



Examining the Determinants and Outcomes of Superior Downward Influence Tactics: The Mediating Impact of Role Ambiguity and Subordinates' Competence Level

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Abstract

This paper examines the antecedents and consequences of superior downward influence tactics in Malaysian companies. The literature review revealed that downward influence tactics are useful but practically challenging. Researchers have identified downward influence tactics such as inspirational appeal, consultation, exchange, pressure, ingratiation, and rational persuasion as commonly used influence tactics by superior to change the behavior of subordinates. The purpose of this paper is to develop a conceptual framework for relating different outcomes of downward influence tactics and the determinants under which such influences are exercised. The outcomes are measured in terms of differences in subordinates' satisfaction with supervision and organizational citizenship behavior when subjected to supervisory downward influence tactics. Understanding different influence tactics affect the outcomes which can provide guidelines for superior in using the suitable influence tactics to increase the organizational citizenship behavior and satisfaction in organizations. Leadership styles, organizational context and mediating variables of role ambiguity and subordinates' competency level were also investigated.

Keywords: Downward Influence Tactics, Leadership, Organizational Contexts, Role Ambiguity, Competence, Satisfaction with Supervision, Organizational Citizenship Behavior

1. Introduction and Objective of the Study

Influence occurred when an influence leader behavior designed to change a member behavior or attitudes. Although in many occasions the term "influence" is used interchangeably with power and influence tactics, Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Morrison & Fetter (1990) demonstrated that power alone is not sufficient in explaining a leader's effectiveness in influencing people. Effective leaders must have the skill to recognize when to use different tactics of influence as well as the skill necessary to effectively carry out these influence attempts (Kipnis, Schmidt & Wilkinson, 1980; Yukl & Falbe, 1990; Yukl, 1998; Bolino & Turnley, 2003). A number of researchers have identified categories of proactive behaviors called influence tactics used by superior with different target and objectives (Kipnis, Schmidt & Wilkinson, 1980; Schriesheim & Hinkin, 1990; Yukl & Falbe, 1990; Yukl, Falbe & Youn, 1993; Yukl & Tracey, 1992; Ansari & Kapoor, 1987; Erez & Rim, 1982; Erez, Rim & Keider, 1986; Schmidt & Kipnis, 1984). More recently, there have been several researchers suggested that leadership research needs to focus more on "fundamental" issues, such as influence processes that characterize leader-follower interaction (Bass, 1990; Hollander & Offermann, 1990; Yukl, 1989). Research has shown that leaders' effectiveness with subordinates depends heavily on their abilities to accomplish things through subordinates (Uyterhoeven 1972; Ruello, 1973). Consequently, the more the leader enters into a set of reciprocal relationships, the more the leader becomes skillful in influencing the subordinates. Moreover, in terms of using downward influence tactics effectively, several empirical studies offer strong support for the idea that the most effective leaders in organizations understand the nature of influence, "what" influence tactics are available to them, and "how" and "when" to use those tactics (Case, Dosier, Murkison & Keys. 1988; Kaplan, 1986; Kipnis & Schmidt,

1988; Mowday, 1978; Schilit & Locke, 1982; Yukl & Falbe, 1990). These works seem to infer that influence is important in all human relationships.

There have been few studies done to investigate the superior downward influence tactics in Malaysian work settings with relates to organizational context and leadership as key independent variables and outcomes such as satisfaction with supervision and organizational citizenship behavior. There are also few studies that investigate role ambiguity and subordinates' competence level as mediators. Thus, this research is conducted with the aim of achieving greater understanding of adopting the appropriate influence tactics to enable the superiors to better achieve their objectives in maintaining organizational harmony and unity. Secondly, this research is conducted in Malaysian cultural setting with diverse social and organizational culture. It will be interesting to look at how Malaysian workforce responds to different influence tactics as social behavior is normally implanted and entrenched in the given society. The research is important to address question confronting our industrial society concerned with the issue on how can the skills of managers be enriched so as to make it possible for them to act with greater proficiency when their contributions are from dealing with and through people especially their subordinates. One way of looking into this issue is from the "influence" perspectives of the interpersonal interactions that occur across organizational levels characterized by the phrase "superior-subordinate relationships".

In fact, there is a significant focus of interpersonal relationship researches due to our belief that sound superior-subordinate relationships are important and consistent with humanistic and cooperative work environment sought by contemporary managers. It is also believed that positive interpersonal relationship at workplace is able to increase subordinates' satisfaction with supervision and organization citizenship behavior (OCB). The subordinates with high levels of satisfaction and OCB are more likely to be committed to the organization (William & Anderson, 1991; Smith, Organ & Near, 1983). It is worthwhile for the superior to be aware of the existence of multiple sources of influence in work situations and how it promote subordinates' satisfaction with supervision and OCB since negative outcome itself could lead to many organizational dysfunctions such as decline in work performances, absenteeism and high turnover (Lamude, 1994; Motowidlo, 2003). According to Williams and Anderson (1991) superior's tactics of influence with subordinates and subordinates' satisfaction with supervision and OCB are inter-related. Different approach of influence styles can trigger negative consequences, which further increases sensitivity and susceptibility to misunderstanding, which in turn increases dissatisfaction. Thus, prevention of subordinates' negative outcome is important when deals with different influence tactics. This becomes a vicious cycle that many organization leaders need to address downward influence tactics and its consequences more systematically.

On the other hand, there was a substantial amount of the research attention in the context of upward influence directional. Little attention has been given in linking the types of downward influence styles. Knowing how downward influence tactics related to the organizational structure, transformational or transactional leadership, role ambiguity and competence level and its consequences will enable the superior to change or maintain his/her influence tactics to achieve the desirable outcomes. Thus, this study seeks to find out the correlates and outcome of downward influence that would ultimately contribute to the knowledge of organizational management and behavior in this area.

1.1 Research Questions

The delineation of research question is to find out the downward influence method employed by superior in the Malaysian companies, what are the correlates and consequences of influence tactics and how it affects subordinates. This research also provides information about the appropriateness and effectiveness of each style as it pertains to specific outcomes (Yukl, Kim & Falbe, 1996). The key advantage to examine the antecedents and consequences of influence tactics is the maximization of organizational outcomes. This study also sought to answer the following research questions.

Are there any significant differences in subordinates' satisfaction with supervision and organizational citizenship behaviour when subjected to downward influence tactics?

Are there any predictable relationships between organizational variables and downward influence tactics and subordinates' satisfaction with supervision and organizational citizenship behaviour?

Can leadership styles be predictors of the exercise of downward influence tactics and subordinates' satisfaction with supervision and organizational citizenship behaviour?

What is the distribution of the use of influence tactics in Malaysian companies?

Can subordinates' competence level and role ambiguity mediate the relationship between the leadership style and downward influence tactics?

Can subordinates' competence level and role ambiguity mediate the relationship between the organizational context and downward influence tactics?

2. Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

The following sections provide the theoretical foundation and review of the relevant constructs and variables as well as their interactions as shown in Figure 1. The main part discusses the constructs and variables, known relationships between them, theoretical perspective that link downward Influence tactics and those that contribute in explaining the determinants and outcomes of downward influence tactics such as leadership styles and organizational contextual variables (key independent variables), satisfaction with supervision, and organizational citizenship behaviour (key dependent variables) and mediator variables such as role ambiguity and subordinates' competence level.

2.1 Influence and Influence Tactics

Kipnis et al. (1980) labels of assertiveness, coalitions, exchange, ingratiation, rationality, and upward appeal represent a broad segment of the influence tactic literature. Schriesheim and Hinkin (1990) replicated the study of Kipnis et al. (1980) and developed new items to measure the same subscales. Yukl and colleagues (Yukl & Falbe, 1990; Yukl & Tracey, 1992; Yukl, Falbe & Yoon, 1993; Yukl, Kim & Falbe, 1996) examined influence tactics from the perspectives of both agent and target, and also extended the work of Kipnis et al. by identifying the additional tactics of inspirational appeal, consultation, legitimating, pressure, and personal appeal. Yukl and Falbe (1990) determined that inspirational appeal and consultation were the most frequently used in downward influence tactics. This conclusion coincides with the research results of Hinkin and Schriesheim (1990), who found that consultation and inspirational appeal has significant positive relationships with the bases of power such as expert and referent.

For the purpose of this study, the researchers have chosen Yukl and his colleagues (Yukl & Falbe, 1990; Yukl & Tracey, 1992) downward influence tactics. It is among the most popular downward influence used in research. In fact, Yukl and his colleagues model was based on Kipnis et al. (1980) influence styles. This work leads them to identify the primary tactics leaders used in downward direction is defined in Table 1.

2.2 Leadership Styles

Past researchers have studied on transactional leadership as the core component of effective leadership behavior in organizations prior to the introduction of transformational leadership theory into the literature (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978; House, 1977). Transactional leadership is based on exchange relationship where subordinates agreed with, accepted, or complied with the superior in exchange for rewards, resources or the avoidance of disciplinary action (Podsakoff, Todor & Skov, 1982; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman & Fetter, 1990). Previous research has shown transactional contingent reward style leadership to be positively related to followers' commitment, satisfaction, organizational citizenship behavior and performance (Bycio, Hackett & Allen, 1995; Hunt & Schuler, 1976; Podsakoff, Todor, Grover & Huber, 1984; Goodwin, Wofford & Whittington, 2001).

More recently, there are many empirical work on transformational leadership focused on the extent to which transformational leadership augments the effect of transactional leadership in explaining various outcomes. For example, leader effectiveness (Hater & Bass, 1988), subordinate satisfaction (Seltzer & Bass, 1990) and subordinate effort (Bass, 1985), and little is known about the transformational-transactional leadership and the influence tactics although there are several writers highlighted the important of studying power and influence processes (Bass, 1990; Hollander & Offermann, 1990; Yukl, 1989). These recommendations seem particularly relevant for transformational leadership research as the literature suggests that (1) the pursuit of visionary influence objectives is a distinguishing feature of transformational leadership, (2) transactional and transformational leaders employ different kinds of influence strategies or tactics to obtain follower conformity, and (3) transactional and transformational leaders elicit different patterns of follower conformity (Kelman, 1958; Howell, 1988; Tichy & Devanna, 1986). This new genre of leadership advocates that transformational leaders can motivate followers to perform beyond the normal call of duty. There is also considerable empirical support that such leaders produce leadership effects such as high follower motivation, satisfaction, and commitment.

2.3 Organizational Contextual Variables

Several researchers have attributed the influence tactics to various factors e.g. span of control (Morris, Steers & Roch, 1979) and organizational structure (Weber, 1946; Crozier, 1964).

2.3.1 Span of Control

Span of control is the number of subordinates reporting to a superior. If the span is narrow, manager will have few underlings. Narrow span will provide closer supervision and tighter "boss-oriented" controls; thus resulting in tall, hierarchical structure (Likert & Likert 1976; Tannenbaum 1968). On the other hand, wider spans will generally entail more responsibility be given to subordinates, thereby making the job more fulfilling. Thus, span of control can be an important variable in the superior-subordinate exchange relation. Moreover, studies by Morris, Steers and Roch (1979) shows that superior span of control contributes to the explained variance in influence styles. Extending this argument, it is also presupposed that supervisory span will have influence to the way manager exercising influence tactics.

2.3.2 Organizational Structure

The study of organizational structure relies on the differentiation of position, formulation of rules and procedures, and prescriptions of authority (Weber, 1946). In this study, structure is conceptualized on a mechanistic-organic continuum. Crozier (1964) suggests that an organization stresses rules, policies, and procedures will lead to rigidity and inflexibility develops an elaborate control system backed by a centralized staff, this is called “mechanistic” or “bureaucratic”. Crozier (1964) called the opposite type “organic”. Organic structure is to be seen as the dominant form of structural design in the near future. Studies by Wells (1990) and Ferris, Duleboun, Flink, George-Falry, Mitchell and Matthew (1997) stated that structure might affect the influence styles. Their findings show that superior tends to favor inspirational appeal and consultation approach when the structure is organic.

2.4 Subordinates' Competency Level

Superior exercises of influence styles can be affected by subordinates' competence level. If subordinate competence level is high, superior may use soft tactics such as inspirational appeal and consultation (Snyder & Bruning, 1985). On the other hand, assuming subordinates' competency is low, superior may be expected to use hard tactics like pressure (Salam, 1998). This could be due to superior who lack confidence in their own capabilities may feel threatened by highly competent subordinates.

2.5 Role Ambiguity

Role ambiguity occurs when employees are not certain of how to go about to perform a given roles or tasks. This could due to the management have not clearly identified the responsibilities of the job (Thomas, 1976). Uncertainty regarding one's job responsibilities creates an environment that fosters influence attempts because of the unclear connections among effort, performance, and desired outcomes (Madison, Allen, Porter, Renwick & Mayes, 1980; Parker, Dipboye & Kackson, 1995). Similarly, when employees experience task ambiguity due to their uncertainty of task responsibilities, a favourable situation for influence attempts is created (Hickson, Hinings, Lee, Schneck & Pennings, 1971). Thus, superior should use inspirational and consultation method to convince subordinates to perform their roles constructively, despite the lack of clarity in their roles.

2.6 Satisfaction with Supervision

Satisfaction with supervision has received extensive attention in organizational research (Locke, 1976). Work satisfaction is an important workplace construct and one that is of concern for effective management. Thus, numerous research findings suggest that influence management style is related to various aspects of employee satisfaction are of interest and represent an important extension to the job satisfaction literature. The amount of supervision and direction given to the subordinates will increase their satisfaction with supervision. Conversely, many studies recorded that supervision to the extent that the superior exercises pressure tactics is found to have a negative impact on the subordinates' satisfaction (Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoeck & Rosenthal, 1964; Likert & Likert, 1967).

2.7 Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB)

Bateman and Organ (1983) introduced the construct of OCB, drawing upon concepts of super role behaviors presented by Katz and Kahn (1966). Examples of employees OCB include, accepting extra duties and responsibilities at work, work overtime when needed, and helping subordinates with their work (Masterson, Lewis, Goldman & Taylor, 1996; Organ, 1988). Determining why individuals engage in OCB has occupied a substantial amount of research attention in both organizational behavior and social psychology (Brief & Motowidlo, 1986; McNeely & Meglino, 1994). Most research on OCB as focused on individual antecedents. For example, researchers have suggested that there is a relationship between OCB and satisfaction (Bateman & Organ, 1983) commitment (O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986), perceptions of fairness (Folger, 1993; Martin & Bies, 1991; Moorman et al., 1993; Tepper & Taylor, 2003), perceptions of pay equity (Organ, 1998).

3. Hypothesized Relationship

3.1 Organizational Structure and Downward Influence Tactics

Except for the perceptual study by Madison, Allen, Porter, Renwick and Mayes (1980), there was no major empirical studies been done to investigate the effects of organizational context on the use of downward influence tactics in organizations. Thus, this study was designed in an attempt to examine the exercise of downward influence in work settings on the contextual effects of organizations on superior's use of influence tactics in dealing with subordinates. Burns and Stalker (1961) define organic structure as horizontal specialization and there are few rules being emphasized in the organization. If the organizational structure is such that organic is prevalent, then superior will have a greater tendency to employ inspirational appeal, consultation, ingratiation and rational persuasion in their downward influence attempts. It can be expected that superior's choice of influence tactics will be a function of the organizational context in which the influence attempt occurs. Consistent with the contextual approach to organizational behavior research (Bass, 1981; Herman & Hulin, 1972; Rousseau, 1978), this study hope to find the link between organizational

characteristics to individual responses. Subordinate competence level i.e. the extent to which subordinates is effective in doing their work is suspected to mediate the relationship between organizational structure and downward influence tactics. Past research has shown that these variables tend to be correlated (Payne & Pugh, 1976). Accordingly, the following hypotheses are advanced:

- Hypothesis 1a: Organic structure is positively associated with inspirational appeal, consultation, ingratiation and rational persuasion and negatively associated with pressure and exchange tactics.
- Hypothesis 1b: Organic structure is negatively associated with pressure and exchange tactics. Role ambiguity will mediate this relationship such that the negative relationship between organic structure and pressure and exchange tactics will be weaker among employees experiencing high levels of role ambiguity compared with those reporting low levels of role ambiguity.
- Hypothesis 1c: Organic structure is positively associated with inspirational appeal, consultation, ingratiation and rational persuasion. This relationship is mediated by the subordinate's competence level.

3.2 Span of Control and Downward Influence Tactics

On the other hand, superiors who possess wider span of control are more likely to influence subordinates in a more formalized, impersonal manner, using warnings and punishments (Kipnis & Cosentino 1969; Kipnis & Lane 1962). In addition, as spans of control increase, managers are found to more autocratic (Heller & Yukl, 1969). As such, the following hypotheses are predicted:

- Hypothesis 1d: Wider span of control is positively associated with exchange and pressure tactics but negatively associated with inspirational appeal, consultation, and rational persuasion.

3.3 Leadership Styles and Downward Influence Tactics

Burns (1978) and Bass (1985) have conceptualized the transactional and transformational leadership. Burns (1978) viewed transformational leadership as a process of activating followers' higher level needs by inspiring higher ideals and raising moral consciousness. Burns contrasted the heroic, agent of transformational leadership with the transactional leader, who invokes exchange processes in order to satisfy followers' self-interests (i.e., exchanging pay and other benefits for follower effort). According to Bass (1985), transactional leadership enhances the likelihood that followers will display expected levels of performance (by providing desired rewards contingent on acceptable performance and by clarifying role expectations when followers do not meet performance standards). Transformational leadership involves heightening follower motivation to accomplish goals that exceed expectations by instilling pride and confidence, communicating personal respect, facilitating creative and critical thinking, and providing inspiration. However, transformational leaders frequently employ transactional behaviors to accomplish routine tasks (Avolio & Bass, 1988).

It may be predicted that transactional leaders frequently exert influence by offering to reciprocate or exchange favours (i.e., exchange tactics). However, it may be expected that transformational leaders employ more personally involving influence tactics (e.g., personal appeals, inspirational appeals, consultation, and rationality) than their transactional counterparts (Falbe & Yukl, 1992; Yukl, 1998). There are several reasons for suspecting an association between influence tactics and transformational leadership. Leaders' behaviours that inspire others to change their beliefs and values (Bass, 1997) reminiscent of inspirational appeal. Inspirational appeals refer to the use of values and ideals to arouse an emotional response in the subordinates (Yukl, 2002; Yukl & Seifert, 2002). The request is presented in such a way that it resonates with the subordinate's needs, values, and ideals. Inspirational appeals are known to be an effective tool to raise the subordinate's enthusiasm towards the request (Yukl et al., 1996). Transformational leader inspires and challenge subordinates to achieve beyond their self-expectations by raising their self-confidence (Bass, 1997, 1998). Thus, inspirational appeals tactic is expected to be associated with transformational leadership who often communicate with vivid imagery and symbols in a way that generates enthusiasm (Yukl, 2002).

In addition, transformational leader should be more likely to influence subordinates by getting them personally involved and committed to a project through consultation tactics, including participate them to contribute and suggest ways to improve a proposal or help plan an activity (Yukl, 2002; Yukl et al., 1996; Yukl & Seifert, 2002; Yukl & Tracey, 1992). Furthermore, the use of rational persuasion is associated with transformational leadership (Caldwell & Burger, 1997; Bass, 1997, 1998). Rational persuasion aims at encouraging subordinates to think critically, rationally or creatively and to express their ideas. When using rational persuasion tactic, transformational leaders create an environment that encourages the reframing of problems through the use of explanations, factual evidence, and logical arguments (Yukl, 2002; Yukl & Seifert, 2002). Rational persuasion is widely used (Aguinis et al., 1994; Yukl & Falbe, 1990; Yukl & Seifert, 2002) by transformational leader to obtain subordinate's commitment to a request (Yukl et al., 1996; Yukl & Tracey, 1992; Kelloway & Barling, 2000) regardless of whether the target is a subordinate, peer, or superior.

Moreover, transformational leader who take into account individual subordinate's accomplishment by praising and

flattery to make them feel liked by the superior can show a positive effects on work outcomes (Higgins et al., 2003). Ingratiation involves flattery and favour doing enhancing managerial liking of the subordinate. In addition, superior reacts differently to different subordinates' competence level. Lowin and Craig (1968) have documented in their field experiment that supervisors reacted more warmly, permissively, and collegially to a subordinate when the latter worked efficiently. Greene (1975) in a longitudinal study concluded that managers initiated more structure and showed less consideration for sub-part performers. Therefore, it was hypothesized that;

Hypothesis 2a: Transformational leadership is positively associated with inspirational appeal, consultation, rational persuasion and ingratiation. This relationship is mediated by the subordinate's competence level.

Hypothesis 2b: Transformational leadership is negatively associated with pressure and exchange tactics. This relationship is mediated by the subordinate's competence level.

3.4 Leadership styles and Organizational Citizenship Behavior

We tested a hypothesis about the relationships between both transformational and transactional leadership and organizational citizenship behavior (Podsakoff et al., 1990). Transformational leadership has been consistently linked to followers' higher level of OCB (Geyer & Steyrer, 1998; Howell & Avolio, 1993; Lowe, Kroeck & Sivasubramaniam, 1996; Onnen, 1987). On the other hand, transactional leadership has been negatively link to follower low level of OCB (Bass & Avolio, 1990).

Graham (1988) has suggested that the most important effects of transformational leadership behavior should be on extra-role behaviors that exceed the requirements of in-role expectations. These extra role behaviors are best articulated by the OCB construct developed by Organ (1988); Deluga, (1995), Organ and Konovsky (1989), Podsakoff et al. (1990). OCB refers to the behavior of an employee that is discretionary, not rewarded or recognized in an explicit way the organization, and tends to promote efficient and effective functioning of the organization (Organ, 1988). Results of research show transformational leadership behavior to have a positive relationship with OCB (Graham, 1988; Podsakoff et al., 1990; Whittington, 1997). Although the relationship between transactional leadership and OCB has not been empirically examined, Graham (1988) suggests that the instrumental compliance to obtain rewards required by transactional leadership may suggest a reduction in OCB when working for a transactional leader.

OCB is behavior, largely discretionary, and seldom included in formal job description. Transformational leaders motivate followers by getting them to internalize and prioritize a larger collective cause over individual interests. Individuals who are intrinsically motivated to fulfill a collective vision without expecting immediate personal and tangible gains may be inclined to contribute toward achieving the shared workplace goal in ways that their roles do not prescribe. These individuals make these contributions because their senses of self-worth and self-concepts are enhanced in making these contributions. Individuals for whom this link between the interests of self and others has not been established are less likely to make largely discretionary, non-tangibly rewarded contributions. A positive association between transformational leadership and OCB is expected and has been supported empirically (e.g., Podsakoff et al., 1990). Thus, the hypothesis is stated as follows:

Hypothesis 2c: Transformational leadership style is positively correlated with OCB whereby, transactional leadership style is negatively correlated with OCB

3.5 Leadership Styles and Satisfaction with Supervision

Among determinants of job satisfaction, leadership is viewed as an important predictor and plays a central role. Leadership is a management function, which is mostly directed towards people and social interaction, as well as the process of influencing people so that they will achieve the goals of the organization (Skansi, 2000). Numerous studies carried out in several countries showed that there is a positive correlation between leadership and the job satisfaction (Seo, et al. 2004; Vance & Larson, 2002; Chiok Foong Loke, 2001; Martin, 1990; Dunham & Klafehn, 1990; Stordeur et al., 2000; Hespanhol et al., 1999; Lowe et al., 1996; Berson & Linton, 2005; Morrison, 1994; Mosaderghrad, 2003a). As such the following hypothesis is predicted.

Hypothesis 2d: Transformational leadership style is positively correlated with satisfaction with supervision, whereas transactional style is negatively correlated with satisfaction with supervision.

3.6 Structure and Outcomes

In relation to organizational context, research by Meadows (1980) concluded that organic structure is positively related to satisfaction of higher order needs, but mechanistic structure is associated with their frustration. This statement is also supported by Rahman and Zanzi (1995) in their study which confirms organic structure is associated with greater job satisfaction with supervision and OCB. Considering these past findings, the following hypotheses are suggested as follows:

Hypothesis 3a: Organic structure has direct and positive effect on the satisfaction with supervision.

Hypothesis 3b: Mechanistic structure has direct and negative effect on the satisfaction with supervision.

Hypothesis 3c: Organic structure has direct and positive effect on the organization citizenship behaviour.

3.7 Downward Influence Tactics and Outcomes

Organizational influence researchers (e.g. Kipnis, Schmidt & Wilkinson, 1980; Kipnis & Schmidt, 1988; Yukl & Falbe, 1990; Yukl, Lepsinger & Lucia, 1993; Yukl & Tracey, 1992; Hinkin & Schriesheim, 1990; Pfeffer 1981) generally assert that superior who exhibits inspirational appeal, consultation, ingratiation and rational persuasion tactics are more prone to foster a cordial dyadic relationships among superiors and subordinates. These tactics are related to an effective influence management.

Conceptual and empirical research on influence tactics and OCB have flourished concurrently but only recently have their conceptual overlaps in behavioural and motive content been pointed out (e.g., Bolino, 1999; Eastman, 1994; Ferris, Bhawuk, Fedor & Judge, 1995). Because of the past investigation of influence tactics and OCB separately, little is known about their level of distinctiveness. This omission represents a research need because both of these categories of behaviour are common within organizations and both have been found to be associated with supervisor-subordinate relationship quality and important organizational outcomes.

The current study was designed to address this gap in the literature by evaluating whether or not supervisor downward influence tactics and OCB are distinct constructs and whether they have a differential impact on superior-subordinate relations. Researchers have found that influence tactics are often used by superiors as a means of obtaining personal goals, promoting their own self interest, exercising social control, and changing the behaviour of others (Ferris & Judge, 1991; Ferris, Russ & Fandt, 1989; Kipnis et al., 1980; Barry & Watson, 1996). The successful used of these tactics tend to be able to reduce resistance by the subordinates' (Pfeffer, 1981; Tedeschi & Melburg, 1984). Initial conceptual and theoretical work in influence tactics research suggested that ingratiation by superior would enhance supervisor-subordinate relationship (Jones, 1964; Tedeschi & Melburg, 1984). Ingratiation tactics used by superior to impress their employees with the objective of being better liked (Kipnis, Schmidt & Wilkinson, 1980; Tedeschi & Melburg, 1984; Wayne & Liden, 1995). These tactics include flattery, favour-doing, emphasizing what they have in common with their subordinates and de-emphasizing their differences (Krone, 1992). Research has demonstrated that these tactics are effective in gaining positive outcomes from the subordinates.

On the other hand, researchers have generally maintained that OCB demonstrated by employee arises from a sense of obligation and from personality traits (Bolino, 1999). Social exchange theory is the basis for arguing this behavior (Niehoff, 2000). According to Blau (1964) and Organ (1988) the employment relationship engenders feelings of personal obligation when subordinates are treated well by superiors feel obligated to discharge their obligation by engaging in extra-role behaviours directed at helping others and the organization. Several studies on the inspirational appeal and consultation and rational persuasion tactics show consistent results in subordinates' satisfaction with supervision and OCB (Kipnis & Schmidt, 1988; Schriesheim & Hinkin 1990). Likewise, other studies recorded that superior uses pressure and exchange tactics are linked to negative effect on subordinates' satisfaction with supervision and OCB (Yulk & Falbe, 1990; Yukl & Tracey, 1992).

Thus, it can be hypothesized that:

Hypothesis 4a: Superior's use of inspirational appeal, consultation, ingratiation and rational persuasion has direct and positive effect on the subordinates' satisfaction with supervision.

Hypothesis 4b: Superior's pressure tactic and exchange tactic have negative effect on the subordinates' satisfaction with supervision.

Hypothesis 4c: Superior's inspirational appeal, consultation, ingratiation and rational persuasion have direct and positive effect on organization citizenship behavior.

Hypothesis 4d: Superior's pressure tactic and exchange tactic have negative effect on organization citizenship behavior

4. Methodology and Research Design

4.1 Sampling Design

The sampling population is generated from the master list of factories registered with the Federation of Malaysian Manufacturers (FMM). We include manufacturing companies with the number of employees greater than 30 as our sample because this number chosen can reflect a more formalized structure and system of supervision that likely to exist and functioning. The sample size would be 350 respondents from executives, managers and professionals in Malaysian manufacturing companies to answer the survey questionnaires as they represent a group of more educated people who are more aware of the types of influence tactics used by their superiors. The stratified random sampling procedure will be used in selecting samples from the large database.

4.2 Research Instruments

Each of the measurements of relevant constructs was discussed here.

4.2.1 Downward Influence Tactics

Yukl's 44-item Influence Behaviour Questionnaire-2000 (IBQ-2000)

4.2.2 Organization Structure

Organization structure was represented a 7 item scale which measures organicity, i.e. the extent to which organizations are structured as organic versus mechanistic entities. This seven-point Likert-type scale was also developed by Khandwalla (1977) and later used by Covin and Slevin (1989) and Low (2005).

4.2.3 Leadership

Transformational and transactional leadership were measured by using the German translation of the (MLQ Form 5X Short; Bass & Avolio, 1995) by Felfe (2006). As the four single components of transformational leadership usually show high intercorrelation ($r = .83$ on average; Bass & Avolio, 2000). We measured leadership as unidimensional concept (see Hambley, Kline, & O'Neill, 2005; Walumba et al., 2004). The participants were asked to rate their superior's leadership behavior on a seven-point Likert scale (ranging from "never" to "almost always"). Since the leaders themselves were asked to assess their leadership style, we used a version for self-evaluation that had already been used in previous studies (Felfe, 2003; Goihl, Tartler & Kroger, 2001; Liepmann & Goihl, 2001). Cronbach's alphas for this scale were .78 for transformational leadership and .62 for transactional leadership.

4.2.4 Span of Control

Span of control is a measure of the total number of person being supervised by a superior.

4.2.5 Satisfaction with Supervision

The instrument used to measure satisfaction with supervision is the updated version of the original Job Descriptive Index (JDI; Smith et al., 1969) which was later revised by Roznowski (1989).

4.2.6 OCB

OCB scale was measured using a 6-item scale for altruism and an 8-item scale for compliance developed by Smith, Organ and Near (1983). The scale measures high and low of OCB. Respondents indicated the frequency in which they had engaged in the various citizenship behaviours. Responses were made on a 7-point scale. The coefficient alpha was .76 for altruism and .66 for compliance.

4.2.7 Role Ambiguity

The six-item scale developed by Rizzo, House and Lirtzman (1970) was used to measure role ambiguity. This scale was selected because it is the most commonly used to measure role ambiguity in management literatures (Jackson & Schuler, 1985). Individual scale items were evaluated on a 7-point Likert-type scale. The scale was reverse coded such that higher number responses reflect greater level of role ambiguity.

4.2.8 Subordinates' Competence Level

Wagner and Morse's (1975) self-report measure of individual sense of competence was used to measure employee task competence in lieu of a more direct measure of competence level. Thirteen items were extracted from their larger pool of items for used based upon their factor loadings as reported in Wagner and Morse (1975). A sample item stated, "I honestly believe I have all the skills necessary to perform this task well." All items were scaled on 7-point agree-disagree rating scales. Evidence pertaining to the reliability and predictive validity of this measure is located in several sources (Morse, 1976; Tharenou & Harker, 1984; Wagner & Morse, 1975).

4.3 Data Analysis Procedure

The main statistical techniques used will be the Path Analysis. Other statistical analysis to be employed is correlational analysis, moderated regression analysis, and analysis of variance (ANOVA).

5. Benefit and Implications of the Proposed Research

There are several specific implications expected from the present study. First, the research suggests that when the superior has a choice in the influence styles he/she emphasizes to achieve greater satisfaction with his/her supervision. For example influence attempt such as inspirational appeal, consultation, rational persuasion, ingratiation tactics are expected to be more favourable than exchange and pressure tactic. Second, in the selection of superior to lead a division of work, especially when the work group is highly experience and skilled, it is expected that certain characteristics or ability will assist in the management of such work group effectively. It may affect the influence style and the outcomes in a direct or indirect way.

Interaction or mediation effect of role ambiguity and subordinates' competence level are investigated and expected to

shed light on how the variable provide direct and indirect effects on downward influence tactics and the outcomes. In an attempt to solicit subordinate super-ordinate effort in the organization, both satisfaction and OCB are included in the outcome variables of the study. Relationships must exist to highlight the relevant contextual and influence tactics that promotes such behaviour in the organization and this will have great practical significance.

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Notes

Note 1. Proposed Model of Downward Influence Tactics and Interaction

Note 2. Definition of Influence Tactics

Table 1. Definition of Influence Tactics

Inspirational Appeals	The agent makes a request or proposal that arouses target enthusiasm by appealing to target values, ideals, and aspiration, 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 behaviour, or helpful behaviour to get the target in a good mood or to think favourably of him or her before asking for something.
Exchange	The agent offers an exchange of favours, indicates willingness to reciprocate at a later time, or promises a share of the benefits if the target helps accomplish a task.
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.
Pressure	The agent uses demands, threats, frequent checking, or persistent reminders to influence the target to do what he or she wants,

Adapted from Yukl & Falbe (1990) and Yukl & Tracey (1992)

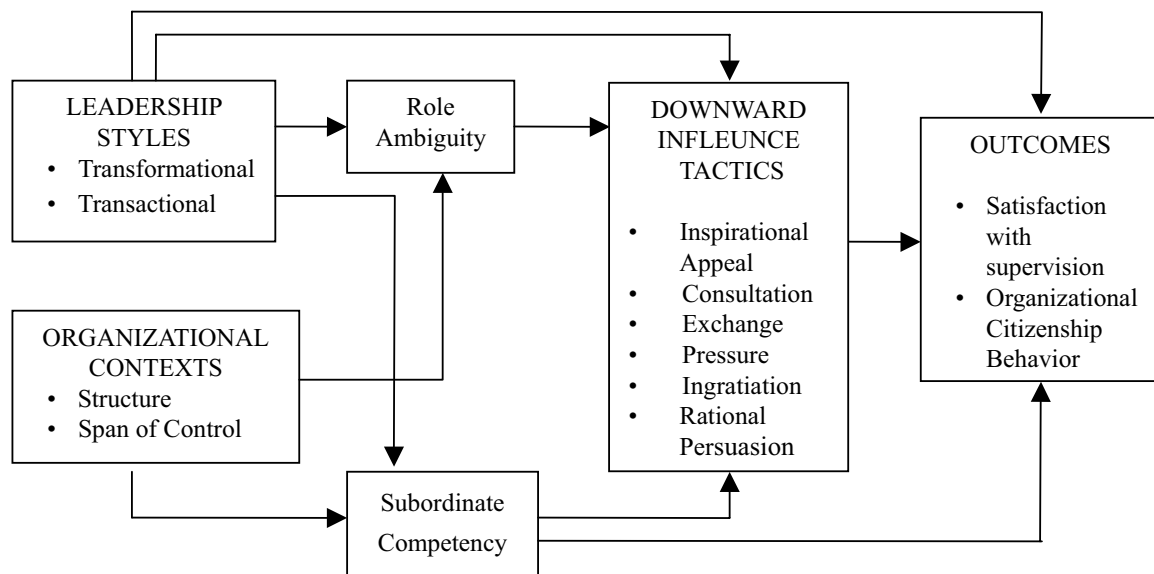


Figure 1. Proposed Model of Downward Influence Tactics and Interactions