

EMBEDDEDNESS: THE NEXUS OF LEARNED NEEDS, CONSCIENTIOUSNESS, AND INFORMAL ACCOUNTABILITY FOR OTHERS

M. Todd Royle, Valdosta State University

ABSTRACT

This research examines the relationship between the dimensions of McClelland's Theory of needs (i.e., needs for power, achievement, and affiliation), conscientiousness, embeddedness, and informal accountability for others. This study's aim is to enhance organizational research by demonstrating the mediating effects of embeddedness, on the relationship between conscientiousness, learned needs, and informal accountability for others. The research tests hypotheses using data collected from 187 working adults in the Southeastern United States. Findings indicated that embeddedness mediates, at least in part, the relationship between conscientiousness, achievement, power and affiliation needs and informal accountability for others. The paper concludes with a discussion of managerial implications, the study's relevant strengths, limitations and directions for future research.

JEL: M12, M14

KEYWORDS: Theory of Needs, Personality, Embeddedness, Informal Accountability for Others

INTRODUCTION

Even a casual viewer of news broadcasts notices that high profile lapses of accountability abound. Most are aware of the things like the global crisis in real estate markets and the massive frauds perpetrated by former NASDAQ chief Bernard Madoff. Even the halls of well-respected academic institutions are not above reproach (e.g., the criminal charges and institutional penalties brought to bear on Penn State for a lack of reporting and accountability in its football program). Both in the public eye and among organizational scholars, there is growing concern about a perceived lack of accountability.

Research indicated that accountability is fundamental to both personal and organizational life (Tetlock, 1985, 1992). As such, it is also instrumental in the sustaining of social systems. Within organizations, lapses in accountability threaten firms' established and legitimate systems of checks and balances. Furthermore it also adversely affects performance (Yarnold, Muesur, & Lyons, 1988; Enzele & Anderson, 1993). Accountability is not necessarily an easily observable formal system or reporting.

Additionally, it sometimes forces individuals to feel pulled in different directions by competing constituencies (Cummings & Anton, 1990). Thus, accountability is both an objective and subjective condition and the level thereof is determined both by individuals and others (IAFO) (Hall, Royle, Brymer, Perrewé, Ferris, & Hochwarter, 2006). A growing body of research (e.g., Royle, Fox, & Hochwarter, 2009; Royle & Fox, 2011; Royle & Hall, 2012) contends that individuals believe they are answerable for the behaviors of others at work, even if they are not formal subordinates. This research seeks to examine further which conditions encourage informal accountability for others. In order to augment the literature, this work proposes a model that extends antecedent variables and mediating circumstances which promote IAFO. The hypothesized model of informal accountability for others in this work addresses these concerns. The model presented here includes McClelland's (1961) socially learned needs variables (i.e., needs for power, achievement, and affiliation), as well as conscientiousness (a personality dimension) as predictors of embeddedness. Previously, Royle and Hall (2012) found that learned needs promoted feelings of individual accountability and subsequently informal accountability for others

(IFAO). This paper examines the potential that in addition to promoting felt accountability, learned needs and conscientiousness predict individuals' fit and linkages in organizations, and then feelings of answerability for others.

From this point forward, the document will proceed as follows: a review of the topic-relevant literature, an overview of the data and mythology used to validate the study's hypotheses, a discussion of the findings, an explanation of the theoretical and practical contributions of the research including its strengths, limitations, and directions for future inquiry. It will conclude with a short synopsis of the study's major contributions and place in existing literature.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The following section discusses the major conceptualizations of accountability. It notes similarities and differences between the major theories of accountability as well as their applications to feelings of informal accountability for others. This review also explains the study's independent variables and their relationship to IAFO.

Established Models of Accountability

In the past several decades, many different distinct but compatible views of accountability appear in academic literature. Lerner and Tetlock (1999) defined accountability in terms of either implicit or explicit expectations related to individuals' beliefs that they may have to justify their feelings, attitudes, or actions to others. Frink and Klimoski (1998, 2004) added that in organizations, accountability involves this need to justify or defend a decisions and actions to an audience that has potential reward and sanctioning power, and these outcomes are determined by the degree to which individuals meet accountability conditions. Naturally, being deemed accountable in a negative sense takes place when a breach of conduct has occurred (Cummings & Anton, 1990), but it is possible that an individual can be accountable and rewarded for meeting valued expectations without doing anything wrong.

Accountability generally implies that those who do not offer proper rationale for their actions incur sanctions with consequences that vary from mild scolding to the potential loss of employment, to incarceration, or even to the loss of life (Stenning, 1995). On the other hand, if individuals proffer sufficient justification for their actions, they incur positive consequences ranging from the mitigation of punishment to reward. One of the most influential and often cited conceptualizations of accountability in extant literature is the phenomenological view of accountability. In other words, accountability as Philip Tetlock (1985, 1992) proposed is based on a model of social contingency. The major tenets of this view include several empirically distinguishable sub-components.

The first of these is the effect of social facilitation (i.e., the mere presence of others). Simply put, individuals behave differently when they know they are being watched (Zajonc, 1965; Zajonc & Sales 1966). Second, is the identifiability of an action. Actions that individuals believe will be linked to them personally are more compelling drivers of behavior than are anonymous or token gestures (Price, 1987; Zimbardo, 1970). The third component of the phenomenological view of accountability, involves the prospects of evaluation. Individuals expect that their performances will be assessed by others according to some normative framework with some implied consequences, good or bad, based on their behaviors (Geen, 1991). The final dimension involves reason giving. Individuals expect to give reasons or justifications for their attitudes or behaviors (Simonson & Nowlis, 2000).

Accountability as a Pyramid

Accountability, according to Barry Schlenker (1986), involves being answerable to audiences for performing up to certain prescribed standards. It connotes meeting specified obligations, duties, and expectations (Schlenker, 1986; Schlenker & Weigold, 1989; Schlenker, Weigold, & Doherty, 1991). The inherent structure of a pyramid makes Schlenker and colleagues' conceptualization of accountability more formal and objective than are phenomenological views, although they are not necessarily incompatible.

Schlenker et al. (1991) contended that employees, when accountable, answer for their attitudes or try to justify their conduct. Authority figures (e.g., supervisors), scrutinize, judge, sanction, and potentially reward their actions (Semin & Manstead, 1983; Tetlock, 1985, 1992). Influential individuals establish prescriptions for conduct, judge others' performances in relation to those standards, and distribute rewards and punishments based on these assessments.

The "evaluative reckonings" described by Schlenker and colleagues (e.g., Schlenker, 1986, Schlenker & Weigold, 1989; Schlenker et al., 1991) are value-laden assessments that evaluators make relative to three key elements when determining culpability (e.g., assigning blame or giving credit). These elements are: (1) *prescriptions* exist and are understood by the actor that dictate conduct on the occasion, (2) the *event* in question is relevant to those prescriptions, and (3) a set of *identity images* exist that are relevant to the event and prescriptions and they describe the actor's roles, qualities, convictions, and aspirations.

The three elements, and the linkages among them, can be characterized as a triangle. Schlenker, Britt, Pennington, Murphy, and Doherty (1994) contended that the combination of the three linkages determine how responsible an individual is judged to be. This is Schlenker and colleagues' "pyramid of responsibility". Essentially, individuals are only deemed responsible for a behavior or condition if: (a) a clear set of prescriptions is applicable to the event (prescription–event link); (b) the prescriptions are perceived to bind individuals due to their identities (prescription–identity link); and (c) the individuals are associated with the event, particularly if they are believed to have personal control over it, (identity–event link) (Schlenker et al., 1994). Responsibility is a social adhesive that binds individuals to events and to relevant governing prescriptions for behavior. Responsibility provides a basis for judgment and its associated outcomes (i.e., reward or punishment) (Schlenker et al., 1994). When evaluators "look down" and appraise the configuration of the elements and linkages, the image is that of a pyramid (Schlenker, 1986). Ultimately, the presence of other evaluating individuals and the individual's answerability to them, moves one from being "responsible" to being "accountable". The present paper contends that IAFO too fits in terms of these linkages. For example, organizational culture may dictate that established members of a firm mentor new hires (prescription–event link). As established members in good standing, individuals thus feel obligated to engage and orient new members (prescription–identity link).

Seasoned employees know the "rule" that new members need their tutelage and have the ability to give of their time and knowledge (identity–event link). When these conditions are met, observed, and rewarded, by those with sanctioning power, individuals are deemed informally accountable for others. It is likely that established employees would choose to engage in these activities, thus becoming informally accountable for others, in order to maintain or increase their good standing within the organization, provided they are able to attend to their own duties. This study intends to demonstrate the role of conscientiousness and learned needs in promoting such behaviors by first channeling individuals into organizations and their positions within hierarchies (i.e., the fit and linkages of embeddedness) and then once established, fostering informal accountability for others.

Cummings and Anton's Conceptualization of Accountability

Cummings and Anton's (1990) conceptualization of responsibility is slightly different than those previously discussed. Based on theories of attribution (e.g., Heider, 1958; Weiner, 1979), they defined responsibility in terms of individuals' causal influence on situations. Accordingly, this conceptualization emphasizes actors' volition in an event. Individuals can affect the situations directly or indirectly, proximally or distally (Cummings & Anton, 1990). The relationship is straightforward, relational, and linear in terms of the individuals' responsibility. Therefore, any given occurrence attributed either directly or indirectly to individuals' influence, increases their perceived culpability.

Cummings and Anton (1990) also claimed that felt responsibility and accountability are subsequent and distinct outcomes of one's responsibility (as defined by his/her causal influence). Further, they argued that felt responsibility is an internal path whereas accountability is an external, public, and visible social process. It is the author's contention that IAFO may have both internal and external components but that it is the external, visible, dimension that individuals seek to enhance their reputations within organizations. Cummings and Anton (1990) proposed that three contingent conditions determine accountability. In order to be called accountable individuals must: 1) have the ability to behave rationally, 2) reasonably predict the outcome of chosen behaviors and 3) deviate from previously stated and understood notions of acceptable actions. Cummings and Anton (1990) diverged somewhat from other notions typically found in accountability theory. Specifically, they considered deviation from a standard to be a precondition of accountability whereas others posited that the accountability evaluations could detect either alignment or deviation. The author maintains that individuals understand what is required of them on the job and that they affect the behaviors of others because they believe they should.

Informal Accountability for Others

Informal accountability for others (IAFO) is a public demonstration that one is willing to answer for the attitudes and behaviors of individuals in an organization regardless of formal position within the firm, rank, or mandate by the organization (Royle et al., 2009; Royle & Fox, 2011; Royle & Hall, 2012).

The informal accountability construct reflects views previously theorized and demonstrated by others as well as budding research on the subject (e.g., Royle et al., 2008). For example, it borrows from the work of Morrison and Phelps (1999) who noted that individuals generally believe they are personally obligated to bring about constructive change, which either directly or indirectly affects (ostensibly benefits) all concerned. Another element of the construct comes from Lerner and Tetlock (1992) who contended that accountability is the implicit or explicit expectation that one may be called on to justify one's beliefs, feelings, or actions to others. Still other aspects come from Ferris, Mitchell, Canavan, Frink, and Hopper (1995), who considered accountability to be a function of how much a person is observed and evaluated by powerful others who have reward or sanctioning power, and the extent to which valued rewards (or feared sanctions) are consistent with these evaluations.

Embeddedness

Job embeddedness encompasses a broad constellation of influences on employee retention, performance, satisfaction, and organizational citizenship behaviors (Mitchell, Holtom, Lee, Sablinski, & Erez, 2001; Lee, Mitchell, Sablinski, Burton, & Holtom, 2004). Fundamentally, embeddedness is defined in terms of how tightly individuals feel they fit with a firm, the degree to which they are well placed within a social network, and how well this promotes the "life-space" they desire for themselves.

The embeddedness construct is theoretically driven and explained by extending both embedded figures and field and ground theory (Lewin, 1951). Embedded figures, used in psychological tests, are those that are blended and camouflaged by their backgrounds. Embeddedness theory predicts that transactions

between individuals create future expectations of trust and reciprocity (Uzzi & Gillespie, 2002). These expectations occur because the embeddedness of interpersonal transactions are learned and mutually understood through the process of socialization. Embeddedness provides the essential priming mechanism for initial offers of trust and mutual reliance that, if accepted and returned, are solidified through reciprocal investments and self-enforcement (Barney & Hansen, 1994; Uzzi, 1997).

Facets of job embeddedness that are of particular importance to this research include (1) the number of linkages that individuals have to other people and activities, (2) the extent to which they feel they belong in their firms, and (3) the ease with which these links can be broken and the negative expected consequences to individuals for doing so (Mitchell et al., 2001; Lee et al., 2004). The author considers these aspects germane because they constitute both position/hierarchy-based and attitudinal drivers of employee attitudes and behaviors. In addition, Lee et al. (2004) noted that the interrelatedness of these dimensions is important because many job factors affect individuals' desires to engage in their work, stay at their jobs, or withdraw. The two aspects of embeddedness theory (Mitchell et al., 2001; Lee et al., 2004) that are examined in detail and measured here are "links" and "fit." The other dimension, "sacrifice," relates to where individuals live and the attractiveness of their respective communities. Because many contemporary employees work in organizations and careers that make this choice for them (Baruch, 2003), the sacrifice aspect of embeddedness is not empirically examined in this research.

Links are defined as either formal or informal connections between people, their institutions or other individuals in an organization (Mitchell et al., 2001; Lee et al., 2004). As such, many links may connect employees with their work, friends, groups, and even the community in which they reside. The greater the number of links, the more individuals are bound to jobs and organizations, and intertwined in social networks (Mitchell, et al., 2001; Lee et al., 2004). This aspect of embeddedness theory represents an extension of March and Simon's (1958, p.72) claim that "families often have attitudes about what jobs are appropriate for their members... the integration of individuals into the community has frequently been urged by organizations because it offers advantages for public relations and reduces voluntary mobility." Thus, strong linkages reduce volatility, help limit the cost of turnover to organizations, and help make employee behaviors more predictable. The more tightly individuals are linked to others in the organization; the more likely it is that they feel informally accountable for those others. This is typically due to recurrent interaction and fewer opportunities or desires to break these ties. It should also be noted that breaking these links might also prove punitive. If individuals are visibly linked to influential others in the organization, it stands to reason that they will try to keep those links strong as a function of the potential benefits and the concurrent costs of losing those associations.

Prior research (Royle, et al., 2008) suggested that increasing numbers of links exacerbates the potential for individuals to seek conditions of informal accountability for others. Tightly linked individuals are often aware of the informal accountability demands placed upon them with respect to others and wish to keep the web in which they function strong by not breaking any of its strands. Individuals might embrace IAFO because they believe that behaving in that way helps ensure that other members help enhance their performance (Royle et al., 2008). Additionally, the ability to promote good performance in others augments organizational performance and may also strengthen the links themselves.

Fit is defined as employees' perceived compatibility or comfort with an organization and with their environment (Mitchell et al., 2001; Lee et al., 2004). According to embeddedness theory, individuals' personal values, career goals, and plans for the future should fit with values and culture of the organization as a whole and with elements of their job descriptions (e.g., knowledge, skills, and abilities) (Mitchell et al., 2001; Lee et al., 2004). Research shows that tighter fits increase the likelihood that individuals feel professionally and personally tied to an organization (Mitchell et al., 2001; Lee et al., 2004). Studies of voluntary turnover suggested that "misfits" terminate faster than "fits" (O'Reilly, Chatman, & Caldwell, 1991). Chatman (1991) also reported that when organizational entry produces

poor person-organization fit, employees are likely to leave. Similarly, Chan (1996) suggested that having one's personal attributes fit with one's job decreases turnover.

A tight fit indicates a shared sense of similarity and value congruence between individuals, other members, and the organization. Snyder and Ickes (1985) contended that individuals seek organizations and situations that affirm their self-concepts, attitudes, values and affinities. As such, it is likely that high levels of interpersonal affect exist between individuals who fit. Individuals who fit tightly usually interact more frequently with others, both formally and socially, in the organization. Royle et al. (2008) noted that under these conditions, individuals seek informal accountability for others because they may be friends with these people particularly when such a behavior is consistent with established informal organizational norms. Additionally, those who fit tightly may demonstrate their willingness to accept part of the blame for those close to them if those others fail in some aspect of work. Research suggested that individuals who fit tightly create predictable social environments, which then helps ensure behavioral consistency (Bowers, 1973; Ickes, Snyder, & Garcia, 1997). Thus, the strong social alliances enjoyed by tightly fitting individuals help reduce future uncertainty.

McClelland's Theory of Needs

The theory of (learned) needs is one of the most ubiquitous and pragmatic in personality and organizational scholarship. Developed by David McClelland (e.g., 1961, 1975, and 1985), needs theory contends that individuals are motivated by three basic drivers: achievement, affiliation, and power. Winter (1992) argued that these needs not only motivate individuals, but also include many of the most important human goals and concerns. This research attempts to demonstrate that each of these dimensions affects the level of accountability one feels for both himself/herself and others as well as helps channel individuals into places with organizations which help them fulfill these needs.

Achievement Needs: McClelland's (1961, 1975, 1985) need for achievement describes a person's drive to excel with respect to some established set of standards. Individuals' achievement needs are satisfied when they are able to actualize their own purposes relative to and regardless of the situations of others (Yamaguchi, 2003). Those high in achievement needs dislike succeeding by chance and seek personally identifiable sources for their success or failure rather than leaving the outcome to probability (Robbins, 2003; Weiner, 1979). Furthermore, individuals high in achievement needs experience joy or sadness contingent upon the identifiable outcomes of their efforts (McClelland & Koestner, 1992).

McClelland (1961, 1975, 1985) noted that individuals high in this dimension differentiate themselves from others by their desire to perform at a more advanced level than their peers. Although achievement could be measured in terms of mastery and competitiveness, it also reflects individuals' desires to excel relative to themselves (Heintz & Steele-Johnson, 2004). High achievement needs motivate individuals to seek relatively difficult vocations (McClelland & Koestner, 1992). Further, high achievement individuals are more satisfied in jobs that involve both high skill levels and difficult challenges (Eisenberger, Jones, Stinglhamber, Shanock, & Randall, 2005). Similarly, individuals high in achievement needs more frequently seek feedback en route to goal completion (McAdams, 1994; Emmons, 1997).

McClelland (1961, 1971, 1985) noted that high in achievement needs individuals seek situations in which they can obtain personal responsibility for finding novel solutions to problems. One underlying driver of such actions is partly the alleviation of concerns about the future in the organization. Such individuals tend to be very persistent with respect to solving problems (McClelland & Koestner, 1992). Research indicated that individuals with high achievement needs are, generally, more effective leaders (McNeese-Smith, 1999; Henderson, 1993, 1995). Unfortunately, however, the motivation to behave opportunistically while trying to satisfy this need has also been empirically validated (Treadway, Hochwarter, Kacmar, & Ferris, 2005). Brunstein and Maier (2005) noted that two separate but interacting

dimensions drive achievement needs: implicit and explicit motives. Implicit motives energize spontaneous impulses to act (e.g., effective task performance). The degree of effective task performance is, of course, related to the degree to which the individual behaves accountably in his/her position.

Explicit motives, on the other hand, are manifest by deliberate choice behaviors (e.g., explicitly stated preferences for difficult tasks). As such, high achievement needs map appropriately onto a drive to be informally accountable for others. Specifically, high achievement needs might drive individuals to seek informal accountability for others because the successful coordination of others' activities might translate directly into better job performance evaluations (both for them and for those for whom they are informally accountable). In addition, those who embrace IAFO and are effective in this capacity, appear to others as more proactive, appealing, employees. These virtues are some hallmarks of leadership (Bass & Avolio, 2004). Appearing to be an effective leader is, thus, an explicit motive (Brunstein & Maier 2005). This research contends that accountability relates to achievement needs such that those who want to maintain high marks and be considered credible leaders must feel answerable for their performances and that then seeking IAFO enhances the degree to which they can achieve.

Power Needs: The need for power denotes individuals' desires to be influential. This could manifest itself in attempts to make others behave, as one would like, or in a manner that they might not have otherwise (McClelland, 1961, 1975, 1985). In other words, individuals high in this need seek position power so that they can compel the actions of others. Those high in power needs prefer being in competitive, status-driven situations, and actively seek the trappings of status (Veroff, 1992). Additionally, they are concerned with ensuring that the methods they choose to influence others are within their control (Veroff, 1992; McAdams, 1994; Emmons, 1997). However, in order to maintain viable interdependent relationships with others, individuals with high power needs must often restrain these desires (Yamaguchi, 2003). Central to one's need for power is gaining influence over others (McClelland, 1961, 1975, 1985; Robbins, 2003; Yamaguchi, 2003). Individuals with influence can then parlay informal accountability for others into the accumulation of additional resources that serve to enhance their status. Prior research indicated that expression of power needs might have a mixed effect on how others are perceived. For example, direct subordinates often react negatively to leaders high in power needs whereas clients and others more distal in the organization view them more positively (McNeese-Smith, 1999; Henderson, 1993, 1995). However, despite these findings, interpersonal failings caused by excessive displays of power seeking tend to derail managers (Van Velsor & Leslie, 1995).

Based on the principles of role theory, when an individual becomes informally accountable for others, the target becomes cognizant of it (Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, & Snoek, 1964; Royle & Fox, 2011). Given the norm of reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960; Meyer & Allen, 1997), targets believe that the accountable party has extended a benefit and reciprocate with actions that align with the attitudes or behaviors to repay their obligations (e.g., Royle et al., 2009). Individuals who are aware that another person has been helpful will reciprocate by ensuring that relevant mutual goals are met or corrective measures taken if perceived performance decrements exist. For one high in power needs, this suggests that others will often indirectly cede a portion of their autonomy to them. Consequently, it is plausible that positive changes to one's job might occur and satisfy implicit power motives. For example, by co-opting some portion of a coworker's efforts, an individual may gain more organizational prestige or be promoted to a job with a greater span of control. At a minimum, those known to be informally accountable for others may perceive a status differential that appeals to those who seek power. However, the extent to which those high in power needs behave in amoral, Machiavellian, fashions, would diminish levels of felt accountability and discourage IAFO if others perceive their actions to be disingenuous. Essentially, it is our contention that power needs to promote felt accountability and IAFO but only if the specific person high in power also feels an obligation to act morally (Spangler, House, & Palrecha, 2004).

Affiliation Needs: The need for affiliation reflects the desire to have close, friendly, relationships with others (McClelland, 1961, 1985; Robbins, 2003). Those high in this dimension tend to spend considerable time seeking interactions with others (McClelland & Koestner, 1992). Further, those with strong affiliation needs pursue team activities in which interdependence and cooperation with others are paramount (Yamaguchi, 2003). Affiliation needs have garnered relatively less critical scholarly attention than the other two of McClelland's needs theory (Robbins, 2003), but they still warrant discussion with respect to accountability. For those who value friendship and prefer cooperation over competition, demonstrating a willingness to meet stated standards of conduct, and to accept accountability for others might be taken as a sign of organizationally desired civility (McClelland, 1961, 1975, 1985). High levels of affiliation motivate individuals to be both sympathetic and accommodating toward others (McClelland & Koestner, 1992). Prior research noted the influence of affiliation on leadership. Specifically, McNeese-Smith (1999) demonstrated a positive relationship between high affiliation needs and enabling others to act in ways deemed desirable. McNeese-Smith (1999) further suggested those high in affiliation needs lead others in desirable directions and that in doing so, they feel answerable to the same ethical codes of conduct common to their peers. In the course of social interaction, individuals pass along important information about how to behave. The norm of reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960; Meyer & Allen, 1997) contends that people might exchange useful information because they sense a debt of obligation. An understanding of the expectations associated with informal accountability for others are well developed in those high in affiliation needs because such individuals are strongly motivated to foster social ties.

Building on this discussion it is likely that those high in affiliation needs will seek informal accountability. Although doing so can be risky (because sometimes a desired complicit reaction fails to occur), seeking informal accountability for others may be attractive to those with high affiliation needs because it offers the opportunity to build informal teams and “feel a part of something.” Nevertheless, those attempting to signal IAFO must demonstrate their own competence. This could be done by feeling accountable for one's role obligations and living up to them. IAFO fosters strong interpersonal associations attractive to high affiliation types (McClelland, 1961, 1975, 1985) and helps reduce their fears of being ostracized (McClelland & Koestner, 1992). Creating strong interpersonal associations also acts as a resource in the future when maneuvering in threatening or uncertain settings.

Conscientiousness

Conscientiousness, has been described both as an ability to conform to socially prescribed notions of impulse control and as a strategic way to deal with others (Hogan & Ones, 1997). It is strategic in the sense that dutiful attention to detail and procedure might allow one to appear more attractive to leaders. Conscientiousness also refers to individuals' tendencies to apply themselves to their work (Barrick & Mount, 1993). Further, they typically work harder and more efficiently than others. Roberts, Chernyshenko, Stark and Goldberg (2005) noted that conscientiousness is associated with the maintenance of order, achievement, diligence, dependability, impulse control, and responsibility. In contrast, those low on the conscientiousness dimension are often remiss in their duties. They are unproductive and erode the economic well-being of the organization because they are not motivated to achieve, act responsibly, or be dependable (Hogan & Ones, 1997).

As expected, conscientiousness has been shown to predict task performance (Ones, Viswesvaran, & Schmidt, 1993), contextual performance (Hogan, Rybicki, Motowidlo, & Borman, 1998; Organ, 1994; Organ & Ryan, 1995), and other outcomes that help facilitate proper social and organizational functioning (Roberts et al., 2005). For example, conscientiousness has been associated with long-term career success (Judge, Higgins, Thoresen, & Barrick, 1999), university retention rates (Tross, Harper, Osher, & Kneidinger, 2000), marital stability (Kelly & Conley, 1987; Tucker, Kressin, Spiro, & Ruscio, 1998), healthy lifestyle choices (Roberts & Bogg, 2004), and one's physical longevity (Friedman, Tucker, Tomlinson-Keasey, Schwartz, Wingard, & Criqui, 1993). In sum, meta-analyses have shown modest, yet

significant, relations between conscientiousness and several indices of job performance (Barrick & Mount, 1993; Tett, Jackson, & Rothstein, 1991).

Hogan (1983) contended that individuals are motivated by a desire to achieve status or gain/maintain social standing. Though sharing some conceptual overlaps with McClelland's (1961) need for achievement, conscientiousness is different particularly with respect to the assumption that it evokes prescriptions for impulse control (Hogan & Ones, 1997). In other words, conscientiousness helps constrain unethical decision-making. On the other hand, McClelland (1961) does not contend that those high in achievement needs will necessarily constrain their behaviors to social ends. In this research, I characterize conscientiousness as a positive, socially beneficial aspect of organizational life. Specifically, conscientious individuals will engage in behaviors that show that they are informally accountable for others because they are concerned for the effective functioning of the organization, and realize that doing so reflects positively upon them. Conscientious individuals seek informal accountability for others because they feel responsible for individuals in the firm (Morrison & Phelps, 1999).

Similarly, the most dutiful and conscientious employees are often those who look for ways to improve both their own performance and the organization's functioning. In order to do this, they collect information from their environments (e.g., other employees or other firms). In their search for improvement, conscientious individuals obtain knowledge of both the expectations and potential rewards of being informally accountable for others. Further, McCrae and Costa (1987) noted that conscientious individuals are driven to promote order. Maintaining order necessarily restricts chaos and helps to reduce uncertainty by making interactions more predictable. Similarly, when members of an organization look out for others, they necessarily constrain some individualistic behaviors. The norm of reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960; Meyer & Allen, 1997; Blau 1964, 1977) demands that when one answers for another, that a like gesture be made in return. When many employees in a firm reciprocally answer for other employees, they may also restrain many exploitative, individual urges, thus promoting stability and order.

DATA AND METODOLOGY

This research proposes a mediated relationship between study variables. The analyses attempt to determine if the variance in a dependent variable (IAFO in this case) is caused independently by the predictor variables (learned needs and conscientiousness), or if these variables act together like links in a chain. Specifically, can the sample's variance in informal accountability for others be attributed to conscientiousness and to needs for power, affiliation, and achievement only if they predict embeddedness?

Participants and Procedures

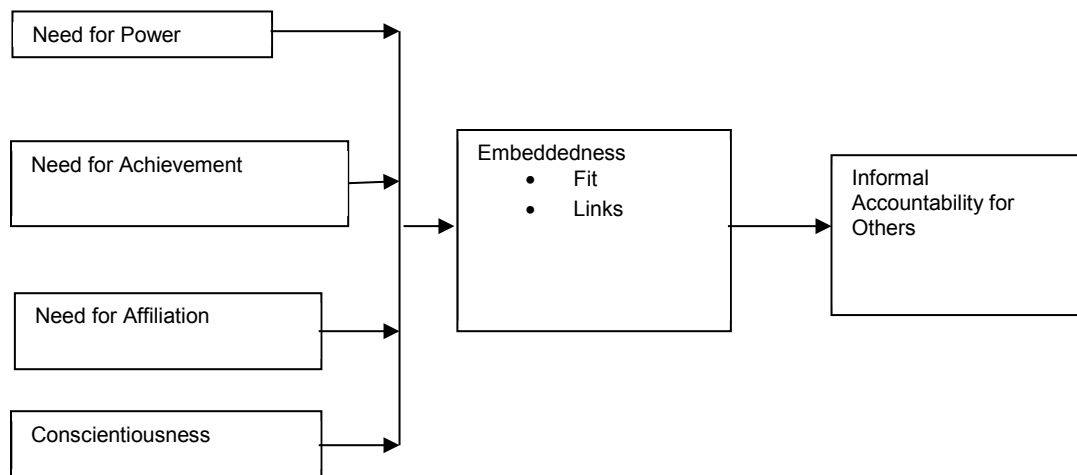
The sample consisted of self-reports from working adults around the world. Students involved in an extra credit assignment dispensed surveys to individuals they knew were full time employees in their respective organizations. A group of 75 students was allowed to give as many as five surveys per person for class extra credit. In many cases, respondents were parents or siblings of these students. A total of 375 surveys were available to students. Ultimately, 187 usable surveys were returned. This constitutes a response rate of 49%. Students either brought completed surveys back to class with them or informed respondents that they could contact the researcher directly and submit an electronic copy. The researchers collected, but did not disseminate, contact information on all respondents in order to ensure the legitimacy of their survey responses. To ensure the privacy of respondents, we never shared identifying information with any third party. However, we collected their telephone numbers and addresses in order to contact them if we suspected that students misrepresenting themselves to obtain class credit completed the surveys.

Respondent occupations in this sample included accountants, human resources administrators, sales professionals, marketing directors, and food service personnel. The average age of respondents was about 37 years old and the average organizational tenure was 7 years. The sample included 98 females (55%). These data were collected between 2006 and 2007. Respondent occupations included human resource professionals, small business owners, restaurant servers, and civil service employees.

Measures

Before reporting results based on this study’s scales, even those well validated in existing research we conducted confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to ascertain their dimensionality. The researchers used a principal component analysis with an orthogonal (Varimax) rotation. We subsequently applied Kaiser’s Rule (retaining factors with eigenvalues over one), and examined the amount of variance extracted in the construct by the first factor relative to others (Pallant, 2004; Kaiser, 1974). The factor structures expected based on existing research emerged, thus, no items were deleted in any scales in the analyses. Table 1 notes the scales’ calculated coefficient alpha values, the eigenvalues of the first extracted factor, and the proportion of cumulative variance in the construct described by that factor as extracted in this research. Additionally, it notes the measures’ original authors and years of publication.

Figure 1: The Mediating Effects of Felt Accountability on the Relationship between Learned Needs and Informal Accountability for Others



This is the model of McClelland’s Needs Theory and individuals’ trait-like characteristic diligence, which predicts organizational placement and individuals’ informal feelings of answerability for the attitudes and behaviors of others at work. The proposed model contends that this sense of informal answerability is driven by individuals’ needs and characteristics but is mediated by the degree to which they are integrated structurally in the firm and fit with other members there.

McClelland’s Individual Needs: This study measures, achievement, affiliation, and power needs using a ten-item scale created by Yamaguchi (2003). The scales employ a five-point response format (1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*). Four items measure affiliation needs. Three items each measure power, and achievement needs. Representative items include, “I enjoy influencing other people and getting my way, I want to be liked by others at work, and I enjoy difficult work challenges.”

Informal accountability for others: In this research IAFO is measured using Royle et al.’s (2008) five-item scale. This scale was originally derived from Ivancevich and Matteson’s (1980) “Responsibility for people” portion of their Stress Diagnostic Survey. The scale employs a five-point response format (1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*). Representative items include, “I am accountable at work for the

results or outcomes of others although it is not part of my formal job duties,” and “I am accountable for counseling and consulting with peers and/or helping them solve their problems although I do not have to.”

Table 1: Scales, Sources, Reliabilities, and Factor Analyses

| Variable Name | Scale Author | Coefficient α | Eigenvalue of the 1 st factor | Variance explained by 1 st factor |
|----------------------|--|----------------------|--|--|
| Need for Power | Yamaguchi (2003) | 0.71 | 2.55 | 0.42 |
| Need for Achievement | | 0.80 | 2.53 | 0.63 |
| Need for Affiliation | | 0.91 | 5.34 | 0.59 |
| Conscientiousness | Goldberg (1999) | 0.83 | 3.69 | 0.46 |
| Embeddedness | Mitchell, Holtom, Lee, Syblyski, & Erez (2001) | 0.81 | 2.87 | 0.58 |
| | | 0.73 | 2.59 | 0.43 |
| IAFO | Royle, Hochwarter, & Hall (2008) | 0.85 | 3.12 | 0.63 |

This table contains information about the study's variables and the creators of the scales used to measure them. In addition, it reports the coefficient alpha values of each scale in both samples as well as the Eigenvalue of the first extracted factor and the amount of variance that it accounts for. All scales were measured with a five-point Likert-type response format anchored by “strongly disagree” and “strongly agree”.

Embeddedness: The author measured embeddedness here using an 11-item amended scale developed by Mitchell et al. (2001). It focuses only on the fit and links dimensions of embeddedness. Sample items from each subset include, “I feel like I am a good match for this company.” “I fit with the company's culture.” “Many employees are dependent on me at work,” and “I am on many teams in this organization.” Five items measure fit and six measure links. The scale employs a five-point response format (1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*).

Conscientiousness: In this paper the author used a ten-item scale developed by Goldberg (1999) to measure conscientiousness. Sample items from this scale include, “I show an underlying concern for doing things better and improving situations at work.” “I exhibit confidence about my job and am willing to work hard and energetically,” and “my work habits are excellent.” A Likert scale was used ranging from 1 to 5 (1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*).

Control variables: Spurious effects are possible if researchers do not include control variables. Age, gender, race, and organizational tenure are, thus, included as control variables given their previously demonstrated influences (Sheridan & Vredenburg, 1978). A brief listing of all the scale level variables' summary statistics is noted in the table below:

Table 2: Summary Statistics for Scale Variables

| | N | | Mean | | Std. Deviation | Variance | Skewness | |
|-------------------|-----------|--|-----------|------------|----------------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| | Statistic | | Statistic | Std. Error | Statistic | Statistic | Statistic | Std. Error |
| IAFO | 187 | | 3.49 | .06479 | .88604 | .785 | -.316 | .178 |
| Conscientiousness | 187 | | 4.21 | .03814 | .52153 | .272 | -.673 | .178 |
| NPOW | 187 | | 3.42 | .04758 | .65065 | .423 | -.416 | .178 |
| NACH | 187 | | 4.21 | .04112 | .56233 | .316 | -.427 | .178 |
| NAFF | 187 | | 4.21 | .04052 | .55407 | .307 | -.193 | .178 |
| Embeddedness | 187 | | 3.75 | .04068 | .55623 | .309 | -.102 | .178 |

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To test for mediation using regression, this research uses Baron and Kenny's (1986) three-step procedure. This method uses a step-wise process. The first step requires that the independent variable is significantly related to the mediator variable (i.e., embeddedness regressed on needs for power, achievement,

affiliation, conscientiousness, and the control variables). Second, the independent variable must be related to the dependent variable (i.e., IAFO regressed on the learned needs, conscientiousness, and control variables). Finally, in the third step, the mediating variable should be related to the dependent variable with the independent variable included in the equation (i.e., embeddedness added into the regression equation). Partial mediation exists if these three conditions exist. If the independent variable has a non-significant standardized beta weight in the third step but the mediator remains significant, a fully mediated model exists (Baron & Kenny, 1986). If the independent variable has a significant yet reduced standardized beta weight (particularly when the level of significance drops off) during the third step, but the mediator also remains significant, then a partially mediated model exists.

Table 2 presents the means, standard deviations, and correlations between this study’s variables. The two largest correlations between variables in this sample are, unsurprisingly, between two control variables—age and organization tenure ($r = .57, p < .01$). In addition, two independent variables correlated strongly; learned needs and achievement needs ($r = .60, p < .01$). These correlations are suspect because they approach, but do not exceed, the threshold for multi-collinearity of .60 proposed by Cohen, Cohen, West and Aiken (2003). None of this study’s control variables were significantly related to either embeddedness or IAFO.

Table 3: Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations between Study Variables

| Variable | M | SD | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|------------------|-------|-------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-----|
| 1. Age | 36.51 | 13.42 | --- | | | | | | | | | |
| 2. Gender | --- | --- | -0.08 | --- | | | | | | | | |
| 3. Race | --- | --- | -0.22 | 0.12 | --- | | | | | | | |
| 4. Tenure | 7.37 | 8.02 | 0.57 | -0.10 | -0.14 | --- | | | | | | |
| 5. IAFO | 2.46 | 0.82 | 0.05 | -0.05 | -0.11 | 0.04 | --- | | | | | |
| 6. Conscientious | 4.21 | 0.52 | 0.13 | 0.11 | -0.10 | 0.06 | 0.34 | --- | | | | |
| 7. NACH | 3.54 | 0.73 | 0.02 | 0.01 | 0.04 | -0.08 | 0.38 | 0.40 | --- | | | |
| 8. NAFF | 1.77 | 0.69 | 0.09 | 0.01 | -0.15 | 0.07 | 0.38 | 0.44 | 0.60 | --- | | |
| 9. NPOW | 3.71 | 0.82 | -0.04 | -0.15 | 0.01 | -0.05 | 0.21 | 0.06 | 0.25 | 0.31 | --- | |
| 10. Embeddedness | 3.62 | 0.64 | 0.11 | -0.04 | 0.08 | 0.08 | 0.37 | 0.28 | 0.38 | 0.31 | 0.34 | --- |

*All bolded correlations indicate significance levels of $p < .05$ or stronger $N = 187$

As noted above, the researcher performed the three-step procedure proposed by Baron and Kenny (1986) to test for mediation. In each of the three steps, Sheridan and Vredenburg’s (1978) suggested standard demographic control variables (i.e., age, race, organizational tenure, and gender) were included. The researcher did this to help eliminate spurious effects they might create and to produce a more stringent test of the study’s hypothesized relationships. The top panel in Table 3 provides the results for the first step indicating that the mediating variable, embeddedness, was significantly related to NPOW ($b = .38, p < .001$). As such, the researcher proceeded to step two.

The second panel provides the results for this step and shows that power needs are significantly related to the dependent variable (IAFO) ($b = .21, p < .01$). Needs for power explained 3% of the variance in IAFO and 14% for embeddedness. In the third step of Baron and Kenny’s (1986) procedure, the mediating variable (i.e., embeddedness) must relate to the dependent variable (IAFO) with the independent and control variables included in the equation. The third panel in Table 3 provides the results of the final step. Results indicated that embeddedness was a significant predictor ($b = .47, p < .001$) of IAFO, and that the standardized beta weight for power needs failed to be significant ($b = .03, p < N/S$). Because the standardized beta weight for power needs became insignificant in the third step, embeddedness fully mediates this relationship (Baron & Kenny, 1986). The following mediated regression equation is used to estimate the determinants of informal accountability for others in the final step:

$$IAFO = \beta_1 Age + \beta_2 Gender + \beta_3 Race + \beta_4 Tenure + \beta_5 NPOW + \beta_5 Embeddedness \quad (1)$$

Table 4 provides the results for the study's second test hypothesis. Results indicated that the mediating variable, embeddedness, is significantly positively related to achievement needs ($b = .53, p < .001$). As such, the second step is required. The table's second panel shows that achievement needs significantly, positively, related to the dependent variable (IAFO) ($b = .39, p < .001$). Needs for achievement explained between 14% of the variance in IAFO and 24% in embeddedness.

Table 4: Mediation Results for Needs for Power

| Step 1: Mediator Variable Regressed on the Independent Variable | | | | |
|---|---------|----|-------------------------|--------------|
| Variable | F | df | Adjusted R ² | β (standard) |
| Mediator: Embeddedness | 7.17 | 5 | 0.14 | |
| NPOW | | | | 0.38*** |
| Step 2: Dependent Variable Regressed on Independent Variable | | | | |
| Dep. Var.: IAFO | 2.14† | 5 | 0.03 | |
| NPOW | | | | 0.21** |
| Step 3: Dependent Variable Regressed on Mediator (IAFO) with the Independent Variable Included | | | | |
| Dep. Var.: IAFO | 9.46*** | 6 | 0.21 | |
| Embeddedness | | | | 0.47*** |
| NPOW | | | | 0.03 N/S |

*N=187 Significance levels are indicated as follows: † $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$. All results include age, gender, tenure, and race as control variables. The panels of this table show the mediation steps suggested by Baron and Kenny (1986). The results suggest that if the relationship between needs for power becomes statistically insignificant in the presence of embeddedness, full mediation occurs.*

The third panel in Table 4 notes the third step of Baron and Kenny's (1986) procedure. The mediating variable (i.e., embeddedness) was related to the dependent variable (IAFO) with the independent variables included in the equation. As noted, embeddedness was still a strong predictor ($b = .39, p < .001$) of IAFO, but achievement needs also still proved a significant antecedent ($b = .19, p < .05$). Baron and Kenny (1986) noted that if between the second and third steps the IV's standardized beta weight drops and/or the significance level drops, the relationship is partially mediated. Such is the case here. In this sample, embeddedness partially mediated the relationship between needs for achievement and IAFO. The following mediated regression equation is used to estimate the determinants of informal accountability for others in the final step:

$$IAFO = \beta_1 Age + \beta_2 Gender + \beta_3 Race + \beta_4 Tenure + \beta_5 NACH + \beta_5 Embeddedness \quad (2)$$

Table 5: Mediation Results for Needs for Achievement

| Step 1: Mediator Variable Regressed on the Independent Variable | | | | |
|---|----------|----|-------------------------|--------------|
| Variable | F | df | Adjusted R ² | β (standard) |
| Mediator: Embeddedness | 16.10*** | 5 | 0.29 | |
| NACH | | | | 0.53*** |
| Step 2: Dependent Variable Regressed on Independent Variable | | | | |
| Dep. Var.: IAFO | 6.89*** | 5 | 0.14 | |
| NACH | | | | 0.39*** |
| Step 3: Dependent Variable Regressed on Mediator (OBSE) with the Independent Variable Included | | | | |
| Dep. Var.: IAFO | 10.56*** | 6 | 0.24 | |
| Embeddedness | | | | 0.39*** |
| NACH | | | | 0.19* |

*N=187 Significance levels are indicated as follows: † $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$. All results include age, gender, tenure, and race as control variables. The panels of this table show the mediation steps suggested by Baron and Kenny (1986). The results suggest that if the relationship weakens substantially in the presence of embeddedness, partial mediation occurs.*

Table 5 provides information like that mentioned above for the results for the study's third hypothesis. Results indicated that the mediating variable, embeddedness, is significantly positively related to affiliation needs ($b = .57, p < .001$). Moving to the second step, results noted in the table's second panel

indicated that affiliation needs also significantly, positively, related to the dependent variable (IAFO) ($b = .37, p < .001$). Needs for affiliation explained 13% of the variance in IAFO and 33% of embeddedness.

In the third step, the mediating variable (i.e., embeddedness) was still related to the dependent variable (IAFO) with the independent variables included in the equation. The third panel notes that embeddedness was a strong predictor ($b = .40, p < .001$) of IAFO, but affiliation needs still proved a significant antecedent to IAFO ($b = .15, p < .05$) even with embeddedness in the equation. Again, between the second and third steps, the independent variable’s standardized beta weight drops along with its significance levels, thus, the relationship is partially mediated. In short, embeddedness partially mediated the relationship between needs for affiliation and informal accountability for others. The following mediated regression equation is used to estimate the determinants of informal accountability for others in the final step:

$$IAFO = \beta_1 Age + \beta_2 Gender + \beta_3 Race + \beta_4 Tenure + \beta_5 NAFF + \beta_5 Embeddedness \quad (3)$$

Table 6: Mediation Results for Needs for Affiliation

| Step 1: Mediator Variable Regressed on the Independent Variable | | | | |
|---|----------|----|-------------------------|--------------|
| Variable | F | df | Adjusted R ² | β (standard) |
| Mediator: Embeddedness | 19.07*** | 5 | 0.33 | |
| NAFF | | | | 0.57*** |
| Step 2: Dependent Variable Regressed on Independent Variable | | | | |
| Dep. Var.: IAFO | 6.34*** | 5 | 0.13 | |
| NAFF | | | | 0.37*** |
| Step 3: Dependent Variable Regressed on Mediator (OBSE) with the Independent Variable Included | | | | |
| Dep. Var.: IAFO | 10.15*** | 6 | 0.29 | |
| Embeddedness | | | | 0.40*** |
| NAFF | | | | 0.15* |

*Significance levels are indicated as follows: †p<0.10, *p < 0.05, **p < 0.01, ***p < 0.001. All results include age, gender, tenure, and race as control variables. The panels of this table show the mediation steps suggested by Baron and Kenny (1986). The results suggest that if the relationship weakens substantially in the presence of embeddedness, partial mediation occurs.*

Table 6 provides information like that mentioned above for the results for the study’s fourth hypothesis. Results indicated that the mediating variable, embeddedness, is significantly positively related to conscientiousness ($b = .42, p < .001$). Moving to the second step, results noted in the table’s second panel indicated that conscientiousness also significantly, positively, related to the dependent variable (IAFO) ($b = .35, p < .001$). Conscientiousness explained 11% of the variance in IAFO and 18% of the variance in embeddedness. In the third step, the mediating variable (i.e., embeddedness) was still related to the dependent variable (IAFO) with conscientiousness included in the equation. The third panel notes that embeddedness was a strong predictor ($b = .41, p < .001$) of IAFO, but conscientiousness still proved a significant antecedent to IAFO ($b = .18, p < .05$) even with embeddedness in the equation. Again, between the second and third steps, the standardized beta weight for conscientiousness drops along with its significance levels, thus, the relationship is partially mediated. In short, embeddedness partially mediated the relationship between conscientiousness and informal accountability for others. The following mediated regression equation is used to estimate the determinants of informal accountability for others in the final step:

$$IAFO = \beta_1 Age + \beta_2 Gender + \beta_3 Race + \beta_4 Tenure + \beta_5 Conscientiousness + \beta_5 Embeddedness \quad (4)$$

Table 7: Mediation Results for Conscientiousness

| Step 1: Mediator Variable Regressed on the Independent Variable | | | | |
|---|----------|----|-------------------------|--------------|
| Variable | F | df | Adjusted R ² | β (standard) |
| Mediator: Embeddedness | 9.09*** | 5 | 0.18 | |
| Conscientiousness | | | | 0.42*** |
| Step 2: Dependent Variable Regressed on Independent Variable | | | | |
| Dep. Var.: IAFO | 5.39*** | 5 | 0.11 | |
| Conscientiousness | | | | 0.35*** |
| Step 3: Dependent Variable Regressed on Mediator (OBSE) with the Independent Variable Included | | | | |
| Dep. Var.: IAFO | 10.15*** | 6 | 0.29 | |
| Embeddedness | | | | 0.41*** |
| Conscientiousness | | | | 0.18* |

Significance levels are indicated as follows: † $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$. All results include age, gender, tenure, and race as control variables. The panels of this table show the mediation steps suggested by Baron and Kenny (1986). The results suggest that if the relationship weakens substantially in the presence of embeddedness, partial mediation occurs.

This research partially confirms the mediating effects of embeddedness on the relationship of learned needs and conscientiousness and informal accountability for others. These needs, for power, affiliation and achievement promoted better placement in organizations along with enhanced fit, which, in turn, enhanced informal answerability accountability for others. These findings help expand the state of organizational understanding in a number of ways. For example, further validating the notion that individuals learn needs which encourage them to answer for their behaviors and those of others enhances both the body of research in accountability, organizational politics, and human resource planning. It also, further supports the Tetlock's (1985, 1992) contention that both seek to understand situational context and causality as well as actively manage how they behave to accommodate that (i.e., they behave both as intuitive psychologists and politicians).

Currently only scant research has examined the extent to which individuals' learned needs impact the degree to which they feel answerable to others for their own attitudes and behaviors as well as those of their colleagues. Similarly, little has been written on the degree to which employee diligence relates to individuals' willingness to feel answerable to the actions of others. Consequently, this study extends accountability research by enhancing the field's understanding of the sequence of feelings of answerability. By a step-wise methodological examination of the links in a chain, it appears that dimensions of needs and personality relevant to enhanced employee fit and organizational linkages and IAFO are effectively measured in this research.

Contributions to Theory and Practice

McClelland's work on personality drivers and their subsequent influence on motivation helped define the social context that distinguishes would-be leaders from underperforming employees. This distinction is rooted in individuals' motives that drive, direct, and select their behaviors (Spangler et al., 2004; McClelland, 1980). The findings in this research help broaden the state of research by demonstrating the unique motivations inherent in power, achievement, and affiliation needs which promote fit, linkage, and accountability. These data suggested that all three (i.e., achievement, power, and affiliation) needs contributed to individuals' willingness to answer for their actions of others.

However, the degree to which these drives did so varied as did the degree to which IAFO was contingent upon fitting in with coworkers and being linked to them. The paper's data indicated that embeddedness partially mediated the relationship between needs for achievement and IAFO. This result helps bolster Spangler et al.'s (2004) contention that high achievement needs encourage employees to identify with task performance on a more personal level. Naturally, this makes it likely individuals dedicate themselves

to their work related tasks and, ultimately, to avoid counterproductive work behaviors and exhibit more civic virtue (Robinson & Bennett, 1995; Van Dyne & LePine, 1998). Spangler et al. (2004) claimed that individuals high in achievement needs are not inclined to delegate and are prone involving themselves with others. In one respect, the significant direct effects of needs for achievement on IAFO in the study's findings confirm this assumption. It appears that those high in achievement needs strive diligently to satisfy the expectations inherent in their own positions in order to enhance the prospect of promotion and recognition within their organizations (Cummings & Anton, 1990). Once they achieve positions of power (e.g., become linked with many others in the hierarchy), they influence, if not co-opt, the behaviors of others by signaling IAFO. Nevertheless, those target individuals must believe their apparently sincere motivations and/or respect the power afforded to them due to their linkages.

When less achievement oriented members comply with the directives of high N Ach individuals who signal IAFO, it will likely reduce their desired level of organizational uncertainty (Gouldner, 1960; Royle & Hall, 2012; Epstein, 1999). Another finding in this research relates to the direction and motives of individuals high in affiliation needs. Like achievement needs mentioned above, affiliation did predict both embeddedness and IAFO. Embeddedness partially mediated this relationship.

However, the most salient aspects of embeddedness for individuals high in affiliation needs are likely different than those with high achievement needs. As opposed to directly involving themselves in the efforts of others (i.e., high achievement needs), those with high needs for affiliation are more reluctant to directly involve themselves in the affairs of others (Spangler et al. 2004). Because these individuals are concerned with maintaining close personal relationships (e.g., McClelland, 1985), they seek IAFO as a means to further enhance the quality of their relationships with their colleagues. This describes the observed direct effects of affiliation needs on IAFO. However, the data also indicated the partial mediation of embeddedness on this relationship. The findings in this paper indicated that high affiliation needs are likely driving issues of self-selection in organizations. Embeddedness, by its nature, involves person-organization fit (Mitchell et al., 2001). Individuals select themselves into organizations, or at least avoid dismissal, based on the degree to which their personalities and values match that of an organization's culture (O'Reilly, Chatman, & Caldwell, 1991).

These authors, as well as Colquitt, Le Pine, and Wesson (2011, pp. 285-287), presented a number of indicators person-organization which both describe high levels of embeddedness and are likely drivers of behavior for those who are informally accountable for others. Accordingly, high affiliation needs make it more likely that individuals become embedded within their organizations because they are more likely to work in teams, be supportive of others, develop friends at work, and work collaboratively (O'Reilly, Chatman, & Caldwell, 1991; Colquitt et al, 2011). These data suggested that individuals with high affiliation mostly enhance their relationships with other by answering for them because they are friends, fit with them ethically, and interact routinely. McClelland (1985) noted that expression of power needs generally resulted in effective job performance, provided they behave in legal and/or ethical ways. They typically seek to obtain power and authority in their organizations (Winter, 1992).

If high power needs individuals both effectively perform their jobs as seek to enhance their prestige within organizations, it is likely that they will move up within organizational hierarchies. This will, thus, enhance their embeddedness within those firms. Furthermore, it is possible that this then promotes IAFO. High power individuals likely view IAFO as a method to exert their will, enhance their base salaries, and achieve better performance evaluations (Ivancevich, 2007; Royle & Hall, 2012). Ivancevich (2007) noted that both formal and informal systems of evaluation exist side by side in most organizations. A formal system of accountability objectively measures employee performance while, simultaneously, an informal system exists which operates on the subjective notion of how individuals and others think others are doing. If employees seem to be performing better because they answer for the actions of others in the firm, they enhance promotion and power gaining potential.

This study's findings help empirically link this assumption. High power need individuals (if acting morally) perform well, become centrally embedded in the power structure of a firm, and then lever the prestige of such high positions in order to influence future gains (e.g., gaining coworker accommodation for possible future promotion by signaling IAFO). The data in this research suggest that conscientiousness also plays a significant role in the promotion of embeddedness and IAFO. As noted by Barrick and Mount (1993), conscientiousness predicted job performance. As such, it is likely that good performance lends higher levels of embeddedness. In addition, conscientiousness positively related to self-directed employee behaviors (Stewart, Carson, & Cardy, 1996). Stewart et al., (1996) focused on employee self-direction of work activity. They defined such behaviors as those that demonstrate internally driven behaviors and which occur in the absence of external constraints or procedural controls (Manz & Sims, 1980; Manz, Mossholder, & Luthans, 1987). Self-direction is increasingly important in contemporary organizations that move away from hierarchical control toward employee driven systems comprised largely of jobs with high motivational potential (Manz & Sims, 1993; Hackman & Oldham, 1974). Furthermore, in these settings, behavior is driven more by individuals than by external leaders (Schutte, Kenrick, & Sadalla, 1985; Weiss & Adler, 1984). Having self-directed employees may be key to success for modern organizations (Manz & Sims, 1993). In this respect, conscientiousness behaviors might indicate that individuals do a good job and are appreciated, promoted, as well as liked for it. In addition, that might allow them discretionary use of their time and resources to seek informal accountability for others. The data in this paper appear to support that claim.

In addition to proposing theoretical extensions to the field, this research also seeks to add practitioner implications. There are several practical ideas which could be proffered. For example, Greenhaus, Callahan, and Godshalk (2010) contended that the most fluid, flexible, and adaptive contemporary careerists are those who do not merely possess adequate skills, but also extend their work involvement. This means they should engage others in order to enhance their reputations and develop supportive, if not symbiotic, relationships. Maintaining co-developmental associations that demonstrate informal accountability for others is an example of extending work involvement as well as a means of enhancing one's reputation. Doing so also enhances career mobility both within a firm and within its business environment (Royle & Hall, 2012).

Research indicated that the culture of an organization often reflects the personality and dispositional proclivities of those who founded it (Schein, 1983). As such, personality traits influence the evolution of firms through the sequence of attraction, selection, and attrition (Schneider, 1987). Testing individuals' dispositional dimensions during the phases of the human resource management process (e.g., recruitment, selection, and performance evaluation) could reduce the costs of mismatch (e.g., reduce employees' stress, levels of job satisfaction, and augment motivation) between organizations and individuals (O'Reilly, Chatman, & Caldwell, 1991). Furthermore, because individuals seek to develop work roles and/or careers around their personalities (Bell & Staw, 1989; Greenhaus, et al., 2010), it is important to know what those dispositional attributes are so that both employees and organizations are better aware of how to proactively deploy their skills.

Furthermore, understanding the inherent drives of employees is also important because, unfortunately, many firms are neither aware of nor can perform sophisticated job analysis (Roff & Watson, 1961). Finding the right match between tasks and those who perform them is important because, as described by Spangler et al., (2004), it increases the likelihood that positions will be filled by employees with essential skills and not potentially problematic personalities (e.g., placing individuals with high in power needs and low dispositions toward personal responsibility). Allowing this to occur could threaten the organization's performance and strategic positioning (Winter & Barenbaum, 1985; Butler, Ferris, & Napier, 1991).

Strengths and Limitations

In order to be balanced, both the strengths and limitations of this study's findings require discussion. Contemporary critiques of accountability research often involve derision of the methods of data collection and their subsequent claims. Unfortunately, researchers noted a lack of realism in some previous works which brings questions of the external validity to the findings (Frink & Klimoski, 2004). For example, some accountability research relied too heavily as opposed to studying real employees in actual organizational settings (Frink & Klimoski, 2004). This research helps obviate some of these problems because its information was drawn from a sample of working adults in a variety of occupations throughout the southeastern United States. This research employed common control variables such as organizational tenure, gender, age, and race (Sheridan & Vredenburg, 1978). This study controlled for organizational tenure and age, due to their positive association with hierarchical level within the firm and, thus, higher levels of formal accountability and embedded linkages (Schlenker & Weigold, 1989; Schlenker et al., 1991; Mitchell et al., 2001). Controlling for these variables strengthens the study's conclusions that essential elements of embeddedness (not just hierarchical position but also fit) is tapped and that it promotes IAFO. Specifically, because this research controlled for age, the researcher feels more confident that although personality dimensions like McClelland's (1985) needs might change over time (Roberts, Walton, & Viechtbauer, 2006), in this case they have not.

There are also limitations that deserve attention. Specifically, the data in this study came from single source, self-report surveys. Such data collection techniques can allow for common method variance (CMV), a commonly lamented problem for self-report measures (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003; Spector, 2006). Although CMV increases the probability of falsely either accepting or rejecting the null hypothesis (Podsakoff et al. 2003), an examination of Table 2 did not indicate spuriously inflated relationships due to response bias. The researcher conducted a post-hoc Harman Single factor analysis. Harman (1976) claimed that method variance might exist if a single factor emerges from un-rotated factor solutions. In addition, CMV might be problem if the first factor explains the majority of the variance in the variables (Harman, 1976; Podsakoff & Organ, 1986). The results of this analysis did not indicate CMV. Of course, the researcher cannot completely rule out the possibility of artifacts generating some of the observed effects, but based on the magnitude of the correlations and post hoc analysis, data suggested that this study was likely not negatively affected by CMV.

Another limitation to this study involves the nature of the sample collected. Specifically, selection bias could be an issue, because individuals seeking extra credit might have relied too heavily on family members and friends as data sources. Students seeking extra credit might have selected individuals (e.g., friends and family) and pressured them to answer. Furthermore, they might have asked only those most willing to answer the survey. This might mean that respondents gave only a cursory treatment to the items in the survey as a means of appeasing those seeking their compliance.

The researcher must, thus, concede that this is a convenience sample and generalization of the results is tenuous. Additionally, non-response bias (i.e., the possibility that respondents differ in motivation and ability from non-respondents) cannot be entirely ruled out in this sample (Schwab, 1999). Although encouraging, because of the sample's response rate of 57%, (which exceeds the relatively low expected rate of only 30% common to organizational research, Dillman, 2000), the researcher cannot claim with certainty that respondents did not differ from non-respondents on the salient dimensions of this research. This study is subject to another limitation in that data are cross-sectional. Another common lament in organizational research is the difficulty of conducting longitudinal field studies.

Commonly, a lack of recurrent access to employees in organizations, turnover, and firm attrition continue to pose problems for researchers seeking longitudinal designs (Schwab, 1999). Cross-sectional studies diminish researchers' abilities to make definitive statements of causality (Schwab, 1999). Capturing a

view of a whole at only one point is tenuous. This notion is roughly analogous to trying to know the plot of a movie by seeing only one still shot.

Directions for Future Research

The first direction research might be guided address the above shortcoming. The field would benefit from longitudinal cohorts that better identify the effects of time on the observed relationship of needs, embeddedness and IAFO. Friedman and Schustack (1999) contended that high achievement needs could positively predict higher organizational levels provided that individuals were persistent and shrewd. These authors noted, however, over time individuals might feel less accountable as they rise within the organization's hierarchy particularly if diplomacy and cooperation diminish in importance (Friedman & Schustack, 1999). In that case, it might be that the perceived fit between high achievement needs individuals and their coworkers might be in decline and, thus, likely to negatively impact IAFO.

Another potential avenue of future interest to the researcher involves Hofstede's (1980, 2001) dimensions of culture. Hofstede's (1980; 2001) dimensions might set the boundary conditions that influence individuals' decisions to fit in organizations and seek informal accountability for others. For example, in cultures that are masculine and individualistic (i.e., those that have prescribed gender differences and value individual initiative, Hofstede, 1980, 2001) employees might not be as likely to seek fit-embeddedness due to culture norms promoting personal initiative, recognition, and assertiveness even if they have affiliation needs. Authoritarian cultures tend to promote the demonstration of assertive behaviors common to individuals high in power and achievement needs (Shankar, Ansari, & Saxena, 1999; Spangler et al., 2004). In this case, research would be well served to note if such cultures encourage the linkages of embeddedness and promote IAFO as a means of social influence.

Collectivistic and feminine cultures (Hofstede, 1980, 2001) value the well-being of the group, overall quality of life, and the promotion of harmonious interpersonal relationships. Shankar et al. (1999) noted that participative relationships are more desirable in collectivist societies. Furthermore, they claimed that under such circumstances ingratiation was more common between individuals. Future research could investigate if expressing affiliation needs in collectivistic and/or feminine cultures enhances fit and embeddedness which in turn promotes IAFO due to a sense of collegial altruism.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

Staw (2004) concluded, from a review of research, that personality dimensions or "dispositional affect" (e.g., fundamental drivers of behavior like the needs examined here) can be a theoretically and empirically important drivers of work behaviors. Naturally, personality variables are not the only relevant predictors of job related attitudes or behaviors and they work in conjunction with the environment and may change over time (Roberts et al., 2006). Nevertheless they constitute key determinants (Staw, 2004). This research attempted to further link dispositional affect to relevant issues of organizational placement of employees and social their interaction (i.e., embeddedness and informal accountability for others).

This study set out to demonstrate the relationship between McClelland's (1961, 1975, 1985) needs, embeddedness, and informal accountability for others. It included a sample of working adults in the southeast United States. It hypothesized that these needs all differentially promoted individuals' fit and linkage to others at work, and subsequently caused them to feel answerable for them (even if they were not subordinates). The researcher tested these hypotheses using mediated regression (Baron & Kenny, 1986). The findings indicated that McClelland's needs (1961, 1975, 1985) promoted embeddedness and that it partially mediated the relationship between needs and IAFO. Data suggested that of McClelland's (1961, 1975, 1985) needs, achievement motivation was the strongest predictor of IAFO followed by affiliation and power. Furthermore, conscientiousness was a significant predictor of IAFO of about the

same potency as affiliation needs. Of course, these findings are limited due to the use of a convenience sample of employees from different organizations and it employed a cross-sectional design. Future research would be well-served to analyze a sample of sufficient size in one organization and expand the list of boundary conditions related to IAFO.

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BIOGRAPHY

M. Todd Royle Ph.D. is an associate professor of management and international business at Valdosta State University. He teaches courses in organizational behavior, international business, human resource management, international management, and career development. His main research interests relate to accountability, culture and organizational politics. He is available for correspondence to readers. Interested individuals may contact him in any of the following ways: M. Todd Royle 103 H Pound Hall Department of Management and International Business, Valdosta State University, Valdosta, GA 31698-10076, by phone at (229) 245-3875 (Office), or mtroyle@valdosta.edu