

CONSEQUENCES FOR MANAGERS OF USING SINGLE INFLUENCE TACTICS AND COMBINATIONS OF TACTICS

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The study involved analyses of incidents described from the perspective of the targets of influence attempts. We coded influence behavior in the incidents into nine tactics and classified outcomes as commitment, compliance, or resistance. Hypotheses were developed to explain the outcome of each tactic used alone and in combination. The findings supported most of the hypotheses. The most effective tactics were inspirational appeals and consultation. The least effective were pressure, legitimating, and coalition tactics. Intermediate in effectiveness were rational persuasion, ingratiation, personal appeals, and exchange tactics. "Hard" tactics were generally less effective than "soft" tactics. The outcomes of tactic combinations depended mostly on the potency of the component tactics.

One of the most important determinants of managerial effectiveness is success in influencing people (Bass, 1990; Yukl, 1989). Influence processes are important for understanding how managers motivate subordinates' commitment and extra effort (Bass, 1985), how decisions are made in organizations (Pfeffer, 1981), whether strategies and policies are implemented successfully (Bass, 1985; Conger, 1989), how managers obtain cooperation and support from lateral peers over whom they have no authority (Cohen & Bradford, 1989; Kotter, 1982), how managers influence superiors to provide necessary support and resources (Gabarro, 1979), and why organizations adopt some innovations but reject others (Kanter, 1983). Despite the obvious importance of this subject, there has not been much empirical research on the influence behavior of managers. Several studies have examined such issues as the types of influence tactics managers use and the objectives of their influence attempts (e.g., Erez, Rim, & Keider, 1986; Kipnis, Schmidt, & Wilkinson, 1980; Yukl & Falbe, 1990). However, only six studies have examined how influence tactics affect attitudes and behavior (Case, Dosier, Murkinson, & Keys, 1988; Dosier, Case, & Keys, 1988; Keys, Case, Miller, Curran, & Jones, 1987; Kipnis & Schmidt, 1988; Mowday, 1978).

Overall, the six studies provide little insight into the relative effectiveness of different tactics in influencing subordinates, peers, and superiors. Few findings have been significant, and the significant results have mostly

been inconsistent across studies. The absence of strong and consistent findings may be due to a number of reasons. Methodological differences among the studies are substantial, with tactics and their outcomes measured in different ways from one study to the next. Some studies have compared the tactics used in successful and unsuccessful influence incidents, whereas other studies have examined correlations between questionnaire measures of tactics and measures of managerial performance. None of the correlational studies has used an immediate outcome, such as the task commitment of the target of the influence behavior under study. Influence behavior is likely to affect such an immediate outcome more than a criterion like ratings of the overall performance of the influence agent. The influence incident studies have used immediate outcomes as criteria but measured them in terms of a simple dichotomy (successful versus unsuccessful), which reduces the likelihood of finding any effect of influence tactics on the outcomes. Finally, most of the studies have examined only upward influence attempts, in which agent influence is likely to be weaker than it would be in lateral or downward influence attempts.

Almost nothing is known about the way agents combine different tactics in the same influence attempt or about the effectiveness of different combinations. It is extremely difficult to investigate this subject in questionnaire studies. For example, a study by Kipnis and Schmidt (1988) indicated the tactics managers emphasized but did not examine tactic sequences or combinations. Tactic combinations can be studied more directly with influence incidents than with questionnaires, but this has not been a research objective in prior incident studies (Case et al., 1988). We conducted the present research to learn more about the likely outcomes of using different influence tactics alone and in various combinations. The next section defines the influence tactics and outcomes studied and presents hypotheses about the effects of tactics on outcomes, along with a brief review of relevant prior research.

CONSTRUCTS AND HYPOTHESES

Outcomes of Influence Attempts

Influence attempts result in various outcomes that can be differentiated in terms of agent success. Prior critical incident studies have used only a dichotomous classification of outcomes (successful versus unsuccessful), but the effectiveness of an influence attempt can be evaluated more precisely by distinguishing between three different outcomes: commitment, compliance, and resistance (Yukl, 1989). Commitment occurs when a target person agrees internally with an action or decision, is enthusiastic about it, and is likely to exercise initiative and demonstrate unusual effort and persistence in order to carry out the request successfully. Compliance occurs when the target person carries out the requested action but is apathetic about it rather than enthusiastic, makes only a minimal or average effort, and does not show

any initiative. The distinction between compliance and commitment is similar to Kelman's (1958) distinction between compliance and internalization. Resistance occurs when the target person is opposed to the requested action and tries to avoid doing it by refusing, arguing, delaying, or seeking to have the request nullified.

The success of an influence attempt depends on the nature of the request as well as on the immediate outcome. Attitudinal commitment is a more successful outcome than behavioral compliance for a complex task that requires extra effort, initiative, and persistence to be performed effectively. Under these conditions, compliance is less successful than commitment but is still preferable to resistance. For a request that is simple and routine (e.g., wear safety goggles, perform a simple, short task), compliance may be all that is needed to accomplish an agent's objective. In this situation, compliance may be regarded as a successful outcome, but in many cases an agent can obtain compliance by making a simple request (Yukl, 1990).

Effectiveness of Individual Tactics

The outcome of an influence attempt depends on several variables, including the type of tactic used, the objective of the influence attempt, the relative power of an agent and a target, their relationship, the agent's skill in exercising power, and the target's prior attitudes and perceptions about the requested action. In light of the large number of causal variables and the inconsistent results of prior studies, it is difficult to develop hypotheses about the likely outcomes of individual tactics. Nevertheless, the few prior studies on this question, and indirect evidence from research on leadership, motivation, attitude change, and conflict resolution, suggest that some tactics are more likely than others to result in successful outcomes. The relative effectiveness of the tactics stems in part from their intrinsic properties and in part from the types of requests for which they are likely to be used.

The present research included nine influence tactics that cover the full range of observable, proactive influence behaviors examined in prior research on managers in organizations. The construct validity of the tactics is based in part on the results of factor analyses of data from self-report agent questionnaires (Schriesheim & Hinkin, 1990) and target questionnaires (Yukl, Lepsinger, & Lucia, 1992). The following hypotheses describe the likely outcome for each of the nine tactics.

Hypothesis 1: Inspirational appeals are more likely to result in commitment than in compliance or resistance.

In an inspirational appeal, an agent makes a request or proposal that arouses enthusiasm by appealing to a target's values, ideals, and aspirations, or by increasing the target's confidence that he or she can do the requested task. Research on the downward influence of leaders over subordinates provides indirect evidence about the likely effectiveness of inspirational appeals. Descriptive studies of "charismatic" and "transformational" leader-

ship (Bass, 1985; Conger, 1989) have found that managers who motivate exceptional effort by subordinates present a clear, inspiring vision, which is one form of inspirational appeal.

Hypothesis 2: Consultation is more likely to result in commitment than in compliance or resistance.

With consultation, an agent seeks a target's participation in planning a strategy, activity, or change for which the target's support and assistance are desired, or the agent is willing to modify a proposal to deal with the target's concerns and suggestions. Consultation increases commitment when the target develops a more favorable attitude than was present formerly about the task and feels a sense of ownership for it as a result of participating in planning it. Most results pertinent to this issue from prior research have been either positive or nonsignificant. Schilit and Locke (1982) found that a consultation tactic—using a target as a platform to present ideas—was likely to be effective in upward influence incidents reported by targets, but the results for upward influence incidents reported by agents were not significant in that study, nor were they in the incident studies by Case and colleagues (1988) and Dosier and colleagues (1988). Leadership research on the use of consultation with individual subordinates has found that consultation increases decision acceptance in some situations but not in others (cf. Vroom & Jago, 1988).

Hypothesis 3: Rational persuasion is more likely to result in compliance or commitment than in resistance.

With rational persuasion, an agent uses logical arguments and factual evidence to persuade a target that a proposal or request is worthwhile. Rational persuasion is most likely to be effective when the agent and target share a common task objective (Yukl, 1990). Results from prior research on the consequences of using rational persuasion have been either positive or nonsignificant. In the questionnaire study by Kipnis and Schmidt (1988), managers who used rational persuasion more than other tactics in upward influence attempts received the highest performance ratings. Rational persuasion was not related to successful upward influence in the questionnaire study by Mowday (1978), and it was not related to outcome success in the four critical incident studies described earlier.

Hypothesis 4: Ingratiation is more likely to result in compliance than in commitment or resistance.

With ingratiation, an agent seeks to get a target in a good mood or to think favorably of him or her before making a request. The agent attempts to increase target cooperation by increasing the target's feelings of positive regard toward him or her (Liden & Mitchell, 1988). The findings of research on the consequences of ingratiation used as a direct influence tactic have been few and inconsistent. In their questionnaire study of upward influence, Kipnis and Schmidt (1988) found that male managers whose influence pro-

file involved a relatively high use of ingratiation received moderate performance ratings, but female ingratiators received high performance ratings. Keys and colleagues' (1987) results were not significant for ingratiation tactics (courtesy or friendliness) used in lateral incidents.

Hypothesis 5: Personal appeals are more likely to result in compliance than in commitment or resistance.

With a personal appeal, the agent appeals to the target's feelings of loyalty and friendship to influence the target to do something unusual or extra as a special favor. Only three studies have examined the effectiveness of personal appeals as an influence tactic, and results were nonsignificant in every case. In the critical incident study by Schilit and Locke (1982), personal appeals (asking for favors or pity) were not related to success in upward influence attempts. Likewise, in the critical incidents study by Case and colleagues (1988), personal appeals (pleading, begging, and asking favors) were not related to the success of upward influence attempts. In the critical incidents study by Keys and colleagues (1987), personal appeals (appealing to the sympathy of the target) were not related to the success of lateral influence attempts.

Hypothesis 6: Exchange is more likely to result in compliance than in commitment or resistance.

Exchange tactics involve explicit or implicit offers by an agent to provide a favor or benefit to a target in return for doing what the agent requests. 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 the agent do a task. An agent is most likely to use exchange when a target is reluctant to do what the agent wants without an additional inducement. An exchange of tangible benefits between a leader and a subordinate is an impersonal transaction that often results in compliance but is unlikely to result in subordinate commitment to the task (Bass, 1985; Yukl, 1989). Results for the consequences of using exchange as a direct influence tactic have been inconsistent. Schilit and Locke (1982) found that exchange (trading job-related benefits) was more likely to be successful than unsuccessful in upward critical incidents described by targets, but results for this tactic were not significant in upward incidents described by agents. No significant results for exchange tactics emerged in the incident studies by Case and colleagues (1988) and by Keys and colleagues (1987) or in the questionnaire study by Mowday (1978).

Hypothesis 7: Pressure is more likely to result in resistance or compliance than in commitment.

With pressure tactics, an agent uses demands, threats, frequent checking, or persistent reminders in an attempt to influence a target to carry out a request. Pressure is unlikely to result in commitment except in the rare situation in which the target already has some prior reason to be committed to the agent's request or proposal, in which case pressure is inappropriate. In

Kipnis and Schmidt (1988), self-reported use of pressure was a key part of the behavior profile for managers who received the lowest performance ratings. In Schilit and Locke (1982), targets reported that some pressure tactics used in upward influence attempts (threatening to go over a target's head, challenging the power of the target) were likely to be unsuccessful, and agents reported that another pressure tactic (threatening to resign) was likely to be unsuccessful. In Case and colleagues (1988), an upward influence attempt was likely to be unsuccessful when the agent used a pressure tactic (telling or arguing without support). Pressure was not related to influence success in three other studies (Dosier et al., 1988; Keys et al., 1987; Mowday, 1978).

Hypothesis 8: Legitimizing is more likely to result in resistance or compliance than in commitment.

With legitimating tactics, an agent seeks to establish the legitimacy of a request by claiming the authority to make it or by verifying that it is consistent with organizational policies, rules, or traditions. Legitimizing tactics may induce a target to comply with a request if the target is convinced the request is within the agent's scope of authority and is consistent with organizational rules and policies. Yukl and Falbe (1991) found that the reason reported most frequently by managers for complying with a request made by a superior or peer was the legitimacy of the request. However, there is little reason to expect legitimating tactics to result in task commitment, and this tactic may even evoke resistance if used in an arrogant manner (Yukl, 1989). Legitimizing tactics were not related significantly to influence success in the incident studies by Schilit and Locke (1982) and Keys and colleagues (1987) or in the questionnaire study by Mowday (1978).

Hypothesis 9: Coalition is more likely to result in resistance or compliance than in commitment.

With coalition tactics, an agent enlists the aid or endorsement of other people to influence a target to do what the agent wants. Most prior studies have indicated that coalition tactics are seldom effective for influencing target commitment. Coalition tactics (using group or peer support) were not significantly related to outcome success in the incident studies by Case and colleagues (1988), Dosier and colleagues (1988), and Schilit and Locke (1982). In the questionnaire study by Kipnis and Schmidt (1988), self-reported use of coalitions in upward influence was part of the profile for managers who received the lowest performance ratings. The only positive relationship for a coalition tactic (gaining the support of several peers) was found in the study of lateral influence incidents by Keys and colleagues (1987).

The following two hypotheses address the relative effectiveness of the nine influence tactics:

Hypothesis 10: Consultation and inspirational appeals are more effective than the other tactics.

Hypothesis 11: Pressure, legitimating, and coalition are less effective than the other tactics.

Effectiveness of Tactic Combinations

The large number of tactic combinations possible for a set of nine tactics makes it difficult to analyze results in critical incident research unless the tactics are first grouped into a smaller number of meta-categories. Kipnis and Schmidt (1985) suggested that influence tactics can be grouped into three categories—hard tactics, soft tactics, and rational persuasion—and recent studies have used these meta-categories to examine the relationship between a leader's influence behavior and other leader attributes (e.g., Deluga, 1991a, 1991b). Hard tactics involve use of authority and position power, and they tend to be used in an impersonal and manipulative way. Pressure and legitimating tactics are clearly hard tactics, and many forms of coalition are hard, especially upward appeals to an agent's superior. Kipnis and Schmidt included exchange as a rational tactic, but when used in an impersonal, manipulative way, exchange appears to be a hard tactic. Soft tactics involve use of personal power and power sharing. The soft tactics include ingratiation, consultation, inspirational appeals, and personal appeals.

As noted earlier, Case and colleagues (1988) found that more successful outcomes occurred for influence attempts with two tactics than for influence attempts with a single tactic, although their study did not examine the relative effectiveness of different tactic combinations. It is likely that the effectiveness of a tactic combination depends primarily on the potency of the component tactics. For example, it is likely that combining two soft tactics is more effective than combining a hard and soft tactic, or combining two hard tactics.

METHODS

Critical incidents were used to investigate the outcomes of influence attempts. In contrast to analysis based on questionnaires, analysis of individual influence attempts makes it possible to assess the effectiveness of each tactic used alone or in combinations.

Data Collection

Information on influence incidents was obtained from 95 night M.B.A. 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 half the students were managers, and most of the rest were nonmanagerial professionals. Eighty-five of the students each described 6 incidents as part of a course project in two M.B.A. courses, and 10 other students each obtained 18 incidents for an optional research project that was not part of a regular course. All incidents were reported from the perspective of the target of an influence attempt made by a subordinate, a peer, or a boss. Most of the students reported on their own experiences as targets, and the

rest interviewed managers from their own or another organization. Respondents were assured that the information on incidents they gave would remain confidential and would not be seen by anybody except the researchers. Students were asked to obtain from each source (themselves or another person) equal numbers of incidents resulting in commitment, compliance, and resistance; we defined these outcomes for the students beforehand.

Students received forms on which to write descriptions of the incidents. The incident forms had fixed-response items that asked respondents to indicate the direction of the influence attempt described—whether the agent was a subordinate, peer, or boss—and the initial and final outcomes of the influence attempt: resistance, compliance, or commitment. The following instructions were provided for the descriptions of incidents to be written by respondents on the blank part of the form: "In a paragraph or two, describe what was said or done by the agent to influence you. Also, describe how you reacted to the request. If a sequence of influence attempts occurred, describe each episode in the sequence." Students were also instructed to provide details, including quotes and examples of what the agent said. We encouraged the students to obtain examples of influence attempts that involved important issues or substantive requests for assistance or support rather than simple requests or routine task assignments. We emphasized selection of nontrivial influence objectives to ensure that the students would provide the types of incidents for which commitment is more desirable than compliance and for which more than a simple request is necessary to ensure target commitment.

Coding of Incidents

Each influence behavior used by an agent in each incident was coded as one of the nine influence tactics described earlier in the hypotheses. To simplify the analysis of tactic combinations, we limited the number of tactics that could be coded in any single time period or phase of an incident to two. Few incidents involved more than two influence tactics at the same time, and for those incidents the two most salient tactics were selected. The coders also checked the respondents' classifications of outcomes and directions of influence to verify their consistency with the evidence provided in the incident.

Two people independently coded each incident. The coders were two management professors and two doctoral students. Whenever possible, one coder screened incidents, and if an incident was ambiguous, the information was returned to the person who had provided it for additional detail and clarification about what the agent said or did in the influence attempt. Likewise, if an incident description did not provide adequate justification for the outcome rating, the respondent was asked to explain in more detail. After a pair of coders had finished their independent coding of a set of incidents, they met to confer about them and resolve any disagreements. The level of agreement between coders in their independent coding of incidents was

moderately high; the same tactic codes were assigned in 85 percent of the incidents. We discarded an incident if it was too ambiguous to allow resolution of coder disagreement, if it involved only a simple request, or if it involved multiple agents and targets in a complex interaction. The data analysis was based on the final codings made after agreement was reached.

A total of 646 usable incidents was obtained. In most of our analyses, we treated the initial and follow-up parts of sequential incidents as separate influence attempts, each with its own tactics and outcome. The 542 initial and 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 half the targets in the downward and lateral incidents were nonmanagerial employees. All the targets in the upward influence attempts were managers. The distribution of outcomes for the 777 influence attempts was as follows: 287 (37%), resistance; 268 (34%), compliance; and 222 (29%), commitment; this distribution is close to the equal distribution we sought to obtain with our instructions to respondents.

RESULTS

The most direct way to evaluate the relative effectiveness of the nine influence tactics is to examine outcomes for influence attempts involving only a single tactic, since there will be no confounding of effects resulting from simultaneous use of another tactic. Table 1 shows the frequency of resistance, compliance, and commitment outcomes for each tactic when used alone, in initial influence attempts (345 incidents), or in follow-up influence attempts (159 incidents). We tested Hypotheses 1 through 9 with a chi-square test. Inspirational appeals and consultation both had a modal outcome of commitment, consistent with the predictions of Hypotheses 1 and 2. Contrary to Hypothesis 3, rational persuasion was as likely to result in resistance as in compliance or commitment. Legitimizing tactics, coalitions, and pressure usually resulted in resistance or compliance, consistent with Hypotheses 7, 8, and 9. As expected, ingratiation, personal appeals, and exchange were intermediate in effectiveness and had a more equal distribution of outcomes. The outcome pattern was consistent with Hypothesis 4 but not with Hypotheses 5 and 6.

We assessed the relative effectiveness of the nine influence tactics by comparing them in terms of a continuous criterion of outcome success. Outcomes were coded as 1 for resistance, 2 for compliance, and 3 for commitment, reflecting increasing outcome success from the perspective of the agent for requests that require a degree of target enthusiasm and initiative to be carried out successfully. Table 1 shows the mean outcome for each tactic when used alone in initial or follow-up influence attempts. An analysis of variance indicated that some tactics had significantly more favorable outcomes than others ($F = 7.8, p < .01, df = 8,495$). Results of a Duncan's multiple range test indicated significant differences ($p < .05$) for many of the

TABLE 1
Outcomes for Each Tactic Used Alone

Influence Tactics	Outcomes ^a		Cases	Means	s.d.	χ^2	Summary of Pairwise Comparisons of Means ^b													
	Resistance	Compliance					Commitment	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8					
1. Inspiration	0%	10%	10	2.9	.32	25.21**														
2. Consultation	18	27	55	2.4	.80	6.56*	ns													
3. Personal appeals	25	33	42	2.2	.81	8.24**	*	ns												
4. Exchange	24	41	35	2.1	.77	5.53*	*	ns	ns											
5. Ingratiation	41	28	31	3.2	1.9	.86	1.16	*	ns	ns										
6. Rational persuasion	47	30	23	2.70	1.8	.80	1.77	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
7. Legitimizing	44	56	0	1.6	.51	2.40	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
8. Coalition	53	44	3	3.1	1.5	.57	3.77*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
9. Pressure	56	41	3	6.4	1.5	.56	14.28**	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Number of incidents	218	169	117				504													

^a Percentages are based on row totals.

^b Pairwise differences on Duncan's multiple range test are significant at $p < .05$; ns = nonsignificant.

* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$

pairwise comparisons (see Table 1). Inspirational appeals and consultation were significantly more effective than most of the other tactics, consistent with Hypothesis 10. Legitimizing, coalition and pressure tactics were significantly less effective than most of the other tactics, consistent with Hypothesis 11.

The fact that more than two thirds of the incidents involved an initial influence attempt may somewhat bias the results for the analysis of tactics used alone. As a supplementary analysis, tactics used in the follow-up influence attempts were compared. For this analysis, the criterion was not the absolute outcome, but rather the degree of improvement in outcome over that of the initial influence attempt. Outcomes that did not change were coded as a 1; improvement from resistance to compliance or from compliance to commitment was coded as a 2; improvement from resistance to commitment was coded as a 3. Because the number of follow-up influence attempts was small, we made the analysis without regard to use of tactics alone (159 incidents) or in combination with another tactic (76 incidents). Thus, the data for this analysis consisted of 311 tactics, not 235 incidents. An analysis of variance indicated significant differences among tactics with respect to outcome improvement ($F = 7.7, p < .01, df = 8,302$). Results of a Duncan's multiple range test showed that there was significantly more improvement in outcomes ($p < .05$) for inspirational appeals, consultation, rational persuasion, and exchange than for pressure and coalition; the remaining three tactics were intermediate in effectiveness. Thus, even for follow-up influence attempts and a different type of criterion, the relative effectiveness of the nine tactics remained about the same. The most obvious difference between the two analyses occurred for rational persuasion, which moved up in the ranking of tactics. This difference arose because rational persuasion was more effective as a follow-up tactic ($\bar{x} = 2.2$) than as an initial tactic ($\bar{x} = 1.8$). In many initial influence attempts, agents used very weak forms of rational persuasion, whereas weak forms were seldom used in follow-up attempts.

Table 2 shows the outcomes for soft, hard, and rational tactics, and the possible pairwise combinations of these categories. We used an analysis of variance to compare the soft, hard, and rational tactics used alone (504 incidents) or in combinations (273 incidents). Results indicated that some combinations had significantly more favorable outcomes than others ($F = 15.3, p < .01, df = 7,769$).

As in the earlier study by Case and colleagues (1988), influence attempts in which an agent used a pair of tactics had more favorable outcomes ($t = 5.6, p < .01$) than incidents in which the agent used only a single tactic. However, results for comparison of different combinations using Duncan's multiple range test (see Table 2) indicated that the effectiveness of a combination depended on what types of tactics were combined. Combining two soft tactics was more effective than using a single soft tactic. Cell sizes were too small to allow analysis of results for specific pairs of tactics, but it is interesting to note one apparent exception to this generalization: the com-

TABLE 2
Outcomes for Major Types of Tactics Used Alone and in Combinations

Influence Tactics	Outcomes ^a			Cases	Means	s.d.	Summary of Pairwise Comparisons of Means ^b									
	Resistance	Compliance	Commitment				1	2	3	4	5	6	7			
1. Soft with soft	14%	12%	74%	35	2.6	.74										
2. Soft with rational	14	31	55	73	2.4	.72	ns									
3. Soft alone	27	28	45	89	2.2	.83	*	ns								
4. Hard with rational	28	46	26	92	2.0	.74	*	*	ns							
5. Soft with hard	33	35	32	37	2.0	.82	*	*	ns	ns						
6. Rational alone	47	30	23	270	1.8	.80	*	*	*	*	ns					
7. Hard with hard	45	47	8	36	1.6	.64	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	ns	ns
8. Hard alone	47	43	10	145	1.6	.67	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	ns	ns
All combinations	25	36	39	273	2.1	.79										
All single tactics	43	34	23	504	1.8	.79										

^a Percentages are based on row totals.

^b Pairwise differences on Duncan's multiple range test are significant at $p < .05$; ns = nonsignificant.

combination of personal appeals with ingratiation appeared relatively ineffective ($\bar{x} = 1.7$). Combining a soft tactic with rational persuasion was more effective than using a single soft tactic or rational persuasion alone. Combining a hard tactic with rational persuasion was more effective than using a single hard tactic or rational persuasion alone. Combining two hard tactics was not significantly different from using a single hard tactic. Combining a hard tactic with a soft tactic was more effective than using a single hard tactic but not significantly different from using a single soft tactic. Finally, combining two soft tactics was clearly more effective than combining two hard tactics.

DISCUSSION

Prior research has found only weak and inconsistent results for the effectiveness of different influence tactics. Our results revealed clear differences among tactics with respect to likely outcomes, and we found that some tactics were generally more effective than others. The most effective tactics were consultation and inspirational appeals, although these tactics were used mostly in a downward and lateral direction and usually in combination with another tactic. The effectiveness of rational persuasion depended to a great extent on how it was used. It was much more effective when used in combination with soft tactics such as consultation, inspirational appeals, or ingratiation than when used alone or with hard tactics such as pressure, coalitions, and legitimating. Ingratiation, personal appeals, and exchange were moderately effective tactics. Exchange was surprisingly effective, and it may not be appropriate to regard it as a hard tactic except when it is used in a very impersonal, manipulative way. The least effective tactics were pressure, coalition, and legitimating. These tactics seldom resulted in commitment, even when used with another tactic. Nevertheless, the results showed that these hard tactics can be useful for eliciting compliance, especially when combined with rational persuasion. As noted earlier, compliance is sometimes all that is needed to accomplish a task objective. Overall, the results are consistent with the proposition that each tactic can be useful in an appropriate situation (Yukl, 1990).

This was the first study to examine the relative effectiveness of different combinations of tactics. The results indicated that the effectiveness of a combination depends primarily on the potency of its component tactics. Combinations were usually more successful than single tactics, but a combination of two hard tactics was no better than a single hard tactic, and a soft-hard combination was no better than a single soft tactic. Thus, when managers use tactic combinations, they should pay careful attention to the selection of component tactics.

The research method used in this study has some limitations that should be acknowledged. Since we did not experimentally manipulate influence behavior in our research, we can only infer causality from the results. Any conclusions about the relative effectiveness of different tactics rest on the assumption that the results were not biased by confounding

factors or sampling problems. For example, a manager's experience may be related to how effectively a particular influence tactic is used. Another limitation was the reliance upon targets to describe the influence behavior of agents. We used targets, because we believed they would provide a more accurate assessment of influence outcomes than agents. However, target reports tend to underrepresent some subtle forms of agent influence behavior that are successful only if the target is not aware they are being used, such as ingratiation and subtle forms of coalition. The ineffectiveness of coalition tactics in this study may be due to a high incidence of overt forms that appeared coercive to the targets.

The findings of our research have implications for improving managerial effectiveness, although caution is needed in offering guidelines until follow-up research verifies the present results. This study indicates that some tactics tend to be more effective than others, but it does not suggest that some tactics or combinations will always result in task commitment or that others will always result in resistance. Other variables besides the types of influence tactics an agent uses affect the outcome of any particular influence attempt, and any tactic can result in resistance if it is used in an unskillful manner or for a request that is illegitimate or unethical. Nevertheless, it is an advantage for a manager to know which tactics have the highest likelihood of success.

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