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Sheer, Vivian

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**Supervisors' Use of Influence Tactics for Extra-Role Tasks: Perceptions
by Ingroup versus Outgroup Members in Organizations in Hong Kong**

Sheer, V. C. (2012). Supervisors' use of influence tactics for extra-role tasks: Perceptions by ingroup versus outgroup members in organizations in Hong Kong. *Southern Communication Journal*, 77(2), 143-162.

Abstract

With a survey sample of 208 fulltime employees of organizations in Hong Kong, this study examined whether ingroup membership made a difference in superiors' use and subordinates' reactions to influence tactics. Results indicated that ingroup membership exerted impact predominantly on supervisors' use and subordinates' perceptions of soft and neutral tactics, but not on hard, negative tactics. Ingroup members, compared to outgroup employees, generally perceived soft, neutral tactics (consistent with group interaction norms) as more appropriate and exhibited greater attitude-behavior consistency in complying with these influence attempts. Supervisors used hard, negative tactics more frequently on outgroup subordinates than on ingroup employees. Ingroup members disliked the anti-normative, negative tactics as much as did the outgroup members. Theoretical and practical implications are discussed.

Keywords: influence tactics, ingroup phenomenon, supervisor-subordinate relationship

Influence in supervisor-subordinate dyads, an important organizational phenomenon, has been examined in terms of various tactical typologies over the past twenty years (Moss, Barbuto, Matkin, & Chin, 2005). The majority of the literature of interpersonal influence in organizations focuses on choice of strategies, but very little examines the effects of the strategies (e.g., Hinkin & Schriesheim, 1990; Kipnis, Schmidt, & Wilkinson, 1980; Yukl, Kim, & Falbe, 1996). The degree to which an influence tactic is effective hinges on the relationship between the supervisor-agent and the subordinate-target (Gerstner & Day, 1997).

Leader-member exchange (LMX) theory (Graen & Scandura, 1987; Graen, & Uhl-Bien, 1995) views leadership as a process centered in the interaction between a leader (e.g., supervisor) and the followers (e.g., subordinates), and explains the quality of supervisor-subordinate relationship in terms of their ingroup or outgroup membership. Ingroup members often show trust, share similar social identities, and exhibit a high degree of liking for each other, but they fail to behave so in interacting with outgroup members (e.g., Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Wickline, Bailey, & Nowicki, 2009). The ingroup versus outgroup division is more pronounced in collectivist cultures than in individualistic cultures (Smith & Bond, 1993). People of collectivist cultures, compared to those of individualist cultures, draw clearer division between members of an ingroup and those of outgroups (Triandis, Bontempo, Villareal, Asai, & Lucca, 1988). Thus, LMX's conceptualization of organizational ingroup/outgroup can serve as a guiding approach to examining supervisors' influence tactics on employees of different groups in collectivist cultures.

Surprisingly, with the key words of "ingroup and (influence or compliance tactics)," a search of the databases of PsycInfo, Communication and Mass Media Complete, and ComAbstracts in May 2011 returned 7 publications, none of which investigated ingroup membership and downward influence tactics. A further search of these databases for "LMX and ingroup" revealed that (a) studies based in LMX either used ingroup/outgroup as an indication of strong/weak supervisor-subordinate relationship (e.g., Ilies, Nahrgang, & Morgeson, 2007) or as a manipulated experimental condition (e.g., Lewis & Sherman, 2003), and (b) no study has actually measured workplace ingroup membership. Thus, empirical research is

needed to examine how influence tactics, an important part of managerial communication, are used in organizations consisting of ingroups and outgroups. This study is among the first empirical efforts to investigate whether ingroup and outgroup members perceive supervisors' use of influence tactics differently in organizations in Hong Kong. Findings may provide direct evidence of the existence of actual ingroups, first asserted in LMX, and serve as an initial basis for understanding workplace influence processes in a collectivist culture.

Need for Supervisor Influence Tactics

Managers are motivated to exercise influence tactics when they perceive resistance from subordinates (Barbuto, Fritz, & Marx, 2002). Generally, employees need little influence attempts from supervisors for daily work routines. When the target behaviors are considered "beyond the call of duty," the subordinates then would need substantive inducements to perform tasks that are beyond expectation (Barbuto, 200; Bass, 1985). Extra-role behaviors then refer to tasks that ordinarily are not expected of employees in their daily routines and responsibilities (Pearce & Gregersen, 1991). Tsui, Porter, and Egan (2002) point out that the relational literature, such as ingroup member relationships, has typically overlooked extra-role behaviors in the vertical, supervisor-subordinate dyads. The present study aims to contribute to the correction of this oversight by examining how the ingroup-versus-outgroup membership classification may lead to differed perceptions of supervisors' use of influence tactics for extra-role behaviors.

Influence Tactics Used by Supervisors

Downward influence tactics are communication strategies used by managers to induce desired behavior, hence, compliance, from subordinates (Hinkin & Schriesheim, 1990). The ability to influence subordinates is a major determinant of a manager's effectiveness. The specific tactics a manager uses can predict whether an influence attempt is successful (Yukl et al., 1996). Researchers have developed various typologies of organizational influence tactics (e.g., Krone, 1992; Kipnis et al., 1980; Yukl et al., 1996). This study, focusing on ingroup versus outgroup member differences in perceptions of supervisors' influence tactics, adopts Kipnis et al.'s typology (1980), which consists of typical, realistic

tactics. That typology, inductively discovered from recalled accounts of actual tactics used to influence boss, co-workers, and subordinates, has received strong empirical support for its validity and generalizability (Hinkin & Schriesheim, 1990).

Kipnis et al.'s typology consists of seven typical tactics: (a) reason, (b) ingratiation, (c) exchange, (d) assertiveness, (e) coalition, (f) upward appeal/higher authority, and (g) sanction. *Reason* involves the use of facts, logical arguments, job-related information, and explanations to persuade the subordinate. *Ingratiation* evokes a superior's humility and makes the subordinate feel important. *Exchange* attempts to influence the subordinate via negotiating, exchanging benefits, and/or offering rewards for the desired behavior. The superior can remind the subordinate that an earlier favor is expected to be reciprocated or a future favor is promised. *Assertiveness* is an overt, forceful approach such as demanding, ordering, setting deadlines, and expressing a threat when a request is presented. *Coalition* mobilizes others or forms alliances in the organization to facilitate the influence attempt (Kipnis & Schmidt, 1983). The agent can seek support from peers or subordinates to back up the request or point out the majority opinions as the reason for the request (Waldron, 1999). *Upward appeal* enlists the support of more powerful authorities in the organization to obtain the desired behaviors from the subordinates. *Sanction* can be done when the supervisor threatens to exercise his/her formal power to punish the subordinate if the latter refuses to perform the task.

Classification of Influence Tactics

These tactics typically are further classified into three groups: (a) soft/pro-social, (b) neutral/rational, and (c) hard/negative (Barry & Shapiro, 1992; Barbuto et al., 2002; Yamaguchi, 2006, 2009). Soft or pro-social tactics, interpersonally oriented, aim at helping the influence agent, the supervisor, project a favorable image and maintain a good relationship with the target, the employee. Ingratiation is a soft tactic. Hard, negative tactics allow the supervisor to use power or the legitimate position to pressure, coerce, or threaten the employee for a desired behavior. Coalition, upward appeal, assertiveness, and sanction are hard, negative tactics. Reason and exchange are two neutral tactics; the former lets the supervisor use rational persuasion such as explanation, logical argument, and factual

information, and the latter enables the supervisor to conduct fair exchange of time, service, and material. Leader-member exchange theory posits that the quality of the supervisor-subordinate relationship, labeled as either ingroup or outgroup relationship, affects leader influence processes (Graen & Scandura, 1987), which logically include the tactics used by the supervisor.

The Ingroup Phenomenon in Collectivist Culture: Beyond the Original Realm of LMX

Leadership-member exchange (LMX) theory (Dansereau, Graen, & Haga, 1975; Graen & Scandura, 1987) maintains that leaders develop different types of exchange relationships with their followers. High-quality exchanges, characterized by mutual understanding, trust, loyalty, respect, and obligation, become the interaction patterns of an ingroup; whereas, low-quality interactions between the leader and other members rely on the formal employment contract and result in distance between the parties, hence, an outgroup. Although originated in LMX as an explicit description of supervisor-subordinate relationship, ingroups have since been examined as a pervasive social phenomenon. The ingroup-outgroup categorization identifies and includes people “who are like us” from those who “we perceive to be different from us” (see p. 309, Cooper, Doucet, & Pratt, 2007). Ingroups are a common phenomenon in the workplace. The quality of these relationships affects member attitudes and behaviors (Gerstner & Day, 1997; Ilies, Nahrgang, & Morgeson, 2007). The discriminatory attitudes and behaviors in favor of the ingroup, and at the expense of outgroups, are often termed ingroup favoritism (Lee, 1993; Tajfel, 1982).

Ingroup favoritism has been a well-documented phenomenon wherein ingroup members are motivated to give each other positive assessment and preferential treatment (Lee, 1993; Lewis & Sherman, 2003). Ingroup members were found to hold bias against outgroup members in allocating resources, evaluating performance, attributing success and failure, memorizing good and bad actions, and rendering judgment (Schwarzwald, Koslowsky, & Allouf, 2005; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). In organizations, ingroup favoritism leads to preferential rewards to team members and appointment of ingroup members as new directors in Fortune 500 companies (Westphal & Zajac, 1995). Ingroup favoritism also is argued to

account for differential mentoring activities (Brewer, 1996) and has been demonstrated as a cause of failure in response to planned mergers (Terry, Carey, & Callan, 2001).

Ingroups in Chinese organizations. Ingroup favoritism exists in Chinese culture (Farh, Tsui, Xin, & Cheng, 1998), likely in much stronger forces than in individualistic cultures (Smith & Bond, 1993). Despite an abundance of literature on ingroups in collectivist cultures, organizational ingroups, having received little empirical attention (see an early discussion in the introduction), warrants research with regard to how ingroups may affect leader influence processes. In a given environment, Chinese people see themselves as part of a highly inter-connected ingroup, which segregates those who do not share ingroup relationships into a different social network, an outgroup (Chen & Tjosvold, 2006). Hui and Tan (1996) discovered that Chinese employees identify themselves in small groupings rather than with larger organizational entities (also see Hui, 1990). Kock and Kock (2007) conclude that most nonfamily-owned Chinese organizations are outgroup settings and employees form ingroup networks within organizations. Chinese ingroup dynamics differs sharply from outgroup dynamics. Chinese ingroup members are tight-knit and supportive of each other; identify, socialize, and cooperate with each other; and have harmonious, personalized relationships (e.g, Chen, Brockner, & Katz, 1998; Erdogan & Liden, 2006; Triandis et al., 1988). Cooperation with ingroup members in collectivist cultures is higher than in individualistic cultures (Triandis, et al., 1988). Chinese organizational ingroups thus extend beyond the mere quality of supervisor-subordinate interaction, as described in leader-member exchange theory. Identifying the boundaries of group membership is important in revealing how managers' influence processes may be affected by employee ingroup status in collectivist Chinese culture.

Loyalty as a unique influence tactic in collectivist culture. Cheng, Farh, Chang, and Hsu (2002) observed that the Chinese manager builds ingroups around him/her based on *zhongcheng* or loyalty; and, reciprocally, loyalty exerts a significant and direct impact on subordinates' perceptions of managerial quality and satisfaction with the supervisor (Cheng et al., 2002). In a study testing influence tactics used in Japanese organizations, Yamaguchi (2009) added loyalty, a soft tactic, to the Kipnis et al.'s (1980) typology. Loyalty was also included in the current study due to the characteristic of person-based

relationships found in ingroups in Chinese culture (Cheng et al., 2002).

Ingroup Membership Status and Supervisor Influence Tactics

The ingroup phenomenon, particularly in Chinese culture, likely exerts an impact on managers' use of and employees' reactions to influence tactics. The current review identifies tactic appropriateness, compliance, private willingness, and attitude-behavior consistency as focal employee perceptions in this study.

Supervisor use of influence tactics. The norm of ingroup interaction is characterized by mutual support, trust, positive relationships, and open communication (Dienesch & Liden, 1986). Outgroup employees, who tend to be cynical about the supervisor, engage in reciprocally defensive communication with the supervisor (Krone, 1992). To that end, H1 was advanced.

H1: Supervisors use hard, negative influence tactics more frequently on outgroup members than on ingroup members.

The positive and open communication norm for ingroups would lead to the prediction that, everything else being equal, managers use soft/positive, neutral tactics more often than they do negative tactics on ingroup members. However, little is known regarding whether managers, when facing potential resistance, generally use soft/positive, neutral tactics more often on ingroup members than on outgroup subordinates. A manager's extra-role task request likely meets with lower resistance from supportive ingroup members than from unsupportive outgroup employees. Lower need for influence likely translates into lower tactic use frequency; but, when in need, the supervisor probably still favors positive or neutral tactics for ingroup members. Taken together, preference for positive and neutral tactics and low need for using influence tactics may counteract each other in managers' use of these tactics on ingroup members. A research question, rather than a hypothesis, was then posed to address supervisor use of positive and neutral tactics with regard to ingroup membership.

RQ1. Do supervisors use soft/positive and neutral tactics differently on ingroup and outgroup members?

Tactic appropriateness. Appropriateness is a subjective assessment of a given behavior of an individual by an observer (Carlston & Skowronski, 1994). Ingroup and outgroup members act on

different interaction norms, and they may assess influence tactics differently (Cooper et al., 2007). As support, trust, and open, positive communication characterize ingroup interactions, superiors' soft/positive and neutral influence tactics fit the interaction norm. On the other hand, outgroup members, with a low quality relationship with the supervisor, likely hold a less favorable view of the supervisor's use of positive and neutral tactics. H2 was proposed for soft/positive and neutral tactics.

H2: Ingroup members view soft/positive and neutral tactics as more appropriate than do outgroup members.

Further, hard, negative tactics do not fit ingroup interaction norms. Thus, how ingroup members view those tactics, compared to outgroup employees, is not definitive. RQ2 was given for hard tactics.

RQ2: Do ingroup and outgroup members view the appropriateness of hard, negative tactics differently?

Subordinate compliance. Based on the dynamics of a positive, supportive interaction norm, ingroup subordinates likely exhibit a greater degree of compliance with positive and neutral tactics than do outgroup employees. Hence, H3.

H3: Ingroup members generally are more compliant with soft/positive and neutral tactics than are outgroup members.

Although negative tactics may violate ingroup interaction norms, the legitimate power associated with the supervisory position may still lead subordinates to comply. Further, high power distance in Chinese culture likely compels subordinates to comply; but, whether ingroup members comply more can not be concluded. The effects of ingroup membership status on compliance with hard tactics warrants a research question. RQ3 was posed.

RQ3: Do ingroup and outgroup members comply with hard, negative tactics differently?

Subordinate private willingness. Due to the high quality relationship between the supervisor and the ingroup members and the generally more supportive environment in ingroups, subordinates, particularly those in Chinese organizations, tend to hold genuine willingness to perform extra-role tasks (e.g., displaying organizational citizenship behavior); the same can not be said about outgroup employees (Hackett, Farh, Song, & Lapierre, 2003). Ingroup subordinates, as opposed to outgroup members, likely

hold greater private willingness to comply with positive and neutral tactics, which converge with group interaction norms. H4 was proposed. RQ4 was posed for hard tactics for the same reasons as were RQ2 and RQ3.

H4: Ingroup members generally hold greater private willingness to comply with soft/positive and neutral tactics than do outgroup members.

RQ4: Do ingroup and outgroup members differ in their private willingness to comply with hard, negative tactics?

Subordinate attitude-behavior consistency refers to the consistency between private willingness to comply and public compliance in the present study. Behavioral compliance is not an indication of the influence target's genuine willingness; publicly expressed behavioral response may well deviate from privately held perceptions (Infante, Anderson, Herington, & Kim, 1993). Owing to a greater degree of trust (Koch & Koch, 2007) and open communication exchange (Hackett et al., 2003) among ingroup members (including both supervisors and subordinates), compliance exhibited by ingroup members likely is more truthful than compliance exhibited by outgroup members, who have a tendency of mistrusting supervisors and resorting to covert, deceitful communication (Krone, 1992). Hence, H5.

H5: Ingroup members exhibit greater attitude-behavior (i.e., willingness-compliance) consistency than do outgroup members.

Methods

Sample and Procedures

Thirty-five fulltime employees who were enrolled in part-time MA programs in communication in a university in Hong Kong first completed the questionnaire in class. Then they each took eight enveloped copies to their friends and colleagues who also were employed fulltime. All respondents received written instructions that guaranteed anonymity, solicited voluntary participation, and asked for independent completion of the questionnaire. No reward of any kind was given to any participant. Of the 178 questionnaires returned, 173 were usable. Together with the 35 questionnaires completed in class, the final sample size reached 208.

Respondents came from various industry sectors such as merchandising, media, telecommunications, transportation, trading, marketing, education, real estate, banking, retail, service, and government organizations. Organization size ranged from 3 to 16,000. Of all respondents, 40.9% were male and 59.1% female; the mean age was 28.82 years. Respondents had worked in their organizations for an average of 3.92 years. Respondents reported that 55.8% of the immediate supervisors were male and 44.2 % female. The immediate supervisors, averaging 41.1 years old, had worked for the organizations for a mean period of 10.66 years, and had been the direct supervisors of the respondents for an average of 2.86 years.

Measurement

The questionnaire consisted of two sections. In the first section, respondents reported demographic information about themselves, the immediate supervisor, and the company. By providing the information, respondents also were guided into a relevant context in which they rated their supervisors' influence tactics. In the second section, respondents read instructions and supervisor influence tactics one by one. Then, for each tactic, they rated the frequency with which the supervisor used that tactic and their own perceptions of the influence tactic in terms of compliance, appropriateness, and their private willingness to comply with the request. Finally, respondents indicated their group membership status, that is, either an ingroup or outgroup member. The researcher designed the questionnaire in English. A graduate research assistant then translated the questionnaire into Chinese, and then another graduate research assistant translated the Chinese questionnaire back into English. The researcher and the two assistants worked out discrepancies.

Both the Chinese and English versions of the questionnaire were pre-tested with 10 fulltime employees who were enrolled in a continuing education BA program at the same university. The two research assistants solicited the employees' voluntary participation in two group meetings with 5 each time. The participants were instructed to complete the questionnaire on their own to get ready for later discussions. For each tactic, respondents were asked whether (1) the example fit their organizational experience and (2) the example fit the corresponding general description. They also were encouraged to

give thoughts regarding reading comprehension and possible problems. Respondents reported that the examples were realistic and appropriate to the respective general descriptions. They reported a few minor problems and their suggestions were incorporated into the final versions.

Influence tactics. Eight influence tactics were tested. Seven were from the Kipnis et al.'s (1980) typology, to which loyalty was added. An introduction guided respondents to evaluate the eight influence tactics in realistic, extra-role situations. The introduction read,

“In the workplace, supervisors often try to get subordinates to perform tasks beyond the call of their duty. For example, subordinates may be called upon to work overtime or on holidays, take up a surprise task, or do extra work. Now evaluate the following methods your supervisor might use to request you to perform extra-role tasks you may or may not be willing to. Please circle the appropriate answer for each item.”

Then eight tactics were presented one by one. The tactics were ordered in a systematic-random fashion, which produced three versions of the questionnaire that differed in the order of the eight tactics. Later oneway ANOVAs of the three versions of the questionnaire detected no order effects on any of the tested variables. For each tactic (label not provided in the questionnaire), a general description was given, followed by a representative example (see Table 1).

Supervisor use frequency was measured via the item, “My supervisor uses this method,” which immediately followed each tactic. The rating scale was from 1 (rarely) to 7 (frequently).

Reactions to the tactics. Following supervisor use frequency, respondents rated three items, each tapping their perceptions of a tactic, with regard to compliance, appropriateness, and private willingness (below). The rating scale ranged from 1 (totally untrue) to 7 (totally true).

When this method is used, I usually do as my supervisor requests (compliance).

I think my supervisor's use of this method is appropriate (appropriateness).

Privately, I am not willing to do as requested when my supervisor uses this method (willingness).

Attitude-behavior consistency. Consistency between private willingness and compliance was measured by the correlation between the two.

Ingroup membership status. As ingroup membership is a social category (rather than a formal administrative division), perception matters. Self-identification (not researcher-assumed group membership) was the basis for individuals to make social judgments (Klimoski & Donahue, 2001), such as making attributions of a supervisor's behavior (Cooper et al., 2007). Thus, self-identification of ingroup membership was used in this study. In order to gauge accurate classification of ingroup/outgroup membership, five questions (i.e., ingroup perception) were formulated based on the reviewed Chinese ingroup characteristics. Respondents provided their ingroup perception by rating the answers to these five questions: Do you and your supervisor have a close relationship? Do you feel you belong in your supervisor's tightly knit circle in your work unit? Do you feel you fit in well with other people in that tightly knit circle? Do people in that tightly knit circle give strong support for each other? Do you identify with the people in that circle? The Likert rating scale was from 1 (certainly yes) to 7 (certainly no). Having thought through the five questions, respondents likely were able to give a valid, accurate assessment of their ingroup membership status. Respondents indicated the ingroup membership status via the final question, "Do you think you are a member of your supervisor's tightly knit, inner circle?" A "yes" answer identified a respondent's ingroup membership, whereas a "no" answer marked an outgroup membership.

Further, a reliability analysis of the five ingroup-perception items (reverse-coded so that a greater value indicates higher ingroup perception) yielded a Cronbach's alpha of .88. An independent-samples *t*-test of ingroup perception between ingroup members and outgroup members showed that the former held much higher ingroup perception ($M[SD]= 5.30[.72]$) than did the latter ($M[SD]= 3.60[.1.20]$), $t(df) = 12.60(206)$, $p < .0001$. Thus, respondents' self-classification of ingroup or outgroup membership appeared consistent with their ingroup perception.

Results

Descriptive Statistics of Influence Tactics

Means and standard deviations of all variables for the total sample are reported in Table 2. The most frequently used influence tactics were reason and exchange (rational, neutral tactics), followed by

coalition, assertiveness, and ingratiation. The least frequently used tactics were upward appeal, loyalty, and sanction. The most appropriate tactics were exchange, reason, and ingratiation, followed by upward appeal, loyalty, assertiveness, and coalition. The least appropriate tactic was sanction. The tactics that induced highest compliance were reason, exchange, ingratiation, followed by coalition, assertiveness, loyalty, and upward appeal. Sanction solicited the least compliance. In terms of private willingness to comply, exchange and reason were rated highest, followed by ingratiation, loyalty and upward appeal. Sanction was last. Further, 91 respondents classified themselves as ingroup members, and 117 labeled themselves as outgroup members.

Ingroup Membership Status and Supervisor Use of Tactics (H1 & RQ1)

H1 predicted supervisors' use of hard, negative influence tactics. Independent-samples *t*-tests were computed for supervisor use frequency of hard tactics. Results, detailed in Table 3, indicate that supervisors used the hard tactics of upward appeal, assertiveness, and sanction more frequently on outgroup subordinates than on ingroup employees; but, they showed no difference in using the coalition tactic. H1 was largely supported.

RQ1 inquired about soft and neutral tactics. Independent-samples *t*-tests (in Table 3) showed that supervisors used reason more frequently on outgroup members than on ingroup members; no significant difference was found for ingratiation, loyalty, or exchange, suggesting that supervisors used these three tactics on ingroup and outgroup members with similar frequencies.

Ingroup Membership Status and Tactic Appropriateness (H2 & RQ2)

H2 addressed soft and neutral tactics. Independent-samples *t*-tests (see Table 4) reveal that ingroup respondents viewed the soft tactics of ingratiation and loyalty and the neutral tactic of reason as more appropriate than outgroup members viewed the same tactics; but ingroup membership status made no difference in appropriateness of the neutral tactic of exchange. H2 was largely supported.

RQ2 focused on hard tactics. Independent-samples *t*-tests (in Table 4) produced no significant statistics. Ingroup and outgroup subordinates did not differ in their views regarding the appropriateness of the hard tactics.

Ingroup Membership Status and Compliance (H3 & RQ3)

H3 centered on soft and neutral influence tactics. Independent-samples *t*-tests (see Table 5) show that the ingroup members, compared to outgroup employees, were more likely to comply with ingratiation (soft tactic) and reason (neutral tactic); but the two groups did not differ in complying with loyalty or exchange requests. As a result, H3 was partially supported.

RQ3 was posed for hard tactics. Independent-samples *t*-tests (in Table 5) yielded no significant statistical results. Ingroup and outgroup members did not indicate any difference in their intention to comply with hard influence requests.

Ingroup Membership Status and Private Willingness to Comply (H4 & RQ4)

H4 concentrated on soft and neutral tactics. Independent-samples *t*-tests (see Table 6) showed that ingroup members were more privately willing to comply with the loyalty, ingratiation, and reason tactics than were outgroup members. However, ingroup and outgroup members did not differ in their private willingness to comply with the exchange tactic. H4 was largely supported.

RQ4 was posed for hard tactics. Independent-samples *t*-tests yielded no statistically significant results, indicating that ingroup and outgroup respondents shared similarly low levels (i.e., below the mid point of 4) of private willingness to comply with negative, hard tactics.

Ingroup Membership Status and Attitude-Behavior Consistency (H5)

H5 predicted greater attitude-behavior consistency among ingroup members than among outgroup members. Pearson's correlations between private willingness and compliance were calculated for all eight tactics for ingroup and outgroup members respectively. Among ingroup members, the correlations between private willingness and compliance were statistically significant for all tactics but coalition or assertiveness, and correlations ranged from .26 to .48. For outgroup members, the willingness-compliance correlation was significant only for reason ($r = .18$) (see Table 7 for details). Thus, ingroup members exhibited greater attitude-behavior consistency for six of the eight tactics than did outgroup members. As a matter of fact, outgroup members revealed little attitude-behavior consistency as only the reason tactic produced a statistically significant correlation. H5 was largely supported.

Discussion

This study was among the first that established empirical evidence that organizational ingroup membership exerts an effect on supervisors' use of influence tactics and subordinates' reactions to the used tactics. Explanations and discussions of research finding are provided below.

Ingroup Membership Status and Influence Tactics

Consistent with the extant literature (e.g., Kipnis & Schmidk, 1983; Yamaguchi, 2009), superiors used reason most frequently and sanction least frequently regardless of employees' ingroup membership affiliation. This was echoed in the finding that employees, regardless of group membership, perceived reason and exchange as the most appropriate and sanction the least appropriate influence tactics exercised by managers. Sanction was much more disliked than the next least-disliked tactic (see Table 2). Respondents might have viewed the specific threat about increasing sales as too harsh, as successful sales are not entirely within the control of a salesperson. Overall, these findings reflect the general tendency of favoring rational persuasion and disliking harsh punishment.

The ingroup phenomenon was evident in the use and perceptions of influence tactics in the current study. As predicted, supervisors generally used hard, negative strategies more frequently on outgroup subordinates than on ingroup members. This lends support to the observation (reviewed in the literature) that outgroup interactions are defensive and untrusting. This finding, coupled with another that superiors used reason on outgroup employees more than on ingroup employees, seems to support the argument that managers, anticipating more resistance from outgroup subordinates, feel the need to use these influence tactics more on outgroup employees than on ingroup members.

Not surprisingly, ingroup members generally perceived soft, neutral influence tactics, communication that fits ingroup interaction norms, as more appropriate than did outgroup members. Interestingly, ingroup favoritism did not lead the members to view superiors' hard, negative strategies as more positive than as viewed by outgroup subordinates. This suggests the possibility that ingroup favoritism holds only when member interaction is normative.

For compliance, ingroup members, compared to the outgroup counterparts, were predicted to be more compliant with soft and neutral tactics. Results showed that such compliance was exhibited only to a limited degree as ingroup members, compared to outgroup subordinates, were only slightly more compliant with the ingratiation and reason tactics. As a matter of fact, subordinates, regardless of ingroup membership status, conformed quite well to all influence tactics (means greater than the scale mid-point of 4) except sanction (ingroup mean = 3.24 and outgroup mean = 3.48). High compliance may indicate that supervisors' request for extra-role behavior was work-related and, thus, legitimate; or, the subordinates simply were obedient in organizations with a culture of high power distance and high hierarchy in Hong Kong. Sanction, the most negative tactic, may hurt recipients' self-respect too much; subordinates were extremely aversive to that influence tactic.

But compliance was not an indication of willingness, and particularly not so for outgroup members. Only one significant correlation (for the reason tactic) existed between private willingness and compliance for outgroup employees. Ingroup members fared better. In fact, ingroup members showed greater attitude-behavior consistency in the low to moderate willingness-compliance correlations for six of the eight influence tactics used by superiors. Understandably, attitude-behavior consistency reflects the trusting, open communication dynamics among ingroup members; whereas, the lack of it points to cynical, untrusting relationships in outgroup interactions. As a matter of fact, attitude-behavior inconsistency prevalent among outgroup members likely result in psychological dissonance, a stressor that can lead to burnout, which in turn may exert negative impact on job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and other employee outcomes. Future research can examine how variability in outgroup-membership-induced attitude-behavior inconsistency may affect employee stress levels and subsequent psychological outcomes.

Of the eight tactics tested, exchange was the only one indifferent to ingroup membership status. Supervisors used it similarly with ingroup and outgroup subordinates. Further, employees, ingroup and outgroup alike, perceived the exchange tactic as appropriate, expressed equal levels of compliance with the tactic, and indicated similarly low degrees of private willingness to comply. These findings suggest

that exchange perhaps is a matter of fair transaction, which possibly is determined by an organization's policy rather than by a supervisor's own volition.

Possible Cultural Influence

Although cultural influence was not the focus of the study, a few results indicate some impact of the cultural context of Chinese organizations in Hong Kong. The five ingroup-perception items, constructed based on the literature review of Chinese ingroups (not the mere strong relationship quality as defined in LMX), yielded a reliable scale. Those self-classified as being in an ingroup with the supervisor indeed scored much higher ($M = 5.30$) than did the outgroup members ($M = 3.60$) on ingroup perception. This finding reveals the divide between ingroups and outgroups rather than the existence of only one large ingroup in the Hong Kong workplace. Interestingly, loyalty, added to fit the current cultural context, was the second least-frequently used tactic. And, supervisors did not use it more often on ingroup than on outgroup members. Possibly, supervisors perceived ingroup subordinates as already being loyal and thus saw little reason for using the loyalty appeal. Or, supervisors felt little need to use an appeal of personal nature such as loyalty for an organizational task. Despite low use of loyalty, ingroup members, compared to outgroup members, perceived it as appropriate, indicated a higher degree of private willingness, and showed the greatest attitude-behavior consistency for this tactic. Ingroup members' favorable perceptions of the loyalty tactic are consistent with the characteristics of Chinese ingroups. The closed-ended design did not allow for in-depth exploration of other possible influence tactics unique to Chinese culture in addition to loyalty. Future research conducted inductively can examine other possible influence tactics driven by Chinese culture.

Theoretical Implications

Leader-member exchange theory is often criticized as being too broad and lacking specifics (see a review by Northouse, 2009). As a specific aspect of manager-employee interactions, the current findings contribute to the understanding of the influence process. This study measured ingroup perception and membership basing the definition of "ingroup" in collectivist Chinese culture. The validated existence of Chinese organizational ingroups indicates that such groups in collectivist cultures are tighter and have

stronger group identity than ingroups of LMX, which is defined as high quality relationship between the supervisor and the subordinate. This points to the need to reexamine LMX's key concepts and theoretical propositions when the theory is applied in collectivist cultures. Researchers should be careful in using and interpreting the terms of ingroup and outgroup, which often mean different things in different cultures.

Further, the current findings call for a closer examination of ingroup favoritism in collectivist cultures. With highly tight relationships in an ingroup, individuals are said to be more tolerant of bad behaviors of ingroup members than bad behaviors exhibited by outgroup members (e.g., Leung, 1988; Cheng et al, 2002). However, ingroup members in this study, compared to outgroup members, did not report more favorable perceptions of supervisors' use of negative tactics; as a matter of fact, ingroup and outgroup members viewed these tactics equally negative. That ingroup favoritism did not surface for neutral or negative tactics raises the need for group communication theories to examine conditions under which ingroup favoritism thrives versus conditions under which ingroup favoritism is tapered or diminished.

Finally, extant ingroup theories largely center on normative ingroup dynamics (e.g., ingroup favoritism, "us" mentality, and "we" communication patterns); very little theorizing effort has been given to anti-normative communication in ingroups. The present study reveals that the anti-normative, negative influence tactics were disliked by ingroup members as much as they were disliked by outgroup members. This finding begs theoretical questions with regard to anti-normative group communication. Perhaps the normative versus anti-normative contrast can serve as the starting point of possible conditions for ingroup favoritism. For example, occasional or patterned anti-normative behavior may lead to differed attribution from ingroup members. Theorizing on anti-normative communication can lead to a better understanding of ingroup interactions and how ingroup dynamics change and evolve, which, in turn, can enhance the understanding of influence processes, particularly in collectivist cultures.

Practical Implications

Practically, the present findings advocate rational persuasion and use of neutral and positive influence tactics for both ingroup and outgroup members. Managers need to avoid hard, negative tactics.

Loyalty, an infrequently used tactic, can work on ingroup members in Chinese organizations, as ingroup subordinates deemed the tactic as appropriate and were willing to comply with it. Given that ingroup members need less persuasion for extra-role tasks, an effective method for enhancing work unit performance is to enlarge the ingroup, or better yet, to build the entire work unit into a supportive ingroup.

Conclusion

With a focus on subordinates' perspective, the current study examined whether ingroup membership status made a difference in superiors' use and subordinates' reactions to influence tactics in organizations in Hong Kong. Kipnis et al.'s (1980) typology of influence tactics, with the addition of the cultural tactic of loyalty, was examined in this context. Ingroup membership exerted influence predominantly on supervisors' use and subordinates' perceptions of soft and neutral influence tactics, but not on hard, negative tactics. The current findings contribute to the extant literature of managerial influence processes. At the same time, findings call for future research on conditions for ingroup favoritism, attention to contextual factors in the application of leader-member exchange theory, and follow-up studies on possible effects of employee attitude-behavior inconsistency resulting from supervisor influence requests. The discussed theoretical implications can guide future research; the practical implications can help managers exert influence effectively.

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Table 1

Influence Tactics Tested

Ingratiation: Your supervisor flatters you to make you feel good about the request.

For example, the supervisor may say, "I need you to postpone your vacation to meet the deadline. We need your expertise. We really cannot get this done without you."

Loyalty: Your supervisor appeals to your loyalty to him/her when presenting a request.

For example, the supervisor may say, "I need you to take our mainland clients for some sightseeing this weekend as a personal favor to me. You have always been loyal to me. I won't forget that."

Reason: Your supervisor gives a reason as to why you should do as requested.

For example, the supervisor may say, "I need you to draft a new proposal as the client has changed his mind. The proposal you did a week ago cannot be used any more."

Exchange: Your supervisor offers you compensation later in exchange with your agreeing to the request.

For example, the supervisor may say, "I need you to complete this task over the weekend. You can take time off next month."

Assertiveness: Your supervisor orders you to do as requested.

For example, the supervisor may say, "I assign you to work with our new colleague Lee. You must get along with him well."

Coalition: Your supervisor cites that the request is supported by others in the work unit.

For example, the supervisor may say, "I need you to work through the mid-autumn holiday to get the project done on time. Most colleagues in our work unit have already agreed to do that."

Upward Appeal: Your supervisor cites that higher authorities support the request.

For example, the supervisor may say, "I need you to switch to another team. The senior management supports my decision."

Sanction: Your supervisor threatens punishment if you do not comply with the request.

For example, the supervisor may say, "I need you to boost sales by 15% in the next three months. If not, your performance review will likely take a hit."

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics for Influence Tactics for the Total Sample (n = 208)

Influence Tactics	<u>Use Frequency</u>	<u>Appropriateness</u>	<u>Compliance</u>	<u>Willingness</u>
	<i>M(SD)</i>	<i>M(SD)</i>	<i>M(SD)</i>	<i>M(SD)</i>
Ingratiation	3.10(1.68)	4.06(1.45)	4.95(1.39)	3.77(1.53)
Loyalty	2.58(1.65)	3.35(1.52)	4.31(1.60)	3.63(1.56)
Reason	3.44(1.73)	4.31(1.36)	5.21(1.25)	3.96(1.37)
Exchange	3.32(1.80)	4.42(1.68)	4.96(1.48)	4.05(1.65)
Coalition	3.14(1.75)	3.20(1.58)	4.49(1.47)	3.12(1.72)
Upward Appeal	2.86(1.63)	3.38(1.53)	4.27(1.67)	3.38(1.63)
Assertiveness	3.11(1.63)	3.32(1.59)	4.41(1.57)	3.02(1.72)
Sanction	2.13(1.44)	2.14(1.37)	3.38(1.75)	2.66(1.81)

Table 3

Independent-samples t-tests for Supervisor Use Frequency of Influence Tactics

Influence Tactics	Ingroup (<i>n</i> = 91) <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	Outgroup (<i>n</i> = 117) <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i> <
Ingratiation	3.05(1.73)	3.13(1.65)	-.31	206	.756
Loyalty	2.66(1.73)	2.52(1.59)	.598	206	.551
Reason	3.00 (1.63)	3.78(1.73)	-3.299	206	.001
Exchange	3.15(1.74)	3.44(1.85)	-1.154	206	.250
Coalition	2.95(1.81)	3.29(1.69)	-1.415	206	.159
Upward Appeal	2.49(1.61)	3.15 (1.60)	-2.899	206	.004
Assertiveness	2.77(1.59)	3.38(1.62)	-2.698	206	.008
Sanction	1.73(1.13)	2.45(1.58)	-3.877	204.580	.000

Table 4

Independent-Samples t-tests for Perceived Appropriateness of Influence Tactics

Influence Tactics	Ingroup (<i>n</i> = 91) <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	Outgroup (<i>n</i> = 117) <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i> <
Ingratiation	4.48 (1.44)	3.74 (1.37)	3.817	206	.000
Loyalty	3.88 (1.63)	2.93 (1.29)	4.686	206	.000
Reason	4.57 (1.34)	4.11 (1.34)	2.451	206	.015
Exchange	4.44 (1.67)	4.43 (1.68)	-.005	206	.996
Coalition	3.18 (1.63)	3.22 (1.55)	-.209	206	.835
Upward Appeal	3.31 (1.64)	3.44(1.44)	-.639	206	.523
Assertiveness	3.36 (1.55)	3.29 (1.63)	.325	197.69	.746
Sanction	2.05 (1.43)	2.21 (1.34)	-.781	206	.436

Table 5

Independent-Samples t-tests for Subordinate Compliance with Influence Tactics

Influence Tactics	Ingroup ($n = 91$) $M(SD)$	Outgroup ($n = 117$) $M(SD)$	t	df	$p <$
Ingratiation	5.21(1.25)	4.74 (1.47)	2.415	206	.017
Loyalty	4.46(1.67)	4.20(1.54)	1.187	206	.236
Reason	5.43(1.19)	5.03(1.27)	2.285	206	.023
Exchange	4.93(1.41)	4.97(1.53)	-.195	206	.846
Coalition	4.55(1.54)	4.44 (1.43)	.509	206	.612
Upward Appeal	4.15(1.79)	4.37(1.57)	-.915	206	.361
Assertiveness	4.62(1.50)	4.25(1.61)	1.679	206	.095
Sanction	3.24(1.72)	3.48(1.77)	-.968	206	.334

Table 6

Independent-Samples t-tests for Subordinate Private Willingness to Comply with Influence Tactics

Influence Tactics	Ingroup (<i>n</i> = 91) <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	Outgroup (<i>n</i> = 117) <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i> <
Loyalty	4.05(1.55)	3.31(1.49)	3.526	206	.001
Ingratiation	4.25(1.34)	3.39(1.58)	4.165	206	.000
Reason	4.30(1.24)	3.69(1.41)	3.227	206	.001
Exchange	4.19(1.68)	3.94(1.63)	1.070	206	.286
Coalition	3.14(1.74)	3.09(1.71)	.203	206	.839
Upward Appeal	3.46(1.65)	3.32(1.61)	.639	206	.524
Assertiveness	3.22(1.78)	2.86(1.66)	1.488	206	.138
Sanction	2.51(1.72)	2.78(1.89)	-1.075	206	.284

Table 7

Correlations between Private Willingness and Compliance

	Willingness-Compliance	
	Ingroup (<i>n</i> = 91)	Outgroup (<i>n</i> = 117)
Ingratiation	.43**	.14
Loyalty	.51**	.083
Reason	.48**	.18*
Exchange	.38**	.16
Coalition	.05	-.01
Upward Appeal	.30**	.05
Assertiveness	.17	.14
Sanction	.26*	.04

* and ** indicate Pearson's *r* significant at .05 and .01 levels respectively, two-tailed.