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Followers’ Active Engagement: Between Personal and Organizational Dimensions

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ABSTRACT. Il contributo presenta una ricerca sul tema della followership nelle organizzazioni, proponendosi di individuare alcuni possibili antecedenti del coinvolgimento attivo dei follower nella relazione con il leader. La ricerca, che ha coinvolto 390 soggetti provenienti da diversi contesti lavorativi, mette in evidenza il ruolo di alcune dimensioni personali (strategie di coping e apertura all’esperienza) e organizzative (comportamenti di cittadinanza organizzativa) nelle dinamiche di followership, e consente di formulare importanti indicazioni per le politiche di gestione delle risorse umane e, nello specifico, per la formazione aziendale.

SUMMARY. Introduction: An increasing number of scholars argue that followers are a precondition for “successful” organizations. Nevertheless, followership has received scant attention in the literature. Starting from a theoretical analysis of the issue, this contribution aims to answer some questions regarding possible antecedents of Followers’ Active Engagement (FAE), a specific followership behavior described by Kelley (1988, 1992), described in previous works, which implies the propensity to take initiative, participate actively and be self-starters. Methods. A questionnaire was administered to 390 respondents from heterogeneous work settings. The questionnaire includes a personal data section and eight measures: FAE; three personal/dispositional variables (extraversion, intellect, and avoiding coping), three individual-organization interaction variables (organizational citizenship behaviors directed at individuals – OCBI – and the organization – OCBO –, leader-member exchange), and a Lie scale as control variable. Data was analyzed with PASW 18. After analyzing reliability and descriptives, the relationship between the variables was explored using correlations and hierarchical multiple regression. Results. FAE is related to six variables (25% explained variance). Three were positively related: in decreasing order, OCBO, intellect, OCBI, and Lie scale. Conversely, avoiding coping and gender were negatively related. Gender becomes significant only in the second step of the regression when dispositional variables are included. Conclusions. This study adds to the understanding of followers’ Active Engagement, for example by measuring some organizational dimensions as its antecedents, and has practical implications for training and human resource management policies. Further studies should clarify the dynamics that influence followers’ behavior and the dynamics of the mutual relationship between the leader’s and followers’ behavior, shedding light on the possible consequences for the organization, in terms of quality of work life and productivity.

Keywords: Followership, Active Engagement, Leadership
INTRODUCTION

The gap of attention concerning followership has been said to be one of the four “inalienable truths of leadership” (Dixon, 2008, p. 159), or “one of the most interesting omissions in theory and research on leadership” (Avolio, Walumbwa & Weber, 2009, p. 434). Contrasting with this lack of attention, and one of the primary reasons for further investigations, is the pervasiveness of followership in the workplace: “we are all followers in some way” (Steger, Manners Jr & Zimmerer, 1982, p. 22) and “even those with the highest levels of leadership responsibilities, answer to someone” (Tanoff & Barlow, 2002, p. 157). Not only does every organization have more followers than leaders (Collinson, 2006), but many people (especially those in middle management) find themselves alternating between the two roles in the course of their work (Kelley, 1988, 1992).

Current changes in the world of organizations call for leaders who are able not only to face uncertainties (Montgomery, 2008), and to influence their team’s change readiness (Caldwell, Chatman, O’Reilly, Ormiston & Lapiz, 2008), but also to develop followers who can provide solid and positive support in these difficult times.

As Collinson (2006) emphasizes, an increasing number of scholars argue that followers are a precondition for successful organizations, a stance confirmed by Agbo’s findings (2009): in his study more than 98% of 302 respondents agree with statements regarding the influence that effective followers have on the organization and on the work group. Thus, followers “who recognize a leader’s flawed thinking and challenge the leader to consider alternative courses of action [...] are highly desirable in today’s organizational environments” (Carsten, Uhl-Bien, West, Patera & McGregor, 2010, p. 557). This points to the importance of proactive followership: a type of followership which can be better expressed if the organizational context is suitable (Carsten et al., 2010).

Followers’ Active Engagement

This study chooses to consider a specific aspect of followership behavior described by Kelley (1988, 1992), that is followers’ Active Engagement, using the scale he proposed (1992) to measure this behavior. Kelley is not the only scholar to emphasize followers’ importance in organizational dynamics, and recent work has built fruitfully on his definition of followership (Carsten et al., 2010; Uhl-Bien & Pillai, 2007). Nevertheless, Kelley is acknowledged to have been the first to draw attention to why people follow (Blackshear, 2003), as well as to the topic of followership per se (Baker, 2007; Crossman & Crossman, 2011). In addition, his followership scale, although not devoid of critical aspects (Blanchard, Welbourne, Gilmore & Bullock, 2009; Tanoff & Barlow, 2002), has been adopted in a number of investigations published in the last decade.
Using artifacts for practices tuning and performance refining

The Nursing Record artifact between affordance and agency: A case study

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\textbf{ABSTRACT.} Il lavoro presenta un’esperienza di ricerca-intervento condotta per accompagnare un cambiamento organizzativo di un ospedale di medie dimensioni del Nord Italia. Il contributo sollecita una riflessione sul ruolo degli artefatti quali organizzatori delle pratiche lavorative, offrendo una prospettiva di ricognizione e analisi dei processi di costruzione e condivisione della conoscenza. Viene evidenziato il ruolo di mediatore svolto dagli artefatti e dalle inscriptions a essi relative, rispetto a conoscenze tacite e a pratiche operative circolanti all’interno di uno specifico contesto organizzativo.

\textbf{SUMMARY. Introduction:} The paper addresses the role of organizational artifacts in mediating the tacit, implicit and informal knowledge embedded in working practice, routines and taken-for-granted activities. Analyzing organizational artifacts offers the possibility to explore the relationship between affordance and agency in the workplace. \textit{Methods.} Nowadays, healthcare contexts are forced to engage in ongoing organizational change. The plurality of actors that inhabit health care services cope with pressures for reorganization and are often challenged to update their operational systems. The paper describes an action research which took place in an (Italian public) hospital during a reorganization aimed at changing the paradigm of healthcare delivery. The contribution highlights the main phases of the intervention, focusing on the revision process of the Nursing Record as crucial artifact. \textit{Results.} Participants tried to make the Record easier, clearer, closer to the patient condition and more connected to the Medical Record. The new Record needed to be effective in identifying the diagnosis, the therapeutic problems and solutions for each patient, and the correct evaluation system requested. Changing the Record, moreover, entailed a professional accountability both as social responsibility for own daily activity and as responsibility to the relational and transactive processes in which practitioners are engaged. \textit{Conclusions.} Artifacts can be seen as mediating objects that spread knowledge and meanings, thus founding the cooperative actions and the possibility to share working cultures. In this direction, the paper proposes new research paths for inquiring situated experiences of transformative agency and and discusses innovative methodological options for developing training interventions.

\textbf{Keywords: Artifacts, Healthcare organizations, Transformative agency}

\section*{INTRODUCTION}

The theoretical framework of this study is rooted on the tradition of practice-based research (Gherardi, 2006, 2008, 2009) and workplace studies (Engeström, 2010; Engeström & Middleton, 1996; Hutchins, 1995; Luff, Hindmarsch & Heath, 2000). These traditions recognize a double register of knowledge (Eraut, 2000): the explicit theoretical and
Linguistic assessment of children with Specific Language Impairment with the BVL_4-12

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ABSTRACT. I Disturbi Specifici del Linguaggio (DSL) sono caratterizzati da alterazioni nello sviluppo del linguaggio in bambini che, per il resto, presentano un normale sviluppo. I disturbi linguistici osservabili in questi bambini possono differire anche radicalmente da individuo a individuo. Diventa quindi importante estendere l’analisi delle loro abilità linguistiche alle interrelazioni tra abilità lessicali, grammaticali e discorsive. Per questo motivo in questo studio le caratteristiche linguistiche e narrative in bambini con DSL sono state attentamente valutate e confrontate con quelle di un gruppo di bambini con normale sviluppo mediante somministrazione della Batteria per la Valutazione del Linguaggio in Bambini dai 4 ai 12 anni (Marini e coll. 2014). Rispetto ai controlli, i bambini con DSL avevano generalizzati disturbi nella comprensione linguistica che risparmiavano solamente le abilità di discriminazione fonologica. Sul versante della produzione, pur non presentando disturbi fonetici o morfologici avevano marcate difficoltà di selezione lessicale che, nel compito narrativo, contribuivano in modo significativo a diminuire i livelli di coerenza locale e di informatività dei loro campioni di linguaggio narrativo.

SUMMARY. Introduction: Specific Language Impairments (SLI) are characterized by language delay in children with otherwise normal development. As language is a complex cognitive process, the linguistic deficits may significantly vary from person to person. Therefore, it is important to extend the analysis of their linguistic skills to the interrelations between lexical, grammatical and discourse skills. The present study was designed to analyze the linguistic and narrative skills of a group of children with diagnosis of SLI compared to those of a group of children with typical development matched for age, level of education and mean length of utterance. The participants with SLI had a significant impairment of linguistic comprehension that spared only phonological abilities. Furthermore, they showed no phonetic-phonological or morphological impairments in production but experienced lexical selection difficulties. As a third result, they had significant problems in selecting words with clear referents and this reduced both the levels of local coherence of their narratives and the amount of informative words that they could produce.

Keywords: Specific Language Impairment, Language, Narrative analysis, Developmental Neuropsychology, Neurolinguistics

INTRODUCTION

Specific Language Impairments (SLI) are a set of relatively frequent developmental disorders (5-8% of pre-school and 10% of school-aged children; Newbury et al., 2010; Nation, 2005; Tomblin et al. 1997) characterized by language delay in children with otherwise normal physical, intellectual, and cognitive development (Leonard, 1998). They are not a homogenous condition (Laws & Bishop, 2003). Two major approaches have biased the classification of these disorders.
Unawareness of Motor and Somatosensory deficits after stroke (UMAS): Validity and Reliability of UMAS Questionnaire

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ABSTRACT. Lo scopo principale dello studio è stato esaminare l’attendibilità e la validità del questionario UMAS. Lo strumento nasce con l’obiettivo di valutare l’anosognosia per l’emiplegia (AHP) e l’anosognosia per l’emianestesia (AHA). Il termine “anosognosia” sta ad indicare l’inconsapevolezza del paziente rispetto ad uno specifico deficit conseguente alla lesione cerebrale. Nella ricerca sono stati esaminati 30 pazienti con lesioni cerebrali nell’emisfero destro ed è stata presa in esame esclusivamente l’anosognosia per l’emiplegia e per l’emianestesia. I risultati dello studio sembrano supportare l’attendibilità e la validità del questionario UMAS per l’esame neuropsicologico dell’anosognosia per l’emiplegia e per l’emianestesia.

SUMMARY. Introduction: The main aim of this study is to test the reliability and validity of the UMAS Questionnaire to evaluate anosognosia for hemiplegia (AHP) and anosognosia for hemianaesthesia (AHA). Anosognosia is the unawareness or underestimation of a specific deficit in sensory, perceptual, motor, affective or cognitive functioning after a brain lesion (Prigatano, 2010). Methods. 30 right brain damaged patients were tested with a neuropsychological battery, a neurological examination and the UMAS Questionnaire. This questionnaire has been administered to patients with or without anosognosia for motor and/or somatosensory deficits after stroke. Conclusion. The results of this study seem to support the reliability and validity of the UMAS Questionnaire to measure anosognosia for motor and somatosensory deficits.

Keywords: Anosognosia, Hemiplegia, Hemianaesthesia

INTRODUCTION

“Anosognosia is a term that indicates the denial behavior for one’s own disease or deficit after a brain lesion. It can be observed in relation to many different kinds of pathological conditions, ranging from denial of mental disease, such as schizophrenia, to unawareness of neurological and cognitive deficits following a brain damage” (Prigatano, 2010). The term anosognosia for hemiplegia was first introduced by Babinski (1914) to denote the astonishing behavior of right brain-damaged patients, who, after having developed contralesional hemiplegia, deny that anything is wrong with their limbs (anosognosia for hemiplegia, AHP).

Patients with anosognosia for hemiplegia claim that they can move their contralesional (plegic) limbs (Pia et al., 2004; Orfei et al., 2007). For instance, if asked about their potential capability of performing actions either with the right or with the left hand, or even bimanual actions, they claim that they...
Training of attention in patients with remitting-relapsing multiple sclerosis

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ABSTRACT. The objective of the study was to seek a method to slow down or even recover the deficit of concentration and divided attention in subjects with multiple sclerosis. The experimental group, consisting of 13 subjects, was subjected to three sessions of rehabilitation with the computerized system ERICA, while the control group, consisting of 7 subjects, performed only pencil and paper tasks. The results of the study showed a significant improvement of these functions in the experimental group, demonstrating the success of this type of rehabilitation with these patients.

SUMMARY. Introduction: Multiple sclerosis is a progressive neurodegenerative disease, which causes early disability and a decreasing quality of life. One of the symptoms of MS is cognitive impairments, such as the deficit of concentration and divided attention. A method must be found to slow down the progress of cognitive dysfunctions or even recover them. Methods. A randomized controlled study was performed on hospitalized patients with remitting-relapsing multiple sclerosis. The Leiter-3 test was used to measure their attention level and with results of this test we selected patients with moderate attention decline. The levels of depression and executive functioning as well as the presence of other neurological diseases, age, duration of illness, dominant hand, medicines prescribed, motor and visual abilities were controlled. Thirteen patients were included in the experimental group, where we used ERICA for experimental impact, while the control group, which consisted of seven people, was asked to complete paper and pencil tasks. The groups trained 40 minutes daily for three weeks. Results. At the end of the study we discovered, that the experimental group had shown a great improvement. The control group had also shown some improvement, which can be explained by the effect of steroid therapy, combined with paper and pencil tasks, but their results were much lower and significantly different from experimental group. Conclusions. It is possible to conclude that the use of computer based rehabilitation programs, like ERICA, is effective in the treatment of cognitive impairments in multiple sclerosis, and drug therapy should be combined with it for better results.

Keywords: cognitive rehabilitation, multiple sclerosis

INTRODUCTION

Multiple sclerosis is an inflammatory autoimmune disease of the nervous system, characterized by multiple lesions in the brain and spinal cord. It is a chronic disease in its early stages and in most cases, has remitting nature, but after a while it often becomes progressive (Compston, 2008). Multiple sclerosis is one of the most common neurological diseases that cause disability...