GETTING THINGS DONE: PROACTIVE INFLUENCE TACTICS IN MEXICO AND THE UNITED STATES

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ABSTRACT

As organizational success depends on the commitment of employees, supervisors inevitably attempt to influence task commitment of their subordinates in many ways. Previous research suggests that supervisor-subordinate influence tactics are culture-sensitive. With the internationalization of human resources in organizations, greater sensitivity is required to understand how "the rules of the game" may differ according to the national culture in question. In this study, a comparison of leadership behaviors of managers in Mexico and the United States is carried out. The results of our study indicate that the influence tactics of "rational persuasion" and "personal appeals" are more strongly correlated with task commitment in the US sample, while "legitimating", "pressure", and "organizational appeal" are more strongly associated with task commitment in the Mexican sample. The results also indicated that the quality of the supervisor and subordinate relationship, as measured by Leader-Member Exchange (LMX), plays a moderating role in the effectiveness of influence tactics used in both cultural settings to elicit task commitment. However, in the Mexican sample, LMX moderates pressure, legitimating, and organizational appeal while for the US sample, LMX moderates rational persuasion and inspirational appeal.

Keywords: cultural dimensions, leadership, LMX, influence tactics, task commitment

INTRODUCTION

One of the most important as well as challenging responsibilities of managers and supervisors is that of leading their subordinates in a manner that effectively motivates them to carry out and gain commitment to requests, proposals, and decisions (Yukl, 2010; Yukl et al., 2008). Insufficient attention paid to the supervisor-subordinate relationship in organizations, and notably effective persuasion tactics, can contribute to employee demotivation, resistance and disengagement which can ultimately lead to a destabilizing high turnover rate (Bass 1990; Ferris 1985; Yukl 2010). Lam et al. (2015), in a US study, provide evidence that the quality of the supervisor-subordinate relationship is affected by the choice of the influence tactic used. Furthermore, the internationalization of human resources in organizations requires greater sensitivity to supervisor-subordinate persuasion tactics as "the rules of the game" may differ according to the national culture in question (Hofstede, 1998; Lin et al., 2007). The purpose of our study is to analyze which types of persuasion are used by managers in Mexico and the United States, and how the impact of these tactics on subordinate task commitment compares across these

two cultures. Of additional interest is whether the use of these influence tactics affect the supervisor-subordinate relationship differently in the two compared country cultures.

Proactive influence tactics are behaviors and actions taken to change an individual's behavior, attitude, or action (Yukl, 2010). Because organizational success depends on the commitment of employees, supervisors attempt to influence task commitment of their subordinates in many ways, including proactive influence tactics. One indicator of managerial ineffectiveness is a subordinate's resistance to tasks and proposals (Tepper et al., 2006). Hence, the use of proactive influence tactics might be one way to address this resistance (Yukl et al., 2008, 2005)and gain subordinates' commitment to their tasks. As such, the appropriate usage of proactive influence tactics is a precursor to effective leadership.

Prior research has argued that to optimize the effectiveness of the influence tactics, supervisors and managers alike use tactics that most closely fit with the objective of the task-at-hand. Other factors of importance are the appropriate type of relationship between the manager and the subordinate (Kipnis et al., 1980; Yukl, 1989; Yukl and Falbe, 1990) and the intrinsic values and beliefs of the subordinates which motivate the subordinates to complete the task. For instance, Trinkle et al. (2016) show how the values and beliefs held by accountants have a moderating effect on task commitment. When an individual identifies more strongly with the organization, influence behaviors that align with this (i.e., organizational appeals) are more likely to result in task commitment (Trinkle and Lam, 2014). To the extent that individuals in different cultures have common values and beliefs, they behave similarly (Javidan and Carl, 2005). Such research results lead to hypothesize that the differences in values and beliefs among cultures affect the usage frequency of various influence tactics.

Our contribution to the literature is twofold. First, we provide insight into the proactive influence tactics most frequently deployed by managers in Mexico and the United States. These two countries were chosen for several reasons. Both countries are members of the North American Free Trade Act (NAFTA). The United States is Mexico's largest trading partner and largest foreign investor while Mexico is the United States' third largest trading partner. Nearly a billion dollar worth of goods legally cross the US-Mexico border each day. In 2010, more than a million US citizens lived in Mexico (US Department of State, 2010) while 31.8 million citizens of Mexican origin lived in the US (US Census Bureau, 2010). From a methodological point of view, the two countries differ, sometimes quite significantly, according to leading culture measures in cross-cultural comparisons (Hofstede, 1984). Second, we show how the effectiveness of various influence tactics in generating task commitment is moderated differently by the quality of the subordinate-supervisor relationship, as measured by LMX in Mexico and the United States. Prior literature has suggested that cultural values influence the leadership behaviors that are optimal (e.g. Howell et al., 2003; Javidan and Carl, 2005; Triandis, 1994). We extend this research by providing initial evidence that the optimal behaviors affect both the outcome as well as the quality of the supervisor-subordinate relationship.

The remainder of the paper is organized as follows. In section 2, we will discuss prior literature and develop our research question and hypotheses. In section 3, we will discuss the method deployed and describe the data. In section 4, we will cover data analysis and results.

Finally, in section 5, we will discuss and provide conclusions outlining implications for practice as well as the limitations of our research.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Influence Tactics

Proactive influence tactics are used to persuade someone to carry out a task or influence someone to complete a new task (Yukl, 2010). Yukl et al. (2008) argue that some tactics are more successful than others to gain task commitment from subordinates. The prior literature has found support for a taxonomy of 12 proactive influence tactics: rational persuasion, exchange, inspirational appeals, legitimating tactics, apprising, pressure, collaboration, ingratiation, consultation, personal appeals, coalition tactics (Yukl and Tracey, 1992; Yukl et al., 2008; 2005) and organizational appeal (Trinkle and Lam, 2014). Yukl et al. (2008) tested the validity of the Influence Behavior Questionnaire (IBQ) survey instrument using a US sample, and found that the four most often used influence tactics are collaboration, rational persuasion, consultation, and inspirational appeals. Trinkle and Lam (2014), based on their sample of US based Certified Public Accountants, report that organizational appeal was the fifth most used influence tactic after collaboration, rational persuasion, consultation, and inspirational appeals.

Results of a study aimed at investigating the effectiveness of influence tactics in 12 different countries, including the United States and Mexico (Kennedy et al., 2003), reveal that managers rated rational persuasion, consultation, and collaboration as effective in all 12 countries. A notable difference is the importance of collaboration. Participants in the United States scored collaboration higher (2nd) than the participants in Mexico (5th). We further note that the Kennedy et al. (2003) study did not use the IBQ survey instrument. Consequently, not all of the currently identified influence tactics (i.e., organizational appeal and legitimating) were measured in the study. Furthermore, one of the shortcomings of the Kennedy et al. (2003) study, as pointed out by the authors themselves, is that the research design using scenario-based analysis measures the perception of the effectiveness of the influence tactics, as opposed to reflecting the actual usage of influence tactics and the effectiveness of such tactics.

Upward influence tactics are strategies used by subordinates to influence their supervisor (e.g., Deluga and Perry, 1991). The three upward influence dimensions in the Strategy of Upward Influence (SUI) are organizational beneficial behavior, self-indulgent behaviors, and destructive behaviors (e.g., Egri et al., 2000; Ralston et al., 2006). In a cross-cultural study of managers in the NAFTA region, Egri et al. (2000) find that the acceptability of upward influence tactics differs significantly across regions. We contribute to this literature by investigating if and how the use of downward influence tactics differs across cultures.

In our present study, we attempt to test results obtained by Kennedy et al. (2003) by investigating the usage and effectiveness of influence tactics from the subordinates' perspectives. We then extend this research by investigating how the use of influence tactics affect the relationship between the supervisor and subordinate. Furthermore, the effects of scenario-based analysis will be mitigated by using an empirical survey design research. Albeit survey research has its own limitations, as causality cannot be demonstrated, it offers the advantage of revealing

tactics actually used by managers. To that end, we aim to shed light on the following research question:

> *RQ: Are the most frequently used influence tactics of Mexican managers the same as the most frequently used influence tactics of US managers?*

Cultural Dimensions

Hofstede (1984) defines culture as "the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one human group from another" (p. 260). Hofstede and his colleagues propose five dimensions of culture: individualism/collectivism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, masculinity/femininity (Hofstede, 1984) and long-term orientation (Hofstede and Bond, 1988). GLOBE (House et al., 2004) is a competing framework (Yeganeh, 2014) that could have been used in the current study. Despite receiving criticism in the literature (e.g., Kelley et al., 2006; McSweeney, 2002) Hofstede's cultural indexes have been used as the foundation of the more recent Globe project (e.g., Hofstede, 2010; House et al., 2004), and are still viewed as an appropriate approach to describe culture (e.g., Bachman et al., 2016; Kaasa et al., 2014). Moreover, most empirical research on culture utilizes the framework (Taras et al., 2016).

One of the criticisms of Hofstede's approach is the use of data intended to measure employees' work related values to derive a cultural dimension (Kaasa et al., 2014). However, since our study builds on employee work related values, we use national culture proxied by Hofstede's dimensions as a moderator in this study.

Another criticism of Hofstede's model include the assumption that national culture is uniform and stable over time (e.g., Kelley et al., 2006; McSweeney, 2002; Steel and Taras, 2010). However, Hofstede (1997) argues that national values remain constant over time and recent replications show no loss of validity of the measures (e.g., Hofstede, 2001; Sondergaard, 1994), while, Taras et al. (2016) find that country is often a poor proxy for culture. In contrast, Minkov and Hofstede (2010) find that national borders are an appropriate way to delineate cultures geographically.

Country can be used effectively as a proxy for culture if the within-country variance is small and between-country variance is large (e.g., Taras et al., 2016). Furthermore, it is noted that the within country variation can sometimes be larger than the across country mean variation (e.g., Au, 2000). Consistent with the recommendations made by Harzing and Pudelko (2016), we select two countries for which the cultural differences are high but have few other differences. As mentioned previously, Mexico and the United States are both members of NAFTA and close in geographic proximity. However, Mexico and the United States score very differently on the dimensions of individualism/collectivism, power distance, and uncertainty avoidance. This suggests that for our sample, using country is an appropriate proxy for culture as the within-country variation would bias against finding results. However, we note that there is a relatively small difference in the masculinity/femininity score for both countries. It is to be noted that because long-term orientation is similar for the two countries, no analysis for this dimension is provided in the current study. Table 1 presents Hofstede's five cultural dimensions and results for Mexico and the United States.

Table 1: Cultural Dimension scores for Mexico and the United States		
Dimension	Mexico	United States
Individualism	30	91
Uncertainty	82	46
Masculinity	69	62
Power distance	81	40
Long-term orientation	24	26
Source: Hofstede, G. (1984) *Culture's Consequences: International Differences in Work-Related Values*		

In individualist cultures, such as the United States, social behavior is primarily guided by personal goals, while in collectivist cultures, such as Mexico, the goals of the collective have a dominant influence in shaping behavior (Triandis, 1989). In individualist cultures, individual success is considered a source of well-being (Van Oudenhoven et al., 1998). Moreover, members of collectivist cultures find that when interacting with members from individualist cultures they have to talk about personal accomplishments to establish personal relationships (Triandis et al., 1988). Collectivism implies permanence in that one can never really leave the group (Oyserman, 2006). In collectivist cultures, individuals are supposed to serve the needs and interests of the (in) group (Van Oudenhoven et al., 1998) and in return for their loyalty to the group, the members expect protection from the group (Hofstede, 1993). It can be hypothesized that in individualist cultures the influence tactic is used more frequently to show why the task is good for the individual while in collectivist cultures organizational appeal will be used more frequently to show why the task is good for the organization or in-group. The latter influence tactic was recently identified and tested in Trinkle and Lam (2014). This is formally stated, in the alternative form, in Hypothesis 1 below.

> *H_1: Organizational appeal will be used more frequently in collectivist cultures, relative to the usage in individualist cultures.*

Power distance and individualism/collectivism are strongly correlated (e.g., Ghosh, 2011; Hofstede, 1984). Power distance refers to the degree to which status inequality is accepted as normal in a given culture (Hofstede, 1984). It measures the extent to which employees accept that they have less power than their superiors. In high power distance countries, such as Mexico, subordinates lose respect for managers who ask them for advice (Hofstede, 2001). This is consistent with the arguments made by Kathri (2009) who observes that employees in cultures with high power distance prefer that their supervisors make the decisions and give their employees instructions. Such results contrast with low power distance countries, such as the United States,

where subordinates' dependence on managers is limited and consultation is preferred (Lindell and Arvonen, 1996). Furthermore, in low power distance cultures the focus tends to be on training of the individual worker (Lagrosen, 2002) which would enhance the worker's knowledge and capacity to participate in decision-making. Such observations contrast with research results on cultures with high power distance, where there is lack of input from low-level employees as well as poor communication and information sharing (Ghosh, 2001; Van Oudenhoven, 1998). These previously outlined cultural norms create barriers for lower-level employees in high power distance to use their own judgment in decision-making (Tata and Prasad, 1998). It can therefore be hypothesized that legitimating and pressure tactics are less utilized in cultures with low power distance.

> *H2: Legitimating and pressure are more frequently used in cultures with high power distance, relative to the usage in cultures with low power distance.*

Uncertainty avoidance and power distance are the two most important dimensions for corporate governance since they are associated with power and rules (Hofstede, 1991). Uncertainty is reduced through informational influence when near-peers and friends inform individuals of their own personal experiences and perceptions of the system or when individuals can observe peers using the system (Hofstede, 1984). In cultures with low uncertainty avoidance, such as United States, people take life as it comes and are more easily engaged in new situations (Van Oudenhoven et al., 1998). Furthermore, managers from countries with low uncertainty avoidance are more open to discussing conflict than managers in countries with high uncertainty avoidance (Van Oudenhoven et al., 1998). Such observations contrast with those made about high uncertainty avoidance cultures. Members of high uncertainty avoidance cultures, such as Mexico, prefer a clear organizational structure and clearly laid out rules (Blunt, 1988). In high uncertainty avoidance cultures, employees are more accepting of a manager's rules and policies (Wheeler, 2001).

In continuity with the above discussion, in a culture of high uncertainty avoidance, consultation, collaboration, and ingratiation are used more frequently by near-peers and friends. In a culture of low uncertainty avoidance, it can be expected that these tactics be used more frequently by managers, as they would be socially accepted by subordinates. Such observations can thus lead to the hypothesis that the influence tactics of consultation, collaboration, and ingratiation are used more frequently by managers in cultures with low uncertainty avoidance than managers in cultures of high uncertainty avoidance. This is formally stated in Hypotheses 3, below.

> *H3: Consultation, collaboration, and ingratiation are used more frequently in cultures with low uncertainty avoidance, relative to the usage in cultures with high uncertainty avoidance.*

Cultures that emphasize masculine values place value on work goals, assertiveness, and material success while cultures that emphasize feminine values place value on quality of life, nurturing, and modesty (Hofstede, 1997). In the workplace, employees in feminine cultures place

importance on maintaining a good relationship with their co-workers (Hofstede, 1984). Moreover, in feminine cultures, mutual help and social contacts are the key components of the ideal job (Hofstede, 2001, 1984). Furthermore, managers use intuition and strive for consensus in more feminine cultures (Lagrosen, 2002). According to Hofstede's work (1984), Mexico and the United States are both rated higher than the median as masculine cultures with Mexico rated slightly higher the United States.

It can be thus be hypothesized that there is a more frequent usage of the hard influence tactics, such as pressure, coalition, legitimating in masculine cultures and a more frequent usage of soft influence tactics, such as ingratiation, rational persuasion and inspirational appeals in feminine cultures. Hypothesis 4 can thus be stated as the following:

> H_4: *Rational persuasion, ingratiation, and inspirational appeals are used more frequently in feminine cultures, relative to their usage in masculine cultures.*

Leader-Member Exchange as a Moderator

The Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) theory first emerged in the 1970s and is still widely used today (e.g., Lam et al., 2015; Yukl et al., 2009; Yukl and Michel, 2006). It focuses on the relationship that develops between managers and members of their teams. The basic tenet of this theory is that leaders do not treat each subordinate the same and the quality of the exchange can range from low to high (Dansereau et al., 1975; Graen and Cashman, 1975; Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995). The type and quality of exchange within distinct cultures lead to different subordinate outcomes which include level of performance, commitment, satisfaction (Gerstner and Day, 1997), and helping behaviors (Masterson et al., 2000). Some studies have shown that establishing high-quality LMX relationships leads to many positive outcomes in individualist cultures (Gerstner and Day, 1997; Ilies et al., 2007); while high-quality outcomes through LMX relationships may be less easily achieved by leaders in collectivist cultures (Jiang and Cheng, 2008; Wasti and Can, 2008). Prior literature, using a US sample, has also pointed out that there are several benefits to establishing a high quality relationship for both the manager and the subordinate (see Gerstner and Day, 1997; Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995). Not least of all, a subordinate who has a favorable relationship with his or her manager is likely to demonstrate more support of the leader (Yukl, 2010). The effectiveness of the various influence tactics might be a function of the strength of this relationship. Lam et al. (2015) provide evidence that, in a continuous improvement setting, the quality of the LMX relationship moderates the effectiveness of influence tactics. We will use the outcomes of this research to investigate whether the quality of the subordinate-manager relationship has a different moderating role in Mexico and the United States. Rockstuhl et al. (2012) report in their meta-analysis of 282 independent samples across 23 countries, that national culture does not affect the relationships of LMX with task performance, organizational commitment, and transformational leadership. We add to this research by investigating the moderating effect of LMX on the effectiveness of influence tactics in different cultures, i.e., the United States and Mexico. Our hypothesized relationship is depicted in Fig. 1 and formally stated in Hypothesis 5 below.

H5: The moderating role of relationship quality, as measured by LMX, is different in the US and Mexican cultures.
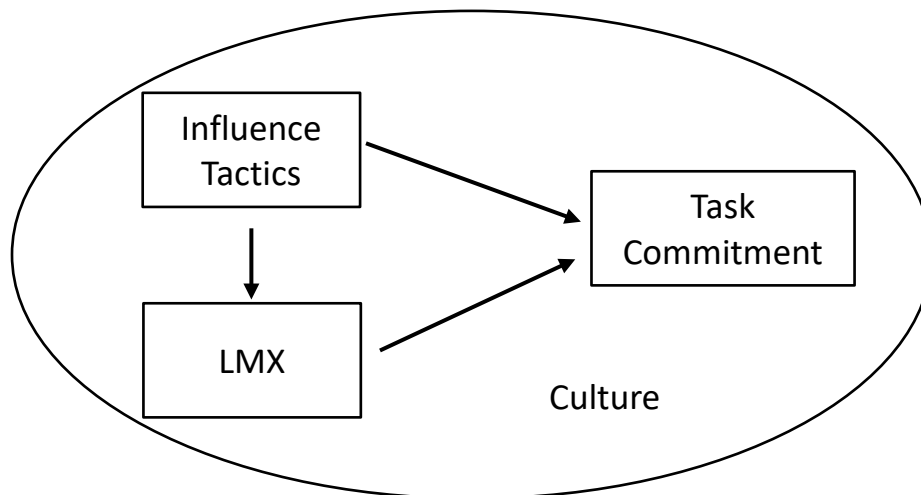
METHOD AND DATA

To test the hypotheses, data was collected in Mexico and the United States through an anonymous online survey created in Qualtrics. An electronic invitation was sent to 95 MBA students enrolled at universities in Mexico and the United States. Country differences are multi-dimensional and may affect managers in a variety of ways (Ambos and Håkanson, 2014). By using MBA students we tried to control for personal and environmental factors that might be alternative proxies for cultural difference (e.g., Taras et al., 2016). The MBA students are also a proxy for low- and mid-level managers. This means they have some experience in supervising others as well as being supervised.

Yukl et al.'s (2008) 44-item IBQ was used to measure the 11 influence tactics: rational persuasion, exchange, inspirational appeals, legitimating, apprising, pressure, collaboration, ingratiation, consultation, personal appeals, and coalition tactics. The 4-items developed to measure organizational appeal (Trinkle and Lam, 2014) were added to this scale. Validity and reliability of the IBQ has been provided in several studies including Yukl et al. (2008) and Trinkle and Lam (2014).

The 12-item multidimensional (i.e., MDM) version of the LMX scale, i.e., LMX-MDM (Liden and Maslyn, 1998) was used to measure the quality of the LMX relationship. The scale captures four dimensions of relationship quality: contribution, affect, loyalty, and professional respect. Additional construct validity of LMX-MDM has been provided in Erdogan and Enders (2007) and Wang et al. (2005). Further, Eisenberg et al. (2010) provide additional evidence that LMX-MDM can be used as a single measure or relationship quality.

As in Trinkle et al. (2016), task commitment was measured using a 4-item scale. The items measure attitude, enthusiasm, and level of commitment to the task-at-hand (Yukl et al., 1999) as

well as commitment of the participant relative to the commitment felt under previous supervisors (Trinkle et al., 2016).

As the IBQ, LMX-MDM, and task commitment scales were originally created in English, the questionnaire was translated in Spanish for the Mexican participants. Consistent with the recommendations made by Brislin (1970), two bilingual behavioral researchers translated the English instrument in Spanish. A third person translated the instrument back into English. Finally, the two versions were compared to ensure that they were equivalent.

Sample

From the 95 respondents who attempted the survey, 77 complete usable survey responses were obtained. For the respondents who did not complete all of the influence tactics usage questions, LMX questions, and task commitment questions were removed from the sample, thus resulting in a completion rate of 81.1%. Such an approach of reporting has been used in prior studies (Henderson et al., 2012, 2011) in lieu of the commonly reported response rate.

Out of the participants who completed the survey, 41 were male and 36 female. Forty responses were obtained from Mexico and 37 from the United States. The average work experience for the Mexican respondents (1.99 years) was slightly lower than that of the US respondents (2.87 years). Most of the participants indicated that they report to low- and mid-level managers (21 and 37, respectively) with fewer participants reporting to senior-level managers (15). Of the participants' supervisors, 35 were male and 40 female. There are no statistically significant differences between the Mexican and US participants in terms of age, gender, work experience, and gender of supervisor. See Table 2 below.

Table 2: Sample Demographics			
	Mexico	**United States**	**Total**
Respondents	40	37	77
Male	20	21	41
Female	20	16	36
Average Work Experience	1.99	2.87	2.40
Average Age	28.3	30.9	29.5
Supervisor			
Male	17	18	35
Female	23	17	40
Low-level	16	5	21
Mid-level	16	21	37
Senior-level	6	9	15

RESULTS

To test the previously presented conceptual models and measurement validation, SPSS 21 and SmartPLS 2.0.M3 (Ringle et al. 2005) were used.

We first investigate which influence tactics used by managers in Mexico and the United States are most strongly correlated with task commitment. We use simple linear regression to identify those influence tactics. The results are reported in Table 3, Panel A. Consistent with prior research, we find that rational collaboration, rational persuasion, consultation, and inspirational appeals are most strongly associated with task commitment (e.g., Trinkle et al., 2016; Yukl, 2008) for both the Mexican and US samples. In addition, ingratiation was strongly correlated with task commitment in the US sample, and organizational appeal was strongly correlated with task commitment in the Mexican sample. However, the survey measures the responses in the aggregate and managers likely use multiple methods simultaneously. Hence, to test our research question, we ran multiple regression models.

In the multiple regression model, the influence tactics most strongly associated with commitment for the Mexican sample were organizational appeal, legitimating, and pressure. The remaining coefficients in the model are not statistically significant ($p > 0.10$). The influence tactics most strongly associated with commitment for the US sample were inspirational appeal and rational persuasion. The remaining coefficients in the model are not statistically significant ($p > 0.10$). See Table 3, Panel B for results.

Table 3: Regression Results						
Panel A: Simple Linear Regression Results						
	Mexico			**United States**		
	Coefficient	**R^2**	**Rank**	**Coefficient**	**R^2**	**Rank**
Rational Persuasion	0.541**	0.355	4	0.655**	0.438	1
Exchange	-0.302	0.236	10	0.385*	0.169	11
Inspirational Appeal	0.595**	0.365	2	0.633**	0.409	2
Legitimating	0.576**	0.344	6	0.331	0.175	10
Apprising	0.550**	0.317	8	0.422**	0.193	9
Pressure	-0.491*	0.279	9	-0.414*	0.207	8
Collaboration	0.654**	0.433	1	0.508**	0.324	5
Ingratiation	0.571**	0.336	7	0.583**	0.349	4
Consultation	0.595**	0.362	3	0.623**	0.407	3
Personal Appeals	0.006	0.148	12	0.130	0.146	12
Coalition	0.209	0.208	11	0.307	0.218	7
Organizational Appeal	0.580**	0.345	5	0.461**	0.239	6
* Significant at the 0.05 level						
** Significant at the 0.01 level						

Panel B: Multiple Linear Regression Results			
	Mexico	**United States**	**Hypothesis**
Organizational Appeal	0.270**		H1
Legitimating	0.300**		H2
Pressure	-0.336**		H2
Inspirational Appeals		0.337*	H4
Rational Persuasion		0.391**	H4
Adj. R^2	0.587	0.458	
* Significant at the 0.05 level ** Significant at the 0.01 level			

Consistent with our first hypothesis, organizational appeal is significant for the Mexican sample (collectivist culture) and not for the US sample (individualist culture). Legitimating and pressure are significant for the Mexican sample (high power distance) and not for the US sample (low power distance) supporting our second hypothesis. Neither consultation nor collaboration are more frequently used in the US sample (low uncertainty avoidance) than in the Mexican sample (high uncertainty avoidance). Hence, our third hypothesis is not supported. This could be a result of the relatively few years of work experience of the participants in the study as they might not have gained sufficient management experience and expertise to feel comfortable in consulting subordinates on projects or engaging subordinates in collaborative modes of work. Finally, rational persuasion and inspirational appeal are more frequently used in the US sample (less masculine) than in the Mexican sample (more masculine) providing support for our fourth hypothesis. Such results concord with Hofstede's findings (1984): both countries score above average on the masculinity score, and the difference between the country sample scores is fairly small.

We next look at the role of the relationship quality as measured by LMX-MDM. Consistent with the findings in Lam et al. (2015), we find that for the US sample rational persuasion and inspirational appeals are associated with relationship quality. Unlike Lam et al. (2015) we do not find significant support for consultation, collaboration, and ingratiation. For the Mexican sample, we find evidence that pressure, legitimating, and organizational appeal are associated with relationship quality. For both models, this relationship quality also serves a moderating role in the effectiveness of influence tactics to elicit task commitment. Hence, these results support Hypothesis 5.

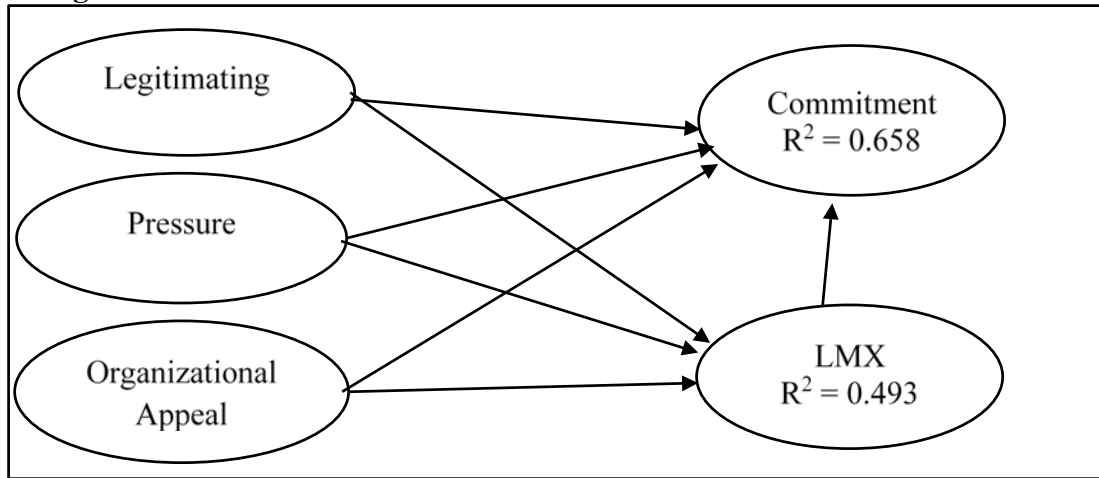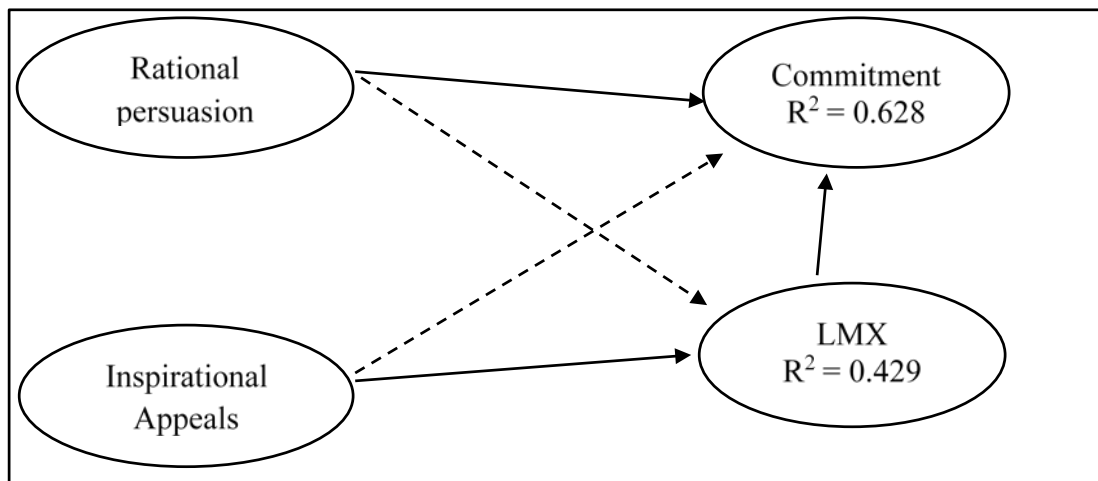**Fig. 2: Influence Tactics, LMX, and Task Commitment**

Fig. 2a Mexico

Fig. 2b United States

→ Significant at the p = 0.01 level

- - - → Significant at the p = 0.05 level

CONCLUSION

In this study, we investigated which influence tactics were most frequently deployed by managers in Mexico and the United States. Our study provides support for the view that the

effectiveness and usage of proactive influence tactics differ across countries with different cultures. We find that the difference in usage of influence tactics between Mexican and US managers is consistent with the differences in country scores on the cultural dimensions identified by Hofstede (1984): individualism/collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, masculinity, and power distance. In particular, in Mexico, a country with a more collectivist culture, organizational appeal is more strongly associated with task commitment than in the United States. Also, in Mexico, a country that has a larger power distance, legitimating and pressure are more strongly associated with task commitment. In the United States, a country that scores lower on the masculinity scale than Mexico, inspirational appeals and rational persuasion are more frequently used.

We next looked at how the usage of proactive influence tactics by managers in Mexico and the United States impacts the subordinate-supervisor relationship. For both the United States and Mexico, the usage of influence tactics and the quality of the relationship has large explanatory power for the variation in subordinates' level of task commitment. The main difference is the relative effectiveness of the various influence tactics in soliciting task commitment and the mediating role of the subordinate-supervisor relationship as measured by LMX. In the United States, LMX is a mediator for the effectiveness of persuasion and inspirational appeals, while in Mexico LMX is a mediator for the effectiveness of pressure, legitimating, and organizational appeals to solicit task commitment. These findings support and extend the work by Lam et al. (2015), where it was found that the supervisor-subordinate relationship was a mediator for the effectiveness of influence tactics to solicit commitment to continuous improvement projects. Indeed in the current paper we provide evidence that this relationship might be culture dependent.

Implications for Managers

The increasing globalization of business has heightened the importance for understanding national cultural influences on managerial effectiveness (Griffith et al., 2006). Failure to acknowledge cultural differences in the workplace can create barriers to understanding and may impact managerial performance outcomes (Li and Karakowsi, 2001). One of the key metrics of evaluating managerial effectiveness is assessing managers' ability to influence subordinates (Bass, 1990; Yukl, 2010). Indeed, for managers to be effective, they need to understand which influence tactics motivate subordinates' commitment and extra effort required to gain commitment to requests, proposals, and decisions (Bass, 1990). Managers, especially aspiring leaders in global settings, need to be attentive to how influence tactics can have a positive impact on relationships with subordinates, and the role played by culture.

Limitations

Like all studies, this study has limitations. For instance, in this study, the subordinates' commitment was measured in the aggregate, while their commitment to individual tasks was not assessed. Future research therefore warrants investigation on the effectiveness of the various influence tactics in soliciting task commitment for specific, individual tasks. As stated previously, the participants of the study had relatively little work experience hence primarily occupied managerial positions of lower levels. On that account, future research can investigate if our results

hold for employees with more work experience and with work experience at mid- and senior-levels. Another limitation concerns the present study's use of surveys. While one advantage of survey studies is enhanced external validity, this approach is not able to show causality. Future research can therefore use an experimental approach to test the direct causal effect implied by our models. In this study perceptual data was used, which is a potential shortcoming of all survey research. However, prior research has found a strong positive correlation between self-reported measures and objective measures (Dess and Robinson, 1984; Ketokivi and Schroeder, 2004). Finally, this study compared the persuasion approaches used by managers in two countries, Mexico and the United States. Future research could investigate the use of influence tactics across a wider spectrum of countries and cultures.

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