

EFFECTIVENESS OF INFLUENCE PATTERNS

Inés Martínez Corts*, Lourdes Munduate Jaca** & Francisco José Medina Díaz**

*Universidad Pablo Olavide and **Universidad de Sevilla

Managers apply a range of influence tactics to get subordinates to perform tasks. For a better understanding of the influence process dynamics it has been recommended to consider the combination of different tactics, rather than analyzing them separately (Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004). The present study analyzes the effectiveness of different combinations of influence tactics used by managers with their subordinates. We identified four influence patterns: strong pattern, rational pattern, active pattern and passive pattern. The effectiveness of these patterns was analyzed in terms of subordinates' job satisfaction, commitment and well-being. We found that managers who used a broader range of tactics were more effective than those who used a single category. The practical implications of our findings are discussed.

Keywords: influence tactics, influence effectiveness.

Los superiores utilizan diferentes tácticas de influencia para conseguir que los subordinados realicen las actividades encomendadas. Para comprender la dinámica existente en este proceso de influencia es importante considerar la combinación de diversas tácticas y no sólo el estudio separado de cada una de ellas. El presente estudio ha analizado la efectividad de los patrones de influencia empleados por los superiores jerárquicos con sus empleados. Se han identificado cuatro patrones de influencia empleados por los superiores: patrón fuerte, patrón racional, patrón activo y patrón pasivo. Su efectividad se ha analizado en términos de satisfacción, compromiso y bienestar de los empleados. Los superiores que recurren a una mayor combinación de tácticas de influencia resultan más efectivos que aquellos que utilizan una única categoría de tácticas. Se analizan las implicaciones del estudio para la práctica directiva.

Palabras clave: tácticas de influencia, efectividad de influencia.

Managerial success depends to a large extent on the ability to exercise influence, on both members of the organization and external agents. In order to understand the way in which one person can influence another, we make use of the concepts of *power* and *influence tactics*. The two concepts are sometimes, indeed, used interchangeably. However, French and Raven (1959) make a fine distinction between them: whilst *power* is defined as a person's potential capacity for exercising influence over another (Peiró & Meliá, 2003; Rodríguez-Bailón, Moya & Yzerbyt, 2006), *influence tactics* is defined as the force exercised by a person over another for inducing a change in his or her behaviour, attitudes and values (Munduate & Medina, 2004).

Yukl, Lepsinger and Lucía (1991) developed a relevant typology of nine influence tactics widely used in research on influence processes in organizations (Cable & Judge, 2003): rational appeals, consultation, inspirational appeals, ingratiation, personal appeals,

exchange, coalition, legitimization and pressure. In the present study we adopt the described typology as a starting point to analyze the use of influence tactics in management".

The various studies exploring the use of these influence tactics have tended to identify dimensions that allow them to be grouped. One of these dimensions is that referring to the degrees of rationality and emotion involved in their use (Kipnis & Schmidt, 1985). In accordance with theories of persuasion (e.g., Chaiken & Trope, 1999; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986) there is a dual strategy in the exercise of influence: one more central that seeks to be rational, and another more peripheral that seeks to alter emotional aspects. Considering these criteria, three broad categories of influence tactics have been established: a) rational tactics, which include tactics of rational appeals and exchange; b) hard tactics, including those of pressure, coalition and legitimization; and c) soft tactics, which cover tactics of personal appeals, ingratiation, inspirational appeals and consultation.

CONFIGURATION OF INFLUENCE PATTERNS

By asking managers what influence tactics they use to

The original Spanish version of this paper has been previously published in *Psicothema*, 2008, Vol. 20, No 3, 369-375

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Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Inés Martínez Corts, Facultad de Psicología, Universidad Pablo Olavide, 41013 Sevilla. Spain. E-mail: imarcor@upo.es

get their employees to implement their work policies, they reply that they need to use more than one influence tactic. Indeed, and as Cialdini and Goldstein (2004) point out in their Annual Review article, in order to understand the dynamic of an influence process, it is important to consider the combination of diverse tactics for achieving the desired results.

Traditionally, influence processes have been analyzed in terms of influence tactics independent of one another, and only recently has research considered the simultaneous use of diverse tactics in the same influence process. Yukl et al. observe that combinations may include as many as five different tactics (Fu et al., 2004). The analysis of different combinations of influence tactics builds on the relationships found between hard, soft and rational tactics (Cable & Judge, 2003; Emans, Munduate, Klaver & Van de Vliert, 2003). For example, Emans et al. (2003) found significant correlations between rational soft and hard tactics; between the hard tactics of coalition and legitimization, the soft tactic of ingratiation and the rational tactic of exchange; and between the hard tactic of pressure and the soft tactic of coalition.

Following this approach, some studies have analyzed, in an exploratory fashion, which specific combinations can be identified with some regularity in influence processes. Fu et al. (2004) observed that when managers wish to exert influence over a subordinate, they are likely to combine three hard tactics such as coalition, exchange and recourse to a superior. Kipnis and Schmidt (1983, 1988) identified three combinations of influence tactics. The first involves less use of influence tactics for achieving the objective, while the second combination is characterized by intensive use of all the influence tactics, and in the third case, rational appeals or persuasion is used as the predominant tactic. In sum, these studies suggest both the tendency for the combined use of different influence tactics and the existence of regular patterns in their use. Such results lead us to a consideration of influence processes as a configuration of different tactics or behaviour patterns, in contrast to the traditional perspective involving the study of influence tactics in isolation.

Given this tendency, it would seem appropriate to identify specific patterns used in a regular fashion in influence processes. In fact, despite the relevance of considering the combination of influence tactics, there is scarce empirical evidence on the combinations that constitute the previously found patterns.

The possible combinations among the nine tactics proposed by Yukl and cols. are many and varied, but in

spite of this, it should be borne in mind that only some of them may be viable in an influence process. The studies mentioned above enable us to predict that the most identifiable combinations would be: a highly active influence pattern characterized by intensive use of hard, soft and rational tactics (Kipnis et al., 1983, 1988) (Hypothesis 1); a rational influence pattern, characterized by intensive use of soft and rational tactics (Emans et al., 2003) (Hypothesis 2); a hard influence pattern, characterized by intensive use of hard tactics (Fu et al., 2004) (Hypothesis 3); and a passive influence pattern, characterized by less use of influence tactics in general (Kipnis et al., 1983, 1988) (Hypothesis 4).

EFFECTIVENESS OF INFLUENCE PATTERNS

The reason behind the use of combinations of influence tactics appears to be their interactive effect for achieving the desired objective (Cialdini et al., 2004). Various authors have tested the hypothesis that the combination of two influence tactics does not result in an additive effect on the achievement of the goal in question (Barry & Shapiro, 1992; Falbe & Yukl, 1992); on the other hand, there is an interactive effect that influences the effectiveness of a given combination (Emans et al., 2003). Thus, a tactic may multiply its influence when used in conjunction with another, or it may totally lose its capacity for influence. However, the effectiveness of combinations of tactics has not been studied systematically. Therefore, the second objective of the present work is to analyze the effectiveness of the influence patterns.

Research on influence tactics has analyzed the effectiveness of tactics considering their effects independently, with hard tactics emerging as less effective than soft tactics and rational tactics (Cialdini et al., 2004; Fu et al., 2004). This research line has highlighted the negative potential of influence tactics involving dominance behaviours. Thus, influence tactics based on behaviours aimed at managing or controlling other persons by means of threats and pressure are seen to be rather ineffective.

A second line of analysis of the effectiveness of tactics consists in measuring the effect obtained using them in combinations of two at a time. From this perspective, effectiveness would be determined by the potential of each individual tactic, so that two tactics with positive sign —soft and rational tactics, say— can be more effective than one alone, or than the combination of two hard tactics (Falbe & Yukl, 1992). As it can be seen, this perspective also tends to stress—in a similar way to the

previous one—the negative character of hard tactics.

Bearing in mind the evidence on the negative aspects of using hard tactics, we can predict that a pattern of influence characterized by intensive use of hard tactics will be less effective than one characterized by the use of soft rational tactics (Hypothesis 5).

Nevertheless, Cialdini et al. (2004) have questioned the validity of the universalist hypothesis of the dysfunctional effect of hard tactics, basing their arguments on the findings of Emans et al. (2003). According to these authors, hard tactics are in themselves rather ineffective. However, when managers apply hard tactics together with rational tactics, this combination is more effective than the isolated use of rational tactics. The reasoning behind this is that each behaviour has a certain level of ineffectiveness, so that some combinations may maximize the benefits of the behaviour in isolation and minimize its problems of ineffectiveness. Hard tactics can help to overcome the inactiveness resulting from the overuse of rational tactics or soft tactics, and to make employees aware of the urgency or importance of the task. Thus, the dysfunctional effect of hard tactics can be reduced if they were combined with soft and rational tactics. Therefore, we can expect a pattern of active influence, characterized by intensive employment of hard, soft and rational tactics, to be more effective than a pattern characterized by the use of hard tactics alone (Hypothesis 6).

METHOD

Participants

Participants in this study were 209 employees at 7 different three- and four-star hotels from different hotel chains located in the Autonomous Region of Andalucía. These employees were distributed as follows: 8.61% were in administrative posts, 21.53% worked in reception, 28.7% in restaurants, 29.18% in cleaning jobs and 5.26% in maintenance; 7.17% did not specify their job. with regard to sex, 52.15% were women and 46.41% were men. Mean age was 31.31 years ($SD = 8.23$). By educational level, the distribution was as follows: 33.49% had primary education, 23.12% secondary education, 31.1% non-university higher education and 9.09% university education; 7 participants failed to indicate their educational level. As far as job conditions were concerned, 43.06% had a permanent contract, 38.75% had temporary work and 16.26% worked on the basis of regular but finite contracts. Professional experience

ranged from 4 months to 44 years, while the relationship between the employee and his/her current manager ranged from 4 months to 20 years. We excluded data on employees who had worked with their immediate superior for less than 4 months.

Procedure

We designed a questionnaire including all the variables, which was accompanied by a letter describing the purpose of the study. The instrument was applied in the workplace by assembling all the employees in one room at a time that did not interfere with their work timetable. An expert was present during the application of the questionnaire for resolving any doubts the participants may have. In order to ensure confidentiality, a closed box was provided, in which participants dropped their completed questionnaires.

Instruments

Influence tactics. We used the Spanish adapted version of the Influence Behavior Questionnaire (IBQ) developed by Yukl et al. (1991). It contains 36 items, distributed in 9 scales, which correspond to the tactics in Yukl's model (e.g., *He/She explains the reasons for a work programme in a clear and convincing way*). Items are rated on a 5-point scale.

Commitment to the team was measured using the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire by O'Reilly and Chatman (1986). In their responses to each item (3), participants had to think about those persons in the organization with whom they had a relationship based on their job (e.g., *I feel proud when I tell others which team I work in*). Responses were made on a 5-point scale.

Job satisfaction was measured by means of the S20/23 questionnaire (Meliá & Peiró, 1989). It consists of 23 items and assesses various specific factors of satisfaction, such as intrinsic job characteristics, supervision, participation and physical environment (e.g., *Personal relationships with your bosses*). In the present study we used a global score of the scale. The response scale has 7 points.

Psychological well-being was assessed using the scale developed by Warr (1990). It measures the degree to which respondents are anxious or calm, depressed or enthusiastic, and content or discontented in relation to their job. Respondents are requested to think about the last few weeks and indicate how they have felt with regard to different aspects of their job (e.g., tense, calm, pessimistic, enthusiastic, energetic, excited). Each dimension is assessed through six items on a 6-point

response scales.

RESULTS

Identification of influence patterns

Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics of the variables analyzed in the study. The reliability coefficients were satisfactory, and were similar to those found in previous studies.

In order to test the first four hypotheses we carried out a cluster analysis with the nine influence tactics. We opted to perform a non-hierarchical k-means cluster analysis, following the recommendations of Aldenderfer and Blashfield (1984). To this end we first established groups, then calculated the centroids and determined the Euclidian distance for all the centroids of the cluster. Each case was assigned to the closest cluster, reducing the within-group variance. This process was repeated until a stable solution was obtained in each cluster. Table 3 shows the patterns identified, together with the centroid values and the size of each group.

Figure 1 illustrates the way in which employees consider their superiors to have used the influence tactics grouped in clusters.

Cluster 1. *Passive pattern*. This pattern is characterized

by low use of influence tactics for getting employees to perform the task proposed. It accounts for 67 managers (32.21%).

Cluster 2. *Rational pattern*. This is characterized by intensive use of soft and rational tactics. In this pattern hard tactics are used to a lesser extent. The results indicate that managers who use this influence pattern prefer to appeal more to their employees' value system, to their level of ambition, to logic and to negotiation, than to pressure, legitimization and coalition. This pattern accounts for 65 managers (31.25%).

Cluster 3. *Strong pattern*. This pattern is characterized by intensive use of hard tactics. The exchange and personal appeals tactics are used moderately, whilst those of rational appeals, inspirational appeals, consultation and ingratiation are scarcely used at all. The pattern accounts for 48 managers (23.07%).

Cluster 4. *Active pattern*. This is characterized by intensive use of all the influence tactics. Managers are indiscriminate in their use of influence tactics in seeking to get their employees to do the job in question. This pattern can be considered as the opposite of the passive pattern. The number of managers corresponding to this

Table 1 Definition of influence tactics (Yukl, Lepsiger & Lucía, 1991)	
Influence tactics	
✓ <i>Exchange</i> . Tangible rewards or benefits are promised.	
✓ <i>Inspirational appeals</i> . There is an appeal to the values, ideals and aspirations of the other person.	
✓ <i>Consultation</i> . Other people's participation is requested and their ideas and suggestions are considered.	
✓ <i>Personal appeals</i> . There is an appeal to feelings of loyalty and friendship.	
✓ <i>Ingratiation</i> . Praise and flattery.	
✓ <i>Legitimization</i> . This tactic is based on policies, rules, common practice and/or tradition.	
✓ <i>Pressure</i> . Demands and threats.	
✓ <i>Coalition</i> . Recourse to the help or support of third persons.	
✓ <i>Rational appeals</i> . The reasons for and objectives of the proposal are explained.	

Table 3 Centroids of influence tactics patterns (N= 209)				
Tactics	Patterns			
	1	2	3	4
Rational appeals	-.66266	.64145	-.41960	.74889
Inspirational appeals	-.76867	.50860	-.42833	1.30841
Consultation	-.54992	.57518	-.58618	.95682
Ingratiation	-.78095	.52981	-.47480	1.41586
Personal appeals	-.79582	.16676	.10755	1.38205
Exchange	-.77083	.31933	-.17138	1.34004
Legitimization	-.83568	.05624	.59715	.84541
Pressure	-.38821	-.36882	.74244	.59403
Coalition	-.58884	-.27594	.52168	1.19064
N	67	65	48	28

Table 2 Descriptive statistics of the variables analyzed in the present study														
Variables	α	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Rational appeals	.76	3.14	0.98	—										
2. Inspirational appeals	.73	2.64	0.99	.67**	—									
3. Consultation	.80	2.82	1.05	.66**	.63**	—								
4. Ingratiation	.76	2.46	1.00	.51**	.71**	.63**	—							
5. Personal appeals	.68	2.31	0.95	.32**	.51**	.39**	.61**	—						
6. Exchange	.70	2.17	0.93	.42**	.56**	.40**	.55**	.58**	—					
7. Legitimization	.67	2.93	0.97	.36**	.37**	.15*	.35**	.43**	.34**	—				
8. Pressure	.67	3.17	0.95	-.11	-.04	-.15*	.04	.19**	.09	.26**	—			
9. Coalition	.71	1.81	0.81	.10	.21**	.05	.25**	.42**	.42**	.34**	.36**	—		
10. Commitment	.73	3.93	.80	.23**	.29**	.23**	.24**	.10	.06	.01	-.18**	-.09	—	
11. Satisfaction	.92	4.17	1.06	.46**	.42**	.50**	.40**	.14*	.11	.01	-.22**	-.01	.44**	—
12. Well-being	.90	3.79	.77	.30**	.25**	.36**	.23**	.07	.09	.03	-.14*	-.02	.28**	.62**
Note: α = Cronbach's alpha; SD = standard deviation; N= 209 * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$ (bilateral)														

pattern is 28 (13.46%).

The results of the cluster analysis confirm the first four hypotheses. As can be derived from the percentages of managers represented in each pattern, the passive and rational patterns seem to be those which group the greatest numbers of managers, followed by the strong pattern, and finally by the active pattern. Thus, the highest percentage of managers choose to employ soft and rational tactics or not to use any influence tactics, whilst the percentage that use hard tactics is lower. Finally, a small number of managers appear to use an active pattern of influence, characterized by intensive use of all the influence tactics.

Effectiveness of influence patterns

To analyze the differences between the patterns in terms of effectiveness, we performed an ANOVA. Significant differences were observed between the different patterns. That is, the four influence patterns are significantly different as regards to employees' response in relation to their level of commitment to the team, job satisfaction and psychological well-being. In order to analyze these differences we carried out multiple comparisons using Tukey's HDS.

Table 4 shows that in all cases the rational pattern and the active pattern emerge as more effective than the strong pattern and the passive pattern—with the exception of commitment to the team in this last case, where there are no significant differences. In the light of these results, Hypotheses 5 and 6 are confirmed.

If we observe the patterns in ascending order of effectiveness, those patterns that combine a greater number of influence tactics—as is the case with the active pattern and the rational pattern—are more effective than those which combine a smaller number of tactics—as occurs with the strong pattern and the passive pattern.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The general aim of the present study was to analyze the effectiveness of the patterns of influence used by

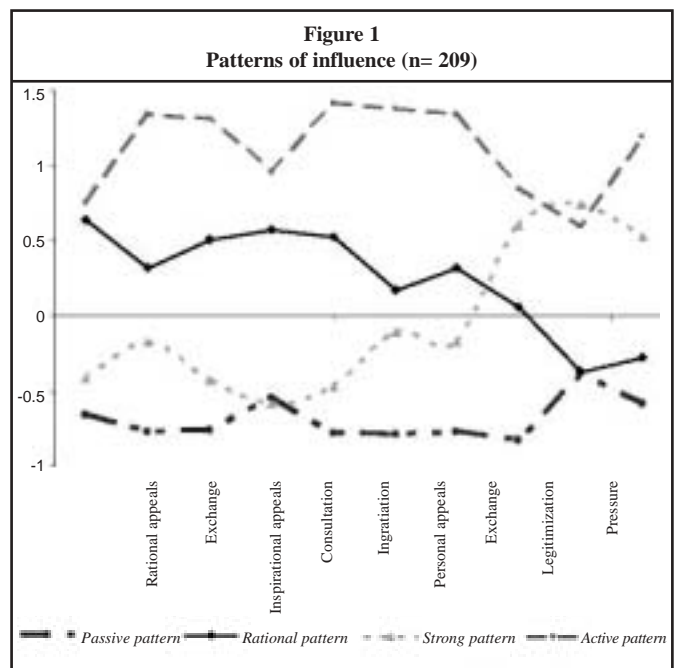
managers in their efforts to influence employees in organizations. Although some authors had previously analyzed the tendency for the combined use of various influence tactics, this is, to our knowledge, the first study which, having identified the principal influence patterns employed by managers, sets out to analyze their effectiveness.

The most relevant findings are, first of all, that managers tend to combine several influence tactics in order to achieve their objectives; second, that we can identify four influence patterns as the most commonly found combinations in such influence processes; and third, that those patterns combining the largest numbers of influence tactics are the most effective.

Our first observation is that the results of the present study show how managers do not merely use one influence tactic, but rather combine diverse tactics for reaching their goals. This confirms the tendency observed in previous research (Fu et al., 2004) for combining different tactics in processes of influence.

The second observation refers to the patterns identified. We found four patterns of influence, labelled as passive—characterized by lesser use of all influence tactics—, rational—characterized by intensive use of soft and rational tactics—, strong—characterized by intensive use of hard tactics— and active—characterized by intensive use of all tactics: hard, soft and rational.

The combinations most widely found in influence processes are consistent with the results obtained in previous studies. First of all, in relation to the passive



Patterns	Commitment	Satisfaction	Well-being
Passive	3.92ab	3.95a	3.67a
Rational	4.05b	4.57b	4.07b
Strong	3.60a	3.50a	3.40a
Active	4.10b	4.70b	4.06b

pattern, research has identified non-influential employees (Perreault & Miles, 1978) and non-influential salespersons (Spiro & Perreault, 1979). Kipnis and Schmidt (1988, 1983) also identified a pattern characterized by lesser use of influence tactics. The second pattern identified, the rational one, is also consistent with previous results. In this regard, Gravenhorst and Boonstra (1998) conclude that there is an influence pattern common to different organizational levels characterized by intensive use of the rational appeals (rational tactic), appealing to subordinates' aspirations and use of consultation (soft tactics), and scant use of tactics such as personal appeals, exchange and coalition. Finally, Kipnis and Schmidt (1983) identify a pattern in which the use of rational appeals is predominant.

Thirdly, the strong pattern also coincides with results obtained in previous research. For example, Perreault and Miles (1978) identify a pattern involving recourse to intensive use of formal power such as legitimization. In this context, Spiro and Perreault (1979) observed that many salespersons show high levels of use of formal tactics. Finally, the active pattern is commonly found in a range of studies analyzing influence processes. Thus, Kipnis and Schmidt (1983, 1988) identify a pattern characterized by intensive use of influence tactics. In different contexts, this pattern has been associated with the labels "highly influential employees" (Perreault & Miles, 1978) and "salespersons who combine influence tactics" (Spiro & Perreault, 1979).

The results show that some patterns are more effective than others. Managers who use active and rational patterns are associated with higher levels of commitment to the team, satisfaction and well-being among their subordinates, whilst managers who employ hard and passive patterns show lower levels of these variables. In sum, those who combine most influence tactics are the most effective.

The results of the present work, then, support the claim that the effectiveness of a tactic can increase or decrease depending on the tactics with which it is combined. Hard tactics can contribute, in combination with others, to making influence processes effective. Indeed, their combination with soft and rational tactics is more effective than the use of hard tactics in isolation. Our results concur with those found in the literature on this issue. Thus, the exploratory study by Falbe and Yukl (1992) suggests that when a hard tactic and a rational one are used in the same influence process, the effect is greater than if they were used independently. Similar

results were obtained by Emans et al. (2003).

Soft and rational tactics permit managers to adapt their work proposals to the expectations of their subordinates, who will thus feel supported by their superiors. Moreover, both rational tactics and soft tactics are socially acceptable (Knippenberg & Steensma, 2003; Yukl, 2005). Thus, as shown by the results, the rational pattern is socially more acceptable than the strong pattern, and contributes to improving relations between supervisor and subordinate. However, we should not overlook the fact that managers also employ hard tactics in their efforts to influence their subordinates. The use of such tactics by managers can be explained according to the result he or she is seeking. On many occasions the most desirable result of an influence process is the employee's commitment; however, in other cases mere obedience can also be an indicator of effectiveness (Munduate & Gravenhorst, 2003). As diverse studies show (Koslowsky, Schwarzwald & Ashuri, 2001; Yukl, 2005), hard tactics can secure obedience, while soft and rational tactics are used for obtaining commitment. Thus, the ineffectiveness of soft and rational tactics for obtaining the initial obedience necessary on some occasions can be counteracted by the efficacy of hard tactics for getting employees to behave as desired, despite the fact that they do not secure their commitment.

In this study we have looked at the issue in question only from the point of view of the recipient of influence. Although the literature suggests that the recipient is the best source of information on the response to influence, it may nevertheless be advantageous to analyze the point of view of the agent, with the aim of comparing the two perceptions on the tactics employed and the results obtained. Secondly, the cross-sectional nature of the study does not permit us to establish causal relations between the patterns of influence and the variables of effectiveness. Thirdly, we cannot compare our results with others because in the literature reviewed we found no empirical evidence on the effectiveness of influence patterns. In this regard, it would be relevant in future research to test the stability of the patterns identified and adopt a contingent approach upon their effectiveness, considering variables such as managers' powerbases or the influence patterns used by employees themselves.

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