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Current Empirical Research

# Leadership tactics: enabling quality social exchange and organizational citizenship behavior

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**Abstract**

We examined the relationship between leaders' positive and negative influence tactics and their subordinates' organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) directed toward them as well as the quality of the social exchange with them in westernized Middle Eastern organizations. In this study, we used data from 202 supervisor–subordinate dyads in the Sultanate of Oman. Our findings supported the hypothesis that positive leader influence tactics would be positively associated with affirmative social exchange (represented by a combination of leader–member exchange (LMX) and trust) and subordinates' OCB directed toward supervisors. However, while negative leader influence tactics were related negatively to social exchange, they were unrelated to supervisor-directed OCB. We found that social exchange mediated the relationship between a leader's positive influence tactics and OCB directed toward them. Finally, we discuss the implications of our findings for future leadership research and leadership development.

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**Keywords:** leadership; tactics; Oman; social exchange; organizational citizenship behavior



The positive organizational approach advocated by positive organizational psychology researchers has been steadily gaining traction among writers analyzing managerial and organizational effectiveness (Luthans, 2002a,b; Cameron *et al.*, 2003; Cameron and Lavine, 2006; Luthans and Avolio, 2009; Quinn, 2009; Wright and Quick, 2009). This perspective focuses on enabling positive social exchange relationships among organizational members, foremost of which are between leaders and their subordinates. Cameron and Lavine (2006) notably employed this approach in analyzing organizational effectiveness in their study of Kaiser-Hill's remediation of the Rocky Flats superfund site. Arising from the positive organizational perspective is the emphasis on employing positive leadership to influence and motivate subordinates' performance beyond ordinary job specifications and performance expectations.

In exploring the dynamics of positive organizational leadership, we recognize that the traditional constructs of leader influence tactics, social exchange relationships, and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) are central. In fact, exercising influence often

is considered essential to the practice of leadership (Kipnis *et al.*, 1980). An important potential consequence of downward leader influence that has received relatively less research attention in this context is OCB (Organ, 1988). Organ (1988) described OCB as discretionary behavior that is not explicitly required or formally rewarded by organizations but at the same time, collectively, contributes to organizational effectiveness. Examples of organizational citizenship behavior directed toward supervisors (SOCB) include accepting extra duties and responsibilities at work, working overtime when needed, and assisting supervisors with their workload. Although these activities may not be included in formal job descriptions, they are necessary to organizational performance.

Podsakoff and MacKenzie (1997) argue that in general, OCB may enhance organizational performance, "by 'lubricating' the social machinery of an organization, reducing friction, and/or increasing efficiency" (Podsakoff and MacKenzie, 1997: 135). OCB may also contribute to organizational success by enhancing co-worker and managerial productivity, promoting better use of scarce resources, improving coordination, strengthening an organization's ability to attract and retain quality employees, reducing variability of performance, and enabling successful adaption to external environmental changes. Though limited, existing research indicates the OCB has a positive relationship to several indicators of organizational performance (Podsakoff and MacKenzie, 1997; Koys, 2001). These indicators of organizational performance include unit performance (Podsakoff and MacKenzie, 1994), quantity and quality of production (Podsakoff *et al.*, 1997), overall operating efficiency, quality of performance, and revenue to full-time equivalents (Walz and Niehoff, 1996), customer satisfaction (Schneider *et al.*, 2005) and productivity and turnover (Sun *et al.*, 2007).

Managing labor forces in complex contemporary organizations poses a challenge to developing nations dependent on managerial guidance based on research originating in mainly first world Western nations, especially the United States. Although leadership research, in general, is copious, it is sparse in third world nations, especially so for positive organizational leadership. Research in organizational contexts outside North America is important to determine if the efficacy of positive organizational leadership is as salient as its proponents advocate. Preferably, research in cultural contexts different from North American

organizational settings is advisable. We chose westernized formal organizations in a traditional Islamic country in the Middle East. In Omani public and private sector organizations, we examined the relationships between leaders' positive and negative downward leadership tactics and subordinates' OCB directed toward their leaders and aspects of their social exchange relationships.

Unfortunately, there is a paucity of organizational behavior research in the Arabian Peninsula, where Oman is located (Hofstede, 2001; House *et al.*, 2001; Tsui *et al.*, 2007). Both the landmark, Hofstede (2001) and House *et al.* (2001) studies explored potentially relevant national values such as Power Distance. One of the Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010) conclusions was that the national culture of Arab countries is relatively high on power distance. However, their respective "Arab Country" and "Middle East" regional findings were based on a limited sample from an amalgam of diverse Arab language countries such as Morocco, Qatar, Egypt, and Libya among others. Even though Hofstede (2001) did not survey Oman, we might expect that the national culture of Oman, also an Arab and Islamic country, would be high on power distance.

However, as a counterpoint to possible high-power distance value, Islam emphasizes equality among individuals, and there is a traditional lack of a religious organizational hierarchy (House *et al.*, 2001). Furthermore, Islam teaches to live cooperatively and care for one another (Bahaudin *et al.*, 2010). Thus, we could expect positive leadership practices to resonate with Omanis. Although national culture values may result in specific intra-organizational influence tactics, we are not aware of organizational behavior studies in the Arabic speaking region specifically relevant to the relationships that we were investigating (Ali, 2005).

This makes Oman an interesting context to study supervisory influence tactics. As argued by the "convergence" hypothesis, managerial beliefs and practices may become increasingly similar across the world with industrialization, but the responses of employees to these practices may still be affected by the national culture. Locating our study in Oman provided us with a unique opportunity to study the responses of employees in a possibly high-power distance and equalitarian culture to positive and negative downward influence tactics used by authority figures. In the absence of research to the contrary, we assume that organizational relationships in westernized, English speaking



formal Omani organizations will generally mirror those in formal North American economic organizations. The apparent paradox between the presumed Middle Eastern high-power distance and equalitarian Islamic values is similar to the paradox in the United States between its national social-cultural equalitarian norms and hierarchical formal organizational power relationships. In addition, we assume that the universal effect of industrialization and Western business practices (Form, 1979) leads to a global “convergence hypothesis” as supported by the work of Rungtusanatham *et al.* (2005). Proponents of this position argue that as nations industrialize, their economic organizations emulate global industrial practices and their managerial beliefs and practices become increasingly similar (Kerr *et al.*, 1960).

### Social exchange relationships

The positive organizational approach advocated by the positive organizational psychology writers (Cameron *et al.*, 2003; Cameron and Quinn, 2006; Luthans and Avolio, 2009) focuses on promoting positive and developmental social exchange between organizational participants, especially between supervisors and their subordinates. An early author in the area of exchange relationships, Blau (1964), distinguished between economic and social exchange. According to Blau (1964), social exchange involves favors that create diffuse future obligations where the nature of the return may be uncertain. Alternately, economic exchange involves contractually specified obligations performed at a specific time (Organ and Konovsky, 1989). Because the obligations are contractual, economic exchange does not necessarily depend on trust. However, unlike economic exchange, social exchange promotes feelings of personal obligation, gratitude, and trust resulting in enduring social patterns (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005).

Building on the work of Blau (1964), Organ and Konovsky (1989) also differentiated between social and economic exchange relationships. They focused on the interpersonal attachment that develops from social exchange between individuals such as between supervisors and their subordinates. Later, Konovsky and Pugh (1994) showed that social exchange in the form of fair treatment leads to the development of a social exchange relationship represented by trust in one’s supervisor. Furthermore, Konovsky and Pugh (1994) found that trust in one’s supervisor mediated the

relationship between fairness and OCB, indicating that social exchange relationships lead to positive work behaviors.

We define trusting one’s supervisor (Ambrose and Schminke, 2003), as the belief of employees that they can communicate with their supervisors with the expectation that the integrity of such communications will not be violated (O’Neill and Arendt, 2008). It is likely that trust in one’s supervisor develops from day-to-day interactions, including influence attempts between supervisors and employees. When these interactions are positive, trust among the participants is likely to increase (Brashear *et al.*, 2003).

Leader–member exchange (LMX), as described by Graen and Scandura (1987), is another construct that reflects a social exchange relationship between leaders and their employees (Wayne *et al.*, 1997; Masterson *et al.*, 2000). The LMX model (Dienesch and Liden, 1986; Liden *et al.*, 1993; Gerstner and Day, 1997) proposes that leaders exhibit very different patterns of behavior toward different employees that they supervise in their work units. These behavioral differences lead to the development of two types of relationships (exchanges) between leaders and their subordinates. One type, high-quality LMX (high LMX), is characterized by mutual trust and support, interpersonal attraction, loyalty, and bi-directional influence (Duchon *et al.*, 1986; Deluga, 1994). Thus, high LMX represents social exchange. The other type, low-quality LMX (low LMX), is characterized by unidirectional downward influence based on formal organizational authority and contractual relations (Duchon *et al.*, 1986; Deluga, 1994). Low LMX represents economic exchange. Employees participating in high-quality exchanges with their leaders often are referred to as the “in-group” and those engaged in low-quality exchanges as the “out-group” (Dansereau *et al.*, 1975).

Wayne and Green (1993) suggest that when leaders engage in behaviors indicating positive regard for their employees, employees feel obliged to reciprocate such that their interactions become mutually beneficial. Thus, these social exchanges affect not only the leader’s behavior toward subordinates, but also the subordinate’s behavior toward the leader. Therefore, the social exchange perspective focuses attention on subordinate’s behavior as reciprocation for positive, supportive leader behavior. One way in which subordinates can reciprocate support from their supervisor is through SOCB.

The reciprocity dynamic may occur because OCB directed at the supervisor will facilitate the supervisor's job through preventing minor social disruptions in the work unit, buffering the supervisor from annoyances, and allowing a supervisor time to focus on perceived strategic issues. While high LMX is a social exchange relationship, SOCB may be considered an appropriate currency of social exchange, because this exchange is not strictly specified, measured, or formally rewarded. Research shows that high-quality LMX leads employees to engage in OCB directed toward their supervisors (Settoon *et al.*, 1996; Wayne *et al.*, 1997; Masterson *et al.*, 2000).

### Leader influence tactics

The positive organizational behavior perspective on leadership emphasizes enabling subordinate performance through exercising positive, supportive influence tactics. Various researchers have examined the influence behavior of managers and identified the array of influence tactics used by them (Kipnis *et al.*, 1980; Yukl and Falbe, 1990). Research also has focused on the frequency with which specific influence tactics are employed with different targets in attempts to obtain desired objectives (Kipnis *et al.*, 1980; Erez and Rim, 1982; Schmidt and Kipnis, 1984; Erez *et al.*, 1986; Ansari and Kapoor, 1987; Yukl and Falbe, 1990).

In addition, a significant amount of influence research centers on the effects of using various influence tactics (Falbe and Yukl, 1992; Yukl and Tracey, 1992; Yukl *et al.*, 1996; Higgins *et al.*, 2003). Some of the consequences of using various downward influence tactics include task commitment and individual effectiveness (Kipnis and Schmidt, 1984; Yukl and Tracey, 1992).

Various influence researchers (Kipnis and Schmidt, 1985; Falbe and Yukl, 1992; Yukl and Tracey, 1992) described "hard" and "soft" categories of leader influence tactics. Typically, hard tactics are associated with member compliance or resistance, and soft tactics with member commitment. In an early theoretical discussion of leader influence tactics, Kipnis (1976) described the differential effects of "strong" and "weak" tactics that approximate the empirically derived "hard" and "soft" categories (Yukl and Tracey, 1992). In the interest of parsimony, researchers have been using hard and soft categories of influence tactics because when influence scales such as those developed by Kipnis *et al.* (1980) or the Profiles of Organizational Influence Strategies (POIS) (1999) are subjected

to a forced two-factor analysis, "hard" and "soft" factors are identified (Standifird *et al.*, 2008; Klocke, 2009).

Conceptually, the soft influence category approximates the organizational approach of employing positive influence that incorporates exercising reason and building positive social relationships. In the Kipnis *et al.* (1980) framework, positive influence would include clusters of influence tactics that they label as Reason, Friendliness, and, perhaps, Bargaining and Coalitions. Evidence indicates that a leader employing these tactics would believe that the subordinate was not under the leader's control, and rather would attribute subordinate compliance to the subordinate's volition. Therefore, extrapolating from the existing research literature, we believe that downward positive influence tactics could lead to developing a productive social exchange relationship with subordinates in line with the positive organizational approach.

Alternately, downward negative influence tactics can be viewed as the antithesis of positive tactics. Negative tactics are conceptually similar to "hard" tactics that incorporate the Kipnis *et al.* (1980) influence strategies of Assertiveness, Higher Authority, and Sanctions. These "negative" influence tactics lead leaders to believe that they control their subordinates' behavior and performance (Kipnis, 1976). Hence, leaders attribute subordinate compliance to their own actions rather than to their subordinates' volition. Consequently, subordinates and their performance may be held in low esteem owing to the metamorphic cognitive process occurring in the leader (Kipnis, 1976). Thus, using downward negative influence is likely to be detrimental to social exchange relationships with subordinates.

Surprisingly, there is relatively little research linking downward influence tactics to OCB. However, positive influence is associated with task commitment (Falbe and Yukl, 1992; Yukl and Tracey, 1992; Yukl *et al.*, 1996). We use the following definition of task commitment: "Strong enthusiasm and special effort beyond what is normally expected" (Yukl and Tracey, 1992: 530). Thus, we deduce that positive downward influence tactics should have a positive relationship to SOCB.

As a leader's downward influence tactics are a common characteristic of the interaction between leaders and their subordinates, we propose that the type of influence tactics employed will also contribute to the quality of their social exchange relationship, LMX. As LMX is associated with



OCB, a supervisor's influence tactics will affect subordinates' SOCB through the quality of the supervisor-subordinate relationship or LMX.

Sparrowe *et al.* (2006) found that LMX moderated the relationship between a leader's influence tactics used with subordinates and the subsequent helping behaviors (a form of OCB) exhibited by subordinates. Using the group engagement model, they argue that supervisors' influence tactics provide cues to employees regarding their relative standing with their supervisors. Subordinates interpret these cues in the context of the quality of the relationship with the supervisor (LMX). Hence, influence tactics that are inconsistent with the quality of LMX become more salient. Thus, LMX should moderate the relationship between influence tactics and helping behaviors. For example, Sparrowe *et al.* (2006) found that influencing through exchange was positively related to helping behavior in the context of high-quality LMX and negatively related to helping behavior in the context of low-quality LMX. This approach assumes that the quality of the exchange relationship with subordinates, LMX, precedes a leader's specific influence tactics usage. We follow the perspective advanced by Masterson and colleagues (2000) that leaders' influence tactics will affect the development of LMX. This is because perceptions of LMX quality develop over time as a function of daily interactions (including influence tactics) between supervisors and their employees. Hence, Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005) argue that there is no contradiction between these two distinct perspectives, because high-quality relationships can be both a result and a resource for social exchange.

On the basis of the above discussion, we hypothesize the following relationships among a leader's downward influence tactics, social exchange (represented by LMX and trust), and OCB directed toward the leader (SOCB):

**Hypothesis 1a:** Positive downward influence tactics will be related positively to social exchange relationships (*represented by LMX and trust with supervisors*).

**Hypothesis 1b:** Positive downward influence tactics will be related positively to SOCB.

**Hypothesis 2:** Negative downward influence tactics will be related negatively to social exchange relationships (*represented by LMX and trust with supervisors*).

**Hypothesis 2b:** Negative downward influence tactics will be related negatively to SOCB.

**Hypothesis 3a:** Social exchange with supervisors (represented by LMX and trust) will mediate the relationship between positive downward influence tactics and SOCB.

**Hypothesis 3b:** Social exchange with supervisors (represented by LMX and trust) will mediate the relationship between negative downward influence tactics and SOCB.

## Methods

### Data collection

In the Sultanate of Oman, we collected survey data from 202 subordinates and 172 supervisors in westernized, formal organizations that included a government export promotion agency, a computer services company, an engineering services company, a ceramic tiles manufacturer, a bank, a construction company, the staff training, retail stores, an engineering department of a university, and the administrative office of a large hospital. Our survey instrument consisted of two sections; one section was completed by subordinates and the other completed by their respective supervisors. Usually we administered the survey to employees in groups at their workplaces and immediately collected the completed forms. Then the employees were asked to give the "supervisor" section of the survey to their supervisors. Subsequently, these "supervisor" surveys were collected from a designated person in the organizations after being completed. In a few cases, subordinates requested additional time to complete the survey. In these cases both the "subordinate" and the "supervisor" sections of the survey were collected from the designated person in the organization. A common serial number was used to match the two sections (supervisor with subordinate) of the survey.

A total of 228 surveys were administered and 202 subordinate surveys and 172 supervisor surveys were returned yielding response rates of 88.6% and 75.44%, respectively. We used AMOS software (Arbuckle and Wothke, 1995) with the maximum likelihood function that enabled us to obtain information from the full data set ( $n=202$ ) in our analysis. The supervisor surveys were from 33 different supervisors who rated an average of five subordinates (range 1–16). The subordinate survey form contained items assessing the frequency with

which downward influence tactics were used, LMX and trust. The supervisor survey form contained items measuring supervisor-directed OCB. Thus, the behavior of subordinates directed toward their supervisors was measured from the perspective of supervisors.

### Sample

The subordinate sample consisted of 62.4% males and 37.6% females. The average job tenure of the sample was 8.2 years ( $SD=5.6$ ). The educational level of 40.7% of the subordinates was bachelor's degree or higher and 84.7% of them had worked under their supervisor for at least 7 months. Most of them (83.3%) were between the ages of 21 and 40. Government employees comprised 39.7% of the sample, and private sector employees 33.3%, with the rest reporting their industry as "other." Clerical/administrative employees comprised 37.5% of the sample, sales 10.3%, production/technical 14.1% and the rest reported their job category as "other."

The supervisory sample consisted of 82.5% males and 17.5%, females. The educational level of 72.35% of the supervisors was bachelor's degree or higher. The ages of 90.9% of the respondents were between 31 and 50. The average period that a supervisor had supervised his or her subordinate(s) was 34.3 months ( $SD=21$ ).

### Measures

*Demographics:* the demographic data gathered from the subordinates were, tenure, gender, nationality, tenure under their supervisor, education, age, nature of industry, and nature of job. The demographic data gathered from the supervisors were, gender, nationality, education, and age.

*Influence:* a modified version of the POIS Form-S (Kipnis and Schmidt, 1999), was used to assess leaders' influence tactics used with subordinates, as perceived by those subordinates. This empirically derived instrument has demonstrated cross-cultural robustness and validity (Schmidt and Yeh, 1992). The POIS scales elicit self-reported influence tactic usage in a specific work and relationship context. However, we modified the wording of the scale items so that subordinates reported their supervisors' use of influence tactics. For example, we changed the item "I act very humble and polite while making my request" to "My supervisor acts very humble and polite while making his/her request." The response choices for this scale ranged from "almost always" (5) to "never" (1).

The POIS Form-S (Kipnis and Schmidt, 1999), consists of 33 tactical items that typically cluster into the following seven downward influence factors used by supervisors with their subordinates: Friendliness, Assertiveness, Reason, Bargaining, Sanctions, Higher Authority, and Coalition (Kipnis *et al.*, 1980). We subjected the POIS response data obtained from the subordinates to an exploratory principal components factor analysis subject to a varimax rotation specifying two factors as shown in Table 1. As we discussed earlier, a two-factor solution would be consistent with the theoretical work describing two parsimonious yet opposing meta-dimensions of influence. Our factor analysis resulted in a solution with one factor containing items measuring: Coalition, Assertiveness, Bargaining, Sanctions, and Higher Authority. A second factor consisted of items measuring Reason and Friendliness. Items for each subsequent scale (positive influence or negative influence) were included if they loaded 0.5 or greater on one factor and 0.3 or less on the other factor. After eliminating cross-loaded items, we had 18 items measuring the first factor that appeared to describe negative influence tactics and 5 items measuring the second factor that appeared to describe positive influence tactics. The reliability (Cronbach's  $\alpha$ ) for the positive influence tactics scale was 0.765 and for the negative influence scale 0.916. Table 2 shows the positive and negative influence scales with the item loadings and the variance accounted for by each scale.

The two scales were clearly differentiated from each other by the type of influence usage each describes. The positive influence scale consisted of using influence tactics such as Logical Arguments, Empathy, Friendliness, and Reason. In contrast, the negative influence scale consisted of pressuring a subordinate with Threats, Social Pressure, Authority, Rewards, Punishments, and Bargaining.

*Social exchange relationship:* we used LMX and trust to measure the social exchange relationship with supervisors. The leader-member (LMX) variable was measured with 4 items from the 7-item scale reported by Scandura and Graen (1984). We selected the 4 items that referred to the quality of the working relationship with supervisors. The responses for this scale ranged from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (7). Trust was measured with the 3-item scale developed by Roberts and O'Reilly (1974). The possible responses ranged from "very low trust" (1) to "very high trust" (7). We subjected the LMX and trust scales to

**Table 1** POIS principal component analysis with varimax rotation – forced two-factor solution ( $n=202$ )

<i>Item</i>	<i>Influence negative</i>	<i>Tactics positive</i>
01. My supervisor obtains the support of other employees in getting me to act on his/her request	<b>0.590</b>	0.140
02. My supervisor makes me feel important by noting that only I have the brains, talent, and experience to what he/she wants	0.335	0.341
03. My supervisor writes a detailed action plan to justify to me the ideas he/she wants to implement	-0.064	0.327
04. My supervisor demands in no uncertain terms that I do exactly as he/she wants	<b>0.520</b>	0.008
05. My supervisor offers me an exchange in which he/she will do something that I want if I do what he/she wants	<b>0.605</b>	0.146
06. My supervisor acts very humble and polite while making his/her request	-0.137	<b>0.600</b>
07. My supervisor makes sure that I do not receive a salary increase until I comply with his/her request	<b>0.618</b>	0.063
08. My supervisor appeals to higher management to put pressure on me	<b>0.655</b>	-0.154
09. My supervisor simply directs me to do what he/she wants	0.323	-0.061
10. My supervisor reminds me how he/she has helped me in the past and imply that now he/she wants compliance with his/her request	<b>0.823</b>	-0.167
11. My supervisor files a report with higher management as a means of pressurizing me to do what he/she wants	<b>0.847</b>	-0.137
12. My supervisor goes out of his/her way to make me feel good about him/her before asking me to do what he/she wants	<b>0.616</b>	0.072
13. My supervisor threatens me with an unsatisfactory performance appraisal unless I do what he/she wants	<b>0.818</b>	-0.141
14. My supervisor sends me to higher management to let it deal with the problem	<b>0.735</b>	-0.281
15. My supervisor threatens not to promote (or recommend me for promotion) unless he/she obtains compliance with his/her request	<b>0.832</b>	-0.218
16. My supervisor sympathizes with me about the added problems that his/her request could cause	-0.137	<b>0.724</b>
17. My supervisor tells me that the work has to be done as he/she specifies, unless I can propose a better way	0.067	0.475
18. My supervisor uses logical arguments in order to convince me to do what he/she wants	-0.193	<b>0.738</b>
19. My supervisor provides me with job-related personal benefits, such as a work-schedule change, in exchange for what he/she wants	0.479	0.359
20. My supervisor waits until I am in a receptive mood before asking me to do what he/she wants	0.408	0.370
21. My supervisor sets a time deadline for me to do what he/she wants	-0.086	0.471
22. My supervisor acts in a friendly manner toward me before making his/her request	0.199	0.497
23. My supervisor presents facts, figures, or other information to me in support of his/her position	-0.092	<b>0.648</b>
24. My supervisor obtains the support and cooperation of his/her co-workers to back up his/her request	<b>0.546</b>	0.117
25. My supervisor hints at or actually threaten to terminate (fire) me if I do not do what he/she wants	<b>0.760</b>	-0.187
26. My supervisor obtains the informal support of higher management to back him/her up in getting what he/she wants	<b>0.561</b>	0.200
27. My supervisor offers to make a personal sacrifice such as giving up his/her free time if I will do what he/she wants	<b>0.615</b>	0.105
28. My supervisor scolds me so that I will realize that he/she is serious about his/her request	<b>0.599</b>	0.091
29. My supervisor promises or actually gives me a salary increase so that I will do what he/she wants	<b>0.706</b>	0.041
30. My supervisor offers to help with my work if I will do what he/she wants	<b>0.578</b>	0.079
31. My supervisor very carefully explains to me the reasons for his/her request	0.010	<b>0.678</b>
32. My supervisor repeatedly reminds me of what he/she wants	0.420	0.342
33. My supervisor points out to me that organizational rules require that I comply with his/her request	0.359	0.319
Eigenvalue	10.595	2.787
Percent variance explained	32.106	8.446
Cumulative percent	32.106	40.552

an exploratory principal components factor analysis employing a varimax rotation. As indicated in Table 3, this analysis resulted in the items measuring both LMX and trust loading on a single

factor. We therefore combined the two scales into a single scale of social exchange relationship with supervisor. The reliability of this scale was 0.868.



**Table 2** LMX and trust scales principal component analysis with varimax rotation ( $n=172$ )

Item	Quality of relationship with supervisor
1. How free do you feel to discuss with your supervisor the problems and difficulties in your job without jeopardizing your position or having it held against you?	<b>0.766</b>
2. Supervisors at times must take decisions that seem to be against the interests of subordinates. When this happens to you as a subordinate, how much trust do you have that the supervisor's decision was justified by other considerations?	<b>0.729</b>
3. To what extent do you have trust and confidence in your supervisor regarding his or her general fairness?	<b>0.700</b>
4. I usually know where I stand with my supervisor.	<b>0.750</b>
5. My working relationship with my supervisor is effective.	<b>0.729</b>
6. My supervisor understands my problems and needs.	<b>0.788</b>
7. My supervisor recognizes my potential.	<b>0.799</b>
Eigenvalue	3.962
Percent variance explained	56.592

**Table 3** Summary statistics and correlations

Variables	Mean	SD	Positive	Negative	Social exchange	SOCB
1. Positive	3.25	0.83	(0.765)			
2. Negative	2.27	0.82	0.072	(0.916)		
3. Social exchange	5.41	1.03	0.553**	-0.355**	(0.868)	
4. SOCB	3.91	0.77	0.195	0.087	0.357**	(0.875)

Notes: \* $P < 0.05$ . \*\* $P < 0.01$ .

Reliabilities are on the diagonal in parentheses.

Means and SD of positive, negative tactics, and SOCB have been transformed to a 5-point scale and those of LMX-Trust have been transformed to a 7-point scale.

OCB: we used the 7-item OCB-Supervisor scale reported by Masterson *et al.* (2000) to measure organizational citizenship. We used this scale because the Masterson *et al.* (2000) study indicates that the social exchange relationships with supervisors are related to behaviors directed toward the supervisors. The responses for this scale ranged from “never true” (1) to “always true” (5).

### Analysis

To reduce the complexity of the measurement model, we created composite sub-scales for some of the observed variables (Mathieu and Farr, 1991). Three composite sub-scales consisting of 6 items each were used as indicators of negative influence. Two composite sub-scales, one consisting of the 3 items measuring trust and the other consisting of the 4 items measuring LMX were used as indicators of social exchange. Finally, two composite sub-scales consisting of 4 and 3 items, respectively, were used as indicators of SOCB. The indicators of positive influence were the 5 items measuring this variable.

We tested our hypotheses using structural equation modeling (SEM) with AMOS 4.0 (Arbuckle and Wothke, 1995) that allowed us to make efficient use of all survey data. The main reason for using SEM in this study was to evaluate simultaneously hypothesized construct relationships rather than in sequential steps as in regression analysis. Second generation multivariate methods (Chin, 1998) allow simultaneous analysis of all the variables in the model instead of separately. We examined the measurement and structural models separately using the two-step method recommended by Anderson and Gerbing (1988). First, the hypothesized factor structure was examined by testing the measurement model. Second, several structural models representing the relationships among the latent variables were examined.

Testing mediation hypothesis with multiple regressions requires running three separate regressions (Baron and Kenny, 1986). With SEM, the mediation model (structural model) is tested directly. In SEM, the observed variables are modeled as imperfect indicators of latent constructs and

each indicator has a measurement error term. This accounts for the unreliability of the observed variables (Arbuckle and Wothke, 1995). In addition, each latent endogenous variable has a disturbance term that reflects the omitted causes (Kline, 1998). Thus, SEM compensates for unreliability of the measures and omitted variables.

**Results**

The summary statistics, correlations, and reliabilities of the latent variables used in the study are shown in Table 3. The fit indexes for the measurement model ( $\chi^2/df=1.191$ , NFI=0.990, RFI=0.984, CFI=0.997, and RMSEA=0.031) indicated that the model fits the data adequately (Figure 1). The factor loadings of all the indicators on their respective latent variables were above 0.5. The hypotheses were tested with a series of structural models. Hypotheses 1 and 2 were tested by specifying a structural model with paths from positive and negative influence to social exchange and SOCB without a direct path from social exchange to SOCB. The fit indexes for this model ( $\chi^2/df=1.318$ , NFI=0.989, RFI=0.982, CFI=0.997, and RMSEA=0.040) indicated that the data fit the model adequately. All regression weights except for the path from negative influence to SOCB were significant. These results provide full support for hypothesis 1 and partial support for hypothesis 2. Positive influence was related positively to social exchange and negative influence was related negatively to social exchange (hypotheses 1a and 2a, respectively). Positive influence also was related positively to SOCB (hypothesis 1b). However,

negative influence did not have the predicted negative influence to SOCB (hypothesis 2b).

As negative influence did not have a direct effect on SOCB, mediation was tested for only positive influence (Baron and Kenny, 1986). The absence of a direct effect for negative influence indicates no support for hypothesis 3b, which states that social exchange will mediate the effect of negative influence on SOCB. First, a fully mediated structural model with paths from positive influence to social exchange and from social exchange to SOCB was tested (Figure 2). The fit indexes for this model ( $\chi^2/df=1.251$ , NFI=0.989, RFI=0.983, CFI=0.998, and RMSEA=0.035) indicated that the model fit the data adequately. The regression coefficients for both the path from positive influence to social exchange and for the path from social exchange to SOCB were significant. In order to test if the mediation was full or partial, a direct path from positive influence to SOCB was added to the above model. The overall fit of this model to the data was adequate ( $\chi^2/df=1.260$ , NFI=0.989, RFI=0.983, CFI=0.998, and RMSEA=0.036), however, the regression coefficients for the paths from positive influence to SOCB and from social exchange to SOCB were not significant. Thus, the above results provide support to hypothesis 3a, the fully mediated model with the effects of positive influence on SOCB being mediated fully by social exchange. This model explained 9.8% of the variance in SOCB.

**Discussion**

We employed a positive organizational behavioral perspective to examine the effects of positive and negative leader influence tactics on the quality of

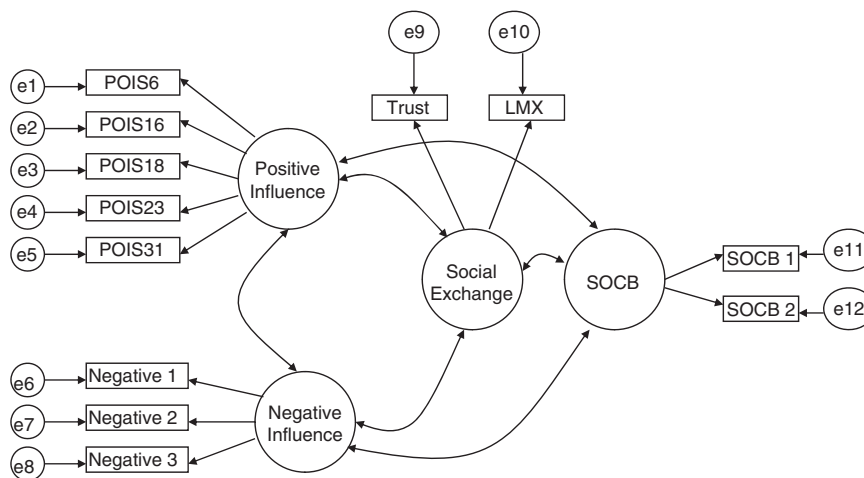
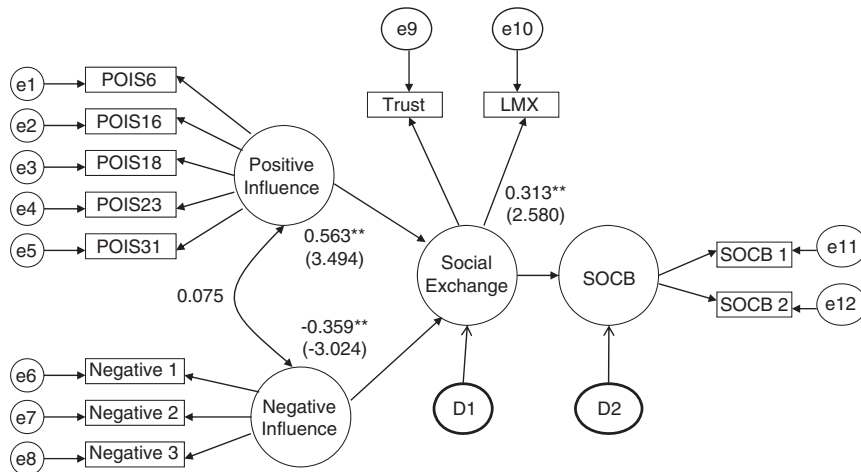


Figure 1 Measurement model.



**Figure 2** Structural model.

Note: The path coefficients are standardized with significant levels determined by the ratios of un-standardized path coefficients. The t-values are in parenthesis.

social exchange with their subordinates. Cameron and Lavine (2006) describe positive employee behaviors (OCB) resulting from exercising positive leadership. In this study, we examined one aspect of positive leadership; positive influence tactics used with subordinates. Furthermore, we employed social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) to combine LMX, OCB, and trust literatures as conceptual and operational definitions of the quality of social exchange in response to a supervisor’s downward influence tactics. We hypothesized that the use of positive downward influence by supervisors leads to the formation of social exchange relationships with their subordinates as represented by high-quality LMX relationships and trust. In addition, based on the findings of Yukl and colleagues (Falbe and Yukl, 1992; Yukl and Tracey, 1992; Yukl *et al.*, 1996), we expected positive downward influence tactics would be associated with SOCB. There is substantial agreement that these organizational relationships are both desired and required in contemporary organizations. Indeed, the management self-help books are rife with advice on the desirability and techniques for achieving positive social exchange among organizational participants.

If positive influence tactics result in positive social exchange, we expected negative downward influence tactics to correlate negatively with high-quality LMX, trust, and SOCB. Finally, we hypothesized that social exchange would mediate the relationship between positive downward influence and SOCB.

As indicated earlier, LMX and trust loaded on a single factor in our factor analysis, and therefore,

these two dimensions were combined into a single scale that we called LMX-trust and it was used as the indicator of social exchange relationships between supervisors and their subordinates.

We tested our hypothesized relationships in a cultural context seemingly very different from the United States where the theory and perspectives that we used originated. The supervisors and their subordinates were employed in the Sultanate of Oman, an orthodox Islamic, mid-range developing nation situated on the Arabian Peninsula. Although, traditional religious and tribal norms and practices hold sway over much of the population, the nation is rapidly modernizing and industrializing. Our survey respondents were employed in formal, English speaking organizations that according to the convergence hypothesis (Form, 1979) would be expected to exhibit organizational relationships similar to those in the West. Furthermore, we might expect that positive downward influence would result in positive social exchange relationships because Islamic teachings promote treatment of employees as equals and with politeness and courtesy (Ali, 2005). Therefore, our finding regarding downward positive influence usage is congruent with the Islamic cultural context of Arab societies. We found that positive downward influence tactics were related positively to quality social exchange and SOCB among the supervisor-subordinate dyads in Oman, just as we would expect in US organizations. Furthermore, the hypothesis that social exchange would mediate the relationship between positive downward influence and OCB was supported fully.



In addition, the finding that positive downward influence tactics were positively associated with social exchange and OCB is congruent with the conclusions of Masterson *et al.* (2000). Our view is that daily interactions of supervisors with their subordinates (including using downward influence) become integrated into the history of experiences between them and the quality of their relationships. This indicates that “little” acts of leadership (McGill and Slocum, 1998) are important for fostering positive social exchange relationships with subordinates and promoting extra-role subordinate contributions.

This paper extends social exchange research by showing that positive downward influence tactics are associated with positive social exchange relationships (LMX and trust) even in contemporary Omani organizations. Furthermore, our study also extends OCB research by demonstrating that positive downward influence tactics are related to SOCB. While negative downward influence was related negatively to social exchange as expected, contrary to our expectations its relationship to SOCB was non-significant.

As indicated earlier, Oman like other Arab Muslim countries studied by Hofstede and Hofstede (2005) is likely to be high on power distance. If this value is operative in Oman, employees may be more accepting of negative leadership tactics in the employment context than in countries lower on power distance. However, the Islamic value of equality and lack of a hierarchical organizational tradition require treating employees with courtesy and politeness. Perhaps, it is because of the combination of these two dynamics that we found no support for the hypothesis that negative downward influence would be related negatively to SOCB. However, the negative relationship of negative influence to social exchange indicates that even in high-power distance countries, negative influence tactics undermine the relationship between supervisors and subordinates. This finding therefore highlights the significance of studying influence processes in cultures that differ on power distance and include competing values.

We found that downward influence tactics using the POIS influence instrument factored into “positive” and “negative” categories (Kipnis and Schmidt, 1985; Falbe and Yukl, 1992; Yukl and Tracey, 1992) with Omani respondents. This finding may indicate the generalizability of “positive” and “negative” categories of leaders’ downward influence tactics. However, it may be possible to develop

a more nuanced understanding of the effects of downward influence tactics on social exchange and SOCB by testing for the effects of individual influence tactics. This was the approach taken by Sparrowe *et al.* (2006) in their study and could be a fruitful avenue for future research.

An important strength of the study is the collection of data from actual supervisor–subordinate dyads. As supervisors rated subordinate SOCB, common method variance could be ruled out as an alternative explanation for the relationship between influence and SOCB. While numerous downward influence studies have relied on supervisor self-reports, our study is unique in using subordinate reports of supervisory downward influence tactics. This study therefore provides the subordinates’ perspective on supervisory downward influence. Finally, this is probably the only study to have used an Omani sample to study leader influence tactics in relation to social exchange relationships.

A limitation of the study is that data on downward influence and social exchange were collected from the same source (i.e., subordinates). It is possible that this relationship is contaminated by common method variance. Another limitation of the study is that all the data were collected at the same time, and therefore, no causal claims can be made for the relationship found among the variables.

The results of the study have practical implications. The results show that positive downward influence is related to positive social exchange relationships and SOCB, and negative downward influence is negatively related to social exchange. Supervisors who want to develop social exchange relationships with their subordinates and promote supervisor-directed OCB might need to emphasize positive downward influence. Research (Kipnis, 1976) indicates that supervisors tend to use negative influence tactics when they meet with resistance to their influence attempts. The results of this study indicate that this may have negative implications for social exchange. As supervisor-directed OCB is important for the supervisor and the organization, the positive approach to influence appears to be the method of choice for downward influence. In addition, the results also suggest that day-to-day interactions with followers are critical for developing high-quality relationships. Leaders need to pay attention to their routine interactions with followers if they wish to develop social exchange relationships that promote extra-role contributions.



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