Influence Tactics and Attributed Bases of Leader Power: The Role of Leader-Member Exchange

Mahfooz A. Ansari

Faculty of Management, University of Lethbridge

Lethbridge, Alberta, T1K 3M4, Canada

Tel: 403-329-2069; Fax: 403-329-2038; E-Mail: mahfooz.ansari@uleth.ca

Rehana Aafaqi

Faculty of Management, University of Lethbridge

Lethbridge, Alberta, T1K 3M4, Canada

Tel: 403-380-1874; Fax: 403-329-2038; E-Mail: rehana.aafaqi@uleth.ca

Lo May Chiun

Department of Business and Management

Faculty of Economics and Business, University Malaysia Sarawak, Malaysia

Tel: +60 82 581000 Ext. 4375, mclo@feb.unimas.my

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Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Mahfooz A. Ansari, Faculty of Management, The University of Lethbridge, 4401 University Drive W, Lethbridge, Alberta T1K 3M4, Canada; E-mail: mahfooz.ansari@uleth.ca; Web: http://mahfoozaansari.blogspot.com/

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Abstract

Drawing on the dominant lens of social exchange theories (Blau, 1964), we made an attempt at integrating the three widely-researched leadership paradigms: power bases taxonomy (French & Raven, 1959), power act model (Kipnis, Schmidt, & Wilkinson, 1980), and leader-member exchange (LMX, Dansereau, Graen, & Haga, 1975). We conceptualized influence tactics in terms of three influence behaviors: rational tactics, harsh tactics, and soft tactics. While we treated LMX as a unidimensional construct, we conceptualized power attribution in terms of three bases of power: personal power, positive position power, and negative position power. Data were obtained from 385 employees and their immediate supervisors from manufacturing organizations in Malaysia. Influence tactics and bases of power items were rated by employees and LMX items were rated by their respective supervisors. We developed a series of hypotheses concerning influence tactics-power base attributions relationships and the ways in which these relationships are moderated by LMX. Controlling for supervisor and subordinate gender and their work relationships duration and social desirability, the analysis, using multisource data, reflects both the type of influence tactics the leader uses and the strength of LMX. Specifically, there was a stronger positive relationship of rational and soft influence tactics with the attribution of personal base of power for high-LMX employees than for the low-LMX employees. We describe an explanation of the moderating role of LMX. Implications for practice include the development of high-quality exchange relationship between supervisors and their subordinates.

Keywords: influence tactics; LMX; bases of power

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"*Power is the opportunity to build, to create, to nudge history in a different direction"*

-- Richard Nixon

Leadership is "one of the most observed and least understood phenomena on earth" (Burns, 1978, p. 2), and this has always been, and probably always be, an important factor in human affairs (Kotter, 1988). A review of the current literature (e.g., Bass & Bass, 2008; Barling, Christie, & Hoption, 2011; Pearce, Sims, Cox, Ball, Schnell, Smith, & Trevino, 2003; Yukl, 2012, 2013) indicates that extensive research on leadership has rapidly accumulated during the past 70 years to understand leader behavior directed at accomplishing individual and collective goals. In course of these research efforts, many different leadership theoretical approaches and paradigms have been advanced. Of these, the three often-cited and widely-used paradigms are power bases taxonomy (French & Raven, 1959), power act model (Kipnis, 1976; Kipnis et al., 1980), and the theory of leader-member exchange (LMX, Dansereau et al., 1975). The three approaches have been studied mostly in isolation, without any attempts at integrating them. Given that the relationship between leaders' use of influence tactics and bases of power could differ as a function of individual and contextual variable, we assert that this relationship might be moderated by the quality of exchange relationship between leaders and members. In other words, LMX might augment or attenuate the above relationship. Thus this study is precisely an attempt at integrating the three bodies of leadership literature and addresses a research question: Does LMX moderate the relationship between leaders' use of influence tactics and the attribution of supervisory bases of power (see Figure 1)?

We contribute to the existing leadership literature in three important ways. First, we are aware of no research that has integrated the three leadership paradigms mentioned above. In fact, studies have been conducted but all in isolation to examine the relationship of work outcomes with bases of power taxonomy (e.g., Ansari, 1990; Podsakoff & Schriesheim, 1985), power act model (e.g., Higgins, Judge, & Ferris, 2003; Kipnis et al, 1980), and the theory of LMX (e.g., Dulebohn, Bommer, Liden, Brouer, & Ferris, 2012; Gerstner & Day, 1997). A handful of studies does exist investigating the relationship between any two of the three leadership paradigms: between influence tactics and attributed bases of power (e.g., Ansari, 1990; Hinkin & Schriesheim, 1990), between bases of power and LMX (e.g., Ansari, Aafaqi, & Oh, 2008), and between influence tactics and LMX (e.g., Furst & Cable, 2008; Sparrowe, Soetjipto, & Kraimer, 2006). Thus we integrate the three bodies of literature—influence tactics, LMX, and bases of power—by examining how the extent of LMX quality moderates the relationship between influence tactics and attribution of bases of power. In other words, we contribute to research on influence tactics and LMX by examining how their interaction (i.e., joint effects) may impact employee attribution of supervisory power bases. Second, most researchers in the past have employed only a single perspective (subordinate or supervisor) to understand the antecedent and/or consequences of power-influence approach to leadership. We employ both supervisor and subordinate perspectives in examining the role that LMX plays in the relationship between social influence tactics and bases of power. Having different sources of data has been strongly recommended in leadership research (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003) to minimize the variance that is attributable to common method. Third, most studies that examined the power-influence approach to leadership were conducted in the West. Our study contributes to

the leadership literature by testing the moderating role of LMX in the influence tactics-bases of power relationship in a slightly different milieu--the Malaysian context.

Theoretical Background and Hypotheses

Social power is defined as the ability to influence or "influence potential" (Ansari, 1990; Fiol, O'Connor, & Aguinis, 2001; French & Raven, 1959). "Simply perceiving that an individual has power to affect oneself helps create the reality of that power, insofar as one's beliefs, intentions, and actions change as a result of that perception" (Farmer & Aguinis, 2005, p. 1069). Many different schemes of power typology (e.g., Etzioni, 1961; Peabody, 1962) are available to understand why and the extent to which an individual may be perceived as being powerful. But, the French and Raven's (1959) taxonomy seems to be the most often-cited power taxonomy in the existing leadership literature. In their original classification, they identified five bases of power: reward, coercive, legitimate, referent, and expert power. A *power base* is a source of influence in social relationships (Ansari, 1990). A brief description of these five power bases is as follows: *Reward power* is based on a subordinate's perception that the supervisor has the ability to provide desired tangible or nontangible outcomes. *Coercive power* is based on a subordinate's perception that the supervisor has the ability to issue punishments. *Legitimate power* is based on a subordinate's perception that the supervisor has the right to give orders and there is an obligation to comply with those orders. *Referent power* is based on an identification with or desire to be associated with the supervisor. *Expert power* is based on a subordinate's perception that the supervisor possesses some special knowledge or skills.

Several studies have been conducted to compare and contrast the effects of using different bases of power. The findings of these studies are well-summarized in the past reviews (Ansari, 1990; Podsakoff & Schriesheim, 1985; Yukl, 2013). Some clear trends are apparent in those

reviews. Two personal bases of power—referent and expert—are positively associated with greater satisfaction and higher performance, and less absenteeism and turnover. The use of legitimate and coercive power is unrelated or negatively related to work outcomes. The use of reward power has no clear trend across various studies.

Leadership researchers (Ansari, 1990; Yukl, 2013) have further grouped French and Raven's (1959) five bases of power into two broad categories: personal and position. Personal power consists of expert and referent power, whereas position power consists of reward, legitimate, and coercive power. In this study, we further categorized position power into positive position (consisting of reward and legitimate power) and negative position power (i.e., coercive power). We expect that positive and negative position power may have different relationship with social influence tactics. Negative position power has also been labeled harsh power (Raven, Schwarzwald, & Koslowsky, 1998). These three categories of power--personal, positive position, and negative position--served as criterion variables in this study (i.e., attributed bases of power). As mentioned before, the purpose of this study was to examine how LMX serves as a boundary condition on influence tactics in predicting attributed bases of power.

We derived three influence tactics—rational, soft, and harsh—from the work by Kipnis and colleagues (Kipnis & Schmidt, 1984; Kipnis et al., 1980) and examined their impact on the attributed bases of power. And, we conceptualized LMX as a unidimensional construct. We summarize our theoretical model in Figure 1. Below is a brief description of social influence tactics and LMX and their role in the attributed bases of power.

Influence Tactics and Attributed Bases of Power

Influence is defined as a transaction in which one person (or group) acts in such a way as to change the behavior of another individual (or group) in some intended fashions (Katz & Kahn,

1978). On the other hand, power is the capacity to exert influence; it does not have to be enacted for it to exist whereas influence does. Stated precisely, influence is "power in action" or demonstrated use of power, and it is viewed as the process of producing behavioral or psychological effects (e.g., beliefs, values, and attitudes) in a target person. In sum, influence is "kinetic power, just as power is potential influence" (French & Raven, 1959, p. 152). In view of the overlap between social power and influence, a parallel development of ideas on power and influence began by David Kipnis (1976). He presented a power act model as the study of influence processes from the standpoint of the influencing agent, which was later called "means of influence" (Kipnis et al., 1980). Kipnis and colleagues identified some specific behaviors individuals have at their disposal for influencing others. These specific behaviors henceforth were called "influence tactics" (Ansari, 1990; Kipnis et al., 1980).

Rational tactic of influence (i.e., rationality) is characterized by leaders' providing supporting evidence, facts, and data while influencing others. We anticipate that rational explanation may lead to the attribution of personal power (referent power and expert power) and positive position power (reward power and legitimate power). We used ingratiation as a soft tactic of influence (Kipnis et al., 1980) that refers to the use of flattery and acting friendly to subordinates to gain compliance. It is predicated that soft tactic is likely to be attributed to personal power and positive position power. Harsh tactic (also called hard tactic, Kipnis & Schmidt, 1984) refers to employing force compliance from subordinates through personally making demands. Originally, this tactic was called assertiveness (Kipnis et al., 1980). Given that force is involved, subordinates are likely to attribute this influence tactic to negative position power (coercive power). In summary, we offer the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: There is a significant linkage between the use of influence tactics and the attributed bases of power.

Hypothesis 1a: Use of rational tactic is positively related to the attribution of personal power and positive position power, and negatively related to the attribution of negative position power.

Hypothesis 1b: Use of soft tactic is positively related to the attribution of personal power and positive position power, and negatively related to the attribution of negative position power.

Hypothesis 1c: Use of harsh tactics is negatively related to the attribution of personal power and positive position power, and positively related to the attribution of negative position power.

LMX as a Boundary Condition on Influence Tactics

The LMX theory (Dansereau et al., 1975) focuses on the two-way, reciprocal exchange relationship between supervisors and each of their subordinates (Graen & Scandura, 1987). Leaders have unique relationships with members within work groups due to varying quality of social exchanges between them (Allinson, Armstrong, & Hayes, 2001). It employs a transactional framework for leadership where leaders treat each of their individual subordinates differently (Duchon, Green, & Taber, 1986) resulting into the development of relatively stable dyads (Liden, Wayne, & Stilwell, 1993) that range on a scale from lower to higher quality exchanges (Dienesch & Liden, 1986; Graen & Cashman, 1975; Liden & Graen, 1980; Liden et al., 1993). High-quality exchanges are friendly working relationships characterized by mutual trust, respect, liking, high level of interaction, and interpersonal attraction (Dansereau et al., 1975; Graen & Cashman, 1975; Graen & Scandura, 1987). The members are committed,

competent, and conscientious subordinates (Dansereau et al., 1975; Liden & Graen, 1980) who not only perform their duties in accordance with job description but also can be counted on to perform unforeseen or unstructured tasks, to volunteer for extra work, and to take on additional responsibilities (Bhal & Ansari, 1996; Truckenbrodt, 2000). These subordinates, who might eventually serve as assistants or advisors to the leader (Dienesch & Liden, 1986), in return receive favorable performance appraisals, valued promotions, satisfying positions, and career development support (Dienesch & Liden, 1986; Graen, Wakabayashi, Graen, & Graen, 1990; Graen & Scandura, 1987; Liden & Graen, 1980), greater access to information, influence, opportunities for professional growth, decision-making latitude, supervisory support, more freedom, better job assignments, and increased opportunities to work with their leaders (Ashkanasy & O'Connor, 1997) as compared to low-quality LMX members.

Research on LMX carried out for over four decades clearly demonstrates the increasing need for organizations to learn how to build mutual subordinate-supervisor interpersonal trust and support relations in order to achieve maximum business results (Bhal & Ansari, 1996; Gerstner & Day, 1997; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Martin, Epitropaki, Thomas, & Topakas, 2010). In examining LMX across a variety of contexts, Gerstner and Day found that LMX is related to a wide range of behavioral and attitudinal outcomes. Other studies reiterated the meta-analysis results by Gerstner and Day, where LMX has been found to be positively associated with various important outcomes such as organizational commitment (Hackett & Lapeirre, 2004; Lee, 2004), organizational citizenship behavior (Hackett & Lapeirre, 2004; Ilies, Nahrgang, & Morgeson, 2007), satisfaction with supervision (Liden & Graen, 1980), employee job satisfaction (Green, Anderson, & Shivers, 1996; Hackett & Lapeirre, 2004; Masterson, Lewis,

Goldman, & Taylor, 2000), and employee creativity (Akinlade, Liden, & Akremi, 2011; Ansari, Tan, & Aafaqi, 2014; Atwater & Carmeli, 2009; Tierney, Farmer, & Graen, 1999).

High quality of relationships between leader and member (i.e., high-LMX) lead to positive feelings that make leader-member connection with each other strengthened (Gerstner & Day, 1997). Given that effective leader-member relationships are characterized by the members' identification with the leader (van Knippenberg & Hogg, 2003), the feeling of identification enhances the value of leaders' influence behavior. Thus what attribution of power is made about leaders' use of influence tactics is likely to depend on the quality of employee relationship with the leader. It is likely that subordinates will attribute personal power and positive position power to rational and soft influence tactics used by their leaders, when LMX is high. The converse is likely to be true in the case of harsh tactic (i.e., assertiveness). Thus we state the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 2: Leader-member exchange moderates the linkage between the use of influence tactics and the attributed bases of power.

Hypothesis 2a: When LMX is high, the use of rational tactic has a stronger positive relationship with the attribution of personal power and positive position power and a stronger negative relationship with negative position power; when LMX is low, the above relationships would be weaker.

Hypothesis 2b. When LMX is high, the use of soft tactic has a stronger positive relationship with the attribution of personal power and positive position power and a stronger negative relationship with negative position power; when LMX is low, the above relationships would be weaker.

Hypothesis 2c: When LMX is low, the use of harsh tactic has a stronger positive relationship with the attribution of negative position power and a stronger negative relationship with personal power and positive position; when LMX is high, the above relationships would be weaker.

Method

Research Site, Participants, and Procedure

In order to generalize the survey findings in significantly different settings, we included in our sample several diverse manufacturing organizations located in north (32.2%), central (39.5%), and east (28.3%) Malaysia. They represented industrial (53.8%), consumer (32.5%), and construction (13.8%) companies. Over half of them (63.4%) were local, Malaysian companies.

We distributed printed survey questionnaires to 1300 full-time employees and their respective current immediate supervisors in 82 companies. In the process of distributing the questionnaires, managers (supervisors) were asked to prepare a code list with the corresponding name(s) of employee(s), and the subordinates' questionnaires were numbered based on the code list before the questionnaires were distributed to the subordinates. The survey was coded so that the supervisor and subordinate responses were matched for statistical analysis. In order to protect the confidentiality of the respondents, completed questionnaires were returned directly to the researchers in sealed envelopes. The sampled employees had to meet the selection criterion of at least six months of working experience with their immediate supervisor. We received usable questionnaires from 385 subordinates and their immediate supervisors (a response rate of 29.62%). Of the 385 pairs of usable responses, only 110 were received on time (i.e., within the specified time of three months) and the remaining 275 were received late after a few reminders.

This might raise an issue if survey responses were subjected to response bias. Thus, we conducted a non-response bias test—for supervisor and subordinates separately--in order to ensure the validity of the research findings by comparing the early and the late respondents on several demographic factors, such as age, gender, ethnicity, tenure, and levels of education. The analysis indicated no significant difference ($p > .05$) between the two groups of respondents on any of the demographic variables—thereby suggesting no threat to response bias.

The demographic profile of the employee participants was as follows: Employees (subordinates) were mostly in the age range of 25 to 45 years ($M = 31.1$; $SD = 7.6$). There were 186 female participants (51.7%). In terms of ethnicity, 200 participants were Chinese (51.9%), followed by 133 Malay (34.6%), 27 Indian (7%), and 25 others (6%). About 40% of them were degree holders, followed by diploma holder (30%). The average tenure of employees with the current organization was 6.0 ($SD = 6.6$) years and the average tenure with the current immediate supervisor (i.e., LMX tenure) was 3.5 ($SD = 3.8$) years. Majority of them represented lower (49.1%) and middle (33.8%) levels of management.

On the other hand, supervisors were mostly in the age range of 25 to 50 years ($M = 35.70$; $SD = 8.06$). Over half of them were female (54.8%). Their racial composition was as follows: Malay = 27.3%; Chinese = 45.5%; Indian = 2.6%; others = 4.9%. Over 57% of the supervisors were degree holders (bachelor's and above). Their average tenure with the current organization was 7.63 ($SD = 6.45$) years.

In summary, supervisors were significantly older ($p < .01$) and better educated ($p < .01$) than their subordinates. As expected, their organizational tenure was significantly longer ($p < .05$) than their subordinates. However, the supervisors and subordinates were not significantly ($p > .05$) different in terms of gender and ethnicity.

Measures

Data were obtained by means of questionnaire surveys from two sources. The employee survey included, in addition to demographics, attribution of power bases, influence tactics, and social desirability items, whereas the supervisor survey consisted of demographic and LMX scale items. Collecting two sources of data was a deliberate attempt to minimize any common method bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003, 2012). Except for personal-demographics, all other scale items were rated on a 7-point scale. The item scores in each scale were summed up and then averaged to arrive at an overall score for the scale. Higher scores represented higher levels of each of the constructs.

Attributed bases of power. We used 15 single-statement items (Hinkin & Schriesheim, 1989) to measure three attributed bases of power: personal power (a combination of expert and referent bases of power), positive position power (a combination of reward and legitimate bases of power), and negative position power (coercive power). The 15 items were interspersed throughout the questionnaire. Sample items include: "… can promote me" (Reward Power); "… can give me a verbal reprimand" (Coercion Power); "…can provide me with sound job-related advice" (Expert Power); "… can make it clear that he/she is my immediate supervisor" (Legitimate Power); "…can make me feel that he/she is someone that I want to be like" (Referent Power). Employees were asked to read each descriptive statement carefully, thinking in terms of what their immediate supervisor could do to them, and then to indicate on a 7-point agreement/disagreement scale the extent to which it best represented their views about their current immediate supervisor.

Leader-member exchange (LMX). We employed a 12-item scale (LMX-MDM, Liden & Maslyn, 1998) to assess the quality of exchange between participating managers and their

respective immediate supervisors. The scale was originally developed to assess four exchange dimensions (contribution, loyalty, affect, and professional respect), with three items for each dimension. Supervisors were asked to indicate their degree of agreement or disagreement with each statement. Sample items are: "This employee is willing to apply extra efforts beyond those normally required, to meet my work goals" (Contribution); "I am impressed with this employee's knowledge of his/her job" (Professional Respect); "I like this employee very much as a person" (Affect); "This employee would defend me to others in the organization if I make an honest mistake" (Loyalty). Given that the four dimensions (often called "currencies") have been found to fall under a second-order factor (Erdogan, Kraimer, & Liden, 2004; Liden & Maslyn, 1998), we used the scale as an overall measure of LMX in this research.

Influence tactics. It is the followers' perceptions of their leaders' behavior and their acceptance of their leaders' influence attempts that give rise to the leadership phenomenon (Beckhard, 1996; Van Dyne & LePine, 1998). Thus, we assessed the supervisors' influence tactics from the subordinates' perspective. We employed 12 single-statement items (Schriesheim & Hinkin, 1990) to assess rational, soft, and harsh tactics used by supervisors to influence employees. Sample items include: "… convinces me by stressing the urgency of the issue at hand" (rational); "… makes me feel important" (soft); "… shouts at me in front of my co-workers" (harsh). The employees were asked to report the frequency (1 = *never*; 7 = *always*) with which their supervisors used each of the descriptive statements to influence them.

Control variables. Subordinates provided information about their age, gender, ethnicity, employment status, level of education, organizational level, organizational tenure, tenure with the current supervisor, and the type of industry described in the questionnaire. Supervisors also provided demographic data similar to those collected from the subordinates. Certain

demographic variables such as subordinate gender, supervisor gender, and the duration of the dyadic work relationship were statistically controlled for in all hierarchical multiple regression analyses because of their potential effects on the quality of the relationship between supervisors and subordinates (Ansari, Hung, & Aafaqi, 2007; Ansari et al., 2014; Erdogan & Liden, 2002; Graen & Scandura, 1987; Liden & Maslyn, 1998; Seers, 1989; Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998). Doing so also ruled out any alternative explanations for the findings. In addition, we controlled for social desirability using the short version (6 items—for example, "I have never intensely disliked anyone") of social desirability scale (Crowne & Marlow, 1960).

Results

Psychometric Properties and Evidence against Common Method Bias

Prior to testing the major moderation hypothesis, we performed several analyses to examine the psychometric properties of the measures and to gather empirical evidence against common method variance (CMV). We conducted a series of confirmatory analysis to examine the distinctiveness of the two employee self-reported constructs (i.e., three attributed bases of power and three influence tactics) and a supervisor-rated construct (LMX). We used four indices to assess the fit of the measurement models: the incremental fit index (IFI), comparative fit index (CFI), goodness of fit index (GFI) (Bentler, 1990), and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) (Browne & Cudeck, 1993).

First, we compared the three-factor bases of power model (personal power, positive position power, and negative position power) with the five-factor model (reward, coercion, legitimate, referent, and expert) and the one-factor model. The analysis showed the three-factor model to have a better fit ($\chi^2 = 286.02$, $df = 87$, $p < .01$; $IFI = .91$; $GFI = .91$; $CFI = .91$; $RMSEA = .07$) than the five-factor model ($\chi^2 = 696.48$, $df = 160$, $\Delta\chi^2(73) = 410.46$, $p < .01$; $IFI = .83$;

GFI = .84; *CFI* = .83; *RMSEA* = .09) and the one-factor model (χ^2 = 537.12, *df* = 90, $\Delta\chi^2(3)$ = 251.10, $p < .01$; *IFI* = .79; *GFI* = .82;*CFI* = .79; *RMSEA* = .12).

Second, we compared the three-factor influence tactics model (rational power, harsh power, and soft power) to the one-factor model. The analysis showed the three-factor model to have a superior fit (χ^2 = 172.82, *df* = 51, $p < .01$; *GFI* = .93; *IFI* = .92; *CFI* = .92; *RMSEA* = .07) to the one-factor model (χ^2 = 739.51, *df* = 54, $\Delta\chi^2(3)$ = 566.69, $p < .01$; *GFI = .72; IFI* = .54; *CFI* = .54; *RMSEA* = .18).

Third, we compared the one-factor LMX model to the four-factor model (contribution, affect, loyalty, and respect). The analysis indicated a one-factor model to have the better fit (χ^2 = 170.82, *df* = 54, $p < .01$; *GFI* = .93; *IFI* = .96; *CFI* = .96; *RMSEA* = .08) than the four-factor model (χ^2 = 368.31, *df* = 48, $\Delta\chi^2(6)$ = 197.49; $p < .01$; *GFI* = .85; *IFI* = .87; *CFI* = .87; *RMSEA* = .13).

Finally, to achieve an optimal ratio of sample size to number of estimated parameters, we followed previous research (e.g., Chin, 1998; Sass & Smith, 2006) and randomly combined the scale items into parcels for each variable. Each variable had two parcels as indicators. We compared the hypothesized 6-factor model (three bases of power and three influence tactics) in relation to other alternative models. The analysis shows satisfactory fit indices (χ^2 = 242.62, *df* = 89, $p < .01$, *IFI* = .92; *GFI* = .93; *CFI* = .92; *RMSEA* = .06) and has significantly better fit than the two-factor (three bases of power combined and three influence tactics combined) model (χ^2 = 576.58, *df* = 103, $\Delta\chi^2(14)$ = 333.96, $p < .01$; *GFI* = .84*; IFI* = .76; *CFI* = .76; *RMSEA* = .11) and the one-factor model (χ^2 = 2009.54, *df* = 324, $\Delta\chi^2(235)$ = 1766.92, $p < .01$; *GFI = .64; IFI* = .59; *CFI* = .58; *RMSEA* = .12). Further, in the 6-factor model, all parcels had significant loadings on

their respective factors. Given these CFA results, we continued to examine these variables as distinct constructs.

Since employees (subordinates) rated both influence tactics and attributed bases of power items at the same time, the possibility of CMV cannot be ruled out. In order to provide some evidence against this bias, we conducted a Harman's 1-factor test and examined the unrotated factor solution involving all 27 items rated by subordinates (12 influence tactic items and 15 bases of power items) in an exploratory factor analysis. The analysis constrained to 6 factors, explaining a total of 61% of the variance in the matrix. It was evident that no single factor accounted for the majority of the variance in the data. In other words, a single factor did not emerge from an unrotated principal components analysis, and the first factor accounted for just 28% of the variance in the matrix, suggesting that CMV was not a serious issue in this data set (Podsakoff et al., 2003, 2012). In addition, strong evidence of construct validity (reported above) also substantiates that measures do not suffer from common method bias.

Means, standard deviations, intercorrelations, and coefficients alpha are presented in Table 1. As can be seen, except for negative position power, all other constructs had acceptable coefficients alpha of .70 or greater (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010). It can also be seen in Table 1 that the constructs were as correlated as one would expect on theoretical grounds. In conclusion, results of CFA, Harman's 1-factor test, reliability analysis, and measurement model analysis indicate that the measures have sound psychometric properties in terms of reliability and construct validity and that there is no serious threat of common method bias in this research.

Test of Hypotheses

We performed a four-step hierarchical multiple regression analysis to test our direct and moderation hypotheses for each attributed base of power. For each interaction pair, scores on

influence tactics and LMX were first converted to *z* scores and then a product term was formed (Aiken & West, 1991). If the moderator hypothesis was to be confirmed, the beta weight of the product term (i.e., interaction) had to be significant. Following significant interactions, simple slopes analysis was conducted to show any interaction effects (Aiken & West, 1991). Table 2 contains a summary of hierarchical regression analysis results.

As can be seen in Table 2, controlling for the gender of the leader and member, leader-member dyadic tenure, and social desirability, influence tactics explained additional variance of 17 to 37% of the variance in attributed bases of power. Thus, Hypothesis 1 received substantial support. The analysis suggests that supervisors who use rational and soft tactics of influence receive positive attribution of personal power and those who use harsh influence tactic receive negative attribution of personal power. Similarly positive attribution is assigned to positive position power for rational and soft tactics, whereas negative attribution is made to harsh influence tactics. As expected, harsh influence tactic were attributed to negative position power.

Interestingly, Hypothesis 2 too received some support, explaining additional variance of 3% in the attribution of personal power (see Table 2 and Figures 2 through 4 for interaction plots). The first interaction (see Figure 2) suggests that when LMX is high, the use of rational tactic has a stronger positive relationship with the attribution of personal power; when LMX is low, this relationships is weaker. Stated differently, when LMX is high, leaders' use of rational tactic is attributed higher personal power. The opposite trend was found for the use of harsh influence tactic (see Figure 3). That is, when LMX is low, the use of harsh influence tactic has a stronger negative relationship with the attribution of personal power than when LMX is low. Finally, LMX makes no difference for the use of high soft tactic, but it does for the use of low soft tactic. When LMX is high, use of low soft tactic is attributed higher personal power than

when LMX is low (see Figure 4). Finally, attribution of positive position and negative position power was not significantly related to any of the social influence tactics.

Discussion

The fundamental purpose of this study was to examine the moderating role of LMX in the relationship of the use of influence tactics with attributed bases of power. The quality of LMX was examined from supervisor perspective, whereas influence tactics and bases of power were examined from subordinates' perspective. We developed and tested two sets of hypotheses and both received substantial support from the data. As expected, the use of rational tactic (rationality) was attributed to personal power (expert power and referent power) and positive position power (reward power and legitimate power). This finding is mostly in the expected direction and quite congruent with previous research. For example, Hinkin and Schriesheim (1990) reported a positive relationship of rationality (i.e., influence tactic) and such bases of power as legitimate, expert, and referent power. As well, Ansari (1990) found a similar link of expertise and reasons tactics of influence with legitimate, expert, and information power. As predicted, the use of harsh tactic (i.e., assertiveness) was negatively attributed to personal power and positively attributed to negative position power (coercion). This finding is also consistent with previous studies (Ansari, 1990; Hinkin & Schriesheim, 1990). Interestingly, the use of soft influence tactic (i.e., ingratiation) was attributed to both bases of power (personal and positive position)—a finding incongruent with the Hinkin and Schriesheim (1990) study. The difference in conclusion may be attributed to different samples. Hinkin and Schriesheim used senior business undergraduate students at a large U.S. university and this study sample consisted of full-time employees in Malaysian manufacturing organizations.

An interesting finding was the role of LMX as a moderator of the relationship between rational influence tactic and personal base of power (expert and referent power). When LMX is high, leaders' use of rational tactic is attributed to higher personal power. The opposite trend was found for the use of harsh tactic. That is, when LMX is low, the use of harsh influence tactic has a stronger negative relationship with the attribution of personal power than when LMX is low. Finally, LMX makes no difference for the use of high soft tactic, but it does for the use of low soft tactic. When LMX is high, use of low soft tactic is attributed higher personal power than when LMX is low. However, no significant relationship was found for either position power, positive or negative. These findings are all in expected direction. The boundary role of LMX has implications for theory and practice.

Implications for Theory and Practice

Our survey findings suggest that LMX augment or attenuate the utility of leader's use of social influence tactics. In other words, we argue that high-LMX serves to enhance the utility of the use of rational and soft tactics of influence and attenuate the use of harsh influence tactic. While our study provides support for the notion that LMX augments or attenuates the effects of influence tactics, alternative interpretations of relationships between influence tactics and bases of power do indeed exist.

Our findings suggest that LMX plays a key role in the influence tactics-bases of power relationship. Thus managers should be aware of the fact that relationship quality does matter. They should understand that LMX may not necessarily have strong positive effect on various outcomes. What they should understand is that LMX becomes a critical boundary condition on the use of influence tactics. They need to make their employees feel good and important. They

can do so by providing enough opportunity and latitude to perform their jobs and providing contractual as well as personalized relationships.

Potential Limitations and Opportunities for Future Research

Despite substantive theoretical and practical contributions, our study has some potential limitations. First, we considered LMX as a moderator of the influence tactics-attributed bases of power relationship. The competing hypothesis may be that LMX acts as a mechanism of this relationship. Employees may form their opinion of the quality of relationship with their leader, as a result of the leader's us of influence tactics. This relationship (i.e., LMX) in turn will lead to the attributed bases of power. Future research should also employ both LMX perspectives in testing moderator or mediator hypothesis. Second, given that our data were limited to only manufacturing companies, a tall claim about external validity cannot be made. It is recommended that future researchers should compare data from service organizations as well. A comparative study would help shed some light on the model of this study. Third, we employed employee self-reported measures to assess both influence tactics and attributed bases of power. Given that leaders' behavior have to be observed by followers, this was the demand of this study's research design (Beckhard, 1996; Van Dyne & LePine, 1998). However, we provided empirical evidence to show that CMV was not an issue in this research. We suggest that future researchers to employ both—leader and member—perspectives to test our model. Finally, based on cross-sectional data, we do not make a tall claim about causality. One possibility is that bases of power may lead to the use of influence tactics (Ansari, 1990). Thus reverse causality cannot be discounted. Future research should consider employing longitudinal design to firm up any causal relationships.

Conclusion

The study extends existing leadership research by demonstrating that attribution of power bases may not only reflect the type of influence tactics used by managers but also the quality of exchange relationship between the employee and manger. Results of this study suggest that use of influence tactics is most strongly related to the attributed bases of power when supervisors report high-quality relationships with their subordinates. The findings may help explain why certain tactics of influence are attributed more personal power than position power. Because leader-member interaction is the reality of the organization, understanding the sources of power is particularly important to managers.

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Table 1

Descriptive Statistics, Coefficients Alpha, and Intercorrelations of Study Variables

Variables	*M*	*SD*	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7*	*8*	*9*	*10*	*11*
1. Leader gender	---[a]	---[a]	---[a]										
2. Member gender	---[a]	---[a]	31**	---[a]									
3. Dyadic tenure	3.50	3.78	-09	-00	---[b]								
4. Social desirability	5.07	0.82	-07	03	04	**74**							
5. Personal power	5.03	1.00	-06	07	07	24**	**87**						
6. Positive position power	4.98	0.89	-04	05	-01	20**	68**	**78**					
7. Negative position power	4.04	1.22	-05	08	01	05	09	27**	**65**				
8. LMX-L	5.02	0.88	-08	10*	07	06	36**	23**	-06	**93**			
9. Rational tactics	4.77	0.94	-04	00	04	12*	48**	49**	11*	17**	**74**		
10. Harsh tactics	3.04	1.32	08	-01	-01	-02	25**	-12*	35**	13*	-02	**82**	
11. Soft tactics	4.34	1.07	00	02	02	12*	47**	49**	13*	30**	58**	08	**75**

Note. N varies from 307 to 385. Diagonal entries in bold indicate coefficients alpha; Decimal points are omitted from correlation matrix and coefficients alpha; [a] Single-item categorical measure (0 = Male; 1 = Female); [b] Single-item ratio measure; LMX-L = Leader-member exchange reported by leader.

*$p < .05$; **$p < .01$.

Table 2

Summary of Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis Results

Personal power		*Positive Position power*		*Negative position power*	
Variable Entered	*β*	*Variable Entered*	*β*	*Variable Entered*	*B*
Step 1 (R^2 = .05**)		*Step 1* (R^2 = .04**)		*Step 1* (R^2 = .01)	
Leader gender[a]	-.08	Leader gender[a]	-.06	Leader gender[a]	-.04
Member gender[a]	.08	Member gender[a]	.09	Member gender[a]	-.03
Dyadic tenure[b]	.04	Dyadic tenure[b]	-.03	Dyadic tenure[b]	-.00
Social desirability	.19**	Social desirability	.17**	Social desirability	.05
Step 2 (R^2 =.42**)		*Step 2* (R^2 = .35**)		*Step 2* (R^2 = .18**)	
Rational tactics (A)	.26**	Rational tactics (A)	.26**	Rational tactics (A)	.09
Harsh tactics (B)	-.29**	Harsh tactics (B)	-.12**	Harsh tactics (B)	.39**
Soft tactics (C)	.35**	Soft tactics (C)	.36**	Soft tactics (C)	.05
Step 3 (R^2=.46**)		*Step 3* (R^2=.36)		*Step 3* (R^2=.18)	
LMX-L (D)	.22**	LMX-L	.06	LMX-L	-.03
Step 4 (R^2 = .49**)		*Step 4* (R^2 = .36)		*Step 4* (R^2 = .18)	
A x D	.10*	A x D	.01	A x D	-.06
B x D	.09*	B x D	-.02	B x D	.02
C x D	-.15**	C x D	-.06	C x D	.05

Note. N = 305. [a] Single-item categorical measure (0 = Male; 1 = Female); [b] Single-item ratio measure; LMX-L = Leader-member exchange reported by leader.
*p < .05 **p < .01.

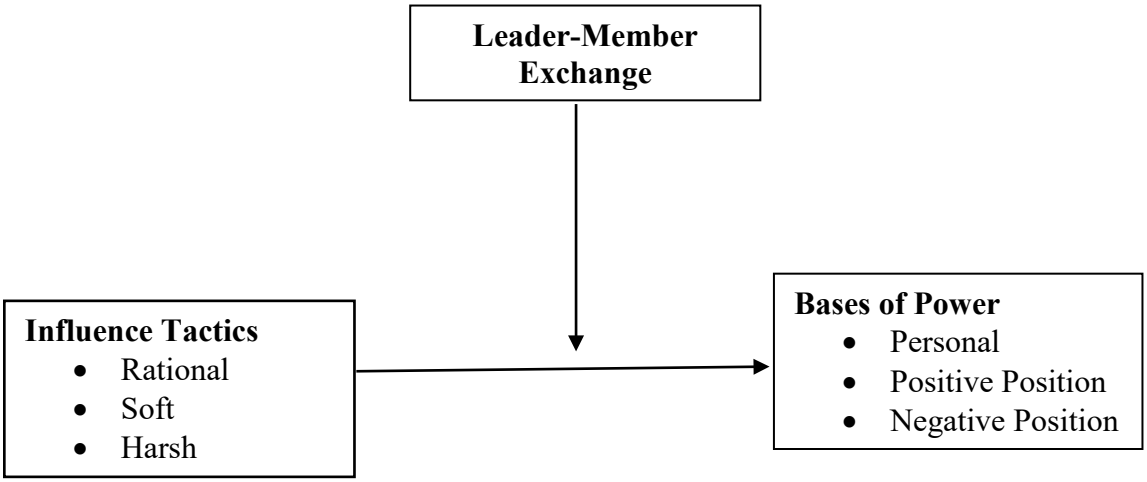

Figure1. Hypothesized relationships among variables.

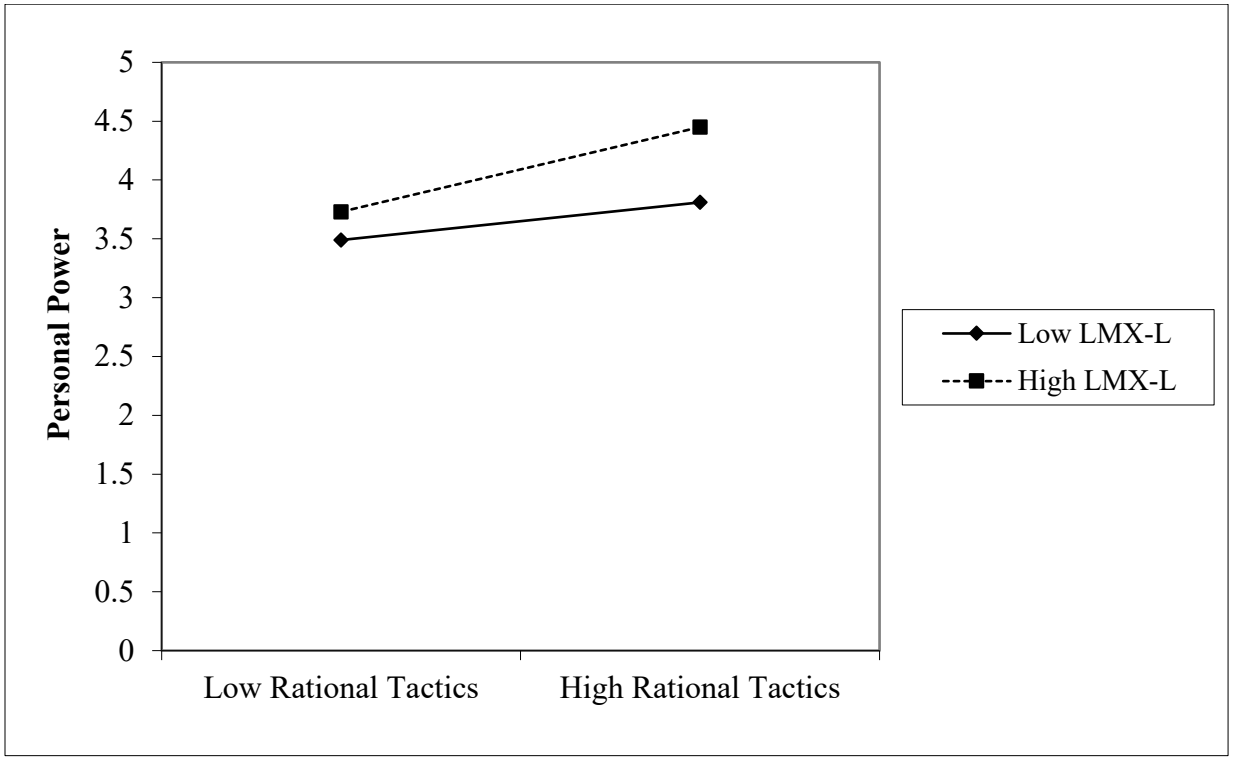

Figure 2. Rational influence tactics by LMX-L interaction on personal power.

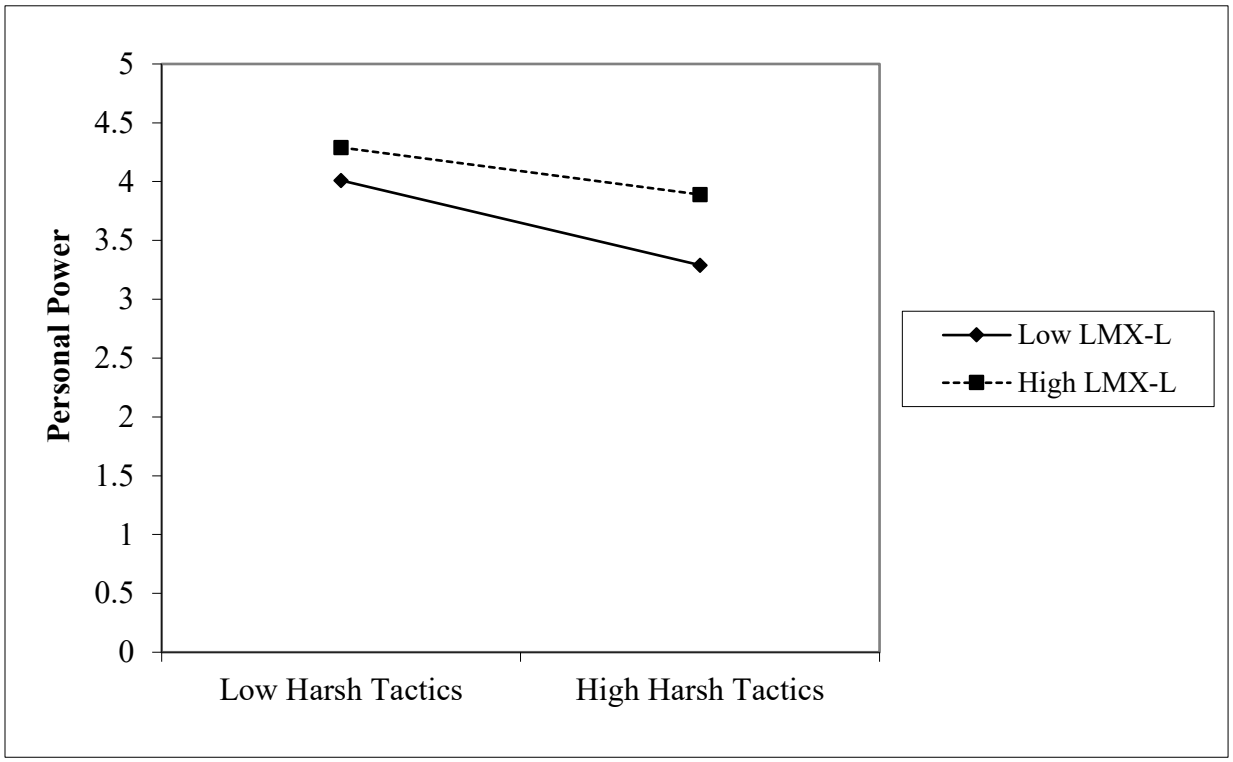

Figure 3. Harsh influence tactics by LMX-L interaction on personal power.

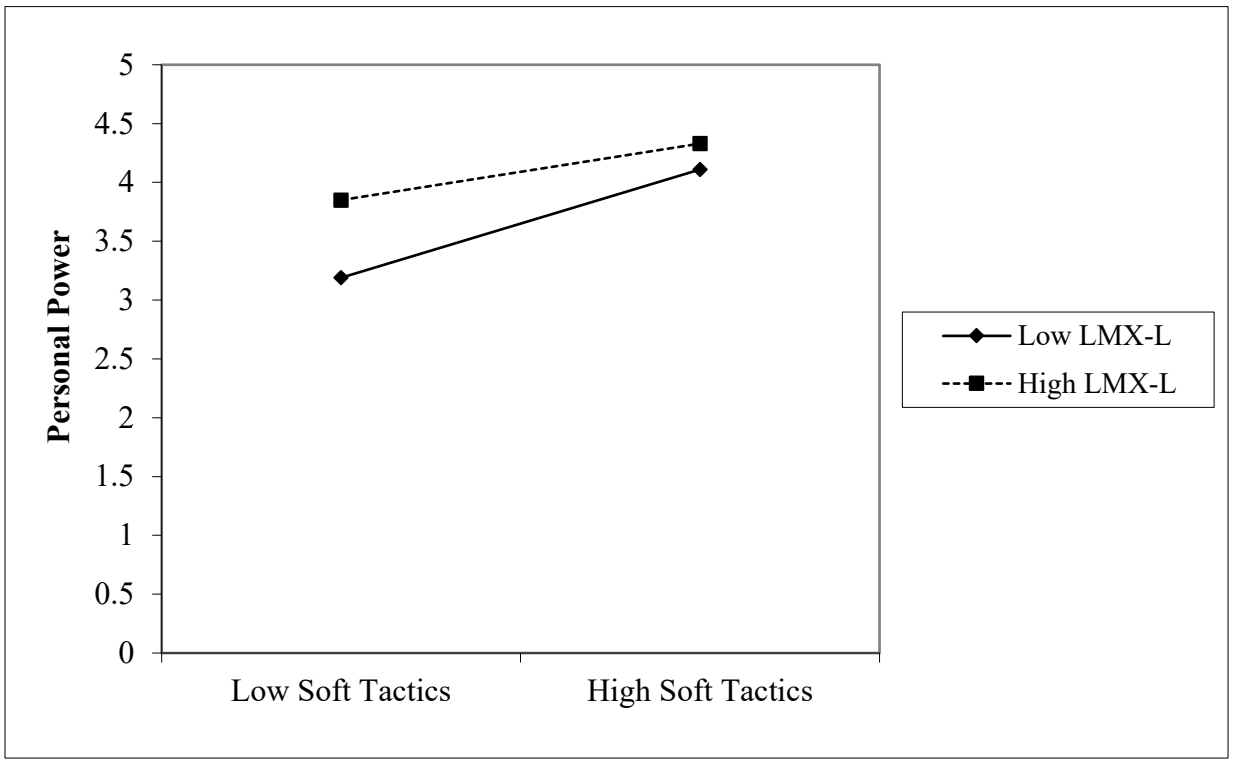

Figure 4. Soft influence tactics by LMX-L interaction on personal power.