Theorising Upward Influence Strategies (UIS) in Indian Context

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ABSTRACT

The present study strives to understand the relationship between national culture, particularly Indian culture, and various Upward Influence Strategies (UIS) employed by the Indian managers to influence their superiors. The study relies heavily on existing literature review to formulate a conceptual and theoretical framework of Indian culture-specific UIS based on Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions(1980). This is particularly important in the context of 21st century Indian management style which is in a transitional phase in light of globalization and concomitant growth of knowledge economy. There is little doubt that the present century will witness an explosion of knowledge-based industry which will employ large number of knowledge workers. Not only that, the 21st century India has seen a demographic shift with the rise of young educated, ambitious, hard working urban middle class which is asserting its voice in both work place and beyond. In consonance with this new development a new leadership style is emerging that is supplanting the traditional top-down approach with bottom-up approach through increased employee participation and engagement in decision making process. But unfortunately there is a serious dearth of research to understand this transitional face of Indian management style. The present study is an effort to bridge the gap. The proposed model propounded in the study is based on both extensive and intensive analysis of existing literature review taking into account all concomitant factors involved in the leadership style with emphasis on upward influence attempts in Indian context. The model has demonstrated a clear link between Indian culture and choice of effective UIS. But due to time and logistical constraints the same has not been empirically tested. Hence, the findings of this study cannot be treated as conclusive, though the same can act as a guide for future Indian managers in choice of effective UIS. The present paper is an effort to pave way to further research in the area which is few and far between.

INTRODUCTION

In the modern era managerial effectiveness does not solely depend on his or her ability to get the best out of his or her subordinates but also on the ability to coax and cajole their superiors to behave in a certain manner which will serve both personal as well as organizational goals. The process of shaping the behaviour of superiors in a certain direction to serve personal and organizational goals is known as Upward Influence.

The sub processes through which such objectives are achieved is known as Upward Influence Strategies (UIS).

The study of UIS is relatively new though the concept is very much in vogue since late 70's and early 80's till date, particularly in North America. Scholars like Kipnis, Schimdt, Ralston, Yuki, and others have studied the different methods adopted by subordinates to influence their superiors and have developed measures to calibrate the same. But the study of UIS in Indian context is few and far between. Though people like Ansari and Kapoor, Asha Kaul, A Rao, et al. have examined the subject, a comprehensive conceptualization is yet to be formulated.

Since the initiation of the study in India, few factors have been examined like gender, agent – target characteristics, agent-target perception and agent-target relation etc that determines the choice of UIS. But the role of culture in shaping the same has been overlooked. Culture is a set of shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices that characterizes an individual in an institution, organization or group. Such set of attitudes, values, goals and practices also defines the characteristics of a manager in an organization. For example, in a country like India which is deeply feudal society with a well defined hierarchical structure the ability to conform to the established norms and practices laid down by the superiors or seniors in an organization is regarded as a valuable trait of a successful manager. This is also known as “Maai Baap” culture in common parlance. Hence, culture is a very important determinant in adopting effective UIS.

According to Hofstede, there are 5 dimensions of culture - Power Distance, Uncertainty Avoidance, Individualism–Collectivism, and Masculinity–Femininity and Long-term Orientation. Among these dimensions, power distance, individualism-collectivism and Long-term Orientation are most important in the study of UIS. In Indian context the aforementioned "Maai Baap" culture is a quintessential example of Power Distance because according to Hofstede power distance index (PDI), India ranks highest. Similarly, organizational ties, group cohesiveness, team work, family run businesses make India a more collectivistic culture than others. Further, as Indian society values traditions, persistence, loyalty, long-term association, those managers who have displayed a long-term vision in achieving both personal and organizational goals are more likely to be successful.

The objective of the study is to develop a conceptual framework of UIS with culture as primary determinant which is expected to improve our understanding of UIS in organizations in India, a culturally and ethnically diversified country.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study attempts to meet the following objectives:

i. to examine the upward influence strategies of managers in Indian context.

ii. to develop a model in Indian context which will
serve as a purpose to understand the relationship between socio-cultural values and choice of upward influence strategies.

iii. to develop a more informed understanding of the dynamics of intra-cultural influence behavior to improve organizational and managerial effectiveness.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Upward Influence Strategies
An important aspect of a manager’s effectiveness is his/her ability to influence others within the organization (Allen, Madison, Porter, Renwick & Mayes 1979; Kipnis, Schmidt & Wilkinson 1980; Mayes & Allen 1977; Schreisheim & Hinkin 1990; Yukl & Falbe 1990; Yukl & Tracey 1992). Influence has been defined as the informal process by which one person affects the behavior of another (Organ & Bateman 1990). It differs from formal organizational power that involves the hierarchical authority to control the behaviors of others. Managers may often need or wish to influence people who are higher (rather than lower) in the organizational hierarchy. Upward influence refers to an agent’s influential behaviors that are directed toward individuals at higher levels in the organizational hierarchy (Wayne et al., 1997). Their ability to develop and use effective upward influence strategies is critical (Ansari & Kapoor 1987; Kipnis & Schmidt 1988; Mowday 1978; Porter, Allen & Angle 1981; Schilit & Locke 1982; Tandon, Ansari & Kapoor 1991). “Upward influence” has been defined as “influence attempts directed toward someone higher in the formal hierarchy”(Porter et al., 1981, p. 111).

Research has shown that subordinates who effectively use influence strategies can secure desired outcomes and resources from their superiors (Deluga & Perry 1991). Therefore, the way in which managers use upward influence strategies with their superiors may be crucial to their personal success in the organization. From an organizational perspective, the appropriate use of influence in superior-subordinate relationships may also contribute to the effectiveness of the firm in that the ability of superiors and subordinates to effectively function together enhances organizational performance. While research interest in upward influence strategies has intensified over the past few decades, there has been an evolution of views as to how this phenomenon should be studied.

The investigation of upward influence began with an approach that we describe as a tactics perspective. Over time, the investigation of upward influence has progressed into a meta-category perspective.

The tactics perspective. Empirical interest in upward influence in organizations heightened considerably approximately twenty-five years ago when Kipnis et al. (1980) inductively developed a list of influence tactics. Based on U.S. data, the tactic categories identified as relevant to upward influence were: reason (or rational persuasion), friendliness (or ingratiation), assertiveness, bargaining (or exchange), higher authority, and coalition. The upward influence tactics developed by Kipnis et al. (1980) were largely supported by another exploratory study conducted by Schilit and Locke (1982). They included all tactics of Kipnis et al. except Ingratiation and Blocking, and added two additional tactics labeled as Adherence to Rules and Manipulation. Yukl and Falbe (1990) conducted a study to replicate and extend the previous exploratory influence research by Kipnis et al. (1980) and added two new tactics, Inspirational Appeals and Consultation. In addition, Yukl and Tracey’s study included Legitimating as another influence tactic. Legitimating was similar to Adherence of Rules proposed by Schilit & Locke (1982). Thus, it is well understood that subsequent upward influence tactics research has identified additional tactics such as adherence to rules and manipulation by Schilit & Locke, 1982, inspirational appeals and consultation by Yukl & Falbe, 1990, and legitimating by Yukl & Tracey, 1992. Schriesheim and Hinkin (1990) replicated the study by Kipnis et al (1980) and removed sanctions and blocking as UIS.

Singh-Sengupta (1990) identified the following influence strategies used by subordinates to influence the manager: blocking, dependency, upward appeal, ingratiation, expertise, persuasion, rationality and personalised approach. The most recent development on the upward influence tactic taxonomy was the Strategies of Upward Influence (SUI) measure (Ralston et al., 1993). The SUI is a cross-culturally developed measure of upward influence tactics. In SUI, Ralston et al. included inputs from Hong Kong Chinese, German, French, and American managers in forming the tactic items in their questionnaire. Their results proposed a set of influence typology that was substantially different from the widely used Kipnis et al. taxonomy. Ingratiation and Rational Persuasion were the only common dimensions. Good Soldier, Image management, Personal Networking, Information Control, and Strong-Arm Coercion were identified for the first time as influence tactics.

The meta-category perspective. Subsequent to their groundbreaking influence tactics work, Kipnis and his colleagues grouped the tactics into three meta-categories that later became known as hard, soft, and rational strategies (Kipnis, 1984; Kipnis & Schmidt, 1988). Hard tactics, in the Kipnis et al. (1980) taxonomy, collectively referred to influence tactics of Assertiveness, Upward Appeal and Coalition. On the contrary, soft strategies of upward influence included Ingratiation and Exchange of favors. Rational strategies referred to use of logic and rational bargaining in a non-emotional way. Rational Persuasion and some forms of Exchange were rational tactics. The meta-category perspective has been empirically validated by other influence researchers (Egri et al., 2000; Falbe & Yukl, 1992; Farmer et al., 1997; Ralston & Pearson, 2003; Sun & Bond, 2000).

Fu and Yukl (2000) study broadly defined another metacategories: persuasive, assertive, and relationship based upward influence strategies. The three strategies are defined as follows: (1) Persuasive strategy includes rational persuasion, inspirational appeal, and consultation. When influencing the target, the manager using this strategy focuses on the merits of the request, provides logical arguments, or connects the request to the larger good. (2) Assertive strategy consists of persistence, pressure, and upward appeal. The manager, when applying this strategy, uses some form of coercion to influence the target. (3) Relationship-based strategy includes giving gifts, informal engagement, personal appeal, socializing, and exchanging.
directional perspective. Directional classification of influence tactics is widely accepted. The three main directions of influence are: downward, horizontal, and upward influence tactics. Early studies focused on influence tactics of leaders toward subordinates i.e. downward (Erez & Rim, 1982; Kipnis et al., 1980). These early studies mainly envision the influence as a one-way process to increase the subordinate performance. Parallel with the progress in understanding leadership in a transformational context, research also started focusing on influence practices between peers (horizontal) and influence tactics toward superiors (upward) (Charbonneau, 2004; Yukl & Chavez, 2002). To put it in simple words, Downward influence tactics is the way of influencing subordinates in an organization. Horizontal influence tactics is the way of influencing peers, colleagues or members at the same hierarchy. Upward influence tactics, the main focus of this paper, is the way of influencing superiors/leaders, someone at a higher hierarchy.

Time-frame perspective. Yukl, a prominent scholar in the field, and his associates classified influence tactics according to their primary purpose and time frame. Proactive tactics are used in an attempt to influence someone to carry out an immediate request, and they are especially important in situations where the agent has little authority over target persons. Impression management tactics are used to create a favorable image and build a better relationship. Political tactics are used to influence policy decisions or the allocation of scarce resources (Yukl & Michel, 2006; Yukl & Chavez, 2002). The three major studies that have played a determining role in the conceptualization of influence tactics are given in table 1.

Emic & Etic Issues in Upward Influence Strategies in Indian Context

Upward Influence Strategies are universal as well as culture-specific phenomena. The fundamental difference between etic and emic studies is that Etic studies assess the universality of upward influence tactics across cultures, and emic studies focus on culture-specific tactics. Hofstede’s research concerning culture’s differences is a prime example of etic approach.

Emic Studies. Not many but a few emic studies in India have captured culture-specific UIS. One such study was conducted by Asha Kaul in the year 2003 where she developed two unique culture-specific upwards influence tactics. Those were “Imitation” and “Nonchalance”. Another such study was conducted by Venkat R. Krishnan in the year 2005 where he developed “pressure”- a combination of some aspects of higher authority and assertiveness, and “meekness”- a subset of friendliness. However, since the present study is more concerned with studying UIS in Indian context and how Indian culture is affecting choice of UIS, I will be focusing on pseudo-etic approach of UIS i.e. a study that investigates the effectiveness of universally accepted UIS, identified by Kipnis and Schmidt, in Indian context.

The Concept of Culture

“Culture is the collective programming of the human mind that distinguishes the members of one human group from those of another. Culture in this sense is a system of collectively held values.” – Geert Hofstede

To understand the effect of culture on UIS in general and India in particular it is important to understand the basic concept of culture in the organizational context with a brief on Indian culture in particular;

“Culture is the deeper level of basic assumptions and beliefs that are shared by members of an organization, that operate unconsciously and define in a basic “taken for granted” fashion an organization’s view of itself and its environment.” – Edgar Schein

“...the core of culture is composed of explicit and tacit assumptions or understandings commonly held by a group of people; a particular configuration of assumptions/understandings is distinctive to the group; these assumptions/understandings serve as guides to acceptable and unacceptable perceptions, thoughts, feelings and behaviors; they are learned and passed to new members of the group through social interaction; culture is dynamic – it changes over time” (Milliken and Martins, 1989).

The implication of this definition is that culture is a collective social phenomenon (Milliken and Martins, 1989). For instance management communicates organizational work culture through practices of recruitment, staff appraisals, remuneration and flexible work arrangements. All these practices are aspects of social interactions. Organizational culture can, therefore, be created, rather than just inherited by employees. Once in existence, it subtly influences perception, thought, action, and feeling of the employees in ways that are consistent with their cultural reality. It guides the selection, interpretation, and communication of information in ways that are meaningful to the employees. To understand organizational culture, one must understand the basic assumptions of the employees, namely, their national cultural values and beliefs. Culture is not a characteristic of individuals; it encompasses a number of people who were conditioned by the same education and life experience.

Hawkins et al. (1983) defined culture as that complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, arts, law, morals, customs and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society. To Hawkins et al., term, “acquired by man” means that culture is socially learnt. The researcher therefore looks at culture as a total way of life of people living together. Every individual is subject to his or her culture, that is, the way people live, eat, dance, believe, dress, sing, etc. The general patterns of behaviour by people accepted by them are influenced by their culture.

Cultural values affect norms, which specify an acceptable range of responses to specific situations. The collective beliefs which affect cultural values and norm in different countries show great variation. For instance, most 1

http://changingminds.org/explanations/culture/what_is_culture.html
Americans still believe in work, in getting married at appropriate age, in giving charity and in being honest. Some people in Nigeria in the North can marry from the age of twelve. When products are introduced into one country from another, acceptance is far more likely if there are similarities between the two cultures. Thus, in short Culture is made up of the values, beliefs, underlying assumptions, attitudes, and behaviors shared by a group of people. Culture is the behavior that results when a group arrives at a set of - generally unspoken and unwritten - rules for working together.

**National Culture.** These are values, beliefs, and assumptions learned in early childhood that distinguishes people in one society from those in another (Beck and Moore, 1995; Hofstede, 1991). Each culture has its own unique set of beliefs, value systems, attitudes, and related behaviors that determine managerial behavior (Chakraborty, 1991). For example due to centuries of British governance, India had considerable Western influences in managerial philosophy that are evident in modern Indian management practices (Bhawgati and Desai, 1970; Jones, 1989). Yet, Indian management practices have developed a distinctly Indian flavor. For instance, Indian companies tend to be run in a more paternalistic manner, with personal relationships playing a more crucial role in business than one observes in Western cultures (Garg and Parikh, 1986). These unique cultural perspectives influence the style of today's Indian managers and shape the expectations of Indian subordinates.

**A Brief Note on Indian Culture**

Indian culture is a confluence of customs, beliefs, value systems, attitudes, and related behaviors that are unique and distinct, which has direct as well as indirect impact on Indian Management style. For example Indian companies are run like a large joint family dominated by a leader who is regarded as a father figure demanding respect and obedience while looking after his subordinates as children requiring nurture and nourishment. This paternalistic and personalised approach gives Indian management practices a distinct Indian flavor despite the fact that India had been subjected to two centuries of British rule, which has left indelible impression on Indian management style. These unique cultural perspectives influence the style of today's Indian managers and shape the expectations of Indian subordinates.

The culture of India (or) Indian culture which shape Organizational Behavior in India can be best expressed as comprising the following - hierarchical orientation, embeddedness, position defining status, leader follower system, paternalism, personalised relationships, never say no attitude, flexibility, devotion to duty and obligation, harmony and long-term relationships.

**Indian Management and Leadership Style:**

The role of a leader in an organization across cultures involves dual responsibility of people orientation and task orientation. In some cultures the former is given more weightage while the later is given more importance in other cultures. In India, where the leader is looked upon as benevolent father, people orientation is given primacy over task orientation to achieve organizational goals. Thus in Indian organizations leaders tend to build personal relationships with the subordinates and vice versa to attain task objectives. This personalised approach involves nurturing and nourishing the subordinates by not only guiding them to achieve the task given but also taking interest in their personal lives which galvanizes them to take action [Sinha, Jai B.P. (1978), The Nurturant-Task Leader – A Model of the Effective Exec]. This approach is rooted in the Indian psyche which craves for societal and personal bonding that gives a sense of emotional security.

A diagramatic representation of the cultural values which shape Organizational Behavior in India is shown in fig. 1

**Geert Hofstede’s cultural dimensions**

Hofstede (2001) is one of the pioneers who have contributed to our modern day understanding of national culture. In the mid 1970's, the Dutch academic, Geert Hofstede, based his five dimensions of culture on an extensive survey at IBM in which he investigated the influence of national culture. His methodology was both unique in size as well in structure. He defined organisational culture is an idea system that is largely shared between organisational members. By filtering out IBM's dominant corporate culture from his data on IBM's national subsidiaries, Hofstede was able to statistically distinguish cultural differences between countries. Hofstede classified a county's cultural attitudes as five dimensions:

- **Power distance**: the degree to which those with less power accept the authority of those with more power. It is defined as “the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organisations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally”. (Hofstede, 1994, p. 28) A High Power Distance ranking indicates that inequalities of power and wealth exist within the society and that the less powerful members of the society accept this situation. A Low Power Distance ranking indicates the society de-emphasizes the differences between citizen's power and wealth. In these societies equality and opportunity for everyone is stressed. Power distance is positively related to the acceptability and use of coercive influence strategies (Egri et al., 2000; Morris & Pavett, 1992; Ralston et al., 1994, 1995, 2001; Schermerhorn & Bond, 1991), unethical decision making (Christie, Kwon, Stoeberl & Baumhart, 2003; Getz & Volkema, 2001; Vitell, Nwachukwu & Barnes, 1993) as well as perceived corruption (Husted, 1999).

- **Masculinity vs. feminism**: refers to the distribution of emotional roles between the genders. It opposes a tough masculine to tender feminine society. focuses on the degree to which `masculine' values like competitiveness and the acquisition of wealth are valued over 'feminine' values like relationship building and quality of life. A High Masculinity ranking indicates the society values assertive and aggressive 'masculine' traits. A Low Masculinity ranking typifies societies in which nurturing and caring 'feminine' characteristics predominate.

- **Uncertainty avoidance**: is the extent to which a culture programs its members to feel either comfortable or uncomfortable in unstructured situations. focuses on the level of tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity within the society. A High Uncertainty Avoidance ranking indicates the country has a low tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity. This creates a rule-oriented society that institutes laws, rules, regulations, and controls in order to reduce the amount of uncertainty. A Low Uncertainty Avoidance ranking
indicates the country has less concern about ambiguity and uncertainty and has more tolerance for a diversity of opinions. This is reflected in a society that is less rule-oriented, more readily accepts change, and takes more and greater risks.

**Individualism vs. collectivism**: the degree to which individuals are more interested in group welfare vs. self-welfare. Hofstede defines this dimension as follows: “individualism pertains to societies in which the ties between individuals are loose: everyone is expected to look after himself or herself and his or her immediate family.” A High Individualism ranking indicates that individuality and individual rights are paramount within the society. A Low Individualism ranking typifies societies of a more collectivist nature with close ties among its members. In these societies “...people from birth onwards are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups, which throughout people’s lifetime continue to protect them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty.” (Hofstede, 1994, p. 51)

**Long term vs. short-term orientation**: Formerly called "Confucian dynamism", LTO focuses on the degree the society embraces, or does not embrace, long-term devotion to traditional values. A High Long-Term Orientation ranking indicates the country prescribes to the values of long-term commitments and respect for tradition and where long-term rewards are expected as a result of today's hard work. A Low Long-Term Orientation ranking indicates the country does not reinforce the concept of a long-term, traditional orientation and people expect short-term rewards from their work. This refers to how much society values long-standing – as opposed to short term – traditions and values.

Depending on Hofstede's cultural dimensions and the scores and ranking of the countries, different countries adopt different upward influence strategies. Therefore, it is important to understand the applicability of the culture value dimensions to the choice of influence strategies in a particular culture.

**Hofstede Analysis of India.** On power distance, India scored 77 points (which was well above average of 50), implying a hierarchical order in which everybody has a place. This Power Distance score for India indicates a high level of inequality of power and wealth within the society with rigid, well defined hierarchical system. This condition is not necessarily subverted upon the population, but rather accepted by the population as a cultural norm. This hierarchical order needs no further justification to most Indians as long as the power holders are perceived as “good fathers,” who are not overtly emphasizing their power. The pronounced score leaves no doubt that hierarchical differences are important in Indian society and organizations alike.

The score for India on individualism is 48. This is a slightly collectivist score and suggests that there are both collectivists and individualistic characteristics in India. However, India’s strong sense of community and group defined orientation mean a greater acceptance of hierarchical settings. In India, there is a noticeable lack of privacy and a smaller concept of personal space, where several generations often live together under one roof. For Indian business practices this places an additional importance on interpersonal contacts, avoidance of conflict and a more indirect approach to communication. India has Masculinity (MAS) as the third highest ranking Hofstede Dimension at 56, with the world average just slightly lower at 51. The higher the country ranks in this Dimension, the greater the gap between values of men and women. It may also generate a more competitive and assertive female population, although still less than the male population.

India's lowest ranking Dimension is Uncertainty Avoidance (UAI) at 40, compared to the world average of 65. On the lower end of this ranking, the culture may be more open to unstructured ideas and situations. The population may have fewer rules and regulations with which to attempt control of every unknown and unexpected event or situation, as is the case in high Uncertainty Avoidance countries. In later work, Hofstede included another dimension of “long-term orientation” in his research and found that India scored 61 on this cultural value, signifying the importance of basic Indian values of perseverance, tolerance and sacrifice. This is often said to explain lethargy and “casual” (relaxed) attitude at work place. But this may also be construed as a cultural value which rewards loyalty, long term relationships and a proclivity to sacrifice short term gain for long term rewards.

**FINDINGS ON UPWARD INFLUENCE STRATEGIES BASED ON HOFSTEDE'S CULTURAL DIMENSIONS IN INDIA: A TACTICAL APPROACH**

Power distance, individualism/collectivism and Long Term Orientation are the cultural dimensions considered to be of primary relevance to the upward influence constructs. Hence, Hofstede's scores on India with respect to the aforesaid cultural dimensions is given in table 2 and is graphically explained in fig 2.

In countries where power distance index (PDI) is high, such as India, a well defined hierarchical structure entails smooth compliance of established norms and practices laid down by the superiors in an organization as the perceived power of the seniors is considered sacrosanct and non-compliance as sacrilege. Not only that people in higher positions are looked upon as role models whose actions are to be followed with unquestionable loyalty. In such a scenario, non conformists are regarded as pariahs destined to fail. Hence, both from personal and organizational perspective, conformist behaviour is regarded as wise policy which in turn spawns “Maai Baap” culture or in other words, “Boss is always right” attitude. The choice of effective UIS in such cases are those which caters to the aforesaid "Maai Baap" culture. Thus tactics like reason, inspirational appeal, consultation, adherence to rules and ingratiations are more

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likely to be effective in India having high PDI. When it comes to individualism-collectivism index (IDV) India's score of 48 is little more than the World Average of 40, which indicates that India is a moderately collectivist culture. This finding finds resonance in strong family ties, respect for elders, peaceful co-existence, tolerance and deep emotional bonding accentuated by the need for emotional support at individual, societal and organizational level. Due to the collectivist bias of Indian culture, it appears that tactics like reason, consultation, inspirational appeal, exchange, ingratiation together with coalition are more likely to be effective as UIS. It is important to note that there is an interdependence between cultures having high PDI and collectivism which implies that those tactics which are more likely to be effective in high PDI cultures are also likely to be effective in moderately collectivistic culture.

Last but not the least, among the cultural dimensions developed by Prof. Hofstede, Long-Term orientation happens to be a very important dimension in effective implementation of UIS. This is because people with high long term orientation cultures value relationships with others in the organization and therefore use these relationships to influence others more effectively. The LTO score of India is 61 compared to the world average of 48 which suggests that Indian managers value loyalty, long term relationships and a proclivity to sacrifice short term gain for long term rewards. Hence, tactics like exchange, ingratiation, reason, consultation and inspiration are more likely to be effective in India having high LTO.

THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Theoretical underpinnings of this study analyzes cultural effects on UIS. The study acknowledges the importance of cultural factors within the context of national culture in shaping UIS towards achieving organizational and personal goals. The conceptual framework of the study incorporated the CDs model of Hofstede (1980), the tactics developed by Kipnis and Schmidt, Yukl and Colleagues. These two perspectives guided the study in exploring the distinguishing effects of national culture on the preferred upward influence tactics in India (Fig. 3).

The different facets of Indian culture like hierarchical orientation, embeddedness, position defining status, leader follower system, paternalism, personalised relationships, never say no attitude, flexibility, devotion to duty and obligation, harmony and long-term relationships find resonance in Hofstede's 3 Cds viz. PDI, IDV-Coll., and LTO. Though not exhaustive, given the enormous diversity of Indian culture, the 3 Cds of Hofstede mentioned herein does have strong relevance to the working of Indian management style in particular. India's high PDI accounts for hierarchical orientation, paternalism, "never say no" attitude, follow the leader system, and position defining status. Similarly, respect for elders, strong family ties, harmony, personal relationships and duty & obligation accounts for moderately collectivist score assigned by Hofstede (see fig 2). On the other hand long-term relationships, embeddedness and flexibility are some of the aspects that account for higher LTO score (refer fig. 2). Thus the primacy of Indian culture affects Indian management style rendering it paternalistic, where the boss is regarded as father figure whose dictats are to be followed with unquestionable loyalty. In return for this devotion, deference and obedience the subordinates expects not only to take care of his professional life but also help him in his personal need. This creates a two-way relation where the supervisor acts both as the enforcer of discipline and task assigned as well as benevolent father who nurtures and nourishes the subordinate to achieve organizational and personal goals.

This uniqueness of Indian management style makes it imperative for the subordinate to use those UIS which does not challenge the revered and exalted status of the superior but propitiates him to come round to his views in order to achieve the desired objectives, whether personal or organizational. Hence tactics like reason, consultation, inspirational appeal, exchange, ingratiation and adherence to rules are more likely to be effective as UIS in the Indian context to achieve organizational goals like organizational effectiveness, job satisfaction, productivity, role clarity et al. and personal goals like promotion, transfer, work-life balance and positive performance appraisal et al.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

An overall observation of the above study reveals that there are no hard and fast rules in employing upward influence tactics, particularly in Indian context. Due to unique blend of both western and traditional culture in its society as well as in its organizational setting, Indian managers use both hard and soft tactics and therefore, it would not be not be out of context to term Indian management style as "moderate". This observation finds echo in the use of coalition, a hard tactic and reason, consultation, inspirational appeal, exchange and ingratiation which are soft tactics, by Indian managers to achieve desired goals. While tactics like coalition, adherence to rules, reason and consultation are more likely to be used for organisational goals, tactics like exchange, ingratiation and inspirational appeal are more likely to be employed for personal goals.

It may be noted that the above study deals with the use of UIS in an intracultural environment, but does not take into account other factors viz. Agent characteristics, target characteristics, agent-target relationships, objectives of influence etc. which play their part in choice of effective UIS. The reason for giving culture primacy in the above study is that though there have been several research on the impact of non cultural factors like gender, affect, leadership style, agent-target characteristic, etc. very few studies have dealt in to the question of "what role does culture play in choice of UIS?"

It is amply clear that the above study is based on exhaustive and extensive literature review but bereft of empirical data due to time constraints. Nevertheless the findings of the above study is based on analytical and logical reasoning which lays down a theoretical and conceptual framework of choice of effective UIS which is subjected to empirical test on the basis of systematic collection and analysis of data – the objective of future research.

LIMITATIONS

The above study only tries to lay down a foundation for research into the question "what role does culture play in choice of UIS?" The model prescribed herein is an effort to understand the various implications of the above question. In absence of empirical data and scant literature, such model cannot be prescribed as prescription for Indian managers to
follow. It can only be treated as a guide to our study of UIS in India. Thus, it is hoped that only empirical research can support or refute the explanations proposed herein.

**SCOPE OF FURTHER RESEARCH**

A few research gaps are identified with the help of literature reviewed and findings of this study. The literature on the role of culture on the choice of UIS in Indian context is strikingly scarce. This research gap became obvious in the process of literature review. Therefore it is necessary to conduct more studies to explore the effect of culture on UIS empirically so that this research gap could be abridged.

As with any research, this study is constrained by time and resources. Sophisticated organizational behaviors such as influence tactics performed at workplace deserve much commitment and in-depth research attempts to discover new dimensions and to supply better understanding in distinct circumstances in Indian context. In order to test the conceptual framework, future research might be carried out with greater sample size and in different settings.

There is need to clearly understand the scenario where the globalised character of Indian organisations are to be taken into consideration while employing UIS effectively. Again, research is needed to examine regional and subpopulation differences in influence styles within countries. So there is a scope for understanding the effect of expatriates working in India under Indian bosses and Indian managers working under foreign bosses in India. Further, the position of India in Hofstede's analysis is not so clear so far as IDV score is concerned. IDV score of India is 48 which is marginally high as compared to world average of 40 which is surprising given the distinctive collectivistic bias of Indian society. So there is scope to identify whether India is a collectivistic society or individualistic society or a moderate society with collectivist bias and accordingly identify most effective UIS so far as IDV is concerned.

Although we were unable to directly test the role of culture on the effectiveness of combinations of tactics in the current study, combining our results with those reported by Falbe and Yukl (1992) allows us to speculate that certain combinations of tactics may be particularly successful in obtaining desirable work outcomes. To illustrate, Falbe and Yukl reported that combining two soft tactics or a soft tactic with rationality would lead to the greatest likelihood of success. However, we found no studies examining the effects of culture on influence tactic combinations, this is an important avenue of future research.

In a nutshell, cultural contexts effecting UIS require more explanation and Hofstede’s value dimensions scores being cultural predictors in identifying effective culture-specific UIS are to be examined further to test its relevance in Indian context which paves the way for future research.

**REFERENCE**


Arora Dayanand. Foreign Multinationals in India: Adapting to India’s Work Culture and Management Practices.


Annexure

Table 1
Major Studies on Upward influence (1978-2002)

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Table 2
Hofstede's scores on India

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<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Power Distance (PDI)</th>
<th>Individualism (IDV)</th>
<th>Long-Term Orientation (LTO)</th>
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<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>61</td>
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<tr>
<td>World Average</td>
<td>56.5</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>48</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Fig 1
A diagramatic representation of the cultural values which shape Organizational Behavior in India
CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

**INTEGRAL CULTURE**

1. Hierarchical orientation
2. Embeddedness
3. Position defining status
4. Leader-follower system
5. Systémism
6. Personalized relationships
7. Never say no attitude
8. Flexibility
9. Delegation to duty and obligation
10. Harmony

**CULTURE DIMENSIONS**

- High Power Distance
- Moderate Collectivism
- High Long-term Orientation

**Indian Management Style**

**UPWARD INFLUENCE TACTICS**

1. Ingratiation
2. Exchange
3. Constitution
4. Inspirational Appeal
5. Reason
6. Coalition
7. Assertiveness
8. Adherence to rules

**ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS**

1. Organizational effectiveness
2. Job satisfaction
3. Productivity
4. Role clarity

**PERSONAL GOALS**

1. Performance appraisal
2. Promotion
3. Salary increment
4. Transfer
5. Work-life balance

Indian scores compared with world average

**Fig-2**

**GEERT HOFSTEDE ANALYSIS**

Scores

- Power distance
- Individualism
- Long-term Orientation

**Fig-3**

Scores

- India
- World Average

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