Upward voice and influence
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CHAPTER 4

DOES ABSOLUTE POWER CORRUPT ABSOLUTELY?

THE THREE-WAY INTERACTIVE EFFECT AMONG EXPERT POWER,

MASTERY AND PERFORMANCE GOALS ON HARD UPWARD

INFLUENCE TACTICS.

We investigated how employees used their expert power base in upward influence and how mastery and performance goals jointly moderated the relationships between expert power and hard upward influence tactics. Using data collected from 118 employee-supervisor dyads in a Dutch hotel, we found three-way interaction effects among employees' expert power, mastery goal, and performance goal predicting their use of hard upward influence tactics. Specifically, performance and mastery goals jointly moderated the relationships between expert power and the hard influence tactics of assertiveness and coalition building such that these relationships were positive only when performance goal was high rather than low and mastery goal was low rather than high. Furthermore, expert power was positively related to employees' use of rational persuasion. Theoretical and practical implications were discussed.

**Keywords:** expert power base, mastery goal, performance goal, assertiveness, coalition building, rational persuasion

Introduction

Upward influence, or the ability of employees to alter the attitudes and behaviors of the supervisor (Higgins, Judge, & Ferris, 2003; Kipnis, Schmidt, & Wilkinson, 1980), has significant value for employees because successfully influencing the supervisor can bring about substantial benefits for employees' performance and career success (Wu et al., 2013). As the possession of social power is a key driver of influence (French & Raven, 1959; Sturm & Antonakis, 2015), engaging in upward influence is a delicate, risky process for employees because they have few sources of power available to rely on in the relationship with the supervisor. Whereas the supervisor has a range of power bases (i.e., formal authority, rewards, punishments), the employee lacks formal positional authority and can only use personal power as a basis for upward influence attempts (Dunleavy, Chory, & Goodboy, 2010; Phillips, 1997).

Accordingly, research on social power and interpersonal influence indicates that expert power, defined as power based on one's superior expertise and professional competence (French & Raven, 1959; Raven, 2008), is critical for acquiring upward influence. Specifically, expert power has a consistent, positive relationship with engagement in rational persuasion -- the influence tactic in which the influence agent presents facts, figures, and logical arguments in order to gain compliance (Hinkin & Schriesheim, 1990; Hysong, 2008; Yukl, Kim, & Falbe, 1996).

Although rational tactics seem to be the most common and optimal ones to bring expert power into manifestation, employees may also exercise this power base through the engagement in other influence tactics. Empirical research indicates that employees engage in hard upward influence tactics as well, defined as behaviors through which the influence agent is forceful, confrontational, and applies pressure (Tepper, Brown, & Hunt, 1993). However, the idea that employees may use expert
power to engage in hard influence tactics triggers intriguing questions that require further investigation. First, the soft and pro-social nature of expert power seems to be at odds with the use of aggressive and hard influence tactics (Finn, 2012; Raven, 2008; Robbins & Judge, 2014; Su, 2010), raising the question: how does this particular power base relate to employees’ use of hard influence behaviors towards the supervisor? Second, forceful and confrontational tactics are viewed as socially undesirable and usually cannot garner long-term commitment from the influence target (Su, 2010). Considering this limited potential for long-term influence, a relevant question is what types of goals do employees have that might push them to exercise their expert power in the form of hard influence tactics? These questions matter to the literature on social power and upward influence because they suggest that the inherently tight relationship between power and influence may actually be subject to alteration by an individual’s goals. The current study is our attempt to address these questions and build conceptual and empirical knowledge that can help clarify why and when employees use their elevated expert power to engage in hard influence behaviors directed at their supervisor.

We use the approach-inhibition theory of power (Keltner, Gruenfeld, & Anderson, 2003) to explicate why expertise power can drive employees to engage in hard upward influence tactics. The central notion in this theory is that elevated power activates approach-related tendencies in people. Based on this notion, we argue that employees with elevated expertise power develop an increased capacity to engage in hard influence behaviors towards the supervisor in order to approach desired outcomes, but whether individuals choose to engage in these tactics depends on their goals. Specifically, the approach-inhibition theory of power (Keltner et al., 2003) contends that people with elevated power tend to act more in accordance with their
own internal goals and become less attentive to the typical press of situations (e.g., Galinsky, Magee, Gruenfeld, & Whitson, 2008; Keltner et al., 2003). We integrate the approach-inhibition theory of power (Keltner, Gruenfeld, & Anderson, 2003) with achievement goal theory (Elliot, 2005; Van Yperen & Orehek, 2013) to propose that achievement goals capture the specific goals that regulate whether employees exercise their expert power in an aggressive and forceful manner to influence their supervisor. Achievement goal theory distinguishes between performance goals focused on the demonstration of superior competence and mastery goals focused on the development of competence. Using the multiple goal perspective on achievement motivation (Barron & Harackiewicz, 2001; Senko, Hulleman, & Harackiewicz, 2011), we argue that employees driven by stronger performance goals and weaker mastery goals are more likely to bring their expert power into manifestation through using hard influence tactics. Thus, performance and mastery goals operate as boundary conditions that jointly moderate the relationship of expertise power and engagement in hard upward influence behaviors.

In sum, we seek to make two main contributions to the literature on power, influence, and achievement motivation. First, a fundamental assumption in the power literature is that power is a strong social cue that guides people’s behavior (Keltner et al., 2003; Magee, Galinsky, & Gruenfeld, 2007). Our study refines this notion by demonstrating that power does not affect all people in the same way. We argue that achievement goals influence how people use their expert power in pursuit of those goals. In other words, how employees exercise their expertise power depends not only on the amount of power they possess but also what they want to do with it. Second, we contribute to the emerging line of research examining how achievement goals affect employees in their interpersonal behavior in social achievement situations (e.g.,
Janssen & Van Yperen, 2004; Poortvliet, Janssen, Van Yperen, & Van de Vliert, 2007; Sijbom, Janssen, & Van Yperen, 2014; VandeWalle, 2003). That is, the present study broadens our understanding of the role achievement goals play in upward influence processes in hierarchical relations between employees and supervisors.

**Literature Review and Hypotheses**

*Expert power and rational persuasion*

According to the established taxonomy of social power sources by French and Raven (1959), expert power refers to an individual's ability to garner influence via superior knowledge, professional skills, and work-related expertise. Unlike positional authority, which has a structural power base and is used mostly in downward influence, expert power is a personal power base which can operate in different directions of influence (Dunleavy et al., 2010; Phillips, 1997). Research has shown that expert power is typically manifested in the influence behavior of rational persuasion in lateral and downward influence processes (Hinkin & Schriesheim, 1990; Hysong, 2008; Yukl, Kim, & Falbe, 1996).

We believe that the close alignment between expert power and rational persuasion also applies to upward influence. In employee-supervisor interactions, employees high on expert power bring specific professional experience and expertise to work and have the capacity to provide their supervisor with important technical and work-related information, advice, and suggestions (Hinkin & Schriesheim, 1989). Such capacities closely align with the behavioral aspects of rational persuasion, which include the presentation of logical arguments and the use of credible facts and figures in order to convince a target to comply with a request (Farmer, Maslyn, Fedor, & Goodman, 1997; Kipnis et al., 1980; Miller, 1983). Thus, expert power-related
knowledge, skills, and abilities and the behavioral features of rational persuasion strongly match each other.

Although previous research has shown a clear and consistent relationship between expert power and rational persuasion in lateral and downward influence (Hinkin & Schriesheim, 1990; Hysong, 2008; Yukl, Kim, & Falbe, 1996), we know of no published study that demonstrates this relationship with an upward direction of influence. Therefore, we formulate our first hypothesis, seeking to replicate and confirm the positive relationship between expert power and rational persuasion in upward influence.

*Hypothesis 1:* Employees’ expert power is positively related to their use of rational persuasion directed at the supervisor.

**Expert power and hard influence tactics**

Although employees can influence the supervisor by using their expertise power through rational persuasion, empirical research shows that employees do engage in hard influence tactics directed at the supervisor as well (Higgins et al., 2003; Falbe & Yukl, 1992; Su, 2010). However, as such hard tactics are known to be forceful, confrontational, and pressuring (Tepper, Brown, & Hunt, 1993), they seem to run contrary to the soft and pro-social nature of expertise power (Finn, 2012; Raven, 2008; Robbins & Judge, 2014). A pertinent question then is why employees high on expert power would not exclusively use it to rationally persuade the supervisor but also use hard influence tactics?

The approach-inhibition theory of power (Keltner et al., 2003) asserts that social power associates with approach-related tendencies in affect, cognition, and behavior. In line with this theory, research has found that individuals with elevated power have increased sensitivity to potential rewards (Galinsky, Gruenfeld, & Magee,
Accordingly, in their rewards pursuits, powerful people have a heightened tendency to construe others as a means to an end (Keltner et al., 2003), to take greater risks (Anderson & Galinsky, 2006), and to exhibit socially inappropriate behaviors (Berdahl & Martorana, 2006) in order to approach desirable outcomes.

Based on this, we argue that elevated expert power activates approach-related tendencies in employees, and that these tendencies may lead them to choose to engage in hard influence attempts towards the supervisor to approach desired outcomes. Research shows that hard tactics can be quite effective in eliciting short-term compliance and accruing short-term benefits (Falbe & Yukl, 1992). Although less effective for gaining long-term commitment and support, dominant and forceful behaviors are more likely to achieve short-term compliance than soft and rational tactics (Falbe & Yukl, 1992). Moreover, the disinhibition effect of elevated expert power can also facilitate employees' use of hard influence behavior. Using influence behaviors which are viewed as deviant from social norms (Su, 2010) signals dominance and status (Robbins & Judge, 2014). As such, employees who perceive themselves as powerful experts may engage in hard behaviors towards the supervisor to make their elevated sense of power manifest and use it to acquire desired benefits (Anderson, John, & Keltner, 2012; Bugental & Lewis, 1999).

Drawn from the approach-inhibition theory of power, these reasons highlight how elevated expertise power can activate approach-related tendencies in employees that facilitate the use of aggressive and hard influence behaviors. However, the incompatibility between the soft and pro-social nature of expert power and the forceful aspects of hard influence tactics implies that the relationship between expert power and hard influence tactics is not as clear-cut and straight-forward as the relationship between expert power and rational persuasion. Hence, we propose that although
expertise power activates increased tendencies in employees to engage in hard upward influence attempts, specific motivational goals will transform this tendency into actual hard influence behaviors. Accordingly, in the following sections we discuss how achievement goals operate as boundary conditions that regulate when individuals choose to exercise expert power in the form of hard tactics.

**The moderating role of achievement goals**

How individuals choose the tactics they use to exert influence depends not only on how much power they have but also on what they want to achieve with that power. Following approach-inhibition theory, powerful individuals have an increased tendency to act in accordance with their own internal goals; they are more immune to social constraints and are less restricted by them (Galinsky et al., 2008). Consequently, for employees with elevated expert power, how they exercise that power depends on how they define and set motivational goals for themselves. As achievement goals play a pivotal role in regulating goal-directed behavior in social achievement situations (e.g., Janssen & Van Yperen, 2004; Poortvliet, Janssen, Van Yperen, & Van de Vliert, 2007; Van Yperen & Orehek, 2013), we expect these goals to function as a boundary condition that regulates how employees choose to exercise their expertise power in upward influence processes.

Achievement goal theory has emerged as a motivational framework for understanding how people define, experience, and respond to competence-relevant achievement situations (Elliot, 2005; Van Yperen & Orehek, 2013). In this framework, achievement goals have been typically defined as performance and mastery goals. Performance goals are grounded in an interpersonal standard, and focused on the demonstration of superior competence (i.e., outperforming relevant others), whereas mastery goals are grounded in an intrapersonal standard, and focused on the
development of competence (i.e., acquiring new knowledge, skills, and abilities) (e.g., Elliot, 2005; Van Yperen, 2003). In this paper, we focus exclusively on approach dimensions of achievement goals, defined as goals directed towards positive or desirable events, because these approach versions align with the approach orientation of elevated power and upward influence motives. Accordingly, performance goals reflect achievement striving to demonstrate superior competence by outperforming others, whereas mastery goals reflect the achievement striving to develop competence by acquiring new knowledge and mastering new skills (Elliot & McGregor, 2001).

According to the multiple goal perspective of achievement motivation (Barron & Harackiewicz, 2001; DeShon & Gillespie, 2005; Senko, Hulleman, & Harackiewicz, 2011), performance and mastery goals are not mutually exclusive but may combine in regulating goal-directed behavior. Three types of combinations have been distinguished. Performance and mastery goals may: (1) have a positive interactive effect to optimize an outcome (interactive model); (2) each have a positive main effect on an outcome (additive model); or (3) have unique effects on different outcomes (specialized model; Barron & Harackiewicz, 2001; Senko et al., 2011). In the present study, we focus on the interactive model and propose that performance and mastery goals interact in moderating the degree to which employees use their expert power to engage in upward influence through hard influence tactics.

We argue that the moderating effect of achievement goals will emerge only in the relationship between expert power and hard influence behavior and does not play a significant role for rational persuasion. When employees have elevated expertise power, the most logical and direct manifestation of this particular power base is

4 Some models of achievement goals also include avoidance motivations (i.e., performance avoidance goal [Elliot & Harackiewicz, 1996], work avoidance goal [Pulkka & Niemivirta, 2013], task avoidance or self-avoidance [Elliot, Murayama, & Pekrun, 2011]). We do not include them in the current study due to our focus on approach-oriented motivations, cognitions, and behaviors.
through rational persuasion; thus, the exertion of expert power in this form does not depend on individual differences in the specific goals of employees. Expert power is anchored on competence and professional expertise, and rational persuasion is the logical influence behavior most closely aligned with the nature of that particular power base and the approach focus that it drives. Thus, as the relationship between expert power and rational persuasion is clear-cut and contains no ambiguity, as has been shown theoretically and empirically in multiple studies (e.g., Hinkin & Schriesheim, 1990; Hysong, 2008; Klocke, 2009; Lines, 2007; Yukl, Kim, & Falbe, 1996), we do not believe that additional achievement goals are needed to regulate the expert power-rational persuasion linkage.

However, the relationship between expert power and hard influence tactics is less straight-forward and self-evident, because the soft and pro-social nature of expert power can be at odds with using forceful, confrontational, and pressuring influence attempts (Finn, 2012; Raven, 2008; Robbins & Judge, 2014; Su, 2010; Tepper, Brown, & Hunt, 1993). Given the ambiguous relationship between expert power and hard influence tactics, motivational boundary conditions should regulate the extent to which employees use their expert power to engage in hard influence tactics. The research literature on achievement goals provides some indication that in complex, demanding, uncertain or ambiguous contexts, achievement goals moderate the relationships between the capacity to engage in actions and actually engaging in those actions (e.g., Pieterse, Knippenberg, & Dierendonck, 2013; Towler & Dipboye, 2001). In a similar vein, we propose that performance goals and mastery goals jointly moderate the relationship between employees’ expert power, or their ability to engage in hard tactics, and whether they actually do so.
We use the logic of the multiple goal perspective to frame our ideas about the relationship between expert power and hard tactics and argue that different combinations of performance goals and mastery goals influence the degree to which individuals will use expert power to engage in hard tactics. We take into account four possible achievement goal profiles: a strong performance goal and a weak mastery goal, a strong mastery goal and a weak performance goal, high levels of both goals, and low levels of both goals. To provide a robust test of the moderation effect of achievement goals in the relationship between expert power and hard influence tactics, we focus on two distinct upward influence behaviors: assertiveness and coalition building. Assertiveness refers to influencing the supervisor through direct confrontational pressuring behavior, while coalition building refers to influencing through mobilizing co-workers and leveraging their support.  

A strong performance goal and a weak mastery goal. We believe that employees with a strong performance goal and a weak mastery goal are the most likely to exercise their expertise power in hard influence tactics. A strong performance goal triggers an individual's competitive regulation (Poortvliet et al., 2009). As a result, such an individual tends to view others as potential competitors or adversaries and establishes negative interdependence with them (Poortvliet & Darnon, 2010). Employees pursuing a performance goal are likely to interact with their supervisors with a competitive state of mind that is focused on winning and dominating. Hard influence tactics such as assertiveness and coalition building afford subordinates the opportunity to express their dominance because these hard tactics, by definition, force and compel the influence target to comply (Tepper et al., 1993). Unlike soft and

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5 Upward appeal (appealing to higher authority to put pressure on the supervisor in order to gain compliance [Kipnis et al., 1980, Schriesheim & Hinkin, 1990]) is the third and final hard upward influence tactic according to the literature. We have excluded it from our hypothesis because it involves a third hierarchical level in the organization whereas our study specifically focuses on the dyadic employee-supervisor relationship.
rational influence tactics which are volitional and leave the decision to comply or not to the influence target, hard tactics leave little room for the influence target to refuse. The motive behind using hard tactics to compel the influence target to comply is consistent with performance goal employees' desire to express dominance and ensure influence success. Therefore, we argue that those employees who are driven by a strong performance goal and a weak mastery goal are highly likely to engage in assertiveness and coalition building to influence the supervisor.

**A strong mastery goal and a weak performance goal.** We believe that the employees driven by a strong mastery goal and a weak performance goal are unlikely to engage in hard upward influence behavior. Although employees pursuing a mastery goal are also motivated to succeed at work, their main focus is to develop professional competence through improving performance and mastering new situations (DeShon & Gillespie, 2005; Dweck, 1999). Consistent with this focus, a strong mastery goal triggers epistemic regulation that centers on knowledge and understanding, creating the tendency to view others as collaborators and not rivals, and to establish positive interdependence with others in social contexts (Poortvliet & Darnon, 2010). This cognitive and behavioral tendency runs contrary to the forceful, aggressive stance of hard influence tactics. Research has shown that the use of hard influence tactics can damage social relations and alienate people (Su, 2010), which runs counter to the common intentions of individuals with mastery goals to collaborate with others in order to develop competence. Unlike performance goals, mastery goals do not lead to motivations to express dominance in social environment (DeShon & Gillespie, 2005). These key differences explain why it is unlikely that employees with a strong mastery goal and a weak performance goal would actively exercise their expertise power through hard upward influence tactics. Accordingly, we propose that those employees
who are driven by a strong mastery goal and a weak performance goal are unlikely to engage in assertiveness and coalition building to influence the supervisor.

**A strong performance goal and a strong mastery goal.** We believe that those employees who are driven by high levels of both mastery and performance goals are also unlikely to engage in hard upward influence behavior. The simultaneous pursuit of both goals neutralizes the tendency of high performance goals to engage in hard influence behavior because of the differences in cognitions and foci associated with each goal. Although both mastery and performance goals can motivate individuals to strive for achievement and success (Elliot, Shell, Henry, & Maier, 2005), they do so by invoking different cognitions. Mastery goals induce tendencies to view others as collaborators, use epistemic regulation strategies, and create positive interdependence with others, whereas performance goals induce tendencies to regard others as adversaries, use competitive regulation strategies, and establish negative interdependence with others (Poortvliet & Darnon, 2010). Given these contrasting cognitive and behavioral tendencies related to mastery and performance goals, when employees pursue high levels of both goals, it is likely that the mastery-oriented cognitions will shift employees’ focus and attention away from typical performance-oriented patterns, thereby mitigating and neutralizing the effect of a strong performance goal on the power-influence relationship. This neutralizing effect was empirically shown in previous work by Van Yperen and Janssen (2002) on the relationship between job demand and job satisfaction. They found that the relationship between job demand and job satisfaction was negative when performance goal was high and mastery goal was low. When both goals were high, however, the demand-satisfaction relationship was no longer significant. Their findings indicate that a strong mastery goal indeed shifted employees’ focus away from typical performance-oriented
cognitions and evaluation criteria (Van Yperen & Janssen, 2002), suggesting the existence of the mitigating and neutralizing effect. Consistent with this reasoning and these previous research findings, we propose that when employees simultaneously pursue performance and mastery goals, they are unlikely to engage in hard upward influence behaviors.

**A weak performance goal and weak mastery goal.** We believe that those employees who are not motivated by either achievement goal are unlikely to exercise their expert power in the form of hard upward influence behaviors. Given the lack of both achievement goals, these employees are not driven to outperform others (i.e., low performance goal) or to develop competence for self-improvement purposes (i.e., low mastery goal). When employees have little desire for achievement striving, they will not be motivated to bring their soft-natured expert power into manifestation through hard influence attempts towards the supervisor. In other words, when an employee has no goal-driven motivation to engage in hard influence tactics, they are unlikely to use their professional competence based on their expertise to actively and aggressively influence their supervisor. As a result, we expect that employees in this category are unlikely to actively exercise their expert power through the hard upward influence tactics of assertiveness and coalition building.

Taken together, we propose that mastery and performance goals jointly determine the relationship between employees' expert power and their use of the hard influence tactics of assertiveness and coalition building. Accordingly, we formulate our second hypothesis to predict this three-way interaction effect.

_Hypothesis 2: Performance and mastery goals jointly moderate the relationships between expertise power and the hard influence tactics of assertiveness (H2A) and coalition building (H2B) such that these relationships_
are positive only when performance goal is high rather than low and mastery goal is low rather than high.

Method

Participants and Procedure

Employees and their direct supervisors in a four-star hotel in the Netherlands were each given a questionnaire to be completed. Participants were from all major operational and administrative departments (Front Office, Housekeeping, Food and Beverage, Human Resources, Reservations). During morning or evening briefing meetings, questionnaires were administered to employees in order to capture self-reports of expert power and achievement goals at work. In addition to these self-report data, the employees' direct supervisors rated employees' use of upward influence tactics. Employee and supervisor questionnaires were paired up in dyads to match employees' responses with their supervisors' ratings of their use of various upward influence tactics. Participation was voluntary and confidentiality was assured.

A total of 135 employee-supervisor dyads were approached and 118 pairs of fully completed questionnaires were returned, resulting in a response rate of 87.41%. Of the employees, 66.1% were female, the average age was 20.49 years (SD = 2.29). In terms of nationality, 61.9% were Dutch, 16.9% German, and 16.1% Chinese and other nationalities.

Measures

Expert power. We adapted Hinkin and Schriesheim’s (1989) scale to measure employees’ expert power. Sample items are “I can give my supervisor good technical and work related suggestions” and “I can provide my supervisor with needed technical knowledge”. The response scale ranged from one (“strongly disagree”) to seven
(“strongly agree”). Cronbach’s alpha for the four-item scale was calculated to be .81 (95% CI: .75 to .86).

**Achievement goals.** We used Elliot et al.’s (2011) scale to measure employee pursuit of mastery and performance goals. Sample items for mastery goal are “In my work I am striving to do well compared to my past performance” and “My goal in my work is to do better than I typically do.” Sample items for performance goal are “My aim in my work is to outperform colleagues” and “In my work I am striving to do well compared to colleagues.” The response scale ranged from one (“strongly disagree”) to seven (“strongly agree”). The Cronbach’s alpha for the three-item measure of mastery goal was calculated to be .83 (95% CI: .77 to .88). For the three items measuring performance goal, the alpha value was calculated to be .85 (95% CI: .79 to .89).

**Upward influence tactics.** We used Schriesheim and Hinkin’s (1990) scale to measure employees’ use of assertiveness, coalition building, and rational persuasion by asking the supervisor to rate their employees’ influence behavior. Each tactic was measured with three items. Sample items for assertiveness (Cronbach’s alpha = .80, 95% CI: .71 to .84) are: “He/she has a face-to-face confrontation with me in which he/she forcefully states what he/she wants” and “He/she verbally expresses his/her anger to me in order to get what he/she wants;” for coalition-building (Cronbach’s alpha = .91, 95% CI: .87 to .93): “He/she mobilizes other people in the organization to help him/her in influencing me” and “He/she obtains the support and cooperation of his/her coworkers to back up his/her request;” and for rational persuasion (Cronbach’s alpha = .85, 95% CI: .80 to .89): “He/she uses logical arguments in order to convince me” and “He/she presents facts, figures, and other information to me in support of his/her position”.

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Control variables. Consistent with prior research on employees’ influence behaviors (LePine & Van Dyne, 1998; Schlueter, Barge, & Blankenship, 1990), we included some control variables: age, gender, team tenure, and team size. These control variables were to account for the possibility that simple demographics and team factors affect employees’ upward influence tactics.

Analytical Approach

As employees were nested in teams each led by a supervisor, and supervisors provided ratings of employees’ upward influence tactics, the data may not be completely independent. We conducted an intraclass correlation analysis on our study variables (i.e., expert power, mastery goal, performance goal, assertiveness, coalition building, and rational persuasion). A statistically significant ICC(1) value would indicate that there is a team/supervisor effect (LeBreton & Senter, 2008). Results of this analysis showed that the ICC(1) values for assertiveness ($ICC[1] = .64$, $p < .01$), coalition building ($ICC[1] = .79$, $p < .01$), and rational persuasion ($ICC[1] = .72$, $p < .01$) were statistically significant, indicating the existence of nesting effects. We accounted for this nested multilevel structure by allowing a random intercept to control for supervisor effects on upward influence tactics. Specifically, we used multilevel modeling employing linear mixed models in SPSS with fixed and random effects. Thus, individual-level effects of expert power, mastery goal, and performance goal on the upward influence tactics (i.e., rational persuasion, assertiveness, coalition building) were tested while possible supervisor and group effects were taken into account. To reduce any potential multicollinearity when testing interaction effects, we standardized all of the predictor variables in the multilevel regression analyses.
Results

Descriptive statistics and correlations

Means, standard deviations, Cronbach’s alpha coefficients, and correlations among the variables are presented in Table 1. Age is positively related to mastery goal and negatively related to coalition building, gender is positively related to expert power, team tenure is positively related to rational persuasion and negatively related to assertiveness. Among the study variables, expert power is positively related to both mastery and performance goals. The two achievement goals are positively related to each other. Mastery goal is negatively related to both assertiveness and coalition building. The two hard tactics are positively related to each other.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics, correlations, and Cronbach's alphas

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<td>-.04</td>
<td>-.34**</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.24*</td>
<td>.54**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. N = 118. Gender: 1 = male, 0 = female. * p < .05;  ** p < .01

Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis 1 predicted that expert power was positively related to the upward influence tactic of rational persuasion. Following Becker’s (2005) recommendation, when testing this hypothesis using multilevel regression analysis, we only controlled for employee gender and team tenure as the other control variables were not related to either expert power or rational persuasion. The results of the regression analysis show that expert power was indeed positively related to rational persuasion ($\gamma = .20$, $p < .05$, see Table 2), supporting the prediction of H1.
Table 2. Multilevel regression analyses for hypotheses testing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor</th>
<th>Rational persuasion</th>
<th>Assertiveness</th>
<th>Coalition building</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>γ</td>
<td>se</td>
<td>t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>4.520</td>
<td>.164</td>
<td>27.586</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team size</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>-1.050</td>
<td>.101</td>
<td>-1.050</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team tenure</td>
<td>.245</td>
<td>.107</td>
<td>2.295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MG</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PG</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EP x MG</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>EP x PG</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>MG x PG</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EP x MG x PG</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Hypothesis 2 predicted a three-way interaction effect among expert power, mastery goal, and performance goal on the hard influence tactics of assertiveness and coalition building. As results presented in Table 2 show, the interaction term among expert power, mastery goal, and performance goal significantly predicted assertiveness ($\gamma = -.54, p < .001$, see Table 2) and coalition building ($\gamma = -.32, p < .05$, see Table 2), supporting the hypothesized three-way interaction effect. We plotted the interactions graphically in Figures 1 and 2 in order to better judge the directions of the relationships.

Hypothesis 2 further predicted that the relationship between expert power and assertiveness is positive only when performance goal is high rather than low and mastery goal is low rather than high (H2A). As shown in Figure 1, the relationship between expert power and assertiveness is indeed positive when performance goal is high and mastery goal is low. Furthermore, slope tests show that the relationship between expert power and assertiveness for high performance goal and low mastery goal is statistically significant ($\gamma = 1.03, p < .01$), non-significant for high performance goal and high mastery goal ($\gamma = -.03, ns$), non-significant for high mastery goal and low performance goal ($\gamma = .41, ns$), and negative for low mastery goal and low
performance goal ($\gamma = -.69, p < .01$). This pattern of findings support H2A, although we did not expect to find a negative relationship between expert power and assertiveness for the multiple goal profile of low mastery goal and low performance goal. We return back to this finding in the discussion section.

H2B predicted that the relationship between expert power and coalition building is positive only when performance goal is high rather than low and mastery goal is low rather than high. As shown in Figure 2, the relationship between expert power and coalition building is indeed positive when performance goal is high and mastery goal is low. Furthermore, slope tests show that the relationship between expert power and coalition building for high performance goal and low mastery goal is statistically significant ($\gamma = .71, p < .05$), non-significant for high performance goal and high mastery goal ($\gamma = -.03, ns$), non-significant for low mastery goal and low performance goal ($\gamma = .15, ns$), and non-significant for low mastery goal and low performance goal ($\gamma = -.38, ns$). This pattern of findings support H2B.

**Supplementary Analyses**

We conducted supplementary analyses to confirm our reasoning that the relationship between expertise power and rational persuasion was stable and not prone to alteration by the joint effect between mastery and performance goals. Specifically, we assessed whether the three-way interaction between expert power and the two achievement goals would significantly predict rational persuasion and whether any potential two-way interactions between expert power and achievement goals would exist in predicting rational persuasion. Regarding the three-way interaction effect, the multilevel regression analysis shows that the interaction term among expert power, mastery and performance goals did not significantly predict rational persuasion ($\gamma = .19, se = .13, t = 1.49, ns$). Moreover, the two-way interaction between expert power
and mastery goal ($\gamma = -.17, se = .10, t = -1.81, ns$) and between expert power and performance goal ($\gamma = .08, se = .10, t = .83, ns$) did not significantly predict rational persuasion either. These results support that the relationship between expertise power and rational persuasion is stable and that achievement goals do not alter this relationship significantly.

Figure 1. Three-way interaction among expert power, mastery goal, performance goal, predicting assertiveness

Figure 2. Three-way interaction among expert power, mastery goal, performance goal, predicting coalition
DISCUSSION

In the present study, we aimed to advance understanding of how employees exercise their expert power in upward influence directed at their immediate supervisor and the role their achievement goals play in regulating their engagement in hard upward influence tactics. Our findings show that expert power is used by employees to rationally persuade the supervisor. More importantly, we found that employees would use this soft power base to engage in hard upward influence behavior when they are motivated by a strong performance goal and a weak mastery goal. The relationships between expert power and two hard influence tactics (assertiveness and coalition building) are significant and positive only when performance goal is high and mastery goal is low.

Theoretical Implications

Our study has several theoretical implications. First, our finding that expert power is positively related to employees' use of rational persuasion is consistent with and an addition to previous research (Hysong, 2008; Hinkin & Schriesheim, 1990; Yukl et al., 1996). Using student and employee samples, these previous studies found that expert power was used by the influence agent through rational persuasion in order to gain compliance from the influence target in lateral and downward influence processes. In the present study, using a sample of hotel employee-supervisor dyads, we show that employees with elevated expert power would use it upwardly in the form of rational persuasion to gain compliance from their immediate supervisor. Our finding reinforces the theoretical argument that the competence based nature of expert power closely aligns with the behavioral aspects of rational persuasion (Hysong, 2008; Hinkin & Schriesheim, 1990; Yukl et al., 1996). More importantly, we empirically demonstrate that this soft and personal power base can operate not only in downward
and lateral directions (Dunleavy et al., 2010; Phillips, 2007), but also in upward influence through rational persuasion.

Second, relying on Keltner et al.'s (2003) approach-inhibition theory of power and in line with related empirical findings (Anderson & Galinsky, 2006; Berdahl & Martorana, 2006; Galinsky et al., 2003), we show that elevated expertise power activates employees' approach-oriented focus in their interactions with the supervisor to the extent that employees may choose to use their expert power, given specific achievement motivation, through the engagement in hard upward influence tactics. This finding is fully consistent with previous research that powerful individuals tend to take greater risks (Anderson & Galinsky, 2006), exhibit socially inappropriate behaviors (Keltner et al., 2003), and construe others as a means in order to achieve outcomes that they themselves desire (Berdahl & Martorana, 2006). Expertise power, a soft, pro-social power base, affords employees the potential capability to engage in hard upward influence.

Third, refining the fundamental assumption in the power literature that power is a strong social cue that guides people's behavior (Keltner et al., 2003, Magee et al., 2007), our study shows that power does not impact all people in the same way. Instead, we argue that how people use their power depends on what they want to achieve with it. Specific to the employee-supervisor relationship, the tactics that employees choose to use in exercising their expert power to influence the supervisor significantly depends on their achievement motivation. Embedding our conceptualization in the achievement goal theory (Elliot, 2005; Van Yperen & Orehek, 2013) and the multiple goal perspective (Barron & Harackiewicz, 2001; Senko, Hulleman, & Harackiewicz, 2011), we proposed and found that employees' achievement goal profile served to regulate the relationship between expert power and hard influence tactics. Employees
showed the strongest striving to engage in forceful influence behavior when they pursued a strong performance goal and weak mastery goal. This empirical finding is consistent with the achievement goal literature showing that performance goal individuals are highly competitive (Poortvliet et al., 2009), prone to establishing negative social interdependence with others (Poortvliet, 2013), and tend to view others as adversaries or competitors (Poortvliet & Darnon, 2010). On the contrary, for those employees who pursued a strong mastery goal, either singly, or in combination with a performance goal, their tendency to engage in hard influence tactics diminished to the extent that their expert power was found to be unrelated with hard influence tactics. This finding is in line with research showing that individuals with mastery goals tend to view others as collaborators (Poortvliet, Janssen, Van Yperen, & Van de Vliert, 2009), establish positive social relations (Poortvliet, 2013), and engage in epistemic regulation instead of competitive regulation (Poortvliet & Darnon, 2010). Our findings also add to the multiple goal literature (e.g., Barron & Harackiewicz, 2001; Janssen & Van Yperen, 2004; Senko et al., 2011) because they show that when an individual simultaneously pursues both mastery and performance goals, the mastery goal may shift this individual’s focus and attention away from typical performance-oriented patterns, thereby mitigating and neutralizing the effect of the performance goal on his or her behavioral tendencies.

Finally, we did not anticipate to find the relationship between expert power and assertiveness to be significantly negative for employees low on both mastery goals and performance goals. This finding shows that employees with elevated expert power would engage in less assertive influence behavior when they strive for neither goal. This finding suggests that the generally positive relationship between power and approach-oriented behaviors could be reversed by the lack of achievement striving.
Although the approach-inhibition theory of power assumes that elevated power activates approach-related tendencies (Keltner et al., 2003), this particular finding is in line with previous studies showing that some factors can weaken or even negate this tendency. For instance, Lammers and colleagues (2008) found that the positive relationship between power and approach was reversed when there was a lack of legitimacy. In the same vein, we believe that a lack of achievement striving can also weaken and negate the approach-related tendencies induced by elevated power. A possible explanation for this result is that the lack of achievement striving exposes the divergent characteristics of expert power and assertive influence behavior. While expert power base is soft and pro-social (Finn, 2012; Raven, 2008; Robbins & Judge, 2014), assertiveness is hard and asocial (Su, 2010; Tepper, Brown, & Hunt, 1993). These opposing elements of the two constructs may be highlighted when employees possess little achievement desires.

**Potential Limitations and Future Research**

The findings of our study need to be considered in view of a few potential limitations related to the research design. First, as we collected data from just one hotel in the Netherlands, the generalizability of our findings may be limited. The hotel industry is known for its labor intensiveness (Groschl & Barrows, 2003). In this environment, there is an increased chance for employees and supervisors to more frequently engage in influence behaviors in order to resolve work-related issues. As a result, how employees' power and achievement motivation interact in predicting their upward influence behavior may differ in other industries. In addition, with this organization being a Dutch hotel, it may be expected to have a culture of relatively low power distance (Hofstede, 1994). In a company where power distance is greater, its employees may interact with their supervisors with a more cautious state of mind,
which may result in different patterns of employee upward influence behavior. Consequently, future research needs to explore how power and achievement motivation may jointly determine upward influence in more industries and geographical locations.

Second, given the cross-sectional design of this study, no causal conclusions can be made with absolute certainty. However, theory and literature on power and achievement motivation clearly support the direction of causation that we conceptualized -- that social power and achievement goals are powerful cues for individuals' behaviors (Barron & Harackiewicz, 2000; Gegenfurtner & Hagenauer, 2013; Janssen & Van Yperen, 2004; Meier et al., 2013; Payne, Youngcourt, & Beaubien, 2007; Yeo, Loft, Xiao, & Kiewitz, 2009). Nevertheless, the fact remains that our data were cross-sectional and future longitudinal or experimental studies can better confirm the direction of causation between expert power, achievement motivation, and upward influence tactics.

Lastly, when conceptualizing the three-way interaction model, we selectively focused on expert power and the approach dimensions of mastery and performance goals due to their theoretical relevance to rational and hard upward influence tactics. However, referent power and the avoidance goals could also play meaningful roles in explaining employees' choice of upward influence tactics. Referent power is a stable, soft, personal power base (French & Raven, 1959; Raven, 2008; Robbins & Judge, 2014) that might also be useful in upward influence. Meanwhile, the avoidance versions of achievement goals, or goals focused on avoiding the demonstration of incompetence relative to others or one's self (Elliot, 2005; Van Yperen & Orehek, 2013), may serve to regulate how referent power may be exercised in upward influence. We encourage future research to explore potential interactive effects among
additional versions of achievement goals and power bases and how they may potentially determine employees' upward influence behavior.

Practical Implications

Our study has two main practical implications for employees and supervisors in the workplace. First, given that hard upward influence tactics are generally ineffective in achieving long run commitment (Falbe & Yukl, 1992) and are negatively received by the supervisors (Su, 2010), the engagement in such tactics should be avoided for the benefit of both the employees and the supervisors. Our findings suggest that by encouraging employees to pursue a strong mastery goal either singly or in combination with a strong performance goal, employees' tendency to bring their expert power into manifestation through hard influence tactics can be reduced. When supervising employees' daily work, supervisors may emphasize that competencies and skills can be developed through effort. Messages such as "you are a developing person and we are committed to helping you further your professional competencies" may serve to promote employees' view that they can improve and encourage their pursuit of a mastery goal at work. Similarly, the performance appraisal system can also be designed to measure how employees improve over a certain period of time relative to their own past performance instead of others' performance in the team. In this way, employees may also be stimulated to focus more on intrapersonal standards and pursue a mastery goal.

Second, in addition to discouraging the use of ineffective and aggressive forms of upward influence tactics, supervisors can focus on promoting the effective use of rational persuasion. This can be done by elevating employees' expert power. As shown by our study as well as others (Hinkin & Schriesheim, 1990; Hysong, 2008; Yukl et al., 1996), expert power is a stable predictor of rational persuasion. Organizations will
benefit from recruiting and selecting employees with proven expertise. For current employees, courses and training programs designed to improve their job-related expertise can also serve to cultivate a stronger expert power base for the employees. This, in turn, will promote their use of rational persuasion in upward influence processes and ensure good quality in the work delivered by the employees.

**Conclusions**

Concluding, as competition continuously grows in the business field and workplaces become increasingly dynamic, employees have more incentives to engage in upward influence tactics directed at their immediate supervisors (Epitropaki & Martin, 2013) and supervisors also rely more on the input and suggestions of their subordinates (Van Dyne & LePine, 1998; Whiting, Podsakoff, & Pierce, 2008). Consequently, understanding how employee power and achievement motivation jointly determine employees' upward influence behavioral outcomes is crucial. In the present study, we have demonstrated that expert power is positively related to employees' use of rational persuasion in upward influence. Furthermore, we have shown that mastery and performance goals jointly moderate the relationship between expert power and employees' use of assertiveness and coalition building. Expert power is positively related to these two hard influence tactics only when performance goal is high and mastery goal is low.