

ABSTRACT:

**INPUT-BASED RELATIVE PERFORMANCE FEEDBACK  
– EVIDENCE FROM A FIELD EXPERIMENT**

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Although it is well-established that relative performance feedback can produce positive motivational effects, empirical support for this relationship has been mixed. One of the reasons could be that employees struggle to attribute relative performance feedback to how much effort they have exerted. Therefore, we conducted a field experiment in collaboration with a software company testing the motivational effects of relative performance feedback that is based on inputs, which are performance measures that feature a strong link between effort and performance. Our findings suggest input-based relative performance feedback produces asymmetrical motivational effects, where low performers increase their performance more in response to input-based relative performance feedback than high performers. These results support our theoretical predictions based on social comparison theory and social loss aversion, and they have practical implications for firms seeking to motivate low performers among their workforce.