

ABSTRACT

SOCIAL POWER STRATEGIES: THE EFFECTS OF SITUATIONAL FACTORS ON CHOICE OF COERCIVE, MANIPULATIVE, AND RATIONAL INFLUENCE TECHNIQUES

Existing research indicates that powerholders develop positive or negative attitudes toward their targets and themselves based on the influence tactics they employ. Research also suggests that influencers experience undesirable effects (e.g., degradation of the target or loss of self-respect) more often when using coercive and manipulative tactics than when using approaches that encourage dialogue and mutual decision-making. This thesis provides a review of current literature on social influence and identifies key situational factors that affect the selection of influence style. A study was conducted on choice of influence tactics in a hypothetical workplace. Results indicate that key factors in the choice of influence strategies include (a) positional power of the influencer and target person, (b) expectations regarding resistance, (c) willingness of the influencer to compromise on his or her goal, and (d) relational goals of the influencer. Implications and directions for future research are discussed.

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