive relationship between *frequency of unfavorable feedback*, the main effect predictor (independent) variable, and employees' perception of feedback *source credibility*, *feedback quality*, and *feedback delivery*, as well as their *motivation to use feedback*, the criterion (dependent) variables, and to determine whether *adaptive narcissism* and *maladaptive narcissism* moderate the relationships between the predictor variable and the criterion variables. An experimental research design was not possible for this study because some of the research variables are personality traits (e.g., adaptive narcissism; maladaptive narcissism) and cannot be manipulated or assigned to study participants (Heiman, 2002). In addition, an experimental design creates an artificial study environment that does not occur naturally in the workplace and, because there is some interference introduced by the researcher (i.e., the researcher is randomly assigning

predictor variables to study participants), there is, potentially, lower ecological and external validity (Heiman, 2002).

A quantitative, correlational research design was optimal for this study because numerous quantifiable measures were used and qualitative research does not generally utilize objective measures for analyses (Howell, 2010; Muijs, 2011). Categorical (nominal) scales were used within this research study to collect pertinent demographic information (e.g., age, gender, race, tenure with organization, tenure with supervisor). In addition, interval data from the FES psychometric assessment questionnaire (e.g., frequency of unfavorable feedback; feedback source credibility; feedback quality; feedback delivery; motivation to use feedback), and ratio data from the NPI psychometric assessment questionnaire (e.g., adaptive narcissism; maladaptive narcissism) were collected from the study participants. Statistical analyses requiring these types of measurement scales were utilized to determine whether, to what degree, and in what direction, a correlation existed between the variables being studied (Dues, 2011). The quantitative method provided a more objective assessment of the proposed interaction among variables due to its inherent capability to establish statistical relationships among numerically-coded variables using parametric procedures (e.g., hierarchical multiple regression analyses) (Heiman, 2002; Muijs, 2011).

This study used an online survey hosted by SurveyMonkey, an Internet survey services provider (SurveyMonkey, 2014f). This survey services provider is commonly used by researchers (Rowley, 2014) and is considered easier to use than other online survey services providers, such as SurveyShare, SurveyGizmo, and SurveyPirate.com (Hoon, 2011). An online survey was appropriate for this study because of the universal

acceptance of, and familiarity with, electronic data gathering (Rowley, 2014). Because the target sample population was comprised of working adults, barring some unique or temporary situation, the likelihood of excluding potential survey candidates because they could not access and complete the survey was minimal.

Anonymity for the survey-taker was fully protected within the SurveyMonkey data collection process (SurveyMonkey, 2014b) and, while the ability to electronically track and log information about who is responding did exist (SurveyMonkey, 2014g), this feature was disabled, and the survey respondent was made aware of this protection prior to starting the survey. SurveyMonkey is HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) compliant, and utilizes advanced technology for Internet security, including SSL/TLS encryption, user authentication, data center security, fully redundant IP network connections and power supplies, intrusion detection and prevention, and storage backups in multiple geographically disparate sites (SurveyMonkey, 2014e). SurveyMonkey exports in xls (e.g., Microsoft Excel), csv (e.g., comma-delimited text), and sav (e.g., Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) data formats (SurveyMonkey, 2014a), and assigns each survey responder a unique identifier to aid in data analysis (SurveyMonkey, 2014d). SurveyMonkey also ensured that Institutional Review Board (IRB) academic and ethical standards were maintained (SurveyMonkey Inc., 2014c) so compliance with NCU IRB protocols was maintained. All statistical analyses were performed by the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) advanced statistical analysis software, version 22 (International Business Machines Corp., 2014).

Two published assessments were used to collect pertinent data from survey respondents, namely the *Narcissistic Personality Inventory* (NPI) (Raskin & Hall, 1979a)

(Appendix A) and the *Feedback Environment Survey* (FES) (Steelman et al., 2004a) (Appendix B). The NPI is the most widely used index to measure narcissism in social psychological research, and is intended for use within the general population to measure individual differences on the dimension of narcissism ranging from normal personality to pathological dysfunction (Watson et al., 2006). Respondents were asked to select between a narcissistic option and a non-narcissistic option for each item, and a point is assigned for each narcissistic response. The internal consistency of the NPI instrument has been established at .83 (Raskin & Terry, 1988; Rhodewalt & Morf, 1995). As is typical in similar research using the NPI, only certain portions of the assessment were utilized for this research study (Babineaux, 2013; Bosson, 2000; Bower, 2006; Govan, 2007; Krishnan, 2011; Mescher, 2012; Neufeld, 2013; Smith, 2006; Washburn, McMahon, King, Reinecke, & Silver, 2004). For example, because this research study was only concerned with the adaptive narcissism and maladaptive narcissism subscales, three factors were extracted from the NPI questionnaire (Ackerman et al., 2011), namely the eleven questions comprising Leadership/Authority ($\alpha = .74$), the ten questions comprising Grandiose Exhibitionism ($\alpha = .69$), and the four questions comprising Entitlement/Exploitativeness ($\alpha = .24$). As a result, the adaptive narcissism and maladaptive narcissism predictor variables were examined using a total of 25 items from the NPI. While the NPI is not available for commercial use, the authors provide permission for use for research and teaching purposes without seeking written permission (Raskin & Hall, 1979b).

The FES measures several contextual aspects of the informal (e.g., day-to-day) supervisor-employee feedback process, and encompasses seven dimensions, namely

favorable feedback ($\alpha = .88$), *unfavorable feedback* ($\alpha = .89$), *source credibility* ($\alpha = 0.85$), *feedback quality* ($\alpha = 0.91$), *feedback delivery* ($\alpha = 0.82$), *source availability* and *promotes feedback seeking* (Rutkowski & Steelman, 2005; Steelman, 1997; Steelman et al., 2004b; Steelman & Rutkowski, 2004). The FES is designed to examine employee perspectives on these seven feedback contextual dimensions by asking questions about feedback received from the respondent's supervisor and from the respondent's coworkers (Stelman et al., 2004b). As is typical in similar research using the FES, only certain portions of the assessment were utilized for this research study (Bridges, 2008; Kung, 2008; Marando, 2011). For example, because this research study was only concerned with the feedback environment surrounding the feedback recipient's supervisor, only the supervisor contextual dimensions were assessed. The use of the FES in this manner is supported by its use in a study by Norris-Watts and Levy (2004) in which they removed the coworker segment of the survey. In addition, because the research study did not address supervisory feedback source availability and feedback seeking behaviors, the FES source availability and promotes feedback seeking questions were not included. As a result, the contextual elements of the feedback environment were examined using a total of 25 items from the FES. While the FES is not available for commercial use, the authors provide permission for use for research and teaching purposes without seeking written permission (Stelman et al., 2004a).

Population

The U.S. call and contact centers industry includes about 4,200 companies and employs a significant number of employees with approximately 4.5 million front-line customer service and sales agent positions active today which represents approximately

2% of the total U.S. population and about 3.5% of the working population (North American Quitline Consortium, 2010). Approximately 3 million of these positions are classified as full-time employees with part-time employees making up the remaining 1.5 million positions (North American Quitline Consortium, 2010).

Sample

The International Association of Reservation Executives (IARE) is an industry association representing most facets of the travel industry, and its members employ many thousands of call and contact center agents (International Association of Reservation Executives, 2014). While agents in these centers may have various job titles, including *customer service agent* and *guest services agent*, one of the central components of the job function is sales (i.e., convert an in-bound inquiry call into a revenue-producing hotel room booking), and the people selected for these positions must be able to successfully function in a fast paced, high-pressure work environment with a high volume of in-bound calls.

This research study examined characteristics of the narcissistic personality, so it was desirable to isolate a sample population that was likely to provide the wide range of narcissistic dimensionality necessary for statistical analysis. Because narcissism is positively correlated with sales performance (Hamer, 2001), and because certain narcissistic attributes, such as the elevated sense of self-worth and confidence in oneself that allows individuals to feel they can overcome any obstacle and achieve any goal, are very similar to the characteristics needed for success in sales occupations with high reward dependence (i.e., rewards earned by employees based on individual performance, such as commissions or bonuses earned for sales performance) (Kets de Vries, 2012;

Nevicka, De Hoogh, Van Vianen, Beersma, & McIlwain, 2011; Samier & Atkins, 2010, Starratt & Grandy, 2010), customer service sales agents within hospitality industry reservations centers were an appropriate sample population for this research study.

The hospitality industry reservations center work environment is also very competitive with numerous, objective performance metrics (e.g., number of reservations booked; upselling revenue; talk-time; wrap-time), as well as performance-based incentive programs, so it was likely to attract personality characteristics tending toward high self-esteem and narcissism. This sample population is also desirable because contact centers in the hospitality industry have very similar technology, operating procedures and performance metrics thus confounds across the various organizations were reduced. To reduce any risk of country-based cultural confounds being introduced into the data pool, only contact centers within the domestic U.S. were approached.

In determining the appropriate sample size for this research study, some consideration was given to current recommendations that a less conservative approach be used when establishing significance levels. According to Balkin and Sheperis (2011), while researchers need to consider effect size, significance level, and sample size before embarking on any research, the authors feel that statistical power decreases when more conservative alpha levels are used (e.g., .01 or .001) and, while researchers gain the benefit of avoiding Type I errors when a conservative approach is adopted, it is less likely they will find statistical significance which increases the possibility of making a Type II error.

While introducing the possibility of failing to find a relationship that does exist between the variables being studied is not a desirable outcome, a less conservative

approach could mean finding a statistical relationship when one does not exist. To reduce the risk of this occurring, the original plan of using a conservative significance level was retained and, to offset the possibility of introducing a Type II error, a larger sample size was planned. Table 1 contains the power analysis for the three predictor variables with a medium effect size of .15, an alpha level of .01, and a power of .80 resulted in a minimum sample size of 109. While many more surveys were hoped for in the data collection, the actual number of surveys collected was 123. After data screening, nine surveys were discarded due to incomplete data which left 114 valid surveys. This number was very close to the original estimate for the minimum sample size. Further discussion on the sample size for this research study is found in Chapter 5, Limitations.

Table 1

*G*Power Test for Minimum Sample Size*

<i>F</i> tests - Linear multiple regression: Fixed model, R^2 deviation from zero		
Analysis:	A priori	
Input:	Effect size:	.15
	Error probability:	.01
	Power:	.80
	Number of predictors:	3
Output:	Noncentrality parameter:	16.3500000
	Critical <i>F</i> :	3.9737726
	Numerator <i>df</i> :	3
	Denominator <i>df</i> :	105
	Total sample size:	109
	Actual power:	0.8009686

Because no direct access to the contact center customer service sales agents was possible within the various hospitality industry reservations centers that had been

targeted, a PhD research request letter (Appendix C) was sent to the largest members of IARE, including American Express Travel, Best Western International, Choice Hotels International, Dollar Thrifty Automotive Group, Hertz Corporation, Hilton Reservations, Hyatt Hotels & Resorts, and Wyndham Hotel Groups. The PhD research request letter was personalized, and sent by courier to the most senior manager that was identified through the IARE membership. The letter described the purpose of the research, the target sample population, and asked that the invitation to participate poster (Appendix D), included in the courier package, be displayed in an area where it would be seen by the contact center customer service sales agents (e.g., employee lunch room, community bulletin board).

The invitation to participate poster provided the Uniform Resource Locator (URL) link to the survey and included multiple tear-off tabs, each listing the URL link, to provide a convenient way for the contact center customer service sales agents to take the information with them (e.g., to their home or to a personal computer where the survey could be accessed). E-mail communications back from managers within several of the selected organizations described the contemporary contact center work environment as fully electronic, without any lunch room bulletin boards or community bulletin boards to post the invitation to participate poster. Requests were made for an electronic version (e.g., a PDF document) that could be posted on the electronic bulletin boards more frequently used by these hospitality industry reservations centers. An electronic version (Appendix E) was sent by e-mail to the individuals who originally made the request, and the same electronic version was then sent by e-mail (Appendix F) to the remaining managers within the invited organizations in the event that the electronic version would

be a better option for them as well. The electronic version of the invitation to participate poster provided the URL link to the research study but did not include the multiple tear-off tabs listing the URL. Instead, a Quick Response Code (QR code) was included to allow a convenient and accurate link directly to the survey from any smartphone equipped with a QR code reader.

When there was no response to the original courier, or to the subsequent e-mail supplying the electronic version of the invitation to participate poster, follow-up telephone calls were placed in an attempt to answer any questions and to gain commitment to sending out the poster. In all cases, the follow-up calls reached a voicemail system and messages were left. There was some success with this follow-up strategy resulting in several telephone calls back from the messages left.

In 100% of the cases, with those who were reached by either e-mail or telephone, the request that the invitation to participate poster be distributed to their respective customer service sales agents was denied. The reason given was that the Human Resources (HR) department had a “no solicitation” policy and that no information from outside of the organization could be distributed to employees. Permission was granted to allow an e-mail explanation of why this research study should be considered (Appendix G) with the intention that the e-mail would be forwarded to a senior representative within the HR department for further review. While HR representatives within several organizations still refused to amend their no solicitation policy to include academic research, HR representatives within several other organizations did understand the benefit of, and appreciate the need for, this type of research, and, subsequently, modified their no solicitation policy to include this research study. A complete listing of the organizations

that distributed the invitation to participate poster to customer service sales agents within various departments is found in Appendix H.

This method of locating survey responders who met the research study criteria (e.g., hospitality industry reservations center customer service sales agents) ensured that fewer biases were introduced in responder selection and increased the randomness of the sample. An SSL-enabled, SurveyMonkey on-line questionnaire (SurveyMonkey Inc., 2014f) was used to gather all pertinent data (Appendix I).

Materials/Instruments

Two published assessments were used to collect pertinent data from survey respondents, namely the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI) (Raskin & Hall, 1979a) (Appendix A) and the Feedback Environment Survey (FES) (Steelman et al., 2004a) (Appendix B).

Narcissistic personality inventory.

The Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI) (Raskin & Hall, 1979a, 1979b; Raskin & Hall, 1981; Raskin & Terry, 1988) is a self-report survey that has become the most widely used index to measure narcissism in social psychological research (Ackerman et al., 2011). Although designed using the DSM-III clinical criteria for narcissistic personality disorder (NPD) (3rd ed; DSM-III; American Psychiatric Association, 1980), it is intended for use by the general population to measure individual differences on the dimension of narcissism ranging from normal personality to pathological dysfunction (Watson et al., 2006). The NPI is used to measure *normal*, *borderline* or *subclinical* narcissism (i.e., people who score very high on the NPI but not at a level necessary to warrant a clinical diagnosis of Narcissistic Personality Disorder

(Bergman et al., 2010). Several versions of the NPI have been released since its inception, but the 40-item, forced-choice version (Raskin & Terry, 1988) is the one most frequently used for research purposes (Watson et al., 2006). Respondents are asked to select between a narcissistic option and a non-narcissistic option for each item, and a point is assigned for each narcissistic response. A total score is calculated by adding all the responses from the 40 questions. The reliability and validity of the instrument has been established at .83 (Raskin & Terry, 1988; Rhodewalt & Morf, 1995).

Various factor structures have been identified within the NPI and these dimensions are beneficial when dichotomized into measures of adaptive and maladaptive narcissism. For example, and for the purpose of this research, Ackerman et al. (2011) identified three subscales, one of which aligned with the adaptive narcissism scale and two of which, when combined, aligned with the maladaptive narcissism scale. The adaptive narcissism scale is calculated using questions 1, 5, 10, 11, 12, 27, 32, 33, 34, 36, and 40. The maladaptive narcissism scale is calculated using questions 4, 7, 13, 14, 15, 19, 20, 24, 25, 26, 28, 29, 30, and 38.

To increase survey response rates and survey completion rates, many researchers use various modified versions of the NPI survey to simplify and reduce the size of the research questionnaire (Babineaux, 2013; Bosson, 2000; Bower, 2006; Govan, 2007; Krishnan, 2011; Mescher, 2012; Neufeld, 2013; Smith, 2006; Washburn et al., 2004). Because recent factor analyses of the 40-item NPI has isolated 25 questions which extract the desired adaptive narcissism and maladaptive narcissism subscales from the NPI instrument (Ackerman et al., 2011), questions 2, 3, 6, 8, 9, 16, 17, 18, 21, 22, 23, 31, 35,

37, and 39 were not used for this research study because they are extraneous and not germane to the research.

While the NPI is not available for commercial use, the authors provide permission for use for research and teaching purposes without seeking written permission (Raskin & Hall, 1979b).

Feedback environment scale.

The Feedback Environment Scale (FES) is a self-report survey that measures several contextual aspects of the informal (e.g., day-to-day) supervisor-employee feedback process, and encompasses eight dimensions, namely *favorable feedback*, *unfavorable feedback*, *source credibility*, *feedback quality*, *feedback delivery*, *source availability*, *promotes feedback seeking*, and *motivation to use feedback* (Rutkowski & Steelman, 2005; Steelman, 1997; Steelman et al., 2004b; Steelman & Rutkowski, 2004). The FES is designed to examine employee perspectives of the eight feedback contextual dimensions by asking questions about feedback received from the respondent's supervisor and from the respondent's coworkers (Steeleman, 1997; Steelman et al., 2004b). As is typical in similar research using the FES (Bridges, 2008; Kung, 2008; Marando, 2011), and because this research study was only concerned with the feedback environment surrounding the feedback recipient's supervisor, only the supervisor contextual dimensions were assessed in this research. The use of the FES in this manner is supported by its use in a study by Norris-Watts and Levy (2004) in which they removed the coworker segment of the survey. In addition, because the study did not address supervisory feedback source availability and feedback seeking behaviors, the FES source availability and promotes feedback seeking questions were not included in

the survey. As a result, the contextual elements of the feedback environment were examined using a total of 25 items from the FES.

While the FES is not available for commercial use, the authors provide permission for use for research and teaching purposes without seeking written permission (Steelman et al., 2004a).

Operational Definition of Variables

To determine whether adaptive and maladaptive narcissist characteristics moderate the predictability of feedback receptivity and motivation to use feedback in a workplace setting, seven variables were measured. Frequency of unfavorable feedback was the main effect predictor variable; adaptive narcissism and maladaptive narcissism were the two moderator predictor variables; and source credibility, feedback quality, feedback delivery, and motivation to use feedback were the four criterion variables.

Table 2 lists all operational variables included in this study.

Parametric data analyses using Likert response formats.

Questions abound in the literature regarding the use of Likert response formats, which are structurally viewed as ordinal data, when performing parametric statistical procedures such as multiple regression analyses (Boone & Boone, 2012; Briand, Morasca, & Basili, 1999; Brown, 2011; Bryman & Bell, 2011; Murray, 2013; Rowley, 2014). The majority of researchers suggest that Likert standard response formats, with a minimum of five points on the response scale, can be analyzed using parametric tests when the data are converted to *continuous* data. This data conversion requires four or more Likert response scales, that all represent similar questions (e.g., all pertaining to one construct or variable), that are then converted by either adding up the individual

responses or calculating an average rating across the items to arrive at a number that can be treated as interval data (Boone & Boone, 2012; Brown, 2011; Creswell, 2008; Rowley, 2014). The designation "approximately interval" signifies that the scales are not interval, but are treated as such in data analysis (Briand et al., 1999).

Cronbach's alpha is a commonly used measure of internal consistency and is calculated to determine how much the items on a response scale are measuring the same underlying construct or dimension. This test procedure is frequently utilized when there are multiple Likert response format questions in a survey that, subsequently, are converted (e.g., summing or averaging) to form a scale or subscale to determine if the scale or subscale is reliable. Cronbach's alpha was calculated for each operational variable in this research study and the results are found in Chapter 4, Findings.

Table 2

Operational Variables (Name; Scale of Measure; Type)

Variable name	Scale of measure	Variable type
Frequency of unfavorable feedback (X1)	Interval	Predictor
Adaptive narcissism (X2)	Ratio	Predictor
Maladaptive narcissism (X3)	Ratio	Predictor
Source credibility (Y1)	Interval	Criterion
Feedback quality (Y2)	Interval	Criterion
Feedback delivery (Y3)	Interval	Criterion
Motivation to use feedback (Y4)	Interval	Criterion

Frequency of unfavorable feedback (X₁).

Frequency of unfavorable feedback is a main effect predictor variable for this research study and measures the frequency that employees receive veridical feedback (e.g., constructive criticism that is perceived to be warranted by the feedback recipient),

from a direct supervisor, indicating their job performance is not meeting performance expectations (Steelman & Rutkowski, 2004). Frequency of unfavorable feedback was measured using the Feedback Environment Scale (FES) survey using questions like “When I don’t meet deadlines, my supervisor lets me know” and “My supervisor tells me when my work performance does not meet organizational standards” (Steelman et al., 2004a). Four questions were used for this construct and responses were measured on a 7-point scale (e.g., Likert response format) with the following rating scale: 1) Strongly Disagree; 2) Disagree; 3) Slightly Disagree; 4) Neither Agree or Disagree; 5) Slightly Agree; 6) Agree; and 7) Strongly Agree. The frequency of unfavorable feedback final score is the arithmetic average of the responses from the four questions. Higher scores reflected higher levels of frequency of unfavorable feedback. The internal consistency reliability for the frequency of unfavorable feedback construct in this research study was .89. Frequency of unfavorable feedback is an interval variable.

Adaptive narcissism (X₂).

Adaptive narcissism is a moderating predictor variable for this research study and is one of the two factors within the multidimensional narcissism construct (Lau & Marsee, 2013). This variable measures self-perceived confidence and leadership ability, social potency, positive illusions of self-image, and adaptive self-enhancement (Ackerman et al., 2011). Adaptive narcissism was measured using the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI) survey using dyadic pairs of complementary statements (i.e., responder selected between a narcissistic option and a non-narcissistic option for each item) such as selecting between “I really like to be the center of attention” (e.g., narcissistic option) and “It makes me uncomfortable to be the center of attention” (e.g.,

non-narcissistic option) (Ackerman, et al., 2011). Eleven paired questions were used for this construct and four questions were reverse-phrased (i.e., survey question for which a response indicates the opposite of the construct being assessed) to avoid response bias and disrupt undesirable response patterns. After a reverse-coding arithmetic transformation was applied for these questions, one point was assigned for each narcissistic response and the adaptive narcissism final score was calculated by summing all responses from the 11 questions. Higher scores reflected higher levels of adaptive narcissism. The internal consistency reliability for the adaptive narcissism construct in this research study was .74. Adaptive narcissism is a ratio variable.

Maladaptive narcissism (X₃).

Maladaptive narcissism is a moderating predictor variable for this research study and is one of the two factors within the multidimensional narcissism construct (Lau & Marsee, 2013). This variable measures potentially socially toxic characteristics of personality, including a willingness to exploit others, sense of entitlement, emotional reactivity, grandiosity, and lack of empathy (Ackerman et al., 2011). Maladaptive narcissism was measured using the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI) survey using dyadic pairs of complementary statements (i.e., responder selected between a narcissistic option and a non-narcissistic option for each item) such as selecting between “I find it easy to manipulate people” (e.g., narcissistic option) and “I don’t like it when I find myself manipulating people” (e.g., non-narcissistic option) (Ackerman, et al., 2011). Fourteen paired questions were used for this construct and seven questions were reverse-phrased (i.e., survey question for which a response indicates the opposite of the construct being assessed) to avoid response bias and disrupt undesirable response patterns. After a

reverse-coding arithmetic transformation was applied for these questions, one point was assigned for each narcissistic response and the maladaptive narcissism final score was calculated by summing all responses from the 14 questions. Higher scores reflected higher levels of maladaptive narcissism. The internal consistency reliability for the maladaptive narcissism construct in this research study was .69. Maladaptive narcissism is a ratio variable.

Source credibility (Y_1).

Source credibility is a criterion variable for this research study and measures the feedback recipient's perception of the supervisor's knowledge of the recipient's performance objectives, knowledge of the recipient's actual performance and the supervisor's ability to evaluate that performance in an accurate and objective manner (i.e., without influence from political considerations or emotional state at the time of the feedback) (Steelman & Rutkowski, 2004). Source credibility was measured using the Feedback Environment Scale (FES) survey using questions like "My supervisor is generally familiar with my performance on the job" and "I have confidence in the feedback my supervisor gives me" (Steelman et al., 2004a). Five questions were used for this construct and responses were measured on a 7-point scale (e.g., Likert response format) with the following rating scale: 1) Strongly Disagree; 2) Disagree; 3) Slightly Disagree; 4) Neither Agree or Disagree; 5) Slightly Agree; 6) Agree; and 7) Strongly Agree. One question was reverse-phrased (i.e., survey question for which a high score indicates the opposite of the construct being assessed) to avoid response bias and disrupt undesirable response patterns. After a reverse-coding arithmetic transformation was applied for this question, the source credibility final score was calculated using the

arithmetic average of the responses from the five questions. Higher scores reflected higher levels of source credibility. The internal consistency reliability of the feedback source credibility construct in this research study was .85. Source credibility is an interval variable.

Feedback quality (Y₂).

Feedback quality is a criterion variable for this research study and measures the degree to which the feedback recipient considers the feedback to be valid, accurate and reliable (Steelman & Rutkowski, 2004). Feedback quality was measured using the Feedback Environment Scale (FES) survey using questions like “The feedback I receive from my supervisor helps me do my job” and “The performance information I receive from my supervisor is generally not very meaningful” (Steelman et al., 2004a). Five questions were used for this construct and responses were measured on a 7-point scale (e.g., Likert response format) with the following rating scale: 1) Strongly Disagree; 2) Disagree; 3) Slightly Disagree; 4) Neither Agree or Disagree; 5) Slightly Agree; 6) Agree; and 7) Strongly Agree. One question was reverse-phrased (i.e., survey question for which a high score indicates the opposite of the construct being assessed) to avoid response bias and disrupt undesirable response patterns. After a reverse-coding arithmetic transformation was applied for this question, the feedback quality final score was calculated using the arithmetic average of the responses from the five questions. Higher scores reflected higher levels of feedback quality. The internal consistency reliability of the feedback quality construct in this research study was .91. Feedback quality is an interval variable.

Feedback delivery (Y₃).

Feedback delivery is a criterion variable for this research study and measures the feedback recipient's view of the manner, style, and tone (e.g., helpful, constructive, supportive) of feedback delivered by a supervisor (Steelman & Rutkowski, 2004). Feedback delivery was measured using the Feedback Environment Scale (FES) survey using questions like "My supervisor is supportive when giving me feedback about my job performance" and "My supervisor does not treat people very well when providing performance feedback" (Steelman et al., 2004a). Five questions were used for this construct and responses were measured on a 7-point scale (e.g., Likert response format) with the following rating scale: 1) Strongly Disagree; 2) Disagree; 3) Slightly Disagree; 4) Neither Agree or Disagree; 5) Slightly Agree; 6) Agree; and 7) Strongly Agree. Two questions were reverse-phrased (i.e., survey question for which a high score indicates the opposite of the construct being assessed) to avoid response bias and disrupt undesirable response patterns. After a reverse-coding arithmetic transformation was applied for these questions, the feedback delivery final score was calculated using the arithmetic average of the responses from the five questions. Higher scores reflected higher levels of feedback delivery. The internal consistency reliability of the feedback delivery construct in this research study was .82. Feedback delivery is an interval variable.

Motivation to use feedback (Y₄).

Motivation to use feedback is a criterion variable for this research study and measures the feedback recipient's motivation to apply the feedback provided for behavior modification or performance improvement (Steelman & Rutkowski, 2004). Motivation to use feedback was measured using questions like "I want to improve my job

performance based on the feedback my supervisor provides” and were originally adapted from Dorfman, Stephan, and Loveland (1986) for research use by Steelman and Rutkowski (2004) (Steelman et al., 2004a). Two questions were used for this construct and responses were measured on a 7-point scale (e.g., Likert response format) with the following rating scale: 1) Strongly Disagree; 2) Disagree; 3) Slightly Disagree; 4) Neither Agree or Disagree; 5) Slightly Agree; 6) Agree; and 7) Strongly Agree. The motivation to use feedback final score was calculated using the arithmetic average of the responses from the two questions. Higher scores reflected higher levels of motivation to use feedback. The internal consistency reliability of the motivation to use construct in this research study was .94. Motivation to use feedback is an interval variable.

Interaction between operational variables.

To determine whether adaptive and maladaptive narcissist characteristics moderate the predictability of feedback receptivity and motivation to apply constructive criticism in a workplace setting, seven variables were measured in this research study. Frequency of unfavorable feedback was the main effect predictor variable (X_1); the two moderator predictor variables were adaptive narcissism (X_2) and maladaptive narcissism (X_3); and source credibility (Y_1), feedback quality (Y_2), feedback delivery (Y_3), and motivation to use feedback (Y_4) were the four criterion variables. Relationships between the moderator predictor variables and the main effect predictor variable were determined through a progression of hierarchical multiple regression analyses. Frequency of unfavorable feedback, the main effect predictor variable, was entered into the regression equation first to establish what, if any, effect existed for source credibility, feedback quality, feedback delivery, and motivation to use feedback (Block 1). Adaptive

narcissism, one of the moderator predictor variables, was entered into the regression equation next to determine what, if any, effect existed for source credibility, feedback quality, feedback delivery, and motivation to use feedback, over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback (Block 2a). Next, the adaptive narcissism variable was removed from the regression equation and maladaptive narcissism, the second moderator predictor variable, was entered into the regression equation to determine what, if any, effect existed for source credibility, feedback quality, feedback delivery, and motivation to use feedback, over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback (Block 2b).

The interaction between the main effect predictor variable and the two moderator predictor variables and the criterion variables can be seen in Figure 3.

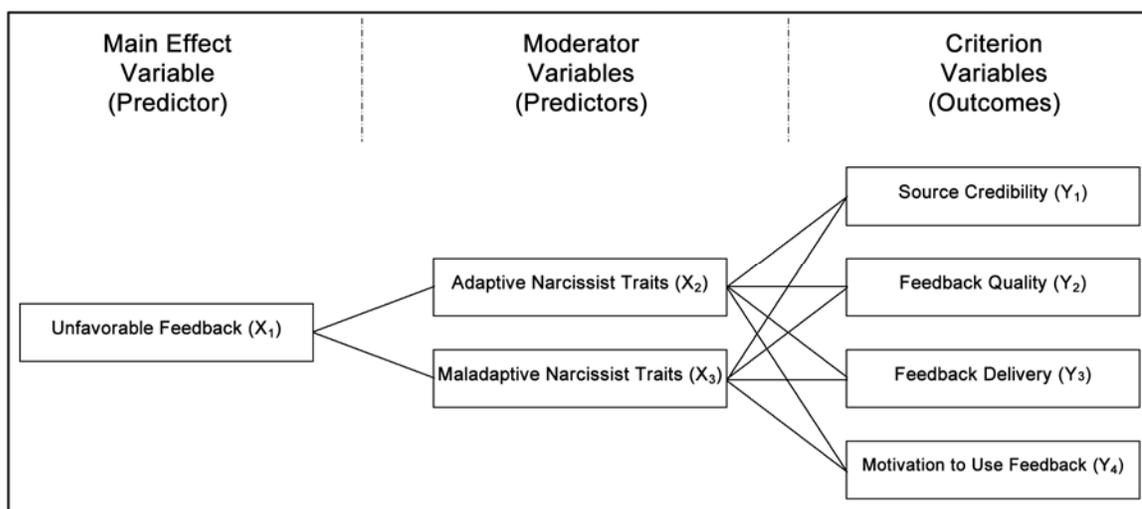


Figure 3. Interaction between all operational variables being studied.

Online Survey/Data Management

The research study sample was comprised of telephone- and Internet-based customer service sales agents within a wide variety of domestic contact centers within the hospitality industry (e.g., hotels, car rental agencies, airlines). It was hypothesized that

drawing from a specific sample population like this would reduce the impact of organizational, cultural, business process differences, among other confounds, on research outcomes because contact centers within the hospitality industry use similar technology and have similar performance metrics.

Data collection.

The data collection process included a personalized e-mail (Appendix C) to a senior manager within each of the identified hospitality industry organizations. This e-mail described the focus of the research, the target sample population, the fact that it was IRB approved, and included a request that the attached invitation to participate poster (Appendix D) be posted in an area where the telephone and Internet customer service sales agents would see it (e.g., employee lunch room, community bulletin board). The invitation to participate poster described the nature of the study, emphasized that the survey was completely voluntary and anonymous, described the approximate time it would take to complete the survey questionnaire, and provided the URL link to the survey. Subsequently, an electronic version of the invitation to participate poster (Appendix E) was sent to address the fact that many of the contact centers no longer offered traditional bulletin boards and, instead, utilized electronic bulletin boards. In addition to providing the URL link to the survey, the electronic version included a QR code to directly access the URL from any smartphone equipped with a QR code reader.

The first page of the research study survey questionnaire included an explanation of the study, information on the risks and benefits of participation, and informed consent information. This page also included information on confidentiality and the ability to withdraw from the study. At the end of the first page, survey participants were able to

click a button indicating they had read all of the information. At that point, survey participants were able to click "next" and advance to the next page. Survey participants were then offered a "yes" or "no" button to indicate their consent to participate in the study. SurveyMonkey question logic was used for this screen page and, if the survey respondents answered yes, they were taken to the next page of the survey; and if they answered no, they were taken to a disqualification page that thanked them for considering to participate in the research study and provided exit instructions as well as, in the event their "no" response was in error, instructions on how to reenter the survey.

Survey participants who gave their informed consent were then asked to confirm that they were telephone or Internet agents within the hospitality industry. A "no" response took them to a disqualification page where they were thanked for their time and the survey ended; a "yes" response took them to a demographic data page where they specified their age range (e.g., under 30; 30-39; 40-49; 50-59; 60 and over), their gender (e.g., Male; Female) and race (e.g., American Indian or Alaska Native; Asian; Black or African American; Hispanic or Latino; Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander; White; Other), the number of years they had been with the organization (e.g., under 1 year; 1-4 years; 5-9 years; 10-19 years; 20 and over), and the number of years they had been with their current supervisor (e.g., under 1 year; 1-4 years; 5-9 years; 10-14 years; 15 and over). After completing the demographic data page, clicking "next" took them to the survey instructions for the 25 questions concerning the feedback environment (e.g., FES). After completing the FES questions, clicking "next" took the survey participants to a page announcing that they were 50 percent of the way through the survey and thanked them for their efforts thus far. This page was utilized to reduce test abandonment by

offering encouragement and reinforcement at the midpoint of the survey. After clicking “next,” survey participants were taken to the survey instructions for the final 25 questions concerning adaptive and maladaptive narcissistic personality characteristics (e.g., NPI).

After completing all 50 research study questionnaire items, survey respondents were taken to a page thanking them for completing the survey. A web site URL address was offered for individuals who were interested in reading a survey participant summary report once all the research study analysis was completed (Appendix J). The survey ended at this point.

Data screening and transformations.

All survey data were downloaded from SurveyMonkey in both .xls (Excel) and .csv (comma delimited text) formats, using a secure link, and stored on a password-protected personal computer. Master copies were made of the files and one copy was saved on a password-protected personal computer and another copy was transferred, using 256-bit AES encryption over SSL, to a cloud-based, password-protected, secured data storage server. A working copy was opened in Excel for visual inspection, data screening, and first-pass data clean-up purposes. For example, the SurveyMonkey data download template (Condensed/Numerical Value) includes optional items that were disabled and not collected during the data collection (e.g., Name, IP address, etc.) so these extraneous fields were deleted from the file. The SurveyMonkey-issued ten-digit Respondent ID and Date Start/Date End fields were retained. This modified Excel spreadsheet was then imported into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) advanced statistical analysis software, version 22 (International Business Machines

Corp., 2014) and a numerically-ordered three-digit case ID was assigned to each respondent.

For ease of use, to enhance readability, and to reduce errors due to the incorrect inclusion, or exclusion, of an item during analysis, all variables were renamed using an easy to identify naming convention. The SPSS Syntax Editor was utilized to create standardized routines to recode variables (e.g., reverse scored items) and to perform the mathematical functions required to create the various subscales being studied (e.g., motivation to apply constructive criticism, adaptive narcissism, maladaptive narcissism). Each routine was tested by manually calculating the arithmetic outcome from ten randomly selected responses for each subscale, and then comparing the calculations with the output from the routine. The use of syntax, as opposed to manually running uniquely-coded routines for each variable within the SPSS Data Editor, ensured a consistent outcome without introducing the possibility of human error.

Researchers frequently remove incomplete surveys from a dataset and, for the purposes of this research study, surveys that were largely incomplete, such as when a respondent entered demographic information only and then exited the survey, were discarded. A total of 5 surveys were determined to be incomplete and, therefore, unusable. However, what became problematic for this research study was an inclusion within the Potential Risk/Discomfort disclosures paragraph on the Informed Consent page in the online research survey that stated: “You can also choose not to answer any question that you feel uncomfortable in answering.” While this may have adequately addressed any respondent discomfort that may have occurred during the survey, an unintended, and undesirable, consequence resulted with some of the survey respondent

data contained missing values. Although missing values can take various forms, the type of missing data in this research study was attributed to an occasional question being missed or intentionally skipped, and is referred to as *missing completely at random* (MCAR) because the missing items can still be thought of as a random sample of all the items across the dataset (Acock, 2005).

There is almost universal agreement that nearly all quantitative analyses involving human subjects draw from incomplete datasets, and that perfectly intact data sets are highly improbable (Cox, McIntosh, Reason, & Terenzini, 2014). When survey respondents skip questions or refuse to answer survey items, the outcome produced through statistical analysis can be compromised (e.g., biased parameter estimates; distorted model fit statistics, exaggerated standard errors, invalid conclusions), with the amount of compromise dependent upon how these missing data are handled. (Cox et al., 2014). Much controversy surrounds the methods to handle missing data (Acock, 2005; Cox et al., 2014; Graham, 2009; Schafer & Graham, 2002; Sweet & Grace-Martin, 2011), with listwise or case deletion being the most common solution and the standard default mechanism in most statistical software (Acock, 2005). While this approach may be the most conservative and widely used, listwise or case deletion usually results in the removal of 20% to 50% of the data, which in smaller datasets, such as is the case with this research study, will reduce the usable sample size and, potentially, inflate the standard errors, reduce the level of significance, and increase the risk of a Type II error (Acock, 2005). Contemporary researchers, studied in the field of statistical analyses protocols for quantitative studies, now recommend that listwise or case deletion not be

used (Acock, 2005; Cox et al., 2014; Graham, 2009; Schafer & Graham, 2002; Sweet & Grace-Martin, 2011),

With a goal of retaining as many survey responses as possible, various techniques to handle missing data were explored with many being rejected because of controversy regarding use (Acock, 2005; Cox et al., 2014; Graham, 2009; Schafer & Graham, 2002; Sweet & Grace-Martin, 2011), or because the application addressed different types of missing data than were present in this research study (i.e., missing income data being replaced with the average income from all respondents). In this research study, the problematic missing data were not the demographic items (e.g., age range, gender, race, tenure with organization, and tenure with supervisor) because no analyses was performed using these items. Therefore, all surveys with missing demographic information (n=3) were retained.

The missing data that were problematic, however, were missing responses on the 7-point scale (Likert response format) for the FES subscales, or missing responses on the dyadic, forced-choice questions for the NPI subscales. In this research study, several subscales were calculated by averaging (e.g., FES Likert response format) or summing (e.g., NPI dyadic pairs) the responses for the questions specific to that scale, and while SPSS software can automate this process, a compromise to data integrity can occur. By way of illustration, when SPSS calculates an average and encounters missing data, the system calculates the average based on the actual number of valid responses which can lead to an inaccurate estimate of the mean, and, ultimately, distorted results (i.e., if a subscale includes eleven questions, and only two were answered, leaving nine missing, the average is calculated on the two valid responses).

The recommended method to address this is to average variables while specifying how many valid responses need to be present prior to the calculation (Sweet & Grace-Martin, 2011; Trochim & Donnelly, 2007). While there is no consensus as to exactly how many valid items are necessary to retain an item, the recommended procedure is to look at the strength of the subscale's internal consistency, and if the strength suggests that all items measure the same general construct, then averaging, for example, five out of seven items, would be reasonable (Sweet & Grace-Martin, 2011; Trochim & Donnelly, 2007). Based on these recommendations, Cronbach's alpha was run for each subscale to determine the internal consistency of the scale, and a determination was made as to the appropriate minimum number of responses that would be reasonable before averaging was applied.

Table 3 lists all subscales and the corresponding minimum number of items deemed to be reasonable before averaging variables with missing data. Please note that any subscale with lower alpha scores (e.g., entitlement/exploitativeness), due to questions regarding its internal consistency, had no allowance established for missing data which meant that all questions needed to have valid responses for inclusion.

Table 3

Retention Strategy for Missing Data

Subscale	Cronbach's alpha	Number of questions per scale	Minimum responses
Adaptive narcissism	.744	11	9
Entitlement/exploitativeness	.243	4	4
Feedback delivery	.821	5	4
Feedback quality	.910	5	4
Feedback source credibility	.851	5	4
Frequency of unfavorable feedback	.889	4	3
Grandiose/exhibitionism	.687	10	9
Maladaptive narcissism		14	12
Motivation to use feedback	.936	2	2
Total narcissism		25	22

Using the aforementioned algorithm, ten surveys were retained that would have otherwise been discarded. Because it is not recommended to retain a criterion variable if data are missing for the corresponding predictor variable or, conversely, retain a predictor variable if data are missing for the corresponding criterion variable, any survey with at least one variable with system missing data remaining, even after the retention algorithm was applied, was discarded. This process isolated an additional four surveys that were discarded. The total remaining number of valid surveys, with all subscales intact, was 114 which exceeded the number required by the G*Power analysis of $N = 109$ ($\alpha = .01$; power = 0.80; effect size = .15).

Data analyses.

All statistical analyses was performed using SPSS advanced statistical analysis software, version 22. Descriptive statistics were produced for the demographic variables

of age, gender, race, tenure with organization, and tenure with supervisor. Descriptive statistics were then produced for the research study variables (predictor, moderator, and outcome), and a Pearson correlation coefficient was run for all variables to ascertain the strength and direction of the linear relationship between the variables. This procedure included variable means, standard deviations, frequency distributions, and intercorrelations so that all results could be visually inspected for abnormalities. Of most interest was any relationships between the frequency of unfavorable feedback variable (predictor variable) and the feedback source credibility, feedback quality, feedback delivery, and motivation to use feedback variables (criterion variables), as well as any relationship between the adaptive narcissism and maladaptive narcissism variables (moderator variables) and the same criterion variables.

Relationships between the moderator predictor variables (adaptive narcissism, maladaptive narcissism) and frequency of unfavorable feedback were determined through a progression of hierarchical multiple regression analyses. This method of regression analysis is part of an extensive array of multiple regression analysis techniques, including the *simultaneous*, or *standard* regression, and *forward and backward stepwise* regression, or, simply, *stepwise* regression statistical analyses. The hierarchical multiple regression approach was selected for this research study over the simultaneous or stepwise approaches to better align with the study purpose. To illustrate why the hierarchical regression method was appropriate for this study, simultaneous and stepwise regression methods are only preferred when the goal is to explore relationships and maximize predictions of the dependent (criterion) variable. For example, simultaneous regression analysis is primarily used to understand the overall relationship between all independent

(predictor) variables (individually and cumulative) and the criterion variable when examined simultaneously, while stepwise regression analysis is primarily utilized to maximize the linear combination of predictor variables (Petrocelli, 2003; Rice, 2014; Sapach, Carleton, Mulvogue, Weeks, & Heimberg, 2015; Strunk, 2014).

When using simultaneous regression analysis, all of the predictor variables are entered into the regression equation at the same time thereby evaluating the magnitude and significance of all the regression coefficients between all of the predictor variables and the criterion variable (Petrocelli, 2003; Strunk, 2014). When utilizing stepwise regression analysis, the statistical computer software (e.g., SPSS) calculates the order of entry of predictor variables into the regression equation. The software analyzes the relationships between the criterion variable being examined and the predictor variables, and order of entry is established based on the amount of variance (R^2) in the criterion variable that can be explained by the model (i.e., the predictor variable that accounts for the most variance is entered first and the rest of the predictor variables are entered in descending order) (Petrocelli, 2003; Strunk, 2014).

In contrast, and why the hierarchical regression method, or *sequential multiple regression* method, was utilized in this research study, hierarchical multiple regression analysis determines the specific contribution of each predictor variable, as it relates to the criterion variable, allowing a researcher to test specific theoretically-based hypotheses by controlling for certain predictor variables. In hierarchical multiple regression analyses, the researcher controls the number of predictor variables that are entered into the equations as well as the order in which each variable is entered. The predictor variables can be entered individually, or in researcher-defined groups, to control for the effects of

specific predictor variables on the criterion variable. As a predictor variable is entered into the regression equation, its value is established by the amount of additional variance it explains (Petrocelli, 2003; Strunk, 2014).

In this research study, frequency of unfavorable feedback, the main effect predictor variable, was entered into the regression equation first to establish what, if any, effect existed for source credibility, feedback quality, feedback delivery, and motivation to use feedback (Block 1). Adaptive narcissism, one of the moderator predictor variables, was entered into the regression equation next to determine what, if any, effect existed for source credibility, feedback quality, feedback delivery, and motivation to use feedback, over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback (Block 2a). Next, the adaptive narcissism variable was removed from the regression equation and maladaptive narcissism, the second moderator predictor variable, was entered into the regression equation to determine what, if any, effect existed for source credibility, feedback quality, feedback delivery, and motivation to use feedback, over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback (Block 2b).

While R^2 is typically used to determine the variation in the criterion variable explained by the predictor variables (i.e., The control variable entered into Model 1 of the regression explained approximately 34% of the variance in employee perceptions of source credibility), the adjusted R^2 is recommended as a more accurate way to define the variance in certain situations (Phelps, Nowak, & Ferrell, 2000). In essence, because the R^2 increases every time a predictor is added to the regression model, a model with more predictors (e.g., > 3) may give the appearance of a better fit simply because it has more predictors (Phelps et al., 2000). The better method, when larger numbers of predictors

are used, is to make use of the adjusted R^2 because it evaluates the explanatory power of the regression equation against the number of predictors used to develop the equation and provides a more accurate assessment of variance (Phelps et al., 2000). In this research study, the hierarchical multiple regression analyses was limited to two predictors for each of the eight hypotheses, so the need to use the adjusted R^2 instead of the R^2 value did not materialize.

Assumptions

Several assumptions were made, as part of this research study, concerning the survey participants. The first assumption related to the education level of the sample population invited to participate in the study and complete the online questionnaire. While the survey design was consistent with the recommended 8th grade reading and comprehension level, and even though the sample population were people employed within major organizations, there was no guarantee that participants had the sufficient level of education to read and understand the instructions and the questions contained in the online survey. The second assumption related to the honesty level of survey respondents and, specifically, the truthfulness of the responses pertaining to demographic information (e.g., age), narcissistic tendencies, and feedback receptivity. A third assumption was that survey participants would believe that personal identity and confidentiality were protected and that there would be no perceived need or motivation to misrepresent themselves (i.e., lie about their age or race) to disguise their responses.

Additional assumptions related to the FES and NPI survey instruments used for data collection. While general population research studies report strong internal consistency for the three criterion variables from the FES (source credibility $\alpha = 0.88$;

feedback quality $\alpha = 0.92$; feedback delivery $\alpha = 0.86$) (Steelman & Rutkowski, 2004; Rutkowski & Steelman, 2005), for the NPI total score ($\alpha = .83$) (Raskin & Terry, 1988; Rhodewalt & Morf, 1995), and for the three factor solution used to extract the adaptive narcissism and maladaptive narcissism predictor variables (leadership/authority $\alpha = .78$; grandiose exhibitionism $\alpha = .72$; entitlement/exploitativeness $\alpha = .46$) (Ackerman et al., 2011; Zeigler-Hill et al., 2013), there was an assumption that the survey items would be valid and reliable for the sample population within this research study. Cronbach's alpha is a commonly used measure of internal consistency and is calculated to determine how much the items on a response scale are measuring the same underlying construct or dimension. This research study used multiple Likert response format questions (e.g., FES) and multiple dyadic pairs questions (e.g., NPI) in the on-line survey that were then converted, by averaging (e.g., FES) or summing (e.g., NPI), to form a scale for subsequent analysis. To test for reliability, Cronbach's alpha was utilized and the results are found in Chapter 4, Findings.

In addition, there are several statistical assumptions when using multiple regression analyses. Part of the standard protocol involves checking to make sure that any data collected can, in fact, be analyzed using strict multiple regression methods. It is only appropriate to use multiple regression analyses if the data does not violate any of the assumptions (i.e., a violation occurs if there is a nonlinear relationship between criterion variables and predictor variables) that are essential for valid results (i.e., examining the specific contribution of each predictor variable). When these assumptions are not met, or are marginal, the results, forecasts, and confidence intervals yielded from the multiple regression analyses may not be trustworthy, resulting in a Type I or Type II error, an

under- or over-estimation of effect size or significance, or misleading or seriously biased results (Osborne & Waters, 2002). Standard assumptions for multiple regression analyses are independence of residuals (autocorrelation), linearity relationships, homoscedasticity, multicollinearity, outliers, leverage points and influential points, and normality (Green & Salkind, 2008; Kumar & Saputra, 2014; Osborne & Waters, 2002; Shahab, Hassan, & Muhammad, 2012).

With the exception of independence of residuals (autocorrelation), each of these assumptions were tested and the results are found in Chapter 4, Findings. In regard to the independence of residuals assumptions test, and why it was excluded, this test is typically accomplished using the Durbin-Watson test, and is only required when there is a possibility of a relationship between values separated from each other by a time lag (i.e., time series data collection such as repeated measurements over time). Because this research study design involved individual people filling out an online survey without any repeated measures, the independence of residuals (autocorrelation) assumptions test was not needed.

Limitations

The outcome of this research study needs to be reviewed within the framework of several potential limitations, including sampling issues, the possibility of response bias, confounding variables, and factor structure implications within the NPI instrument. In regard to sampling issues, there was some potential for selection bias in this study because there may have been some systematic difference between those individuals who choose to participate and those individuals who do not participate. For example, if the invitation to participate in the survey was posted in an area where only new employees

congregate, a sampling selection bias would result which may affect the external validity of the study. The possibility of response bias is also a concern whenever self-report surveys are utilized. While surveys of this type are very common, and provide the advantage of quick data collection, using self-report surveys can result in survey participants responding in a socially desirable manner (e.g., in a manner they perceive will be viewed favorably by other people). While this can affect the internal validity of the study, it was very difficult to control for this possibility.

Another limitation may be confounding variables (i.e., an incentive program in one organization's contact center but not in the contact centers of the other contributing organizations) that could have influenced the outcome variables and affect the internal validity of the study. The NPI instrument could also create a study limitation because there are ongoing disagreements regarding the precise factor structures that should be measured.

Delimitations

This study was delimited to telephone and Internet customer service sales agents in U.S. based hospitality industry call and contact centers to avoid inclusion of potential confounding factors such as vastly divergent job functions (e.g., customer service versus sales), cultural influences (e.g., North American versus East Indian cultural differences), language variables, technology differences, performance metrics, and type of products and approach to the potential consumer.

Ethical Assurances

Ethical considerations are a critical priority in any research using human participants (van Wijk, 2014). In addition to the ethical concept of individual and

autonomous choice, any apparent benefits and risks of participating in the research must be addressed. Prior to any data collection for this research study, the NCU Institutional Review Board reviewed all proposed research steps to ensure that the study would be implemented and managed in an ethical manner with the individuals who volunteered to participate. Only those individuals who provided an informed consent acknowledgement, and confirmed the voluntary nature of participating in this study, were allowed to participate in the study. In addition to informed consent, survey participants were informed of the confidential nature of the study, that their identity would remain anonymous, and that no foreseeable risk of harm existed for anyone who participated in the study.

Because the survey was completed using SurveyMonkey, participants were assured of anonymity as respondents do not have to create any form of account or login, give any personal contact information in order to participate in the survey, and the IP address collector was disabled for the survey within SurveyMonkey. Although survey participants were given access to the researcher, and his supervising faculty mentor, through e-mail if they had any questions prior to, during, or after taking the survey, no contact was made by survey respondents. Survey participants were able to withdraw at any time during the survey (i.e., if there was discomfort with any of the questions asked) and a total of five respondents elected to exit the survey before fully completing all questions.

Because this research study used employees as research subjects, the vulnerability of the survey participant sample population was also considered (Rose & Pietri, 2002). The term "paycheck vulnerability" is used when there is an existing employment

relationship somewhere within the study sample population and addresses the coercion potential or pressure that may be felt by employees to participate in a study (Rose & Pietri, 2002). This ethical consideration was addressed by using an open invitation to participate in the study that clearly stated, “This research is not sponsored by your company nor will your personal responses be available to anyone other than myself.” and “There is no obligation to participate in this on-line survey and you can withdraw at any time during the survey.”

Chapter 4: Findings

The purpose of this quantitative, non-experimental study was to determine whether any predictive effect existed between the adaptive narcissism and maladaptive narcissism subscales and employee feedback receptivity, defined as a conceptual construct for this research study, and comprised of employee perceptions of source credibility, feedback quality, and feedback delivery, and employee motivation to use feedback to improve job performance. The explicit queries that needed to be answered within this research study concerned specific personality traits that might enable employees with narcissistic proclivities to suppress their negative narcissistic inclinations, such as being emotionally vulnerable to constructive criticism and not receptive to feedback, and, instead, draw upon personality traits that could positively contribute to career success within contemporary work environments (e.g., being receptive to feedback and willing to use feedback to improve).

Four research questions guided the entire literature review, subsequent research design and execution, and all post-research analyses:

Q1. To what extent, if any, does adaptive narcissism and maladaptive narcissism predict employee perceptions of feedback source credibility over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback?

Q2. To what extent, if any, does adaptive narcissism and maladaptive narcissism predict employee perceptions of feedback quality over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback?

Q3. To what extent, if any, does adaptive narcissism and maladaptive narcissism predict employee perceptions of feedback delivery over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback?

Q4. To what extent, if any, does adaptive narcissism and maladaptive narcissism predict employee motivation to use feedback over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback?

As described in the Research Method section, the a priori estimate for the hierarchical multiple regression analyses required for this research study was $N = 109$ ($\alpha = .01$; power = 0.80; effect size = .15). The number of online surveys collected was 123, and, after data screening for incomplete surveys, 114 valid surveys were entered into the analysis pool. While this number of valid surveys exceeded the minimum sample size required, during the required multiple regression assumptions testing, several outliers were discovered that did not follow the usual response pattern within subscales with, what appeared to be, aleatory randomness. The largest number of outlier cases filtered out during the hierarchical multiple regression analyses (see Tests of Assumptions section for further details) was four which, based on a priori estimates, is still within the minimum tolerance. However, because a very conservative alpha was chosen for the original G*Power estimate ($\alpha = .01$), relaxing the alpha to .05 would reduce the minimum required sample size, if needed within the research to maintain statistical significance. Table 4 shows a comparison between the two alpha levels and the different minimum required sample sizes.

Table 4

Required Sample Size Comparison (based on error probability)

	Error probability ($\alpha = .01$)	Error probability ($\alpha = .05$)
Effect size:	.15	.15
Power:	.80	.80
Number of predictors:	3	3
Minimum required sample size:	109	77

Data collection instruments included the Feedback Environment Scale (FES) and the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI). Statistical analyses included a Pearson product-moment correlation test (r) to examine all possible relationships among the variables, a coefficient of determination (R^2) to measure the strength of correlation for the multiple predictor variables, and a multiple regression analysis examining the main effect predictor variable (frequency of unfavorable feedback), the two moderator predictor variables (adaptive narcissism; maladaptive narcissism) and the four criterion variables (feedback source credibility; feedback quality; feedback delivery; and motivation to use feedback). All statistical analyses were performed by SPSS advanced statistical analysis software, version 22. Statistical tests conducted were all two-tailed, and statistical significance was predetermined at $\alpha = .05$.

This chapter provides the results, beginning with descriptive statistics, support for the reliability of the two survey instruments utilized within the research, and tests of assumptions for all analyses performed. Research questions, with corresponding hypotheses, guided the remaining main statistical analyses. A brief evaluation of the

findings is provided as well as potential explanations for some of the unexpected results that were derived from the analyses (see Chapter 5 for a more comprehensive review).

Results

The data collection process included a personalized e-mail (Appendix C) to a senior manager within each of the targeted domestic hospitality industry organizations. These individuals were all members of the International Association of Reservations Executives (IARE) and were responsible, in some way, for the overall management of the organization's call/contact centers. The targeted organizations, collectively, employed tens of thousands of customer service sales agents. The e-mail described the focus of the research, the target sample population, the fact that the research was IRB approved, and included a request that an attached invitation to participate poster (Appendix D), in portable document format (PDF), be posted in an area where the telephone and Internet customer service sales agents would see it (e.g., employee lunch room, community bulletin board).

The invitation to participate poster described the nature of the study, emphasized that the survey was completely voluntary and anonymous, described the approximate time it would take to complete the survey questionnaire, and provided the URL link to the survey. Subsequently, an electronic version of the invitation to participate poster (Appendix E) was sent to address the fact that many of the contact centers no longer offered traditional hard-copy bulletin boards and, instead, utilized electronic bulletin boards. In addition to providing the URL link to the survey, the electronic version included a quick response code (QR) to directly access the URL from any smartphone equipped with a QR code reader.

Survey respondent descriptive statistics.

The first page of the research study survey questionnaire included an explanation of the study, information on the risks and benefits of participation, and informed consent information. People who decided to exit the survey, after reviewing the overview of the research study and the informed consent form, were taken to a thank you page and the survey ended. Survey participants who gave their informed consent were taken to a demographic data page where they specified their age range (Table 5), their gender (Table 6), their race (Table 7), the number of years they had been with the organization (Table 8), and the number of years they had been with their current supervisor (Table 9). The modal respondent for this survey was a White female, under 30 years of age, who had worked for her current supervisor for less than one year, and was employed by her current employer for less than one year.

Descriptive statistics for demographic information.

Table 5

Survey Respondent Age Range Distribution

Category	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
‡ Under 30 years old	41	36.0	36.0
* 30 – 39 years old	28	24.6	24.6
40 – 49 years old	21	18.4	18.4
50 – 59 years old	11	9.6	9.6
60+ years old	13	11.4	11.4
Total	114	100.0	100.0

* denotes Median; ‡ denotes Mode

Table 6

Survey Respondent Gender Distribution

Category	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Male	34	29.8	29.8
* ‡ Female	80	70.2	70.2
Total	114	100.0	100.0

* denotes Median; ‡ denotes Mode

Table 7

Survey Respondent Race Distribution

Category	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Asian	19	16.7	16.7
Black or African American	10	8.8	8.8
Hispanic or Latino	23	20.2	20.2
* ‡ White	60	52.6	52.6
Other	2	1.8	1.8
Total	114	100.0	100.0

* denotes Median; ‡ denotes Mode

Table 8

Survey Respondent Tenure (Employer)

Category	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
‡ Under 1 year	52	45.6	46.8
* 1 – 4 year	30	26.3	27.0
5 – 9 years	15	13.2	13.5
10 – 19 years	10	8.8	9.0
20+ years	4	3.5	3.6
Missing data	3	2.6	
Total	114	100.0	100.0

* denotes Median; ‡ denotes Mode

Table 9

Survey Respondent Tenure (Supervisor)

Category	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
* † Under 1 year	83	72.8	73.5
1 – 4 year	26	22.8	23.0
5 – 9 years	1	0.9	0.9
10 – 14 years	2	1.8	1.8
15+ years	1	0.9	0.9
Missing data	1	0.9	
Total	114	100.0	100.0

* denotes Median; † denotes Mode

Descriptive statistics for narcissism subscales.

Narcissism is a construct that has been studied within a variety of disciplines including clinical, social-personality, and organizational-industrial psychology, and, up until recently, was thought to exist on a one-factor, unidimensional continuum marked by a grandiose sense of self-importance, feelings of privilege and entitlement, and a dominant and virulent interpersonal style (Gentile et al., 2013). Previous attempts at assimilating the various perspectives on narcissism, and specifically, its integration into a conceptual framework, led to a proposal that a single dimension exists on which normal (e.g., adaptive) and pathological (e.g., maladaptive) variants of narcissism reside, and that this hypothesized narcissism continuum delineated the relationship between self-esteem, and the adaptive and maladaptive aspects of self-regulation, by anchoring healthy self-esteem at the lower extreme, followed by adaptive (e.g., normal; constructive) narcissism, and ending with maladaptive (e.g., unhealthy; destructive) narcissism at the upper extreme (Besser & Priel, 2010; Godkin & Allcorn, 2010). In essence, this

unidimensional framework for narcissism proposed that adaptive and maladaptive typologies are absolute in that they occupy only a portion of this hypothesized continuum (e.g., each representing one third of the continuum), and that narcissistic levels are more quantitative in nature (e.g., differ by degree) rather than being more qualitative in nature (e.g., differ by type or in kind) (Gentile et al., 2013; Koliscak, 2012; Lau & Marsee, 2013; Lau et al., 2011).

In sharp contrast to the viewpoint that narcissism is a continuous trait, with levels of narcissism as points along a continuum (Gentile et al., 2013; Hopwood, 2013; Karterud, Øien, & Pedersen, 2011; Kealy & Rasmussen, 2012; Muñoz Centifanti, Kimonis, Frick, & Aucoin, 2013; Sosik, Chun, & Zhu, 2014), is research supporting the perspective that two distinct personality dimensions exist between healthy or normal (e.g., adaptive) and pathological (e.g., maladaptive) variants of narcissism (Kealy & Rasmussen, 2012; Russ & Shedler, 2013; Zeigler-Hill et al., 2011). An increasing number of researchers provide evidence demonstrating that narcissism is a two-factor heterogeneous construct comprised of narcissistic traits that are more adaptive in nature in one factor, with those traits that are more maladaptive in nature in the second factor, and a meaningful and salient distinction has been made between the two (Gentile et al., 2013; Hopwood, 2013; Karterud, Øien, & Pedersen, 2011; Kealy & Rasmussen, 2012; Muñoz Centifanti, Kimonis, Frick, & Aucoin, 2013; Sosik, Chun, & Zhu, 2014).

This research study supports the contemporary view that two distinct constructs exist, and that adaptive and maladaptive forms of narcissistic functioning do, independent of each other, co-occur in people. Tables 10, 11, and 12 show how these two constructs are represented by age range, gender, and race.

Table 10

Narcissism Subscales by Age Range

	Adaptive narcissism			Maladaptive narcissism		
	Mean	<i>N</i>	<i>SD</i>	Mean	<i>N</i>	<i>SD</i>
Under 30 years old	6.61	41	2.51	3.73	41	2.61
30 – 39 years old	7.75	28	2.66	3.75	28	2.38
40 – 49 years old	5.9	21	2.55	2.81	21	2.14
50 – 59 years old	6.45	11	1.64	2.27	11	2.24
60+ years old	4.62	13	3.55	3.77	13	2.98
Total	6.52	114	2.74	3.43	114	2.50

Table 11

Narcissism Subscales by Gender

	Adaptive narcissism			Maladaptive narcissism		
	Mean	<i>N</i>	<i>SD</i>	Mean	<i>N</i>	<i>SD</i>
Male	6.85	34	2.63	3.79	34	2.41
Female	6.38	80	2.79	3.27	80	2.53

Table 12

Narcissism Subscales by Race

	Adaptive narcissism			Maladaptive narcissism		
	Mean	<i>N</i>	<i>SD</i>	Mean	<i>N</i>	<i>SD</i>
Asian	6.05	19	2.78	4.05	19	2.76
Black or African American	7.5	10	1.72	4.8	10	2.82
Hispanic or Latino	7.13	23	2.34	3.91	23	2.78
White	6.3	60	2.98	2.90	60	2.12
Other	5.5	2	3.54	1.0	2	.00
Total	6.52	114	2.74	3.43	114	2.50

Descriptive statistics for frequency of unfavorable feedback.

In work environments where supervisors deliver consistent formal and informal performance coaching, there is a positive and prominent increase in overall performance (e.g., bottom-line financial results) (Westover et al., 2010; Yu, 2013), a significant improvement in skills, motivation, and, ultimately, individual performance (Manzoor, 2012; Mendelson et al., 2011; Schraeder & Jordan, 2011), and performance coaching is associated with higher employee commitment (e.g., a strong belief in organizational goals and values; a willingness to apply more discretionary effort on the organization's behalf), lower employee turnover rates (e.g., employees are less likely to quit or accept other job offers), and greater organizational citizenship (Behery, 2011; Springer, 2011).

Effective constructive feedback mechanisms are also related to increased job and customer satisfaction, better workplace safety, lower waste and inefficiency, higher pride, trust, and respect (Mendelson et al., 2011), increased adaptability, innovation, empowerment, and motivation to participate (e.g., share ideas) (Baker et al., 2013; Dobre, 2012; Wichitchanya & Durongwatana, 2012), improved best practice transfer, better cultural awareness, increased comfort with initiative and risk taking (Hellqvist, 2011; Jauhari et al., 2013; Kyvik et al., 2012), less employee stress (Ansari, 2011; Berg & Karisen, 2013; Mofoluwake & Oluremi, 2013), and lower rates of sickness and absenteeism (Nankervis et al., 2012; Rothmann & Welsh, 2013). In essence, performance management activities that are aligned and functioning well allow the organization's subsystems (e.g., processes, systems, people) to perform together in an optimum fashion (Jagoda et al., 2013).

While positive feedback for quality work is one element of the feedback process, occasionally a supervisor must communicate deficiencies in job performance (Dearstyne, 2010; Kondrasuk, 2011; McComb, 2009). Even though this constructive criticism is essential to ongoing learning (Martin, 2010), providing unfavorable feedback does not guarantee that feedback recipients will respond positively or use the information conveyed to make the desired corrections (Feys et al., 2011; Kaymaz, 2011). Indeed, 68.9% of supervisors report that they have experienced various forms of verbal aggression, including insults, profanity, and threats of retaliation, in response to negative performance evaluations (Penney & Spector, 2002).

These reactions to unfavorable feedback can place significant pressure on supervisors and, even though most know that accurate and timely performance feedback is vital to improving individual performance and helping the organization succeed, the potential for adverse interpersonal repercussions frequently compel supervisors to defer, distort, or avoid altogether, providing unfavorable feedback to employees (Ashauer, 2010; Dibble & Levine, 2010).

The main effect predictor in this research study was, in fact, the frequency of unfavorable feedback, and is defined as the amount of veridical constructive criticism that is received from a feedback recipient's direct supervisor (Steelman & Rutkowski, 2004). Tables 13 to 17 show how the frequency of unfavorable feedback is segmented by age range, gender, race, tenure with employer, and tenure with supervisor.

Table 13

Frequency of Unfavorable Feedback by Age Range

	Frequency of unfavorable feedback		
	Mean	<i>N</i>	<i>SD</i>
Under 30 years old	3.99	41	.70
30 – 39 years old	4.12	28	.70
40 – 49 years old	3.96	21	.48
50 – 59 years old	3.91	11	.65
60+ years old	4.07	13	.34
Total	4.02	114	.62

Table 14

Frequency of Unfavorable Feedback by Gender

	Frequency of unfavorable feedback		
	Mean	<i>N</i>	<i>SD</i>
Male	4.15	34	.57
Female	3.96	80	.64

Table 15

Frequency of Unfavorable Feedback by Race

	Frequency of unfavorable feedback		
	Mean	<i>N</i>	<i>SD</i>
Asian	3.96	19	.66
Black or African American	3.82	10	.53
Hispanic or Latino	4.39	23	.72
White	3.93	60	.55
Other	4.0	2	.35
Total	4.02	114	.62

Table 16

Frequency of Unfavorable Feedback by Tenure (Employer)

	Frequency of unfavorable feedback		
	Mean	<i>N</i>	<i>SD</i>
Under 1 year	4.04	52	.63
1 – 4 year	4.11	30	.60
5 – 9 years	4.10	15	.58
10 – 19 years	3.64	10	.76
20+ years	3.94	4	.13
Total	4.03	111	.62

Table 17

Frequency of Unfavorable Feedback by Tenure (Supervisor)

	Frequency of unfavorable feedback		
	Mean	<i>N</i>	<i>SD</i>
Under 1 year	3.99	83	.63
1 – 4 year	4.06	26	.61
5 – 9 years	5.00	1	
10 – 14 years	3.88	2	.18
15+ years	3.75	1	
Total	4.01	113	.62

Reliability of survey instruments.

Two different survey instruments, namely the Feedback Environment Scale (FES) and the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI), were utilized to collect the responses needed to calculate the various subscales used in this research study. Internal consistency tests, using Cronbach's Alpha, were performed on each instrument to determine whether questions or items under each subscale produced similar scores. Cronbach's alpha

requires data to meet certain preliminary assumptions, including the continuous probability distribution components of approximately normally distributed data, skewness, and kurtosis, for reliability estimates to be more accurate and significant (Arnau, Bendayan, Blanca, & Bono, 2013; Arnau, Bono, Blanca, & Bendayan, 2012; Cantin, Plante, Coutu, & Brunson, 2012; Green & Salkind, 2008).

All tests for normality, skewness, and kurtosis, were completed and can be found in the Tests of Assumptions section; histograms with superimposed normal curves and probability-probability (p-p plots) demonstrating the normality of the residuals for all criterion subscales can be found in Appendix K. Table 18 reports the descending-ordered outcome from Cronbach's pairwise correlation test for internal consistency, as well as the number of items within each construct. Of interest during the analyses was the counterintuitive relationship between strength of internal consistency, and number of items (e.g., survey questions), with the subscales generated with the least number of items having the highest strength of internal consistency. Further discussion on this phenomenon is found in Chapter 5, Potential Limitations.

Table 18

Cronbach's Alpha for the Study Variables

Variable name	Variable type	Cronbach's alpha	Number of items
Motivation to use feedback	Criterion	.94	2
Feedback quality	Criterion	.91	5
Frequency of unfavorable feedback	Predictor	.89	4
Source credibility	Criterion	.85	5
Feedback delivery	Criterion	.82	5
Adaptive narcissism	Predictor	.74	11
Maladaptive narcissism	Predictor	.69	14

Tests of assumptions.

Prior to performing any tests of assumptions, or conducting statistical analysis on the dataset, preliminary screening was conducted to ensure integrity of the survey data, and the subsequent analyses. For example, while SPSS can be used to perform many functions, such as *recode* and *compute variable* for the user, human error is always a possibility when instructing the program (e.g., using Syntax Editor) to run a routine. In regard to this research study, many subscales were created by summing together, or averaging, predetermined survey items, some of which were reversed-scored, into a usable scale. To ensure that all syntax were working as expected, ten surveys were pulled at random and each subscale was manually scored to determine if the SPSS output matched the expected output.

According to Osborne and Waters (2002), any research study involving human subjects will include inherent data discrepancies, and that moderate reliabilities, due to the presence of measurement errors in human subject research, will be the best researchers can hope for. This creates a very compelling argument in favor of proper and methodical tests of assumptions for each type of analyses performed on a dataset. For example, this research study design called for hierarchical multiple regression analyses (HMRA). Standard tests of assumptions for HMRA are the same tests recommended for a multiple regression analysis, including independence of residuals or observations (autocorrelation), linearity relationships, homoscedasticity, multicollinearity, outliers, leverage points and influential points, and normality (Green & Salkind, 2008; Kumar & Saputra, 2014; Osborne & Waters, 2002; Shahab, et al., 2012).

With the exception of the independence of residuals (autocorrelation) test, each of these assumptions were tested and the results follow. In regard to the independence of residuals assumptions test, and why it was excluded from this research study, and, more specifically, from the analysis stage of this study, the independence of residuals test is typically accomplished using the Durbin-Watson test, and is only required when there is a possibility of a relationship between values separated from each other by a time lag (e.g., time series data collection such as repeated measurements over time). Because this research study design involved individual people filling out an online survey without any repeated measures, the independence of residuals (autocorrelation) assumptions test was not required and, therefore, not performed (Osborne & Waters, 2002). While some assumptions of hierarchical multiple regression are immutable (e.g., approximately normally distributed data), and are robust to violation, other assumptions, including the independence of residuals test, are more specific to the study design and are factored into the design phase of the study (Osborne & Waters, 2002).

Linearity relationships.

Any violation of linearity, in essence, trying to fit a linear model, such as a regression equation, to data which are nonlinear, is very serious and any prediction that results from this attempt will be seriously flawed (Parmeter, Sun, Henderson, & Kumbhakar, 2014; Xie, Brand, & Jann, 2012), and may include Type I or Type II errors, or under- or over-estimations of effect sizes and corresponding significance values (Osborne & Waters, 2002). The multiple regression model is an extension of the simple linear regression which requires that predictor variables, both individually and collectively, relate to each criterion variable in a linear fashion (Green & Salkind, 2008;

Kumar & Saputra, 2014; Osborne & Waters, 2002). Tests for this assumption include scatterplots, partial regression plots, histograms, and p-p plots, all of which are standard options within SPSS when running any form of regression.

Visual inspections of the p-p plots and histograms, derived from the various criterion variables within this research study (e.g., feedback source credibility; feedback quality; feedback delivery; motivation to use feedback), presented a normally distributed set of residuals for each scale indicating that the residuals met the assumption of linearity. The assumption of non-linearity was rejected. Histogram and p-p plots for each criterion variable associated with this research study can be found in Appendix K.

Homoscedasticity.

Homoscedasticity is simply homogeneity of constant variance, which means the variances remain reasonably constant (e.g., similar) along the line of best fit, and is another test for linearity. Homoscedasticity can be visually inspected with a scatterplot of studentized residuals plotted against the unstandardized predicted values that are output from SPSS (Green & Salkind, 2008; Osborne & Waters, 2002).

Studentized residuals were generated through SPSS for all multiple regression calculations in this research study and visually inspected for homogeneity. All showed very constant points along the line of best fit. The assumption of homoscedasticity was rejected.

Multicollinearity.

Multicollinearity occurs when two or more predictor variables are highly correlated with each other which makes it very challenging to discern which of the two (or more) variables are contributing to the variance explained in the criterion variable

(Pati, Adnan, & Rasheed, 2015; Zainodin, Noraini, & Yap, 2011). The test for multicollinearity is done, first, by inspecting the correlation coefficients of the predictor variables to ensure that no correlations exist greater than 0.7 between any of the variables. Once that has been confirmed, within the statistical software program, select the option for calculating Tolerance/VIF values to check for multicollinearity; if the Tolerance value is less than 0.1, there is a strong indication that a multicollinearity or, minimally, a collinearity problem does exist (Pati et al., 2015).

Within the data collected for this research study, no correlations existed greater than 0.7 between any of the predictor variables. Additionally, the Tolerance range for these data was .818 to .976 which demonstrates no multicollinearity exists. The assumption of multicollinearity was rejected.

However, with that said, a vast body of contemporary literature recommends that, regardless of the outcome of the normal tests for multicollinearity, a centered predictor variable should be used because it will vastly reduce the effects of multicollinearity, even when a correlation of significant proportion might exist (Christiansen, 2014; Dawson, 2014). This centered variable is produced by subtracting the variable's total mean score from the variable score (Christiansen, 2014; Dawson, 2014) and can be done automatically within the statistical software. Tests done using both the unmodified variable and the modified variable produced the same output which supports the fact that no multicollinearity exists in these research data. All subsequent analyses done for the research study was done using centered predictor values, when appropriate (e.g., when performing hierarchical regression analysis).

Outliers, leverage points, and influential points.

An outlier is a case (i.e., an entire survey response), or item within a case (i.e., a single response to an item) that does not follow the usual pattern of response and falls well outside the majority of the data, making it appear that it comes from a different probability distribution than the mass of the data (Chien, 2013). Identifying cases, or items within a case, that may affect the results of a regression analysis is a critical step in testing assumptions for the regression model because the existence of outliers can distort relationships and significance tests and, ultimately, the accuracy and usability of the prediction derived from the regression results (i.e., the outlier pulls the regression line toward itself and distorts the outcome) (Chien, 2013).

Several methods are available to aid in identifying outliers, and other observations or data points that can distort relationships and significance tests (e.g., leverage points; influential points), including standardized residuals (e.g., using casewise diagnostics greater than ± 3 standard deviations), studentized residuals, and studentized deleted residuals (Alfandi & Alkawsaneh, 2014; Langman & Chung, 2013; Ning, Hu, & Garza-Gomez, 2015; Osborne & Waters, 2002). In addition, methods such as leverage values and Cook's Distance (Cook's D) testing can check for significant outliers, high leverage points, and highly influential points that identify data points that appear to be from a different deterministic model than the dataset being studied (Anwar et al., 2014; Campbell, Smith, Dugan, & Komives, 2012).

Initial examination of this study's dataset included visual inspection of scatterplots and histograms, and by reviewing casewise diagnostics for studentized residuals with an absolute value greater than ± 3 standard deviations. Studentized deleted

residuals (SDRs) were examined to determine whether there were any residuals greater than ± 3 standard deviations. Leverage values were examined to determine whether any cases exhibited high leverage, with a conservative threshold of < 0.2 . Cook's D, using a cutoff threshold of 1, was calculated to determine the influence of outliers.

Because the purpose of this research study was to examine the amount of variance explained in four different criterion variables by multiple independent predictors, each criterion variable was reviewed for outliers, leverage points, and influential points separately. When casewise diagnostics indicated the presence of outliers, each outlier identified was reviewed individually by examining the studentized deleted residuals, leverage values and Cook's D for its influence on the regression. The second step was to filter out the case and run the regression again to examine the impact on regression results. Lastly, a visual examination of the responses pertaining to the subscale in question (i.e., feedback quality is calculated using questions 6, 7, 8, 9, 10) was performed to determine if the responses looked valid.

A total of 14 outliers were examined in this manner and while the majority were determined to be legitimate cases, and kept in the analyses, several outliers were seen as problematic for various reasons and filtered from that particular analysis. By way of illustration, if visual inspection determined an odd or inconsistent response pattern that could be interpreted as the respondent simply responding in a random manner to the questions in that subscale, which may have an adverse effect on the results of a regression analysis, they were filtered from that particular analysis. A myriad of literature exists supporting the removal of outliers if an exhaustive review process is undertaken prior to

removal (Alfandi & Alkawsaneh, 2014; Langman & Chung, 2013; Ning, Hu, & Garza-Gomez, 2015; Osborne & Waters, 2002).

A total of nine subscales were calculated from the responses contained within this research survey, and each subscale was reviewed independently from each other to ensure an entire case was not filtered when the offending response pattern may have been contained within just one subscale. Table 19 lists the outcome of the determinations relating to filtering of outliers and other influential points.

Table 19

Outliers Removed from Analysis

Criterion variable	Predictor variable	Case filtered	<i>N</i> remaining
Source credibility	Adaptive narcissism	20, 42, 45, 114	110
Source credibility	Maladaptive narcissism	20, 25, 42	111
Feedback quality	Adaptive narcissism	42	113
Feedback quality	Maladaptive narcissism	42	113
Motivation to use feedback	Adaptive narcissism	20, 112, 113, 114	110
Motivation to use feedback	Maladaptive narcissism	20	113

Normality.

In order to run inferential statistics and arrive at a predictive solution that is statistically significant, the residuals (e.g., errors in prediction) need to be approximately normally distributed (Arnau et al., 2013; Arnau et al., 2012; Cantin et al., 2012; Green & Salkind, 2008; Kumar & Saputra, 2014; Osborne & Waters, 2002; Shahab, Hassan, & Muhammad, 2012). Two common statistical methods to investigate this assumption include a visual inspection of a histogram (e.g., a histogram that incorporates a superimposed normal curve), and a normal p-p plot of the studentized residuals (e.g., errors) to determine if the residuals are, in fact, approximately normally distributed.

Skewness is another term associated with the normality of data and refers to whether the mean of the data or the entire symmetry of the distribution is shifted to the left (positive skewness) or to the right (negative skewness). Kurtosis is another normality factor that measures the peakedness of a distribution with low kurtosis distribution having a more rounded peak and thinner tails, while high kurtosis distribution has a sharper peak and fatter tails (Green & Salkind, 2008; Kumar & Saputra, 2014; Osborne & Waters, 2002).

Initial examination of this study's dataset for normality included a visual inspection of the various histograms and p-p plots generated for the four criterion variables, namely feedback source credibility (SC), feedback quality (FQ), feedback delivery (FD), and motivation to use feedback (MU). Each looked to be approximately normally distributed with very little apparent skewness or kurtosis. Copies of the aforementioned graphs can be found in Appendix K.

Next, calculations were made to determine a true value for both skewness and kurtosis for each of the four criterion variables. None of the criterion variables had skewness or kurtosis values ≥ 2.00 , which supported the visual determination that the scales were normally distributed (Arnau et al., 2013; Arnau et al., 2012; Cantin et al., 2012). Therefore, no transformations of this study's dataset were needed because small amounts of deviation from normality (e.g., skewness or kurtosis) can be accommodated by multiple linear regression analysis (Arnau et al., 2013; Arnau et al., 2012; Cantin et al., 2012). The assumption of non-normality was rejected.

Measure of linear correlation.

Having met the basic assumption of approximately normally distributed data, Pearson's correlation coefficient calculations were done for each of the seven subscales

within the research survey. Table 20 reports descriptive statistics for each of the variables as well as any intercorrelations that exist. Frequency of unfavorable feedback from one's supervisor and feedback source credibility, feedback quality, feedback delivery, and motivation to use feedback, are all significantly correlated ($p < 0.01$) at .47, .45, .31, and .46 respectively.

While only statistically significant for the feedback delivery variable, as expected, maladaptive narcissism is negatively correlated with each of the criterion variables. This implies that higher levels of maladaptive narcissism will reduce employee feedback receptivity, defined as employee perception of feedback source credibility, employee perception of feedback quality, employee perception of feedback delivery, as well as reduce employee motivation to use feedback.

While not statistically significant, what was unexpected, based on literature available on adaptive narcissism, were the extremely low correlation levels between adaptive narcissism and the feedback receptivity criterion variables, with one being negatively correlated. Possible reasons for this phenomenon are described in Chapter 5.

Table 20

Descriptive Statistics and Intercorrelations for Study Variables

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. SC	4.6	0.6	.85						
2. FQ	4.5	0.7	.83**	.91					
3. FD	4.8	0.7	.78**	.78**	.82				
4. MU	4.3	0.6	.56**	.63**	.45**	.94			
5. UF	4.0	0.6	.47**	.45**	.31**	.46**	.89		
6. AN	6.5	2.7	.05	.02	-.07	.11	-.13	.74	
7. MN	3.4	2.5	-.14	-.14	-.25**	-.02	-.13	.42**	.69

1. SC: Feedback source credibility
2. FQ: Feedback quality
3. FD: Feedback delivery
4. MU: Motivation to use feedback
5. UF: Frequency of unfavorable feedback
6. AN: Adaptive narcissism
7. MN: Maladaptive narcissism

** . All correlations are significant at $p < .01$ (2 tailed).
Internal consistency estimates are provided on the diagonal.

The attraction-selection-attrition (ASA) model offers generally supportive evidence suggesting that homogeneity and heterogeneity will influence data collection efforts, and that individual differences can lead to differential attraction or attrition that impact between-group differences when evaluating within-group agreement (Anaza & Rutherford, 2012; Bradley-Geist & Landis, 2012; Satterwhite, Fleenor, Braddy, Feldman, & Hoopes, 2009). Because homogeneity issues can include gender and race, among other factors (Biron & Boon, 2013), a partial correlation was produced between the predictor and criterion variables, while controlling for demographic values, to ensure the demographic values did not generate a stronger moderation effect than a balanced dataset

should provide. While no adverse effect on variable associations was detected, Table 21 does show the partial correlations, while controlling for gender, as an example of the influence homogeneity had on the dataset for this research study. The impact of homogeneity and heterogeneity on this study, will be addressed in detail in Chapter 5.

Table 21

Descriptive Statistics and Intercorrelations While Controlling for Gender

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. SC	4.6	0.6							
2. FQ	4.5	0.7	.83**						
3. FD	4.8	0.7	.78**	.78**					
4. MU	4.3	0.6	.56**	.63**	.45**				
5. UF	4.0	0.6	.47**	.44**	.31**	.46**			
6. AN	6.5	2.7	.04	.02	-.07	.11	-.13		
7. MN	3.4	2.5	-.15	-.15	-.25**	-.03	-.15	.41**	

1. SC: Feedback source credibility
 2. FQ: Feedback quality
 3. FD: Feedback delivery
 4. MU: Motivation to use feedback
 5. UF: Frequency of unfavorable feedback
 6. AN: Adaptive narcissism
 7. MN: Maladaptive narcissism

** . All correlations are significant at $p < 0.01$ (2 tailed).

Relative contribution of each of the predictors and overall fit.

A fairly typical use of HMRA is to determine the effect a predictor variable or, in some cases, a block of predictor variables, has on a criterion variable after covariates (or potential confounds) have been controlled for. This is done by first entering the covariates into the regression equation, and then adding the predictor variable under study into the equation. HMRA examines the effect of this predictor variable on the

criterion variable (i.e., how much the predictor variable uniquely adds to the prediction of the criterion variable) after all covariates have been accounted for. Unlike the outcome from a standard multiple regression, this effect is not shared among the variables but, instead, represents the unique contribution the specific predictor variable makes to the explanation of the variation in the criterion variable. It is expressed as an increase in R^2 .

By way of illustrating this process, when Steelman and Rutkowski (2004) undertook their seminal work on the feedback environment, they focused on the factors they felt would influence satisfaction with feedback and motivation to use feedback. While their study was not significant for the satisfaction with feedback criterion variable, they were able to demonstrate, with statistical significance, that perceptions of source credibility, feedback quality, and feedback delivery were all able to, uniquely and separately, add to the prediction of the criterion variable, namely motivation to use feedback, over and above the effects of unfavorable feedback itself (Steeleman & Rutkowski, 2004).

Whereas Steelman and Rutkowski (2004) were able to explain approximately 16% of the variance in this study, a large portion of the variance remained unexplained. This residual became the catalyst for questions about the *feedback recipient* and, specifically, whether it is possible for certain personality characteristics to influence employee perceptions of source credibility, feedback quality, and feedback delivery, and, thereby, add confounds which could, at least, theoretically, explain some of the residual or unexplained variance left in the Steelman and Rutkowski (2004) regression equation. In this study, that possibility was explored through four research questions and eight

corresponding hypotheses. The results of the statistical hypotheses testing are presented by means of confirmatory hierarchical multiple regression analysis.

HMRA of research question 1.

Research question 1 in this study asked, “To what extent, if any, does adaptive narcissism and maladaptive narcissism predict employee perceptions of feedback source credibility over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback?” This research question focused on the *feedback source credibility* criterion variable, and resulted in two corresponding hypotheses, one addressing adaptive narcissism (H1a₀ and H1a₁) and, the second, addressing maladaptive narcissism (H1b₀ and H1b₁). Histogram and p-p plot diagrams demonstrating that residuals are approximately normally distributed for this criterion subscale can be found in Appendix K. Correlations between all hypothesis H1 variables are shown in Table 22. The research findings from the HMRA conducted to test these hypotheses can be found in Tables 23 and 24.

Table 22

Cronbach's Alpha for Hypothesis H1 Variables

	1	2	3	4
1. Feedback source credibility		.47**	.05	-.14
2. Frequency of unfavorable feedback	.47**		-.13	-.13
3. Adaptive narcissism	.05	-.13		.42**
4. Maladaptive narcissism	-.14	-.13	.42**	

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

H1a₀. Adaptive narcissism, as measured by the NPI, does not significantly predict employee perceptions of feedback source credibility, as measured by the FES, over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback, as measured by the FES.

H1a1. Adaptive narcissism, as measured by the NPI, does significantly predict employee perceptions of feedback source credibility, as measured by the FES, over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback, as measured by the FES.

Rejecting the null hypothesis for hypothesis H1a called for the HMRA analysis to prove that there was a relationship between adaptive narcissism and employee perceptions of feedback source credibility beyond the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback. HMRA was the appropriate analysis for this purpose because variables are added to the regression equation in a fixed, sequential order, as determined by the hypothesis being tested, and then the effect of the predictor variable on the criterion variable is established after all covariates have been controlled for. For hypothesis H1a, the criterion variable is employee perceptions of feedback source credibility. The control variable, frequency of unfavorable feedback, is the first variable entered into the regression equation (Model 1). The predictor variable being studied, adaptive narcissism, is entered into the regression equation next (Model 2).

Table 23

H1a: Feedback Source Credibility (Predictor: Adaptive Narcissism)

Model	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> ²	Adjusted <i>R</i> ²	ΔR^2	ΔF	Sig. <i>F</i> Change	B	β	<i>p</i>
1	.58 ^a	.34	.33	.34	54.53	.000	4.66		.000
							.52	.58	.000
2	.60 ^b	.37	.35	.03	4.90	.029	4.66		.000
							.54	.60	.000
							.04	.17	.029

a. Predictors: (Constant), Frequency of unfavorable feedback

b. Predictors: (Constant), Frequency of unfavorable feedback, adaptive narcissism

Note. *N* = 110. B = Unstandardized coefficient; β = Standardized coefficient.

As shown in Table 23, the control variable entered into Model 1 of the regression equation, frequency of unfavorable feedback, explained approximately 34% of the variance in employee perceptions of source credibility ($R^2 = .34$, $F[1, 108] = 54.53$, $p < .001$). The addition of adaptive narcissism (Model 2) improved the prediction of employee perceptions of source credibility over and above frequency of unfavorable feedback alone. The full model of frequency of unfavorable feedback and adaptive narcissism to predict employee perceptions of feedback source credibility was statistically significant, $R^2 = .37$, $F[2, 107] = 30.70$, $p < .05$; adjusted $R^2 = .35$.

The addition of adaptive narcissism to the prediction of employee perceptions of feedback source credibility (Model 2) led to a statistically significant increase in R^2 of .03, $F[2, 107] = 4.90$, $p < .05$. Adaptive narcissism significantly predicted employee perceptions of feedback source credibility, $\beta = .17$, $t[107] = 2.21$, $p < .05$; therefore, the null hypothesis, H1a0, was rejected.

H1b0. Maladaptive narcissism, as measured by the NPI, does not significantly predict employee perceptions of feedback source credibility, as measured by the FES, over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback, as measured by the FES.

H1b1. Maladaptive narcissism, as measured by the NPI, does significantly predict employee perceptions of feedback source credibility, as measured by the FES, over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback, as measured by the FES.

Rejecting the null hypothesis for hypothesis H1b called for the HMRA analysis to prove that there was a relationship between maladaptive narcissism and employee perceptions of feedback source credibility beyond the effects of frequency of unfavorable

feedback. HMRA was the appropriate analysis for this purpose because variables are added to the regression equation in a fixed, sequential order, as determined by the hypothesis being tested, and then the effect of the predictor variable on the criterion variable is established after all covariates have been controlled for. For hypothesis H1b, the criterion variable is employee perceptions of feedback source credibility. The control variable, frequency of unfavorable feedback, is the first variable entered into the regression equation (Model 1). The predictor variable being studied, maladaptive narcissism, is entered into the regression equation next (Model 2).

Table 24

H1b: Feedback Source Credibility (Predictor: Maladaptive Narcissism)

Model	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> ²	Adjusted <i>R</i> ²	ΔR^2	ΔF	Sig. <i>F</i> Change	B	β	<i>p</i>
1	.58 ^a	.34	.33	.34	54.83	.000	4.67		.000
							.52	.58	.000
2	.59 ^b	.35	.34	.02	2.57	.112	4.67		.000
							.50	.56	.000
							-0.03	-.13	.112

a. Predictors: (Constant), Frequency of unfavorable feedback

b. Predictors: (Constant), Frequency of unfavorable feedback, maladaptive narcissism

Note. *N* = 111. B = Unstandardized coefficient; β = Standardized coefficient.

As shown in Table 24, the control variable entered into Model 1 of the regression equation, frequency of unfavorable feedback, explained approximately 34% of the variance in employee perceptions of feedback source credibility ($R^2 = .34$, $F[1, 109] = 54.83$, $p < .001$). The addition of maladaptive narcissism (Model 2) improved the prediction of employee perceptions of feedback source credibility over and above frequency of unfavorable feedback alone, however, the full model of frequency of

unfavorable feedback and maladaptive narcissism to predict employee perceptions of feedback source credibility was not statistically significant, $R^2 = .35$, $F[2, 108] = 29.10$, $p = .112$; adjusted $R^2 = .34$.

Maladaptive narcissism did not significantly predict employee perceptions of feedback source credibility, $\beta = -.13$, $t[108] = -1.60$, $p = .112$, therefore, the null hypothesis, H1b₀, could not be rejected.

HMRA for research question 2.

Research question 2 in this study asked, “To what extent, if any, does adaptive narcissism and maladaptive narcissism predict employee perceptions of feedback quality over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback?” This research question focused on the *feedback quality* criterion variable, and resulted in two corresponding hypotheses, one addressing adaptive narcissism (H2a₀ and H2a₁) and, the second, addressing maladaptive narcissism (H2b₀ and H2b₁). Histogram and p-p plot diagrams demonstrating that residuals are approximately normally distributed for this criterion subscale can be found in Appendix K. Correlations between all hypothesis H2 variables are shown in Table 25. The research findings from the HMRA conducted to test these hypotheses can be found in Tables 26 and 27.

Table 25

Cronbach's Alpha for Hypothesis H2 Variables

	1	2	3	4
1. Feedback quality		.45**	.02	-.14
2. Frequency of unfavorable feedback	.45**		-.13	-.13
3. Adaptive narcissism	.02	-.13		.42**
4. Maladaptive narcissism	-.14	-.13	.42**	

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

H2a₀. Adaptive narcissism, as measured by the NPI, does not significantly predict employee perceptions of feedback quality, as measured by the FES, over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback, as measured by the FES.

H2a₁. Adaptive narcissism, as measured by the NPI, does significantly predict employee perceptions of feedback quality, as measured by the FES, over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback, as measured by the FES.

Rejecting the null hypothesis for hypothesis H2a called for the HMRA analysis to prove that there was a relationship between adaptive narcissism and employee perceptions of feedback quality beyond the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback. HMRA was the appropriate analysis for this purpose because variables are added to the regression equation in a fixed, sequential order, as determined by the hypothesis being tested, and then the effect of the predictor variable on the criterion variable is established after all covariates have been controlled for. For hypothesis H2a, the criterion variable is employee perceptions of feedback quality. The control variable, frequency of unfavorable feedback, is the first variable entered into the regression equation (Model 1). The predictor variable being studied, adaptive narcissism, is entered into the regression equation next (Model 2).

Table 26

H2a: Feedback Quality (Predictor: Adaptive Narcissism)

Model	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> ²	Adjusted <i>R</i> ²	ΔR^2	ΔF	Sig. <i>F</i> Change	B	β	<i>p</i>
1	.49 ^a	.24	.23	.24	34.88	.000	4.55		.000
							.56	.49	.000
2	.50 ^b	.25	.23	.01	1.00	.319	4.55		.000
							.57	.50	.000
							.02	.08	.319

a. Predictors: (Constant), Frequency of unfavorable feedback

b. Predictors: (Constant), Frequency of unfavorable feedback, adaptive narcissism

Note. *N* = 113. B = Unstandardized coefficient; β = Standardized coefficient.

As shown in Table 26, the control variable entered into Model 1 of the regression equation, frequency of unfavorable feedback, explained approximately 24% of the variance in employee perceptions of feedback quality ($R^2 = .24$, $F[1, 111] = 34.88$, $p < .001$). The addition of adaptive narcissism (Model 2) improved the prediction of employee perceptions of feedback quality over and above frequency of unfavorable feedback alone, however, the full model of frequency of unfavorable feedback and adaptive narcissism to predict employee perceptions of feedback quality was not statistically significant, $R^2 = .25$, $F[2, 110] = 17.94$, $p = .319$; adjusted $R^2 = .23$.

Adaptive narcissism did not significantly predict employee perceptions of feedback quality, $\beta = .08$, $t[110] = 1.00$, $p = .319$, therefore, the null hypothesis, H2a₀, could not be rejected.

H2b₀. Maladaptive narcissism, as measured by the NPI, does not significantly predict employee perceptions of feedback quality, as measured by the FES, over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback, as measured by the FES.

H2b₁. Maladaptive narcissism, as measured by the NPI, does significantly predict employee perceptions of feedback quality, as measured by the FES, over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback, as measured by the FES.

Rejecting the null hypothesis for hypothesis H2b called for the HMRA analysis to prove that there was a relationship between maladaptive narcissism and employee perceptions of feedback quality beyond the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback. HMRA was the appropriate analysis for this purpose because variables are added to the regression equation in a fixed, sequential order, as determined by the hypothesis being tested, and then the effect of the predictor variable on the criterion variable is established after all covariates have been controlled for. For hypothesis H2b, the criterion variable is employee perceptions of feedback quality. The control variable, frequency of unfavorable feedback, is the first variable entered into the regression equation (Model 1). The predictor variable being studied, maladaptive narcissism, is entered into the regression equation next (Model 2).

Table 27

H2b: Feedback Quality (Predictor: Maladaptive Narcissism)

Model	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> ²	Adjusted <i>R</i> ²	ΔR^2	ΔF	Sig. <i>F</i> Change	B	β	<i>p</i>
1	.49 ^a	.24	.23	.24	34.88	.000	4.55		.000
							.56	.49	.000
2	.50 ^b	.25	.24	.01	1.78	.183	4.55		.000
							.54	.48	.000
							-0.03	-.11	.183

a. Predictors: (Constant), Frequency of unfavorable feedback

b. Predictors: (Constant), Frequency of unfavorable feedback, maladaptive narcissism

Note. *N* = 113. B = Unstandardized coefficient; β = Standardized coefficient.

As shown in Table 27, the control variable entered into Model 1 of the regression equation, frequency of unfavorable feedback, explained approximately 24% of the variance in employee perceptions of feedback quality ($R^2 = .24$, $F[1, 111] = 34.88$, $p < .001$). The addition of maladaptive narcissism (Model 2) improved the prediction of employee perceptions of feedback quality over and above frequency of unfavorable feedback alone, however, the full model of frequency of unfavorable feedback and maladaptive narcissism to predict employee perceptions of feedback quality was not statistically significant, $R^2 = .25$, $F[2, 110] = 18.46$, $p = .183$; adjusted $R^2 = .24$.

Maladaptive narcissism did not significantly predict employee perceptions of feedback quality, $\beta = -.11$, $t[110] = -1.34$, $p = .183$, therefore, the null hypothesis, H2b₀, could not be rejected.

HMRA for research question 3.

Research question 3 in this study asked, “To what extent, if any, does adaptive narcissism and maladaptive narcissism predict employee perceptions of feedback delivery over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback?” This research question focused on the *feedback delivery* criterion variable, and resulted in two corresponding hypotheses, one addressing adaptive narcissism (H3a₀ and H3a₁) and, the second, addressing maladaptive narcissism (H3b₀ and H3b₁). Histogram and p-p plot diagrams demonstrating that residuals are approximately normally distributed for this criterion subscale can be found in Appendix K. Correlations between all hypothesis H3 variables are shown in Table 28. The research findings from the HMRA conducted to test these hypotheses can be found in Tables 29 and 30.

Table 28

Cronbach's Alpha for Hypothesis H3 Variables

	1	2	3	4
1. Feedback delivery		.31**	-.07	-.25**
2. Frequency of unfavorable feedback	.31**		-.13	-.13
3. Adaptive narcissism	-.07	-.13		.42**
4. Maladaptive narcissism	-.25**	-.13	.42**	

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

H3a₀. Adaptive narcissism, as measured by the NPI, does not significantly predict employee perceptions of feedback delivery, as measured by the FES, over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback, as measured by the FES.

H3a₁. Adaptive narcissism, as measured by the NPI, does significantly predict employee perceptions of feedback delivery, as measured by the FES, over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback, as measured by the FES.

Rejecting the null hypothesis for hypothesis H3a called for the HMRA analysis to prove that there was a relationship between adaptive narcissism and employee perceptions of feedback delivery beyond the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback. HMRA was the appropriate analysis for this purpose because variables are added to the regression equation in a fixed, sequential order, as determined by the hypothesis being tested, and then the effect of the predictor variable on the criterion variable is established after all covariates have been controlled for. For hypothesis H3a, the criterion variable is employee perceptions of feedback delivery. The control variable, frequency of unfavorable feedback, is the first variable entered into the regression

equation (Model 1). The predictor variable being studied, adaptive narcissism, is entered into the regression equation next (Model 2).

Table 29

H3a: Feedback Delivery (Predictor: Adaptive Narcissism)

Model	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> ²	Adjusted <i>R</i> ²	ΔR^2	ΔF	Sig. <i>F</i> Change	B	β	<i>p</i>
1	.31 ^a	.10	.09	.10	11.83	.001	4.82 .34	.31	.000 .001
2	.31 ^b	.10	.08	.00	.12	.727	4.82 .34 -.01	.31 -.03	.000 .001 .727

a. Predictors: (Constant), Frequency of unfavorable feedback

b. Predictors: (Constant), Frequency of unfavorable feedback, adaptive narcissism

Note. *N* = 114. B = Unstandardized coefficient; β = Standardized coefficient.

As shown in Table 29, the control variable entered into Model 1 of the regression equation, frequency of unfavorable feedback, explained approximately 10% of the variance in employee perceptions of feedback delivery ($R^2 = .10$, $F[1, 112] = 11.83$, $p < .05$). The addition of adaptive narcissism (Model 2) did not improve the prediction of employee perceptions of feedback delivery over and above frequency of unfavorable feedback alone. The full model of frequency of unfavorable feedback and adaptive narcissism to predict employee perceptions of feedback delivery was not statistically significant, $R^2 = .10$, $F[2, 111] = 5.93$, $p = .727$; adjusted $R^2 = .08$.

Adaptive narcissism did not significantly predict employee perceptions of feedback delivery, $\beta = -.03$, $t[111] = -.35$, $p = .727$, therefore, the null hypothesis, H3a₀, could not be rejected.

H3b₀. Maladaptive narcissism, as measured by the NPI, does not significantly predict employee perceptions of feedback delivery, as measured by the FES, over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback, as measured by the FES.

H3b₁. Maladaptive narcissism, as measured by the NPI, does significantly predict employee perceptions of feedback delivery, as measured by the FES, over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback, as measured by the FES.

Rejecting the null hypothesis for hypothesis H3b called for the HMRA analysis to prove that there was a relationship between maladaptive narcissism and employee perceptions of feedback delivery beyond the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback. HMRA was the appropriate analysis for this purpose because variables are added to the regression equation in a fixed, sequential order, as determined by the hypothesis being tested, and then the effect of the predictor variable on the criterion variable is established after all covariates have been controlled for. For hypothesis H3b, the criterion variable is employee perceptions of feedback delivery. The control variable, frequency of unfavorable feedback, is the first variable entered into the regression equation (Model 1). The predictor variable being studied, maladaptive narcissism, is entered into the regression equation next (Model 2)

Table 30

H3b: Feedback Delivery (Predictor: Maladaptive Narcissism)

Model	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> ²	Adjusted <i>R</i> ²	ΔR^2	ΔF	Sig. <i>F</i> Change	B	β	<i>p</i>
1	.31 ^a	.10	.09	.10	11.83	.001	4.82 .34	.31	.000 .001
2	.37 ^b	.14	.12	.04	5.41	.022	4.82 .31 -0.06	.28 -.21	.000 .002 .022

a. Predictors: (Constant), Frequency of unfavorable feedback

b. Predictors: (Constant), Frequency of unfavorable feedback, maladaptive narcissism

Note. *N* = 114. B = Unstandardized coefficient; β = Standardized coefficient.

As shown in Table 30, the control variable entered into Model 1 of the regression equation, frequency of unfavorable feedback, explained approximately 10% of the variance in employee perceptions of feedback delivery ($R^2 = .10$, $F[1, 112] = 11.83$, $p < .05$). The addition of maladaptive narcissism (Model 2) improved the prediction of employee perceptions of feedback delivery over and above frequency of unfavorable feedback alone. The full model of frequency of unfavorable feedback and maladaptive narcissism to predict employee perceptions of feedback delivery was statistically significant, $R^2 = .14$, $F[2, 111] = 8.86$, $p < .05$; adjusted $R^2 = .12$.

The addition of maladaptive narcissism to the prediction of employee perceptions of feedback delivery (Model 2) led to a statistically significant increase in R^2 of .04, $F[2, 111] = 5.41$, $p < .05$. Maladaptive narcissism significantly predicted employee perceptions of feedback delivery, $\beta = -.21$, $t[111] = -2.33$, $p < .05$, therefore, the null hypothesis, H3b₀, was rejected.

HMRA of research question 4.

Research question 4 in this study asked, “To what extent, if any, does adaptive narcissism and maladaptive narcissism predict employee motivation to use feedback over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback?” This research question focused on the *motivation to use feedback* criterion variable, and resulted in two corresponding hypotheses, one addressing adaptive narcissism (H4a₀ and H4a₁) and, the second, addressing maladaptive narcissism (H4b₀ and H4b₁). Histogram and p-p plot diagrams demonstrating that residuals are approximately normally distributed for this criterion subscale can be found in Appendix K. Correlations between all hypothesis H4 variables are shown in Table 31. The research findings from the HMRA conducted to test these hypotheses can be found in Tables 32 and 33.

Table 31

Cronbach's Alpha for Hypothesis H4 Variables

	1	2	3	4
1. Motivation to use feedback		.46**	.11	-.02
2. Frequency of unfavorable feedback	.46**		-.13	-.13
3. Adaptive narcissism	.11	-.13		.42**
4. Maladaptive narcissism	-.02	-.13	.42**	

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

H4a₀. Adaptive narcissism, as measured by the NPI, does not significantly predict employee motivation to use feedback, as measured by the FES, over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback, as measured by the FES.

H4a1. Adaptive narcissism, as measured by the NPI, does significantly predict employee motivation to use feedback, as measured by the FES, over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback, as measured by the FES.

Rejecting the null hypothesis for hypothesis H4a called for the HMRA analysis to prove that there was a relationship between adaptive narcissism and employee motivation to use feedback beyond the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback. HMRA was the appropriate analysis for this purpose because variables are added to the regression equation in a fixed, sequential order, as determined by the hypothesis being tested, and then the effect of the predictor variable on the criterion variable is established after all covariates have been controlled for. For hypothesis H4a, the criterion variable is employee motivation to use feedback. The control variable, frequency of unfavorable feedback, is the first variable entered into the regression equation (Model 1). The predictor variable being studied, adaptive narcissism, is entered into the regression equation next (Model 2).

Table 32

H4a: Motivation to Use Feedback (Predictor: Adaptive Narcissism)

Model	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> ²	Adjusted <i>R</i> ²	ΔR^2	ΔF	Sig. <i>F</i> Change	B	β	<i>p</i>
							4.35		.000
1	.51 ^a	.26	.26	.26	38.22	.000	.45	.511	.000
							4.35		.000
							.47	.54	.000
2	.56 ^b	.31	.30	.05	7.45	.007	.04	.22	.007

a. Predictors: (Constant), Frequency of unfavorable feedback

b. Predictors: (Constant), Frequency of unfavorable feedback, adaptive narcissism

Note. *N* = 110. B = Unstandardized coefficient; β = Standardized coefficient.

As shown in Table 32, the control variable entered into Model 1 of the regression equation, frequency of unfavorable feedback, explained approximately 26% of the variance in employee motivation to use feedback ($R^2 = .26$, $F[1, 108] = 38.22$, $p < .001$). The addition of adaptive narcissism (Model 2) improved the prediction of employee motivation to use feedback over and above frequency of unfavorable feedback alone. The full model of frequency of unfavorable feedback and adaptive narcissism to predict employee motivation to use feedback was statistically significant, $R^2 = .31$, $F[2, 107] = 23.98$, $p < .05$; adjusted $R^2 = .30$.

The addition of adaptive narcissism to the prediction of employee motivation to use feedback (Model 2) led to a statistically significant increase in R^2 of .05, $F[2, 107] = 7.45$, $p < .05$. Adaptive narcissism significantly predicted employee motivation to use feedback, $\beta = .22$, $t[107] = 2.73$, $p < .05$, therefore, the null hypothesis, H4a₀, was rejected.

H4b₀. Maladaptive narcissism, as measured by the NPI, does not significantly predict employee motivation to use feedback, as measured by the FES, over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback, as measured by the FES.

H4b₁. Maladaptive narcissism, as measured by the NPI, does significantly predict employee motivation to use feedback, as measured by the FES, over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback, as measured by the FES.

Rejecting the null hypothesis for hypothesis H4b called for the HMRA analysis to prove that there was a relationship between maladaptive narcissism and employee motivation to use feedback beyond the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback. HMRA was the appropriate analysis for this purpose because variables are added to the

regression equation in a fixed, sequential order, as determined by the hypothesis being tested, and then the effect of the predictor variable on the criterion variable is established after all covariates have been controlled for. For hypothesis H4b, the criterion variable is employee motivation to use feedback. The control variable, frequency of unfavorable feedback, is the first variable entered into the regression equation (Model 1). The predictor variable being studied, maladaptive narcissism, is entered into the regression equation next (Model 2).

Table 33

H4b: Motivation to Use Feedback (Predictor: Maladaptive Narcissism)

Model	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> ²	Adjusted <i>R</i> ²	ΔR^2	ΔF	Sig. <i>F</i> Change	B	β	<i>p</i>
1	.51 ^a	.26	.25	.26	39.18	.000	4.35		.000
							.45	.51	.000
2	.52 ^b	.27	.25	.00	.63	.430	4.35		.000
							.46	.52	.000
							.01	.07	.430

a. Predictors: (Constant), Frequency of unfavorable feedback
b. Predictors: (Constant), Frequency of unfavorable feedback, maladaptive narcissism

Note. *N* = 113. B = Unstandardized coefficient; β = Standardized coefficient.

As shown in Table 33, the control variable entered into Model 1 of the regression equation, frequency of unfavorable feedback, explained approximately 26% of the variance in employee motivation to use feedback ($R^2 = .26$, $F[1, 111] = 39.18$, $p < .001$). The addition of maladaptive narcissism (Model 2) did not improve the prediction of employee motivation to use feedback over and above frequency of unfavorable feedback alone. The full model of frequency of unfavorable feedback and maladaptive narcissism

to predict employee motivation to use feedback was not statistically significant, $R^2 = .27$, $F[2, 110] = 19.84$, $p = .430$; adjusted $R^2 = .25$.

Maladaptive narcissism did not significantly predict employee motivation to use feedback, $\beta = -.07$, $t[110] = 0.79$, $p = .430$, therefore, the null hypothesis, H4b₀, could not be rejected.

Evaluation of Findings

Supervisors can have a dramatic influence on employees' beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors (Best, 2010; Paarlberg & Lavigna, 2010), and one of the most frequent ways this influence is leveraged is through feedback mechanisms that communicate which behaviors are expected and appropriate and which behaviors are discouraged (Kuo et al., 2010; Rooney et al., 2009). While positive feedback for quality work is one key component of the feedback process, occasionally a supervisor must inform employees about deficiencies in job performance (Dearstyne, 2010; Kondrasuk, 2011; McComb, 2009). Even though this constructive criticism is essential to ongoing learning (Martin, 2010), providing unfavorable feedback does not guarantee that feedback recipients will respond positively or use the information conveyed to make the desired corrections (Feys et al., 2011; Kaymaz, 2011).

Steelman and Rutkowski (2004) examined this phenomenon by focusing on contextual factors they hypothesized would influence employee satisfaction with feedback and employee motivation to use feedback. They were able to isolate approximately 16% of the variance between the contextual factors of employee perceptions of feedback source credibility, feedback quality, and feedback delivery, and the criterion variable, motivation to use feedback (Steelman & Rutkowski, 2004).

Using the Steelman and Rutkowski (2004) study, and, specifically, the strength of associations of the criterion variables contained within (e.g., source credibility, feedback quality, feedback delivery, and motivation to use feedback), as a substructure, the remaining variance was examined to determine possible root causes. This was accomplished by de-emphasizing the *feedback environment* and, instead, examining the *feedback recipient* to establish whether certain narcissistic traits influence how employees' perceive source credibility, feedback quality, and feedback delivery, and, ultimately, how these narcissistic traits might influence motivation to use feedback to improve performance. Relationships between the adaptive and maladaptive narcissism subscales and the conceptualized construct of employee feedback receptivity and employee motivation to use feedback to improve job performance were explored and a significant moderating influence was found for several aspects of employee feedback receptivity and employee motivation to use feedback.

Relationships between study variables.

Testing of the research study's eight hypotheses resulted in three null hypotheses being rejected, namely H1a, H3b, and H4a, and five that failed to reject the null hypothesis, namely H1b, H2a, H2b, H3a, H4b. Statistically significant outcomes, with moderate effect sizes, were noted for the predictor variable, adaptive narcissism, and the criterion variable, feedback source credibility (H1a); for the predictor variable, maladaptive narcissism, and the criterion variable, feedback delivery (H3b); and for the predictor variable, adaptive narcissism, and the criterion variable, motivation to use feedback (H4a). Of these significant findings, the largest effect size, with approximately 5% ($\Delta R^2 = .048$) of the variance explained, was for the predictor variable, adaptive

narcissism, and the criterion variable, motivation to use feedback (H4a). This was closely followed by the predictor variable, maladaptive narcissism, and the criterion variable, feedback delivery (H3b) with 4.2% ($\Delta R^2 = .042$) of the variance explained. The third null hypotheses was for the predictor variable, adaptive narcissism, and the criterion variable, feedback source credibility (H1a) with 2.9% ($\Delta R^2 = .029$) of the variance explained.

While not statistically significant, and therefore not providing support for any alternative hypothesis, there were a number of relationships identified between predictor variables and criterion variables that should be highlighted. A number of contemporary researchers posit that there is still value in looking at research outcomes that may not be statistically significant because a weaker relationship may be less about the constructs being measured and more about design elements within the research study that can be addressed, modified, or corrected through further research (Pagell, Kristal, & Blackmon, 2009; Pagell, Kristal, & Blackmon, 2010). In addition, the direction of the relationship provides further insights into the conceptual framework surrounding the hypotheses in question (Pagell et al., 2009; Pagell et al., 2010).

In this research study, nonsignificant data that warrant comment include the relationships between maladaptive narcissism (predictor variable) and feedback source credibility, feedback quality, and motivation to use feedback (criterion variables). It was hypothesized that maladaptive narcissism would have a negative effect on how employees perceive feedback source credibility, how they perceive the quality of feedback, and how they perceive the feedback delivery, as well as reduce employees' motivation to use feedback to improve performance. This hypothesis was supported in

the literature (Andrey et al., 2012; Ivancevich et al., 2009; Lessard et al., 2011; Lieber, 2010; Maynard et al., 2015; Twenge & Campbell, 2008), and evinced by the research findings in this study which established the direction of the beta standardized coefficients to be negatively correlated for all but one of the aforementioned criterion variables, namely feedback source credibility, feedback quality, and feedback delivery. As expected, this phenomenon repeated itself with the adaptive narcissism predictor variable and the aforementioned criterion variables, albeit from the opposite direction, with all but one of the coefficients demonstrating a positive beta standardized coefficients value, namely feedback source credibility, feedback quality, and motivation to use feedback. The direction of association for the predictor variables under study are found in Table 34.

Table 34

Direction of Association for Predictor Variables under Study

	Adaptive narcissism			Maladaptive narcissism		
	<i>B</i>	β	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>B</i>	β	<i>Sig.</i>
Feedback source credibility	.04	.17	.029	-.03	-.13	.112
Feedback quality	.02	.08	.319	-.03	-.11	.183
Feedback delivery	-.01	-.03	.727	-.06	-.21	.022
Motivation to use feedback	.04	.22	.007	.01	.07	.430

Moderating influence of adaptive and maladaptive narcissism.

While the internal reliability of the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI) total score is strong ($\alpha = .83$) (Raskin & Hall, 1981; Soyer et al., 2001), using only the total score is potentially misleading because it conflates the adaptive narcissism and maladaptive narcissism subscales, thereby disregarding the differential relations the subscales have with various criterion variables (Ackerman et al., 2011; Hepper et al.,

2014). The three-factor solution used in this research study is comprised of the Leadership/Authority factor, the Grandiose Exhibitionism factor, and the Entitlement/Exploitativeness factor, and is stable across multiple datasets (Ackerman et al., 2011), and demonstrates strong differential relations and criterion validity with various measures of narcissism and other theoretically pertinent constructs (Miller et al., 2014). These measures and constructs include psychopathy (e.g., fearless dominance; impulsive antisociality), as measured by the International Personality Item Pool (IPIP), machiavellianism, as measured by the Kiddie Mach (shorter version of the full MACHIV), self-esteem, as measured by the Rosenberg scale, behavioral inhibition system (BIS) and behavioral activation system (BAS), as measured by the Carver and White measure, self-control, as measured by the self-control Tangney et al. (2004) scale, counterproductive school behaviors and interpersonal deviance, as measured by the Bennett and Robinson (2000) workplace deviance measure, entitlement, as measured by the Psychological Entitlement Scale, and pathological characteristics associated with narcissism, as measured by the Pathological Narcissism Inventory (Ackerman et al., 2011).

The first extracted factor, Leadership/Authority, is represented by items relating to self-perceived leadership ability, social potency, and, to a lesser extent, dominance, and characterizes the more adaptive elements of the narcissistic personality (Ackerman et al., 2011; Keller et al., 2014). The Leadership/Authority factor is used in this study as the adaptive narcissism subscale. To measure the moderating influence of the adaptive narcissism subscale, the frequency of unfavorable feedback predictor variable was entered into the multiple regression equation first to establish what, if any, effect existed

for employee perceptions of feedback source credibility, feedback quality, and feedback delivery, as well as employee motivation to use feedback criterion variables. The adaptive narcissism moderator predictor variable under study was entered into the multiple regression equation next to determine what, if any, effect existed for these criterion variables, over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback.

The findings indicate that, for the feedback source credibility and motivation to use feedback criterion variables, the adaptive narcissism subscale increased the effect size significantly ($\Delta R^2 = .03, p = .029$ and $\Delta R^2 = .05, p = .007$, respectively). This significant interaction reveals that there is a stronger positive correlation between frequency of favorable feedback and the feedback source credibility and motivation to use criterion variables when the feedback is being received by an employee with higher levels of adaptive narcissism. Surprisingly, the predictions for the feedback quality and feedback delivery criterion variables, as they pertain to the adaptive narcissism subscale, did not materialize. In essence, no relationships were found to support the hypotheses that adaptive narcissism would have a significant effect on the feedback quality and feedback delivery criterion variables, over and above frequency of unfavorable feedback. This enigma will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

The second extracted factor, Grandiose Exhibitionism, and the third extracted factor, Entitlement/Exploitativeness were combined to create the maladaptive narcissism subscale. This conjoined scale is represented by items reflecting a combination of self-absorption, exhibitionistic tendencies, vanity, emotional reactivity and brittleness, superiority, interpersonal entitlement behaviors, expectations of respect and admiration, and a propensity toward manipulation and the exploitation of others, and corresponds to

the maladaptive elements of the narcissistic personality captured by the NPI summary measures (Ackerman et al., 2011). To measure the moderating influence of the maladaptive narcissism subscale, the frequency of unfavorable feedback predictor variable was entered into the multiple regression equation first to establish what, if any, effect existed for employee perceptions of feedback source credibility, feedback quality, and feedback delivery, as well as employee motivation to use feedback criterion variables. The maladaptive narcissism moderator predictor variable under study was entered into the multiple regression equation next to determine what, if any, effect existed for these criterion variables, over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback.

The findings indicate that, for the feedback delivery criterion variable, the maladaptive narcissism subscale increased the effect size significantly ($\Delta R^2 = .04$, $p = .022$). This significant interaction reveals that there is a stronger negative correlation between frequency of favorable feedback and the feedback delivery criterion variable when the feedback is being received by an employee with higher levels of maladaptive narcissism. Surprisingly, the predictions for the feedback source credibility, feedback quality, and motivation to use criterion variables, as they pertain to the maladaptive narcissism subscale, did not materialize. In essence, no relationships were found to support the hypotheses that maladaptive narcissism would have a significant effect on the feedback source credibility, feedback quality, and motivation to use criterion variables, over and above frequency of unfavorable feedback. This enigma will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

Hypotheses tested and retained.

Four research questions addressed the research study problem:

Q1. To what extent, if any, does adaptive narcissism and maladaptive narcissism predict employee perceptions of feedback source credibility over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback?

Q2. To what extent, if any, does adaptive narcissism and maladaptive narcissism predict employee perceptions of feedback quality over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback?

Q3. To what extent, if any, does adaptive narcissism and maladaptive narcissism predict employee perceptions of feedback delivery over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback?

Q4. To what extent, if any, does adaptive narcissism and maladaptive narcissism predict employee motivation to use feedback over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback?

From these questions, a series of hypotheses were extracted which guided the research design and execution, and all post-research analyses. Table 35 reveals the hypotheses retained after thorough testing of assumptions and hierarchical multiple regression analyses to determine statistical significance.

Table 35

Hypotheses Retained after Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis

		Hypothesis
H1a ₁	Alternative	Adaptive narcissism, as measured by the NPI, does significantly predict employee perceptions of feedback source credibility, as measured by the FES, over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback, as measured by the FES.
H1b ₀	Null	Maladaptive narcissism, as measured by the NPI, does not significantly predict employee perceptions of feedback source credibility, as measured by the FES, over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback, as measured by the FES.
H2a ₀	Null	Adaptive narcissism, as measured by the NPI, does not significantly predict employee perceptions of feedback quality, as measured by the FES, over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback, as measured by the FES.
H2b ₀	Null	Maladaptive narcissism, as measured by the NPI, does not significantly predict employee perceptions of feedback quality, as measured by the FES, over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback, as measured by the FES.
H3a ₀	Null	Adaptive narcissism, as measured by the NPI, does not significantly predict employee perceptions of feedback delivery, as measured by the FES, over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback, as measured by the FES.
H3b ₁	Alternative	Maladaptive narcissism, as measured by the NPI, does significantly predict employee perceptions of feedback delivery, as measured by the FES, over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback, as measured by the FES.
H4a ₁	Alternative	Adaptive narcissism, as measured by the NPI, does significantly predict employee motivation to use feedback, as measured by the FES, over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback, as measured by the FES.
H4b ₀	Null	Maladaptive narcissism, as measured by the NPI, does not significantly predict employee motivation to use feedback, as measured by the FES, over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback, as measured by the FES.

Summary

The results of this study further expand our knowledge and understanding of the conceptual construct of employee feedback receptivity, comprised of employee perceptions of source credibility, employee perceptions of feedback quality, employee perceptions of feedback delivery, as well as provide increased cognizance of the complex elements that influence employee motivation to use feedback to improve job performance. In addition, the results provide further support and evidence for the emerging view that both adaptive (e.g., self-sufficiency, competitiveness, superiority, sense of invulnerability) and maladaptive (e.g., exploitativeness, exhibitionism, entitlement) conceptualizations of narcissistic traits and characteristics are necessary to adequately understand narcissism (Barry & Wallace, 2010; Clark, 2010; Koliscak, 2012; Lau & Marsee, 2013; Lau et al., 2011).

As illustrated by the findings in this research study, the relationship between feedback mechanisms and performance improvement is not just a simple, positively correlated, bivariate phenomenon, and, while the primary purpose of performance feedback (e.g., unfavorable feedback) is to inform employees of deficiencies in job performance to ensure behaviors are better aligned with performance expectations, confounding issues moderate the impact of feedback on the feedback recipient and, consequently, moderate the impact on performance. Indeed, providing unfavorable feedback, even in the context of development, as opposed to punitive reasons, does not guarantee that feedback recipients will respond positively or use the information conveyed to make the desired corrections.

The focus of this workplace-based research study was narcissism, a very specific facet of personality, within the context of employee feedback receptivity, because narcissistic personality traits and feedback receptivity are traditionally thought to be negatively correlated, yet many occupations benefit from certain attributes of the narcissistic personality. While employees with narcissistic tendencies are defined by the literature as typically unable to tolerate criticism and utilize feedback constructively, have grossly inflated views of their own self-worth, are less open to development opportunities, and frequently fail to incorporate feedback from others (Amernic & Craig, 2010; Feys et al., 2011; Kaymaz, 2011), contemporary organizations need employees who continue to learn and improve, and constructive criticism is an important contributor to growth and professional development.

This study reveals that some people with narcissistic tendencies, specifically those with higher levels of adaptive narcissism, are able to suppress the many negative predilections contained in the narcissistic personality and become more receptive to feedback, and more motivated to use the feedback received to improve performance. While the small effect sizes in this study, and the non-significant outcomes in many of the hypotheses tested, warrant some caution regarding interpretation, what needs to be restated, and, possibly, re-emphasized, are the clear signs that certain personality characteristics do influence employee receptivity and employee motivation to use feedback.

Chapter 5: Implications, Recommendations, and Conclusions

A workplace paradox, with four contradictory and counterintuitive constituents, was the genesis of this research topic. One of these constituents relates to the observation that certain narcissistic attributes may be advantageous for success in specific job functions such as sales and other high-pressure occupations (Galvin et al., 2010; Nevicka et al., 2011). The second constituent, and the origin of the paradox, relates to the unique challenge this creates for supervisors who are responsible for the activities that ensure high-quality employee output in the aforementioned job functions because feedback receptivity and narcissistic personality traits are traditionally thought to be negatively related (i.e., people with narcissistic proclivities are known to be emotionally vulnerable to criticism and not receptive to feedback) (Amernic & Craig, 2010).

The third constituent, and clearly why this paradox is so contradictory and counterintuitive, relates to the irrefutable understanding that coaching feedback and constructive criticism are important contributors to productivity, growth, and professional development in the workplace (Govaerts et al., 2011), so narcissistic characteristics such as resistance to feedback and development indifference would typically be viewed as significant career limiters and cause for concern (Toegel & Barsoux, 2012). The fourth, and final, constituent of this conundrum is the fact that narcissistic personality traits are common among successful people in the workplace (Chen, 2010; Ouimet, 2010; Paunonen et al., 2006), including such well-known people as Bill Gates, Jack Welch, Oprah Winfrey, and the late Steve Jobs (Holt & Marques, 2012). So, the genesis of this research is really the question spawned by the aforementioned paradox: How is it that some people with narcissist tendencies experience career success inside organizations,

the same organizations where managers provide frequent coaching feedback to help their employees get better results, when these people with narcissistic tendencies are emotionally vulnerable to criticism and not receptive to feedback?

While a myriad of studies on narcissism exist, and the impact of the many narcissistic manifestations in the workplace are well documented, debates persist about its nomological network with much of contemporary research still generating correlates based on a *unidimensional* narcissism construct (Gentile et al., 2013; Kolisckak, 2012; Lau & Marsee, 2013; Lau et al., 2011). Because there is a growing recognition that narcissism may be a *multidimensional* construct, with evidence for both adaptive and maladaptive narcissistic domains, correlates established from a unidimensional measure are potentially misleading because they conflate the adaptive narcissism and maladaptive narcissism subscales, thereby disregarding the differential relations the subscales have with various criterion variables (Lau et al., 2011), including the feedback receptivity variables that were examined in this research study, namely, employee perceptions of source credibility, employee perceptions of feedback quality, employee perceptions of feedback delivery, and employee motivation to use feedback. Accordingly, a deeper understanding of the interactions between the adaptive narcissism and maladaptive narcissism subscales, as it pertains to feedback receptivity and motivation to use feedback to improve job performance, is necessary to further illuminate the narcissism nomological network, and to contribute to the understanding of feedback processes.

The purpose of this quantitative, non-experimental research study was to examine the extent to which adaptive and maladaptive narcissism moderate the relationship between unfavorable feedback and employee feedback receptivity, defined as a

conceptual construct for this research study, and employee motivation to use feedback to improve job performance or correct behavior. A power analysis (Faul et al., 2009) determined the minimum sample size to be 109. The study sample was comprised of customer service sales agents within several domestic call centers within the hospitality industry. To ensure the minimum sample size was attained, invitations to partake in this study were extended to several large hospitality organizations that, collectively, employ thousands of telephone and Internet customer service sales agents. The survey was closed after 123 surveys were collected. After data screening, nine surveys were discarded due to missing data, leaving 114 surveys for data analyses.

The predictor variables of adaptive and maladaptive narcissistic characteristics were measured using the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI) (Ackerman et al., 2011; Raskin & Hall, 1979a, 1979b; Raskin & Hall, 1981; Raskin & Terry, 1988). The Feedback Environment Scale (FES) was used to measure the main effect predictor variable of frequency of unfavorable feedback, and the criterion variables of feedback source credibility, feedback quality, feedback delivery, and motivation to use feedback (Steelman et al., 2004b). A SurveyMonkey on-line survey (SurveyMonkey Inc., 2014f) was used to gather all pertinent data. Demographic data, including age, gender, race, tenure with organization, and tenure with supervisor, were recorded.

Several limitations were identified and disclosed prior to embarking on the survey data collection. The main limitations identified included potential sampling issues, the possibility of response bias, confounding variables, and factor structure implications within the NPI instrument. In regard to sampling issues, there was some potential for selection bias in this study because there may have been some systematic difference

between those individuals who choose to participate and those individuals who do not participate. The possibility of response bias is also a concern whenever self-report surveys are utilized. While surveys of this type are very common, and provide the advantage of quick data collection, using self-report surveys can result in survey participants responding in a socially desirable manner (e.g., in a manner they perceive will be viewed favorably by other people). Another limitation may be confounding variables, in addition to the predictor variables being studied, that could have influenced the outcome variables and affect the internal validity of the study. The NPI instrument was also seen as a potential study limitation because there are ongoing disagreements regarding the precise factor structures that should be measured.

The research study complied with The American Psychological Association's (APA) Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct (n.d.). The foundation and structure upon which this study was based was supported by scholarly, peer reviewed journals, and all judgments were free of biases to ensure the author remained within the APA stipulated ethical boundaries. An institutional review board (IRB) approval was sought, and obtained, and no research was conducted until formal approval was granted, to ensure the protection of all the participants involved in the data collection effort and subsequent data analyses. Only those individuals who provided an informed consent acknowledgement, and confirmed the voluntary nature of participating in this study, were allowed to participate in the study. In addition to informed consent, survey participants were informed of the confidential nature of the study, that their identity would remain anonymous, that no use of deception existed, that the study would create minimal risk limited to the discomfort someone may have responding to potentially uncomfortable

personal questions, that the volunteer survey participant could choose to not answer any question, and that the volunteer survey participant could withdraw from the survey at any time. Many prudent steps were taken to minimize the potential for any volunteer survey participant to feel coerced into participation. Because the survey was completed using SurveyMonkey, participants were assured of privacy and anonymity as respondents did not have to create any form of account or login, or give any personal contact information in order to participate in the survey.

The relationship between the main effect predictor variable (frequency of unfavorable feedback) and the predictor variables under study (adaptive narcissism, maladaptive narcissism) was explored through two separate hierarchical multiple regression analyses (HMRA) for each research question (e.g., H1a and H1b). Frequency of unfavorable feedback was entered into the regression equation first to establish what, if any, effect existed for feedback source credibility, feedback quality, feedback delivery, and motivation to use feedback. Adaptive narcissism was then entered into the regression equation next to determine what, if any, effect existed for feedback source credibility, feedback quality, feedback delivery, and motivation to use feedback over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback. Once the regression output from the HMRA was captured and recorded, a second HMRA was run using the exact same parameters except substituting the maladaptive narcissism predictor variable for the adaptive narcissism predictor variable. Output from the second HMRA was captured and recorded.

This chapter includes any implications identified from this study based on each research question and its corresponding null and alternative hypotheses. Limitations of

the study will be discussed as well as any alignment issues identified between the original design and research outcomes. Research findings will be discussed within the context of existing literature to isolate consistencies and inconsistencies between literature and the research outcomes. Recommendations for theoretical contributions, for practical applications, and for further research are provided. Finally, logical conclusions, that were established based on the statistical analysis of the data, are listed.

Implications

Research question 1.

Research question 1 in this study asked, “To what extent, if any, does adaptive narcissism and maladaptive narcissism predict employee perceptions of feedback source credibility over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback?” This research question focused on the *feedback source credibility* criterion variable, and resulted in two corresponding hypotheses, one addressing adaptive narcissism (H1a₀ and H1a₁) and, the second, addressing maladaptive narcissism (H1b₀ and H1b₁).

H1a₀. Adaptive narcissism, as measured by the NPI, does not significantly predict employee perceptions of feedback source credibility, as measured by the FES, over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback, as measured by the FES.

H1a₁. Adaptive narcissism, as measured by the NPI, does significantly predict employee perceptions of feedback source credibility, as measured by the FES, over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback, as measured by the FES.

H1b₀. Maladaptive narcissism, as measured by the NPI, does not significantly predict employee perceptions of feedback source credibility, as measured by the FES,

over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback, as measured by the FES.

H1b1. Maladaptive narcissism, as measured by the NPI, does significantly predict employee perceptions of feedback source credibility, as measured by the FES, over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback, as measured by the FES.

Discussions and logical conclusions.

The results of the adaptive narcissism (H1a) hierarchical multiple regression analyses suggest that a significant proportion of the total variation in feedback source credibility was predicted by regressing frequency of unfavorable feedback and adaptive narcissism. The explained variance significantly increased when the adaptive narcissism variable was entered indicating support for H1a. The direction of the effect suggests that the employee's perception of the manager's expertise and competence (e.g., knowledge of the feedback recipient's job function, job requirements, actual job performance, and the ability to judge that job performance accurately) and trustworthiness (e.g., whether or not the feedback recipient trusts the feedback source to provide accurate performance information that is free of biases) will be stronger as adaptive narcissism scores increase. Thus, employees with higher levels of adaptive narcissism will perceive the source of feedback as more credible, which makes it more likely that they will be receptive to the feedback (Steelman et al., 2004b).

The results of the maladaptive narcissism (H1b) hierarchical multiple regression analyses were not significant although there was an effect, and the direction was negative. This would imply, as expected, that higher levels of maladaptive narcissism

will reduce employee perceptions of feedback source credibility. The null hypotheses H1b could not be rejected.

From a practical standpoint, these results should suggest to managers of people within workplace settings that they may want to tailor their coaching style to ensure that the focus is on strengthening the adaptive qualities of the narcissistic personality.

Research question 2.

Research question 2 in this study asked, “To what extent, if any, does adaptive narcissism and maladaptive narcissism predict employee perceptions of feedback quality over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback?” This research question focused on the *feedback quality* criterion variable, and resulted in two corresponding hypotheses, one addressing adaptive narcissism (H2a₀ and H2a₁) and, the second, addressing maladaptive narcissism (H2b₀ and H2b₁).

H2a₀. Adaptive narcissism, as measured by the NPI, does not significantly predict employee perceptions of feedback quality, as measured by the FES, over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback, as measured by the FES.

H2a₁. Adaptive narcissism, as measured by the NPI, does significantly predict employee perceptions of feedback quality, as measured by the FES, over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback, as measured by the FES.

H2b₀. Maladaptive narcissism, as measured by the NPI, does not significantly predict employee perceptions of feedback quality, as measured by the FES, over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback, as measured by the FES.

H2b₁. Maladaptive narcissism, as measured by the NPI, does significantly predict employee perceptions of feedback quality, as measured by the FES, over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback, as measured by the FES.

Discussions and logical conclusions.

The results of the adaptive narcissism (H2a) hierarchical multiple regression analyses were not significant although there was a minor effect, and the direction was positive. This would imply, as expected, that higher levels of adaptive narcissism will increase perceptions of feedback quality. The null hypotheses H2a could not be rejected.

The results of the maladaptive narcissism (H2b) hierarchical multiple regression analyses were not significant although there was an effect, and the direction was negative. This would imply, as expected, that higher levels of maladaptive narcissism will reduce perceptions of feedback quality. The null hypotheses H2b could not be rejected.

Research question 3.

Research question 3 in this study asked, “To what extent, if any, does adaptive narcissism and maladaptive narcissism predict employee perceptions of feedback delivery over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback?” This research question focused on the *feedback delivery* criterion variable, and resulted in two corresponding hypotheses, one addressing adaptive narcissism (H3a₀ and H3a₁) and, the second, addressing maladaptive narcissism (H3b₀ and H3b₁).

H3a₀. Adaptive narcissism, as measured by the NPI, does not significantly predict employee perceptions of feedback delivery, as measured by the FES, over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback, as measured by the FES.

H3a₁. Adaptive narcissism, as measured by the NPI, does significantly predict employee perceptions of feedback delivery, as measured by the FES, over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback, as measured by the FES.

H3b₀. Maladaptive narcissism, as measured by the NPI, does not significantly predict employee perceptions of feedback delivery, as measured by the FES, over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback, as measured by the FES.

H3b₁. Maladaptive narcissism, as measured by the NPI, does significantly predict employee perceptions of feedback delivery, as measured by the FES, over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback, as measured by the FES.

Discussions and logical conclusions.

The results of the adaptive narcissism (H3a) hierarchical multiple regression analyses were not significant and the effect was very minimal. The null hypotheses H3a could not be rejected.

The results of the maladaptive narcissism (H3b) hierarchical multiple regression analyses suggest that a significant proportion of the total variation in feedback delivery was predicted by regressing frequency of unfavorable feedback and maladaptive narcissism. The explained variance significantly increased when the maladaptive narcissism variable was entered indicating support for H3b. The direction of the effect suggests that the employee's perception of the manager's feedback delivery will reduce as the maladaptive narcissism score increases. In essence, the higher the score on the maladaptive narcissism scale, the less likely the employee is to see the manner, style, and tone with which the feedback is delivered by a supervisor to be supportive, tactful,

considerate, and respectful (Steelman, 1997; Steelman et al., 2004b; Steelman & Rutkowski, 2004).

From a practical standpoint, these results should suggest to managers of people within workplace settings that they may want to tailor their coaching style when working with individuals with high levels of maladaptive narcissism to ensure that the delivery style is tactful, respectful, and supportive to offset the maladaptive influence.

Research question 4.

Research question 4 in this study asked, “To what extent, if any, does adaptive narcissism and maladaptive narcissism predict employee motivation to use feedback over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback?” This research question focused on the *motivation to use feedback* criterion variable, and resulted in two corresponding hypotheses, one addressing adaptive narcissism (H4a₀ and H4a₁) and, the second, addressing maladaptive narcissism (H4b₀ and H4b₁).

H4a₀. Adaptive narcissism, as measured by the NPI, does not significantly predict employee motivation to use feedback, as measured by the FES, over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback, as measured by the FES.

H4a₁. Adaptive narcissism, as measured by the NPI, does significantly predict employee motivation to use feedback, as measured by the FES, over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback, as measured by the FES.

H4b₀. Maladaptive narcissism, as measured by the NPI, does not significantly predict employee motivation to use feedback, as measured by the FES, over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback, as measured by the FES.

H4b₁. Maladaptive narcissism, as measured by the NPI, does significantly predict employee motivation to use feedback, as measured by the FES, over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback, as measured by the FES.

Discussions and logical conclusions.

The results of the adaptive narcissism (H4a) hierarchical multiple regression analyses suggest that a significant proportion of the total variation in employee motivation to use feedback was predicted by regressing frequency of unfavorable feedback and adaptive narcissism. The explained variance significantly increased when the adaptive narcissism variable was entered indicating support for H4a. The direction of the effect suggests that the employee's motivation to use feedback will increase as the adaptive narcissism score increases. This may manifest as an increase in drive, desire, and willingness to improve performance, or correct behavior, after feedback has been provided (Steelman, 1997; Steelman et al., 2004b; Steelman & Rutkowski, 2004). Thus, employees with higher levels of adaptive narcissism will be more likely to adjust their work behaviors after receiving feedback.

The results of the maladaptive narcissism (H4b) hierarchical multiple regression analyses were not significant and the effect was very limited. The null hypotheses H4b could not be rejected.

From a practical standpoint, these results should suggest to managers of people within workplace settings that they may want to tailor their coaching style to ensure that the focus is on strengthening the adaptive qualities of the narcissistic personality.

Potential limitations.

There were several potential limitations of this study that should be examined when reviewing the results or interpreting the findings:

Rate of response.

A notable limitation of this research study was the low rate of response from the invitation to participate posters that were sent out to representatives at the targeted organizations for distribution to the customer service sales agents. While, ultimately, the study generated enough respondents to reach the minimum called for by the G*Power calculation, the amount of time for the entire survey collection was extended and spanned several months, including being extended over the holidays at the end of one year, and then continued well into the next year. It is impossible to tell if this introduced any confounds into the data.

The fact that Human Resource (HR) departments in each organization that had been targeted had a “no solicitation” policy, created a real challenge to getting the numbers of surveys that were originally thought possible. While HR in a few organizations were eventually able to see the merits of the study, and subsequently allowed the survey invitation to be sent out to their customer service sales agents, this took an extended amount of time and dramatically reduced the numbers hoped for.

While it would be impossible to know if the extra surveys hoped for, but not collected, would have made a difference to the null hypotheses that could not be rejected due to a lack of statistical significance, it is possible that the results might have been different had the sample been much larger. This limitation will be addressed in the Recommendations section.

Response bias potential limitations.

There are several types of response biases that could be potential limitations of this research study. Because certain questions in the online survey dealt with personality, and specifically traits that are contained in the narcissistic domain, there may have been some avoidance of the extreme response categories creating a central tendency bias when responding. In this research study, the mean and standard deviations (Table 20) do show a central tendency response pattern that may have made a difference to the findings.

The possibility of response bias also occurs whenever self-report surveys are used within a research study. Although this type of survey is commonly used, and can be implemented quickly, and with very little cost, survey participants can, and frequently do, respond in a socially desirable manner (e.g., responding in a way they perceive will be viewed favorably by others) (Krumpal, 2013). While some literature posit that social desirability biases are more frequent when a survey is asking questions about socially-taboo topics, or contain items of a sensitive nature, such as sexual or drug-related activities, other illegal activities, or antisocial attitudes (e.g., racial prejudices) (Miller, 2012), recent literature posit that socially desirable response patterns are more prevalent than once thought, and report significant relationships between social desirability and perceptions of institutional values, self-reported personal gains, value commitments, and goal orientation (Krumpal, 2013; Mayr et al., 2012; Miller, 2012). While all possible recommendations to reduce the likelihood of socially desirable responses, including increasing the anonymity of the survey, were designed into this survey, it is very difficult to control for this response bias limitation.

Other potential response biases include gender biases, with some literature suggesting males are more likely to respond to online surveys (Mayr et al., 2012), while other literature report females are more likely to respond by a large margin (e.g., 65%) (Ward, Clark, Zabriskie, & Morris, 2012). For this research study, females did, in fact, respond at a much higher rate (70.2%), however, there are more females working as customer service sales agents in the contact centers that were involved in this research, so that is more likely to be the reason behind the skewed responses. Younger people have also been reported as more likely to respond to online surveys because of their comfort and familiarity with the Internet (Mayr et al., 2012). Again, while the survey responses did, in fact, have a stronger response rate from those under 30 years old (36%), the contact center industry is predominately younger people, especially in the customer service sales agent position that was targeted for this research. This skewed response pattern is unlikely to be due to an age bias.

Sample size potential limitations.

This research study is limited by its small sample size. A total of 123 surveys were collected; after data screening, nine incomplete cases were removed, leaving a total of 114 valid surveys. While a power analysis using G*Power software (Faul et al., 2009) showed that $N = 114$ was sufficient to detect statistically significant results, it is important to consider that the G*Power output was based on the expectation of a medium effect size ($f^2 = .15$). Because research outcomes failed to reject the null hypothesis for five out of eight possible hypotheses, it is entirely possible that the sample size was too small to detect significance relative to the relationship between the main effect predictor

variable and the moderator predictor variables (Selya, Rose, Dierker, Hedeker, & Mermelstein, 2012).

Homogeneity and heterogeneity potential limitations.

This research study sample was comprised of telephone- and Internet-based customer service sales agents within a wide variety of domestic contact centers within the hospitality industry (e.g., hotels, car rental agencies, airlines). It was hypothesized that drawing from a specific sample population like this would reduce the impact of organizational, cultural, business process differences, among other confounds, on research outcomes because contact centers within the hospitality industry use similar technology and have similar performance metrics. Unfortunately, the unintended consequence of attempting to reduce confounds by narrowing the selection band for inclusion is that the data may have become too homogeneous (Anaza & Rutherford, 2012; Biron & Boon, 2013; Bradley-Geist & Landis, 2012; Satterwhite et al., 2009).

Literature abounds with research demonstrating the impact of homogeneity from several vantage points, including gender (Biron & Boon, 2013), social consciousness (Bradley-Geist & Landis, 2012), organizational values, employee-customer orientation, and employee-role orientation (Anaza & Rutherford, 2012), and vocational choice (Satterwhite et al., 2009). The attraction-selection-attrition (ASA) model is based on the observation that organizations gravitate toward homogeneity of personality, and that individual differences (e.g., being socially conscious) lead to differential attraction to organizations (e.g., socially conscious organizations) (Bradley-Geist & Landis, 2012).

Customer service sales agents within hospitality industry reservations centers were the target sample population for this research study because the hospitality industry

reservations center work environment is very competitive, with numerous, objective performance metrics (e.g., number of reservations booked; upselling revenue; talk-time; wrap-time), as well as performance-based incentive programs, so it was likely to attract personality characteristics tending toward high self-esteem and narcissism. One of the potential limitations of this research study is that, in a similar way to the aforementioned ASA model, these reservations centers have attracted a very narrow band of personalities, that, although well-suited for the customer service sales agent role, resulted in the data collection for this study to be too narrow to show the differentiation that is necessary to be able to reject the null hypotheses identified in this study.

Factor analysis (NPI) potential limitations.

The Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI) is the most widely used index to measure narcissism in social psychological research, and is intended for use within the general population to measure individual differences on the dimension of narcissism ranging from normal personality to pathological dysfunction (Watson et al., 2006). The predominate use of the NPI for social/personality psychology is largely due to the linkages with numerous behavioral indices connected with the narcissistic personality (Bobadilla et al., 2012; Brown et al., 2013; Gardner & Pierce, 2011; Graham & Cooper, 2013; Hamedoglu & Potas, 2012; Keiller, 2010; Keller et al., 2014; Lau et al., 2011; Rijsenbilt & Commandeur, 2013; Traiser & Eighmy, 2011). The internal reliability of the NPI total score is good ($\alpha = .83$) (Raskin & Hall, 1981; Soyer, Rovenpor, Kopelman, Mullins, & Watson, 2001).

The recent three-factor model identified *leadership/authority*, utilizing 11 questions from the NPI, *grandiose exhibitionism*, utilizing 10 questions from the NPI,

and *entitlement/exploitativeness*, utilizing 4 questions from the NPI (Ackerman et al., 2011; Keller et al., 2014; Zeigler-Hill et al., 2013). Internal consistencies reported by the literature are $\alpha = .78$ for leadership/authority, $\alpha = .72$ for grandiose exhibitionism, and $\alpha = .46$ for entitlement/exploitativeness (Ackerman et al., 2011; Zeigler-Hill et al., 2013). While the lower alpha coefficient for the entitlement/exploitativeness scale ($\alpha = .46$) would normally be of concern, part of the explanation for this is there are only four items in this subscale so the lower coefficient may not be because of the content of the scale but, instead, resulting from the total number of items scored (Ackerman et al., 2011). To further support this theory, the average interitem correlation for this scale approached .20 in a series of iterative studies which is acceptable given the optimal average interitem correlation coefficient for a scale is recommended to be between .20 and .40 (Ackerman et al., 2011).

Perhaps due to the small sample size of this research study, but comparing the Ackerman et al. (2011) internal consistency values with the values generated for this research study reveals two extracted factors with slight differences and one extracted factor with a major difference: $\alpha = .74$ for leadership/authority (-.04), $\alpha = .69$ for grandiose exhibitionism (-.03), and $\alpha = .24$ for entitlement/exploitativeness (-.22). While leadership/authority and grandiose exhibitionism are still in the acceptable range for internal consistency, entitlement/exploitativeness is clearly now in the unacceptable range (George & Mallery, 2003; Tavakol & Dennick, 2011), regardless of what the optimal average interitem correlation coefficient may be. Why this is of concern, and why it is listed as a potential limitation, has to do with how the maladaptive subscale is calculated by summing the grandiose exhibitionism subscale and the entitlement/exploitativeness

subscale. If one of the two subscales needed to create the maladaptive narcissism subscale is unable to report strong internal consistency, what happens when it is added to another, albeit, stronger, scale? Interestingly, the internal consistency for the composite maladaptive narcissism scale is .69. This may need to be addressed in future research.

The first extracted factor, Leadership/Authority, is represented by items relating to self-perceived leadership ability, social potency, and, to a lesser extent, dominance, and characterizes the more adaptive elements of the narcissistic personality captured by the NPI summary measures (Ackerman et al., 2011; Keller et al., 2014). The second extracted factor, Grandiose Exhibitionism, is represented by items reflecting a combination of self-absorption, exhibitionistic tendencies, emotional reactivity and brittleness, and superiority, and corresponds to the maladaptive elements of the narcissistic personality captured by the NPI summary measures (Ackerman et al., 2011). The third extracted factor, Entitlement/Exploitativeness, is represented by items reflecting interpersonal entitlement behaviors, expectations of respect and admiration, and a propensity toward manipulation and the exploitation of others, and corresponds to the maladaptive elements of the narcissistic personality captured by the NPI summary measures (Ackerman et al., 2011; Besser & Priel, 2010; Keller et al., 2014; Zeigler-Hill et al., 2013).

Ackerman et al. (2011) reported Pearson correlation coefficients between the three extracted factors with the leadership/authority subscale showing a moderate association with grandiose/exhibitionism ($r = .34$) and a weaker association with entitlement/exploitativeness ($r = .16$). Grandiose/exhibitionism also showed a modest association with entitlement/ exploitativeness ($r = .17$). This research study reports alpha

scores approximately the same with the leadership/authority subscale showing a moderate association with grandiose/exhibitionism ($r = .39$) and a weaker association with entitlement/exploitativeness ($r = .15$). Grandiose/exhibitionism also showed a modest association with entitlement/ exploitativeness ($r = .30$). Of interest was the relatively strong association between the adaptive narcissism subscale and the maladaptive narcissism subscale $\alpha = .42$ ($p < .01$). This strength of association would become a concern if further research incorporated an interaction into the hierarchical multiple regression analyses.

Alignment of research study outcomes with study problem/purpose.

Certain narcissistic attributes may be advantageous for success in specific job functions such as sales and other high-pressure occupations (Galvin et al., 2010; Nevicka et al., 2011). This creates a unique challenge for supervisors responsible for the activities that ensure high-quality employee output in these job functions because feedback receptivity and narcissistic personality traits are traditionally thought to be negatively related. People with narcissistic proclivities are known to be emotionally vulnerable to criticism and not receptive to feedback (Amernic & Craig, 2010). Because coaching feedback and constructive criticism are important contributors to productivity, growth, and professional development in the workplace (Govaerts et al., 2011), narcissistic characteristics such as resistance to feedback and development indifference would typically be viewed as significant career limiters and cause for concern (Toegel & Barsoux, 2012).

The purpose of this quantitative, non-experimental study was to determine whether any influence exists between the adaptive narcissism and maladaptive narcissism

subscales and employee feedback receptivity, defined as a conceptual construct for this research study, and comprised of employee perceptions of source credibility, employee perceptions of feedback quality, employee perceptions of feedback delivery, and employee motivation to use feedback to improve job performance or correct behavior.

As illustrated by the findings in this research study, the relationship between feedback mechanisms and performance improvement is not just a simple, positively correlated, bivariate phenomenon, and, while the primary purpose of performance feedback (e.g., unfavorable feedback) is to inform employees of deficiencies in job performance to ensure behaviors are better aligned with performance expectations, confounding issues moderate the impact of feedback on the feedback recipient and, consequently, moderate the impact on performance.

The focus of this workplace-based research study was narcissism, a very specific facet of personality, within the context of employee feedback receptivity, because narcissistic personality traits and feedback receptivity are traditionally thought to be negatively correlated. While employees with narcissistic tendencies are defined by the literature as typically unable to tolerate criticism and utilize feedback constructively, have grossly inflated views of their own self-worth, are less open to development opportunities, and frequently fail to incorporate feedback from others (Amernic & Craig, 2010; Feys et al., 2011; Kaymaz, 2011), contemporary organizations need employees who continue to learn and improve, and constructive criticism is an important contributor to growth and professional development.

This study reveals that some people with narcissistic tendencies, specifically those with higher levels of adaptive narcissism, are able to suppress the many negative

predilections contained in the narcissistic personality and become more receptive to feedback and more motivated to use the feedback received to improve performance. While the small effect sizes in this study, and the non-significant outcomes in many of the hypotheses tested, warrant some caution regarding interpretation, what needs to be re-stated, and, possibly, re-emphasized, are the clear signs that certain personality characteristics do influence employee receptivity and employee motivation to use feedback.

Recommendations for Further Research

This research study had several limitations that were outlined in detail earlier in this chapter. These limitations accent the need for further inquiry into the extent to which adaptive and maladaptive narcissism moderate the relationship between unfavorable feedback and employee feedback receptivity, comprised of employee perceptions of source credibility, employee perceptions of feedback quality, employee perceptions of feedback delivery, and employee motivation to use feedback to improve job performance or correct behavior.

The findings within this research study provide the method and logic for conducting future research, with a much larger sample, to determine whether the findings will generalize to the greater population. Because many of the shortcomings of this research study can be linked directly to the small sample size, further research is encouraged. A much larger sample would also yield higher power to detect significance (Selya et al., 2012). Replication of the study should involve a sample size of at least $N = 550$ ($\alpha = .05$; power = 0.80; effect size = .02).

One benefit that could come from a larger sample is the ability to look at an interaction analyses. In the hierarchical multiple regression models that were utilized for this study, the effects of the predictors (adaptive narcissism; maladaptive narcissism) have been additive. With a larger sample, further analyses could formally test whether additivity holds and further determine if the way the criterion variables (feedback source credibility; feedback quality; feedback delivery; motivation to use feedback) vary with frequency of unfavorable feedback *depend on* the adaptive narcissism or maladaptive narcissism predictor variables.

In their review of multisource feedback (MSF) improvements, Walker et al. (2010) found a small association between personality (i.e., of an employee) and improvement, but only when the feedback was poor; when feedback was favorable, the association did not exist. They called for further research. Because the narcissistic constructs measured in this study are dimensions of personality, and because feedback is being measured through the FES, perhaps further research could incorporate the Walker et al. (2010) dimensions as well.

While analyses of the demographic variables in this study (e.g., age range, gender, and race) were limited to descriptive statistics only, several aspects of the reported data were of interest. For example, the narcissism subscales by race table (Table 12) show Black or African American respondents to have the highest mean scores for both the adaptive narcissism scale and the maladaptive narcissism scale by a large margin. Because $N = 10$, no conclusions can be drawn from this, but further research could be done to see if any significant effect could be identified out of a study looking at how adaptive and maladaptive narcissism moderate the relationship between unfavorable

feedback and employee feedback receptivity, and employee motivation to use feedback, while controlling for race.

Conclusions

This non-experimental quantitative research study examined the extent to which adaptive and maladaptive narcissism moderate the relationship between unfavorable feedback and employee feedback receptivity, defined as a conceptual construct for this research study, and comprised of employee perceptions of source credibility, employee perceptions of feedback quality, employee perceptions of feedback delivery, and employee motivation to use feedback to improve job performance or correct behavior. The explicit queries that needed to be answered within this research study concerned specific personality traits that might enable employees with narcissistic proclivities to suppress their negative narcissistic inclinations, such as being emotionally vulnerable to constructive criticism and not receptive to feedback, and, instead, draw upon personality traits that could positively contribute to career success within contemporary work environments (e.g., being receptive to feedback and willing to use feedback to improve). Four research questions guided the research design and execution, and all post-research analyses. The findings from all eight corresponding hypotheses follow:

Adaptive narcissism significantly predicted employee perceptions of feedback source credibility over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. Maladaptive narcissism did not significantly predict employee perceptions of feedback source credibility over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback. Therefore, research outcomes failed to reject the null hypothesis.

Adaptive narcissism did not significantly predict employee perceptions of feedback quality over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback. Therefore, research outcomes failed to reject the null hypothesis. Maladaptive narcissism did not significantly predict employee perceptions of feedback quality over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback. Therefore, research outcomes failed to reject the null hypothesis.

Adaptive narcissism did not significantly predict employee perceptions of feedback delivery over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback. Therefore, research outcomes failed to reject the null hypothesis. Maladaptive narcissism significantly predicted employee perceptions of feedback delivery over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Adaptive narcissism significantly predicted employee motivation to use feedback over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. Maladaptive narcissism did not significantly predict employee motivation to use feedback over and above the effects of frequency of unfavorable feedback. Therefore, research outcomes failed to reject the null hypothesis.

Although the body of knowledge concerning subclinical narcissism continues to grow, many questions still remain about the nomological network surrounding the adaptive narcissism and maladaptive narcissism constructs within workplace settings. These questions accentuate the need for further research into the factors that influence better working relationships between managers and employees and, ultimately, provide the impetus for better results.

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Appendix

Appendix A: Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI)

Read each pair of statements and then choose *the one that is closer to your own feelings and beliefs*. Indicate your answer by circling the letter “A” or “B” to the left of each item.

Original Number	Assigned Number	Choice	Forced-choice response
1	1	A	I have a natural talent for influencing people.
		B	I am not good at influencing people.
4	2	A	When people complement me I sometimes get embarrassed.
		B	I know that I am good because everybody keeps telling me so.
5	3	A	The thought of ruling the world frightens the hell out of me.
		B	If I ruled the world it would be a better place.
7	4	A	I prefer to blend in with the crowd.
		B	I like to be the center of attention.
10	5	A	I am not sure if I would make a good leader.
		B	I see myself as a good leader.
11	6	A	I am assertive.
		B	I wish I were more assertive.
12	7	A	I like having authority over other people.
		B	I don't mind following orders.
13	8	A	I find it easy to manipulate people.
		B	I don't like it when I find myself manipulating people.
14	9	A	I insist upon getting the respect that is due to me.
		B	I usually get the respect that I deserve.
15	10	A	I don't particularly like to show off my body.
		B	I like to show off my body.
19	11	A	My body is nothing special.
		B	I like to look at my body.
20	12	A	I try not to be a show off.
		B	I will usually show off if I get the chance.
24	13	A	I expect a great deal from other people.
		B	I like to do things for other people.
25	14	A	I will never be satisfied until I get all that I deserve.
		B	I take my satisfactions as they come.
26	15	A	Compliments embarrass me.
		B	I like to be complemented.
27	16	A	I have a strong will to power.

		B	Power for its own sake does not interest me.
28	17	A	I don't care about new fads and fashions.
		B	I like to start new fads and fashions.
29	18	A	I like to look at myself in the mirror.
		B	I am not particularly interested in looking at myself in the mirror.
30	19	A	I really like to be the center of attention.
		B	It makes me uncomfortable to be the center of attention.
32	20	A	Being an authority doesn't mean that much to me.
		B	People always seem to recognize my authority.
33	21	A	I would prefer to be a leader.
		B	It makes little difference to me whether I am a leader or not.
34	22	A	I am going to be a great person.
		B	I hope I am going to be successful.
36	23	A	I am a born leader.
		B	Leadership is a quality that takes a long time to develop.
38	24	A	I get upset when people don't notice how I look when I go out in public.
		B	I don't mind blending into the crowd when I go out in public.
40	25	A	I am much like everybody else.
		B	I am an extraordinary person.

NPI Scoring Key: Assign one point for each response that matches the key.

Original Number	Assigned Number	Key	Original Number	Assigned Number	Key
1	1	A	4	2	B
11	6	A	5	3	B
12	7	A	7	4	B
13	8	A	10	5	B
14	9	A	15	10	B
24	13	A	19	11	B
25	14	A	20	12	B
27	16	A	26	15	B
29	18	A	28	17	B
30	19	A	32	20	B
33	21	A	40	25	B
34	22	A			
36	23	A			
38	24	A			

Appendix B: Feedback Environment Scale (FES)

The following questions concern peoples' perceptions of their supervisor. Please answer these questions with respect to the everyday interactions and day-to-day feedback you receive at your current job. This does not include formal performance appraisal feedback. Please think carefully about each question individually. For each question please indicate your agreement or disagreement using the scale provided.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

Items (reverse scored items noted with RS)

Source credibility

1. My supervisor is generally familiar with my performance on the job.
2. In general, I respect my supervisor's opinions about my job performance.
3. RS With respect to job performance feedback, I usually do not trust my supervisor.
4. My supervisor is fair when evaluating my job performance.
5. I have confidence in the feedback my supervisor gives me.

Feedback quality

1. My supervisor gives me useful feedback about my job performance.
2. The performance feedback I receive from my supervisor is helpful.
3. I value the feedback I receive from my supervisor.
4. The feedback I receive from my supervisor helps me do my job.
5. RS The performance information I receive from my supervisor is generally not very meaningful.

Feedback delivery

1. My supervisor is supportive when giving me feedback about my job performance.
2. When my supervisor gives me performance feedback, he or she is considerate of my feelings.
3. RS My supervisor generally provides feedback in a thoughtless manner.
4. RS My supervisor does not treat people very well when providing performance feedback.

5. My supervisor is tactful when giving me performance feedback.

Frequency of favorable feedback

1. When I do a good job at work my supervisor praises my performance.
2. RS I seldom receive praise from my supervisor.
3. My supervisor generally lets me know when I do a good job at work
4. I frequently receive positive feedback from my supervisor.

Frequency of unfavorable feedback

1. When I don't meet deadlines, my supervisor lets me know.
2. My supervisor tells me when my work performance does not meet organizational standards.
3. On those occasions when my job performance falls below what is expected, my supervisor lets me know.
4. On those occasions when I make a mistake at work, my supervisor tells me.

Motivation to use feedback

1. I am willing to change my work behaviors based on the feedback I receive from my supervisor.
2. I want to improve my job performance based on the feedback my supervisor provides.

Appendix C: PhD Research Request Letter

RE: PhD Research Request

Dear [Name]:

My name is Neil Dempster and I am a PhD Candidate at Northcentral University (NCU). I am sending you this letter because you are a member of the International Association of Reservation Executives (IARE). I am very familiar with IARE having delivered the keynote address for your annual conference in 2000 and in 2011. In addition, I've consulted with, and delivered training programs for, many IARE members. I am embarking on a research project for my dissertation and I would appreciate your help.

Supervisors report that employees who are open and receptive to constructive criticism are easy to work with while employees who are not receptive to feedback, and resist or reject criticism, are often difficult to manage. I'm sure you have experienced this in your time as a manager/leader!

I am studying several personality characteristics that may influence employees' openness to feedback and their motivation to apply constructive feedback. My target population for this research are telephone agents within several diverse hospitality industry reservations centers because people selected for this position must to be able to successfully function in a fast paced, metrics-driven work environment where coaching feedback is routinely provided.

While I am sending this research proposal to you by way of [Name of Company], I am not asking that [Name of Company] be, in any way, involved in this research study. This is a critical point within my research because I must ensure that each person who responds to the on-line survey does so completely voluntarily without any influence, implied or otherwise. All I ask in this proposal is that you extend the invitation to be part of this research study to your telephone agents using the attached form. This form can be put in the lunch room, put on the community bulletin board, or any place where your telephone agents will see it. The survey is completely anonymous and will not identify, in any way, the person responding, or the company he/she represents. The survey will take approximately 15-25 minutes to complete.

The results of this survey may provide a better understanding of how employees interpret and react to constructive feedback and will, potentially, improve workplace recruiting efforts, enhance performance coaching methods, and help supervisors deliver work performance feedback in a more effective manner. As a way of saying thank you for considering this proposal, I will be happy to send you an executive summary of the outcome of this research once it is completed.

The Northcentral University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has approved this survey. Questions may be directed to: NCU PhD Candidate: Neil Dempster - N.Dempster0517@email.ncu.edu.

Appendix E: Participant Recruitment Invitation (Electronic version)

Do YOU want to participate in an important research study?

Are you a Telephone or Internet Agent in the Hospitality Industry?

Hello, my name is Neil Dempster and I am a PhD Candidate at Northcentral University (NCU) in Arizona.

I am studying the conditions that influence how employees perceive feedback from their supervisors and I would appreciate your help. If you work in the Hospitality Industry as a Telephone or Internet Agent, then you know what it's like to be part of a fast-paced work environment. Your input will be a VALUABLE addition to this research study!

The results of this important study will be of scientific interest. My hope is that the analyses may eventually benefit employees and supervisors through improved coaching and feedback methods.

This on-line survey is totally anonymous and will only take 15-25 minutes to complete. The link is listed below.

This research is not sponsored by your company nor will your personal responses be available to anyone other than myself.

There is no obligation to participate in this on-line survey and you can withdraw at any time during the survey.

The NCU Institutional Review Board (IRB) has approved this survey. Questions may be directed to:

PhD Candidate: Neil Dempster - N.Dempster0517@email.ncu.edu



https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/Dempster_NCU_ResearchStudy

Appendix F: E-mail Providing PDF of Participant Recruitment Invitation

From: Neil Dempster
Sent: Monday, December 15, 2014 7:25 AM
To: 'xxx@hyatt.com'
Subject: Neil Dempster Dissertation Research

Hello [Name]!

As you know, I have reached out to many members of IARE with my dissertation research request. This is to ensure the research is randomized, and that I end up with enough survey responses to be statistically significant.

A situation has been communicated back to me that I wanted to make you aware of in case this is something you could utilize as well.

Feedback: Some work environments don't have the types of 'bulletin boards' that I had hoped would allow a flyer to be posted.

My Response: I have attached an electronic version of the flyer that can be sent out easily to overcome that obstacle. (Thank you!) To date, this electronic method has worked perfectly in at least one of the organizations I sent my request to.

Thank you, [Name], for considering this request.

Have a great day!

Neil

Neil Dempster, MBA, CSP

Appendix G: E-mail Addressing the Human Resources “No Solicitation” Policy

From: Neil Dempster
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2015 12:50 AM
To: 'xxx@carlsonrezidor.com'
Subject: Neil Dempster Dissertation Research

Hello [Name]!

Thank you for taking the time to speak with me. I didn't want to cause any trouble with my research request because I certainly understand and appreciate why HR has a strict no solicitation policy ... no one wants to be sold to, or invited to another multilevel marketing meeting, or any of the other reasons why a no solicitation policy needs to be in place in the workplace. That's why I would like to ask that my request be considered because this research request is not a solicitation - it's academic research; it's adding to the body of knowledge that could make the workplace a better place; the research outcomes could be valuable to leaders throughout the call center and hospitality industry. In essence, how will we ever do a better job as managers of people if we can't perform pure research-with no hidden agendas and protected anonymity-in the real world of work? As you are aware, most research is done on first-year university students which gives it very little utility to those who lead real people in a real workplace. That's why I took this route; even knowing full well that I would probably have to overcome certain policies like "no solicitation" policies. So far, organizations such as AMEX Travel, Best Western, Choice Hotels, and Hyatt Hotels have provided this information to their respective HR departments and have been given approval to send this survey invitation to their customer service/customer care agents.

Thank you, [Name], for considering this request.

Have a great day!

Neil

Neil Dempster, MBA, CSP

Appendix H: Organizations That Distributed the Invitation to Participate Poster

Organizations that distributed the invitation to participate poster to customer service sales agents within various departments:

American Express Travel (AMEX Travel)
Best Western International
Choice Hotels International
Hyatt Hotels & Resorts

Appendix I: SurveyMonkey On-line Questionnaire

Informed Consent Form



Academic Research Study
concerning
*'Factors That Affect How Employees
View Coaching Feedback'*

Neil Dempster
PhD Candidate
Northcentral University

[Exit this survey](#)

Feedback Receptivity

Informed Consent Form

Welcome! My name is Neil Dempster and I am a student at Northcentral University (NCU) studying Organizational Psychology.

As partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of doctor of philosophy, I will be collecting data from approximately 150 employees in the area of coaching feedback. I will then analyze the information collected looking for factors that effect how employees view coaching feedback.

For this research to be approved by the NCU Institutional Review Board, several conditions must be met, including:

- a) providing specific information to potential survey participants about the nature of the research study, and
- b) obtaining voluntary consent from each person prior to participating in the research.

This important information is found below.

Thank you for considering to be involved in this very important research.



Factors That Affect How Employees View Coaching Feedback

1

Nature of the Research Study

PURPOSE OF THIS RESEARCH: You are invited to participate in a research study being conducted for a dissertation at Northcentral University in Prescott, Arizona. The purpose of this study is to examine factors that impact how employees view feedback they receive from their direct supervisors. The questions in this survey will ask your opinions of, and reflections about, your experiences as a recipient of coaching and feedback in a workplace setting, as well as questions about your personality that may influence how you view feedback.

PROCEDURES: To partake in this study, you will be asked to complete an online survey with 50 questions. While your participation is important and highly valued, participation remains totally optional and voluntary. If you consent to participate, you will be asked questions about your personality and how you view yourself in various life situations as well as your perceptions of factors relating to feedback you may have received from your supervisor in the past. The time required to complete the survey is approximately 15-25 minutes.

ANONYMITY/CONFIDENTIALITY: This is an anonymous survey. Data being collected cannot be tracked back to any individual survey participant. All data collected in this study will be reported in an aggregate manner and will remain confidential. Data collected will not have any identifying capability, and will be available only to the researcher associated with this study (Neil Dempster). Data must be kept for five (5) years in a secure location and only assessable by the researcher.

POTENTIAL RISK/DISCOMFORT: Although there are no known risks in this study, some of the questions might be personally sensitive because some of the questions ask about feedback you have received from a supervisor and other questions ask about your personality. This can be uncomfortable to some people. However, you may stop the study at any time. You can also choose not to answer any question that you feel uncomfortable in answering.

POTENTIAL BENEFIT: There are no direct benefits to you of participating in this research. No incentives are offered. However, the results of this important study will be of scientific interest and will be added to the existing body of knowledge on coaching feedback methods. The outcome of the research may eventually benefit employees and supervisors through improved coaching and feedback methods.

RIGHT TO WITHDRAW: You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty of any kind. There are no costs to you whatsoever. You may omit any question you do not want to answer.

IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS: If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, any complaints about your participation in the research study, or any problems that occurred in the study, please contact Neil Dempster (researcher) at N.Dempster0517@email.ncu.edu or Dr. Lindsey Dippold (research Chair) at L.Dippold@ncu.edu. Or, if you prefer to talk to someone outside the study team, you can contact Northcentral University's Institutional Review Board at irb@ncu.edu or 1-888-327-2877 ex 8014.

If you are interested in participating in this study, please acknowledge consent by checking the "willing to participate" button. If you prefer not to participate, check the "not interested" button and you will be taken to the exit page. Thank you for considering this invitation to be involved in this research study.

Consent to Participate

* Consent to participate in this research study ...

- I have read the above information and acknowledge that I am willing to participate in this research study.
- I am not interested in participating in this research study.



Next

Occupation Confirmation



Academic Research Study
concerning
*'Factors That Affect How Employees
View Coaching Feedback'*

Exit this survey

Neil Dempster
PhD Candidate
Northcentral University

Feedback Receptivity

Occupation Confirmation

This research study is designed only for individuals who are call/contact center telephone and/or Internet agents within hospitality industry reservations centers (e.g., hotel, car rental and airline reservations centers) within the domestic United States of America (USA).

If you are an employee of a USA-based hospitality industry reservations center, and your job description includes telephone and/or Internet agent duties, please select the appropriate button below and you will be taken to the research study.



*** Occupation Confirmation**

- Yes! My employment is with a USA-based hospitality industry reservations center and my job function includes telephone and/or Internet agent duties. Take me to the research study!
- No. My employment and/or job description does not fit the research parameters described.

[Prev](#)[Next](#)

Demographic Information



Academic Research Study
concerning
*'Factors That Affect How Employees
View Coaching Feedback'*

Neil Dempster
PhD Candidate
Northcentral University

[Exit this survey](#)

Feedback Receptivity

Demographic Information

First, we must collect a few details about you and your work history. Remember, all information collected is completely anonymous and cannot be connected with you in any way.

Which age range best describes your current age?

Under 30 years old

30 - 39 years old

40 - 49 years old

50 - 59 years old

60 + years old

What is your gender?

Male

Female

What is your race?

American Indian or Alaska Native

Asian

Black or African American

Hispanic or Latino

Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander

White

Other

6

How long have you been with your current employer?

- Under 1 year
- 1 - 4 years
- 5 - 9 years
- 10 - 19 years
- 20 + years

How long have you been with your current supervisor?

- Under 1 year
- 1 - 4 years
- 5 - 9 years
- 10 - 14 years
- 15 + years



[Prev](#) [Next](#)

Feedback Environment Questions (FES Survey)



Academic Research Study
concerning
*'Factors That Affect How Employees
View Coaching Feedback'*

Neil Dempster
PhD Candidate
Northcentral University

[Exit this survey](#)

Feedback Receptivity

Feedback Environment Questions

The following 25 questions concern your perceptions of your supervisor. Please answer these questions with respect to the **everyday interactions and day-to-day feedback you receive** at your current job. This does not include formal performance appraisal feedback. Please think carefully about each question individually. For each question please indicate your agreement or disagreement using the scale provided. Remember, all information collected is completely anonymous and cannot be connected with you in any way.

Questions about feedback credibility....

- 1. My supervisor is generally familiar with my performance on the job.**

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- 2. In general, I respect my supervisor's opinions about my job performance.**

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- 3. With respect to job performance feedback, I usually do not trust my supervisor.**

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- 4. My supervisor is fair when evaluating my job performance.**

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

8

5. I have confidence in the feedback my supervisor gives me.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Questions about feedback quality ...

6. My supervisor gives me useful feedback about my job performance.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

7. The performance feedback I receive from my supervisor is helpful.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

8. I value the feedback I receive from my supervisor.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

9. The feedback I receive from my supervisor helps me do my job.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

10. The performance information I receive from my supervisor is generally not very meaningful.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Questions about feedback delivery ...

11. My supervisor is supportive when giving me feedback about my job performance.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

12. When my supervisor gives me performance feedback, he or she is considerate of my feelings.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

13. My supervisor generally provides feedback in a thoughtless manner.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

14. My supervisor does not treat people very well when providing performance feedback.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

15. My supervisor is tactful when giving me performance feedback.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Questions about favorable feedback ...

16. When I do a good job at work my supervisor praises my performance.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

17. I seldom receive praise from my supervisor.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

18. My supervisor generally lets me know when I do a good job at work.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

19. I frequently receive positive feedback from my supervisor.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Questions about unfavorable feedback ...

20. When I don't meet deadlines, my supervisor lets me know.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

21. My supervisor tells me when my work performance does not meet organizational standards.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

22. On those occasions when my job performance falls below what is expected, my supervisor lets me know.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

23. On those occasions when I make a mistake at work, my supervisor tells me.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Questions about your motivation to use feedback ...

24. I am willing to change my work behaviors based on the feedback I receive from my supervisor.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

25. I want to improve my job performance based on the feedback my supervisor provides.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

The image shows a large, empty rectangular frame. At the top of the frame, there is a horizontal bar. On the left side of this bar is a dark grey progress indicator. On the right side of the bar, the text "44%" is displayed. Below the progress bar, centered horizontally, are two buttons: "Prev" on the left and "Next" on the right. The rest of the frame is empty.

Fifty Percent Progress Report



Academic Research Study
concerning
*'Factors That Affect How Employees
View Coaching Feedback'*

Exit this survey

Neil Dempster
PhD Candidate
Northcentral University

Feedback Receptivity

Progress Report ...

You are **over 50% done!** Thank you for your contribution to this important research study. Click 'Next' to continue.



Prev Next

Personality Questions (NPI Survey)



Academic Research Study
concerning
*'Factors That Affect How Employees
View Coaching Feedback'*

Exit this survey

Neil Dempster
PhD Candidate
Northcentral University

Feedback Receptivity

Personality Questions

The following 25 questions concern characteristics and preferences of your personality. Please read each pair of statements and click on the button beside ***the one that is closer to your own feelings and beliefs.*** There is no 'right' or 'wrong' answer. You may find that some questions seem to be duplicates, and other questions don't seem to be relevant, but every question has been carefully prepared. Simply read each question carefully and answer it quickly and honestly.

Remember, all information collected is completely anonymous and cannot be connected to you in any way.

Question 1.

- I have a natural talent for influencing people.
- I am not good at influencing people.

Question 2.

- When people complement me I sometimes get embarrassed.
- I know that I am good because everybody keeps telling me so.

Question 3.

- The thought of ruling the world frightens the hell out of me.
- If I ruled the world it would be a better place.

Question 4.

- I prefer to blend in with the crowd.
- I like to be the center of attention.

Question 5.

- I am not sure if I would make a good leader.
- I see myself as a good leader.

Question 6.

- I am assertive.
- I wish I were more assertive.

Question 7.

- I like having authority over other people.
- I don't mind following orders.

Question 8.

- I find it easy to manipulate people.
- I don't like it when I find myself manipulating people.

Question 9.

- I insist upon getting the respect that is due to me.
- I usually get the respect that I deserve.

Question 10.

- I don't particularly like to show off my body.
- I like to show off my body.

Question 11.

- My body is nothing special.
- I like to look at my body.

Question 12.

- I try not to be a show off.
- I will usually show off if I get the chance.

Question 13.

- I expect a great deal from other people.
- I like to do things for other people.

Question 14.

- I will never be satisfied until I get all that I deserve.
- I take my satisfactions as they come.

Question 15.

- Compliments embarrass me.
- I like to be complemented.

Question 16.

- I have a strong will to power.
- Power for its own sake does not interest me.

Question 17.

- I don't care about new fads and fashions.
- I like to start new fads and fashions.

Question 18.

- I like to look at myself in the mirror.
- I am not particularly interested in looking at myself in the mirror.

Question 19.

- I really like to be the center of attention.
- It makes me uncomfortable to be the center of attention.

Question 20.

- Being an authority doesn't mean that much to me.
- People always seem to recognize my authority.

Question 21.

- I would prefer to be a leader.
- It makes little difference to me whether I am a leader or not.

Question 22.

- I am going to be a great person.
- I hope I am going to be successful.

Question 23.

- I am a born leader.
- Leadership is a quality that takes a long time to develop.

Question 24.

- I get upset when people don't notice how I look when I go out in public.
- I don't mind blending into the crowd when I go out in public.

Question 25.

- I am much like everybody else.
- I am an extraordinary person.

[Prev](#)[Next](#)

Exit Page (Survey Completed)



Academic Research Study
concerning
*'Factors That Affect How Employees
View Coaching Feedback'*

Exit this survey

Neil Dempster
PhD Candidate
Northcentral University

Feedback Receptivity

Exit Page (Survey Completed)

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Your anonymous responses will be added to the responses from other individuals and help add to the body of knowledge about coaching and feedback methods in the workplace.

If you are interested in reviewing a summary of the outcome of this research study, please go to www.DempsterResearch.info. The actual date that this summary will be available depends on many factors, including when all the data is collected. The web site will post an approximate date that will be periodically updated.

Click 'Next' to exit this survey.



78%

Prev Next

Exit Page (No Consent)

	<p>Academic Research Study concerning <i>'Factors That Affect How Employees View Coaching Feedback'</i></p> <p>Neil Dempster PhD Candidate Northcentral University</p>	Exit this survey
Feedback Receptivity		
Exit Page (No Consent)		
<p>Thank you for the time you invested here today considering whether or not to participate in this research study. I respect your decision to not participate.</p>		
<p>If you would like to re-consider and participate in the research study, please use the 'Prev' button to go back and start again or, alternatively, use the same link (url) you used previously.</p>		
<p>Sincerely,</p>		
<p>Neil Dempster PhD Candidate Northcentral University</p>		
		89%
<p>Prev Next</p>		

Exit Page (Occupation Confirmation)



Academic Research Study
concerning
*'Factors That Affect How Employees
View Coaching Feedback'*

Exit this survey

Neil Dempster
PhD Candidate
Northcentral University

Feedback Receptivity

Exit Page (Occupation Confirmation)

Thank you so much for considering this research study. This study is designed only for individuals who are call/contact center telephone and/or Internet agents within hospitality industry reservations centers (e.g., hotel, car rental and airline reservations centers) within the domestic United States of America (USA).

Unfortunately, your current employment and/or job description falls outside of the target audience for this research, so you will be unable to fill out the survey. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Neil Dempster
PhD Candidate
Northcentral University



Prev

Done

Appendix J: Survey Participant Summary Report Web Site



Feedback Receptivity Research Analysis

Thank YOU for participating in my research study.

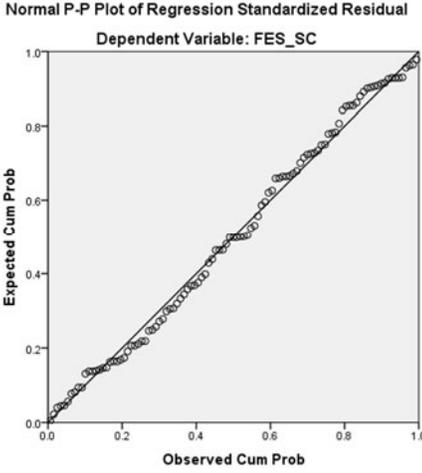
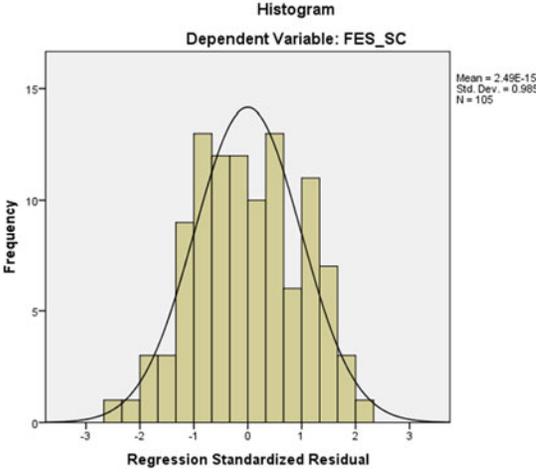
As you may recall, you were invited to participate in a research study being conducted for my dissertation at Northcentral University in Prescott, Arizona. The purpose of the study was to examine factors that impact how employees view feedback they receive from their direct supervisors. The questions in the survey asked your opinions of, and reflections about, your experiences as a recipient of coaching and feedback in a workplace setting, as well as questions about your personality that may influence how you view feedback.

The approximate date that the summary report from this research will be available is **July 15, 2015**. Please check back periodically because this date may change.

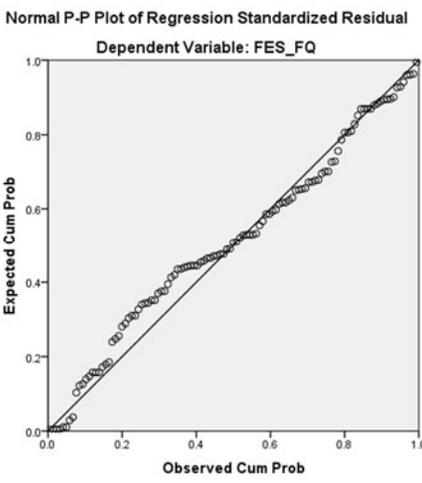
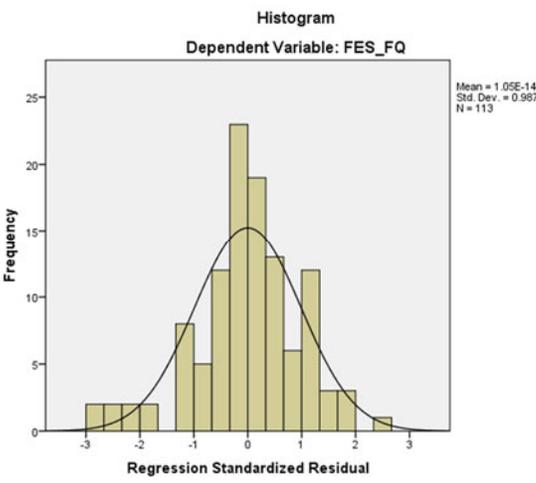
This web site is owned by Neil Dempster, PhD Candidate at Northcentral University

Appendix K: Criterion Variable Tests for Normal Distribution

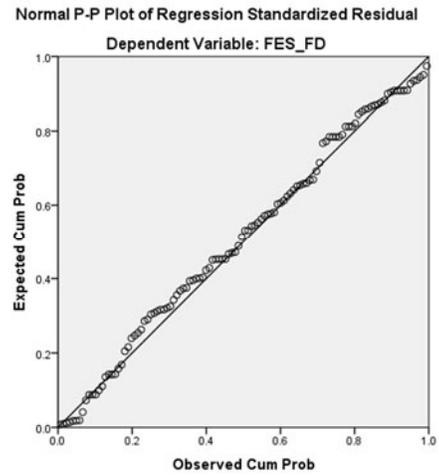
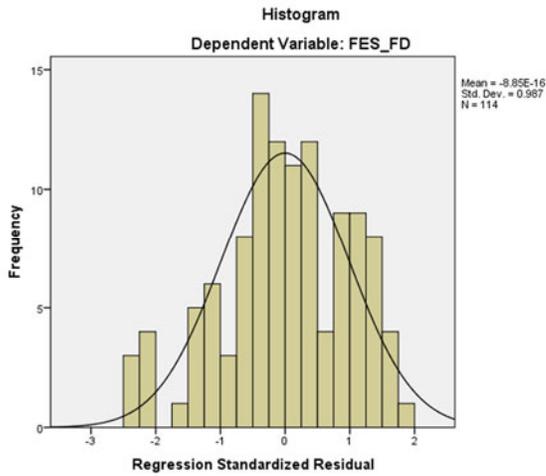
Feedback Source Credibility



Feedback Quality



Feedback Delivery



Motivation to Use Feedback

