

Performance, Motivation, Self-efficacy and Feedback

by David Roberts

This study sought out to explore the relationship between performance, motivation, perceived fairness and self-efficacy after receiving constructive or destructive feedback. Research suggests feedback has become more critical and delivered more frequently as advances in technology have increased trackable metrics. As competition grows between organizations, they also seek to increase performance and efficiency of employees through performance feedback. Increased performance feedback frequency combined with a highly critical tone may be creating more negative consequences for employees despite the positive intention of organizations.

To test the potential impact of destructive and constructive feedback university students completed performance tests and questionnaires to measure task performance and changes in perception after receiving their feedback condition N=93. All performance tests and questionnaires were completed online through qualtrics.

Results revealed destructive feedback significantly lowered perceptions of fairness and self-efficacy regardless of how well participants performed. In real world settings, employees who receive destructive feedback are worse off whether their performance was above or under expectations. Although participants maintained their intrinsic motivation levels despite receiving destructive feedback. Constructive feedback increased levels of intrinsic motivation and maintained self-efficacy levels when combined with receiving a high performance score. It appears it is important for employees to receive constructive feedback to increase their motivation to perform well and maintain their confidence in their ability to do so.

The above results suggest organizations may wish to reconsider the repercussions of delivering increasingly critical feedback to their employees. While one of the primary goals of this thesis was to increase discussion around the implications of highly critical feedback, it is recommended that future research replicates these findings within an organizational setting with a larger sample size.

If you have any questions regarding the study you can reach the principle investigator through email: David.Roberts@smu.ca