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## **Influence tactics and work outcomes: a meta-analysis**

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### **Summary**

Recent research on influence tactics has focused on the benefits that accrue as a result of using such tactics. The current study utilizes meta-analytic techniques to estimate the true population correlations between various influence tactics and work-related outcomes. Results indicate that ingratiation and rationality have positive effects on work outcomes. Additional analyses suggest that these and other influence tactics have significant effects in certain situations and on specific work outcomes. Copyright © 2003 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

### **Introduction**

Over 40 years ago, Goffman (1955) introduced to the behavioral sciences the notion that people consciously manage the impressions they convey to others in interpersonal interactions. While manipulation was not a new concept at that time, it was indeed a novel argument that people act out roles in efforts to establish identities they wish to convey, and which can result in personal gain. It was also intriguing to suggest that people alter the image they choose to present, and the strategy used to present this image, based on the situation they are in and the outcomes they hope to achieve. Goffman's dramaturgical perspective strongly influenced the evolution of theory and research in interpersonal behavior, and subsequent streams of related work on self-presentation, impression management, influence tactics, and organizational politics, have remained active areas of inquiry to date.

Somewhat later, within the past two decades, interpersonal influence theory was applied to organizational settings in efforts to better understand the behavior of people at work. Work settings were seen as conducive to interpersonal influence because obtaining a job offer, receiving a favorable performance evaluation, or ensuring a high pay increase represent rewards at work which could stimulate the self-interest motive and thus behaviors designed to manage favorable impressions. However, it is important to note that individuals do not necessarily use the same influence strategy in every situation. Likewise, different individuals may choose different influence strategies when faced with similar situations. For example, whereas one individual may use self-promotion to obtain a job offer, that same

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individual may use ingratiation or rationality in an attempt to obtain a promotion or pay raise. On the other hand, another individual, when faced with the same situation, may use ingratiation to obtain a job offer and assertiveness or self-promotion to win a pay raise.

A number of contextual factors and individual differences determine which influence tactics an individual chooses to use, under what circumstances he or she chooses to use them, and how effective the tactic of choice will be. Such factors include the relative power of the parties, the direction of the influence attempt, the objective of the influence attempt, and the political skill of the influencer (Falbe & Yukl, 1992; Ferris, Perrewé, Anthony, & Gilmore, 2000). Another factor affecting the success of an influence attempt is the choice of tactic. Falbe and Yukl found that using a single soft tactic (i.e., those that rely on personal power and power sharing, such as ingratiation or consultation) was more effective than a single hard tactic (i.e., those that rely on authority and position power, such as self-promotion). Furthermore, combining two soft tactics, or a soft tactic and rationality, was more effective than any single tactic or a combination of hard tactics. Thus, evidence suggests that different tactics do have differing degrees of effectiveness.

However, despite the fact researchers have investigated the effects of influence tactics on work outcomes for some time now, there has been little attention devoted to obtaining a comprehensive assessment of the effects of influence tactics by cumulating results across studies. In addition, previous attempts to meta-analyse the effects of influence tactics have suffered from several shortcomings that limit the confidence one can have in the results of such studies.

### *Purpose of the present study*

The purpose of the present study is twofold. First, despite the increased amount of research examining the role of various influence tactics in organizations, the results of this research reveal a lack of consistent findings. For example, whereas Orpen (1996) found a positive effect of ingratiation on promotions, Thacker and Wayne (1995) found a negative effect for the same relationship. Similarly, Stevens and Kristof (1995) found a positive relationship between self-promotion and performance assessments, but Ferris, Judge, Rowland, and Fitzgibbons (1994) found self-promotion to have a negative effect on performance. As a result of these conflicting findings, it is difficult to determine the true nature of the relationship between influence tactics and work outcomes. In order for a literature to advance and have an impact on the field of organizational behavior, it is important that we be able to show consistency in research findings or, at the very least, attempt to explain discrepancies. Therefore, one purpose of the current study is to cumulate the results of recent research examining the effect of influence tactics on work outcomes, meta-analytically examine these results, and try to provide a consistent explanation of these results that will allow us to better understand the effects of influence tactic use in organizations.

The second purpose of the present study is to overcome limitations of previous meta-analytic studies of influence tactics. In particular, we seek to expand upon Gordon's (1996) recently published meta-analysis of ingratiation strategies. Although Gordon's study provided thorough coverage of the ingratiation literature, there are several limitations to this study that warrant further study. First, there are many influence tactics other than ingratiation that may affect organizational outcomes. A review of the influence literature indicated that most research on influence tactics in organizations focused on one or more of the following tactics: ingratiation, self-promotion, rationality, assertiveness, exchange, upward appeal, and/or coalitions. In addition, Gordon's investigation included self-promotion as a tactic of ingratiation. However, Godfrey, Jones, and Lord (1986) provided empirical evidence that self-promotion and ingratiation are indeed distinct influence tactics and should be treated as such. Therefore, it is theoretically and conceptually important to distinguish self-promotion and ingratiation as independent influence tactics.

In addition, Gordon's (1996) meta-analysis was based on a fixed effects method, which assumes no between studies variance. However, based on the significant homogeneity statistics reported by Gordon, this assumption did not hold true for the studies included in Gordon's meta-analysis. Therefore, it is difficult to determine whether or not the effects reported by Gordon are non-zero. Also, the meta-analytic technique used by Gordon (1996) corrected effect sizes only for the bias introduced by the *d*-statistic's overestimation of population effect sizes. This is a serious deficiency as measurement error often accounts for up to 50 per cent of the total variance of a measure (Schmidt & Hunter, 1996). In the present study, effect sizes were corrected not only for bias due to sampling error, but also for bias due to measurement error in both the independent and dependent variables.

In light of the issues just raised, an updated review of the influence tactic literature is necessary to enhance our understanding of influence in organizations. The present study attempts to address some of the concerns with previous meta-analytic reviews of influence tactics and contribute to the literature by including a broader set of influence tactics, investigating a comprehensive framework of work-oriented outcomes, and using appropriate meta-analytic techniques.

### *Interpersonal influence theory*

Theory and research on interpersonal influence has been developed and advanced largely through the contributions of scholars such as Jones (Jones, 1964, 1990; Jones & Pittman, 1982), Tedeschi (1981), and more recently, by Leary (1995; Leary & Kowalski, 1990). This body of work has articulated the precise nature of interpersonal influence tactics, their antecedents, boundary conditions, and consequences, and considerable empirical work has been generated in efforts to systematically examine these theoretical arguments.

Within the last two decades, interest emerged in applying interpersonal influence theory to organizational settings. The measurement of influence tactics in organizational settings began with the categorization scheme proposed by Kipnis, Schmidt, and Wilkinson (1980), which identified eight tactics. These tactics included assertiveness (using a forceful manner to get what one wants), ingratiation (using behaviors designed to increase the target's liking of oneself or to make oneself appear friendly in order to get what one wants), rationality (using data and information to make a logical argument supporting one's request), sanctions (using punishment or the threat of punishment to gain compliance), exchange (making an explicit offer to do something for another in exchange for their doing what one wants), upward appeals (relying on the chain of command, calling in superiors to help get one's way), blocking (attempting to stop the target from carrying out some action by impeding their progress), and coalitions (mobilizing others to help in persuading the target individual). Kipnis and Schmidt (1982) published scales for their principal influence tactics that have been used in several organizational studies (e.g., Wayne, Liden, Graf, & Ferris, 1997). However, subsequent research on the Kipnis et al. (1980) tactics has omitted two of the tactics (sanctions and blocking) due to conceptual problems and infrequent use (Kipnis & Schmidt, 1988; Yukl & Falbe, 1990).

In addition to the tactics put forth by Kipnis et al. (1980), Jones and Pittman (1982) proposed another set of influence tactics believed to be relevant to interpersonal behavior in organizational settings. Jones and Pittman's categorization of self-presentation tactics was the first to distinguish the tactic of self-promotion (attempting to create an appearance of competence or that you are capable of completing a task) from ingratiation. Although Jones and Pittman's categorization included a total of five self-presentation tactics, only self-promotion and ingratiation have received substantial attention in the literature.

As widely studied as influence tactics are, there is little agreement as to the exact labels to be used for each tactic. For example, Wayne and Ferris (1990) conducted a study of supervisor-focused and

job-focused influence tactics. These tactics are essentially the same as ingratiation and self-promotion respectively, but were identified by different labels in the Wayne and Ferris study. Therefore, in an effort to provide consistency throughout the present study, we have adopted the Kipnis et al. (1980) labels of assertiveness, coalitions, exchange, ingratiation, rationality, and upward appeal, as well as the self-promotion label proposed by Jones and Pittman (1982). Because they represent a broad segment of the influence tactic literature and because of their widespread acceptance and use, these tactics will be the focus of the present study.

### *Interpersonal influence in organizations*

In 1988, Gardner and Martinko conducted a thorough review of the literature on interpersonal influence. On the one hand, Gardner and Martinko's (1988) review suggested that researchers had developed a clear understanding of the antecedents to influence tactic use in organizations. On the other hand, Gardner and Martinko also noted that little research had examined the outcomes of, or behavioral responses to, influence strategies. Fortunately, researchers recognized the importance of this area of enquiry and sought to address this issue.

Following the seminal work of Gardner and Martinko (1988), much of the research on interpersonal influence in organizations applied interpersonal influence to human resources management systems and decisions (Ferris & Judge, 1991), with particular reference to selection and employment interview decisions (e.g., Gilmore & Ferris, 1989; Gilmore, Stevens, Harrell-Cook, & Ferris, 1999), the performance evaluation process and outcomes as engineered by supervisors/raters (e.g., Cleveland & Murphy, 1992; Villanova & Bernardin, 1991) as well as by subordinates/ratees (e.g., Ferris & Frink, 1997), the use of goals (in goal setting) as impression management tactics (e.g., Frink & Ferris, 1998; Huber, Latham, & Locke, 1989), and the career progression and success process, focusing on promotions and salary increases (e.g., Cooper, Graham, & Dyke, 1993; Ferris, Fedor, & King, 1994; Judge & Bretz, 1994).

### *Factors affecting overall validity estimates*

Because of the complex nature of interpersonal interactions and because of the even greater complexity introduced through the use of influence tactics, a number of variables could potentially affect the relationships between influence tactics and work outcomes. In the present study, the variables most likely to affect such relationships include the specific work outcome of interest, the source of performance assessments, and the research environment. Each of these will be discussed in turn.

#### **Work outcomes**

The specific work outcome of interest is likely to affect the relationship between influence tactics and work outcomes. Unlike performance assessments, which are largely dependent on the behavior of the individual, measures of extrinsic success (e.g., salaries and promotions) are often affected by a number of factors that are not directly under the control of the employee. For example, seniority, job level, and gender affect salaries (Gerhart & Rynes, 1991; Lawler, 1966), whereas promotions are at least partially dependent upon the availability of open positions to be promoted to. Furthermore, because performance assessments typically occur more frequently than either pay raises or promotion, they are also likely to occur closer in time to an individual's use of influence tactics. As a result, there is a lesser probability that external factors may intervene and weaken the effect the influence tactic(s) may have. Therefore, it seems likely that influence tactics will have stronger effects on performance assessments than on measures of extrinsic success.

### Source of performance assessment

Wortman and Linsenmeier (1977) have argued that certain influence tactics are likely to be less effective in the workplace than in an employment interview. Furthermore, they have suggested that differences in how individuals are evaluated might depend on the amount of background information the rater has about the ratee. For example, in the workplace, raters typically have the opportunity to observe the ratee over a long period of time and across many situations. As a result, it would be difficult for the ratee to consistently employ influence tactics that might affect the evaluation of his or her performance by a supervisor. In an interview, however, interviewers are able to observe applicants for only a limited amount of time and in only one situation. Because interviewers have a more limited knowledge of applicants' backgrounds, their perceptions must be based primarily on this limited period of observation. Thus, when applicants choose to employ influence tactics during the interview, it is likely that they will be able to influence the ratings given to them by interviewers. As a result, we expect influence tactics to have stronger effects on performance assessments provided by interviewers than those provided by supervisors.

### Research environment

The environment in which the primary studies were conducted (laboratory versus field) is also likely to affect the strength of the relationships between influence tactics and work outcomes. In a laboratory environment, researchers are able to exert more control over the situation and manipulate independent variables more precisely than researchers in field studies, where a number of intervening variables may detract from the effectiveness of influence tactics. In addition, much as the interview context provides only a brief interaction between the influencer and the target of influence, laboratory experiments also tend to be brief encounters in which influence tactics are likely to have more impact than they might over a longer period of time. As a result, we expect influence tactics to have stronger effects on work outcomes in a laboratory environment than in the field.

## Organizational Context

### Contextual Information About the Studies Included in the Meta-Analysis

The primary studies included in our meta-analysis were conducted between 1973 and 2000. The majority (94 per cent) were conducted between 1980 and 2000. Twenty-seven studies appeared in academic journals and four were unpublished doctoral dissertations. Only two studies were conducted outside the United States. Both of these studies were conducted in India. Finally, 29 studies were cross-sectional in nature while two were longitudinal.

## Method

### *Rules for inclusion*

Primary studies were included in our analyses if they met the following conditions. First, an appropriate effect size statistic (e.g., correlation or *d*-value) must have been reported. If no effect size was

reported, the information necessary for computing the effect size (i.e., means and standard deviations) must have been available either in the study or from the study author(s).

Second, influence tactics must have been one of the following: assertiveness, coalitions, exchange, ingratiation, rationality, upward appeal, or self-promotion (however, because we found only two studies that examined the relationship between coalitions and work outcomes, coalitions was subsequently dropped from our study). Several studies appeared to assess these constructs but identified the tactics by different names. As a result, it is possible that these studies actually examined different constructs. In order to address this concern, three individuals familiar with the influence literature independently evaluated each study included in our analysis. Each individual searched each study for a definition or description of the tactics under examination or, when available, for the items used to measure each tactic. Then, each tactic was placed into one of eight categories representing the seven tactics originally included in the present study and a category labelled 'other.' The latter category was to be used if the tactic in question did not fit the definition of any of the tactics used in the present study. Following the independent evaluation of these studies, the three sets of evaluations were compared to determine areas of discrepancy. There was disagreement in only one case and the three evaluators discussed this discrepancy until agreement was reached.

Third, following Ferris and Judge's (1991) classification of outcomes of influence behaviors, work outcomes must have been a measure of performance or competence, salary, or promotions. In addition, measures of salary recommendation or progression and promotion recommendation or promotability were included. Again, based on Judge and Bretz (1994) all measures of salary and promotions were combined to create the extrinsic success variable.

### *Identification of studies*

In an effort to obtain the broadest possible sample of empirical studies relating influence tactics to work outcome variables, we conducted a computerized search of the PsychINFO database (1967–2000). Because the influence tactic construct is identified by a variety of names including impression management (Tedeschi & Melburg, 1984), organizational politics (Ferris et al., 1989) political influence behavior (Judge & Bretz, 1994), and influence tactics (Thacker & Wayne, 1995), multiple searches were necessary. In addition, our dependent variable also consists of a number of different facets: salary, promotions, and performance assessments, both by supervisors and by interviewers. Again, this required multiple searches. These searches consisted of reading more than 300 abstracts to identify studies that examined influence tactics and work outcomes. Of these approximately 300 studies, 81 were identified for possible inclusion in our meta-analysis. These 81 studies included 65 published journal articles and 16 unpublished doctoral dissertations. Each of these 81 studies was then obtained and read in order to ascertain whether or not the study met the criteria for inclusion in the present study.

Based on the previously stated inclusion rules, 23 studies were retained for our analysis. The most common reason for discarding studies was a failure to report correlations, *d*-values, or the information necessary to compute effect sizes that could be used in our analyses. When studies failed to report this information, the study authors were contacted in an effort to obtain correlations or *d*-values. If the authors were unable to provide that information, the study was eliminated from consideration.

A smaller number of studies were excluded based on the definition and/or measurement of influence tactics. Studies eliminated based on definition or measurement differences typically combined several influence tactics into one variable or one manipulation (e.g., video stimulus) making it impossible to extract the effect of each influence tactic on the dependent variable of interest.

The next step in identifying possible studies consisted of a manual search of the reference lists of those studies already included in our meta-analysis. The reference list search resulted in three additional studies that met the inclusion criteria. Finally, we contacted several researchers in the influence tactic field who identified five additional studies, which were subsequently included in the final analyses. All told, 31 studies were retained for analysis. These 31 studies contained 37 independent samples and reported 98 correlations between individual influence tactics and work outcomes.

### *Meta-analytic procedures*

The meta-analytic procedures outlined by Hunter and Schmidt (1990) were used in conducting our analyses. When correcting correlations individually, as was done in the present study, the procedure developed by Hunter and Schmidt stipulates that observed correlations be corrected first for unreliability in both the predictor and criterion variables, then the meta-analysis is conducted on the corrected correlations. The corrections for unreliability are discussed in the following sections.

#### **Correcting for unreliability in influence tactic measures**

A majority (87 per cent) of the studies included in our meta-analysis contained internal consistency reliabilities for the influence tactic measures used in the study. When such a reliability estimate was available, it was used in all subsequent analyses of that study. When no reliability was reported for a given measure, an estimated reliability was calculated using the average of the reliabilities reported in other studies in our sample that assessed the same influence tactic. In the present study, four studies of ingratiation and one study of self-promotion failed to report reliability estimates. The average coefficient alpha reliabilities that were computed and used for these studies were  $\alpha = 0.71$  (ingratiation) and  $\alpha = 0.80$  (self-promotion).

Typically, if influence tactics were used in a selection context where the criterion was job performance, one would not correct influence tactics for reliability. Because this is not the context of the present study, however, it is reasonable to correct influence tactics for unreliability even when the criterion is job performance.

#### **Correcting for unreliability in work outcome measures**

Although most studies that included performance assessments as a dependent variable included estimates of internal consistency reliability, these estimates were not used in our analyses. Because we typically seek to generalize, not to one specific rater, but to an equally knowledgeable rater, the appropriate correction to use is inter-rater reliability. Therefore, for studies that included supervisor performance ratings we used the inter-rater reliability estimate of 0.52 reported by Viswesvaran, Ones, and Schmidt (1996). This meta-analytically derived estimate, based on a sample of 14 650 subjects, represents the most thorough estimate to date of the mean population estimate of supervisory performance ratings. For studies that included performance assessments by interviewers, we corrected for unreliability using the inter-rater reliability estimate of 0.70 reported by Conway, Jako, and Goodman (1995) as the mean population estimate of inter-rater reliability in interview settings. Again, this estimate was derived through meta-analytic techniques and is the most accurate estimate available for inter-rater reliability in an interview setting.

The remaining work outcome measures, salary and promotions, were typically obtained through a one-time search of historical records by one individual. When this occurs there is no associated internal consistency reliability or inter-rater reliability that could be used in correcting the observed correlations for unreliability. Schmidt and Hunter (1996) addressed the issue of unreliability in such objective measures and concluded that it is appropriate to assume perfect reliability with the



understanding that all resulting coefficients will be downwardly biased to some unknown extent. As a result, the reliability for all measures of salary and promotions was coded as 1.0. Therefore, all resulting correlation coefficients are conservative estimates of the true relationship.

### Creating composite measures

Several studies reported multiple measures of either influence tactics, work outcome variables, or both. When such studies were encountered, equally weighted composite measures were constructed as recommended by Hunter and Schmidt (1990). That is, if a study reported correlations between ingratiation and three different measures of performance a composite was computed based on the average correlation between ingratiation and the performance measures, corrected for the correlation among the three measures of performance (see Hunter & Schmidt, 1990, p. 457). The purpose of such a composite correlation is to estimate the correlation between ingratiation and overall performance as if such an overall correlation had been reported. By computing composites from these samples, the independence of the sample is maintained. In addition, creating a composite correlation generally results in a more construct valid measure of the variable of interest (Ones & Viswesvaran, 1996).

## Results

### Overall analysis

The results of the overall meta-analyses are presented in Table 1. The first set of analyses was conducted with each influence tactic as an independent variable. All individual work outcomes were combined into a single dependent variable for overall analyses. Results of these analyses were quite varied with mean weighted, uncorrected correlations ranging from  $-0.01$  (exchange) to  $0.18$  (rationality). After correcting for predictor and criterion unreliability, estimated population mean correlations ranged from  $-0.03$  (exchange) to  $0.26$  (rationality). In addition, the variance accounted for by artifacts ranged from 6.9 per cent (self-promotion) to 73.5 per cent (exchange). These results suggest substantial variability in the effectiveness of different influence tactics. However, it is important to note that the upward appeal analyses were based on only four studies. Thus, results of this analysis are tenuous and should be interpreted with caution.

In order to assess variability in the individual, corrected true score correlations, 95 per cent credibility intervals (CVs), which provide information concerning the dispersion of individual study correlations, were computed for each set of relationships. The credibility intervals were generally quite

Table 1. The effect of influence tactics on overall work outcomes

Influence tactic	<i>k</i>	<i>n</i>	Mean <i>r</i>	<i>SD<sub>r</sub></i>	Mean $\rho$	<i>SD<sub>ρ</sub></i>	% Variance	95% CV	95% CI
Ingratiation	50	6065	0.17	0.17	0.23	0.26	20.0	( $-0.28, 0.74$ )	(0.20, 0.26)
Self-promotion	20	3587	0.02	0.28	0.01	0.35	6.9	( $-0.68, 0.70$ )	( $-0.03, 0.05$ )
Rationality	9	1454	0.18	0.16	0.26	0.26	13.7	( $-0.25, 0.77$ )	(0.20, 0.32)
Assertiveness	9	1487	0.00	0.16	$-0.02$	0.23	18.7	( $-0.47, 0.43$ )	( $-0.08, 0.04$ )
Exchange	6	1041	$-0.01$	0.05	$-0.03$	0.07	73.5	( $-0.17, 0.11$ )	( $-0.10, 0.04$ )
Upward appeal	4	846	0.04	0.15	0.05	0.22	16.9	( $-0.38, 0.48$ )	( $-0.03, 0.13$ )

Notes: *k* = number of correlations; *n* = total sample size; mean *r* = average uncorrected correlation; *SD<sub>r</sub>* = Standard deviation of uncorrected correlation; mean  $\rho$  = average corrected correlation; *SD<sub>ρ</sub>* = standard deviation of corrected correlation; % variance = per cent variance accounted for by artifacts; 95 per cent CV = lower and upper limits of 95% credibility interval; 95% CI = lower and upper limits of 95% confidence interval.

large ranging from 0.28 (exchange) to 1.38 (self-promotion) suggesting substantial variability in the individual correlations across studies.

Additional analyses produced 95 per cent confidence intervals (CIs) for each influence tactic. Unlike credibility intervals, confidence intervals provide information regarding variability around estimated mean population values. Whereas CVs provide the range across which individual study correlations are dispersed, CIs provide a measure of confidence concerning the estimated mean true correlation in the population. Confidence intervals for ingratiation and rationality excluded zero suggesting that the average relationships between work outcomes and each of these influence tactics is non-zero.

As indicated previously, our overall meta-analyses suggested that artifacts failed to account for 100 per cent of the variance in any of the tested relationships. In addition,  $Q$ -tests were significant for all sets of effects sizes except exchange. This suggests that the remaining sets of effect sizes contained significant amounts of unexplained variability across studies. As a result additional analyses were conducted in an attempt to explain additional between studies variance.

### Work outcomes

The first set of additional analyses examined the independent effects of influence tactics on each work outcome. Results of these analyses are presented in Table 2 and highlights are discussed below.

#### Ingratiation and work outcomes

The analysis of ingratiation by work outcome measure indicated that ingratiation had a generally positive effect on both work outcomes. The strongest effect was found for performance assessments with a

Table 2. Effect of influence tactics on specific work outcome measures

Measure	<i>k</i>	<i>n</i>	Mean <i>r</i>	Mean $\rho$	% Variance	95% CV	95% CI	Significant differences
Ingratiation								
(a) Performance assessments	27	3090	0.23	0.35	17.8	(-0.24, 0.94)	(0.31, 0.39)	b
(b) Extrinsic success	23	2975	0.09	0.11	47.2	(-0.13, 0.35)	(0.06, 0.16)	a
Self-promotion								
(a) Performance assessments	11	1774	0.03	0.01	4.4	(-0.95, 0.97)	(-0.04, 0.06)	
(b) Extrinsic success	9	1813	0.01	0.01	100.0	(0.01, 0.01)	(-0.05, 0.07)	
Rationality								
(a) Performance assessments	4	547	0.32	0.50	13.8	(-0.01, 1.1)	(0.41, 0.59)	b
(b) Extrinsic success	5	907	0.10	0.12	92.5	(0.06, 0.18)	(0.04, 0.20)	a
Assertiveness								
(a) Performance assessments	4	547	-0.12	-0.19	20.5	(-0.72, 34)	(-0.29, -0.09)	b
(b) Extrinsic success	5	940	0.07	0.08	32.9	(-0.17, 0.33)	(0.00, 0.16)	a

Notes: *k* = number of correlations; *n* = total sample size; mean *r* = average uncorrected correlation; mean  $\rho$  = average corrected correlation; % variance = per cent variance accounted for by artifacts; 95% CV = lower and upper limits of 95% credibility interval; 95% CI = lower and upper limits of 95% confidence interval.

Letters in the right-hand column denote means that are significantly different from each other at the 0.01 level. Means were not compared across influence tactics.

mean population correlation of 0.35. This effect is larger ( $\rho = 0.35$  versus  $\rho = 0.05$ ) but in the same direction as the result of similar analyses reported by Gordon (1996).

To determine whether the effects of ingratiation on performance assessments and extrinsic success were statistically different from each other, pairwise comparisons were conducted using *Z*-tests suggested by Quiñones, Ford, and Teachout (1995). Results of these tests indicated that ingratiation did have a significantly stronger effect on performance assessments than on extrinsic success ( $z = 7.71, p < 0.01$ ).

#### **Self-promotion and work outcomes**

Self-promotion was found to have only a weak effect on performance assessments and extrinsic success. Although mean population correlations were slightly positive in both instances, both confidence intervals contained zero, leaving the possibility that the true effect of self-promotion on these work outcomes is zero.

#### **Rationality and work outcomes**

As with ingratiation, more detailed analyses of rationality and work outcome measures suggested a positive influence of rationality on both performance assessments and extrinsic success. Rationality also had a significantly stronger effect on performance assessments than on extrinsic success ( $z = 11.93, p < 0.01$ ). However, the results of these analyses should be viewed with caution as no subgroup contained more than five individual studies.

#### **Assertiveness and work outcomes**

The analysis of assertiveness and work outcomes provided interesting results. Whereas a negative effect was found for performance assessments, a positive effect was found for extrinsic success resulting in a significant difference between these two relationships ( $z = 7.94, p < 0.01$ ). Although based on a limited number of studies, these results are cause for speculation regarding the differential effect of assertiveness on two seemingly related work outcomes.

### *Source of performance assessment*

Another variable we expected to affect the relationship between influence tactics and work outcomes was the source of the performance assessments. Thus, our next set of analyses focused on the relationship between influence tactics and performance assessments given by supervisors versus performance assessments provided by interviewers. As the results in Table 3 show, ingratiation and self-promotion had significantly stronger effects on performance assessments provided by interviewers than those provided by supervisors (ingratiation:  $z = 7.90, p < 0.01$ ; self-promotion:  $z = 25.31, p < 0.01$ ). In fact, whereas self-promotion had a strong, positive effect on interviewers' performance assessments, a strong, negative effect was found for supervisor assessments. However, we must urge caution in the interpretation of these latter results as only three studies were used in computing the meta-analytic estimate of the relationship between self-promotion and interviewer performance assessments. As such, a single study may have unduly influenced the resulting estimate making these results, at best, speculative. In order to better understand this relationship, further study is necessary.

### *Research environment*

Table 4 presents the results of the final analysis. This analysis grouped studies by research environment: laboratory versus field. However, the only influence tactic for which multiple studies have been conducted in both the laboratory and in the field is ingratiation. In fact, of all the other influence tactics,

Table 3. Effect of performance assessment source on the relationship between influence tactics and performance assessments

Measure	<i>k</i>	<i>n</i>	Mean <i>r</i>	Mean $\rho$	% Variance	95% CV	95% CI	Significant differences
<b>Ingratiation</b>								
(a) Supervisor performance assessments	20	2299	0.17	0.26	19.9	(-0.33, 0.85)	(0.21, 0.31)	b
(b) Interviewer performance assessments	7	791	0.41	0.60	58.1	(0.42, 0.78)	(0.53, 0.67)	a
<b>Self-promotion</b>								
(a) Supervisor performance assessments	8	1215	-0.18	-0.25	23.9	(-0.64, 0.14)	(-0.31, -0.19)	b
(b) Interviewer performance assessments	3	559	0.49	0.58	2.0	(-0.34, 1.50)	(0.51, 0.65)	a

Notes: *k* = number of correlations; *n* = total sample size; mean *r* = average uncorrected correlation; mean  $\rho$  = average corrected correlation; % variance = per cent variance accounted for by artifacts; 95% CV = lower and upper limits of 95% credibility interval; 95% CI = lower and upper limits of 95% confidence interval.

Letters in right-hand column denote means that are significantly different from each other at the 0.01 level. Means were not compared across influence tactics.

only self-promotion and rationality have been included in even one laboratory study with work outcomes as the dependent variable.

In order to avoid confounding the results by using a composite dependent variable (i.e., one that consisted of a combination of performance assessments and extrinsic success), two analyses were conducted. The first analysis examined the effect of ingratiation on performance assessments in laboratory versus field environments. The second examined the effect of ingratiation on extrinsic success in laboratory versus field environments. In each instance, significantly stronger effects were found in the laboratory than in the field (performance assessments:  $z = 3.78$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ; extrinsic success:  $z = 4.77$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ).

## Discussion

Drawing from an older literature in social psychology, organizational researchers in the last 20 years have linked influence tactics to a number of criteria that reflect work outcomes. The breadth of these

Table 4. Effect of research environment on the relationship between ingratiation and work outcomes

Method	<i>k</i>	<i>n</i>	Mean <i>r</i>	Mean $\rho$	% Variance	95% CV	95% CI	Significant differences
<b>Performance assessments</b>								
(a) Laboratory	10	656	0.33	0.48	19.2	(-0.21, 1.17)	(0.40, 0.56)	b
(b) Field	17	2434	0.21	0.31	17.8	(-0.24, 0.86)	(0.26, 0.36)	a
<b>Extrinsic success</b>								
(a) Laboratory	10	654	0.25	0.29	52.2	(0.04, 0.55)	(0.21, 0.37)	b
(b) Field	13	2321	0.05	0.06	84.8	(-0.02, 0.14)	(0.01, 0.11)	a

Notes: *k* = number of correlations; *n* = total sample size; mean *r* = average uncorrected correlation; mean  $\rho$  = average corrected correlation; % variance = per cent variance accounted for by artifacts; 95% CV = lower and upper limits of 95% credibility interval; 95% CI = lower and upper limits of 95% confidence interval.

Letters in the right-hand column denote means that are significantly different from each other at the 0.01 level. Means were not compared across work outcomes.

studies is impressive; researchers have studied a wide range of influence tactics, and related these tactics to many different work outcomes. At the same time, this breadth has had its drawbacks. The literature has provided remarkably little consensus on the relative effectiveness of these influence tactics. Therefore, the present study sought to address the issue of which influence tactics are most effective in helping one obtain desirable work outcomes.

Results show that two influence tactics (i.e., ingratiation and rationality) displayed mean non-zero relationships with work outcomes. Thus, individuals who exhibit ingratiation behaviors, and who use logic and data to justify their requests, appear to have a greater chance of succeeding in their careers than individuals who use these tactics to a lesser degree. However, while these influence tactics displayed the strongest correlations with work outcomes, and we can be highly confident that the average correlation is non-zero, the individual correlations were highly variable across studies. Thus, it was important to investigate the relationships between influence tactics and work outcomes in greater detail.

In fact, the results of the additional analyses were perhaps as interesting and important as the results from the overall analyses. Ingratiation and rationality both correlated much more strongly with performance assessments than with extrinsic success. Why were these differences by criteria observed? One possible reason for these differential relationships is that performance assessments are more directly influenced by employee behavior than are salary or promotions, the two components of extrinsic success. If influence tactics affect salary or promotions, they likely do so through their effects on performance assessments since such assessments are a primary component of many salary and promotion decisions. Thus, influence tactics probably more proximally influence performance assessments, and their effect on salary and promotions is probably only indirect. Another, related, factor that may explain differential relations by criteria is the issue of supervisory power and influence. Typically, upward influence tactics are designed to motivate supervisors to produce the outcomes desired by the subordinate. Performance assessments are usually directly within supervisors' control. However, salary and promotions are less clearly within the supervisor's control and likely are more affected by external conditions such as the financial condition of the organization and the availability of open positions to which one can be promoted. Thus, ingratiation and rationality may have a stronger relationship with performance assessments because these outcomes are within the direct control of the typical target of these tactics (i.e., the supervisor) whereas the target typically has much less control over salary and promotions.

On a similar note, assertiveness also had differing relationships with performance assessments and extrinsic success. On the one hand, assertiveness had a moderately strong, negative relationship with performance assessments. On the other hand, assertiveness had a positive relationship with extrinsic success. One might typically assume that an influence tactic would affect both of these work outcomes in the same manner (i.e., either positively or negatively). However, results of the present study suggest that this is not always true. One explanation may be that those who use assertiveness are more aggressive in seeking out or asking for pay raises and promotions. In so doing, those individuals may receive rewards that outpace their actual performance as reflected in their performance ratings. Although these results are based on a relatively small number of studies ( $k=4$  and 5, respectively), future research should examine these relationships in more detail in an effort to elucidate the different processes through which assertiveness affects various work outcomes.

Another important factor was the source of performance assessments. When influence tactics were studied in the context of employment interviews, the effect sizes were quite large. The interview effect is particularly notable for self-promotion. It appears that self-promotion aids in the receipt of favorable interview ratings, but such tactics seem to backfire in obtaining favorable performance assessments from supervisors. This latter result is consistent with previous work by Gordon (1996) and makes sense if one considers the nature of self-promotion. Jones and Pittman (1982) suggested that self-promotion is likely to be more successful when claims of competence are difficult to verify. On the other hand,

when claims of competence can be easily refuted the chances of achieving success are likely to be diminished. Therefore, when one self-promotes in an interview, the likelihood of establishing a perception of competence is good because the interviewer has little ability to verify. Conversely, the supervisor is probably in a position to gauge the veridicality of self-promotion, because compared to the interviewer, the supervisor has a greater ability to recognize self-promotion for what it is, rather than as an accurate description of one's accomplishments. However, a note of caution should be sounded here. Only three studies that investigated self-promotion in the interview were included in this meta-analysis. Although a meta-analysis based on only three studies is generally more interpretable than results from a single study (Hunter & Schmidt, 1990), one can be less confident that we have close estimates of population values than if the number of studies was larger.

Finally, results of the present study suggest that ingratiation has a much stronger effect on work outcomes in the laboratory than in the field. This is consistent with results reported previously by Gordon (1996) and is not surprising due to the ability of researchers to develop strong experimental manipulations of ingratiation in the absence of many of the contextual factors present in field studies that work to mitigate the effects of influence tactics (i.e., accountability, historical relationship between the target and the influencer, etc.).

### *Limitations and contributions*

The present study has several limitations that need to be noted. First, due to the relatively large number of influence tactics that were included in the present study and the relatively small number of studies that fit the criteria for some analyses, we were limited in our investigation of factors that might affect the relationships between influence tactics and work outcomes to specific work outcome measures, the source of performance assessments, and research environment. Given that the correlation of the two most effective influence tactics (i.e., ingratiation and rationality) with work outcomes was highly variable across studies, it would have been informative to conduct more extensive analyses. As studies in this area continue to cumulate, it would be important for future research to investigate additional factors that may influence the relationship between influence tactics and work outcomes.

Related to this issue is the fact that some influence tactics have not received much attention in the research literature. Therefore, as noted above, the number of studies included in some analyses was small. For example, despite the fact that rationality appears to have a significant effect on work outcomes, we identified fewer than 10 studies that empirically tested the effects of rationality in the workplace. Furthermore, exchange and upward appeal have been the focus of even fewer studies. Although ingratiation and self-promotion have received considerable attention, it is important for future research to examine other tactics in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the effects of influence tactics in organizations.

A third limitation is that this study provided a relatively direct view of the effectiveness of influence tactics. In most models of influence tactic use, a number of contextual factors are taken into account, such as political norms (Porter, Allen, & Angle, 1981), affect or liking (Ferris & Judge, 1991), characteristics of the influence target (Mowday, 1978), and direction of influence (Yukl & Falbe, 1990). Unfortunately, as is the case with most meta-analyses, it is not possible to code these variables at the study level. Although this is a limitation of our study, it is also an important direction for future research.

The above limitations notwithstanding, we believe this paper makes an important contribution to the influence tactic literature. Despite increased interest in the last 20 years, research has not appeared to successfully answer one of the most fundamental questions; that is, which influence tactics are most effective in obtaining positive work outcomes? Ferris and Judge (1991) provided a qualitative review

of the relationship between influence tactics and work outcomes. Yet, in examining their review, it is difficult to come away with a clear understanding of which influence tactics appear to be most (and least) effective in obtaining desirable work outcomes. Indeed, as Ferris and Judge noted with respect to performance evaluations, 'Clearly further research is needed in this area to more precisely delineate the differential effectiveness of a broad array of influence attempts' (p. 464). Ferris and Judge went on to call for more research on the '... differential effectiveness of particular forms of political influence in different ... contexts' (p. 470). By revealing that ingratiation and rationality display mean, non-zero relationships with work outcomes, that ingratiation and self-promotion are strongly related to success in employment interviews, and that self-promotion and assertiveness may backfire in some situations, hopefully our work has added some clarity to this area.

### *Implications and future research*

Individuals who desire to be successful in their careers would benefit from knowing that some influence tactics, especially ingratiation and rationality, appear to be effective means of influencing others. In addition, some of the relationships investigated in the current study are contextually sensitive. For example, ingratiation and self-promotion appear to work particularly well in the interview and, in the case of self-promotion, it appears to backfire in performance evaluations provided by supervisors. It seems then, that individuals seeking to become more politically astute could be informed by the results of this study.

Although we were unable to directly test the effectiveness of combinations of tactics in the current study, combining our results with those reported by Falbe and Yukl (1992) allows us to speculate that certain combinations of tactics may be particularly successful in obtaining desirable work outcomes. To illustrate, Falbe and Yukl reported that combining two soft tactics or a soft tactic with rationality would lead to the greatest likelihood of success. Results of the current study indirectly support this assertion as ingratiation (a soft tactic) and rationality consistently had the strongest positive relationships with work outcomes. Thus, it appears likely that combining ingratiation and rationality would provide one with a good chance of obtaining positive work outcomes. However, as we found no studies examining the effects of influence tactic combinations on work outcomes, this is an important avenue of future research.

There are a number of important questions that cannot be answered in a quantitative review, and have not yet been addressed in the literature. First, though interest in influence tactics is growing, one of the issues fundamental to any field of research has yet to be fully addressed in the influence literature. That issue is the measurement of influence tactics. Although researchers have been studying influence tactics for more than 30 years, there is still no unified conceptualization of what influence tactics are or how they should be measured. Proof of this exists in the primary studies included in the present meta-analysis. The 31 studies represented here used at least nine different instruments for measuring influence tactics. While having multiple instruments for measuring a given construct is not inherently wrong, it is important to know whether each of these instruments is measuring the same underlying factors. In order to do this, we must know what those underlying factors are. Therefore, one important avenue for future research is the development of a comprehensive framework that clearly defines what influence tactics are and what they are not. We should note, however, that diversity in measures did not undermine our ability to find non-zero effects with respect to several influence behaviors.

Another area for further research is the role of two new influence tactics recently added to the Kipnis et al. (1980) typology by Yukl and Falbe (1990); that is, inspirational appeal and consultation. Research by Yukl and associates has found that inspirational appeal is among the most effective tactics

in gaining cooperation from others (Yukl & Falbe, 1996). However, because we found no study that linked the use of this tactic to work outcomes, we were not able to include it in our review.

Next, the direction of the influence attempt (i.e., upward versus lateral versus downward) is a potential moderator of the relationships examined in the current study. However, we were able to identify only one study of lateral and downward influence attempts (Yukl & Tracey, 1992) that investigated the relationship between influence tactics and work outcomes. Despite the attention given to this issue in recent years (e.g., Yukl & Falbe, 1990) it appears that few have attempted to empirically test this aspect of the influence relationship. It seems likely that differing levels of success may be realized when using certain tactics with subordinates, peers, and supervisors. For example, whereas the present study found self-promotion to have a negative effect on performance assessments made by supervisors, it is possible that the use of self-promotion toward subordinates may result in that group providing more positive assessments of managerial performance. One explanation for such a result could be that the subordinate group does not have the means to verify claims made by the influencer, whereas a supervisor is in a much better position to determine the veracity of such claims, especially when those claims are work-related. Therefore, future research that examines the moderating effect of direction on the influence tactic/work outcome relationship, stands to make a significant contribution to the influence literature.

In addition to the direction of the influence attempt, the level, or amount, of influence may also affect the outcome. Whereas previous research has suggested that too much ingratiation may adversely affect the outcome of an influence attempt (Baron, 1986), it is unclear if such non-linear effects exist with other influence tactics. It seems plausible to expect that the effects of self-promotion might be non-linear, such that a moderate amount may be effective in some situations while too much or too little may be ineffective. On the other hand, it seems one would be hard pressed to use too much rationality. Thus, future research should examine the possibility of non-linear relationships between influence tactics and work outcomes.

Finally, future research needs to investigate the style or political skill of the influencer. The style used by influencers likely contributes substantially to the effectiveness of influence tactics because of the influencer's ability to disguise ulterior motives of manipulation, and instead contribute to positive motives and intentions being perceived. Recent research has labelled such style considerations as 'political skill,' and future work needs to examine this construct in more detail (Ferris et al., 2000; Ferris, Berkson, Kaplan, Gilmore, Buckley, Hochwarter, & Witt, 1999—paper presented at the Academy of Management 59th Annual National Meeting, Chicago).

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