

Running head: SOCIAL INFLUENCE TACTICS

**Social Influence Tactics and Influence Outcomes:  
The Role of Leader-Member Exchange and Culture**

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### Abstract

Building upon theories linking social influence with LMX and cross-cultural management, and deriving hypotheses from leadership and influence literatures, we examined in a 6 x 2 x 2 between-participants full-factorial design the effect of three factors on the relative effectiveness of the use of social power: social influence tactics (six conditions: ingratiation, exchange of benefits, rationality, assertiveness, upward appeal, and coalition), LMX (two conditions: low-LMX and high-LMX), and culture (two countries: Canada and Malaysia). The first two factors were manipulated independent variables and the third one was a subject variable. Data were obtained from 609 undergraduate business students from a Western public university in Canada ( $n = 249$ ) and a public University in Malaysia ( $n = 360$ ). Results show that LMX does make a difference in the effective use of influence tactics. Influence tactics such as ingratiation, exchange, and rationality are more effective with high-LMX subordinates than with low-LMX subordinates. However, assertiveness, upward appeal, and coalition tactics of influence make no difference for low- and high-LMX subordinates. In addition, country culture acts as a moderator in that leader's use of influence tactics are more effective with Malaysian subordinates than with Canadian subordinates. However, the tactic of ingratiation is equally effective regardless of country cultures. Aspiring leaders need to be aware that their social influence is associated with various degrees of their relationship with their subordinates and the cultural context and may therefore wish to attempt to manage their use of power accordingly.

*Keywords:* Influence Tactics, LMX, Cultural Orientation

Leaders' effective use of social influence tactics plays an important role in shaping subordinate behavior and productivity (Kipnis, Schmidt, & Wilkinson, 1980; Yukl, 2013). The effectiveness of influence tactics depends, to a greater extent, on contextual factors such as the quality of the leader-subordinate relationship (Michela, 2008; Sparrowe, Soetjito, & Kraimer, 2006; Tepper, Eisenbach, Kirby, & Potter, 1998) and the national culture (Ferris, Hochwarter, Douglas, et al., 2002). While scholars (e.g., Dienesch & Liden, 1986; Schriesheim, Castro, & Yammarino, 2000; Sparrowe et al., 2006) have emphasized the importance of studying influence tactics in the context of LMX, only a few studies (Furst & Cable, 2008; Sparrowe et al., 2006; Yukl, Michel, Schriesheim, & Neider, 2006) have examined the relationship between LMX and the effectiveness of downward influence tactics. In addition, the role of culture in choice and effectiveness of influence tactics (Ferris et al., 2002) has been suggested, thus leading to calls for additional cross-cultural research examining influence behaviors (Furst & Cable, 2008).

The social influence framework developed by Kipnis et al. (1980) emphasizes how the leader exerts influence over the subordinate, and is the most widely used approach to studying social influence (Ansari, 1990; Bhal & Ansari, 2007; Schriesheim & Hinkin, 1990). While the other influence taxonomy includes a number of tactics (Yukl, 2013; Yukl, Guinan, & Soitolano, 1995), our focus here is on six tactics (Kipnis et al., 1980) that are often used in downward influence: rationality, ingratiation, exchange of benefits, assertiveness, upward appeal, and coalition. When using the *rationality* tactic, a manager offers factual evidence and logical arguments to show that the request is reasonable and relevant for the task objectives. A manager using *ingratiation* uses flattery or praise in order to influence the employee to support a proposal or carry out a request. When a manager uses the *exchange* tactic, he or she offers to reciprocate later, or offers something the employee wants, if the employee carries out the requested behavior. When using the *upward appeal* tactic, the

manager seeks the formal or informal support of those in higher organizational levels in order to influence the employee's behavior. The *assertiveness* tactic (also known as pressure, Ferris et al., 2002), involves the use of a forceful manner, the verbal expression of anger, and confrontation. Lastly, the *coalition* tactic uses the support or assistance of others to try to influence the employee to do something. These influence tactics are often grouped into three categories based on their forcefulness: (a) rational tactics (b) soft tactics like ingratiation, and (c) hard tactics such as assertiveness (Ferris et al., 2002; Sparrow et al., 2006; van Knippenberg & Steensma, 2003), as tactics within a particular group may have similar outcomes. Past research (e.g., Ansari, 1990; Kipnis et al., 1993; Yukl & Falbe, 1992; Yukl & Tracey, 1992; Yukl et al., 2003; van Knippenberg & Steensma, 2003) suggests that rational and soft tactics are used most frequently.

How well a leader uses influence tactics is a key determinant of managerial effectiveness (Yukl & Tracey, 1992) that has consequences for employees, leaders, and the organization (Kipnis et al., 1980). Thus the purpose of our research is to examine the effectiveness of manager's downward influence tactics, and how this relationship is moderated by the quality of LMX and by country culture.

### **The Effectiveness of Influence Tactics**

An influence tactic is the demonstrated use of power or power in action (Ansari, 1989), or the characteristic manner in which a request is presented (Charbonneau, 2004). That is, an influence tactic is the actual behavioral mechanism through which the leader exerts influence over the subordinates. Influence tactics vary in their effectiveness, depending on, for example, the type of tactic used and the relationship between the parties (Falbe & Yukl, 1992; Kipnis et al., 1980). In downward influence, an effective outcome is one in which the employee carries out the manager's request. It is important to recognize, however, that employees can carry out the requested task begrudgingly or enthusiastically, and the different psychological processes can be initiated by the manager's influence tactics.

Kelman (1958, 2006) described three influence outcomes. In *compliance*, the individual's desire for a favorable outcome, such as gaining approval or rewards, or avoiding disapproval or punishment, induces the desired behavior. In *identification*, individuals accept influence to engage in behaviors in order to develop or maintain relationships, through behavioral modeling, or to fulfill role expectations. In *internalization*, the individual accepts influence to engage in particular behaviors on the basis of shared beliefs and in order to maintain value congruency.

As soft tactics are more likely to signal to employees that the manager respects them (Sparrowe et al., 2006) and are, therefore, likely to promote shared beliefs and higher quality relationships with the manager, we suggest that employees are more likely to respond to soft influence tactics with identification and internalization. Indeed, the limited empirical evidence shows that soft tactics, like inspirational appeal (Falbe & Yukl, 1992; Yukl & Tracey, 1992), consultation, and rational persuasion (Yukl & Tracey, 1992) are more likely to result in commitment (i.e., internalization). The use of hard tactics, on the other hand, may signal to employees that the manager questions the employees' abilities and motivation (Sparrowe et al., 2006), which should result in employees' compliance. And, in fact, research has also shown that hard tactics, such as assertiveness (or pressure), coalitions, and upwards appeal are more likely to result in compliance or resistance (Falbe & Yukl, 1992; Yukl & Tracey, 1992). Accordingly, we predict that:

*Hypothesis 1.* Influence tactics used by supervisors are related to influence outcomes (compliance, identification, and internalization).

*Hypothesis 1a:* Rational influence tactics (such as rationality) and soft influence tactics (such as exchange of benefits and ingratiation) used by supervisors have stronger positive impact on identification and internalization than on compliance.

*Hypothesis 1b:* Hard tactics (such as assertiveness, coalition, and upward appeal) used by supervisors have stronger positive impact on compliance than on identification and internalization.

### **LMX as a Moderator of Influence Effectiveness**

Leader-member exchange (LMX) reflects the quality of the supervisor-subordinate relationship (Graen & Scandura, 1987; Michela, 2008). According to LMX theory, the quality of the relationship between a supervisor and each subordinate can vary within a workgroup such that some employees are part of the "in-group" while others are part of the "out-group" (Sparrowe et al., 2006). As LMX appears to affect the use and effectiveness of influence tactics, some researchers (e.g., Dienesch & Liden, 1986; Schriesheim et al., 2000; Sparrowe et al., 2006) have emphasized the importance of studying social influence in the context of LMX.

Managers vary their use of influence tactics with the quality of the LMX relationship with their subordinates: rational tactics and soft tactics like ingratiation are used more frequently in high-quality LMX relationships (Yukl et al., 2006). This may be due to the fact that high-quality LMX relationships are beneficial for managers, and in order to maintain those relationships, supervisors must remain attentive and responsive to subordinates' needs and feelings, and therefore rely on more time-consuming influence tactics, such as rational persuasion, in order to protect the relationship (Yukl et al., 2006).

Employees are equally attentive to the type of influence tactic their manager uses with them: they rely on this information to form beliefs about their relative status and standing within the group (Michela, 2008; Sparrowe et al., 2006). For example, soft influence tactics signal that the manager recognizes and respects employees' contributions to the workgroup, and can reinforce LMX if it is high (Sparrowe et al., 2006). Yukl et al. (2006) also observed a positive relationship between LMX and ingratiation, and suggested that soft tactics which include recognition and praise can

strengthen relationships and regard when they are sincere. On the other hand, when LMX is low, soft tactics that appeal to employee aspirations, goals, and values can be perceived as empty exchanges (Sparrowe et al., 2006). Yukl et al. (2006) found that the effectiveness of some soft tactics depends on the quality of the LMX relationship. For example, when LMX is high, ingratiation reduced resistance, whereas when LMX is low, ingratiation increased resistance. The relationship between LMX and exchange, however, was not significant, perhaps because subordinates trust that the manager will reward them appropriately in high-quality relationships, and thus exchange tactics are less relevant in high quality LMX relationships (Yukl et al., 2006). Since rational persuasion tactics often rely on non-verifiable subjective opinions, they are more common and are more likely to be effective when the employee trusts the supervisor, as in high-LMX relationships (Yukl et al., 2006). Hard tactics

Hard tactics are perceived by employees as being unfair and damaging to their dignity (Tepper et al., 1998). Hard tactics communicate a lack of respect, and may be cues that the manager questions the employee's motivation and holds them in lower standing (Sparrowe et al., 2006). Hard tactics are unsuitable when LMX is high, as tactics like pressure or assertiveness, are likely to make employees resentful, and can undermine trust (Yukl et al., 2006) and endanger the relationship (van Knippenberg & Steensma, 2003). Hard tactics appear less effective when LMX is low, as tactics like sanctions and legitimation have been shown to increase employee resistance (Sparrowe et al., 2006)/

Furst and Cable (2008) have suggested that attribution processes may help explain how employees respond to supervisors' influence attempts, as employees' existing perceptions of their manager-employee relationship shapes their interpretation of influence tactics. When the LMX relationship is strong, employees are more likely to attribute influence tactics (especially hard tactics) to situational factors, and are less likely to resist complying. In contrast, when the LMX relationship is weak

and employees are accustomed to more antagonistic interactions with their supervisor, influence tactics are more likely to be seen as suspicious and are more likely to result in resistance (Furst & Cable, 2008). Looking beyond resistance behaviors, this suggests that in high-quality LMX relationships, influence tactics are more likely to result in compliance, identification, or internalization than in low-quality LMX relationships.

*Hypothesis 2.* Leader-member exchange (LMX) moderates the relationship between influence tactics and influence outcomes, such that each influence tactic has a stronger positive impact on influence outcomes tactics for high-LMX subordinates than for low LMX subordinates.

### **Culture as a Moderator of Influence Tactics Effectiveness**

Societal cultural orientations also affect employee reactions to managerial influence tactics (Fu & Yukl, 2000; Furst & Cable, 2008). Cultures differ on a number of key dimensions (see Clugston, Howell, & Dorfman, 2000; Hofstede, 1980). We focus here on two cultural dimensions which differ across individuals and countries: power distance and collectivism. Power distance reflects individuals' beliefs regarding the degree to which power should be distributed unequally (Hofstede, 1980), and the extent of status and privilege to which supervisors are entitled (Hofstede, 1980). Collectivism reflects the degree to which collective action is encouraged and rewarded (Hofstede, 1980), and is characterized by norms that emphasize in-group harmony and embeddedness, security, and duty (Clugston et al., 2000).

Studies have shown that managers in high power-distance cultures (such as Malaysia) are more likely to use tactics like assertiveness (Schermerhorn & Bond, 1991), legitimizing (Furst & Cable, 2008; Pasa, 2000), sanctions (Furst & Cable, 2008), or coalitions and upward appeals (Fu & Yukl, 2000), as hard influence tactics are less aversive in high power distance cultures (Furst & Cable, 2008). Managers in low

power distance cultures (such as Canada) are more likely to use rational persuasion (Fu & Yukl, 2000; Pasa, 2000; Schermerhorn & Bond, 1991), exchange (Fu & Yukl, 2000; Schermerhorn & Bond, 1991), or ingratiation, since hard or highly assertive tactics are more likely to result in employee resistance (Schermerhorn & Bond, 1991). Pasa (2000) noted that in societies with high power distance, managers often do not need to actively influence employees, as employees will comply with requests simply on the basis of the manager's implicit authority.

In collectivist cultures, assertive tactics are often ineffective as they have negative effects on team cohesion (Fu et al., 2004), and collectivist managers have been found to consider coalitions and upwards appeals (Fu & Yukl, 2000), or indirect forms of influence (Yukl, Fu, & McDonald, 2003) as most effective.

*Hypothesis 3.* Country culture moderates the relationship between influence tactics and influence outcomes such that the impact of rational influence tactics is greater in countries with low power distance and low collectivism than in countries with high power distance and high collectivism. On the other hand, the impact of hard influence tactics will be greater in countries with high power distance and collectivism, than in countries with lower power distance and low collectivism.

In the paucity of empirical research integrating influence, LMX, and culture, we make no prediction about three-way interaction effects.

## Method

### Participants

Participants were 609 undergraduate business school students from a Western public university in Canada ( $n = 249$ ) and a public University in Malaysia ( $n = 360$ ). They were mostly in the age range of 20 to 25 years ( $M = 22.13$ ;  $SD = 3.41$ ). There were 393 female

(64.50%) and 216 male (35.5%) participants. Self-reported ethnicity of the participants in Malaysia was as follows: 35.1% Malay, 18.9% Chinese, and 4.1% Indian and others. Self-reported ethnicity in Canada was as follows: 4.9% Asia-Pacific Islander, 30.2% Caucasian/White. On average, they had 4.1 years ( $SD = 4.19$ ) of working experience and 1.7 years ( $SD = 3.79$ ) of supervisory experience.

### Experimental Design and Procedure

We implemented a  $6 \times 2 \times 2$  between-participants full factorial design including three factors: (a) social influence tactics (six conditions: ingratiation, exchange of benefits, rationality, assertiveness, upward appeal, and coalition), (b) LMX (two conditions: low-LMX and high-LMX), and (c) culture (two countries: Canada and Malaysia). The first two factors were manipulated independent variables and the third one was a subject variable. Since the first two independent variables were manipulated, we employed 12 versions of the scenario, each representing a particular experimental treatment. Table 1 reports a distribution of respondents in each experimental condition. That is, we crossed six types of influence tactics by two levels of LMX. We used between-participants as opposed to a within-participants design to avoid any potential contrast biases that may occur if the same study participant is asked to provide information on all treatment conditions. Specifically, asking the same participant to respond to all conditions may exaggerate differences between them due to contrast effects (Aguinis, 2009; Fiske & Taylor, 1991). An additional advantage of using a between-participants design is that some participants respond to one stimulus, whereas others respond to a different stimulus. Consequently, although all participants are exposed to the same dependent measures, they are exposed to different stimuli, which reduces the threat that common-source variance may affect the study's results (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, & Podsakoff, 2012).

We asked the participants to read a one-page scenario and then to respond to the dependent measure and other scale items. The

experimental materials were administered to the business students in classroom-like situations.

### Experimental Manipulations

The manipulation of independent variables—influence tactics and LMX—was done through a three-section scenario.<sup>1</sup> A brief description of the experimental manipulation of independent variables is presented below.

The first paragraph of Section 1 described the quality of relationship between the supervisor and subordinate (i.e., LMX). The second paragraph of Section 1 included the manipulation for influence tactics. After reading a two-paragraph complete vignette, the participants were asked to respond to the dependent measures. Sections 2 and 3 contained cultural orientation items and demographic items, respectively.

**LMX.** A review of the literature (see, for example, Bhal & Ansari, 2000; Bernerth, Armenakis, Feild, Giles, & Walker, 2007) indicates that there are several scales available to assess the quality of LMX. However, of all the instruments available, two have been found to be quite popular and widely used in leadership research. One is LMX-7 (Graen, Novak, & Sommerkamp, 1982) and another is LMX-MDM (Liden & Maslyn, 1998). The essential difference between the two is that LMX-7 is unidimensional, whereas LMX-MDM is a multidimensional scale. Because of the wide coverage of LMX-MDM (i.e., multidimensionality), we chose multidimensional perspective in this research. The multidimensional perspective of LMX consists of four inter-related dimensions: (a) *Contribution*—the perception of the amount, direction, and quality of work-oriented activity each member puts forth toward the mutual goals of the dyad; (b) *Loyalty*—the extent to which both the leader and the member express public support for each other's actions and character; (c) *Affect*—the mutual affection members of the dyad have for each other based primarily on interpersonal attraction, rather than work or professional values; and (d) *Professional respect*—the perception of the degree to which each member of the dyad has built a reputation,

within and/or outside the organization, of excelling at his or her line of work. Thus, based on this multidimensional perspective, our LMX manipulation scenario read as follows:

*You work for a reputed multinational company as a manager. Your job is to assist your immediate superior in making sure that your department functions smoothly. You've been working under your present supervisor for about two years. You like your supervisor and enjoy working with him/her. You've a high respect for him/her and you admire his/her professional competence. On your making honest mistakes, your supervisor defends you if you are attacked by others. In return, you work for your supervisor that goes beyond what is specified in your job descriptions. (High-LMX)*

*You work for a reputed multinational company as a manager. Your job is to assist your immediate superior in making sure that your department functions smoothly. You've been working under your present supervisor for about two years. You do not like your supervisor, nor do you enjoy working with him/her. You've no respect for him/her; and you've no admiration for his/her professional competence. Even if you make honest mistakes, your supervisor does not defend you if others attack you. In return, you work for your supervisor only to the extent that is specified in your job descriptions. (Low-LMX)*

**Influence tactics.** This independent variable (i.e., influence tactics) was also manipulated by means of a scenario for each of the six influence tactics: ingratiation, exchange of benefits, rationality, assertiveness, upward appeal, and coalition. The paragraph read as follows:

*Now imagine that, in handling your day-to-day responsibilities, you have encountered complicated problems that*

*may affect your department's effectiveness. You already have a plan on how to handle the problems and went to see your immediate supervisor to discuss it. Instead of accepting your idea, your immediate superior offers another strategy and wants you to follow it...* (At this point, a particular influence tactic was introduced)<sup>2</sup>.

The manipulation for each of the six influence tactics was as follows:

*While suggesting another strategy, he/she acted very humbly, made you feel good, and acted in a friendly manner.* [Ingratiation]

*While suggesting another strategy, he/she reminded you of past favors and offered to grant you favors if you would do what he/she wanted.* [Exchange of benefits]

*While suggesting another strategy, he/she used logic to convince you—that is, he/she presented you with information in support of his/her point of view.* [Rationality]

*While suggesting another strategy, he/she had a showdown in which he/she confronted with you face-to-face, expressed his/her anger verbally, and used a forceful manner.* [Assertiveness]

*While suggesting another strategy, he/she obtained the informal support of higher-ups, or made a formal appeal to higher levels of the chain of command to back up his/her request.* [Upward Appeal]

*While suggesting another strategy, he/she obtained the support of his/her peers and/or subordinates to back up his/her request.* [Coalition]

Participants were then asked to indicate their degree of agreement or disagreement with each dependent measure item. Also built in the scenario were manipulation check items (described later). After reading a complete scenario and responding to the dependent measures, participants also responded to demographic and cultural orientation scale items.

## Measures

Except for demographic items, all other measures required the participants to rate on a 7-point scale. The items in each scale were summed and then averaged to arrive at an overall score for the scale. Higher scores represented higher levels of each of the constructs.

***Influence outcomes.*** Influence outcomes were conceptualized based on the classic work by Kelman (1958, 2006) in terms of compliance, identification, and internalization. Compliance is acceptance of influence due to a desire to gain rewards and avoid punishments from the immediate supervisor, identification portrays acceptance of influence to maintain satisfying relationship with the immediate supervisor, and internalization is acceptance of influence through a perceived congruence between individual's personal values and the values exemplified by his or her immediate supervisor (Vandenberg, Self, & Seo, 1994). We assessed each influence outcome dimension with one item: "I would agree with him/her because he/she is my immediate supervisor" (Compliance), "I would feel proud of accepting my immediate superior's strategy" (Identification), and "I would accept my immediate superior's strategy primarily because it is similar to my values" (Internalization). These items were taken from the work of O'Reilly and Chatman (1986). Participants were asked to rate each item on a 7-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree*; 7 = *strongly agree*). Since the three items were interrelated (see Table 2), we also computed an overall effectiveness score (coefficient  $\alpha = .65$ ).

***Cultural orientations.*** Twelve items were used (Dorfman & Howell, 1988; Howell, Dorfman, & Clugston, 200) to assess the cultural orientations of the subordinates: power distance (6 items) and collectivism (6 items). Dorfman and Howell developed this scale as an on-going effort to extend Hofstede's (1980, 1993) work to the individual level of analysis, so that it can be used at both the micro (individual) and macro (national) levels of analysis. Evidence regarding



reliability, validity, and usefulness of the scale was found for research studies conducted in Taiwan and Mexico (Dorfman & Howell, 1988). Subordinates rated their degree of agreement with each of the 12 items on a 7-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree*; 7 = *strongly agree*). Sample items include, “Managers should seldom ask for the opinions of employees” (Power Distance) and “Being accepted by the members of your workgroup is very important” (Collectivism). The coefficients alpha for power distance and collectivism in this study were estimated to be .66 and .74, respectively. The two cultural dimensions—power distance ( $M = 3.39$ ;  $SD = 1.00$ ) and collectivism ( $M = 4.69$ ;  $SD = .80$ )—were significantly, but weakly, correlated ( $r = .20$ ,  $p < .01$ ). The choice of these two cultural dimensions in the Malaysian and Canadian context was based on the fact that (a) Malaysian culture has high collectivism traits, whereas Canadian culture has high individualism traits; and (b) Malaysian culture has been found to be high in power distance while Canadian culture has been found to be low in power distance (Hofstede, 1980, 1993). If our study also reveals similar findings, then the use of country culture would be justified—an evidence of internal validity.

**Demographic variables.** Participants provided information about their age, gender, ethnicity, and work experience.

## Results

### Check on Experimental Manipulations

Our study's internal validity relies upon how precisely the participants understood the scenario as intended when responding to the dependent measure items. Built into the scenario were four bi-polar manipulation check items to which the study participants were asked to react on a 7-point semantic differential scale by circling the chosen number in each pair that best described their immediate supervisor's influence strategy.

A consistent finding in the leadership literature (see, e.g., Erdogan & Bauer, 2010; Zhang, Wang, & Shi, 2012; Yukl, 2013) is that compared with low-LMX, a high-LMX

relationship is characterized with a relaxed, pleasant relationship. Thus, we included two items (unpleasant-pleasant; tense-relaxed) to check on LMX manipulation. We expected an effect for LMX such that participants in the high-LMX condition would assign higher rating to these items as compared to participants in the low-LMX condition. Similarly, following past research (Ansari, 1990; Kipnis & Schmidt, 1985; Kipnis et al., 1980), we included two items (irrational-rational; hard-soft) to check on influence tactics manipulation.

**LMX manipulation.** We conducted a two-factor ANOVA using LMX conditions (2 conditions: low-LMX and high-LMX) as the independent variable and each LMX manipulation item as the dependent variable. As expected, results disclosed a strong main effect of LMX for unpleasant-pleasant ( $\eta^2 = .48$ ,  $F[1,597] = 548.59$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and tense-relaxed ( $\eta^2 = .32$ ,  $F[1,597] = 282.14$ ,  $p < .01$ ) items. Specifically, participants in the high-LMX condition rated their relationship with their immediate supervisor significantly more pleasant and more relaxed ( $M = 5.53$ ;  $SD = 1.29$  and  $M = 4.71$ ;  $SD = 2.74$ , respectively) than the participants in the low-LMX condition ( $M = 2.91$ ;  $SD = 1.54$  and  $M = 2.74$ ;  $SD = 1.41$ , respectively).

**Influence tactics manipulation.** We conducted another two-factor ANOVA using influence tactic conditions as the independent variable (6 conditions: ingratiation, exchange, rationality, assertiveness, upward appeal, and coalition) and each influence tactic manipulation item as the dependent variable. We expected an effect for influence tactics such that participants in ingratiation, exchange, and rationality conditions would rate these tactics higher on irrational-rational item than those in other influence conditions. In line with our expectation, the analysis indicated a significant effect of influence tactics for irrational-rational ( $\eta^2 = .10$ ,  $F[5,595] = 13.24$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and hard-soft ( $\eta^2 = .07$ ,  $F[5,595] = 8.65$ ,  $p < .01$ ) items. Specifically, participants in ingratiation ( $M = 5.07$ ;  $SD = 1.38$ ), exchange ( $M = 4.25$ ;  $SD = 1.29$ ), upward appeal ( $M = 4.58$ ;  $SD = 1.33$ ), and rationality ( $M = 4.93$ ;  $SD = 1.20$ ) conditions

reported the use of their immediate supervisor as more rational than those in assertiveness ( $M = 3.72$ ;  $SD = 1.44$ ) and coalition ( $M = 4.44$ ;  $SD = 1.25$ ) conditions. In addition, we expected that some influence tactics such as ingratiation and rationality would be labeled significantly softer compared with other influence tactics. Clearly, participants in ingratiation ( $M = 4.50$ ;  $SD = 1.35$ ) and rationality ( $M = 4.19$ ;  $SD = 1.14$ ) conditions reported the use of these tactics by their immediate supervisor softer than those in assertiveness ( $M = 3.36$ ;  $SD = 1.40$ ) and upward appeal ( $M = 3.99$ ;  $SD = 1.26$ ) conditions. However, exchange ( $M = 4.01$ ;  $SD = 1.10$ ) and coalition ( $M = 4.06$ ;  $SD = 1.10$ ) tactics were not statistically different from other tactics ( $p > .05$ ).

**Country culture manipulation.** We examined whether Malaysian and Canadian cultures were statistically different in terms of collectivism and power distance scores. The analysis indicated that Malaysian students ( $M = 4.78$ ;  $SD = 0.74$ ) were significantly ( $F[1,607] = 11.72$ ,  $p < .01$ ) higher than Canadian students ( $M = 4.56$ ;  $SD = 0.86$ ) on collectivism. Similarly, they ( $M = 3.80$ ;  $SD = 0.92$ ) were significantly ( $F[1,607] = 200.27$ ,  $p < .01$ ) higher than Canadian students ( $M = 2.79$ ;  $SD = 0.78$ ) on power distance.

Taken together, the above findings provide evidence in support of the success of our influence tactics and LMX manipulations, thereby providing support for the internal validity of this study. In addition, use of country as independent variable was also justified for the national comparison on power distance and collectivism cultural orientations. As additional evidence in support of the manipulation, we next describe tests of the hypotheses stated earlier. Differences in different influence tactics and LMX conditions would not be found if the manipulation had been ineffective.<sup>2</sup>

### Tests of Hypotheses

We tested our hypotheses by implementing a three-factor multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) including influence tactics (6 conditions), LMX (2 conditions), and country culture (2 groups) as the independent variables and influence

effectiveness (compliance, identification, and internalization) as the dependent variables. When appropriate, this MANOVA was followed-up by univariate ANOVAs.

Results from the MANOVA indicated an effect of influence tactics (Wilks's Lambda = .95,  $F(15,1755.00) = 2.14$ ,  $p < .01$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .02$ ,<sup>3</sup>) an effect of LMX (Wilks's Lambda = .96,  $F(3,583.00) = 7.70$ ,  $p < .01$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .04$ ), an effect of country (Wilks's Lambda = .86,  $F(3,583.00) = 32.09$ ,  $p < .01$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .14$ ), an influence tactics by LMX interaction effect (Wilks's Lambda = .97,  $F(15,1609.81) = 1.38$ ,  $p < .01$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .01$ ), an influence tactics by country interaction effect (Wilks's Lambda = .97,  $F(15,1609.81) = 1.36$ ,  $p < .01$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .01$ ), and an LMX by country interaction effect (Wilks's Lambda = .96,  $F(3,583.00) = 7.24$ ,  $p < .01$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .04$ ). However, the three-way interaction effect did not reach its level of statistical significance ( $p > .05$ ).

Given the statistically significant results for the main effects of influence tactics, LMX, and country, and the interaction effects of influence tactics by LMX and influence tactics by country from the MANOVA offered support for the corresponding hypotheses, we proceeded to test our hypotheses by conducting follow-up univariate ANOVAs. Descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) for each of the three influence outcomes (compliance, identification, and internalization) as well as overall effectiveness are displayed in Table 3 and various two-way interactions are shown on Figures 1 through 4. We provide a brief description of our interaction results below.

First, our analysis (see Table 3) for compliance reveals that ingratiation, upward appeal, and coalition tactics of influence were significantly more effective than rationality, exchange, and assertiveness. However, of interest were the significant influence by LMX and influence by country interactions. Figure 1a suggests that ingratiation and rationality tactics of influence were significantly more effective in gaining compliance from high-LMX subordinates than from low-LMX subordinates, whereas upward appeal and coalition were more

effective to influence low-LMX subordinates than high-LMX subordinates. Assertiveness as a tactic of influence was found to be least effective, regardless of the exchange relationship. Hypothesis 2 was therefore partially supported. Culture did also modify the relationship between influence tactics and compliance as an indicator of effectiveness. Specifically, ingratiation as a tactic of influence was more effective in gaining compliance in the Canadian context than in the Malaysian context, whereas assertiveness was more effective in the Malaysian context than in the Canadian context. Culture made no difference in gaining compliance for other influence tactics. Thus, hypothesis 3 was partially supported.

Second, Table 3 and Figure 2 suggest that identification as an indicator of influence effectiveness has interesting results. We found that tactics of ingratiation, rationality, assertiveness, and upward appeal were more effective in developing identification with high-LMX subordinates than with low-LMX subordinates. But LMX made no difference for the use of exchange and coalition tactics of influence (Figure 2a). Interestingly, culture made a great difference in the effective use of influence tactics in developing identification. It is worthy of mention that all tactics of influence were more effective in the Malaysian context than in the Canadian context, so far as identification is concerned (Figure 2b).

Third, internalization as an indicator of effectiveness had a rather similar interaction pattern (see Table 3 and Figure 3). The analysis indicates that LMX did act as a moderator for the influence tactics-internalization relationship. Influence tactics such as ingratiation, exchange, rationality, and coalition were more effective for developing internalization with high-LMX students than with low-LMX students. But the use of assertiveness and upward appeal was not significantly different regardless of the exchange relationship with subordinates (Figure 3a). We found that culture modified the relationship between influence tactics and internalization (see Figure 3b). Except for ingratiation, all other influence tactics were significantly more effective for developing internalization in the

Malaysian context than in the Canadian context. Ingratiation was found to be equally effective regardless of cultures.

Finally, as mentioned earlier, given that the three influence outcomes were interrelated, we analyzed overall effectiveness as well by implementing a three-factor ANOVA. The analysis indicated the main effects of influence tactics, ( $F[5,585] = 2.82, p < .01, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .02$ ), LMX, ( $F[1,585] = 16.93, p < .01, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .02$ ), and country, ( $F[1,585] = 44.14, p < .01, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .07$ ), and a significant effect of influence tactics by country, ( $F[5,585] = 2.65, p < .05, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .02$ ) interaction. Influence tactics by LMX and three-way interaction were found to be non-significant. The analysis (see descriptive statistics in Table 3) revealed that ingratiation, rationality, upward appeal, and coalition were the most effective tactics of influence, whereas assertiveness and exchange of benefits tactics of influence turned out to be the least effective.

Interestingly, influence tactics interacted significantly with LMX as well as country. As can be seen in Table 3 and Figure 4a, LMX significantly moderated the relationship between influence tactics and effectiveness. Ingratiation, exchange, rationality, and assertiveness were found to be significantly more ( $p < .01$ ) effective with high-LMX subordinates than with low-LMX subordinates. However, LMX made no difference for upward appeal and coalition tactics of influence ( $p > .05$ ).

The analysis (see Table 3 and Figure 4b) with regards to influence tactics by country interaction indicated that five influence tactics—exchange, rationality, assertiveness, upward appeal, and coalition—were more effective in the Malaysian culture than in the Canadian culture. It is interesting to note that the influence tactic of ingratiation was equally effective in both countries.

### Discussion

The present study advances our understanding of social influence effectiveness in the context of LMX quality and national culture. Our findings that ingratiation and

rationality tactics are more effective when LMX is high are consistent with previous research (Yukl et al., 2006). Whereas others have suggested that ingratiation and hard tactics are less effective when LMX is low (Sparrowe et al., 2006; Yukl et al., 2006), we found that ingratiation, upward appeal, and coalition were most effective when LMX is low.

We found, as have others, that national culture significantly moderated the effectiveness of influence tactics. While ingratiation was equally effective in both countries, all other influence tactics were significantly more effective in Malaysia, which has high power distance and high collectivism culture, as compared to Canada, which is low on both of those culture dimensions. Our results appear to echo Pasa's (2000) suggestion that managers have little need for influence tactics in countries with high power distance, as employees will comply with requests simply out of respect for the manager's authority. Our findings also offer support for Furst and Cable's (2008) comments that harsh tactics are less aversive in high power-distance countries.

### **Implications for Practice**

Our findings suggest that influence tactics vary in their effectiveness, and that the quality of the LMX relationship and national culture differences significantly moderate the effectiveness of social influence tactics. Managers who promote identification or internalization, rather than compliance, should consider the quality of the LMX relationship with individual employees, and then select an appropriate influence tactic. When LMX is high, ingratiation, rationality, assertiveness, upward appeal and coalition tactics are best suited to promoting identification and internalization outcomes among subordinates. When LMX is low, managers should rely on coalition tactics to promote identification outcomes, and upward appeals to promote internalization outcomes.

Our study also shows that national culture has an important bearing on influence effectiveness. In Malaysia, where power distance and collectivism are high, all six forms of influence are effective, with coalition tactics

showing the highest overall effectiveness. In Canada, where power distance and collectivism are low, there is greater variance in the effectiveness of influence tactics, although tactics such as ingratiation and rationality are most effective overall. These results suggest that managers should select influence tactics that are best suited to the national culture of their employees.

### **Potential Limitations**

As with all organizational research, some limitations in our study must be acknowledged. First, all measures in our study were self-reported. This was necessary as individual's reactions to influence attempts, with respect to outcomes such as compliance, identification, and internalization, are private and cannot readily be observed. Second, by using a cross-sectional design for the experiments, all the measures were collected at a single point in time, which could give rise to concerns about common method variance (Cook & Campbell, 1979). We used several procedural remedies to reduce the likelihood of response biases, such as assuring participants of the anonymity and confidentiality of their responses, and by separating scale items (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, & Podsakoff, 2003). Third, the use of an experimental methodology with a student sample might raise concerns over the generalizability of the results. However, given that experimental designs permit the assessment of causality, and appear in the social influence literature (e.g., Kelman, 2006; Wayne & Ferris, 1990), this trade-off was worthwhile (Cook & Campbell, 1979). Students can be expected to behave the same as other populations (van Knippenberg & van Knippenberg, 2005), and may be as useful as non-student samples in understanding the processes underlying organizational phenomena (Greenberg, 1987).

### **Conclusion**

Building upon theories linking social influence with LMX and cross-cultural management, and deriving hypotheses from the leadership as well as influence literatures, the present results show that the use of social power is a function of leader-member exchange and the cultural context. Specifically, LMX did make a

difference in the effective use of influence tactics. Influence tactics such as ingratiation, exchange, and rationality were more effective with high-LMX subordinates than with low-LMX subordinates. However, assertiveness, upward appeal, and coalition tactics of influence made no difference for low- and high-LMX subordinates. In addition, country culture acts as a moderator in that leader's use of influence tactics are more effective with Malaysian subordinates than with Canadian subordinates. However, the tactic of ingratiation was equally effective regardless of country cultures. Aspiring leaders need to be aware that their social influence is associated with various degrees of their relationship with their subordinates and the cultural context and may therefore wish to attempt to manage their use of power accordingly. Finally, our article points to the need to investigate variables beyond LMX and that are more directly relevant to various cultural contexts that may differentiate the effectiveness of various influence tactics.

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### Footnotes

<sup>1</sup>Scenarios may not reflect the dynamism of supervisor-subordinate relationships as accurate as videotapes or live enactments do. However, vignettes do allow researchers remove several potential confounds and extraneous sources of variance that other methods may introduce (Aguinis, Simonsen, & Pierce, 1998). Thus, through vignettes, we can manipulate supervisors' use of influence tactics and the quality of supervisor-subordinate exchange with greater precision and a high degree of experimental control. In addition, previous researchers have successfully manipulated supervisor-subordinates relationships through

vignettes (e.g., Ansari & Kapoor, 1987; Ansari, Tandon, & Lakhtakia, 1987; Fu & Yukl, 2000; Leong, Bond, & Fu, 2007). In our research, the use of scenarios had several benefits such as the standardization of the stimulus materials and the capability to manipulate and compare specific experimental conditions.

<sup>2</sup>We checked on experimental manipulations for the two countries—Canada and Malaysia—separately and found identical results.

<sup>3</sup>Eta-squared (i.e.,  $\eta^2$ ) and partial  $\eta^2$  values are often reported as estimates of effect size in multifactor analyses of variance. However, partial  $\eta^2$  is a more appropriate estimate of effect size in this particular situation given that we are interested in assessing the impact of a factor on an outcome controlling for the impact of the other factors included in the research design (Pierce, Block, & Aguinis, 2004).

Table 1

*Distribution of Participants Treatment-wise*

Independent Variable Manipulations		Influence Tactics						Total
		Ingratiation	Exchange of Benefits	Rationality	Assertiveness	Upward Appeal	Coalition	
LMX	Low	42	90	49	47	41	44	313
	High	46	56	52	52	47	43	296
Total		88	146	101	99	88	87	609

Table 2

*Descriptive Statistics and Intercorrelations of Dependent Measures*

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4
1. Compliance	4.18	1.28	<b>SIM</b>			
2. Identification	3.68	1.33	.37**	<b>SIM</b>		
3. Internalization	4.20	1.38	.29**	.49**	<b>SIM</b>	
4. Overall Effectiveness	4.02	1.02	.71**	.81**	.79**	<b>.65</b>

*Note.*  $N = 609$ ; SIM = Single-item measure; diagonal entry in bold indicates coefficient alpha.

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

Table 3

*Mean (SD) Scores on Effectiveness as a Function of Influence Tactics, LMX and Culture*

<i>Influence Tactics</i>	<i>LMX</i>	<i>Culture</i>	<i>Compliance</i>	<i>Identification</i>	<i>Internalization</i>	<i>Overall Effectiveness</i>
Ingratiation	Low-LMX	Canada	4.20 (1.44)	3.05 (1.28)	4.00 (1.84)	3.75 (1.22)
		Malaysia	4.18 (0.91)	3.77 (1.15)	4.23 (1.11)	4.06 (0.74)
		Total	4.19 (1.17)	3.43 (1.25)	4.12 (1.49)	3.91 (1.00)
	High-LMX	Canada	5.14 (1.01)	3.76 (0.83)	4.86 (1.11)	4.59 (0.67)
		Malaysia	4.44 (1.12)	3.76 (1.13)	4.52 (1.19)	4.24 (0.86)
		Total	4.76 (1.12)	3.76 (0.99)	4.67 (1.16)	4.40 (0.79)
	Total	Canada	4.68 (1.31)	3.41 (1.12)	4.44 (1.55)	4.18 (1.05)
		Malaysia	4.32 (1.02)	3.77 (1.13)	4.38 (1.15)	4.16 (0.80)
		Total	4.49 (1.17)	3.60 (1.13)	4.41 (1.35)	4.17 (0.92)
Exchange of Benefits	Low-LMX	Canada	4.32 (1.42)	2.63 (1.21)	3.21 (1.40)	3.39 (0.94)
		Malaysia	4.07 (1.20)	3.92 (1.16)	4.37 (1.15)	4.12 (0.92)
		Total	4.12 (1.24)	3.64 (1.28)	4.12 (1.29)	3.96 (0.97)
	High-LMX	Canada	4.00 (1.41)	3.26 (1.56)	4.07 (1.54)	3.78 (1.08)
		Malaysia	3.97 (1.05)	4.21 (0.98)	4.72 (1.00)	4.30 (0.78)
		Total	3.98 (1.23)	3.75 (1.37)	4.41 (1.32)	4.05 (0.96)
	Total	Canada	4.13 (1.41)	3.00 (1.45)	3.72 (1.53)	3.62 (1.03)
		Malaysia	4.04 (1.15)	4.00 (1.11)	4.47 (1.11)	4.17 (0.88)
		Total	4.07 (1.24)	3.68 (1.31)	4.23 (1.30)	4.00 (0.96)
Rationality	Low-LMX	Canada	3.82 (1.65)	3.05 (1.59)	3.45 (1.44)	3.44 (1.20)
		Malaysia	3.78 (1.34)	3.96 (1.29)	4.19 (1.39)	3.98 (1.03)
		Total	3.80 (1.47)	3.55 (1.49)	3.86 (1.44)	3.73 (1.13)
	High-LMX	Canada	4.57 (1.24)	3.96 (1.19)	4.39 (1.37)	4.30 (0.67)
		Malaysia	4.31 (0.94)	4.52 (0.95)	4.41 (0.95)	4.41 (0.64)
		Total	4.42 (1.07)	4.27 (1.09)	4.40 (1.14)	4.37 (0.65)
	Total	Canada	4.20 (1.49)	3.51 (1.46)	3.93 (1.47)	3.88 (1.05)
		Malaysia	4.05 (1.17)	4.25 (1.15)	4.30 (1.17)	4.20 (0.87)
		Total	4.12 (1.31)	3.92 (1.34)	4.14 (1.32)	4.06 (0.96)
		Canada	3.50 (1.70)	2.20 (1.28)	3.05 (1.85)	2.92 (1.32)

Assertiveness	Low-LMX	Malaysia	4.15 (0.95)	3.89 (1.42)	4.37 (1.04)	4.14 (0.80)
		Total	3.87 (1.35)	3.17 (1.59)	3.81 (1.57)	3.62 (1.21)
		Canada	3.81 (1.55)	3.27 (1.66)	3.88 (1.68)	3.65 (1.27)
	High-LMX	Malaysia	4.19 (1.13)	3.73 (1.25)	4.15 (1.19)	4.03 (0.98)
		Total	4.00 (1.36)	3.50 (1.48)	4.02 (1.45)	3.84 (1.14)
		Canada	3.67 (1.61)	2.80 (1.59)	3.52 (1.79)	3.33(1.33)
	Total	Malaysia	4.17 (1.03)	3.81 (1.33)	4.26 (1.11)	4.08 (0.89)
		Total	3.94 (1.35)	3.34 (1.53)	3.92 (1.51)	3.73 (1.17)
		Canada	4.06 (1.61)	2.44 (1.09)	3.25 (1.24)	3.25 (0.87)
Upward Appeal	Low-LMX	Malaysia	4.72 (1.21)	4.24 (1.39)	5.20 (1.12)	4.72 (1.01)
		Total	4.46 (1.40)	3.54 (1.55)	4.44 (1.50)	4.15 (1.20)
		Canada	4.39 (1.46)	3.78 (1.35)	4.50 (1.38)	4.22 (1.11)
	High-LMX	Malaysia	3.97 (1.09)	3.90 (0.94)	4.21 (1.26)	4.02 (0.88)
		Total	4.13 (1.24)	3.85 (1.10)	4.32 (1.30)	4.10 (0.97)
		Canada	4.24 (1.52)	3.15 (1.40)	3.91 (1.44)	3.76 (1.11)
	Total	Malaysia	4.31 (1.20)	4.06 (1.17)	4.67 (1.29)	4.35 (1.00)
		Total	4.28 (1.32)	3.70 (1.33)	4.38 (1.39)	4.12 (1.07)
		Canada	4.22 (1.59)	3.00 (1.19)	3.11 (1.81)	3.44 (1.18)
Coalition	Low-LMX	Malaysia	4.50 (1.21)	3.46 (1.17)	4.42 (1.17)	4.46 (0.90)
		Total	4.39 (1.37)	3.86 (1.37)	3.89 (1.59)	4.05 (1.13)
		Canada	4.16 (1.30)	3.26 (1.15)	3.68 (1.29)	3.70 (1.00)
	High-LMX	Malaysia	4.17 (0.82)	4.13 (1.04)	4.88 (0.95)	4.39 (0.66)
		Total	4.16 (1.04)	3.74 (1.16)	4.35 (1.25)	4.09 (0.89)
		Canada	4.19 (1.43)	3.14 (1.16)	3.41 (1.57)	3.59 (1.09)
	Total	Malaysia	4.34 (1.04)	4.30 (1.11)	4.64 (1.08)	4.43 (0.79)
		Total	4.28 (1.22)	3.80 (1.27)	4.11 (1.44)	4.07 (1.01)
		Canada	4.22 (1.59)	3.00 (1.19)	3.11 (1.81)	3.44 (1.18)

*Note.* Figures under parentheses are standard deviations.

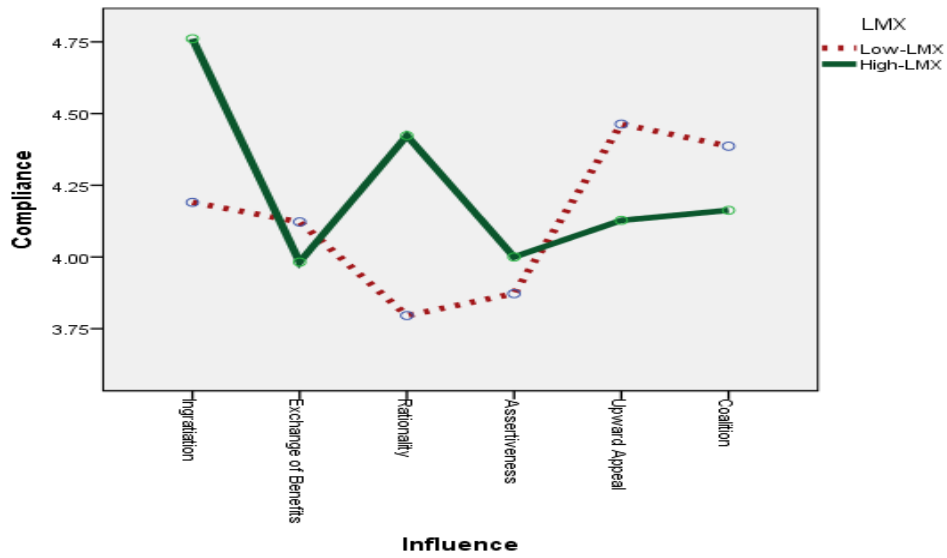


Figure 1a

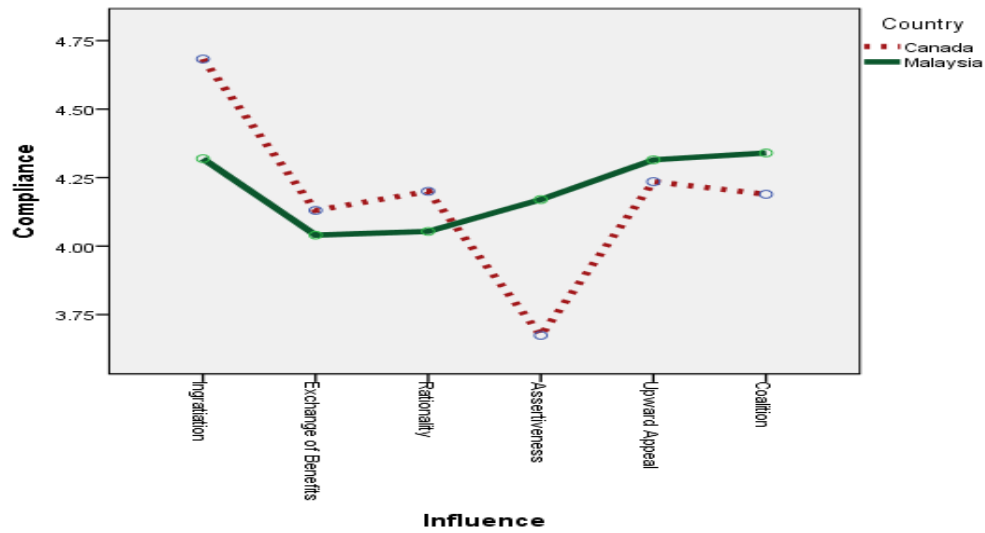


Figure 1b

Figure 1. Compliance as a function of (a) influence tactics by LMX interaction and (b) influence tactics by country interactions.

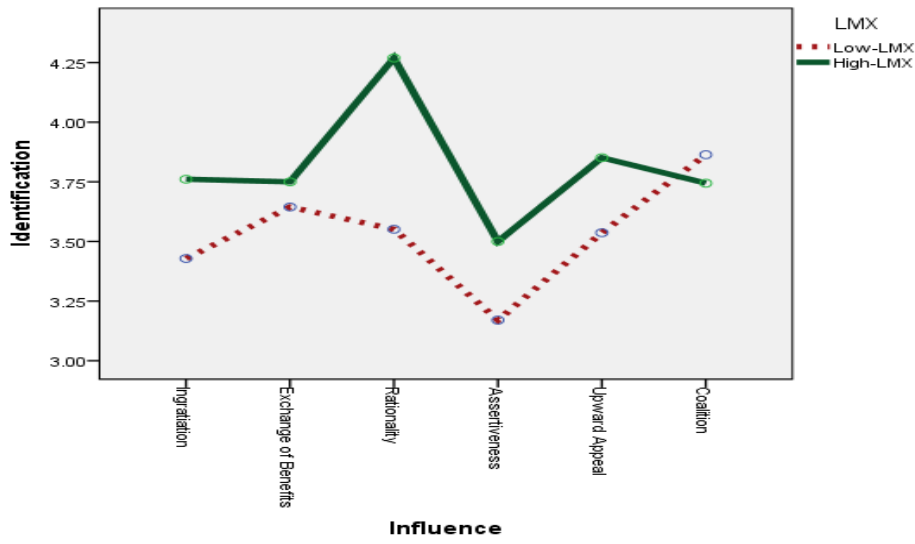


Figure 2a

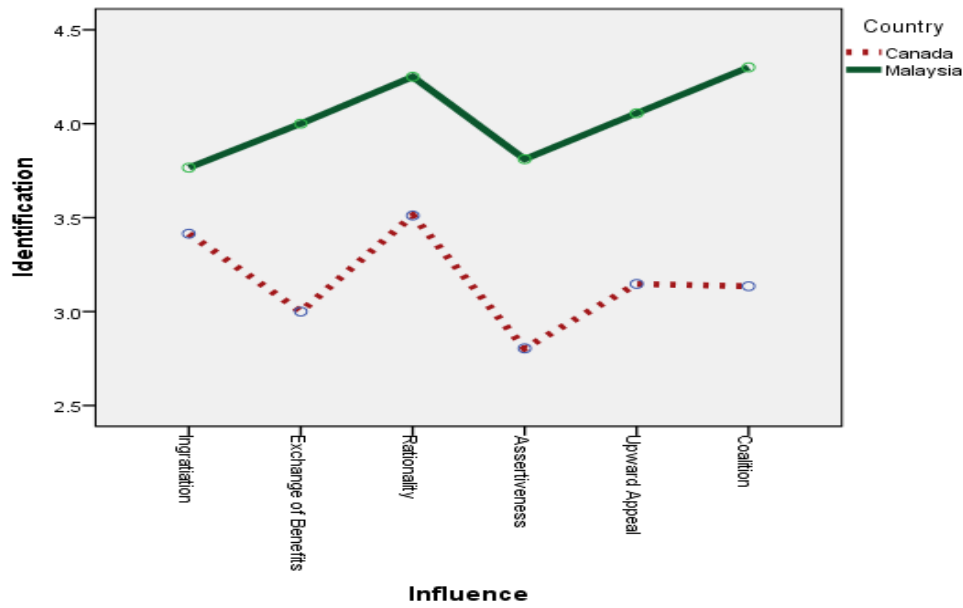


Figure 2b

Figure 2. Identification as a function of (a) influence tactics by LMX interaction and (b) influence tactics by country interactions.

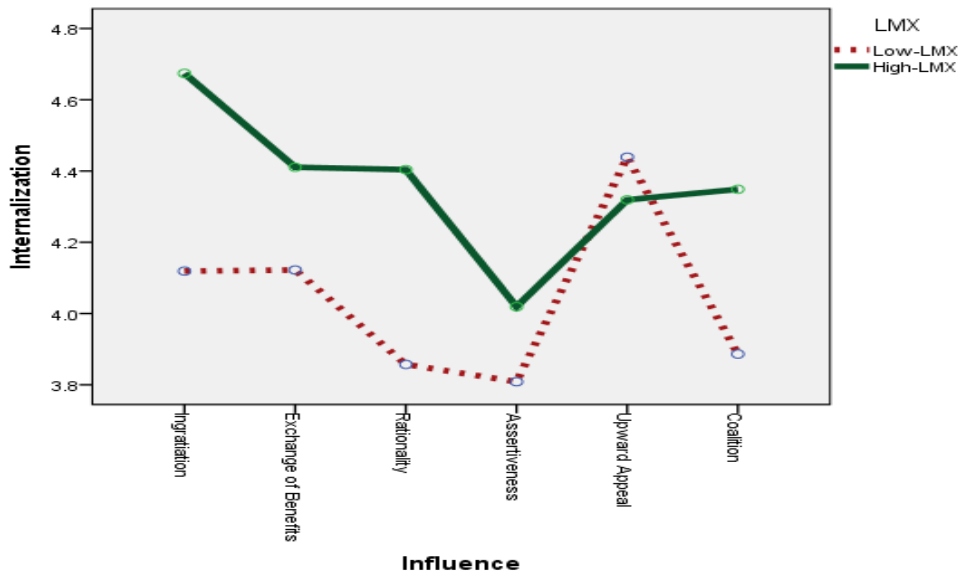


Figure 3a

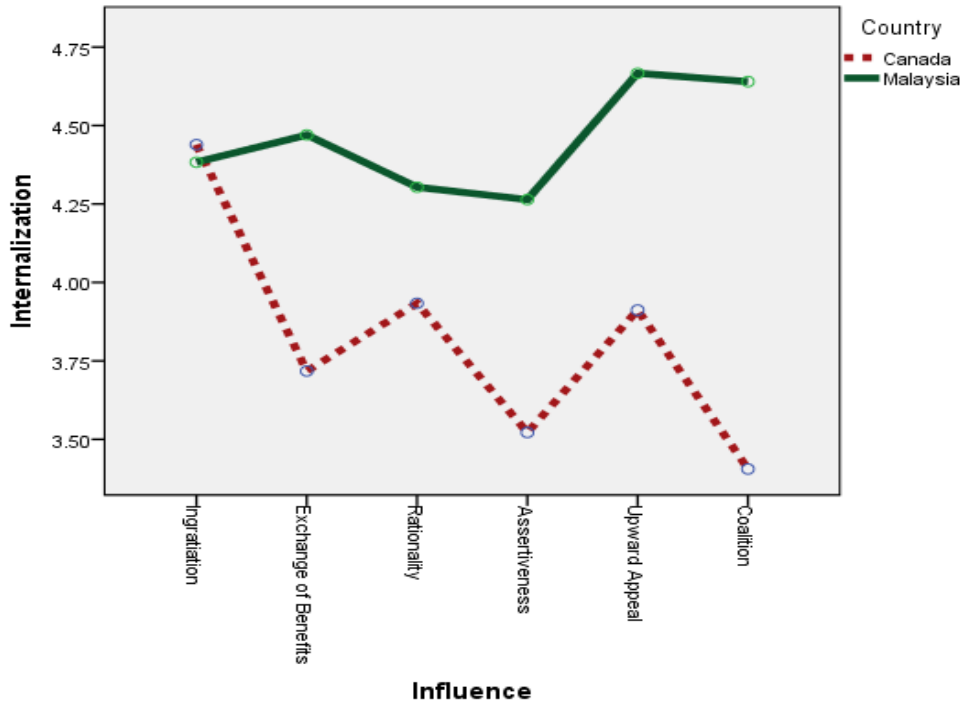


Figure 3b

Figure 3. Compliance as a function of (a) influence tactics by LMX interaction and (b) influence tactics by country interactions.

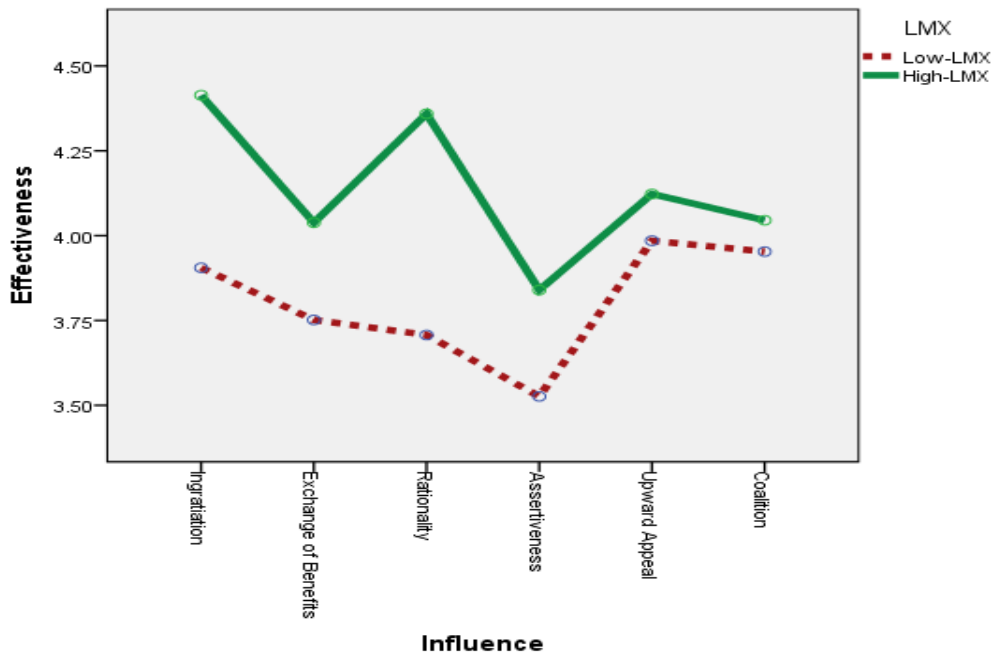


Figure 4a

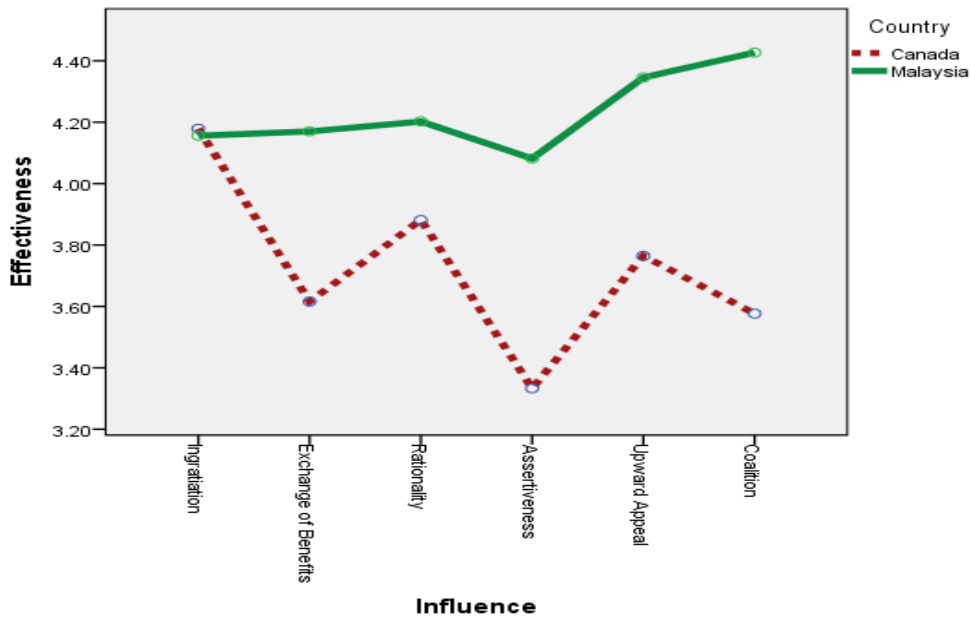


Figure 4b

Figure 4. Compliance as a function of (a) influence tactics by LMX interaction and (b) influence tactics by country interactions.