BALANCING BORDERS AND BRIDGES AT THE WORKPLACE – ROLE OF LEADERSHIP STYLES AND INTERACTIONAL JUSTICE ON THE USE OF UPWARD INFLUENCE TACTICS: AN EXPERIMENTAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Although leadership has been studied extensively for the past 50 years and delved into from many different angles, it seems like there is still no single perspective has proven to be more successful than others in advancing the understanding of this complex and multi-faceted field. The indispensable foundation is leaders are being judged by their decisions. The magnitude to which employees and society perceive the impacts of these decisions as fair and ethical is critical because it will lead to they way they choose the types of influence tactics towards their managers. Thus, this research paper examined the effects of the interaction between leadership styles and interactional toward upward influence tactics. This study used 2 (leadership styles: participative/autocratic) X 2 (interactional justice: fair/unfair) X 2 (gender of the supervisor: male/ female) between-subjects factorial design. In order to capture better view about the effect, this study employed an experimental study where promotion is being used as career objective of the employees. In total, there were eight different scenarios involved in this study and about 445 employees participated. The data were analyzed by using a varimax rotated principal components analysis prior to hypothesis testing to determine the actual numbers of influence tactics. Then, the main hypotheses of the study were tested using 2-way MANOVA and followed by 2 X 2 X 2 ANOVA. Result indicated that there are significant relationships in all the interactions. Therefore, it validates that there is an intimate relationship between leadership style and interactional justice patterns towards the decision to select types of upward influence tactics for promotion purpose. Thus, in order to balance the border and bridges between the employees and employers, managers have to be vigilant about their managerial behavior as well as the level of interactional justice practiced in their organisation.

Keywords: Leadership styles, Interactional Justice, Upward Influence Tactics, Promotion.

INTRODUCTION

Given increasingly turbulent environments, heightened competition, unpredictable technology change, more and more employees are coming to realize that they have to compete to achieve their career advancement. It is because, once the employee joins any organisation, in addition to have the employment contract, they also signed the psychological contract with the organisation. Part of the psychological contract promised that the employee will have uninterrupted, smoothly upward climb on a corporate ladder. Unfortunately, due to many reasons and factors that crop up in the organisation as well as in the environment, it has altered or most of the time broke the promise. Since, career is a dynamic rather than static, it very much dependent to both individual factors as well as organisational factors (Wu, Thus, & Kinicki, 2010). In many situations, they have to vie among them to climb the career ladders. Anderson, and Tolson, (1991) for example, indicate that job tenure has a linkage with career advancement. However, when Ralston (1985) concluded that career advancement is very much relying in the hand of the supervisor, it triggers many other researchers to analyze the effect of upward influence tactic towards career advancement. In addition, researchers also are interested to analyze the effect of types of leadership styles of the supervisor and level of justice towards

choosing types of upward influence tactics. By using the sample of manufacturing managers in northern areas, this study intends to analyze the effect of leadership styles, interactional justice towards the decision in choosing types of upward influence tactics for the purpose of career advancement.

LITERITURE REVIEW

Leadership styles

Leadership style is conceptualized as a process of superior-subordinate relationships (Bhal & Ansari, 2000). This study applied the same categories as introduced by Bhal and Ansari (2000) which are   participative, autocratic, and nurturant-task leadership style.

1.   Authoritarian leaders ófocuses on what must be done, and how it must be done. This behavior clarifies performance expectations and the role of each subordinate in the work group.
2.   Participative leaders ó participative leaderøs behavior includes consultation with subordinates and serious consideration of subordinatesø ideas before making decisions.

Organisation justice

This study defines organisational justice as a term used to describe the role of fairness in the workplace (Moorman, 2002). This includes employeesø views and feelings about their treatment and that of others within an organisation. After a thorough analysis, this study replicates the categories used by Colquitt (2001), which are procedural justice, interactional justice and distributive justice.

1.   Distributive justice ó fairness of allocation of resources
2.   Interactional justice ó relates to the perceived fairness of the interpersonal treatment that employees receive from their supervisor.
3.   Procedural justice ó focus on the fairness of the decision-making aspect of the process.
Compared to distributive and procedural justice, interactional justice is a type of justice that deals with relationship between supervisor and supervisee in the workplace and this relationship will shape the attitudes and behaviors of the subordinates (Chacko, 1990). Thus, interactional justice should be analysed in depth compared to other types of justice in order to analyze the behaviors of the employees. Bies and Moag (1986) defined interactional justice as a measurement of sincerity. Similarly, Colquitt (2001) sees interactional justice in action when the supervisor gives accurate performance rating. The justice literature showed that if the workers perceived that they had received fair treatment in the organisation, it give them a feeling of job security (Burgoon, Dillard & Doran, 1983). Greenberg (1990) proposed that the employeesø view towards justice is correlated with the turnover. At the end of the study, they found that interactional justice had an effect on the trust in the management, the organisational commitment and withdrawal behaviors. After many studies, researchers found that interactional justice might be a more important component of procedural justice than formal procedures (Colquitt, 2001).

Theoretical Framework

Figure1: Posited relationships among study variables.

Independent variables   Dependent variable
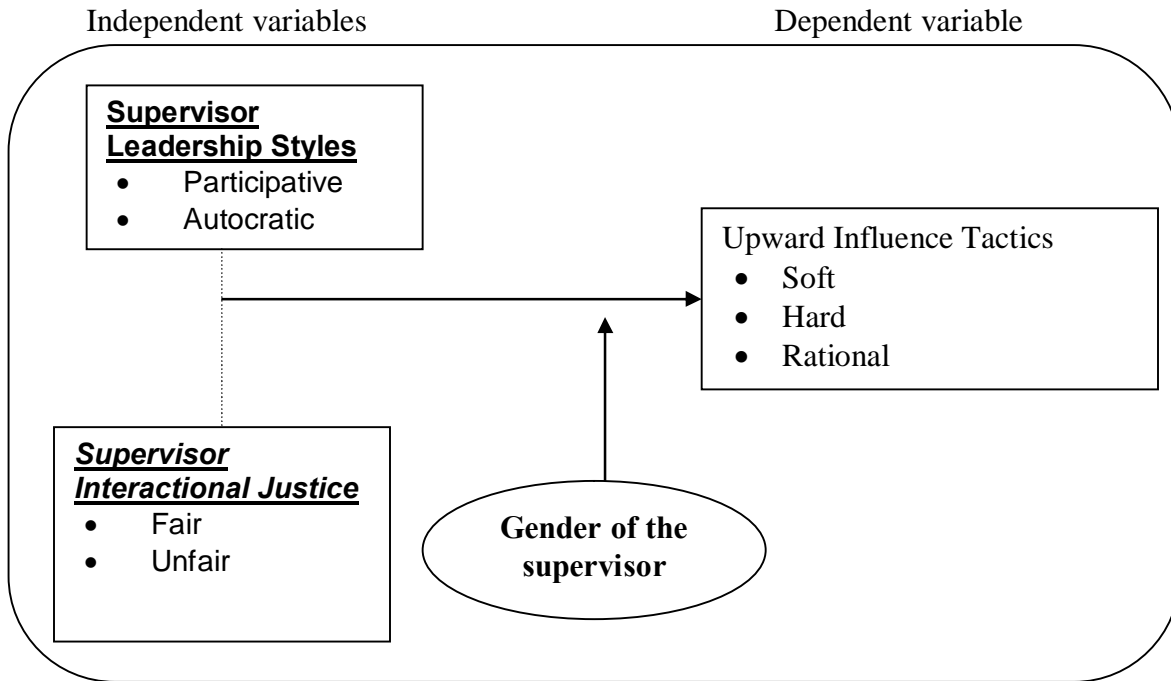
Hypotheses

H1: Upward influence tactics is a function of the supervisor leadership styles.

H2: Upward influence tactics is a function of interactional justice portrayed by the supervisor.

H3: Upward influence tactics is a function of the interaction between leadership styles and interactional justice of the supervisor.

H4: Upward influencing tactics is a function of gender of the supervisor

H5: Upward influencing tactics is a function of the interaction between leadership styles and gender of the supervisors.

H6: Upward influence tactics is a function of the interaction between interactional justice and gender of the supervisors.

H7: Upward influence tactics is a function of the interaction between supervisor leadership styles, interactional justice and gender of the supervisor.

METHODOLOGY

For this study, data were collected from electronic and computer manufacturing companies. This is an experimental study that consists of eight different scenarios. Since the unit of analysis is individual, 900 questionnaires were distributed to the sample companies by hand and 400 were returned. 200 questionnaires were distributed through e-mail and postage mail and only 45 were replied. Each of the 8 different sets was being distributed equally to all the companies. Each of the subjects was exposed to one condition only. Among the 445 individuals

participating in this study, a majority of them were in the age of 20 to 29 years. More than half of the respondents were males. More than 62% or 290 respondents held degree as their highest education level. 43.1% of the respondents are Malays. In term of experience in the current company, most of the respondents have below than 5 years of experience. 76% of 445 respondents have below than 5 years experience in the same position.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Design and Procedure

The overall design of this study was a 2 (gender of the supervisor: male / female) X 2 (leadership styles of the supervisor: participative / authoritarian) X 2 (interactional justice: fair / unfair). In total, there were eight different situations that were treated as experimental conditions. The first paragraph describes leadership styles of the supervisor. Interactional justice portrayed by the supervisor during performance appraisal is explained in paragraph two. After reading the paragraphs, the respondents are required to respond on the manipulation check items. Names like Fatimah and Faisal are used to manipulate the gender of the supervisors. Since there are eight different scenarios, each of the scenarios is being distributed equally. However, each of the respondents is only exposed to one scenario.

Leadership styles measures is based upon the work by Ansari (1990) and Sinha (1980), items describing participative and authoritarian leadership are combined to create a scene of leadership styles. Ansari (1990) reported that the reliability coefficients range from .68 to .89. By combining the elements of participative leaders explained in the previous studies (Ansari & Kapoor, 1987; Ansari, 1990; Chacko, 1990). On the other hand, the interactional justice measures were used to describe about the interactional justice portrait by the supervisor while conducting the performance appraisal. As for fair interactional justice, the paragraph is written by combining all elements that should occur when the interactional justice is high. The elements are based on the study by Bies and Moag (1986). As for the dependent measures, a total of 42 items made up in the upward influence strategy measures. The items were drawn from studies Ansari (1990), Bhal and Ansari, (2000), Kipnis, Schmidt and Wilkinson (1980), and Sinha (1995). Respondent were asked to indicate on a 7-point scale (1 = never; 7 = always), on how frequently they will take each of the actions in order to influence their supervisor for promotions. It is important to highlight that the reliability coefficients for the items used in this study is ranging from 0.69 to 0.84 based on the study by Ansari (1990).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Hypotheses Testing

The multivariate *eta* squared of .12 implies that 12% of the variance in upward influence tactics alone is associated with leadership styles. In addition, 19% is associated with interactional justice and 9% associated with gender. Upward influence tactics is 9% associated with the interaction between leadership styles and justice. As for the interaction between leadership styles

and gender, the multivariate *eta* square is .11. The multivariate *eta* square for the interaction between interactional justice and gender is .11. Overall, 5% of the variance in upward influence tactics is associated with the interaction between leadership styles, justice and gender toward upward influence tactics. The significant MANOVA was followed by a 2 X 2 X 2 univariate ANOVA for each of the ten factors derived from the factor analysis.

Table 1: Summary of Multivariate Analysis of Variance: Upward Influence Tactics as a function of Supervisor Leadership Styles, Interactional Justice and Supervisor Gender

Source of Variation	df	Wiks' Lambda	F	Eta Squared
Styles (LS)	10	.89	5.57***	.12
Justice (IJ)	10	.81	9.85***	.19
Gender(G)	10	.91	4.05***	.09
LS X IJ	10	.91	4.11***	.09
LS X G	10	.89	5.47***	.11
IJ X G	10	.89	5.49***	.11
LS X IJ X G	10	.95	2.3*	.05
Error	428			

*Note. *p < .05, ***p < .001*

Hypotheses Testing

Previously, this study consists of eleven types of upward influence tactics. However, after factor analysis, the study derived to three categories of influence tactics namely hard, soft and rational tactics. Thus, each of the independent variables is tested to each of the factor. In addition, the moderator variable was also tested using the same method.

Table 2: Summary of Analysis of Variance: Hard

Source of Variance	df	SS	MS	F
Leadership Styles (LS)	1	18.00	18.00	7.96**
Interactional Justice (IJ)	1	27.07	27.07	11.98**
Gender (G)	1	12.85	12.85	5.69*
LS X IJ	1	2.27	2.27	1.01
LS X G	1	4.00	4.00	1.77
IJ X G	1	2.20	2.20	0.98
LS X IJ X G	1	4.42	4.42	1.96
Error	437	987.38	2.26	
Total	444	1056.41		

*Note. *p < .05, **p < .01*

Table 3: Means and Standard Deviations: Hard

Factors	Styles			
	Autocratic		Participative	
	Fair	Unfair	Fair	Unfair
Male				
M	4.98	4.40	4.44	3.75
SD	1.18	1.66	1.16	1.46
n	56	50	52	54
Female				
M	5.19	4.49	4.63	4.62
SD	1.09	1.78	1.95	1.39
n	53	61	63	56

$N = 445$

Table 2 contains a summary of analysis of variance for hard tactics. The mean and standard deviations are tabulated in Table 3. Means values tabulated in Table 3 shows that employees will use more ingratiation with upward appeal tactic when they are dealing with authoritarian leader ($M = 4.76$, $SD = 1.49$) compared to participative leader ($M = 4.37$, $SD = 1.57$). The result also indicates that the tactic will be applied mostly when the supervisor is fair ($M = 4.81$, $SD = 1.44$). It will be least applied when the supervisor is unfair ($M = 4.32$, $SD = 1.67$). As for gender differences, the result shows that employees will use the tactics toward female supervisor ($M = 4.72$, $SD = 1.62$) and least toward male supervisor ($M = 4.40$, $SD = 1.43$).

Table 4: Summary of Analysis of Variance for Soft

Source of Variance	df	SS	MS	F
Leadership Styles (LS)	1	40.50	40.50	12.25**
Interactional Justice (IJ)	1	7.73	7.73	2.34
Gender (G)	1	7.90	7.90	2.39
LS X IJ	1	13.89	13.89	4.20*
LS X G	1	37.846	37.85	11.45**
IJ X G	1	95.53	95.53	28.89***
LS X IJ X G	1	17.52	17.52	5.30*
Error	437	1445.02	3.31	
Total	444	1674.94		

Note. *$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$

Table 5: Means and Standard Deviations for Soft

Factors	Styles			
	Autocratic		Participative	
	Fair	Unfair	Fair	Unfair
Male				
M	3.40	4.63	3.46	4.61
SD	1.86	1.85	1.55	1.73
n	56	50	52	54
Female				
M	3.87	2.45	4.31	4.39
SD	1.90	1.61	1.92	2.06
N	53	61	63	56

N=445

This study shows that, the employees will apply soft when they see their supervisor as participative leader ($M = 4.20$, $SD = 1.87$) compared to authoritarian leader ($M = 3.53$, $SD = 1.96$). As for the interaction between supervisor leadership styles and interactional justice portrayed by the leader, result proved that soft would be apply more in order to persuade unfair participative leader ($M = 4.50$, $SD = 1.90$).

This study also indicated that subordinates are more likely to use soft tactics more in order to persuade female participative leader ($M = 4.35$, $SD = 1.98$) and least towards female authoritarian leader ($M = 3.11$, $SD = 1.88$). As for the interaction between interactional justice and gender, soft is a tactics chosen by the employees to persuade fair female ($M = 4.11$, $SD=1.92$) for their career advancement. Table 4.13 indicates that this tactics is use by the employees when they see their male supervisor as unfair and autocratic ($M = 4.63$, $SD = 1.85$). The interaction between leadership styles, interactional justice can be viewed clearly in the above figures.

Figure 2: Soft as a function of supervisor gender and supervisor leadership styles.
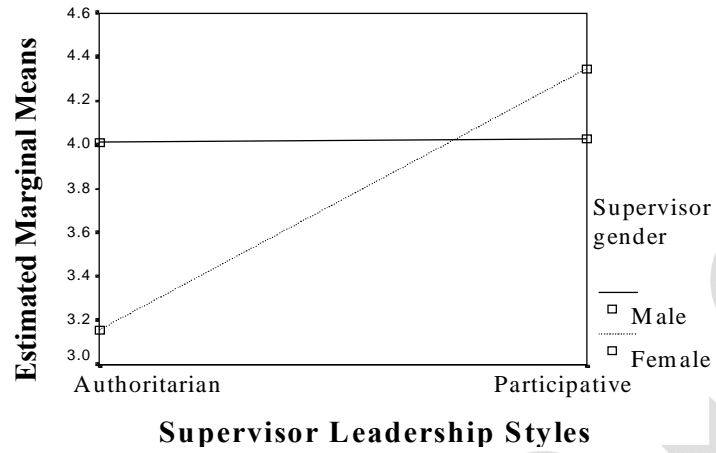

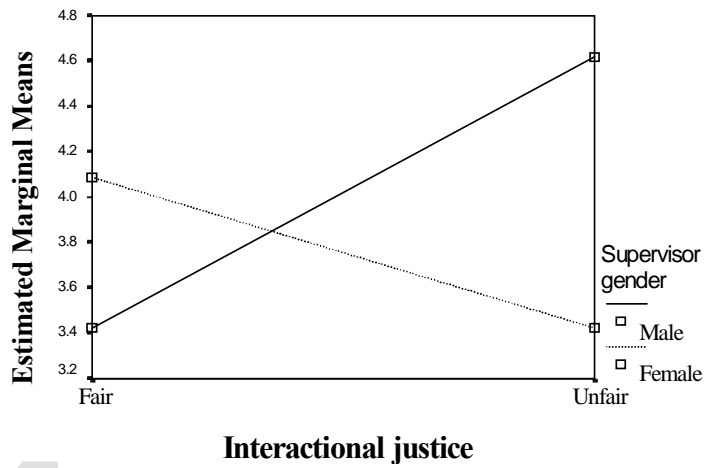**Figure 3**: Soft as a function of supervisor gender and interactional justice

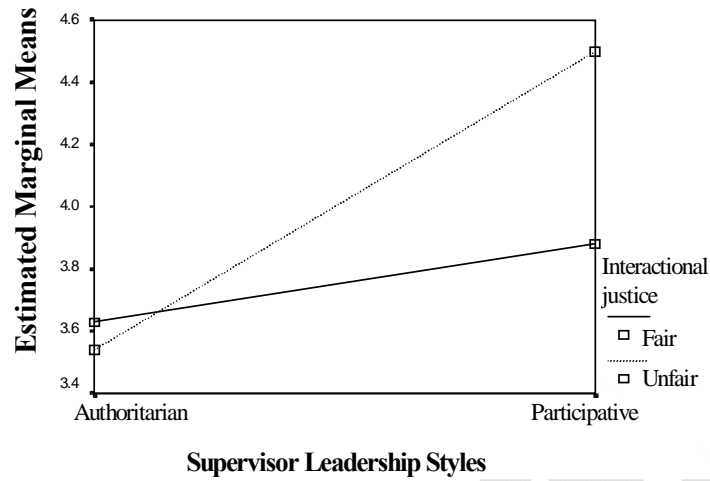**Figure 4**: Soft as a function of interactional justice and supervisor leadership styles.

Table 6: Summary of Analysis of Variance for Rational

Source of Variance	df	SS	MS	F
Leadership Styles (LS)	1	0.21	0.21	0.12
Interactional Justice (IJ)	1	13.41	13.41	7.70**
Gender (G)	1	6.77	6.77	3.38*
LS X IJ	1	35.22	35.22	20.22***
LS X G	1	25.26	25.26	14.50***
IJ X G	1	3.02	3.02	1.74
LS X IJ X G	1	3.57	3.57	2.05
Error	437	761.27	1.74	
Total	444	849.80		

Note. *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001*

Table 7: Means and Standard Deviations for Rational

Factors	Styles			
	Autocratic		Participative	
	Fair	Unfair	Fair	Unfair
Male				
M	5.53	5.66	4.63	5.52
SD	1.24	1.06	1.53	0.94
n	56	50	52	54
Female				
M	5.15	4.59	4.84	5.77
SD	1.47	1.41	1.65	1.01
N	53	61	63	56

N=*445*

A summary of ANOVA result for rational is presented in Table 6. Table 7 shows the means and standard deviation for this tactic. Based on this study, rational tactics are applied towards unfair leader more (M = 5.36, SD = 1.22) compared to a fair leader (M = 5.04, SD = 1.51). Respondents also indicate that they would apply this tactic toward male leader more (M = 5.34, SD = 1.27) and least when the supervisor is female (M = 5.07, SD = 1.47).

As for the interaction between leadership and interactional justice, employees would applied this tactics more when the supervisor is participative and unfair (*M* = 5.65, *SD* = .98) compared to when the supervisor is participative and fair (*M* = 4.74, *SD* = 1.59). Respondents also rated that they would apply rational, when the male supervisor is authoritarian (*M* = 5.59, *SD* = 1.15). The interaction is illustrated in Figure 5 and Figure 6. From the Figure 5, it shows that employees would apply the tactics more when the female supervisor is participative compared to when the supervisor is authoritarian. When the supervisor is male, the employees used the tactics more when the supervisor is authoritarian compared to when the supervisor is participative. Result shows that for career advancement, hard tactics would be applied more by the subordinates when the supervisor is unfair and participative compared to when the participative leader being fair. However, the tactics would be use more to persuade fair authoritarian leader and least when the supervisor is authoritarian and unfair.

Implications

At the work place, generally, the employees are eyeing for smooth career advancement. Unfortunately, due to limited positions in the company, employees have to contend with the other employees to accomplish their career objective. Realizing that there are many factors influenced the career advancement, employees start to analyze the best alternative to achieve their career advancement timely. No doubt that knowledge, skills and ability act as the advocates in developing career, however, the role of supervisor acting as an agent to propagate the

employeeøs knowledge, skills and ability should not be viewed lightly. This has prompted many researchers to study the element of impression management in career advancement. It is because; the individuals who received high amount of support for their supervisor will enhance their reputation and managementø confidence to be part of the succession planning. Previous researchers concluded that in order to create a good impression, employees are required to have good influence skills. In addition, employees also need to understand that their supervisor leadership styles. Thus, this study holds upward influence tactics as the dependent variable and supervisor leadership styles and interactional justice as the independent variables.

Findings indicate that leadership styles have an effect towards upward influence tactics. Study also shows that interactional justice is one of the variables that contributed to upward influence tactics used by the employees. Thus, managers in Malaysia should start to evaluate their level of interactional justice in work place. Masterson (2000) concluded that when the employees think that they are being treated with courtesy and fairly, they would show their respect toward their leaders. On the other hand, if the leader is dishonest and rude, then the employees will show their resentment toward their supervisor. In conclusion, in our work place, productivity and quality of work are always an issue. Management are willing to spend huge capital in conducting researches in order to analyze and understand a good working environment that can contribute towards higher productivity and quality management. One of factor in creating good working environment is to have a mutual understanding between employees and employers. The findings derived from this study can be used to understand more our employeesø behavior. Basically by understand employeesø behavior we can strengthen the foundation of the company and later increase our productivity and quality in our company. Like other study, this study also subjected to few caveats. First, this study is focus only on the upward influence tactics. Thus, any other categories of influence tactics like downward influence tactics and literal influence tactics are excluded. Result might change if there other types of tactics are included. In addition, the sample companies are only focus in private sector, thus by extending this study to the service and public sector could add further support to the findings of this study. Third, the scenarios given are created based on a particular situation, which is getting a promotion. This may affect the way the respondent thinking because maybe under other circumstances the respondents will be differently. Therefore, to draw more comprehensive study in future, these weaknesses should be analyze and overcome. It is because, we are still very much relying to the western countries to understand employees behavior.

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