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Gender, Affect and Upward Influence: An Indian Study

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Abstract

With the rapid influx of women in organizations, more specifically in the Indian context, “gender” becomes an important construct in the study of upward influence strategies, by which the member is able to influence the attitude, perceptions and behavior of the leader in a desired manner. In this study, we made an attempt to understand gender differences in terms of use of upward influence strategies and the moderating effect of the positive and the negative affect. The sample size comprised employees (N=107) working in a large bank in Western India. We employed both in-depth exploratory interviews and a survey methodology. While the interview data was subjected to rigorous content analysis techniques, regression analysis was performed on survey data. Results indicate that the gender of the agent and the supervisor, as well as the interaction of gender and affective styles, influenced the choice of upward influence strategies.

Introduction

The prevalence of the sex role ideology in India as compared to other countries in the West makes gender an important variable for research in the Indian context. Additionally, with more women occupying managerial roles in organizations, its practical implications for organizations and workplace culture need to be researched. Likewise, upward influence (UI) is of significant importance as it aids cooperation and collaboration within teams, makes organizations democratic, and enhances their receptivity to change (Waldron, 1999) and creativity. Concentrating on organizational benefits, significant relationships have been found between UI strategies and workplace environment, culture and relationship such as job performance (Kipnis and Schmidt, 1988; Yukl and Tracey, 1992), assessment of promotability (Thacker and Wayne, 1995); and increase in salary (Kipnis and Schmidt, 1988, Thacker, 1995).

Gender differences have been differentially linked to the choice of influence strategies employed in organizations. As early as 1976, Johnson found that men use more direct strategies and assertive influence as compared to women in organizations. Men and women working in a diverse setting are expected to display stereotypical forms of behavior in both interpersonal

(Falbo and Peplau, 1980; Maccoby, 1988) and work situations (Eagly and Johnson, 1990; Mainiero, 1986). Women, for instance, agree more often than men and display more positive socio emotional behavior (Anderson and Blanchard, 1982; Carli 1989, 1990; Piliavin and Martin, 1978). These gender differences have been found both within mixed-sex and between same-sex groups (Johnson, Warner and Funk, 1996).

However, the style of application of UI attempts varies with individuals and can best be studied with the aid of moderator variables. Researchers (Wayne and Ferris, 1990) found that the results of UI strategies, showed a variation when moderator variables like affect, were introduced. The role of affect, positive and negative, in moderating/affecting the style of influence in organizational social composition makes interesting investigation.

There is little work on the gender and affective disposition of the influencer that impacts the UI strategy, and particularly so in an Indian setting. Given this limitation and the need to assess the generalizability of the UI strategies in an Indian organization, we investigated the relationship between gender, affect and UI strategies. Specifically, our objective was to study whether men and women are differentially successful in their influence attempts and the extent to which affect, positive and negative, impacts the success of their influence attempts.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND DEVELOPMENT OF HYPOTHESIS

Gender and Upward Influence

Gender differences defined by the status characteristics theory suggest that gender differences in interaction in mixed-sex groups are a result of women's lower status in larger society (Berger et al., 1977; Berger, Rosenholtz and Zelditch 1980). This is a multi level theory that provides linkages between the society's cultural assumptions of inequality in gender, status, race and age and links it to inequalities in face-to-face interaction (Ridgeway, Cecilia and Diekema, 1992) in developing status hierarchies in small groups within or outside organizations.

In the organizational context, influence is the process by which an employee attempts to sway the thinking process of leaders, team members or peers. It is the effect, either intended or unintended, of the agent (influencer) on the target's (to be influenced) attitude, perception or behavior (Yukl, 1998).

Yukl (1998) states, “influence is the essence of leadership. It is necessary to sell your ideas, to gain acceptance of your policies or plans, and to motivate and support and implement your decisions”. Specifically, the agent uses influence for organizational purposes (Yukl and Tracey, 1992) but it can also be used for fructification of personal goals.

Recent work in the area of social composition in organizations and effectiveness constructs plays a critical role in success of interpersonal communication in organizations (Ferris, Hockwarter, Douglass, Blass, Kolodinsky and Treadway, 2002) be it in the same-sex or mixed- sex groups.

A steady rise in the number of women taking up managerial positions over the last few years has added to the complexity of interactions at work (Thacker, 1995). Researchers have begun to focus their attention on similarities and dissimilarities between the approach adopted by men and women in usage of UI strategies.

However, researchers are uncertain about the existence of gender differences in use of UI strategies (Baxter, 1984; Conrad, 1985; DuBrin, 1989, 1991; Grob et al. 1997; Kipnis et al, 1980; Kline 1994; Lamude, 1993; Schlueter et al 1993). Some research studies suggest that women use strategies differently than men. They use charm, appearance, ingratiation and compliments – that is indirect strategies (DuBrin, 1991) - or weaker altruistic strategies whereas men use so-called stronger strategies of manipulation, reason (Baxter, 1984; Schlueter et al., 1990) and assertiveness (Johnson, 1976). Additionally, researchers note that females may even be more effective at influence attempts than males (Lauterbach and Weiner, 1996).

There have been findings that report no or very little difference in choice of UI strategy between men and women (Kipnis et al, 1980; Schilit and Locke, 1982; Yukl and Falbe, 1990). No differences in how men and women use UI have been found in both interpersonal (Carli, 1989; Sagrestano, 1992) and organizational settings (Dreher et al., 1989; Kipnis, Schmidt and Wilkinson, 1980; Yukl and Tracey, 1992). A reason attributed to negative findings concerning gender difference in use of influence strategies is the situation that has a bearing on the relationship between the agent and the target (Falbo

and Peplau, 1980; Sagrestano, 1992) and organizational position (Schlueter and Barge, 1993) and gender of target which determines the choice of influence behaviors. Thus it is likely that gender will have differential effect on the choice of upward influence strategies.

H1: Males and females will differ significantly in their choice of UI strategies.

H1a: Female agents will differ significantly in their choice of UI strategies with male superiors and female superiors.

H1b: Male agents will differ significantly in their choice of UI strategies with male superiors and female superiors.

Empirical research indicates that the choice of a strategy is based on the individual's power, organizational structure (Schlueter and Barge, 1993; Schlueter et al. 1990, Fagenson, 1990). These structural models argue that influence use is a consequence of structural power rather than consequence of gender. However, what these studies fail to record is the effect of gender and the individual style of the employee that will determine the choice and application of the strategy. Interpersonal communication styles and gender diversity will influence the manner in which strategies are used and success of the strategies will also vary in accordance with the effectiveness of the styles (Jones, 1990). The style of the agent will moderate the influence strategy and the receptivity by the target will in turn be influenced by the impression that the target holds of the agent. Affect (positive and negative) will also have a significant bearing on the agent and choice of UI.

Affect and Upward Influence

Recent work in the area of social composition in organizations and effectiveness constructs plays a critical role in success of interpersonal communication in organizations (Ferris, Hockwarter, Douglass, Blass, Kolodinsky and Treadway, 2002) be it in the same or mixed- sex groups. Constructs of social skills play an important role in determining the nature in which influence attempts are made, perceived and responded to.

Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS; Watson et al., 1988) is a measure to study two general dimensions that describe individual affective responses: positive (interested, enthusiastic) and negative (hostile, anger) (George, 1992; Watson and Tellegan, 1985) on a seven point scale. Past

researches have tried to study either PA or NA but seldom a combination of the two.

Positive affect has been defined by Perrewe and Spector (2002) as: “the tendency to experience positive emotions across situations and time”. Personality research (George, 1992; Watson and Tellegan, 1985) has shown that there are two general dimensions of affective responding. These are positive affect (PA) and negative affect (NA). PA and NA do not seem to be opposite points on a continuum. Rather they are independent dimensions (Diener and Emmons, 1984). That is, an individual can be high on both or low on both or high in one and low on the other or vice versa or high in both or low in both (George, 1992; Watson and Tellegan, 1985). Individuals high on PA are characterized as excited, joyful and enthusiastic. They are energetic and enjoy life. Individuals low on PA are less likely to report positive feelings. People who report high levels of NA are likely to be anxious, afraid and angry. They are often tense and nervous. When low on NA, individuals report feeling placid, calm and contented. Individual’s affect may influence both the decision making and interpersonal aspects of managerial performance. Based on these definitions, and subsequent research (George, 1998; Hochwarter, Perrewe, Ferris and Brymer, 1999), it can be stated that employees with high PA are effective at interpersonal communication than those with low PA or high NA as they lack interpersonal enthusiasm (Watson, Clark, and Tellegen, 1988). Individuals with positive affect have been found to have a positive impact on the target in the influencing process (Mackie, Asuncion and Rosselli, 1992). Researchers (Judge et al 1999; Watson et al 1988) have found that the enthusiastic and confident agents possess a higher capability of influencing the target. Mood, more specifically positive mood, increases the probability of acceptance of attitude of agent by the target (Isen, 1984). The agent, in such situations, is viewed more positively and message accepted more readily by the target. Thus it is likely that positive and negative affect will have a differential bearing on the choice of upward influence strategies.

H2: Positive and negative affect in males and females will be significantly related to the choice of UI strategies.

Interaction between Gender, Affect and UI

While there is sufficient literature on gender, gender communication/interaction patterns and affect there is little research in the area of gender and affect which would have an impact on the choice and use of UI strategies. In the wake of earlier discussions it is plausible that gender and affect will interact to have differential impact on the choice of upward influence strategies.

H3: Affect and subordinate gender will interact to influence the choice of UI strategies
H3a: Male respondents with positive affect will use different UI strategies when interacting with male superiors than with female supervisors.

H3b: Male respondents with negative affect will use different UI strategies when interacting with male superiors than with female supervisors.

H3c: Female respondents with positive affect will use different UI strategies when interacting with male superiors than with female supervisors.

H3d: Female respondents with negative affect will use different UI strategies when interacting with male superiors than with female supervisors.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

We used the triangulation methodology in which both in-depth exploratory interviews and survey were conducted. Based on analysis of the interviews, we drew up a questionnaire which was later distributed via the intranet to all the employees. The purpose of using both exploratory interviews and the survey method was two fold. First, within the framework of the study, the in-depth exploratory interviews provided us with a thorough grounding to help build up a theory, specifically in investigating the types of upward influence strategies used by the executives. Exploratory interviews bring to the fore several context relevant variables and their interactions which otherwise may have been discarded or ignored. Such insights made the data richer and relevant to the context in which we conducted the study. They also ensured that the resulting theory provided a better understanding of gender and the upward influence strategies and their deployment both for the participating managers and the researchers alike. The survey using a quantitative instrument provided a deeper understanding of the phenomenon from multiple perspectives. By using triangulation to collect the same information, cross validation of the findings was possible, thus making the results more robust. The quality of information and findings were better and richer as these two methods provided mutual confirmation.

Second, the exploratory interviews helped in the development of a modified instrument to measure the criterion variable of upward influence strategies. It was based on the analysis of the exploratory interviews that a combined version of Kipnis et al (1980), Ansari (1990) and Bhal and Ansari (2000) measure, consisting of 41 items was developed and subsequently used for the study.

Sample and Procedure

We conducted the two studies in the western zonal office of a bank in India. All employees in the managerial cadre were selected. In the Indian sub continent the aforesaid bank is the only one in which the ratio of men to women is 60 to 40. The choice of the bank was deliberate as it provided virgin ground for study of gender, affect and upward influence. This attempt provided an opportunity to posit the findings in a significantly mixed setting of employees.

Data for this research were collected from a sample (n=107) of all employees of the managerial cadre of the western zonal office of a bank. There were 28 women and 79 men. Large number of employees (50.6 %) fell in the age bracket of 21 to 25. About 60% of respondents had one to four years of work experience. Maximum respondents (22.7%) had a Master of Business Administration degree and next in line were respondents with a Bachelor of Commerce degree (21.6%).

As indicated earlier, the procedure adopted for this study entailed two studies, in-depth interviews and survey. The subsequent sections will describe these methods in greater details.

Study 1

In-Depth Interviews

In the interviews the employees were asked to narrate a critical incident in which they had used influence with their superior. Employees were asked to describe briefly the purpose of the influence attempt, what was said or done by the agent to influence the target and how the target responded to the request. The questions were of the following nature: “What was the issue for which you used influence strategies?” “What did you say?”, “How did you say?”, “What was the impact on the leader?”, “Did you feel nice or confident

or nervous and shaky?” etc. If a sequence of influence attempts occurred, respondents were asked to describe each episode in the sequence. Employees were instructed to provide details, including quotes and examples of what the target said. They were assured of confidentiality. Respondents were encouraged to describe influence attempts that involved important issues and substantive requests for assistance and support, rather than routine task assignments. The interviews were conducted by one of the authors and two qualified researchers working in the area of communications. Both researchers were briefed extensively on the interview procedures and dummy interviews were conducted prior to commencement of the final interview procedure.

The narrative description of the agent's influence behavior in an incident was recorded. A number was assigned to each interviewee that helped in protecting the identity of the speaker. These numbers also helped in coding and record keeping. Transcripts were prepared and units of analysis were categorized. Two separate readers working in the area of communications coded the text. We compared the coding and finalized the classification after re-examining the text and a discussion with the bank officials. The statements of all the interviewees were cross-validated. Some managers were even interviewed twice for authenticating the data.

Study 1

Results

We asked the participants to recreate and narrate an incident in which they influenced their supervisor to change the thinking pattern to a desired way. Though the participants were asked to narrate an incident which did not involve routine-task, most of them narrated incidents that were technical and task oriented. Analysis of the content was done in four quarters:

- a. Male agent and female target (Table 1)
- b. Male agent and male target (Table 2)
- c. Female agent and male target (Table 3)
- d. Female agent and female target (Table 4)

Interaction patterns between male agents and female targets revealed reason and logic to be the most frequently employed strategy (Table 1). This is consistent with earlier studies (Nonis, Sager and Kumar, 1996), which

reported that men employ rationality as an influence strategy more than assertiveness, ingratiation and upward appeal. They felt that management listened to logic, and backing up arguments with numbers, research and data was important. Rational persuasion was effective while dealing with all kinds of bosses. Moreover, since intensified prescriptions and proscriptions for men reflects traditional emphasis on strength, drive, assertiveness, and self-reliance (Prentice and Carranza, 2002), their preference for logic and reason is easily explained. A closer look at the other strategies revealed that they primarily consisted of building connections, personal relationships, target gratification and instrumental dependency.

Interestingly in the interaction or influence attempts between men and men the combination of other strategies was marginally higher than rationality (Table 2). In the exchange between men and men, a significant number of respondents indulged in upward appeal keeping their superiors or 'boss's boss' informed and approaching the supervisor as a team. Thus the boundaries between upward appeal and coalition in such cases are blurred and could be captured only through factor analysis. Respondents felt that the organization was transparent and superiors did not mind if they took their case or argument forward to their superior's superior so long as they were 'kept in the loop'.

A differential analysis was done for women (Table 3). The interesting finding was that like men, women too did not use ingratiation or exchange strategies at all. Such exchange involves offering an exchange of favors while indicating willingness to reciprocate at a later date. This can be explained in terms of the social norms prevalent in the Indian context and can be a result of difficulty in articulation and multiplicity of connotations if such offers are to be made. Moreover they used coalition and upward appeal and assertiveness in almost the same proportion as men. This is in contradiction to the previous studies (Nicotera and Rancer, 1994) which suggest that men are generally seen as more aggressive and assertive displaying behaviors associated with hard influence strategies, whereas women are seen as nurturing and tentative.

As discussed in the earlier instances of analysis, ingratiation and exchange were not used in the UI strategies adopted by female respondents for female supervisors (Table 4). As in the case of male respondents and male

supervisors, other strategies as fact revelation, connection, target gratification and instrumental dependency had a higher percentage of use than reason and logic. Though the difference was only marginal, it does provide insight into mixed and same-sex interaction patterns in teams as specified through the status characteristic theory (SCT) (Berger et al, 1977; Berger, Rosenholtz and Zelditch, 1980). According to the SCT, in gender neutral tasks, status will not impact the interaction pattern. Task behaviors of men in all-men groups and of women in all-women groups will be similar (Johnson, et al. 1996).

Analysis was clubbed and done on the basis of the agent gender (Table 5).

An interesting observation is that majority of the respondents used more than one type of influence strategy. Amongst these the largest percentage was the combination of logic and reason, upward appeal and other strategies. This is consistent with the findings of studies (Prentice and Carranza, 2002) that found that these were the traits typically associated with men. It also shows that possibly men think that a combination of strategies is better suited to achieve results rather than a single strategy. Alternatively they may think that different strategies are better suited for different conditions and situations. This could mean that individual disposition and gender attitudes may not be the only explaining variables for determining the upward influence strategies used by people. The situational variables may have an important role to play in determining which strategy needs to be used in what conditions.

Another analysis was done based on the target gender (Table 6). In all four combinations, it was observed that men and women did not use ingratiation or exchange strategy at all with leaders across genders. This is explained by the argument that exchange and ingratiation involve offering an exchange of favors, bargaining and creating a feeling of indebtedness to be reciprocated at a later stage and is rarely seen in the Indian context in interaction with members of the opposite sex because of the difficulty in articulation and multiplicity of connotations if such offers are to be made especially to people of the opposite sex. Moreover, men used upward appeal much more often with female bosses than with their male counterparts. This could possibly be explained by the perceptions of female bosses in the eyes of men, which tends to be lower. This could also be explained by Lamude's

study (1993) which found that male supervisors employ upward influence strategies which appeal to values, emotions, affect and friendliness (soft strategies) more with female managers and they employ strategies that appeal to demands, intimidation, explanation and other employees' respect and attraction (hard strategies) with male managers.

Moreover women used upward appeal and coalition significantly more with male superiors rather than with female superiors. On the other hand, men used coalition and upward appeal significantly more with their male superiors than with women superiors. This can again be linked to connotations involved with repeated offers to a person of the opposite sex in the Indian context.

Study 2

Survey

On the basis of the content analysis of the transcribed interviews, we drew up a questionnaire comprising two sections and distributed via intranet to all employees. As the branch was small with only 107 employees, no need was felt for sampling. Data collected was inclusive of responses from all employees. The first section dealt with UI strategies, second, positive and negative affect. Respondents filled in the questionnaire during their working hours and mailed it to their branch in-charge, who collected the responses in a folder and mailed it to the first author. The respondents were, in this case as well, assured of complete secrecy with respect to their responses.

Study 2

Results

Gender of the agent and the supervisor/target clearly, as revealed in the study impact the choice of UI strategy. Interplay or interaction of gender and affective styles (positive and negative) also influence the communication styles of UI. Strategies generally discussed by researchers (Kipnis et al, 1980; Falbe and Yukl, 1992; Kipnis and Schmidt, 1988) as exchange and ingratiation, found abundantly in organizational talk did not emerge strongly in the study of differences in choice of UI strategies across genders. The results suggest that while these UI strategies may be employed by agents in organizations, when combined with a study of gender and affect reveal lower applicability.

Significant results in terms of UI revealed instrumental dependency (Ansari, 1990; Bhal and Ansari, 2000) to be the most frequently used UI (Table 7). Instrumental dependency can be understood as an attempt to 'seek advice at regular intervals', and 'inform the boss of the happenings at the office' or keep the boss in the loop. This finding can be related to the nature of tasks for which UI strategies were used.

Gender of target and agent together with negative (Figs. 1 and 2) and positive affect (Figs. 3 and 4) had a significant impact on the choice and use of UI strategies. As discussed, affect is a trait and can be witnessed in all interactions of employees. It is not contingent upon a situation but can clearly be seen in all behavioral patterns. Similarly, in this study it was seen that women using instrumental dependency were high on negative affect but men were much higher on negative affect. In the game of influencing the role of the supervisor was equally important. The negative affectivity of a male supervisor increased instrumental dependency. When the supervisor was a female, and instrumental dependency was high, it did not necessarily mean that the supervisor was not as high on negative affect as compared to the male supervisor. Thus on a comparative scale we can infer NA x gender (female) = high instrumental dependency; NA x gender (male) = higher than female instrumental dependency.

It is interesting to note that both males and females high in positive affect were also high on instrumental dependency, though males were slightly higher than females. The positive affect in the supervisor moderated the relationship between the gender of the supervisor and the use of UI strategy. Male supervisors with high positive affect responded positively to high instrumental dependency. Female supervisors with higher positive affect than male supervisors responded positively to lower demands of instrumental dependency.

Gender of the leader was found to have a significant bearing in the choice of the UI strategy (Fig. 5). The present results suggest that the gender of the supervisor affected the application of the UI strategy. When the gender of the supervisor was male, female respondents were higher in instrumental dependency than their male counterparts in the same organization. Women naturally reticent and careful in task oriented assignments find it preferable to inform the supervisor of the issues being tackled. This can be explained

by the normative/socialization approach which suggests that specific norms are learned by men and women in the formative stages in the interaction patterns within mixed sex peer groups (Carli, 1989, 1990; Maccoby, 1990; Eisenhart and Holland, 1983) which are then revealed in interaction patterns within organizations.

It was interesting to note that the gender of the supervisor and negative affect played an important role in the application of instrumental dependency (Figure 2). Once again as in the previous case when the gender of the agent was male, negative affect barely had any effect on the application of the instrumental dependency. However in the case of a female supervisor, higher the affect, lower the instrumental dependency. The relationship between negative affect and instrumental dependency was inversely proportional. Contrary to the results discussed above, in this case, instrumental dependency was higher when the negative affect was between low and moderate. In fact the drop was considerable from a low to a moderate negative affect in cases of application of instrumental dependency in female supervisors. However the slope in the graph from moderate to high negative affectivity indicating less instrumental dependency was a very gradual decline with a difference of barely 0.3 between the two points of moderate and high on negative affect.

Discussion

The present study affirms the first hypothesis that males and females will differ in their choice of UI strategies and the differences will also be related to the gender of the supervisor. However the difference, in this study, was evidenced only in the application of “instrumental dependency”. The role of affect as a moderator in choice and application of UI strategies across genders was clearly seen in the present study. Both NA and PA in the male and female agents and targets affected the interaction patterns, specifically influencing patterns across genders. In other words, we can state that affect plays an important role in determining the choice of UI strategy. Positive affect in the agent, whether male or female, will result in high instrumental dependency. Negative affect in the male agent will lead to higher instrumental dependency than female agents. The present findings affirm the studies conducted by previous researchers that affect can and does have an effect on the target. The gender of the supervisor also impacts the choice of UI.

In other words,

PA x male agent x male supervisor = high instrumental dependency

PA x male agent x female supervisor = low instrumental dependency

NA x male agent x male supervisor = high instrumental dependency

NA x male agent x female supervisor = high instrumental dependency

PA x female agent x male supervisor = high instrumental dependency

PA x female agent x female supervisor = high instrumental dependency

NA x female agent x male supervisor = high instrumental dependency

NA x female agent x female supervisor = low instrumental dependency

In brief, the results of the findings are as follows:

1. Gender differences exist in application of UI strategies in both males and females with positive and negative affect. While no significant conclusions can be derived from an analysis of responses given by males, the same cannot be stated for women. Positive and negative affect in both the supervisor and the subordinate influence the choice of UI strategies.
2. Responses in same sex groups, whether male or female, are the same. In mixed sex group, whether the supervisor is a male or a female and the subordinate a member of the opposite sex, the responses are the same.

This study has many theoretical and practical implications. While there has been research, as presented in the literature review that posit the role and significance of gender differences in interaction patterns within organizations, few studies use affect, positive and negative, as a variable in analyzing the influencing patterns across genders within organizations. While the study reveals the significance of affect in agent as well as target, it also makes significant contributions to the body of research on gender and personality and claims that it is the individual style of functioning that matters more in the organizational set-up rather an assumption that mixed or same-sex groups can be clustered and generalizations made. With new ideas and newer ways of tackling situations, it disproves the consistently held view that employees can be clubbed or grouped in differing groups and similar response patterns elicited.

Communication within organizations typifies interaction patterns as specifically women or men centric. Nature of tasks assigned varies with the gender of the employees or subordinates. The UI strategies then are supposedly contingent on the subordinate, the supervisor and the situation. However as revealed through the study, it cannot with certainty be stated that the gender of the subordinate determines the choice of strategy. This implies that while gender is an important variable, more important is the personality of the individual who acts as the agent or the target and the situation in which the UI is attempted.

The findings of this study have direct relevance to growing organizations with a diverse group of employees. Stereotyping behaviors and communication patterns into gender specific clusters will prevent fruitful interaction between employees. Two-way successful communication can and will only happen when the employees are viewed as individuals with specific personality traits, capable of using a variety of UI strategies in tune with the dictates of the situation.

Limitations of the Study and Areas of Future Research

A limitation of the study is that the findings are based on analysis of gender differences in terms of UI strategies in only one organization in the western zone of the country. Additionally the sample size of the study precludes possibilities of making generalizations. The findings thus can be suggestive and not conclusive. If a variety of organizations had been studied or the sample size increased, we could have categorically stated the difference in influence patterns across genders and the role of affect in determining the choice of UI strategies. Further, most of the incidents narrated dealt with routine issues. If non routine issues would have been presented probably, the findings would have been more varied. But at this stage it remains an assumption. Narration of a variety of incidents and greater corpus size would have helped in ascertaining the validity of the findings.

We cannot negate the fact that with growing number of women joining the corporate sector, there is considerable interest in the similarities and differences between the communication patterns of female and male managers (O'Neil, 2004; Wilkins and Andersen, 1991). Though the number of women managers is still small, they are gradually moving into higher managerial positions. This phenomenon increases the scope for vertical

communication across gender and gives rise to several interesting research questions (Kaul and Patnaik, 2006).

Studies on the communication patterns of women and men indicate an observed difference between the two groups in their interaction patterns in general, and specifically in UI (Kaul and Patnaik, 2006). However, this difference may be affected by various situational factors like role relationship, environment and individual differences, rather than gender differences (Mills, 2002).

Given the diverse nature of findings of researchers concerning impact of gender on managerial effectiveness or handling of teams, future research will benefit by studying the role of affect as a moderator in the relationship between UI strategies and gender. This will aid in analyzing the role of affect, positive and negative in ascertaining the communication styles across genders in application of UI strategies. However, within organizations there cannot always be clear cut demarcations in affectivity as positive and negative. There are bound to be grey areas or traits which can be defined as neutral. The choice of UI strategies in such cases will make interesting study.

All organizations are a composite of teams, rich in diversity, in which team members need to influence the leader to their way of thinking. Organizations with women in their workforce would provide productive ground for survey. Research can also study various sectors like FMCG, pharmaceutical, automobile etc. and identify common patterns, if any, in research on gender differences and raise the study to a macro level. In other words, do gender differences in influencing patterns exist only in banks or can we draw a parallel with other organizations as well? While this study used one-time interviews and surveys, future research can couple interviews with ethnography. Affect can be further broken up into a third component which adds a third aspect to it: the grey area in which neither does the agent or target feel positive or negative but is passive to the situation or is passive in himself/herself. In which category would we like to club these employees? If we had a third category of affect would it change the findings? This will help researchers to also ascertain the application of affect as a trait inherent in the individual or bound to the situation. Some questions that can be raised for future research are:

1. What is the role of affect in determining the choice of UI strategies?
2. To what extent does the nature of the organization determine gender differences in influencing the supervisor?
3. Would a third category of affect independent in itself have an effect on gender differences in application of UI strategies?

Table 1 Respondent - M
Target - F

Issues discussed: Procedural in nature and leave related.

Strategies	Percentage
Reason and logic	45
Upward Appeal	12.15
Assertion	9
Coalition	11.79
Ingratiation	0
Exchange	0
Others (use of experience and exposure, fact revelation, connection, target gratification and instrumental dependency)	14.06

Table 2 Respondent – M
Target - M

Issues discussed: Transaction of the work procedures/ rules/ regulations related to customer complaint. Other issues discussed were related to the leave and office hours.

Strategies	Percentage
Reason and logic	26.02
Upward Appeal	21.80
Assertion	9.52
Coalition	14.14
Ingratiation	0
Exchange	0
Others (use of experience and	28.52

exposure, fact revelation, connection, target gratification and instrumental dependency)	
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Table 3 Respondent – Female (F)
Target - Male (M)

Issues discussed: Technical and routine

Strategies	Percentage
Reason and logic	44
Upward Appeal	24
Assertion	8
Coalition	8
Ingratiation	0
Exchange	0
Others (use of experience and exposure, fact revelation, connection, target gratification and instrumental dependency)	16

Table 4 Respondent – F
Target - F

Issues discussed: Procedural/technical/customer oriented

Strategies	Percentage
Reason and logic	38
Upward Appeal	12.5
Assertion	12
Coalition	95
Ingratiation	0
Exchange	0
Others (use of experience and exposure, fact revelation, connection, target gratification and instrumental dependency)	39

Table 5

Male agent

Strategies	Reported usage (in percentage)
Reason and Logic	71.02
Upward Appeal	33.95
Assertion	18.52
Coalition	25.93
Exchange	0
Ingratiation	0
Others	42.58

Table 6
Female agent

Strategies	Reported usage (in percentage)
Reason and Logic	81
Upward Appeal	36.50
Assertion	20
Coalition	17.5
Exchange	0
Ingratiation	0
Others	45

Table 7

Descriptive Statistics, Reliabilities, and Intercorrelations among Study Variables

Factors	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Influence							
1. Ingratiation	.79						
2. Rational Persuasion	-.12	.75					
3. Connection	.31	-.23	.56				
4. Target Gratification	.22	.17	.20	.82			
5. Instrumental Dependency	-.06	.45	.05	.16	.58		
Affect							

6. Negative Affect	.17	-.22	.22	.17	-.01	.89	
7. Positive Affect	-.13	.31	-.13	.02	.22	-.39	.89
<i>M</i>	2.96	5.51	2.97	4.00	4.84	2.72	5.72
<i>SD</i>	1.20	0.86	1.21	1.43	1.13	0.83	0.75

Note. N = 176, *p < .05; **p < .01; Diagonal entries in bold indicate Cronbach's coefficients alpha.

Figure 1

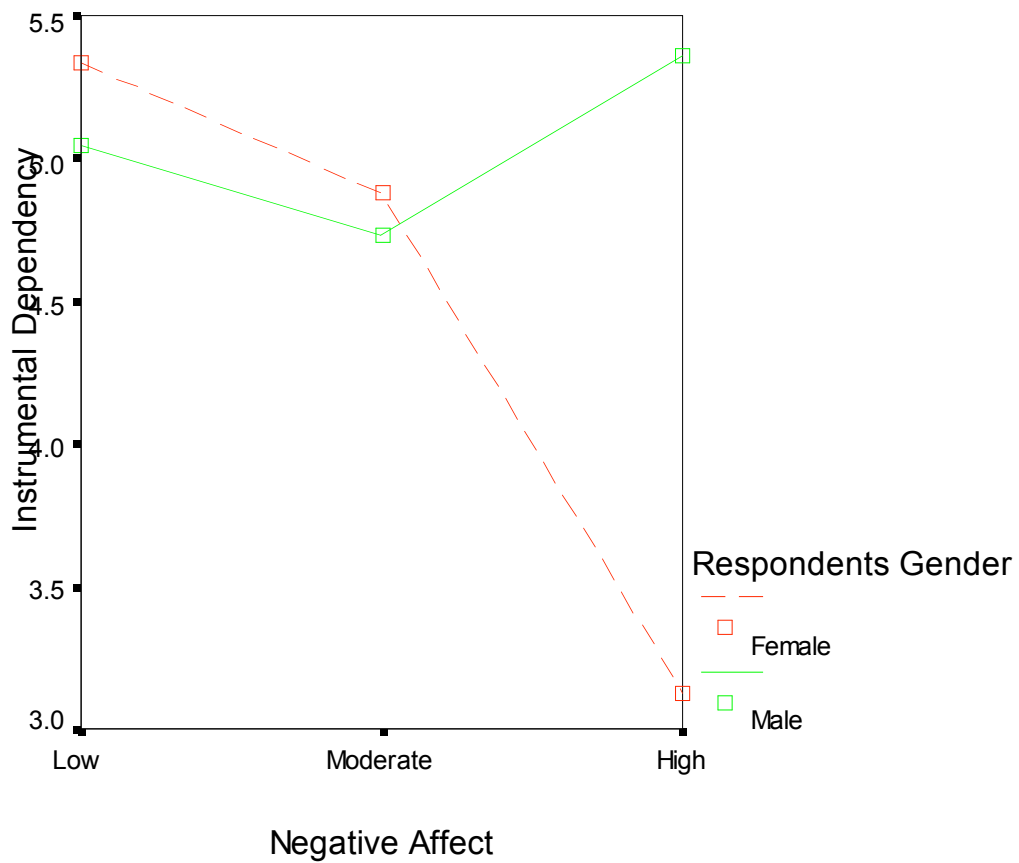


Figure 2

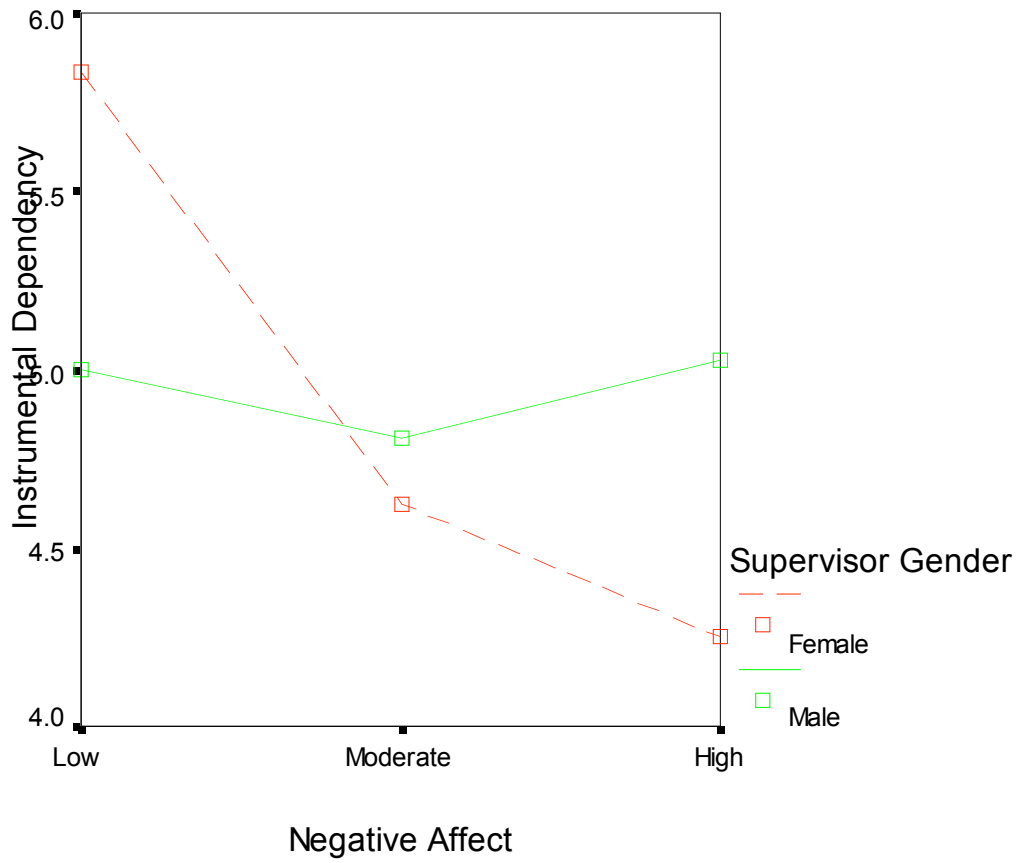


Figure 3

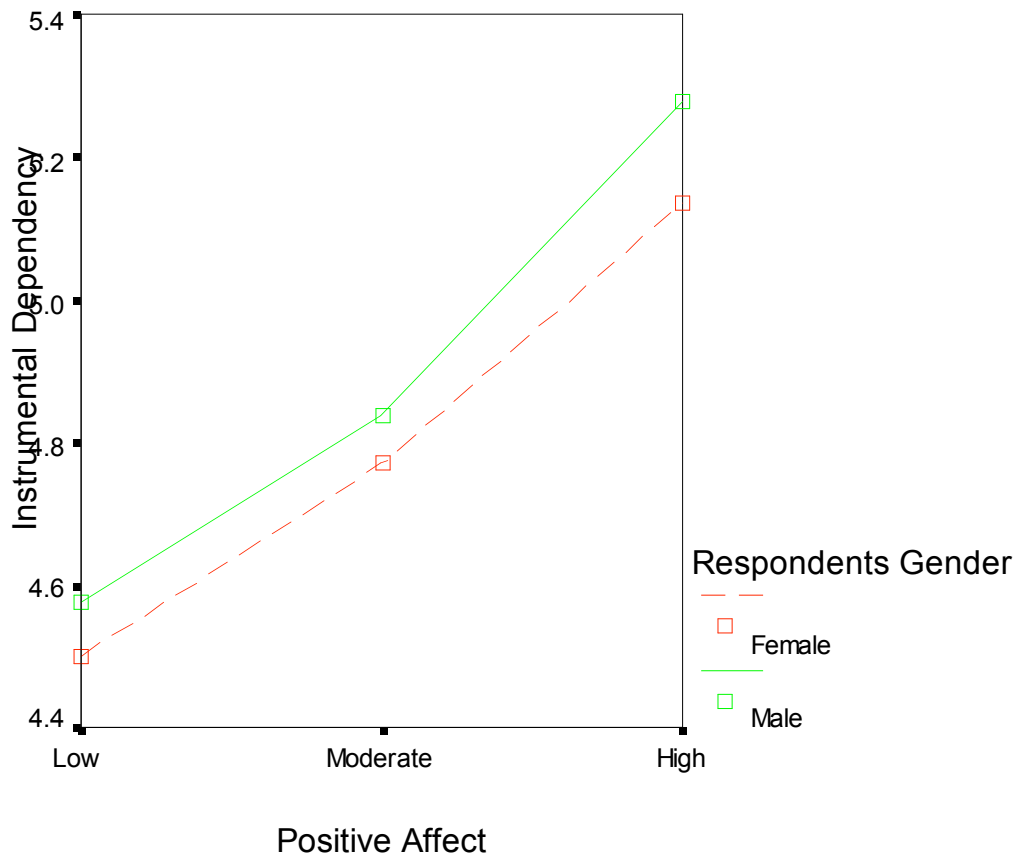


Figure 4

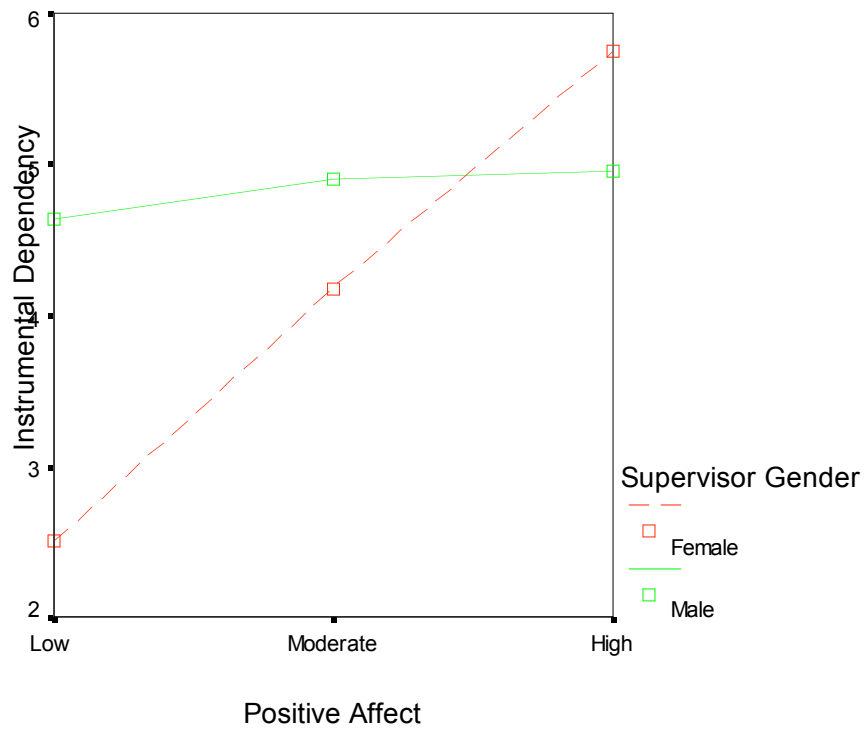
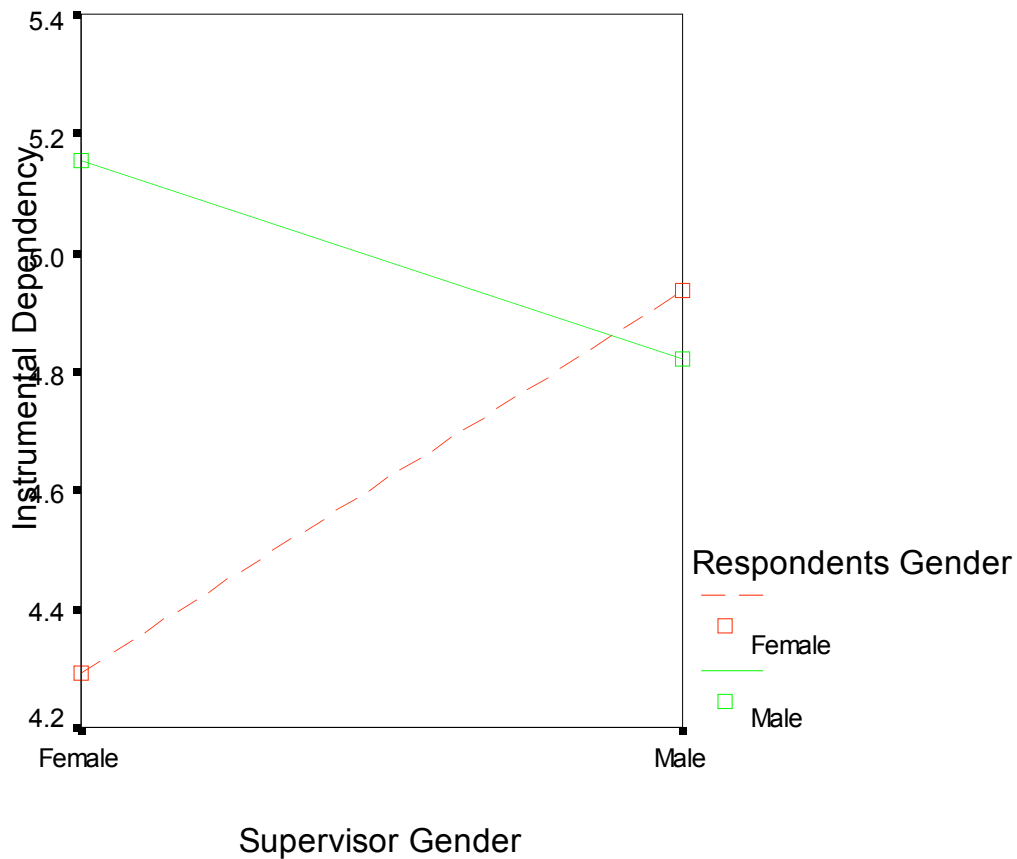


Figure 5



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