RESEARCH ARTICLE

The role of feedback on interview self-efficacy and outcome expectations

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Abstract

Applicants' self-cognitions toward selection procedures are decisive to produce favorable outcomes. Drawing upon the career self-management model, this study explored the impact of performance feedback after a simulated employment interview on interview self-efficacy (ISE) and outcome expectations. Participants (a sample of recent graduates; $N = 240$) were given timely feedback after the simulated interview with suggestions to improve their performance. The interviewer's feedback was positively related to participants' ISE measured after the feedback. A significant relationship between participants' ISE and outcome expectations emerged. Feedback was related to outcome expectations only indirectly, via ISE. This study contributes to existing knowledge about ISE and provides practitioners with hints to help job seekers to master job search in troubled times.

Practitioner notes
- Interview self-efficacy is a major predictor of performance in the employment interview.
- We show that performance feedback enhances interview self-efficacy and outcome expectations.
- Job seekers in training should be given meaningful feedback to raise their interview self-efficacy.

KEYWORDS
career self-management model, employment interview, feedback, interview self-efficacy, personnel selection, social cognitive theory

1 | INTRODUCTION

Employment interview still gathers elevated scholarly attention, as it represents the most popular selection tool among employers (Macan, 2009; McCarthy & Cheng, 2018), and it is seen favorably by applicants (Anderson et al., 2010). Scholars have been increasingly studying the employment interview from the applicants'

perspective (McCharty & Cheng, 2014), focusing on their attitudes, self-cognitions, and emotions, and evaluating the impact of these aspects on their performance (see Nikolaou & Georgiou, 2018; Schneider et al., 2019).

We aim at strengthening understanding of interview self-efficacy (henceforth, ISE), a prominent self-cognition explaining employment interview performance (Tay et al., 2006; Tross &

Maurer, 2008), basing on social cognitive theory (hereafter, SCT) and the related career self-management model (hereafter, CSM model; Lent & Brown, 2013). Self-efficacy is an experience-based cognition reflecting the personal capability to perform a task, which drives motivation toward the execution of job search behaviors (Lent & Brown, 2013; Sheu et al., 2018). It has been shown to explain mastery of job search behaviors (Kanfer et al., 2001; Lent & Brown, 2013; Van Hoye et al., 2019) and selection process (Chiesa & Mariani, 2016). We explore the ISE concept examining its antecedent of verbal persuasion. Accordingly, we got a sample of new entrants in the labor market (composed of Italian university graduates) to receive feedback after attending an employment interview simulation to evaluate the relationship between feedback and ISE. Moreover, the CSM sees outcome expectations, together with self-efficacy, as pivotal to perform effective behaviors (Lent & Brown, 2013). Therefore, we also evaluate the relationship between feedback, ISE, and outcome expectations about the employment interview.

Our study provides a valuable contribution to knowledge about ISE. On the one hand, we use the malleability of self-efficacy beliefs to posit an influence of verbal persuasion on ISE. The involvement of participants in simulation, with timely feedback upon their performance, allows enriching the sparse evidence upon the impact of verbal persuasion, and feedback in particular. On the other hand, we add subsequent outcome expectations to the relationship between feedback and ISE. We confirm empirically the tenet of CSM model that understands self-efficacy and outcome expectations as connected in the motivational dynamic chain that sustains behavior.

The importance of interview preparation and self-efficacy-oriented activities in job search training programs (Liu et al., 2014) gives our results practical value. The technique used herein to provide a realistic interview experience (simulation and feedback) corroborates the beneficial effects of stimulating experiential sources of self-efficacy. As such, we provide hints to university career services to exploit the malleability of self-efficacy and grow graduate new entrants' confidence in their interviewing capabilities.

In what follows, we introduce the variables and their hypothesized relationships. Then, the methodology of the study is presented, followed by the results. Eventually, we discuss main theoretical and practical implications, along with limitations and opportunities for future research.

1.1 | Interview self-efficacy

ISE reflects personal judgments about one's capabilities to execute a proper performance at interviewing (Tay et al., 2006; Tross & Maurer, 2008). The perception of having what it takes to succeed generates a positive forethought and sustains motivation and persistence, eventually yielding better performances (Bandura, 1997). Translated in the interviewing domain, candidates who are confident about their interviewing capabilities are expected to display better self-regulation toward the outcome they wish to achieve. For instance, they could be less hesitant to face the demands of the

interview situation and more self-confident in using verbal and nonverbal behaviors, such as self-promotion, to deliver motivation and suitability with the position (Huffcutt, 2011; Huffcutt et al., 2011; Tay et al., 2006).

Therefore, the theoretical models of interviewees' performance posit ISE as a critical factor to master interviewing situation (see Huffcutt, 2011; Huffcutt et al., 2011). This assumption resonates with the CSM model (Lent & Brown, 2013), which offer a framework to study the process underlying job search behaviors. The authors contended that self-efficacy beliefs are the initiators of the motivational process to implement job search behaviors. They also mentioned self-efficacy about self-presentation skills (which recalls ISE) as an essential factor in new entrants' job search activities like the employment interview. Empirical research has shown ISE to predict effective behaviors during the employment interview (Latham & Budworth, 2006; Shantz & Latham, 2012; Tross & Maurer, 2008) and interview success (i.e., job offers; Tay et al., 2006).

1.2 | Verbal persuasion and interview self-efficacy

Drawing upon SCT tenets, the CSM model assumes that self-efficacy beliefs about job search behaviors are malleable and can be shaped by information coming from four primary sources: performance accomplishment, observational learning (or modeling), social and self-verbal persuasion and encouragement, and affective states (Lent & Brown, 2013). Empirical research has confirmed the influence of performance accomplishment (Tay et al., 2006) and observational learning on ISE (i.e., watching models performing interview behaviours; Liu et al., 2014). Also, positive emotions elicited in interviewees by interviewers' interest in them raise ISE (Wilhelmy et al., 2016), along with self-persuasion operated with positive and encouraging self-talk (Latham & Budworth, 2006).

Herein, we focus on verbal persuasion source of self-efficacy information. Verbal persuasion pertains to transmitting people compelling and detailed messages about their capability to raise their self-confidence in mastering a task (Bandura, 1997). The effect on self-efficacy is more substantial when these messages are tied to an actual performance, where individual capabilities can be evaluated and individuals can interpret their performance to understand how their skills can inform self-regulation strategies to manage the external environment's demands in the future (Bandura, 1997; Schunk & Usher, 2019; Sheu et al., 2018).

Feedback reflects these characteristics. It provides information about different aspects of performance (Kluger & DeNisi, 1996), allowing people to elaborate insights about their behaviors through the comparison against an existing standard (Shea & Howell, 1999; Sitzmann & Yeo, 2013). The comparison should make them understand the discrepancy from the standard and how they can fill it by harnessing their skills and adjusting their actions (Chan & Lam, 2010). Eventually, feedback may empower them and help them feel that they can control their performance with practical strategies to exploit their capabilities (Schunk & DiBendetto, 2020; Sheu et al., 2018; Sitzmann & Yeo, 2013).

This is expected to promote and validate self-efficacy growth (Peifer et al., 2020; Shea & Howell, 1999; Tolli & Schmidt, 2008).

In the context of employment interview research, Wilhelmy et al. (2017) found a positive effect of interviewers' applicant-enhancement behaviors during the interview, such as paying attention to the interviewees and encouraging them to create closeness with them, and the interviewees' ISE, because these behaviors provide them with self-assurance and confidence. If these behaviors grow interviewees' ISE, this should also be true for feedback, as it pertains to transmitting encouraging messages to the receivers.

Empirical research on the impact of verbal persuasion and feedback on ISE is scarce. Latham and Budworth (2006) showed the positive impact of self-persuasion techniques on ISE. While their focus was on the enhancing effect of encouraging interviewees' self-talk, they did not stress the impact of positive messages from significant others. Moreover, Tross and Maurer (2008) found a modest relationship between interview training (which encapsulated feedback) and ISE. Still, they did not give details about the contents of behavioral feedback provided to participants.

Herein, we want to explore the feedback's role more in depth. We suggest that receiving timely feedback (verbal persuasion) after a simulated employment interview helps to understand the current state of interviewing capabilities and how it is possible to control future employment interview situations by improving and exercising those skills. This, eventually, should produce an alteration in ISE. Moreover, positive feedback reflects a more positive gain in executing an activity, which instills stronger self-efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 1997). Therefore, we also posit that the better the feedback, the higher the ISE perception. Hence:

Hypothesis 1 *Feedback in an employment interview simulation has a positive relationship with the interviewee's ISE.*

1.3 | ISE and outcome expectations about employment interview

While depicting their model of employment interview performance, Huffcutt et al. (2011) reported a lack of research about the mechanism by which ISE operates. Indeed, scholarly research has mostly focused on self-efficacy, overlooking the role of outcome expectations while studying job search behaviors (see the meta-analytic review done by Kim et al., 2019). Translated in the employment interview's specific context, no study has investigated the dynamic motivational chain connecting ISE and outcome expectations about employment interview over the past ten years to the best of our knowledge.

According to SCT, while self-efficacy cognitions refer to the individual's belief about their capacity to perform a task, outcome expectations pertain to the actual possibility to produce desired results by employing their skills (Bandura, 1997). The joint action of self-efficacy beliefs and outcome expectations have a more substantial anticipation power in the job search implementation process, representing an incentive to act (Lent & Brown, 2013). The

CSM model (Lent & Brown, 2013) posits that expectations about job search behaviors' outcomes can root directly upon experiences similar to those influencing self-efficacy, including verbal persuasion (see Fouad & Guillen, 2006; Sheu et al., 2018). Applicants who are being told that their interviewing capabilities contribute positively to their performance may think it bodes well for future employment interviews and grow the expectation to succeed and attain favorable outcomes (i.e., a job offer). Therefore, we hypothesize the following:

Hypothesis 2 *Feedback has a positive relationship with the interviewee's outcome expectations about the employment interview.*

Self-efficacy beliefs partly govern outcome expectations because they are functional to exploit expectations' motivational potential. People dealing with activities intrinsically linked to desired outcomes (i.e., employment interview that brings a job offer) form positive expectations about the consequences of their actions (i.e., putting efforts in interview-related behaviors enhances success probability) (Fouad & Guillen, 2006; Schunk & DiBendetto, 2020). However, feeling a lack of ability in activities that depend on performance quality may undermine those expectations. Conversely, a higher sense of efficacy is encouraging, such that the motivation produced by outcome expectations does not remain unused but, instead, is reinforced (Bandura, 1997).

CSM adopts this assumption and understands self-efficacy as a direct antecedent of outcome expectations (see Lent et al., 2016; Lim et al., 2016). In a similar vein, we contend that those who believe themselves as better performers in an employment interview are more likely to think that their interviewing skills will help them succeed (i.e., getting a job offer). We then hypothesize that:

Hypothesis 3 *ISE has a positive relationship with outcome expectations about employment interview.*

The CSM model depicts a path connecting verbal persuasion, self-efficacy, and outcome expectations, such that the self-enhancing power of feedback affects efficacy beliefs that, in turn, shape outcome expectations. Hence:

Hypothesis 4 *ISE mediates the relationship between feedback and outcome expectations about the employment interview, such that feedback has a positive and indirect effect on outcome expectations about the employment interview.*

Figure 1 shows the conceptual model for this study.

2 | METHOD

2.1 | Sample and procedure

We collected data with a sample of recent bachelor's and master's degree graduates from a leading Italian university. Participants
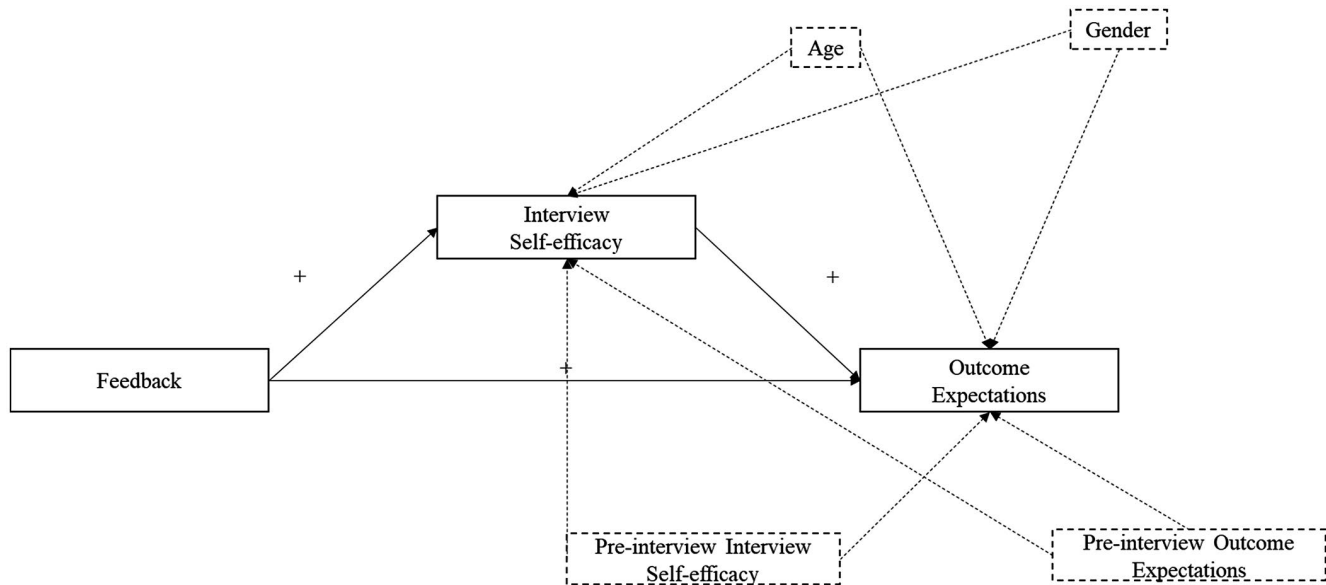
FIGURE 1 The conceptual model with the hypothesized relationships for this study. Dotted lines indicate the control variables and their relationship with the model's variables

attended job search preparation activities (e.g., workshops and group activities) offered by the university's career services in 2016–2018. We invited them to participate in an employment interview simulation held by a personnel selection expert. Participation was not mandatory. We contacted those who had confirmed attendance to the simulation with an e-mail containing preliminary indications, at least 1 week before the simulation. Following the procedure by Young et al. (2004), we asked participants to prepare for the interview simulation thinking of an actual position they desired and indicate it to the research team. The interviewers could become aware of the participants' desired job and prepare a suitable employment interview structure. Moreover, we invited participants to take their curriculum vitae with them.

We guaranteed the anonymity and confidentiality of the participants. On the day of the simulation, we asked them to give their informed consent to the procedure and the utilization of the data for scientific purposes, in compliance with the EU Regulation no. 679/2016. A structured anonymous questionnaire was used. The first part of the questionnaire measured demographic variables, ISE and outcome expectations before the simulation, to be included as control variables. After the simulation session, we collected ISE and outcome expectations with the second part of the questionnaire. At the end of the data collection period, 240 participants to the simulation had completed the whole questionnaire, mostly women (154; 64.2%) with a mean age of 25.65 years.

2.2 | Employment interview simulation and feedback

We invited experienced selection professionals to conduct the simulated interview ($N = 6$; $F = 3$, $M = 3$). They all had a multiyear involvement in the selection process for both companies (public and private) and career services. Moreover, we trained and instructed them to assess the participants' behaviors and use reliable criteria to evaluate their performance and generate timely feedback based on study goals and rationale (International Taskforce on Assessment Center Guidelines, 2015). Each simulated interview session lasted at least 50/55 min per participant and was held by one interviewer.

The first phase of the simulation session comprised a welcome and few icebreaking conversation moments (5 min), the reading of the curriculum vitae (5 min), and the actual interview simulation that lasted approximately 25–30 min. The interviewer followed a 20-question interview schedule, with open-answer, situational, and behavioral questions (as recommended by Levashina et al., 2014). Examples of questions are: "Tell me about yourself/please introduce yourself," "Tell me about a major problem you had during your experiences and the solution(s) you found," "What skills do you consider to be the most important to do this job?"

The second phase of the simulation session focused on providing participants with timely feedback about their performance (15 min). In structuring it, we followed some examples coming from studies dealing with feedback and self-efficacy. Right after the simulation, participants had the opportunity to take notes of their behaviors during the simulation using a structured form. Then, while they were given feedback, participants were also encouraged to share their thoughts, verbalize the impression they had from their own performance, and contribute to feedback by combining their notes with the interviewer's information. Doing so, we attempted to take into account the impact of subjective assessment of performance on ISE measured after feedback.

According to Shea and Howell (1999), feedback aimed at developing self-efficacy should facilitate the comparison of one's performance with an explicit standard as a means to assess performance and start

to correct errors. Thus, we structured the feedback around four aspects of interviewees' performance that, if adequately executed, may increase the possibility of having higher interview rates (Huffcutt et al., 2011; Levashina et al., 2014; Macan, 2009). Then, interviewers were asked to assess participants' performance against the following: self-promotion (candidates' ability to present their expertise and motivation); knowledge of the role (the extent to which candidates are knowledgeable about main requirements of the position); management of emotions (ability to control emotions related to the interview and remain calm); adaptation to unexpected questions (the ability to answer tricky or uncommon questions from the interviewer).

Moreover, to raise efficacy beliefs, feedback should follow a formative approach and focus on letting people attribute to themselves their performance, providing them with strategies to exploit their skills better and improve their behaviors (Chan & Lam, 2010; Tolli & Schmidt, 2008; Usher & Pajares, 2009). Therefore, during the feedback phase, interviewers shared some suggestions with participants about their interviewing behaviors and encouraged them to use those suggestions to improve. For instance, participants received recommendations like the following: "to look more knowledgeable and motivated try to retrieve extensive information about the job or the company and use it when it seems fit"; "to assure the interviewer that you possess a particular skill, you may think about a situation in which you used it to make an example of how you managed that situation"; and "rehearse nonverbal communication in front of a mirror or with someone trustful."

2.3 | Measures

2.3.1 | ISE

ISE was measured before and after the simulation session with five items from Tay et al.'s (2006) scale adapted in Italian, asking respondents to rate how confident they feel in their interviewing skills (e.g., "how confident are you that you can successfully…," "prepare for an interview," or "make a good impression during the employment interview") on a 5-point Likert scale (from $1 = $ *not confident at all* to $5 = $ *completely confident*). The original scale showed good internal consistency values ($\alpha = 0.92$; 0.96).

2.3.2 | Outcome expectations

We measured outcome expectations before and after the simulation session with two items created for this research. We opted to use ad hoc items, in line with other studies based on the CSM model (Lim et al., 2016) and self-efficacy in the personnel selection process (Mariani et al., 2017) since no measure of outcome expectations about employment interview was available. These items measure the extent to which participants expected to succeed in future employment interview situations (e.g., "I expect to get the job I desire through the employment interview"), on a 9-point Likert scale (from $1 = $ *totally disagree* to $9 = $ *totally agree*).

2.3.3 | Feedback

While participants were not given scores whatsoever during the feedback session, we used a numeral score to run the quantitative analyses. Therefore, we asked interviewers to provide feedback (in terms of self-promotion, knowledge of the position, management of emotions, and adaptation to unexpected questions) that could be translated in a numerical score. After the simulation session's conclusion, while participants were completing the second part of their questionnaire, interviewers were asked to answer four items corresponding to each of the four feedback dimensions. A Likert response scale ranging from $1 = $ *very poor* to $6 = $ *excellent* was used with items like "which feedback would you give on interviewee's capability at presenting themselves and their skills?" Scores on each interview performance dimension were aggregated to obtain a single score. The complete set of items is displayed in Appendix A.

2.3.4 | Control variables

Participants' age and gender were included in the analysis as control variables since they influence job search behaviors (Kanfer et al., 2001) and interviewers' evaluation of applicants (Huffcutt et al., 2011). The inclusion of ISE and outcome expectations before the simulation allowed us to evaluate the impact of feedback on ISE and outcome expectations controlling for their initial levels. Indeed, they could impact subsequent changes in self-efficacy beliefs and outcome expectations (Gist & Mitchell, 1992).

3 | DATA ANALYSIS

We used SPSS version 25 for analyzing data. We used linear regression analyses to test the relationship between feedback and ISE (Hypothesis 1) and between ISE and outcome expectations (Hypothesis 3). We employed the analytical approach developed by Hayes (2012) to test the direct (Hypothesis 2) and indirect (Hypothesis 4) effect of feedback on outcome expectations. This procedure performs a bootstrap procedure to test the indirect effect, representing a more robust approach than the Sobel test (McKinnon et al., 2004). We tested Hypothesis 4 with Model 4 in the macro SPSS PROCESS (Hayes, 2012) and estimated the indirect effect with a 95% confidence interval. When the interval does not include zero, the effects are statistically significant at a 0.05 level.

4 | RESULTS

Table 1 reports mean values, standard deviations, internal consistency values, and correlations among the study variables. Feedback showed a positive and significant relationship with ISE and outcome expectations measured after the simulation. ISE and outcome expectations measured after simulation were positively associated, as well.

All the measures provided good internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha above 0.70; Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

4.1 | Hypothesis test

Table 2 and Figure 2 report the estimates of path coefficients for the direct (Hypothesis 1–3) and the indirect effects (Hypothesis 4) analysis and 95% confidence intervals for path estimates. The results outlined a positive relationship between feedback and ISE after the simulation ($B = 0.21$; $SE = 0.04$; $p < .001$; Hypothesis 1 confirmed) and a positive relationship between ISE and outcome expectations both measured after the simulation ($B = 0.92$; $SE = 0.09$; $p < .001$; Hypothesis 3 confirmed). Contrary to theoretical expectations, no significant association emerged between feedback and

outcome expectations measured after the simulation (Hypothesis 2 not confirmed). Moreover, the results demonstrated an indirect effect of feedback on outcome expectations after the simulation, via ISE mediation ($B = 0.19$; $SE = 0.04$; $CI = 0.11$; 0.28; Hypothesis 4 confirmed).

5 | DISCUSSION

In this study, we aimed to develop empirical research literature about ISE, which is a pivotal factor in mastering interview behaviors and performance in employment interviews (Huffcutt et al., 2011; Tay et al., 2006). The growing attention upon studying the selection process through applicants' lenses requires more effort to understand their self-cognitions related to the hiring process (McCarthy &

TABLE 1 Correlations, descriptive statistics, and internal consistency values of the scales

Variable	M	SD	Cronbach's α	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Gender[a]	–	–	–	–						
2. Age	25.65	3.11	–	0.04	–					
3. ISE before simulation	2.95	0.61	0.85	−0.12	0.08	–				
4. Outcome expectations before simulation	5.97	1.55	0.84	−0.09	−0.04	0.30**	–			
5. Feedback	3.89	0.95	0.90	0.19**	−0.03	0.15*	0.12	–		
6. ISE after simulation	3.58	0.65	0.87	−0.02	0.04	0.49**	0.33**	0.37**	–	
7. OutcomeExpectations after simulation	6.43	1.52	0.91	−0.06	−0.04	0.26**	0.79**	0.19**	0.55**	–

Note: $N = 240$.

Abbreviation: ISE, interview self-efficacy.

[a]1 = man, 2 = woman;

*$p < .05$; **$p < .01$;

TABLE 2 Path coefficients for direct and indirect effects for the hypothesized model

	ISE after simulation		Outcome expectations after simulation			
	Direct effect		Direct effect		Indirect effect	
Variable	B	SE	B	SE	B	95% CI
Age	0.01	0.01	−0.01	0.02		[LLCI; ULCI]
Gender	−0.02	0.07	−0.002	0.11		
ISE before simulation	0.42***	0.06	−0.36***	0.09		
Outcome expectations before simulation	0.07**	0.02	0.69***	0.04		
Feedback	0.21***	0.04	−0.02	0.06		
ISE after simulation	–	–	0.92***	0.09		
Feedback →ISE →outcome expectations after simulation					0.19*	[0.11; 0.28]

*$p < .05$;; **$p < .01$;; ***$p < .001$.

[a]1 = man, 2 = woman.

Note CI (95%); 95% confidence interval using the bootstrap bias-corrected method using 5,000 samples. Coefficients are not standardized. $N = 240$
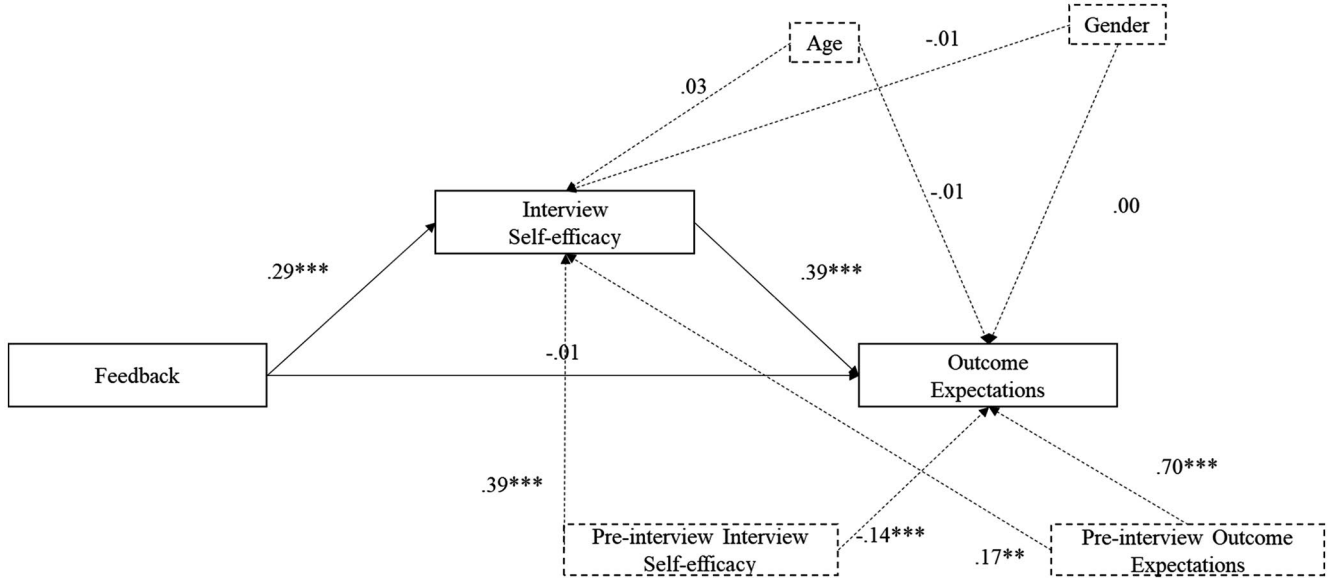
Abbreviation: ISE, interview self-efficacy.

FIGURE 2 The path coefficients for the hypothesized model. $N = 240$; $^{**}p < .01$; $^{***}p < .001$; coefficients are standardized. Dotted lines indicate the control variables and their relationship with the model's variables

Cheng, 2018). This reason led to us using the SCT's CSM model (Lent & Brown, 2013) to explain the motivation chain that sustains performance in the employment interview, which is still underexplored, focusing on verbal persuasion as an antecedent of ISE and outcome expectations about the employment interview.

Specifically, we hypothesized that feedback received after a simulated employment interview would associate positively with ISE in a sample of new entrants in the labor market. In line with the CSM assumption about the development of efficacy beliefs, we structured the simulated interview experience to include feedback that interviewers gave to participants right after the simulated interview. Our findings confirm that feedback is related to ISE beliefs. This result is consistent with previous findings of the role of feedback by Tross and Maurer (2008). Indeed, more positive feedback from the interviewers matches firmer ISE beliefs. We expand these findings by using detailed feedback in a context where new entrants have the opportunity to live a direct experience of an employment interview setting. Feedback improves the interpretation of the performance, as it is functional to understand means to achieve goals (Chan & Lam, 2010; Sheu et al., 2018). Our findings confirm that feedback promotes the variation of ISE. It facilitates assessing the interview skills against the performance standard and suggests how to trigger behavioral change and new strategies to control future interview situations. Through this mechanism, ISE grows because people feel empowered.

Another valuable contribution of this study is examining feedback and ISE's impact on employment interview outcome expectations. Scholarly research recognizes the strong motivational power of expectations, yet they have not been explored thoroughly. In line with CSM, we posited feedback to influence outcome expectations directly and indirectly through enhanced ISE. While the indirect effect hypothesis was confirmed, no support was found for the direct

positive effect of feedback on outcome expectations. SCT suggests that when a certain activity's outcomes are highly dependent on the performance quality, self-efficacy becomes particularly relevant to determine outcome expectations, as it reflects how people see themselves as performers (Bandura, 1997; Lent et al., 1994). The employment interview is such an activity where success (i.e., interviewers' rating or hiring recommendation) relies strongly on how interviewees perform (Huffcutt, 2011). As such, in the employment interview situation, ISE can be so important that it represents a necessary element to explain the link between feedback and outcome expectations.

5.1 | Implications

At a theoretical level, this study's value relies on expanding knowledge about ISE and contributing to the CSM model with empirical evidence. Indeed, we translate the CSM in the employment interview domain and confirm the impact of feedback on ISE and outcome expectations. Providing participants with a firsthand experience of employment interview enriched by timely feedback to explain ISE variance is consistent with the theoretical assumption that self-efficacy is based on the convergence and integration of information about one's capability coming from experience (Gist & Mitchell, 1992; Sheu et al., 2018).

Moreover, using feedback/evaluation by others (herein, the interviewers) upon performance may represent a solution to a methodological issue that occurs when other self-efficacy sources are under study, such as performance accomplishment (Sheu et al., 2018). On the one hand, an objective indicator of success only gives partial information to shape self-efficacy because it does not account for the individual skills' contribution. On the other hand, a subjective

assessment of performance (i.e., people recalling or interpreting their behaviors) may inflate the relationship between performance and self-efficacy. Indeed, both could be measured with the same method (i.e., self-report measures). In contrast, an external expert evaluation measure may represent a more reliable tool to explore this relationship. Future research may combine feedback with indicators of performance mastery and attainments in employment interviews (i.e., recommending or not the interviewee be hired) and explore their joint effect on ISE.

Our findings suggest that ISE is necessary for explaining the impact of feedback on outcome expectations. This contrasts with previous CSM model application in job search (Lim et al., 2016), probably because previous studies assessed together different job search behaviors, including those where self-efficacy is less critical in determining outcome expectations. Instead, our study included only an employment interview, where self-efficacy is prominent to nurture outcome expectations.

At a practical level, our findings give some hints in promoting job search intervention for new entrants. Consistent with our findings and previous literature (i.e., Latham & Budworth, 2006; Liu et al., 2014), career services and job search guidance for recent graduates should build interventions to provide participants with interviewing skills. Those skills should then be practiced to foster a sense of efficacy by integrating the various sources (Sheu et al., 2018). To give the participants coherent information, it is necessary to combine at unison direct experiences in a specific activity (i.e., role-play and simulations), with compelling messages to reinforce their self-confidence (i.e., feedback and positive self-talk). Also, those sources may integrate indirect learning (role modeling, examples of successful interviewing). In such a way, new entrants may be equipped with the essential interviewing skills and self-confidence to exercise them, which is necessary to be employable in a volatile labor market (Clarke, 2018). The relevance of nurturing those resources is even stronger in the current circumstances where the COVID-19 crisis dramatically deteriorated new entrants' occupational expectancies and increased competition among job seekers (ILO, 2020). Future studies may want to investigate whether the development of ISE positively influences people's occupational possibilities in a turbulent labor market.

5.2 | Limitations and future research

Our study has some limitations. First, even though we measured ISE and outcome expectations after the simulation session, we did not test for the stability of ISE and outcome expectations changes after a longer period, as already done with research upon other forms of self-efficacy (i.e., Palmer, 2006). Future studies may replicate the method employed here with a more delayed assessment of ISE and outcome expectations. This kind of design could also reduce common method bias that we already tried to unravel with the other-report measure of feedback. Second, the measure herein used for

outcome expectations may represent a limitation, given the CSM model's multidimensional definition of outcome expectations (Lent & Brown, 2013). However, similarly to Mariani et al. (2017), we understood outcome expectation as the expected success in future employment interviews. As such, it may be depicted as a monodimensional construct.

Third, we did not apply an experimental design with different experimental conditions and a control group, contrary to previous studies investigating the impact of various self-enhancing information on ISE (i.e., Latham & Budworth, 2006), including feedback (Tross & Maurer, 2008). Then, additional research is advocated to attribute changes of ISE to feedback and study the impact of different forms or comprehensiveness of feedback on ISE's alteration and, in turn, on outcomes expectations. Fourth, we controlled for initial levels of ISE and outcome expectations and encouraged participants to share their thoughts and impressions while they were given feedback. Nevertheless, we did not include other variables that could affect how people process information referring to their performance and subsequent estimation of ISE. Indeed, feedback may be filtered by recipients' factors such as affectivity and their level of experience with employment interviews, especially because they might have had little employment interview experience (Bandura, 1997; Lent et al., 1994). Future research may control the variables that affect the elaboration of information and its impact on ISE to make more robust conclusions about attributing changes in ISE and outcome expectations to feedback.

Lastly, this study involved only a sample of recent graduates involved in a simulated employment interview situation, which reduces our results' generalizability. Future research is demanded to replicate our study with different age groups and people dealing with real selection endeavors. As such, analyses could also link ISE and outcome expectations with subsequent criteria (i.e., the intensity of interview preparation behaviors and the number of interviews done in a specific time, or the number of job offers). This could be useful to examine whether interview performance feedback shapes ISE and outcome expectations and, in turn, interviewing performance in successive job search endeavors.

Our study applied the ISE conceptualization as introduced by Tay et al. (2006), which is monodimensional. Nevertheless, a self-efficacy construct should account for efficacy beliefs regarding a range of capabilities needed to achieve an adequate performance within an activity domain (Bandura, 2006). In other words, future research is required to examine ISE using a multidimensional construct that assesses perceived capability at performing different interview-related behaviors (such as preparation, anxiety management, self-promotion beliefs).

CONFLICT OF INTEREST
We have no conflict of interest to disclose.

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APPENDIX A

List of items used for this study

Variable	Items	Response scale	Reference
Performance feedback			
Which feedback would you give on the interviewee's capability at…	…presenting themselves and their skills?	Likert response scale from 1 = *very poor* (*molto scarsa*) to 6 = *excellent* (*eccellente*)	Created for this study
	…presentare se stesso/a e le sue capacità?		
	…managing their emotions during the interview?		
Che tipo di feedback daresti al/alla candidato/a circa la sua abilità di…	*…gestire le emozioni durante il colloquio?*		
	…showing to be knowledgeable about the job?		
	…mostrarsi ben informato/a rispetto al ruolo?		
	…dealing with unexpected questions?		
	…affrontare domande impreviste?		
Interview self-efficacy			
How confident are you that you can successfully:	Prepare for an interview?	Likert response scale from 1 = *not confident at all* (*per niente*) to 5 = *completely confident* (*del tutto*)	Tay, C., Ang, S., & Van Dyne, L. (2006). Personality, biographical characteristics, and job interview success: A longitudinal study of the mediating effects of interviewing self-efficacy and the moderating effects of internal locus of causality. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 91*(2), 446–454. https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.91.2.446
	Prepararti per il colloquio?		
Quanto ti senti in grado di riuscire a:	Persuade potential employers during the job interview to consider you for a job?		
	Persuadere un potenziale datore di lavoro a prenderti in considerazione per un lavoro durante un colloquio?		
	Market your skills and abilities during the job interview?		
	Enfatizzare le tue skill ed abilità durante il colloquio?		
	Make the best impression during the job interview?		
	Fare la migliore impressione possibile durante il colloquio?		
	Get your points across in the job interview?		
	Mostrare le tue caratteristiche durante il colloquio?		
Outcome expectations			
	I expect to get the job I desire through the employment interview.	Likert response scale from 1 = *totally disagree* (*totalmente in disaccordo*) to 9 = *totally agree* (*totalmente d'accordo*)	Created for this study
	Mi aspetto di ottenere l'occupazione da me desiderata tramite un colloquio.		
	I expect to successfully carry out an employment interview for the position I desire.		
	Mi aspetto di sostenere con successo un colloquio per l'occupazione da me desiderata.		

Note. The Italian version of the items and the verbal anchors in the corresponding response scales are italicized.

[Correction added on 30 June 2021, after first online publication: In Appendix A the sentence "presentare te stesso/a e le sue emozioni?" has been changed to "presentare se stesso/a e le sue capacità?".]