# Personality and Social Influence Strategies in the Workplace

**David F. Caldwell**
**Jerry M. Burger**
*Santa Clara University*

*Two studies were conducted to examine the relation between personality and the use of social influence strategies in the workplace. In Study 1, MBA students reported how often they used various influence tactics with their peers at work. They also completed measures of the Big Five personality dimensions, desire for control, and self-monitoring. Canonical correlation analyses found several significant relations between the reported use of influence strategies and personality. High scores on extraversion, self-monitoring, and desire for control predicted more and more varied use of influence strategies. In Study 2, coworkers of the Study 1 participants indicated the extent to which they believed the student used each of the influence strategies and how effective they believed that person was at influencing them. The use of rational persuasion and efforts to involve the other person were related to perceived effectiveness, whereas relying on others to influence a coworker was seen as ineffective.*

The interaction between personality and social behavior has long been a topic of discussion among personality and social psychologists (see, e.g., Endler & Magnusson, 1976; Higgins, 1990; Murray, 1938). In one analysis of this issue, Buss (1987) identified three mechanisms through which personality and social processes are linked: selection, evocation, and manipulation. In this model, individual differences in personality are said to influence the kinds of social environments people place themselves in, the kinds of responses they elicit from others, and the ways they attempt to alter or change the people they encounter. Thus, it is through these three mechanisms that one sees the social consequences of personality.

The present research is concerned with the relation between personality and one of these three mechanisms. Specifically, we were interested in manipulation—that is, the ways in which people intentionally "alter, change, influence or exploit others" (Buss, 1987, p. 1218). The study of social influence has a long history in social psychology (Cialdini, 1993). Relevant to our research, several investigators have identified and categorized the various strategies people use to influence the behavior of those around them (Belk & Snell, 1988; Buss, 1992; Buss, Gomes, Higgins, & Lauterbach, 1987; Falbo & Peplau, 1980). For example, Falbo and Peplau (1980) identified 13 strategies people commonly use in romantic relationships to get their partners to do what they want. These researchers found that strategies that directly address the issue and that involve the other person were more effective than strategies that lacked these features. Similarly, Belk and Snell (1988) identified 24 strategies people use when faced with an unwanted request from their romantic partners. These investigators found evidence that strategies that directly involve the other person and that resulted in some kind of acquiescence to the response were the most effective.

Buss and his colleagues (Buss, 1992; Buss et al., 1987) demonstrated that the use of influence strategies is related to individual differences in personality. That is, they found that scores on personality measures could predict the tendency to use certain influence strategies over others. They interpret these findings in support of the notion that personality is connected to social behavior through the manipulation mechanism. However, there are reasons to question the generalizability of these findings. To date, most of the research examining personality and use of influence strategies has been limited to personal relationships, such as between romantic part-

**Authors' Note:** Address correspondence either to David F. Caldwell, Department of Management, Santa Clara University, Santa Clara, CA 95053, e-mail dcaldwell@mailer.scu.edu, or to Jerry M. Burger, Department of Psychology, Santa Clara University, Santa Clara, CA 95053, e-mail jburger@mailer.scu.edu.

*PSPB*, Vol. 23 No. 10, October 1997 1003-1012
© 1997 by the Society for Personality and Social Psychology, Inc.



Downloaded from http://psp.sagepub.com by Jerry M. Burger on October 1, 2008

ners, close friends, or relatives. However, as Buss (1992) discovered, use of influence strategies varies as a function of the type of relationship, even when examining different types of close, personal relationships. For example, Buss identified six kinds of influence strategies typically used with friends and relatives that were not found when looking at romantic partners.

Thus, the present research was designed to examine the relation between personality and social influence within a different social context. Specifically, we examined self-reported use of influence strategies among coworkers in a business setting. The potential contribution of this work is threefold. First, on a theoretical level, it is important to demonstrate that the personality-manipulation linkage Buss (1987) described is not limited to a specific kind of social situation. Second, examining the relation between personality and reported use of influence strategies provides additional insights about the specific personality variables. Third, identifying the kinds of influence strategies used with coworkers and their relation to personality and other variables has some important applied implications.

*Influence Strategies Among Coworkers*

Buss and his colleagues (Buss, 1992; Buss et al., 1987) identified influence strategies within close relationships by asking pilot subjects to report various strategies they used to manipulate others. The researchers then factor analyzed other subjects' self-reported use of these strategies to identify a smaller number of basic tactics. Fortunately, several investigators already have used similar procedures to identify and measure the various types of influence strategies used in the workplace (Kipnis, Schmidt, & Wilkinson, 1980; Schriesheim & Hinkin, 1990; Yukl & Falbe, 1990). For example, Kipnis et al. (1980) asked subjects to describe "how I get my way" with bosses, coworkers, and subordinates. The researchers factor analyzed these responses and some additional data to identify eight types of influence strategies. Kipnis and Schmidt (1982) followed this work with the development of a scale to assess the extent to which people typically rely on each of the eight strategies to influence their coworkers. Schriesheim and Hinkin (1990) conducted an extensive analysis of the original Kipnis and Schmidt scale. Their analysis reduced the original eight strategies to six. They identified these six strategies as follows: *ingratiation*, such as acting in a friendly or humble manner before making the request; *exchange of benefits*, such as offering help in return or reminding of past favors; *rationality*, such as the use of logic and information to persuade; *assertiveness*, such as setting a deadline and constantly reminding the person about his or her requirements; *upward appeal*, such as informing or appealing to someone higher up in the organization; and *coalition*, such as getting others to back up the request.

Recently, Yukl and his colleagues (Yukl & Falbe, 1990; Yukl & Tracey, 1992) followed a process similar to that used in the original Kipnis (Kipnis et al., 1980) research. Although their results were similar to those reported earlier, these researchers identified two additional influence strategies. They labeled these *consultation*, such as asking how the request could be modified, and *inspiration*, such as describing how it would be personally fulfilling to meet the request. Because organizations have undergone substantial changes during the 10+ years separating the work by Kipnis and Yukl, it is not surprising that these other strategies for influence have become viable. Therefore, we included measures of all eight strategies—the six reported by Schriesheim and Hinkin (1990) and the two unique ones described by Yukl and Falbe (1990)—in our investigation.

*Personality*

We selected seven personality variables that past research and theory suggest should be related to influence strategies. Like Buss (1987), we examined the five personality dimensions from the Big Five model. During the past decade, a remarkably consistent pattern of findings indicates that personality trait variables can be placed within a structure of five robust personality dimensions (cf. Digman, 1990; John, 1990). Although some disagreement remains about the exact structure and labels, the five dimensions generally have been identified as extraversion, neuroticism, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness.

The development of the well-accepted five-factor model has spurred researchers to examine the relations between general personality constructs and workplace behavior. For example, in a review of research findings, Barrick and Mount (1991) concluded that conscientiousness was a particularly strong predictor of job performance. Other factors within the model were related to more specific workplace behaviors. For example, extraversion predicted success at job performance for occupations requiring effective social interaction, such as managers and sales, and openness was related to training proficiency. Similarly, Barrick, Mount, and Strauss (1993) found that sales representatives high in conscientiousness set higher goals and were more committed to those goals than those scoring low on this dimension. Because our intent was to identify the pattern of relations between the set of broad five-factor indicators and the set of influence strategies, we do not propose specific hypotheses between the separate five-factor markers and specific influence strategies.

A number of authors (cf. Block, 1995; Briggs, 1989) have noted that although the five-factor dimensions allow for

Downloaded from http://psp.sagepub.com by Jerry M. Burger on October 1, 2008

the broad categorization of individuals, measures of more fine-grained traits or traits related to more than one of the five factors may also be useful for predicting behavior. Therefore, in addition to the five-factor markers of extraversion, neuroticism, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness, we looked at individual differences in desire for control and self-monitoring.

Specifically, we used the Desirability of Control Scale (Burger & Cooper, 1979) to assess the extent to which people generally want to feel in control of the events in their lives. Compared with those scoring low, people scoring high on the scale are more likely to make their own decisions, exert leadership in group situations, and have more difficulty with situations over which they perceive little personal control (Burger, 1992). Past research suggests that this individual difference variable might be related to the use of influence strategies in the business world. Zimmerman (1990; Zimmerman & Rappaport, 1988) found that people high in desire for control are more likely than those low in desire for control to try to influence members of their community. These people tended to get involved in political and neighborhood projects and other efforts to change the community they live in. Similarly, Reed (1989) found that union organizers tended to have high desire-for-control scores. Moreover, the higher the organizer's desire-for-control level, the more effective he or she was at the job. Finally, people high in desire for control have been found to use a variety of strategies to control the conversations they have with others (Burger, 1990; Dembroski, MacDougall, & Musante, 1984). In short, desire for control has been tied to influence efforts in a number of different domains. It seemed reasonable to expect that this individual difference variable also would be related to the use of influence strategies in the workplace. Specifically, we expected people high in desire for control to make greater use of influence strategies generally than those low in desire for control. Because they are highly motivated to control the work environment and have things done their way, people high in desire for control should frequently use the various tools in their repertoire for influencing the actions of their coworkers.

Finally, we looked at individual differences in self-monitoring. Self-monitoring refers to the extent to which people typically monitor or control the images of themselves they project in social situations (Snyder, 1974, 1987). High self-monitors are very sensitive and responsive to social and interpersonal cues regarding what is appropriate in a situation. Self-monitoring has been related to several workplace behaviors. For example, high self-monitors perform at a higher level than low self-monitors in boundary-spanning jobs that require incumbents to work with different types of individuals (Caldwell & O'Reilly, 1982a). Similarly, high self-monitors are more likely to receive a promotion early in their careers compared with low self-monitors (Kilduff & Day, 1994).

The relative success of high self-monitors in some aspects of organization life may be the result of how self-monitors interact with others. High self-monitors are better at managing the information others receive about their work activities than are low self-monitors (Caldwell & O'Reilly, 1982b) and are more likely to resolve work conflict through collaboration and compromise than are low self-monitors (Baron, 1989). Continuing this line of reasoning, we expect high self-monitors to employ a larger number of different influence strategies than low self-monitors. This is because high self-monitors are better able to alter their style to adapt to the situation and the person they are interacting with. On the other hand, low self-monitors are more likely to use the same style, what they consider the real person, when interacting with others.

## STUDY 1

### *Method*

#### *PARTICIPANTS*

A total of 212 individuals enrolled in a part-time MBA program participated in the study. Volunteers were solicited during class, and all individuals who were solicited agreed to participate. Approximately 85% of the sample were employed full-time. About 46% of those employed were working in engineering or technical jobs, and about 15% held jobs in sales or marketing. Overall, members of the sample had an average of 7.2 years ($SD$ = 7.8) of work experience.

#### *MATERIALS*

*Influence strategies.* We used a slightly modified version of the Schriesheim and Hinkin (1990) scale to assess use of influence strategies. Participants indicated on 5-point scales the frequency with which they used each of 24 tactics to influence peers at work to do something they thought needed to be done. The 24 items included the final 18 items generated by Schriesheim and Hinkin. Because Yukl and his colleagues (Yukl & Falbe, 1990; Yukl & Tracey, 1992) identified two additional strategies in the workplace (consultation and inspirational appeals), we developed additional items to assess these two strategies. Three of these items were designed to assess use of consultation (e.g., "Offered to modify my request to enlist the person's support"), and three were written to assess inspiration (e.g., "Tried to get the person excited about helping out with what I wanted him or her to do"). Thus, the questionnaire contained the six 3-item scales refined by Schriesheim and Hinkin and the two

Downloaded from http://psp.sagepub.com by Jerry M. Burger on October 1, 2008

3-item scales we developed to measure the unique strategies identified by Yukl and Falbe (1990).

*Personality scales.* Individuals completed the NEO Five-Factor Inventory Form S (Costa & McCrae, 1992). This 60-item measure provides self-reported assessments of the Big Five personality dimensions of neuroticism, extraversion, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness. Individuals also completed the Desirability for Control Scale (Burger & Cooper, 1979) and the Revised Self-Monitoring Scale (Lennox & Wolfe, 1984).

*PROCEDURE*

Participants were given a questionnaire during class time and instructed to return the completed questionnaire at the next class meeting. The questionnaire contained the influence strategies items and the personality tests in random order.

*Results*

To identify the dimensions underlying the 24 influence tactics, a principal component analysis with varimax rotation was conducted. The Kaiser eigenvalue-one criterion and a scree plot of the eigenvalues indicated that a six-factor solution explaining 58% of the total item variance was most appropriate. The solution is quite consistent with the a priori structure with two exceptions. The Rational Persuasion, Pressure, Exchange, and Ingratiation factors were identical to those obtained by Schriesheim and Hinkin (1990). The six items reflecting inspiration and consultation combined into a single factor. Because all six of these items describe tactics to build the other person's commitment to the request, we label this factor Involvement. In addition, six items related to the original Schriesheim and Hinkin upward appeal and coalition scales were contained in a single factor. These items all share the common feature of attempting to use others to gain compliance. Therefore, we label this factor Using Others. Table 1 shows the results of this analysis and the six dimensions of influence used in subsequent analyses: involvement, using others, rational persuasion, pressure, exchange, and ingratiation. Scores for each of the six influence dimensions were calculated for each individual by averaging the appropriate questions. The reliability for these scale scores was adequate, with the coefficient alpha ranging from .57 (for ingratiation) to .81 (for involvement).

Table 2 shows the correlations between the complete set of influence and personality variables. Although the Revised Self-Monitoring Scale contains two subscales measuring two facets of self-monitoring, we report only the total score. We repeated the analyses using the subscales together and separately and found essentially the same results as in the analysis using the total score. Several factors reported in Table 2 are worth note. First, there are moderate correlations between many of the personality variables. Individuals high on neuroticism were relatively low on the other Big Five dimensions except openness. Individuals high on extraversion also are relatively high on agreeableness and conscientiousness. Of somewhat more interest are the relations between self-monitoring and desire for control and the Big Five dimensions. High-self-monitoring individuals are relatively high on extraversion and conscientiousness and low on neuroticism. A similar pattern exists for individuals who have a high desire for control. Consistent with previous findings (Yukl & Tracey, 1992), there were small to moderate positive correlations between the reported use of the influence strategies.

Of primary interest for this study is the relationship between personality and the self-reported use of influence strategies. To examine this relationship, we first looked at the correlations between use of the six influence strategies and the seven personality variables. Several significant correlations emerged in this analysis and are shown in Table 2.

To examine the overall relation between personality and self-reported use of influence strategies, we computed canonical correlations between the sets of personality and influence variables. Canonical analysis derives a vector of weights that maximizes the correlation between the sets. These coefficients are similar to regression weights in that each standardized coefficient may be interpreted as the independent contribution of that variable to the correlation between sets. Canonical correlation is also similar to factor analysis in that correlations for succeeding significant roots are independent of preceding roots. Results of this analysis are shown in Table 3. These results show three significant canonical roots. Table 3 also presents two measures of the contribution of each variable to the canonical relationships. The first measure is the canonical loading, or the correlation between individual variables and the respective canonical variates. The final measure is the variable-variate correlation squared, expressed as a percentage of the sum of squared correlations for each variable. This measure can aid in determining the relative magnitude of the relationship of the variables to the variates.

The results of the canonical analysis support and extend those shown in Table 2. The first root suggests that high levels of agreeableness and conscientiousness are associated with relatively low self-reported use of assertiveness and exchange and relatively high self-reported use of rational persuasion and involvement. The second root suggests that individuals high on extraversion and self-monitoring more frequently report use of all influence techniques except rational persuasion

Downloaded from http://psp.sagepub.com by Jerry M. Burger on October 1, 2008

**TABLE 1: Factor Loadings From Study 1 and Study 2**

| | Factors | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Item* | *1* | *2* | *3* | *4* | *5* | *6* |
| Tried to get the person excited about helping out with what I wanted him or her to do | .75 (.77) | | | | | |
| Tried to get the person involved in planning how he or she could meet my request | .74 (.74) | | | | | |
| Explained that what I am asking for will be something that the person will find rewarding or satisfying | .72 (.79) | | | | | |
| Presented my request in an enthusiastic manner | .69 (.63) | | | | | |
| Asked if he or she had any ideas to accomplish the request I made | .66 (.53) | | | | | |
| Offered to modify my request to enlist the person's support | .48 (.72) | | | | | |
| Made a formal appeal to higher levels to back up my request | | .77 (.76) | | | | |
| Obtained the support of other coworkers to back up my request | | .76 (.78) | | | | |
| Mobilized other people in the organization to help me in influencing him or her | | .69 (.56) | | | | |
| Obtained the informal support of higher-ups | | .66 (.68) | | | | |
| Relied on the chain of command—on people higher up in the organization who have power over him or her | | .58 (.44) | | | | |
| Obtained the support of my subordinates or other people at a lower level in the organization to back up my request | | .58 (.65) | | | | |
| Explained the reasons for my request | | | .79 (.73) | | | |
| Used logic to convince him or her | | | .75 (.62) | | | |
| Presented him or her with information to support my point of view | | | .67 (.61) | | | |
| Expressed my anger verbally | | | | .80 (.77) | | |
| Used a forceful manner; I tried such things as demands, the setting of deadlines, and the expression of strong emotion | | | | .74 (.76) | | |
| Had a showdown in which I confronted him or her face-to-face | | | | .69 (.76) | | |
| Offered an exchange (e.g., if you do this for me, I will do something for you) | | | | | .78 (.84) | |
| Reminded him or her of past favors that I did for him/her | | | | | .72 (.72) | |
| Offered to make a personal sacrifice if he or she would do what I wanted (e.g., work late, work harder, do his or her share of the work, etc.) | | | | | .56 (.49) | |
| Acted very humbly to him or her while making my request to him or her | | | | | | .80 (.40) |
| Acted in a friendly manner prior to asking for what I wanted | | | | | | .65 (.79) |
| Made him or her feel good about me before making my request | | | | | | .59 (.66) |

NOTE: Items in the table have loadings greater than .45 in Study 1. The results of the Study 2 analysis are shown in parentheses.

Downloaded from http://psp.sagepub.com by Jerry M. Burger on October 1, 2008

**TABLE 2: Correlations Between Personality and Influence Variables, Study 1**

| | *M* | *SD* | *1* | *2* | *3* | *4* | *5* | *6* | *7* | *8* | *9* | *10* | *11* | *12* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Personality | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1. Neuroticism | 15.86 | 8.02 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2. Extraversion | 32.33 | 6.02 | –.38** | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3. Openness | 30.04 | 4.27 | .01 | .06 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4. Agreeableness | 30.99 | 4.25 | –.24** | .25 | –.05 | | | | | | | | | |
| 5. Conscientiousness | 36.33 | 5.77 | –.34** | .27** | –.03 | .18* | | | | | | | | |
| 6. Self-monitoring | 42.74 | 6.84 | –.27** | .39** | .09 | .03 | .41** | | | | | | | |
| 7. Control | 107.30 | 9.94 | –.34** | .36** | .16* | –.08 | .38** | .38** | | | | | | |
| Influence | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 8. Rational persuasion | 4.53 | .53 | –.06 | .18** | .10 | .11 | .09 | .01 | .25** | | | | | |
| 9. Ingratiation | 3.29 | .83 | .11 | .07 | –.03 | .04 | –.05 | .15* | .00 | .12 | | | | |
| 10. Assertiveness | 1.93 | .73 | .09 | .03 | .03 | –.26** | .03 | –.02 | .09 | .16* | .05 | | | |
| 11. Exchange | 2.13 | .80 | .13 | .11 | .09 | –.14* | –.19** | .02 | .02 | .18** | .40** | .25** | | |
| 12. Using others | 3.03 | .67 | .08 | .09 | –.02 | –.04 | .00 | .13 | .10 | .21** | .74** | .14* | .45** | |
| 13. Involvement | 3.72 | .71 | .01 | .22** | .10 | .05 | .16* | .23** | .24** | .48** | .23** | .18** | .28** | .40* |

*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$.

**TABLE 3: Canonical Correlation Analysis, Study 1**

| | *Root 1* | | *Root 2* | | *Root 3* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Loading* | *Correlation Squared as a Percentage of Sum* | *Loading* | *Correlation Squared as a Percentage of Sum* | *Loading* | *Correlation Squared as a Percentage of Sum* |
| Personality | | | | | | |
| Neuroticism | –.34 | 8% | .30 | 9% | –.22 | 6% |
| Extraversion | .28 | 5% | .54 | 29% | .25 | 7% |
| Openness | .03 | 0% | .23 | 5% | .28 | 11% |
| Agreeableness | .80 | 43% | .17 | 3% | .23 | 6% |
| Conscientiousness | .64 | 27% | .01 | 0% | .15 | 2% |
| Self-monitoring | .31 | 7% | .59 | 35% | –.42 | 22% |
| Control | .38 | 9% | .44 | 19% | .61 | 45% |
| Influence | | | | | | |
| Rational persuasion | .46 | 23% | .34 | 5% | .70 | 50% |
| Ingratiation | .06 | 0% | .59 | 16% | –.50 | 26% |
| Assertiveness | –.50 | 28% | .39 | 7% | .42 | 18% |
| Exchange | –.48 | 26% | .69 | 22% | .08 | 1% |
| Using others | .03 | 0% | .64 | 19% | –.13 | 2% |
| Involvement | .45 | 22% | .82 | 31% | .18 | 3% |

and assertiveness. The third root primarily relates to desire for control. Individuals who are high in desire for control, particularly if they are low in self-monitoring, report relatively high use of rational persuasion and assertiveness and low use of ingratiation. It seems that individuals who have a strong desire to be in control of their environment, particularly if they are not sensitive to social cues, are likely to use techniques that enable them to directly influence how coworkers behave.

The analyses reported thus far show that personality is related to the self-reported frequency of use of different influence techniques. A related question is whether personality is correlated with total frequency of influence attempts. To address that question, two additional analyses were undertaken. Because there was a great deal of variation in the frequency with which different types of influence are used, *z* scores were calculated for each influence type. A measure of total influence use was obtained for each individual by summing the *z* scores for the six strategies. The resulting summed scores then were correlated with the seven personality variables and are reported in Table 4. Three of these were significantly correlated with total influence: extraversion ($r = .19$, $p < .05$), self-monitoring ($r = .14$, $p < .05$), and desire for control ($r = .18$, $p < .01$). People who are extraverted, responsive to social cues, and desire control report making more attempts to influence others.

Given this finding, the question that arises is whether this greater use of influence is enacted by the use of more tactics or by more frequent use of a few tactics. To answer this question, a new variable that we called *influence flexibility* was created by counting the number of influ-

Downloaded from http://psp.sagepub.com by Jerry M. Burger on October 1, 2008

**TABLE 4: Correlations Between Personality and Frequency of Influence Use, Study 1**

| | *Total Influence* | *Influence Flexibility* |
|---|---|---|
| Neuroticism | .10 | .07 |
| Extraversion | .19** | .13 |
| Openness | .07 | .06 |
| Agreeableness | –.06 | –.06 |
| Conscientiousness | .00 | –.02 |
| Self-monitoring | .14* | .14* |
| Control | .18** | .22** |

*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$.

ence techniques in which the individual had a *z* score of greater than zero. This count represents the number of strategies the person used more frequently than the average of the sample. Thus, scores could run from 0 (if the person used all six strategies less frequently than the average) to 6 (if the person used all six strategies more frequently than the average). The mean for this score was 3.17 ($SD$ = 1.64). The correlations between this influence flexibility and the personality variables are similar to those reported above, suggesting that the way these personality variables affect total influence is through the regular use of a greater variety of strategies rather than the very high use of a few strategies.

## STUDY 2

The results of the first study demonstrate the relation between personality and the use of influence strategies in the workplace. Study 2 was designed to examine some secondary but related questions. Specifically, we wanted to provide some evidence of the construct validity of the influence measure and to provide a partial test of the relations between personality, use of influence strategies, and effectiveness in influencing others.

### *Method*

#### *PARTICIPANTS*

Of the participants in Study 1, 85 agreed to participate in the second study. Although all individuals who participated in Study 2 were employed full-time, there were no significant differences in any of the personality measures between those individuals who participated in Study 2 and those who did not. Each participant distributed questionnaires to five coworkers. Three of the participants were dropped because too few coworkers returned questionnaires. A total of 374 coworkers returned questionnaires.

#### *MATERIALS*

The same 24 items used in the first study to assess influence strategies were included in a questionnaire for the coworkers. Items were reworded to ask the extent to which the focal person typically uses the tactic when trying to influence the coworker. Again, we used 5-point Likert-type scales to measure the frequency of each tactic. Coworkers also completed three questions evaluating the success of the focal person's influence attempts. Using 7-point scales, coworkers rated their level of agreement with two statements: "If this person asks me to do something, I am more likely to do it than if someone else makes the same request of me" and "If I agree to a request from this person, I am completely committed to meeting it—that is, I will put in special effort beyond what is normally expected." The third question asked for an overall rating on the focal person's effectiveness at influencing others: "Compared to other individuals who are about the same level in the organization, how effective is this person at influencing others?"

#### *PROCEDURE*

Participants distributed questionnaires to five coworkers with instructions to return the questionnaire in a postage-paid envelope directly to one of the researchers. The cover letter for the questionnaire described the purpose of the study, guaranteed confidentiality of responses, and provided a telephone number that could be called to answer questions. A complete set of five ratings was obtained for 52 of the participants, four ratings were available for 24 individuals, and three ratings were returned for 6 participants. Fewer than three ratings were returned for 3 participants, and these participants were dropped from the study.

### *Results*

To provide a partial test of the construct validity of the influence measure, we conducted a principal component analysis with varimax rotation of the 374 responses by peers. The results of this analysis are reported in Table 1. Consistent with the results from Study 1, the same six-factor solution was most appropriate for the peer reports. The loadings of the items on the factors from both samples were nearly identical.

Overall measures for the focal person's use of the six influence techniques were developed by averaging the responses from the peer raters and the individual's own self-ratings for the use of the techniques. Combining responses this way allowed us to develop a composite rating of influence techniques across targets and situations and was consistent with previous attempts to assess these types of behaviors in organizations (Yukl & Tracey, 1992). An overall measure of effectiveness was computed for each participant by averaging the sum of his or her coworkers' responses to the three effectiveness questions ($M$ = 15.25, $SD$ = 2.11, alpha = .88).

Downloaded from http://psp.sagepub.com by Jerry M. Burger on October 1, 2008

**TABLE 5: Regression Results, Study 2**

| | *Rated Effectiveness* |
|---|---|
| Step 1: Influence measures | |
| Rational persuasion | .30* |
| Ingratiation | .14 |
| Assertiveness | .00 |
| Exchange | –.06 |
| Using others | –.28* |
| Involvement | .31* |
| $R^2$ = .29, $F$ = 5.25** | |
| Step 2: Personality measures | |
| Neuroticism | .03 |
| Extraversion | –.18 |
| Openness | –.05 |
| Agreeableness | .15 |
| Conscientiousness | .02 |
| Self-monitoring | .26 |
| Control | .07 |
| $R^2$ = .35, $F$ = 2.81** | |
| $R^2$ change = .06, $F$ = 0.79 | |

*$p$ < .05. **$p$ < .01.

We regressed the sets of influence strategies and personality variables against the effectiveness score in two steps. In the first step, we entered the use of influence strategies; in the second step, we entered the personality variables. The influence variables explained a significant amount of the variance in the effectiveness scores ($R^2$ = .29, $F$ = 5.24, $p$ < .01). The addition of the personality variables to the equation did not significantly increase the explained variance ($R^2$ = .34, $F$ = 2.81, $p$ < .01; $R^2$ change = .05, $F$ = .79). Table 5 shows the result of this analysis. Three influence variables contributed significantly to this result. The frequency of use of rational persuasion ($\beta$ = .30, $p$ < .05) and involvement ($\beta$ = .31, $p$ < .05) were positively related to evaluations of effectiveness, whereas using others ($\beta$ = –.28, $p$ < .05) was negatively related to success in influencing others. In addition, the personality variable of self-monitoring was marginally related to effectiveness ($\beta$ = .26, $p$ < .10) even after controlling for the use of influence techniques.

## GENERAL DISCUSSION

Influence is an important social process. As previous research has shown, in any relationship, there are a variety of strategies by which individuals attempt to alter or change the behavior of those around them. Further, the frequency with which different strategies are used is related to the personality of the person undertaking the influence attempt. The present research extends previous work by investigating the association between personality and influence in a very important relationship—that is, between people at work. The findings have implications for the theoretical link between personality and social behavior, for what they tell us about the specific personality variables investigated, and for what they tell us about relations between workers and job satisfaction.

First, the results from the first study provide support for the notion that personality affects the way people seek to manipulate and control social environments (Buss, 1987). The findings complement those from previous investigations examining influence strategies within personal and romantic relationships. Looking at the relevant studies to date on this question, it appears that the kinds of strategies people use vary as a function of the kind of relationship. That is, the strategies typically used by an individual when interacting with friends may be different from those used when that person interacts with coworkers or a romantic partner. Of more interest is the fact that personality is related to the reported frequency of use of influence techniques, whether in social or work relationships. Given that work organizations often create "strong" situations with both well-defined procedures and strong norms regarding forms of interactions, the results of this study illustrate the importance of personality in understanding differences in influence attempts. Further, the use of the well-defined five-factor personality taxonomy, in both this study and earlier ones, provides the basis for identifying the specific traits related to broad categories of influence techniques in different situations. The use of a common set of personality measures in studies of different influence situations may ultimately allow for a general description of the relations between specific personality traits and influence. Combining measures of broad personality constructs, such as the Big Five with more specific variables, relevant to a particular situation, may provide the greatest opportunity for developing both a general understanding of the relationships between personality and social manipulation and an understanding of the influences of personality in very defined situations.

Second, the canonical correlation analyses indicate that the relation between personality variables and influence attempts in the workplace is complex but understandable. As the first canonical root shows, individuals high on the personality dimensions of agreeableness and conscientiousness tend to avoid using those influence techniques that are based on either pressuring the other individual or a specific quid pro quo. As the second root shows, individuals who are both extraverted and sensitive and responsive to social cues use a variety of influence techniques. But these people tend to use those strategies that are based on the maintenance of a relationship as opposed to strategies that rely simply on persuasive argumentation or demands most frequently. Finally, as indicated by the third canonical root, when individuals have a high desire to control but do not have the predis-

Downloaded from http://psp.sagepub.com by Jerry M. Burger on October 1, 2008

position to adapt their self-presentations to others (low self-monitors), they tend to rely on rational persuasion and, to a lesser degree, assertiveness to influence others. It may be that without inclination to adapt, those with high need for control rely on the tactics with the least interpersonal sensitivity.

Third, these results may also provide some understanding of how personality is related to work performance. The previously observed relationships between such personality variables as conscientiousness or self-monitoring and performance (Barrick & Mount, 1991; Kilduff & Day, 1994) may be explained in part by the strategies individuals use to influence others. As our findings show, personality is related to influence strategies. When these results are combined with other work showing that influence styles are related to aspects of performance at work (Yukl & Tracey, 1992), they suggest that one mechanism by which personality affects performance is in the influence strategies an individual chooses to use. As the results of Study 2 suggest, the influence of personality on work-related outcomes may be indirect.

Our results also may have some implications regarding affective responses at work. Satisfaction at work is in part a function of relationships with coworkers (Smith, Kendall, & Hulin, 1969). Although we do not test this, an inspection of the influence tactics suggests that individuals are likely to have a different affective response to them. For example, it seems reasonable that if one uses tactics associated with assertiveness or pressure, the targets of those influence attempts are likely to respond with anger or withdrawal. Thus, the results we report may suggest a mechanism through which personality of coworkers influences job satisfaction.

The results of the second study are consistent with previous research relating types of influence attempts to performance (Yukl & Tracey, 1992) and linking high levels of self-monitoring to specific aspects of managerial success (Caldwell & O'Reilly, 1982a; Kilduff & Day, 1994). However, the conclusions that can be drawn from the second study must be regarded as tentative. Establishing clear links between personality, influence, and work-related outcomes will require further work. For example, a definitive test of the links between the personality of the influencer and the perception of influence attempts by the target would require knowing something of the relationship between the influencer and the target. The perception of an influence attempt may be shaped by previous interactions between the two parties, anticipated future interactions, the relative power of the two parties, and the set of norms that exists within the organization. In addition, a convincing test of the relations between influence strategies and effectiveness would require a determination of the appropriate level of aggregation. Is effectiveness a general outcome, or is it relevant only within the context of a dyad? Nonetheless, the results of Study 2 suggest that individuals who presented cogent, reasoned requests, who involve the other person in planning how the request could be met, and who have the sensitivity to respond to social cues may be the most effective at enlisting the support of others.

Buss (1992) noted that studies linking personality with influence techniques can contribute to the development of an interactional framework for linking personality and social psychology. Our research supports that notion by showing that personality is related to reported influence attempts even in well-defined and structured relationships. Further research is necessary to move beyond self-reports of influence to behavioral measures and to more clearly describe the factors within a situation that both constrain the choices of influence techniques and contribute to their effectiveness.

## REFERENCES


Baron, R. A. (1989). Personality and organizational conflict: Effects of Type A behavior pattern and self-monitoring. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, 44*, 281-296.

Barrick, M. R., & Mount, M. K. (1991). The Big Five personality dimensions and job performance: A meta-analysis. *Personnel Psychology, 44*, 1-26.

Barrick, M. R., Mount, M. K., & Strauss, J. P. (1993). Conscientiousness and performance of sales representatives: Test of the mediating effects of goal setting. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 78*, 715-722.

Belk, S. S., & Snell, W. E. (1988). Avoidance strategy use in intimate relationships. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology, 7*, 80-96.

Block, J. (1995). A contrarian view of the five-factor approach to personality description. *Psychological Bulletin, 117*, 187-215.

Briggs, S. R. (1989). The optimal level of measurement for personality constructs. In D. M. Buss & N. Cantor (Eds.), *Personality psychology: Recent trends and emerging directions* (pp. 246-260). New York: Springer-Verlag.

Burger, J. M. (1990). Desire for control and interpersonal interaction style. *Journal of Research in Personality, 24*, 32-44.

Burger, J. M. (1992). *Desire for control: Personality, social and clinical perspectives.* New York: Plenum.

Burger, J. M., & Cooper, H. M. (1979). The desirability of control. *Motivation and Emotion, 3*, 381-393.

Buss, D. M. (1987). Selection, evocation, and manipulation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 53*, 1214-1221.

Buss, D. M. (1992). Manipulation in close relationships: Five personality factors in interactional context. *Journal of Personality, 60*, 478-499.

Buss, D. M., Gomes, M., Higgins, D. S., & Lauterbach, K. (1987). Tactics of manipulation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 52*, 1219-1229.

Caldwell, D. F., & O'Reilly, C. A. (1982a). Boundary spanning and individual performance: The impact of self-monitoring. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 67*, 124-127.

Caldwell, D. F., & O'Reilly, C. A. (1982b). Responses to failure: The effects of choice and responsibility on impression management. *Academy of Management Journal, 25*, 121-136.

Cialdini, R. B. (1993). *Influence* (3rd ed.). New York: HarperCollins.

Costa, P. T., Jr., & McCrae, R. R. (1992). *Professional manual for the Revised NEO Personality Inventory and NEO Five-Factor Inventory.* Odessa, FL: Psychological Assessment Resources.

Dembroski, T. M., MacDougall, J. M., & Musante, L. (1984). Desirability of control versus locus of control: Relationship to paralinguistics in the Type A interview. *Health Psychology, 3*, 15-26.

Digman, J. M. (1990). Personality structure: Emergence of the five-factor model. *Annual Review of Psychology, 41*, 417-440.


Downloaded from http://psp.sagepub.com by Jerry M. Burger on October 1, 2008

Endler, N. S., & Magnusson, D. (1976). Toward an interactional psychology of personality. *Psychological Bulletin, 83*, 956-974.

Falbo, T., & Peplau, L. A. (1980). Power strategies in intimate relationships. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 38*, 618-628.

Higgins, E. T. (1990). Personality, social psychology, and person-situation relations: Standards and knowledge activation as a common language. In L. A. Pervin (Ed.), *Handbook of personality: Theory and research* (pp. 301-338). New York: Guilford.

John, O. P. (1990). The "Big Five" factor taxonomy: Dimensions of personality in the natural language and in questionnaires. In L. A. Pervin (Ed.), *Handbook of personality: Theory and research* (pp. 66-100). New York: Guilford.

Kilduff, M., & Day, D. V. (1994). Do chameleons get ahead? The effects of self-monitoring on managerial careers. *Academy of Management Journal, 37*, 1047-1060.

Kipnis, D., & Schmidt, S. M. (1982). *Profile of organizational influence strategies.* San Diego, CA: University Associates.

Kipnis, D., Schmidt, S. M., & Wilkinson, I. (1980). Intraorganizational influence tactics: Explorations in getting one's way. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 65*, 440-452.

Lennox, R. D., & Wolfe, R. N. (1984). Revision of the self-monitoring scale. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 46*, 1349-1364.

Murray, H. A. (1938). *Explorations in personality.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Reed, T. F. (1989). Do union organizers matter? Individual differences, campaign practices, and representation election outcomes. *Industrial and Labor Relations Review, 43*, 103-119.

Schriesheim, C. A., & Hinkin, T. R. (1990). Influence tactics used by subordinates: A theoretical and empirical analysis and refinement of the Kipnis, Schmidt, and Wilkinson subscales. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 75*, 246-257.

Smith, P. C., Kendall, L. M., & Hulin, C. L. (1969). *The measurement of satisfaction in work and retirement.* Chicago: Rand McNally.

Snyder, M. (1974). The self-monitoring of expressive behavior. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 30*, 526-537.

Snyder, M. (1987). *Public appearances, private realities: The psychology of self-monitoring.* New York: Freeman.

Yukl, G., & Falbe, C. M. (1990). Influence tactics and objectives in upward, downward, and lateral influence attempts. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 75*, 132-140.

Yukl, G., & Tracey, J. B. (1992). Consequences of influence tactics used with subordinates, peers, and the boss. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 77*, 525-535.

Zimmerman, M. A. (1990). Toward a theory of learned hopefulness: A structural model analysis of participation and empowerment. *Journal of Research in Personality, 24*, 71-86.

Zimmerman, M. A., & Rappaport, J. (1988). Citizen participation, perceived control, and psychological empowerment. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 16*, 725-750.

Received March 3, 1995
Revision accepted September 19, 1996

Downloaded from http://psp.sagepub.com by Jerry M. Burger on October 1, 2008