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Feedback seeking effects on creative performance based on goal self consistency

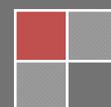
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ABSTRACT

This study examined the link between feedback seeking and creative performance by focusing on the mediating role of goal self consistency. The survey was completed by 160 full-time employees from China. We found that Feedback seeking would increase creative performance, feedback seeking would increase goal self consistency, goal self consistency would increase creative performance, goal self consistency is a mediating factor in the relationship between feedback seeking and creative performance.

KEYWORDS

Feedback seeking; Goal self consistency; Creative performance.



INTRODUCTION

Innovation is the fundamental condition of survival and development of organization. Innovation comes from the employee's creative performance of the organization^[1] and incentive of innovation abilities has been the leading subject of enterprise human resources management. Compared with the creative personality and creative thinking, environmental factors are more likely to get intervention in management practice, and the effect can be perceived in a short period of time, thus the environmental factors influence the performance of creative organization, which is the hotspot in the study of organizational creativity. As to the influence factors of organization environment for creative performance, the essays have discussed the independent support level of leadership, the role of goal setting, feedback and reward^[2,3]. Feedback is an incentive strategy and behavior modification tools commonly used in organization^[4], it is an external intervention to promote enterprise employees working behavior. Feedback is most useful for creative performance, because feedback reduces the uncertainty in the change of work and helps feedback receiver to establish creative standards. Studies have found that feedback given in an informational style can enhance employees' autonomy, internal motivation, thereby promoting creative performance, and feedback given in an controlling style is just the opposite, which hinders creative performance^[5]. However, practice shows that with the expansion of organization and the working content of complications, despite that the leaders pay attention to feedback on employees, a lot of employees stay in the feedback vacuum. How to understand employee feedback demand timely and accurately became management problems which managers face increasingly. Feedback seeking, which is a process of getting valuable information by spending a certain amount of effort consciously, in order to determine the correct, appropriate or not, provided an effective way for solving problems of feedback vacuum. This concept emphasizes individual initiative in feedback seeking, changing passively accept feedback information to seeking actively, in order to make up for the shortcomings of feedback which is not presented timely and not strong enough. As a kind of individual behavior frequent feedback seeking will bring individual feedback-giver's opinion of his work, and these views may be used to cope with the changing environment with the time passing, which provide individuals a different perspective that will help the individual generate more creative ideas in the related work, promote individual creative performance^[6]. Therefore, this study suggests feedback seeking has a positive influence on creative performance.

The research on relationship between feedback and creative performance has achieved initial progress. They are more concentrated in the feedback valence, style and means of intervention and other feedback itself, but the mechanisms of them remain unclear^[7]. Meanwhile, most of researches ever about feedback and creative are how feedback intervention way affects employees' creative performance through achievement motivation variables such as motivation, internal targets^[8], and the influence of external motivation has controversial opinions. Self-Determination Theory integrate the effects of autonomous motivation and controlling motivation, and it simply reflects the motivation with removing of the external motivation of the negative impact of individual behavior^[9]. This theory illustrates mechanism of environmental factors impact on the individual behavior more clearly, providing a new perspective for the research on creative performance influence. Compared with traditional feedback, feedback seeking considers that feedback receiver has the capability of self-adjustment actively. Self-Determination Theory indicates that individuals can take the initiative to pursue their goals, mainly because they agree with these goals or the individual can feel fun and passion in these goals. They can experience the process of a high level of goal self consistency through the pursuit of target. Academics have found that the level of employees' goal self consistency can affect happiness, satisfaction and performance, etc^[10]. Individuals with high level of goal self consistency would pay more attention to their goal, and is willing to pay more for their efforts. The generation of creative performance needs to have a strong interest and persistence, to pursue the efforts continuously^[5].

Based on the above analysis, this article explores feedback seeking influence on employees' creative performance by the mediation of goal self consistency, which provides valuable suggestions for management practice.

METHOD

Research setting, participants, and procedure

This study is based on the principle of combining random sampling and convenience sampling, staff employees and their supervisors from nine enterprises participated. Data were collected from two sources: the employees and their supervisors. The employees filled out a questionnaire that included items measuring the independent variables, mediation variables and demographics. On a separate rating form, each employee's supervisor rated the employee's creativity. The supervisors assigned to complete the rating forms were those who had plenty of opportunity to observe their employees' creative performance. One hundred and sixty completed and usable questionnaires with rating forms were received, resulting in an overall response rate of 80%. The sex ratio of basic equilibrium fluctuations in 50%; Aged 20 to 30 accounted for more than half of the employees, 88% of the participants were aged under 40 years old; 56% of the participants were bachelor degree or above; 46% of the participants worked in following 3 years, 83% in the following 5 years.

Measures

(a) Creative performance

Being consistent with prior researches, we used a 13-item scale to measure creative performance. The 13 items were averaged (Cronbach's $\alpha=0.92$).

(b) Feedback seeking

Fifteen items adapted from De Stobbeleir (2011) were averaged to create this measure (Cronbach's $\alpha=0.92$).

(c) Goal self consistency

This was measured by averaging twenty items developed by Sheldon and Elliot (1999)(Cronbach's $\alpha=0.904$).

RESULTS

TABLE 1 displays means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations among all study variables. Feedback is correlated with creativity ($r=0.33$, $p=0.002$), feedback also is correlated with goal self consistency ($r=0.49$, $p=0.000$), goal self consistency is correlated with creativity ($r=0.35$, $p=0.001$).

TABLE 2 summarizes the regression results. In first step of regression, gender, age, education and organizational tenure are entered as the independent variables. In the second step, feedback seeking is entered as the independent variables, and creative performance is entered as the dependent variables (Model 1). In the third step, feedback seeking is entered as the independent variables, and goal self consistency is entered as the dependent variables (Model 2). In the fourth step, goal self consistency is entered as the independent variables, and goal self consistency is entered as the dependent variables (Model 3). Feedback seeking would increase creative performance ($\beta=0.65$, $P < 0.01$, Model 1), feedback seeking would increase goal self consistency ($\beta=0.49$, $P < 0.01$, Model 2), goal self consistency would increase creative performance ($\beta=0.71$, $p=0.004$, Model 3).

TABLE 3 tests goal self consistency as a mediating factor in the relationship between feedback seeking and creative performance. According to the Baron&Kenny suggested analysis steps, using hierarchical regression method test goal self consistency's mediation. In model 1 TABLE 1, feedback seeking would increase creative performance ($\beta=0.65$, $P < 0.01$). In model 2 TABLE 1, feedback seeking would increase goal self consistency ($\beta=0.49$, $P < 0.01$). In TABLE 3, gender, age, education, organizational tenure are entered as the control variables, feedback seeking and goal self consistency are entered as the independent variables, creative performance is entered as the dependent variables, goal self consistency is positively related to creative performance ($\beta=0.53$, $P < 0.001$) and relationship between feedback seeking and creative performance becomes nonsignificant ($\beta=0.43$, $P =0.07$).

TABLE 1: Means, standard deviations, and correlations, and reliabilities of all measures

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3
1. Creative performance (CP)	48.94	10.41	1		
2. Feedback seeking (FS)	63	13	0.33**	1	
3. Goal self consistency (GSC)	43.92	8.39	0.35**	0.49**	1

Notes : n = 160, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01

TABLE 2: Regression results

Variable	Model 1 Creative performance	Model 2 Goal self consistency	Model 3 Creative performance
Gender	2.95	2.38	3.57
Age	3.22	0.75	4.61
Education	5.16	3.63	5.69
Tenure	-0.83	3.43	-1.06
Feedback seeking	0.65**	0.49**	
Goal self consistency			0.71**
R ²	0.14	0.38	0.12
ΔR^2	0.09	0.34	0.06
F	2.55**	9.57*	2.89**

Note : n = 160; ** p < 0.01, * p < 0.05

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Feedback seeking positively relates to creative performance. Generally academic researches about creation admit that employee needs to be motivated and led, which neglects self adjusting potential of them. This study thinks that

innovation is not only driven by organization, and the active role of employee plays a very important role in the process of creative performance. Researches about new employees put forward and confirmed that the new staff feedback seeking behavior is significantly positive influence on the innovation behavior of employees. Ashford's research is carried out that the high level of feedback seeking behavior will promote the staff's creative performance by measurement of the consulting firm knowledge staff.

TABLE 3: Mediator test results

	Creative performance				
	R ²	ΔR ²	F	β	Sig
Control variable	0.06	0.06	1.321		
Gender				3.45	0.518
Age				4.615	0.30
Education				3.214	0.735
Tenure				-1.08	0.716
Independent variable	0.16	0.02	2.972		
Feedback seeking				0.43	0.07
Goal self consistency				0.53	0.001**

Note : n = 160; ** p < 0.01, * p < 0.05

Goal self consistency positively relates to creative performance. Goal self consistency derives from Self-Determination Theory, and individual with a high level of goal self consistency think work is not completed due to external pressure, but genuine love and liking, so such individuals are more willing to initiatively make commitment to work, to achieve the goal of work. As an important motivation factor influencing the performance of creative, goal self consistency will inevitably affect creative performance because job itself gives individual challenging and fun. This study obtains the conclusion which is also confirmed by the Zhou research.

Goal self consistency mediates the relationship between feedback seeking and creative performance. This study expands Deci and Ryan's Self-Determination Theory. Self-Determination Theory is that the organization environmental factors promote performance of employees, etc. by increasing employees' internal motivation and promoting the internalization of external motivation. This study thinks that feedback seeking behavior is about employees' effective self-regulation, a high level of employee feedback seeking behavior is to promote a better understanding of the environment. In the process, active seeking behavior has a clear purpose, which would make the employees get higher information quality. Feedback seeking lets the employee integrate and internalize work value, the individuals who have more feedback seeking behavior will focus more on working content, generate interest, employees will be more likely to work goals and interests as a self consistent, and then promote them to work target internalization, and weaken the external motivation, strengthen internal motivation, increase the integration degree of goal and "self", that also means improve the level of goal self consistency. Zhou's study put forward the creative produce need strong interest to work and be able to insist on doing their work, to pursue the progress and achievements in the work.

Several innovations of this study are as follows: (1) In the past researches on the relationship between feedback and creative performance, most of the employees act as feedback passive recipients, but in fact, with the continuous improvement of employees' personal qualities, they have more autonomy and are the active individuals. Therefore, our research pays attention to employee's initiative, studying the active feedback seeking behavior of the individual effects on creative performance. (2) This research breaks through the limitation about previous motivation field which only considers internal motivation. (3) Using expert scoring method measuring employees' creative performance, this is an effective way to control common variations. Management practical significance of this article are: Managers should pay attention to employee goals self consistency, pay attention to arouse the inherent interest and recognition of employees, promote employees' work enthusiasm and initiative, so that employees can produce more creative performance.

The role of feedback seeking is complicated. Especially in China, the east of the doctrine make individuals to care more about interpersonal relationship and "face", when needing to valuable information, as to the matter of "face", it changes by the impact of feedback seeking behavior. Looking forward to the future study, the main consideration is that feedback seeking itself is a kind of complex variable. The research should find different feedback for the different creative performance in-depth study of native culture and leadership styles by using the multilevel longitudinal study to increase the stability of the conclusion and comprehensiveness.

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