

ABSTRACT

The issue of how managers use influence tactics in Chinese organizations was systematically scrutinized. The contributions of this dissertation include model establishment, empirical evidence discovery, and methodology and scale improvement.

A structure of influence tactics used in Chinese organizations was first established. In the pilot study, involving 219 Chinese managers, the Influence Tactics Profile (ITP) was produced, consisting of eleven Chinese culture-featured items and twenty-three items originating from American culture (Kipnis & Schmidt, 1982). In the main study, which involved 372 Chinese managers, the ITP was improved to include sixteen Chinese culture-featured items. These items reflected concepts of face, renqin, bao, networking, long-term perspective and modeling. The ITP has two dimensions labeled Contingent Control (CC) and Gentle Persuasion (GP). They were found to have a high congruence across influence directions. The instrument allows us to study factors which affect influencers' choice of tactics.

The effects of status, targets' behavioral patterns, and influencers' personality on influencers' choice of tactics were included in an interactive influence model. This model borrows the basic components of seeing the choice of tactics as a process of calculating costs and success rate of using such tactics from pioneering models, such as Raven's (1993), and, Tedeschi and Felson's (1994). It supplements these models by also relating influencers' personality and targets'

behavioral patterns to influencers' choice of tactics. The data used to test this model was provided by 198 male Chinese managers who were required to respond to male targets, and to complete the designed questionnaires.

Superiors were found to use various influence tactics more frequently than did subordinates (Bond & Schmerhorn, 1991; Kipnis, Schmidt & Wilkinson, 1980; Yukl & Falbe, 1990, 1993). Lateral peers, a seldom studied influence dimension, was involved in the study. It was found that Chinese lateral peers used tactics less frequently than did their superiors, but were not differentiated from their subordinates. It seems probable that superiors' power advantage exerts profound effect in the influence process by decreasing targets' resistance to influence and by increasing the success rate of using such tactics.

Chinese managers were found to use CC to deal with the "Black Face God" more frequently than did the "Control Target" (an average target). The "Control Target" was found to score higher in the Feeling dimension of the manipulation scale than did the "Black Face God". This result can be explained with Reciprocal Rule. However, we regard that greater resistance to influence from, and lower success rate of influence to, the "Black Face God" than from other targets restricts the probability that influencers use GP, and thus increases their probability to use CC. The frequencies with which influencers use GP to deal with targets were not significantly different across three influence directions. Generally, GP would incur less resistance from targets than CC.

Influencers' personality was comprehensively measured by the five factors of the FFI (McCrea & Costa, 1990) and the five facets of the CPAI (Cheung, Leung

& Song, 1996). influencers with high level of scores in Openness were found to use CC and GP tactics more frequently than those with low level, and the trait of Agreeableness showed the opposite pattern. Neuroticism was found to be positively correlated with the frequent use of CC. Extroversion and Conscientiousness were positively correlated with the Gentle Persuasion usage. Face, Harmony, negative Flexibility, and Chinese Tradition which was composed by the five facets of the CPAI positively correlated with the use of GP. Renqin negatively correlated with Contingent Control usage. Agents' influence capabilities, which might be determined by their personal traits, were connected to their choice of tactics. The suggested relations include: fluid and permeable structure of consciousness might facilitate, while weak and acquiescent might inhibit the use of tactics; relation-oriented, orderful, high self-consciousness, and generally, Chinese traditional traits may facilitate Gentle Persuasion usage.

The proposed research model and methodology enable us to study other targets' behavioral patterns, typologies of the influencers, and the sequence of choice of tactics and the effectiveness of tactics in future studies. The ITP developed permits us to implement cross-cultural research, and can be used practically in management evaluation and training. This dissertation provides a wealth of empirical knowledge, an improved theoretical model, and eventually will benefit Chinese society by applying these results to improve influence effectiveness in Chinese organizations.

However, there are some limitations in this study. First, this study just concerns male targets and male influencers. Further studies are required to verify

the effect of gender on influencers' choice of tactics. Second, the influence tactics were mainly probed on the general level. Although the tactics clusters were explored in the pilot study, the main study focused only on the dimensions of Contingent Control and Gentle Persuasion. Successive studies need to delve into the detail of the choice of tactics by cluster or specific type of influence.