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Rationale and emotion in the selection of influence tactics by managers in conflict with subordinates

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to examine Koslowsky and Schwarzwald's (2009) recent conceptualization of the interpersonal power interaction model which assumed that the choice of power tactics in conflict situations is a sequential process including antecedents, mediators, and the choice of influence tactics. The mediation process is the new component of the model, thus the authors tested two potential mediators – perceived damage and negative emotions – in the choice process.

Design/methodology/approach – Managers ($n=240$) were presented with conflict scenarios involving one of their subordinates (low/high performing) and differed by conflict type (relations/task and principle/expediency). They indicated the influence tactics they would utilize in the given situation for gaining compliance and completed a series of questionnaires: perceived damage engendered by disobedience, resultant emotion, cognitive closure, and demographics.

Findings – Results indicated that perceived damage, directly and through the mediation of resultant negative emotions, influenced the tendency to opt for harsh tactics. This trend was further affected by the managers' gender and cognitive closure.

Research limitations/implications – The discussion addresses the empirical validity of the model, the role of rationality and emotion in the process of choosing influence tactics. Practical implications concerning the usage of harsh and soft tactics and the limitation of the self-report method were also discussed.

Originality/value – The contribution of the study is twofold: proving the empirical validity of the new conceptualization of the model and explaining the dynamic involved in the choice of influence tactics.

Keywords Leadership, Conflict, Power, Organization

Paper type Research paper

Power and influence are integral components of interpersonal, intergroup, and international relationships, as evident in their ample representation in the philosophical and social science literature (Simon and Oakes, 2006). Social and organizational scholars are interested in this topic because the choice of tactics exercised for gaining compliance may affect the quality of the relationships between the parties involved as well as their attainment of goals. When appropriate, influence tactics can promote positive relationships and goal achievement; when inappropriate they can harm the relationships and hinder goal attainment (Raven and Kruglanski, 1970). Our study involves conflict situations where supervisors (agents of influence) and subordinates (targets) disagree and the supervisors attempt to obtain their subordinates' compliance. In particular, it examines the empirical validity of the updated interpersonal power interaction model (IPIM) (Koslowsky and Schwarzwald, 2009). The revised model



introduced a mediation process linking antecedents with the choice of influence tactics. It assumes that in the mediation process the influencing agent evaluates the perceived damage in case of noncompliance. Here we propose a two-stage process – perceived damage (to the manager’s status and work process) and negative emotions – as explanations for the link between the conflict and the choice of influencing tactics. Namely, we added an emotional component to the rational one that was proposed in the model.

For several decades, French and Raven’s (1959) conceptualization of power was considered the most prevalent and sophisticated model in the field of influence tactics (Mintzberg, 1983; Podsakoff and Schriesheim, 1985). The model defined five power bases: coercive – power derived from the ability to punish; reward – power based on the ability to provide desired benefits; legitimacy – power granted by virtue of status or position; expertise – power vested in knowledge and experience; and referent – power based on popularity and attraction. Later on, Raven (1965) added information – power founded on the ability to provide convincing arguments or supporting evidence.

In response to criticism of this conceptualization (e.g. Kipnis and Schmidt, 1983; Podsakoff and Schriesheim, 1985; Yukl, 1981), Raven (1992) formulated the IPIM, in which he defined 11 power bases and delineated factors involved in the process of tactic choice. In the expanded definition, coercive and reward bases were further divided into personal and impersonal perspectives. In addition, three legitimacy bases were added stipulating compliance in return for a favor (reciprocity), compensation for damage (equity), and highlighting the weakness or distress of the influencer (dependence).

Several studies have shown that the 11 power bases are not independent and can be subsumed into two categories: soft bases or tactics (information, expertise, referent, legitimacy of dependence) and harsh tactics (coercion and reward in their various forms, legitimacy of position, reciprocity, equity) (e.g. Elias, 2007; Raven *et al.*, 1998; Schwarzwald *et al.*, 2004). The soft tactics are based on traits such as intelligence, knowledge and skills that cannot be taken away from an individual. In contrast, the harsh tactics are granted by role or position in an organization or society and may be taken away from an individual. Other similar categorizations such as positional vs personal power have also been proposed (e.g. Yukl and Falbe, 1991).

This categorization goes beyond statistical analyses such as factor or facet analysis, reflecting two distinct influence strategies. The harsh strategy leans on social and/or organizational resources, emphasizing the advantage of the influencing agent’s status relative to the status of the target person, enabling this agent to limit the target’s freedom of action. In contrast, the soft strategy is based on personal resources and maintains a more egalitarian stance, allowing greater freedom of decision for the target of influence. Furthermore, while the harsh strategy is viewed by the target as an arbitrary approach, the soft strategy is perceived to be content dependent (Koslowsky *et al.*, 2001).

The IPIM also delineates social-cultural, situational, and personality factors that may impact the process of choosing influence tactics in conflict situations. These factors have been defined in general terms that need to be specified in relevant research variables on the basis of theory and/or research findings. Gender presents an example of a social-cultural factor, as social and cultural norms dictate differential behavior for the two genders. Women are expected to utilize soft and indirect tactics, while men are expected to employ more direct, harsh strategies. Diverting from these expectations may negatively impact the image of the influencing agent (Eagly and Johnson, 1990; Schwarzwald and Koslowsky, 1999), particularly women (Burgoon *et al.*, 1983). Organizational position is an example of a situational variable, as with a higher

position one enjoys the power to exercise an increased range of influence tactics (Stahelski and Paynton, 1995). Self-esteem is an example of a personality factor because individuals with low self-esteem are more likely to utilize harsh tactics than individuals with high self-esteem (Raven, 1992).

Raven (1992) assumed that the influencing agent acts rationally aiming to achieve maximum compliance at the lowest cost. Consequently, when choosing a mode of influence the influence agent considers the range of available tactics (the “toolbox” at their disposal), the likelihood of achieving the desired outcome (effectiveness), the relationship expense (cost), and adherence with company or organizational norms (acceptability).

Since the publication of the IPIM, its empirical validity has been confirmed in various relationships such as between managers and subordinates in manufacturing or service organizations (Schwarzwalde *et al.*, 2004), between teachers and students in educational institutions (Erchul *et al.*, 2004; Schwarzwalde *et al.*, 2006), the relationships between people from different ethnic groups (Schwarzwalde *et al.*, 2005), and romantic relationships (Bui *et al.*, 1994; Schwarzwalde *et al.*, 2008).

Recently, Koslowsky and Schwarzwalde (2009) conceptualized the IPIM as a sequential process involving antecedents, mediators, and outcomes. The social-cultural, situational, and personality factors defined in the original model serve as antecedents that may exert a unique or moderating influence. The innovative element of the new conceptualization involves the mediation process that aims to explain the relationship between antecedents and the choice of influence strategy. In this mediating process, the influence agent considers the cost/benefit implications associated with compliance/noncompliance by subordinates, in particular, the potential perceived damage in case the target does not comply.

Although the updated model has not as yet been tested directly the authors offer several examples that may explain the mediation process. In one example, the role of group membership of the target of influence was investigated. The study revealed that influence agents tend to prefer harsher strategies toward out-group members as compared to in-group ones (Schwarzwalde *et al.*, 2005). Based on Social Identity Theory (e.g. Tajfel and Turner, 1986) Koslowsky and Schwarzwalde (2009) contended that individuals in conflict with out-group members consider the potential damage to in-group status in case of noncompliance and prefer harsh influence tactics as a means for highlighting the advantage of influence agents’ group who manifest their ability to reward, punish, or demand compliance by virtue of status. In other words, in conflicts with individuals from an out-group, the potential loss of in-group status mediates the relationship between the target’s group membership and influence tactics preference.

Cost/benefit considerations are also discussed in a study that examined the relationship between power distance and the choice of influence tactics (Koslowsky *et al.*, 2011). The researchers contended that the desire to maintain existing power distance influences the relative importance of task vs relationship considerations. Thus, when the power distance is small, the weight of relationship consideration increases as the goal is to include lower-ranking individuals in the decision process. In contrast, when the power distance is large and decisions are made by those with authority, the weight of task considerations increases. Indeed, when the choice of influence strategy was examined among police captains in conflict with lower rank police officers, it became apparent that power distance influenced the preference for harsh tactics, and furthermore, task/relationship considerations were expressed in accordance with the expected dynamics.

Purpose and hypotheses

The purpose of the current study is to examine the empirical validity of the recent conceptualization of the IPIM in conflict situations between supervisors and subordinates. Unlike other types of interactions with subordinates where power choice is involved, in conflict situations managers are more focussed on the potential effect of noncompliance on their status, and on the achievement of organizational goals. In examining the new conceptualization of the IPIM, the model we will include the following as antecedents: conflict features, the subordinate's performance level, the manager's gender, and the manager's cognitive closure. The selection of these antecedes was based on research derived from the IPIM that has shown their relevance to the process of tactics selection (e.g. Keshet *et al.*, 2006; Pierro *et al.*, 2012; Schwarzwald *et al.*, 2006; Tal *et al.*, 2015).

The novelty of our study is to propose two potential mediators for testing the validity of the updated IPIM. First, we assume that the managers in conflict with subordinate assess the potential damage in case of noncompliance to their status and to the work process. Second, we also assume that noncompliance by a subordinate and assessment of potential damage evoke negative emotions that are also involved in the mediation process of influence tactic choice. Until now the IPIM assumed that the choice of influence tactics is rational, but here we contend that the involvement of emotions can also lead to irrational decisions in the choice process. In other words, while the IPIM proposes a rational mediation process which assesses the potential damage in case of noncompliance, here we propose a two-stage mediation process that includes an emotional component as well. The first stage involves the assessment of potential damage to the manager's standing and/or normative work process as cost considerations. The second stage involves the impact of negative emotions that are evoked by the perceived damage. Figure 1 depicts the expected relationships among these variables.

Model antecedents

Conflict features. Conflicts between supervisors and subordinates involve individuals at unequal levels in the organization. Research on such conflicts has focussed mainly on situations in which a subordinate faces inconsistent or contradictory job expectations. Research on interpersonal disputes is scarce (Xin and Pelled, 2003). Research has investigated supervisor's management style in handling conflicts (Rahim and Buntzman, 1989) or addressed the impact of conflict features – interpersonal vs

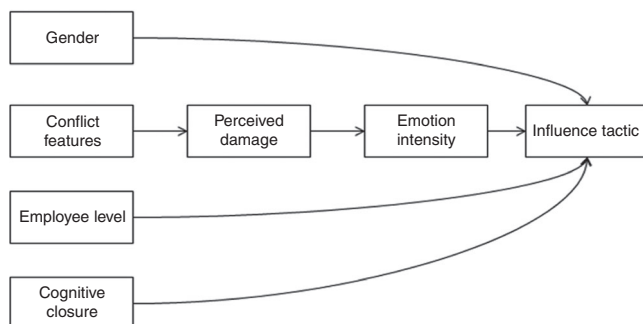


Figure 1.
Description of the
variables tested in
the model

task – on perceived leadership style (Xin and Pelled, 2003). Here we explore the impact of two conflict features – interpersonal vs task, and principle as opposed to expediency.

The differentiation between conflicts based on task vs personal issues can be explained as a difference of opinion embedded in the task itself, as opposed to interpersonal incompatibilities (Jehn, 1995, 1997). Conflicts that are task based contain the positive potential of elevating the quality of performance and promoting the task by an exchange of ideas and creative thinking (Amason, 1996; De Dreu, 2006; Dornon *et al.*, 2007; Simons and Peterson, 2000). In contrast, conflicts that involve personal incompatibilities damage performance by demanding precious time to settle interpersonal differences, instead of devoting the time to process information and achieve goals (Baron, 1991; Janssen *et al.*, 1999; Jehn and Mannix, 2001).

The principle vs expediency distinction refers to the difference between disputes relating to basic, fundamental beliefs as opposed to disputes regarding the appropriateness to the purpose at hand. Principle-based conflicts may impair communication and mutual understanding (Lankau *et al.*, 2007; Plaks *et al.*, 2005), while conflicts regarding expediency allow for a creative dialogue (Gelfand *et al.*, 1996). Thus it can be expected that managers will be less tolerant with subordinates when disputes arise on interpersonal issues as compared to task issues and when conflicts relate to basic beliefs as opposed to expediency. These expectations are stated in the following hypothesis:

- H1.* In comparison to task-based conflicts, personal conflicts will increase the tendency to employ harsh tactics and decrease the tendency to employ soft ones. Likewise, in comparison to expediency conflicts, principle conflicts will increase the tendency to employ harsh tactics and decrease the tendency to employ soft ones.

Subordinates' performance level. Ample research on workers' performance has indicated that this variable determines the quality of the relationship between managers and workers to a large extent (Murphy and Ensher, 1999; Schriesheim *et al.*, 2000; Townsend *et al.*, 2000). This has been demonstrated for work-related issues and interpersonal ones. In general, managers act more cooperatively toward high-ability workers and are more coercive toward low-performance workers (Gerstner and Day, 1997; Schriesheim *et al.*, 1998; Yukl and Fu, 1999). High-performance workers enjoy more freedom whereas less proficient workers are more restricted and tend to be carefully scrutinized (Major *et al.*, 1995; Steiner, 1997).

Moreover, social exchange theories postulate that reciprocal relationships between people are influenced by cost/benefit calculations (Blau, 1964; Cook, 1987; Homans, 1958; Thibaut and Kelley, 1959), and are also relevant here. Thus, managers' approach toward subordinates is a function of the outcome they expect from them. When recompense is high, managers will aim to preserve the relationship, while they will not shy away from behaviors that may harm the relationship if compensation is low (Marcus and House, 1973; Naves and Caetano, 2006; Organ, 1974). A more focussed theory, Leader Member Exchange, developed by Graen and colleagues (Graen, 1976, 2003, 2004; Graen and Graen, 2005; Graen *et al.*, 1982, 1986) contends that managers utilize different behaviors styles toward their subordinates. Of particular relevance is the seminal work by Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) arguing that many managerial processes in organizations occur on a dyadic basis, with managers developing

differentiated relationships with their direct employers. These differentiated relationships are based on managers' considerations of the subordinates' professional capabilities and interpersonal skills and utilize different behavior styles toward their employers. Studies have demonstrated that employees who exhibit a high-performance-level benefit from a friendlier approach and freedom of action, while low-performing employees encounter authoritative, punishing treatment, and close supervision (Bhanthumanavin, 2003; Schyns *et al.*, 2005; Yukl and Fu, 1999). Because harsh tactics are considered less friendly and means for restricting the target person's freedom, and soft tactics are friendlier, allowing greater freedom of decision, the following hypothesis will be examined:

- H2.* Managers will tend to employ more harsh tactics and less soft ones in conflicts with low-performance subordinates, as compared to high-performance subordinates.

Manager gender. This variable is included in the model as a social-cultural factor because of the universal socialization experiences that men and women undergo. Men are expected to become adventurous, independent, dominant, and strong, whereas women are expected to become sentimental, submissive, and empathic (Williams and Best, 1990). This gender distinction is labeled by Eagly and Steffen (1984) as "communal" (altruistic and caring for others) in describing the female stereotype and "agentic" (imposing themselves and controlling their environment) in describing the male stereotype. Furthermore, gender expectations also arise because men and women occupy roles in society associated with different skills and options to exercise power. Each gender is assumed to possess the characteristics that typify these roles (Cejka and Eagly, 1999; Eagly, 1987; Eagly and Steffen, 1984). Since harsh tactics emphasize the advantage of the influence agent over the target person and soft tactics express a more egalitarian stance, men, as opposed to women, could be expected to use harsh tactics more frequently and soft tactics less frequently, an expectation that has been confirmed in several studies (Bonn, 1995; Eagly and Johnson, 1990; Jordan *et al.*, 1995; Keshet *et al.*, 2006; Schwarzwald and Koslowsky, 1999). Accordingly, the following hypothesis was formulated:

- H3.* In conflict situations with subordinates, male, as compared to female managers, will prefer more harsh tactics and less soft ones.

Cognitive closure. This personality characteristic is related to information processing. High cognitive closure is associated with intolerance toward ambiguity, preference for quick, unequivocal solutions, and resistance to change. Low cognitive closure is characterized by a continued quest for valid information and precise diagnosis even at the risk of ambiguity and delayed solutions (Kruglanski *et al.*, 2002; Kruglanski and Webster, 1996; Webster and Kruglanski, 1994). During conflict, these differences may motivate people with high cognitive closure to prefer a competitive, nonflexible approach. In contrast, those with low cognitive closure, who are more tolerant of opposing opinions, may be more receptive to compromise (Kruglanski *et al.*, 1993; Shan *et al.*, 1998). Research has demonstrated that a high need for cognitive closure evokes adverse responses to normative violations (Pierro *et al.*, 2004), reduces the tendency to compromise in negotiation (De Dreu *et al.*, 1999), and decreases the tendency to

demonstrate empathy for others (Webster-Nelson *et al.*, 2003). During conflict, high cognitive closure is expressed as an aggressive, competitive approach that attempts to force compliance on the opposing party (Golec, 2002). Refraining from cognitive closure, on the other hand, is associated with a greater willingness to compromise and be considerate of the other person (Golec and Federico, 2004). This dynamic is the basis for the next hypothesis:

- H4.* High cognitive closure managers will tend to utilize more harsh tactics and less soft ones than low cognitive closure managers.

The mediation process

The predominant theoretical model of emotions in the current literature presumes that situational features of a given state activate cognitions which in turn lead to emotions that motivate the individual toward specific behaviors (Bell and Song, 2005; Roseman *et al.*, 1994; Weiner, 1986). Following this presumption, we propose a two-stage mediating process to explain the relationship between conflict features and the choice of influence tactics. The first stage involves an evaluation of the potential damage of the conflict in case the subordinate does not comply, which in turn, in the second stage, evokes negative emotions.

When assessing the potential damage of noncompliance, the manager considers two kinds of threats: threats to the manager's status and threats to the work process. The status threats reflect the manager's social/organizational standing in the workplace. When discussing status threats, it is worthwhile to note that the literature differentiates between "ego threat" and "face threat." Ego threats concern a positive image of oneself, and face threats concern a positive image of one's social-self. By expressing disagreement, the subordinate subverts the needs and attitudes of the manager thereby creating a potential threat to the personal-self as well as to the social-self (Bechtoldt *et al.*, 2010; Ting-Toomey, 1994). People who are more resilient to ego threats show more cooperative problem-solving behavior, as compared to those who are less resilient to ego threats (Bechtoldt *et al.*, 2010). In addition, a greater need for self-face maintenance enhances a dominating/competing conflict management style (Ting-Toomey, 2005). In the present study, the perceived costs refer to damages to the manager's "face," such as the potential future ability to influence. The second category, damage to the work process, involves the costs associated with potential harm to the normative job process and achievement of work objectives.

We will test the following two hypotheses based on the literature reviewed earlier indicating that task-based conflicts embed a greater positive potential for the quality of performance than personal incompatibilities, and that expediency disagreements contain a greater negative potential for the quality of the manager-subordinate relationship than principle conflicts. From the discussion on this issue we expect that an increase in the perceived damage to status and/or work process will augment the tendency to employ harsh influence tactics and lessen the preference for soft ones:

- H5.* Interpersonal relations conflicts will evoke greater perceived damage than task conflicts. Likewise, principle conflicts will evoke greater perceived damage than expediency conflicts.
- H6.* Increased perceived damage to status and/or to work process will augment the tendency to employ harsh influence tactics, and reduce the tendency to employ soft ones.

The second stage of the mediating process proposed here involves the arousal of negative emotions associated with the perceived damage and their effect on power choice. Similar to the IPIM, the traditional approach viewed conflict management as a rational process of decision making (Montes *et al.*, 2012). However, more recently, inherent importance to the emotional component as an involving factor that may help in understanding the process has been ascribed (Barry, 2008; Obedidi *et al.*, 2005). It is argued that emotions assist in conceptualizing the conflict as well as in directing behavior (Morris and Keltner, 2000). For example Montes *et al.* (2012) have shown that in conflict situations people do not necessarily act in a rational manner, but rather are influenced by emotional feelings.

Here we contend that damage assessment is a cognitive process which ramifications arouse negative emotions which in turn influence behavioral reactions (Bell and Song, 2005; Frijda, 2003; Lazarus, 1991). The perceived damage to a manager's status and/or to the work process evokes negative emotions, the intensity of which is a derivative of the degree of the perceived damage. The choice of influence tactics is aimed at maintaining positive results and preventing negative consequences (Plutchik, 1989; Wallbott and Schiener, 1989). Formulated differently, it is assumed that an increase in the perceived damage to a manager's standing and/or work process will intensify the negative emotions, and that these emotions in turn will lead to an increase in the tendency to exercise harsh tactics and reduce the tendency to choose soft ones. From this process, we posit the following two hypotheses:

- H7. Intensified negative emotions will increase the tendency to employ harsh tactics and decrease the tendency to employ soft ones.
- H8. Increased levels of perceived damage will be associated with greater negative emotions.

Method

Study design and participants

The study design took the form of a process model which included antecedents, mediators, and outcome variables. The antecedents comprised two manipulated and one measured variables. The manipulated antecedents were the subordinate's performance level (low, high) and the conflict type (relations/task and principle/expediency). The measured antecedent was the need for cognitive closure. The two mediating variables were the perceived damage aroused by the conflict and the accompanied negative emotions. The outcome variable was the choice of influence tactics (soft and harsh strategies).

The study was conducted in one of central Israel's government bureaus which provide welfare services. This bureau was selected because it includes a large number of managers. The research sample included the department and section managers of 14 branches who were randomly selected from the 22 existing branches. A total of 240 managers participated in the study (184 females, 51 males, five did not respond to the question relating to gender). Education level was divided as follows: 2 percent did not graduate from high school, 46 percent graduated from high school, 36 percent held bachelor's degrees, 14 percent held master's degrees, and 2 percent did not respond to the question relating to education level. The average age was 51.85 years ($SD = 6.87$), the average seniority in the organization was 26.48 years ($SD = 7.20$), the average seniority in a managerial position was 10.32 years ($SD = 7.35$), and the average number

of subordinates was 10.30 (SD = 15.60). Managers were randomly assigned to one of the eight manipulated antecedents and then completed a series of questionnaires.

Measures and manipulations

Power Tactic Scale (see Appendix 1). The questionnaire developed by Raven *et al.* (1998) was adapted to meet the needs of the current study. The questionnaire opened with a description of a conflict with one of the manager’s subordinates. Eight conflict versions were prepared, differentiated by focus of conflict (interpersonal, task), basis of conflict (principle, expediency), and content (extra task, overtime hours). Appendix 2 contains a complete description of the conflicts. The following example describes a conflict that is task-focussed and principle based, containing a request for an additional task:

Dear Manager,

Imagine that you have asked an employee (a label containing the name of one of the employees was inserted here, either of high or low performance level) to complete an additional task. The employee (name inserted again) does not agree to carry out the task, as in his opinion it is not part of his formal job description. Nevertheless, you would like the employee to complete this additional task. What is the likelihood, in this situation, that you will utilize each of the behaviors described below?[1]

The conflict description was followed by 22 behaviors that the respondent could employ to achieve compliance. The available responses ranged from “highly unlikely” (1) to “highly likely” (7). These behaviors represent the 11 influence tactics delineated in the model and appear randomly in the questionnaire. Two scores were calculated for each respondent reflecting their average responses on items reflecting the harsh influence tactics and the soft ones. Minor text changes were made to reflect the options available to the managers (e.g. “promote,” was rephrased “to help him/her obtain a promotion.” In addition, the number of items was reduced from 33 to 22. Item reduction was based on scale analyses conducted on two databases from previous research (Schwarzwald *et al.*, 2004; Tal *et al.*, 2015). Of three items that comprised each power base, the one that contributed the least to the internal consistency was eliminated.

To test for scale structure, we initially conducted a principal component analysis using varimax rotations that indicated that personal reward loaded higher (0.53) on the soft rather than on the harsh (0.38) factor. Nevertheless we kept the original structure. Furthermore, despite item reduction and keeping the original structure, satisfactory α coefficients for the harsh and soft scores were obtained ($\alpha = 0.85$, $\alpha = 0.68$, respectively) and were similar to those reported by the scale developers.

Emotional response scale. This measure assesses the manager’s emotions evoked by the conflict. To this end, the description of the conflict that appeared in the scale of influence tactics was repeated (including the employee’s name), followed by nine negative emotions such as “distress” and “upset.” The respondent indicated the degree to which the conflict evoked each emotion, on a scale ranging from “absolutely not” (1) to “absolutely yes” (5). These emotions were taken from the Hebrew version (Lipovetzky *et al.*, 2007) of the original questionnaire (Watson *et al.*, 1988). It has been argued in the literature that emotions represent two dimensions: self-directed and other directed (e.g. De Rivera, 1977; De Rivera and Grinkis, 1986). Thus, a principal component analysis as well as a confirmatory analysis were conducted on the scale items. The PCA yielded a two-factor solution (see Table I), and the CFA supported this structure ($\chi^2 = 44.47$, $df = 26$, $p < 0.01$, CFI = 0.96, TLI = 0.93, RMSEA = 0.06).

Factor and emotions	Loadings	
	Factor 1	Factor 2
<i>Negative externalized</i>		
Jittery	0.86	0.07
Irritable	0.85	-0.01
Hostile	0.65	0.12
Upset	0.60	0.41
Ashamed	0.47	0.35
<i>Negative internalized</i>		
Guilty	-0.01	0.71
Scared	0.09	0.69
Grief	0.52	0.54
Distressed	0.46	0.51
Eigenvalue	3.66	1.14
Explained variance	40.64%	12.72%
α coefficients	0.78	0.63

Table I.
Principle component
analysis of
the negative
emotions scale

Furthermore, second order CFA produced lower values ($\chi^2 = 118.61$, $df = 27$, $p < 0.01$, $CFI = 0.84$, $TLI = 0.74$, $RMSEA = 0.12$). The first factor contained externalized negative emotions aimed at the instigator of the conflict; the second factor comprised internalized negative emotions. Based on these results, two scores were calculated: negative externalized and negative internalized emotions.

Perceived damage. This questionnaire was constructed for this study. Its purpose was to estimate the manager's perception of damage in the case that the subordinate does not comply. The 16 scale items (see Table II) were based on Herzberg motivation

Factor and item content	Loadings	
	Factor 1	Factor 2
<i>Manger status</i>		
Damage to prestige	0.86	0.24
Damage to popularity	0.82	0.21
Damage to status	0.81	0.23
Damage to ability to exert influence	0.80	0.32
Damage to estimation in the eyes of colleagues	0.80	0.33
Damage to estimation in the eyes of subordinates	0.79	0.28
Damage to standing as manager	0.76	0.35
Damage to estimation in the eyes of supervisors	0.75	0.39
Damage to relationship with the subordinate	0.65	0.15
<i>Work process</i>		
Damage to achievement of goals	0.15	0.86
Damage to normative work processes	0.18	0.84
Damage to achieving work goals	0.35	0.79
Damage to recognition for work accomplishments	0.48	0.63
Damage to work satisfaction	0.39	0.53
Eigenvalue	6.08	3.49
Explained variance	43.43%	24.91%

Table II.
Principle component
analysis for cost of
noncompliance items

Note: The item "damage to department atmosphere" was excluded, as it was not related to either factor

theory (e.g. House and Wigdor, 1967) especially on contents of the work itself, recognition, status, achievement, supervision, and relationships with subordinates. For example, "In your opinion, to what extent would noncompliance on the part of the employee damage work efficiency?" Available responses ranged from "not at all" (1) to "to a great extent" (5).

Principal component analysis using varimax rotations produced a two-factor solution (see Table II). The first factor included items related to the perception of damage to the manager's status. The second factor was comprised of items related to the perception of damage to the work process. Consequently, two scores were calculated for each manager – reflecting average responses to items related to the perception of damage to the status and to the work process. Internal consistency of these scores were satisfactory ($\alpha = 0.94$, $\alpha = 0.88$, respectively). CFA also yielded reasonable results ($\chi^2 = 191.33$, $df = 73$, $p < 0.01$, CFI = 0.96, TLI = 0.94, RMSEA = 0.82)[2].

Manager's cognitive closure. The questionnaire measures attitude toward information and tolerance for ambiguity. To this end, we translated the items from the concise version of the questionnaire (Pierro and Kruglanski, 2005, 2008) from English to Hebrew, and back from Hebrew to English. The questionnaire comprised 14 items, such as "In cases of ambiguity, I prefer an immediate decision, regardless of what the decision may be." Respondents were asked to indicate agreement with each statement on a scale ranging from "absolutely disagree" (1) to "absolutely agree" (6). The internal consistency of the questionnaire was satisfactory ($\alpha = 0.83$).

Manipulation check. This measure was designed to verify that the description of the conflict achieved the desired manipulation; more specifically, if a differentiation was perceived between the focus of conflict (interpersonal, task) and the basis of conflict (principle, expediency). The conflict in question was repeated, followed by four items, two relating to relationship and two related to principle: To what extent does the event describe personal tension? To what extent is the disagreement personal? To what extent does the event describe a disagreement over basic opinions? To what extent does the event describe a disagreement over principles? Responses ranged from "not at all" (1) to "to a great extent" (5).

Demographics. The questionnaire contained items related to gender, age, education, seniority in organization, seniority in position, managerial level, and number of subordinates. Except for gender effects that were expected and included in the analyses, none of the other demographics was significantly associated with the choice of influence tactics and thus will not be further discussed.

Procedure

Each manager was randomly assigned one of these two names which was attached to the questionnaire with a label and which was subsequently removed by the manager. The subordinate's performance level was coded on the questionnaire so that the researchers did not have any access to personally identifiable information.

The researchers met with each of the managers who participated in the study, explained the purpose of the study, and assured full confidentiality. The manager was asked to specifically consider the "randomly" chosen employee named on the questionnaire in order to maximize the reality of the study.

The questionnaires contained a letter describing the purpose of the study and ensuring confidentiality. The questionnaires were presented in the following order:

conflict, power base, emotional response, cost of noncompliance, manipulation check (their order of the latter four controlled by the Latin Square Design), followed by the cognitive closure and demographic questionnaires.

Results

Manipulation check

Initial manipulation checks indicated that conflict content did not produce significant results on its own; neither did it interact with the other conflict dimensions. Therefore, further analyses were conducted beyond the content of conflict. To determine whether the conflict scenarios were perceived according to the conflict manipulations, a 2x2 MANOVA was conducted on the interpersonal and principle manipulation measures where task/relation and principle/expediency distinctions were included as independent variables (see Table III). The analysis yielded significant results for the focus of conflict (task vs relations), Wilks' $\Lambda = 0.96$, $F(2, 230) = 4.21$, $p < 0.05$, $\eta^2 = 0.03$, for the basis of conflict (principle vs expediency), Wilks' $\Lambda = 0.89$, $F(2, 230) = 14.18$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta^2 = 0.11$, and for the interaction between them, Wilks' $\Lambda = 0.96$, $F(2, 230) = 4.96$, $p < 0.01$, $\eta^2 = 0.04$.

Follow-up ANOVA on the interpersonal measure, $F(1, 231) = 8.00$, $p < 0.01$, $\eta^2 = 0.03$, demonstrated that interpersonal conflict scenarios were indeed perceived as more relationship-focussed ($M = 2.42$) than task conflict scenarios ($M = 1.99$). The analysis of the principle measure was also significant, $F(1, 231) = 24.34$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta^2 = 0.09$, indicating the principle-based conflicts were perceived as more principle ($M = 3.01$) than the expediency conflicts ($M = 2.33$). The interaction reflected the fact that task conflicts that involved principle issues were also perceived as carrying interpersonal relevance. This suggests that conflicts on principle issues even when related to tasks are perceived as part of a relationship, a phenomenon that has been demonstrated in other studies as well (Hobman and Bordia, 2006; Nemeth and Staw, 1989; Schneider, 1983).

Examining the empirical validity of the model

The sequential model presumes a mediating process between antecedents and the choice of influence tactics. This assumption was initially examined for each of the antecedents in the model using Baron and Kenny (1986) four steps to testing mediation: first, the relationships between the predictors and the outcome variables; second, the relationships between the predictors and the mediating variables; third, the relationships between the mediating and the outcome variables; and fourth, the mediating process.

Relationships between predictors and influence tactics. Four antecedents were included in the model: conflict features, subordinate's performance level, manager's

Conflict bases	Conflict focus			
	Relations		Task	
	Interpersonal measure	Principle measure	Interpersonal measure	Principle measure
Principle	2.09	3.00	2.12	3.02
Expediency	2.74	2.49	1.85	2.16

Note: The SD's are 0.15 for the interpersonal measure and 0.14 for the principle measure

Table III.
Means of manipulation measures by conflict dimensions

gender, and the need for cognitive closure. The influence of these predictors was examined with simple regressions on the harsh and soft influence tactics for each of the antecedents.

Conflict features. None of the regressions for these variables produced significant results. Namely, *H1* was not supported. This hypothesis expected a greater tendency to exercise harsh tactics and a lesser tendency to exercise soft ones in interpersonal conflicts as compared to task conflicts and also in principle conflicts as compared to expediency conflicts.

Subordinate performance level (low vs high). The regressions that examined the influence exerted by this variable on the preference for influence tactics were not significant. Thus, *H2* was not confirmed. This hypothesis expected a greater tendency to employ harsh tactics and a lesser tendency to employ soft tactics toward performance workers as compared with their high-performance colleagues.

Gender. The regression on harsh tactics was significant ($\beta = -0.13, p < 0.05$). However, gender differences were not found for soft tactics. As evident in Table IV and in accordance with *H3*, male managers preferred harsh tactics to a greater extent than female managers, $F(1, 233) = 4.20, p < 0.05, \eta^2 = 0.02$.

Cognitive closure. Cognitive closure was only related to the preference for harsh tactics ($\beta = 0.23, p < 0.01$). As expected in *H4*, an increase in the need for cognitive closure elevated the tendency to choose harsh tactics. This linear relationship is demonstrated in Table V which presents the preference for influence tactics by cognitive closure (low, intermediate, and high) as is standard in the literature (Webster and Kruglanski, 1994). Analysis of linearity yielded significant results for harsh tactics, $F(1, 237) = 11.99, p < 0.01$, indicating that with higher cognitive closure the preference for harsh tactics increases.

It is interesting to note that a clear preference for soft ($M = 4.20$) over harsh tactics ($M = 2.28$) was found across all antecedents, $t(239) = 33.54, p < 0.00$. This trend corresponds with previous research (see review, Schwarzwald and Koslowsky, 2006) and adds to the robustness of our findings.

Relationships between predictors and mediators. Since the expected relationship between conflict type and influence tactics was not confirmed, no further analyses were conducted on this variable. Namely, *H5*, which predicted a relationship between conflict type and perceived damage will not be analyzed.

Table IV.
Means^a (and SDs) for strategy of influence by manager's gender

Strategy	Male	Female
Harsh	2.49 (0.82)	2.23 (0.77)
Soft	4.10 (1.10)	4.24 (0.92)

Note: ^aIncrease in mean indicates a heightened tendency to employ the strategy

Table V.
Means^a (and SDs) for power strategy by level of cognitive closure

Strategy	Cognitive closure		
	Low	Intermediate	High
Harsh	2.04 (0.73)	2.36 (0.75)	2.46 (0.84)
Soft	4.11 (0.93)	4.22 (0.96)	4.27 (0.99)

Note: ^aIncrease in mean indicates a heightened preference for the strategy

Although no hypotheses were stated concerning the relationship between other antecedents that predicted power choice, we also tested their relationship and the mediators. The regression on gender did not yield significant results. However, the regressions on cognitive closure were significant for both perceived damage to manager's status ($\beta = 0.18, p < 0.01$) and perceived damage to work ($\beta = 0.16, p < 0.05$). These results indicate that high cognitive closure elevates the perception of damage.

Relationships between mediating and outcome variables. Two sequential mediators were proposed in our study: perceived damage (manager's status, work process) and the accompanied negative emotions. As such, we examined the relationship between these mediators and power preference, and the relationship between perceived damage and negative emotions. The regressions for perceived damage revealed that damage both to the manager's status and to the work process increased the tendency to employ harsh tactics ($\beta = 0.41, p < 0.01$; $\beta = 0.33, p < 0.01$, respectively) as well as the tendency to employ soft tactics ($\beta = 0.22, p < 0.01$; $\beta = 0.27, p < 0.01$, respectively). These results partially supported *H6*, which expected that perceived damage will intensify the tendency to choose harsh tactics and reduce the tendency to choose soft ones.

The regressions of influence tactics on negative emotions were conducted separately for internalized and externalized emotions. Significant results were obtained for the relationship between harsh tactics and the externalized score ($\beta = 0.41, p < 0.01$), and for the internalized score ($\beta = 0.32, p < 0.01$). However, both multiple and stepwise regressions indicated that when both scores were included in the same regression only the externalized score remained significant.

The regressions on soft tactics were significant for the internalized emotions ($\beta = 0.25, p < 0.01$) and for the externalized emotions ($\beta = 0.20, p < 0.01$). Here, however, when both scores were included in the same regression, only the internalized score remained significant. Hence, *H7* was only confirmed for the harsh tactics. This hypothesis stated that more intensified negative emotions will be accompanied with a greater tendency to employ harsh tactics and the lesser tendency to employ soft ones.

In *H8*, we predicted that increased levels of perceived damage will be associated with greater negative emotions. Indeed the regressions supported these expectations indicating that both externalized and internalized emotions were significantly associated with perceived damage to status ($\beta = 0.45, p < 0.01$; $\beta = 0.36, p < 0.01$, respectively) and to work process ($\beta = 0.33, p < 0.01$; $\beta = 0.35, p < 0.01$, respectively).

The mediating role of negative emotions. Since the conflict features did not systematically affect the choice of influence tactic, it was removed from the model. The perceived damage evoked by the conflict was posited as a predictor rather than as a mediator, and negative emotions evoked by the perceived damaged remained the only mediator in the model.

Based on these preceding tests, we examined the mediating process of the externalized negative emotions on the relationship between perceived damage and the choice of harsh tactics using hierarchical regressions. The regression on the perceived damage to the manager's status which was included in the first stage was significant ($\beta = 0.45, p < 0.01$); the inclusion of externalized negative emotions in the model decreased the β coefficient of manager status ($\beta = 0.29, p < 0.01$). Sobel's test yielded significance ($z = 4.98, p < 0.01$), indicating that the externalized negative emotions partially mediated the link between perceived damage to status and power preference.

The hierarchical regression on the perceived damage to work was significant ($\beta = 0.41, p < 0.01$), and inclusion of the negative emotion in the model reduced the β coefficient of damage to work ($\beta = 0.30, p < 0.01$). Sobel's test ($z = 4.77, p < 0.01$), here too indicated that externalized negative emotions partially mediated the relationship.

The tests for the mediating role of internalized negative emotions on the relationship between perceived damage (to manager's status and to the work process) and soft tactics did not yield significant results.

Testing the full model

Finally, using SEM we tested the empirical validity of two alternative models: direct influence and mediation. As soft influence tactics were found to be only related to perception of damage to work, the two models were only tested on harsh tactics. The direct influence model presumes that all of the variables that significantly correlated with the choice of harsh tactics exert a direct, unique influence. Unlike the direct influence model, the mediating model contends that the externalized negative emotion mediates the relationship between the damage to managers' status and work, and the preference for influence tactics. The analyses were conducted using structural equations that examined the fit between the theoretical model and the empirical data (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988; Schumacker and Lomax, 1996).

A preliminary test of the mediating model demonstrated that the average score across perceived damage to work and to status increased the compatibility of both models. Consequently, in the models tested here we included a single perceived damage score rather than two separate scores.

Regression coefficients for the direct influence model are presented in Figure 2, and for the mediating model in Figure 3. Table VI presents the corresponding values of goodness of fit. Examining the values in the table clearly indicate the advantage of the mediating model over the direct influence model. Fitness values for the mediating model are considerably higher than those of the direct model. Furthermore, while the mediating model yielded acceptable values of fitness (RMSEA = 0.06), the direct effect model did not (RMSEA = 0.19).

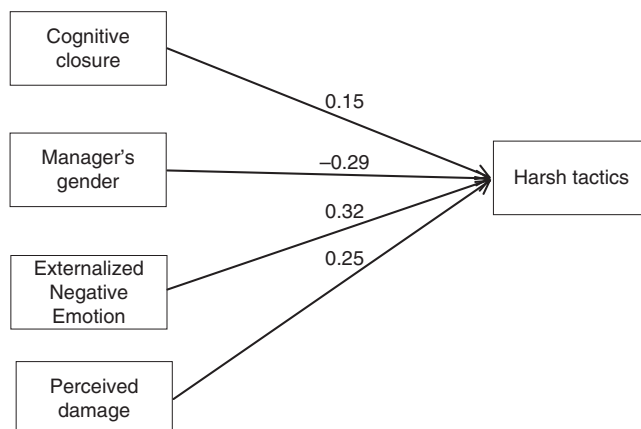


Figure 2.
 β coefficients in the direct influence model

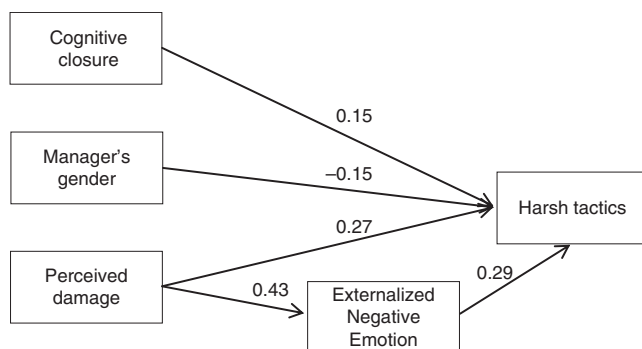


Figure 3.
 β coefficients in the mediation model

Model	df	χ^2	p	CFI	TLI	RMSEA
Direct	6	59.66	0.00	0.56	0.57	0.19
Mediating	5	9.93	0.08	0.96	0.88	0.06

Table VI.
Goodness of fit values for the two models

Discussion

Since publication of the IPIM two decades ago (Raven, 1992), the model has inspired numerous studies focussing on diverse relationships and producing comparable results. Our study has also replicated three such results. First, similar to others (e.g. Pierro *et al.*, 2008; Schwarzwald *et al.*, 2008), we found a preference for soft influence tactics over harsh ones beyond the various predictors included in the model. Second, the model's empirical validity was limited to the choice of harsh tactics (e.g. Koslowsky and Stashevsky, 2005; Schwarzwald *et al.*, 2005). Finally, men, as compared to women, reported a greater tendency to exercise harsh tactics (e.g. Bonn, 1995; Bui *et al.*, 1994). These replications attest to the robustness of the study data and indicate a consistency in findings based on the IPIM that go beyond the specific settings in which the data were collected, a consistency that is critical to promoting research (Kuhn, 1962).

The mediating model and its antecedents examined in our study uniquely contribute to and expand our understanding of the dynamics at play in the process of choosing influence tactics. Our assumption of a two-stage mediating process whereby the features of the conflict determine the intensity of the perceived damage, which in turn evokes negative emotions, was not supported. The dimensions of the conflict that were manipulated here did not produce systematic degrees of the perceived damage. Consequently, the findings only supported a single mediation process in which the perceived damage embedded in the conflict evokes externalized negative emotions of varying intensities; the greater their intensity the greater the tendency to opt for harsh tactics. Examining the empirical validity of the model in its entirety indicated that the perceived damage directly affected the tendency to choose harsh influence tactics, and also impacted the choice of influence tactics via the negative emotions it evoked.

However, it is too early to reject the possibility of the existence of a two-stage mediating process. Tal *et al.* (2015) examined influence tactic preferences of bank managers in conflicts with subordinates. They found a significant link between conflict features and the choice of influence tactics. In her study, the potential organizational implications of noncompliance by subordinates were clearly specified. In contrast,

in our study the conflict scenarios were described in a more generalized manner, and the managers had to surmise what the organizational implications would be. In future research, this possibility can be examined by comparing scenarios in which potential implications are an integral part of the description of the conflict with scenarios in which repercussions are left to the manager's interpretation.

Principal component analysis of the negative emotions evoked by the perceived damage of the conflict yielded a dichotomous division between emotions directed at oneself (the manager) and emotions directed toward the other (the subordinate). This differentiation concurs with the Structural Theory of Emotions that views emotions as a response to a change in social dynamics within a dyad (De Rivera, 1977; De Rivera and Grinkis, 1986; De Rivera *et al.*, 1989). The theory defines this response according to two central dimensions: the frame of reference – other (it emotion) or self (me emotion), and the movement in space – contraction unto oneself vs extension toward the other's space. Internal contraction occurs when positive emotions such as admiration or desire, or negative emotions such as fear or terror are aroused. External extension occurs when positive emotions such as love or affection, or negative emotions such as anger or hostility are evoked. The current study focussed on a social change that forces a manager into an uncomfortable situation accompanied by negative emotions, and found that only emotions directed toward the other affected the choice of influence tactics. Negative emotions directed toward the self, had limited impact on the choice of tactics. As such, the directionality (inward-outward) of the emotions aroused by the conflict shed further light on understanding the process of choosing influence tactics.

The emotional involvement evoked by the conflict also has implications for the claim that the choice of influence tactics is rational (Raven, 1992). The original IPIM presumed that in the process of power choice, the influencing agent rationally examines the acceptability, the cost and the effect of the available influence tactics. For example, a manager considering legitimacy of dependence as a possible tactic considers that utilizing this tactic places him/her in a weak or inferior position; or a manager who contemplates coercion considers the possibility that this tactics may hamper the relationship with the subordinate. This presumption is well grounded in the updated model as well (Koslowsky and Schwarzwald, 2009), since it includes cost-benefit considerations that may promote or hinder cultural, situational, and/or personal requirements. However, the negative emotions evoked by the conflict may produce self-serving behaviors in the choice of influence tactics rather than rational considerations conducive to organizational benefits.

Conflicts are viewed in the literature as a "problem-solving" situation in which emotions serve as a hindrance that should be "neutralized" in efficient conflict management. Fisher and Sharp (2004) quote the saying that is common to such processes: "Try to put your emotions aside," demonstrating the degree to which people are aware of the importance of emotions but believe (erroneously) that one can easily dissociate from them. We believe that the role of emotion is more complex.

Up to this point we have presented the opinion that emotional involvement may impair rationale. Nevertheless, some scholars argue that emotion and logic are not independent (Ashforth and Humphrey, 1995). Emotion, a derivative of the assessment of damage inherent in the conflict, provides the manager with an indication of the need to choose an appropriate resolution strategy. Rationality depends on the chosen strategy. When emotion assists with identifying the problem or difficulty and promotes behaviors that are conducive to achieving organizational goals, the decision can be viewed as rational. In contrast, the decision is irrational when emotion prompts self-serving behaviors (Thomas, 1979).

Another unique finding of our study indicated that the choice of influence tactics is not entirely rational but rather influenced by personality characteristics. High cognitive closure managers reported a greater tendency to employ harsh tactics. This tendency was predicted and attributed to information processing typical to this personality type. Moreover, a significant positive relationship between cognitive closure and the perception of damage was found, indicating that cognitive closure intensified the perception of damage to the work flow and to the manager's status. Thus, high cognitive closure drives managers to employ influence tactics that would maintain a clear hierarchy and ensure that decisions are made solely by managers (Pierro *et al.*, 2005). Furthermore, conflicts in essence call for change which is difficult for managers with high cognitive closure to deal with due to their inherent resistance to change (Kruglanski *et al.*, 2007). The preference for harsh tactics apparently serves here as a means for quickly ending the conflict, rather than managing the conflict rationally.

In contrast to our expectations, the subordinate's performance level was not related to the choice of influence tactics. This finding could be attributed to the type of organization (public sector) in which the data were collected. The literature differentiates between goals and conduct in private vs public organizations (Buchanan, 1974; Fottier, 1981). In private organizations, management is fairly stable and the goal of financial gain is clear. In contrast, in public organizations, management is less stable and is subject to political considerations and changes in policy that blur its goals and priorities. Conflict between managers and subordinates is set against this milieu which reduces the power of managers. In addition, work policy and tenure of employees in the public sector limit managers' ability to reward employees on the basis of skills and performance (Bourantas and Papalexandris, 1993; Solomon, 1986). For the most part, reward is based on teamwork, which is characterized by a homogenous approach to subordinates. The homogeneous approach of managers during conflict with subordinates is possibly rooted in this policy.

At this stage, it would be appropriate to address some practical implications of the findings. Conflicts are an inseparable part of life and an integral part of managers' work. Influence tactics employed by managers during conflict may influence the quality of the relationship with subordinates. In particular, soft tactics may promote pleasant relationships and attainment of organizational goals while harsh tactics may ruin relationships and hamper goal achievement (Raven and Kruglanski, 1970). Our study detected three factors that increase the tendency to employ harsh strategies: cognitive closure, gender, and emotions evoked by the conflict. A high need for cognitive closure elevated the tendency to employ harsh tactics. The myopic perspective that is associated with a high need for cognitive closure lessens the ability to view situations on a broad spectrum and the ability to utilize employees' full potential. Unfortunately, cognitive closure is a personality characteristic that can be shaped only in early stages of socialization (Webster and Kruglanski, 1998). However, awareness of our findings should be taken into consideration during the selection process of managers and their training. For example, assessment of the need for cognitive closure may help in screening out close minded candidates.

Similar to previous studies (e.g. Instone *et al.*, 1983; Keshet *et al.*, 2006; Schwarzwald and Koslowsky, 1999), the current findings demonstrated that male managers, more so than their female counterparts, tend to exercise harsh tactics when in conflict with subordinates. This tendency, as mentioned above, may diminish utilization of an employee's full potential, and may impair the relationship with him/her. The lesser tendency of female managers to employ harsh tactics is apparently part and parcel of

the female management style, matching contemporary perceptions of effective leadership that encourages teamwork, cooperation, employee empowerment, and the inclusion of subordinates in decision-making processes (Hammer and Champy, 1994; Rosener, 1990, 1997; Senge, 1994). Harsh tactics that are more likely to characterize male managers starkly contrast with effective leadership. These tactics are associated with close supervision, limiting an employee's freedom to act and participate in decision-making processes. The literature offers several programs for promoting female management style (Bass, 1991; Yoder, 2001) that could benefit from inclusion of influence tactics as techniques that promote effective management.

Our study indicated the central role of emotional involvement in the process of choosing influence tactics during conflict, in particular the arousal of negative emotions which heightens the tendency to opt for harsh tactics. These negative emotions are aroused as a consequence of perceived threat to the social self (face) as well as to the work process. The literature indicates that negative emotions may impair effective cognitive processing of information when coping with conflict (Maiese, 2005). Negative emotions may delay agreement between parties, decrease consideration of the other, and distract one from the primary purpose of the interaction, moving toward more personal goals of harming the source of conflict (Shapiro, 2002).

Several cognitive-based techniques have been proposed for alleviating or moderating negative emotions during conflict. These techniques suggest diminishing negative emotions through thought processes such as comparing the conflict to other conflicts, considering the positive potential of the conflict, or focussing attention on the solution instead of the problem (Campbell-Sills and Barlow, 2006; Levin *et al.*, 1988; Taylor and Lobel, 1989). Other techniques that have been proposed are organizational based that strive to create a healthy emotional climate in the workplace that facilitates free expression of diverse views. The organizational techniques suggest creating a positive emotional climate in the workplace so that conflict is less threatening. These goals can be accomplished through training procedures, selection processes, rewarding individuals with healthy emotional expression, and by developing a clear vision of the emotional climate in the workplace (Ashkanasy and Daus, 2002).

Finally, it is worthwhile to point out several limitations of the study. Our study was conducted in the field; yet, the conflict content and worker's level that were manipulated did not yield the expected effect. This deficiency was attributed to the specific nature of the organization in which the study was conducted and needs to be examined in other types of organizations as well. Furthermore, our study on the negative emotions that were aroused by the conflict included potential threats to the normative work procedure and to the manager's status. In future research it would be worthwhile also to include threats to one's face as well.

Our study employed a self-report format throughout. This technique is prone to percept-percept bias and common method variance (Crompton and Wagner, 1994). To eliminate the spurious effects of common method variance, future researchers may consider developing a more direct, observational approach, or alternatively collect information from other resources such as subordinates, peers, or semi-standardized interviews. In addition, one cannot ignore the fact that the application of vignettes, though widely used in social research, may create a disjuncture between the vignette content and the actual experiences of research respondents (Wilson and While, 1998). Here too, complimentary research approaches, as mentioned earlier, are required in future research.

Notes

1. The subordinate's performance level was manipulated by the inclusion of the first and last name of one of the manager's actual subordinates whose performance level was either high or low. In accordance with organizational procedures regarding managers' participation in the study, the branch managers provided the names of one high-performing and one low-performing employee for each manager that was included in the study. Although respondents were informed that the names were randomly selected and were included to enhance the reality of the study. The names appeared on labels and the managers were asked to remove them after completing the scale.
2. Due to high wording similarity the error terms of item 1 and 3, 8 and 9, 11 and 14 were correlated.

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Further reading

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Appendix 1. The interpersonal power inventory items

Reward impersonal

1. I will remind my employee that I can help him/her receive an increase in pay and special benefits.
18. I will remind my employee that I can help him/her get a promotion.

Reward personal

2. I will let the employee believe that I will like him/her more if he will fulfill my request.
12. I will tell my employee that if he will comply he will earn my respect.

Coercive impersonal

14. I will inform my employee that I could make it more difficult for him/her to get a promotion.
20. I will inform my employee that I could make it more difficult for him/her to receive a salary increase.

Coercive personal

5. I will make my employee feel unappreciated if he will not comply.
8. I will let the employee know that I will give him/her the “cold shoulder” if he/she will not comply.

Expert power

6. I will tell my employee that I know the job better than him/her so he must comply.
19. I will remind him/her about all my experience in this area in order to obtain his/her compliance.

Referent power

4. I will inform my employee that if I were in his/her position I would comply.
17. I will treat my employee in an egalitarian way when I present my request.

Informational power

9. I would carefully explain the basis for my request.
22. I will give my employee good reasons as to why my request is the best way to perform the job.

Legitimacy of position

11. I will remind my employee that I am his supervisor.
16. I will remind my employee that as his supervisor I have the right to request that he/she does the work in a particular way.

Legitimacy of reciprocity

3. I will tell my employee that I helped him/her in the past, and I expect him/her to reciprocate.
15. I will remind my employee that I have done some good things for him/her in the past and I expect him/her to do the same for me in return.

Legitimacy of dependence

10. I will explain to my employee that I really need his help with this.
21. I will explain to my employee that I really depended on him/her and need his cooperation.

Legitimacy/equity

7. I will tell my employee that in the past he has made mistakes so he must comply now.
13. I will tell my employee that by complying he will make up for some of the problems he may have caused in the past.

Appendix 2. Conflict scenarios

Imagine that you have asked an employee (a label containing the name of one of the employees was inserted here, either of high or low performance level) to complete an additional task. The employee (name inserted) does not agree to carry out the task as, in his opinion, it is not part of his formal job description.

You would like the employee to complete this additional task. What is the likelihood in this situation that you will utilize each of the behaviors described below?

Imagine that you have asked an employee (a label containing the name of one of the employees was inserted here, either of high or low performance level) to complete an additional task. The employee (name inserted) does not agree to carry out the task as, in his opinion, he doesn't have enough time to carry out the tasks that are part of his formal job description.

Imagine that you have asked an employee (a label containing the name of one of the employees was inserted here, either of high or low performance level) to complete an additional task. The employee (name inserted) does not agree to carry out the task as, in his opinion, the task was forced upon him/her and managers need to let employees be part of decision process.

Imagine that you have asked an employee (a label containing the name of one of the employees was inserted here, either of high or low performance level) to complete an additional task. The employee (name inserted) does not agree to carry out the task as, in his opinion, you addressed him/her in an insulting way.

Imagine that you have asked an employee (a label containing the name of one of the employees was inserted here, either of high or low performance level) to stay overtime. The employee (name inserted) does not agree to stay overtime. In his opinion it is not part of his formal job description.

Imagine that you have asked an employee (a label containing the name of one of the employees was inserted here, either of high or low performance level) to stay overtime. The employee (name inserted) does not agree to stay additional time. In his opinion he would not have enough time to carry out the tasks designed as part of his formal job description even if he stayed for additional hours at work.

Imagine that you have asked an employee (a label containing the name of one of the employees was inserted here, either of high or low performance level) to stay overtime. The employee (name inserted) does not agree to stay additional time. In his opinion the request was forced upon him/her and managers need to let employees be part of this decision process.

Imagine that you have asked an employee (a label containing the name of one of the employees was inserted here, either of high or low performance level) to stay overtime. The employee (name inserted) does not agree to stay additional time. In his opinion you have addressed him/her in an insulting way.

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