

ABSTRACT

Motivational contagion is a process where one individual's intentions are adopted by others (Dragoni & Kuenzi, 2012). Leaders enact motivational contagion when they share their goal orientations with followers. The present work proposes applying motivational contagion to a leader-follower dynamic to identify how it occurs and if substitutes/neutralizers to leadership reduce the rates of motivational contagion. Data from 300 followers will be collected using MTurk. It is hypothesized that motivational contagion occurs because leaders behaviorally establish and reinforce a desired climate that signals similar goal orientations in followers. The presence of substitutes/neutralizers to leadership are hypothesized to reduce the rates of motivational contagion. A potential theoretical implication of this research is a fuller explicative understanding of motivational contagion's process between leaders and followers. A potential practical implication is behavioral guidance for leaders to share a desired goal orientation with followers for stronger work group effectiveness.

INTRODUCTION

- Motivational Contagion- a process where one person adopts the motives of another (Dragoni & Kuenzi, 2012)
- Goal orientations- general motives to learn, perform well, or avoid performing poorly (Vandewalle et al., 2019)
- Leaders influence followers to pursue shared goals (Northouse, p.7, 2016), enacted by goal orientations
- Rates of motivational contagion differ across organizational structures (Dragoni & Kuenzi, 2012)
 - Substitutes/neutralizers to leadership may explain that discrepancy
- No theoretically based process of motivational contagion between leaders and followers has been tested

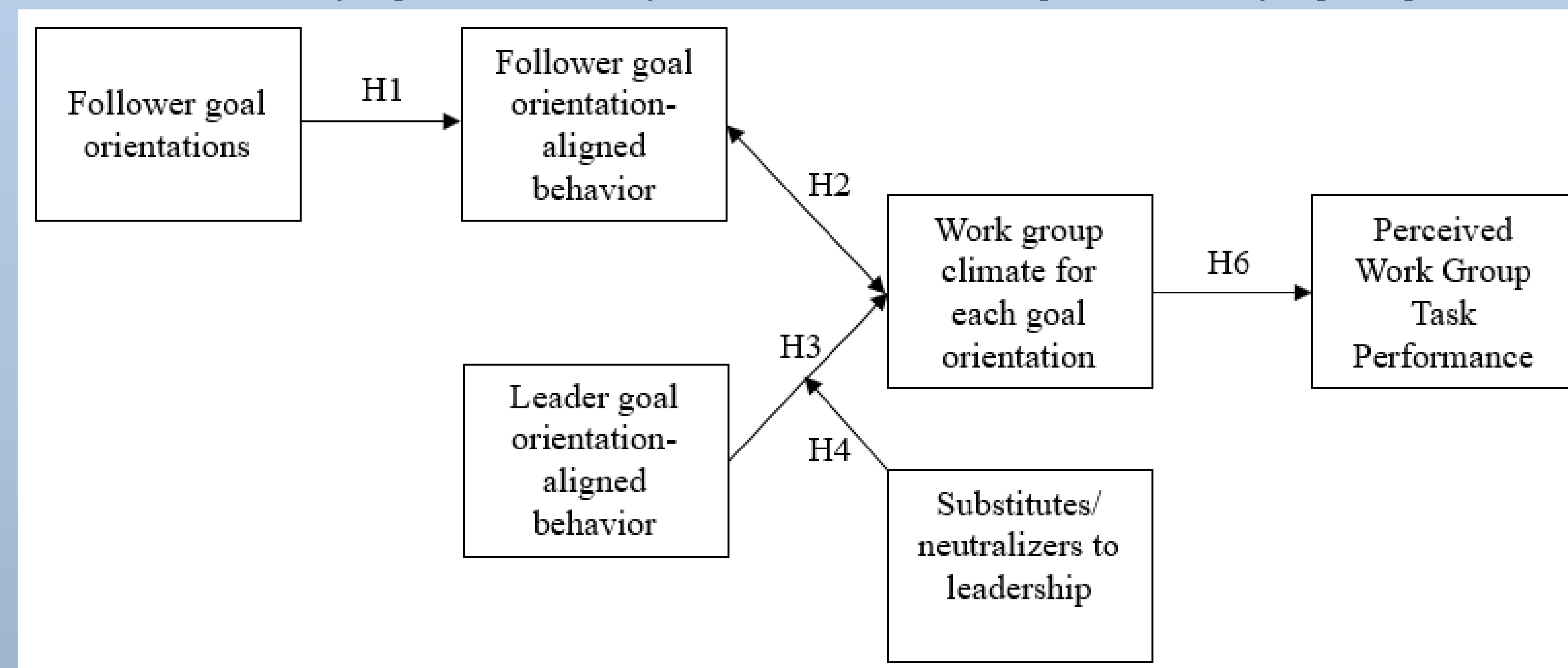
Leadership is an interactive process



INTRODUCTION CONT.

Hypotheses

- H1: Follower goal orientations will positively relate to their respective goal orientation-aligned behaviors
- H2: Followers' goal orientation-aligned behaviors will positively relate to the work group climate for each respective goal orientation
- H3: Leader goal orientation-aligned behaviors will positively relate to the work group climate for each respective goal orientation.
- H4: Substitutes/neutralizers to leadership will moderate the relationship between leader goal orientation-aligned behaviors and the respective work group climate for each respective goal orientation, such that more substitutes/neutralizers to leadership will decrease the aforementioned relationship's strength.
- H5: Leader, as compared to follower, goal orientation-aligned behaviors will more strongly relate to their work group climate for each respective goal orientation.
- H6: The work group climate for each goal orientation will relate to perceived work group task performance



PROPOSED METHOD

- Participants
 - 300 followers from across the U.S. recruited through MTurk
- Measures
 - Follower Goal Orientations (Vandewalle, 1997)
 - 13 items on a 6-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 6 = *strongly agree*) assess how motivated followers are to learn, perform well, or avoid performing poorly
 - Follower and Leader Goal Orientation-Aligned Behavior (created from Dragoni, 2005)
 - 9 items on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = *not very often*, 5 = *very often*) assess frequency of initiating goal orientation-aligned behavior
 - Perceived Work Group Climate for Each Goal Orientation (created by modifying Vandewalle, 1997)
 - 13 items on a 6-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 6 = *strongly agree*) assess how motivated followers perceive their work group is to learn, perform well, or avoid performing poorly
 - Substitutes/Neutralizers to Leadership (Podsakoff & MacKenzie, 1993)
 - 41 items on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*) assess substitutes/neutralizers to leadership
 - Perceived Work Group Task Performance (Barrick et al., 1998)
 - 8 items on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = *consistently below requirements*, 5 = *consistently above requirements*) assess perceived work group task performance

ANTICIPATED RESULTS

- Results are intended to support the aforementioned hypotheses as such: motivational contagion occurs by leaders—as compared to followers—more directly shaping the work group climate for a given goal orientation through goal orientation-aligned behavior. That is, assuming that substitutes/neutralizers to leadership do not prevent such motivational contagion. These hypotheses can be addressed with a Pearson correlations and hierarchical linear regressions.

DISCUSSION

- Implications
 - Motivational contagion with leaders and followers may have a theoretically based and empirically supported framework
 - Leaders may have step-by-step instructions on how to share goal orientations with followers
- Limitations
 - Attraction-Selection-Attrition theory may artificially create motivational alignment
 - Sampling only followers is practical, yet ignorant of direct leader influences
- Future Directions
 - Conduct this study with a different sampling procedure to represent entire work groups
 - Identify which goal orientations most effectively assist which types of work groups (e.g. production, sales, medical, etc.)
- Conclusion
 - Motivational contagion is a helpful method for leaders to motivate followers in a common direction. Its process should thus be better understood to reach desirable group outcomes

REFERENCES

- Barrick, M. R., Stewart, G. L., Neubert, M. J., & Mount, M. K. (1998). Relating member ability and personality to work-processes and team effectiveness. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 83(3), 377–391.
- Dragoni, L. (2005). Understanding the emergence of state goal orientation in organizational work groups: the role of leadership and multilevel climate perceptions. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 90(6), 1084.
- Dragoni, L., & Kuenzi, M. (2012). Better understanding work unit goal orientation: Its emergence and impact under different types of work unit structure. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 97(5), 1032.
- Podsakoff, P. M., MacKenzie, S. B., & Fetter, R. (1993). Substitutes for leadership and the management of professionals. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 4(1), 1-44.
- Vandewalle, D. (1997). Development and validation of a work domain goal orientation instrument. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 57(6), 995-1015.