Why seeking feedback from diverse sources is not enough for increasing creativity: The role of performance dynamism and creative time pressure

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Frederik Anseel is a Full Professor of Work Psychology and Behavioral Economics and Department Chair at Ghent University. The people make the place is the lens through which he studies and consults with companies. Without a profound insight in the underlying psychological principles that determine how people behave at work, one cannot understand why some organizations prosper, while others don’t. As the founder of the VIGOR Innovation Research Group, he built a team of scientific experts and entrepreneurs in creativity and innovation, which resulted in the Ghent University spin-off’s ’The Vigor Unit’ and “The Forge”. Since 2013 he also holds the Securex Chair “Working in the 21st century: Creating business results through a personalized organization”. His research has been published in journals such Journal of Applied Psychology, Psychological Science and Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes.

Abstract: Seeking feedback information from different sources has been argued to spur creativity by exposing individuals to diverse feedback perspectives. However, others have noted that seeking feedback will yield positive outcomes for employees only when they have the motivation and opportunity to process and integrate the feedback they received. To address this issue, we advance and test two contextual factors, namely performance dynamism and creative time pressure, as moderators of the relationship between feedback-seeking source diversity and creativity. In Study 1 (N = 1031), results showed that under conditions of high performance dynamism, the relation between feedback source diversity and self-reported creativity was nonlinear, with employee creativity exponentially increasing as a function of feedback source diversity. Similarly, in Study 2 (N = 181), we found that under conditions of low creative time pressure the relation between feedback source variety and employee creativity was nonlinear, with better supervisor-rated creative performance at higher levels of feedback source variety.