

Outcome Alternatives and Value as Criteria for
Multistrategy Evaluations

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Abstract

This study examined the impact of some basic exchange-theory variables, (i.e., outcome *alternatives* and outcome *value*) on multistrategy evaluations in a conflict; setting. Using a role-playing simulation method, 320 college students took the position of an employee in conflict with an employer and evaluated their own likelihood of adopting four strategies suggested by exchange-theory schemes: self-enhancement, threat to leave, coalition with other employees, and conflict avoidance. A $2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 2$ factorial design manipulated self's (employee) outcome alternatives, self's (employee) outcome value, other's (employer) outcome alternatives, and other's (employer) outcome value. The results showed that outcome alternatives and outcome value have differential effects on strategy evaluations. The results generally support predictions implied by the Blau and Emerson analyses of power relations and a subjective probability of success interpretation suggested by Kipnis's "treatment of choice" metaphor.

Conflicting parties in “natural” settings typically have a range of strategy options, meaning that they must evaluate and select one of several strategies. This multistrategy decision process prompts two important questions: What criteria do parties use to evaluate diverse strategies? Are similar or different criteria applied to disparate strategies? These questions have not been answered in research on power tactics, which uses “forced-choice” settings to investigate one strategy at a time (see reviews by Kipnis, 1974; Michener & Suchner, 1972; Tedeschi, Schlenker, & Lindskold, 1972). Such single-strategy research yields valuable information on why persons decide to use or not use a particular strategy, but it ignores the problem of what information persons use to simultaneously evaluate diverse strategies. Research incorporating a full range of strategy options seems essential to examine this issue.

The present study addresses the multistrategy issue and is theoretically based on the exchange framework of Blau (1964) and Emerson (1962, 1972). In conflict settings, persons typically evaluate the context and alternatives available to them before undertaking some action. A significant aspect of these cognitive processes appears to be the development of “plans of action” (i.e., tentative decisions regarding the behavioral alternatives). The present research examines these plans of action rather than behavior per se and is, therefore, concerned with cognitive processes that precede actual behavior in conflict settings.

In most conflict settings, there are a large number of specific strategies available to actors, and exchange theorists have suggested various strategy categorizations. The major strategies can be identified as self-enhancement, threatening to leave the relationship, coalition formation, and conflict avoidance (Blau, 1964; Emerson, 1962, 1972; Michener & Suchner, 1972). Consider these strategies in a situation where an employee might try to extract a pay raise from an employer. The *self-enhancement* strategy involves an attempt to persuade the employer

that one's inputs (e.g., performance) are high enough to warrant a pay raise. The *threat-to-leave* strategy is a threat to seek employment elsewhere. A *coalition* refers to joint action with other employees against the employer. *Conflict avoidance* involves resigning oneself to current pay levels (Blau, 1964; Emerson, 1962, 1972; Michener & Suchner, 1972). The present study uses an employee-employer context to examine how persons evaluate these four strategies.

Some recent theory and research suggests that multistrategy evaluations can depend on a number of factors, including expected success, normative constraints, and the approval of a third party (Kipnis, 1974; Michener & Schwertfeger, 1972; Raven & Kruglanski, 1970). The basic idea guiding this research is that persons will estimate the probable success of alternative strategies and that strategy evaluations will reflect these expectations of success. This idea has been developed by Kipnis (1974) in his research on how leaders overcome resistance from subordinates. He argues that there is a "treatment of choice" for each form of subordinate resistance. The treatment is adjusted to the situation, meaning that leaders diagnose the reason for a subordinate's resistance and adopt strategies that are most likely to overcome this resistance (i.e., strategies with the greatest expected success). The present study is concerned with a subordinate's attempt to overcome the resistance of an employer to a pay raise and uses expected success to suggest criteria or information a subordinate may use to make strategy evaluations.

Exchange-theory treatments of power suggest that a person might use information regarding the power position of "self" and "other" to form success expectations and make strategy decisions. To Blau (1964) and Emerson (1962, 1972), outcome alternatives and outcome value determine the power each person has over the other. Outcome *alternatives* refer to the availability of outcomes from other sources, and *value* is generally viewed as the "importance of" or "need for" the outcomes in question, rather than outcome magnitude (Blau, 1964;

Emerson, 1962, 1972; Gergen, 1969; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). A person (employee) has power over an other (employer) to the extent that the other has few alternative sources and highly values the outcomes at issue; similarly, the other (employer) has power over oneself (employee) to the extent that self has few alternatives and highly values the outcomes at issue. A recent study shows that these determinants of “objective” power also affect a person’s subjective estimate of the power of self and other (Bacharach & Lawler, 1976).

Blau (1964) and Emerson (1962, 1972) identify four variables that might provide persons criteria for making multistrategy evaluations: self’s alternatives, self’s value, other’s alternatives, and other’s value. Blau and Emerson do not explicitly predict which criteria will affect which strategies, but Emerson (1972, p. 68) has recently posed this research question and suggested that expected success might provide the foundation for such predictions. From an expected-success premise, this study expects each of the foregoing variables to be associated with different strategies because (a) different variables give persons information on different points of vulnerability in one’s own or the other’s situation, and (b) different strategies tend to be directed at disparate sources of vulnerability. For example, if one (self) has many alternatives, then he may see a threat to leave as more effective than tactics that do not use the power resource provided by such alternatives. A person may expect greater success from a threat to leave under such circumstances because this strategy attacks a vulnerable point in the other’s situation. With few alternatives, a person (self) would be foolish to use this strategy because such a threat is buttressed by minimal force and unlikely to be viewed as credible.

The implication of the Blau-Emerson analyses of power and the expected-success premise (Kipnis, 1974) is that each alternative- value variable will bear most heavily on one of the four strategies. Before presenting the specific predictions, two points should be emphasized.

First, an independent variable may affect more than one strategy without undermining the general hypothesis, which suggests that each independent variable may be more important to one strategy than to the remaining strategies. Second, consistent with a cognitive focus, the dependent variables are a person's (self) report of how likely he would be to adopt each of the four strategies (i.e., strategy plans).

Self's Outcome Alternatives

One's own alternatives should be most important to the threat-to-leave strategy. As noted above, the availability of alternatives for self is especially relevant to the expected success of threats to leave, with greater success anticipated under high as opposed to low alternatives. Persons should see such alternatives as a more relevant criterion for threats to leave when compared with other strategies. Although several studies document links between alternatives and cooperation, prior research has not determined whether persons view self's alternatives as more relevant to threats to leave than to other possible strategies (e.g., Burgess & Nielsen, 1974; Schellenberg, 1965).

Other's Outcome Alternatives

The other's alternatives should most strongly affect coalition evaluations. A coalition limits the other's alternatives (e.g., Emerson, 1962; Michener & Suchner, 1972); consequently, persons may see a coalition as more useful when the other has many alternatives because the coalition reduces this base for the other's power. If the other has few alternatives, then coalitions

would be pointless and a threat to leave may become a more viable strategy. In sum, other's alternatives should be most important to coalitions but may also affect threats to leave. Under conditions of high as opposed to low alternatives, persons' expressed tendency toward coalitions should increase, whereas their expressed tendency toward a threat to leave should decrease.

The impact of other's alternatives on coalitions has not been explicitly investigated, but this effect is suggested by a study which found that the frequency of "weak" coalitions (i.e., coalitions between subordinates) was greater when the other (i.e., superordinate) has an alternative outcome source (Kelley & Arrowood, 1960). However, this finding could be due to the superordinate refusing a coalition and selecting the alternative rather than to the effect of other's alternatives per se on subordinates' inclination toward the weak coalition. The present study attempts to demonstrate a link between the other's alternatives and a subordinate's evaluation of the coalition option.

Self's Outcome Value

The value persons attach to the outcomes should be the prime criterion for conflict avoidance. The conflict-avoidance option enables a person to avoid the risk or effort associated with "confrontation" strategies, such as coalitions, threats to leave, and selfenhancement. Persons should report a greater tendency toward conflict avoidance when they attach low as opposed to high value to the outcomes at stake. There are two possible reasons for this, both of which suggest that the expected success of attempting influence will decrease under low value. First, persons may not view the salary grievance as legitimate enough to justify influence attempts under conditions of low value. Given that legitimate grievances provide a better foundation for

influence, persons may expect less success from influence in the low-value condition. Second, given that the other has information on self's value, persons in the low-value condition might expect to be viewed by the other as lacking the motivation or commitment to push for a pay raise, and this may make the other less responsive to influence attempts.

In sum, low value should reduce the expected success of influence attempts and facilitate conflict avoidance. Regarding prior research, conflict-avoidance responses (e.g., "withdrawal") have been documented in a variety of contexts, but research has not examined the impact of extant outcome value on conflict avoidance or on multistrategy evaluations (e.g., Hammock & Brehm [cited in Brehm, 1966]; Leventhal & Bergman, 1969; Michener & Suchner, 1972).

Other's Outcome Value

The importance that other ascribes to the outcomes should be strongly associated with self-enhancement. Other's value reflects the cost of making concessions to self. If other's value is low, the costs are minimal, and persons might expect the other to be more receptive to influence. If other's value is high, on the other hand, persons might expect the other to adopt a more intransigent stance because the cost of making concessions to self is greater.

Persons may expect greater success from self-enhancement when the other attributes low value to the outcomes in question. The reason is that self-enhancement involves more gentle persuasion than the other confrontation strategies (i.e., threat to leave, coalition), and the success of such gentle persuasion should be especially sensitive to the other's concession cost. Self-enhancement may be fruitless when the other highly values the outcomes because of the other's intransigence; the high-value condition suggests a more forceful strategy, a coalition. In sum, an

increase in the other's value should decrease the expressed likelihood of self-enhancement and increase the likelihood of a coalition strategy.

Method

Subjects and Procedures

The four independent variables (i.e., self's outcome value, self's outcome alternatives, other's outcome value, other's outcome alternatives) were manipulated in a $2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 2$ factorial design. A total of 320 undergraduates at Cornell University participated in the study and were randomly assigned to 1 of 16 experimental treatments (i.e., 20 per cell). The data were gathered via questionnaires administered in large classes, and care was taken to assure that classes had not discussed ideas relevant to the study.

Before responding to a questionnaire, subjects read a description of a situation involving conflict between an employer and an employee. AH subjects adopted the role of the employee and imagined themselves as a sales representative for a large clothing company. Specifically, the description was as follows:

You are a salesman (saleswoman) for a large company which produces and sells clothing. Sales personnel, like yourself, work on a salary basis and do not receive a commission. Recently, the company did give pay raises to production workers, but did not give salary increases to sales personnel (such as yourself). Over the last year, your own sales have steadily increased, and you are somewhat unhappy about not getting a salary increase.

Faced with the failure of the company to give sales personnel pay raises, you have four alternative courses of action: (1) try to persuade your supervisors that you, personally, deserve a pay increase by pointing to your sales performance; (2) join with other sales personnel and, as a group, pressure the company to give pay raises; (3) individually, threaten to find another sales job and leave the company; (4) stay in your present job and accept your current salary. Your task is to decide which of these options to select.

Subjects then read information that manipulated the independent variables. The availability of alternative jobs for self and alternative employees for other manipulated self-other alternatives. The self-alternatives (low vs. high) manipulation stated, "The job market for sales people with your qualifications is (very tight/very good), and there is (only a 10%/a 90%) chance that you could find a better job." The manipulation of other's alternatives (low vs. high) stated, "If you quit, the company would find it (difficult/easy) to replace you because there is (only a 10%/a 90%) chance that they could hire another person with your qualifications."

Self value and other value were manipulated by varying the consequence a pay raise would have for one's own and the employer's financial position. Specifically, the self-value (low vs. high) manipulation stated, "A pay raise is (not at all important/ very important) to you because your financial position has (improved/deteriorated) in the last year." Other value (low vs. high) was manipulated by stating, "The company is in (good financial condition/poor financial condition), and there is (only a 10%/a 90%) chance that giving salary increases will affect the financial security of the company."

Dependent Variables

A questionnaire, containing the dependent measures, followed the description of the situation. Subjects were instructed to read the description of the situation twice before proceeding to the questionnaire. This served to equalize subjects' understanding of the situation and account for differentiation in reading-comprehensive ability. Separate questionnaire items for each strategy asked subjects how likely they would be to adopt the strategy. Subjects responded on 9-point scales labeled "not at all likely" at the low end and "highly likely" at the opposite pole. The specific items were as follows:

How likely is it that you would decide to accept your current salary and not try to get the company to change its decisions on pay raises? (*conflict avoidance*)

How likely is it that you would try to persuade the company to give you a pay raise by pointing to your sales performance? (*self-enhancement*)

How likely is it that you would threaten to leave the company and get another job? (*threat to leave*)

How likely is it that you would organize with other sales personnel and, as a group, pressure the company to give salary increases? (*coalition*)

Additional questionnaire items, with similar response formats, asked subjects to evaluate the legitimacy of attempting social influence and estimate the success of social influence in general as well as the likelihood that particular strategies would successfully extract a pay raise from the other.

The last item on the questionnaire asked subjects, "How confident are you with the answers you gave?" Subjects answered on a 9-point scale ranging from "not at all confident" to

“highly confident.” The overall mean across experimental conditions was 6.87, reflecting considerable confidence.

Results

With multiple dependent variables, separate analyses of variance for each dependent variable (strategy) may yield significant effects by chance. To avoid capitalizing on chance, it is necessary to perform a multivariate analysis of variance to ascertain whether each independent variable has an overall effect on the multidependent variables. If the overall effects are statistically significant, then it is appropriate to examine univariate F s from separate four-way analyses of variance on each dependent variable (for pertinent discussions of multivariate analysis of variance, see Anderson, 1966; Cooley & Lohnes, 1971; Jones, 1966).

A multivariate analysis of variance, including the four strategies, revealed main effects for all four independent variables using the Wilks-lambda criterion, $F(1,304) = 6.43, p < .001$, for self's value; $F(1,304) = 20.85, p < .001$, for self's alternatives; $F(1,304) = 3.97, p < .004$, for other's value; $F(1,304) = 4.55, p < .001$, for other's alternatives. Multivariate tests for interaction effects were not statistically significant. Therefore, it is appropriate to examine univariate F s for the main effects of each independent variable. Table 1 presents the mean likelihood scores for each strategy by experimental condition.

The results are divided into four sections. First, the pattern of main effects for each independent variable is presented. Second, standardized discriminant coefficients from the multivariate analysis assess the relative importance of each independent variable to the four

strategies. Third, the effects of the independent variables on perceptions of strategy success are presented. Fourth, the overall preference rankings of the strategies are discussed.

Insert Table 1 Here

Main Effects

Self's outcome alternatives. As expected, self's alternatives constituted a criterion for threats to leave. Persons reported greater inclination toward a threat to leave in the high- as opposed to low-alternatives condition, $F(1,304) = 64.75, p < .001$. High alternatives for self also decreased the tendency of persons to say they would adopt conflict avoidance, an effect that was not predicted, $F(1, 304) = 7.89, p < .005$. In sum, persons with many alternatives reported less inclination toward accepting their current pay and more inclination toward a threat-to-leave strategy.

Other's outcome alternatives. Two main effects occur for the other's alternatives. As predicted, persons in the high-alternatives condition said they were more likely to opt for a coalition than persons in the low-alternatives condition, $F(1,304) = 4.94, p < .03$. Moreover, persons reported less tendency toward a threat to leave when the other had high rather than low alternatives, $F(1, 304) = 10.67, p < .001$. Thus, as expected, where the other had many alternatives, persons reported a greater tendency toward coalitions and a lower tendency toward threats to leave.

Insert Table 2 Here

Self's outcome value. The importance of the outcomes to self affected two strategies. As expected, persons reported greater inclination toward conflict avoidance when they (self) attached low as opposed to high value to the outcomes, $F(1,304) = 21.72, p < .001$. When the outcomes were of low importance, persons simply expressed less tendency to attempt changing their current outcome position. Low value also reduced persons' tendency toward the gentlest confrontation strategy—self-enhancement, $F(1,304) = 8.84, p < .003$.

Other's outcome value. The prediction that other's value would affect self-enhancement is not supported ($F < 1$). However, other's value did affect coalition responses. Persons reported greater inclination toward a coalition when the other attributed low as opposed to high value to the outcomes, $F(1,304) = 6.71, p < .01$. This pattern is the opposite of that predicted in the introduction and we return to it later.

To conclude, the main effects indicate that different independent variables have somewhat different tactical implications. Three of the four hypotheses were supported. As predicted, high alternatives for self enhanced the likelihood of threats to leave, high alternatives for the other increased the likelihood of coalitions while decreasing the likelihood of threats to leave, and low outcome value for self facilitated conflict avoidance. The hypothesized effect of other's value on self-enhancement did not emerge. A couple of effects that were not predicted also occurred. However, recall that the hypotheses do not preclude the possibility of additional effects but suggest that specific independent variables will be more important to some strategies than others. Main effects alone are not sufficient because they do not allow one to systematically

compare the effects of a given independent variable on the four strategies. Discriminant analysis was used for this purpose.

Insert Table 3 Here

Discriminant Analysis

The use of standardized discriminant functions has two compelling advantages. First, this controls for intercorrelations among strategies (see Table 2). Second, and more important, standardized discriminant functions enable one to compare the sensitivity of different strategies to variation in a given independent variable by determining the ability of each dependent measure (strategy) to discriminate between the categories of the independent variable (Anderson, 1966; Cooley & Lohnes, 1971; Jones, 1966). The equations containing the standardized discriminant coefficients are presented in Table 3. In each equation, the dependent variable (strategy) with the largest score is the most sensitive to variation in a given independent variable and, by implication, the strategy for which the specific independent variable is most important (see Anderson, 1966; Cooley & Lohnes, 1971; Jones, 1966).

To evaluate the hypotheses, compare the size of the coefficients within each equation and the coefficients for a given strategy across the four equations. The data provide unequivocal support for predictions regarding self's alternatives and self's value. In the first equation, a threat to leave was clearly more sensitive to self's alternatives than other strategies; moreover, contrasting the threat-to-leave scores across equations, the threat-to-leave score was largest in the first equation. A similar pattern was revealed for self's value (Equation 2). Conflict avoidance

had the largest discriminant score within the second equation, as well as across equations. The predicted effect of other's alternatives is partially supported. Consistent with the prediction, coalition responses were quite sensitive to other's outcome alternatives, but the coefficient for a threat to leave was larger than expected. Other's alternatives apparently constituted a major criterion for both threat-to-leave and coalition evaluations. Regarding the other's value (fourth equation), self-enhancement did not attain the highest score, contrary to the prediction. The most important implication of Equation 4 is that other's value is important to coalition decisions because the coalition coefficient was the highest compared to the other equations. Within Equation 4, the value of threat-to-leave was slightly higher, but other equations contained even larger threat-to-leave scores, and the main effect of other's value on threats to leave is not statistically significant.¹

In sum, self's alternatives was the prime criterion for threats to leave, and self's value was the prime criterion for conflict avoidance. Other's alternatives was important to both threats to leave and coalitions, but of somewhat greater importance to the former, whereas other's value was important primarily to coalitions.

¹ Note that these data allow one to compare the effects of each independent variable on the four strategies rather than compare the effects of the four independent variables on each strategy separately. This is consistent with the major purpose of the research, but one might argue that Blau (1964) and Emerson (1962, 1972) also imply that certain independent variables will have larger effects on a given strategy compared with other independent variables. For example, threats to leave should not only discriminate the most, compared with other strategies, between the low and high self alternatives, but among the independent variables, self's alternatives should have the largest effect on threats to leave. To examine this issue, each strategy was separately regressed on the four independent variables. The results of multiple regression complement and are generally consistent with the discriminant analysis. Comparing the independent variables, self's value had the largest effect on conflict avoidance, self's alternatives had the largest effect on threats to leave, and other's value and other's alternatives had the largest (and nearly equal) effects on coalition evaluations.

Perceptions of Success

The discriminant functions show what strategies are most sensitive to given independent variables. If expected success (Kipnis, 1974) is a viable interpretation, then each independent variable should affect the expected success of the strategy that is most sensitive to it.

Data on subjective probabilities of success indicate that the observed effects on strategy evaluations are consistent with the observed effects on expected success. Regarding self's alternatives, persons expected threats to leave to be more effective when they had high as opposed to low alternatives, $F(1,304) = 28.96, p < .001$, but self's alternatives did not affect the success attributed to the other confrontation strategies (self-enhancement and coalitions). Based on the discriminant functions, a threat to leave is also most sensitive to other's alternatives, and persons accordingly perceived it as more effective when the other had few alternatives, $F(1, 304) = 107.29, p < .001$. Other's alternatives did not affect perceived coalition success but did unexpectedly affect the expected success of self-enhancement, $F(1,304) = 6.65, p < .01$. In addition, consistent with the observed effects of other's value, a coalition was perceived as more effective when the other attached low value to the outcomes, $F(1, 304) = 4.33, p < .05$, whereas other's value did not affect the expected success of threat-to-leave and self-enhancement strategies. Finally, self's value did not affect the subjective success of specific confrontation strategies (threat to leave, self-enhancement, and coalition) but did affect the success attributed to social influence in general. When persons felt the outcomes were of low importance, they expected social influence to be less effective, $F(1,304) = 8.92, p < .03$.

These results suggest that perceptions of success played an important role in persons' use of the independent variables to make strategy evaluations. The major effects on strategy evaluations were generally isomorphic with the effects on expected success.

Strategy Preference Rankings

The data also provided crude information on the ranking of strategy preferences. A comparison of the overall strategy likelihood scores showed that self-enhancement, coalitions, and threats to leave were the most preferred strategies in this particular setting. Since these three responses, in contrast to conflict avoidance, involved a direct confrontation with the other, the rankings affirmed that persons were inclined to exert overt pressure on the other. Of course, these data should be interpreted with considerable care, because such overall scores should be affected by fixed aspects of the experimental situation. In the present study, a conflict situation was intentionally induced, and it is quite likely that these preference rankings were a function of this conflict. Of primary interest is whether the independent variables have different tactical implications, regardless of the preference rankings, and this has been addressed in prior sections.

Discussion

From the Blau (1964) and Emerson (1962, 1972) analyses of power relations and Kipnis's (1974) "treatment of choice" notion, this research proposed that outcome alternatives and value would provide cues for perceptions of strategy success and thereby affect strategy evaluations. The effects of different variables on persons' evaluation of different strategies

generally substantiate this notion. Self's alternatives bear primarily on threats to leave, self's value bears primarily on conflict avoidance, and other's alternatives are important, though not most important, to coalition evaluations. The only clear negative finding is that other's value does not affect self-enhancement. Despite the negative finding, however, the observed effects of alternatives and value on strategy evaluations are consistent with the effects on expected success, supporting expected success as an interpretive premise. Overall, the results show that persons view different power determinants, specified by exchange theories, as having different tactical implications. The following discussion will elaborate the tactical implications of each independent variable and relate the major findings to prior research.

Outcome Alternatives

Research has shown that self's alternatives affect the tendency of persons to maintain cooperative relations with an other (Burgess & Nielsen, 1974; Schellenberg, 1965; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). Using a role-playing setting, the present study reveals a related finding on threat-to-leave evaluations. Specifically, this research makes two contributions regarding this strategy. First, it demonstrates that threat-to-leave evaluations are a function of the other's alternatives as well as self's alternatives. When the other has few alternatives, persons believe he is more vulnerable to this strategy than when he has many alternatives. Second, this study shows that both self's and other's alternatives are more important to threat-to-leave evaluations than to coalitions, self-enhancement, and conflict avoidance.

The effect of other's alternatives on coalition evaluations is also an important finding. If the other has many alternatives, persons report a greater inclination toward a coalition, yet at the

same time they report less tendency toward a threat to leave. This link between other's alternatives and coalitions is relevant to a finding in Kelley and Arrowood (1960) indicating that "weak" coalitions (i.e., coalitions between subordinates) were more likely when the superordinate had an alternative outcome source. This could have occurred because (a) the superordinate was simply more inclined toward the alternative than toward a coalition with a subordinate or (b) because subordinates felt a coalition with each other was more useful to contain an other who had alternatives. The present study demonstrates a link between other's alternatives and a subordinate's expressed tendency toward coalitions where only the second interpretation (b) could apply. In general, this finding suggests that persons use the fact that coalitions obstruct an other's alternatives to identify cues for making coalition evaluations. The level of the other's alternatives is one such cue.

Outcome Value

Most research on strategies assumes that valued outcomes are at stake and investigates strategy behavior in the context of such valued outcomes. As a consequence, little research has explored the role of extant outcome importance on strategy evaluations (see Michener & Suchner, 1972). The present study reveals that the value ascribed to the outcomes by self and other affects strategy evaluations and that persons see self's value as having different tactical implications than other's value.

Consider the effect of self's value on conflict avoidance. Persons with low value say they are more likely to resign themselves to current outcomes. Low value reduces the subjective probability of extracting any concessions from the other and enhances one's proclivity toward

simply adjusting to current outcome levels. This occurs despite the fact that persons had some reason to perceive the pay decisions of the employer (other) as inequitable, since the other had awarded pay raises to production personnel but not to sales personnel (such as self).

Ancillary questionnaire data shed further light on why low self value reduces the expected success of social influence. First of all, persons felt they had a less legitimate grievance in the low-value condition. A question asked persons how legitimate they felt an influence attempt would be. Under conditions of low self value, persons perceived influence attempts as less legitimate than under conditions of high value $F(l, 304) = 18.56, p < .001$. And the lower the perceived legitimacy of the grievance, the lower the expected success of influence ($r = .25, p < .001$). Second, persons with low as opposed to high value reported a tendency to expend less effort to get a pay raise. A question asked persons how much effort they would be willing to put forth, and the results indicate that low value reduced the estimated effort, $F(l, 304) = 79.29, p < .001$. Less effort was also associated with lower expected success ($r = .35, p < .001$). Thus, low value undermined the perceived legitimacy of the grievance and lowered the effort persons expected to make in behalf of a pay raise. Persons are apparently aware that successful influence requires a legitimate grievance and a substantial expenditure of effort. Self's value is one basis for making these judgments.

In contrast to self's outcome value, other's value does not affect conflict avoidance but does affect evaluations of the most severe confrontation tactic—coalitions. In retrospect, the unexpected direction of the effect on coalition evaluations is understandable. Under low other's value, persons probably did not believe the other would be more receptive to social influence because, given the situation, the other had already implicitly refused to award raises. The employer failed to increase pay even when it involved minimal cost and, therefore, persons

probably inferred that *collective* pressure was more essential to win concessions where the other attributed low (compared with high) value to the outcomes. Under high value, persons may have viewed the employer as constrained by his financial situation, attributed less personal responsibility for the lack of a pay raise to the employer (e.g., see Jones & Davis, 1965), and thereby expressed less proclivity toward coalitions.

In conclusion, using the Blau-Emerson exchange framework, this study undertook the first complete investigation of the links between certain power determinants (i.e., alternatives and value) and strategies. In a multistrategy setting, the present research demonstrates that outcome alternatives and outcome value have differential effects on the evaluation of strategies. Future research should examine the impact of alternatives and value on other cognitive elements of conflict settings, such as the expected response (i.e., counterstrategies) of the adversary, and relate the cognitive elements of “plans of action” to actual behavior.

Table 1

TABLE 1
MEAN LIKELIHOOD SCORES FOR EACH OF FOUR
STRATEGIES BY EXPERIMENTAL CONDITION

Experimental condition (SV-SA- OV-OA) ^a	Strategy			
	Self-en- hance- ment	Coalition	Threat to leave	Conflict avoid- ance
L-L-L-L	6.60	6.40	4.75	3.20
L-L-L-H	7.00	5.25	5.45	3.15
L-L-H-L	6.60	4.35	4.20	4.35
L-L-H-H	6.45	5.15	4.95	4.75
L-H-L-L	7.25	5.75	2.75	4.05
L-H-L-H	6.80	5.40	3.60	3.90
L-H-H-L	6.60	4.35	4.20	4.35
L-H-H-H	7.35	4.85	3.75	4.25
H-L-L-L	7.35	6.55	4.35	2.50
H-L-L-H	7.75	5.95	5.30	2.45
H-L-H-L	7.50	5.75	6.15	3.05
H-L-H-H	7.15	4.00	6.80	2.15
H-H-L-L	7.35	6.30	2.90	3.05
H-H-L-H	7.35	5.55	3.65	4.05
H-H-H-L	7.25	6.00	2.90	3.30
H-H-H-H	7.65	5.75	3.95	3.50

Note. Abbreviations: SV = self's outcome value; SA = self's outcome alternatives; OV = other's outcome value; OA = other's outcome alternatives; L and H refer to low and high conditions for the value and alternative variables.

^a Each experimental condition is defined by a combination of letters (L and H) that correspond to the variables SV-SA-OV-OA, respectively.

Table 2

TABLE 2
ZERO-ORDER CORRELATIONS BETWEEN
FOUR STRATEGIES

Strategy	Self-en- hancement	Coalition	Threat to leave
Coalition	-.02		
Threat to leave	.27*	.05	
Conflict avoidance	-.25*	-.22*	-.27*

* $p < .001$.

Table 3

TABLE 3
STANDARDIZED DISCRIMINANT COEFFICIENTS FOR EACH INDEPENDENT VARIABLE

Independent variable	Equation	Wilks-lambda criterion
1. Self's alternatives	= .43(SE) - .99(TL) + .30(C) + .26(CA)	$p < .001$
2. Self's value	= .40(SE) + .03(TL) + .11(C) - .79(CA)	$p < .001$
3. Other's alternatives	= -.16(SE) + .91(TL) - .62(C) + .09(CA)	$p < .001$
4. Other's value	= -.35(SE) + .71(TL) - .67(C) + .41(CA)	$p < .004$

Note. SE = self-enhancement; TL = threat to leave; C = coalition; CA = conflict avoidance.

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