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Smart People Ask for (My) Advice: Seeking Advice Boosts Perceptions of Competence

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Although individuals can derive substantial benefits from exchanging information and ideas, many individuals are reluctant to seek advice from others. We find that people are reticent to seek advice for fear of appearing incompetent. This fear, however, is misplaced. We demonstrate that individuals perceive those who seek advice as *more* competent than those who do not. This effect is moderated by task difficulty, advisor egocentrism, and advisor expertise. Individuals perceive those who seek advice as more competent when the task is difficult rather than when it is easy, when people seek advice from them *personally* rather than when they seek advice from others and when people seek advice from experts rather than from nonexperts or not at all.

Keywords: advice; advice seeking; competence; impression management; egocentrism; help seeking

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1. Introduction

Many organizations require their members to complete challenging tasks in novel environments (Geddes et al. 1999, Griffin et al. 2007). In these settings, individuals derive significant benefits from learning information from others (Larrick and Soll 2006, Nadler et al. 2003, Surowiecki 2003). Prior work has often assumed that individuals will seek advice when they need it (Vancouver and Morrison 1995, Wills and DePaulo 1993). In practice, however, individuals routinely fail to seek advice (Lee 1997, Van der Vegt et al. 2006).

Deciding to seek or not to seek advice can have profound consequences, both for the individual and for the broader organization (Haas and Hansen 2007). Although a substantial literature has investigated how people respond to advice when advice is available to them (e.g., Bonaccio and Dalal 2006, Gino 2008, Gino and Schweitzer 2008, Larrick and Soll 2006, Yaniv 2004, Yaniv and Kleinberger 2000), surprisingly little prior work has investigated the critical decision that precedes this process: the decision to *seek* advice.

In this paper, we investigate the interpersonal consequences of seeking advice. This line of inquiry makes several theoretical contributions. First, we break new ground in the advice literature by considering the advisor's perspective and by focusing on the understudied advice-seeking process. Second, we identify a failed mental model with respect to advice seeking. Extant work suggests that seeking help may

reflect an inability to complete tasks independently (e.g., Lee 2002). By contrast, we expect and find evidence that when tasks are difficult, seeking advice *increases* perceptions of competence. Third, we highlight the important role that advisor expertise and egocentrism play in evaluating advice seekers.

1.1. Advice

Prior advice research has largely focused on how individuals *respond* to advice. This work has found that although individuals routinely underweight others' advice (Bonaccio and Dalal 2006, Yaniv 2004, Yaniv and Kleinberger 2000), several factors influence how receptive individuals are to advice, including characteristics of the advisor (Feng and MacGeorge 2006; Sniezek and Buckley 1995; Sniezek et al. 2004; Yaniv 1997, 2004; Yaniv and Kleinberger 2000; Yaniv and Milyavsky 2007), characteristics of the advice (e.g., Goldsmith 1992, 1999; Patt et al. 2006), characteristics of the decision context (e.g., Gardner and Berry 1995, Gibbons et al. 2003, Gino and Moore 2007, Goldsmith 2000), and characteristics of the advice recipient (e.g., Cooper 1991, Gino et al. 2012, See et al. 2011, Tost et al. 2012).

Related research has examined how individuals *give* advice. That work has explored differences between giving advice to another person and making the same decision for oneself (Jonas and Frey 2003, Jonas et al. 2005, Kray 2000, Kray and Gonzalez 1999).

Compared with making decisions for oneself, giving advice to others causes an individual to consider fewer attributes of the decision and to give more weight to socially desirable dimensions (Jonas and Frey 2003, Kray 2000, Kray and Gonzalez 1999).

Surprisingly, prior advice research has largely neglected the decision to *seek* advice. In fact, the dominant experimental paradigm in advice research omits the advice-seeking process altogether. In this paradigm, individuals make an initial judgment, view another person's judgment of the same stimuli, and then revise their initial judgment. Using this paradigm, extant advice research has focused on how people react to unsolicited advice.

A few studies, however, have considered the factors that lead people to solicit advice from others and the type of people they reach out to. These studies have found that decision makers are more likely to seek advice from advisors who are accurate, trustworthy, and accessible than those who are not (Hofmann et al. 2009, Yaniv and Kleinberger 2000). In addition, individuals are more likely to seek advice when they are uncertain about their initial decision (Cooper 1991, Gibbons et al. 2003), when they feel anxious (Gino et al. 2012), when the cost of seeking advice is low (Gino 2008, Schrah et al. 2006), and when the problem is complex (Schrah et al. 2006, Snizek and Buckley 1995).

1.2. Advice Seeking

We conceptualize advice seeking as a type of help-seeking behavior. Hofmann et al. (2009) define help seeking as “the act of asking others for assistance, information, advice, or support” (p. 1262). When an individual seeks help, she is asking others to expend resources (e.g., mental effort, time, money) to benefit herself (Lee 2002). In most cases, the help seeker aims to reduce her costs to achieve a desired outcome (e.g., asking a peer if she can copy his homework or asking a tutor for help; see Nelson-Le Gall 1985). When people seek advice from others, they are asking others to recommend either a solution or a process to address a challenge (e.g., Albrecht and Goldsmith 2003, Gino 2008, Goldsmith and Fitch 1997, Goldsmith and MacGeorge 2000, Harvey and Fischer 1997). For instance, someone considering several job offers might seek advice about which offer to accept or how to reason through the decision.

Advice seeking differs from other help-seeking behaviors in three important ways. First, advice seeking elicits information for a prescriptive course of action. Second, the advice seeker retains agency in the decision process. In other help-seeking domains, the individual seeking help may share or relinquish decision-making control. That is, seeking advice involves asking another person what course of action

he or she would recommend; other forms of help seeking involve asking another person to take action on one's behalf. Third, advice seeking implies congruence between the advice seeker's values and those of the adviser. The advice seeker's willingness to follow the advice is an implicit assumption of advice seeking (Liljenquist 2010). It is important to note that people may seek advice strategically—without the intention of relying on the advice they receive—as an impression management tool. Although seeking advice strategically is likely to be a different experience for the advice seeker than seeking advice with the intention of using it, from the advisor's perspective, strategic advice seeking may elicit the same perceptual effects as authentic advice seeking because the advice seeker's intentions (and her reliance on advice) are often unobservable.

It is also important to distinguish advice seeking from feedback seeking. Although advice seeking and feedback seeking both solicit information from others (see Otero and Graesser 2001, Rioux 2005, Savolainen 1995), the type of information they solicit is very different. The temporal focus of feedback seeking is different from advice seeking, and the nature of the information being sought also differs. Whereas advice seeking solicits help for a current or upcoming problem or decision, feedback seeking solicits information about past performance (see Ashford et al. 2003, Morrison and Bies 1991).

Both advice seeking in particular and help seeking in general are important to organizations. The decision to seek help involves potential costs and benefits for the self and the organization (e.g., Mueller and Kamdar 2011). Existing help-seeking research has largely focused on the intrapsychic consequences of seeking and giving help (Grant and Ashford 2008, Podsakoff et al. 2000). Across many domains, seeking help improves learning, creativity, and performance (e.g., Lee 1997). For example, children who seek help develop better systematic problem-solving skills (Nelson-Le Gall 1981). In organizations, seeking help enables individuals to acquire new skills, achieve better outcomes, and attain higher levels of satisfaction (Tyre 1992, Tyre and Ellis 1993).

To date, little is known about the *interpersonal* consequences of help seeking, such as how help seeking triggers reciprocity (Mueller and Kamdar 2011). This is a surprising omission because help seeking is inherently interpersonal (Anderson and Williams 1996). In a review of the help-seeking literature, Bamberger (2009) calls for a comprehensive understanding of the underlying interpersonal dynamics of help seeking.

The few investigations that have considered the interpersonal effects of help seeking have largely focused on negative consequences. Although advice seeking may be an effective strategy to project warmth

and invoke commitment from an advisor (Liljenquist 2010, Liljenquist and Galinsky 2007), most prior work conjectures that individuals who seek help incur social costs, because they appear incompetent (Karabenick and Knapp 1988, Lee 1997), dependent on others (DePaulo and Fisher 1980, Druian and DePaulo 1977), powerless (Lee 1997), or inferior (Ames and Lau 1982).

We challenge the presumption that seeking advice harms advisors' perceptions of the advice seeker. Instead, we expect advice seekers to derive benefits from seeking advice. Specifically, we expect advisors to perceive individuals who ask for advice as *more* competent than those who do not.

2. Advice Seeking and Impression Management

In this paper, we disentangle two consequences of seeking advice. We separate how seeking advice influences *objective performance* and *impression management*. Although seeking out and relying on advice is likely to improve objective performance, it is unclear how seeking advice influences impression management. Consistent with Lee's (2002) conjecture that seeking help signals an inability to complete tasks independently, individuals may fear that asking for advice may also signal a lack of competence.

Individuals are motivated to manage the impressions they make on others and feel anxious about creating a negative impression. In fact, a substantial amount of social anxiety derives from the innate fear of negative evaluation (e.g., Leary 1983, Weeks et al. 2010). Prior work suggests that powerless individuals are more likely to rely on advice, and individuals may believe that relying on advice signals weakness (Lee 2002, See et al. 2011, Tost et al. 2012). As a consequence of these beliefs, people may be reluctant to seek advice. We expect individuals to avoid seeking advice, even when they would benefit from it, to avoid appearing incompetent.

However, concerns about appearing incompetent may be misplaced. Whereas potential advice seekers may avoid seeking advice because they fear creating a negative impression, seeking advice may actually boost impression management by increasing perceptions of competence. Advisors may positively assess advice seekers, but potential advice seekers may fail to anticipate this. Perspective taking is difficult (Ames et al. 2008, Davis 1983, Epley et al. 2006, Galinsky and Moskowitz 2000), and we consider the possibility that advice seekers misperceive the impression management consequences of seeking advice.

In practice, advice seeking may boost perceptions of competence for several reasons. First, the act of seeking advice may convey wisdom. Seeking advice is an efficient way to gather information (e.g., Tyre and

Ellis 1993), and advisors may recognize this. Second, seeking advice can convey confidence. Although feeling confident decreases advice taking (See et al. 2011, Magee 2009), seeking advice may demonstrate vulnerability and willingness to take a risk, signaling one's confidence about overcoming the potential interpersonal costs of seeking advice (Borgatti and Cross 2003). Third, like being praised or receiving a sincere compliment, being sought for advice can stroke an advisor's ego. By seeking advice, individuals may flatter the advisor and improve the advisor's perceptions of the advice seeker (Cialdini 2001).

2.1. The Moderating Roles of Task Difficulty, Advisor Ego, and Advisor Expertise

We investigate the moderating effects of task difficulty, ego involvement, and advisor knowledge. Task difficulty is a prominent feature of any task and is likely to moderate the relationship between asking for advice and perceptions of competence. Individuals often seek advice when they lack expertise and the decisions they face are difficult (e.g., investment decisions or healthcare decisions; see Gino and Moore 2007). When tasks are difficult, asking for advice may substantially improve decision quality, and the advisor may perceive the decision to seek advice as highly competent. For difficult tasks, the decision to seek advice reflects recognition of one's own limitations and is an effective approach for making good decisions. However, when the task is easy, the advisor may perceive that the advice seeker lacks the competence to complete an easy task and lacks the judgment to discern when imposing on others is a reasonable strategy.

The benefits of seeking advice are also likely to be moderated by advisor ego. In general, people hold positive views of themselves (e.g., Taylor and Brown 1988) and enjoy flattery, even when it is insincere (e.g., Chan and Sengupta 2010, Merkle and Weber 2011). Seeking advice is a gesture that acknowledges the advisor's expertise and can affirm the advisor's positive self-view (e.g., "She thinks I am knowledgeable"). Individuals may believe that their own advice is particularly useful and judge the advice seeker to be especially competent when the advice seeker asks for the advisor's advice specifically. We do not expect to observe the same boost in perceived competence when the advice seeker asks for advice from a third party.

Finally, the benefits of seeking advice are likely to disappear (or even reverse) when the advisor is unambiguously ill-equipped to give advice. We expect that when a potential advisor admits his or her own lack of expertise, then seeking advice from that individual will make the advice seeker seem less competent than not seeking advice at all or seeking advice from someone else.

2.2. The Present Research

We investigate perceptions of advice seeking across eight experimental studies. In Pilot Studies A and B, we explore the impression management concerns that may prevent people from seeking useful advice. Then, in Studies 1–5, we assess the actual impressions people make when they seek advice.

3. Pilot Study A

We conducted two pilot studies to investigate lay beliefs about advice seeking. In Pilot Study A, we survey people's lay beliefs about the interpersonal consequences of seeking advice.

3.1. Method

3.1.1. Participants. We recruited 302 adults via Amazon's Mechanical Turk (142 male; $M_{\text{age}} = 35.40$, $SD = 12.77$) to participate in an online study in exchange for \$0.50. Across all studies, we recruited our sample sizes based on an estimate of effect size $d = 0.2$ and studies powered at 80%.

3.1.2. Procedure. We asked participants to read one of two versions of a scenario in a between-subjects design. In the scenario, the focal actor either did or did not seek advice:

Imagine that you are working on an important project at work. While working on this project, you encounter a problem that you are not sure how to solve. You consider asking a coworker for advice. If you decide [not] to ask a coworker for advice, the coworker will . . .

Participants then predicted how the coworker would perceive their competence by indicating their agreement with three items adapted from Mayer and Davis's (1999) measure of competence ("My partner will think I am very capable of solving problems," "My partner will feel very confident about my skills," and "My partner will think I am well qualified"; $\alpha = 0.83$) on a seven-point scale (ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree).

3.2. Results and Discussion

We found a significant difference in projected perceptions of competence between advice-seeking conditions. Individuals believed their coworker would view them as less competent when they asked for advice ($M = 4.50$, $SD = 0.99$) than when they did not ($M = 5.69$, $SD = 0.75$) ($t(302) = 11.77$, $d = -1.35$, $p < 0.0001$).

In this study, respondents reported that seeking advice from a coworker, compared with not seeking advice, would make them appear less competent. These findings support our prediction that people believe seeking advice harms impression management.

This pilot study required metacognition because participants considered a hypothetical scenario and engaged in perspective taking. In Pilot Study B, we extend our investigation of lay beliefs about advice seeking to a laboratory setting to directly investigate impression management expectations.

4. Pilot Study B

In Pilot Study B, we explore how concerns about impression management influence advice-seeking behavior. Specifically, we investigate whether concerns about creating an impression of incompetence motivate individuals to avoid seeking advice.

4.1. Method

4.1.1. Participants. We recruited 199 students (77 male; $M_{\text{age}} = 20.22$, $SD = 1.54$) from a northeastern university in the United States to participate in a study in exchange for a \$10 show-up fee and additional payment based on performance.

4.1.2. Design and Procedure. We randomly assigned participants to one of two between-subjects conditions: performance versus perception. In both conditions, we asked participants to complete the same seven IQ questions. In the performance condition, we paid them \$1 for each correct answer. In the perception condition, we told participants they would be paid based on their partner's rating of their competence, on a scale from 1 to 7 (\$1 for each point).

Our primary dependent variable was discrete (multiple choice). Before completing a "challenging brain teaser," participants could send a message to their (computer-simulated) partner, who had purportedly completed the brain teaser earlier in the study. We asked participants to choose one of the following message options (an advice-seeking option, a no-message option, and a neutral greeting option):

Send the following message: "Hey, can you give me any advice?"

Send no message.

Send the following message: "Hey, I hope you did well."

Next, participants completed the task. Upon completion of this task, participants in the perception condition indicated the competence rating they expected from their partner using a seven-point scale ("My partner thinks I am competent"). At the end, we paid every participant based on his or her performance.

4.2. Results and Discussion

Participants in the performance condition were more than twice as likely to seek advice than were participants in the perception condition—73.5% versus

32.7% ($\chi^2(1) = 14.49$, $p < 0.001$). By contrast, participants in the perception condition were significantly more likely to send a neutral greeting than were participants in the performance condition—49.5% versus 13.3% ($\chi^2(1) = 21.73$, $p < 0.001$). The likelihood of not sending a message did not differ significantly between groups (13.3% in the performance condition versus 17.8% in the perception condition). An omnibus χ^2 test showed that our manipulation created two significantly different populations overall ($\chi^2(1) = 36.99$, $p < 0.0001$).

Individuals were less likely to seek advice in the perception-incentivized condition, when they were focused on creating an impression of high competence, than in the performance-incentivized condition, when they did not care about impression management. This shows that impression management concerns prevent people from seeking advice. In our next set of studies, we investigate whether this belief is correct: Does seeking advice make an individual seem less competent?

5. Study 1

In Pilot Studies A and B, we explored beliefs and decisions about advice seeking from the advice seeker's perspective. We found that people believe they will create the impression that they are low in competence if they seek advice, and concerns about impression management caused people to seek less advice. In Studies 1–5, we shift our focus from the advice seeker's perspective to the advisor's perspective. We investigate the impressions individuals actually create when they ask for advice. In Study 1, we investigate how being asked for advice influences the advisor's perceptions of the advice seeker's competence.

5.1. Method

5.1.1. Participants. One hundred seventy students (82 male; $M_{\text{age}} = 20.3$, $SD = 1.71$) at a northeastern university in the United States participated in the study in exchange for a \$10 show-up fee and additional payment based on their performance during the study.

5.1.2. Design. We randomly assigned participants to one of two between-subject conditions: advice seeking or no advice seeking. In the advice-seeking condition, a computer-simulated partner asked participants for advice. In the no-advice-seeking condition, a computer-simulated partner did not ask for advice. Although we required each experimental session to have an even number of participants to increase the believability of a dyadic interaction, participants did not interact face-to-face with the other participants in the session.

5.1.3. Procedure. We seated participants in separate cubicles in front of computers with headphones. We presented all of the instructions and experimental tasks on the computer screen. As a cover story, we told participants that we were studying the effects of instant messaging on performance on a difficult brain teaser. We informed participants that they would be matched with an anonymous partner in the room. In reality, the "partner" was a computer-simulated confederate. We told participants that they would complete a brain teaser and then their partner would complete the same brain teaser later in the study. The brain teaser was a series of five "sum-to-ten" problems presented in grids (initially developed by Mazar et al. 2008). Each grid was a 3×3 cell matrix of numbers (e.g., 5.43). We gave participants 45 seconds to find the two numbers in the grid that summed to 10.

Participants were allowed to send two instant messages to their partner during the study. The computer-simulated confederate did not respond directly to the participants' messages. Rather, the computer sent two independent messages. At the beginning of the study, the computer sent the message: "Hey, good luck." Then, after the participants completed the brain teaser, the computer partner sent one of the following two messages: "I hope it went well. Do you have any advice?" in the advice-seeking condition or "I hope it went well" in the no-advice-seeking condition.

Immediately after receiving this message, participants completed dependent measures. Although they knew they would not receive a response, they were allowed to send a message back to the partner (not required) and were paid based on their brain teaser performance (\$1 for each correct grid).

5.1.4. Dependent Measures. Our main dependent measure was perceived competence of the advice seeker. We captured this measure by asking participants to evaluate their partner "even if they did not have a lot of information about them." We used three items to measure competence ("My partner is very capable of solving problems," "I feel very confident about my partner's skills," and "My partner is well qualified"), adapted from Mayer and Davis's (1999) measure of ability. For each item, participants chose a value from a seven-point scale (from 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree). The items were closely related ($\alpha = 0.88$), and we used an average of the three items for our analyses.

As part of our dependent measures, we also asked participants to indicate how likely they would be to ask their partner for advice on a similar problem-solving task using a seven-point scale (from 1 = not likely at all to 7 = very likely). We included this measure for a deeper understanding of the reciprocal nature of advice seeking.

5.2. Results and Discussion

Participants in the advice-seeking condition rated their partner higher on competence than did participants in the no-advice-seeking condition ($M = 3.62$, $SD = 0.67$ versus $M = 3.40$, $SD = 0.58$) ($t(168) = 2.21$, $d = 0.35$, $p < 0.03$). As we predicted, participants who were asked for advice reported that they would be more likely to ask their partner for advice on a similar problem-solving task than did participants who were not asked for advice ($M = 3.75$, $SD = 0.72$ versus $M = 3.36$, $SD = 0.72$) ($t(168) = 3.53$, $d = 0.54$, $p < 0.001$).

We found that perceptions of competence mediated the relationship between being asked for advice and the likelihood of asking the partner for advice (Baron and Kenny 1986). The effect of being asked for advice was significantly reduced (from $\beta = 0.26$, $p = 0.001$ to $\beta = 0.21$, $p < 0.01$) when we included competence in the model, and competence was a significant predictor of the likelihood of asking the partner for advice ($\beta = 0.34$, $p < 0.001$). Including competence increased explained variance significantly by 11% from $R^2 = 0.07$ to $R^2 = 0.18$ ($F(1, 167) = 23.00$, $p < 0.001$). A bootstrap analysis revealed that the 95% bias-corrected confidence interval for the size of the indirect effect excluded 0 (0.016, 0.202), suggesting a significant indirect effect (MacKinnon et al. 2007).

These results demonstrate that, in contrast to lay beliefs, being asked for advice *increases* perceptions of the advice seeker's competence. In Studies 2a and 2b, we test the robustness of this main effect.

6. Study 2a

In Study 2a, we tested the robustness of the link between advice seeking and competence in two ways. First, in Study 1, advice seekers were completely anonymous to the advisors. In Study 2a, we provided participants with prior performance information about their partner. The performance information we provided demonstrated competence (participants who saw the performance information and were not asked for advice rated their partner above the midpoint of the competence scale). The goal of this study was to test whether asking for advice influences perceptions of competence when advisees have more objective information on which to base their judgment.

Second, in Study 2a, we also ruled out the possibility that *any* friendly greeting or inquiry might increase perceptions of competence. To do this, we compared the effects of being asked for advice with receiving a neutral greeting, receiving an affiliation-oriented message, and being asked a nonadvice-related question.

6.1. Method

6.1.1. Participants. One hundred ninety-one students (71 male; $M_{\text{age}} = 20.85$, $SD = 3.44$) at a north-eastern university in the United States participated

in the study in exchange for a \$10 show-up fee and additional payment based on their performance during the study.

6.1.2. Design and Procedure. We seated participants in separate cubicles in front of computers. We told participants that they would complete two sets of 10 brain teaser questions for money (\$0.50 per correct answer). We created the first set of 10 questions such that 7 of the questions were straightforward (e.g., "Who was the first president of the United States?") and 3 of the questions were extremely difficult (e.g., "What is the correct definition of sesquipedalian?"). Consistent with our expectation, all participants scored 7/10 on the first set of questions.

After completing the first set of questions, participants received a message from a computer-simulated partner, who had purportedly scored 6/10 on the first set of questions. Participants received one of the following four messages from the simulated partner: "Hey there. Do you have any advice?" (advice seeking), "Hey there" (neutral greeting), "Hey there. How many classes are you taking this semester?" (solicitous message), and "Hey there. We're in this together" (affiliation message).

Participants then reported perceived competence of their partner (same three-item measure as in Study 1; $\alpha = 0.91$). Next, participants were allowed to send a message to their partner (not required). Finally, participants completed a second set of brain teaser questions, reported their age and gender, and were paid based on their performance.

6.2. Results and Discussion

An analysis of variance with experimental condition as the independent variable and ratings of competence as the dependent variable revealed a significant effect of experimental condition ($F(1, 189) = 22.46$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta^2 = 0.11$). Participants who were asked for advice rated their partner to be higher in competence ($M = 5.40$, $SD = 0.83$) than did participants who received a neutral greeting ($M = 4.67$, $SD = 1.12$) ($t(87) = 3.67$, $d = 0.74$, $p < 0.001$), an affiliation-oriented message ($M = 4.34$, $SD = 1.24$) ($t(80) = 4.90$, $d = 1.00$, $p < 0.001$), or a nonadvice-related question ($M = 4.47$, $SD = 1.14$) ($t(88) = 4.62$, $d = 0.93$, $p < 0.001$). We found no differences in competence ratings among the latter three conditions (all p -values > 0.18).

As in Study 1, participants rated those who asked for advice as more competent than those who did not. Participants also rated those who asked for advice as more competent than those who asked another type of question ("How many classes are you taking this semester?") and more competent than those who made an affiliation-oriented statement ("We're in this together"). Importantly, Study 2a extends the findings of Study 1 into a domain in which participants had

performance information about the advice seeker and viewed them as above the midpoint on competence (even when they did not seek advice).

7. Study 2b

In Study 2b, we tested whether the main effect endures when participants are allowed to rate the advice seeker on attributes other than competence.

7.1. Method

7.1.1. Participants. We recruited 226 students (91 male; $M_{\text{age}} = 20.52$, $SD = 3.03$) from a northeastern university in the United States to participate in the study in exchange for a \$10 show-up fee and additional payment based on their performance during the study.

7.1.2. Design and Procedure. We used the same two-stage brain teaser experimental design as in Study 2a, and we randomly assigned participants to one of two between-subject conditions: advice seeking (“Hey there. Do you have any advice about this task?”) versus no advice seeking (“Hey there”). After completing the first set of brain teaser questions and receiving one of the two messages from the simulated partner, participants rated their partner’s competence (same measure as in Study 1; $\alpha = 0.89$), warmth (“My partner is warm,” “My partner would not knowingly do anything to hurt me,” and “My partner is friendly”; $\alpha = 0.92$), likeability (“My partner is likeable” and “I like my partner”; $\alpha = 0.93$), and social closeness (“I feel close to my partner”). Participants also predicted their own and their partner’s performance in the second set of brain teaser questions (i.e., the number of questions they expected to score correctly out of 10). Finally, participants completed the second set of brain teasers, reported their age and gender, and were paid based on their performance (\$0.50 for every correct answer).

7.2. Results and Discussion

Consistent with our findings in Studies 1 and 2a, we found a main effect of advice seeking on judgments of the advice seeker’s competence. Individuals who sought advice were rated as more competent than those who did not seek advice ($M = 4.88$, $SD = 0.83$ versus $M = 4.51$, $SD = 1.12$) ($F(1, 224) = 8.33$, $d = 0.38$, $p = 0.004$, $\eta^2 = 0.036$). We also found an effect of advice seeking on predictions of the partner’s future performance. Participants expected individuals who sought advice to perform significantly better on the second set of brain teasers than those who did not seek advice (questions correct out of 10, $M = 4.82$, $SD = 0.85$ versus $M = 4.49$, $SD = 1.01$) ($F(1, 224) = 7.19$, $d = 0.35$, $p = 0.008$, $\eta^2 = 0.031$). We

found no significant effects of advice seeking on perceptions of the partner’s warmth ($p = 0.63$), likeability ($p = 0.83$), or social closeness ($p = 0.48$). A partner’s advice-seeking behavior did not influence the predictions participants made about their own future performance ($p = 0.38$).

In Studies 2a and 2b, we document a robust relationship between advice seeking and judgments of competence. Seeking advice boosts perceptions of competence even when evaluators have prior performance information and know that the advice seeker is competent (above the midpoint of the scale) and when they evaluate the advice seeker on dimensions other than competence (e.g., warmth, likeability, social closeness). In addition, we found that seeking advice increased perceived competence compared with a neutral greeting, an affiliative message, or a nonadvice-related inquiry. In Studies 3–5, we investigate moderators of the link between advice seeking and perceptions of competence: task difficulty, advisor egocentrism, and advisor expertise.

8. Study 3

Many characteristics of the task are likely to moderate the influence of asking for advice on perceptions of competence. In Study 3, we investigated an important moderating variable: task difficulty. We expected the boost in perceived competence from seeking advice to be greater for difficult tasks than for easy tasks.

8.1. Method

8.1.1. Participants. We recruited 213 students (99 male, $M_{\text{age}} = 20$, $SD = 1.88$) from a northeastern university in the United States to participate in the study in exchange for a \$10 show-up fee and additional payment based on their performance during the study.

8.1.2. Design and Procedure. We randomly assigned participants to one of four between-subject conditions using a 2 (easy task versus difficult task) \times 2 (advice-seeking versus no-advice-seeking) experimental design.

We seated participants in separate cubicles in front of computers. We presented all the instructions and tasks on the computer screen. As a cover story, we told participants that we were studying the effects of instant messaging on math performance. As in Study 1, we informed participants that they would be matched with an anonymous partner in the room. In reality, the partner was a computer-simulated confederate. We told participants that they would complete a math task and then their partner would complete the same task later in the study.

We randomly assigned participants to complete either an easy or a difficult task. In the difficult task

condition, we used the same task as the one we used in Study 1; we asked participants to complete five sum-to-ten math grids. Each grid had a 3×3 matrix of numbers (e.g., 5.43). We gave participants 45 seconds to find the two numbers in each grid that summed to 10. In the easy task condition, we asked participants to complete five simple addition problems (e.g., “What is $4,325 + 1,122$?”).

Participants were allowed to send two instant messages to their partner during the study. The computer-simulated confederate did not respond directly to the participants’ messages. Rather, the computer sent two independent messages as well. At the beginning of the study, the computer confederate sent the message: “Hey, good luck.” Then, after participants completed the brain teaser, the computer-simulated partner sent one of the following two messages: “I hope it went well. Do you have any advice?” in the advice-seeking condition or “I hope it went well” in the no-advice-seeking condition.

Finally, participants judged their partner’s competence, using the same measures as the ones used in Studies 1 and 2 ($\alpha = 0.87$). We then asked participants their age and gender and paid them based on their performance (\$1 for each correctly solved problem).

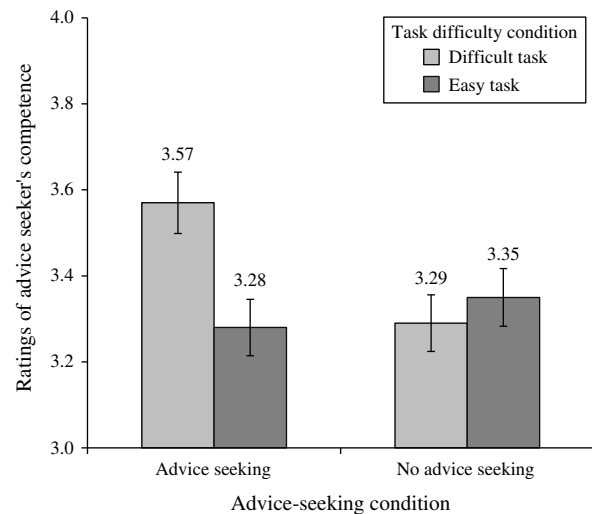
8.2. Results

8.2.1. Task Difficulty. We conducted a separate pilot study ($N = 62$) to assess our manipulation of task difficulty. A nonoverlapping sample of participants rated the difficulty of both tasks and confirmed that the difficult task was in fact more difficult than the easy task ($p < 0.001$). In addition, participants in the main study solved more problems correctly in the easy task condition ($M = 4.96$ out of 5, $SD = 0.21$) than in the difficult task condition ($M = 4.02$ out of 5, $SD = 1.05$) ($F(1, 211) = 70.22$, $d = 1.24$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta^2 = 0.25$).

8.2.2. Perceived Competence. The interaction between advice seeking and task difficulty on the perceived competence of the advice seeker was significant ($F(1, 209) = 5.19$, $p < 0.03$, $\eta^2 = 0.02$). In the difficult task condition, participants who were asked for advice rated their partner higher in competence than did participants who were not asked for advice ($M = 3.57$, $SD = 0.49$ versus $M = 3.28$, $SD = 0.57$) ($t(121) = 3.03$, $d = 0.55$, $p < 0.01$). In the easy task condition, competence ratings did not differ between advice-seeking conditions ($p = 0.72$). We depict these results in Figure 1.

Across conditions in this study, we found a marginal main effect of advice seeking on perceptions of competence. Participants who were asked for advice rated their partner to be higher in competence ($M = 3.53$, $SD = 0.51$) than did participants who were

Figure 1 Task Difficulty Moderates the Effect of Advice Seeking on the Perceived Competence of the Advice Seeker (Study 3)



Note. Error bars represent standard error.

not asked for advice ($M = 3.38$, $SD = 0.53$), but the difference was only marginally significant ($F(1, 209) = 3.05$, $d = 0.29$, $p < 0.08$, $\eta^2 = 0.01$). The main effect of task difficulty on competence was not significant ($F(1, 209) < 1$, $p = 0.43$, $\eta^2 = 0.003$).

8.3. Discussion

In Study 3, we found that task difficulty moderated the relationship between seeking advice and perceptions of competence. When the task was difficult, seeking advice increased perceptions of competence. However, when the task was easy, asking for advice did not increase perceptions of competence. Notably, when the task was easy, seeking advice did not harm perceptions of competence.

9. Study 4

In Study 4, we explored the moderating role of egocentrism. Most people hold a positive view of themselves and enjoy flattery, even when it is insincere (e.g., Chan and Sengupta 2010, Merkle and Weber 2011). The act of seeking advice acknowledges the advisor’s expertise and can affirm the advisor’s positive self-view (e.g., “She thinks I am knowledgeable”). We expect this affirmation process to influence the advisor’s assessment of the advice seeker. As a consequence, the impression management effects of advice seeking are particularly likely to influence advisors who are directly asked for advice. That is, we expect seeking advice to boost perceptions of competence more when raters are themselves asked than when raters observe individuals seeking advice from others.

9.1. Method

9.1.1. Participants. We asked 114 students and staff members (52 male; $M_{\text{age}} = 22.03$, $SD = 6.23$) at a

southeastern university in the United States to participate in the study in exchange for a \$2 show-up fee and additional payment based on their performance during the study.

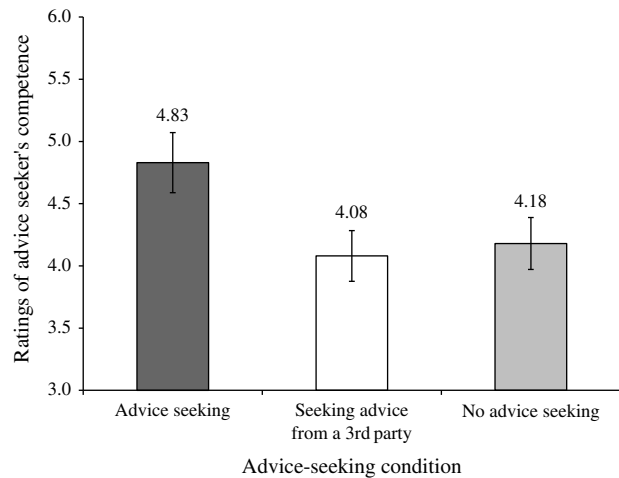
9.1.2. Design and Procedure. We used a procedure similar to the one we used in Study 3. In this study, we used the difficult version of the math task only, and we randomly assigned participants to one of three conditions: advice seeking, no advice seeking, or seeking advice from a third party. After completing the math task, participants in all conditions received the following instructions: “The computer has allowed your partner to write a message. Your partner is allowed to write a message to you or to another participant in the lab. Please wait while your partner writes his/her message.” Across conditions, we varied the type of message participants saw. Participants in the advice-seeking condition received the following message from their partner: “I hope it went well. Do you have any advice?” In the no-advice-seeking condition, the message read: “I hope it went well.” In the seeking-advice-from-a-third-party condition, participants learned that their partner sent a message to *another* participant that read, “I hope it went well. Do you have any advice?”

Next, we asked participants to assess their partners’ competence ($\alpha = 0.91$) using the same measures as those we used in Studies 1–3. We also asked participants to evaluate their partners’ fear of negative evaluation with a 12-item, 7-point scale adapted from Leary (1983); e.g., “My partner is concerned about others forming bad impressions of him/her” (from 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree; $\alpha = 0.92$). To measure the role of advice-seeking in boosting an advisor’s ego, we also asked participants to rate their *own* self-confidence with a four-item, seven-point scale adapted from Bandura (1990); e.g., “I am able to make good judgments” (from 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree; $\alpha = 0.93$). Finally, participants answered demographic questions (age and gender), and we then paid them based on their performance.

9.2. Results

9.2.1. Perceived Competence. As we found in Studies 1–3, asking for advice boosted perceived competence. Participants’ perceptions of their partners’ competence varied across conditions ($F(2, 111) = 5.04$, $p < 0.01$, $\eta^2 = 0.08$). Post hoc tests (with Bonferroni corrections) indicated that ratings of competence were higher in the advice-seeking condition ($M = 4.83$) than they were in both the seeking-advice-from-a-third-party condition ($M = 4.08$, $p < 0.02$) and the no-advice-seeking condition ($M = 4.18$, $p < 0.04$). We found no significant differences between the seeking-advice-from-a-third-party and the no-advice-seeking

Figure 2 Egocentrism Moderates the Effect of Advice Seeking on the Perceived Competence of the Advice Seeker (Study 4)



Note. Error bars represent standard error.

conditions ($p < 0.50$). We depict this pattern of results in Figure 2.

9.2.2. Fear of Negative Evaluation. Across conditions, participants also rated their partner differently with respect to fear of negative evaluation ($F(2, 111) = 4.36$, $p < 0.02$, $\eta^2 = 0.07$). Ratings of the partner’s fear of negative evaluation were higher in the seeking-advice-from-a-third-party condition than they were in both the advice-seeking condition ($p < 0.03$) and the no-advice-seeking condition ($p < 0.05$), but they did not differ significantly in these latter two conditions.

9.2.3. Mediation. To test our prediction that being sought for advice boosts the advisor’s ego, we examined participants’ ratings of their *own* self-confidence as a mediator of the effect of advice seeking on perceived partner competence. We conducted regression analyses with advice-seeking condition as the independent variable, perceived competence as the dependent variable, and advisor self-confidence as the mediating variable. We controlled for the number of answers participants scored correctly on the math task. The effect of seeking advice on perceived partner competence was significantly reduced (from $\beta = 0.23$, $p < 0.04$ to $\beta = 0.15$, $p = 0.15$) when participants’ own self-confidence was included in the equation, and participant self-confidence was a significant predictor of perceived partner competence ($\beta = 0.27$, $p < 0.02$). Including one’s own self-confidence in the model significantly increased explained variance from $R^2 = 0.15$ to $R^2 = 0.21$ ($F(1, 78) = 6.20$, $p < 0.02$). A bootstrap analysis revealed that the 95% bias-corrected confidence interval for the size of the indirect effect excluded 0 (0.031, 0.432), suggesting a significant indirect effect (MacKinnon et al. 2007).

9.3. Discussion

As in Studies 1–3, we found that being asked for advice increased perceptions of the advice seeker's competence. However, this boost in perceived competence occurred only when the rater was *personally* asked for advice, not when a third party was asked for advice. Seeking advice increased the self-confidence of the advisor, which in turn boosted the advisor's positive perceptions of the advice seeker. These results suggest that being asked for advice is flattering, which causes people to view advice seekers more positively (i.e., "He was smart to ask for my advice because I am smart").

10. Study 5

In Study 5, we explored a third moderator: advisor expertise. In Study 4, the act of seeking advice seemed to implicitly acknowledge the advisor's expertise, ingratiating the advice seeker to the advisor. But what if the advisor was clearly not an expert? We expected that seeking advice would boost perceptions of competence when advisors are self-proclaimed experts, but seeking advice may harm perceptions of competence when advisors are clearly not experts. We explore this boundary condition in Study 5 by asking participants to identify personal areas of expertise and weakness and by having people ask for advice on a decision-making task that the advisor has not completed him- or herself.

10.1. Method

10.1.1. Participants. We recruited 250 American adults via Amazon's Mechanical Turk (149 male; $M_{\text{age}} = 31.44$, $SD = 9.95$) to participate in an online study in exchange for \$1.50.

10.1.2. Design and Procedure. In this study, participants answered questions about their own areas of expertise and areas of weakness before being asked for advice in an area of personal strength (expert-advisor condition), being asked for advice in an area of personal weakness (nonexpert-advisor condition), or not being asked for advice at all (no-advice-seeking condition). We conducted this study on Amazon's Mechanical Turk, and we included two stringent reading and comprehension checks to ensure participant engagement. If participants failed either of the reading checks, they were not allowed to complete the study.

After participants passed both reading checks, we asked them about their areas of personal expertise. First, we asked them to list up to six musical instruments they knew how to play or had played in the past. Second, we asked them to select the U.S. states in which they had lived, traveled, or visited regularly. Third, we asked them to list up to six sports

they watched or played regularly. Finally, we asked them to indicate which of the three categories (musical instruments, U.S. geography, or sports) they were most and least knowledgeable about.

Next, we told participants that they were placed in groups of four (i.e., with three other concurrent participants) and that one person in their group would be randomly selected to "complete a brain teaser that is comprised of ten questions that measure knowledge, creativity, and intelligence." In reality, the brain teaser did not exist, and we told all participants the following:

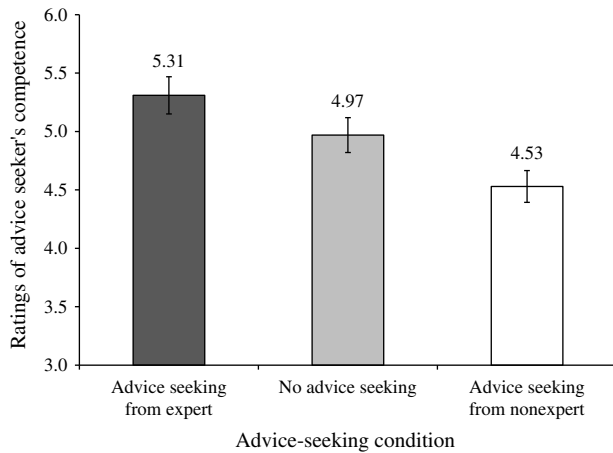
Of the four people in your group, you were not the one assigned to complete the brain teaser. However, you will still play a role in this study. The participant who was assigned to complete the brain teaser is reviewing the questions now. S/he will have the opportunity to ask someone in your group for advice on one of the brain teaser questions. To help him/her decide whom to ask for advice, s/he has been shown your answers to the biographical questions that you answered earlier in the study.

Then participants received a message from the experimenter. In the no-advice-seeking condition, participants read, "The participant who was assigned to complete the brain teaser has not asked you for advice." As in the real world, we left this condition intentionally ambiguous about whether the participant sought advice from someone else or not at all. In the expert-advisor and nonexpert-advisor conditions, participants read, "The participant who was assigned to complete the brain teaser has chosen to ask you for advice."

Next, participants received a message purportedly from the participant who was completing the brain teaser, seeking their advice on one of the questions. We varied whether the brain teaser question was related to the advisor's area of *most knowledge* (in the expert-advisor condition) or of *least knowledge* (in the nonexpert-advisor condition), as identified by the participant earlier in the study. The advice-seeking messages were "The brain teaser is asking about [the differences between the piano and the guitar/whether more people live in the states on the East Coast or West Coast of the United States/about the differences between the games of men's baseball and women's softball]. Do you have any advice about this question?"

After reading an advice-seeking message (or not) and providing their advice, participants indicated their impressions of the participant completing the brain teaser on the same measure of competence used in Studies 1–4 ($\alpha = 0.91$). Finally, participants answered demographic questions about themselves (age and gender).

Figure 3 Advisor Expertise Moderates the Effect of Advice Seeking on the Perceived Competence of the Advice Seeker (Study 5)



Note. Error bars represent standard error.

10.2. Results

10.2.1. Perceived Competence. Participants' perceptions of their partner's competence varied across the three advice-seeking conditions ($F(1, 248) = 21.79$, $p = 0.01$, $\eta^2 = 0.08$). Pairwise comparisons indicated that ratings of competence were higher in the expert-advisor condition ($M = 5.32$, $SD = 1.11$) than in the no-advice-seeking condition ($M = 4.97$, $SD = 1.01$) ($t = 2.08$, $p = 0.038$, $d = 0.33$), and ratings of competence were lower in the nonexpert-advisor condition ($M = 4.53$, $SD = 1.15$) than in the no-advice-seeking condition ($t = 2.61$, $p = 0.01$, $d = 0.41$). We depict this pattern of results in Figure 3. There were no effects of participant age or gender on ratings of advice seeker competence.

10.3. Discussion

As in Studies 1–4, we found that being asked for advice increased perceptions of the advice seeker's competence. However, this boost in competence occurred only when the advisor had personally identified himself as an expert. When the advisor had identified the topic as an area of weakness, seeking advice decreased perceptions of competence compared with not seeking advice. These results suggest that seeking advice is not beneficial if the advisor views himself as a poor target for advice (i.e., "She is incompetent to ask for my advice because I obviously don't know anything about this topic").

11. General Discussion

Although a substantial literature has explored how people decide to give advice and how people take advice (e.g., Jonas and Frey 2003, Kray 2000, Larrick and Soll 2006, See et al. 2011), little prior work has explored the critical antecedent: the decision to seek

advice (Hofmann et al. 2009, Schrah et al. 2006). We demonstrate that seeking advice can profoundly influence perceptions of competence, but not in the way people expect. Contrary to conventional wisdom and lay beliefs (Pilot Studies A and B), we find that asking for advice *increases* perceptions of competence (Study 1). This effect was robust when advice seeking was compared against other types of inquiry and affiliative messages, in performance domains in which people view others as competent (above the midpoint on the competence scale) and when people have prior performance information about the advice seeker (Studies 2a and 2b).

We identify three important moderators of the relationship between advice seeking and perceptions of competence. First, this relationship is moderated by task difficulty (Study 3). When the task is difficult, asking for advice causes advice seekers to appear more competent than they do when the task is not difficult; when the task is easy, asking for advice confers no benefit. Interestingly, even when the task was easy, seeking advice did not harm perceptions of competence. However, it is possible that our easy task was not easy enough to elicit lowered perceptions of competence. We suspect that there are questions so inane that advisors would view advice seekers as less competent.

Second, the beneficial effects of advice seeking on perceptions of competence are personal. Advisors perceive advice seekers as more competent when they are asked for their advice personally, but not when they observe an advice seeker consulting another person (Study 4). Participants in Study 4 discounted the act of seeking advice when they were not asked for advice themselves. Our findings suggest that the benefits of advice seeking are contingent on *direct* flattery; being asked for advice caused advisors to feel more self-confident and, in turn, to view the advice seeker more positively.

Third, the relationship between advice seeking and perceptions of competence depends on the advisor's expertise (Study 5). If the advice seeker asks for guidance in an area that the advisor knows well, then the advice seeker appears competent. If the advice seeker asks for advice in an area that the advisor obviously does not know well, then the advice seeker seems less competent than if he or she had not asked for advice.

11.1. Theoretical Contributions

Our findings make several theoretical contributions. First, we break new ground in the advice literature by investigating the understudied process of advice seeking. Prior work has focused on the decision to *give* advice and the decision to *take* advice, but it has largely neglected the advice-seeking process. We explore the decision to seek advice and perceptions of people who seek advice.

Second, prior advice research has focused on the advisee's or the advisor's perspectives independently. For example, some work has considered the decision to give advice from the advisor's perspective; other work has considered the decision to rely on advice from the advisee's perspective. Advice, however, is an interpersonal process. We advance the advice literature by considering both the advice seeker's and the advisor's perceptions in the advice-seeking process. We find evidence of a failed mental model: advice seekers do not anticipate the impression management benefits of seeking advice.

Third, our work challenges conventional wisdom and previous work (e.g., Lee 2002), which presumes that seeking help reflects an inability to complete tasks independently. We find that people fail to seek advice out of fear of negative evaluation. In contrast to this belief, we demonstrate that seeking advice can *enhance* advisors' perceptions of advice seekers' competence. This is true when tasks are difficult and the advisor perceives himself or herself as an expert. Even when tasks are easy or when the advice seeker chooses to seek advice from a third party, we find that seeking advice does not hurt perceptions of competence. Only when the advisor had publicly identified himself as a nonexpert did advice seeking harm perceptions of competence.

Fourth, we shed light on the critical role that ego plays in evaluating those who seek advice. We find that being asked for one's own advice, compared with observing advice seeking from a third party, is flattering and critically contributes to a boost in the perceived competence of the advice seeker. Interestingly, our findings imply that being sought for advice may have a similar effect as self-affirmation for the advisor.

Finally, our research contributes to the literatures on information seeking, help seeking, and feedback seeking. Although similar, we distinguish advice seeking from feedback seeking and other types of help-seeking behaviors. For example, in contrast to advice seeking, feedback seeking focuses on past behavior and is evaluative in nature (Ashford and Northcraft 1992, Ashford and Tsui 1991, Edwards 1995, Morrison and Bies 1991). Feedback seeking is qualitatively different from advice seeking, and the interpersonal consequences of both advice seeking and feedback seeking merit further investigation.

11.2. Future Directions

Our findings are qualified by a number of limitations that suggest new directions for future research. In our studies, we focused on perceptions of competence. It is possible that asking for advice could signal vulnerability and increase perceptions of warmth or trust as well (e.g., Fiske et al. 2007, Liljenquist 2010). The nature of our methods (e.g., not face-to-face) and our

tasks (e.g., math) limited our ability to study warmth. Future research might employ different types of tasks to extend our investigation of the warmth-related consequences of seeking advice.

Other aspects of our methods also qualify our findings and suggest areas for future research. For example, future work should explore how different levels and types of information advisors have about advice seekers moderate the relationship between advice seeking and competence. In Studies 2a and 2b, we provided prior performance information about the anonymous partner, but providing more information about the advice seeker may be useful in identifying boundary conditions for our findings. For instance, future work could vary the power relationship between the advisor and advice seeker (See et al. 2011, Tost et al. 2012). Power dynamics may influence not only whether people seek advice when they need it (e.g., Lee 1997) but also the advisor's perceptions of the advice seeker's competence. For some potential advisors, such as those with fragile egos or low self-confidence, it may be particularly prudent to ask for advice. The interdependence or magnitude of stakes related to the task or its outcomes may also represent a boundary condition for this effect.

In addition, our manipulation of advice seeking did not involve a face-to-face request. As a result, our work did not attend to variations of the emotional or linguistic content of a request for advice. We call for further research of characteristics of the request for advice itself. For example, the confidence with which questions are asked, gender differences, implicit beliefs (Haselhuhn et al. 2010), and linguistic or other nonverbal cues may significantly influence how advisors respond to requests for advice. In addition, other aspects of the relationship between the advice seeker and advisor (e.g., familiarity, trust) are likely to influence perceptions of advice seeking. For example, a developmental leader or an advisor known for being interpersonally fair and compassionate in his or her interactions with subordinates might elicit fewer impression management concerns from potential advice seekers than an advisor known for being judgmental or nonempathic. However, we expect that task difficulty, advisor egocentrism, and advisor expertise are likely to moderate perceptions of advice seekers in face-to-face settings and between advisors and advice seekers with highly nuanced and ongoing relationships as well as one-shot interactions between strangers.

Moreover, in some domains, there may be important costs for seeking advice. Although seeking help and advice can improve learning and performance (e.g., Lee 1997, Tyre 1992, Tyre and Ellis 1993), there may be occasions when those who ask for help do appear incompetent (Ames and Lau 1982, Lee 1997).

Seminal work in the organizational literature about participatory decision making (Vroom and Jago 1978) suggests that including others' opinions in one's own decision process is not always optimal and emphasizes that it is important to identify when using others' information can help or harm one's own decision process. For example, we find that seeking advice harms perceptions of competence when individuals seek advice from advisors who clearly do not know the correct answers (Study 5). Future work should examine the consequences of requests for advice when there is disagreement or ambiguity about the advisor's expertise. We suspect that in many circumstances, advice seekers view advisors as experts when, privately, the advisors do not view themselves as experts. Future work should examine contexts such as repeated requests for advice or requests that are nontask oriented. It is possible that this approach may cause advisors to feel burdened or annoyed.

Finally, future work could explore the relationships among expectations, advice seeking, and evaluations. Quite possibly, advice seekers fail to seek needed advice because they mistakenly believe that others have higher expectations of what they should know than they really do. If individuals believe that others expect them to know information or how to solve a problem, they may fail to seek advice. This may be particularly problematic for new employees.

11.3. Practical Implications

Our work suggests that many individuals exaggerate the harmful consequences of seeking advice and undervalue its benefits. Our findings identify an important opportunity for employees and managers. Specifically, employees should seek advice and managers should promote advice seeking among their employees. Not only is advice seeking beneficial for the spread of information, but it may also boost perceptions of competence for advice seekers and make advisors feel affirmed. By failing to seek advice, individuals and their organizations miss opportunities to share knowledge and improve interpersonal outcomes.

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