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Self-Regulation of Goals and Performance: Effects of Discrepancy Feedback, Regulatory Focus, and Self-Efficacy

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ABSTRACT

We adopted a social cognitive approach of motivation (Bandura, 1986, 1989, 2002) to examine the influence of normative feedback and self-set goals on positive discrepancy creation and goal revision in the face of a novel task. The moderating effects of self-efficacy and regulatory focus were also examined. A laboratory study including 297 undergraduate students demonstrated that feedback, whether based on normative standards of performance or goal-performance discrepancies was a strong predictor of positive discrepancy creation and goal revision. Self-efficacy was also an independent predictor of goal revision, but regulatory focus was not. These findings have important practical implications for a variety of performance contexts (e.g., work, school, sports). Individuals will modify their goals based largely on feedback received (goal-performance discrepancies and normative standards); however, self-efficacy independently influences goal revision beyond the effects of feedback. Other implications for research and practice are discussed.

KEYWORDS

Motivation, Performance, Self-Regulation, Goal-Performance Discrepancies, Feedback, Regulatory Focus, Self-Efficacy

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