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A study of intraorganizational influence processes: The relationship between a superordinate's perception of influence strategies and effectiveness

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A STUDY IN INTRAORGANIZATIONAL INFLUENCE PROCESSES: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN A SUPERORDINATE'S PERCEPTION OF INFLUENCE STRATEGIES AND EFFECTIVENESS

by

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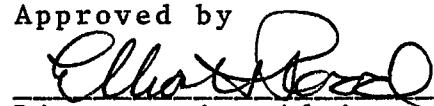

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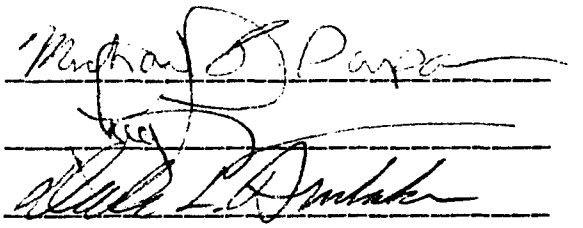
Committee Members 

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This study of upward influence stategies in the context of an academic organization attempted to determine the following: 1) the frequency of use of certain upward influence tactics of subordinate administrators and 2) the significance of the relationship between subordinate upward influence methods and the superordinate's evaluative perception of influence effectiveness. Stating the latter purpose in the form of a research hypothesis, it was believed that a significant difference would be found in the upward influence behavior of those subordinate administrators perceived as most effective and those perceived as least effective in exercising upward influence. The focus of study was the agent-target dyad of the subordinate administrator-president of selected community and technical colleges.

Data collection consisted of a self-reporting influence "profile" for each subordinate respondent and an influence effectiveness rating on each subordinate respondent. The subordinate respondents were trichotimized on the basis of evaluative perception of influence effectiveness scores to yield three distinct groups. A simple analysis of variance (ANOVA) was employed to determine if significant differences existed in the mean scores (by type of influence strategy)

of the three groups.

Subordinate administrators collectively scored high (above the 70th percentile) in frequency of use for both the friendliness and coalition strategies when compared to a norm group; they scored from low (at or below the 30th percentile) to average (between the 30th and 70th percentile) for all other strategies. Results of the ANOVA showed that the three groups (differentiated according to the presidents' evaluative perception of influence effectiveness) did not differ significantly enough in terms of frequency of use of upward influence strategies to support the research hypothesis.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Any study of leadership and organizational behavior must necessarily incorporate the study of power and influence by and among superordinates, subordinates, and colleagues. Power and influence are indigenous to organizational life and, at the interpersonal level, reflect complex and interactive relationships which are played out through the communication process.

The exercise of power and influence at some minimal level is necessary for social survival in the ebb and flow of human interaction. Indeed, we seek to exert control over our environment, to counter threats or other offensive forces that impinge on us, to achieve some sense of autonomy, to modify or to effect a change in behavior of another whose assent is a valued outcome, or to produce an intended effect on the emotions and attitudes of others (Winter, 1973; Kipnis, 1976; Tedeschi, Schlenker, & Linkskold, 1972).

Relevance of Upward Influence

Power and influence are particularly relevant to managers, administrators, or others in leadership roles in purposeful organizations. Because the exercise of

leadership does frequently involve attempts to influence subordinates to behave in compliant ways, scholars have been, for the most part, absorbed with the study of downward influence as an integral part of leadership behavior (Kipnis, Schmidt, & Wilkinson, 1980; Cheng, 1983; Mowday, 1978). Downward influence behavior is indisputably an important dimension of leadership; however, several scholars (Mowday, 1978; Schilit & Locke, 1982; Porter, Allen, & Angle, 1981) point to the upward influence process as a neglected area of leadership study.

As expected, a review of the literature reveals little meaningful research of upward influence behavior prior to 1975. Study of upward influence, up to that time, had been "guided by anecdotal evidence...[and] organized into rational classifications of power tactics" (Kipnis et al, 1980). Such rational classifications may have been adequate for the study of downward influence but seemed wholly inadequate for the more non-rational (political), upward influence processes. Fortunately, more recent study has attempted to broaden the classifications of power tactics to include rational and non-rational schemes.

Leadership and upward influence. Effective leaders ought to have the ability to exert upward influence over decision-making and resource allocation in order to be effective and to accomplish productive work in

organizations (Whetton & Cameron, 1984; Kanter, 1979; Posner & Butterfield, 1978; Jablin, 1980). Managers and administrators who are perceived by subordinates as upwardly influential in the organization are characterized as being more effective and more likely to acquire valued resources and rewards for subordinates (Kanter, 1979; Whetton & Cameron, 1984). Kanter (1979) has suggested at least eight ways in which a manager's upward influence may be favorably exercised in behalf of subordinates:

1. intercession in behalf of an individual in trouble in the organization;

2. obtaining a valued promotion or transfer or other desirable placement;

3. getting spending approvals to exceed budgeted amounts;

4. influence over agenda items for important meetings;

5. fast access to the hierarchy;

6. early information about important decisions or policy shifts;

7. salary increases; and

8. frequent contact with top decision-makers.

Moreover, employees who perceived their bosses as upwardly and outwardly influential view their own status as "enhanced by the association and they generally have high morale and feel less critical or resistant to their boss"

(Kanter, 1979, p. 68). Pelz (cited in Kelly, 1969; Jablin, 1979) conducted an important study at the Detroit Edison Company and found that the superior's upward hierarchical influence was a significant variable in determining employee satisfaction. Known generally as the "Pelz effect," it makes the following proposition:

> There is a a positive linear association between a supervisor's upward hierarchical influence and a subordinate's satisfaction with the performance of the supervisor, provided that the supervisor also exhibits a "supportive" leadership style in his/her interactions with the employee (Jablin, 1980, p. 349).

Jablin's (1980) replicative study provides support for the "Pelz effect" but warns against the indiscriminate application and generalizability to all influence situations, e.g. work-related influence versus strategic influence situations.

The "politics" of upward influence. Closely tied to the study of upward influence is the question of so-called "political" behavior. The leader who exerts upward influence cannot use formal authority (as in downward influence) and therefore depends on a different set of strategies and tactics (Porter, Allen, and Angle, 1983), many of which may be labeled "political." Such strategies and tactics are intentional acts to further the self-

interest of the actor or agent of influence---perhaps accompanied by the ostensible performance of verbal courtesies and signals which point in the other direction.

Scope and Objective

The present study focuses on upward power and influence at the interpersonal or individual level of analysis (as opposed to the subunit or organizational level of analysis). More particularly, the study focuses on the agent-target dyad of the subordinate-superordinate in organizations. Here the kinds of strategies and tactics of influence may be studied under a variety of compliance-gaining situations. Based on a review of the literature (Allen, Madison, Porter, Renwick, & Mayes, 1979; Mowday, 1978; Kanter, 1979; Brass, 1984; Kipnis et al, 1980; Cheng, 1983) in power and influence, three broadly defined factors seem to emerge which could reasonably be expected to predict upward influence behavior and which establish the necessary conditions for influence to occur; they are as follows: 1) a source or agent of influence, 2) a recipient or target of influence, and 3) a contextual or environmental setting. This observation is consistent with Cobb (1984) who has recently attempted to integrate past theory and research into an "episodic model of power." He suggested that the agent, target, and situational context are "antecedent conditions" which set the stage for power

episodes (p. 482).

The source or agent of influence. The agent of influence may possess a variety of behavioral, personality, and/or positional attributes which may affect target reaction. Something within the individual such as the degree of power motivation (Mowday, 1978) or the position of the individual in the workflow/communications network (Brass, 1984) may account for certain influence behavior.

The target of influence. The target of influence may also possess certain behavioral, personality, and/or positional attributes which may affect compliance with intentional influence attempts. For example, the amount of prestige of the target or the expected resistance offered by the target (Kipnis et al, 1980) may seriously affect influence behavior.

Contextual or environmental factors. Factors which are external to the agent and target of influence include certain situational variables like organizational culture, structure, and processes; other factors may include the timing of the influence attempt or the type of decision being influenced (Cheng, 1983; Allen, Madison et al; Cobb, 1984).

An individual exerting upward influence frequently makes strategic choices in the kind of influence target and alternative methods of influence. The agent of influence

may, for example, consider the norms of organizational behavior and the relative risk/reward ratio. The decision to exert influence and the influence behavior itself involve a variety of interwoven and sometimes interdependent elements--all major variables of interest. Additionally, there is the question of what characteristics of the agent make the agent prone to choose one influence method over another and whether such characteristics are associated with the frequency of influence attempts.

Upward influence in educational administration. Though most any kind of organization, public or private, profit or non-profit, would be appropriate for empirical study of upward influence processes, the current research will focus on the academic organization. Such organizations are highly advanced social systems fragmented by divergent interests and values resulting in special interest groups, conflict, bargaining, and negotiation. It is an organization where a strong informal communication network seems to exist, "...better controlled by social and cultural rules than the formal networks are controlled by organizational rules" (Gratz & Salem, 1981, p. 32). And despite the bureaucratic and collegial images of governance, it is very apt to follow a political model as an organizational paradigm (Baldridge, 1977). Thus, such an organization seems to be fertile ground for the study of

the micro-politics and influence processes of organizations.

Administrators can ill afford to ignore the importance of organizational dynamics at work in academic organizations. Administrative effectiveness is quite often measured by the extention of one's self into the political milieu of competing interests or estates. There seems to be little question that the success of agent administrators in academic organizations is measured in a significant way by their effectiveness in exerting influence over "target" superordinates. As Barker (1984) observes, faculty expect administrators to protect their interests and provide support for research and scholarship. Place and Sorenson (1974) found that favorable turnover rates and department morale were highly correlated to the chairperson's external relationships, i.e. his/her success in getting valued resources from his or her dean.

Despite the inherent interest and importance of internal influence processes, most research of organizational communication in higher education has concentrated on external communication rather than internal communication (Gratz & Salem, 1981). The present study attempts to redress this imbalance by sruntinizing a subset of internal organizational communication--the little noticed upward power and influence processes at work in higher education

administration.

This study concentrated on the agent-target dyad of mid-level, subordinate administrators and community/technical college presidents at selected North Carolina community and technical colleges. Subordinate administrators included deans of instruction, administrative services, student services, college transfer, career education, or similarly titled administrators reporting to and directly accountable to the president of the institution. These administrators occupy central roles in the vertical lines of authority and communication within the community/technical colleges. Since they are subordinate to presidents, they are naturally dependent upon them for certain desired outcomes relative to individual and organizational goals. Each of the administrators has frequent opportunity to exercise influence and each operates at the same basic level of the hierarchy.

Presidents, in turn, were considered as excellent condidates for selection as targets of influence by subordinate administrators. They are higher in the formal hierarchy of authority and possess a base of power such that the agent or source of influence (the mid-level administrator) views the president as possessing relatively greater status, prestige, and control over rewards and

sanctions. The agent administrators are expected by subordinates to exercise influence to the upper levels of academy in order to protect projects of the faculty, to salvage programs from the budget axe, to acquire needed resources of one kind or another, etc. And the president usually possesses sufficient power to provide outcomes which are highly desired by the agents of influence.

Preview. This study begins with a review of research conducted on power and influence processes at work in organizations. It addresses deliberate (or direct) influence efforts only and excludes instances of "behavioral contagion," defined as the "spontaneous pickup or imitation" of another's behavior (Lippett, Polansky, Redi, and Rosen, 1968, p. 236).

The review of literature which follows in chapter II will address conceptualizations of power and influence, theoretical frameworks for the study of intraorganizational influence and power processes, and specific taxonomical schemes for the study of upward influence methods. Field research has been conducted in a community college administration setting to determine the type and frequency of influence attempts made by mid-level administrators on presidents. The research was also done to determine how self-reported subordinate tactics of influence may be related to the superordinate presidents' perception of

influence effectiveness. Chapter III identifies the methodology employed in the research along with the appropriate data analysis and statistical tests. Acknowledgement of the methodological problems inherent in the research is also discussed. Results of the research are reported in chapter IV and carefully analyzed in chapter V in order to establish the implications and conclusions of the study.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A review of professional literature in organizational behavior and communications reveals a paucity of coherent, theoretical frameworks to study intraorganizational influence and power processes. Such a current state probably stems from the semantical and conceptual difficulties in defining power and influence (Cobb, 1984; Abell, 1975; Tedeschi & Bonoma, 1982). Power and influence are psychosocial concepts and controversy is bound to exist and seriously impair any unified perspective in the study thereof. Power is not, after all, a scientific construct and any definitional attempts "...constitute prescientific (preparadigmatic) efforts to carve out a set of events amenable to study" (Tedeschi & Bonoma, 1982, p. 8). Nevertheless, argues Abell (1975), "they are arguably the most important factors in understanding the complex pattern of social interaction that takes place within organizations" (preface).

Power and Influence: Problems of Definition

Some scholars (Mechanic, 1962; Cobb, 1984) use the terms influence and power synonymously. Mechanic (1962)

views power as an effort or a force which results in a behavior in others that would not have occurred otherwise. Cobb (1984) defines power as "the deployment of means to achieve intended effects" (p. 483) and, thus, "views power more in terms of effort than in success or capacity" (p. 484). Differences between power and influence have been suggested. Allen & Porter (1983) as well as Cartwright & Zander (1968) define power as the "potential" or "capacity" for changing behavior and/or attitude whereas influence is the ability to actually bring about an intended change in a target person or group. Most scholars (Schmidt-Posner & Schmidt, 1983; French & Raven, 1959; Mowday, 1978; Porter, Allen, & Angle, 1981) define power as passive and possessing only kinetic potential whereas influence refers to action and/or change actually wrought in behavioral or psychological terms. The action wrought may be as simple as "securing the consent of others to work with you in accomplishing an objective" (Whetton & Cameron, 1984, p. 266).

Control. In every definition of interpersonal power, there seems to be explicit or implicit reference to the control which a person seeks to exercise over information, goals, policies, rewards, and so forth valued by others (Schmidt-Posner & Schmidt, 1983; Mechanic, 1962; Etzioni, 1968; Wells, 1980) and to the corollary of control which is

dependence, i.e. the reliance which one party has upon another for certain desired outcomes (Barnett, 1984). This control and/or dependence forms a basis for power.

To the extent that an individual possesses or controls certain resources of power such as status, wealth, skill, or information, the individual is in a more favorable position to exert influence (Cartwright & Zander, 1968). The individual may possess what French & Raven (1959) refer to as reward power which "increases with the magnitude of the rewards which...[the target of influence] perceives that...[the agent of influence] can mediate for him" (p. 202). The bases of the control may also be legitimate power which stems from the internalized social and cultural values of the target of influence which legitimizes the act of influence; or there may be a particularly strong identification of the target with the agent's personality which forms the basis for referent power (French & Raven, 1959).

Power may also develop through the control which one has over another's environment. This "ecological control" can be observed when, for example, a teacher wants to curb a class troublemaker by assigning another seat surrounded by well-behaved children (Cartwright & Zander, 1968, p. 222).

Whether an individual actually uses acquired power to

make an influence attempt will, however, depend on a number of factors including the agent's needs and values, e.g. power motivation. For example, it is likely that "an individual will convert his power into influence only when he expects the gains from an act of influence to exceed its costs" (Cartwright & Zander, 1968, p. 218).

Conflict. Conflict is often associated with the study of power and influence. Most organizational life is filled with goal incompatibility, activity interdependence, shared resources, and misunderstanding regarding motives and intent (Crocker, 1980; Tushman, 1977). Conflict seems to be rooted in the perceived need to change someone or something in order to achieve desired outcomes. Therefore, some resistance is likely in the organizational world where most interactions are mixed motive, non-zero sum games in which cooperation brings mutual benefits but greed and selfishness create the temptation to gain more by exploiting the other party. Frequently, it is power and influence that "...are the forces that resolve (or partially resolve) these conflicts and provide forces that produce streams of organizational outcomes" (Abell, 1975, p. 37).

The conflict itself may lie hidden or "veiled by social amenities" (Tedeschi, Schlenker, & Linkskold, 1972, p. 324). Hence, the exercise of power and influence may be

accompanied by considerable deception, half-truths, and distortions amounting to a staged performance (French & Raven, 1959; Wells, 1980; Culbert & McDonough, 1980). According to Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical perspective, there are subtle attempts to "...put the other team in an unfavorable [light], often under the cover of verbal courtesies and compliments which point in the other direction" (p. 191).

A Political Process. The exercise of power can also be viewed from a dynamic, political perspective. This is particularly true with respect to upward influence where, it is alleged, the "vast majority" of political attempts occur (Porter, Allen, & Angle, 1981, p. 111). Interpersonal influence freqently is not a single, rational event but a process which involves interactive compromise, bargaining, and accomodation over time (Zahn & Wolf, 1981; Tushman, 1977; Thomas, 1982). It occurs in "marketplaces for the exchange of incentives...." (Frost & Hayes, 1979, p. 370). Thus, the exercise of influence is a transactional exchange which occurs through communication and exchange of resources.

In review, the exercise of power and influence does involve an attempt to control others through several bases of power, an exercise which apparently is both intrinsically and extrinsically satisfying. The desired

outcome of an interaction may be viewed in the context of a social and/or political exchange in which the outcome may be unsatisfactory to one or both parties. The incongruity in desired outcome inevitably leads to conflict of interest, the intensity of which may be influential in the modes of influence exercised (to be discussed later).

Upward Influence

Upward influence will be defined as the "deployment of means to achieve intended effects" on someone higher in the formal hierarchy of authority in the organization (Cobb, 1984, p. 483). Intended effects may include either personal or organizational goals. However, Kipnis & Schmidt (1980) found that agents of upward influence seek self-interest goals more than any other type of goals, e.g. salary increase, promotion, or improved work schedule. Clearly, the exercise of upward influence is a dynamic, interactive process governed by complex psychosocial variables--difficult to define and operationalize.

Influence Methods. What methods are available or preferred for exerting influence? There seems to be little agreement in identifying a single taxonomy of upward influence methods. Taxonomical schemes differ on the basis of the following: 1) overt versus covert methods (Tedeschi & Bonoma, 1982; Tedeschi, Shlenker, & Linkskold, 1972), 2) sanctions versus informational methods (Porter, Allen, &

Angle, 1981), 3) personal versus organizational reasons for exercising influence (Kipnis, Schmidt, & Wilkinson, 1980), 4) situational factor "predictors" versus personal agent characteristic "predictors" (Mowday, 1979; Cody, Jordon, & Woelfel, 1983), and 5) "soft-track" styles with the focus on collaboration, reason, etc. versus "hard-track" styles with the focus on assertiveness and grasping the initiative (Schmidt-Posner & Schmidt, 1983).

The studies done by Kipnis, Schmidt, and Wilkinson (1980) point to a great variety of influence tactics. They used "content analysis" of managers' descriptions of successful attempts to influence others. Eight dimensions of influence emerged: assertiveness, sanctions, ingratiation, rationality, exchange of benefits, upward appeal, blocking, and coalitions. Six major stategies were used by Schmidt and Kipnis (1984) in order to measure the frequency of upward influence attempts: 1) ingratiation, 2) exchange, 3) reason, 4) assertiveness, 5) appeal up, and 6) coalition.

Ingratiation involves making the superordinate feel important in order to establish oneself in the good graces of the superordinate. It is an attempt to create an impression which will make the agent of influence appear more attractive (Jones, Gergen, Gumpert, & Thibaut, 1965). This may be done by humble behavior, friendliness or

affability, opinion conformity, praise, politeness, sympathy, or the like prior to or coincident with the influence attempt. Ingratiation seems to be a rather indirect, manipulative, covert technique--very political! In fact, Cheng's findings (1983) show that ingratiation is the most likely political tactic used. As Porter, Allen, and Angle (1981) observe, "...ingratiation may serve to increase the willingness of the target to provide desired outcomes through a process of increasing the target's interpersonal attraction for the political actor" (p. 125).

The exchange strategy uses a quid pro quo relationship to maximum advantage, e.g. if you do something for me, I'll do something for you. It may well involve the formal tender of reward, e.g. personal favors. There is a sense of social obligation and reciprocity. This method is usually an undisguised, rather direct approach to influence.

The reason method draws upon the persuasive effect of logic, e.g. detailed plans that reveal competent, expert support for the agent's point of view. This rational approach is generally sanctioned by the organizational hierarchy and governed by certain organizational rules and policies (Cheng, 1983). The reason method is overt and reported by both Schilit & Locke (1982) and Kipnis, Schmidt, & Wilkinson (1980) as the most frequently used

tactic in upward influence attempts. This is not consistent, however, with Porter, Allen, and Angle (1981) who suggest that the more indirect methods are more commonly used.

Assertiveness refers to direct, forceful techniques which may be manifest in verbal anger, threats, or sanctions. It may involve persistent requests or reminders about rules, regulations, deadlines, board policy, etc. Therefore, a type of coercive power may be manifest such that the target of influence expects to be punished in some way if he/she does not conform to the influence attempt (French & Raven, 1959).

The appeal up to higher authority tactic may involve the formal or informal support of those higher in the hierarchy than the target of influence, i.e. bypassing a direct supervisor. This tactic may be either overt or covert.

The coalition method may involve the support of coworkers or subordinates who are effectively mobilized to assist in the influence attempt. The premise which underlies this approach is that there is "power in numbers."

Mowday (1978) suggests yet another method that could be called manipulation: informing or arguing in such a way that the recipient is not aware of being influenced. This

category of tactics involves "...withholding, or distorting information (short of outright lying), or overwhelming the target with too much information" (Porter, Allen, & Angle, 1981, p. 131). Innuendo, selective disclosure, and speculation may occur under the cover of supposed objectivity.

In another study (Allen et al, 1979) managers ranked the following political tactics among the top three: 1) attacking or blaming others, e.g. scapegoating or making a rival look bad in the eyes of important, influential people, 2) use of information, e.g. the withholding or distorting of information or overwhelming the target with data, and 3) image building, e.g. attention to general appearance, dress and hair style, taking credit for others' ideas or accomplishments. Of lesser importance were ingratiation, power coalitions, associating with influential people, reciprocity, and support-building for ideas.

In review, many taxonomies exist for the study of the several methods of upward influence. Major strategies of influence include ingratiation, exchange, reason, assertiveness, appeal up to higher authority, coalition, and manipulation. The aforementioned methods of influence will seldom be used to the total exclusion of other methods; however, it is felt that "a single influence

tactic will usually dominate a given social interaction" (Tedeschi & Bonoma, 1982, p. 19).

The Source (Agent) of Influence. What characteristics of persons make them more prone to engage in influence attempts? And what methods are they prone to use? As a useful approach to the study of these questions, agent characteristics may be subdivided according to the following scheme: 1) the agent's perception of the situation, i.e. situation variables, and 2) the agent's personal image or traits, i.e. person variables.

First, the source or agent may have varying degrees of access to and capacity to control various dependence-building resources or hold a task position which is critical to the organization's workflow (Barnett, 1984; Brass, 1984). The agent may possess expert knowledge not available to superordinates. Tedeschi et al (1972) found that those people who are centrally located in the communication network (and thus have access to persons, information, or materials critical to the organization) make more frequent influence attempts with more people on a more successful basis than those who are not centrally located. Also, the agent of influence may have special skills that have become seemingly indispensable. The agent who accurately perceives this dependency relationship may then use various strategies to attempt to influence the

superordinate's behavior.

Also, the agent may make a subjective judgment of the relative benefits and costs associated with an influence situation (Porter, Allen, & Angle, 1981; Tedeschi et al, 1972). This is consistent with Vroom's expectancy theory which posits that an organizational member's motivation to behave in a certain way is dependent on how much the member wants something and the probability that the objective can be attained (Pringle, Jennings, & Longenecker, 1988). Tedeschi et al (1972) claim that the heightened subjective probability of success is "positively related to the frequency of influence attempts" (p. 302). Also, the subjective assessment, a benefit/cost ratio, takes into consideration recent experience with influence attempts. It is a basic pychological tenet that behavior which is rewarded is more likely to be repeated (a lä B.F. Skinner).

Second, a variety of studies (Porter, Allen, & Angle, 1981; Tedeschi et al, 1972) have suggested a relationship between certain personality traits and characteristics of the agent and the influence process; findings point to a positive relationship between self-confidence/feelings of power and the frequency of influence attempts. Veroff (cited in Tedeschi, et al, 1972) found that those who scored high on power motivation were "high in argumentation and attempts to influence others" (p. 300). A study done

by Allen et al (1979) revealed the following personal characteristics were perceived by managers and supervisors to be the most conducive to successful organizational politics (in the order of most frequently mentioned characteristic): 1) articulate, 2) sensitive, 3) socially adept, 4) competent, 5) popular, 6) extroverted, 7) self-confident, 8) aggressive, 9) ambitious, 10) devious, 11) "organization man", 12) highly intelligent, and 13) logical.

The role position, self-image, status, and prestige of the source are also major variables in predicting the frequency, success, and method of influence attempts. Tedeschi et al (1972) define status as the "perceived deference to an individual because of occupation of a role position." French and Raven (1959) refer to this basis of power as <u>legitimate power</u> and lies in "internalized norms, role prescriptions, and expectations...." (p. 203). Individuals often engage "in specific influence attempts because they conform to the expectations that others attach to his position" (Cartwright & Zander, 1968, p. 219). Steffen and Eagley (1985) found that the perception of relative status of an agent and target affects people's "beliefs about the influence styles that are chosen and the consequences of those styles" (p. 201).

Also, the agent's motive or reason for exerting

influence has been reported by Kipnis et al (1980) as a significant factor in the choice of influence tactics (regardless of target status level). For example, agents who frequently sought personal assistance or favors used ingratiation tactics more than any other.

Mowday's study (1979) attempted to draw inferences concerning the types of individuals who were most likely to be effective in exercising influence and using certain influence tactics. However, the results were inconclusive; findings showed only a weak relationship with the admission that many extraneous factors were very difficult to control in the experimental study conducted. Evidently, some (Cody et al, 1983) do not believe that the so-called person variables possess "trans-situational predictive abilities" (p.110).

Three personal characteristics, according to Whetten & Cameron (1984), are important sources of power: 1) expertise, 2) personal attraction, and 3) personal effort and/or commitment. First, expertise is related to cognitive abilities and is closely associated with what French & Raven (1959) call <u>expert power</u>. However, the individual with substantial expertise is usually limited in influence to specific areas of expertise although some "halo effect" may be present (French & Raven, 1959).

Secondly, personal attraction is a person's affective

appeal. Those with attractive appearance are more likely to feel good about themselves, exude more confidence, be more likable, and therefore exert more social influence than those who are unattractive. A study done by Ross & Ferris (1981) to determine, among other things, the relationship between physical attractiveness of subordinates and ratings of performance revealed that physical attractiveness was a statistically significant factor in performance ratings. It appeared that attractive people may receive higher performance appraisals from superordinates than others.

Thirdly, extra personal effort to do a good job and contribute to an organization's success may do much to win the admiration and respect of others. Subordinates who work hard to perform critical tasks, to increase their knowledge and expertise, and otherwise exhibit high levels of commitment may "obtain more power than is warranted by their position in the hierarchy" (Whetten & Cameron, 1984, p. 265).

In summary, the agent of influence possesses both personal characteristics and unique perceptions of the situation which may affect influence behavior. Some relevant personal traits include the level of self-confidence, power motivation, and ability to articulate views. Personal image in the form of role position,

physical attractiveness, expertise or the like may be important. And finally, the agent's perception of the organizational context probably includes an assessment of his own dispensability and the probablity of successful influence behavior.

The Target of Influence. Characteristics of the target are significant variables of interest in the agent/target interplay. The target's ability or propensity to act in a favorable way vis-a-vis the agent involve the target's perception of the context, relative power, psychological state, normative values, and interpersonal attraction for the agent (Cobb, 1984; Porter, Allen, & Angle, 1981; Tedeschi & Bonoma, 1982). These elements will help to determine the degree of resistance offered by the target to the influence attempt and, consequently, the frequency and method of influence likely to be employed. For example, if the agent is substantially less powerful than the target, it is improbable that a rationally acting agent would use so-called "hard track" techniques of coercion and threat. Such techniques would seem to be high-risk and invite costly retaliation. More "soft-track" methods like ingratiation, reason, or coalition are far more likely (Tedeschi et al, 1972; Kipnis et al, 1980)

Tedeschi & Bonoma (1982) observed the following in study of target characteristics:

> The highly resistant target is confident of his own abilities to affect his environment and those around him, he has a complicated and highly differentiated cognitive structure, is heterogeneous in his view of other individuals, and has "expensive" tastes. The deferent target may suffer from feelings of anomie or normlessness, does not feel that he can control his own reinforcements and is likely to attribute causation to the environment rather than to himself, has a rather uncomplicated, clearly segmented cognitive structure, is homogeneous in his views of others, and has "beer" tastes (pp. 33-34).

The target of influence, in review, will probably have a unique perception of the influence context and his/her relative power vis-a vis the agent of influence. The target of influence may be highly resistant to influence or deferent depending on this perception and other factors such as psychological state, normative values, and interpersonal attaction for the agent of influence.

Environmental factors. A variety of contextual and/or situational characteristics also seem to affect the upward influence processes in organizations. A review of the literature reveals that at least the following contextual elements are relevant to the exercise of influence: 1)

organizational culture and 2) organizational structure and processes (Porter et al, 1981; Wells, 1980; Mowday, 1978; Erez & Rim, 1982; Tedeschi et al, 1972).

Organizational culture comprises the behavioral norms and climate of the organization. All interactive social systems develop formal and informal communication networks wherein certain behavioral rules seem to guide the choice of influence target, as well as method and frequency of influence attempt. Therefore, organizational norms may often permit or proscribe certain types of upward influence (Cartwright & Zander, 1968). Organizations differ in the ways in which subordinates are expected or "ought to" relate to superordinates, the amount of deference that ought to exist vis-a-vis those higher in the hierarchy, and the level of conflict intensity or the ethical standards present. Sometimes, for example, it may be norms in the form of certain ethical requirements that are invoked by relatively powerless subordinates to gain influence. Such a phenomenon caused Nietzche (cited in Tedeschi et al, 1972) to remark that "the propagation of morals is a tactic of the weak and powerless to undermine the power of the strong" (p. 326). Or with regard to conflict intensity within organizations, Tedeschi et al (1972) found that agents "...prefer the use of coercion at high levels of conflict intensity" (p. 325).

The structure and processes of the organization are also pertinent to the exercise of upward influence. For example, a rigid, formal hierarchy of authority may thwart certain informal, "political" attempts at upward influence. On the other hand, more adhocratic, participative organizations with friendship networking may be much more conducive to influence attempts. Ownership of the organization (public vs private) and size of the organization may affect the network of influence as well (Erez & Rim, 1982). And according to Porter et al (1981), there are certain processes inherently more "political" and thus more subject to influence attempts, e.g. reorganization changes, personnel changes, and budget allocation.

Though few will question the relevancy of organizational context and climate in the study of influence, Cheng (1983) claims that there is little research to show the relationship between organizational context or climate and the use of particular power and influence tactics. He did suggest, however, that the more political the organizational climate, the greater the tendency to employ ingratiation, threat, and blocking tactics in upward influence attempts.

In summary, the organizational climate, structure, and processes may effectively promote or proscribe certain

upward influence behavior. The established norms of behavior or the existence of formal bureaucratic controls may, among other things, be just as important to the way influence is exercised as the agent or target-specific variables discussed earlier.

Relevant Studies in Academe

A review of literature reveals only one study of upward influence in an academic organization. Barker's study (1984) identified three sources of upward and lateral influence available to deans which could be used to distinguish those considered "most influential" from "least influential" by colleagues and superiors: 1) influence style, 2) frequency of contacts with colleagues and superiors, and 3) unit resources under the control of agent administrators. Barker delineated the most influential from the least influential deans at five universities by asking colleagues and superiors to rate the agents of influence by a paired-comparison technique. She then asked respondents (the agents of influence) to rate the frequency of certain self-reported influence behaviors in an "Influence Style Questionnaire" developed by Roger Harrison and David Berlew. The four styles together with examples of behavior were as follows: 1) reward and punishment, e.g. communicating demands, giving or promising rewards, invoking power, status, or authority; 2) participation and

trust, e.g. inviting contributions, giving credit for ideas, playing back another's feelings, or admitting mistakes; 3) common vision, e.g. appealing to values and emotions, building group cohesion, or helping others imagine a better future; 4) assertive persuasion, e.g. putting forward ideas, giving reasons and arguments, agreeing or disagreeing with others' facts or logic.

There were significant differences in the two groups. The "most influential" deans used significantly more reward and punishment ($p \leq .005$) as well as assertive persuasion ($p \leq .0005$) than the "least influential." deans. The two groups did not differ significantly in participation and trust or common vision behavior. Barker (1984) also found that the "most influential" deans had 1) significantly more contacts with superiors and colleagues, 2) had substantially more ability to attract external financing, and 3) were "nearly three times as likely to head units with more than the median number of F.T.E." (p.12).

The Research Question

The first purpose of this study is to learn which influence strategies are strongest among community and technical college administrators. As agent administrators interact on a daily basis with target superiors (the presidents of the community and technical colleges), they may choose from a broad array of tactics--assertiveness,

reason, friendliness, bargaining, coalition, or appeal to higher authority. To what extent will the mid-level administrators employ the various methods of upward influence? And how does such behavioral frequency compare to a norm group?

The second purpose of this study is to determine whether there is a significant relationship between the upward influence behavior of agent administrators and the superordinate's evaluative perception of that subordinate's influence effectiveness. Stating the latter purpose in the form of a research hypothesis, it is believed that there is a significant difference between the upward influence behavior of those perceived by superordinates as most effective in influence and those perceived as least effective. If so, in what way will mid-level administrators who are rated most effective in influence by superordinates differ in influence behavior from those who are rated least effective? For example, those who are rated most effective in influence may use assertiveness tactics on a more frequent basis than those who are rated least effective.

Summary

Power and influence are pervasive elements in nearly all organizations as individuals attempt to exert control over their environment. Whether by political tactics or

otherwise, subordinates often attempt to exert upward influence in order to acquire valued outcomes. Numerous variables (identified heretofore in this chapter) exist to help explain and understand the tactical choices made by the agents of influence. Although several approaches to the study of upward influence are possible, a review of the literature suggests that the characteristics of the agent of influence, the target of influence, and the environmental context are highly relevant dimensions.

The review of literature reveals little about upward influence study in academic organizations. The study done by Barker (1984) does suggest that those administrators who are perceived as least influential do differ in influence behavior from those who are perceived as least influential. The question raised in the study herein is whether influence behavior or style of NCCCS administrators is in some way unique (relative to the norm group) and whether those perceived as most effective in influence differ significantly from those perceived as least effective.

Having thus reviewed the literature on power and upward influence and having established the focus of inquiry, the method of research must now be outlined in chapter III.

CHAPTER III

OUTLINE OF PROCEDURES

Methodology

Field research was conducted in a community college administration setting. In classifying the type of research conducted by purpose, the present study was both an example of basic research (basic observations for the purpose of theory development and refinement) as well as evaluative research (to find which of the various influence strategies and tactics were in most frequent use and whether one particular strategy was perceived as more effective than another).

In classifying the research by method, it was both descriptive (to identify the influence strategies/tactics in use) and correlational (to determine whether there was a significant relationship between influence strategy and an evaluative perception of influence effectiveness).

Subjects. The subjects for the research were college presidents and subordinate, mid-level administrators selected from a population of more than 200 mid-level administrators at 58 technical and community colleges in the North Carolina Community College system. All

participating administrators had a minimum of one year's experience in their respective organizations.

A final judgment sample (rather than random sample) of the largest twenty-nine (29) institutions in the North Carolina Community College System showed that each had a minimum 1985-1986 full-time equivalent (FTE) enrollment of at least 1,706. The twenty-nine (29) smallest institutions in the NCCCS with enrollments of less than 1,706 were excluded from the survey. Refer to table 1 for a listing of the twenty participating colleges and their respective enrollments. Nine of the twenty-nine selected institutions did not participate. The presidents of the nonparticipating institutions either did not acknowledge the request to conduct the surveys, denied permission to conduct the surveys, or withdrew from participation due to lack of one year's experience at the institution.

Table 1

List of North Carolina Community and Technical Colleges Participating in the Surveys

College	Average Annual FTE Enrollment 1985-86
1. Asheville-Buncombe TC	2,508
2. Cape Fear TC	4,452
3. Catawba Valley TC	2,653
4. Central Carolina TC	3,405
5. Coastal Carolina CC	2,925
6. Craven CC	1,965
7. Davidson County CC	2,354
8. Fayetteville TI	8,456
9. Forsyth TC	3,714
10. Gaston College	2,722
11. Guilford TCC	6,035
12. Johnston TC	2,717
13. Lenoir CC	2,464
14. Pitt CC	2,676
15. Robeson TC	1,998
16. Stanly TC	1,706
17. Surry CC	2,505
18. Wake TC	4,193
19. Western Piedmont CC	2,293
20. Wilkes CC	2,337

Note. From Annual Enrollment Report by Research & Information Services, N.C. Department of Community Colleges, 1985-86, 22, pp. 36-37.

Twenty college presidents at each of the participating institutions responded favorably to a request to conduct dissertation research. The first mailout consisted of a letter of introduction from Dr. Swanson Richards at Surry Community College along with a letter of explanation by the author (see Appendix).

Instruments. Profiles of Organizational Influence Strategies (POIS), Form M, by Kipnis & Schmidt was mailed to 87 subordinate administrators at the 20 participating colleges. A cover letter of introduction and instruction accompanied the instrument (see Appendix). Great emphasis was placed on the confidentiality of response because of the sensitive character of the topic. The instrument is a diagnostic survey which provided a "profile" of subordinate (agent) administrator methods used to influence superordinate (target) presidents. Respondents were asked to indicate the frequency (almost always, frequently, occasionally, seldom, or never) of use of twenty-seven different tactics when they attempted to exert upward influence on college presidents. The 27 tactics (represented by clear, concise statements of behavior) were then additively scored to arrive at separate summary scores for each of the six (6) different strategies: 1) friendliness, 2) bargaining, 3) reason, 4) assertiveness, 5) higher authority, and 6) coalition.

Design and data collection. The basic correlational design consisted of two measurements obtained for each subordinate: 1) a frequency or "profile" rating by type of tactic or influence strategy, i.e. separate scores for friendliness, bargaining, reason, assertiveness, higher authority, and coalition; and 2) a behaviorally anchored rating of the relative effectiveness of the subject in exercising influence with the president. Effectiveness in exercising influence was operationalized by the administration of a questionnaire to presidents who were asked to circle the frequency rating which best described how often each subordinate administrator was effective in getting him to accept the subordinate's ideas, to make a decision favorable to the subordinate, or to produce change wanted by the subordinate.

The following steps were taken in the data collection phase:

1. a letter to presidents advising them of dissertation research in progress and asking permission to administer the instruments;

2. a telephone or letter follow-up to presidents with no response within approximately two weeks;

3. a mailout of the "effectiveness" instrument to college presidents who agreed to participate in the survey;

4. a mailout of the Kipnis-Schmidt POIS, Form M, to

subordinate administrators selected as subjects;

5. a telephone follow-up to each president and subordinate administrator where there was no response within approximately 30 days; and

6. data tabulation.

Data Analysis/Statistical Tests

The Kipnis-Schmidt POIS, Form M. Measures of central tendency and dispersion were computed by type of tactic (represented by the 27 statements). Mean scores for each tactic were then used to obtain strategic scores per Form M, p. 7. These scores were then plotted against the profile of the norm group to determine how subordinate administrators collectively compared to others who had completed the "Influencing Your Manager" profile, Form M.

Next, the POIS Form M scores of the lowest rated subordinate administrators (those who scored a "3" or "occasionally" effective in exerting influence) were tabulated to determine how often they employed the various tactics of influence. This group's mean score for each tactic was then transferred to a scoring key to compute scores for the six major strategies of friendliness, bargaining, reason, assertiveness, higher authority, and coalition. This yielded a collective "profile" of strategic influence for the lowest rated group.

Likewise, the POIS Form M scores of the highest rated

administrators (those who scored a "1" or "almost always" effective) were tabulated to determine how often this group employed the various tactics of influence. This group's mean score for each tactic was then similarly transferred to a scoring key to also yield a collective "profile" of strategic influence.

Effectiveness instrument. Measures of central tendency and dispersion were computed to determine the extent of differentiation the presidents made in evaluating the relative effectiveness of subordinate influence.

Analysis of variance. A tabulation was performed for each responsdent (mid-level administrator) to yield a separate score by stategy according to Form M, p. 7. A simple analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to see if there was a significant difference among the mean scores (by type of strategy) of three groups as follows:

1. those subordinate administrators who were rated highest (a "1" or "almost always" effective) in exerting influence;

2. those subordinate administrators who were rated lowest (a "3" or "occasionally" effective) in exerting influence;

3. those administrators who were rated between the highest and lowest (a "2" or "frequently" effective) in exerting influence.

Methodological Problems

There are admittedly many methodological obstacles to the study of power and influence; persons who exercise power tend to resist being studied (Porter et al, 1981; Kipnis, 1976). "Power tends to preserve itself from scrutiny by directing the efforts of potential examiners elsewhere" (Kipnis, 1976, p. 7). This at least one explanation of why there has been so little focus in social pychology upon the use of power and influence by the source of power.

There are few testable models of upward influence available and certainly no universal agreement concerning the most appropriate approach (Kipnis & Schmidt, 1980; Cody et al, 1983). Cody et al (1983) call for "interactional models" that would "...attempt to study what identifiable situation factors interact with a specific person measure to influence a specific type of mode of response" (p. 111). To this end, Cody et al (1983) have conducted multidimensional scaling studies, a highly sophisticated methodological approach.

The present study, however, will attempt to delimit the scope and sophistication of study by examining certain perceptual measures to the power episode rather than attempting, for example, to obtain an absolute measure of the success or failure of the influence attempt. The

proposed study also attempts to hold relatively constant the organizational setting (the community/technical college), the target of influence (the president), and the role of the agent of influence (the mid-level administrator). The control technique is akin to "pair-wise matching" of subjects insofar as possible.

Thus, despite the methodological pitfalls inherent in this study, the potential for valued examination compels that the study be done albeit with considerable caution. Results of the study follow in Chapter IV.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The twenty participating technical and community colleges yielded a total of eighty-seven (87) subordinate, mid-level administrators who were asked to complete the Kipnis-Schmidt POIS instrument. The administrators had numerous job titles but could be easily classified into the following functional areas:

1. Academic instruction, e.g. vice-president of instructional services, dean of instruction, dean of evening programs, dean of continuing education;

2. Student services, e.g. vice-president for student services, dean of student development services, dean of student affairs;

3. Administrative services, e.g. director of fiscal affairs, director of personnel, business manager, personnel officer; and

4. Ancillary services, e.g. director of development, director of public relations, director of research & planning, assistant to the president.

Sixty-nine (69) of the 87 administrators actually responded to the survey instrument, a 79.3% response rate.

Table 2 indicates the response by functional area.

Table 2

Subordinate Administrator Response Rate by Functional Category

Category	Number Surveyed	Responses	Response Rate
Academic Instruction	25	21	84%
Student Services	17	14	82%
Administrative Services	25	19	76%
Ancillary Services	20	15	75%
Total	87	69	79%

Only one of the 18 non-respondents indicated why he did not participate in the survey. He wrote the following on the answer sheet: "Questions are too manipulative. Poor instrument. I decided not to participate." Nonetheless, a 79% response rate is very satisfactory. Therefore, bias or any systematic error seemed negligible since respondents did not consistently decline participation.

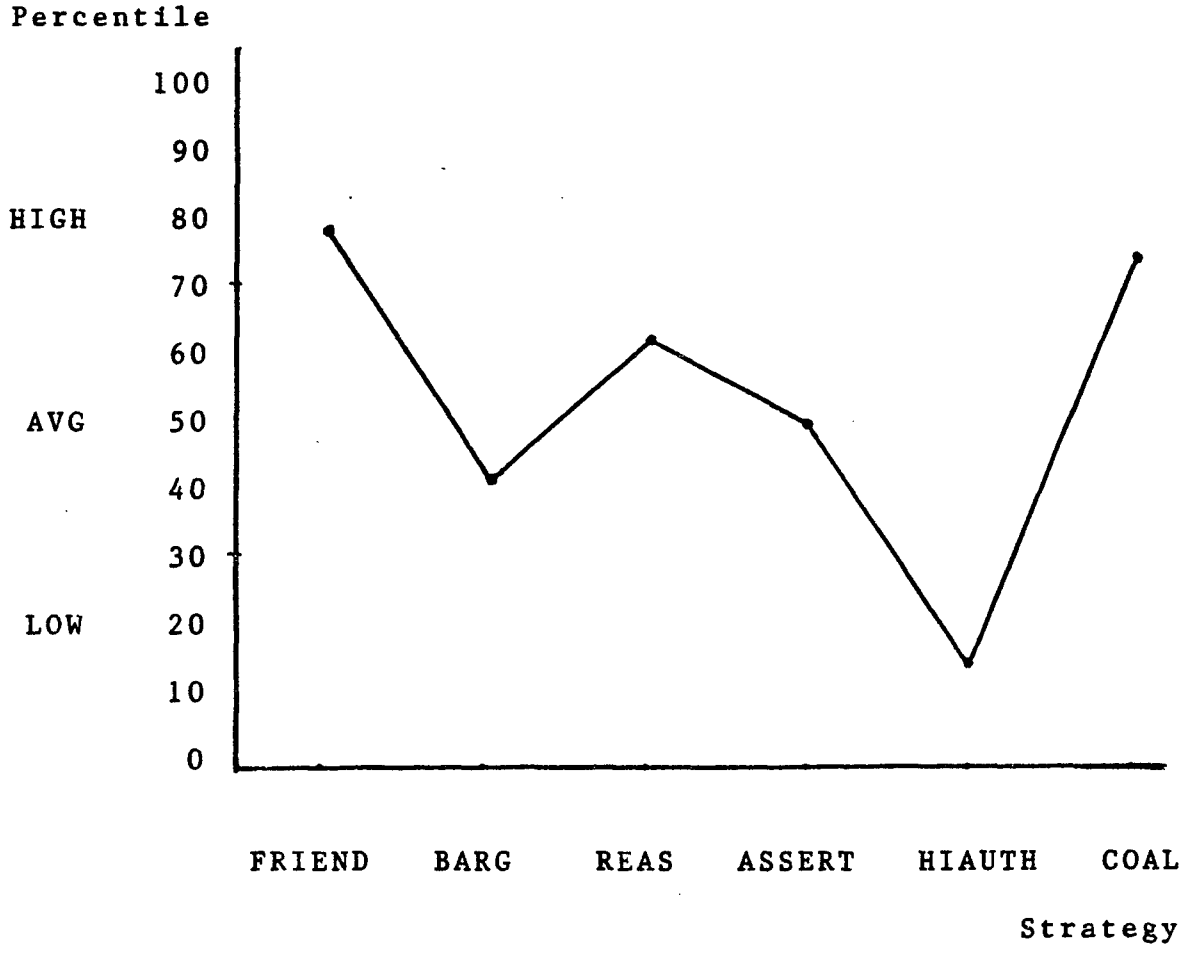
Composite Analysis

Subordinate profile. The collective profile of upward influence strategies used by subordinate administrators is shown in figure 1. The line graph shown makes it possible to compare scores of NCCC administrators with a norm group established through extensive empirical research by Schmidt, Kipnis, & Wilkinson (1980). The norm group consisted of over 754 respondents (individuals in mostly professional & managerial positions) over an "extremely diverse group of organizations" (Kipnis & Schmidt, 1982b, p. 9). A "high" score indicates that NCCC administrators scored at or above the 70th percentile. A "low" score indicates a score at or below the 30th percentile.

Administrators in the NCCCS collectively scored high in the use of "friendliness" and "coalition", low on "higher authority", and average on "bargaining," "reason," and "assertiveness."

Figure 1

Relative Use of Influence Strategies by NCCC Administrators



Presidents' evaluation of subordinate influence effectiveness. As indicated earlier, the presidents were asked to rate subordinates on a scale of 1 to 5, from "almost always" effective to "never" effective in exercising influence. The presidents scored all subordinate administrators at one of the top three ratings ("almost always," "frequently," or "occasionally") for effectiveness in exercising influence. Therefore, subordinates were divided into three groups based on a trichotimization of the distribution of scores. See table 3 for the distribution of scores.

Table 3

The Presidents' Ratings of Subordinate Influence Effectiveness

Frequency (Rating)	Number of Subordinates
Almost Always (1)	xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx [18]
Frequently (2)	xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx [41]
Occasionally (3)	xxxxxxxxxx [10]
Seldom (4)	[0]
Never (5)	[0]

Mean = 1.884 Median = 2 Std. Dev. = .6355

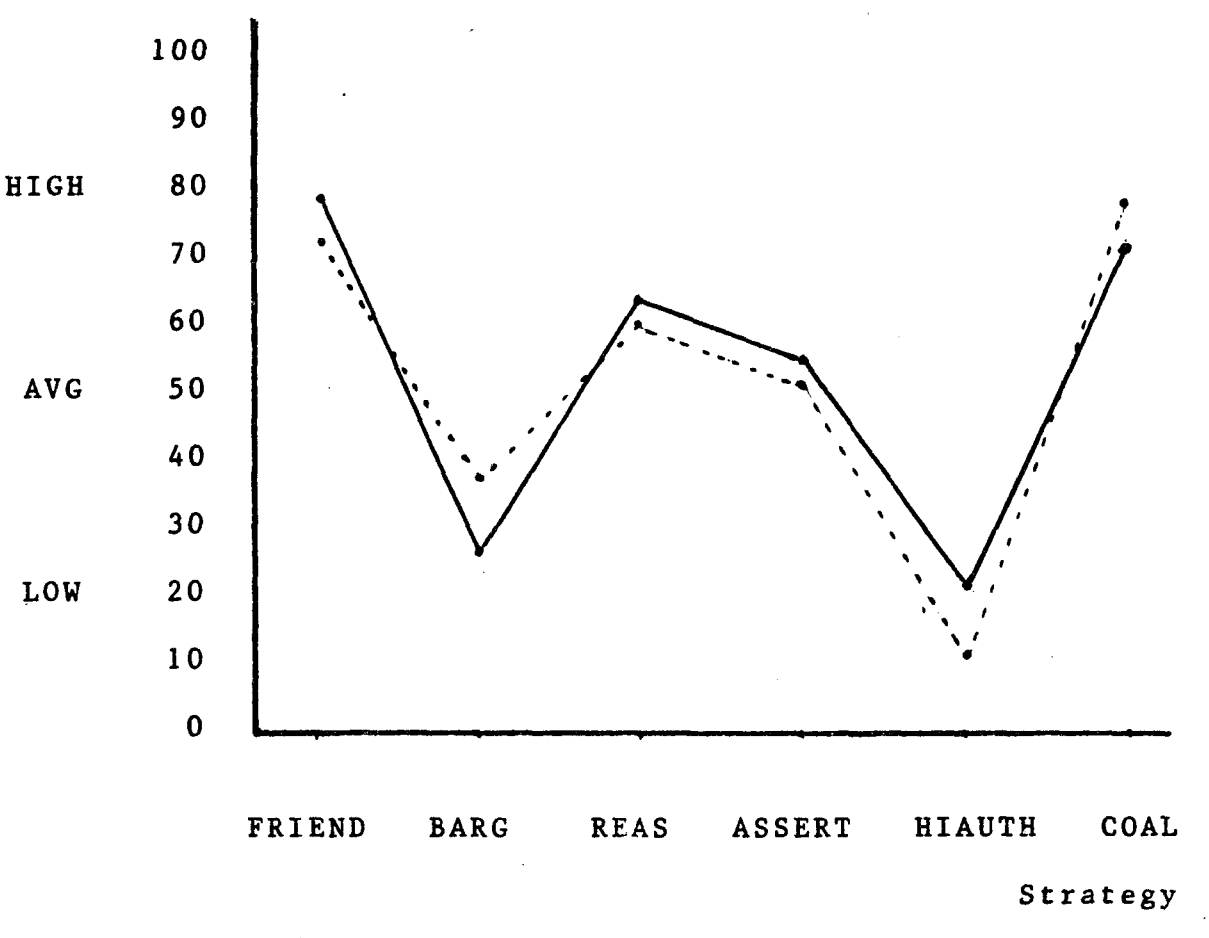
Of the 20 participating presidents, eight (8) did not differentiate among subordinates when recording an evaluative frequency rating of influence effectiveness. In such instances, they rated each of the subordinates as "almost always" or "frequently" effective.

Most Effective vs Least Effective Administrators

A composite profile taken from the group of administrators (X) who rated "almost always" effective in exercising influence is graphically shown in figure 2. This group would be considered the most effective of the three groups identified in table 3. Observe also the composite profile of the group of administrators (Y) who rated "occasionally" effective in exerting influence but, nonetheless, must be considered the least effective of the three groups.

Figure 2

Comparative Influence Profiles of the Most Effective (X) Versus the Least Effective (Y) Administrators



For each of the six strategies, a simple analysis of variance (ANOVA) showed no statistically significant differences among the mean scores of the following three groups:

1. administrators rated "almost always" effective in exerting influence (X in figure 2), N = 18;

2. administrators rated "frequently" effective in exerting influence, N = 41; and

3. administrators rated "occasionally" effective (Y in figure 2), N = 10.

None of the F ratios were at the required probability level ($p < .05$) necessary to reject the null hypothesis. A summary of findings is shown in table 4.

Table 4

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA): Summary Results by Strategy

Strategy	Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Sq	F	Signif of F
REASON	Between	5.504	2	2.752	.454	.637
	Within	375.512	62	6.057		
ASSERT	Between	6.496	2	3.248	.322	.726
	Within	654.974	65	10.077		
FRIEND	Between	5.726	2	2.863	.166	.848
	Within	1070.490	62	17.266		
BARG	Between	19.334	2	9.667	2.252	.114
	Within	266.204	62	4.294		
HIAUTH	Between	7.201	2	3.600	2.281	.110
	Within	102.608	65	1.579		
COAL	Between	5.627	2	2.813	1.021	.366
	Within	179.123	65	2.756		

Summary

Survey response for both agent administrators and presidents was excellent. Collectively, administrators scored high in frequency of use for both friendliness and coalition strategies and low to average on all other strategies. The presidents rated all subordinate administrators at least "occasionally" effective in exercising influence.

Results of a trichotimization of the subordinate administrators' evaluative ratings showed that the three groups did not differ significantly enough in terms of influence strategies to reject the null hypothesis.

A thorough review and discussion of findings with attendant implications follow in the next chapter.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The findings of the research herein may be generalized and summarized as follows:

1. the collective influence profile of NCCC administrators indicates that they deviate substantially from the average frequency of use of certain strategies as found in a norm group developed by Kipnis & Schmidt (1982b). Specifically, it seems that NCCC administrators make relatively more effort than the norm group to create favorable impressions with friendliness tactics or form coalitions or alliances as a favored way of exerting upward influence;

2. the difference between the upward influence profile of those subordinates perceived by superordinates as most influential and those perceived as least influential is not statistically significant ($p < .05$). Therefore, the research hypothesis is not supported in the present study.

Characterization of Influence Profile

As an organization with a different set of prevailing norms, the NCCC administrative setting seems to beget a distinct subordinate influence profile. Due to the

frequent use of friendliness and the coalition strategy, subordinate administrators may be characterized as highly "political" in choice of influence behavior. A variety of plausible explanations exist to help understand this chararacterization.

The frequent use of friendliness. Friendliness, it should be remembered, involves ingratiation, humble behavior, politeness, sympathy, or even overt compliments and praise of the influence target--all so-called "soft-track" tactics.

The role position of the president may be a relevant factor in this choice. There is little question that the strong role position of community college presidents with attendant status and prestige does legitimize the power of the president and directly limits the perception of subordinate administrators as to what might be successful. Many subordinate administrators may have a relatively narrow power base vis-a-vis the presidents and thus, it may be inferred from the work of Tedeschi et al (1972), would be inclined to use more "soft-track" methods. Such methods are generally assumed to be less risky when the subordinate has a substantially weaker base of power. If there is a widespread subordinate perception that the president is powerfully autocratic, this could lead the rationally acting agent administrator to shun the frequent use of

"hard-track" techniques like assertiveness, bargaining, or appeal to higher authority.

The results of this study do indicate that administrators make no more than average use (relative to the norm) of the assertiveness, bargaining, and higher authority strategies. Note that the appeal to higher authority is well below average as expected since the only avenue of appeal for the subordinate administrator is to the Board of Trustees, a body considered relatively inaccessible to those in administration other than the president.

Therefore, as a summary observation, agent administrators may make more frequent use of friendliness due to the following disadvantages of certain "hard-track" techniques: 1) the risk/reward ratio is too high and 2) the probability of success is too low as compared to the friendliness strategy.

Another reason why friendliness may be so frequently used in the community college administration setting is that the president is not, in most cases, restricted to a preestablished set of performance evaluation criteria. In this case, where there is a "large degree of freedom in developing and applying standards of evaluation...there exists a possibility of biasing the supervisor's decisions in the worker's favor" (Jones et al, 1965, p. 289).

Consequently, incentives exist to concentrate on certain subjective, political tactics like friendliness to create a favorable impression with the superordinate.

The frequent use of coaliton. The coalition method is also used more often by NCCC administrators than the norm group since it is rated "high" in usage per the Kipnis-Schmidt POIS, Form M. Again, the principal reason may be the rather centralized, autocratic form of organization. If a subordinate administrator wants to exert influence on a powerful president, it may be frequently necessary to tip the scale of power through an alliance with others of like mind, i.e. a safety-in-numbers kind of psychology at work. Since coalition is a technique often used by those of little power to enhance his/her power (Cartwright & Zander, 1968; Gamson, 1964), it is an intelligent, less risky choice than some of the more "hard-track" techniques.

Perception of influence style effectiveness. Superordinate presidents in the NCCCS generally rated subordinate administrators as relatively effective in exercising upward influence (mean = 1.884; standard deviation = .6355). Two major observations are in order:

1. the strategic influence profile which stresses the frequent use of friendliness and coalition seems to be ubiquitous in the NCCCS;

2. the highly "political" upward influence profile

identified herein is a rather well received strategic mode of behavior in the context of the NCCC administrative setting.

The first observation refers to the rather uniform influence profile found across three separate groups who were differentiated according to perceived influence effectiveness. Those administrators who were rated "almost always" effective in exercising influence were not significantly different in influence style from those who were rated lower. Thus, a rather widespread reliance on one general style of influence seems to be evident.

The second observation stems from the consistently high ratings given all subordinate administrators on influence effectiveness (note a standard deviation of only .6355). In other words, the presidents seem to accept this highly political style of subordinate influence as a favorably effective style.

This latter observation seems slightly contradictory to the findings of Barker's study (1984) directed at academic deans in five public, Research I univerities in the west. She found that the favored mode of influence of the most influential deans in that setting was tilted toward "reward and punishment" and "assertive persuasion" which are seemingly "hard-track." However, the instrument which Barker used to profile influence strategy did little

to measure the friendliness or coalition tactics peculiar to the Kipnis-Schmidt POIS.

Lack of Significant Differentiation

A large percentage of the presidents (40%) did not differentiate at all among subordinates when rating how often they were effective in exercising influence; and others were inclined to minimize those differences as evidenced by a standard deviation on rating scores of .6355. Plausible explanations of this failure to differentiate are as follows:

1. Presidents would not or could not effectively evaluate influence attempts made upon them;

2. Subordinate administrators are, in fact, a rather homogenous group in terms of influence effectiveness without significant incentives to behave in disparate ways.

Superordinate evaluative deficiencies. Participating presidents may not have carefully considered the questionnaire and the differences that, with a little thought, actually exist in subordinate influence effectiveness. It is difficult to conceive of a superordinate who actually sees no difference in influence effectiveness among four or five subordinate administrators. And it is even more difficult to conceive of 69 administrators who are all judged at least "occasionally" effective and not one judged as "seldom" or

"never" effective in influence attempts. Therefore, a conclusion that presidents were not very conscientious in reporting their perception of subordinate influence effectiveness is very tempting indeed.

However, effectiveness in exercising influence is not without problems of measurement. First, presidents may be consciously unaware of influence attempts, especially those which are more covert in nature. They may have trouble in registering any influence attempt which is part of a process evolving over time without distinct features. The influence attempt cannot always be characterized as a discreet, rational act easily measurable in the mind of the superordinate.

Second, there are numerous variables present which may distort the evaluative perception of presidents. As Napier and Gershenfeld (1985) observe, "each perception and its interpretation of virtually any event is based on a combination of historical experiences, present needs, and the inherent properties of the scene being perceived" (p. 5). Some of these variables may have little to do with the influence style itself and it could well be that superordinates do not disassociate style from non-style influence factors like personality or positional attributes. For example, there may be a type of "halo effect" at work. Simply defined, the "halo effect" is the

"power of an overall feeling about an individual to influence evaluation of the person's individual attributes" (Napier & Gershenfeld, 1985, p. 10). To illustrate, a chauvinistic president may more often than not be annoyed when a subordinate administrator tries to use ingratiating tactics but, nonetheless, finds it charming in a well-liked, female administrator. This type of effect would help explain why influence style alone is not always a strong correlate to superordinate perception of influence effectiveness.

Additionally, this study did not attempt to control for a number of specific contextual factors like type of decision situation. Mowday's study (1978) did find that influence effectiveness as rated by superiors was significantly related to the choice of alternative influence methods. However, his study controlled for the type of decision situation.

Third, presidents may feel uncomfortable having to judge how effectively a subordinate has been in exercising upward influence. Some social desirability response bias may be present in the current study inasmuch as every subordinate was rated at least "occasionally" effective in exercising upward influence. Perhaps the raters wanted to give the impression that they are modern participatory, subordinate-centered managers who consistently accept

input (through influence attempts) and have moved away from the seemingly outdated management approaches which discourage subordinate input to decision-making. Some of these presidents may have arrived at an intellectual acceptance of more participatory management styles but cannot internalize what they have learned well enough to act on their new beliefs. As a result they may have engaged in a kind of cognitive dissonance reduction when they were asked to rate subordinates on influence effectiveness. A fundamental principle of psychology is that "individuals strive to reduce inconsistencies between their personal beliefs and personal behaviors" (Whetton & Cameron, 1984, p. 265). To rate subordinates low on influence effectivenss while at the same time pretending allegiance to participatory management principles may have created considerable cognitive dissonance for the presidents.

Homogeneity of influence style. Norms of organizational behavior may effectively proscribe any influence style in NCCC other than the one profiled earlier for the following reasons:

1. the organizational climate for a majority of the community and technical colleges may be rather centralized and autocratic without as many divergent interests as found in the university setting of Barker's study (1984). Less

faculty and student input to administration could exist along with less alumni pressure than in a university setting. This would virtually guarantee presidential power to govern unilaterally without serious challenge in the NCCCS. So-called "hard-track" methods (e.g. assertiveness, bargaining, and higher authority) of upward influence may seldom be successful by anyone in such a climate.

2. Subordinate administrators in the NCCCS may not have strong access to and capacity for controlling major dependence-building resources vis-a-vis the presidents. In the present community and technical college administration climate, the author has observed a number of factors which suggest a sense of powerlessness on the part of subordinate administrators, e.g. rules inherent in the position, rewards for predictability and conformity, few rewards for innovation, etc. As Whetton & Cameron (1984) observe:

> A critical requirement for building a power base is discretion. A person who has no lattitude to improvise, to innovate, to demonstrate initiative, will find it extremely difficult to become powerful. (p. 254)

Therefore, the relationship between the presidents and subordinate administrators may be quite asymmetric. The presidents may have power over the subordinate

administrators but subordinate administrators may have little power over presidents.

In this particular agent-target interplay in the NCCCS, it is questionable whether the subordinate administrator has necessary power resources to enter into any "hard-track" methods like assertiveness or bargaining. For example, a subordinate would be foolish to rely on a bargaining strategy without the power to give or withhold actual rewards and punishments.

3. The last plausible explanation for the homogeneity in influence style may be the actual screening and hiring process at work in the institutions. Presidents may be prone to select only those subordinate administrator applicants whose behavioral characteristics "fit" with the organizational climate. Thus, consistent screening and hiring practices tend to build a rather well accepted, uniform model of political behavior across the entire organization.

Concluding Observations

Although the findings of the present study do not support the hypothesis implied in the original research question, the study does offer revealing insights and implications.

Methodology. The study does emphasize the methodological difficulties of studying constructs such as

power and influence and the necessary caution which must be exercised. Future study could be greatly enhanced by a standardized instrument for assessing upward influence effectiveness (and other kinds of effectiveness). Such an instrument may have led to more variance in the effectiveness ratings for subordinates. Also, as a procedural adjustment in the present study, presidents could have been asked to 1) rate the subordinate individual who they believed was the most frequently influential and 2) to rate the individual believed to be the least frequently influential (in that order).

Additionally, a significance level of $p < .05$ is quite demanding (as it should be) in an exploratory study such as this. Therefore, the possibility of a type II error may be just cause for further investigation. It should be noted that the two strategies of higher authority, $F(2,65) = 2.281$, $p < .110$, and bargaining, $F(2,62) = 2.252$, $p < .114$, indicated the most potential for statistically significant differences in group means.

Finally, the Schmidt-Kipnis diagnostic survey and profile (1982a), though highly regarded, has a major limitation--only twenty seven upward influence tactics (consolidated into six strategies) are profiled by the instrument. Therefore, strategies like "common vision" or "participation and trust" found in another influence style

questionnaire used by Barker (1984) could not have been identified in the current study even if present. In a future study, perhaps the use of a natural language sample with content analysis would yield methods of upward influence otherwise concealed by the limitations of the current instrument in use.

Relevance of influence style. Influence style itself may not be a a major variant in all organizations. Due to the culture and/or norms of behavior, a homogeneous stylistic influence behavior may be compellingly dominant. Perhaps a future study in community and technical colleges could determine the bases of power. Clearly, the presence or absence of dependence-building resources do determine how often certain methods of influence can reasonable be used.

Future studies may also find some major differences in influence methods and perceptions of effectiveness based on demographic variables such as race, sex, and age. Other studies may also examine an underlying premise which is the foundation for the current study--that upward influence attempts are in fact occurring at North Carolina community and technical colleges. The instruments used in the study were designed to measure perceptions of upward influence which may or may not be consistent with reality. Subordinate administrators at community and technical

colleges may unconciously misjudge the agent-target interaction which occurs in an atmosphere of predominately downward communication. They may seriously overestimate the frequency of genuine upward influence attempts which, in another context, would not be perceived as such. This could account for the seeming homogeneity of influence style among subordinate administrators--a homogeneity based on the absence of real upward influence.

Finally, the unhypothesized results herein should stimulate yet more inquiry and discussion of the various taxonomies of study. And, rather than diminish the importance of influence style as an important organizational element, this study has only substantiated the crucial relationships which influence style has with a host of other organizational factors.

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APPENDIX

SURRY
COMMUNITY COLLEGE
P. O. BOX 304
DOBSON, NORTH CAROLINA 27017
TELEPHONE 386-8121

June 22, 1987

Dr. Richard L. Brownell
Rowan Technical College
P. O. Box 1595-Courier 242
Salisbury, NC 28144

Dear Dr. Brownell:

One of our faculty at Surry Community College, Gary C. Tilley, will be conducting dissertation research this summer on the topic of intraorganizational influence processes. By a type of cluster sampling, Gary would like to administer two brief surveys at Rowan Technical College.

I am satisfied that the surveys are manageably brief and will be used only for purposes of scholarly research. Therefore, I endorse his efforts.

Sincerely,

Swanson Richards
President

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SURRY
COMMUNITY COLLEGE
P. O. BOX 304
DOBSON, NORTH CAROLINA 27017
TELEPHONE 386-8121

June 23, 1987

Dr. Richard L. Brownell
Rowan Technical College
P. O. Box 1595-Courier 242
Salisbury, NC 28144

Dear Dr. Brownell:

The dissertation research mentioned by Dr. Richards is the culmination of six years of part-time doctoral study at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Survey results will be held in strictest confidence, and results of the research will not reveal inter-institutional differences or individual scoring.

The first survey will be a diagnostic instrument to be administered to all subordinate administrators at Rowan Technical College who report to and are directly accountable to you in the formal hierarchy of the organization. It is a brief survey (twenty-seven statements to respond to) and will take less than fifteen minutes of time. It will be mailed directly to administrators.

The second survey will ask for you to rate each subordinate administrator with whom you have had at least a one-year supervisor-subordinate relationship. This survey will ask for a frequency rating as follows: 1) almost always, 2) frequently, 3) occasionally, 4) seldom, or 5) never effective in getting you (the president) to accept his/her ideas, to make a decision favorable to him/her, or to produce change wanted by him/her. Again, this will be a mail-out survey and should take less than five minutes to complete.

The return of the enclosed fill-in-the-blank memorandum in the postage-paid envelope will signal your approval for the survey to be administered. I shall appreciate any help that you can give.

Sincerely,

Gary C. Tilley, Instructor
Division of Business

MEMORANDUM

TO: Gary C. Tilley, Surry Community College

FROM: _____

DATE: _____

RE: Dissertation Research

Approval is granted to administer the surveys indicated in your letter of June 22, 1987.

The following subordinate administrators report to and are directly accountable to me in the formal structure of the college:

	NAME	TITLE/POSITION
1.	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____
6.	_____	_____

SURRY
COMMUNITY COLLEGE
P. O. BOX 304
DOBSON, NORTH CAROLINA 27017
TELEPHONE 386-8121

TO:

FROM: Gary C. Tilley, Surry Community College

DATE: July 20, 1987

RE: Research Survey

Your president, Mr. McIntyre, has recently approved the administration of the enclosed diagnostic survey at Edgecombe Technical College. The research is the culmination of six years of part-time doctoral study at UNC-G. The survey is brief, and results will be held in strictest confidence. Results will not reveal inter-institutional differences or individual scoring.

I would very much appreciate your cooperation in carefully reading pages 1 - 3 of the enclosed instrument and then responding to the 27 statements on pages 4 - 6. The instrument is being used to study the ways in which you make suggestions or requests to your manager, the president of the college, in order to obtain results that you want. Please use the enclosed answer sheet. Please do not mark on the instrument as it will be used by others.

After responding to the survey, please enclose the answer sheet and the instrument in the self-addressed, stamped envelope provided for easy response. If, for some reason, you do not wish to participate in the survey, please return the instrument because it is an expensive document ($5.00). Thanks.

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Enclosures

SURRY
COMMUNITY COLLEGE
P. O. BOX 304
DOBSON, NORTH CAROLINA 27017
TELEPHONE [illegible]

July 8, 1987

Dr. Phail Wynn, Jr.
Durham Technical Community College
P. O. Drawer 11307-Courier 205
Durham, NC 27703

Dear Dr. Wynn:

Thank you for approval to conduct the survey instruments indicated in my letter of June 23, 1987. For each administrator listed below, please circle the frequency rating which best describes how often each administrator is effective in getting you to either accept his/her ideas, to make a decision favorable to him/her, or to produce changes wanted by him/her. Please respond for only those with whom you have had at least a one-year supervisor-subordinate relationship.

NAME OF ADMINISTRATOR	Almost Always	Frequently	Occasionally	Seldom	Never	
1.	1	2	3	4	5	
2.	1	2	3	4	5	
3.	1	2	3	4	5	
4.	1	2	3	4	5	
5.	1	2	3	4	5	
6.	1	2	3	4	5	