

# The Mediation Role of Strategic Influence in The Relationship Between Personality and Performance

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## ABSTRACT

This article aims to develop a model related to influence strategy provide a more comprehensive of mechanism of the relationship between personality and performance. By reviewing related theories and result of previous research, a model is developed that connect personality with influence startegy and performance. To test the significance of the model, empirical research is needed.

**Keywords:**Hard strategy, rational strategy, soft strategy, personality, performance

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## 1. Introduction

One of the roles of a manager is to influence other people to behave as desired. Ability. to influence others both within the organization (subordinates, co-workers, or superiors) and outside the organization (consumers, suppliers, shareholders and others) this will encourage its success. A manager who is able to encourage others to behave or behave in a certain way will find it easy to achieve organizational, group or personal goals. Yukl et al (2005) refer to as influence tactics (influence tactics) for the type of behavior of a person (agent) to influence the attitude or behavior of others (target). Other terms given by other researchers are influence behavior and power behavior. Somech and Zahavy in their 2002 article quoted Bass (1990) who defined power as the potential of a person (agent) to cause another person (target) to act in accordance with the agent's wishes, while influence behavior is defined as actual behavior, which causes changes in behavior or attitudes. targets (Raven and Rubin, 1983; Stahelski and Payton, 1995).

## 2. Literature Review

- *Influence Tactics*

There are many ways superiors can influence subordinates. They behave with the aim of getting obedience from subordinates. There are several main categories in influence behavior, such as hard strategy, rational strategy and soft strategy (Somech and Zahavy, 2002). Hard strategy is defined as a strategy to get the fulfillment of the agent's request or expectation. This can be obtained through direct assertive requests to fulfill the request, or through manipulation of treatment and 'aggression'. The rational strategy includes the application of bargaining power and logic such as the agent's efforts to obtain instrumental reasons from the target (of the importance of the action for the target). On the other hand, a soft strategy is needed when the agent tries to meet expectations in a polite, friendly and humble manner.

Apart from Somech and Zahavy, several researchers distinguish managerial influence into different types, as in the article written by Frust and Cable (2008). In this article it is explained that managerial influence is divided into three types, namely sanctions, legitimization, ingratiation and consultation. Sanctions are managers' tactics to punish employees who do not fulfill their duties with reprimands or deductions from rewards. Legitimacy is a tactic used by managers to establish the credibility of their requests by claiming their authority or rights by verifying that their requests conform to organizational policies, practices or traditions (Yukl and Seifert, 2002). This concept is like the hard strategy that has been discussed previously. Consultation is a manager's tactic to influence by inviting employees to get suggestions or support in making changes (Yukl and Seifert, 2002).

Barbuto and Moss (2006) conducted research related to tactical influence by conducting a meta-analysis to examine the dispositional antecedents of tactical influence used intra-organizational. This research uses dispositional categories such as impression management, Machiavellianism, self-monitoring, locus of control, social identity, internal motivation and internal motivation. The tactical influences studied are categorized into several types, as summarized in table 1. The results of this research indicate that each tactical influence shows a significant influence of dispositional.

Each influence tactic has different characteristics as stated by Steensma (2007) as follows:

- Upward appeals are often used as a method of suppression.
  - Ingratiation (licking) can be considered as a special case of exchange, someone flattering another person to get rewards from cooperation with him.
  - Rationality (rationality) is assessed in the organization; so that agents can use rationality to inspire their subordinates.
  - Rational persuasion can benefit from consulting tactics, to be able to weigh one's arguments carefully.
  - Inspirational tactics seem to be most successful where they can be linked to someone's expectations and those desires can be brought up for consultation.
- *Three Measure of Influence Tactics*

Table 1 shows sample items to measure influence tactics.

Table 1. Sample Items to Measure influence Tactics

Influence Tactics	Sample Item
Ingratiation	The person make me important by nothing I have brain, talent and/or experience to do what he/she wants (Kipnis, et al, 1980)
Rationality	The person write a detailed action plan for me to justify the ideas that he/she want implemented (Kipnis, et al, 1980)
Exchange	The person offer to do a specific task for me and exchange to carried of a request for him/her (Yukl and Falbe, 1990)
Coalition	The person obtain the informal support of his/her co worker to back up his/her request (Schriesheim and Hinkin, 1990)
Upward Appeals	The person obtain the informal support of higher ups to get me to do what he/she wants (Schriesheim and Hinkin, 1990)
Assertiveness	The person sets time deadline for me to what he/she request (Schriesheim and Hinkin, 1990).

Source: Barbuto dan Moss (2006)

There are several kinds of influence tactics, Farmer et al. (1997) propose a framework of strategies, tactics and conditions related to their use, as described in the following table:

Table 2. Framework of Upward Influence Strategies, Related Tactical Components and Conditions Related to Strategy Use

Strategy	Description	Tactic	Conditions associated with use
Hard strategy	Subordinate uses negative reinforcement and punishment to gain compliance from the supervisor. Based on interdependence of working relationships	Assertiveness Upward Appeals Exchange based on dependence of target coalition?	Perceived power differentials between subordinate are low. Poor LMX relationship. Subordinate is high-Mach. Subordinate has external orientation.
Soft strategy	Subordinate secures supervisor's volitional compliance by psychological manipulation of supervisor affect toward self or toward subordinate (identification)	Ingratiation Exchange based on invoking norm of reciprocity Coalition?	Subordinate is high self-monitor Increasing levels education Subordinate is high-Mach Subordinate has external orientation.
Rational Strategy	Subordinate gain compliance by appealing to supervisor's instrumental reasoning. Based on subjective expected utility, expectancy, and internalization perspectives.	Rationality Exchange as bargaining	Increase level of education Subordinate work at different physical location to supervisor.

Source: Farmer et al. (1997)

Based on the description above, the following research model was developed:

Figure 1. Research Model

### Relationship Between Personality and Performance

There are several personality models. The big five personality dimension is the most widely accepted model as a comprehensive personality model. (Mount & Barrick, 1998). One reason is that this personality trait structure is universal (Mc. Crae and Costa, 1997). In addition, there are five reasons why this model is widely used. First, the model addresses one of the most fundamental topics in the field of industrial-organizational psychology. Second, this study is the first to introduce the framework of The Big Five personality in the field of industrial-organizational psychology. Third, the time of the study is a factor. Some people say that this article is the right article at the right time. Fourth, related to the points above, that study (Mount & Barrick, 1998). used meta analysis which quickly became a well-received data analysis technique at the time of this study. Fifth, their research results enhance understanding and contribute to the theoretical development of causal models that explain performance. This model consists of extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability, neuroticism.

The literature has traditionally recognized that a manager's individual characteristics can influence the management style he chooses and can subsequently influence his performance (Junquera and Ordiz, 2002). Extraversion includes characteristics such as excitability, sociability, assertiveness, talkative, and highly expressive. This dimension has the characteristics of an open personality, easy to agree, has accuracy and emotional stability, and openness to experience, all of which are positive personal traits.

Agreeableness is a personality dimension that includes attributes such as trustworthiness, altruism, kindness, compassion, and other prosocial behaviors. Conscientiousness is characterized by a high level of attention, with good impulse control and goal-directed behavior. With high levels of awareness they tend to be more organized and pay attention to detail. The neuroticism is a high individual trait that tends to experience emotional instability, anxiety, moodiness, irritability, and sadness. Openness to experience (openness) is characterized by characteristics such as imagination and insight, and tend to have various interests. Neuroticism is an individual trait that tends to have unstable emotional experiences, anxiety, depression, irritability and sadness.

Conte and Gintoft (2005) have tested the relationship between polychronicity, the dimensions of the big five personality (extraversion and conscientiousness) and salesperson performance. This study concludes that polychronicity is significantly related to supervisor's assessment of customer service, sales performance and overall performance. Although conscientiousness was not related to performance, extraversion was significantly related to supervisors' ratings of customer service, sales performance and overall performance. This finding is similar to previous research conducted by Conte and Jacobs (2003) which concluded that the big five personality dimension (conscientiousness) is related to performance. Likewise, conscientiousness, extraversion and neuroticism are related to absenteeism levels.

Mount and Barrick (1998) conducted a re-analysis of published and unpublished research on personality between 1952-1988. The result is that most findings suggest that one of the big five personality dimensions, Conscientiousness, is positively correlated with performance (job proficiency, training proficiency, and personnel data) in five occupational groups (professionals, police, managers, traders, and trained workers and semi-trained). Individuals who are reliable, persistent, goal-directed and organized tend to have higher performance in almost all jobs, in contrast to those who are careless, irresponsible, low on achievement and impulsive tend to have lower performance in almost all jobs.

Mount and Barrick (1998) also found that extraversion was a valid predictor for two types of work (manager and salesperson) on all performance criteria, where interaction with other people constituted a large portion of the job. Thus traits such as sociable, talkative, assertive and energetic contribute to performance in several jobs. They also found that Extraversion and Openness to Experience were valid predictors of training proficiency in all occupations. Being active, sociable, open to experience may encourage individuals to be more involved in training and consequently will learn more. A meta-analysis that examines the relationship between personality and performance in work that involves interpersonal interactions with both customers and other employees also finds that emotional stability, agreeableness, and conscientiousness are positively related to success at work.

Research conducted by Le et al. (2010) found that there is a curvilinear relationship between personality and performance. The personality dimensions studied included conscientiousness and emotion stability, while the performance measured included task performance, civic behavior (OCB) and counterproductive work behavior. They also found that job complexity moderated their relationship. Based on the research above, it can be assumed that personality is related to performance.

Based on the description above, several propositions are formulated as follows:

*Proposition 1. Conscientiousness is positively related to performance.*

*Proposition 2. Extraversion is positively related to performance.*

*Proposition 3. Agreeableness is positively related to performance.*

*Proposition 4. Emotional stability is positively related to performance.*

*Proposition 5. Neuroticism is negatively related to performance.*

### **The Influence of Personality on the Selection of Influence Tactics**

A person's personality will determine a person's attitude and behavior, including managers. Managers, whose role is to lead subordinates will have a leadership style that suits their personality. Therefore, the relationship between personality and various aspects of leadership has received much attention from researchers. George (1992) stated that personality is increasingly recognized as important for researchers to understand leadership from a more macro and micro side of organizational behavior. The relationship between personality and leadership, including how the leader (manager) chooses to influence his subordinates, is an interesting topic to study. Grams and Rogers in their paper stated that the choice of influence tactics depends on the level of a person's power-relevant personality trait to Machiavellianism and the need for approval. A person becomes more motivated to succeed in influencing others, he will be more assertive and less manipulative.

The resistance of the people who are the targets of change will also affect the tactics chosen. Influence tactics by managers will not directly affect the desired attitudes and behaviors, resistance to change, for example. However, that influence will run through the mediation process. The mediation process is for example target perception of the request, target perception of agent, target perception of benefit and cost of compliance.

If the target has a perception that the manager's request is important, appropriate, attractive and ethical, the employee (target) will tend to comply with the manager's request (not resistant to change). Likewise, if the requesting agent (manager) is perceived by the target as a good, trustworthy, fair and knowledgeable person, then employees are less likely to be resistant to change.

The target's perception of the benefits and costs of the change will also affect the target's attitude and behavior towards the change. Therefore, it is suspected that influence tactics have an effect on employee resistance to change through the target perception of the request.

In the personality model widely used in research, there are five types of human personality (the big five personality). There are openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism. Someone who is open will tend to have an active imagination. Meanwhile, people with the basic type do everything in an orderly manner, while an extraversion is characterized by a firm, social, talkative nature. In contrast to a friendly person, he likes to help, moderately sympathetic and a neurotic is a person who is often anxious and feels guilty. Because personality determines a person's attitude and behavior, this personality is thought to have an effect on the choice of tactics to influence.

Research related to influence tactics (tactics to influence) has been carried out by several researchers. Cable and Judge (2003) tried to examine why managers use certain tactics when they try to influence others. This research examines the theoretical relationship between the five-factor personality model and managers' tactics to influence others. The results of this study indicate that extraversion managers are more likely to use inspirational appeal and ingratiation. Managers who are open (openness to experience) tend to use coalitions less. A person with emotional stability is more likely to use rational persuasion and may use less inspirational appeal. An agreeable person is less likely to use legitimacy or pressure, and a conscientious person is more likely to use rational appeal. The results of this study also confirm that the choice of influence tactics also depends on the leadership style of their superiors. Managers are more likely to use consulting and inspirational tactics when their boss is a transformational leader, but they are more likely to use coalition, legitimacy and pressure tactics when their boss has a laissez-faire leadership style.

Based on the description above, the following proposition is formulated:

*Proposition 6. Conscientiousness tends to use rational strategy influence in influencing others.*

*Proposition 7. Agreeableness, emotional stability, extraversion tend to use soft influence strategy in influencing others.*

*Proposition 8. Neuroticism tends to use a hard strategy of influence in influencing others.*

## **The Relationship between Influence Tactics and Performance**

Previous research has discussed the construct of influence tactics related to the output. Frust and Cable (2008) have investigated the effect of influence tactics on employee resistance to organizational change moderated by leader-member exchange (LMX). This study shows that employees' resistance to change reflects the type of influence tactics managers use and the strength of the relationship between LMX. The results of this study help explain why some researchers have found manager behaviors, such as the use of sanctions or power, decrease resistance to change attempts, whereas others find similar approaches increase that resistance.

Jensen (2007) has conducted research that examines how interpersonal influence tactics affect policy decisions in group decision-making settings. The results of this study indicate that the most popular tactics used are to draw inspiration and rational persuasion. The most effective techniques for influencing participants vary depending on the type of decision to be made. When drafting a

vision, the most effective tactics are coalition and inspirational, for decisions related to current issues, rational persuasion, inspirational appeal and consultation influence decisions.

Another study related to influence strategy was also conducted by Chakrabarty et al. (2011) which explored influence strategies on customer-oriented sales, adaptive selling and sales performance. This research distinguishes influence strategy into two, namely open and closed influence strategy. The results of this study indicate that salespeople who use an open influence strategy will be more customer-oriented, more adaptive and have better performance.

Based on the description above, it can be formulated the proposition:

*Proposition 9. Influence Strategy (hard strategy, soft strategy and rational strategy) is positively related to performance.*

*Proposition 10. Influence strategy mediates the relationship between personality and performance.*

## 29 Conclusion

Based on the literature review that has been described previously, this article tries to explore the relationship between personality and the influence strategy used. Furthermore, this article discusses the possible relationship between the influence strategy used and performance. To test the significance of the developed model, an empirical study is needed to prove the possible relationships of the three variables that have been described.

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