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ORIGINAL PAPER

Daily Idea Generation and Employee Creative Performance: Effect of Day-Level Congruence Between Felt Responsibility for Change and Willingness to Take Risks

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Abstract

This study explores a potential joint effect between two proactive motives on creative performance. Departing from the assumption of motivation as a relatively stable between-person construct, we also pay attention to the within-person process to examine how daily fluctuations of proactive motives affect daily idea generation, leading to creative performance. Specifically, drawing on job demands–resources theory, we theorize a joint effect of two proactive motives at the within-person level: daily felt responsibility for change (DFRC) and daily willingness to take risks (DWTR). We test our hypotheses by analyzing data collected from 135 employees and their supervisors by using the experience sampling method followed by multiwave field surveys. Daily idea generation is high when the DFRC and DWTR have high congruence, particularly when both motives are high rather than low. In addition, daily idea generation mediates the effect of the DFRC and DWTR congruence on employee creative performance as appraised by supervisors. Moreover, seeking feedback from coworkers strengthens the indirect effect of the DFRC and DWTR congruence on employee creative performance via daily idea generation. This study offers a fine-grained view of motivational mechanisms and employee social behavior that lead to creative performance in the workplace.

Keywords Creativity · Proactive motivation · Felt responsibility for change · Willingness to take risks · Coworker feedback seeking

Given the increasing appreciation of creativity as a critical performance domain (Acar & Van den Ende, 2013), an intensive stream of research has sought to identify various contextual and individual characteristics that influence employee creative performance (e.g., Sears et al., 2018; Zhu et al., 2018). The underlying motivational mechanisms have also been theorized to account for the effects of contextual and individual factors on workplace creativity. The literature reveals the main effects and mediating roles of diverse motivation constructs, such as intrinsic motivation, creative self-efficacy, and prosocial motivation (Liu et al., 2016). The present study enriches the literature on the motivation–creativity relationship by distinguishing distinct motivational processes in shaping idea generation at the within-person level, ultimately leading to creative performance.

With the growing recognition that creative processes are inherently proactive (Gong et al., 2012), researchers have examined the roles of proactive motives, such as felt responsibility for change (FRC) and willingness to take risks (WTR). These motivation constructs are also in line with the findings that individuals think ahead to evaluate anticipated outcomes and potential risks before engaging in proactive behaviors, including creativity (Grant &

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Ashford, 2008; Liang & Gong, 2013). FRC refers to individuals' belief that they are personally obligated to bring about constructive changes (Morrison & Phelps, 1999). WTR is defined as individuals' willingness to take potential risks to produce positive job-related outcomes and thus being open to potential unfavorable results (Dewett, 2004, 2006). FRC and WTR have been empirically validated as motivational mediators that explain how proactive personality and industrial contexts manifest their effects on voice and creativity (e.g., Berg et al., 2017; Jiang & Gu, 2015). The present study addresses two distinct limitations of the previous literature by focusing on the within-person daily interactive processes of FRC and WTR in predicting daily creative behavior among employees, ultimately leading to creative performance.

Despite the considerable developments in the motivation–creativity literature, motivation to date has mostly been treated as a stable psychological property that does not vary over time. This view is limiting, given that empirical findings show daily fluctuations of motivational factors and their immediate effects on daily behavior (Foulk et al., 2019; Morgenstern et al., 2016). The same affective factors can also exhibit different patterns of associations with creativity on different analysis levels (i.e., between-person level vs. within-person level, Park et al., 2021b). Unfortunately, studies on motivation and creativity have predominantly focused on between-person motivational mechanisms at the expense of within-person processes (Curran & Bauer, 2011; Molenaar, 2004). This prevailing approach is ill-suited to properly evaluate the effects of proactive motives, such as FRC and WTR, which are explicitly conceptualized and demonstrated as malleable "states" (Dewett, 2006; Starzyk & Sonnentag, 2019).

In the present study, we take an alternative perspective and consider proactive motives as changeable states with daily fluctuations. To investigate their effects, we identify idea generation as the pivotal behavioral mechanism translating motivation into creative outcomes (Amabile & Pratt, 2016; Zhang & Bartol, 2010). Importantly, the association between motivation and idea generation may occur at the between-person and within-person levels (Park et al., 2021b). Between-person relationships investigate how variations in motivation between different individuals relate to differences in idea generation, whereas within-person relations focus on whether deviations from an individual's mean motivation level on a specific day are linked to varying levels of idea generation on that same day (Germeys & Kuppens, 2021). Accordingly, exploring the relationship between motivation and idea generation at the between-person level addresses whether individuals with higher motivation levels demonstrate more idea generation than those with lower motivation. By contrast, when examining the within-person relationship, a positive relationship implies that, on days of heightened motivation, individuals tend to exhibit more idea generation compared to days of lower motivation.

The current conceptual framework encompasses both within- and between-person processes that elucidate the effects of proactive motives. At the within-person level, we investigate the combined effect of daily felt responsibility for change (DFRC) and daily willingness to take risks (DWTR) on employees' daily idea generation. At the between-person level, we explore the indirect effect of these daily proactive motives on employee creative performance through daily idea generation. Our multilevel model contributes valuable insights by capturing the temporal fluctuations of variables such as proactive motives and idea generation, thereby revealing the within-person relationship entailing these variables along with their between-person level effect on creativity (Binnewies & Wörnlein, 2011).

It is essential to note that between-person study designs are unable to delve into within-person relationships between variables. By contrast, within-person study designs, such as daily diary studies, possess the capability to analyze both within- and between-person effects by consolidating within-person data to the between-person level (Gabriel et al., 2019; Ma et al., 2021). Utilizing an experience sampling method (ESM)-based daily survey, this study sheds light on the often-overlooked within-person effects of motivational states on creative processes at work. Beyond its theoretical significance, this within-person approach yields valuable practical insights for managing projects that require varying levels of creativity at different phases. This study informs interventions to enhance employees' creative process engagement at specific time points, thus providing actionable guidance for project management.

This study also complements the previous literature on separate predictive effects of proactive motives by theorizing their potential interactions. Although FRC and WTR by themselves are meaningful motivational mechanisms that lead to proactive behaviors—such as change behavior, voice, and creativity (Berg et al., 2017; Jiang & Gu, 2015)—they represent different motivational components that may work in combination to enhance individual proactivity. FRC represents one's perceived demands or urgency to introduce changes, while WTR reflects the available resources for a person to accept risks in initiating changes. To understand the interplay between FRC and WTR, we draw on job demands–resources (JD–R) theory that postulates positive work outcomes (e.g., well-being and task engagement) when personal resources meet or fulfill job demands (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Xanthopoulou et al., 2007). Employees may increase their engagement in proactive behaviors on days when they perceive adequate resources to deal with task demands (Bakker et al., 2023). Specifically, we propose that the extent of DFRC and DWTR congruence predicts employees' daily idea generation. Exploring the dynamic

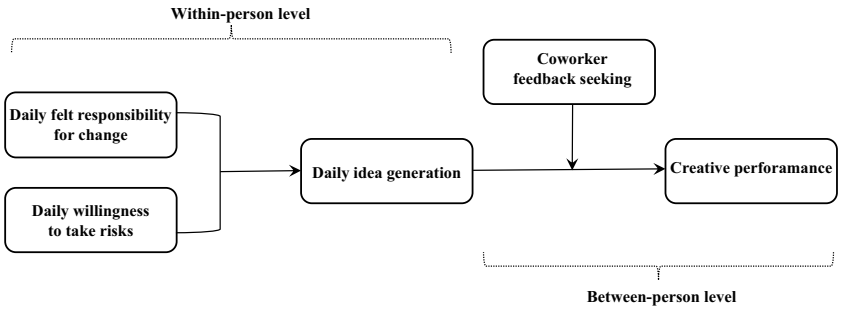

Fig. 1 Proposed research model

and complementary relationship among proactive motives can advance the literature by allowing for a fine-grained analysis of the integrative processes of multiple motives.

To elaborate on the joint effect of proactive motives, we also explore the possibility that the DFRC and DWTR congruence contributes to employee creative performance through daily idea generation (Amabile & Pratt, 2016; Gong et al., 2017). Daily effort toward developing novel ideas may serve as an underlying mechanism that translates daily proactive motivation into creative performance (Huang et al., 2016; Kwan et al., 2018; Martinaityte et al., 2019). We further identify a boundary condition of the proposed indirect effects of the two proactive motives. Given that creativity requires collecting information and discussing alternatives with others (Babalola et al., 2021; Huang et al., 2016), we consider a potential moderator, coworker feedback seeking, which is defined as individual behavior to gain evaluative information about their task and performance from coworkers (Ashford et al., 2016; De Stobbeleir et al., 2011). Seeking feedback from coworkers may help employees who are generating ideas to obtain essential information and knowledge needed for channeling such process toward novel and useful ideas in view of others, thus strengthening the relationship between daily idea generation and creative performance.

In summary, this study advances the literature in several important ways. First, given the critical but largely neglected role of within-person variation in proactive motives in creativity research, we enrich the literature by exploring the within-person effects of daily fluctuations of motivational factors on daily creative processes. Second, we expand the scope of motivational mechanisms underlying creativity by testing the joint effect of two distinct proactive motives, namely, FRC and WTR. This consideration is important given that the representation of two disparate motivational mechanisms and their congruence may offer distinct within-person level advantages in promoting daily creative processes beyond their separate main effects. Third, the within-person interactive effect of proactive motives on daily idea generation is further extended to the between-person level to predict employees' creative performance as appraised by supervisors. By simultaneously examining within- and between-person effects of proactive motives on creative processes, we complement the prevailing static perspective on the motivation–creativity linkage and advance the understanding of the motivational mechanisms underlying creative processes and outcomes. Fourth, this study contributes to the emerging literature on feedback seeking and creativity. The consideration of coworker feedback seeking as a moderator can provide new insights into when and how the joint effect of proactive motives fosters creative performance in the workplace. The proposed conceptual model is illustrated in Fig. 1. The current theoretical framework is empirically validated with multisource field data derived by using the ESM and multiwave surveys.

Theoretical Framework and Hypotheses

FRC and WTR as Dynamic Constructs

FRC and WTR require employee effort to identify and assess the values, risks, and resources associated with taking initiatives for work-related changes. Specifically, FRC involves retrospective (evaluating and reflecting on past events that involve task-related changes) and prospective (predicting future problems and concerns) processes (Cummings & Anton, 1990). Employees with high FRC may be self-motivated to reflect on previous work events and prepare for future change-oriented actions (Liao et al., 2021; Niess & Duhamel, 2018). Likewise, WTR involves a mental process to assess the risks—and the severity—of engaging in proactive behaviors and the available resources to initiate them, then make favorable appraisals of initiating proactive attempts (Al-Hawari et al., 2021; Berg et al., 2017). WTR does not imply a blind willingness to take unmeasured risks out of an exclusively optimistic outlook but a desire to take calculated risks to produce positive job-related outcomes (Dewett, 2006). As such, FRC and WTR rely on self-control, which is the process of regulating and guiding behavior to a desired direction (Baumeister et al., 1994). Given that self-control can be temporarily depleted after excessive use (Muraven & Baumeister, 2000; Wehrt et al., 2020) and depends on malleable physiological states (Schmeichel,

2007), we expect daily fluctuations of FRC and WTR to the extent that self-regulatory resources become available.

Despite their correlation with relatively stable personality traits—such as proactive personality (Jiang & Gu, 2015), personal initiative tendency (Starzyk & Sonnentag, 2019), and optimism (Dohmen et al., 2019)—FRC and WTR have been known to be malleable and dependent on contextual factors. For example, leadership style, leader–member exchange quality, and other environmental or situational factors can influence employee FRC and WTR (e.g., Arain et al., 2019; Berg et al., 2017). The manifestation of these two motives also can vary day to day depending on self-regulatory resources, emotional states, and the framing of the problem at the time. Empirical research shows that guilt increases perceived responsibility (Berndsen & Manstead, 2007). In addition, prospect theory suggests that WTR can be swayed by the mere framing of the given problem in terms of gain or loss because people generally dislike losses more than equivalent gains (Kahneman, 2011; Kahneman & Tversky, 1979). Employee FRC and WTR can therefore fluctuate daily in response to daily affective changes and the perception of task-related situations and demands.

Idea Generation and Creative Performance

Idea generation can be viewed as a key precursor of creative performance (Zhang & Bartol, 2010). Despite their relation, idea generation and creative performance have conceptual differences. The former reflects individuals' internal, mostly cognitive processes of developing new ideas while the latter focuses more on the resulting individual outcome or performance as appraised by coworkers or supervisors (Amabile & Pratt, 2016; Weinberger et al., 2018). Generating ideas is a dynamic form of creative process engagement and is crucial for achieving creative performance; however, not all new ideas are recognized by others and translated into creative outputs (Hughes et al., 2018; Zhou & Hoever, 2014). The creative process model indicates that creative performance requires multifaceted behaviors beyond generating ideas, such as gathering information, communicating new concepts, and persuading others of their value in improving work procedures, products, and services (Mumford et al., 1991, 2023). As indicated by Zhang and Bartol (2010), engaging in creative processes is a necessary condition, but not a sufficient one, for enhancing creative performance. Thus, further investigation is necessary to determine when creative process engagement can lead to ultimate creative performance.

Drawing on these discussions and distinctions, we specify that employees' daily action of generating ideas may form within-person processes of engaging in creative efforts, potentially leading to the ultimate output of creative performance recognized by others. In addition to the conceptual distinction, our operationalization of idea generation and creative performance as within- versus between-person constructs clearly differs from previous empirical studies (Kwan et al., 2018; Martinaityte et al., 2019; Zhang & Bartol, 2010). Accordingly, this study seeks to uncover the influences of employees' daily proactive motives on daily idea generation and subsequent creative performance.

DFRC and DWTR Congruence and Daily Idea Generation

Although both are proactive motive constructs based on self-regulatory resources, FRC and WTR are conceptually distinct with disparate psychological underpinnings in shaping employee behavior. FRC may represent an individual's urge and sense of responsibility to engage in proactive or extra-role behaviors to introduce changes in his/her job and organization (Arain et al., 2019; Starzyk & Sonnentag, 2019). As such, FRC reflects an employee's internalization of unspecified and implicit demands for task-related changes. Empirical evidence that hierarchical position and access to resources have positive relationships with FRC also implies an association with perceived job demands (Fuller et al., 2006). Thus, DFRC can be considered one's felt obligation and perception of change-related job demands on a given day. By comparison, WTR represents one's psychological resource and capacity to accept and handle potential risks accompanying proactive behaviors (García-Granero et al., 2015; Jung et al., 2020). WTR increases when employees with high emotional competence have high-quality leader–member exchange (Berg et al., 2017); therefore, WTR has close association with personal and job resources. In this sense, DWTR can be regarded as one's momentary capacity on a given day to initiate potentially risky change-oriented efforts that may be influenced by available resources. Recognizing the distinctiveness of these two proactive motives may offer a compelling reason to postulate their complementary function; that is, DWTR as a personal resource can fulfill internalized demands for change as indicated by DFRC.

JD–R theory provides a useful theoretical lens to explicate how DFRC and DWTR work together to predict the daily idea generation of employees. Recent conceptual and empirical developments of JD–R theory suggest that both job demands and resources can improve the proactive behavior of employees (Bakker et al., 2023). In addition, personal resources have been integrated as follows: "Proposition 4 in JD–R theory states that personal resources such as optimism, self-efficacy, and resilience have a reciprocal relationship with job resources. This means that employees with more personal resources are expected to also have access to more job resources, and vice versa" (Bakker et al., 2023, p. 35). In effect, the concept of resources now includes job and

personal ones that are theorized to evoke the same effect and interactive function with job demands in predicting employee wellbeing and performance (Schaufeli & Taris, 2014).

According to JD–R theory, job demands and resources work together in that the latter can attenuate the detrimental effect (i.e., buffer hypothesis) and amplify the benefits (i.e., boost hypothesis) of the former (Bakker et al., 2023). Given this view, incongruence between job demands and resources may lead to negative outcomes (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Fulfilling task demands that are congruent with job and personal resources contributes to the experience of work meaningfulness and task engagement (May et al., 2004; Zhang et al., 2021). This view is in line with findings from the demands–abilities fit perspective that individuals perform well when the job environment facilitates the use of their abilities (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). Employees who are either under or overqualified for their jobs tend to experience negative work outcomes (Luksyte & Spitzmueller, 2016). These theoretical and empirical results prove the benefit of the congruence between job demands and personal resources.

In line with the theoretical rationale from JD–R theory and demands–abilities fit, we propose a joint effect of DFRC and DWTR on employees' daily idea generation at the within-person level. Generating new ideas requires intentional, proactive efforts that can be initiated by one's perceived obligation toward and the necessity of introducing work-related changes (Fuller et al., 2006; Jiang & Gu, 2015). However, new ideas often fail and evolve through trial and error and experimentation, which require the willingness to take risks and confront uncertainties (Dewett, 2006; García-Granero et al., 2015). Drawing on JD–R theory, we focus on the DFRC and DWTR congruence as a promotive condition for daily idea generation. On a given day, employees who perceive congruent levels of DFRC and DWTR may feel personally responsible for initiating changes and have the corresponding level of resources to undertake associated risks. This congruence on a given day can motivate them to engage in idea generation for task-related changes and improvements on the same day.

In contrast, JD–R theory posits that work engagement may decrease when personal resources (DWTR) fall below job demands (DFRC) on a daily basis (Bakker et al., 2023). In such scenarios, employees might acknowledge their responsibility for initiating work-related changes but could be hesitant to embrace potential risks, thereby impeding daily idea generation. Conversely, when DWTR surpasses DFRC, it can lead to negative work outcomes since personal resources cannot be fully utilized when job demands are relatively low (Luksyte & Spitzmueller, 2016). In this situation, employees may be willing to take risks to drive changes, but they might not feel compelled to do so, hindering their complete engagement in creative processes. Considering these arguments, we hypothesize the following relationship:

Hypothesis 1 (H1). The congruence between DFRC and DWTR is positively related to the daily idea generation at the within-person level.

The congruence between DFRC and DWTR can occur at either high or low values. When employees simultaneously experience elevated levels of both DFRC and DWTR on a given day (i.e., boost hypothesis, Bakker et al., 2023), there is a likelihood of increased daily idea generation at the within-person level due to this congruence. In contrast, when employees experience congruence at low values of DFRC and DWTR, the deficiency in proactive motivation diminishes the likelihood of engaging in proactive behaviors, even in the absence of strain from discrepancy (Malik et al., 2019; Zhu et al., 2018). As such, the congruence between DFRC and DWTR at low values is less likely to motivate employees to engage in daily idea generation.

Hypothesis 2 (H2). At the within-person level, daily idea generation is higher when DFRC and DWTR are both high than when these are both low.

Indirect Effect of the Congruence Between DFRC and DWTR on Creative Performance

The literature shows that creative process engagement predicts employee creative performance; thus, idea generation is a critical step toward creative performance (e.g., Kwan et al., 2018; Martinaityte et al., 2019). Employees who are motivated to generate ideas daily tend to direct their attention and efforts to creativity-related activities that are conducive to creative performance (Huang et al., 2016). To generate task-related ideas, these employees may attempt to understand problems from multiple perspectives, integrate knowledge and information, and develop ideas to improve work procedures (Zhang & Bartol, 2010). As employees increasingly engage in daily idea generation, they effectively respond to task problems. These ideas may lead to alternatives or solutions and increase creative output.

Accordingly, daily idea generation may affect creative performance, thereby mediating the joint effect of congruent DFRC and DWTR at the between-person level. The dynamic componential model of creativity suggests that its processes, such as idea generation, are critical intervening mechanisms linking individual motivation to creative outcomes (Amabile & Pratt, 2016). Zhang and Bartol (2010) demonstrated the mediating role of creative process engagement on the relationship between intrinsic motivation and creativity. Therefore, we specify the following mediation hypothesis.

Hypothesis 3 (H3). The DFRC and DWTR congruence has an indirect effect on creative performance via daily idea generation at the between-person level.

Moderating Role of Coworker Feedback Seeking

The inherently social nature of creativity, particularly in organizations, has been underscored in the literature (Acar & Van den Ende, 2013). According to Torrance (1988), creative processes include identifying problems, establishing hypotheses, and discussing thoughts with others, recognizing the importance of social exchanges in generating ideas. In our theoretical model that posits a mediating mechanism of idea generation between proactive motivation and creative performance, considering its social aspect is important to complement the focus on intrapersonal processes. To this end, we identify feedback as a critical social input that is needed to improve one's creativity. Feedback provides employees with valuable information on constantly changing task situations, problems, and expectations (De Stobbeleir et al., 2011; Yu & Choi, 2022). Seeking feedback from coworkers enables employees to accurately identify task problems that they are expected to address and problem-solving strategies that are deemed effective and acceptable in their work settings (De Stobbeleir et al., 2020). Empirical studies also reveal that employees who frequently seek others' opinions concerning their work can enhance their creative performance (Sun et al., 2020; Sung & Choi, 2021).

The present study investigates whether seeking feedback from coworkers moderates the indirect effect of the DFRC and DWTR congruence on creative performance via daily idea generation at the between-person level. Specifically, we propose that coworker feedback seeking strengthens the relationship between daily idea generation and creative performance. Although feedback from coworkers can also be less conducive to radical creativity by filtering out highly risky attempts and allowing only incremental or relatively safe ideas (Sijbom et al., 2018; Sun et al., 2020), even negative feedback is vital to adequately modify maverick ideas and thus lessen its flaws while increasing its usefulness. Feedback from others may expose new problems, offer alternative perspectives, and enhance the adequacy of generated ideas.

Creative ideas tend to be developed and elaborated through a prolonged process, which includes identifying problems, searching for alternatives, and discussing ideas with others (Babalola et al., 2021; Huang et al., 2016; Torrance, 1988). Accordingly, ideas based on sufficient coworker feedback tend to effectively reflect the current demands, expectations, and various views on the given task. Furthermore, given that linking diverse knowledge is critical for developing breakthrough ideas (De Stobbeleir et al., 2020; Sun et al., 2020), coworker feedback seeking can strengthen the indirect effect of daily proactive motivation on employee creative performance by allowing access to others' knowledge. Conversely, insufficient feedback seeking may reduce the possibility for employees to acquire important knowledge and information needed for creative performance (Jiang & Gu, 2016; Yu & Choi, 2022), thereby inhibiting the mediating effect of daily idea generation. As such, we propose the following moderated mediation hypothesis.

Hypothesis 4 (H4). At the between-person level, coworker feedback seeking moderates the indirect effect of the DFRC and DWTR congruence on employee creative performance via daily idea generation, such that the indirect effect is strong when coworker feedback seeking is high.

Method

Sample and Data Collection Procedure

The study examined full-time employees who were recruited from various organizations in China by using the social network of the research team and assistants. Before data collection, we carefully explained the study purpose and schedule to the participants and assured them of the anonymity and confidentiality of their responses. The data were collected in three different stages (i.e., Stages 1–3) over a one-month period. In Stage 1, we used ESM that required the participants to complete daily surveys two times per day (i.e., at 12 a.m. and 5 p.m.) for 10 consecutive working days. Of the 196 participants who voluntarily joined our research, 162 completed the ESM-based daily surveys during Stage 1. One week after Stage 1, 159 participants responded to another survey for Stage 2. Another week later in Stage 3, the immediate supervisors of 136 participants who completed the Stage 1 and 2 surveys were invited to respond to a final survey assessing the creative performance of their employees. Thus, the final sample includes 136 participants.

In the final sample, 89 were men (65.4%) and 47 were women (34.6%). Participants' average age was 28.58 ($SD = 7.80$), and average organizational tenure was 3.19 years ($SD = 5.43$). In terms of educational level, 11 did not reach high school (8.1%), 18 were high school graduates (13.2%), 26 had two-year college degrees (19.1%), 58 had undergraduate degrees (42.6%), and 23 had graduate degrees (16.9%). Participants were from different industries, including information technology (13.2%), retail/sales/marketing (36.8%), manufacturing (5.1%), education (14.0%), and services (30.9%). The data included responses from 136 supervisors, each of whom rated one employee under his or her supervision. Among the supervisors, 77 were men (56.6%) and 59 were women (43.4%). Their average age was

35.40 (*SD* = 8.47), and their average tenure was 11.88 years (*SD* = 8.08).

We collected data through online survey questionnaires (on www.wjx.cn) sent to participants through an instant messaging service (i.e., WeChat). The participants were requested to fill in the surveys by using their mobile phones, tablets, laptops, or desktops. During Stage 1, the participants were first asked to provide their demographic information and then answer daily surveys twice per day for 10 consecutive workdays. Following the recommendations in carrying out ESM-based studies (e.g., Gabriel et al., 2019; Sun et al., 2021), we used the 10-workday time span to sufficiently capture the within-person relationship between our study constructs. Specifically, the participants reported their DFRC and DWTR in the morning survey during 12–2 p.m. and then their daily idea generation in the afternoon survey during 5–7 p.m. To reduce retrospective reporting, the participants were asked to complete all daily surveys within two hours of receipt. In total, 162 participants finished the daily surveys and provided 1475 and 1389 valid observations for the morning and afternoon surveys, respectively. This time-lagged ESM design not only helps reduce issues related to common method bias but also accurately captures the temporal sequence between the predictors (i.e., motivational states) and outcomes (i.e., generating ideas) (Hülsheger et al., 2021; Liao et al., 2018). One week after the completion of ESM-based daily surveys, the participants reported their coworker feedback seeking in the Stage 2 survey. Last, the immediate supervisors of participants who completed the Stage 1 and 2 surveys were invited to rate their employees' creative performance. All surveys were anonymous, and participant responses over multiple time points were matched by using unique identification codes.

Measures

This study used previously validated and published scales to evaluate the constructs. All the scales were translated from English into Chinese using a standard back-translation procedure (Brislin, 1986). The response format was a seven-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*), unless noted otherwise.

Daily Felt Responsibility for Change

DFRC was measured using four items developed by Morrison and Phelps (1999). Sample items are "Today, I felt a personal sense of responsibility to bring about change at work" and "Today, I felt obligated to try to introduce new procedures where appropriate." The average Cronbach's alpha for this scale across 10 working days was 0.72.

Daily Willingness to Take Risks

DWTR was assessed using four items from Trimpop, Kerr, and Kirkcaldy (1999). Sample items are "Today, I took risks and did things differently than others" and "Today, I set challenging goals that involve some risks." Average Cronbach's alpha across 10 working days was 0.90.

Daily Idea Generation

Daily idea generation was measured using five items developed by Zhang and Bartol (2010). Sample items include "Today, I considered diverse sources of information in generating new ideas" and "Today, I looked for connections with solutions used in seemingly diverse areas." The average Cronbach's alpha for this scale across 10 working days was 0.93.

Coworker Feedback Seeking

Coworker feedback seeking was assessed with four items from Callister et al. (1999). Sample items include "I ask my coworkers if I am doing a good job" and "I ask my coworkers what other people think I must be doing." The participants were asked to rate these items using a seven-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*never*) to 7 (*very often*). Cronbach's alpha for this scale was 0.88.

Creative Performance

We measured employee creative performance using five items from Sung et al. (2017). Sample items are "This employee suggests new ways of performing tasks in a proactive manner" and "This employee presents voluntary and creative contributions in his or her work." The immediate supervisors of the participants rated the items on a seven-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). Cronbach's alpha for this scale was 0.92.

Control Variables

Following previous studies on creativity (e.g., Hwang & Choi, 2020; Sijbom et al., 2018), we controlled for the potential effects of employee demographic characteristics, including age (in years), gender (1 = male, 2 = female), education (1 = less than high school, 2 = high school, 3 = two-year college, 4 = undergraduate degree, and 5 = graduate degree and above), and organizational tenure (in years). Given that industry type can systematically influence the value, requirements, and expectations of idea generation and creative performance (Malik et al., 2019), we also controlled for its effect. Given that our data were collected in five industry types, we created four dummy variables to control for the

industry type in the analyses. We ran all analyses with and without the control variables and found no meaningful differences in our results.

Analytic Strategy

To test H1 and H2, we carried out polynomial regression followed by response surface analysis (Edwards & Cable, 2009; Zhang et al., 2012) using hierarchical linear modeling (HLM5; Raudenbush et al., 2000). These approaches are widely used to examine congruence effects because their generated three-dimensional (3D) response surfaces can provide more abundant information than traditional two-dimensional interaction analysis. As such, we can test the combined effect of two predictors on an outcome variable (e.g., Liu et al., 2021; Shanock et al., 2010; Sung & Choi, 2021). The polynomial regression equation is presented as follows:

$$Z = b_0 + b_1 DFRC + b_2 DWTR + b_3 DFRC^2 + b_4 DFRC \times DWTR + b_5 DWTR^2 + e \quad (1)$$

where Z represents the dependent variable (i.e., daily idea generation), DFRC refers to the effect of daily felt responsibility for change, and DWTR refers to the effect of daily willingness to take risks. Control variables such as age, gender, education, and tenure were not shown to simplify the equation. We examined the within-person effects by regressing the daily idea generation on control variables and five polynomial terms. To decrease multicollinearity and enhance interpretation of the obtained results, we group-mean centered two daily predictors before calculating the three second-order polynomial terms (Zhang et al., 2012).

Then, the estimated coefficients were used to plot the 3D response surface (Shanock et al., 2010) and calculate slopes and curvatures along the congruence (DFRC = DRTW) and the incongruence (DFRC = −DRTW) lines. According to previous studies (e.g., Carter & Mossholder, 2015; Edwards & Cable, 2009), a negative and significant curvature along the incongruence line (DFRC = −DRTW) supports H1. This curvature of the surface can be calculated from the coefficients estimated in Eq. 1 (i.e., $b_3 - b_4 + b_5$). H2 is supported when the slope along the congruence line (DFRC = DRTW) is significantly positive, and its curvature is nonsignificant. The slope and curvature can be calculated from the coefficients estimated in Eq. 1 (i.e., $b_1 + b_2$ and $b_3 + b_4 + b_5$, respectively).

Then, we tested the indirect effect of the DFRC and DWTR congruence on creative performance via daily idea generation (H3) at the between-person level. Given that employee creative performance was assessed once by the supervisors, we examined the between-person level relationship by aggregating our within-person variables at this level. This approach was aligned with previous studies assessing daily experiences that investigated between-person level relations (Dong et al., 2014; Parke et al., 2022; Parke et al., 2015). To check if aggregating the daily scores for testing mediation and moderated mediation was appropriate, we calculated the aggregation statistics, including $r_{wg(j)}$, ICC(1), and ICC(2) (Biemann et al., 2012). The results were as follows: (a) the $r_{wg(j)}$ values were 0.85, 84, and 0.90; (b) the ICC(1) values were 0.68, 65, and 73; and (c) the ICC(2) values were 0.97, 0.96, and 0.97, respectively, for DFRC, DRTW, and daily idea generation. All these statistics were greater than the recommended thresholds and provided an adequate statistical justification for aggregation (Klein & Kozlowski, 2000).

To test H3 at the between-person level, we utilized the block variable approach (Edwards & Cable, 2009; Tepper et al., 2018). The five polynomial regression terms (DFRC, DWTR, $DFRC^2$, DFRC × DWTR, and $DWTR^2$) were combined into a block variable (i.e., a weighted linear composite) to obtain a single coefficient representing their joint effects. We tested the mediation effects using Model 4 in PROCESS macro for SPSS 27.0 (Hayes, 2013), which has been adopted because of its effectiveness in examining mediation and moderation effects (e.g., Han & Hwang, 2021; Tang et al., 2020; Woehler et al., 2021). The generated block variable was treated as the predictor, daily idea generation was processed as the mediator, and employee creative performance was the outcome variable. We also tested the significance of the indirect effects by using the 95% confidence interval (CI) generated by the bias-corrected bootstrapping method using 5000 samples (Preacher & Hayes, 2008).

Finally, we examine the moderated mediation effects of coworker feedback seeking (H4) at the between-person level by using PROCESS macro Model 14 for SPSS 27.0. Daily idea generation and coworker feedback seeking were grand-mean centered prior to estimating the moderated mediation effect. The significance of the moderated mediation effect was verified using 5000 bootstrapped samples.

Results

Discriminant Validity, Convergent Validity, and Descriptive Statistics

A series of confirmatory factor analyses (CFAs) were carried out to examine the discriminant validity of the study constructs. We compared the hypothesized five-factor model (i.e., DFRC, DWTR, daily idea generation, coworker feedback seeking, and employee creative performance) with alternative measurement models, such as one-, two-, three-, or four-factor model. As shown in Table 1, the hypothesized five-factor model exhibits adequate fit to the data

Table 1 Model fit of confirmatory factor analyses

Model	χ^2	*df*	CFI	IFI	TLI	RMSEA
Hypothesized five-factor model	343.28	198	.94	.94	.93	.07
Four-factor model (DFRC + DWTR, DIG, CFS, and ECP)	444.43	202	.89	.90	.88	.09
Three-factor model (DFRC + DWTR + DIG, CFS, and ECP)	653.89	205	.80	.81	.78	.12
Two-factor model (DFRC + DWTR + DIG + CFS, and ECP)	938.66	208	.68	.68	.64	.15
One-factor model (DFRC + DWTR + DIG + CFS + ECP)	1291.18	209	.53	.53	.48	.18

DFRC daily felt responsibility for change, *DWTR* daily willingness to task risks, *DIG* daily idea generation, *CFS* coworker feedback seeking, *ECP* employee creative performance, *CFI* comparative fit index, *IFI* incremental fit Index, *TLI* Tucker–Lewis index, *RMSEA* root-mean-square error of approximation

Table 2 Descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations

Variable	Mean	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1. Age	28.58	7.80	–												
2. Gender	1.60	.49	.04	–											
3. Education	3.49	1.14	−.31**	.05*	–										
4. Tenure	3.19	5.43	.65**	.03	−.12**	–									
5. Industry type 1	.35	.48	.24**	−.22**	−.51**	.10**	–								
6. Industry type 2	.05	.22	.01	−.05*	.15**	.05	−.17**	–							
7. Industry type 3	.11	.31	−.15**	.01	.05*	−.09*	−.26**	−.08**	–						
8. Industry type 4	.35	.48	−.06*	.22**	.37**	.02	−.54**	−.17**	−.26**	–					
9. DFRC	4.61	1.04	.02	−.03	−.14**	.04	.11**	−.10**	.01	−.08**	(.72)				
10. DWTR	4.51	1.21	.04	−.12**	−.18**	.05	.19**	−.04	−.05*	−.12**	.67**	(.90)			
11. Daily idea generation	4.20	1.15	.07*	−.17**	−.11**	.06*	.19*	−.06**	−.06*	−.05*	.62**	.65**	(.93)		
12. CFS	4.43	1.20	.17**	−.02	−.29**	.10**	.21**	.05**	−.11**	−.10**	.37**	.47**	.49**	(.88)	
ECP	5.28	.94	.12**	−.13**	−.16**	.07**	.20**	.08**	−.10**	−.06*	.43**	.50**	.52**	.33**	(.92)

Figures in parentheses are Cronbach's alpha values of variables.

Industry type 1 information technology, *Industry type 2* retail/sales/marketing, *Industry type 3* manufacturing, *Industry type 4* education. *DFRC* daily felt responsibility for change, *DWTR* daily willingness to task risks, *CFS* coworker feedback seeking, *ECP* employee creative performance

*$p < .05$; **$p < .01$

($\chi^2 = 343.28, df = 198, p < .01; CFI = .94, IFI = .94, TLI = .93 and RMSEA = .07$). The CFA results also show that the hypothesized five-factor structure performed better than any of the alternative measurement models, thereby supporting the distinctiveness of the study variables.

Convergent validity was examined through average variance extracted (AVE) and composite reliability (CR). For all study constructs, the AVE scores reached the threshold of .50 recommended by Hair et al. (1998), thereby confirming convergent validity. The CR values were higher than the threshold of .70, potentially setting an upper bound for validity (Hair et al., 2014). We also compared the AVE scores of each variable with the corresponding squared correlations with the focal variable to further confirm discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2014). All AVE scores were larger than the corresponding squared correlations and thus demonstrate satisfactory discriminant validity. The means, SDs, and correlations of the study variables are presented in Table 2.[1]

Hypothesis Testing

The results of the polynomial regression analysis are presented in Table 3 and the corresponding 3D response

[1] The results show that gender was negatively related to other main variables (e.g., proactive motives, daily idea generation, and creative performance). With respect to gender differences in creativity, we note that no consensus was reached on which gender shows a higher level of creativity. Regarding this inconsistency, Nakano et al. (2021) claim that studies of this nature must consider the influence of other factors, such as motivation, opportunities, and measures used. Especially given the evidence of the effects of the interaction between situational factors and gender on creativity (Walton, & Kemmelmeier, 2012), situational factors such as organizational norms or situational threats experienced by our participants may have been less conducive to the creative performance among women.

Table 3 Polynomial regression analysis of DFRC and DWTR predicting daily idea generation at the within-person level

Variable	Daily idea generation	
	Model 1	Model 2
Controls		
Age	−.01 (.02)	−.01 (.02)
Gender	−.26* (.17)	−.26 (.17)
Education	−.04 (.09)	−.04 (.09)
Tenure	.01 (.02)	.01 (.02)
Industry type 1 (information technology)	.45† (.27)	.45† (.27)
Industry type 2 (retail/sales/marketing)	−.02 (.31)	−.02 (.30)
Industry type 3 (manufacturing)	−.01 (.32)	−.01 (.33)
Industry type 4 (education)	.26 (.24)	.26 (.24)
Polynomial terms		
DFRC	.17*** (.03)	.17*** (.04)
DWTR	.08** (.02)	.08** (.03)
DFRC^2		−.09† (.05)
DFRC × DWTR		.08 (.06)
DWTR^2		−.02 (.03)
Individual-level σ^2	.28	.28
Congruence line (DFRC = DWTR)		
Slope ($b_1 + b_2$)		.25*** (.01)
Curvature ($b_3 + b_4 + b_5$)		−.03 (.08)
Incongruence line (DFRC = −DWTR)		
Slope ($b_1 - b_2$)		.09 (.06)
Curvature ($b_3 - b_4 + b_5$)		−.19*** (.05)

Standard errors are in parentheses

DFRC daily felt responsibility for change, *DWTR* daily willingness to task risks

$^{\dagger}p < .10$; $^{*}p < .05$; $^{**}p < .01$; $^{***}p < .001$

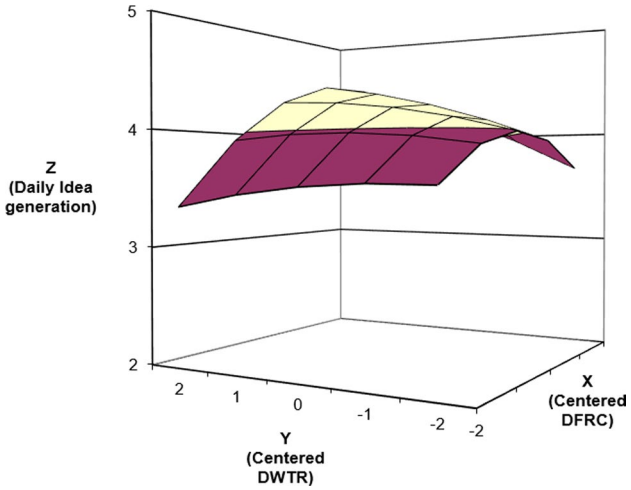

Fig. 2 DFRC and DWTR predicting daily idea generation at the within-person level

surface plot is shown in Fig. 2. The results (Model 2 in Table 3) indicate that control variables such as age, gender, education, organizational tenure, and industry type did not have a significant relationship with daily idea generation. H1 proposes that as the DFRC and DRTW congruence increases, the employees' daily idea generation also increases at the within-person level. As presented in Table 3, the curvature along the incongruence line (DFRC = −DRTW) is negative and significant (curvature $[b_3 - b_4 + b_5] = -0.19$, $p < 0.001$). Moreover, the surface along the incongruence line (from the left corner to the right corner on the plot) curves up then down (Fig. 2). This result shows that the levels of daily idea generation increase as DFRC and DRTW scores increase in congruence but decrease as DFRC and DRTW scores diverge in either direction, thereby supporting H1.

H2 posits that at the within-person level, daily idea generation is higher when DFRC and DRTW are high than when DFRC and DRTW are low. Table 3 presents that the slope along the congruence line (DFRC = DRTW) is significantly positive (slope $[b_1 + b_2] = 0.25$, $p < 0.001$) and the curvature is insignificant (curvature $[b_3 + b_4 + b_5] = -0.03$, *ns.*). These results suggest that the congruence between DFRC and DRTW has a positive linear effect on daily idea generation. As shown in Fig. 2, daily idea generation increases along the congruence line (from the front corner to the back corner) on the response surface plot, thereby supporting H2.

In H3, we propose that the congruence between DFRC and DRTW exerts an indirect effect on creative performance via daily idea generation at the between-person level. Table 4 shows the test results, which indicate that the indirect effect of the DFRC and DRTW congruence (block variable) on creative performance through daily idea generation is statistically significant, as 95% CI from lower to upper bound does not contain zero (point estimate = 0.23, CI = [0.01, 0.46]), thereby supporting H3.

H4 posits that at the between-person level, coworker feedback seeking moderates the indirect effect of the DFRC and DRTW congruence on employee creative performance via daily idea generation. As displayed in Table 5, the conditional indirect effect of the congruence on creative performance through daily idea generation is strong and significant when coworker feedback seeking is high (+1 *SD*) (point estimate = 0.25, CI [0.01, 0.50]), but weak and insignificant when coworker feedback seeking is low (−1 *SD*) (point estimate = 0.19, CI [−0.08, 0.44]), thereby showing empirical support for H4.

Table 4 Bootstrapped indirect effects on employee creative performance

Direct effect			Indirect effect			
				Point estimate	95% bias corrected bootstrap CI	
	B	*SE*			Lower	Upper
BV → DIG	1.00***	.06	BV → DIG → ECP	**.23**	**.01**	**.46**
BV → ECP	.38**	.14				
DIG → ECP	.23*	.12				

Bootstrap sample size = 5000. Coefficients in bold denote significant mediation ($p < .05$)

BV block variable of congruence between DFRC and DWTR, *DIG* daily idea generation, *ECP* employee creative performance, *CI* confidence interval

*$p < .05$; **$p < .01$; ***$p < .001$

Table 5 Conditional indirect effects on employee creative performance at different levels of coworker feedback seeking

Independent variable	Mediator	Outcome	Moderator	Moderator level	Indirect effect	Bootstrapped SE	95% bias corrected bootstrap CI
Congruence	Daily	Employee	Coworker	Low	.19	.13	[−.08, .44]
Between	Idea	Creative	Feedback	Medium	.22	.12	[−.02, .44]
DFRC & DWTR	Generation	Performance	Seeking	High	**.25**	**.13**	**[.01, .50]**

Bootstrap sample size = 5000

CI confidence interval

Coefficients in bold denote significant mediation ($p < .05$)

Post Hoc Analysis

As indicated by previous research (Preacher et al., 2010), daily variables (e.g., DFRC, DRTW, and daily idea generation) have both within- and between-person variance. Therefore, the relationships between daily variables (Level 1) can be examined both at the within- and the between-person levels, but the relations between Level 1 and Level 2 variables can only be examined at the between-person level. Therefore, to compare effects at different levels of analysis, we examined the effect of the congruence between DFRC and DRTW on daily idea generation at the between-person level by conducting multilevel polynomial regression analysis with Mplus 7.0 (Muthén & Muthén, 2010). Next, to provide a robust examination of the hypotheses, we tested the mediation effect of daily idea generation on the relationship between the congruence and creative performance in a 1–1–2 multilevel model by using Mplus 7.0.

First, the results of the multilevel polynomial regression analysis show that the effect of the congruence between DFRC and DRTW on daily idea generation is insignificant at the between-person level. The hypothesized curvature along the incongruence line (DFRC = − DRTW) is insignificant (curvature $[b_3 - b_4 + b_5] = -0.11$, SE = 0.60, *ns.*). The slope along the congruence line (DFRC = DRTW) and the curvature are also insignificant (slope $[b_1 + b_2] = 0.32$, SE = 1.53, *ns.*; curvature $[b_3 + b_4 + b_5] = -0.03$, *ns.*). Therefore, the congruence effect is significant only at the within-person level. These patterns suggest that the effect of the congruence between DFRC and DRTW are more likely to influence daily idea generation at the within-person level rather than at the between-person level.

Next, the results of the 1–1–2 multilevel model show that the effect of the DFRC and DRTW congruence on daily idea generation is significant ($\gamma = 0.20$, $p < 0.01$) and the effect of daily idea generation on creative performance is also significant ($\gamma = 0.47$, $p < 0.001$). The indirect effect of the DFRC and DRTW congruence on creative performance through daily idea generation is statistically significant as well because 95% CI does not contain zero (indirect effect = 0.14, SE = 0.05, CI = [0.04, 0.25]), thereby supporting for H3. Moreover, we examined our 1–1–2 multilevel mediation model with a Level-2 moderator. We found that the conditional indirect effect of the congruence on creative performance through daily idea generation is strong and significant when coworker feedback seeking is high (+1 *SD*) (indirect effect = 0.67, SE = 0.29, CI [0.10, 1.24]), but weak and insignificant when coworker feedback seeking is low (− 1 *SD*) (indirect effect = 0.36, SE = 0.20, CI [−0.04, 0.76]), thereby supporting H4.

We also carried out multiple regression analyses to test the direct effects of DFRC and DWTR on coworker feedback seeking and employee creative performance, both of

which represent proactive employee behaviors in the workplace. First, demographic variables such as age, gender, education, tenure, and industry type were entered as control variables. Then, aggregated DFRC and DWTR at the individual level were entered as predictors. The results show that DFRC ($\beta = 0.39$, $p < 0.001$) and DWTR ($\beta = 0.50$, $p < 0.001$) are significantly and positively associated with coworker feedback seeking. DFRC ($\beta = 0.48$, $p < 0.001$) and DWTR ($\beta = 0.57$, $p < 0.001$) are also significantly and positively related to employee creative performance.

Discussion

Expanding the motivation and creativity literature, the current multiwave field study demonstrates that the DFRC and DWTR congruence has a positive effect on employees' daily idea generation at the within-person level. Moreover, such congruence has an indirect effect on employee creative performance via daily idea generation at the between-person level. Our analysis further shows that coworker feedback seeking acts as a boundary condition that enhances the indirect effect of the DFRC and DWTR congruence on creative performance. Last, our bivariate correlation analysis shows that WTR has a stronger relationship with both idea generation and creativity than FRC. Below, we discuss the theoretical and managerial implications of our analysis, including the limitations and directions for future studies.

Theoretical Implications

This study presents several meaningful contributions to the creativity literature. First, we expand the current understanding of motivational mechanisms for creativity by exploring how distinct aspects of proactive motives (i.e., DFRC and DWTR) interact to influence daily creative processes. Drawing on JD–R theory, we theorize and empirically confirm that DFRC and DWTR are crucial to the daily idea generation of employees. Notably, the congruence between DFRC and DWTR leads to higher daily idea generation than their incongruence (Fig. 2).

According to JD–R theory (Bakker et al., 2023), daily perceived obligation to engage in extra-role or proactive behaviors may reflect unspecified job demands that can be both beneficial and detrimental to individual wellbeing and performance. As revealed in our analysis, when motivational resources such as DWTR are lower than DFRC, employees are less likely to effectively cope with their daily demands (Schaufeli & Taris, 2014). The lack of resources reflected in the unwillingness to take potential risks may impair the daily creative process of idea generation. Moreover, when DFRC is lower than DWTR, employees become hesitant to initiate proactive behaviors and withdraw from generating ideas, which are perceived as unnecessary (Xanthopoulou et al., 2007). These incongruent conditions may prevent employees from fully demonstrating their competence and reduce the daily generation of ideas.

By contrast, when DFRC is congruent with DWTR, employees' motivational resources are likely to be fully translated into productive actions and show a sense of competence, which contributes to daily creative processes (i.e., boost hypothesis, Bakker et al., 2023). Our polynomial regression analysis reveals that as the DFRC and DWTR congruence increases, the employees' daily idea generation increases (cf. demands–abilities fit, Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). This finding provides a nuanced understanding of the potential complementary function of distinct proactive motives and advances the motivation–creativity literature that has thus far concentrated on the simple main effects of such motives (e.g., Berg et al., 2017; Jiang & Gu, 2015).

Second, complementing the dominant focus on the between-person comparison, this study examines the daily within-person fluctuations of proactive motives (i.e., DFRC and DWTR) and their joint effects on daily idea generation that fosters ultimate creative performance. Although research on between-person relationship (e.g., Liu et al., 2016; Tan et al., 2019; van Knippenberg & Hirst, 2020) provided valuable insights, a comprehensive understanding remains lacking due to the neglect of the within-person fluctuations of motivational variables. Given that these motivational variables, such as FRC and WTR, are conceptualized as malleable states that may vary daily (Morgenstern et al., 2016), uncovering how their fluctuations influence employees' daily creative process is critical. The current research design, based on ESM, not only enables us to explore the within-person relationship between proactive motives and idea generation—aligning with the dynamic nature of creative processes (Chi et al., 2021)—but also aids in mitigating person-based biases (e.g., retrospective bias) and enhances the ecological validity of the study (Larson & Csikszentmihalyi, 2014; Park et al., 2021b).

Third, this study adds to creativity research by highlighting idea generation as a crucial mediating mechanism for linking the DFRC and DWTR congruence to employee creative performance at the between-person level. The dynamic componential model of creativity posits that creative processes are essential for translating motivation into creative performance (Amabile & Pratt, 2016). Empirical studies have shown that creative process engagement is critical in promoting creativity (e.g., Kwan et al., 2018; Martinaityte et al., 2019; Zhang & Bartol, 2010). The present findings further extend the creativity literature by confirming that idea generation, as a form of creative process engagement, constitutes an important explanatory mechanism for reaping the creative benefits of the congruence between complementary proactive motives.

Fourth, this study further contributes to the feedback and creativity literature by revealing the moderating role of coworker feedback seeking in the indirect effect of the DFRC and DWTR congruence on creative performance through daily idea generation. Doing so offers a step forward in developing a comprehensive understanding of the antecedents of creativity in organizations. The results indicate that the joint effects of DFRC and DWTR lead to high levels of employee creative performance when coworker feedback seeking is high. Task-related feedback enables employees to obtain valuable information and diverse perspectives from the work and social settings (De Stobbeleir et al., 2020; Sung & Choi, 2021; Yu & Choi, 2022). Thus, feedback acts as a crucial contingency for channeling the indirect effect of the DFRC and DWTR congruence in positively shaping creativity. The present findings extend related literature that has focused predominantly on the direct influence of feedback-seeking behavior on creative outcomes (e.g., De Stobbeleir et al., 2011; Sijbom et al., 2018; Sung et al., 2020), by offering evidence that seeking feedback accentuates the positive indirect effects of daily proactive motives on creative performance through daily idea generation.

Next, although the comparison of DFRC and DWTR to determine which may exert a stronger influence on daily idea generation and creative performance was not the goal of this study, the bivariate correlation analysis shows that WTR shows stronger positive effects than FRC. This pattern seems theoretically plausible in view of JD–R theory, in which job and personal resources such as WTR tend to increase task engagement and proactive behavior (Schaufeli & Taris, 2014). By contrast, despite being also a form of proactive motive, FRC represents job demand, which may lead to positive and negative outcomes, such as the sense of challenge and psychological strain or burden (Bakker et al., 2023). The current findings are consistent with theoretical expectations, but the joint effects of similar but conceptually distinct proactive motives merit future investigation.

Additionally, though we focus mainly on the moderating role of coworker feedback seeking, our post hoc analysis shows its direct and positive relationship to both DFRC and DWTR. Given that seeking feedback from others involves potential costs (e.g., time, energy) and risks to employees' social image (Ashford et al., 2016), coworker feedback seeking is highly likely to be influenced by employees' feeling responsible for constructive change and willingness to take potential risks. These patterns support that proactive motives can influence the likelihood of seeking feedback from coworkers, which is in line with previous studies (Ashford et al., 2016; Parker et al., 2010). Future research is encouraged to extend the current theoretical model by providing a more complete theoretical and empirical understanding of the relationships among proactive motives, coworker feedback seeking, and creative outcomes.

Finally, our observation regarding education suggest that individuals with higher educational attainment often exhibit lower levels of proactive motives, accompanied by reduced daily idea generation and creative performance. This phenomenon may be attributed to the likelihood of individuals with advanced educational backgrounds securing positions with elevated pressure and specialized responsibilities (Judge et al., 2010). Highly educated employees tend to face substantial job demands, such as task pressure and time urgency, and often report higher levels of job-related anxiety and stress compared to their less-educated counterparts (e.g., Moen et al., 2013; Perko et al., 2017; Solomon et al., 2022). Such demanding roles could deplete cognitive resources, diminish motivation, and subsequently impede creative performance (Anderson et al., 2014; Byron et al., 2010). In light of these findings highlighting creative performance as a social behavior shaped by intricate interactions between various individual and situational factors (Nouri et al., 2015), future studies should extend our model by exploring potential social mediators and moderators.

Practical Implications

This study provides several crucial implications for organizations that seek to promote employee creative performance. First, the findings suggest that the DFRC and DWTR congruence has a positive effect on daily idea generation, particularly when the two motives are high compared with when both are low. By contrast, the DFRC and DWTR incongruence tends to reduce daily idea generation, thereby hindering employee creative performance. Therefore, organizations must appreciate the significance of and manage the DFRC and DWTR among employees. Our bivariate correlation analysis at the between-person level reveals that WTR shows a greater effect on idea generation and creative performance than FRC. However, our within-person analysis suggests that enhancing not only WTR but also FRC to a comparable level is an adaptive strategy given their joint effects on daily idea generation.

First, to enhance employees' daily levels of perceived obligation toward changes and improvements, managers may recruit employees with high personal initiatives, foster employees' belief that they can and are expected to introduce meaningful changes, and provide the needed resources and strategic information for pursuing constructive changes (Fuller et al., 2006; Starzyk & Sonnentag, 2019). Second, managers can increase employees' risk-taking willingness in their daily work by providing a supportive system and creating a safe culture to reduce perceived threat and anxiety regarding penalties for failures or unaccepted ideas (Berg et al., 2017; Jung et al., 2020). To this end, managers may provide employees with psychological empowerment

and participative decision-making through supportive and empowering leadership.

Moreover, given that coworker feedback seeking strengthens the effect of the DFRC and DWTR congruence on creative performance through daily idea generation, managers who desire to increase employee creative performance may seek ways to encourage active feedback seeking. To this end, managers can build a supportive feedback environment where employees feel psychologically safe to ask coworkers for feedback and suggestions without worrying about image costs (Sijbom et al., 2018). Rewarding employees who seek feedback from others and encouraging them to maintain high-quality exchange relationships with coworkers may also improve feedback seeking within the organization (De Stobbeleir et al., 2020).

Limitations and Future Studies

Despite the strengths of our research (e.g., ESM design, data collection from different sources at multiple time points), several limitations must be considered and addressed in future work. First, although our research design helps enhance ecological validity and minimize common method bias (Larson & Csikszentmihalyi, 2014; Podsakoff et al., 2012), caution is needed in drawing conclusions of causality among the examined constructs in our model. Future research may use an experimental design to clearly ascertain such causal relationships. Moreover, we investigate the effects of employees' proactive motives on their idea generation at the within-person level and on creative performance (i.e., rated by supervisors) via idea generation at the between-person level. However, previous studies (e.g., Dalal et al., 2020) have suggested that job performance such as creative performance can be viewed not only as a stable construct but also as a changeable one given its likelihood to vary over short timeframes. Therefore, future studies may adopt alternative designs to investigate the within-person relationships among proactive motives, creative process engagement, and creative performance on a daily or weekly basis.

Second, we investigate whether the DFRC and DWTR congruence positively predicts daily idea generation and subsequent creative performance. JD–R theory (Bakker et al., 2023; Xanthopoulou et al., 2007) suggests alternative theoretical possibilities that the congruence first produces positive work-related states, such as work engagement, that cause creative or other proactive processes. That is, other mechanisms may translate the congruence between DFRC and DWTR into creative processes and outcomes. Future studies must address this point by theorizing and testing other potential mechanisms in the relationship between the congruence of proactive motives and creative performance.

Third, future studies can identify specific job demands and resources as antecedents of motivational processes to provide a more comprehensive view of associated mechanisms toward creativity within the JD–R framework. Based on JD–R theory, several important forms of job demands—such as employees' perceptions about their overall workload and job or personal resources such as self-esteem and optimism—have the potential to shape their motivational states and enhance creative performance (Antwi et al., 2019; Bakker et al., 2023; Xanthopoulou et al., 2007). To further extend our research model and related theories, future studies may integrate relevant job demands or job and personal resources into the model to gain a deeper understanding of creative processes within the JD-R framework.

Fourth, drawing on previous studies (e.g., De Stobbeleir et al., 2020; Yu & Choi, 2022), we have conceptualized coworker feedback seeking as a construct at the between-person level. Although coworker feedback seeking captures the general inclination of employees to obtain work-related information from their coworkers, it can also be seen as a dynamic construct subject to variations over short periods (e.g., Zhang et al., 2022). However, for practical reasons, we chose to examine the construct at the between-person level. Given the increased response burden associated with lengthier daily surveys (Uy et al., 2017), we decided against assessing coworker feedback seeking during the daily surveys. Nevertheless, future research delving into the role of daily coworker feedback seeking in the creative process could provide valuable new insights, extending our current findings. Furthermore, it is worth noting that contextual factors, such as organizational climate, task characteristics, and leader behavior, may influence the congruence between DFRC and DWTR and its impact on creativity. Consequently, we recommend that future research investigates these contextual contingencies to better comprehend how they may either enhance or mitigate the proposed relationships outlined in our study.

Finally, in line with the greater attention to the inquiry strategy over the monitoring strategy in the feedback-seeking literature (Ashford et al., 2016), we operationalize feedback seeking as inquiry behavior. However, feedback-seeking strategies comprise feedback inquiry and monitoring. Given the non-redundant effect of monitoring on creativity and the dearth of research on its role in the literature (Sung & Choi, 2021), we recommend that future research attend to both strategies to provide a more comprehensive understanding of feedback seeking. Notably, empirical evidence shows that the breadth of inquiry or monitoring may have divergent effects on creativity due to frequency (Sung & Choi, 2021). Therefore, future studies can expand our understanding by attending to diverse methods of feedback seeking and their distinct effects on creativity.

Despite these empirical and conceptual challenges, this study complements the literature on creativity and motivation by exploring the potential joint effect of distinct proactive motives and examining its within-person process. The analysis demonstrates the significance of daily fluctuations and the resulting congruence between DFRC and DWTR in shaping daily idea generation, ultimately affecting employee creative performance. These within-person psychological developments leading to employee creative performance are strengthened by positive social interactions, such as seeking feedback from others. Researchers can further investigate the functions of the temporally sensitive and evolving motivational states and their interactions in the context of creativity in the workplace by identifying organizational and individual factors, which drive these daily motivational processes.

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