

THE ROLE OF LEADERSHIP IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COLLECTIVE ORGANIZATIONAL EFFICACY AND COLLECTIVE WORK ENGAGEMENT

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Abstract

The present study analyses the mediating role of transactional and transformational leadership in the relationship between collective organizational efficacy and collective work engagement. The data was collected from 86 employees working in nine Italian companies of the Food & Beverage sector. The questionnaire included three scales: a) collective organizational efficacy (Bohn, 2010); b) collective work engagement (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003); c) Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) (Bass & Avolio, 1995). Results showed positive relationship between one component of transactional leadership – contingent reward – and collective work engagement. This result confirms that even if it lacks inspirational appeal in some situations contingent reward could be a rather effective leadership style contributing to employees' work engagement. Also a positive relationship was found between collective work engagement and three components of transformational leadership – intellectual stimulation, idealized influence (behavior) and idealized influence (attributed) that is consistent with the studies that investigated individual work engagement and leadership. The mediation effects of contingent reward and transformational leadership on the relationship between collective organizational efficacy and collective work engagement were confirmed. This result has an important practical implication: managers can promote collective work engagement through development of a sense of collective organizational efficacy using not only transformational leadership style but also contingent reward. Directions of future research are discussed.

Keywords: collective organizational efficacy, collective work engagement, transactional leadership, contingent reward, transformational leadership.

Introduction

Research studies have revealed that collective organizational efficacy predicts collective work engagement (Kravchenko & Zappalà, 2017). However, it has not been explored which psychological constructs have an impact on the relationship between beliefs about organizational efficacy and the demonstration of high interpersonal energy, persistence and collective immersion in work. In this study we explored the role of transactional and transformational leadership in mediating the relations between collective organizational efficacy and collective work engagement.

Collective organizational efficacy is a belief of members of an organization about the organization's capacity to produce desired outcomes (Bandura, 1997). Collective organizational efficacy is determined by successful or unsuccessful patterns of previous performance and by some internal organizational processes, such as communication, collaboration, or cohesion (Heuzé, Raimbault, & Fontayne, 2006; Kozub & McDonnell, 2000; Martínez-Santos & Ciruelos, 2013; Paskevich, Brawley, Dorsch, & Widmeyer, 1999; Spink, 1990). Collective organizational efficacy has implications for organizational commitment (Borgogni, Dello Russo, Petitta, & Latham, 2009; Borgogni, Petitta, & Mastrorilli, 2010; Petitta & Borgogni, 2011), organizational citizenship behavior (Chen & Kao, 2011), job satisfaction (Stephanou, Gkavras, & Doukeridou, 2013), work engagement (Borgogni, Petitta, & Steca, 2001), and collective work engagement (Kravchenko & Zappalà, 2017; Salanova, Llorens, Cifre, Martinez, & Schaufeli, 2003).

Collective work engagement refers to the judgement of employees about how strongly their work group as a whole is involved and concentrated on work (Richardson & West, 2010). Collective work engagement occurs when employees work together, communicate with each other, transfer their willingness to work, and influence their colleagues (Bakker, van Emmerik, & Euwema, 2006). Little research is currently available on collective work engagement. Bakker et al. (2006) found that team work engagement appears when engaged employees share their positive attitudes and influence their colleagues. Salanova et al. (2003) investigated the relationship between collective work engagement and performance, and found out that collective efficacy determines levels of collective work engagement and moderate task performance. Kravchenko and Zappala (2017) confirmed that collective organizational efficacy predicts all three dimensions of collective work engagement – vigor, dedication, and absorption. Nevertheless, Bakker, Albrecht and Leiter (2011) noticed that literature on collective work engagement is rather limited, and further research of the construct is necessary.

Leadership behaviour is an important determinant of collective efficacy and work engagement (Dussault, Payette, & Leroux, 2008; Kovjanic, Schuh, & Jonas, 2013). Previous research demonstrated a positive correlation of transformational leadership style with collective efficacy and work engagement (Bradford, 2011; Ghadi, Fernando, & Caputi, 2013). Still few studies investigated the relationship of collective organizational efficacy, collective work engagement and transactional and transformational leadership. The present study aims to fill up this gap in the literature and extend theorization of these constructs.

Theory

Collective Organizational Efficacy

In organizations people act together to achieve outcomes that they are not able to achieve on their own. They accomplish the goals by not simply sharing knowledge and skills, but also interacting together and coordinating efforts. During this process people share beliefs between each other about their collective power: about their and others' capabilities and the ability of the whole organization to produce high performance. Bandura (1997) called such beliefs collective organizational efficacy.

As Bandura (2000) stated, “the locus of perceived collective efficacy resides in the minds of group members” (p. 76). This means that people implement their individual behavior and judge how well other members of their team act and execute their roles. For example, in judging efficacy, a sales manager considers the sales volume that he was able to achieve, the quality of products that the production department ensures, the advertising support for these products provided by the marketing department, and, of course, how well they all work together as an organization. Thus, collective organizational efficacy combines individual factors and interactive ones. It is admitted that people in a team have different perceptions of collective organizational efficacy, and for this reason Bandura (2000) suggested using personal responses about team’s capability operating as a whole in order to measure perceived collective organizational efficacy.

Collective organizational efficacy predicts how well work teams can manage their collective effort in order to perform their work activities (Katz-Navon & Erez, 2005; Little & Madigan, 1997). Patterns of own or similar organizations’ past success (failure) are important determinants of collective organizational efficacy as they lead to development of positive (negative) beliefs about ability and probability to achieve organizational goals in the future (Bandura, 1997).

Leadership behavior is another important determinant of collective organizational efficacy. The theory of transformational leadership emphasizes that effective leaders encourage their subordinates and enhance the perceptions of their capabilities (Bass, 1985; Dussault et al., 2008; Ross & Gray, 2006). The study of Bradford (2011) indicated that work teams guided by transformational leaders had greater levels of collective efficacy.

Other internal organizational processes, such as communication, collaboration, and cohesion, also determine a sense of collective organizational efficacy (Heuzé et al., 2006; Kozub & McDonnell, 2000; Martínez-Santos & Ciruelos, 2013; Paskevich et al., 1999; Spink, 1990).

Collective organizational efficacy has implications for organizational commitment (Borgogni et al., 2009; Borgogni et al., 2010; Petitta & Borgogni, 2011), organizational citizenship behavior (Chen & Kao, 2011), engagement and job satisfaction (Borgogni et al., 2001; Stephanou et al., 2013).

Collective organizational efficacy could not be considered as an objective evaluation of organizational performance because it just treats subjective employees’ perceptions and beliefs. But when employees perceive high collective efficacy, they most likely make additional efforts toward organizational goal accomplishment. For this reason the construct of collective organizational efficacy is important to understanding the issues of organizational performance, and research in organizational psychology needs to investigate this construct.

Collective Work Engagement

The concept of collective work engagement emerges from individual work engagement through collaboration and communication of employees (Bakker et al., 2006; Gracia, Salanova, Grau, & Cifre, 2013). Collective work engagement

refers to the judgement of employees about how strongly their work group as a whole is involved and concentrated on the work (Richardson & West, 2010). Vigor reflects interpersonal energy. Dedication characterizes the work group's identification to a vision, its commitment to tasks and roles, and persistence when the group deals with challenges. Absorption characterizes a level of collective immersion in work when the work group finds it difficult to detach itself from its tasks.

Collective work engagement is based on social interactions. Through these interactions group's members share information and form close relationships; people also combine their knowledge, skills, and abilities. As Richardson and West (2010) stated, collective work engagement manifests particularly in situations of high challenges when only collective resources and shared experience can bring a resolve to current problems.

Job and personal resources (e.g., autonomy, self-efficacy, or resilience) predict work engagement (Bakker & Leiter, 2010; Barbier, Hansez, Chmiel, & Demerouti, 2013; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Schaufeli, Bakker, & van Rhenen, 2009). Job resources are most predictive of work engagement under conditions of high job demands (e.g., workload, performance expectations, or role conflicts) because they help employees to cope better with job demands (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007).

Work engagement stimulates job satisfaction and organizational commitment, and reduces absenteeism and turnover (Salanova et al., 2003; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez-Roma, & Bakker, 2002). Engaged employees are more likely to improve their work and increase their professional knowledge, they are highly-efficacious and problem focused too (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008; Rothmann & Storm, 2003; Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2007, 2009a). Work engagement also has a positive impact on job performance that was confirmed in a wide range of studies (de Beer, Rothmann, & Pienaar, 2012; Hakanen, Schaufeli, & Ahola, 2008; Halbesleben & Wheeler, 2008; Kim, Kolb, & Kim, 2013; Robertson, Birch, & Cooper, 2012; Salanova, Agut, & Peiry, 2005; Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2009b).

Little research is currently available on collective work engagement. Bakker et al. (2006) found that team-level work engagement was related to individuals' engagement. Kravchenko and Zappala (2017) confirmed that collective organizational efficacy predicts collective work engagement. The results of Salanova et al. (2003) confirmed that collective efficacy determines levels of collective work engagement and moderate task performance. Nevertheless, Bakker et al. (2011) noticed that literature on collective work engagement is rather limited, and further research of the construct is necessary.

Transactional and Transformational Leadership

Transactional leadership focuses on the exchanges between leaders and their followers, and occurs when a leader rewards or disciplines followers according to the results of their performance. Transformational leadership refers to the process of engagement, motivation and reinforcement of morality in both the leader and the followers, and pays much attention to followers' needs, motives, and emotions (Bass, 1985).

Transformational leadership is positively related to non-financial performance (e.g., customer satisfaction), higher followers' satisfaction, psychological well-being of followers, and commitment (Arnold, Turner, Barling, Kelloway, & McKee, 2007; Avolio, Zhu, Koh, & Bhatia, 2004; Erkutlu, 2008; Lowe, Kroeck, & Sivasubramaniam, 1996; Patiar & Mia, 2009). Chun, Yammarino, Dionne, Sosik, and Moon (2009) and Hater and Bass (1988) confirmed that transformational leadership enhances work team performance. Several studies confirmed positive interrelations between transformational leadership and work engagement (Ghadi et al., 2013; Kovjanic et al., 2013). We expect to find positive relationships between transformational leadership and work engagement at the collective level too:

H1: Transformational leadership (intellectual stimulation and idealized influence) is positively related to collective work engagement.

Bass (1985, 1998) stated that transformational leadership is more effective than transactional one, while contingent reward is considered as an effective type of transactional leadership (Avolio, Waldman, & Einstein, 1988; Bass, 1998; Walumbwa, Wu, & Orwa, 2008). Previous research found that in certain situations contingent reward could be even more effective than transformational behavior (Judge & Piccolo, 2004). We suppose that as an effective leadership style contingent reward could have the same relationship with collective work engagement as transformational leadership. Therefore we hypothesize that

H2: Contingent reward is positively related to collective work engagement.

Previous studies demonstrated that collective organizational efficacy predicts collective work engagement (Kravchenko & Zappalà, 2017). We expect that leadership style will mediate the effect of collective organizational efficacy on collective work engagement. The research model is displayed graphically in Figure 1.

Therefore, the main hypotheses of the study are the following:

H3: Transformational leadership (intellectual stimulation and idealized influence) mediates the relationship between collective organizational efficacy and collective work engagement.

And if H2 is true, we hypothesize that

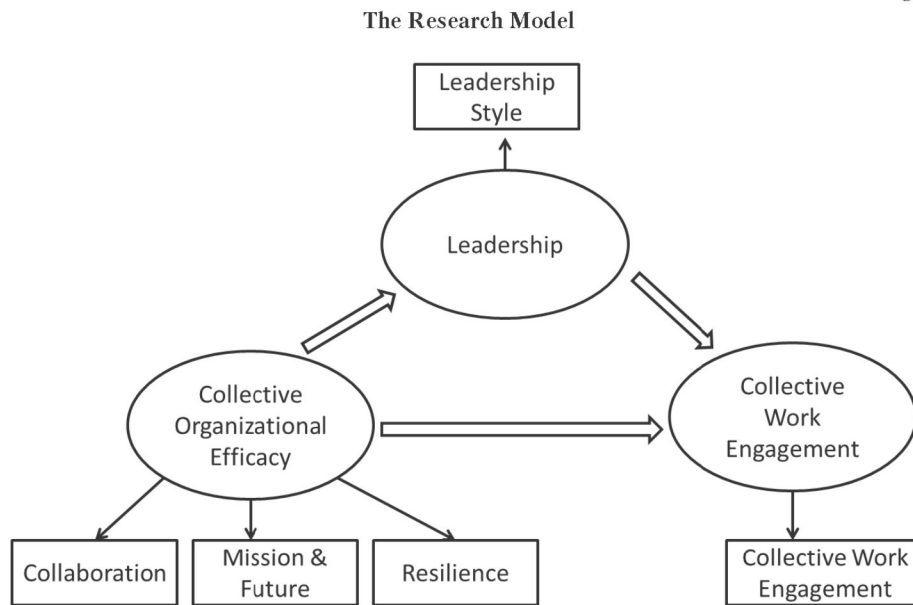
H4: Contingent reward mediates the relationship between collective organizational efficacy and collective work engagement.

Method

Participants

Eighty six employees from nine Italian companies of the Food & Beverage Sector participated in the present study. Respondents were 41.5% females and 58.5% males; ages ranged from less than 25 years (5.2%) to 36–50 years (50.6%), with the majority between 36 and 50 years. As for their education, 32.2% respondents had a secondary school diploma and 28.7% a university degree. Total years in the company ranged from less than two years (11.1%) to more than 10 years (40%) with the majority of respondents working in the company for more than 10 years.

Figure 1



Measures

Collective organizational efficacy ($\alpha = .93$) was measured using the 17-items scale developed by Bohn (2010) and adapted in Italian language by Capone and Petrillo (2015) that measures three dimensions: collaboration (nine items; e.g. “In this organization everyone works together very effectively”), mission and future (five items, e.g. “This organization is confident about its future”), and resilience (three items, e.g. “This organization has no hope of surviving more than a year or two”). Respondents indicated their agreement with each statement using a 6-point Likert scale (1 = “Strongly disagree”, 6 = “Strongly agree”).

Collective work engagement ($\alpha = .90$) was measured using 8-items of Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES), adapted shorten version from Schaufeli and Bakker (2003). Following previous researches of Salanova et al. (2003) and Kravchenko and Zappala (2017) all items were reformulated in order to adapt them at the collective level, for instance, “I am immersed in my work” was changed to “Individuals in this organization are immersed in their work”. The item “When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work” from the scale vigor was eliminated because it could not be adapted on the collective level. The scale measures three dimensions: vigor (two items; e.g. “Individuals in this organization feel bursting with energy at their work”), dedication (three items; e.g. “Individuals in this organization are enthusiastic about their job”), and absorption (three items; e.g. “Individuals in this organization are immersed in their work”). According to the suggestion of Schaufeli and Bakker (2003) the total score of collective work

engagement was used. Respondents indicated their agreement with each statement, using a 7-point Likert scale (0 = "Never", 6 = "Always, every day").

Transactional and transformational leadership ($\alpha = .92$) was measured using 12-items of MLQ adapted from Bass and Avolio (1995) that measures one component of transactional leadership – contingent reward (three items) and three components of transformational leadership – intellectual stimulation (three items), idealized influence (behaviour) (three items), idealized influence (attributed) (three items). Examples of the items are not provided because of copyright restrictions. Respondents indicated their agreement with each statement, using a 5-point Likert scale (0 = "Not at all", 4 = "Frequently, if not always").

Items were randomized to minimise the response set. The questionnaire was developed in the Italian language. The items of all scales were taken from an Italian version of these scales.

Procedure

The questionnaires were handed to the employees by the researcher and were filled in writing by respondents. Participation in the study was voluntary and confidentiality was guaranteed.

Measurement Issues

In the present study we investigate individual beliefs about collective constructs – how well people in an organization are able to perform (collective organizational efficacy) and how strongly employees of a given organization are involved in their work (collective work engagement). As stated by Bandura (2000), "it is people acting coordinatively on a shared belief, not a disembodied group mind that is doing cognizing, aspiring, motivating, and regulating" (p. 76). Therefore, in spite of all scales referring to an organization rather than to a single individual, we do not aggregate the data at the organizational level.

The same approach was used in previous studies of collective efficacy and collective work engagement. For example, Borgogni et al. (2009) assessed collective efficacy measuring respondents' beliefs about the ability of the city hall as a whole to cope effectively with the daily routines. All items of collective efficacy scale referred to a group perspective and were formulated as statements of individuals responding to issues related to the team (e.g., "I believe that my work group is able to cope effectively with emergencies"). As concerns collective work engagement, Salanova et al. (2003) measured it at the individual level adapting the standard UWES at the work group level and reformulating the items, as it was described above.

Fit Indices

We used Structural Equation Modelling (SEM), implemented by the AMOS program (Arbuckle, 1997), for the data analyses. Maximum-likelihood estimation

methods were used, and the goodness of fit of the models was evaluated using the following indices: (a) the chi-square goodness-of-fit statistic, (b) the root-mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA), (c) p of close fit (PCLOSE), (d) normed fit index (NFI), (e) the comparative fit index (CFI). RMSEA values of less than .08 are assumed to indicate a good fit between the hypothesized model and the observed data. For the NFI and CFI the values greater than .90 are considered as indicating a good fit (Byrne, 2001). As the sample size was not large we used bootstrapping method (Preacher & Hayes, 2004) in order to assess the significance of a mediation effect.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 shows mean values, standard deviations, and intercorrelations of the scales. Intellectual stimulation, idealized influence (behavior) and idealized influence (attributed) are positively correlated with collaboration (mean $r = .41$), mission & future (mean $r = .50$), and resilience (mean $r = .45$). Also contingent reward is positively correlated with collaboration ($r = .43$), mission & future ($r = .47$), and resilience ($r = .36$).

The components of transformational leadership – intellectual stimulation, idealized influence (behavior) and idealized influence (attributed) – are positively correlated with collective work engagement (mean $r = .43$) that confirms the hypothesis 1. Besides, there is a positive significant correlation between a component of transactional leadership, contingent reward, and collective work engagement ($r = .49$) that also confirms the hypothesis 2.

Table 1

Means, Standard Deviations, and Intercorrelations

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Collaboration	4.30	0.85							
2. Mission & Future	4.55	0.84	.75						
3. Resilience	5.25	0.97	.43	.62					
4. Collective work engagement	3.90	1.25	.55	.52	.37				
5. Intellectual stimulation	2.90	0.82	.46	.51	.45	.44			
6. Idealized influence (behavior)	3.15	0.87	.42	.46	.40	.40	.73		
7. Idealized influence (attributed)	3.00	0.88	.36	.52	.50	.44	.72	.63	
8. Contingent reward	2.91	0.85	.43	.47	.36	.49	.77	.76	.67

Note. All correlations are significant at $p < .01$.

Structural Equation Modelling

According to Baron and Kenny (1986), in order to test the hypotheses 3 and 4 we fit our research model to the data. The results are given in Table 2. They demonstrate that the research model fits the data with all indices meeting the criteria for both transformational leadership and contingent reward as mediators.

Figure 2 illustrates the test of the mediation effect of transformational leadership (intellectual stimulation and idealized influence behavior and attributed) on the relationship between collective organizational efficacy and collective work engagement.

Figure 3 illustrates the test of the mediation effect of contingent reward in the relationship between collective organizational efficacy and collective work engagement.

Table 1

The Fit of the Research Model

	2	df	RMSEA	PCLOSE	NFI	CFI
Mediation effect of transformational leadership	40.39***	12	.08	.04	.97	.98
Mediation effect of contingent reward	44.07***	12	.08	.02	.95	.96

*** $p < 0.001$.

Figure 2

The Test of Indirect Effect of Collective Organizational Efficacy on Collective Work Engagement through Transformational Leadership

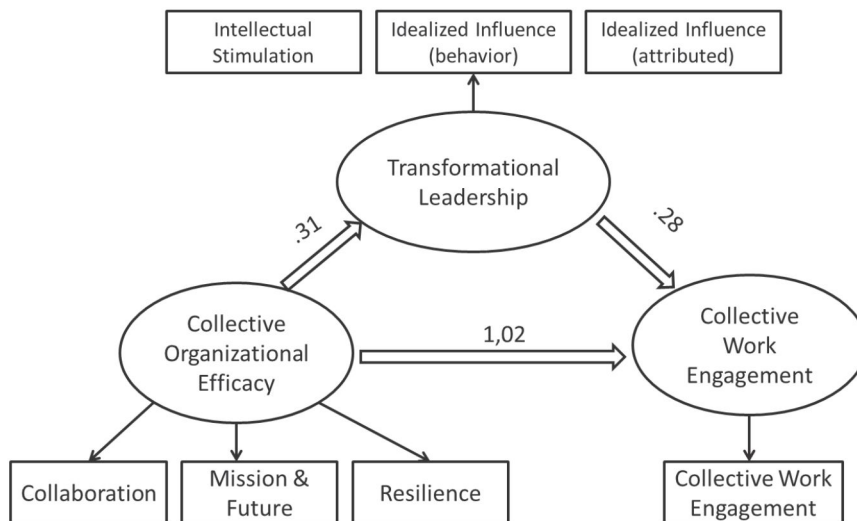


Figure 3

The Test of Indirect Effect of Collective Organizational Efficacy on Collective Work Engagement through Contingent Reward

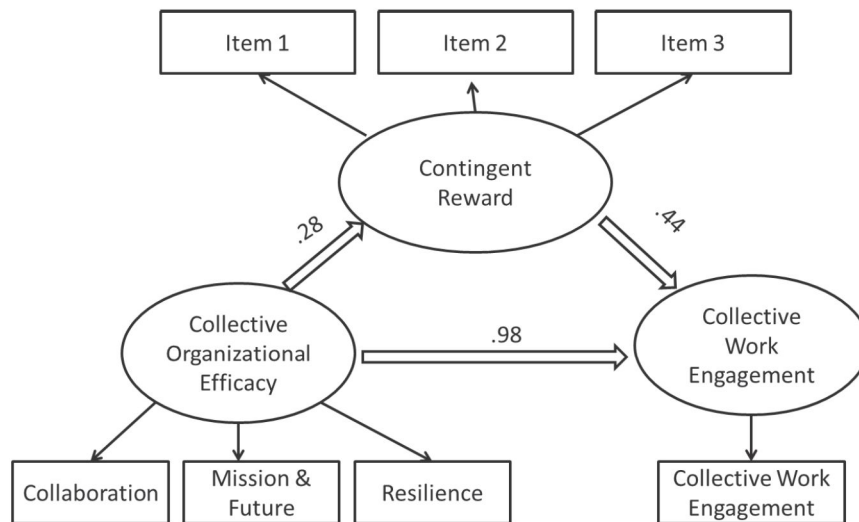


Table 3

The Results of the Bootstrap of the Mediation Effect

Hypothesis	Direct effect	Indirect effect
Mediation effect of transformational leadership	1.02***	.085**
Mediation effect of contingent reward	.984***	.123*

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

As the sample was not large, we used bootstrapping method (2000 bootstrap samples and 90% of bias-corrected confidence intervals) in order to investigate a kind of mediation effect (Preacher & Hayes, 2004). Table 3 demonstrates that the relationship between collective organizational efficacy and collective work engagement in a presence of mediators, transformational leadership or contingent reward, is still significant. Therefore we can conclude about a partial mediation of leadership on the relationship between these constructs.

Thus, the hypotheses were supported by the data, and the results show the partial mediation of leadership in the relationship between collective organizational efficacy and collective work engagement.

Discussion and Summary

The results confirmed the positive relation between collective work engagement and transformational leadership that is consistent with the studies that inves-

tigated individual work engagement and leadership (Ghadi et al., 2013; Kovjanic et al., 2013; Tims, Bakker, & Xanthopoulou, 2011). The results also demonstrate that transformational leadership mediates the relationship between collective organizational efficacy and collective work engagement. When employees perceive leader's determination and inspiration, the positive mood and optimism spread among employees, and they become more motivated to dedicate their extra effort to work.

According to Bakker, Albrecht and Leiter (2011), transactional leadership lacks motivational power and inspirational appeal, and for this reason the authors suppose that it will unlikely contribute to employees' work engagement. However, the findings of the present study demonstrate that the most effective component of transactional leadership, contingent reward, is positively related to collective work engagement. Moreover, the results of the study confirm that contingent reward mediates the relationship between collective organizational efficacy and collective work engagement, as transformational leadership does. Contingent reward leaders assign what needs to be done, clarify roles and objectives, and promise rewards. Such transparency and predictability of the relationship between leaders and their followers reinforce employees' willingness to dedicate their extra effort on behalf of the organization. Therefore contingent reward could act as a kind of a job resource that fosters employees' achievements, and they perceive higher collective work engagement. Both in case of high and low perceived organizational capacities clear roles, goals, and instructions facilitate collective effort, and employees are likely to be concentrated on what needs to be done. Thus, the results of the present study are consistent with the findings of other authors that contingent reward could be a rather effective leadership style (Avolio et al., 1988; Bass, 1998; Judge & Piccolo, 2004; Walumbwa et al., 2008).

The present results have relevant practical implications for companies. As work engagement has a strong positive impact on job performance (Salanova et al., 2005; Xanthopoulou et al., 2009b), management should pay attention to promotion of work engagement and collective work engagement in their employees. In accordance with previous research (Kravchenko & Zappalà, 2017) our study has shown that managers can promote collective work engagement through the development of a sense of collective organizational efficacy. We have pointed out that one of the ways could be the implementation of transformational leadership or contingent reward. For example, in case employees are faced with a new and difficult task, managers may develop a sense of collective organizational efficacy if they promote sharing knowledge among employees and introduce group tasks. In addition, they may inspire employees with their vision, determine high standards of work, encourage employees to try new approaches, and stimulate their innovativeness and creativity. These will result in higher collective work engagement of employees. Instead, in case employees deal with routine or unchallenging tasks, managers may divide these tasks into small subtasks and share employees' duties in order to enhance collective organizational efficacy. Also they may establish simple short-term goals and define clear group rewards for the accomplishment of these goals. In this way they promote collective work engagement through contingent reward.

The findings invite to use the full version of MLQ in further studies in order to test a mediation effect of other components of transformational leadership – inspirational motivation and individualized consideration. This study investigated only one possible mediator of the relationship between collective organizational efficacy and collective work engagement – leadership style. Further studies are necessary in order to test other eventual mediators, such as organizational commitment and job satisfaction. Also some specific research issues should be tested in future research, such as the interaction effect of general and specific collective organizational efficacy on collective work engagement through mediation of other constructs.

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Роль лидерства во взаимосвязи между коллективной организационной эффективностью и коллективной вовлеченностью в работу**Е.М. Кравченко^а**

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Резюме

Данное исследование анализирует эффект медиации транзакционного и трансформационного лидерства во взаимосвязи между коллективной организационной эффективностью и коллективной вовлеченностью в работу. Данные были собраны среди 86 сотрудников девяти итальянских компаний, работающих в секторе пищевых продуктов и напитков. Опросник включал три шкалы: а) коллективная организационная эффективность (Bohn, 2010); б) коллективная вовлеченность в работу (Schaufeli, Bakker, 2003); в) Многофакторный опросник лидерства (MLQ) (Bass, Avolio, 1995). Результаты обнаружили положительную связь между одним из компонентов транзакционного лидерства – зависимые вознаграждения – и коллективной вовлеченностью в работу. Этот результат подтверждает, что, несмотря на то, что стиль зависимых вознаграждений не характеризуется воодушевлением сотрудников, в некоторых ситуациях он тем не менее может усиливать вовлеченность сотрудников в работу. Также положительная связь была найдена между коллективной вовлеченностью в работу и тремя компонентами трансформационного лидерства – интеллектуальное стимулирование, идейное влияние (поведенческое) и идейное влияние (личностное), что согласуется с результатами исследований индивидуальной вовлеченности в работу и лидерства. Результаты подтвердили эффект медиации зависимых вознаграждений и трансформационного лидерства во взаимосвязи между коллективной организационной эффективностью и коллективной вовлеченностью в работу. Этот результат имеет важное практическое применение: менеджеры могут влиять на коллективную вовлеченность в работу посредством развития чувства коллективной организационной эффективности, используя при этом не только трансформационное лидерство, но и стиль зависимых вознаграждений. В статье обсуждаются направления дальнейших исследований.

Ключевые слова: коллективная организационная эффективность, коллективная вовлеченность в работу, транзакционное лидерство, зависимые вознаграждения, трансформационное лидерство.

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Сфера научных интересов: организационная эффективность, вовлеченность в работу, лидерство.

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