THE EFFECTS OF SOLICITATION OF ADVICE AND WANT FOR ADVICE ON EVALUATION OF ADVICE: TESTING THE MEDIATING ROLE OF PERCEIVED FACE THREAT IN THE CONTEXT OF GRADUATE STUDENTS' ADJUSTMENT

By

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ABSTRACT

THE EFFECTS OF SOLICITATION OF ADVICE AND WANT FOR ADVICE ON EVALUATION OF ADVICE: TESTING THE MEDIATING ROLE OF PERCEIVED FACE THREAT IN THE CONTEXT OF GRADUATE STUDENTS' ADJUSTMENT

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The purpose of this research is to test (a) the effects of initial interaction of advice provision—characterized by solicitation of advice and want for advice—on the recipient's perception of positive and negative face threat and (b) the mediating role of perceived face threat between initial interaction type and the evaluation of advice helpfulness in the context of graduate students' adjustment. First-year graduate students in a large university were surveyed about their past advice receiving experience (N = 128), which began with one of the three types of initial interaction: (a) when advice was wanted and solicited; (b) when advice was wanted but unsolicited; and (c) when advice was unwanted and unsolicited. The quantitative data results showed that the recipient felt significantly less positive face threat in the wanted but unsolicited interaction, and felt significantly greater negative face threat when advice was unwanted and unsolicited. Also, it was found that only perceived negative face threat served the mediating role between the type of initial interaction and the evaluation of advice helpfulness. The qualitative data suggested that graduate students do not like asking for advice from another person due to positive face threat-related concerns and that they tend to seek advice from an advice giver who seemed to feel less negative face threat upon their request. The importance of the distinction between psychological want for advice and discursive solicitation of advice and refining the measurement of face threat were highlighted in the discussion for future research.

This thesis is dedicated to God.
For His love endures forever.

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INTRODUCTION

As a leading research institution, Michigan State University has a large population of graduate students (7,556 as of Spring 2013 reported by the registrar's office) and thus has a large and often diverse group of students about which to be concerned regarding both their academic performance and their physical and mental well-being. Research examining the adjustment of graduate students in a large Western university in the US reports that 44.7% of the sampled graduate students reported that they have had a mental health issue, and 57.7% reported knowing a colleague who had had a similar issue (Hyun, Quinn, Madon, & Lustig, 2006).

In order to decrease the intensity and duration of psychological disturbances, social support is suggested as a central device to buffer the negative consequences of the life changes that occur during the beginning of graduate work (Goplerud, 1980). Social support refers to support sought from an individual's social network in a variety of forms, such as comfort, advice, information, and the provision of tangible resources (Albrecht & Goldsmith, 2003; Heany & Israel, 2002). Research (Albrecht & Adelman, 1984; Albrecht, Burleson, & Goldsmith, 1994; Burleson & Goldsmith, 1998) suggests that simply conversing about personal issues helps individuals cope with distressing issues by opening up opportunities to receive support from another.

Although the request for and provision of support both are regarded as common expectations for people in close relationships (Adelman, Parks, & Albrecht, 1987), individuals in need of support may not always request support from another. This may be especially true in an environment such as graduate school where individuals are highly concerned with their self-image as competent students. Seeking support from social networks in this case may, rather, feel like a threatening or embarrassing task. Therefore, increasing our understanding of the barriers

impeding requests for social support, and the factors that influence support seeking and the evaluation of support, are important areas for communication research.

This research builds on Goldsmith's (2000) study, which examined the relationship between perceived solicitation advice and perceived face threat, and investigates one special kind of social support provision: advice provision. Taking Goldsmith's work (2000) further, this research discriminates between the discursive solicitation of advice, as manifested by an act of request made by the recipient, and latent want for advice as a psychological state, and categorizes three types of initial interactions for advice provision: (a) when advice was wanted and solicited (Type 1); (b) when advice was wanted but unsolicited (Type 2); and (c) when advice was unwanted and unsolicited (but received) (Type 3).

The purpose of this research is two-fold: (a) to test the effects of initial interaction of advice provision—characterized by solicitation and want—on the recipient's perception of positive and negative face threat and (b) to test the mediating role of perceived face threats between initial interaction type and evaluation of advice helpfulness in the context of graduate students' adjustment to a new graduate program. To begin, a review of literature on face threat and social support will be offered first, and then extant research in the area of advice, focusing on advice solicitation, will be discussed in the next section.

CHAPTER 1

LITERATURE REVIEW

Face and Support Interaction

Face refers to an image of self an individual claims for oneself by a pattern of verbal and nonverbal acts that *others assume* one has taken during a particular encounter (Goffman, 1967). It is said to be one's socially situated identity because, regardless of what an individual intends to enact for oneself, the value is dependent on how others judge and approve of it in the context. Goffman (1967) suggests that there can be cases where a face one claims is not supported by evidence conveyed by other interactants. Speech acts that introduce such inconsistencies between an image one claims and an image approved by others are said to be face threatening (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Goffman, 1967). Because individuals experience emotional attachments to face, they are vulnerable to face threatening acts—whether enacted by themselves or others—and thus also are vulnerable to feelings of hurt or embarrassment (Goffman, 1967).

Brown and Levinson (1987) argued that face consists of two specific kinds of desires, which they called "face wants" (p.13), and which any individual in society wants to claim. Positive face wants refer to "the desire to be approved of" (p. 13), while negative face wants refer to "the desire to be unimpeded in one's action." Accordingly, Brown and Levinson (1987) distinguished between positive face threatening acts and negative face threatening acts. Positive face threatening acts are those that indicate that the speaker does not attend to, or rejects, another's feelings or wants. Negative face threatening acts are those that indicate that the speaker impedes another's freedom of action. They noted that there are some face threatening acts that intrinsically threaten either positive face or negative face, but still others may offend both positive and negative face, including requests and interruptions.

Although face threats can occur in any social interaction, social support interactions—especially those involving acts of requesting/seeking support—seem to involve a high risk of threatening one's own, as well as another's, face (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Fisher, Goff, Nadler & Chinsky,1988; Wilson, Aleman, & Leatham, 1998). Asking for support may threaten another's negative face by interrupting or imposing on the other (Barbee, Rowatt, & Cunninghan, 1998; Brown & Levinson, 1987; Spiers, 1998; Wilson et al., 1998). In contrast, responses to requests—even approving responses—may threaten the seeker's positive face by indicating that the seeker was seen as incompetent due to the fact that they had to make a request in the first place (Barbarin & Chesler, 1984; DePaulo, 1982; Shapiro, 1983; Wilson et al., 1998). Finally, receiving support may threaten the recipient's negative face by putting the recipient in a position to be indebted to the support giver (Fisher, Nadler, & Whitcher-Alagna, 1982; Hatfield & Sprecher 1983) and to reciprocate and thank the giver (Spiers, 1998).

These threats often cause emotional distress to the recipient (e.g., Coyne, Wortman, & Lehman, 1988; Fisher et al., 1988; Shrout, Herman, & Bolger, 2006) and, moreover, either prevent individuals from seeking support when they need it or, even when wanted support is offered, influence them to evaluate the received support as ineffective (Deelstra et al., 2003; Dunkel-Schetter, Blasband, Feinstein, & Herbert, 1992). A few studies report that received support, albeit intended to be supportive to the distressed person, does not always render positive outcomes; and is instead perceived to be inappropriate and insensitive (Dakof & Taylor, 1990; Lehman, Ellard, & Wortman, 1986), or less satisfactory by the recipient (Dunkel-Schetter et al., 1992). In the next section, how these face threats discount the evaluation of advice will be discussed.

Evaluation of Advice and Face Threat

Among the various kinds of support, advice is a ubiquitous form manifested verbally in everyday talk (Cutrona & Suhr, 1994; Goldsmith & Fitch, 1997). Advice is a verbal, supportive, instrumental behavior and is an example of issue-focused aspects of support interactions (MacGeorge, Lichtman, & Pressey, 2002). Goldsmith et al. (2000) noted that offering advice is a difficult communicative behavior because it needs to achieve multiple functional goals (e.g., satisfy problem-solving needs, convey caring) and because its effectiveness is largely judged by the recipient's active interpretation of the advice.

Effective advice not only provides useful information but also shows sensitivity to the relationships and the identities of the interactants (Goldsmith, 1992, 1994). In a later study, Goldsmith et al. (2000) documented three dimensions of effective advice in the evaluation of the support received: helpfulness, sensitivity, and supportiveness. Judgments of helpfulness focus on the usefulness of the advice in problem solving and are distinct from judgments of sensitivity that are associated with legitimating, elaborating, and acknowledging the feelings of another person. Judgments of supportiveness refer to relational loyalty and caring. Among these three dimensions, helpfulness is found to be the most widely covered in the advice literature (e.g., Goldsmith, 1992, 1994; Goldsmith & Fitch, 1997), with advice generally conceptualized as problem/issue-oriented, instrumental behavior.

As a goal of human interactions, face is known to be closely associated with the evaluation of the helpfulness of advice (Caplan & Samter, 1999; Goldsmith & MacGeorge, 2000; MacGeorge et al., 2002). Studies have shown that when a recipient perceives that advice restrict his or her freedom of choice, it can threaten negative face (Fitzsimons & Lehmann, 2004; Goldsmith, 2000) and that it can threaten positive face when the recipient seems incompetent or

unlikable (Goldsmith, 2000; Wilson et al., 1998). Previous findings suggested that the use of language that mitigates face threat (e.g., politeness strategy) (See Brown & Levinson, 1987) is more likely to lead to a favorable evaluation of helpfulness or effectiveness of the advice (Caplan & Samter, 1999; Goldsmith & MacGeorge, 2000; MacGeorge et al., 2002). Goldsmith and MacGeorge (2000) provided preliminary evidence that the recipient-perceived regard for both positive and negative face induced by the use of polite forms of advice messages predicted evaluations of the effectiveness of the advice. Similar to their study, I first show that there is an association between the degree of face threat perceived by the recipient and the evaluation of the advice, followed by an examination of the antecedents of face threat. Hence, it follows that:

H1a: The recipient's perception of positive face threat will be a significant predictor of the evaluation of the advice such that as positive face threat increases the perceived helpfulness of the advice decreases.

H1b: The recipient's perception of negative face threat will be a significant predictor of the evaluation of the advice such that as negative face threat increases the perceived helpfulness of the advice decreases.

Original essays on face (e.g., Goffman, 1967; Brown & Levinson, 1987) acknowledged that face threat was not influenced only by the features of advice but also heavily dependent on the context in which the advice is delivered. Additionally, the advice giver's behaviors and the inferences made about these behaviors also influenced face threat. In other words, contextual factors, as well as the message itself, influence the judgment of advice (i.e., whether it is perceived as face threatening or helpful). Nevertheless, few of the contextual factors have been examined to date.

The extant literature suggests that factors, such as the conversational sequence of speech acts, the perceived solicitation of the advice (Goldsmith, 2000), the recipient's receptiveness to the advice (MacGeorge, Feng, Butler & Budarz, 2004), and the recipient's responsibility for their problems and efforts to resolve them (MacGeorge et al., 2002) all impact the face threat perceived by the recipient. In the following section, the sequence of speech acts, perceived solicitation of advice and advice receptiveness will be reviewed and will be related to the discursive solicitation of advice and psychological want for advice.

Solicitation of Advice and Face Threat

Goldsmith (2000) examined the relationship between the sequence of speech acts, perceived solicitation of advice, and perceived regard for face. Concerning speech acts, Goldsmith pointed out that the perceived regard for face depends not only on properties of individual acts but also on the sequential placement of the acts in an interaction. Specifically, the sequence of speech acts allows the recipient to make inferences about the advice giver's intentions and about what these intentions imply about the recipient's face (Goldsmith, 2000; Wilson et al., 1998). If the recipient feels that the implications of the advice for their own face are inconsistent with what he or she claims to be, then he or she perceives face threat.

Goldsmith (2000) identified six types of sequences through which advice could be offered: (a) the recipient asks for advice, (b) the recipient asks for opinion or information, (c) the recipient discloses a problem, (d) the recipient announces a plan of action, (e) the advisor identifies problem experienced by the recipient, and (f) the advisor volunteers advice. Goldsmith (2000) further proposed that perceived solicitation mediates the sequence type and perceived regard for face, with the recipient perceiving greater regard for face as more advice was solicited. The results showed that the six sequences differed in the degree to which an advice recipient was

perceived to solicit the advice. Sequences in which the recipient explicitly asked for advice or information, introduced a topic, or acknowledged a problem were seen as more solicitous of advice than sequences in which the recipient did not perform these activities.

Although the data were consistent with the mediating hypothesis for negative face, they did not support the mediating role of perceived solicitation between the sequences and perceived regard for positive face (Goldsmith, 2000). Differences in the perceived regard for positive face did not correspond to differences in the perceived solicitation of advice. For positive face, quite unexpectedly, the advice giver was perceived to show more regard for face in sequences where the solicitation seems more ambiguous (e.g., when an recipient of the advice merely disclosed a problem or announced a plan) than in those where the advice was obviously solicited (e.g., when a recipient of the advice asked for advice, opinion, or information).

In addition to the aforementioned, the heterogeneous regression coefficients are worth noting. The size of the correlation between perceived solicitation and regard for positive face varied considerably from one sequence type to another. These correlations were higher in sequences where the solicitation seemed more ambiguous (e.g., when a recipient simply disclosed a problem or announced a plan, or when an advisor identified a problem) than in sequences where the advice was obviously solicited (e.g., when a recipient asked for advice, opinion, or information) or unsolicited (e.g., when an advisor volunteered advice). That is, there was an interaction between perceived solicitation and the advice sequence. As Goldsmith (2000) stated that:

> a judgment about the degree to which advice was solicited is one factor that contributes to inferences about regard for positive face and that this factor is most influential when the discursive cues are

> mixed (i.e., the recipient doesn't explicitly ask for advice but may initiate talk about the topic or acknowledge a problem exists). (pp.15-16)

It may well be the case that some factor other than the sequences interacted with perceived solicitation. The perceived solicitation measure in Goldsmith's study (2000) may have confounded by discursive, observable solicitation (e.g., A was asking for advice from B) and a psychological, latent desire for advice (e.g., A clearly wanted advice from B). In Goldsmith's (2000) study, the participants rated the solicitation after reading a scenario rather than self-reported an actual event, when discursive cues in the scenario did not clearly suggest that the recipient asked for advice, the participants could have inferred that solicitation occurred because the recipient wanted advice.

This research suggests that discursive solicitation (hereafter, referred to as solicitation) of advice be distinguished from the want for advice by defining solicitation of advice as the degree to which the recipient explicitly seeks advice as expressed verbally in the discourse and by defining the recipient's want for advice as the degree to which the recipient psychologically desires advice. Advice can be *desired but unsolicited*. The extant literature has not studied how received advice would be evaluated in this particular case.

Want for Advice

To elaborate on the definition mentioned above, want for advice refers to the recipient's subjective wish to receive advice from another on a particular issue. Little research has examined the concept of want for advice; however, a few studies have examined concepts similar to want for advice. One of these concepts is receptiveness to advice, which refers to "the extent to which a distressed individual is willing or ready to receive advice from others with respect to a

problematic situation" (Feng & MacGeorge, 2006, p. 68) or "the extent to which advice is wanted" (p. 67). The concept is distinct from evaluations of advice already received, as well as from advice outcomes "because it focuses on the individual's openness to advice prior to, and during, the interaction that contains the advice" (p. 68). MacGeorge et al. (2004) found that receptiveness to advice was positively associated with the perceived quality of the advice (i.e., the effectiveness, helpfulness, appropriateness, sensitivity, and supportiveness of the advice) and that receptiveness to advice was a stronger predictor of the quality of the advice than the perceived usefulness of the advised action or the face mitigating strategies with which the advice was presented. This shows that the recipient's receptiveness to advice can have a stronger impact on the evaluation of the received advice than the content of the advice or the conversational style of the advice.

Another similar concept is the need for advice, which refers to the recipient's objective need for advice, which depends on the gravity of the situation faced by the recipient (Deelstra et al, 2003; Kronrod, Grinstein, & Wathieu, 2014). Deelstra et al. (2003) examined the context of instrumental support provision in a workplace, and demonstrated how the need for support influenced the evaluation and emotional outcomes of the received support. The results showed that receiving imposed support (i.e., support given without the giver's asking if the recipient wanted support) was associated with negative affect, inappropriateness of support, and lower competence-based self-esteem, but that it was moderated by the recipient's need for support. This finding can be explained by people being less likely to evaluate imposed support negatively if they believe that they could not solve the problem on their own and needed support from another. On the other hand, when they do not perceive a problem and thus believe they have little need for support, they are more likely to believe that the advice provider inappropriately

restricted their freedom of choice and that they appeared incompetent to the provider (Deelstra et al., 2003). This result is partly consistent with previous research (e.g., Goldsmith, 2000; Goldsmith & Fitch, 1997; Wilson et al., 1998) that imposed advice is likely to be seen as bossy or critical and thus threaten the recipient's positive face, as well as the recipient's negative face when it is seen as superfluous.

Recently, Kronrod et al. (2014) argued that want for advice may be even more important than the need for advice in determining a recipient's reaction to advice. They pointed out that an objective need is not necessarily translated into a want for advice (e.g., someone may be in poor health and need advice but not want any). Kronrod et al. (2014) further argued that when offering advice, advice givers tend to base their advice on inferences about the recipient's need for advice, and often fail to take the recipient's want for advice into account. This is mainly because the advice giver proffers advice based on their assessment of the recipient's need for advice as inferred from their own objective reality in the absence of the recipient explicitly conveying a subjective want for advice to the giver. Thus, the advice giver often offers advice that *he or she thinks* the recipient needs but that the recipient did not ask for and that, more importantly, the recipient did not want.

Based on these previous findings, the want for advice is predicted to be associated with perceived face threat, possibly stronger than the content, conversational style, and sequence of the advice (i.e., whether it is requested or imposed). As Goldsmith and Fitch (1997) stated in their paper on the normative context of advice: Want for advice may be one of the salient contextual elements that "participants may *assume* […] as they communicate support and as they interpret and evaluate the effectiveness and appropriateness of support attempts" (p. 457). The absence of this may lead to a judgment that the received advice is ineffective and inappropriate.

In order to test the effect of want for advice, this research differentiates a case when a recipient receives *wanted* advice proffered by an advice giver without soliciting it from a case when a recipient receives *unwanted* advice proffered by a giver. These two cases, together with a solicited case, constitute three types of initial interactions resulting in the provision of advice, which is discussed in the next section.

CHAPTER 2

THE PROPOSED RESEARCH

Three Types of Initial Interaction of Advice Provision

In order to disentangle the impact of want for advice from that of solicitation of advice, this research examines three types of initial interaction of advice provision: (a) when advice was wanted and solicited (Type 1); (b) when advice was wanted but unsolicited (Type 2); and (c) when advice was unwanted and unsolicited (but received) (Type 3).

Type 1. When advice was wanted and solicited by the recipient. This type of interaction includes situations in which the recipient asks for advice, or opinion/information, as a device to invite further advice from the other. In Goldsmith's (2000) study, where participants rated the solicitation after reading a hypothetical scenario of each different type of advice provision sequences, the Type 1 interaction was judged as showing greater regard for the recipient's negative face than other situations where the recipient did not explicitly ask for advice or information. Her explanation was that the advice givers in the Type 1 interaction were seen as prioritizing the recipient's freedom of choice over their own, due to the fact that they waited to use their right to offer advice until their "intrusion" was legitimized—or welcomed—by the recipient's utterance of a request. Thus, they were seen as being responsive to a request rather than "butting in or exercising unwarranted control" (p. 4).

In the case of positive face, however, Goldsmith (2000) found that types when the recipient did not explicitly solicit advice (e.g., the recipient merely introduced a problem) were judged as showing more regard for the recipient's positive face than in Type 1 interactions. This may be evidence of the emotional distress elicited by the action of seeking advice, as suggested

by a line of research mentioned in the first section of the literature review (e.g., Barbarin & Chesler, 1984; Barbee et al., 1998; DePaulo, 1982; Spiers, 1998; Shapiro, 1983; Wilson et al., 1998). The recipient would risk his or her own positive face when interrupting or imposing on the other to ask for advice and presenting oneself as incompetent (Brown & Levinson, 1987). For this reason, Type 2 interactions should feel less threatening to the recipient's positive face than Type 1 interaction. Before posing this hypothesis, Type 2 and Type3 interaction shall be differentiated in terms of want for advice.

Type 2. When advice was wanted but unsolicited by the recipient, but offered by the giver. In both Type 2 and Type 3 interactions, the recipient does not explicitly ask for advice but the giver proactively offers advice. Hence, discursively there should be no differences observable between the two types; the only difference is the recipient's subjective want for advice, which is not observable. Goldsmith (2000) examined several types of interactions in which advice was unsolicited by the recipient but offered by the giver in her study; she differentiated types based on whether the recipient acknowledged a problem. For example, one type was when the giver identified a problem (hence the recipient acknowledged the problem); another was when the recipient announced his or her plan of action (the recipient did not acknowledge a problem, if he or she had one). It was found that the latter type was seen as showing greater regard for recipient's positive face than the former type. This result was true even compared to Type 1 interactions in which the recipient (acknowledged a problem and) asked for advice. These findings support Kronrod et al.'s (2014) claim that the recipient's need for advice may not be a strong predictor of face threat or advice evaluation, whereas want for advice could be.

When want for advice exists, Goldsmith and Fitch's (1997) conceptualization of "the normative context" is established; in other words, the advice giver's "intrusion" in the absence of

an explicit request is normalized. It even may be appreciated by the recipient (when considering positive face) because the recipient does not have to risk his or her own positive face by interrupting or imposing on the giver. The fact that the advice giver proactively offered advice ensures the recipient that the giver was available and willing to do so. Little risk of threatening the giver's negative face will, in turn, reduce the recipient's perceived positive face threat. Hence, Type 2 interactions should feel less face threatening than Type 1 interactions, as far as positive face threat is concerned.

Type 3. When advice was unwanted and unsolicited by the recipient, but offered by the giver. Type 3 interactions occur when the advice giver judges that the recipient is in need of advice, regardless of whether or not the recipient wants to hear the advice. Goldsmith (2000) reported that the giver was perceived to show the least regard for both positive and negative face when advice was obviously unsolicited by the recipient, but the giver was insensitive enough to believe that the recipient would welcome the advice (e.g., when an advisor identifies a problem or volunteers advice). Hence, it is predicted that, in terms of both positive and negative face, the recipient would perceive the greatest face threat in a Type 3 interaction.

Formally stated,

H2a: The recipient's perception of positive face threat will be significantly different by the initial interaction type, with the least positive face threat perceived in the wanted but unsolicited type (Type 2), more in the wanted and solicited type (Type1) and the most in the unwanted and unsolicited type (Type 3).

H2b: The recipient's perception of negative face threat will be significantly different by the initial interaction type, with the least negative face threat perceived in the wanted and

solicited type (Type 1), more in the wanted but unsolicited type (Type 2) and the most in the unwanted and unsolicited type (Type 3).

According to Hunter and Gerbing's (1982) method of assessing a causal model, for a variable M to be a mediator between a variable A and a variable B, it is a necessary condition that A significantly accounts for variability in M and that M significantly accounts for variability in B. Hence, either of the following mediation hypotheses will be tested only if the corresponding H1 and H2 are supported by data. The mediation hypotheses are:

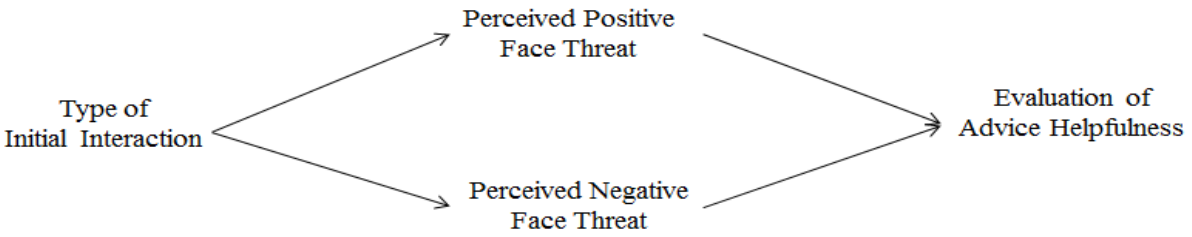
H3a: The relationship between the initial interaction type and the recipient's evaluation of the advice will be mediated by the perceived positive face threat.

H3b: The relationship between the initial interaction type and the recipient's evaluation of the advice will be mediated by the perceived negative face threat.

The hypothesized path model is depicted in Figure 1.

Importantly, a type of situation in which advice was unwanted but solicited was excluded from the Want (wanted vs. not wanted) x Solicitation (solicited vs. unsolicited) design. Such an interaction may occur, albeit rare, when the recipient is motivated by some external force to engage in solicitation behavior rather than by his or her intrinsic want to receive advice. These external forces may include, for instance, financial incentives or psychological rewards promised by another, yet contingent upon performing the solicitation behavior for the other. In addition to

Figure 1. Visual Representation of the Hypothesized Relationships between Variables



this, obligations to evoke solicitation may be a reason for reluctantly soliciting unwanted advice as in situations, for example, where an undergraduate student has a required meeting with an academic advisor. In this particular case, however, the recipient is not in a legitimate position to report perceived face threat or evaluate the helpfulness of the received advice because the controlling nature of external rewards or punishments may distort the recipient's emotions (Matsumoto, & Sanders, 1988) and judgments (e.g., dissonance reduction) (see Festinger & Carlsmith, 1959).

Although the recipient had performed the behavior for the sake of him/herself, if the aforementioned face threat associated with the solicitation behavior is compensated by some other incentive/reward beyond the helpfulness of the solicited advice, then perceived face threat is not the sole mediator in the process. Therefore, this type of initial interaction of advice provision is not within the scope of this research.

Application to Graduate Students' Adjustment

First year graduate student's adjustment to academic life was chosen as a context for this research. The chosen institution was a Midwestern university having a large population of graduate students. Adjustment to a graduate program is known as one of the greatest life transitions; it is when students receive support from a variety of others around them (Mau & Jepsen, 1990)—whether they want it or not. Seeking advice is a common type of social support interaction, typically occurring when individuals having an issue seek advice from their social networks (Albrecht & Goldsmith, 2003; Heany & Israel, 2002). However, the context of graduate education elicits additional levels of face threat to a typical advice encounter. Specifically, seeking and receiving advice may threaten the identities graduate students want to claim as competent and independent scholars. Thus, in this particular context, it is likely that

students may have experienced incidents where they wanted advice but did not explicitly request due to the face threats associated with this action (Eisenberg, Downs, Golberstein, & Zivin, 2009; Hunt & Eisenberg, 2010).

The descriptive richness of advice encounters expected from first year graduate students, along with the importance of their well-being and adjustment to an academic community, justifies the selection of this particular context.

In order to explore particular reasons for seeking or not seeking advice from another in this context, additional research questions are posed:

RQ1: What are the types of barriers that prevent graduate students from seeking advice from another person?

RQ2: What lowers these barriers and still allows graduate students to seek advice from another person?

Open-ended response data to the above research questions is expected to be consistent with the results for H2a, which predicted that the recipient's perception of positive face threat would be greater when the recipient asked for advice. More precisely, the responses should articulate reasons as to how concerns related to positive face threat affect graduate students' advice seeking behavior.

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

Procedure

Web-based self-report surveys were used to assess participants' recollections of a recent advice receiving interaction. Three surveys were developed for three different incidents of receipt of advice to be recalled: (a) Survey A (see Appendix A) for an incident that began with Type 1 interaction; (b) Survey B (see Appendix B) for an incident that began with Type 2 interaction; and (c) Survey C (see Appendix C) for an incident that began with Type 3 interaction.

The survey instrument included both close-ended quantitative scales and open-ended questions. Participants first were given a consent form (see Appendix D), and only those who consented to participate in the study proceeded to the survey questionnaire. They were asked to recall an incident when they had received wanted/unwanted, solicited/unsolicited advice, as specified in the instruction, and to describe how the conversation had started in order to facilitate immersion into the recall task. For Survey A, the participants were asked to recall and describe what the participant (i.e., the recipient) actually had said when requesting advice and how the advice giver responded. For surveys B and C, the participants were asked to recall and describe what the advice giver had said when proffering advice and how they (i.e., the recipient) responded. Immediately following this, participants were asked to indicate how much they wanted advice during this encounter. Participants then completed a scale assessing perceived face threats during the encounter. Participants also completed questions that probed further about the advice: (a) when and where the incident took place, (b) the issue/problem addressed, (c) the specific advice they received, and (d) who the advice giver was. Finally, participants completed a

scale evaluating the advice, and additional sections asking their reasons for seeking (for Survey A) or not seeking advice (for Survey B).

Each survey was randomly distributed via an email link sent by the registrar's office to approximately 2,800 registered first year Master's and PhD students at a large Midwestern University. The sample received email reminders about participating in the survey, and a $5 e-gift card was provided for people who completed the surveys. One hundred and forty two participants completed questionnaires, resulting in a response rate of 5.07%. Surveys were excluded from the analysis when the manipulation seemed to have failed: For Survey A and B (Type 1 and Type 2), participants responding that they did "not at all" (=1) want the support were excluded. For Survey C (Type 3), those who answered that they did want the support "very much" (=5) were excluded. Also, surveys that described an advice encounter that was, in fact, not advice but tangible support (e.g., getting a ride) were excluded from analysis. This resulted in dropping 15 cases, leaving 128 surveys eligible for analysis (N = 128; 50 for Survey A, 40 for Survey B, and 38 for Survey C).

Participants

Participants ranged in age from 20 to 55 *(*M = 26.36 years, SD = 5.57). The majority of the sample was female (72 %). Most participants were domestic students (68 %) with some international students of other nationalities (32%). Among the international students 78 percent, or 25 percent of the sample, were from Asian countries. Participants came from a wide variety of academic majors. Most participants were pursuing a Master's degree (63%) with some pursuing a PhD degree (37 %).

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Qualitative Data

Six categories of issues emerged from the data on which graduate students received advice, including: career-related, adjusting to a new area/community, adjusting to a new program, academic performance, emotional, and relational. The categories were tabulated based on the descriptions the participants provided in response to the question, "Please describe what the issue was about."

The most reported category was adjusting to a new program, which comprised 23.5% of responses, followed by career-related issues (21.1%) and emotional issues (17.2%). The remaining categories and their frequencies are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Issue Categories and Subcategories

Issue categories	Subcategories	Freq.	Percentage
Career-related	Career path (e.g., exploring other career path, changing fields/school/program, pursuing a higher degree)	22	17.2%
	Searching for a job/internship/institution to apply	5	3.9%
Emotional	Anxiety, doubts about yourself, stress, homesick, etc.	22	17.2%
Adjusting to new program	Socializing to the program	22	17.2%
	Program specific-decision making (e.g., different tracks in the program, course selections, faculty suggestions)	8	6.3%
Academic performance	Study skills, class tips, research/lab work	12	9.4%
Adjusting to new area/community	Adjusting to a new culture/lifestyle	12	9.4%
	Administrative (tax, insurance, registration, etc.)	10	7. 8%
Relational	Problem with colleagues/friends/professors/advisor	7	5.5%
Miscellaneous (e.g., financial issues, general information seeking, etc.)		8	6.3%
	Total	128	100.0%

To make sure the initial interaction types in this research were not confounded with the issue categories, the association between type and six issue categories was tested using Chi-square. The result was non-significant, χ^2 (10, n =120) = 8.24, p =.61, Cramer's V = .19, concluding no significant association between type and issue category.

Coding of Reasons for Seeking/Not Seeking Advice

The researcher developed a coding scheme for coding the open-ended questions by reading and re-reading the data to uncover common themes. Seven categories of reasons emerged from the data for seeking support from another (Survey A) and for not seeking support from another (Survey B), respectively. Any category encountered within the response was coded by two coders, one was the researcher and the other was a trained coder. Responses that listed two or more categories of reasons were regarded as giving multiple reasons, hence divided and coded for respective category. Reliability for the reasons coding between the two primary coders was good (Kappa = .81 for Survey A; Kappa = .80 for Survey B) (see Cohen, 1960). Disagreements were resolved by discussion between the two coders.

Quantitative Data Measurement

Want for advice. A single item was used for the purpose of a manipulation check regarding psychological want for advice to determine whether the received advice (recalled by participants) was wanted more in Type 1 and Type 2 interaction than the advice reported in Type 3 interaction. One Likert type item (1= Not at all, 5= Very much) was used for measuring the extent to which the advice recipient wanted help from the other when he or she was asking for it (Survey A)/offered it (Surveys B & C).

Perceived face threat. A fourteen item scale was created to measure perceived face threats. Two items were adapted from the face threat scale used in Goldsmith's study (2000) in

the context of advice giving, and eight from Park and Guan's (2009) study in the context of apology. Four items were written by the author. The scale consisted of five-point semantic differential items, with 3 being midpoint, in response to the question, "During the conversation you described above when you were asking the other person for help, please describe how you felt about asking the other person for help."

The structural validity of the scale was assessed using confirmatory factor analysis. Factor loadings were derived using the centroid method of estimation; internal consistency and parallelism theorems were used to generate predicted correlations for each of the items (Hunter & Gerbing, 1982). Large residual deviations between obtained and predicted correlations were flagged as significant ($p < .05$) and were thus unacceptable.

After dropping two items from the positive face threat scale and two items from the negative face threat scale that were causing large errors, the data fit a three-factor model instead of a two-factor model. Each of the first two factors consisted of three of the positive face threat items, and the third factor consisted of five of the negative face threat items. The results revealed an acceptable fit of the data to the model (RMSE = .10). Tests of parallelism revealed small error rates, and the number of significant deviations did not exceed what was expected by chance ($p < .05$). Reliability checks were acceptable (α =.77 for factor one; α =.81 for factor two; α = .94 for factor three). The scale items, factor loadings, and reliability coefficients of the three-factor face threat measurement model are reported in Table 2.

Although factor two initially was developed to measure positive face threat, it was observable from the resulting factor loadings that factor two showed a larger correlation with the negative face threat factor (i.e., factor three) than with the positive face threat factor (i.e., factor one). In order to validate the second factors as measuring positive face threat, confirmatory

factor analysis was performed again to test whether factor two constituted the second-order uni-dimension of positive face threat along with factor one. The remaining five positive face threat items and five negative face threat items was used for the analysis. Tests of parallelism revealed an unacceptable fit of the data to the model (RMSE = .13). The number of significant deviations exceeded what was expected by chance ($p < .05$), which indicated that dimension two (i.e., factor two) was not measuring the same construct as dimension one (i.e., factor two).

Considering that, in this research, positive face threat was centered on a threat to the recipient's self-presentation as a competent individual (e.g., not having to ask for advice from

Table 2. Factor Loadings for Three-factor Model of Face Threat

Factor Loadings for Face Items and Reliabilities			
Face Threat Factor One $\alpha = .77$	F1	F2	F3
I did NOT feel ashamed.—I felt ashamed.	**.81**	.49	.44
I did NOT feel self-conscious.—I felt self-conscious.	**.47**	.22	.19
I did NOT feel embarrassed.—I felt embarrassed	**.94**	.55	.34
I felt my self-image was preserved.—I felt my self-image was threatened.	-	-	-
Face Threat Factor Two $\alpha = .84$			
I did NOT feel humiliated.—I felt humiliated.	.56	**.83**	.67
I felt accepted.—I felt rejected.	.36	**.83**	.56
I felt respected.—I felt disrespected.	-	-	-
Face Threat Factor Three $\alpha = .94$			
I did NOT feel inconvenienced.—I felt inconvenienced.	.33	.62	**.78**
I did NOT feel intruded upon.—I felt intruded upon.	.35	.68	**.86**
I did NOT feel bothered.—I felt bothered.	.43	.66	**.90**
I did NOT feel imposed upon.—I felt imposed upon.	.39	.62	**.92**
I did NOT feel disturbed.—I felt disturbed.	.41	.63	**.88**
I did NOT feel like I owed her/him something in return.—I felt like I owed her/him something in return.	-	-	-
My personal boundaries were preserved.—My personal boundaries were crossed.	-	-	-

another person), factor one was deemed valid in terms of face validity. However, the failure of the second-order uni-dimensionality test was not sufficient to reject factor two for not measuring positive face threat. Therefore, in order to test the possibility that factor two measured a negative fact threat instead of a positive face threat, another confirmatory factor analysis was performed to see whether factor two constituted the second-order uni-dimension of negative face threat along with factor three. Tests of parallelism revealed an acceptable fit of the data to the model (RMSE = .06), and the number of significant deviations did not exceed what was expected by chance ($p < .05$). Thus, it was concluded that factor two measured a dimension of negative face threat rather than a dimension of positive face threat; factor two was invalid for measuring positive face threat.

Three items of factor two, therefore, were removed from the positive face threat scale. Confirmatory factor analysis was performed to test the final two-factor model, with three items of factor one constituting the positive face threat and five items of factor two constituting the negative face threat factor. Tests of internal consistency and tests of parallelism revealed an acceptable fit of the model (RMSE = .09), and the number of significant deviations in the parallelism block did not exceed what was expected by chance ($p < .05$). Reliability checks were acceptable ($\alpha = .77$ for positive face threat; $\alpha = .94$ for negative face threat). Thus, the scale exhibited acceptable structural validity and reliability (see Table 3 for factor loadings). The positive face threat scale showed a mean of 1.88 and a standard deviation of .92. The negative face threat scale showed a mean of 1.53 and a standard deviation of .85.

Evaluation of advice helpfulness. The utility of received support scale items were adopted from Goldsmith et al.'s three-factor received support evaluation scale (2000). A six item scale was created for this research, using three items adapted from Goldsmith et al.'s scale

(2000) and three written by the author. Participants responded to the question, "how would you describe the support you received?" by completing six five-point semantic differential items with 3 being the midpoint. Tests of internal consistency revealed small residuals (RMSE = .04), and the number of significant deviations did not exceed what was expected by chance (p <.05). Hence, no item was dropped. Further, Cronbach's alpha indicated high reliability (α = .95). Thus, the scale was judged to exhibit acceptable structural validity and reliability. The mean of

Table 3. Factor Loadings for Items and Reliabilities

Factor Loadings for Items and Reliabilities for the Scales Used	
Positive Face Threat α = .77	
I did NOT feel ashamed.—I felt ashamed.	.81
I did NOT feel self-conscious.—I felt self-conscious.	.47
I did NOT feel embarrassed.—I felt embarrassed	.94
I felt respected.—I felt disrespected.	-
I felt my self-image was preserved.—I felt my self-image was threatened.	-
I felt accepted.—I felt rejected.	-
I did NOT feel humiliated.—I felt humiliated.	-
Negative Face Threat α = .94	
I did NOT feel inconvenienced.—I felt inconvenienced.	.78
I did NOT feel intruded upon.—I felt intruded upon.	.86
I did NOT feel bothered.—I felt bothered.	.90
I did NOT feel imposed upon.—I felt imposed upon.	.92
I did NOT feel disturbed.—I felt disturbed.	.88
I did NOT feel like I owed her/him something in return.—I felt like I owed her/him something in return.	-
My personal boundaries were preserved.—My personal boundaries were crossed.	-
Evaluation of Received Advice α = .95	
NOT Beneficial—Beneficial	.92
NOT Valuable—Valuable	.88
NOT Constructive—Constructive	.79
NOT Helpful—Helpful	.88
Useless—Useful	.87
NOT knowledgeable—Knowledgeable	.78

the evaluation of the received advice helpfulness was 4.26 (*SD* = .86), indicating that received advice was perceived to be helpful in general.

The final scale items, factor loadings, and reliability coefficients are reported in Table 3.

Manipulation Checks

Quantitative evidence. A one-way independent groups analysis of variance (ANOVA) was employed to determine if the want for advice induction was successful. Results indicated that significant differences in want for advice were present, F (2, 125) = 53.20, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .46$. Post hoc analysis with Dunnett's test revealed that the means were in the expected order such that participants in the unwanted advice provision interaction (Type 3 M_b = 2.58, *SD* = .92) reported significantly lower want for advice than those in wanted advice provision interaction (Type 1 M_a = 4.28, *SD* = .78) and (Type 2 M_a = 4.12, *SD* = .83).

Qualitative Evidence. What the participant and the advice giver actually said at the beginning of interaction was asked to help participants recall an interaction according to the type of interaction being primed and help them immerse in the situation. Few participants indirectly quoted or paraphrased what was said; they did not directly quoted what was actually spoken. Only direct quotations available from the responses were monitored to identify any distinctive patterns in the use of language unique to the initial interaction type.

As shown in Table 4, varying degrees of attempts to mitigate possible face threats were observed in each interaction type. The language uses were coded into three categories: positive politeness, negative politeness, and no redress/bald-on record. The concept of redress refers to strategies to counteract potential face threat that may be posed by an action by indicating that no such face threat is intended (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Positive politeness included redressive action that counteracts positive face threat, often by assuring that the speaker cares about the

hearer's wants or that the speaker respects the hearer as an equal. Negative politeness included redressive action that counteracts negative face threat by avoiding sounding forceful and assuring that the hearer deserves all rights in decision over his or her action. An act is said to be without redress/bald-on-record when the speaker's action does not involve any redress and is done directly and clear enough to convey the intention that led the speaker to perform the act.

In Type 1 interactions the recipients solicited advice using techniques of negative politeness; some apologized before asking, explained the urgency of the situation, or appealed to the triviality of what they were asking. Others indirectly started the conversation by asking a question about ability or availability. Still others used more bald-on-record strategies by starting the conversation relatively bluntly, introducing the issue upfront, or asking for an opinion.

Similarly, in Type 2 and Type 3 interactions where the advice giver proactively offered advice, some advice givers, using negative politeness, initiated the advice provision indirectly by checking on the recipient's well-being or by introducing what they could offer without imposing. On the other hand, there also were givers who began offering advice without any preface, (i.e., bald-on-record). Some opted for positive politeness by emphasizing that they were concerned about the recipient's well-being, believed in the recipient's competence (e.g., encouragement), and were the same as the recipient facing this issue together.

Overall, it was judged that participants reported the type of interaction that they were asked to report according to the instructions; participants in Type 1 reported incidents where they first asked for advice to the advice giver, whereas those in Type 2 and 3 reported incidents where the advice giver proactively offered advice in the absence of the participant's request for advice. It should be noted; however, that varying strategies of mitigating face threat existed within each type.

Table 4. Examples of Language Use in Each Type of Initial Interaction

Types	Examples
Type 1: Wanted and Solicited Advice (The recipient speaking)	"Excuse me, could you advise me [...]?" (N) "Hey, can you help me with that assignment for […]? It's due by midnight. I just need you to check […]. It's pretty easy, just nine posts for […]." (N) "Are you busy at this moment?" (N) "I am really having a difficult time dealing with the negativity of my colleagues and their arrogance. How should I deal with Prof. ____?" (B) "How do you think about attending a Ph.D. program instead of a Master program?" (B)
Type 2: Wanted and Unsolicited Advice (The giver speaking)	"I have just started yoga classes offered to graduate students for free. […] You should try! I know other students […] found them helpful. (P)" "Would you like to sit together to discuss about your upcoming project for the next sampling?" (P) "What can I help?" (N) "XX, is there any additional information you need about […] or questions about the program in general?" (N) "I heard that you wanna choose a graduate programme in [..]. I have some data that maybe helpful for you." (N) "Do you need help in this area?" (B) "Ok, what is your problem?" (B)
Type 3: Unwanted and Unsolicited Advice (The giver speaking)	"Do enjoy your days? Nothing can be certain at your stage. […] Just follow your beliefs and work hard. Make some good friends you like. Be positive and hard working. You will have your great career […]." (P) "Is everything going alright?" (N) "Would you like me to make sure you're taking courses that make you on track for graduation?" (N) "Your writing has too much emphasis on transitions between topics […], and you don't need to explain a quote in the sentence following." (B)

Note. P = positive politeness; N = negative politeness; B = Bald-on-record

Hypotheses 1 and 2

It was hypothesized that recipient-perceived positive face threat (H1a) and negative face threat (H1b) were predictors of evaluation of advice helpfulness. Multiple regression analysis was used to analyze the relationships among the variables. The result was significant, F (2, 125) = 50.62, $p < .001$, adjusted $R^2 = .44$. The analysis showed that perceived negative face threat was a significant predictor of evaluation of advice helpfulness, $\beta = -.69$, P ($-.84 \leq \beta \leq -.54$) = .95, t = -9.60, df = 125, $p < .001$, while positive face threat was not, $\beta = .04$, P ($-.09 \leq \beta \leq .17$) = .95, t = .62, df = 125, $p = .54$. Thus, the data were consistent with H1b, but not with H1a.

H2a stated that the recipient's perception of positive face threat would significantly differ by the initial interaction type such that positive face threat would be perceived least in Type 2 interaction, more in Type 1 interaction and most in Type 3 interaction.

As shown in Table 5, the ANOVA revealed a significant main effect of initial interaction type on positive face threat, F (2,125) = 10.02, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .14$. Dunnett's T3 test, which does

Table 5. One-way ANOVA Results

One-way ANOVA Results for Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis	Effects of initial interaction type on DVs	df	F	p	η^2	r
H2a	DV: Positive face threat Wanted, solicited ($M = 2.01_b$, $SD = 1.00$) Wanted, unsolicited ($M = 1.39_a$, $SD = .54$) Unwanted, unsolicited ($M = 2.23_b$, $SD = .95$)	2	10.02	<.01	.14	.37
H2b	DV: Negative face threat Wanted, solicited ($M = 1.34_a$, $SD = .66$) Wanted, unsolicited ($M = 1.22_a$, $SD = .42$) Unwanted, unsolicited ($M = 2.12_b$, $SD = 1.10$)	2	16.13	<.01	.21	.45
Extracting r for testing H3	DV: Evaluation of advice Wanted, solicited ($M = 4.56_a$, $SD = .73$) Wanted, unsolicited ($M = 4.46_a$, $SD = .57$) Unwanted, unsolicited ($M = 3.66_b$, $SD = .97$)	2	16.56	<.01	.21	.46

Notes. Means with different subscripts differ at $p < .001$.

Figure 2. Means (±SD) of Perceived Positive Face Threat for Each Type

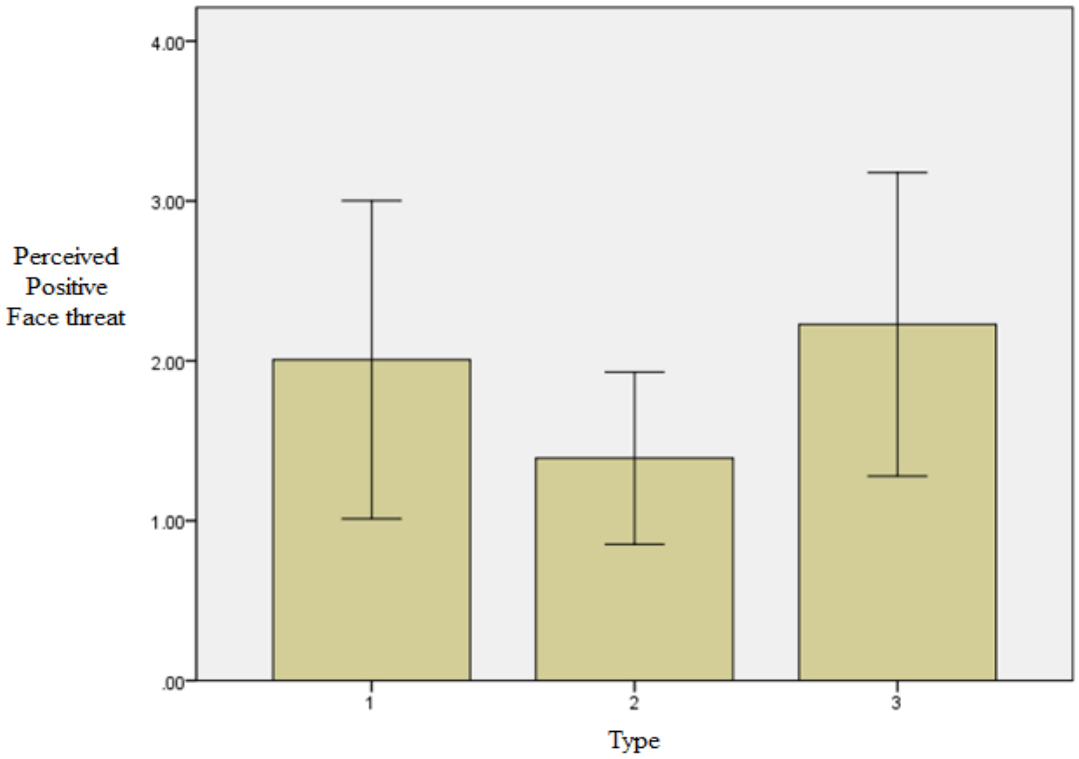
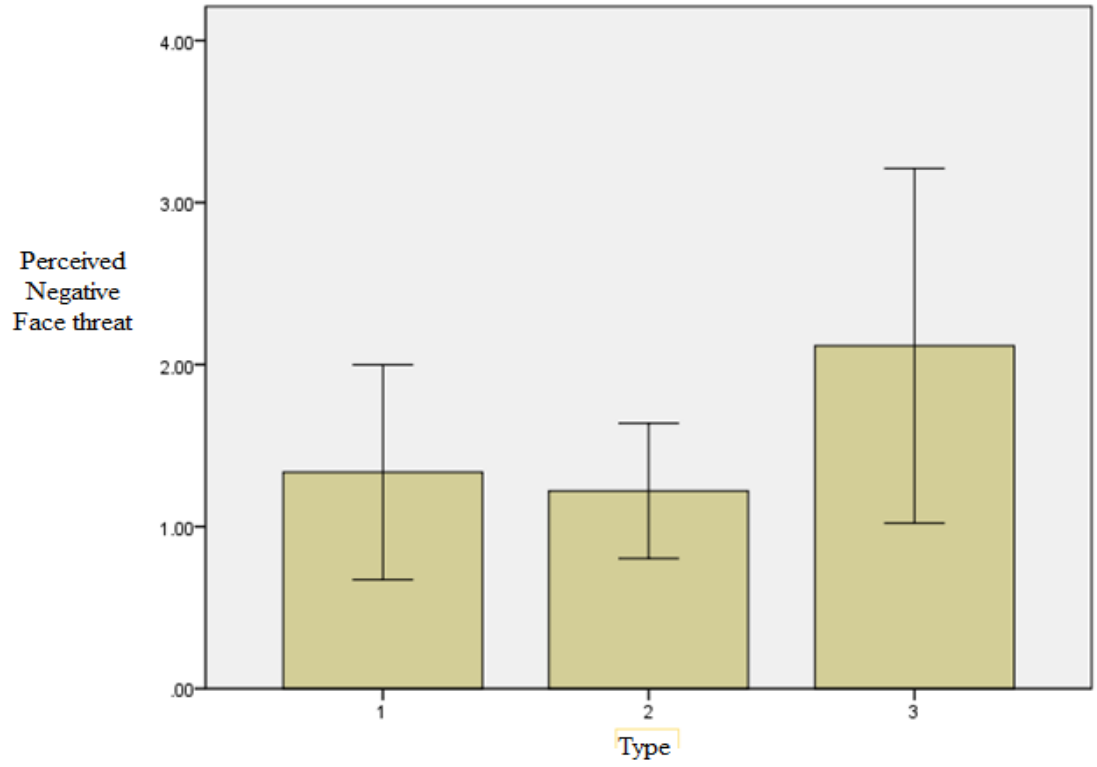


Figure 3. Means (±SD) of Perceived Negative Face Threat for Each Type



not assume equal variances, was used for post hoc analysis because the test of homogeneity of variances revealed significant differences in variances ($p < .05$). Consistent with the prediction, the results showed that participants who wanted but did not solicit advice (Type 2 $M_a = 1.39$, $SD = .54$) perceived significantly lower positive face threat than those who wanted and solicited advice (Type 1 $M_b = 2.01$, $SD = 1.00$) or those who did not want and did not solicit advice (Type 3 $M_b = 2.23$, $SD = .95$) (see Figure 2). Perceived face threat in Type 1 interactions were lower than Type 3 interactions; however, the difference was not significant ($p = .64$). Hence, H2a was partially supported by the data.

H2b predicted that the recipient's perception of negative face threat would significantly differ by the initial interaction type such that negative face threat would be perceived least in Type 1 interaction, more in Type 2 interaction and most in Type 3 interaction. As shown in Table 5, the ANOVA revealed a significant main effect of initial interaction type on negative face threat (F [2,125] = 16.13, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .21$). Consistent with the hypothesis, Dunnett's T3 post hoc test showed that participants who had unwanted and unsolicited advice interactions (Type 3 $M_b = 2.12$, $SD = 1.10$) perceived higher negative face threat than those who had wanted and solicited advice (Type 1 $M_a = 1.34$, $SD = .66$) or who had wanted advice but not solicited it (Type 2 $M_a = 1.22$, $SD = .42$) (see Figure 3). Perceived facet threat in Type 2 interaction was lower than Type 1 interaction; however, the difference was not significant ($p = .68$). Hence, H2b was partially supported by the data.

Evaluation of Mediation Model: Testing H3

The correlations among variables in the model are presented in Table 6. The standardized item alpha estimates reported previously were used to correct the correlations for attenuation due

Table 6. Variable Means, Standard Deviations and Correlation Coefficients

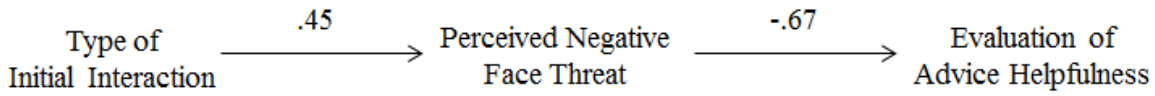
Variable Means, Standard Deviations and Correlation Coefficients						
	M	SD	1	2	3	4
Type of Initial Interaction	-	-	1	.44**	.50**	-.48**
Perceived Positive Face Threat	1.88	.92	.37**	1	.48**	-.25*
Perceived Negative Face Threat	1.53	.85	.45**	.36**	1	-.78**
Evaluation of Advice	4.26	.86	-.46**	-.20*	-.67**	1

**. Significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed); *. Significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

to measurement error. The corrected correlations are displayed in the upper triangle of this correlation matrix; their uncorrected values are displayed in the lower triangle of this matrix.

To test the hypothesized model, each parameter size was examined, and the fit of the model was assessed. As the result of multiple regression of evaluation of advice onto positive and negative face threats suggested in the previous section, the resulting beta weight of positive face threat was not substantial; hence, the link between positive face threat and evaluation was removed from the path model. Consequently, H3a was not tested with the model because the data suggested that recipient-perceived positive face threat was not a predictor of evaluation of advice (hence, should not be a mediator). The revised path model with path coefficients is depicted in the path diagram (Figure 4). The coefficient linking initial interaction type and negative face threat was .45, P ($.31 \leq \rho \leq .59$) = .95. The coefficient linking recipient-perceived negative face threat and evaluation of advice was -.67, P ($-.79 \leq \rho \leq -.55$) = .95. All the path coefficients were both substantial and in the direction predicted. Model fit was tested by comparing the observed correlations to the predicted correlations. Hunter and Gerbing (1982)

Figure 4. Revised Model with Path Coefficients



suggested that to the extent that the differences between observed and predicted correlations (i.e., errors) are attributable to sampling error, the model is said to be consistent with the data. If errors are larger than what is expected from sampling error, the model is said to be inconsistent with the data.

The differences between predicted and obtained correlations for all bivariate relationships in the revised model were examined, and none differed substantially from what was expected from sampling error. Furthermore, the global test for goodness of fit indicated that the data were consistent with the model, χ^2 (1) = 1.82, p = .18. Given that the path coefficients were relatively large in magnitude, and that the model and parameter estimates predicted accurately the correlations, the revised causal model and the data were judged to be consistent with one another; hence, H3b, which predicted the mediating role of the recipient's perception of negative face threat between initial interaction type and evaluation of advice, was supported.

Research Questions

The research questions were explored by examining the frequencies that emerged from the qualitative data. Participants describing an encounter in which they wanted but did not solicit advice (Type 2) were asked "why did you NOT first ask for help from another (i.e., why did you try to handle the issue on your own)?" The categories of reasons represent the range of different responses. It was not uncommon for respondents to list more than one reason in their responses, resulting in a total of 46 responses out of 40 participants.

The data (see Table 7) revealed that the most reported reasons for not seeking advice were personality reasons (17.4%)—either because they were reserved or because they like doing things on their own—and reasons related to pride (17.4%), i.e., that they thought they could handle the issue on their own. The next most reported category included variations on the idea

Table 7. Frequency of Reasons for Not Seeking Advice

Reasons for not seeking advice even when in want	Freq.	Percentage
I am shy/reserved/timid, I am just a person who likes doing things by myself, I don't like asking others	8	17.4%
I thought I could handle the issue by myself, pride	8	17.4%
I am a graduate student, expected to be independent	6	13.0%
I did not feel it as an issue	5	10.9%
The other did not give a moment, just started offering advice	5	10.9%
I had no connection to the person/people who were available at that time	3	6.5%
I did not want to bother/intervene the person	3	6.5%
Miscellaneous	8	17.4%
Total	46	100.0%

that graduate students are expected to be independent, emerging in 13% of the responses. Other reasons included that they did not feel it was a big issue (10.9%); that the advice giver simply started offering advice and did not give a moment for them to ask for it (10.9%); that they had no connection to people who were available at the scene (6.5%); and that they did not want to intrude upon the other (6.5%). The frequencies are summarized in Table 7.

Those who wanted and solicited advice (Type 1) were asked "why did you ask for help from that person?" to examine what allowed them to overcome the barrier and seek advice from a certain person. The categories of reasons represent the range of different responses. It was not uncommon for respondents to list more than one reason in their responses, resulting in a total of 58 responses out of 50 participants.

The data (see Table 8) revealed that the most reported reason was the knowledge/ expertise/experiences of the advice giver (24.1%), followed by appreciation that the advice giver knows very well about one and/or one's situation (15.5%), and trust that they had for the

Table 8. Frequency of Reasons for Seeking Advice

Reasons for seeking advice	Freq.	Percentage
The person has knowledge/expertise/experiences	14	24.1%
The person knows very well about me/my situation	9	15.5%
I trust the person	8	13.8%
The person is the go-to person/responsible for such issues, it is his or her job, etc.	7	12.1%
The person is kind/welcoming/willing to help me out	7	12.1%
The person is important to me (e.g., family member, partner)	5	8.6%
Somebody recommended the person	5	8.6%
Miscellaneous	3	5.1%
Total	58	100.0%

advice giver (13.8%). The fact that the giver was usually a person who deals with such issues (12.1%) and that the giver was kind/welcoming/willing to help seemed to lower the barriers for the advice seeker to ask for advice (12.1%). Other reasons included that the person was one of importance to the respondent (i.e., one feels a need to discuss this issue with the person) (8.6%) and that somebody recommended that they ask for help from that specific individual (8.6%). The frequencies are summarized in Table 8.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Discussion of Hypotheses Testing Results

The purpose of this research was to investigate (a) the effects of initial interaction of advice provision—characterized by solicitation and want—on the recipient's perception of positive and negative face threat, and (b) the mediating role of perceived face threats between initial interaction type and evaluation of advice helpfulness in the context of graduate students' adjustment to a new graduate program. The data revealed that, of the initially hypothesized model (Figure 1), the path coefficient of the link between positive face threat and evaluation of advice helpfulness was not substantial (i.e., H1a not supported). By removing this path, the data were consistent with the revised model (Figure 4), which suggested that perceived negative face threat mediated the relationship between the initial interaction of advice provision and evaluation of advice helpfulness.

The data were not consistent with H1a, which posited that perceived positive face threat would be a significant predictor of evaluation of advice helpfulness. Initially, it was reasoned that the recipients would experience feelings of embarrassment associated with having to ask for advice, or risk looking incompetent to the other person. The data indicated, however, that even though recipients may have perceived positive face threat during the advice provision interaction and felt embarrassed, they were not much influenced by these feelings when evaluating the extent to which the received advice was helpful. On the other hand, recipients who perceived that the advice giver had imposed or intruded upon them, (i.e., perceived negative face threats) seemed to evaluate the received advice as less helpful.

Among the possible accounts for the minimal effect of perceived positive face threat compared to that of negative face threat, the context effect should be noted first. Unlike previous studies that used undergraduate students as a sample, this research used first-year graduate students as a sample. It could be that in the context of graduate students' adjustment, the recipients' perception of positive face threat (i.e., feelings of embarrassment) is not a relevant factor that affects their evaluation of advice helpfulness. Feelings of embarrassment to some degree may be taken as a normal response when seeking advice and learning from others. Whether this finding holds across contexts should be tested in the future.

One explanation is through the reactance response. According to reactance theory (Brehm, 1961), when a personal freedom is perceived as threatened, a motivational state called psychological reactance occurs to restore the freedom. In the context of communicative interactions, negative feelings such as aggression and hostility lead to cognitive responses, such as derogating the source of the threat and/or the source of the message (Dillard & Shen, 2007; Grandpre, Alvaro, Burgoon , Miller, & Hall, 2009; Kohn & Barnes, 1977; Schwarz, Frey, & Kumpf, 1980). Hence, in the context of advice provision, when the recipient perceives that one's negative face is threatened, the recipient would derogate the advice giver and hence the quality of the received advice. On the other hand, the negative feelings elicited by positive face threat, including humiliation and shame, may not be of such kind that lead to cognitive reactance response, hence the minimal effect on the evaluation of advice.

Still another explanation could be a biased evaluation of advice helpfulness in the case of seeking advice. It could be that when the recipient had asked for advice from a certain advice giver, as the recipient chose the giver and put more of his or her emotion and cognitive efforts into the planning (e.g., risking their competent self-image, initiating conversation, having to

impose on another), the evaluation was more biased in the direction that overestimated helpfulness of the advice (i.e., post-decision dissonance) (see Knox & Inkster, 1968). If this was the case, then the effect of perceived positive face threat on the evaluation of advice could have been mitigated by the cognitive dissonance reduction process.

It is still worth noting that the mean scores of face threat indicated low experiences of both types of face threat in general. This means that perceived face threat supposedly induced by the recalled interaction might not have been large enough to capture its further effect on the evaluation of advice. In the future, stronger induction of perceived face threat should be employed to examine its role of mediation more accurately. In addition, the effects of positive face threats should be compared between the solicited condition and unsolicited condition to see if the solicitation—and emotional and cognitive investments associated with soliciting advice—would moderate the effect of positive face threat on the evaluation of advice helpfulness.

Hypotheses 2 concerned the effect of initial interaction type on perceived face threats. Considering that act of solicitation first, the results showed that when advice was solicited by the recipients (Type 1), they felt significantly higher levels of positive face threats than Type 2 or Type 3 interactions, where the acts of solicitation were absent. This is consistent with the extant literature that seeking support is associated with negative outcomes, as documented by Fisher et al. (1988), including: (a) the potential to lower self-esteem (Barbarin & Chesler, 1984; Wortman & Dunkel-schetter, 1979); (b) the potential to change the balance of equity in a relationship (Fisher et al., 1983; Hatfield & Sprecher 1983); and (c) the fear of judgment by others as incompetent (DePaulo, 1982; Shapiro, 1983).

In contrast, it appears that want for advice did not impact the recipient's perception of positive face threat as much as solicitation did. The results indicated that there was no significant

difference between Type 2 interactions, where the proffered advice was actually wanted by the recipient, and Type 3 interactions, where it was not.

The want for advice, instead, seemed to be associated with perceived negative face threat. The results showed that Type 3 interactions, where the recipient's want for advice was minimal, felt significantly higher levels of negative face threats than Type 1 or Type 2 interactions, where the recipient's want for advice was higher. This is consistent with the prediction that unwanted advice would be perceived as superfluous and hence burdensome and intruding. Importantly, the results rendered preliminary evidence that want for support/advice is in fact one of the salient contextual elements that constitute a normative context of advice provision, which would impact interpretation and evaluation of the effectiveness and appropriateness of support attempts (Goldsmith & Fitch, 1997). This research showed that proffering advice in the absence of want for advice (Type 3) was associated with greater negative face threat, which led to lower evaluation of helpfulness.

A unique contribution of this research to the extant literature on advice lies in its distinction between solicitation of advice and want for advice. Unlike much of the previous research, this research examined Type 2 interactions where the recipient, even when in want for advice, does not explicitly solicit advice due to the risk of positive face threats. This distinction was critical in that the effect of each factor was indeed different. A key take-away from this finding is that it is less than accurate to suggest that unsolicited advice is more imposing (i.e., threatening to negative face) than is solicited advice. This research argued that only unsolicited advice that was unwanted by the recipient would threaten negative face. More importantly, the results showed that an act of solicitation of advice (or explicit request) is associated with perceived positive face threat, but little with negative face threat. In the context of advice

receiving experiences of graduate students during adjustment to a new program, this research highlighted the appropriateness of the context in terms of the recipient's want for advice and the impact it has on the recipient's perceptions about the giver's potentially face threatening behavior and on evaluation of advice helpfulness.

A general implication for future support communication is the significance of the initial condition *prior to* the actual receipt of support as well as the recipient's perceptions *during* the provision in determining the recipient's emotional outcomes and the evaluation of the received support. One direction for future research is to test whether the findings of this research are generalizable to broader contexts other than graduate students' adjustment, where different types of support may be granted and a different aspect of support quality may matter.

Discussion of Research Questions Results

The results showed that a major reason why people in want for advice may not explicitly seek out advice is either because they like doing things on their own or because they thought they could handle the issues on their own. This research did not investigate further as to why people prefer handling issues on their own; however, along with the H2a testing results, it is suspected that the positive face threats associated with seeking advice could well be the reason behind their responses.

Another critical reason was directly related to participants' identities as graduate students, which come with the obligations to maintain independence and self-competence. Responses of this type directly inform about a kind of positive face participants wanted to maintain by avoiding the risk of losing it. In addition, a small number of participants reported that they did not want to inconvenience the other or that they did not know anyone in the scene. This suggests that one's perceived risk of positive face threat also may be influenced by one's perception that

the other would mind offering advice, the chance of which is higher when the other is a stranger than a close other (Feng & MacGeorge, 2006; Goldsmith & Fitch, 1997; Lim & Bowers, 1991).

Considering why advice was solicited from a specific giver, the results showed that the knowledge/expertise/experiences the advice giver possessed was a single most reported reason. However, it is questionable as to whether the knowledge level of the advice giver necessarily *lowers* barriers (i.e., decreases positive face threat) that would otherwise prevent graduate students from seeking advice. A more knowledgeable and experienced advice giver, rather, may be threatening to the recipient's positive face if the recipient perceives more power difference, more knowledge difference or less similarity to the advice giver (Fisher & Nadler, 1974; Lim & Bowers, 1991). If this is the case, the reason one seeks advice from a knowledgeable individual is not because it feels less face threatening but because one is willing to sacrifice one's positive face threat for a quality piece of advice. It is thus left for future research to examine how advice expertise may impact the advice recipient's perceived face threat and evaluation of advice.

The results also indicated that advice givers who were deemed close (i.e., knew the recipients and/or recipients' situation very well, were trusted by the recipients, or kind/welcoming/willing to help) were perceived as approachable from the recipient's perspective. Graduate students seem to have a tendency or preference to ask advice from someone who is *least* likely to mind offering advice or reject one's competent, independent self-image. In other words, the participants' response that "the other person really knows me well" translates into "the person has been regarding my face as I claim it." By the same token, trust can be conceptualized as one's belief in another that the person will accept one's face as one is attempting to claim; Deutsch (1973) once conceptualized trust as "confidence that one will find what is desired rather than what is feared" (p.148). Trust in the advice giver would then mean

confidence in the belief that the giver would accept one's request and grant the advice, and, moreover, one's face as one claims it. In this sense, the extent to which a recipient trusts the advice giver may impact perceived positive face threat during advice provision interaction such that the greater the trust, the less the perceived positive face threat.

A slightly different explanation is needed to account for how knowing that giving advice on this issue is one of the giver's responsibilities. The most obvious reason is that the recipient is quite sure that the giver will not, or cannot, reject the request for advice. A more complicated reason is that the recipient knows that his or her request would be regarded as less burdensome and less imposing to that specific person than to others who do not have responsibilities to do the job. The recipient's perception that the other would not feel imposed upon or interrupted is critical because the recipient's positive face (e.g., being seen as a polite individual) is dependent on how the other judges the recipient's behavior (Barbarin & Chesler, 1984; DePaulo, 1982; Shapiro, 1983; Wortman & Dunkel-schetter, 1979).

In sum, the findings from the open-ended data supported the findings from testing H2a, that positive face threat was a major reason for not seeking advice from another even when in want of advice. The mechanisms through which the advice giver factors mentioned in the data (e.g., the advice giver's expertise, willingness, availability, and responsibility over the issue or the job of advice giving) operate on face threat to lower the barriers are in need of future research.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

Although this research adds to the literature on advice giving and face threats, a number of limitations merit discussion.

One obvious limitation is restriction of the context to graduate students' adjustment, which limits the generalizability of the findings. It is an empirical question whether the context

would interact with the type of initial interaction and change its effect on the recipient's perception of face threat or the evaluation of advice differently. In particular need of further investigation is whether perceived positive face threat would mediate the relationship between the initial interaction and evaluation of advice in another context. In fact, help avoidance and help seeking behaviors have been studied in many different contexts, including mental health issues (e.g., Hunt & Eisenberg, 2010; Komiya, Good, & Sherrod, 2000; Möller-Leimkühler, 2002, Nickerson, Helms, & Terrell, 1994) and academic failures (e.g., Butler, 1998; Butler & Neuman, 1995; Marchand & Skinner, 2007, Newman, 1990; Ryan, Gheen, & Midgley, 1998). In addition, there is abundant evidence suggesting that advice seeking and proffering behaviors are judged differently by culture (e.g., Cai & Wilson, 2000; Kim, Sherman, Ko, & Taylpr, 2006; Mortenson, 2006; Narikiyo & Kameoka, 1992; Samter, Whalery, Mortenson, & Burleson, 1997). Future research can extend the findings of this research by testing the factors in a different group of participants in a different context or culture.

Furthermore, this research considered only three types of initial interaction of advice provision among the four possible types resulting from a two-by-two (wanted vs. unwanted x solicited vs. unsolicited) design. Because of the missing cell of the unwanted and unsolicited condition, a two-way ANOVA could not be performed. Due to this limitation in the design, the effects of solicitation of advice and want for advice were not independently tested, and the possible interaction between the two was not tested. In the future, a design could be devised to test the effects of solicitation and want separately. Adding the fourth condition will be viable as long as the predicted variable (i.e., evaluation of advice in this research) is something that a "pseudo advice seeker" (who does not have a want for advice but solicits advice anyway) can legitimately rate. If inclusion of the missing cell is judged as not viable, a statistical analysis or a

sampling method that is modified to accommodate the missing cell could be employed (e.g., ANOVA for unbalanced designs) (see Ott & Longnecker, 2001).

Additionally, although participants were primed to recall an advice provision incident of a specific type, the study was based on a self-reported memory recollection survey, not a behavioral study. Memory recollection has strength in that the recalled incidents were real-life incidents that participants experienced as opposed to a hypothetical situation given by another. However, responses based on participants' memory retrieval are vulnerable to their imperfect memory or biased appraisal of the incident that is retrospectively processed (Bradburn, Rips, & Shevell, 1987; Pearson, Ross, & Dawes, 1992). In this research, the possibility cannot be ruled out that participants' recalled want for advice—which by definition *should* have existed prior to receiving advice—could have been affected by the retrospective evaluation of advice helpfulness. In other words, a participant's memory of their prior want for advice could be less than what it actually was. For example, if a participant had received unhelpful advice, he or she could retrospectively change the perception regarding how much he or she originally wanted the advice. In the future, a behavioral study could be conducted to manipulate the solicitation of advice and want for advice more cleanly and to ensure a temporal order among the variables in the causal model.

The lack of homogeneity of variance in perceived face threats across conditions may have increased the chance of reporting a larger *F*. This research was vulnerable to the assumptions of ANOVA due to its relatively small and unbalanced sample sizes. Threats were mitigated by using a post-hoc analysis that assumed unequal variances and unequal sample sizes between conditions. Additionally, Welch's *F* test, which weights means by the respective group mean variances (Welch, 1951) and thus is robust against heterogeneity of variances, was

performed, and it did not change the significant results. The effect of initial interaction type on positive face threat (F [2, 76.99] = 14.63, $p < .001$) and negative face threat (F [2, 73.22] = 11.08, $p < .001$) was still significant. Future research should re-examine the effects of initial interaction type with larger and more balanced sample sizes and investigate if unequal variances still persist.

One cause of unequal variances in this research may be due to different variances in the degree to which the recipient solicited advice across conditions. As observed in the open-ended data, some participants solicited advice directly (e.g., "Could you advise me …?"), while others solicited advice indirectly (e.g., "How should I deal with..?"). There existed varying degrees of bluntness to which the advice giver proffered advice as well. These variances in the use of language may have differed across condition (e.g., a wide range of language use observed in one condition and not in the other conditions), and have caused unequal variances across conditions. Besides language use, the issue advice was given on or the advice giver's social distance and power relative to the recipient could be other factors that could have caused different variances of face threats across conditions. This is again where future behavioral studies can contribute by having the unsolicited advice manipulations constant for Type 2 and Type3 conditions. On the other hand, these effects can be statistically controlled if measured as interval variables and included in a multi regression model. A few potential control variables to consider are: the degree to which advice was solicited, the degree to which language use mitigates face threat, the degree to which the issue itself feels face threatening, the social distance, and the power difference between the giver and the receiver.

Finally, the structural validity of the positive and negative face threat scale measure needs to be re-examined. The predicted two-factor model fit based upon the removal of four positive face threat items and two negative face threat items. On the other hand, a three-factor model

including two more items as another factor fit as well as the predicted model. Notably, factor two of the positive face threat scale in fact fit better as a dimension of negative face threat under a second-order uni-dimensionality of negative face threat construct. This result is perplexing given that the literature clearly informs that feelings of rejection/humiliation—measured by factor two—are attached to perceived positive face threat.

It could be the case that the specific context of this research (i.e., graduate student's adjustment) may have resulted in high correlation between feelings of imposition and intrusion (negative face threat, or factor three) and feelings of humiliation and rejection (factor two). For example, another's imposing advice made the advice recipient feel humiliated by hurting his or her competent self-image that had been held in the graduate program. Brown and Levinson (1987)'s account for high correlation between positive and negative face was that positive face threatening acts, by definition, indicate the speaker does not care about the hearer's *wants*; these wants include *both* positive and negative face wants. This suggests that any negative face threatening act implies that the other did not care about the recipient's (negative) wants and thus threatening to positive face as well. Even though the high correlation between feelings of humiliation and feelings of imposition can be accounted for in the literature, the fact that feelings of embarrassment (factor one) paralleled with feelings of humiliation (factor two) calls for serious re-examination of the conceptualization of positive face threat. Simply put, face wants can be threatened in many different ways, and depending on how they are threatened, different feelings could arise. It is left to the work of future researchers to refine the concept and scale and test the scales in different contexts to see if the three-factor model found in this research holds across contexts.

In pursuit of a more comprehensive theory of support seeking and proffering, continuing work should investigate the *support proffering* phenomena, and study the initial interaction of support provision from the giver's perspective as well. Several questions arise based upon the findings from this research: How can a giver notice another's latent want for advice when the person perfectly conceals one's want and displays no solicitation behavior? In the aforementioned case, what makes a giver risk his or her own face and proffer support (i.e., what does an advice giver gain by proffering support)? In the aforementioned case, how may a giver successfully initiate support provision interaction and offer support without eliciting any reactance from a recipient? With its extensive connections to the extant literature, future work on support proffering will provide a new perspective on support/advice provision interactions and complete our understanding of the phenomena.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

This research examined (a) the effects of initial interaction of advice provision—characterized by solicitation and want—on the recipient's perception of positive and negative face threat and (b) the mediating role of perceived face threats between initial interaction type and the evaluation of advice helpfulness in the context of graduate students' adjustment to a new graduate program. To investigate these questions, 128 participants were surveyed about their past advice receiving experience, which began with one of the three types of initial interaction: (a) when advice was wanted and solicited (Type 1); (b) when advice was wanted but unsolicited (Type 2); and (c) when advice was unwanted and unsolicited (but received) (Type 3).

The ANOVA results showed that the effect of the initial interaction was significant on the recipient's perception of both positive and negative face threat. The recipient felt less positive face threat in the wanted but unsolicited interaction (Type 2) compared to Type 1 and Type 3 interactions, and felt more negative face threat in the unwanted and unsolicited interaction (Type 3) compared to Type 1 and Type 2 interactions (H2a and H2b partially supported). The regression results showed that only perceived negative face threat was a significant predictor of the evaluation of advice helpfulness; perceived positive face threat was not (H1a not supported; H1b supported). The results from testing the path model supported the mediating role of the recipient's perception of negative face threat between the type of initial interaction and the evaluation of advice helpfulness (H3 supported).

The qualitative data suggested that graduate students do not like asking for advice from another person due to positive face threat-related concerns. The data also suggested that graduate

students tend to seek advice from advice givers who seem to be knowledgeable, trustworthy and willing to advise them.

In conclusion, this research argued that current conceptualizations of advice must be refined to consider issues of psychological want, rather than simply whether or not advice is solicited, so that we can fully understand the interplay between initiating conditions, face threats, and evaluation of advice.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Support Process Survey A

Attending college is one of the greatest life transitions for many young adults.
Often when a student adjusts to college, a variety of others will offer a concrete form of assistance, well-meaning advice or useful information.

Please recall, in as much detail as you can, a time when you asked another person for help regarding your adjustment to your current graduate program.

Importantly, this should be a time when

- You wanted help from another regarding your adjustment to your current graduate program;
- you explicitly asked for help from another person; and
- the person offered you help in response.

Before you proceed, make sure you recall such an incident and have it in your mind.

In the following sections, you will be asked to describe your answer regarding the incident in detail.

Please recall in as much detail as possible the actual conversation you had with the other person (i.e., helper) when you requested help.

* What did you say? How did the other person respond?

** Please indicate the extent to which you wanted help from the person when you were asking for it. (3 = mid-point)*

(1) (5)

not at all very much

---

* *During the conversation you described in the previous section,*
how did you feel about asking the person for help?

For each pair of explanations, please choose one response that best describes how you felt when you were asking the person for help. (3 = mid-point)

(1) (5)

I did NOT feel self-conscious I felt self-conscious

I felt my self-image was preserved.	I felt my self-image was threatened.
I felt accepted.	I felt rejected.
I did NOT feel humiliated.	I felt humiliated.
I did NOT feel embarrassed.	I felt embarrassed.
I felt respected.	I felt disrespected.
I did NOT feel ashamed.	I felt ashamed.

---

* <u>*During the conversation you had with the person*</u>,
how did you feel about receiving help from the person after you asked for it?

Please choose one response that best describes how you felt <u>*when you were receiving help from the person after you asked for it.*</u> (3 = mid-point)

(1)	(5)
I did NOT feel like I owed her/him something in return.	I felt like I owed her/him something in return.
My personal boundaries were preserved.	My personal boundaries were crossed.
I did NOT feel bothered.	I felt bothered.
I did NOT feel imposed upon.	I felt imposed upon.
I did NOT feel disturbed.	I felt disturbed.
I did NOT feel inconvenienced.	I felt inconvenienced.
I did NOT feel intruded upon.	I felt intruded upon.

---

* Where did the conversation take place? (i.e., if it was a face to face conversation, where did it occur; if it was not face to face, how did the conversation take place?)

* How long ago (i.e., when) did the conversation occur?

* Please describe <u>*what the issue was about*</u> and <u>*the help you received*</u>.

* Please describe the relationship to the person you received help from (i.e., was it a family member, friend, relational partner, instructor, etc.?)

** Please think about your relationship with the person (i.e., the helper) when responding to the following questions.*

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
My relationship with the person is close.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
The person and I disclose	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )

important personal things to each other.					
The person and I have a strong connection.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
The person and I want to spend time together.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
I'm sure of my relationship with the person.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
The person is a priority in my life.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
The person and I do a lot of things together.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
When I have free time I choose to spend it alone with the person.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
I think about the person a lot.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
My relationship with the person is important in my life.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
I consider the person when making important decisions.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )

---

* What prompted you to ask for help rather than dealing with the issue on your own?
* Why did you ask for help from *that person*?

---

* How would you describe the help you received from the person? (3= mid-point)

(1)				(5)
NOT beneficial				Beneficial
NOT valuable				Valuable
NOT constructive				Constructive
NOT helpful				Helpful
Useless				Useful
Not knowledgeable				Knowledgeable

** What is your sex?*
( ) Male

( ) Female

* What is your age in years?

** What is your academic status?*
( ) MA student

( ) PhD student

* What is your major?

** Please indicate your ethnicity.*
[ ] American Indian or Alaskan Native

[ ] Black or African American

[ ] Asian

[ ] Hispanic

[ ] Caucasian

[ ] Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander

** Are you an international student?*
( ) Yes

( ) No

Thank you SO much for your participation!
Please provide your email address below so we can send you the e-gift card via email.
In case you do not receive the reward within two weeks, even though you have answered all the questions faithfully, please contact the researcher: paikjihy@msu.edu.

Your response is greatly appreciated! Thank you again for taking time and participating in our survey :)

APPENDIX B

Support Process Survey B

Attending college is one of the greatest life transitions for many young adults.
Often when a student adjusts to college, a variety of others will offer a concrete form of assistance, well-meaning advice or useful information.

Please recall, in as much detail as you can, a time when you asked another person for help regarding your adjustment to your current graduate program.

Importantly, this should be a time when

- you wanted help regarding your adjustment to your current graduate program;

- you did NOT first ask for help from another person;

- BUT another person proactively offered you help that you wanted and you received it.

Before you proceed, make sure you recall such an incident and have it in your mind.

In the following sections, you will be asked to describe your answer regarding the incident in detail.

Please recall in as much detail as possible the actual conversation you had with the other person (i.e., helper) when you requested help.

* What did the person say? How did you respond?

** Please indicate the extent to which you wanted help from the person when you were offered it by the person. (3 = mid-point)*

(1)	(5)
not at all	very much

---

* *During the conversation you described in the previous section,*
how did you feel about being offered help by the person?

For each pair of explanations, please choose one response that best describes how you felt when you were being offered help by the person. (3 = mid-point)

(1)	(5)
I did NOT feel self-conscious	I felt self-conscious
I felt my self-image was preserved.	I felt my self-image was threatened.
I felt accepted.	I felt rejected.
I did NOT feel humiliated.	I felt humiliated.
I did NOT feel embarrassed.	I felt embarrassed.
I felt respected.	I felt disrespected.
I did NOT feel ashamed.	I felt ashamed.

I did NOT feel like I owed her/him something in return.	I felt like I owed her/him something in return.
My personal boundaries were preserved.	My personal boundaries were crossed.
I did NOT feel bothered.	I felt bothered.
I did NOT feel imposed upon.	I felt imposed upon.
I did NOT feel disturbed.	I felt disturbed.
I did NOT feel inconvenienced.	I felt inconvenienced.
I did NOT feel intruded upon.	I felt intruded upon.

---

* Where did the conversation take place? (i.e., if it was a face to face conversation, where did it occur; if it was not face to face, how did the conversation take place?)

* How long ago (i.e., when) did the conversation occur?

* Please describe <u>*what the issue was about*</u> and <u>*the help you received*</u>.

* Please describe the relationship to the person you received help from (i.e., was it a family member, friend, relational partner, instructor, etc.?)

** Please think about your relationship with the person (i.e., the helper) when responding to the following questions.*

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
My relationship with the person is close.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
The person and I disclose important personal things to each other.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )

The person and I have a strong connection.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
The person and I want to spend time together.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
I'm sure of my relationship with the person.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
The person is a priority in my life.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
The person and I do a lot of things together.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
When I have free time I choose to spend it alone with the person.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
I think about the person a lot.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
My relationship with the person is important in my life.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
I consider the person when making important decisions.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )

---

* Why did you NOT first ask for help from another (i.e, why did you try to handle the issue on your own)?
* In your opinion, what made the person proactively offer help to you?
* In your opinion, what made the person sense your need for help?

---

* How would you describe the help you received from the person? (3= mid-point)

(1)	(5)
NOT beneficial	Beneficial
NOT valuable	Valuable
NOT constructive	Constructive
NOT helpful	Helpful
Useless	Useful
Not knowledgeable	Knowledgeable

** What is your sex?*
( ) Male

( ) Female

* What is your age in years?

** What is your academic status?*
( ) MA student

( ) PhD student

* What is your major?

** Please indicate your ethnicity.*
[ ] American Indian or Alaskan Native

[ ] Black or African American

[ ] Asian

[ ] Hispanic

[ ] Caucasian

[ ] Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander

** Are you an international student?*
( ) Yes

( ) No

Thank you SO much for your participation!
Please provide your email address below so we can send you the e-gift card via email.
In case you do not receive the reward within two weeks, even though you have answered all the questions faithfully, please contact the researcher: paikjihy@msu.edu.

Your response is greatly appreciated! Thank you again for taking time and participating in our survey :)

APPENDIX C

Support Process Survey C

Attending college is one of the greatest life transitions for many young adults.
Often when a student adjusts to college, a variety of others will offer a concrete form of assistance, well-meaning advice or useful information.

Please recall, in as much detail as you can, a time when you asked another person for help regarding your adjustment to your current graduate program.

Importantly, this should be a time when

- you did NOT want that help as much from the person,

- NOR did you ask for his/her help,

- but another person proactively offered you help regarding your adjustment to your current graduate program and you received it.

Before you proceed, make sure you recall such an incident and have it in your mind.

In the following sections, you will be asked to describe your answer regarding the incident in detail.

Please recall in as much detail as possible the actual conversation you had with the other person (i.e., helper) when you requested help.

* What did the person say? How did you respond?

** Please indicate the extent to which you wanted help from the person when you were offered it by the person. (3 = mid-point)*

(1)	(5)
not at all	very much

---

* *During the conversation you described in the previous section,*
how did you feel about being offered help by the person?

For each pair of explanations, please choose one response that best describes how you felt when you were being offered help by the person. (3 = mid-point)

(1)	(5)
I did NOT feel self-conscious	I felt self-conscious
I felt my self-image was preserved.	I felt my self-image was threatened.
I felt accepted.	I felt rejected.
I did NOT feel humiliated.	I felt humiliated.
I did NOT feel embarrassed.	I felt embarrassed.
I felt respected.	I felt disrespected.
I did NOT feel ashamed.	I felt ashamed.

I did NOT feel like I owed her/him something in return.	I felt like I owed her/him something in return.
My personal boundaries were preserved.	My personal boundaries were crossed.
I did NOT feel bothered.	I felt bothered.
I did NOT feel imposed upon.	I felt imposed upon.
I did NOT feel disturbed.	I felt disturbed.
I did NOT feel inconvenienced.	I felt inconvenienced.
I did NOT feel intruded upon.	I felt intruded upon.

---

* Where did the conversation take place? (i.e., if it was a face to face conversation, where did it occur; if it was not face to face, how did the conversation take place?)

* How long ago (i.e., when) did the conversation occur?

* Please describe <u>*what the issue was about*</u> and <u>*the help you received*</u>.

* Please describe the relationship to the person you received help from (i.e., was it a family member, friend, relational partner, instructor, etc.?)

** Please think about your relationship with the person (i.e., the helper) when responding to the following questions.*

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
My relationship with the person is close.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
The person and I disclose important personal things to each other.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )

The person and I have a strong connection.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
The person and I want to spend time together.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
I'm sure of my relationship with the person.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
The person is a priority in my life.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
The person and I do a lot of things together.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
When I have free time I choose to spend it alone with the person.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
I think about the person a lot.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
My relationship with the person is important in my life.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
I consider the person when making important decisions.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )

---

* Why did you NOT want that help as much?
* Why did you still receive the help?
* In your opinion, what made the person proactively offer help to you?

---

* How would you describe the help you received from the person? (3= mid-point)

(1)	(5)
NOT beneficial	Beneficial
NOT valuable	Valuable
NOT constructive	Constructive
NOT helpful	Helpful
Useless	Useful
Not knowledgeable	Knowledgeable

** What is your sex?*
( ) Male

( ) Female

* What is your age in years?

** What is your academic status?*
( ) MA student

( ) PhD student

* What is your major?

** Please indicate your ethnicity.*
[ ] American Indian or Alaskan Native

[ ] Black or African American

[ ] Asian

[ ] Hispanic

[ ] Caucasian

[ ] Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander

** Are you an international student?*
( ) Yes

( ) No

Thank you SO much for your participation!
Please provide your email address below so we can send you the e-gift card via email.
In case you do not receive the reward within two weeks, even though you have answered all the questions faithfully, please contact the researcher: paikjihy@msu.edu.

Your response is greatly appreciated! Thank you again for taking time and participating in our survey :)

APPENDIX D

Consent Form

You are being asked to participate in a research project. Researchers are required to provide a consent form to inform you about the study, to convey that participation is voluntary, to explain risks and benefits of participation, and to empower you to make an informed decision. You should feel free to ask the researchers any questions you might have.

Study Title: Support Provision Process Study

Researchers: Jihyun Paik (MA student) and Kelly Morrison (Associate Professor)
Department and Institution: Department of Communication, Michigan State University

You are being asked to participate in a study investigating the support provision process. Your participation will help improve the support provision experiences of students in MSU community.

To participate in this study, please take a moment to review the following important details:

• The survey should take about 30-45 minutes to complete.
• You must be 18 years old or older to participate in this study.
• You will be given multiple choice and short answer questions to answer. You will be asked to recall and write about your experiences and indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with given statements.

• While this study is not expected to yield any immediate direct to the individual participants, the knowledge generated from this project will improve the well-being of student community.
• There are no foreseeable risks associated with participation in this study.
• Information about you will be kept confidential to the maximum extent allowable by law unless there is a danger to yourself or others. No one except the researchers will be able to know how you answered on any particular item. Rather, results will be presented in an aggregate data format.
• You can refuse to participate in this study without penalty. You may refuse to cease participation at any time without penalty.

• You will receive a $5 STARBUCKS e-gift card via email within two weeks for answering all the questions faithfully in the survey.
• You have a right not to answer any question that you do not wish to answer, however, if you do that, the researchers will not be able to use your data, therefore they will not be able to compensate you.

• By completing this survey, you signify that you agree to participate in the study voluntarily.

Your assistance in this project is greatly appreciated. If you have any questions about the survey or its results, please feel free to contact the researcher: Jihyun Paik (email: paikjihy@msu.edu). If you have any questions or concerns that are raised by participating in the study, you may contact the researchers as well as Michigan State University's Human Research Protection Program by phone (517) 355-2180, fax (517) 432-4503, email irb@msu.edu, or regular mail at 207 Olds Hall, MSU, East Lansing, MI 48824

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