

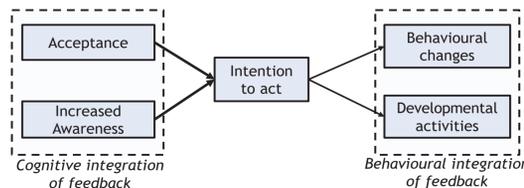
INTRODUCTION

Organizational psychologists and career counselors take different actions to encourage clients to develop themselves and further their career. **Individual psychological assessment (IPA)** is a process in which these practitioners draw conclusions about a candidate's attitudes, behaviours, competencies and development opportunities.

- These conclusions are based on information gathered through psychometric tests, interviews and simulations.
- At the end of this process, a feedback session is set between the candidate and their assessor, where the latter communicates its conclusions and identifies development opportunities for the candidate (Kluger & DeNisi, 1996).

Plunier (2012) has suggested a multidimensional model of **IPA feedback integration**, based on Ilgen, Fisher, and Taylor's (1979) previous work on performance feedback acceptance. This model is constituted of three successive steps:

1. Cognitive integration of feedback (which includes acceptance and awareness gained from the feedback);
2. Intention to act on the feedback and;
3. Behavioural integration of the feedback (composed of behavioural changes and participation in developmental activities; Boudrias, Bernaud, & Plunier, 2014; Plunier, Boudrias, & Savoie, 2013).



This model is rooted in the theory of planned behaviour, stipulating that the intention to behave in a way determines the behaviour's actual execution (Ajzen, 1991). This tenet was confirmed by Armitage and Conner's (2001) meta-analysis of 185 empirical studies showing that :

The best predictor of a behaviour is the intention to behave in that way. While interesting, there are limited work showing that this conclusion could apply in the IPA context neither whether external variables influence the relationship between candidates' intention to act upon feedback and the actual adoption of behaviour aligned with feedback.

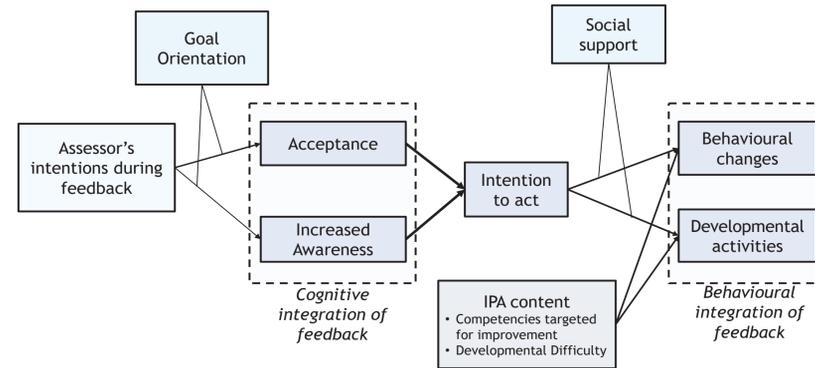
1. In his meta-analysis, Sheeran (2002) concludes that many types of moderators may accentuate or reduce the relationship between intention and action.
 - One of them is **social support**. Indeed, a supervisor, a coach, or a colleague offering resources and advice may amplify the relationship between a candidate's intention to act and the actual action. To our knowledge, while this has been substantiated in different feedback contexts, no study has been done in an IPA context.
2. Furthermore, **assessors' intentions** when giving feedback may influence subsequent feedback integration and types of action performed by candidates.
 - Even though facilitating candidates' integration of their developmental needs may be an ideal objective in the feedback, assessors may sometimes aim for more modest targets. For many reasons, they may devote their feedback session to simply making candidates accept the assessment outcomes (e.g. selection decision), without aiming to discuss a development plan. Thus, assessors do not always try to increase candidates' awareness of their developmental needs.
3. Finally, candidates' reactions to feedback are also known to be affected by their **goal orientation** (VandeWalle & Cummings, 1997).
 - Learning goal orientation has been found to augment favorable reactions to feedback, while performing and avoiding goal orientations do the same for negative reactions. Additionally, candidates' goal orientations could interact with their assessor's intentions. A strong willing to learn or demonstrate performance may amplify the relationship between the assessor's developmental intentions and the candidate's cognitive integration of feedback, whereas an avoiding goal orientation would undermine it.

OBJECTIVES

Part of my ongoing doctoral research is to examine how the assessor's intentions and the candidate's goal orientation and social support influence cognitive and behavioural integration of an IPA feedback.

- My model, based on renowned theories in social psychology, also originates from consultations with practitioners who identified assessors' intentions as critical variables to understand the impact of feedback.

RESEARCH MODEL



PROCEDURE AND MATERIALS

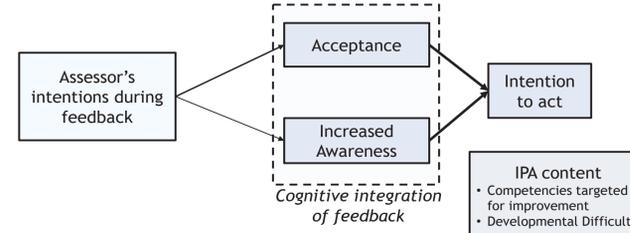
Time 1 : Assessment Day



- 1 **Goal orientations at work** (Lessard et al., submitted) :
 - Learning goal orientation ($\alpha = .81$; 5 items) ;
 - Performing goal orientation ($\alpha = .65$; 4 items) ;
 - Avoiding goal orientation ($\alpha = .76$; 4 items) ;

For the moment, **438** candidates participating in an IPA in a private firm have completed Time 1

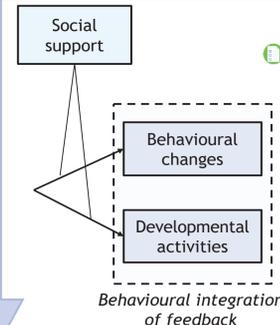
Time 2 : Feedback session



- 1 **Assessor's intentions** (3 items created for the project)
- 1 **Cognitive integration of feedback** ($\alpha = .83$; Plunier et al., 2013) :
 - Acceptance ($\alpha = .89$; 3 items) ;
 - Increased awareness ($\alpha = .85$; 4 items) ;
- 1 **Intention to use feedback** ($\alpha = .88$; Plunier et al., 2013 ; 3 items)

For the moment, **226** candidates have completed Time 2

Time 3 : 3 months later



- 1 **Social support** ($\alpha = .97$; 6 items ; Maurer et al., 2002)
- 1 **Behavioural integration of feedback** (Boudrias et al., 2014) :
 - Behavioural changes ($\alpha = .85$; 5 items) ;
 - Developmental activities ($\alpha = .75$; 3 items) ;

For the moment, **141** candidates have completed Time 3

IMPLICATIONS

Implications of this research include improved understanding of how IPA feedback relates to professional development. Results will allow organizational psychologists and career counselors to optimize benefits from their intervention and allow organizations to take advantage of IPA, often done in contexts of selection or development, by linking it to developmental activities. In terms of career counselling, considering IPA feedback as a process intertwined with professional development can help workers to think strategically about long-term career planning.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS IDENTIFIED FROM PRELIMINARY RESULTS

Avoiding goal oriented candidates have a lower intention to act on feedback, especially if their assessor looks credible. Furthermore, intention leads to action less often in these individuals than in others. Thus, when giving feedback to avoiding goal oriented candidates, efforts have to be made to make the situation less threatening.

- Put them at ease and take time to establish trust!
- Bring the recipients to build their own feedback. The feedback is less threatening if the recipients feel it comes from themselves.

The number of competencies addressed in the feedback and the competencies' developmental difficulty have an impact on the behavioural integration of feedback. To give a powerful feedback :

- Consider that all developmental goals aren't equally difficult ;
- Address a maximum of three poorly demonstrated competencies that are difficult to develop - the less, the better ;
- Avoid easy developmental goals.

During the feedback :

- Have 1 to 3 key messages in mind ;
- Establish with the candidate a goal that fits his or her personal values ;
- Explain the pros and cons associated with the goal ;
- Explore with the candidate the social and organizational support he or she could get ;
- Establish a detailed development plan.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The first author received the Joseph-Armand Bombardier Canada Graduate Scholarship from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada for his ongoing doctoral research.



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