

Patterns of Influence Behavior for Managers

GARY YUKL
CECILIA M. FALBE
JOO YOUNG YOUN
State University of New York at Albany

This study involved analysis of incidents describing influence attempts from the perspective of an agent or a target. Influence behavior in the incidents was coded into nine influence tactics. A conceptual framework was presented to explain the selection and sequencing of tactics, and the model was used to derive specific hypotheses for individual tactics. Analysis of tactic combinations revealed that some tactics were used together much more often than others. Consistent with the model, some tactics were used more in initial influence attempts, and other tactics were used more in follow-up influence attempts. Differences in the use of tactics with subordinates, peers, and superiors were also consistent with the model, and the results verified directional differences found in earlier research with questionnaires.

One of the most important determinants of managerial effectiveness is success in influencing people and developing commitment to task objectives (Yukl, 1989). Several studies have examined issues such as the types of influence tactics used by managers and the objectives of their influence attempts (Ansari & Kapoor, 1987; Erez, Rim, & Keider, 1986; Kipnis, Schmidt, & Wilkinson, 1980; Schilit & Locke, 1982; Schmidt & Kipnis, 1984; Schriesheim & Hinkin, 1990; Yukl & Falbe, 1990). However, we have only begun to investigate a number of important research questions about influence behavior that have implications for understanding and improving the effectiveness of managers. Only a few studies have examined the pattern of influence behavior used by managers with subordinates, peers, and superiors. Potentially relevant aspects of the influence pattern include differences in choice of tactics to use with subordinates, peers, and superiors (*directional differences*), which tactics are used together in the same influence attempt (*tactic combinations*), and differences in the choice of tactics for successive influence attempts made with the same target person (*sequencing differences*).

The extent to which managers vary their use of tactics with different targets has been examined in four questionnaire studies (Erez et al., 1986;

Group & Organization Management, Vol. 18 No. 1, March 1993 5-28
© 1993 Sage Publications, Inc.

Kipnis et al., 1980; Yukl & Falbe, 1990; Yukl & Tracey, 1992). Significant directional differences were found in these studies, but the magnitude of the effect was small. Regardless of the direction of influence, the various tactics had a similar ranking in terms of mean frequency of use. This finding may reflect common biases among the respondents. For example, it is possible that both agents and targets report more agent use of socially desirable tactics, such as rational persuasion, as compared to “undesirable” tactics, such as pressure. Directional differences in the use of various tactics have not been investigated with a research method less susceptible to these biases and attributions.

We know almost nothing about the way in which different tactics are combined in the same influence attempt. It is extremely difficult to investigate this subject in questionnaire studies. The profiles used by Kipnis and Schmidt (1988) indicate which tactics are emphasized by a manager, but they do not reveal which tactics are used alone and which are used together in the same influence attempt. Tactic combinations can be studied more directly with descriptions of specific influence incidents than with questionnaires, but this was not a research objective in prior incident studies, such as those by Keys and Case (1990) and Schilit and Locke (1982).

We have very limited knowledge about the way in which different influence tactics are sequenced in influence attempts involving repeated interactions between an agent and a target. Kipnis and Schmidt (1983) proposed that most managers use simple requests or rational persuasion in an initial influence attempt, whereas in a follow-up influence attempt, ingratiation or a coalition is likely to be used with a powerful target, and pressure is likely to be used with a weak target. No empirical results were presented to support this proposition. In their article on how to become an influential manager, Keys and Case (1990) proposed that most contemporary managers try positive tactics initially but quickly resort to threats or manipulation if necessary, especially when the target is a subordinate. Once again, no empirical evidence was presented. It is time for a systematic investigation to determine if these propositions can be verified and to study the sequencing of tactics in more detail.

The present research was conducted to learn more about how managers use different tactics to influence subordinates, peers, and superiors. The research had three specific objectives:

1. to assess directional differences in the use of influence tactics
2. to identify tactics used together frequently and tactics used alone
3. to identify typical patterns in the sequencing of tactics

TABLE 1
Definition of Influence Tactics

Rational persuasion: The agent uses logical arguments and factual evidence to persuade the target that a proposal or request is viable and likely to result in the attainment of task objectives.

Inspirational appeals: The agent makes a request or proposal that arouses target enthusiasm by appealing to target values, ideals, and aspirations, or by increasing target self-confidence.

Consultation: The agent seeks target participation in planning a strategy, activity, or change for which target support and assistance are desired, or the agent is willing to modify a proposal to deal with target concerns and suggestions.

Ingratiation: The agent uses praise, flattery, friendly behavior, or helpful behavior to get the target in a good mood or to think favorably of him or her before asking for something.

Personal appeals: The agent appeals to target feelings of loyalty and friendship toward him or her when asking for something.

Exchange: The agent offers an exchange of favors, indicates willingness to reciprocate at a later time, or promises a share of the benefits if the target helps accomplish a task.

Coalition tactics: The agent seeks the aid of others to persuade the target to do something or uses the support of others as a reason for the target to agree also.

Pressure: The agent uses demands, threats, frequent checking, or persistent reminders to influence the target to do what he or she wants.

Legitimizing tactics: The agent seeks to establish the legitimacy of a request by claiming the authority or right to make it or by verifying that it is consistent with organizational policies, rules, practices, or traditions.

The first research question has been investigated by analysis of questionnaire data, and our objective in the current study was to determine if the results could be replicated with a different research method. The second and third objectives involve research questions not examined in previous empirical studies. A conceptual framework and specific hypotheses are presented in the next section, and relevant prior research is reviewed briefly.

MODEL AND HYPOTHESES

The research deals with the nine influence tactics defined in Table 1. These influence tactics are representative of the ones studied in prior research with questionnaires and influence incidents. The tactics are based on results from factor analysis studies of questionnaires and other types of validation research (Schriesheim & Hinkin, 1990; Yukl, Lepsinger, & Lucia, in press).

Building on the preliminary model proposed by Yukl and Tracey (1992), the following interrelated factors determine how frequently an influence tactic is used in a particular direction: (a) consistency with prevailing social norms and role expectations about use of the tactic in that context, (b) agent possession of an appropriate power base for use of the tactic in that context, (c) appropriateness for the objective of the influence attempt, (d) level of target resistance encountered or anticipated, and (e) costs of using the tactic in relation to likely benefits. The underlying assumption is that most managers will prefer to use tactics that are socially acceptable, that are feasible in terms of the agent's position and personal power in relation to the target, that are not costly (in terms of time, effort, loss of resources, or alienation of the target), and that are likely to be effective for a particular objective—given the anticipated level of resistance by the target. These factors may be used to derive specific hypotheses about directional differences in patterns of influence behavior and about patterns in the sequencing of tactics.

DIRECTIONAL DIFFERENCES IN THE USE OF TACTICS

Directional differences in the use of specific tactics may occur for a variety of reasons. Prior studies show that influence objectives vary by direction (Erez et al., 1986; Kipnis et al., 1980; Yukl & Falbe, 1990), and there is evidence that particular tactics tend to be used more with particular objectives (Erez et al., 1986; Kipnis et al., 1980; Schmidt & Kipnis, 1984). Some tactics are easier to use in a particular direction, because the agent's authority and position power are greater in that direction or because their use is consistent with role expectations. Finally, research with questionnaires indicates that some tactics are more likely to be effective in a particular direction (Falbe & Yukl, 1992; Yukl & Tracey, 1992). Based on these components of the model and on prior research findings, Yukl and Tracey (1992) proposed specific hypotheses for the nine tactics. Because all but one hypothesis was supported in their study, we will test the same hypotheses in the current study (the explanation for each hypothesis can be found in the Yukl and Tracey article).

Hypothesis 1: Rational persuasion is used more often in an upward direction than in a lateral or downward direction.

Directional differences in frequency of use for rational persuasion were not consistent in four prior studies that used questionnaires. More upward use of rational persuasion was found for two agent samples (Erez et al., 1986; Kipnis et al., 1980) and one target sample (Yukl & Tracey, 1992), but not for

another agent sample (Yukl & Falbe, 1990) or for two other target samples (Erez et al., 1986; Yukl & Falbe, 1990).

Hypothesis 2: Inspirational appeals are used more often in a downward direction than in a lateral or upward direction.

Two prior studies (Yukl & Falbe, 1990; Yukl & Tracey, 1992) found that inspirational appeals were used more in downward influence attempts than in lateral or upward influence attempts.

Hypothesis 3: Consultation is used more often in a downward direction than in a lateral or upward direction.

In the study by Yukl and Falbe (1990), agents reported greater use of consultation in a downward direction, but directional differences were not significant for target reports in the same study or in the study by Yukl and Tracey (1992).

Hypothesis 4: Ingratiation is used more often in a downward and lateral direction than upward.

Yukl and Tracey (1992) found that ingratiation was used most in downward influence attempts and least in upward influence attempts. In studies by Kipnis et al. (1980) and Yukl and Falbe (1990), agents reported that ingratiation was used more in downward and lateral influence attempts than in upward influence attempts. No significant differences were found for target reports in the study by Yukl and Falbe (1990), and no clear pattern emerged for agent and target reports in the study by Erez et al. (1986).

Hypothesis 5: Personal appeals are used more often in a lateral direction than in a downward or upward direction.

In the only study that examined directional differences for this tactic, Yukl and Tracey (1992) found that personal appeals were used most often for lateral influence attempts and least often for upward influence attempts.

Hypothesis 6: Exchange tactics are used more in a downward and lateral direction than upward.

Three prior studies (Erez et al., 1986; Kipnis et al., 1980; Yukl & Falbe, 1990) found that exchange was used more in downward and lateral influence

attempts than in upward influence attempts. Yukl and Tracey (1992) found that exchange was used most often in lateral influence attempts and least often in upward influence attempts.

Hypothesis 7: Coalition tactics are used more in a lateral and upward direction than downward.

Yukl and Tracey (1992) found that coalition tactics were used most often in lateral influence attempts and least often in downward influence attempts. In a study by Erez et al. (1986), coalitions were used most often in a lateral direction according to agents, but no significant directional differences were found for targets. Likewise, directional differences were not significant for coalition tactics in two other studies (Kipnis et al., 1980; Yukl & Falbe, 1990).

Hypothesis 8: Legitimizing tactics are used more in a lateral direction than in a downward or upward direction.

In the only prior study to examine directional differences for legitimizing tactics, Yukl and Tracey (1992) found more use in lateral influence attempts than in downward or upward influence attempts.

Hypothesis 9: Pressure tactics are used more in a downward direction than in a lateral or upward direction.

Four questionnaire studies found more use of pressure in a downward direction than in a lateral or upward direction (Erez et al., 1986; Kipnis et al., 1980; Yukl & Falbe, 1990; Yukl & Tracey, 1992).

INITIAL AND FOLLOW-UP INFLUENCE ATTEMPTS

The sequencing of tactics depends in part on the relative advantages and costs of each tactic. In general, it is reasonable to assume that a manager will initially select tactics that are likely to accomplish an objective with the least effort and cost. Simple requests and weak forms of rational persuasion (e.g., a brief explanation of the agent's request or proposal, an assertion made without supporting evidence) are easy to use and entail little in the way of agent costs. Thus initial influence attempts often involve either a simple request or a relatively weak form of rational persuasion, especially when the agent desires only compliance rather than commitment. If the agent doubts that a simple request or rational persuasion alone is likely to be effective, then an initial influence attempt is likely to include other "soft" tactics, such

as personal appeals, ingratiation, consultation, or inspirational appeals. These tactics may be used alone, in various combinations with each other, or in combination with rational persuasion. In the face of continued resistance by a target, the agent will either escalate to "harder" tactics or abandon the effort if the request does not justify the risks of escalation. Pressure, exchange, and coalitions are likely to be saved for follow-up influence attempts, because they involve the greatest costs and risks. Based on this analysis, some specific hypotheses can be made for timing differences in the use of individual tactics.

Hypothesis 10: Rational persuasion is used more in initial influence attempts than in follow-up attempts.

Rational persuasion is a flexible tactic that is suitable for most types of influence attempts, and weak forms of rational persuasion are especially easy to use. Thus it is reasonable to expect that rational persuasion will be used frequently in initial influence attempts. In follow-up influence attempts, managers use a greater variety of tactics, and the proportionate use of rational persuasion is necessarily lower.

Hypothesis 11: Ingratiation is used more in initial influence attempts than in follow-up influence attempts.

Ingratiation is likely to be used early rather than late, because this tactic is intended to make the target more receptive to the agent's request. Ingratiation is unlikely to be successful unless it appears sincere, and it is more likely to appear manipulative if used after the agent has already encountered some resistance to a request or proposal.

Hypothesis 12: Personal appeals are used more in initial influence attempts than in follow-up influence attempts.

Personal appeals are used most for unusual requests for which there is not a clear rationale or legitimate basis. The agent needs a special favor and is asking the target to do something as a friend that would not be asked of a casual acquaintance or impersonal colleague. Because this tactic is the primary basis for some types of requests, it is likely to be used more often in initial influence attempts than as a follow-up tactic.

Hypothesis 13: Exchange is used more in follow-up influence attempts than in initial influence attempts.

Exchange requires some payoff to the target in return for compliance, and the payoff often has a direct cost to the agent. Thus exchange will not be used in an initial influence attempt, unless the request is important enough to justify an immediate offer of benefits.

Hypothesis 14: Coalition tactics are used more in follow-up influence attempts than in initial influence attempts.

Coalitions require effort to arrange, and some coalition tactics are risky because they may be perceived as manipulative. It is unlikely that an agent will go to the extra effort to enlist the aid of others unless the target resists a request important enough to justify this effort. In most cases, coalitions are used as a follow-up tactic to enhance an initial request that has not been as successful as the agent would like. A coalition is not likely to be used for an initial influence attempt except for a very important request for which some target resistance is anticipated.

Hypothesis 15: Pressure is used more in follow-up influence attempts.

Pressure tends to be resented by the target, especially when it appears coercive, and it hardly ever results in commitment. Pressure is a tactic that is used primarily to get compliance, and it is most appropriate when the target has already resisted an initial influence attempt. Because the potential costs (including the risk that a cooperative relationship will be undermined) are substantial in relation to the potential benefits, pressure tactics are less likely to be used in an initial influence attempt than in a follow-up influence attempt.

USE OF INDIVIDUAL TACTICS VERSUS TACTIC COMBINATIONS

Little is known about the extent to which each of the nine tactics is used alone or in combination with other tactics. Except for the idea that multiple tactics are more likely when resistance is anticipated, there is little basis for predicting this aspect of influence behavior. It is likely that complex interactions occur among aspects of the situation such as the influence objective, the expectation of likely target resistance, and the timing of the influence attempt. No specific hypotheses were developed for relative use of tactics alone or in combinations.

METHOD

SAMPLE AND DATA COLLECTION

Descriptions of influence incidents in organizations were obtained from night MBA students at a large state university. The students worked in regular jobs during the day in a variety of large and small private companies and public agencies. Nearly one half of the students were managers or supervisors, and most of the rest were nonmanagerial professionals. A total of 145 students provided incidents as part of a course project in three MBA courses. The students reported on their own experiences as an agent or target, and each student was asked to provide at least three incidents. Students were asked to provide an equal number of incidents in the same direction resulting in commitment, compliance, and resistance, and these outcomes were defined for the students beforehand. Direction of influence for the incidents was randomly assigned, but students who were not managers were not asked to provide downward agent incidents or upward target incidents because they did not have any subordinates. The students were encouraged to obtain examples of influence attempts that involved important issues or substantive requests for assistance or support, rather than routine task assignments for which only a simple request is necessary to ensure target compliance or commitment.

Students were provided forms for writing the critical incidents. The incident forms had fixed-response items to indicate the direction of the influence attempt (i.e., down, lateral, or up) and the initial and final outcome of the influence attempt (i.e., resistance, compliance, or commitment). On the blank part of the form, students were asked to describe in a paragraph or two what was said or done by the agent to influence the target and how the target reacted to the request. If a sequence of influence attempts occurred, respondents were asked to describe each episode in the sequence. Students were instructed to provide details, including quotes and examples of what the agent said. They were assured that the information in their incidents would remain confidential and would not be seen by anybody except the researchers.

Additional incidents were obtained by 16 MBA students for an optional research project that was not part of a regular course. These students interviewed managers in their own company and in other organizations. Each student was asked to collect 18 incidents, balanced by outcome and direction (randomly assigned). Ten students collected target incidents, and the remain-

ing 6 students collected agent incidents. The students were given instructions on how to conduct the interview and how to report the results on the incident forms. To ensure that the instructions were understood, the first three incidents collected by a student were reviewed by the researchers, and students were given feedback about any deficiencies.

CODING OF INCIDENTS

Some incidents (*single-phase incidents*) involved only an initial influence attempt, whereas others (*sequential incidents*) involved more than one influence attempt. One type of sequential incident involved two episodes that occurred close together but usually had different outcomes. The agent made an initial influence attempt, and when the target responded in a negative way, the agent made another (*immediate follow-up*) influence attempt. For example, an agent started by using rational persuasion, and the initial reaction was resistance; then the agent used pressure together with more rational persuasion, and the final outcome was compliance. Another type of sequential incident involved two or more episodes separated by a time interval of at least an hour (usually it was a day or more). In this type of incident, the agent made an initial influence attempt, then another (*delayed follow-up*) attempt was made at a later time after the target failed to comply. For example, an agent made a simple request, and the outcome was resistance; a few days later, the agent made another influence attempt using rational persuasion, but the outcome was still resistance. The small number of sequential incidents with more than one follow-up attempt were collapsed into the second type in order to simplify the analysis.

The influence tactics used by the agent in each incident were coded into the nine influence tactics described in Table 1. To simplify the analysis of tactic combinations, the number of tactics was limited to two in any single time period or phase of an incident. Few incidents involved more than two influence tactics at the same time, and for those incidents the two most salient tactics were selected (or the incident was discarded). Most agent statements were coded into a single tactic category, but the tactic categories were not assumed to be mutually exclusive, and in some cases the same statement was coded into two tactics. For example, an agent's statement that "the target is the only person qualified to do a task that is essential for the success of a major project" involves both ingratiation and an inspirational appeal.

Each incident was coded independently by two people. The coders were two management professors and two doctoral students. Whenever possible, incidents were screened initially by one coder, and, if the incident was

ambiguous, it was returned to the MBA student for additional detail and clarification about what the agent said or did in the influence attempt. The coders also checked the respondent's classification of outcomes and direction of influence to verify consistency with the evidence provided in the incident. After pairs of coders finished a set of incidents, they met to confer about them and resolve any disagreements. The level of agreement among coders in their independent coding of incidents was moderately high; the same tactic codes were assigned in 85% of the single-phase incidents. An incident was discarded if it involved only a simple request, if it was too ambiguous to resolve coder disagreement, if it involved multiple agents and targets in a complex interaction, if it was very complex in terms of multiple episodes or multiple tactics in an episode, or if the agent was someone external to the organization. The data analysis was based on the final coding after agreement was reached.

A total of 646 usable target incidents was obtained, including 411 single-phase incidents involving only an initial influence attempt and 235 sequential incidents involving both initial and follow-up influence attempts. Of the sequential incidents, 105 had an immediate follow-up attempt, and 130 had a delayed follow-up attempt. In most of our analyses, the initial and follow-up parts of sequential incidents were treated as separate influence attempts. Thus there were 542 initial influence attempts, which included the 411 single-phase incidents and the initial influence attempt in 131 of the sequential incidents. The remaining 104 sequential incidents involved only a simple request in the initial influence attempt, so these incidents were used only for the analysis of follow-up influence attempts. The 542 initial influence attempts and the 235 follow-up influence attempts provided a total of 777 influence attempts. The direction of the influence attempt was downward in 328 cases, lateral in 212 cases, and upward in 237 cases. Roughly one half of the targets in the downward and lateral incidents were nonmanagerial employees. All of the targets in upward influence attempts were supervisors or managers.

A total of 238 usable agent incidents was obtained, including 103 single-phase incidents involving only an initial influence attempt and 135 sequential incidents involving both initial and follow-up influence attempts. Of the sequential incidents, 63 had an immediate follow-up attempt, and 72 had a delayed follow-up attempt. The 182 initial influence attempts included the 103 single-phase incidents and the initial influence attempt in 79 of the sequential incidents. The remaining 56 sequential incidents involved only a simple request in the initial influence attempt, so these incidents were used only for the analysis of follow-up influence attempts. The 182 initial influence attempts and the 135 follow-up influence attempts provided a total of

317 influence attempts. The direction of the influence attempt was downward in 119 cases, lateral in 77 cases, and upward in 121 cases. Roughly one half of the agents in the upward and lateral incidents were nonmanagerial employees. All of the agents in downward influence attempts were supervisors or managers.

RESULTS

The results are reported in three separate sections: (a) use of tactics alone and in combinations, (b) directional differences in use of tactics, and (c) use of tactics in initial and follow-up influence attempts. Given the unequal distribution of incidents and small cell sizes for many tactics, most analyses were done separately rather than testing for interactions between direction, timing, source, and use of single tactics or combinations. Because of the large number of pairwise comparisons, a conservative two-tailed test was used even when a specific hypothesis would justify use of a one-tailed test.

USE OF TACTICS ALONE AND IN COMBINATIONS

Table 2 shows how frequently each tactic was used alone or in combination with another tactic in the same influence episode. Proportions were based on total number of tactics used by agents or targets. A *Z* test of proportions (Loether & McTavish, 1980) indicated that the differences for several influence tactics were significantly greater than would be expected by chance. Results were very similar for data from agents and targets. Rational persuasion was more likely to be used alone than in combinations. Inspirational appeals, consultation, ingratiation, and legitimating tactics were more likely to be used in combinations than alone. The differences were not significant for the other five tactics.

Some tactics were more likely to be combined than others. Table 3 shows the frequency of all possible two tactic combinations in initial and follow-up influence attempts. Rational persuasion is a very flexible tactic that can be used with any of the other eight tactics, and it was the tactic selected most often for combinations used in both initial (68%) and follow-up (66%) influence attempts. Rational persuasion was clearly the first choice for most combinations, but the second choice varied considerably across the remaining tactics. For example, consultation was paired more often with inspirational appeals or ingratiation than with other tactics (excluding rational persuasion) in initial influence attempts.

TABLE 2
Use of Each Tactic Alone and in Combinations

<i>Influence Tactic</i>		<i>Single Tactic</i>	<i>Combinations</i>	<i>Z Test</i>
Rational persuasion	Target	270 (54%)	165 (30%)	7.89**
	Agent	148 (70%)	89 (42%)	5.83**
Inspiration	Target	10 (2%)	48 (9%)	-4.96**
	Agent	1 (0%)	13 (6%)	-3.25**
Consultation	Target	11 (2%)	33 (6%)	-3.23**
	Agent	1 (0%)	8 (4%)	-2.35*
Ingratiation	Target	32 (6%)	56 (10%)	-2.34*
	Agent	5 (2%)	19 (9%)	-2.93**
Personal appeal	Target	36 (7%)	43 (8%)	-0.61
	Agent	4 (2%)	6 (3%)	-0.63
Exchange	Target	34 (7%)	44 (8%)	-0.62
	Agent	16 (8%)	16 (8%)	-0.01
Coalition	Target	31 (6%)	50 (9%)	-1.82
	Agent	13 (6%)	16 (8%)	-0.56
Legitimizing	Target	16 (3%)	45 (8%)	-3.46**
	Agent	3 (1%)	10 (5%)	-1.96*
Pressure	Target	64 (13%)	62 (11%)	1.00
	Agent	24 (11%)	35 (17%)	-1.52
Incidents	Target	504	273	
	Agent	211	106	
Tactics	Target	504	546	
	Agent	211	212	

NOTE: Percentages are based on column total for number of tactics.
* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.

DIRECTIONAL DIFFERENCES

Results for use of each type of influence tactic in downward, lateral, and upward influence attempts are presented in Table 4. Data for agents and targets were combined, because results were mostly consistent for the two sources of incident descriptions. Pairwise directional differences in frequency of use for each tactic were analyzed with a Z test of proportions. The results are for proportions based on the number of incidents, but similar results were found when the base for computing proportions was the number of tactics. The analysis revealed significant directional differences in frequency for all of the tactics.

TABLE 3
Frequency of Different Tactic Combinations in Initial and Follow-up Influence Attempts

<i>Influence Tactic</i>	<i>Rational Persuasion</i>	<i>Consultation</i>	<i>Inspirational Appeal</i>	<i>Ingratiation</i>	<i>Personal Appeal</i>	<i>Exchange</i>	<i>Coalition</i>	<i>Legitimizing</i>	<i>Pressure</i>
Rational persuasion	—	3	8	3	9	8	15	10	31
Consultation	18	—	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Inspirational appeal	26	7	—	3	0	3	0	1	1
Ingratiation	24	7	8	—	2	1	1	1	1
Personal appeal	15	1	1	8	—	1	1	0	1
Exchange	22	1	1	2	6	—	2	1	5
Coalition	24	1	1	5	2	1	—	0	12
Legitimizing	16	1	0	4	2	2	2	—	6
Pressure	23	0	0	4	0	4	0	9	—

NOTE: Numbers in lower left quadrant are for combinations in 248 initial influence attempts, and numbers in upper right quadrant are for combinations in 132 follow-up influence attempts.

TABLE 4
Frequency of Tactics by Direction of Influence Attempt

Influence Tactic	Downward		Lateral		Upward		Pairwise Z Test		
	N	%	N	%	N	%	1 vs. 2	1 vs. 3	2 vs. 3
Rational persuasion	234	(52%) _b	161	(56%) _b	275	(77%) _a	-0.89	-7.15*	-5.69*
Inspirational appeal	50	(11%) _a	15	(5%) _b	7	(2%) _c	2.80*	5.07*	2.26*
Consultation	30	(7%) _a	19	(7%) _a	4	(1%) _b	0.07	3.92*	3.73*
Ingratiation	68	(15%) _a	32	(11%) _a	12	(3%) _b	1.60	5.59*	3.88*
Personal appeal	17	(4%) _b	52	(18%) _a	20	(6%) _b	-6.45*	-1.20	4.99*
Exchange	62	(14%) _a	35	(12%) _a	13	(4%) _b	0.69	4.97*	4.09*
Coalition	17	(4%) _b	38	(13%) _a	55	(15%) _a	-4.71*	-5.71*	-0.80
Legitimizing	45	(10%) _a	20	(7%) _a	9	(3%) _b	1.47	4.26*	2.69*
Pressure	97	(22%) _a	33	(11%) _b	55	(15%) _b	3.57*	2.28*	-1.46
Incidents	447		289		358				
Tactics	620		403		450				

NOTE: Percentages in columns do not add up to 100% because they are based on the number of incidents in a given direction, not the number of tactics. Percentages with different subscripts differ significantly by direction on the Z test.

* $p < .05$.

Consistent with Hypothesis 1, rational persuasion was used more in an upward direction than in a lateral or downward direction. Consistent with Hypothesis 2, inspirational appeals were used more in a downward direction than in a lateral or upward direction. Consultation was used more in a downward and lateral direction than upward, providing partial support for Hypothesis 3 (which stated that it would be used more in a downward direction than laterally or upward). Consistent with Hypothesis 4, ingratiation was used more in a downward and lateral direction than in an upward direction. Consistent with Hypothesis 5, personal appeals were used more in a lateral direction than in a downward or upward direction. Consistent with Hypothesis 6, exchange was used more in a downward and lateral direction than in an upward direction. Consistent with Hypothesis 7, coalition tactics were used more in a lateral and upward direction than in a downward direction. Hypothesis 8 was not supported; legitimating tactics were used most in a downward direction, not in a lateral direction. Consistent with Hypothesis 9, pressure was used more in a downward direction than in a lateral or upward direction.

Directional differences were sometimes reflected in the frequencies for particular components of the tactic categories. These findings are based on a qualitative examination of patterns of results rather than on statistical tests because of the small number of cases. Pressure in the form of threats to get the target dismissed occurred most often in a downward direction, whereas pressure in the form of persistent nagging or threats to quit occurred most often in an upward direction. An upward appeal to the boss of the target is a type of coalition tactic that occurred most often in lateral influence attempts, whereas asking peers to influence the target was a type of coalition tactic that occurred most often in upward influence attempts. Exchange in downward influence attempts often involved specific incentives (e.g., promise of a pay increase, promotion, or better assignment), whereas in lateral influence attempts exchange usually involved offers to trade favors or a reminder that a favor was owed.

INITIAL AND FOLLOW-UP ATTEMPTS

The initial influence attempt in sequential incidents often involved either a simple request (43%) or the use of rational persuasion alone as a single tactic (22%). The relatively small number of sequential incidents and the high incidence of simple requests and weak cases of rational persuasion in initial influence attempts limited analysis of complex tactic sequences in the present data set. Nevertheless, the combined data from agents and targets was suf-

ficient to test our hypotheses about the use of tactics in initial and follow-up influence attempts.

Table 5 shows the frequency for each tactic when used in an initial influence attempt, an immediate follow-up attempt, or a delayed follow-up attempt. A *Z* test of proportions was used to analyze pairwise differences in frequency of use for each tactic in different time periods. The results are for proportions based on the number of incidents, but similar results were found when the base for computing proportions was the number of tactics. The pairwise differences for several of the influence tactics were significantly greater than would be expected by chance. Consistent with Hypotheses 10, 11, and 12, rational persuasion, ingratiation, and personal appeals were used most often in initial influence attempts. Consistent with Hypothesis 13, exchange was used most often in immediate follow-up attempts. Although no hypothesis was made for legitimating tactics, this type of tactic was used more often in immediate follow-up attempts than in delayed follow-up attempts. Consistent with Hypotheses 14 and 15, coalition tactics and pressure were used most often in delayed follow-up influence attempts; in other words, they were usually saved until last.

As in the case of directional differences, a qualitative analysis of major components of the tactic categories revealed some differences related to sequencing. For example, an initial influence attempt often involved a weak form of rational persuasion (e.g., a brief explanation, an assertion without supporting evidence), whereas follow-up influence attempts usually involved a stronger form of rational persuasion (e.g., a detailed proposal, elaborate documentation, a convincing reply to concerns raised by the target person). A proactive form of consultation (e.g., requests for target suggestions or participation in planning) was more likely to be used in an initial influence attempt, whereas a reactive form of consultation (e.g., the agent offered to modify a proposal or assignment to deal with target concerns) was more likely to be used in an immediate or delayed follow-up attempt. A relatively weak form of pressure (e.g., insistent demand, sarcasm, vague threat) was more likely to be used in an initial influence attempt or an immediate follow-up attempt, whereas in a delayed follow-up attempt a strong form of pressure was more likely to be used (e.g., explicit threat or warning, disciplinary action, overt sanction). Persistent reminders, checking, or nagging were other (weak) forms of pressure unique to delayed follow-up attempts. The form of coalition tactic used in an initial influence attempt or an immediate follow-up attempt was likely to involve statements to identify others who endorsed the agent's proposal, whereas in a delayed follow-up

TABLE 5
Frequency of Tactics by Timing of Influence Attempt

Influence Tactic	Initial		Immediate		Delayed		Pairwise Z Test		
	N	%	N	%	N	%	1 vs. 2	1 vs. 3	2 vs. 3
Rational persuasion	500	(69%) ^a	78	(46%) ^b	91	(45%) ^b	5.53*	6.28*	0.27
Inspirational appeal	50	(7%)	10	(6%)	12	(6%)	0.44	0.49	0.00
Consultation	43	(6%)	5	(3%)	6	(3%)	1.53	1.67	0.00
Ingratiation	95	(13%) ^a	8	(5%) ^b	9	(4%) ^b	3.05*	3.45*	0.14
Personal appeal	72	(10%) ^a	11	(7%)	6	(3%) ^b	1.37	3.16*	1.64
Exchange	62	(9%) ^b	32	(19%) ^a	15	(7%) ^b	-3.99*	0.52	3.34*
Coalition	38	(5%) ^b	11	(7%) ^b	61	(30%) ^a	-0.67	-10.15*	-5.72*
Legitimizing	51	(7%)	16	(10%) ^a	7	(3%) ^b	-1.10	1.86	2.40*
Pressure	62	(9%) ^c	47	(28%) ^b	76	(38%) ^a	-6.92*	-10.26*	-1.96*
Incidents	724		168		202				
Tactics	974		218		283				

NOTE: Percentages in columns do not add up to 100% because they are based on the number of incidents in a given direction, not the number of tactics. Percentages with different subscripts differ significantly by timing on the Z test.

* $p < .05$.

attempt a coalition was more likely to involve getting other people to lobby directly with the target, or an upward appeal to the target's boss.

DISCUSSION

This was the first study to use critical incidents to examine directional differences in use of influence tactics. Directional differences were significant for all nine tactics, and the results mostly supported the hypotheses based on our model (see Table 6 for a summary of results). The results also confirmed most of the findings in the earlier research by Yukl and Tracey (1992) using questionnaires.

The current study is the first to report empirical results on the sequencing of tactics by managers. The results verified some propositions about sequencing made by other social scientists, and most of the hypotheses based on our model were supported. As expected, many initial influence attempts consisted of simple requests or weak forms of rational persuasion. Ingratiation and personal appeals were used more in initial influence attempts, exchange and legitimating tactics were used more in immediate follow-up influence attempts, and coalitions and pressure tactics were used more in delayed follow-up influence attempts. A supplementary qualitative analysis of the influence incidents identified some apparent directional and sequencing differences involving various forms of the same influence tactic. However, these qualitative findings need to be verified and extended by additional research with quantitative methods of analysis.

The combined results for direction and sequencing supported the Kipnis and Schmidt (1983) proposition that pressure is used more as a follow-up tactic with weak targets and that coalition is used more as a follow-up tactic with strong targets. However, the results did not support their proposition that ingratiation is used more as a follow-up tactic with strong targets. Nor did the results support the Keys and Case (1990) proposition that managers quickly resort to use of threats and manipulation when meeting resistance by subordinates. Most of the managers in our study appeared reluctant to use coercive power and did so only as a last resort after trying less extreme tactics, such as mild forms of pressure and efforts to get a subordinate to take responsibility for helping to solve a performance problem.

This study was the first to examine how often various tactics are used alone and in combinations. Some tactics (inspirational appeals, consultation, ingratiation, and legitimating tactics) were more likely to be used in combination with another tactic than alone. The finding that consultation and

TABLE 6
Summary of Results for Each Influence Tactic

<i>Influence Tactic</i>	<i>Directional Hypothesis</i>	<i>Directional Results</i>	<i>Sequencing Hypothesis</i>	<i>Sequencing Results</i>
Rational persuasion	More up than down or lateral	Supported	More initial	Supported
Inspirational appeal	More down	Supported	No hypothesis	No difference
Consultation	More down than lateral or up	More down and lateral than up	No hypothesis	No difference
Ingratiation	More down and lateral than up	Supported	More initial	Supported
Personal appeal	More lateral than down or up	Supported	More initial	Supported
Exchange	More down and lateral than up	Supported	More follow-up	Supported for immediate follow-up
Coalition	More lateral and up than down	Supported	More follow-up	Supported for delayed follow-up
Legitimizing	More lateral than down or up	More down and lateral than up	No hypothesis	Most in immediate follow-up, least in delayed follow-up
Pressure	More down than lateral or up	Supported	More follow-up	Supported

inspirational appeals are seldom used as single tactics may explain why they did not emerge as separate categories in the early incident study by Kipnis et al. (1980), in which each influence attempt was coded into only one tactic category. More research is needed to discover why some combinations occur frequently and others seldom occur. A promising possibility to investigate is the idea suggested by Yukl (1990) that some tactics are more compatible with each other because they are easier to use together and enhance each other's effectiveness.

The results from our analysis of directional differences, sequencing differences, and tactic combinations provide the following summary of the way the nine influence tactics are typically used by managers. Rational persuasion was the tactic used most often both alone and in combinations. Although used proportionally more often in upward influence attempts, rational persuasion was used frequently in downward and lateral influence attempts as well. Inspirational appeals were used most often in influence attempts with subordinates, usually in combination with another tactic, such as rational persuasion, consultation, or ingratiation. Consultation was used most often in influence attempts with subordinates or peers, and it was usually combined with another tactic, such as rational persuasion, inspirational appeals, or ingratiation. Personal appeals were used most often in initial influence attempts or immediate follow-up attempts with a peer. Ingratiation was used most often in initial influence attempts with subordinates or peers, and it was typically used in combination with another tactic. Note, however, that our study investigated the use of ingratiation as an immediate influence tactic, and in an upward direction ingratiation is more likely to be used as a long-term impression management technique. Exchange was used most often in immediate follow-up attempts with subordinates and peers. A legitimating tactic was used most often in immediate follow-up attempts with subordinates and peers, and it was typically used in combination with rational persuasion or a pressure tactic. Pressure was used mostly as a follow-up tactic, and the target was usually a subordinate. Coalitions were used mostly as a follow-up tactic, and the target was usually a peer or superior.

The research method used in this study has some limitations that should be acknowledged. Any conclusions about the frequency of use for various tactics and tactic combinations rests on the assumption that the sampling of incidents was representative of influence attempts made in organizations. Some tactics or combinations may have occurred more frequently or less frequently merely because our set of incidents included a higher percentage of resistance outcomes than normally occurs in organizations. The absolute frequency of use for each tactic is probably somewhat inflated, because

respondents were instructed not to include incidents involving only a simple request, which our unpublished research with diaries indicates is a very common form of influence attempt. As noted earlier, because of the unequal distribution of incidents and small cell sizes for many tactics, most analyses were done without regard to possible interactions between direction, timing, source, and use of single tactics or combinations. Future research should examine the possibility that our results for “main effects” may have been distorted by such interactions.

In the present study, we did not directly investigate an agent’s reasons for selecting a particular tactic at a particular time for a particular target person. More research is needed to determine why managers select particular combinations and sequences of tactics and how these choices affect target compliance and commitment. Finally, the research on influence tactics has largely ignored the fact that an influence attempt made by a manager is seldom an isolated episode but is instead part of a sequence of reciprocal influence processes that occur in an evolving relationship between the parties. Research on proactive influence tactics needs to be integrated with the extensive research literature on other ways in which managers influence people at work (e.g., use of contingent rewards and punishments, goal setting, coaching and instruction, role modeling).

The findings in this study have some important practical implications. Recent studies have found that the influence behavior of managers is related to their effectiveness (Keys & Case, 1990; Kipnis & Schmidt, 1988; Yukl & Tracey, 1992). Effective managers select influence tactics that are appropriate for the situation (Yukl, 1989). Determining what tactics are appropriate is not just a matter of “common sense.” Our set of incidents contained many examples of inept influence attempts (e.g., use of pressure when unnecessary; use of ingratiation in a clumsy way, use of incompatible tactics in the same influence attempt). Empirically based guidelines would help managers identify appropriate tactics and could be used in management training to improve a manager’s skills in influencing people at work.

The present study increases our knowledge about aspects of the situation likely to be relevant for selecting appropriate tactics, and the results move us closer to development of an influence model with practical guidelines for managers. The following tentative guidelines are based on findings in the present study and findings about outcomes of using different tactics from the parallel research by Falbe and Yukl (1992) and Yukl and Tracey (1992).

- Ingratiation is sometimes useful for influencing subordinates and peers, but it is seldom useful for an immediate influence attempt with the boss.

- Exchange tactics are sometimes useful for influencing subordinates and peers, but they are seldom useful for influencing the boss.
- Ingratiation should be used in an initial influence attempt rather than in a follow-up influence attempt.
- Pressure tactics should be used in a follow-up influence attempt rather than in an initial influence attempt, and only when justified by the importance of the request.
- Legitimizing tactics should be used only when there is a clear, verifiable basis for a request that is unknown to the target.
- A strong form of rational persuasion (e.g., a clear explanation of the reason for the request or proposal, a review of evidence supporting it) should be used rather than a weak form whenever possible.
- Rational persuasion may be used in combination with any of the other tactics, and it usually increases their effectiveness.
- Ingratiation should be used with another compatible tactic, such as rational persuasion or inspirational appeals, rather than alone.
- Pressure should be used with another compatible tactic, such as rational persuasion or legitimating, rather than alone.
- Strong forms of pressure (e.g., demands or threats) should not be used in combination with a soft tactic that is based on mutual trust and friendship, such as ingratiation, consultation, or personal appeals.
- Each tactic category includes a broad variety of behaviors; when planning an influence attempt, it is important to consider not only what tactics to use but also what forms of each tactic are most appropriate for the situation.

In conclusion, our research examined some questions that have received little attention, and some other questions for which prior research found mostly inconsistent results. The results supported our theoretical propositions in most cases, and they provide a better understanding about the use of different influence tactics by managers. Follow-up research is currently in progress to refine and extend the model.

REFERENCES

- Ansari, M. A., & Kapoor, A. (1987). Organizational context and upward influence tactics. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, *40*, 39-49.
- Erez, M., Rim, Y., & Keider, I. (1986). The two sides of the tactics of influence: Agent vs. target. *Journal of Occupational Psychology*, *59*, 25-39.
- Falbe, C. M., & Yukl, G. (1992). Consequences for managers of using single influence tactics and combinations of tactics. *Academy of Management Journal*, *35*, 638-652.
- Keys, B., & Case, T. L. (1990). How to become an influential manager. *The Executive*, *4*(4), 38-51.
- Kipnis, D., & Schmidt, S. M. (1983). An influence perspective on bargaining within organizations. In M. Bazerman & R. Lewicki (Eds.), *Negotiating in organizations* (pp. 303-319). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

- Kipnis, D., & Schmidt, S. M. (1988). Upward influence styles: Relationship with performance evaluations, salary, and stress. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 33, 528-542.
- Kipnis, D., Schmidt, S. M., & Wilkinson, I. (1980). Intra-organizational influence tactics: Explorations in getting one's way. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 65, 440-452.
- Loether, H. J., & McTavish, D. G. (1980). *Descriptive and inferential statistics: An introduction*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Schilit, W. K., & Locke, E. (1982). A study of upward influence in organizations. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 27, 304-316.
- Schmidt, S. M., & Kipnis, D. (1984). Manager's pursuit of individual and organizational goals. *Human Relations*, 37, 781-794.
- Schriesheim, C. A., & Hinkin, T. R. (1990). Influence tactics used by subordinates: A theoretical and empirical analysis and refinement of the Kipnis, Schmidt, and Wilkinson subscales. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 75, 246-257.
- Yukl, G. (1989). *Leadership in organizations*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Yukl, G. (1990). *Skills for managers and leaders*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Yukl, G., & Falbe, C. M. (1990). Influence tactics in upward, downward, and lateral influence attempts. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 75, 132-140.
- Yukl, G., Lepsinger, R., & Lucia, T. (in press). Preliminary report on the development and validation of the Influence Behavior Questionnaire. In K. Clark & M. Clark (Eds.), *The impact of leadership*. Greensboro, NC: Center for Creative Leadership.
- Yukl, G., & Tracey, B. (1992). Consequences of influence tactics used with subordinates, peers, and superiors. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 77, 525-535.

Gary Yukl is Professor of Management at the State University of New York at Albany. He received his Ph.D. in industrial-organizational psychology from the University of California at Berkeley. His research interests are in leadership, power and influence, and training and development. He has published extensively in these fields and has authored several books.

Cecilia M. Falbe is Associate Professor of Management at the State University of New York at Albany. She received her Ph.D. in sociology and organizational theory from Columbia University. Her research interests are leadership, organizational culture and symbols, and franchising. She serves on the boards of several journals in the management field.

Joo Young Youn is a doctoral student in the Organizational Studies Program at the State University of New York at Albany. He is currently working on his dissertation, and his research interests are leadership and cross-cultural studies in management.