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Ingratiation as Related to Leadership Styles and Perceived Supervisory Control

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The study aimed at investigating the role of leadership styles and perceived supervisory control and their interaction on the use of ingratiation tactics with the immediate superior. The sample consisted of 294 male managers drawn from seven manufacturing organizations located in Northern-India. The salient findings of the study were that: (i) Authoritarian leadership style was positively related and the nurturant-task style was negatively related to ingratiation tactics. (ii) Supervisory control was positively associated with all tactics of ingratiation. (iii) The interaction of authoritarian style with supervisory control predicted positively the usage of ingratiation behavior in organizations.

According to the norm of distributive justice, an individual in an exchange relationship with another will expect that the rewards of each individual be propor-

tional to his or her costs and the net rewards or profits of each be proportional to his or her investments (Homans, 1961). In spite of this norm, there are certain contexts and certain personal dispositions that motivate an individual to search for ways to increase his or her payoffs with little cost involved. One way of altering this proportion of profit to investment is through ingratiation which has been de-

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defined by Jones (1961, p. 11) as "a class of strategic behavior illicitly designed to influence a particular other person concerning the attractiveness of one's personal qualities." An individual through ingratiation tries to manipulate another's feelings to establish that he or she is attractive and deserves rewards (Jones, 1964, Pandey, 1980). According to Jones (1964) an ingratiation seeks attraction by manipulating the attributions of friendliness made by the target and at the same time, avoids attributions of ulterior motives. Thus, ingratiation is attraction management with a manipulative intent. If ingratiation is viewed as attraction management, then ingratiation can take any or all forms by which interpersonal attraction can be solicited, therefore, there are tactical variations in the use of ingratiation (Jones, 1964). A review of the literature (Jones, 1964, Pandey & Bohra, 1984, Wortman & Linsenmir, 1977) reveals some seven classes of ingratiation tactics, namely, other enhancement, self enhancement, third party directed, self degradation, instrumental dependency, name dropping and opinion conformity.

Ingratiation tactics are considered illicit and strategic forms of social behavior, since the intent behind the act is kept hidden and that act seeks to bring about changes in the target. Therefore, the decision to ingratiate has ethical ramifications which have to be cognitively mollified before ingratiation can be used. It has been found that the behavioral characteristics of the individual have strong bearings upon the decision to ingratiate. There are certain personality types that can be termed ingratiating. Such

individuals possess traits, attributes, or values which lead them to perceive ingratiation as legitimate social behavior. They try to increase the goodness of their outcomes outside the task system, despite the norm of distributive justice. For example, individuals high on internal locus of control (Kumar & Beyerlein, 1991, Ralston, 1985) or Machiavellianism, Pandey & Rastogi, 1979) make frequent use of ingratiation to influence the behavior of others. Earlier studies, treating ingratiation as a unidimensional concept, found that ingratiation is positively related to authoritarian leadership style (Ansari, 1990) and authoritarian climate (Ansari & Kapoor, 1987). Ingratiation, in the present paper has been conceptualized as a multidimensional concept and as an upward influence strategy, it is expected that the leadership style of the respondent will influence the frequency of ingratiation behavior in organizations. Three leadership style dimensions were of interest participative, nurturant-task, and authoritarian.

A participative leader is one who recognizes the value of human assets and in whom is found the optimum integration of human needs and values as well as organizational requirements. Such a leader is supportive and his or her subordinates perceive in him or her personal worth and meaningful place in the organization. Such a leader, it is speculated, is not likely to ingratiate the immediate superior. It is conjectured that an authoritarian leader will be more ingratiating because his or her main concern is personal vanity, power, status, and image-management. A nurturant-task leader is typical of Indian work organiza-

tions. He or she structures his or her subordinates roles clearly, so that communications are explicit, structured and task relevant. He initiates, guides, and directs his or her subordinates to work hard and maintain a high level of productivity. He cares for his or her subordinates, shows affection and takes personal interest in their well-being (Ansari, 1986, Sinha, 1980). Such a leader, it is anticipated, will not indulge in ingratiation for manipulative reasons. It is thus hypothesized that

H1: The higher the respondent is on participative and nurturant-task leadership styles the less is the frequency of ingratiation.

H2: The higher the respondent is on authoritarian leadership style the more is the frequency of ingratiation.

Ingratiation, as an influence strategy, involves attempts to control the behavior of the target. Control in one form or other is a universal feature of organizations. Tannenbaum (1974) found that a wide variety of organizations had a similar gradient of control, with managers at the top of the organization enjoying more power than those at the bottom. If we conceptualize control in a superior-subordinate relationship framework, we once again find the concept of control implied in it. The superior can control the behavior of the subordinate and seek compliance by threatening to reduce power, status, autonomy, and job security. Thibaut and Kelley's (1959) formulation presents a similar analysis. According to them, the person who is in a greater position of power, in an exchange matrix,

can get the lower powered person to comply with his or her wishes. That is the individual who is relatively low in power can increase his or her outcomes through behavioral compliance with the high powered person's demands.

Individuals do not like to be controlled and thus there always are attempts to resist control. Resistance to control occurs because an individual perceives control as a threat to need satisfaction (Argyris, 1974). One way of resisting control can be through ingratiation. Ingratiation is directed towards redistribution of outcome values between members of the dyad. Rather than representing a fair exchange, it involves an introduction of extraneous considerations into the utilization of available power. Primarily, the ingratiation aims at influencing the target's actions, ultimately, the aim is to equalize power in the relationship (Jones, 1964). It is thus hypothesized that

H3: The greater the degree of supervisory control the more is the frequency of ingratiation.

Thus far we treated the two variables—leadership styles and supervisory control—almost independently. However, such independent effects do not explain behavior in totality and psychological theory, as we know, is concerned with understanding and explaining human behavior in a wider sense. In reality, behavior is a function of both personal factors and those of the environment (Bowers, 1973; Lewin, 1951). We postulated earlier that an authoritarian

personality would use ingratiation to influence his or her superior at work. We also hypothesized that the greater the degree of perceived supervisory control, the more frequent will be the use of ingratiation by the subordinates. It follows that an authoritarian manager who perceives his or her superior to have a high degree of control on him or her, is likely to indulge more often in ingratiation. The social/organizational literature (Baron, 1953; Lindgren, 1962), however, suggests that high authoritarianism is strongly related to conformity—that is, to yielding under conditions of group pressure in an experimental situation. Elms and Milgram (1966) found that high authoritarianism predicted more yielding in the Milgram "obedience to authority" experiment. Given the ambiguity we hypothesize that

H4: Ingratiation is a function of the interaction of the leadership styles of the respondent with the perceived supervisory control.

Method

Sample and Procedure

Seven diverse manufacturing organizations located in Northern India were approached for data collection. Of the seven organizations, three were in the public sector and were involved in the manufacture of chemicals, television sets and scooters. Four corresponding organizations were taken from the private sector. Once permission for data collection was obtained, the personnel departments were requested for a list of managers. Data were collected from a total of 350 randomly selected male

managers, of which 56 were eliminated because of missing information. Out of a total of the 294 sampled respondents, 179 consisted of managers from the public sector and 115 managers from the private sector. The mean age of the respondents was 41.83 years, while their average tenure in the organization was 13.56 years. The majority of the respondents had at least a bachelor's degree. The bulk of the respondents (69.73%) had technical jobs, while 30.24% had nontechnical jobs.

Measures

Ingratiation. The measure was a 35-item scale, with seven subscales (other enhancement, self enhancement, opinion conformity, self degradation, instrumental dependency, third party directed, and name dropping). The subjects were asked to indicate on a 7-point scale (1=never; 7=always), the frequency with which during the past six months they had used each of the actions (described by the scale items) to influence their immediate superior at work. A varimax rotated factor analysis constrained to five factors and were named *Using a Third Person* (ingratiation by taking the help of a third person not directly involved in the interaction of the target and the ingratiator), *Enhancement of Self* (ingratiation through explicit presentation or description of one's positive attributes), *Disparagement of Self* (ingratiation through manifestation of one's negative attributes in order to overplay the superiority of the target), *Instrumental Dependency* (ingratiation by inducing a sort of social responsibility in the target while showing dependency on him or her), *Target Gratification* (ingratiation through

gratification of the target). The descriptive statistics, coefficients alpha, and inter-correlations of the ingratiation factors can be seen in Table 1. There are only two correlations above the 50 level—that between Instrumental

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics, Coefficients Alpha, and Intercorrelations of Ingratiation Factors.

Tactics	1	2	3	4	5
1. Using a Third Person	.93				
2. Enhancement of Self	.40	.82			
3. Disparagement of Self	.47	.17	.74		
4. Instrumental Dependency	.52	.40	.52	.85	
5. Target Gratification	.38	.36	.35	.46	.72
M	24.93	21.39	8.61	10.35	17.43
SD	12.39	07.06	4.38	04.87	05.03

Note. $r(292) = .11$ at $p < .05$; $r(292) = .15$ at $p < .01$; Diagonal entries indicate coefficients alpha.

dependency and disparagement of self and that between instrumental dependency and using a third person. Such an overlap could be because all the three tactics are based on the Indian middle class values (Sinha, 1980) of "personalized relationships" (i. e., an obsession for making connections at personal level) and "dependence proneness" (i. e., a strong tendency to lean on others for help, support, advice, and/or emotional reassurance). Overall, however, the tactics are only moderately intercorrelated (average $r = .40$),

thereby showing a reasonable level of independence among the factors. The coefficients alpha of the five subscales are fairly high, thus showing high internal consistency of responses. The subscales have also been found to be free from social desirability effect. A detailed description of the scale development can be found elsewhere (Shankar, 1992; Shankar, Ansari, & Saxena, 1993).

Leadership Styles. The self-reported leadership style measures had items

that were drawn from Sinha (1987). The scale was a 24-item, 3-dimensional measure, with eight items in each subscale. The respondents were asked to evaluate how frequently the statement was true to them on a 7-point scale (1=never; 7=always). The reliabilities, means, and standard

deviations for the three subscales, respectively, were 76, 40.25, and 6.31 for the participative subscale; 77, 47.71, and 6.42 for the nurturant-task subscale; and 56, 36.64, and 6.42 for the authoritarian subscale.

Table 2

Stepwise Multiple Regression Analysis Results-Leadership Styles (Predictors) and Ingratiation (Criterion variables)

Tactics	Leadership Styles		
	Participative	Nurturant-task	Authoritarian
Using a Third Person (UT)			
r	-.06	.08	.18
R^2 change	*	.03	.03
B	*	-.20 ^b	.18 ^b
Order	*	2	1
Enhancement of Self (ES)			
r	.08	.07	.17
R^2 change	*	*	.03
B	*	*	.17 ^b
Order	*	*	1
Disparagement of Self (DS)			
r	.14	-.27	-.05
R^2 change	*	.07	*
B	*	-.27 ^b	*
Order	*	1	*
Instrumental Dependency (ID)			
r	-.07	-.09	.15
R^2 change	*	.03	.02
B	*	-.20 ^b	.15 ^b
Order	*	2	1
Target Gratification (TG)			
r	.01	-.08	.14
R^2 change	*	*	.02
B	*	*	.14 ^a
Order	*	*	1

Note. $P^a < .05$; $P^b < .01$; N=294; * Tolerance level insufficient for further computation.

Supervisory Control. The Scale was a 7-item measure taken from Lakhtakia (1990). Respondents were asked to judge on a 7-point scale (1=*to almost no extent* 7=*to a very great extent*) the extent to which each statement was true to their relationship with the immediate superior. The reliability, mean, and standard deviation of the scale, respectively, were .79, 28.50, and 6.91.

Results

The stepwise multiple regression analysis was used to test the relationship between leadership styles and ingratiation. The results (see Table 2) disclosed that using a third person tactics was significantly influenced by authoritarian and nurturant-task styles of leadership, with the latter having a negative regression coefficient. They each explained 3% of the variance. Enhancement of self was significantly affected only by the authoritarian style of leadership (3% variance). Disparagement of self was predicted negatively by nurturant-task style, explaining 7% of the variance. Instrumental dependency was significantly influenced by both the authoritarian and the nurturant-task leadership styles, with the latter

having a negative impact. They explained 2% and 3% of the variance, respectively. Target gratification was predicted only by the authoritarian style of leadership, explaining a total of 2% of the variance. The participative style did not relate to any tactics of ingratiation.

Zero-order correlations were computed to see the relationship between control and ingratiation. The results suggested that there was a positive relationship between perceived control of the immediate superior and the use of using a third person ($r=.25$), enhancement of self ($r=.12$), disparagement of self ($r=.32$), instrumental dependency ($r=.40$), and target gratification ($r=.42$) tactics of ingratiation. The significance level of all correlations was above the .01 level, but that between enhancement of self and ingratiation was above the .05 level of confidence ($df=292$).

The hierarchical multiple regression analysis was performed to test the interactive relationship between leadership styles and perceived control on ingratiation. Out of a total of 15 possible interactions, only 4 were significant. All the significant interactions (see Table 3) per-

Table 3
Significant Interactions Between Leadership Styles and Supervisory Control on Ingratiation ($N=294$)

	Leadership Styles		
	Participative	Authoritarian	Nurturant-task
Supervisory Control		UT (.09, .19) DS (.03, .15) ID (.03, .19) TG (.03, .13)	*

Note. Figures in parentheses indicate R^2 change and Beta coefficient, respectively; * No significant interaction on any tactics; For abbreviations, see Table 2.

tain to the authoritarian style of leadership. Interaction between participative style and perceived control and between nurturant-task style and perceived control did not predict significantly the use of any tactics of ingratiation. An inspection of the significant interactions, through graphical representation (see Figure 1),

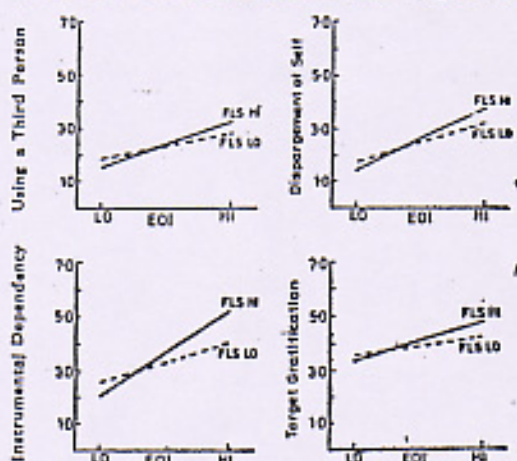


Figure 1. Mean ingratiation scores as a function of authoritarian style and extent of influence.

Abbreviations: FLS=Authoritarian style, EOI=Extent of influence, LO=Low, HI=High.

revealed that there was a high frequency of using a third person, disparagement of self, instrumental dependency and target gratification tactics when the supervisory control was perceived to be high. There was less frequent use of these tactics when the control was perceived to be low but the respondents were high on authoritarianism.

Discussion

The results substantiate the first two hypothesis that authoritarianism will

predict the use of ingratiation behavior while the participative and the nurturant task styles of leadership will not. Thus there are individual differences in the readiness to accept the legitimacy of tactical social behavior. As per the findings of this study, the attributes of an authoritarian leader are such that they are prone to adopt ingratiation tactics to get their way with their superior. Disparagement of self was the only ingratiation tactics that was not related to the authoritarian style. A probable explanation could be that since the main concerns of an authoritarian leader are personal vanity and image management, nothing will be done by him to degrade his image.

The results also substantiate the third hypothesis that the more the perceived supervisory control over the subordinate the more will be the use of ingratiation. These results are also in tune with the observation of Jones (1964), who asserts that ingratiation maneuvers will be justified if the target person is perceived as one who does not deserve equitable treatment. Moreover, when the inter-status relationship is generally antagonistic, the orientation of the subordinate is often to best the superior in the game of power application, and to subvert and thwart in such subtle ways that reprisals are not invited. Further, although all five tactics of ingratiation are significantly correlated with control, enhancement of self was found to have a low correlation with ingratiation. It follows from this that probably ingratiation is used more often as a coping strategy to resist the control of the superior rather than for acquisitive purposes.

As is clear from the interactive relationship results, there is more frequent usage of ingratiatory behavior if both supervisory control and the authoritarian style are high. These results do not support the findings of Elms and (Milgram (1966) who found that authoritarians are conformists. It appears that the ethics of ingratiation are quite complicated and ambiguous, since there is less frequent use of ingratiatory tactics when the subordinate is high on authoritarian style but supervisory control is low. A possible explanation could be that, in an interaction of authoritarian style with supervisory control, it is the supervisory control that plays a more important role than leadership styles. Or it could be that although the authoritarian leader is predisposed to ingratiate, he may not do so because he perceives that the superior is not trying to control his behavior and therefore deserves equitable treatment. Enhancement of self was not determined by the interaction between authoritarian leadership style and supervisory control. It is possible that the subjective probability of successful ingratiation in a situation where the superior exerts excessive control would be more for target directed tactics than for positive self presentational tactics.

The overall findings offer several directions for future research. The study suggests that there are individual differences and there are contextual factors that independently or jointly determine the use of ingratiation. Future research should focus on isolating those personality dispositions that prompt an individual to be ingratiating. Another issue bearing investi-

gation is to find whether ingratiation is individually initiated or whether organizational variables are also important features in its inducement. Effect of background variables on ingratiation is another area for investigations. Research is also needed to examine the role of Indian middle class values in work organizations and their relationship to ingratiation. Such research would throw light on the frequency of ingratiatory behavior in organizations.

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