THE IMPACT OF HELP-SEEKING ON INDIVIDUAL TASK PERFORMANCE: THE MODERATING EFFECT OF HELPSEEKERS' LOGICS OF ACTION

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ABSTRACT

Drawing from achievement-goal theory and the social psychological literature on help-seeking, we propose that it is the variance in the logic underpinning employees' help-seeking that explains divergent findings regarding the relationship between help-seeking and task performance. Using a sample of 110 newly hired customer contact employees, a prospective study design, and archival performance data, we find that, the help-seeking-performance relationship is indeed conditioned by the help-seeker's help-seeking logic (*autonomous* versus *dependent* logic). High levels of help-seeking are positively related to performance only among those either more strongly endorsing an autonomous help-seeking logic or more weakly endorsing a dependent help-seeking logic.

While employee helping behavior continues to receive a significant amount of attention in the organizational literature (Podsakoff, Whiting, Podsakoff & Blume,. 2009), our understanding of the antecedents and consequences of employee help-*seeking* remains limited (Lee, 1997; 2002; Bamberger, 2009). Defined as an informal, interpersonal activity involving the solicitation of assistance in which individuals deliberately approach others whom they consider to have better skills, capabilities or resources in order to manage some problem (Nadler, 1998; Bamberger, 2009), the relative absence of research on employee help-seeking (herein referred to as HS) is surprising given the recognition that helping is rarely spontaneous behavior, but rather occurs in response to a help-seeker's solicitation of assistance (Anderson & Williams, 1996; Flynn, 2005). To the extent that help has generally positive performance-related implications (Dovidio, Piliavin, Schroeder, & Penner, 2006), logic would suggest a positive association between HS and task performance. However, the handful of studies that have examined the performance-related consequences of such behavior suggest mixed, if not generally detrimental effects (c.f., Stone & O'gorman, 1991; Nadler, Ellis & Bar, 2003).

Such a conundrum has direct practical implications in that the findings noted above leave open the question as to whether employee HS, as a means by which to enhance task performance, should be encouraged or discouraged by managers. In an attempt to resolve this inconsistency in the literature, the current study suggests that the performance-related consequences of employee HS are not universal, but rather depend on the approach individuals take when seeking such assistance. Drawing from achievement-goal theory Dweck, 1986; Farr, Hofman & Ringenbach, 1993; Payne, Youngcourt & Beaubien, 2007) and the literature on the social psychology of HS, we posit that individuals maintain a relatively stable but implicit set of

assumptions regarding how and for what purposes assistance should be solicited. Furthermore, we propose that these implicit assumptions or, as we refer to them below, logics of action (Bacharach, Bamberger & Sonnenstuhl, 1996), characterize an underlying and stable style of HS which, in turn, plays an important role in determining the performance-related implications of HS in the workplace.

Accordingly, consistent with a mastery or learning goal orientation (Dweck, 1986), we propose that to the extent that employees view the solicitation of assistance from others as a means by which to develop their work-related competencies and enhance their mastery over job tasks, higher levels of HS will be associated with enhanced task performance over time. In contrast, consistent with a performance goal orientation (Dweck, 1986), we also propose that to the extent that employees view the solicitation of assistance as a means by which to secure a full solution so as to resolve an immediate task-related problem or challenge, higher levels of HS will be associated with diminished task performance over time. We test this theory using a sample of newly hired workers employed in four customer contact (i.e., call) centers.

THE IMPACT OF HELP-SEEKING ON TASK PERFORMANCE

Theory suggests several reasons why HS should have significant performance-related benefits. First, by soliciting the assistance of others, employees may enhance their ability to more effectively and efficiently solve problems (Ellis & Tyre, 2001), make better and/or quicker decisions (Eisenhardt, 1989), reduce uncertainty and performance-impeding stress (West, 2000), and acquire critical knowledge and competencies (Leonard- Barton, 1989). Additionally, to the degree that employees do not hesitate to seek needed assistance as problems emerge, the more significant and often more costly side-effects associated with problem denial or neglect may be

avoided (Bamberger, 2009). Hence, to the extent that helping has been found to have a generally positive impact on performance (Podsakoff et al., 2009), and that most helping interactions are initiated on the basis of HS (Flynn, 2005), a generally positive association between HS and performance may be assumed.

However, HS may also be associated with significant instrumental and psychological costs, with some of these costs ultimately influencing the individual's task performance. For example, HS is not an effortless activity. Indeed, in order to secure the most effective assistance, help seekers must allocate significant time and energy resources in order to identify the appropriate help-giver and soliciting his/her assistance (Tyre & Orlikowski, 1994). To the extent that such resources are allocated towards HS and are unavailable for direct task-related activity, individual task performance may suffer. Performance may further suffer as a result of the resources that help-seekers must ultimately allocate to providing assistance to those from whom they seek help (Mueller & Kamdar, 2011). Additionally, HS may pose a direct threat to the individual's sense of self-efficacy (Nadler, 1991, Lee, 2002), in that by soliciting assistance, one must implicitly admit inferiority (Ames & Lau, 1982) or incompetence (Karabenick & Knapp, 1988), and/or accept dependence on someone else (Druian & DePaulo, 1977). And to the extent that self-efficacy has a direct influence on performance (Eden, 1990), these psychological costs can also exert an instrumental toll in the form of diminished task performance. Finally, the HS benefits noted above are only likely to emerge only to the extent that the help solicited is actually provided. To the extent that frequent and recurring help requests require potential help providers to reallocate time and effort resources away from their own task-oriented activities, higher levels of HS may be viewed as "nagging", generate animosity and generally reduce potential providers' motivation to be forthcoming.

As noted earlier, while the literature on the performance-related implications of HS is limited, these contradictory effects of HS on performance have been noted. For example, Nadler et al. (2003), found the relationship between the frequency of HS and performance to be curvilinear, with HS having positive effects on supervisory performance evaluations up to a point, but with more excessive levels of HS being associated with diminished performance. These researchers conclude that it is the simple frequency of HS that determines its net effects on performance, with excessive help solicitation reflecting "a maladaptive behavioral pattern of habitual reliance" posing a drain on individual and peer resources with little instrumental gain. In contrast, others argue that the impact of HS intensity on performance depends on the nature of the help that is being sought. For example, Stone & O'gorman (1991) demonstrate that while the degree of HS on more difficult tasks yields positive performance consequences, the same is not true for HS for simple matters. Still, to date researchers have yet to identify a common factor that might both explain these divergent effects, and take into account the two explanations noted above.

THE MODERATING EFFECT OF HELP-SEEKING LOGICS

Taken-for-granted, implicit beliefs regarding the likely consequences of seeking help provide potential help-seekers with a "logic of action" or cognitive framework for making sense of situations in which help solicitation may serve as a means by which to cope with a work-related challenge (Levy, Chiu & Hong, 2006). Bacharach et al. (1996: 477-8) define logics of action as the assumed means-ends relations underlying organizational members' displayed or self-perceived behavioral tendencies. Similar to naïve (Anderson & Lindsay, 1998), lay (Furnham, 1988) and implicit (Levy, Stroessner & Dweck, 1998) theories, logics of action are schema-like

knowledge structures that allow for a priori prediction (Bacharach, Bamberger & McKinney 2000), and let individuals process stimulus cues and choose subsequent responses with relatively little effort (Ross, 1989). However, unlike scientific theories and more like institutions, they tend to be enduring and stable even in the face of disconfirming evidence, manifesting themselves in the form of stable and enduring behavioral tendencies (Anderson & Lindsay, 1998).

In an important application of such schema-like structures, achievement-goal theory (see Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Payne et al., 2007) suggests that individuals frame similar achievement situations in the context of different goals, with these goals systems serving as the basis of logics of action, and these logics, in turn, "generating individual differences in behavior" (Dweck & Leggett, 1988: 257). Achievement-goal theory places primary attention on two broad types of goals, namely mastery (or learning) goals, and performance goals, with each reflecting a different set of assumptions regarding the mutability of one's competencies. In situations demanding that individuals turn to others for assistance, achievement-goal theory suggests and finds that those with a mastery-oriented logic of action will view such situations as "opportunities to increase their competence" (Dweck & Leggett, 1988: 259), and seek help that facilitates understanding and learning, allowing for independent action in the future. In contrast, those with a performance-oriented logic of action will view these same situations as implicit tests of their competence, and thus tend to engage in more expedient HS aimed at getting others to solve the immediate problem for them (Butler, 1998; 2006).

Research in educational psychology suggests that such HS logics may develop already at a very early age. For example, Arbreton's (1998) research suggests that children who assume HS will provide quick and easy solutions to task-related

challenges are likely to develop a tendency to ask for help too quickly without first trying to work on the task themselves. In contrast, those who view HS as a means by which to achieve independent mastery are likely to tend to seek help more selectively and in a manner that allows for learning as opposed to immediate problem resolution.

Extending these ideas beyond the educational context, Nadler (1997, 1998; Nadler, Harpaz-Gorodiesky & Ben-David, 2009) differentiates between two orthogonal logics among those engaging in HS. Paralleling the performance goal orientation, a dependent HS logic is characterized by very high levels of maladaptive HS focused on immediate problem resolution. Underlying this tendency is likely to be an overweighting of the more immediate, instrumental benefits of HS and an underweighting of the potential costs to oneself and those from who help is being solicited. In contrast, paralleling the learning orientation, an autonomous HS logic is characterized by a tendency to focus on the achievement of independent mastery in order to maximize the longer-term benefits of help-solicitation and minimize the instrumental and psychological costs.

To date, we are unaware of any research that has empirically validated this framework of HS logics and the behavioral tendencies which they are likely to manifest. Nevertheless, to the extent that they describe the implicit assumptions regarding HS that individuals bring to the workplace, they are likely to condition the impact that HS has on individual task performance, and as such reconcile the inconsistencies noted earlier with regard to the impact of HS on individual task performance. More specifically, we propose that dependent and autonomous HS logics will largely determine the impact that HS has on individual task performance.

Individuals engaging in HS on the basis of a more dependent HS logic do so in the interests of expediency, with the intent of finding an immediate solution to some

work-related problem and with little interest in developing competencies or mastery. While the assistance that is provided in response to the help solicitation may indeed provide a solution to the immediate problem, it is likely to only encourage additional rounds of help solicitation if and when the problem emerges again. Thus, individuals maintaining more dependent logics of HS are likely to have little choice but to engage in repetitious HS activity, drawing attention away from their primary activities. This drain on performance-dependent resources may be exacerbated to the extent that those receiving repetitive requests for assistance may become increasingly reluctant to accede to such requests, forcing dependent help-seekers to draw even greater resources away from direct task activity as they engage in multiple solicitation attempts before receiving the necessary help. Additionally, concerned with the potentially negative implications of repeated requests for help from that person most capable of solving the problem, dependent help-seekers may diffuse their requests among those less able but more willing to assist them. To the extent that the assistance gleaned in such a manner may be of lower quality, help-seekers' task performance may be further compromised. However, with HS among those less strongly endorsing a dependent HS logic less likely to incur such performance-related costs, the net performance-related consequences of such behavior are more likely to be more positive. Accordingly, we posit that: (*Hypothesis 1): The impact of HS on task performance is moderated by the degree to which individuals endorse a dependent logic of HS, such that HS's impact on task performance is (H1a) more negative as a function of the degree to which they more strongly endorse a dependent HS logic and (H1b) more positive to the degree to which they more weakly endorse such a logic.*

In contrast, individuals engaging in HS on the basis of a more autonomous HS logic typically do so with a desire to gain access to the unique expertise, experience,

and insights of those with recognized competencies in the domain in which they feel challenged, and with the general aim of gaining understanding and mastery (Gray & Meister, 2004; Nadler, 1997; 1998). Typically, such HS is characterized by a request for insights and explanations aimed at facilitating the development of those competencies required in order to develop a sense of independent mastery. While HS on the basis of an autonomous logic may initially require the allocation of greater effort and time than that based on a dependent logic, because these resources are targeted towards the development of competencies allowing for independent problem solution in the future, the likelihood that the help-seeker will need to repeatedly request similar help in the future is substantially lower. Moreover, given that HS based on an autonomous logic focuses on learning and mastery, to the extent that the competencies enhanced as a result of the help-solicitation are task-related, in the longer-term it is likely that the task performance of the help seeker will improve. However, with HS among those less strongly endorsing an autonomous HS logic less likely to generate such performance-related benefits, given the inherent costs of HS noted above, the net performance-related consequences of such behavior are likely to be more negative. Accordingly, we posit (*Hypothesis 2*): *The impact of HS on task performance is moderated by the degree to which individuals endorse an autonomous logic of HS, such that HS's impact on task performance is more positive as a function of the degree to which they (H2a) more strongly endorse an autonomous HS logic and (H2b) more negative to the degree to which they more weakly endorse such a logic.*

METHOD

Sample and Procedure.

Participants were 112 newly-hired customer service agents employed over the 6 month period over which we collected our data in the call centers of an Israeli

telecommunications firm and responsible for handling service inquiries as well as (when possible) opportunizing on these inquires to sell products (e.g., phones, pay plans) or value-added services. Two of these agents were subsequently excluded due to missing age data. Deployed in 22 work groups nested in 4 call centers (mean team size was 18.58 workers [$SD = 1.76$]), all participants (n=110; 71% female, mean age = 23.8) were matriculating college students that had completed 2 or more years of military service but had no prior customer contact center work experience.

Survey data were collected one month after the participants began work (Time 1; n =221; response rate = 100%) and six months after that (Time 2; n = 110; retention rate = 50%; in all but 2 cases drop-out was due to voluntary turnover). Archival performance data were collected at the end of agents' 1st (T1), and 7th month of employment (T2). To rule out the possibility of bias stemming from attrition-based range restriction, we conducted t-test analyses comparing the mean scores on T1 assessments of HS logics and performance of those retained (n=110) versus dropped (n=111) from the sample. Findings indicated that there were no significant differences between the two groups with respect to any of these variables.

Measures

Individual task performance was assessed at T1 and T2 on the basis of archival data regarding the average number of calls handled per hour by the participant in the past month. *Task-related help-seeking* was measured on the basis of participant self-reports of the degree to which they solicited assistance from their work group peers. Rather than asking participants to assess their overall level of HS activity, we applied a target-specific approach similar to that used by Bowler & Brass (2006). Based on providing a roster of the names of unit members and asking participants to answer a common set of questions

about each person on the roster, this approach is a common technique for

obtaining more reliable measures of interpersonal relations (Marsden, 1990;

Labianca, Brass & Gray, 1998). Accordingly, at the end of their 7th month on

the job (i.e., T2), we asked unit members to assess the degree (1 = not at all) to

(7 = great extent) to which they sought task-related help (i.e., "assistance with

technical or practical work-related problems") from their fellow members

during the previous month. We then calculated the mean level of target-

specific HS across each participant's coworkers, with that mean serving as our

indicator of that individual's average level of task-related HS. *Autonomous

and dependent help-seeking logics* were assessed at T1 on the basis of

participants' self-reported HS tendencies in that, as noted above, Bacharach et

al. (1996) argue that actors' self-perceived behavioral tendencies reflect the

logics underlying their actions. To assess these tendencies, we applied an

unpublished instrument originally developed by Harpaz-Gorodeisky & Nadler

(Nadler, 2009). Participants were asked to: "think about how they *typically*

cope with the challenges they confront at work" and then indicate their level

of agreement -- using a 7-point scale ranging from -3 (strongly disagree) to +3

(strongly agree) -- with 13 statements (presented in the Appendix) reflecting

alternative coping methods. Seven items assessed dependent HS tendencies

(α=.80) , and six items tapped the autonomous HS tendencies (α=.80).

In testing our hypotheses, we controlled for a number of additional variables.

First, we applied Allison's (1990) regressor variable method, in which Y_2 (i.e.,

performance at T2) is regressed on both Y_1 (i.e., performance at T1) and X (i.e. HS),

in order to capture the effect of the latter on T2 performance above and beyond that of

T1 performance. Second, we controlled for several individual difference and

situational variables with previously demonstrated effects on performance, namely: age and age² (proxies for work experience; Haberfeld, 1992), gender (Snipes, Thomson & Oswald, 2006), team size (Cohen & Bailey, 1997), and mean strength of participant's friendship relations with team members (friendship relations; Cross & Cummings, 2004). Age, gender and workgroup size data were drawn from archival sources. Finally, using an approach similar to Granovetter (1973), at time T2, participants were provided with a list of the names of their fellow group members and asked to rate on a 0 (never) to 5 (very frequent) scale the frequency with which they have "friendly conversations with each one on topics or issues that are not work related." Friendship relations were then calculated as the sum of group members' scores for participant/(n-1), where "n" = the number of group members.

Data Analysis

Hypotheses were tested using a mixed model approach in order to account for the nesting of participants in teams within call centers. Accordingly, our models took into account the correlation between individuals from the same team and same call center by estimating the variance of team- and unit- level intercepts in each model tested. We centered the variables involved in all interaction terms prior to their incorporation into a given model (Aiken & West, 1991). The relative predictive utility of each model was assessed on the basis of the significance of the variance-based pseudo-R^2 calculated according to the recommendations of Xu (2003) and Edwards, Muller, Wolfinger, Qaqish & Schabenberger (2008).

RESULTS

A confirmatory factor analysis provided empirical support for the distinction between autonomous and dependent HS logics. More specifically, the results

indicated that a two-factor model (see Appendix for factor loadings) was significantly better fitting with the data (SRMR= .08, RMSEA= .05, CFI= .96, NNFI=.95) than a single-factor model, in which the two logics are combined (SRMR= .14; RMSEA= .14; CFI= .64; NNFI= .54; $\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = 125.45, p< .0001).

Means, standard deviations and the correlations among the remaining variables are presented in Table 1. Notable are the moderate correlations among the two HS logics (r= -.20, p<.05), between the two logics and performance at T1 (r=.20 and -.22 for autonomous and dependent logics respectively, p<.05), and between the dependent HS logic and performance at T2 (-.21, p<.05).

Results of our hypothesis testing are presented in Table 2. As is evident in Models 2 and 3, both HS and dependent HS logic are unrelated to performance. In contrast, autonomous logic is inversely associated with task performance (est. = -.49, p<.01). Most significant, however, are the results of our tests for the hypothesized interactions (see Model 4), indicating support for both Hypothesis 1 (dependent logic; estimate = -.72; p<.05) and Hypothesis 2 (autonomous logic; est. = .60; p<.05). In order to confirm the nature of these interactions, we estimated the simple slopes of the HS-performance relationship for those more strongly (+1 SD) and more weakly (-1 SD) endorsing a dependent HS logic (while assuming autonomous HS logic to be at the mean). The results (see Figure 1) indicate that, as suggested by H1a, among those more weakly endorsing a dependent logic, there is a positive association between HS and performance (est. = 1.26; p= <.05) In contrast, among those more strongly endorsing a dependent logic, consistent with H1b, this relationship is negative (est. = -.17), albeit not significant. The simple slopes for those more strongly (H2a) and weakly (H2b) endorsing an autonomous logic (while assuming the dependent logic to be at the mean) indicate that among the former (+1 SD) the HS – performance

relationship is, as hypothesized, positive (est. = 1.15; p= <.05). In contrast, among the latter, the association, while attenuated and negative, is not significant (est. = -.05, n.s.). Accordingly, both hypotheses are only partially supported.

-- -- Tables 1 and 2 and Figures 1& 2 About Here -- --

In order to rule out alternative explanations, we ran three additional, post-hoc analyses. First, we tested the proposition suggested by Nadler et al. (2003), that the inconsistent findings regarding the HS- performance relationship may simply be a function of the overall intensity of HS. According to this proposition, the HS – performance relationship is curvilinear, with moderate levels of HS associated with enhanced performance while low and high levels of HS are associated with poorer performance. Accordingly, we tested: (a) an expanded Model 2 incorporating a parameter for the level of HS^2, and (b) an expanded Model 4, supplementing not only HS^2, but also the interaction of this term with both HS logics. In both cases, while the linear terms noted above remained significant, the parameters incorporating the squared term were not significant (results available from the authors upon request).

The second post-hoc analysis examined whether our findings may be specific to the particular performance criterion examined. Accordingly, we tested our hypotheses (i.e., Model 4) on the basis of a performance dimension capturing a more qualitative aspect of service work, namely the average number of sales (of products and services) made by the agent per hour in the past month. Sales are indicative of qualitative performance in that in order to close a sale, the agent must be able to accurately ascertain and effectively respond to the customer's need, and interact with the customer in such a way as to secure customer agreement. Although archival agent

sales data at Time 2 were available to us from only the largest of the 4 call centers (n= 56), as shown in the right-most column of Table 2, the findings are largely consistent with those reported above with respect to the quantitative performance criterion (i.e., calls answered). More specifically, despite the small sample, a significant interaction was found between HS and autonomous HS logic (estimate = 3.23, p<.01), with the simple slope analyses (see Figure 2) indicating that while HS has a positive effect on sales performance among those more strongly endorsing an autonomous logic (H2a; est. = 2.31; p=.05), it has an inverse effect on sales performance among those more weakly endorsing such a logic (H2b; est. = -4.14; p= <.01). No significant effects were found with respect to the interaction of HS and a dependent HS logic.

Finally, we ran a third post-hoc analysis in order to rule out the possibility that rather than being an antecedent of performance, HS is actually a consequence of it. To do so, we tested a model including the same control variables noted earlier but specifying HS at T2 as the dependent variable, with HS at T1 and performance at T2 as independent variables, and the two HS logics as moderators of the performance → HS relationship. The results of this analysis (available upon request) indicate that both the main (est. =.02) and interactive (est. = .002 and -.009 for autonomous and dependent logic interactions) effects of performance on HS were not significant.

DISCUSSION

The findings reported above are largely consistent with our general proposition that the link between HS and individual task performance is contingent upon help-seekers' logics of action. More specifically, they point to the beneficial effects of HS on both quantitative (calls answered) and qualitative (sales made) performance criteria among those more strongly endorsing an autonomous logic of HS. They also suggest

a more positive impact of HS on quantitative performance among those less strongly endorsing a dependent HS logic, and a more detrimental impact on qualitative performance among those less strongly endorsing an autonomous HS logic.

The fact that the degree to which an autonomous HS logic is endorsed is inversely associated with performance suggests that those endorsing such logics may also embody other characteristics such as inquisitiveness and curiosity that, without regard to HS, may be detrimental to certain forms of task performance such as that required by highly standardized contact center work. Indeed, service agents that ask too many questions or try to learn "more than necessary" may simply be unable to meet the performance criteria laid out for them. To the degree that number of calls handled or sales made largely reflect these criteria , the direct, inverse effect of an autonomous logic is not surprising. However, when these same individuals apply that logic to HS itself, the benefits appear to outweigh the costs. That is, regardless of any spurious but adverse performance outcomes that such a logic may hold for agents, the degree to which they endorse a more autonomous HS logic appears to influence the degree to which HS results in long-term performance enhancement.

From a theoretical perspective, our findings are significant in that they underscore the notion that, while perhaps universally endorsed, HS as it is enacted in the work context cannot always be expected to yield positive, long-term performance benefits for the seeker. Instead, we propose and find that the performance-related consequences of HS for the seeker are largely contingent upon the degree to which such behavior is enacted in the context of a broader, learning orientation. To the extent that help is sought as a means by which to learn and enhance mastery, even more frequent help seeking may be linked with enhanced longer-term performance.

Our findings are also significant from the perspective of achievement-goal theory in two ways. First, they extend the theoretical relevance of goal orientations to employee help-seeking. Although scholars have examined the impact of goal-orientation on a variety of proximate and distal organizational consequences (Payne et al., 2007), the association between goal-orientation and employee search behavior has been largely neglected (the one exception being the study of VandeWalle & Cummings, 1997 examining the impact of goal-orientation on feedback-seeking). To the extent that our conceptualization of HS logics has strong conceptual links to goal-orientation, our findings suggest that such an extension of achievement-goal theory may have important implications not only for understanding the consequences of HS, but also for understanding when and how it is likely to be performed. Second, they suggest that beyond any direct effects that goal-orientation may have on employee performance, such mental frameworks may also moderate the impact that other employee behaviors may have on performance. This is significant in that Payne et al's (2007) review and meta-analysis of the organizational goal-orientation literature makes no reference to how goal orientation may *moderate* person- or situation-specific influences on performance, suggesting that this potentially promising organizational application of goal orientation theory remains relatively undeveloped.

Our findings have important implications for management as well. Perhaps most importantly, they suggest that managers should avoid blindly encouraging employees to seek help whenever the latter deem it necessary. Indeed, as noted above, when enacted among employees more weakly endorsing an autonomous logic, such behavior may actually do more harm to performance than good. Accordingly, our findings suggest that before endorsing such a norm, managers should first attempt to shift employees' HS logics. Like any deep-seated behavioral tendency or learned

decision premise, such logics may be difficult to change. However, in the context of a broader organizational culture that encourages and rewards learning, such logics may be malleable over time (Popper & Lipshitz, 1998). Alternatively, and to the degree that HS is deemed to be a key determinant of success on the job, managers may also seek to consider applicants' general approach to help-seeking when selecting new employees.

Limitations

We would be remiss were we to ignore this study's limitations. One of the most significant limitations has to do with external validity. This study was conducted in Israel, a country known for a high level of collectivism (Hofstede, 1980). Because collectivistic norms may lower the psychological costs of HS, participants may have engaged more freely in such behavior than might be expected in other countries such as the United States. To the extent that the adverse performance consequences of HS based on a dependent logic may only occur above some tipping point of HS intensity, the conditioning effect identified in the current study may not necessarily be generalizable to cultures in which intensive help solicitation is less legitimate.

Similarly, our findings may not be generalizable across all task contexts. Indeed, while our findings suggests that HS on the basis of an autonomous HS logic offers greater performance benefits than that based on a dependent logic, there may be certain task-based situations in which HS enacted on the basis of the latter may offer more positive outcomes. For example, to the extent that employees are engaged in tasks that are dynamic, intensive, highly variable and characterized by time-dependent uncertainties (e.g., a trauma unit in a military field hospital), the costs of learning-based HS may outweigh the benefits. This would suggest that the conditioning role of HS logic on the HS-performance relationship may itself be context-contingent and

that in order to more fully explain when and how HS affects performance, one would have to model a three-way interaction taking into account the nature of the task itself.

Third, for two reasons, our findings may err towards the conservative. First, the small size of our sample increases the risk of Type II error, with the risk particularly salient with regard to the magnitude of the estimated interaction effects (Leon & Heo, 2009). Second, as one of our reviewers noted, the likelihood of finding a positive HS effect on objective performance may be limited in that what some would call HS others might actually view as ingratiation or impression management. Given the questionable association between impression management and objective task performance, any tendency of employees to perceive and/or report such behavior as HS is likely to further increase the probability of finding the null.

Finally, the effect sizes associated with HS and HS logics appear to be of only moderate magnitude. Still, given that effect sizes estimated in the context of hierarchical models reflect the impact of explanatory variables on multiple, level-specific components of variance (with some variables reducing the variance at one level but potentially increasing it at another), it is likely that the absolute size of the effects estimated in the current study are systematically smaller than those typically obtained in single-level linear regression and therefore should not be interpreted according to the same standards (Snijders & Bosker, 1999; Recchia, 2010).

Despite these limitations, the results presented above provide important new insights into the role of HS logics in governing the impact of HS on the seeker's task performance. This is significant not only in that it explains discrepant findings regarding the impact of HS on performance, but also because it demonstrates the conditioning role that logics of action and related phenomena such as lay and implicit theories may have on the consequences of employees' workplace behaviors.

Organizational scholars have recently begun to generate and test theories regarding the *direct* effects of actors' mental schemas on a variety of work-related outcomes (e.g., Bacharach et al., 2000; Detert & Edmondson, In Press). However, ours is among the first studies to posit and demonstrate that such schemas may also *moderate* the impact of workplace behaviors on key workplace outcomes such as individual task performance. Accordingly we encourage future research aimed at identifying other types of employee logics, discerning the manner in which these logics may condition the impact of employee workplace behaviors on a variety of outcomes, and exploring the degree to which these conditioning effects may themselves be context-specific.

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Appendix:
Help-Seeking Logics Measure: Items and Factor Loadings[1,2]

Item	Autonomous	Dependent
1. Encountering a problem when learning something new at work, I generally ask someone with an understanding of the problem to explain the general principal to me so that I will be better able to manage it myself.	**.60** (.58)	
2. I seek that kind of work-based assistance that will allow me to better cope on my own with the work-based problems that I may encounter.	**.66** (.69)	
3. When I encounter a task-related problem at work, I tend to consult with other people, get other perspectives, and then go back to the problem and try to solve it again.	**.50** (.52)	
4. When I encounter a task-related problem at work, I speak with others in order to enhance my ability to handle such issues.	**.73** (.77)	
5. When I encounter a task-related problem at work I ask someone who has encountered similar issues how s/he solved it and try to learn from her/his experience.	**.62** (.57)	
6. I believe that while one should request assistance when encountering a task-related problem at work, one should also not to forget to use their own common sense.	**.63** (.59)	
7. I frequently ask for assistance in solving a problem at work even if I'm able to solve it myself.		**.57** (.58)
8. When I encounter a problem in performing a work task, I frequently ask someone else for the solution.		**.55** (.46)
9. I prefer to rely on someone who really understands the task-related problems that I encounter than try to solve such problems on my own.		**.69** (.68)
10. When I encounter a task-related problem at work, I prefer to seek the assistance of someone who will solve it for me before trying to solve it on my own.		**.67** (.68)
11. The moment I encounter a task-related problem at work that I don't understand, I ask someone else who understands it better than me to solve it for me.		**.56** (.51)
12. I am happy when I can turn to someone who is able to solve my task-related problems and thus save me the energy needed to deal with them on my own.		**.67** (.69)
13. I generally prefer to get others to help me complete a work task than to try to master such tasks on my own.		**.52** (.57)

[1] Loadings in **bold** generated on the basis of an exploratory factor analysis with oblique (promax) rotation. Loadings in parentheses generated on the basis of the CFA.
[2] Source: Nadler (2009)

Table 1

Means, Standard Deviations and Intercorrelations of All Measures (n=110)

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Performance T1	12.56	3.29								
2. Performance T2	13.27	3.31	.78***							
3. Age	23.76	3	-.16	-.24*						
4. Gender [a]	0.29	0.46	.012	-.00	-.01					
5. Work group size	18.63	1.74	.43***	.60***	-.21*	-.14				
6. Friendship relations	1.22	0.88	-.32***	-.29**	.09	-.00	-.33***			
7. Level of help-seeking	0.41	0.43	-.15	-.14	.04	-.05	-.34***	.54***		
8. Autonomous help-seeking tendency	1.77	0.89	.20*	.17	-.15	-.25**	.31***	.04	-.10	
9. Dependent help-seeking tendency	-0.90	1.16	-.22*	-.21*	.16	-.00	-.17	-.08	.18	-.20*

[a] For gender, 0="female"; 1="male"   * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

Table 2

Results of the Regression Analyses of the Association Between Help-Seeking and Performance: calls (n=110) and sales (n=56)

Variable	Model 1:Calls		Model 2: Calls		Model 3: Calls		Model 4: Calls		Model 4a: Sales	
	Estimate	SE	Estimate	SE	Estimate	SE	Estimate	SE	Estimate	SE
Intercept	12.08*	5.66	11.98*	5.7	14.45**	5.55	13.66**	5	-12.99	12.4
Performance TI	.34**	.06	.34**	.06	.34**	.06	.34**	.05	.26**	.06
age	-.36	.40	-.37	.41	-.56	.39	-.49	.36	1.34	.92
age²	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	-.02	.02
Gender[1]	.53	.29	.53	.29	.36	.29	.47	.26	-.00	.51
Work group size[2]	.05	.11	.06	.12	.06	.12	.07	.11	-.19	.35
Friendship relations	.37*	.16	.34	.19	.45*	.20	.35	.18	-.18	.37
Level of Help-seeking			.08	.37	-.01	.37	.55	.40	-.91	.84
Autonomous help-seeking					-.49**	.16	-.49**	.14	-.74*	.37
Dependent help-seeking					-.11	.12	-.16	.10	-.11	.20
Autonomous X Help-seeking level							.60*	.28	3.23**	.96
Dependent X Help-seeking level							-.72*	.35	.17	.64
Pseudo R^2 (Change in R^2)	0.253		0.246 (Δ= -0.007)[3]		0.30 (Δ=0.054**)[3]		0.36 (Δ=0.114**)[4]			

[1] For gender, 0=female; 1=male.   [2] In the current analysis, unit=work group.   [3] Relative to preceding model.   [4] Relative to Model 2   * $p<.05$ ** $p<.01$
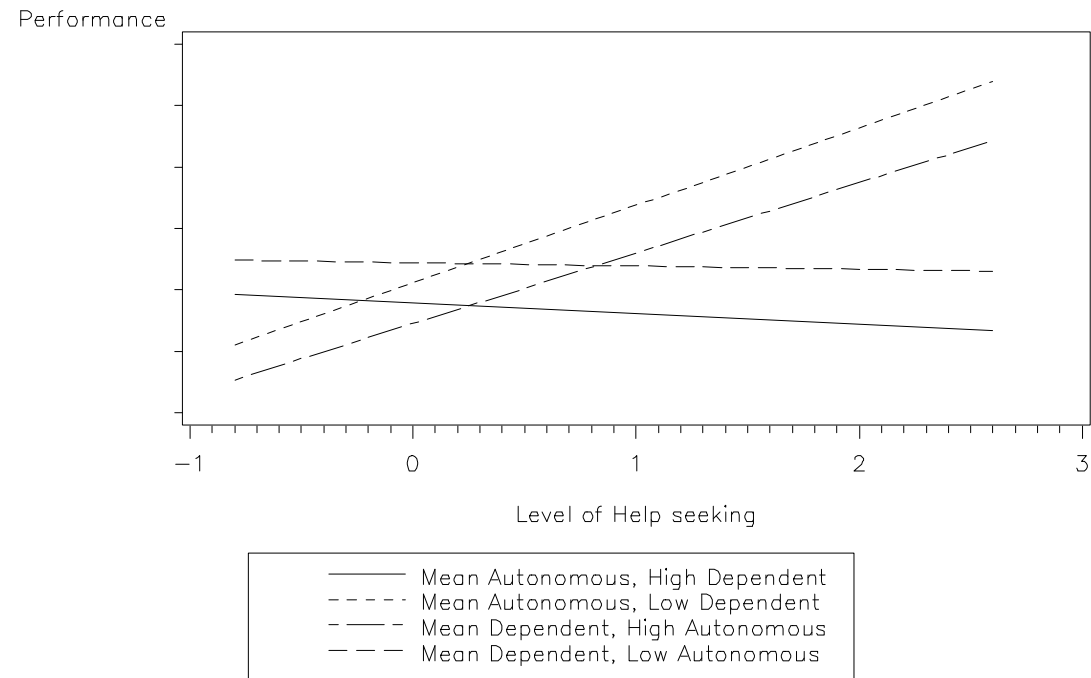
Figure 1. The Differential Effect of Help-Seeking Level on Number of Calls Answered Depending on Help-Seeking Logic
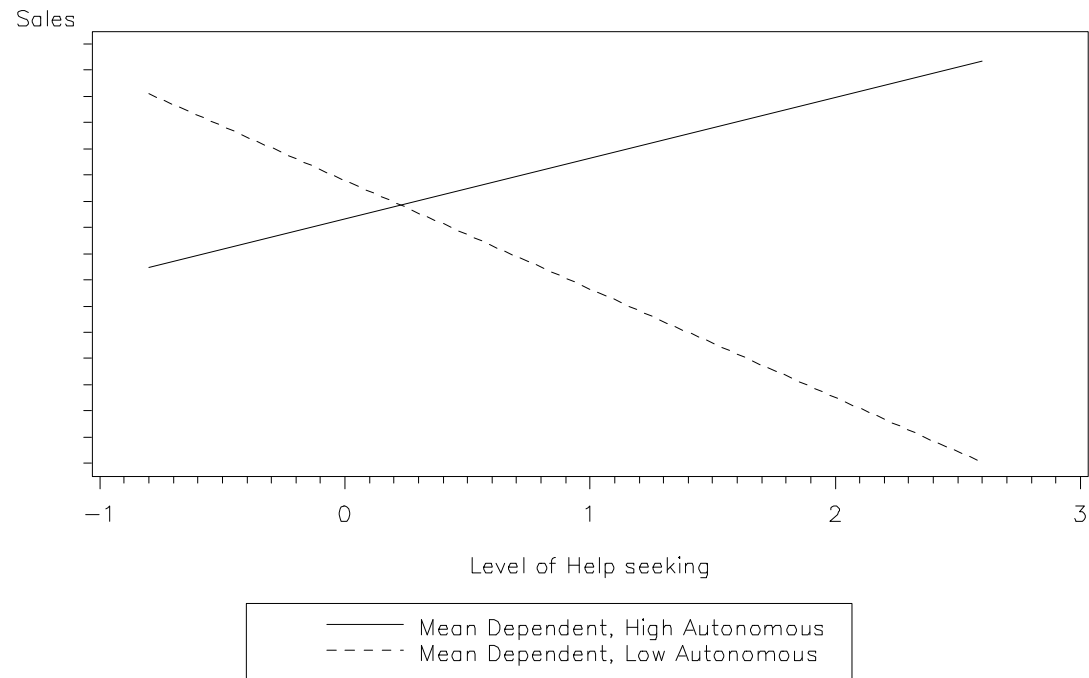
Figure 2. The Differential Effect of Help-Seeking Level on Number of Sales Made Depending on Help-Seeking Logic