

# Gendered Influence: A Gender Role Perspective on the Use and Effectiveness of Influence Tactics

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*The current study meta-analytically examined the gendered nature of lateral and upward influence attempts. Drawing from gender role theory, we investigated the extent to which the gender of the influence actor affected the use and effectiveness of influence behaviors. The role of a gendered environmental context was also examined. The results provided limited support of gender role theory such that men were more likely to use agentic influence tactics and women were more likely to receive personal advancement outcomes when they used communal influence tactics. Overall, the current work suggests that influence tactics may be gendered in nature such that there may be gender differences in the frequency of use and subsequent outcomes thereof. Recommendations for future research on influence include increased attention to the potentially gendered nature of influence behaviors as well as more explicit considerations of the impact of gender and gendered environment on influence effectiveness.*

**Keywords:** *gender; influence tactics; gendered environment; meta-analysis*

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Influence tactics must often be employed to gain compliance from others. This is particularly true in the absence of legitimate power sources, as in the case of peer-to-peer (i.e., lateral) or subordinate-to-supervisor (i.e., upward) influence (Farmer, Maslyn, Fedor, & Goodman, 1997), which does not necessarily rely on formal and legitimate organizational systems and processes to exert influence (Mintzberg, 1983). While the last 30 years have seen a proliferation of research inquiries into the effectiveness of influence tactics, the empirical evidence indicates the relationship between various influence tactics and work outcomes is quite variable (Higgins, Judge, & Ferris, 2003). Further, because individuals often use multiple tactics simultaneously, the influence-to-outcome relationship is more theoretically complex than is often accounted for by primary researchers (Castro, Douglas, Hochwarter, Ferris, & Frink, 2003; Kipnis, Schmidt, Swaffin-Smith, & Wilkinson, 1984). In light of such inconsistencies, it is not surprising that the most recent meta-analysis investigating the relationship between influence tactics and outcomes concluded that the overall relationship was rather weak and called for further examination into the boundary conditions determining the outcomes of various influence tactics (Higgins et al., 2003).

We argue that gender may shed light on the variability in findings regarding the relationship between influence tactics and workplace outcomes. Although influence studies typically control for gender as a nuisance variable, some work has directly investigated the impact of gender on influence tactic choices and outcomes (e.g., Eagly & Wood, 1982; Guadagno & Cialdini, 2007). With a few exceptions (e.g., O'Neil, 2004; Thacker & Wayne, 1995), this research finds that men and women tend to display different influence tactics (e.g., Carothers & Allen, 1999) and experience different outcomes when using the same tactics (e.g., Buttner & McEnally, 1996). As such, gender appears to be a key variable for understanding workplace influence.

We draw from gender role theory (Eagly, 1987) to explain how actor gender determines the display and effectiveness (i.e., the degree to which an actor's influence behavior leads to desired ends) of lateral or upward influence behaviors. According to gender role theory (Eagly, 1987), men and women are prescribed distinct sets of gender role-congruent behavioral norms. These normative prescriptions should carry over to influence interactions such that men's and women's influence tactic use and the effectiveness thereof should depend, in part, on the alignment between the gender of the actor and the nature of the influence tactic (Guadagno & Cialdini, 2007; Kulik & Olekalns, 2012).

Narrative reviews on gender and influence tactic use support our reasoning. Guadagno and Cialdini's (2007) qualitative review asserted that different impression management tactics align with masculine and feminine gender roles and, further, that men and women tend to use gender role-congruent tactics. We extend this review by (a) examining a more inclusive list of upward and lateral influence tactics, (b) quantitatively testing the impact of gender on influence tactic use, and also (c) investigating the interactive effect of gender and tactic type on influence effectiveness. Consistent with previous research on the gendered use of influence in downward influence interactions (Eagly & Wood, 1982), we suggest that both men and women are beholden to gender-based norms that prescribe *appropriate* influence behaviors, the use of which should result in better interpersonal outcomes (e.g., liking) and personal advancement outcomes (e.g., promotions, salary progression). Importantly, we note that our hypotheses are not expected to vary as a function of the nature of the criterion.

In the current meta-analysis, we attempt to develop theoretical clarity on the impact of gender on influence tactic use and effectiveness.<sup>1</sup>

## Workplace Influence

Influence tactics are other-directed behaviors that individuals use to gain compliance, assets, or liking from others in the workplace (Barrick, Shaffer, & DeGrassi, 2009; Mintzberg, 1983). Individuals use influence tactics at work for a number of reasons, including obtaining assistance on one's own job, getting others to do one's own work, obtaining personal benefits, initiating changes at work, and improving others' job performance (Kipnis, Schmidt, & Wilkinson, 1980). To date, researchers have identified over a dozen specific influence tactics as well as potential outcomes that result from the use of these tactics. Influence tactics are associated with outcomes such as helping behavior and leader-member exchange (LMX) quality (e.g., Sparrowe, Soetjito, & Kraimer, 2006), enhanced career success (e.g., Judge & Bretz, 1994), job performance evaluations (e.g., Barrick et al., 2009), resistance to organizational change (e.g., Furst & Cable, 2008), corporate board appointments (e.g., Stern & Westphal, 2010), perceptions of attractiveness and likability (e.g., Buttner & McEnally, 1996), and hiring recommendations (e.g., Higgins & Judge, 2004).

While queries were initially concerned with identifying influence tactics and establishing their effectiveness, research has since turned to classifying these distinct tactics into categories of similar behaviors or descriptive influence strategies. For example, tactics have been divided into hard, soft, and rational categories, which are classified on the basis of the directness or assertiveness of the influence attempt (Kipnis et al., 1980). In most research, hard tactics include assertiveness, upward appeals, and coalitions (Kipnis & Schmidt, 1985); soft tactics include ingratiation (Kipnis & Schmidt, 1985); and rational tactics include rationality and exchange (Kipnis & Schmidt, 1985; see Farmer et al., 1997, for a different classification). In addition to classifying individual influence tactics into different categories, other work demonstrates that individuals may also combine multiple tactics toward an overall goal of gaining compliance. The so-called shotgun, tactician, and bystander approaches describe the instrumental strategies of the agent (Kipnis et al., 1984; Kipnis & Schmidt, 1988). The shotgun approach describes an agent who uses the full arsenal of upward influence tactics with machine gun-like speed in order to increase the likelihood of compliance. The tactician approach relies largely on rationality and exchange to negotiate or reason one's way to the desired outcome. And finally, the bystander strategy describes the behavior of one who avoids the political fray, instead choosing to refrain from influence tactics altogether. This research has shown differences in the effectiveness of each approach (for examples, see Castro et al., 2003; Kipnis & Schmidt, 1988).

However, regardless of whether tactics are examined individually or in strategic bundles, most research to date has been preoccupied with identifying direct effects of influence on outcomes without consideration of other factors, such as gender. This has relegated gender to the set of control variables in most studies on influence. On the whole, the few studies that have investigated the impact of gender on the use of various influence behaviors have produced mixed results. For example, on one hand, there is some evidence that compared to

men, women use fewer manipulative tactics (Dubrin, 1989, 1991), rationality tactics (Benson & Hornsby, 1988), exchange tactics (Dubrin, 1991), pressure tactics (Lamude, 1993), and assertiveness tactics (Rizzo & Mendez, 1988). On the other hand, some studies find no gender differences in the display of influence tactics (Dreher, Dougherty, & Whitely, 1989; Instone, Major, & Bunker, 1983; O'Neil, 2004).

Studies that have investigated the impact of gender on the relationship between influence tactics and outcomes have also yielded mixed results. For example, while Dreher et al. (1989) demonstrated that women and men using the same tactics were perceived differently and only men received higher salaries as a result of their influence attempts, Rai (2009) demonstrated that women who ingratiated perceived more positive LMX relations with their managers than did men who ingratiated. Similarly, women using the same tactics as men achieved outcomes similar to men in some studies (Castro et al., 2003; Thacker & Wayne, 1995) yet are penalized in other studies (Benson & Hornsby, 1988) and are rewarded in yet other studies (Buttner & McEnally, 1996).

Gender role theory may shed light on the disparate set of findings regarding gender and influence. We assert that gender, being an identity group associated with prescriptive stereotypes, is subject to role-based behavioral norms that prescribe appropriate and inappropriate behaviors to men and women. These prescriptions also apply to influence tactics and should ultimately impact their relative frequency of use and effectiveness for men and women. In the following section, we explicate the theory in greater detail and make predictions.

## **Theory Development and Hypotheses**

### *Gender Role Theory*

According to gender role theory, men and women are beholden to certain behavioral prescriptions based upon their gender. For example, communal characteristics (e.g., sympathy, gentleness, submissiveness) are more associated with women than men, whereas agentic characteristics (e.g., assertiveness, dominance, aggression) are assumed to be more aligned with men than with women (Broverman, Vogel, Broverman, Clark, & Rosenkratz, 1972; Eagly, 1987). These role prescriptions not only affect how men and women behave, but they also determine how others perceive and evaluate their behaviors.

We posit that, similar to the way that organizations (e.g., Acker, 1990), tasks (e.g., Carli, LaFleur, & Loeber, 1995; Swim, Borgida, Maruyama, & Myers, 1989), extrarole behaviors (e.g., Heilman & Chen, 2005), and positions (e.g., Heilman & Okimoto, 2007) can be thought of as gendered, influence tactics may also be perceived along gender lines. In the context of social influence, gender role theory suggests that men and women are likely to use tactics that are aligned with their respective gender roles such that men may prefer more aggressive, self-oriented tactics, whereas women may prefer more passive, other-oriented tactics. In addition to their own preferences, men and women who use gender-congruent tactics may make others more comfortable with or receptive to their influence efforts. Indeed, it may be detrimental for men and women to behave otherwise, as backlash may ensue when men or women behave in ways that are counter to their respective gender prescriptions (e.g., Kulik & Olekalns, 2012; Rudman, 1998; Rudman & Glick, 2001).

### *Agentic Versus Communal Influence*

Previous research has classified influence tactics into categories of similar behaviors (e.g., soft, hard, and rational tactics; Farmer et al., 1997; Kipnis et al., 1984; Kipnis & Schmidt, 1985). These typologies, while descriptive, do little to build explanatory theory around the impact of gender on influence effectiveness. We posit that many tactics are aligned with agentic or communal behaviors, and following gender-role theory, men's and women's use of agentic and communal tactics, respectively, align with gendered role prescriptions. We argue that considering the gender of the actor along with the agentic or communal nature of the tactics is necessary to achieve a more nuanced understanding of social influence.

Evidence supports the notion that influence tactics are themselves gendered and that men and women are prescribed role-congruent tactics (Kray & Thompson, 2005; Rudman, 1998; Shaugnessy, Treadway, Breland, Williams, & Brouer, 2011; Tepper, Brown, & Hunt, 1993). For example, the assertive and direct nature of self-promotion was predicted and found to be perceived as more appropriate and to result in more effective outcomes for men than for women (Rudman, 1998), while the indirect and other-oriented nature of ingratiation was a winning strategy for women (Shaugnessy et al., 2011). Similarly, research supports the notion that in negotiation contexts, men and women are expected to (and are rewarded when they do) behave consistently with gender stereotypes, such as assertiveness and passivity, respectively (Kray & Thompson, 2005). Thus, gender role theory would assert that the gender of the actor as well as the gendered nature of the tactic determines its potency. Consistent with this previous work, we suggest that influence tactics may be gendered such that tactics are aligned with either the agentic characteristics of male gender roles or the communal characteristics of female gender roles. Below, we classify each of the tactics as agentic, communal, or neutral, and we later present a substudy that supports this classification.

*Agentic tactics.* We consider influence tactics to be agentic to the extent that they embody aggression, assertiveness, control, directness, and dominance (cf. Broverman et al., 1972; Eagly, 1987). Such tactics are forceful and demonstrate a concern for oneself rather than for others. Of the eight influence tactics identified by Kipnis et al. (1980), assertiveness, sanctions, and blocking are classified as agentic. The first influence tactic, assertiveness, involves getting what one wants in a forceful manner. Being demanding and ordering others also fall into this category. Sanctions can be described as pressuring others into compliance by using punishment or the threat of punishment (e.g., threatening job security or preventing salary increases or bonuses). Blocking is an intentional attempt to prevent a target person from carrying out some job function by purposefully taking actions to impede his or her progress. This can be done by actions such as engaging in a work slowdown or by threatening to stop working with the target (Kipnis et al., 1980). Because of the use of pressure and aggressiveness, the qualities of these tactics can be seen as agentic.

Regarding self-presentational tactics (Bolino & Turnley, 1999; Jones & Pittman, 1982), we classified self-promotion, intimidation, and legitimating as agentic (see Guadagno & Cialdini, 2007). The self-promotion influence tactic involves attempting to gain a target's respect or favor by advocating one's own performance. The use of intimidation requires one

to elicit fear or compliance using direct or indirect negative actions (such as threats). The legitimating tactic involves relying on one's own authority or advocating consistency with organizational regulations to gain compliance from targets. The direct and aggressive features of these tactics can be considered agentic in nature.

*Communal tactics.* We consider tactics to be communal to the extent that they embody submission, dependence, interpersonal sensitivity, modesty, and involvement of (or concern for) others (cf. Broverman et al., 1972; Eagly, 1987). These types of tactics include ingratiation, supplication, exemplification, personal appeals, the indirect use of sexuality, consultation, and collaboration. Ingratiation can be defined as the use of behaviors designed to increase the target's liking or to appear friendly to gain compliance or support. Supplication is employed when one elicits nurturance or obligation from a target through self-deprecation or claims of helplessness. Exemplification involves eliciting target guilt or awe through behaviors such as self-denial or helping. Personal appeals are employed when one entreats the target's sense of loyalty or friendship to gain compliance or support for one's own desired outcomes. The indirect use of sexuality as an influence tactic involves subtly, but intentionally, using one's sexuality to gain favor from others. This tactic can include wearing perfume or provocative clothes and flirting (e.g., Baron, 1986). Consultation entails seeking the advice or participation of others. Finally, collaboration involves offering assistance or resources in exchange for compliance. We consider the other-oriented and indirect nature of these tactics to be communal.

*Neutral tactics.* We classify tactics as neutral to the extent that they are not strongly linked to either agentic or communal roles. Among these tactics are rationality, apprising, upward appeals, exchange, coalitions, and inspirational appeals. Rationality tactics involve making requests and accompanying them with supporting logic by using sound data and information. Similar to rationality, the apprising tactic entails providing explanations for how compliance would benefit the target. Upward appeals require one to use the chain of command by calling in superiors to assist in achieving the actor's desired ends. Exchange can be defined as "making an explicit offer to do something for another in exchange for their doing what one wants" (Higgins et al., 2003: 24) and is often described as "you scratch my back; I'll scratch yours." Coalitions involve attempts to mobilize others to aid in persuading the target to comply with a specific request. This "power-in-numbers" approach includes obtaining the support of both coworkers and subordinates (Kipnis et al., 1980). Inspirational appeals are employed when one appeals to others' values and aspirations in order to arouse enthusiasm and/or confidence for one's own desired outcomes.

On the basis of these classifications, and in line with past research (e.g., Guadagno & Cialdini, 2007), we propose that gender role prescriptions about appropriate behaviors differ for men and women. We posit that gender differentials in influence behavior displays are due to the agentic or communal characteristics associated with some tactics. Gender role theory would predict that men use agentic tactics more often while women use communal tactics more often. Thus, consistent with the gender role paradigm, we make the following prediction:

*Hypothesis 1a:* There will be a direct relationship between actor gender and gender type of the influence tactic such that male actors use agentic tactics more often than do female actors.

*Hypothesis 1b:* There will be a direct relationship between actor gender and gender type of the influence tactic such that female actors use communal tactics more often than do male actors.

Gender role theory does not make predictions regarding men's and women's use of neutral tactics. Since these tactics are not strongly aligned with either masculine or feminine gender roles, their use should be unaffected by actor gender. Thus, *we do not expect a relationship between actor gender and neutral influence tactics.*

### *Implications for Influence Effectiveness*

Gender role theory posits that behavioral norms prescribe that individuals behave in gender-appropriate ways in order to reach effective outcomes (Eagly, 1987; Eagly & Karau, 2002). That is, men and women are rewarded when they behave in concert with their respective role prescriptions and are punished when they violate those gender role prescriptions. Theoretical arguments (e.g., Guadagno & Cialdini, 2007; Perrewe & Nelson, 2004) and empirical evidence (e.g., Dreher et al., 1989; Rudman & Glick, 1999) indicate that there are penalties for engaging in behaviors that are counter to those prescribed by one's gender role. For example, results from studies conducted by Rudman and Glick (1999) suggested that agentic women were perceived as lacking interpersonal skills. Similarly, Rudman (1998) found that women who engaged in self-promotion (an agentic influence tactic) were seen as more competent but as less hireable and less likable. Also, Dreher et al. (1989) investigated the relationship between influence tactics and salary attainment and found that men and women using the same tactics were perceived and evaluated differently. For instance, many of the tactics that assisted men in obtaining higher salaries were ineffective for women working in the same positions.

Similarly, men were considered more effective leaders when in masculine roles, when compared with women, and conversely, women were found to be more effective leaders in feminine roles (Eagly, Karau, & Makhijani, 1995). Further, Tepper et al. (1993) demonstrated that women who used weaker upward influence tactics obtained more psychosocial mentoring functions, while men who used stronger upward influence tactics obtained higher performance ratings and career mentoring.

Because stereotypes are prescriptive in that they "dictate that women should behave differently than men—that women should be nurturing and service-oriented (communal), but not tough and achievement-oriented (agentic)" (Heilman, 2001: 667), the targets of influence tactics may respond negatively when men or women engage in influence tactics that violate gender norms (Shaughnessy et al., 2011). The notion that women who engage in counterstereotypic behaviors are perceived as less likable (e.g., Rudman, 1998) is relevant because likability is especially important when women are attempting to influence men (e.g., Carli et al., 1995; Castro et al., 2003). For example, Castro et al. (2003) demonstrated that while both men and women benefited from the use of influence tactics, only women needed to exhibit positive affect while influencing others in order to be effective. These authors

reasoned that those with high positive affectivity were more likable and, thus, more influential. Further, with lateral and upward influence attempts, one has to rely more on personal power because position power does not necessitate compliance. Accordingly, targets may look to other cues to determine how they should respond. Targets may respond negatively when a woman is engaging in agentic behaviors because of the conflict with gender role prescriptions.

Therefore, we posit that when individuals use influence tactics that are consistent with their gender role prescriptions, they should be (a) perceived more favorably by others and, consequently, should be (b) more likely to receive the intended outcomes of their influence attempts. For example, women who ingratiate (a communal tactic) should be more likely to be effective than women who self-promote (an agentic tactic). Alternatively, men who self-promote should be more likely to be effective than men who ingratiate. In sum, gender role theory predicts that men should be more effective when using agentic tactics and women should be more effective when using communal tactics. Thus, we hypothesize the following:

*Hypothesis 2a:* For male actors, agentic tactics are more strongly related to effectiveness than are communal tactics.

*Hypothesis 2b:* For female actors, communal tactics are more strongly related to effectiveness than are agentic tactics.

Because gender role theory prescribes agentic and communal behaviors to men and women, respectively, it should not have implications for the relationship between the use of neutral behaviors and men's and women's effectiveness. Therefore, *we do not expect the display of neutral tactics to differ in effectiveness for male and female actors.*

### *Gendered Workplaces and Influence*

The workplace context should also be considered when examining the relationship between the gender of the actor and the effectiveness of influence tactics. Organizational demography is the relative representation of different groups throughout the ranks of an organization (Reskin, McBrier, & Kmec, 1999). Organizations that are male dominated, where men occupy more positions of power than women, tend to empower men to a greater extent than women. Indeed, a substantial amount of evidence indicates that in many organizations, upper-level positions of power and influence in the workplace are disproportionately held by men (e.g., Catalyst, 2011; Helfat, Harris, & Wolfson, 2007; Pichler, Simpson, & Stroh, 2008; Ragins & Sundstrom, 1989).

Research has shown that gender norms are more salient in gendered workplaces and subsequent behavioral prescriptions are enhanced in these environments (Alderfer & Smith, 1982; Gutek & Morasch, 1982). Norms are informal guidelines that dictate behaviors that are appropriate or inappropriate and influence the behaviors of those working within the context (Cialdini & Trost, 1998). Gendered workplaces may create strong situations where behavioral norms prescribing how men and women should behave are deeply embedded and strongly enforced such that social approval comes to those who behave "appropriately" and sanctions are enacted on those who do not (Acker, 2012; Pierce, 1995; Wacjman, 1998).

These norms may be gendered such that men and women are expected to behave according to their respective gender roles. Further, the gender roles associated with the dominant gender in the organization may have a higher value than the gender roles associated with the gender that is nondominant. For example, research shows that in male-dominated environments, male characteristics are endorsed while female characteristics are devalued (Ely, 1995). Therefore, behaviors that are more associated with men, such as agentic tactics, may have a higher value in male-dominated organizations than communal tactics, and vice versa in female-dominated organizations. As such, we suspect that agentic influence tactics would be more effective in organizations that are male dominated, and communal influence tactics would be more effective in organizations that are female dominated. Thus, we predict the following:

*Hypothesis 3a:* The positive relationship between agentic influence tactics and influence effectiveness is stronger in male-dominated rather than non-male-dominated (female-dominated and balanced) organizations.

*Hypothesis 3b:* The positive relationship between communal influence tactics and influence effectiveness is stronger in female-dominated rather than non-female-dominated (male-dominated and balanced) organizations.

However, because neutral tactics are necessarily neither agentic nor communal, we do not expect gendered work environments to create norms prescribing neutral influence behaviors. Thus, *we do not expect neutral tactics to differ in effectiveness in male- or female-dominated organizations.*

Further, because powerful prescriptive norms make gender norms more salient, it is particularly important that men and women adhere to their gendered behavior prescriptions in gendered work environments. However, because exerting influence is more a part of the masculine than the feminine role prescription, we assert that environments dominated by masculine prescriptions (not feminine environments or balanced environments) will encourage the use of gender role-consistent influence tactics and also create a strong situation where men are expected to behave in masculine ways while women are expected to behave in feminine ways. As such, people may respond more positively to men's display of agentic influence tactics and women's display of communal influence tactics because of their alignment with their respective gender roles. We expect that in masculine organizations, men's and women's role prescriptions are heightened, and consequently their success with influencing others should depend upon the use of gender role-congruent influence tactics. As such, we propose the following:

*Hypothesis 4a:* In male-dominated environments, male actors who use agentic tactics will be more effective than male actors who use communal tactics.

*Hypothesis 4b:* In male-dominated environments, female actors who use communal tactics will be more effective than female actors who use agentic tactics.

We do not expect balanced environments to moderate the relationships between actor gender, tactic type, and influence effectiveness because balanced environments should not

heighten the salience of traditional gender role prescriptions. Therefore, *we do not expect tactics' effectiveness to depend upon actor gender and tactic type in balanced environments.*

## Method

### *Literature Review and Inclusion Criteria*

We used a variety of extensive search techniques to identify relevant studies that examined the relationship between influence tactics, gender, work environment, and work outcomes. First, we searched electronic databases, including PsycINFO and ABI/Inform, for published articles and unpublished dissertations using keywords, such as *social influence*, *influence tactics*, *political influence*, *political behavior*, and *persuasiveness*, and each specific influence tactic (e.g., ingratiation, assertiveness, upward appeal, exchange, self-promotion). Second, we manually searched the reference lists of relevant quantitative and qualitative reviews on the topic (e.g., Guadagno & Cialdini, 2007; Higgins et al., 2003) to locate additional articles. Third, we posted a query on the Academy of Management Organizational Behavior Division Listserv to locate unpublished or working papers. The goal of this literature search was to retrieve relevant published articles and chapters, doctoral dissertations, conference papers, and unpublished manuscripts. Of the thousands of articles retrieved by the search, 195 were deemed potentially usable studies on the basis of their abstracts and were examined for inclusion against our inclusion criteria.

Studies had to meet the following criteria to be included in the meta-analysis. First, a primary study had to empirically investigate a gender–influence tactic relationship or an influence tactic–work outcome relationship, resulting in elimination of 51 studies deemed irrelevant (e.g., did not report gender or measure outcomes of interest). In terms of work outcomes, we included studies that measured interpersonal outcomes (e.g., liking, LMX quality) and personal advancement outcomes (e.g., salary progression, promotions). Second, only studies that reported on the use of lateral or upward influence tactics were included; studies that examined only downward influence tactics or did not report results separately for the type of influence tactic were not considered, resulting in the elimination of 23 articles. We limited this meta-analysis to lateral and upward influence because downward influence (i.e., leadership) imbues the influence agent with a source of power or status beyond that of his or her societally ascribed status (Eagly & Wood, 1982). By eliminating downward influence attempts, we are able to examine the relationships between gender, tactic use, and effectiveness without the potentially confounding impact of position power. Third, relevant information, such as sample size and a statistic that could be used to calculate a correlation coefficient for at least one of the relationships of interest, had to be reported (e.g., chi-square,  $t$ ,  $F$ ). Sixteen articles were eliminated due to insufficient information to compute the effect size, and 23 were eliminated because they were nonempirical. In addition, 24 papers were unobtainable or could not be translated to English, and 2 were excluded because they were meta-analyses, not primary studies. In total, 139 studies were excluded, with 56 studies being retained for analysis. Of the 56 studies that were included, 5 were unpublished dissertations, 49 were published journal articles, 1 was a conference presentation, and 1 was a

book chapter. The included studies yielded 144 independent effect sizes with a total sample size of 11,426.

### *Coding of Studies*

The coding process was conducted by six coders. Prior to initiating the coding of studies for analysis, each person independently coded three articles (randomly chosen from the set of 56 primary studies). This initial coder training effort identified needed revisions and clarifications on the initial coding form. Further, this initial coding allowed us to get feedback from an experienced meta-analytic researcher on the consistency of the coding between coders and the accuracy of their computations of effect sizes.

Subsequently, for the coding of primary studies, each study was coded by two independent coders. Discrepancies were resolved by a third coder often in consultation with the original coders. In this way, three coders independently coded or examined each study. Initial agreement on coding of the primary variables that entered tests of the study hypotheses was approximately 80%. All disagreements were resolved in order to reach 100% interrater agreement on all data that entered tests of hypotheses. Details on the study information gathered relative to influence tactics, work outcomes, work environments, and gender of the actor are presented below.

*Agentic versus communal influence tactics.* Initially, the extant literature was examined in an effort to develop a comprehensive list of influence tactics. This review led to the inclusion of 15 distinct influence tactics. Specifically, we focused on the original influence tactics identified by Kipnis and colleagues (1980), which include assertiveness, ingratiation, exchange, coalitions, upward appeals, rationality, blocking, and sanctions (although blocking and sanctions have largely been ignored in the literature), and those put forth by Yukl and Falbe (1990), which include inspirational appeals and consultation. We also include the self-presentation techniques identified by Jones and Pittman (1982), which include supplication, self-promotion, intimidation, and exemplification. Finally, we consider the indirect use of sexuality as a tool that may be used by an actor to influence the target (e.g., Baron, 1986).

Given our conceptual arguments concerning the alignment (or lack thereof) of particular influence tactics with agentic versus communal gender roles, we conducted a substudy to examine whether others perceived influence tactics as agentic, communal, or neutral (neither agentic nor communal). Recall, agentic tactics are forceful and demonstrate a concern for oneself rather than for others, whereas communal behaviors embody submission, dependence, interpersonal sensitivity, modesty, and involvement of and concern for others. Neutral tactics are not tied to either gender role. For the classification of influence tactics, we asked 52 business and social science graduate students and professors from a number of universities to categorize the influence tactics from our comprehensive list into agentic, communal, and neutral categories. This sample was chosen because, coming from a variety of scholarly disciplines, they were able to respond on the basis of common knowledge of cultural norms regarding masculine and feminine gender roles. Using the definitions of the tactic and the gender role categories, the raters indicated whether they perceived a tactic to be agentic, communal, or neutral.

Given the use of three categories for this task, we computed interrater agreement with respect to the classification of each influence tactic by calculating the Average Deviation (AD) index for the median (Burke & Dunlap, 2002; Burke, Finkelstein, & Dusig, 1999). The  $AD_{Md}$  index reflects the average absolute deviation of each rating from the median item rating, with smaller AD values indicating greater agreement. Statistical significance criteria at the .05 level for the AD index with respect to three ratings categories and different sample sizes were presented in Dunlap, Burke, and Smith-Crowe (2003) and were used here. The agentic influence tactics that had statistically significant  $AD_{Md}$  values were self-promotion ( $AD_{Md} = .39$ ), intimidation ( $AD_{Md} = .29$ ), sanctions ( $AD_{Md} = .42$ ), and assertiveness ( $AD_{Md} = .25$ ). The communal tactics with statistically significant  $AD_{Md}$  values included ingratiation ( $AD_{Md} = .48$ ), supplication ( $AD_{Md} = .12$ ), exemplification ( $AD_{Md} = .35$ ), consultation ( $AD_{Md} = .35$ ), personal appeals ( $AD_{Md} = .48$ ), collaboration ( $AD_{Md} = .48$ ), and sexuality as a tool ( $AD_{Md} = .31$ ).

Exchange ( $AD_{Md} = .40$ ), inspirational appeals ( $AD_{Md} = .43$ ), upward appeals ( $AD_{Md} = .54$ ), and apprising ( $AD_{Md} = .569$ ) had statistically significant  $AD_{Md}$  values and were classified as neutral by the majority of our sample. In addition, coalitions ( $AD_{Md} = .592$ ) and rationality ( $AD_{Md} = .615$ ) had  $AD_{Md}$  values with  $p < .10$  and were endorsed as neutral by the majority of our sample. Therefore, we considered exchange, inspirational appeals, upward appeals, apprising, coalitions, and rationality as neutral tactics. Blocking ( $AD_{Md} = .80$ ) and legitimating ( $AD_{Md} = .73$ ) had large and statistically nonsignificant  $AD_{Md}$  values, indicating a lack of interrater agreement within our sample. Thus, we excluded blocking and legitimating from analyses.

*Work outcomes.* Much of the research on influence examines the effect of influence tactics on a number of indicators, including employment decisions (e.g., Gilmore & Ferris, 1989), job performance (e.g., Andrews, Kacmar, & Harris, 2009), and career success (e.g., Judge & Bretz, 1994). Because our arguments do not specify differences among outcomes, we based our analyses on an overall effectiveness criterion, which included effects from two broad categories: interpersonal outcomes (e.g., likeability, friendships or relationships, LMX) and personal advancement outcomes (e.g., in- and extrarole job performance, salary progression, promotions, hiring recommendations). If a primary study included outcomes from both categories, we selected the personal advancement outcomes because they had higher reliabilities and were more objective, thus limiting the potential for subjective biases associated with interpersonal ratings. Furthermore, this decision precluded us from violating the independence assumption of sample-based meta-analytic procedures and allowed us the opportunity to conduct follow-up analyses where the results were broken down by criterion construct category (i.e., personal advancement outcomes and interpersonal outcomes). Also, to prevent violations of assumptions of independence, we created a linear composite if a study included multiple effects from a criterion construct category (see Lipsey & Wilson, 2001). Finally, while we distinguished between self-ratings and observer ratings, there were not a sufficient number of studies to conduct separate analyses for rating source.

*Work environments.* We relied on the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' (BLS; 2011) sex composition statistics to determine the gendered nature of the work environment and a slight

modification to Kanter's (1977) work on tokenism to classify work environments as male dominated, female dominated, or balanced. As such, we considered a work environment to be male dominated if men composed 60% or more of the population for a type of work (as reported by the BLS), and we considered a work environment to be female dominated if women composed 60% or more of the population for a type of work (as reported by the BLS). In the event that insufficient information was reported to classify the work environment with respect to BLS (2011) data, we relied on the gender composition of the sample and used the same cutoff value of 60%. We considered a work environment as balanced if the gender composition for the industry was balanced (i.e., between 40% and 60% male or female dominated) or if the study sample was from a variety of organizations or industries spread across BLS categories.

*Actor gender.* Most of the studies reported the gender of the influence actor, so we recorded that information accordingly. However, for a few studies that did not report this information, we classified the study as having a female or male actor if the sample was predominantly of one gender (i.e., 70% or greater). For instance, Wayne and Ferris's (1990) sample was 88% female, so it was coded as having a female actor, and similarly, Watt's (1993) sample was 76% female, and was also coded as having a female actor. In the event that a particular gender did not dominate the study and actor gender was not provided (e.g., in a correlation table), the study was excluded from analyses concerning the gender of the actor.

## Results

### *Descriptive Information*

A complete list of the included studies can be provided upon request. On average, the effects included in the analyses were based on data from employed adults (85.71%) and university students (14.29%). The majority of our analyses were conducted with very few or no student samples. Despite this, we conducted moderator analyses to determine the extent to which the effect size estimates vary on the basis of this sample characteristic, where possible (i.e., in distributions with  $k = 3$  or more samples of students). Because, with one exception, our estimates did not change on the basis of this moderator, we report this information only for the one analysis where the moderation effect was significant.

### *Meta-Analytic Calculations*

We either directly gathered observed correlations from primary studies or computed and converted observed  $d$  statistics to correlation coefficients before conducting the meta-analyses.<sup>2</sup> We used Raju, Burke, Normand, and Langlois's (1991) meta-analytic procedures to analyze the data (for details about this procedure, see Burke & Landis, 2003). We corrected for unreliability in the predictor and criterion (or dependent variable) measures. The mean sample-based reliability estimates for the study variables are reported in Table 1. We

**Table 1**  
**Mean Sample-Based Reliability Estimates**

Category and Construct	<i>k</i>	<i>N</i>	Mean Reliability Estimate
Influence tactics			
Communal	42	8,745	.78
Agentic	31	5,968	.74
Neutral	21	4,046	.76
Outcomes			
Personal gain	54	9,880	.81
Interpersonal	12	1,856	.90

**Table 2**  
**Results for Gender by Frequency of Influence Tactic Use**

Influence Tactic <sup>a</sup>	<i>k</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>M<sub>r</sub></i>	<i>V<sub>r</sub></i>	<i>M<sub>p</sub></i>	95% CI <i>M<sub>p</sub></i>	<i>V<sub>p</sub></i>	90% Cred Int
Agentic	12	2,729	.07	.01	.08	[.02, .14]	.01	[-.02, .19]
Communal	14	3,778	-.04	.01	-.04	[-.10, .01]	.01	[-.13, .05]
Neutral	8	1,817	.03	.01	.03	[-.05, .11]	.01	[-.08, .13]

Note: *k* = number of study effects; *N* = total number of individuals; *M<sub>r</sub>* = sample-size weighted mean uncorrected correlation; *V<sub>r</sub>* = the variance of uncorrected effects; *M<sub>p</sub>* = the sample-size weighted mean correlation corrected for dependent variable unreliability (mean rho); 95% CI *M<sub>p</sub>* = the 95% confidence interval around the estimated *M<sub>p</sub>*; *V<sub>p</sub>* = the variance of corrected effects; 90% Cred Int = 90% credibility interval.

<sup>a</sup>All gender comparisons code female as 0 and male as 1 such that positive correlations indicate a positive relationship for males.

also estimated confidence intervals based on a random effects estimate of the standard error of the mean-corrected effect (Burke & Landis, 2003) and rely on them for tests of hypothesized moderation. A corrected mean correlation (i.e., *M<sub>p</sub>*) is statistically significant at the  $p < .05$  level when its 95% confidence interval does not include zero within its bounds. We also used the confidence intervals to determine significant differences between mean correlations, concluding with 95% confidence that two correlations are significantly different from each other when their confidence intervals do not overlap. Where relevant in the remaining sections, we interpret comparisons of *M<sub>p</sub>* in terms of the significance of their difference, and we refer the reader to the tables for the specific confidence interval values. We also report 90% credibility values, which represent the extent to which individual correlations varied across studies for a particular analysis distribution (Hunter & Schmidt, 2004). Specific information on meta-analytic findings is reported in Tables 2 through 5.

### *Hypothesis Tests*

Hypothesis 1a predicted that male actors would use agentic tactics more often than female actors. As shown in Table 2, actor gender was positively related to agentic influence tactics ( $M_p = .08$ ), supporting Hypothesis 1a. Hypothesis 1b predicted that women would use

**Table 3**  
**Results for Gender by Gendered Influence Tactics for Three Effectiveness Criteria**

Influence Tactic	<i>k</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>M<sub>r</sub></i>	<i>V<sub>r</sub></i>	<i>M<sub>p</sub></i>	95% CI <i>M<sub>p</sub></i>	<i>V<sub>p</sub><sup>a</sup></i>	90% Cred Int
Male actor								
Agentic tactics								
Overall effectiveness	6	1,256	-.03	.01	-.04	[-.14, .06]	.01	[-.16, .07]
Interpersonal outcomes	1	155	.12	—	—	—	—	—
Personal advancement outcomes	5	1,101	-.05	.01	-.07	[-.17, .03]	.00	[-.15, .01]
Communal tactics								
Overall effectiveness	9	1,578	.07	.02	.09	[-.01, .19]	.01	[-.06, .23]
Interpersonal outcomes	2	272	.31	.03	.36	[.16, .57]	.01	[.22, .51]
Personal advancement outcomes	7	1,306	.02	.00	.03	[-.02, .08]	.00	—
Neutral tactics								
Overall effectiveness	4	597	.09	.00	.12	[.05, .19]	.00	—
Interpersonal outcomes	1	155	.15	—	—	—	—	—
Personal advancement outcomes	3	442	.07	.00	.10	[.01, .18]	.00	—
Female actor								
Agentic tactics								
Overall effectiveness	6	770	-.11	.04	-.14	[-.35, .06]	.06	[-.44, .16]
Interpersonal outcomes	1	185	-.38	—	—	—	—	—
Personal advancement outcomes	5	585	-.03	.03	-.03	[-.19, .13]	.02	[-.22, .16]
Communal tactics								
Overall effectiveness	11	1,106	.19	.04	.23	[.08, .37]	.05	[-.05, .51]
Interpersonal outcomes	2	232	.06	.10	.05	[-.44, .53]	.11	[-.39, .48]
Personal advancement outcomes	9	874	.22	.02	.28	[.16, .40]	.02	[.10, .46]
Neutral tactics								
Overall effectiveness	3	390	.09	.04	.11	[-.17, .39]	.05	[-.18, .39]
Interpersonal outcomes	1	185	-.12	—	—	—	—	—
Personal advancement outcomes	2	205	.28	.00	.34	[.28, .39]	.00	—

Note: *k* = number of study effects; *N* = total number of individuals; *M<sub>r</sub>* = sample-size weighted mean uncorrected correlation; *V<sub>r</sub>* = the variance of uncorrected effects; *M<sub>p</sub>* = the sample-size weighted mean correlation corrected for dependent variable unreliability (mean rho); 95% CI *M<sub>p</sub>* = the 95% confidence interval around the estimated *M<sub>p</sub>*; *V<sub>p</sub>* = the variance of corrected effects; 90% Cred Int = 90% credibility interval. Information on which specific studies were coded as having male or female agent is available from the first author upon request.

communal tactics more often than men. Actor gender was negatively, but not significantly, related to communal influence tactics ( $M_p = -.04$ ). Therefore Hypothesis 1b was not supported. Finally, as expected, the relationship between actor gender and neutral tactics was not significant ( $M_p = .03$ ).

The second set of hypotheses concerned the effectiveness of the tactics.<sup>3</sup> Hypothesis 2a predicted that for male actors, agentic tactics will be more strongly related to effectiveness than will communal tactics. As shown in Table 3, for male actors, the correlation for agentic tactics ( $M_p = -.04$ ) was not significantly different from the correlation for communal tactics ( $M_p = .09$ ). Thus, Hypothesis 2a was not supported. Hypothesis 2b predicted that for female actors, communal tactics will be more strongly related to effectiveness than will agentic tactics.<sup>4</sup> For female actors, the correlation for communal tactics ( $M_p = .23$ ) was stronger than for agentic tactics ( $M_p = .09$ ), supporting Hypothesis 2b. Also in support, female actors using communal tactics had a significantly stronger relationship with personal advancement outcomes ( $M_p = .28$ ) than female actors using agentic tactics ( $M_p = -.03$ ). Finally, as expected,

**Table 4**  
**Results for Work Environment by Influence Tactics**  
**for Overall Effectiveness Criterion**

Influence Tactic and Work Environment	<i>k</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>M<sub>r</sub></i>	<i>V<sub>r</sub></i>	<i>M<sub>p</sub></i>	95% CI <i>M<sub>p</sub></i>	<i>V<sub>p</sub><sup>a</sup></i>	90% Cred Int
Agentic influence tactics								
Male-dominated environment	8	1,559	.04	.02	.05	[-.08, .18]	.03	[-.16, .26]
Female-dominated and balanced environment	25	3,905	-.03	.04	-.04	[-.14, .06]	.06	[-.39, .27]
Communal influence tactics								
Female-dominated environment	12	1,328	.17	.03	.21	[.09, .33]	.03	[-.03, .46]
Male-dominated and balanced environment	36	7,751	.14	.02	.17	[.11, .23]	.03	[-.04, .38]
Neutral influence tactics								
Male-dominated environment	5	738	.09	.00	.11	[.05, .17]	.00	—
Female-dominated environment	3	390	.09	.04	.11	[-.17, .39]	.05	[-.18, .41]
Balanced environment	14	2,960	.20	.04	.25	[.12, .38]	.05	[-.05, .54]

Note: *k* = number of study effects; *N* = total number of individuals; *M<sub>r</sub>* = sample-size weighted mean uncorrected correlation; *V<sub>r</sub>* = the variance of uncorrected effects; *M<sub>p</sub>* = the sample-size weighted mean correlation corrected for dependent variable unreliability (mean rho); 95% CI *M<sub>p</sub>* = the 95% confidence interval around the estimated *M<sub>p</sub>*; *V<sub>p</sub>* = the variance of corrected effects; 90% Cred Int = 90% credibility interval.

**Table 5**  
**Results for Work Environment by Gender by Influence**  
**Tactics for Overall Effectiveness Criterion**

Work Environment Alignment	<i>k</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>M<sub>r</sub></i>	<i>V<sub>r</sub></i>	<i>M<sub>p</sub></i>	95% CI <i>M<sub>p</sub></i>	<i>V<sub>p</sub></i>	90% Cred Int
Male-dominated environment								
Male actor								
Agentic	5	1,140	-.02	.01	-.03	[-.15, .08]	.01	[-.15, .09]
Communal	7	1,441	.03	.00	.05	[-.01, .11]	.00	—
Neutral tactics	4	597	.09	.00	.12	[.05, .19]	.00	—
Female actor								
Communal	8	895	.16	.04	.19	[.02, .36]	.05	[.09, .47]
Female-dominated environment								
Female actor								
Agentic	5	679	-.14	.04	-.17	[-.40, .05]	.06	[-.47, .13]
Neutral tactics	3	390	.09	.04	.11	[-.17, .39]	.05	[-.18, .38]
Balanced environment								
Male actor								
Agentic	1	116	-.14	—	—	—	—	—
Communal	1	73	.25	—	—	—	—	—

Note: *k* = number of study effects; *N* = total number of individuals; *M<sub>r</sub>* = sample-size weighted mean uncorrected correlation; *V<sub>r</sub>* = the variance of uncorrected effects; *M<sub>p</sub>* = the sample-size weighted mean correlation corrected for dependent variable unreliability (mean rho); 95% CI *M<sub>p</sub>* = the 95% confidence interval around the estimated *M<sub>p</sub>*; *V<sub>p</sub>* = the variance of corrected effects; 90% Cred Int = 90% credibility interval.

there were no differences between the effectiveness of neutral tactics for male actors ( $M_p = .12$ ) and female actors ( $M_p = .11$ ).

Hypothesis 3a predicted that the relationship between agentic influence tactics and influence effectiveness is stronger in male-dominated rather than non-male-dominated (female-dominated

or balanced) organizations. As seen in Table 4, this hypothesis was not supported; the male-dominated correlation ( $M_p = .05$ ) was not significantly different from the non-male-dominated correlation ( $M_p = -.04$ ). Hypothesis 3b was that work environment moderates the relationship between communal influence tactics and influence effectiveness such that the relationship is stronger in female-dominated rather than non-female-dominated organizations. This hypothesis was not supported; the female-dominated correlation ( $M_p = .21$ ) was not significantly different from the non-female-dominated (male-dominated and balanced) correlation ( $M_p = .17$ ). In line with expectations, there were no significant differences between the correlations between neutral tactics and effectiveness for male-dominated ( $M_p = .11$ ), female-dominated ( $M_p = .11$ ), and balanced environments ( $M_p = .25$ ).

Our fourth set of hypotheses predicted that in male-dominated environments, tactic effectiveness depends on the use of gender-congruent tactics. Hypothesis 4a predicted that in male-dominated environments, male actors who use agentic tactics will be more effective than male actors who use communal tactics. As shown in Table 5, Hypothesis 4a was not supported, as in male-dominated environments, for male actors, agentic tactics were not more strongly related to effectiveness ( $M_p = -.03$ ) than were communal tactics ( $M_p = .05$ ). Hypothesis 4b predicted that in male-dominated environments, female actors who use communal tactics will be more effective than female actors using agentic tactics. As shown in Table 5, we did not have sufficient data to test this hypothesis, because we found no primary studies reporting female actors using agentic tactics in male-dominated environments. We also had insufficient data to test our expectations for balanced environments.

## Discussion

The purpose of the current work was to meta-analytically examine the effect of gender on the relationship between influence tactic use and effectiveness. We used gender role theory to make predictions about the tactics women and men use when influencing peers and superiors, the outcomes thereof, and the impact of the surrounding work environment. Our review suggests some tentative conclusions and considerations, including the value of gendered norms in classifying influence strategies and the appearance that women seem to reap more benefits than do men from alignment between their gender and their display of gender-appropriate influence tactics. Although our findings provide limited support for predictions derived from gender role theory, the gendered influence tactic typology yielded a number of meaningful findings concerning the relative effectiveness of agentic, communal, and neutral influence tactics. Below, we discuss implications, contributions, and conclusions.

### *Theoretical Implications*

The results of the current study tell a story about the role of gender role alignment in influence behavior under some circumstances. That is, our results support the notion that men tend to display agentic influence behaviors that are consistent with their gender role prescriptions. Women, however, did not tend to favor communal tactics. Given the small effects, one explanation could be that men, more than women, are somewhat beholden to

rigid gendered behavioral displays, while women tend to draw from a wider behavioral repertoire that includes the use of both agentic and communal influence tactics.

Further, our analyses demonstrate that women who use communal tactics received more favorable personal advancement and overall effectiveness outcomes than women who used agentic tactics. However, the fact that no such findings were present amongst men seems to suggest that gender role-aligned behaviors (i.e., alignment between gender and influence tactic) are especially important for women. Thus, while men may tend to display more behaviors that are in line with gender norms, it appears that in terms of effectively influencing others, women, more so than men, may be bound to gender role behavioral prescriptions. Similar to other contexts, such as in negotiations (e.g., Amanatullah & Morris, 2010), women may be well aware of gendered expectations and the backlash that may ensue if they behave otherwise. Thus, an implication of this research may be that women who strategically use communal tactics may increase their effectiveness and minimize the risk of repercussions. These results suggest that in terms of achieving work outcomes, managers and coworkers may respond more positively to female actors who use communal rather than agentic tactics.

This reasoning has been an implicit assumption in many studies of gender role backlash (e.g., Rudman, 1998; Rudman & Glick, 2001). This literature has largely examined the impact of gender role behavioral violations amongst women (i.e., women's out-of-role behaviors). For example, this research has investigated the negative impact of agentic female leadership (Eagly et al., 1995), women's assertive self-promotional influence behaviors (Rudman, 1998), and uppity (i.e., assertive and dominant) women (Berdahl, 2007). However, relatively few studies examine the impact of men's out-of-role behaviors. Among those that do study the impact of these behaviors, men behaving out of role are not met with the same degree of backlash or negative response from observers or evaluators (e.g., Heilman & Chen, 2005). In fact, people may react especially favorably to men who engage in positive behaviors that are expected more from women (e.g., helping), whereas women who do not engage in such stereotypical behaviors may be penalized (e.g., Heilman & Chen, 2005).

Interpreted differently, one could conclude that the reason men had similar outcomes using agentic and communal tactics may be that men have more flexibility in terms of using different influence tactics when attempting to obtain valued outcomes. Status theory suggests that gender acts as a status characteristic such that men and women are ascribed differential status value based on their gender (Berger, Webster, Ridgeway, & Rosenholtz, 1986; Ridgeway, 1991). This societally ascribed status hierarchy should give high-status individuals an advantage over others in influence attempts. Men, being the higher-status gender, should be better able to exert influence than women—especially in the absence of legitimate authority (Aguinis & Adams, 1998; Eagly & Wood, 1982). Men's higher status imparts greater legitimacy than women are afforded. As such, men's influence attempts should result in more positive outcomes (Carli & Eagly, 1999; Ridgeway, 2001; Ridgeway, Diekema, & Johnson, 1995; Ridgeway, Johnson, & Diekema, 1994). Accordingly, women's upward and peer influence attempts, which lack legitimate organizational status, should also be particularly vulnerable to the prescriptive limitations imposed by women's low societal status. Thus, women may be more confined to appropriate (communal) influence tactics. However, men's higher status imparts greater legitimacy than women, so their influence

**Table 6**  
**Overall Effectiveness of Agentic, Communal, and Neutral Influence Tactics**

Influence Tactic <sup>a</sup>	<i>k</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>M<sub>r</sub></i>	<i>V<sub>r</sub></i>	<i>M<sub>p</sub></i>	95% CI <i>M<sub>p</sub></i>	<i>V<sub>p</sub></i>
Agentic	35	5,671	-.01	.04	-.01	[-.09, .07]	.04
Communal	50	9,195	.15	.03	.18	[.13, .23]	.03
Neutral	23	4,184	.17	.03	.21	[.12, .31]	.05

Note: *k* = number of study effects; *N* = total number of individuals; *M<sub>r</sub>* = sample-size weighted mean uncorrected correlation; *V<sub>r</sub>* = the variance of uncorrected effects; *M<sub>p</sub>* = the sample-size weighted mean correlation corrected for dependent variable unreliability (mean rho); 95% CI *M<sub>p</sub>* = the 95% confidence interval around the estimated *M<sub>p</sub>*; *V<sub>p</sub>* = the variance of corrected effects.

<sup>a</sup>All effect sizes represent direct correlations between tactic use and outcomes such that positive correlations indicate a positive relationship.

attempts should result in more positive outcomes regardless of the influence tactic used (Carli & Eagly, 1999; Ridgeway, 2001; Ridgeway et al., 1994, 1995). In other words, women's influence effectiveness may be constrained to the use of gender role-appropriate behaviors, while men's effectiveness is less dependent on the use of particular influence tactics.

The current findings suggest an implicit boundary condition of gender role theory. While gender role theory may prescribe gender-appropriate behaviors to men and women differentially, it appears that the benefits of staying in role appear to be stronger for women than for men (or put another way, that men have greater behavioral flexibility in their influence attempts). Thus, these results suggest that gender role theory, as it applies to influence, affects men's *display* of various influence behaviors but has a greater impact on women's *effectiveness*. Alternatively, some research suggests that men do indeed experience backlash, such as being perceived as wimpy, when behaving out of role (see, for example, Heilman & Wallen, 2010). This point indicates that other factors may play a role, such as whether the influence attempt is lateral or upward as well as the specific norms of the organization. Future research should further explore such interpretations to provide more conclusive evidence.

Moreover, considering both the pattern and magnitudes of the relationships, a general implication of the results is that communal and neutral tactics tend to be more effective than agentic tactics, regardless of the actor's gender or the gendered nature of the work environment. To examine the effects of the types of tactics, overall, we conducted a post hoc analysis. These results can be found in Table 6. Essentially, they show that agentic tactics have a lower level of effectiveness than communal or neutral tactics. Perhaps communal and neutral tactics yielded more positive results than agentic ones because these tactics tend to rely mainly on subtle, indirect, or unaggressive means of influencing others rather than aggressive and direct means. Indeed, in the current sample, ingratiation and rational persuasion represented the majority of influence tactics found in primary studies that reported communal and neutral influence tactics, respectively. Previous research suggests that soft (e.g., ingratiation) and rational (e.g., rational persuasion) tactics are more effective means of getting what one wants in influence attempts than hard (e.g., assertiveness) tactics (Falbe &

Yukl, 1992). The notion that influence tactics may vary in effectiveness solely on the basis of their gendered nature is an unexpected finding that should be further explored by future research.

Yet, other research points to the varied effectiveness of some agentic tactics in various contexts. For example, self-promotion (classified here as agentic, otherwise classified as hard) may be less effective in “on-the-job” influence attempts but more effective in interview settings (Higgins et al., 2003; Swider, Barrick, Harris, & Stoverink, 2011). This suggests that context may indeed play a powerful role in terms of impacting the effectiveness of influence tactics. Thus, we also encourage future research to examine the role of influence attempt context on the relative effectiveness of agentic, communal, and neutral tactics.

Theoretical arguments for and empirical examinations of tactics used in concert could not only shed light on the boundaries of effectiveness for certain tactics but also provide further information concerning the efficacy of our gendered influence typology. It is possible that men as well as women can be effective using particular combinations of influence tactics. In this regard, we advocate for future research on the effectiveness of the separate and joint use of agentic, communal, and neutral tactics.

Related, we encourage future research to identify other important factors that may enable men and women to be effective in their influence attempts. For example, political skill is “the ability to effectively understand others at work, and to use such knowledge to influence others to act in ways that enhance one’s personal and/or organizational objectives” (Ahearn, Ferris, Hochwarter, Douglas, & Ammeter, 2004: 311). Although our results indicate that women are more effective when they use communal influence tactics, political skill may enable women to effectively influence others if they choose to adopt more masculine agentic strategies. Perhaps the influence attempts of highly politically skilled women are successful when they use both communal and other tactics (agentic and/or neutral). Further, politically skilled women compared to women with less political skill may be more attuned to the norms of their particular workplace in terms of whether agentic or communal tactics (or both) are encouraged and valued.

### *Practical Implications*

Our study has a number of practical implications. First, partially consistent with Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, and van Engen’s (2003) meta-analysis that showed women tend to embody a slightly more transformational leadership style and men tend to rely on a more transactional leadership style in their downward influence behaviors, our study demonstrates that the distinctions between genders in some regards also extend to upward and lateral influence efforts. Specifically, although our study does not reveal that women have an inclination toward communal versus agentic tactic use in interactions with their peers and managers, our findings do suggest that men tend to display agentic tactics more often than communal tactics in these interactions. Accordingly, companies that wish to improve the effectiveness of men’s and women’s interpersonal interactions might be more attentive to possible differences in communication styles and their relative effectiveness.

An additional workplace implication results from the finding that women's workplace outcomes appear to be significantly impacted by their differential use of agentic versus communal tactics. Specifically, our results indicate no difference in women's inclination toward communal versus agentic influence behaviors but did demonstrate that out-of-role agentic influence behaviors were less likely to be effective in helping women achieve their desired workplace outcomes. As a result, perhaps some of the instances in which women use more agentic influence tactics may help to explain why women continue to lag behind their male counterparts in terms of occupying positions of power (Catalyst, 2011) and securing equal compensation (Kulik & Olekalns, 2012).

The current findings support the assertions of previous research that suggests that women should be especially aware of the gendering of influence tactics because they may experience greater success in negotiations or in selection interviews with more other-focused communal tactics (e.g., Amanatullah & Morris, 2010). Moreover, women should be aware that behaving contrary to their gender role prescriptions during negotiations or selection interviews could come at a cost (e.g., Rudman, 1998). That is, women will not likely be as effective in their influence attempts when they use agentic tactics. Thus, being more agentic could backfire, whereas more communal tactics, such as ingratiation, can be employed effectively, whether the desired outcome is interpersonal (e.g., liking) or personal gain (e.g., salary). Men engaging in out-of-role behaviors, however, do not appear to be negatively impacted in this same manner.

However, while these findings suggest that women should use communal tactics to ensure success, practical realities of the workplace may put women in a difficult bind. As suggested above, some environments have norms that encourage the use of more agentic tactics. In these situations, such as during an interview or in a distributive negotiation, women who restrict themselves to communal tactics may do themselves a disservice. In such cases, normative workplace prescriptions encourage workers to behave agentially, but women's descriptive stereotypes relegate them to behaving in a gender-consistent manner (e.g., using communal influence tactics as demonstrated in this research; see also Heilman, *in press*). While the workplace may demand agency, women's gender roles prescribe communality. Accordingly, women, in this double bind, must be wise about choosing which competing value will win and when.

### *Potential Limitations and Additional Future Research Directions*

While the findings have practical as well as scientific implications, there are several potential limitations to the current work. First, while meta-analytic research has the possible benefit of making more generalizable conclusions in comparison to primary research, we were not able to conduct fine-grained tests of many relevant variables. For example, the effects of upward and lateral influence attempts could not be separated because many studies did not distinguish them and there were not enough studies that made meaningful comparisons. As another example, our analyses were largely presented using a composite overall effectiveness criterion variable. Reassuringly, in several analyses, we were able to compute

more fine-grained analyses among interpersonal and personal advancement outcomes, and we did not observe statistically significant differences among the majority of the relationships. Still, for the analyses conducted solely at the overall effectiveness level, it is difficult to know whether the observed effects would vary on the basis of the lower-order criterion construct. Additionally, our meta-analytic approach constrained our ability to determine the degree to which individuals' use of various tactics was based on choice. That is, our finding that men use agentic tactics more frequently than communal does not necessarily mean that they intentionally choose those tactics. We encourage future researchers at the primary study level to examine the degree to which individuals actively choose agentic or communal tactics and their reasons for doing so.

Moreover, many of our conclusions were based on significant, but small, effects. Similar to Eagly and colleagues (2003), our results were in the 0.08-to-0.28 range. Thus, although the evidence suggests that the effects of gender on influence tactic use and effectiveness are practically important, these effects are not strong, indicating that although gender is part of the story, it is not the whole story. Future research could consider expanding the nomological network to investigate other predictors of influence use and effectiveness in addition to influencer gender. For example, it could be that some variables interact with gender to determine influence strategy use, such as personality, gender identity, values, or benevolent sexism. It is possible that, for example, women who are more traditional in their views of gender roles might be more likely to use and benefit from gender-congruent tactics. Future studies might also consider the role of gender from an influencer-influencee perspective, with matched versus incongruent gender dyads. The gender of the person being influenced may tell another important part of the story.

Second, many studies reported using student or worker samples; however, we did not have enough student samples to run meaningful comparisons between the two groups. This point is, on one hand, reassuring because our population was primarily working adults; only 14.29% of our total  $N$  were students. Where possible, we did examine differences and found very few differences between findings for student versus working adult samples. The latter point is important, as students were primarily involved in laboratory studies, and working adults were the primary participants in field and survey studies. As such, findings in this domain did not vary meaningfully on the basis of study design and provided us with confidence in regard to combining samples to reach more generalizable conclusions. Yet, on the other hand, we could not tease out any fine-grained differences in effects due to any possible differences in samples drawn from student versus working adult populations. These types of comparisons will be dependent on the expansion of the primary study base to permit more specific comparisons between student and worker samples.

Third, our measure of gendered environments relied upon the BLS's (2011) statistics and Kanter's (1977) conceptualization of tilted environments to reveal the gender representation of various job types. This proxy for environmental "gendering" provided useful information for studying effects associated with the gendered nature of work environments, especially since research shows that environments that are numerically dominated by one group tend to be characterized by the norms and values of that group (e.g., Ely, 1995). Nevertheless, researchers at the primary study level are encouraged to use more direct measures of gendered

environments in order to permit more standardized comparisons of primary study findings in future research.

Fourth, several of our hypotheses could not be tested fully due to low availability of relevant primary studies. In many cases, we suspect that small  $k$  led to less stability in the estimated mean correlations and, thus, wide confidence intervals, leading to difficulty in making firm statistical conclusions. In particular, our ability to fully examine some relationships of interest was hindered, in part, due to uneven research coverage of agentic, communal, and neutral influence tactics and also by underreporting of the gender composition of samples. We urge researchers to report not only the influence tactics and outcomes thereof but also the gender, context, and other relevant variables when reporting their sample statistics and results. Further, influence researchers are encouraged to continue to study the use of multiple influence tactics (e.g., Farmer et al., 1997). However, we recommend that future research report the effects of each influence tactic separately as well as in categories of similar gendered influence tactics. We also encourage future research to consider the direction of influence as an important variable. As we examined only upward and lateral influence attempts, future studies could determine if the results would indeed differ with downward influence. However, some of our significant results are consistent with the similarly small effect sizes found in Eagly et al.'s (2003) meta-analysis on gender differences between men's and women's leadership styles and effectiveness.

Fifth, we relied on a sample of 52 individuals with academic training in the social sciences to classify tactics as agentic, communal, and neutral. Several tactics, including blocking and legitimating, were not classified within this typology. The inability to classify these tactics as well as the fact that several tactics had marginally significant interrater agreement values (i.e., rationality and coalitions) may be in part due to the nature and size of our sample. That is, the classification of agentic, communal, and neutral tactics is central to research examining the impact of gender role alignment in influence. We strongly encourage future research with a larger and more diverse sample of raters to reexamine the classification of tactics as gendered and, thus, further evaluate the efficacy of our gendered influence typology. In doing so, we encourage researchers not only to consider the level of agreement with respect to classifying an influence tactic as agentic, communal, or neutral but also to consider theoretical rationales for why different patterns or response distributions might emerge when raters classify particular influence tactics relative to those three categories (see Smith-Crowe, Burke, Kouchaki, & Signal, in press). In addition, we advocate for future research that examines the degree to which influence tactics within our gendered categories covary (e.g., via confirmatory factor analytic research) as well as the extent to which particular tactics co-occur both within and across our gendered influence categories (e.g., via cluster analytic research).

In addition, although the effects supporting the relationship between actor gender and frequency of tactic use were not strong, they have practical significance and likely have ramifications for outcomes in high-stakes situations (e.g., selection and promotion settings). As we noted above, the ability to effectively influence others at work is important for a number of positive outcomes. Perhaps women who are better able to influence others at work by utilizing communal influence tactics may be more likely to find success in terms of

career advancement. In this regard, it is important that women are aware of the influence tactics that may be well received by others. Future research could elaborate on the impact of context or organizational environment on influence-outcome relationships. As a step in this direction, we acknowledged the gendered nature of the work environment as a theoretically important moderator of influence tactic-outcome relationships, and we encourage future investigations to empirically test our assertions at the primary study level. For example, some organizations may frown upon certain types of influence tactics due to their political climate regardless of whether the actor is a man or a woman.

Finally, we suggest that future research continue to examine the role of status. While status theory was not a primary focus in this meta-analytic work, we believe that had we taken downward (supervisor-to-subordinate) influence into account, status would have made a bigger impact. As previous research has shown, status plays a role in gendered influence (e.g., Aguinis & Adams, 1998; Eagly & Wood, 1982), and it should continue to be present in the literature on gender and influence. We suggest that future research consider the role of gender and status on downward influence attempts.

In conclusion, this work made four important contributions to theory and research on gender and influence: (a) We empirically tested the assertions of gender role theory as they apply to influence, (b) we provided a new typology of gendered influence, (c) we examined the impact of workplace context on gendered influence, and finally, (d) we contributed practical advice to working men and women concerning the use of gendered influence tactics. Importantly, while our results point to the importance of gender-appropriate behavior for women, an overarching finding is that gender role theory, while insightful, may be limited in explaining the nuanced relationships between gender of the actor, gendered influence tactics, and the gendered nature of the work environment.

## Notes

1. Our theory, being one of cultural meanings associated with gender roles, is limited to the Western, industrialized context. That is, gender roles are necessarily products of cultural socialization; and to the extent that cultures deviate from the Western, industrialized context in which Eagly's theory is couched, the gender roles prescribed to men and women may vary in quality or significance. While our analyses include a minority of studies conducted in the non-Western world (i.e., China, India), we interpret our results through the lens of this culture.

2. In cases where it was necessary to compute *d* statistics from the summary statistics or significance test values within a study (e.g., an *F* or *t* value), we used equations from Lipsey and Wilson (2001). The majority of studies either reported results in correlation form or provided enough information to perform straightforward *d* statistic calculations. Several studies, however, reported results in proportions or percentages or with respect to ANOVA designs. For instance, in the case of proportions, we estimated *d* statistics via arcsine transformations (see Lipsey & Wilson, 2001). When a study included multiple influence tactics within a particular category, the relevant effects were averaged because they were nonindependent (Lipsey & Wilson, 2001).

3. As shown in Table 3, we performed meta-analyses on an overall effectiveness criterion as well as broke this criterion domain down into interpersonal outcomes and personal advancement outcomes. Given that these results are generally not significantly different among the criteria, we primarily discuss the results in terms of the overall effectiveness criterion and refer the reader to Table 3 for the various breakdowns of the criterion domain. When differences are significant in terms of the breakdown of criteria, we discuss them in the Results section. We did not have a large enough sample size to compute the criterion breakdowns for Table 4 or Table 5 with the exception of a very small subset, which we do not present here. These results are available from the first author upon request.

4. We also note that the effect for women was significantly different among student samples ( $M_p = .55$ ,  $k = 3$ ,  $N = 177$ , 95% confidence interval [CI] = [.37, .73]) versus employed adult samples ( $M_p = .17$ ,  $k = 7$ ,  $N = 833$ , 95% CI = [-.01, -.35]). This was the only effect with  $k = 3$  or more for which we found a significant moderating effect for sample type. The results of all of the moderation analyses are available from the first author upon request.

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