Moving toward a Global Understanding of Upward Influence Strategies:

An Asian Perspective with Directions for Cross-Cultural Research

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Abstract

We begin with a review of the upward influence literature for the past twenty years. In particular, we examine the extent to which upward influence behavior is congruent with the value dimensions proposed in the established values research and the extent to which the U.S. based measures are applicable in the Asian context. A model of cross-cultural influence behavior is developed to synthesize the present state of our knowledge in cross-cultural upward influence, and to provide a framework for identifying issues requiring further investigation. We conclude by proposing a set of cross-cultural research questions identified in the model.

It is well recognized in studies of managerial behavior that a manager's effectiveness highly depends upon his/her success in dealing with interpersonal relationships. An effective manager should be able to "manage" not only his/her subordinates and co-workers but also superiors. In other words, to effectively accomplish work through interpersonal networks, managers must succeed in influencing the behavior of others, including their superiors (Pfeffer, 1992; Schilit, 1986).

Likewise, given the increasing numbers of transnational and multinational corporations in the global economy and the migration of workers from one country to another, more and more managers, whether employed abroad or working domestically, have to work with superiors and subordinates from other cultures. Developing a more informed understanding of the dynamics of intra-organizational influence behavior from a cross-cultural perspective, undoubtedly should help to improve organizational and managerial effectiveness in multinational corporations (Gabarro & Kotter, 1993; Porter, Allen & Angle, 1981). In addition, given China's entry into the WTO and the gradual recovery of the East Asian economies after the Asian Currency crisis, it is likely that China and East Asia will continue to be a focal area of many global business ventures.

While downward influence, also know as leadership, has been the focus of many studies over the last few decades, and are even reasonably plentiful in the cross-cultural literature, upward influence behavior and informal power, in general, were given very little attention by management researchers until the late 1970s. Few studies have examined upward influence behavior in a cross-cultural context, and even fewer have used Asian samples. Therefore, given the limited study of Asian upward influence behavior and the importance of Asia to the world economy ("War of the Worlds," 1994), it is important for business people on both sides of the Pacific to understand how influence behaviors in Asia might converge or diverge with those behaviors in the West. For example, we might have the case of two subordinates, one from China and the other from the U.S. The Chinese subordinate effectively does his/her job, but never asks the superior for bigger and more challenging assignments. The U.S. subordinate effectively does his/her job and continually asks the superior for bigger and more challenging assignments. Who is perceived to be the "better" employee may depend on the cultural background of the superior. For a U.S. superior, the somewhat aggressive self-presentation style of the U.S. subordinate is seen as a positive, while being quiet may be perceived as lack of motivation. Conversely, for a Chinese superior, being quiet is showing respect for the superior who will know when the more challenging assignment is appropriate, while the

self-presentation style may be perceived as rude. Both are good employees, but these two may be perceived quite differently depending upon the target of their influence attempt, and culture can play a role in the perception.

To put the cross-cultural influence issue into perspective, we will begin considering the broader context of the convergence or divergence (i.e., compatibility) of values and behaviors across cultures. The question that is repeatedly asked is whether Western (American) theories of management apply abroad, especially in Asia. In essence, this question is asking us, are the values of people in different cultures sufficiently similar to result in similar behaviors? The response to this question by cross-cultural scholars has been repeatedly "no" (Greenfield, 1997; Hofstede, 1980; Neghandi, 1975) as time and again the geographic mobility of such theories has been challenged. On the other hand, none of this research has specifically investigated the influence process in organizations. For that reason, we pose two related questions. One, to what extent are upward influence behaviors across cultures congruent with the value dimensions proposed in the relatively well-established cross-cultural values research? And, two, to what extent can American theories in upward influence be applied in the Asian organizational context? Answers to these questions will help us to understand how the upward influence literature fits into the broader cross-cultural values and behavior literature and the degree to which our present knowledge about influence, attained primarily in the U.S., is sufficient for the global business environment. Very simply, as we will show, the answers to these questions have remained fairly elusive to date.

Thus, the goal of this paper is to attempt to attain two very interrelated objectives. First, to the degree possible given the limited research available, we will attempt to provide whatever answers we can to the two questions above. Second, we will attempt to categorically develop a set of research questions that can address the still-unresolved issues of upward influence in the multi-cultural context. It is this second objective that is the primary focus of our paper. To this end, we will divide the paper into three parts. In the first part, we will establish a literature base using single country—primarily U.S.—studies to identify the methodologies and typologies employed in previous upward influence research. Based on the work of Porter et al. (1981) we identify five categories of factors that affect the influence decision. We will use these to organize and synthesize this single-country literature. In the second part, while continuing to rely on the Porter et al. (1981) framework as our categorical foundation, we will review and summarize relevant cross-cultural studies in upward influence. Lastly, in the third part, we begin by proposing a cross-cultural model of upward influence. The Porter et al. (1981) framework remains our foundation for the model, and thus it provides the thread of continuity throughout this paper. We use our

model to synthesize what we presently know, as well as to help us to categorically understand what we *need* to know. Thus, we conclude by developing a set of research questions that are designed to help provide answers for the issues that we found requiring future investigation in the field of cross-cultural upward influence.

1. SINGLE-COUNTRY STUDIES

1.1 Methodologies and Typologies

Intra-organizational influence behavior can be divided into three types according to the relative positions of the Agent (the one exerting the influence) and the Target (the one being influenced). The focus of this paper is on upward influence, the attempt to influence someone higher in the formal hierarchy of authority in the organization (Porter et al. 1981). That is to say, the agent is subordinate to the target within the organizational hierarchy. The second, and most studied, type is downward influence in which the agent is the superior and the target is the subordinate. The last type is lateral influence where agent and target are peers. Distinguishing the directions of influence is important in reviewing influence research. As several studies have suggested, there are directional differences in the application of influence tactics (e.g. Kipnis, Schmidt & Wilkinson, 1980; Yukl, Falbe & Youn, 1993). In addition, several influence studies have adopted an integrated approach in examining influence behavior. That is, they examined two or all three directions of influence behavior in the same study. While some integrated studies reported their results of each direction separately (e.g. Kipnis, Schmidt & Wilkinson, 1980), some only presented their empirical results collectively (e.g. Fu & Yukl, 2000). In our review, we not only include the studies that directly examined upward influence but also extract the results relevant to upward influence from those integrated studies (see Table 1). Influence studies in general were not given much attention until the late 1970s (see Kipnis et al., 1980; Mowday, 1978; Porter et al., 1981). The Kipnis et al. (1980) study has come to be considered a landmark work triggering subsequent studies in organizational influence research (Schermerhorn & Bond, 1991 p.155; Schriesheim & Hinkin, 1990 p.246). Using Kipnis et al. as our starting point, we reviewed the empirical and theoretical papers that were published since 1980. Since the majority of the single country studies used U.S. samples, all studies discussed in this section, unless otherwise noted, are based on U.S. data.

The studies included in our reviews below were identified through various sources. First, we searched databases of ProQuest and PsyInfo to identify related articles published in English language academic journals. Second, we crosschecked the references cited in related papers to identify those that were excluded by those two databases.

Lastly, we conducted an Internet search with several search engines to identify any other missing papers in the area of upward influence.

Insert Table 1 about here

1.1.1 **Inquiring Methodologies.** The three main inquiry methodologies that have been used in the study of upward influence are agent self-report, report on others' behavior (i.e. report by peers or targets), and a combination of both. Under these approaches, researchers invite respondents to provide information about their own and/or their co-workers' past influence behavior. A summary of the methodologies used is presented in Table 2.

1.1.1.1 **Measurement techniques**. Both quantitative and qualitative methods have been employed to collect data related to upward influence behavior. The survey method has been the most commonly used approach to collect data on the various influence tactics (e.g. Kipnis, Schmidt & Wilkinson, 1980; Yukl & Falbe, 1990; Yukl & Tracey, 1992). In some studies, respondents were asked to rate the frequencies or acceptabilities of tactics (e.g. Kipnis et al. 1980; Ralston, Gustafson, Mainiero & Umstot, 1993). In other studies, respondents were asked to give their preference for tactics in response to some hypothetical situations (e.g. Fu & Yukl, 2000; Mowday, 1978; Schermerhorn & Bond, 1991). To collect information of respondents' past influence experience, critical incident recall (e.g. Case, Dosier, Murkison & Keys, 1988; Falbe & Yukl, 1992; Schilit & Locke, 1982) and journal keeping were employed (Schilit, 1986).

Insert Table 2 about here

1.1.1.2 **Subjects.** Agent self-report is the most common inquiry approach in single-country upward influence studies. It was used as the sole method in some studies (e.g. Chacko, 1990; Farmer, Maslyn, Fedor and Goodman, 1997; Kipnis et al. 1980; Kipnis & Schmidt, 1988) and was combined with other inquiry methods in other studies (e.g. Schilit & Locke, 1982; Thacker & Wayne, 1995). Agent self-report has been criticized for its limitations in terms of overcoming the reluctance of respondents to admit to and divulge information on "political" behavior. Thus, the possibility of subjects "faking" socially desirable responses tends to be prevalent when it comes to identifying the sensitive information of upward influence tactics (Anastasi, 1982). To eliminate this bias, the other-

report approach has been adopted by some researchers like Yukl and associates (1990, 1992, 1993, 1995 & 1996), Falbe and Yukl (1992), and Rao, Schmidt and Murray (1995), and Ralston and associates (1993, 1994, 1995 & 2002), Egri, Ralston, Murray & Nicholson (2000), and Terpstra, Ralston & Jesuino (2002) in all their cross-cultural influence studies. This concern of bias was found valid in the empirical studies in which targets and agents reported different influence tactics (Erez, Rim & Keider, 1986; Xin & Tsui, 1996).

1.1.2 Tactics Typologies. Kipnis et al. (1980) research has drawn the most attention in intra-organizational influence studies in the last twenty years. Previously, the study of upward influence was framed as part of organizational politics with a focus of examining how power was exercised. The study by Kipnis et al. (1980) identified a comprehensive list of influence tactics and explored the tactics people used at work to influence their subordinates, peers, and superiors, as well as their reasons to influence. The tactic categories that they identified relevant to upward influence are Reason (or Rational Persuasion), Friendliness (or Ingratiation), Assertiveness, Bargaining (or Exchange), Higher Authority and Coalition (Kipnis & Schmidt, 1982). Blocking and Sanctions are two other tactics, but related only to downward and lateral influence. Table 3 presents a summary of these and subsequent influence tactic dimensions that have been proposed since 1978.

Insert Table 3 about here

In later studies, Kipnis (1984) grouped the tactics into three mega-categories—strong, weak, and rational—that were later re-named as hard, soft, and rational strategies (Kipnis & Schmidt, 1985). Hard tactics referred to those that "are perceived by power-holders (agents) as not allowing the target person freedom to decide whether to comply, without incurring severe costs" (Kipnis, 1984 p.130). The costs of non-compliance might be material, physical or psychological penalties. Hard tactics, in the Kipnis et al. (1980) taxonomy, collectively referred to influence tactics of Assertiveness, Upward Appeal and Coalition. On the contrary, soft strategies of upward influence involved less aggressive, unobtrusive, and more psychologically manipulating means. Ingratiation and Exchange of favors were considered as soft strategies. Rational strategies referred to use of logic and rational bargaining in a non-emotional way. Rational Persuasion and some forms of Exchange were rational tactics. Philosophically, these mega-categories were adopted by other influence researchers (Falbe & Yukl, 1992; Ralston,

Vollmer, Srinvasan, Nicholson, Tang & Wan, 2002; Terpstra et al., 2002) and empirically validated by Farmer and associates (1997).

The upward influence tactics developed by Kipnis et al. (1980) were largely supported by another exploratory study conducted by Schilit and Locke (1982). Schilit and Locke collected data by student interviews with managers who described past incidents of successful and unsuccessful influence attempts either from the perspective of the agent or from the perspective of the target. They included all tactics of Kipnis et al. except Ingratiation and Blocking, and added two additional tactics labeled as Adherence to Rules and Manipulation.

Yukl and Falbe (1990) conducted a study to replicate and extend the previous exploratory influence research by Kipnis et al. (1980). Their study supported the findings of Kipnis, although they added two new tactics, Inspirational Appeals and Consultation. Those two dimensions were added on the bases that consultation was a key form of leadership behavior and inspirational appeal to emotion and values are an important aspect of charismatic and transformation leadership. Those two dimensions, although seemingly relevant only to downward influence, were found to be the two most frequently used tactics in upward influence after Rational Persuasion in two separate studies by Yukl and Falbe (1990) and Yukl and Tracey (1992). In addition, Yukl and Tracey's study included Legitimating as another influence tactic. Legitimating was similar to Adherence of Rules proposed by Schilit and Locke (1982), but its coverage of influence efforts was widened to include seeking legitimacy of a request by claiming the authority or right to do so.

The most recent development on the upward influence tactic taxonomy was the Strategies of Upward Influence (SUI) measure (Ralston et al., 1993). The SUI is a cross-culturally developed measure of upward influence tactics. Unlike the previous researchers who only sought input from American managers, Ralston et al. included inputs from Hong Kong Chinese, German, French, and American managers in forming the tactic items in their questionnaire. Their results proposed a set of influence typology that was substantially different from the widely used Kipnis et al. taxonomy. Ingratiation and Rational Persuasion were the only common dimensions. Good Soldier, Image management, Personal Networking, Information Control, and Strong-Arm Coercion were identified for the first time as influence tactics, although the latter three dimensions were similar to the power classifications of previous power researchers (French & Raven, 1959; Mechanic, 1962; Raven, 1974).

1.1.2.1 **Instruments.** The 58-item questionnaire developed by Kipnis et al (1980) is one instrument that has been widely referenced. Another is the Profile of Organizational Influence Strategies (POIS Form M) developed

by Kipnis and Schmidt (1982). It extracted the most relevant 27 items of upward influence from the 58-item instrument. Since POIS (Form M) was designed primarily for corporate clients, the use by academic researchers was limited. Schreisheim and Hinkin (1990) also developed an instrument based upon a refinement of the original items from Kipnis et al. (1980). Their refinement resulted in an instrument with fewer sub-scales (only 18 items) and higher content validity and reliability. Other instruments that have been employed include the Influence Behavior Questionnaire (IBQ) developed by Yukl and Falbe (1990) and the 38 item Strategies of Upward Influence (SUI) that was previously discussed.

1.2 The Preference for and the Effectiveness of Upward Influence Tactics

Kipnis et al. (1980) found that the most commonly used methods of upward influence were Rational Persuasion and Informal Exchange. Schilit and Locke's (1982) study also recorded this finding in successful influence attempt as reported by both agents and targets. Yukl and associates (1990, 1991, 1992) also found that Rational Persuasion was the most commonly used method in influence of all directions.

Only a few studies have examined the relative effectiveness of different upward influence tactics, and those studies applied different methodologies in their assessments. Schilit and Locke (1982) in their critical incident studies used immediate outcomes as criteria but only measured them in terms of a simple dichotomy—successful versus unsuccessful. The survey subjects were asked to recall prior successful and unsuccessful influence attempts from the perspectives of both agent and target. Their findings show that agent and target agreement in tactic usage was only found for successful attempts. In those cases, the tactics used most often were Rational Persuasion and Exchanges. Such findings, however, were not consistent across the three studies conducted by Schilit and Locke in the same research project. Discrepancies were also found between supervisors' and subordinates' perceptions of the causes of failure. Agents reported the major reason for failure was the close-mindedness of their supervisors, whereas targets reported that the content of the influence attempts was the most common cause.

Falbe and Yukl (1992), instead of simply focusing upon successful and unsuccessful influence attempts, identified three immediate outcomes of influence attempts: task commitment, task compliance, and task resistance. Attitudinal commitment in complex task and behavioral compliance in simple task were considered successful outcomes of influence attempts whereas resistance was considered as failure. The effectiveness of single tactics and combinations of tactics from the perspective of targets were studied. The soft tactics of Inspirational Appeal and Consultation when used singularly were most effective. Rational Persuasion was found to be moderately effective,

with the hard tactics—Legitimating, Coalition, and Pressure—being the least effective single strategies. Falbe and Yukl were the first to look at the consequences of the use of combination of tactics by applying the soft, hard and rational dimensions. In short, soft tactics were found more effective than hard tactics and the effectiveness of Rational Persuasion depended to a great extent on how it was used. Reason was much more effective when used in combination with soft tactics such as Consultation, Inspirational Appeals, or Ingratiation than when it was used alone or with hard tactics. Rational Persuasion was found to be the most effective upward influence tactic, which, in concert with Inspirational Appeal and Consultation, were the most effective tactics for all directions of influence (Yukl & Tracey, 1992). Another study by Case et al. (1988) also reported that Rational Persuasion together with strong support and persistence was the effective influence method in successful upward influence incidents.

1.3 Influence Tactics and HR Decisions

The empirical results on the relationship between influence tactics and HR decisions are mixed. Some studies suggested direct association between influence tactics and HR decisions, such as performance ratings, performance evaluation, and promotability assessment (Kipnis and Schmidt, 1988; Mowday, 1978; Thacker & Wayne, 1995), while others indicated a minimal relationship between HR Decisions and influence tactics (Rao et al., 1995; Wayne, Linden, Graf and Ferris, 1997).

Mowday (1978) studied the relationship between five influence tactics by elementary school principals and ratings made by the immediate supervisor of each principal on the principal's overall effectiveness in exercising influence. Among all tactics, only Manipulation of Information discriminated significantly between more and less effective principals.

Kipnis and Schmidt (1988) conducted three surveys on subordinates of different hierarchies (workers, supervisors, and CEOs) in which the subordinates' perception of the effectiveness of the different strategies were correlated to their performance evaluation conducted by their immediate supervisors. Kipnis and Schmidt then clustered the data collected and identified four types of influencers according to the reported frequency of application of various influence tactics—shotgun, tactician, ingratiatory, and bystander. Shotgun managers were active influence agents and frequently used all six upward influence tactics. In particular, they liked using Assertiveness and Bargaining. Tactician managers, who mostly used Rational Persuasion, exerted only an average amount of overall influence. Ingratiators used predominantly Friendliness tactics, with average use of the other strategies. Bystanders were low on the usage of all six upward influence strategies. In the study on supervisors, both

male and female shotgun managers received the lowest performance ratings. Male Tacticians scored the highest in performance evaluation whereas male Ingratiators received only a moderate performance rating. For female managers, Bystanders and Ingratiators received the highest performance rating. Similar results were also found in a separate study on workers and clerical personnel. In another study of CEOs, shotgun managers were evaluated less favorably by their superiors, earned less, and reported more job tension and physical and psychological stress than managers of other influence styles.

Thacker and Wayne (1995) investigated the importance of subordinates' influence tactics on supervisors' perceptions of promotability. Significant statistical support was found for the positive correlation between Rational Persuasion and promotability. To a lesser extent, Ingratiation and Assertiveness were found to be significantly negatively related to promotability. Later studies by Rao et al. (1995) and Wayne et al. (1997), however, did not support the existence of direct relationship between influence tactics and the HR decisions of performance ratings, promotability assessments, and salary progression. The Ingratiation-promotability finding in Thacker and Wayne's research was also contradictory to previous research that suggested positive effect of ingratiation influence styles on an individual's career success or performance evaluations (e.g. Judge & Bretz, 1994; Linden and Mitchell, 1988).

1.4 Factors Affecting the Selection of Upward Influence Tactics

To examine the achievement of the single-country studies using U.S. samples, we will apply an abridged framework adapted from Porter et al. (1981). In their model, Porter et al. proposed an elaborate framework to examine overt, upward, political influence in the organizational context. They suggested that five categories of inputs have impact on the influence process: agent characteristics, target characteristics, agent-target relationship, situational characteristics, and agent belief system. Agent characteristics included agent's need of power, Machiavellianism, locus of control, risk-seeking propensity, and personal power. Target characteristics referred to the power of the target and the cost involved for approaching the target. Agent-target relationship referred to the interpersonal attraction between the agent and the target. Situational characteristics referred to the structuring of the organization, ambiguity of the situation, resource scarcity, and stake of agent's personal interest. The last input was agent belief system that included the agent's expected cost and benefit of the influence attempt and the perceived norms that endorsed or discouraged certain influence behavior.

While adopting Porter et al. model, we should note that the factors used to exemplify each input were not meant to be exhaustive. Therefore, we follow its broad categorization in our analysis and expand the details of each input

by adding relevant factors that have been identified in the reviewed studies. For example, we will add the goals of exerting influence and the agents' demographics, such as gender and employee unionization, under agent characteristics, while viewing leadership style as a target characteristic. Also, it should be noted that the model is a single-culture model, which is relevant for our present discussion, but which will not be sufficient to understand the cross-cultural level of analysis in the subsequent sections.

1.4.1   Agent Characteristics. Under this categorization scheme, individual factors of agents including the need for achievement and power, locus of control, goals of influence, gender and employee unionization, have been studied. Prior studies indicated that active influencers were characterized with high need for achievement (Chacko, 1990; Schilit, 1986), high need for power, high self-perception of power (Mowday, 1978; Schilit, 1986) and an internal focus of control (Schilit, 1986).

Chacko (1990) found need for achievement was correlated with the majority of influence tactics whereas the need for power was positively related with Assertiveness, Reason and Ingratiation. Individuals with high self-perception of power or an internal locus of control were found more likely to use Reason and Assertiveness (Ringer & Boss, 2000). When an agent's status was higher in the organizational hierarchy, he/she tended to use more Rationality and Assertiveness tactics with upward influence (Kipnis et al., 1980; Rao et al., 1995).

The goals of exercising influence were found to be significantly related to the tactics that were adopted, although the results were not perfectly consistent across different studies. The goals of influence were categorized into individual goals and organizational goals (Kipnis & Schmidt, 1984). Individual goals included seeking assistance on one's own job, favorable performance appraisals and personal benefits. Organizational goals referred to selling new ideas, getting more responsibility, assigning work to managers, and convincing managers to work better. Bargaining, Reason, Assertiveness, and Higher Authority were the preferred tactics to fulfill organizational goals, whereas Ingratiation was preferred for the personal goals of favorable appraisal and personal benefits (Rao et al., 1995). Similar results were found in the Kipnis et al. (1980) three-directional influence study with the exception that Ingratiation was frequently used to obtain assistance on one's own job.

In relation to gender effect, the influence literature provides contradictory evidence about the link between gender and preference for tactics. Kipnis et al. (1980) reported there was no significant gender difference in their self-report questionnaire study. Kipnis and Schmidt (1988) reported that women Ingratiators were given the highest performance evaluation by their male supervisors. In contrast, the highest performance evaluation was given to

Tactician men workers and supervisors. Given the fact that the evaluators in those studies were predominantly male, a researcher might ask: Would the reverse of this pattern occur if women were doing the evaluating? Would women supervisors give high evaluations to male Ingratiators and to female Tacticians? Thus, the gender effect in their studies was not conclusive. Gender difference in the preference for tactics was also supported in Schermerhorn and Bond's (1990) cross-cultural study. They reported that females in both the Hong Kong Chinese and American samples had a stronger preference for the rationality tactic than did their male counterparts. Lastly, employee unionization was found associated with use of influence tactics. To influence superiors, agents in a unionized work unit were found to rely more on Blocking tactics and less Rational Persuasion (Kipnis et al., 1980).

1.4.2   Target Characteristics. Subordinates' perceptions of their supervisors' leadership styles were associated with their preference for upward influence methods (Chacko, 1990). Subordinates were more likely to use Assertiveness and Upward Appeal to influence supervisors who exhibited leadership styles that were low in initiation of structure and low in consideration.

1.4.3   Agent-Target Relationship. Managers' perceptions of the subordinates' interpersonal skills, their liking of subordinates, and their perceptions of similarity to subordinates were associated with subordinates' use of influence tactics (Wayne et al., 1997). Wayne et al. divided Ingratiation into two categories of tactics, favor rendering tactics focusing on targets and self-promotion tactics focusing on agents. They then concluded that Reason, Assertiveness, and favor rendering were positively related to the above managers' perceptions whereas Bargaining and self-promotion were negatively related to managers' perceptions. Higher performance ratings and higher promotability assessments were given to subordinates who were higher on perceived interpersonal skills and perceived similarity.

The impact of interpersonal trust between agents and targets on the selection of upward influence tactics was examined in a hospital setting (Ringer & Boss, 2000). Results showed that there was a negative relationship between the level of interpersonal trust and the use of Upward Appeal and Assertiveness. Lastly, subordinates who had been working for their supervisors for a longer period of time were found extremely influential in strategic decisions (Schilit, 1986).

1.4.4   Situational characteristics. The Rao et al. (1995) study was the only one to test if there were a relationship between situational characteristics and the type of influence tactics used by subordinates. They differentiated three situational characteristics: routinization, formalization, and innovation. Routinization refers to

situational circumstances that demand pre-established operations and plans to be followed and allow little personal discretion. Formal organizations are those that emphasize documentation and standard operating procedures and a chain of command. If an organization emphasizes innovation, more personal creativity is allowed, but there is more ambiguity in terms of performance requirements. However, the Rao et al. study did not find any significant relationship between the above situational characteristics and use of upward influence methods.

1.5 Summary and Discussion

Over the last two decades, there has been only limited progress made in understanding upward influence behavior in the organizational setting, especially in the cross-cultural context. However, the single-country findings presented here do provide us with a starting point to explore upward influence strategies in Asia, as well as other cultures. In this section, we began by discussing the methods and measures that have been used. Agent self-report, other-report, and a combination of both approaches are the inquiring methods used in the reviewed studies. Survey, incidents, and journals were the data collection methods used across the various influence studies. Published upward influence measures include the original items from Kipnis et al. (1980), a commercial version, POIS (Form M) by Kipnis & Schmidt (1982), the IBQ by Yukl and Falbe (1990) and the SUI by Ralston (Ralston et al. 1993). Those instruments also suggest some different typologies of upward influence tactics. The six tactics from POIS—Reason, Friendliness, Bargaining, Upward Appeal, Coalition and Assertiveness—have been widely followed. The IBQ typology is largely similar to the POIS, with both having substantial differences from those suggested in the SUI. Nevertheless, in recent surveys, researchers applied the mega-categories, hard, soft, and rational tactics, in their analysis.

With respect to the consequences of influence methods, the few related studies suggested that Rational Persuasion and soft strategies were more effective than the other tactics. Also, Rational Persuasion was consistently the most commonly used tactics by American subjects. However, mixed results were found between the use of influence tactics and some HR decisions, such as performance evaluation and promotability.

Finally, to put into perspective the factors that have been examined in these single-country studies, we applied the Porter at el. (1981) typology of inputs to the influence decision. Several factors for the first four types of inputs—agent characteristics, target characteristics, agent-target relationship, and situational characteristics—have been examined, albeit with only a small number of studies. No study examined the crucial final category, agent belief system. In essence, the literature to date indicates that research in upward influence is still limited with most

studies simply focusing on profiling agents' influence behavior. The major factors, as identified by the Porter et al. model, have yet to be adequately examined. Obviously, there are substantial gaps in the influence literature.

In the context of future research and in addition to the voids identified above, there are two methodological questions that will require researchers' attention. First, should we ask agents to report their influence behavior or should we ask targets to report the agents' influence behavior? Surveying agents may result in socially desirable responses, while surveying targets may only reflect the targets' values and attitudes, and not the agent's actual behavior. Peer-report may be helpful in resolving this dilemma, but this approach also has its limitation. When it comes to examining association of influence tactics and tactic effectiveness with reference to some past influence attempts or hypothetical situations, peer-report approach will not be helpful in collecting relevant data.

The other methodological issue is related to the content validity of items included in the available instruments. Kipnis et al.'s (1980) original items have shaped the content of the POIS and IBQ. A primary contrast with the SUI is that the latter includes more organizationally destructive tactics, as grouped under the dimensions of Information Control and Strong-arm Coercion, than do the POIS and IBQ. The two SUI dimensions, Personal Networking and Image Management, are not given commensurate weight in Kipnis et al., POIS, or Yukl and Falbe's IBQ. The difference between the traditional Kipnis taxonomy and Ralston's taxonomy raises a question: Why do these differences exist? One possible reason that might account for the differences is the input from the non-American managers in the creation of the SUI. Cultural differences may have impacted the influence methods employed by non-American managers versus those preferred by American managers. This will be discussed in a later section of this paper. Another reason might be that in the process of developing the instrument, Kipnis et al. sought suggestions from the survey subjects on the means of getting one's way, a non-specific objective, whereas Ralston's survey asked subjects to identify strategies to get ahead that they saw others using within their organizations, which refer to a specific objective. Therefore, when choosing which instrument to apply, researchers should consider the inherent question raised in the development of those measures. Moreover, researchers should also consider the transferability of US-based instruments (e.g., POIS and IBQ) to study other cultures. Further discussion of these issues will follow in subsequent sections.

2. UPWARD INFLUENCE STUDIES FROM AROUND THE WORLD

In the context of Asian management research, the results from the summary of single-country (primarily U.S.) studies raise two primary questions. First and foremost, Asian cultures and American culture differ substantially

along Hofstede's cultural dimensions (1980). Although Hofstede only studied seven Asian countries including India, Hong Kong, Pakistan, Taiwan, Thailand, Singapore, and the Philippines, Asian cultures are grouped as a single Far East cluster (Ronen & Shenkar, 1985; Redding, 1976) that is characterized by high power distance and low individualism. Power distance and individualism/collectivism are the cultural dimensions considered to be of primary relevance to the upward influence constructs (Egri et al., 2000; Ralston, 1995; Xin & Tsui, 1996). Thus, compared with the low power distance, individualist Americans, how do the high power distance, collectivistic Asian subjects differ, or not, in their choice of upward influence methods? Does the difference in selection of upward influence methods correspond with the differences along these cultural dimensions? Second, to what extent is it effective to apply the U.S.-developed instruments (e.g., POIS and IBQ) to measure the upward influence preference of non-American subjects? In other words, are upward influence tactics universal, and therefore covered in U.S. measures, or are there culturally specific tactics not included in those instruments? With these questions in mind, we will summarize the present state of upward influence studies that involved non-U.S. samples. As this section will indicate, most of these studies are basic cross-cultural comparisons of influence tactics that do not ascend the depth of analysis needed to fit into the Porter et al. (1981) framework used in the previous section. Later in this section, we will identify the few studies that can be discussed within the Porter et al. framework.

2.1 Preference for Upward Influence Tactics

Suzuki and Narpareddy's (1988) comparative study of Japanese and U.S. female executives indicated that the U.S. subjects placed more focus on mentorship and formal evaluation system as means to achieve influence than did their Japanese counterparts. In Chow's single-country study (1989) on mainland Chinese, the following influence strategies in descending order of popularity were identified: Rationality, Coalition, Assertiveness, Upward appeal, Exchange of benefits, Ingratiating, and Blocking. However, since neither statistical testing of the data nor comparative information was provided, it is difficult to evaluate the results. Kipnis, Schmidt, Swaffin-Smith and Wilkinson (1984) studied three Anglo countries, the UK, the US and Australia. Consistent with the findings in single-country studies, Reason was the strategy used most often for all three groups of managers.

Schermerhorn and Bond (1991) conducted an empirical study to statistically test cross-cultural differences. They applied a "situation frames" methods to study Chinese and American subjects' preference for tactics of upward and downward influence. They asked subjects to give frequency ratings for the original eight influence tactics proposed by Kipnis et al. (1980) in each of the two given situations. The results were generally consistent with those

of Kipnis et al. in that there was obvious directional impact on the preference of influence tactics. In upward influence situation, both Hong Kong Chinese and American subjects favored Rationality and Coalition tactics. Significant cultural preference was also found. American subjects were more prone to use Ingratiation and Exchange tactics, while Assertiveness was more likely to be applied by Hong Kong Chinese. Given the exploratory nature of their study, Schermerhorn and Bond did not provide an explanation for their findings nor test the association between the findings and cultural dimensions.

In addition, Schermerhorn and Bond (1991) highlighted the potential inappropriateness of applying Western-developed instruments using Asian subjects and suggested that Eastern-developed instruments might be more valid in cross-cultural studies. They also suggested that Chinese indigenous concepts *guanxi* (connections) and *renqin* (favors) should play a role in upward influence and those variables need to be addressed with proper instruments.

Ralston et al. (1993) began to address the issue of using emic measures in non-U.S. samples by cross-culturally developing the Strategies of Upward Influence (SUI) instrument. Furthermore, to avoid bias resulting from self-report answers (Yukl & Falbe, 1990), SUI subjects were asked to give answers about their co-workers' influence behavior, instead of their own on the likelihood, risk, and ethics of using the upward influence strategies. As previously discussed, the SUI consists of a set of seven job tactics dimensions. The use of tactics was suggested to be consistent with the individualistic and collectivistic dimension of country cultures (Hofstede, 1980). Hong Kong Chinese with a high collective cultural background were more likely to use informal Information Networks in their effort to advance in the organization. In contrast, very individualistic Americans were more likely to take more individual strategies such as Image Management in getting ahead.

In two related studies, Ralston et al. (1994 & 1995) administered the SUI instruments to American managers working in Hong Kong as well as Hong Kong Chinese managers. The Chinese managers were found more likely to use behind-the-scene tactics, such as Personal Network and Information Control than their American counterparts working in Hong Kong. Personal Networking and Information Control strategies were perceived to be consistent with the Chinese cultural characteristic, "guanxi," the kind of personal relationship developed for mutual reciprocity (Child, 1994). The development of Personal Network, for the Chinese, was in alignment with building-up of guanxi and information power. Tactic preference for American managers based in Hong Kong was not significantly different from those in the U.S. It was concluded that divergence of values remains in force whereby expatriates did

not change their behavior to fit a foreign culture. Yet, Ralston et al. (1995) also acknowledged that the subjects' short expatriate experience in Hong Kong (average 1.9 years) weakened the strength of that conclusion.

The SUI instrument was later applied in a few other cross-cultural empirical studies that involved managers apart from the U.S. and Hong Kong. Ralston et al. (2002) compared German, Dutch, Indian, Mexican, Hong Kong, and American managers' perception of acceptability of various upward influence strategies. American and Dutch managers found soft tactics more acceptable and hard tactics less acceptable. On the contrary, Hong Kong and Mexico were the cultures that favored hard tactics as opposed to soft tactics. By comparison, German and Indian managers were moderate on both the soft as well as the hard tactics.

Egri et al. (2000) applied the SUI to managers from NAFTA countries and examined the perceptions of acceptability of upward influence tactics using the four upward influence hierarchy dimensions proposed by Ralston et al. (1994), Organizationally Sanctioned Behavior, Non-Destructive/Legal Behavior, Destructive/Legal, and Destructive/Illegal Behavior. The findings showed American and Canadian-Anglophone managers more strongly supported the Organizationally Sanctioned Behavior than did the Canadian-Francophone and Mexican managers, while the Canadian-Francophone and Mexican managers showed greater support for the Destructive/Legal and Destructive/Illegal Behavior than did the American and Canadian-Anglophone managers.

Terpstra et al. (2002) used the same instrument in a study of managers from China, Portugal, and Macao, the Chinese society that was repatriated to China in 1999 after being a Portuguese colony for over 450 years. The subjects in the study included Mainland Chinese, Portuguese, expatriate Portuguese in Macao, and Macanese Chinese. The findings supported that Good Soldier and Rational Persuasion were acceptable to all subjects. The two Chinese groups found Information Control more acceptable, and Image Management and Personal Networking less acceptable than the two Portuguese groups. The expatriate Portuguese and the Macanese Chinese significantly differed in their perception of acceptability of Strong-Arm Coercion from their fellow countrymen in Portugal and in China. This suggested that political and social variables such as the prolonged period of colonialism, and extended expatriate assignments may affect the values of managers and caused them to modify the values and behaviors. As labeled by Ralston, Holt, Terpstra, and Yu (1997), crossvergence of values and behaviors did take place.

All studies using the SUI instrument in cross-cultural studies have provided evidence of differences in perceptions of acceptability of upward influence tactics among different national and sub-cultural groups. Despite their differences, each subject group ranked the acceptability of the various Job Tactics dimensions in the same

order. In essence, the rational and soft upward influence tactics were ranked as more acceptable than the hard or coercive ones. What was different was the strength of preference for a tactic that was expressed by different cultural groups. These findings suggest that the relative acceptability of certain influence tactics might be universal. This universality in ranking of tactics was also supported in a study of U.S. and Chinese managers by Fu and Yukl (2000), who examined the perceived effectiveness for influence tactics in all three directions.

In addition, Fu and Yukl's (2000) study identified a cultural specific influence tactic, Gift, which is considered common in China. Using primarily a scenario framed survey, they reported that American managers rated Rational Persuasion and Exchange more effective than Chinese managers, while Chinese managers rated Coalition tactics, Upward Appeals, and Gift more effective. However, since no breakdown of the ratings was given in relation to the directions of influence, we do not know the exact extent to which the conclusion is applicable to upward influence.

2.2 Factors Affecting the Selection of Upward Influence Tactics

Only four studies were identified that incorporated inputs to the influence process into their methodologies. Collectively, these studies addressed the agent characteristics, the target characteristics, and the situational factors categories of input to influence tactics.

2.2.1 Agent Characteristics. As noted, few studies tested the relationship of the selection of upward influence tactics with antecedents identified in the Porter et al. (1981) typology of inputs to the upward influence process. One exception was Kipnis et al.'s (1984) study of the subjects from the U.K., the U.S., and Australia. This study indicated that agent's power, goals of exerting influence, and expectations of target's willingness to comply were the key factors in determining the choice of strategy. These findings were consistent with those of Kipnis et al.'s (1980) single country study.

2.2.2 Target Characteristic. The Ansari & Kapoor (1987) study in India showed that leadership styles were associated with choice of upward influence tactics. By classifying leadership into three types, Authoritarian, participative, and nurturant-task, they concluded that subjects used more rational tactics toward participative and nurturant-task supervisors and more hard tactics towards authoritarian supervisors. In the same study, the goals of exerting influence were also found significantly related to the choice of influence tactics. Ingratiation tactics were preferred for personal goals and a combination of rational and non-rational tactics for organizational goals.

2.2.3 Situational Factors. The Erez and Rim (1982) and the Erez et al. (1986) studies are the only other ones that may fit the Porter et al. typology. Both were studies of Israeli managers' influence behavior in all three

directions. The Erez and Rim (1982) study indicated that goals and tactics were significantly related to firm size and the number of the agent's subordinates. Managers of larger organizations used rational tactics more to exert upward influence than did those from small organizations. Managers who had a larger number of subordinates used more hard tactics in all three directions of influence than did those who had fewer subordinates. The Erez et al. (1986) study supported the conclusion found in Schilit and Locke (1982) that agents and targets reported different usage of tactics. Agents reported more frequent use of rational and hard tactics whereas targets reported more use of soft tactics in general.

2.3 Summary and Discussion

The research involving non-U.S. samples studied the upward influence behavior of the following cultural and sub-cultural groups: Mainland Chinese, Hong Kong Chinese, Macao Chinese, Indian, Mexican, Dutch, German, Portuguese, Israeli, Australian, English, Anglo-Canadian, and Franco-Canadian. All of these studies, except the four discussed in section 2.3, focused primarily on the profiles of preference for influence tactics of different groups of subjects. Many of these samples exhibited significant differences in influence preferences from those indicated by U.S. samples. However, consistent with the findings in the U.S. studies, Reason or Rational Persuasion was found to be the most acceptable and frequently used upward influence strategy by all non-US cultures. As shown in all SUI studies, as well as in Schermerhorn and Bond (1991), all subject groups rated soft tactics as being more acceptable than hard tactics. As such, the SUI studies provide evidence that *some* level of universality of preference for tactics has emerged. However, without broader empirical support, that plausible universality remains more of a question than a fact.

In addition to this trend, we identify another intriguing association between cultural dimensions and choice of upward influence tactics from the studies of Egri et al. (2000), Fu & Yukl (2000), Ralston et al. (1993, 1994, 1995), Schermerhorn & Bond (1991), and Terpstra et al. (2002). As shown in Table 4, Hofstede's (1980) power distance and individualism/collectivism dimensions are compared with findings for the preference toward "hard" or "soft" upward influence tactics. For the purpose of illustration, all dimensions are described as high, low, or moderate. We can see that, for the samples discussed, the Hong Kong Chinese, Indians, Portuguese, and Mexicans are high power distance and low individualism cultures, with the American, Anglo-Canadian, Dutch and German being low power distance and high individualism cultures. Additionally, the Franco-Canadians, who share many cultural characteristics with the French, are high in both power distance and individualism (Egri et al., 2000). Mainland

Chinese and Taiwanese Chinese were not included in Hofstede's original IBM study (1980), but later studies have confirmed that these two groups of Chinese, like their Hong Kong counterparts, are also high in power distance and low in individualism (Cheung & Chow, 1999). As shown in Table 4, this clustering of the individualism and power distance dimensions corresponds with the relative preference for soft or hard upward influence tactics. Subjects high on power distance and low on individualism tended to prefer hard tactics, whereas subjects low on power distance and high on individualism preferred soft tactics. Nevertheless, this association has yet to be fully investigated. Out of all of the cross-cultural studies, to date, only Fu & Yukl (2000) explicitly examined the relationship of cultural values and the selection of influence tactics. The paucity of research related to this issue serves to exemplify a more pervasive issue. There are a multitude of gaps in the cross-cultural influence literature. In the following section, we will begin to try to address these shortcomings of the literature through the presentation of a set of potential research questions that we pose for future investigation.

Insert Table 4 about here

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3. RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES

As discussed previously, a few single-country studies using U.S. samples have explored, at least to a limited degree, the impact of factors that are inputs to the selection of upward influence strategies. Thus, our scrutiny of the literature has yielded the proverbial good news – bad news dichotomy. The bad news is that even at the single-country (U.S.) level there is limited research to report, with cross-cultural studies and samples outside the U.S. being very scarce. The good news is that a plethora of research opportunities exist in the area of upward influence in the organizational setting. With the importance that informal, political influence has in determining success or failure of a venture, as well as that of an individual's career, these research grounds should prove to be not only copious but fertile as well. In this concluding section of this paper, we develop a model that allows us to identify the areas where future research may be needed within the cross-cultural aspects of upward influence strategy.

3.1 A Cross-Cultural Model of Upward Influence

While the Porter et al. (1981) model did an excellent job identifying factors relevant to the influence process, it was not designed to address those situations where agents and targets have different belief systems due to systematic differences in the societal influences of culture, economic system, and political-legal system. Therefore, we have

developed a conceptual model that acknowledges these pervasive societal influences that differentiate one culture from another, and in turn, differentiate the behaviors of members of one culture from another. Figure 1 presents a process model of upward influence strategy selection that focuses upon the inputs to the selection strategy. We do not propose this to be an all-encompassing model of influence. The purpose of this model is to facilitate our discussion of where cross-cultural research on upward influence is needed, with an emphasis on the Asian perspective.

Insert Figure 1 about here

3.1.1   Agent's decision to attempt to exert upward influence. As shown in Figure 1, our model begins when the opportunity to exert upward influence has been recognized by agents. They have three options: take action themselves, influence another to take action on their behalf, or do nothing (Porter et al., 1981). When one of the two cases to take action is chosen as the decision, the agent starts to put the influence selection process in motion. When the agent and target come from different cultures, there may be a relevant societal impact on the agent characteristics, the target characteristics, and the agent-target relationship that needs to be taken into consideration, as well as potentially the situational characteristics.

3.1.2   Agent characteristics. The characteristics of the agent, as well as the target, consist of two fairly unique sets of variables: personality characteristics and demographic characteristics. Porter et al. (1981) identify personality variables such as locus of control, Machiavellianism, and propensity to take risk as contributors to an individual's influence style. The classic cross-cultural position is that the societal background of an individual contributes significantly to the personality development of that individual. In that vein, research has shown that on all three of these personality indicators, there are systematic differences between Asian [China] and Western [U.S.] societies (Ralston et al., 1993). Likewise, as illustrated in Table 4, a tentative relationship also has been identified for the values of individualism and power distance with the behavior of upward influence tactics chosen. Thus, it appears reasonable to say that the individual attempting to exert influence comes to the situation with a set of predispositions regarding the use of influence.

However, more recent research has suggested that the individual's predisposition may be more accurately viewed as an integration of societal norms and individual values. Within any country there is a range of values that

the members of its society hold. For example, Egri and Ralston (2001) found that the values of Chinese youths were more similar to the values of American youths than they were to the values of their Chinese elders. Furthermore, one might argue that with increasing relocation due to global business, the cultural diversity of the population within societies is likely to be increasing. In essence, this poses the question: Is country the best predictor of upward influence behavior, or is the specific value system of the agent? To date, almost all cross-cultural research has relied simply on "country" to be the variable that explains differences in values and behavior. However, the preliminary evidence of recent research suggests that this is an overly simplistic perspective, and that to understand upward influence behavior, or likely any behavior, it is necessary to go beyond the country variable. While to the best of our knowledge no study has simultaneously investigated the causal linkages for country and individual values with upward influence behavior, the evidence strongly suggests that exploration of this linkage is clearly warranted.

Research
Question 1a: Research is needed to explore cross-culturally the strength of the relationship for country and individual values of the agent with the influence strategy preference(s) of the agent in terms of what is perceived to be the most likely strategy to be successful.

Furthermore, while the agent-target relationship may be significantly affected by demographic influences, agents can do little to change their demographic characteristics, especially in the short-run. Nonetheless, agents should be aware of the relevance of demographic similarities and differences. While all demographic issues should be considered worthy of investigation, gender and age are two variables that the cross-cultural literature has found to be particularly relevant. In general, research has shown that the social roles of males and females in Western societies are more similar than they are in Asian societies (Elsass & Ralston, 1989). Given the wider differences in the social roles between males and females in Asia, we tend to expect that there may be more pronounced gender differences in the selection of upward influence tactics across cultures. What these are, however, is not clear. For example, would an Asian male agent be more likely to select a female or male Asian target in Asia, *ceteris paribus*? Research, at least in the West, suggest that females have a more nurturing style (Kipnis & Schmidt, 1988), which could mean that they are more open to an influence attempt. However, in a male-dominated business society, might it be more comfortable for an Asian male to have an influence type of relationship with a male target, or not? The same question could be ask about females in Asia, as well as males and females in the West. Additionally, similar questions could be explored in the cross-cultural context, where the agent and the target are from different societal cultures. Age difference for the agent and target may also be viewed in terms of seniority or mentor-student relationship. Confucian societies, where power distance is usually relatively great, attach more reverence to age than

do many youth-oriented Western societies (Aviel, 1996). Additionally, as noted, there may be more similarities across cultures for an age group than within a culture across generation (Egri & Ralston, 2001). Therefore, age, like gender, is a demographic factor in which differences within and across societies are likely to have an impact— positively or negatively— on the agent's selection of a target.

Research
Question 1b: Research is needed to explore cross-culturally the impact of individual demographics, especially age and gender, of both the agent and target on the agent's selection of a target for influence.

3.1.3   Target characteristics. The target, like the agent, has a set of predispositions based on personality and demographic characteristics. Thus, what has been said previously concerning the agent, also applies for the target. Additionally, for the agent's influence attempt to be possibly worthwhile, the target must possess both the ability and the willingness to provide the desired outcome (Tedeschi, Schlenker & Lindskold, 1972). These issues identify what the target brings to the agent-target relationship, and thus precede this relationship. While we felt that it was logical to cluster "ability" and "willingness" in this section, the ability issue could also arguably be discussed in the situational characteristics section. Thus, the two appropriateness-of-target questions are the following: Does a target in a particular situation (e.g., position in organization) have the ability to help the agent meet his/her needs? And, does a target from a particular society tend to be more or less receptive to agent (subordinate) influence attempts, in general, than targets from other societies? A sub-category of the latter question asks whether a target from a particular society tends to be more or less receptive to specific type(s) of influence attempts. Societies vary on their degree of formality of organizations, use of informal networks, and legal sophistication. Thus, in some societies, the "everything is negotiable" philosophy pervades, while in other societies rules are preeminent. While, to date, we are aware of no cross-cultural research that has investigated the comparability of agent and target perceptions of the target's cultural orientation for a willingness to reward influence attempts, it appears likely that a target's societal conditioning may lead the target to have a predisposition that is receptive to or opposed to the use of informal influence attempts by subordinates. In the following section, we will discuss the concept of *guanxi*. In Chinese societies the guanxi relationship will likely have ramifications on a target's predisposition toward an agent's influence attempt.

Research
Question 2:   Research is needed to explore cross-culturally the appropriateness-of-target selection by the agent regarding a target's ability and willingness to provide the outcomes desired by the agent.

3.1.4 **Agent-target relationship**. For the agent to be successful, he/she will most likely need to form and maintain, at least temporarily, an appropriate relationship with the target. While this relationship could be adversarial in nature and based on coercion, it is more likely that a subordinate-initiated relationship will be based on interpersonal attractiveness between the members of the dyad. Thus, the agent's objective is to create and foster a relationship based on trust (Brower, Schoorman & Tan, 2000). Obviously, there are an abundance of issues that could be relevant to the study of the dynamics of an agent-target relationship, and frankly too many to try to identify within the scope of this paper. Thus, we will select and discuss a few that we believe to be most relevant.

While the formation and maintenance of any personal dyadic relationship is challenging, when the individuals in the relationship are from different cultures, the dynamic complexity of the relationship ascends to a new level. Individuals tend to be interpersonally attracted to others who are similar. Individuals from different cultures tend to have dissimilar values, which means that there is the need to integrate or accommodate unique societal beliefs and values that are brought to the relationship by the two individuals. The result is that the relationship must endure within a set of combined societal factors that may be less than compatible. The literature has described the similarity-dissimilarity in societal values in terms of the "cultural distance" between societies (Brouthers, 2001; Kogut & Singh, 1988; Morosini, Shane & Singh, 1998; Shenkar, 2001). Unanswered is the question of whether the selection of a target for the agent-target relationship is significantly impacted by the degree of overall cultural distance between the agent and the potential targets. Perhaps more importantly, within this overall distance, there are the two interrelated issues—trust and relationship-formation—that we see as particularly relevant to understand differences between societies, in general and specifically in terms of the agent-target relationship in the upward influence process.

If we accept that trust is the foundation of a functional relationship, then a primary issue worthy of exploration is how societal differences in interpersonal trust affect the agent-target relationship in an influence attempt. For example, Triandis and associates' (1988) study of in-group and out-group differences between Asian and Western societies suggests that those who are perceived to be trustworthy enough to be included within the inner circle may vary substantially between societies. Concurring, Fukuyama (1995), notes that the level of trusting varies significantly from one culture to another, and that low trust societies (e.g., China, France) may lack social capital, which is the ability to form meaningful relationships outside the inner circle. Additionally, Shane (1993) has shown that level of trust and level of power distance may be inversely related. And, as we have already noted [Table 4], the

high or low level of power distance and the degree to which "soft" influence tactics are employed appear to be inversely related. Thus, at the interpersonal level, trust, power distance, and influence style may be related. That is, the ability to develop trust relationships (Fukuyama, 1996) and the hierarchical orientation at work (Shane, 1993) should contribute in explaining the success or failure in building agent-target relationships.

Research
Question 3a: Research is needed to explore cross-culturally the impact that both the level of societal trust and power distance have on the agent's ability to develop and foster an agent-target relationship.

Furthermore, in the context of relationship formation for the agent-target dyad, *guanxi,* or connection, is considered important in business success in Asia (Luo & Chen, 1997), particularly in predominantly Chinese societies. In the West the concept of *networking* comes closest to approximating the guanxi relationship. However, recent research has disagreed over the degree of comparability of these two informal relationship concepts (Hackley & Dong, 2001; Luo, 1997; Standifird & Marshall, 2000). Thus, it leaves unanswered the question of whether these indigenous cultural concepts for relationship building play a significant role in the formation and maintenance of the agent-target dyad relationship in the upward influence process. However, it would seem reasonable to propose that the more dissimilar guanxi and networking are, the more difficult it will be for a Westerner agent to understand the relationship formation process with an Asian target, and vice versa.

Research
Question 3b: Research is needed to explore cross-culturally the degree of similarity or dissimilarity of Chinese *guanxi* and Western *networking*, and in turn the impact that these findings have on the agent's ability to develop and foster an agent-target relationship.

3.1.5 **Situational Characteristics**. The concept of situational characteristics is open to multiple interpretations. Thus, in this context, we define them as the organizational culture and climate factors that affect the upward influence process. Additionally, this input to the selection of an influence strategy is interesting in that, in the cross-cultural context, it may be more difficult to locate these in the model than the previously discussed characteristics. The societal influence on the situational characteristics might come primarily from the target's society, or from the agent's society, or from another society where, for example, the home-office of the organization is located, or they may come from some combination of societies. Therefore, in the model, situational characteristics are placed outside the target and agent environments, with the understanding that the primary societal impact on these situational characteristics might come from either, both or neither of these environments. Clearly, there are a multitude of factors that contribute to the formation of an organizational culture. We selected two representative factors, regional difference and ownership type, based on their diversity and their relevance to Asia.

The topic of organizational culture or climate has received a good deal of attention over the past decade (for a review see Ashkanasy, Wilderom & Peterson, 2000). Basically, this literature identifies a variety of different organizational cultures pervading the business world today. However, the concept of organizational culture has not received substantial cross-cultural scrutiny. At the same time, another body of cross-cultural literature notes that, while capitalism is proliferating around the world, each culture attaches its own interpretation to capitalism (Bond & King, 1985; Child, 1981, Redding, 1990). These societal interpretations, in turn, have had an impact on the structuring of activities, the processes used, and the general norms of doing business within a culture. In essence, these combined literatures appear to provide preliminary support for the notion that societal influence has an impact on organizational culture norms, and possibly vice versa—a topic unto itself that appears worthy of additional investigation. Further contributing to the "splintering" of a universal definition of capitalism, and in turn the possible increase of organizational culture types, is that significant regional differences have been identified. Recently, research on China (Cheung & Chow 1999; Ralston, Yu, Wang & Terpstra, 1996) and Canada (Egri et al., 2000) has focused on identifying regional differences. Furthermore, given the history and geography of a number of countries (e.g., Switzerland, Indonesia, Mexico), it would not be surprising to find cultural differences across regions proliferating elsewhere. Thus the societal impact on organizational structure may be better viewed as a regional-society impact—again arguing, as in Research Question 1a, that country-level investigation is not sufficient for truly understanding cross-cultural behavior.

Similarly, contributing to the potential for unique organizational structures and norms is that there are very distinct forms of ownership, especially in societies in Asia and Eastern Europe that are transitioning from central-planned to free-market economies (Sun, 2000; Tan, 1999). For example, in China this literature has identified the state-owned enterprise, the township-village owned enterprise, the privately owned enterprise and the joint venture owned enterprise as organizations that possess structures and norms that are systematically unique from one another. Therefore, if we accept that organizational culture is a situational influence that will have an impact on the use of influence strategies within the organization, then it becomes relevant to understand the antecedents to the formation of these organizational cultures, if we are going to understand the upward influence process.

Research
Question 4:   Research is needed to explore cross-culturally the factors that shape an organization's culture or climate, which in turn affects an agent's selection of an influence strategy.

3.1.6 **Agent belief system**. The synthesis of the inputs to the influence process—the agent characteristics, the target characteristics, the agent-target relationship and the situational characteristics—provides the information that helps the agent perform a cost-benefit analysis that will lead to the decision to take action to attempt influence, or not. Additionally, if the decision is to take action, then this process also results in the selection of the influence strategy to be used. Thus, the agent belief system produces the influence strategy selection decision based on, not only the personal wants of the agent, but also on the agent's perception of the target, the societal norms of one or more cultures, and the organizational norms and practices unique to the situation (Tse, Lee, Vertinsky & Wehrung, 1988). How this agent decision-maker evaluates and assigns weights to the various inputs would be a very challenging research question to explore. Nonetheless, since it is a crucial step, if not *the* crucial step, in the model leading to the selection of an influence strategy, it truly is worthy of research consideration.

Research
Question 5:   Research is needed to explore cross-culturally the interactive impact of agent characteristics, target characteristics, agent-target relationship and situational characteristics on the decision-making process of the agent in the selection of an influence strategy.

3.1.7 **Perception of outcome**. Following the selection and implementation of the influence strategy, the agent will assess whether the selected influence strategy resulted in a positive, a neutral, or a negative outcome? As indicated by the feedback loops to the agent decision to attempt upward influence and agent belief system, both of these aspects of the process receive feedback. Research has shown that decision-making styles in different cultures vary (Perry, 1990: Robertson & Fadil, 1999; Tse, Lee, Vertinsky & Wehrung, 1988). Thus, the question becomes, are there cultural differences affecting the decision to attempt influence again, if the previous attempt resulted in a positive, a neutral, or a negative outcome? Furthermore, if following a non-positive outcome the decision is made to try upward influence again, to what degree and in what ways will the agent belief system undergo examination regarding the decision to attempt upward influence? For example, will the assessment include questions such as: Was the appropriate individual selected? Were the inputs accurately weighed and assessed? What will improve the likelihood of success in the future? These issues are, of course, relevant whether a single country study or a cross-cultural one. However, there may be unique cross-cultural implications that could have an impact on the future likelihood to attempt upward influence and on the selection of a strategy. Also, as with an examination of the agent belief system, the investigation of the feedback process should prove to be challenging.

Research
Question 6:   Research is needed to explore cross-culturally the decision making process of the agent in response to feedback concerning a previous attempt to exert upward influence.

4. CONCLUDING COMMENTS

The use of influence in organizational setting predates the days of Sun Tzu and Julius Caesar. However, only over the past few decades have researchers seriously studied the use of informal influence and its implications within the organizational context. Of upward and downward influence, this paper has focused on the latter, the less traveled road.

We began this paper by raising two questions. First, to what extent are upward influence behaviors across cultures congruent with the value dimensions proposed in the relatively well-established cross-cultural values research? Second, to what degree can American theories in upward influence be applied in the Asian organizational context? We now conclude by proposing the following responses to those questions. First, the present state of the cross-cultural upward influence literature has provided some evidence that upward influence behaviors may be related to the cultural dimensions of power distance and individualism/collectivism. However, we are far from answering this question, or that of other possible relationships. Substantial direct empirical study is needed to investigate the societal values – upward influence behavior relationship. Second, from the limited research available, it seems evident that American theories in upward influence have some level of applicability in the Asian context. We can consider this view from the standpoint that human behavior has innate, as well as learned characteristics, and that these two sets of characteristics may be thought of as the proverbial "yin" and "yang" of behavior. Thus, it may be worth exploring the similarities in preference pattern—the universality aspect—as well as pursuing the differences in the level of intensity of preference. If these deep-seated, innate similarities are sufficiently pervasive, then American theories of upward influence, and perhaps overall behavior, may be sufficiently malleable that they can serve as a foundation, if not the entire model. However, until we explore well beyond the surface level of between-country comparisons, we will not be able to ascertain the level of global universality that exists for upward influence theory or management behavior, in general.

In conclusion, it has been our goal to provide some food for research thought. In this regard, we propose eight possible research questions for consideration. Without a doubt, this list of questions is not exhaustive, but hopefully these questions will stimulate interest that leads to further discussion and investigation. The need to more fully explore these issues appears apparent. Developing a relevant body of literature on the cross-cultural implications for the political influence processes, which are a fact-of-life within international organizations, is particularly meaningful to international managers in our era of rapid globalization.

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Table 1: Major Studies on Upward influence (1978-2001)

	Study	Upward Influence	Upward and Downward Influence	Upward, Downward & Lateral Influence
Single-country (US) study	Chacko, 1990	x		
	Case, Dosier, Murkison, Keys, 1988	x		
	Deluga & Perry, 1991	x		
	Erez & Rim, 1982			x
	Erez, Rim & Keider, 1986			x
	Mowday, 1978	x		
	Falbe & Yukl, 1992			x
	Farmer, Maslyn, Fedor & Goodman, 1997	x		
	Kipnis, Schmidt & Wilkinson, 1980		x	x
	Kipnis & Schmidt, 1988	x		
	Schilit, 1986	x		
	Schilit & Paine, 1987			
	Schilit & Locke, 1982	x		
	Rao, Schmidt & Murray, 1995	x		
	Ringer & Boss, 2000	x		
	Xin & Tsui, 1996		x	
	Yukl & Falbe, 1990			x
	Yukl, Falbe, Youn, 1993			x
	Yukl, Guinan & Sottolano, 1995			x
Single-country (non-US) study	Ansari & Kapoor, 1987	x		
	Erez & Rim, 1982			x
	Erez, Rim & Keider, 1986			x
Cross-cultural study	Egri, Ralston, Murray & Nicholson, 2000	x		
	Fu & Yukl, 2000			x
	Kipnis, Schmidt, Swaffin-Smith, Wilkinson, 1984			x
	Ralston et al., 1993, 1994, 1995 & 2002	x		
	Schermerhorn & Bond, 1991		x	
	Terpstra, Ralston & Jesuino, 2002	x		

Table 2
Methodologies Employed in Upward Influence Studies

Data Source of Influence Tactics

Measure	Agent self-report	Other-report		Combination of agent agent self-report & target other-report-on-others
		Peer other-report	**Target report**	
All or some of the 58 items from Kipnis, Schmidt & Wilkinson (1980)	Ansari & Kapoor, 1987 Erez & Rim, 1982 Erez, Rim & Keider, 1986 Kipnis, Schmidt & Wilkinson, 1980 Schermerhorn & Bond, 1991			
POIS (M) instrument	Chackoo, 1990 Deluga & Perry, 1991 Kipnis & Schmidt, 1988 Wayne et al. 1997			Rao, Schmidt & Murray, 1995 (POIS-M for agents and another instrument for targets) Thacker & Wayne, 1995 Xin & Tsui, 1996
IBQ instrument	Fu & Yukl, 2000 (Some items were similar to POIS & Refined POIS)		Yukl & Tracey, 1992	Yukl & Falbe, 1990
Refined POIS (Schriesheim & Hinkin's)	Farmer et al., 1997 Ringer & Boss, 2000			
SUI instrument		Egri et al. 2000 Ralston et al. 1993, 1994, 1995 & 2002 Terpstra, Ralston & Jesuino, 2002		
Critical incidents	Case et al., 1988		Falbe & Yukl, 1992 (Coded under the IBQ taxonomy)	Schilit & Locke, 1982 Yukl, Falbe & Youn, 1993 Yukl, Guinan & Sottolano, 1995 Yukl, Kim & Falbe, 1996
Journal keeping	Schilit, 1986			

Table 3

Summary of Upward Influence Tactics and Dimensions

Tactics/Dimensions	Descriptions	In which instrument(s) the tactic/dimension is included
Assertiveness/ Pressure	Order, repeatedly demand, remind or keep checking up or sets a deadline for compliance.	Kipnis et al. (1980), POIS for downward, lateral and upward influence; IBQ
Ingratiation/ Friendliness	Deliberately wait for a good time when the target is in good mood before seeking compliance. Agent may also make the target feel good of himself/herself by praising, acting in a friendly and/or humbly way, inflating the importance of compliance and pretending to be submissive to the target's expertise.	Kipnis et al. (1980), POIS for downward, lateral and upward influence; IBQ; SUI
Rational Persuasion/Reason	Use logical arguments and reasons to convince the target to comply.	Kipnis et al. (1980), POIS for downward, lateral and upward influence; IBQ; SUI
Exchange of Favors/Bargaining	Offer an exchange of help that includes offer to make a personal sacrifice or personal favor.	Kipnis et al. (1980), POIS for downward, lateral and upward influence; IBQ
Upward Appeal/Higher Authority	Seek support from the target's higher-ups.	Kipnis et al. (1980), POIS for downward, lateral and upward influence; IBQ
Coalitions	Gain support from others to back up one's request.	Kipnis et al. (1980), POIS for downward, lateral and upward influence; IBQ
Blocking	Distort or lie about reasons one should do what the agent wants. Ignore the target or stop being friendly.	Kipnis et al. (1980), POIS for downward and lateral influence
Sanctions	Threaten to stop cooperating until the target gives in.	Kipnis et al. (1980), POIS for downward and lateral influence
Legitimization/ Adherence to Rules	Seek to establish the legitimacy of a request by claiming the authority or right to make it or by verifying that is consistent with organizational, policies, rules, practices or traditions.	IBQ
Manipulation	Inform or argue in such a way that the target is not aware of being influenced.	IBQ
Inspirational Appeal	Make request or proposal that arouses enthusiasm by appealing to the one's values, ideals, and aspirations or by increasing one's confidence that one can do it.	IBQ
Consultation	Seek the target's participation in planning a strategy, activity or change for which target's support and assistance are desired or modify a proposal to deal with target's concerns and suggestions.	IBQ

Good Soldier	Get ahead through hard work that benefits the organization.	SUI
Image Management	Actively present oneself in a positive manner across the entire organization.	SUI
Personal Networking	Develop and utilize an informal organizational social structure for one's own benefit.	SUI
Information Control	Control information that is restricted from others in order to benefit oneself.	SUI
Strong-arm Coercion	Use illegal tactics, such as blackmail, to achieve personal goals.	SUI
Organizationally Sanctioned Behavior	Behaviors directly beneficial to the organization such as self-enhancement (obtaining an MBA)and personal ingratiation tactics	SUI
Destructive Legal Behavior	Behaviors that directly harmful to others or the organization, such as obtaining and communicating information to discredit others)	SUI
Destructive Illegal Behavior	Behaviors harmful to others and illegal such as blackmailing, stealing valuable document and harassment	SUI

Notes:

POIS, Profiles of Organizational Influence Strategies by Kipnis, David & Stuart M. Schmidt, (1982).

IBQ, Influence Behavior Questionnaire, by Yukl & Tracey (1992).

SUI, Strategies of Upward Influence, by Ralston and Gustafson in Ralston et al., 1993.

Table 4

A Comparison of Cultural Orientation and Upward Influence Strategy Preferences

Country	Hofstede's Dimensions		Upward Influence Strategy Selection		Measuring Instrument
	Individualism	**Power Distance**	**Hard**	**Soft**	
Hong Kong	Low	Hi	Hi	Low	**SUI, items from Kipnis et al. (1980)**
Portugal	Low	High	High	Low	**SUI**
Mexico	Low	High	High	Low	**SUI**
China	Low	High	High	Low	**SUI, Situational framed survey (items from IBQ & POIS)**
India	Low	High	Moderate	Moderate	**SUI**
US	High	Low	Low	High	**SUI; Situational framed survey; items from Kipnis et al. (1980)**
Canada	High	Low	Low	High	**SUI**
Netherlands	High	Low	Low	High	**SUI**
Germany	High	Low	Moderate	Moderate	**SUI**
France	High	High	Moderate	Moderate	**SUI**

FIGURE 1

A Cross-Cultural Model of Upward Influence Selection