

The Effect of Organizational Support on Feedback-Seeking Behavior of Physical Education Experts in Education Departments: The Mediating Role of Openness to Experience

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Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of this study was to investigate the effect of organizational support on the feedback-seeking behavior of physical education experts in education departments, with the mediating role of openness to experience.

Methods: This applied research was conducted using a survey method. The statistical population consisted of 1,712 physical education experts working in the education departments across the country in 2024. Using Cochran's formula, a sample size of 314 experts was estimated, and participants were selected through cluster sampling. In total, 314 completed questionnaires were analyzed. The measurement tools included the Perceived Organizational Support Questionnaire (Eisenberger et al., 2001), the Openness to Experience Scale (Soto et al., 2008), and the Feedback-Seeking Behavior Questionnaire (Moss et al., 2003). Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics through SPSS and SmartPLS software.

Results: The results indicated that organizational support had a positive and significant effect on openness to experience among physical education experts. Moreover, organizational support showed a positive and significant effect on feedback-seeking behavior. Finally, the findings confirmed the positive and significant effect of organizational support on feedback-seeking behavior of physical education experts in education departments, mediated by openness to experience.

Conclusion: Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that organizational support for physical education experts can bring about positive outcomes, such as improving openness to experience and strengthening feedback-seeking behavior. Accordingly, it is recommended to pay attention to the professional and personal needs of physical education experts and provide adequate financial resources and facilities for them.

Keywords: Organizational Support, Feedback-Seeking Behavior, Openness to Experience, Physical Education Experts, Educational Environments.

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Introduction

Nowadays, the success of organizations depends more than ever on the abilities, skills, and performance of their employees. With this reality in mind, forward-looking and successful organizations place great importance on employee career development, integrating it into their strategic policies, and allocating resources to foster human capital (Aguilar-Fernandez et al., 2024). However, scholars and managers agree that without the active participation of employees, existing career development programs and initiatives will not achieve their desired and expected outcomes (Hasan et al., 2024). Existing research in this field has also shown that merely designing and implementing development and empowerment programs does not guarantee their success (Kanjanakan et al., 2023; Sardana et al., 2024). True success in human resource development emerges when employees take responsibility for their own growth, set their own career goals, seek learning and new experiences, and apply what they have learned in real work settings (Martínez Cañas et al., 2024). In this regard, Tania (2025) highlights that when employees feel a sense of psychological ownership over empowerment programs, choose self-development methods aligned with their interests, strengths, and career aspirations, and take initiative in implementing them, the long-term effectiveness and success of career development programs will be realized.

Feedback-seeking behavior, as an important method of self-development, acts as a key driver for developing employees' job-related skills and competencies (Ashford et al., 2003). Feedback-seeking is a proactive approach through which employees gather timely and purposeful information from various sources including managers and colleagues in order to enhance the accuracy and effectiveness of their decisions, gain greater awareness and knowledge about their own performance and other work-related issues, strengthen their

communication and task-related skills, and better adapt to their evolving roles and responsibilities (Kearns et al., 2022). Moreover, as a form of extra-role and voluntary behavior, feedback-seeking encourages employees to expand their collaboration and interaction with colleagues and engage in more effective actions to achieve personal and organizational goals (Chae & Park, 2022).

Feedback-seeking behavior consists of three essential components: (1) the source from whom feedback is sought (colleagues, supervisors, or clients), (2) the strategies individuals use to seek feedback (such as active listening or reading others' evaluations), and (3) the type of feedback information (corrective or motivational) that individuals pursue (Auh et al., 2019). Actively seeking accurate, specific, and timely feedback provides numerous benefits for employees, including improved initiative, enhanced socialization, error correction, and increased effectiveness of both individual and team efforts (Khan & Iqbal, 2022).

The positive consequences of feedback-seeking behavior for both employees and organizations are well documented (Ansel et al., 2015; Balaciano et al., 2021). Nevertheless, the ways in which activities and cultures related to feedback-seeking can be systematically developed and embedded in organizational work environments remain relatively underexplored (Cheng et al., 2023). Feedback-seeking is a behavior that is shaped and reinforced in line with employees' job performance needs as well as their perceptions of the work environment (Ashford et al., 2016). Moreover, since feedback-seeking entails potential costs such as self-presentation costs (fear of appearing incompetent), ego costs (discomfort with negative feedback), and effort costs (time and energy needed to seek and act upon feedback) employees first evaluate their work environment before engaging in this behavior (Du & Chang, 2023). Accordingly,

organizational factors such as respect, trust, fairness, access to resources, non-discriminatory managerial behavior, job security, and valuing human resources which represent organizational support can encourage employees to engage in positive extra-role behaviors such as feedback-seeking (Li et al., 2018).

Zhang et al. (2022) argue that when employees perceive their work environment as supportive, inclusive, and communicative, they are more inclined to actively seek feedback as a natural and valuable part of ongoing performance and personal development. Such positive perceptions create a sense of safety and trust that enables employees to feel secure enough to ask questions, request constructive input, and discuss their progress with colleagues without fear of judgment (Jankulova et al., 2021). Furthermore, when the work environment is perceived as fair and respectful, with clear channels for dialogue and collaboration, individuals are more likely to view feedback as a practical tool that guides their growth, helps them refine their skills, and aligns their personal efforts with team and organizational goals (Li & Qian, 2016). In such supportive environments, feedback is regarded as part of a continuous learning process that enhances psychological safety and fosters a culture of mutual accountability. This supportive climate also encourages proactive self-reflection, as employees compare their performance with shared expectations and standards, leading to more mindful practice, targeted developmental actions, and sustained improvement over time (Li et al., 2018).

On the other hand, since employees' individual and personality traits within organizations can play a role in shaping and reinforcing positive job-related and extra-role behaviors, the level of organizational support can either nurture or suppress such traits (Ben Ahmed et al., 2018). A negative or toxic organizational climate, characterized by low support, can foster

undesirable personality traits among employees. For example, high stress levels, lack of support, and unclear communication may trigger anxiety, defensiveness, or insecurity. In such environments, employees may display behaviors such as neuroticism, aggression, withdrawal, or even psychological disengagement from work (Nelson et al., 2024). Conversely, a positive work environment with high levels of support enables employees to cultivate traits such as adaptability, emotional stability, self-esteem, confidence, and resilience (Sears & Han, 2021).

Openness to experience, as a positive personality trait, can also be nurtured and developed in a supportive work environment (Li et al., 2022). Openness to experience, one of the Big Five personality traits, reflects the degree of imagination, curiosity, and open-mindedness an individual possesses. Highly open individuals are more willing to embrace uncertainty, change, and contradictions, and they enjoy engaging in novel and untested activities (Judge & Smylie, 2019). Such individuals are curious about their inner and outer worlds and are described as imaginative, creative, cultured, authentic, broad-minded, intelligent, and artistically sensitive. These characteristics are positively related to self-perceived learning ability, motivation for learning, and participation in self-development activities (Banago et al., 2021).

Along the same lines, Hutchin and West (2021) state that employees high in openness to experience tend to value personal growth, autonomy, and positive emotions, which allows them to employ more adaptive and effective coping strategies in the face of adversity, challenges, and difficult work conditions. Abu Raya et al. (2023) suggest that individuals with high levels of openness strengthen traits such as risk-taking, acceptance of diversity, and creative thinking—including both divergent and convergent thinking—which enable them to consider multiple perspectives and generate

practical solutions when confronted with new or unfamiliar problems. Similarly, Petro et al. (2023) emphasize that employees with high levels of experiential openness continually place themselves in varied work situations, enriching their experiential repertoire, which facilitates cognitive flexibility and idea generation in a positive feedback loop. Tan et al. (2019) also argue that individuals high in openness develop cognitive skills essential for creativity more effectively through diverse experiences and display a greater interest in seeking new ideas, experiences, and work methods, thereby enhancing their creative performance.

Likewise, Li and Yang (2025) assert that when employees feel supported by their organization, they are more likely to experience psychological safety. This sense of safety enables them to take risks, express creative ideas, and experiment with new approaches without fear of judgment or failure. As a result, they become more receptive to exploring new experiences and ways of thinking, which represents a core dimension of openness to experience. On the other hand, employees with high levels of openness are often curious, receptive to new ideas, and motivated toward self-improvement. This intrinsic drive for personal and professional growth makes them more likely to seek feedback, as they perceive it as a valuable tool for their development. Such employees' inclination toward improving their skills and performance encourages them to actively pursue diverse feedback from colleagues, supervisors, or clients (Li et al., 2022).

Feedback-seeking behavior has always been considered in educational environments due to its positive outcomes (Sun & Huang, 2023), and most studies conducted on feedback-seeking behavior have focused on students (Kutumisu, 2019). Despite the importance of feedback-seeking behavior in educational contexts, its application cannot be limited only

to students (Mazloom Kasrineh & Bai, 2022). In this regard, findings from some studies have shown that feedback-seeking behavior can lead to positive outcomes such as creativity (Du & Chang, 2023) and improved job performance (Dagbe et al., 2024) for teachers.

Nevertheless, developing such behavior among educational staff who are indirectly involved in the teaching process such as physical education experts is also of particular importance. As part of the deputy department for student affairs, physical education experts play a significant role in delivering physical education classes as well as in implementing programs related to physical activity at the school level. Addressing students' postural issues and physical deficiencies, implementing health programs in schools, organizing student sports competitions at various levels (school, provincial, and national), forming sports associations across different disciplines, implementing talent identification programs in schools, providing part of the necessary facilities and equipment for school sports, and designing and delivering recreational and sports programs for teachers are just a few of their tasks.

The broad scope of responsibilities assigned to physical education experts, on the one hand, and the lack of adequate financial and material resources within education departments to support the implementation of these programs, on the other, have caused these experts to face many challenges (Taghizadeh et al., 2023). To overcome some of these challenges and improve the quality of services provided by physical education experts to teachers and students, it is necessary to consistently focus on their career development and the factors that influence it.

Strengthening feedback-seeking behavior in physical education experts can serve as an effective strategy to help them continually evaluate their own performance from the perspectives of others and identify their strengths and weaknesses. However, no study

has yet examined the enhancement of self-development activities among physical education experts such as feedback-seeking behavior and the mechanisms that influence it. This highlights the necessity of conducting the present research.

Based on the issues discussed and the existing research gap, the main objective of this study is to examine the relationship between openness to experience and the creative performance of physical education experts in education departments, with the mediating role of feedback-seeking behavior.

Materials and Methods

The present study is applied in terms of purpose, and from the perspective of data collection, it is descriptive-survey research conducted in the field. The statistical population of this study consisted of all physical education experts working in the education departments across the country in 2024 (a total of 1,712 experts). Using Cochran's formula with a 0.05 margin of error, the required sample size was estimated at 314 experts, selected through cluster random sampling. Accordingly, the provinces of the country were divided into five clusters: north, central, south, west, and east. The northern provinces included Mazandaran and Gilan; the central provinces included Tehran and Isfahan; the southern provinces included Hormozgan and Fars; the eastern provinces included North Khorasan and South Khorasan; and the western provinces included Kermanshah and Kurdistan.

Data collection was carried out using three standardized questionnaires, all based on a five-point Likert scale, described as follows:

- **Perceived Organizational Support:** The extent of organizational support perceived by physical education experts in their workplace was measured using the eight-item questionnaire by Eisenberger et al. (2001). Responses were recorded on a five-point Likert scale. The reliability coefficient

reported by Eisenberger et al. (2001) was 0.89, confirming its internal consistency. Arshadi (2011) used this standard questionnaire in Iran and reported a reliability coefficient of 0.82. In the present study, the face validity of the questionnaire was reviewed by five sports management experts, and based on their suggestions, two items were reworded to improve clarity. Furthermore, the Content Validity Index (CVI) was calculated using the experts' opinions, yielding a value of 0.92. Reliability was also tested in a pilot study involving 40 physical education experts, with Cronbach's alpha estimated at 0.81, indicating acceptable reliability.

- **Openness to Experience:** This variable was assessed using the seven-item questionnaire by Soto et al. (2008), based on a five-point Likert scale. Soto et al. (2008) reported a reliability coefficient of 0.89, confirming the appropriateness of the tool. In Iran, this questionnaire was applied by Bai et al. (2020), who reported a reliability coefficient of 0.84. In the current research, face validity was reviewed by five sports management experts, and four items were rephrased based on their feedback for better clarity. The CVI was calculated at 0.96. In a pilot study with 40 physical education experts, Cronbach's alpha was estimated at 0.78, which exceeds the acceptable threshold of 0.70.
- **Feedback-Seeking Behavior:** This construct was measured using the five-item questionnaire by Moss et al. (2003), based on a five-point Likert scale. Moss et al. (2003) reported a reliability coefficient of 0.89. In Iran, this questionnaire was used by Ghanbarpour et al. (2021), with a reported Cronbach's alpha of 0.71. In this study, face validity was reviewed by five sports management experts, and based on their suggestions, two items were reworded for better clarity. The CVI for this tool was estimated at 0.90. In a pilot study with 40

experts, Cronbach's alpha was calculated at 0.79, indicating acceptable reliability.

For data analysis, both descriptive and inferential statistics were applied. In the descriptive section, using SPSS version 25, frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were calculated to describe the demographic characteristics of the respondents and the study variables. In the inferential section, using Smart PLS version 4, first the quality of the structural model was assessed, and then the hypotheses were tested. It is noteworthy that the bootstrap method was used to examine the mediating role of openness to

experience.

Results

The descriptive results regarding the demographic characteristics of the study sample, presented in Table 1, indicated that the majority of participants had 21 years or more of work experience (188 experts). Regarding educational background, most of the respondents held a master's degree (213 experts). Finally, the analysis of demographic features revealed that the majority of the participants were 41 years old or older (218 experts).

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of the research sample

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Work experience	11–20 years	126	40.1
	21 years and above	188	59.9
Education	Bachelor's degree	73	23.2
	Master's degree	213	67.8
	Ph.D.	28	8.9
Age	31–40 years	96	30.6
	41 years and above	218	69.4

As shown in Table 2, the descriptive statistics of the study variables demonstrated that the mean (\pm SD) scores for perceived organizational

support, openness to experience, and feedback-seeking behavior were 3.49 ± 0.70 , 3.51 ± 0.77 , and 3.61 ± 0.69 , respectively.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of the study variables

Variable	N	Mean	SD
Perceived organizational support	314	3.49	0.70
Openness to experience	314	3.51	0.77
Feedback-seeking behavior	314	3.61	0.69

Measurement Model

The measurement model was assessed using reliability and validity indicators (convergent and discriminant validity). As shown in Table 3, composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha

values for all variables exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70, confirming internal consistency. Factor loadings for all items were above 0.50, further supporting construct reliability.

Table 3. Reliability indices of the measurement model

Variable	Composite Reliability	Cronbach's Alpha
Perceived organizational support	0.907	0.882
Openness to experience	0.940	0.923
Feedback-seeking behavior	0.856	0.796

For convergent validity, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values for all variables were above the threshold of 0.50. Discriminant

validity, evaluated using the HTMT ratio, showed values below 0.90, confirming adequate discriminant validity (Table 4).

Table 4. Convergent and discriminant validity indices

Variable	1	2	3	AVE
Feedback-seeking behavior	—			0.546
Openness to experience	0.855	—		0.693
Perceived organizational support	0.833	0.883	—	0.553

Structural Model

The structural model was evaluated using R², VIF, SRMR, Q², and GOF indices. As indicated in Table 5, the R² values for openness to experience (0.676) and feedback-seeking

behavior (0.703) confirmed strong explanatory power. VIF values (2.086) were below the threshold of 3, indicating no multicollinearity issues. The SRMR value (0.078) was within the acceptable range (<0.08), supporting model fit.

Table 5. Structural model evaluation indices

Index	Variable	Value	Status
R ²	Openness to experience	0.676	Acceptable
	Feedback-seeking behavior	0.703	Acceptable
VIF	—	2.086	Acceptable
SRMR	—	0.078	Acceptable

Predictive relevance (Q²) results in Table 6

further confirmed the strong predictive ability of the model, as all values exceeded the threshold of 0.35.

Table 6. Predictive relevance (Q²) of variables

Variable	SSO	SSE	1-SSE/SSO	Predictive Power
Perceived organizational support	2340	1564.119	0.331	Strong
Openness to experience	1450	847.002	0.416	Strong
Feedback-seeking behavior	1015	560.489	0.448	Strong

The overall Goodness-of-Fit (GOF) index was calculated as 0.727, which exceeds the

benchmark of 0.36, confirming a strong overall model fit.

Hypothesis Testing

The results of hypothesis testing (Table 7) revealed that perceived organizational support had a positive and significant effect on

openness to experience ($\beta = 0.822$, $t = 30.255$, $p < 0.001$) and feedback-seeking behavior ($\beta = 0.549$, $t = 6.582$, $p < 0.001$). Furthermore, the mediating role of openness to experience in the relationship between perceived organizational support and feedback-seeking behavior was confirmed ($\beta = 0.326$, $t = 3.912$, $p < 0.001$).

Table 7. Direct and indirect effects in the model

Pathway	β	t-value	p-value
Perceived organizational support \rightarrow Openness to experience	0.822	30.255	0.001
Perceived organizational support \rightarrow Feedback-seeking behavior	0.549	6.582	0.001
Perceived organizational support \rightarrow Feedback-seeking behavior (mediated by openness)	0.326	3.912	0.001

Discussion

This study aimed to examine the effect of organizational support on feedback-seeking behavior among physical education experts in education departments, with the mediating role of openness to experience. The results indicated that organizational support had a positive and significant effect on openness to experience, which is consistent with the findings of Banago et al. (2021), Li et al. (2022), and Li & Yang (2025). Undoubtedly, in any job, employees' personality traits play a critical role in shaping work behaviors (Josh & Smiley, 2019), and physical education experts are no exception.

Openness to experience, often characterized as a personality trait associated with curiosity about new ideas and experiences, can contribute to the improvement and development of the quality of physical education experts' actions and performance. Accordingly, openness to experience helps experts to acquire a wide range of perspectives, opinions, and new ideas from various sources or through trial and error. Access to diverse informational and knowledge resources in the form of new experiences can both expand their cognitive capacity regarding work-related issues and increase the number and diversity of solutions available for problem-solving. These factors can ultimately improve their functional

performance.

Since openness to experience in the workplace is influenced by employees' perceptions, the existence of a supportive work environment can be considered the starting point for fostering employees' experiential behaviors (Li et al., 2022). When education departments succeed in creating a truly supportive environment that actively encourages risk-taking and values new ideas, physical education experts will experience psychological safety, enabling them to express opinions, share perspectives, and experiment with unconventional approaches without fear of punishment or ridicule. Such a work environment, characterized by high levels of psychological safety, not only reduces experts' hesitations but also strengthens their willingness to explore, experiment, and become more open to new experiences.

Moreover, organizational support plays an important role in enhancing job autonomy (Nelsen et al., 2024). When physical education experts enjoy greater job autonomy, their sense of responsibility toward their work increases. This responsibility, in turn, enhances their personal commitment, motivating them to invest more time, energy, and attention in every detail of their tasks. Under such circumstances, their motivation, self-efficacy, and confidence in testing new ideas will increase, encouraging

them to go beyond repetitive, routine methods and making them more likely to adopt unconventional practices and gain new experiences.

Another finding of the study revealed that organizational support had a positive and significant effect on feedback-seeking behavior, consistent with the results of Jankulova et al. (2021), Li et al. (2022), and Zhang et al. (2022). Working in environments with high job expectations and multiple constraints such as lack of facilities, limited equipment, and scarce financial resources can present numerous challenges for physical education experts and weaken their performance (Taghizadeh et al., 2023). To succeed in such environments, it is crucial to encourage self-development actions that allow experts to identify their strengths and weaknesses and enhance their professional capabilities.

Feedback-seeking behavior is one such self-development action, whereby employees actively gather others' opinions and evaluations to strengthen self-awareness, foster continuous learning, and improve responsibility all of which are essential for professional growth (Ansel et al., 2015). However, seeking feedback from colleagues or managers may involve risks and costs, which can discourage such behavior. Therefore, a supportive organizational environment is essential for reducing the challenges associated with feedback-seeking behavior.

Access to a wide range of resources in a supportive environment such as comprehensive training opportunities, ongoing coaching, and clear performance standards enables physical education experts to receive more targeted, higher-quality, and practical feedback. Furthermore, building strong social networks among employees, which provide emotional support, plays a crucial role in fostering trust-based relationships. When colleagues are connected through supportive ties, conversations become more open, honest, and

collaborative, creating an atmosphere of trust. Such networks serve as diverse feedback channels, drawing from multiple perspectives and experiences, which help experts to better reflect on and improve their performance. Strengthening psychological safety within these networks further encourages experts to share ideas, embrace uncertainty, and seek guidance without fear of judgment or negative consequences. This safe environment reduces the anxiety typically associated with receiving feedback and facilitates more constructive, timely, and practical exchanges. As a result, physical education experts are better positioned to reflect on their performance, test new approaches, and continuously improve their work.

Finally, the findings confirmed that organizational support positively and significantly influenced feedback-seeking behavior through the mediating role of openness to experience, which aligns with Li et al. (2022). In today's organizational settings, expectations of employees have shifted. Alongside increasing challenges, organizations now expect employees to engage in extra-role behaviors that go beyond formal job descriptions. However, both formal and informal behaviors in organizations, including in education departments, are shaped by the reciprocal relationship between employees and their organizations.

In this regard, Birzi and Hamieh (2020) argue that when employees feel valued, supported, and cared for by their organizations, they are more likely to engage in extra-role behaviors. Positive perceptions of organizational support enhance reciprocity and encourage employees to exceed their formal duties. For example, when organizations provide employees with comprehensive tools, advanced technologies, and adequate resources, they create an enabling environment for exploration, learning, and new experiences. Employees, in turn, develop an implicit sense of obligation to reciprocate

organizational efforts.

By strengthening supportive infrastructures, employees are more likely to experiment with new approaches, face unfamiliar challenges, and acquire fresh experiences, which facilitate skill development and professional growth. On the other hand, employees with high levels of openness to experience are naturally curious and growth-oriented (Abouraya et al., 2023). Such employees are drawn to seeking feedback from others, as they view it as a valuable tool for learning and self-improvement. Furthermore, employees with high openness to new experiences are inclined to test innovative methods in their tasks, which may sometimes lead to uncertainty or ambiguity. By actively seeking feedback from multiple sources, they can gain reassurance about their actions, refine their approaches, and acquire valuable insights for performance improvement.

Ultimately, employees with high openness to experience are more receptive and willing to listen to diverse perspectives. They believe that different individuals can offer unique insights and are therefore more likely to seek feedback from a broad range of sources. This openness broadens their understanding of work situations and provides a more comprehensive perspective on performance.

Conclusion

Considering the findings obtained in this study, it can be concluded that organizational support for physical education experts can lead to positive outcomes such as enhancing openness to experience and strengthening feedback-seeking behavior. Accordingly, it is suggested that attention be paid to the professional and personal needs of physical education experts by providing financial resources and facilities, granting them job autonomy in accordance with their job requirements and professional competencies, and fostering a spirit of experimentation through various methods such as offering material and non-material rewards.

Moreover, creating a work environment with high levels of psychological safety for physical education experts will allow them to exchange ideas and opinions with colleagues and try new work methods. Developing a culture of experimentation in the workplace, creating opportunities for physical education experts to collaborate with colleagues in different departments or teams in order to benefit from their suggestions and experiences, allowing them to test their own methods or ideas without fear of failure or punishment, emphasizing the importance of feedback-seeking behavior by managers, holding training sessions focused on how to provide and receive effective feedback, and developing skills related to feedback-seeking behavior in their empowerment programs are all recommended.

Like other studies, the present research also faced certain limitations. The use of self-report questionnaires to assess organizational support, openness to experience, and feedback-seeking behavior among the studied sample can be considered one of the most important limitations of this research.

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