

**Upward Influence in Organizations:
Test of A Model**

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Abstract

A causal model of upward influence in organizations was proposed and tested on a sample of staff nurses and their supervisors in a hospital setting. LISREL results demonstrated that the proposed model fit the data well, and reflected a better fit than several alternative models that were estimated. The contributions and limitations of the present study are discussed, in addition to challenges and directions for future research.

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Traditional conceptions of organizations suggest that influence is directed downward, typically derived from formally designated and organizationally-sanctioned authority bases. However, organizational scholars have maintained interest in better understanding the processes by which influence is exercised upward from subordinates toward their supervisors. Theory and research on upward influence has tended to focus on how the process operates in organizations (Ferris, Russ, & Fandt, 1989; Gardner & Martinko, 1988; Liden & Mitchell, 1988; Porter, Allen, & Angle, 1981; Tedeschi & Melburg, 1984), the tactics used (Kipnis, Schmidt, & Wilkinson, 1980; Porter et al., 1981; Schilit & Locke, 1982; Tedeschi & Melburg, 1984), and in the conditions under which influence tactics are employed (Fandt & Ferris, 1990; Mowday, 1978; Kipnis & Schmidt, 1983; Schmidt & Kipnis, 1984). Furthermore, empirical research has investigated the effects of influence tactics on organizational outcomes such as employment interview decisions (Baron, 1986; Gilmore & Ferris, 1989), career progress (Gould & Penley, 1984), managerial action recommendations (Wood & Mitchell, 1981), and performance evaluations and salary increases (Dreher, Dougherty, & Whitely, 1988; Kipnis & Schmidt, 1988; Wayne & Ferris, 1990; Wayne & Kacmar, in press). Thus, while specific relationships and linkages have been investigated, little work has been done on the formulation and empirical testing of causal models depicting how the upward influence process operates in organizational settings. The purpose of the present study is to address this need by conducting an empirical test of a model of upward influence in organizations. The model proposed and tested in this study is an adaptation and extension of a conceptual model proposed by Ferris et al. (1989). The following sections provide a brief overview of the Ferris et al. model, before turning to the extended model to be tested and how it expands upon the prior conceptualization.

Influence Tactics

Numerous specific influence tactics have been isolated and studied in the social psychological literature. Tedeschi and Melburg (1984) recently have proposed a useful taxonomy for conceptualizing the vast array of influence tactics. These behaviors are classified according to two dimensions: assertive-defensive and tactical-strategic. Assertive behavior is initiated by the actor, presumably in response to a perceived opportunity. Defensive behavior is reactive, typically occurring when the actor is faced with a predicament or perceived threat. Tactical behavior has short-term objectives, whereas strategic behaviors serve longer-term, less clear-cut interests such as enhancing one's reputation.

The tactical-defensive category includes such behaviors as apologies, accounts (excuses and justifications), disclaimers, and self-handicapping. Tactical assertive behaviors include ingratiation, intimidation, self-promotion, exemplification, entitlements (verbal claims of responsibility for positive events), and enhancements (Jones & Pitman, 1982; Schlenker, 1980). Strategic defensive behaviors range from learned helplessness to alcoholism and drug abuse, which are typically seen as self-handicapping behaviors, whereas strategic assertive behaviors include those aimed at developing desired reputational characteristics.

Conceptualization of Upward Influence in Organizations

In a recent conceptualization of social influence, the role of upward influence and some of the factors that might encourage such behavior were discussed (Ferris & Mitchell, 1987; Ferris et al., 1989). With the foregoing notions in mind, Ferris et al. suggested that systematic inquiry needs to proceed in several directions to converge on a more informed understanding of the influence construct. First, there is a need to increase efforts to better understand the conditions under which entities engage in influence behavior, and the types of behaviors they select in particular situations. Second, research should focus on the

consequences of entities engaging in influence behavior, and the extent to which they achieve the goals or outcomes they desired.

When one considers the many opportunities, rewards, and threats available in organizational settings, it seems quite reasonable to expect that people will find it advantageous to manage the impressions that others form of them. But it does not occur under all circumstances, since it is likely to be intertwined in social responses that have other significance (Jones & Pittman, 1982). Generally, influence behaviors are most likely to occur when: (1) emotionality or task involvement are moderate or low enough, or other conditions exist, to stimulate self-consciousness; (2) the social interaction and work context are not rigidly ritualized, scripted, or otherwise constrained (i.e., a reasonably high degree of uncertainty or ambiguity exists); (3) opportunities or threats create perceptions of instrumentality of influence behavior; (4) the employee believes that he/she will be successful; (5) when the situation and the potential outcomes are important to the individual; and (6) when the employee observes relevant others (e.g., supervisor, coworkers, etc.) engaging in influence behaviors, particularly when they do so successfully.

In organizations, there are many contexts that are generally characterized by ambiguous social or task conditions, dependency (a power difference) of the actor on the audience, and (often) performance-related demands. In fact, some research has reported that influence behaviors are more likely to be observed as uncertainty in the situation increases (Fandt & Ferris, 1990; Dyke, 1990; Pfeffer, Salancik, & Leblebici, 1976). If task and situation outcomes are ambiguous, or subjectively determined, there is more opportunity for subordinates to exercise upward influence. Ferris et al. (1989) further proposed that formalized procedures would reduce ambiguity and thus the perceived extent to which influence tactics might be effective. Also, they suggested that spatial distance between supervisor

and subordinate in the work environment would increase uncertainty, but have a differential impact on the type of influence tactics used.

A second direction of suggested research endeavor has also produced some results that have increased understanding of the instrumental nature of upward influence behavior, or its consequences for attaining desired outcomes. Contextual conditions contribute to particular types of influence behavior being exhibited. These behaviors then elicit some type of desired response from others, such as social or material rewards (e.g., recognition, pay increase, promotion, etc.), or simply the prevention (or reduction in severity) of punishment. Just as contexts or situations differ in the extent to which they encourage or permit influence behavior, individuals differ in their propensity to behave opportunistically.

Individual Differences

Although the presence of certain conditions increases the probability of influence behavior, employees may differ in either their ability to influence or their interest in doing so. It is unwarranted to assume that all people have identical or even similar upward influence goals, and some individuals are better than others at controlling their behavior. The major individual difference variable that implies the ability to monitor and control one's expressive behavior is self-monitoring (Snyder, 1987). Out of a concern for social appropriateness, the self-monitoring individual is sensitive to the expressions and self-presentations of others in social situations. Guidelines for monitoring their own presentations come from these social cues. That is, self-monitoring individuals are sensitive to what others want and have the ability to control their actions to present a desired identity (Snyder, 1979).

Evidence has accumulated that the high self-monitor is more sensitive to social cues, exhibits higher levels of social conformity, and is highly skilled in influence behavior. In the Caldwell and O'Reilly (1982) investigation of situations

in which decision makers were faced with failure, high self-monitors were more likely to engage in opportunistic behaviors. Additional field research applying self-monitoring to impression management includes influences in job interviewing situations (von Baeyer, Shirk, & Zanna, 1981), decision-making contexts (Fandt & Ferris, 1990), promotion situations (Dyke, 1990), and forced compliance and counterattitudinal behavior (Paulhus, 1982).

While not explicitly stated in the Ferris et al. (1989) model of influence, there is some evidence to suggest that some demographic characteristics may be associated with the demonstration of influence behaviors. For example, it seems likely that men and women would be inclined to use different types of influence tactics in organizations due to observation and conventional wisdom regarding what works for each. Among others, Kanter (1977) has alluded to this issue, and Kipnis and Schmidt (1988) reported results indicating that influence tactics found to be effective for males are not similarly effective for females.

Research on employee age and influence tactics is noticeably absent. Since there is a dearth of evidence on the relationship between age and influence behaviors, there are undoubtedly many possible conjectures. However, indirectly supporting an inverse relationship between age and influence tactics is work by Judge and Hulin (1990) that found older workers were less likely to engage in non-task behaviors on the job such as chatting with co-workers. Obviously, because most influence tactics are communicated verbally, if older workers spend less time talking to co-workers including their supervisor, they might be less prone to use influence tactics.

Consequences of Upward Influence

The other important linkage in the Ferris et al. (1989) model concerns the effects of influence behaviors on the attitudes and behaviors of relevant others. Employees engage in influence behaviors in an instrumental manner, and the

decision to engage in such behaviors is presumably based on a subjective probability that the behavior will be effective in acquiring the valued outcome. Clearly, this process is modeled by the decision-making processes described by expectancy theory (Vroom, 1964). Influence behaviors then generate effectiveness feedback, influencing subsequent decisions whether or not to engage in such behavior, and if so, which particular types.

However, the consequences of upward influence tactics may not operate quite that simply or directly. Rather, it may well be the case that influence tactics operate on outcomes through affective reactions of the supervisor. There is general agreement that a relationship exists between the influence tactics or strategies one uses and how that person is evaluated (Schlenker, 1980). In fact, it has been shown that persons who demonstrate ingratiating types of behaviors tend to receive favorable or positive evaluations (e.g., Jones, 1964). More specifically, other-enhancing communications (Jones, Gergen, & Davis, 1962), favor doing (Wortman & Linsenmeier, 1977; Wayne & Ferris, 1990), and opinion conformity (Byrne, 1969; Byrne & Griffit, 1966) all have been found to increase liking. Furthermore, liking has been found to be positively related to supervisor responses, such as performance ratings (e.g., Cardy & Dobbins, 1986; Kingstrom & Mainstone, 1985; Tsui & Barry, 1986; Wayne & Ferris, 1990), and reward behavior (Kipnis & Vanderveer, 1971). Thus, whereas it seems that upward influence tactics may well affect liking which in turn influences supervisor responses, this linkage is missing in several conceptual models of influence in organizations, including the Ferris et al. (1989) model.

CAUSAL MODEL OF UPWARD INFLUENCE

A causal model of upward influence in organizations was developed based on observations from the research literature, as well as strengths and limitations

from the Ferris et al. (1989) conceptual model and the causal framework tested by Wayne and Ferris (1990). This model is presented in Figure 1.

INSERT FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE

The proposed causal model of upward influence in organizations extends prior conceptualizations in several ways. First, it expands upon the Ferris et al. (1989) model by incorporating supervisor affect toward the subordinate, which Wayne and Ferris (1990) found to be an important variable in the reflection of influence behaviors. In fact, it could be argued that supervisor affect is the key variable in the causal model. It is proposed in the present model that influence behaviors exert no direct effects on supervisor ratings of subordinate performance and supervisor provision of resources to the subordinate. This is a departure from past research on influence tactics, which has generally assumed that influence behaviors operate directly on performance ratings. Rather, in the present model, influence tactics are believed to exert a strong influence on performance ratings, but only indirectly through supervisor affect. The key role of supervisor affect, as an outcome of influence tactics and a cause of performance ratings, may lead to a redirection in influence research.

A second means in which the causal model extends past research is an attempt to be more comprehensive than Wayne and Ferris (1990) by examining potential antecedents of upward influence, as well as the consequences, as suggested by Ferris et al. (1989). Specifically, the proposed model specifies the effects of two individual characteristics and two situational factors as antecedents of upward influence, consistent with the discussion in an earlier section of this paper. That is, self monitoring is hypothesized to be positively associated with

upward influence (i.e., both types of tactics) because high self monitors will be more attuned to identifying influence opportunities in the work environment.

The role of employee age is less clear, since as indicated earlier virtually no research has been reported concerning its relationship with influence behaviors. Thus, the proposed negative relationship between age and influence tactics in the present model is admittedly speculative, and based upon limited observation and indirect evidence offered by Judge and Hulin (1990) cited earlier. Several studies have reported that a greater degree of influence behavior is perceived to take place at higher levels in the organizational hierarchy (e.g., Gandz & Murray, 1980; Madison, Allen, Porter, Renwick, & Mayes, 1980), and one could reasonably assume that position in the hierarchy is positively related to age. However, research by Kipnis and his colleagues (e.g., Kipnis et al., 1980) would lead one to infer that different tactics of influence are employed in different situations and levels in the organization. Thus, whereas older employees might engage in influence tactics, it is reasonable that they would engage more in the use of direct, logical reasoning approaches than using manipulative, ingratiating types of tactics. Because both of the types of influence tactics specified in the present model would fall into this manipulative category, an inverse relationship with age is proposed.

Two situational antecedents also are proposed to affect influence behaviors. Formalization is believed to relate negatively to both types of influence tactics because it reduces the uncertainty surrounding how actions are to be taken, decisions made, and so forth. Mintzberg's (1979) research on power and politics has shown that political activity (influence behavior) is weakest in formalized organizations. In such situations, there should be a lower perceived probability of influence attempts being effective, thus inhibiting such behavior.

The effects of spatial distance also are proposed to affect influence behavior. Spatial distance refers to the extent to which supervisor and subordinate

work in close proximity to one another, which presumably affects how informed the supervisor is regarding the subordinate's work behavior and performance. Spatial distance, then, is proposed to have differential impact on the two different types of influence tactics. A negative relationship is proposed for the spatial distance-supervisor-focused tactics relationship due to the types of specific behaviors that make up these tactics. Showing an interest in the supervisor's personal life, praising his or her accomplishments, volunteering to help him or her on a task, and doing personal favors for him or her all involve direct contact between supervisor and subordinate. Thus, the subordinate may see little usefulness in exhibiting such behaviors when the supervisor is never around. Presumably, there is little to be gained from "playing to an empty house."

Alternatively, a positive relationship is proposed between spatial distance and job-focused influence tactics. These tactics are characterized by trying to take responsibility for positive events that occur, making your supervisor aware of your accomplishments, and de-emphasizing the seriousness of negative events, all of which would be more easily accomplished if the immediate supervisor was not in close proximity.

A third feature of the proposed model is to follow the approach taken by Wayne and Ferris (1990) in expanding our understanding of the differential effectiveness of different influence tactics. In fact, the job-focused and supervisor-focused categories of tactics are ones developed and tested by Wayne and Ferris (see Appendix for a complete list of the specific behaviors making up these two categories of tactics). The notion that not all influence tactics are similarly perceived or equally effective is promoted in the model's linkages proposing a negative relationship between job-focused tactics and supervisor affect, and a positive relationship between supervisor-focused tactics and affect. The use of entitlements and enhancements (i.e., behavior included in the job-focused

category) have been associated in prior research with the concept of self-promotion (Giacalone, 1985; Schlenker, 1980), and such behaviors often have been found to be ineffective, and even detrimental, with regard to achieving desired outcomes. It is proposed here that such job-focused tactics lead to negative affect or dislike by the supervisor, resulting in lower performance ratings and provision of resources. The supervisor-focused tactics, involving favor-doing, compliments, and other ingratiating behaviors, are believed to lead to more positive affect on the part of the supervisor, thus leading to both higher performance ratings and provision of resources.

A final feature of the upward influence model is to include a group of demographic similarity influences on supervisor affective reactions. Demographic similarity has been discussed relative to both influence behaviors (Eisenhardt & Bourgeois, 1988) and affect or liking (Byrne, 1969). Thus, it is particularly important to sort out the affect or liking variation that is explained by active upward influence attempts by subordinates and that which is attributable to similarity. The similarity between supervisor and subordinate regarding age, race, and marital status are included as potential influences on supervisor affect toward the subordinate.

The purpose of the present study was to empirically test a causal model of upward influence in organizations. The proposed model investigates both antecedents and consequences of upward influence tactics, and also how upward influence might operate on individual work outcomes through the effects exerted on affect or liking by the supervisor.

METHOD

Sample

A total of 95 staff nurses and their supervisors voluntarily participated in the study, and the sample representatively reflects all three work shifts and most

of the major departments in the hospital. The demographic composition of the sample demonstrates that 91 of the participants were female while only four were male, and 74% were married ($n=70$) with 26% ($n= 25$) not married. The average age of the participants was 33.02 years, with a range of 21 to 55 years, and employees reflected an average tenure in the organization of 4.87 years, with a range of two months to 23 years. Finally, participants in the study came from all three work shifts, but more were from the day shift than from afternoons or nights. Of the total number of employees, 54 worked the day shift, 20 worked the afternoon shift, and 15 worked nights.

Additionally, 28 nurse supervisors participated in the study. Of the total number of supervisors, all were female, and they had an average age of 31.61 years, with a range of 24 to 49 years. Their tenure in the organization averaged 7.42 years, with a range of three months to 22.50 years. Average tenure as a supervisor was 2.74 years with a range of three months to 10 years. Supervisors reported an average span of control (i.e., number of employees reporting to them) of 17.39, with a range of three employees to 69.

Questionnaires

Data on a number of measures were collected from different questionnaires distributed separately to supervisors and staff nurses. The major variables used in the data analyses are presented below, along with their psychometric properties.

Self-monitoring. A 25-item scale developed by Snyder (1987) was used to measure self-monitoring of subordinates, a construct that assesses the extent to which someone is aware of and monitors the social climate around them. The self-monitoring scale consists of a set of 25 true-false, self-descriptive statements, and was gathered for subordinates. The coefficient alpha internal consistency reliability estimate was .73.

Affect of supervisor toward subordinate. A three-item, 5-point scale was used to measure the supervisor's degree of affect or liking toward the subordinate. The anchors for one of the items ranged from "I don't like this subordinate at all" to "I like this subordinate very much." The anchors for the remaining two items ranged from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." The Cronbach alpha reliability estimate was .88.

Provision of resources. Often a supervisor has several informal resources under his or her control such as providing his or her employees with inside information, emotional support, or a flexible work schedule. In addition, these resources are often limited and not provided to all people. This measure assesses, using 8 items measured on a 1-5 Likert-type scale, the extent to which the supervisor makes such resources available to employees. The coefficient alpha reliability estimate for the degree to which supervisors report they provide resources to subordinates is .82.

Performance evaluation. Each staff nurse's work performance was evaluated by his or her supervisor on several dimensions which were collapsed into a scale; the ratings received on the specific dimensions of job knowledge, quantity of work, quality of work, and patient relations were the basis for this performance scale. The reliability estimate for the performance scale is .87.

Subordinate influence tactics. The influence tactics of interest included other-enhancing communication, opinion conformity, favor-doing, exemplification, entitlements, and enhancements. Each tactic was assessed by at least 3 items resulting in a total of 19 items in the influence tactics measure (see Appendix for a complete list of these items). The frequency that a subordinate had engaged in the behavior during the past three months was reported by their supervisors on a 7-point scale, ranging from "never" to "always". Results of a principal components analysis on this measure conducted by Wayne and Ferris (1990) indicated that the

24 items separated into three types of behaviors or tactics: job-focused, supervisor-focused, and self-focused. Because the self-focused tactics scale with the current data had very poor reliability ($\alpha=.34$), and because many of the items seemed to relate as much to the other scales as being distinct, the self-focused scale was not used in the analysis. Further research needs to address if self-focused tactics are in fact distinct from the other two tactics. The relevant items loading on the job- and supervisor-focused dimensions were summed to form two scales. The extent to which subordinates engaged in each of these behaviors was assessed from the perspective of the supervisor. This was done because it was thought that with the nature of influence behavior, those that are most likely to behave in a self-interested manner may be the least likely to be open in their responses. The coefficient alpha reliability estimate for these two influence behavior scales are: job-focused = .88; supervisor-focused = .83. However, in addition to the causal model presented later, a model using subordinate self-rating of influence tactics is reported.

Formalization. This refers to the extent to which rules, procedures, instructions, and communications in the organization are written, and thus the extent to which well-defined procedures for operation, decisions, and so forth exist. The nine-item (measured on a 1-5, Likert-type scale) formalization scale discussed by Kerr and Jermier (1978) was used. Because formalization is hypothesized as a perception influencing subordinate tactics, formalization was assessed by subordinate report. This scale had a coefficient alpha of .88.

Spatial distance. A three-item measure (1-5 Likert-type scale) developed by Kerr and Jermier (1978) was used to assess the degree of interpersonal distance that characterized the work-related interactions between supervisor and subordinate. Again, because it is hypothesized that spatial distance will influence

subordinate's tactics, subordinate reports of spatial distance were used. The coefficient alpha reliability estimate was .80.

Background data. Additional data were collected from both supervisors and subordinates concerning age, sex, race, marital status, tenure, work shift, and the unit within the hospital in which they worked. Similarity was found to be an important determinant of supervisor liking of the subordinate, therefore, race, age, and marital similarity are included in the causal model as indicators of supervisor affect toward the subordinate (see Figure 1). Race similarity was computed as a dichotomous variable (1 if the supervisor's and subordinate's race are the same; 0 if they are not). Marital similarity was assessed comparably (1 if the supervisor's and subordinate's marital status were the same; 0 if not). Age similarity was computed as the absolute difference between the age of the supervisor and age of the subordinate.

RESULTS

Causal Model Testing

To test the proposed causal model (Figure 1), a covariance structure model was employed. Covariance structure models, most commonly estimated by the LISREL software package, allow the joint specification and estimation of the measurement model and structural model hypothesized to account for the observed data (Long, 1983). LISREL VI (Joreskog & Sorbom, 1986) was used. There are two advantages of LISREL to the present study.

First, LISREL allows the estimation of latent variables from observed variables. It is unjustified to assume that variables in the causal model are measured by the instruments without error. Structural relationships among concepts are disattenuated for measurement error, providing an assessment of the "true" relationship between the variables. Second, LISREL incorporates structural equation modeling techniques into the algorithm. This allows tests of nonrecursive

models and models with endogenous independent variables. Because it is necessary to estimate alternative models with reciprocal causal links, this is a key contribution of the LISREL algorithm to this research.

It is essential, with covariance structure models, to first examine the overall fit of the model. If the model does not fit the data acceptably, the overall hypothesis that the model is an accurate representation of the data is rejected. In such a case, the coefficients estimated in the model can be biased due to relevant omitted causes, and thus are meaningless (James, Mulaik, & Brett, 1982).

Several statistics provide information on the fit of the model. The most widely used measure is the chi-square (X^2) statistic. Perhaps the most conventional use of chi-square is to examine the ratio of chi-square relative to the degrees of freedom (Hoetler, 1983; La Du & Tanaka, 1989). Marsh and Hocevar (1985) and Carmines and McIver (1981) have suggested that a X^2/df of 2 or less suggests a good fit. This standard has subsequently been widely employed (Ashforth, 1989; Brooke, Russell, & Price, 1988; Schmitt, Coyle, White, & Rauschenberger, 1978). Other conventional fit statistics include the goodness-of-fit index, adjusted goodness-of-fit index, root-mean-square-residual, and coefficient of determination (R^2). Goodness-of-fit indices above .70 usually imply an adequate fit (Mumford, Weeks, Harding, & Fleishman, 1988). When a correlation matrix is used as input, root-mean-square-residuals below .10 imply a reasonable fit (Mumford et al.; Rock, Bennett, & Jirele, 1988; Vance, MacCallum, Covert, & Hedge, 1988).

LISREL Results

Table 1 presents the correlations among the variables used as input for the LISREL VI program. Scale reliabilities are provided in the diagonals. Because of the relatively small sample size, the measurement structure of the model was kept as simple as possible. Each variable was treated as manifest. When the sample size is relatively small, a parsimonious estimation strategy is an important consideration

because the number of parameters estimated relative to sample size is an important determinant of convergence, standard errors, and model fit in covariance structure models (Hayduck, 1987; Idaszak, Bottom, & Drasgow, 1988).

INSERT TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

Prior to estimating relations between manifest variables, Hayduck (1987) encouraged the researcher to sequester error variances of concepts based on their known psychometric properties. Accordingly, the error variances for each manifest variable measured by multiple items were fixed at one minus the reliability coefficient. For example, because alpha for the formalization scale was .88, the error variance for formalization was fixed at .12. Single-item measures of concepts (e.g., age) were assumed not to be measured with error.

Table 2 provides the maximum likelihood estimates of the influence tactics causal model. The parameter estimates of the model indicate that neither subordinate age nor self-monitoring were significant causes of job- or supervisor-focused tactics. Also, formalization was not found to significantly cause the occurrence of either influence tactic. However, spatial distance was significantly associated with supervisor-focused tactics but not job-focused tactics. Finally, age similarity and race similarity were not significantly associated with supervisor affect toward subordinates. Marital similarity was found to be a significant cause of supervisor liking of the subordinate.

INSERT TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE

The other causal links received clear support from the results. Job-focused tactics led to much lower levels of supervisor affect toward the subordinate. On

the other hand, supervisor-focused tactics led to much higher levels of liking. High (or low) levels of supervisor affect led to high (or low) performance ratings. Finally, supervisor affect toward subordinate and appraised performance each were strongly associated with supervisors' provision of resources to subordinates.

By the criteria discussed earlier, the fit statistics displayed in Table 3 all indicate that the model fits the data well. Table 3 also indicates that 46% of the variance in the dependent variables is explained in the causal model. However, there is considerable variability in variance explained in the endogenous concepts. Only 5% of the variance is explained in job-focused tactics, while supervisor affect toward subordinate (59%), supervisor rating of subordinate performance (66%), and supervisor provision of resources to subordinate (91%) all have a high proportion of their variance explained by the hypothesized casual influences.

INSERT TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE

Table 4 provides the indirect effects of job- and supervisor-focused tactics. The stability index is less than 1.0, indicating that the model is stable and indirect effects can be properly interpreted (Hayduck, 1987). Both job-focused tactics and supervisor-focused tactics, although not hypothesized to have direct effects on performance, have substantial indirect effects. As hypothesized, they are in opposite directions. Job-focused tactics, through their effect on supervisor affect, led to lower performance ratings. Supervisor-focused tactics indirectly led to higher performance ratings. The same situation holds for the indirect effects of influence tactics on resource provision. Job-focused tactics led to much lower provision of resources; supervisor-focused tactics led to much higher levels of resource provision. All these indirect effects are statistically significant.

INSERT TABLE 4 ABOUT HERE

As indicated earlier, the hypothesized model fit the data very well.

However, because one model fits the data well does not rule out the possibility that other models might fit the data at least as well. Hayduck (1987) encouraged researchers to test alternative, particularly nested, models. Nested models address the issue if the decrease in X^2 between the hypothesized model and the model with an additional causal link added is significant. If so, the hypothesis of the original model as an adequate representation of the data is rejected. The proper model should include the added causal link.

Several added causal links, although not hypothesized, seemed reasonable to investigate. For example, it is possible that supervisors like high performers, rather than (or in addition to) issuing favorable ratings to those they like. Finding such a link would call into question the validity of the present model, because supervisor affect toward the subordinate might be more of a result, rather than cause, of performance ratings. In response to this possibility, the hypothesized model reviewed earlier was estimated with an added link from supervisor evaluation of subordinate performance to supervisor affect toward subordinate. Estimation of this model yielded a decrease in chi-square of only 0.62 with 1 less degree of freedom, which was not significant, indicating that adding the linkage from performance to affect does not significantly add to the explanatory power of the model. Thus, the results do not support the inference that high performers are better liked, but rather that supervisors who like their subordinates appraise them more favorably, as hypothesized.

Another alternative model is that influence tactics predict performance directly. This would be expected if subordinate influence tactics caused differing

supervisor evaluations of subordinate performance without necessarily operating through affect. For example, it is possible that defensive tactics, such as excuse-making, may not cause the supervisor to like or dislike the subordinate, but might lead the supervisor to evaluate the subordinate less harshly. These additional direct links, from job- and supervisor-focused tactics to performance ratings, were added to the hypothesized model. The decrease in chi-square with this model (2.14) with 2 fewer degrees of freedom, was not significantly less than the hypothesized model. Thus, influence tactics can be concluded to operate on appraised performance only as mediated through supervisor affect. No direct links were found to exist.

Because both evaluation of influence tactics and affect toward subordinate were evaluated by the supervisor, it is possible that the causal direction of the influence tactics-supervisor affect linkage instead (or also) operates opposite to that hypothesized--that is, from supervisor affect to report of influence tactics. This might be expected if supervisor's liking of the subordinate biased their evaluation of the behaviors in which subordinates engaged.

This alternative model was estimated with each influence tactic. The decrease in chi-square (decrease $X^2=0.63$) adding a link from supervisor affect to evaluation of supervisor-focused tactics (decrease $df=1$) was not significant. Adding a link from affect to job-focused tactics also did not significantly improve the fit of the model (decrease $X^2=0.53$, decrease $df=1$, n.s.). Thus, the data support the hypothesis that supervisor evaluation of subordinate influence tactics is not dependent upon the degree to which the supervisor likes the subordinate.

As indicated earlier, an alternative model was estimated using subordinate rather than supervisor reports of influence tactics. The model fit the data well ($X^2/\text{degrees of freedom}=1.37$; Goodness-of-Fit-Index=.894; Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit-Index=.820; Root-Mean-Square-Residual=.084). In fact, the overall fit is very

similar to the model using supervisor reports of influence tactics. All relationships that were significant in the previous model were significant in this model, with one exception. Subordinate reports of job-focused tactics, although negatively related to supervisor affect, failed to achieve statistical significance. Supervisor-focused tactics were significantly and positively related to supervisor affect toward the subordinate.

As explained earlier, the slight difference between the models may be due to the fact that those subordinates most likely to behave opportunistically may be the least likely to be frank in self-evaluation of influence tactics. Supervisor reports were preferred for this reason. However, the communality between the models is evidence for the validity of the findings. In summary, in light of the confirmatory results presented earlier on the hypothesized model--in addition to the nonsignificant alternative links tested--the causal model displayed in Figure 1 is supported by the data.

DISCUSSION

In the past 15 or 20 years, the field has witnessed some important increments to our knowledge base concerning upward influence processes in organizational settings. However, these research efforts have proceeded in largely piecemeal fashion, examining a relationship here and there. While such work has been needed and important, a more informed understanding of the dynamics of upward influence processes in organizations has awaited the formulation and empirical testing of causal models more precisely articulating the critical linkages underlying this process. The present study has addressed this need by empirically testing a causal model developed from an analysis of the research literature and the strengths and limitations of prior research models proposed by Ferris et al. (1989) and Wayne and Ferris (1990). The results of this investigation provide both

convergence with some previous research concerning how the influence process operates, and raises questions and issues to be pursued in further work.

The Upward Influence Model

The causal model testing resulted in some interesting findings. Regarding antecedents of upward influence, only spatial distance demonstrated significant effects in the predicted direction, and only for supervisor-focused influence tactics. It seems, quite logically, that individuals are inclined to engage in influence tactics directed at the supervisor only in contexts where subordinates and supervisors work in reasonably close proximity.

Because the linkage between subordinate age and upward influence was somewhat intuitive and speculative, it was less surprising to observe no significant effects. However, the failure of self-monitoring to affect upward influence was more unexpected. As seen in Table 2, the maximum likelihood estimate for self-monitoring effects on job-focused influence tactics is in the predicted direction and reasonable in magnitude (although it fails to achieve statistical significance). However, the self-monitoring-supervisor-focused tactics link is essentially zero.

The fourth antecedent of upward influence examined was formalization, and it failed to demonstrate significant effects on either job- or supervisor-focused influence tactics. It may be the case that formalization and spatial distance are both aspects of the work context which affect the degree of ambiguity or uncertainty perceived, thus suggesting the extent to which influence tactics can be effective. If this is so, perhaps spatial distance simply overwhelms formalization in an individual's determination of influence tactics usage.

The paths from both job-focused and supervisor-focused influence tactics to supervisor affect toward subordinate were both strongly supported in the predicted direction. These results are supportive of the findings reported recently by Wayne and Ferris (1990) regarding supervisor-focused influence tactics, but are

inconsistent with respect to job-focused tactics. Whereas the present results show a significant negative causal link from job-focused tactics to supervisor affect toward subordinate, Wayne and Ferris (1990) reported a near significant ($p < .10$) linkage for job-focused tactics, but in the positive not negative direction. These differences could be a function of the different occupational groups sampled in the Wayne and Ferris (bank employees) and the present (staff nurses) studies. Grabbing responsibility for positive events and other self-enhancements may simply be less tolerated by supervisors in the nursing profession, whose roots trace to the example of the Good Samaritan (Dolan, Fitzpatrick, & Herrmann, 1983). Alternatively, the differences in results could be due to the sources used for reporting influence tactics in the two studies, which is discussed in more detail below.

A series of demographic similarity variables were tested in this causal model in order to address the possible influences of similarity on liking, which may go beyond the liking variance accounted for by influence tactics. It was found that whereas the age and race similarity paths were not significant, the marital similarity linkage was significant. The failure of the race similarity path to achieve significance is understandable given the poor distribution of the variable. Because so few members of the sample were black (5%), the low base rate of the variable likely attenuated its correlation with other variables. The reason for the nonsignificant age similarity to supervisor affect path is less clear.

A final set of linkages examined in the present causal model involved supervisor affect toward subordinate influences on performance ratings and provision of resources, and the effects of performance ratings on provision of resources. All three of these paths indicated strong support for the predictions. The first two of these three significant linkages even more firmly establish the findings from prior research that supervisor affect toward subordinate is related

positively to the supervisors' ratings of subordinate performance (e.g., Cardy & Dobbins, 1986; Kingstrom & Mainstone, 1985; Tsui & Barry, 1986; Wayne & Ferris, 1990), and to allocation of rewards or resources (Kipnis & Vanderveer, 1971).

This third linkage, between supervisor ratings of subordinate performance and supervisor provision of resources to subordinate, has both logical, and prior research, support. It makes sense, in organizations, that resources should be allocated differentially on the basis of a legitimate criterion such as performance. In fact, the very basis of performance-based reward systems assumes the accurate assessment of "objective performance," followed by the allocation of resources and rewards based on that performance assessment. However, where this assumption breaks down is in the accurate assessment of "objective performance," which for most jobs simply does not exist. Rather, performance level can only be known through the supervisor's subjective evaluation, which can be substantially influenced by affective reactions to the subordinate, further affected by influence tactics displayed by the subordinate. All of this suggests, of course, that even though reward and resource allocation appears to be based solely on performance and not a result of interpersonal influence, we may find that influence simply enters the equation at an earlier point to affect outcomes.

Contributions, Limitations, and Future Research

The present study makes contributions to our understanding of upward influence processes in several ways. The causal model tested is more inclusive than the Wayne and Ferris (1990) model, by including antecedents of upward influence as well as mediating variables and consequences. In so doing, the present model also extends the Ferris et al. (1989) conceptual model in an informed way.

A perhaps more important contribution of this study concerns the methodology employed to gather upward influence information. A potential problem in the study of "sensitive" topics like upward influence is the possibility

of social desirability in responses when the actor or influencer is asked to self-report on the extent to which he or she engages in a series of influence tactics. Such use of the actor as the exclusive source of information regarding influence tactics presumably could affect the validity of the results, yet this approach has been employed in prior research (e.g., Wayne & Ferris, 1990) for at least two reasons. First, it is often quite difficult or impossible to obtain information from alternative sources in organizational field research. Second, despite potential problems, using the actor or influencer as the source of information on influence tactics has some merit, and while socially desirable response bias might pose a potential problem in using actor sources of influence tactics, it has not been empirically substantiated to date.

The present study tested this notion by assessing upward influence tactics from both the actor/subordinate and the target/supervisor, and estimated separate models using each source. Essentially, the results of the two model estimation procedures were similar, with one exception. In the model using the subordinate as the source of upward influence tactics, the linkage between job-focused influence tactics and supervisor affect toward subordinate was not statistically significant, though it was negative as predicted. These results mirror those reported by Wayne and Ferris (1990) in which the subordinate also was used as the source of influence tactics. There do then appear to be differences in the results of research that employ different sources of influence tactics. When subordinates, the perpetrators of influence tactics, are used, supervisor-focused but not job-focused tactics affect supervisor liking, as found by Wayne and Ferris and in the present study when the alternative source model was estimated. When supervisors are used as information sources on influence tactics, both supervisor- and job-focused tactics significantly affect supervisor liking of the subordinate, but in different directions. These results using the supervisor as the information source in the present study have

recently been replicated by Valerius (1990) on a sample of city parks and recreation department managers.

Despite the contributions, the present research is not without its limitations. In this study, performance of the subordinate was measured by supervisor ratings (which was appropriate given the way the upward influence process was modeled and that performance is typically assessed in this manner in organizations). However, it would be desirable to have an "objective" measure of subordinate performance available against which to validate the present results. For example, it could be the case that "objective" poor-performing subordinates tend to make disproportionate use of job-focused upward influence tactics which result in supervisors liking them less and assigning them lower performance ratings. And, "objective" high-performing subordinates may make greater use of supervisor-focused influence tactics resulting in greater liking by supervisor and higher performance ratings. If this was the case, "objective" performance would be confounded with upward influence tactics, and it would be impossible to disentangle the effects. Unfortunately, for many jobs, "objective" measures of performance simply do not exist, making this issue highly problematic and difficult to address. Although some efforts were made in the present study to gather follow-up data, from non-participant sources, on the performance of employees who took part in this research, and the limited data gathered suggested no systematic differences in performance, these efforts provided only sketchy information and are not sufficient to discount this alternative explanation.

A second issue represents both a limitation of the present study and a direction for future research; that is, the cross-sectional nature of the research design. While much can be learned from cross-sectional research, and such research has yielded useful results in this area, we need to design longitudinal research in order to develop a more informed understanding of how upward influence

processes operate over time. It seems likely that employees draw upon a diversified portfolio of influence tactics to manage impressions over their careers, and examinations of the differential use and effectiveness of these tactics over an extended period of time are best investigated using longitudinal research designs.

Future research in this area needs to investigate how upward influence tactics affect other types of human resources decisions and activities beside the performance evaluation process. Some efforts have been made to examine the effects of influence tactics on employment interviewer decisions (e.g., Baron, 1986; Gilmore & Ferris, 1989), career progress (e.g., Gould & Penley, 1984), and pay increase decisions (e.g., Dreher, Dougherty, & Whitely, 1988; Kipnis & Schmidt, 1988). Further research is needed in these and other areas, such as promotion decisions. Furthermore, efforts need to focus on competitive tests of different types of influence tactics so we can increase our understanding of the effectiveness of different types of tactics in different situations.

In conclusion, a final issue is raised that poses a challenge for, and bears consideration by, anyone pursuing research in this area; that is, the issue of intentionality of the observed influence behaviors. As researchers, we often may assume that when a person demonstrates a behavior we have defined as an influence tactic, that person is necessarily doing so with the intention to manipulate and opportunistically bring about some valued and desired outcome. Until we design research (if possible) to expressly address the intentionality issue, we must be cautious in making such unfounded assumptions. It could be the case, for example, that some of the behaviors that make up the supervisor-focused category (e.g., favor-doing, volunteer to help supervisor, show a personal interest in supervisor) are interpreted by some employees and supervisors not as efforts to manipulate for personal gain, but as what an employee is supposed to do as part of regular work behavior. In fact, it is quite likely that supervisors observing the

same behavior, but inferring different intentionality on the part of the actor, would respond quite differently.

Hopefully, the present study and the foregoing discussion of issues and challenges will serve to stimulate more research on upward influence in organizations. Progress has been made in developing a better understanding of this process, but there is much to be done.

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TABLE 1
Correlations of Variables

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1 Supervisor Affect toward Subordinate	92											
2 Subordinate Performance Rating	72	87										
3 Job-Focused Tactics	-49	-30	88									
4 Supervisor-Focused Tactics	47	40	16	83								
5 Provision of Resources	78	75	-30	29	82							
6 Subordinate Self-monitoring	-11	13	14	05	-02	73						
7 Subordinate Age	-03	-18	-06	-28	08	-21	--					
8 Spatial Distance	-25	-26	-01	-46	-09	00	33	80				
9 Formalization	-02	-12	08	11	07	00	-07	-12	88			
10 Age Similarity	-08	-09	-11	-33	-02	-12	58	28	-08	--		
11 Race Similarity	-06	14	22	21	-05	15	-07	-13	08	-03	--	
12 Marital Similarity	30	33	-20	06	30	-07	05	00	-09	07	11	--

NOTE: Decimals are omitted. Scale reliabilities are in diagonals.

TABLE 2

Maximum Likelihood Estimates of Structural Model

Path	Parameter Estimate
Subordinate Self-Monitoring to Job-Focused Tactics	.19 (.13) ⁺
Subordinate Self-Monitoring to Supervisor-Focused Tactics	.09 (.12)
Subordinate Age to Job-Focused Tactics	-.02 (.13)
Subordinate Age to Supervisor-Focused Tactics	-.06 (.11)
Spatial Distance to Job-Focused Tactics	-.05 (.14)
Spatial Distance to Supervisor-Focused Tactics	-.53 (.12) ^{**}
Formalization to Job-Focused Tactics	.03 (.12)
Formalization to Supervisor-Focused Tactics	.09 (.11)
Job-Focused Tactics to Supervisor Affect Toward Subordinate	-.48 (.10) ^{**}
Supervisor-Focused Tactics to Supervisor Affect Toward Subordinate	.64 (.11) ^{**}
Age Similarity to Supervisor Affect Toward Subordinate	.05 (.09)
Race Similarity to Supervisor Affect Toward Subordinate	.01 (.09)
Marital Similarity to Supervisor Affect Toward Subordinate	.21 (.09) ^{**}
Supervisor Affect Toward Subordinate to Supervisor Rating of Subordinate Performance	.78 (.09) ^{**}
Supervisor Affect Toward Subordinate to Supervisor Provision of Resources to Subordinate	.40 (.14) ^{**}
Supervisor Rating of Subordinate Performance to Supervisor Provision of Resources to Subordinate	.56 (.15) ^{**}

NOTE: + p < .10 * p < .05 ** p < .01

Standard errors are in parentheses. All tests are one-tailed.

TABLE 3

Fit Statistics of Structural Model

<u>Statistic</u>	<u>Value</u>
Chi-Square	64.26
Degrees of Freedom	48
χ^2/df	1.34
Goodness-of-Fit Index	.887
Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index	.816
Root-Mean-Square-Residual	.089
Overall Coefficient of Determination	.463

Coefficients of Determination for Structural Equations

<u>Dependent Variable</u>	<u>R²</u>
Job-Focused Tactics	.049
Supervisor-Focused Tactics	.374
Supervisor Affect Toward Subordinate	.588
Supervisor Rating of Subordinate Performance	.656
Supervisor Provision of Resources to Subordinate	.913

TABLE 4

Indirect Effects of Job and Supervisor-Focused Tactics

<u>Path</u>	<u>Indirect Effect</u>	<u>Standard Error</u>
Job-Focused Tactics to Supervisor Rating of Subordinate Performance	-.38	.08
Supervisor-Focused Tactics to Supervisor Rating of Subordinate Performance	.41	.10
Job-Focused Tactics to Supervisor Provision of Resources to Subordinate	-.46	.09
Supervisor-Focused Tactics to Supervisor Provision of Resources to Subordinate	.55	.10

All effects are significant at the .01 level.

Stability Index=.864

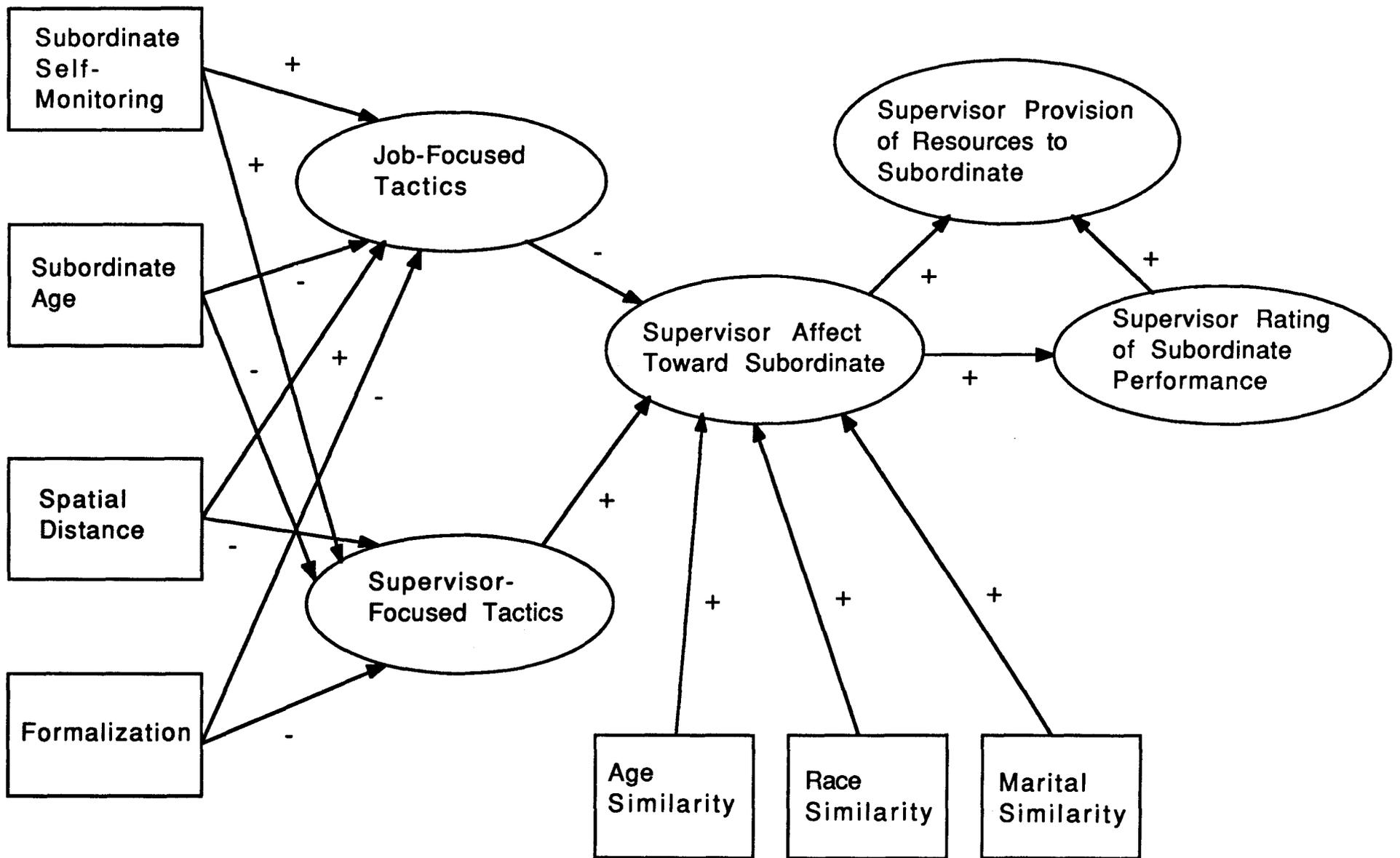


Figure: Causal Model of Upward Influence in Organizations

APPENDIX

Job-Focused and Supervisor-Focused Influence Tactics

Job-Focused Tactics

Play up the value of a positive event that you have taken credit for.

Try to make a positive event that you are responsible for appear greater than it actually is.

Try to take responsibility for positive events, even when you are not solely responsible.

Try to make a negative event that you are responsible for not appear as severe as it actually is to your supervisor.

Try to let your supervisor think that you are responsible for positive events that occur in your work group.

Arrive at work early in order to look good in front of your supervisor.

Work late at the office so that your supervisor will see you working late and think that you are a hard worker.

Make your supervisor aware of your accomplishments.

Agree with your immediate supervisor's major opinions outwardly even when you disagree inwardly.

Create the impression that you are a "good" person to your supervisor.

Disagree with your supervisor on major issues.

Take responsibility for negative events, even when you are not solely responsible.

Supervisor-Focused Tactics

Take an interest in your immediate supervisor's personal life.

Praise your immediate supervisor on his or her accomplishments.

Do personal favors for your supervisor.

Offer to do something for your supervisor which you were not required to do; that is, you did it as a personal favor for him or her.

Volunteer to help your immediate supervisor on a task.

Compliment your immediate supervisor on his or her dress or appearance.

Agree with your supervisor's major ideas.