

**POWER STRATEGIES  
IN INTER-PERSONNEL RELATIONSHIPS  
AMONG INDIAN LIBRARY PROFESSIONALS**

**ABSTRACT**

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## **BACKGROUND**

Power strategies in inter personal relationship is imperative in the proper management of personnel in order to achieved organisational goals. Often library professionals whine about their lack of power yet they still utilized certain forms of power in their daily personal relationship within the organisation. Without the use of some amount of influence processes the there must be null interpersonal relationship. Understanding the use of power strategies and its proper implementation can be an important factor contributing towards the achievement of goals.

In this study power is conceived as having the following components: leadership styles, bases of power, influence strategies, and organisational climate.

**Leadership Styles:** Leadership style has two parts: one in which the library professionals assess their leadership style and another is their perception about their immediate superior's leadership style.

**Bases of Power:** Bases of power is the sources of power that makes library professionals change the mind of their superior or subordinates.

**Influence strategies:** Influence strategies are conceived in two perspectives: upward and downward influence strategies. The upward strategies are concern with the influence strategies towards the superior and the downward strategies are the strategies towards the subordinates.

**Organisational climate:** Every organisation is said to have its own organisational climate which distinguish it from other organisation. The climate can enhance or degenerate the organisation in attaining its objectives. In other words, organizational climate will affect the power strategies of the personnel.

Since the study of power is mostly done in organisations other than library, literature on power strategies of library professional are rather rare. The study of power, unlike

leadership, lacks the transformation and refinement of approaches. Each study seems to be independent of the other. The literature also indicated that there are multiple forms of social influence at work. It is evident from the review that the studies of power strategies in its entirety were rare and the studies of power with related aspects are inadequate. The studies of power strategies conducted are mostly done in environments other than libraries. Some studies of leadership style and organisational climate in Indian libraries were conducted. However, other important aspects like influence strategies and sources of power are found wanting and the study of power along with influence strategies, leadership styles and organisational climate in Indian library environment does not emerged at all. Literature have suggested the use of various methods in examining power strategies but a clear and effective method for evaluating library professionals' power strategies have not materialized. No significant attempt has been made to study power strategies of Indian librarians. This study is an attempt to investigate the Indian library professionals' use of power, influence strategies, leadership styles and organisational climates of the Indian libraries.

### **OBJECTIVES**

Librarians as leaders and libraries as organization have librarians exercising influence over subordinates to achieve the library objectives. There is no library without its own objectives. However, the relation of librarians and library staff is yet to be views as that of leader and follower relationship. The nature of how library professionals influence the behaviour of the subordinate and how their behaviour of library professionals are in turn influence by subordinate is investigated in this study. In this study an attempt is made to establish that libraries personals can be superiors and subordinates and they both influences each other, exercise power on each other by way of different influence strategies in different

circumstances or situations. Therefore, the objectives of the present study are listed as follows: -

1. To identify various power bases among library professional in India.
2. To identify the leadership styles of librarians.
3. To identify the organizational climate of libraries in India.
4. To examine the relationship between power bases and librarian choice of leadership style.
5. To investigate how a library professional with certain leadership style influence, the behaviour of the subordinate and superior.
6. To investigate if superior leadership styles affect the subordinate's use of influence strategies.
7. To examine the relationship between perceived organizational climate and influence strategic.
8. To examine organizational climate as a moderating factor between leadership style and influence strategies.
9. To examine organizational climate as a moderating factor between bases of power and influence strategies.
10. To study the effect of basis of power in the choice of leadership style.
11. To identify the strategies used to influence subordinate and superior.

### **HYPOTHESES**

With the above objective the present study attempts to examine the relationship between the exercise of power and leadership style with organizational climate as the moderating factor. The study being conducted in a similar environment the choices of power strategies are not expected to have significant difference among library professionals. However, the choice of influence strategies in varying leadership styles will have significant

difference. In other words library professionals are likely to adopt similar leader behaviour. Since the use of influence strategy being directed not only to subordinate but also toward the superior, the subordinate choice of influence strategies towards their immediate superior will be persuasive in nature. Organizational climate being the moderating factor, it is expected that organizational climate will have significant effect both on leadership behaviour and influence strategies. With these assumptions in mind the hypothesis to be tested are: -

**Hypothesis # H<sub>1</sub>**: The more favourable the organisational climate is, more participative is the leadership style and the more unfavourable the organisational climate is the more authoritative is the leadership style.

**Hypothesis # H<sub>2</sub>**: Among the background variables age factors significantly mediate the leadership styles.

**Hypothesis # H<sub>3</sub>**: In a more favourable organizational climate the exercise of power are more non-authoritative whereas, in less favourable organizational climate the exercise of power are more authoritative.

**Hypothesis # H<sub>4</sub>**: The participative types of leaders encourage the subordinates to adopt rational tactics whereas; autocratic types of leader encourage the subordinate to adopt non-rational tactics.

**Hypothesis # H<sub>5</sub>**: Professional and legitimate types of power are used in the downward influence process whereas; persuasive types of power are used in the upward influence process.

## **RESEARCH SITES**

Samples are collected from three types of libraries viz., academic libraries, public libraries, and special libraries. Almost all the libraries of the Northeast come into these three categories. Libraries as it is well known are mostly dependent and serve the interest of an institution or its parent organization. For the purpose of this study, the distinction between types of libraries are loosely defined and grouped into three main categories as Academic Libraries, Public Libraries, and Special Libraries.

## **POPULATION**

Organizational hierarchy is uniform only in the university libraries. The organizational set up in the other two types of libraries differs. Even libraries of the same type often have different organizational hierarchy. Owing to the nature of the study library professionals with the requisite designation and having at least two or more subordinates are taken into consideration. For the purpose of generalization, the population is divided into four designations as follows: -

1. Assistant Librarians
2. Documentation Officers (D.O)/ Information Scientist (I.S)/ Information Officers (I.O).
3. Deputy Librarian
4. Librarian

Out of 110 professionals that come under these four categories, questionnaires are distributed to 108<sup>1</sup> of them and out of which, a population of 91.81% (n=101) responded to participate in this study. The maximum number of respondents is from Assam as is the number libraries, followed by Meghalaya and a high response is also recorded from Manipur.

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<sup>1</sup> One of the professional was on study leave and the other on duty leave.

Although rest of the states show less number of response the degree of response against the existing total population is high.

### **DATA COLLECTION**

To examine the selected population questionnaire method is adopted. A standard scale available from previous studies, with some modification, is personally administered to each individual that fits the status mentioned earlier. The researcher spends about half an hour with each respondent in explaining and helping them respond appropriately to the questionnaire. The questionnaire consists of eight different sections. Section 1 and 2 are on leadership and of similar nature. Likewise, section 3 and 4 are on the bases of power and section 5 and 6 are on influence strategies.

<b>THE QUESTIONNAIRE</b>			
<b>SECTIONS</b>	<b>MEASURES</b>	<b>NO. OF ITEMS</b>	<b>SCALES</b>
1.	Leadership Behaviour (Self Assessment)	50	Likert's 5 point
2.	Leadership Behaviour (Assessing Immediate Superior)	50	Likert's 5 point
3.	Bases of Power (Influencing Subordinates)	7	Likert's 5 point
4.	Bases of Power (Influencing Immediate Superior)	7	Likert's 5 point
5.	Influence Tactics (Downward)	60	Likert's 5 point
6.	Influence Tactics (Upward)	56	Likert's 5 point
7.	Organizational Climate	30	Likert's 5 point
8.	Background Variables	12	1 to 9

### **DATA ANALYSIS**

Data collected is analyzed using the suitable statistical tools namely, (1) Factor analysis, (2) Correlations, and (3) One way A NOVA.

### **FINDINGS**

The organisational climate data are subjected to factor analysis with varimax rotation and four factors namely, Interpersonal Relations, Benevolent, Reward, and Structuring emerged. Mean score ranking shows that Academic libraries have the most favourable climate followed by Special libraries whereas, Public libraries have unfavourable climate. Similarly,

the leadership styles data are also subjected to varimax rotated factor analysis. In the leadership style self assessment four factors namely, authoritative, bureaucratic, nurturant and participative style of leadership are derived. Authoritative, bureaucratic, participative and task-oriented leadership style emerged as the leadership styles of superiors as conceived by the subordinates.

The factors in bases of power and influence strategies are adopted from previous studies. The bases of power for influencing the subordinates and superior has 7 bases each viz. expert, referent, reward, coercive, legitimacy, information and connection. The downward influence strategies have 15 strategies namely, assertion, coalition, showing dependency, diplomacy, exchange of benefits, showing expertise, ingratiation, manipulation, persuasion, personalised help, rationality, negative sanction, positive sanction, threats, and upward appeal. There are 14 strategies in the upward influence strategies namely, blocking, unclassified, coalition, defiance, showing dependency, diplomacy, exchange of benefits, showing expertise, ingratiation, manipulation, persuasion, personalised help, reasoning, and upward appeal.

Other major findings on the basis of the hypotheses are as follows: -

1. The special libraries with favourable organisational climate are higher on authoritative styles of leadership than public libraries which has unfavourable organisational climate. This finding rejects the later part of the hypothesis. However, academic and public libraries with favourable organisational climate have more participative types of leadership than public libraries which have unfavourable climate. Therefore, it is clear that hypothesis **H<sub>1</sub>** is partially accepted.
2. The age factors mediate the leadership style. All the leadership styles except authoritative style are mediated by respondents age and joining age. Present age show significant relation with bureaucratic leadership style. This means that older professionals are more bureaucratic than the younger professionals. Joining age also show significant relation

with nurturant and participative styles of leadership. Professionals who join the profession at a later age are more nurturant and participative than those who join earlier. Based upon these findings the hypothesis **H<sub>2</sub>** is moderately accepted.

3. The types of libraries with favourable climate use more of authoritative bases like coercion and legitimate power. In the unfavourable climate non-authoritative powers like expert, information, referent and reward are used. However, the difference between the two is not very significant. The f ratio shows that none of the bases of power have significant relation with the two types of climate. From the above discussion, it may be concluded that the third hypothesis is moderately rejected.
4. Participative leaders do adopt rational tactics like diplomacy, exchange of benefits and positive sanction. The correlation between participative style with diplomacy and exchange of benefits is highly significant at 0.01 levels and the relation with positive sanction is significant at 0.05 levels. Among the autocratic styles authoritative shows more correlations than bureaucratic which has a significant correlation at 0.05 levels with exchange of benefits. The authoritative leaders seem to have adopted every tactics irrespective of them being rational or non-rational. The authoritative style is significantly correlated at 0.01 with diplomacy, benefits, expertise, ingratiation, persuasion, and positive sanction. It is also significantly correlated at 0.05 levels with assertion, coalition, dependency, and rationality. The nurturant leaders show no significant choice of tactics. It may be concluded that hypothesis **H<sub>4</sub>** is partially accepted.
5. Upward influence strategies have more significant relation with the bases of power than the downward influence strategies. This may be due to the fact that library professionals must have tried all sorts of sources and strategies to influence their superiors who must have been more difficult to influence than their subordinates. In the downward influence process connection is used more as a source of power and interestingly, coercion is the

most used sources of power in the upward influence process. It may be mentioned that the coercion base of power for influencing superior is much milder and different from coercion base of power for influencing subordinates. In the downward influence process subjects resorted to more professional powers than legitimate whereas, in the upward influence process they are coercive. The use of coercion might have been due to the availability of connection a source of power. From this relationship it is clear that the hypothesis  $H_5$  is again moderately rejected.

### SUGGESTIONS

The findings in this study show varying result. Based upon these findings the following suggestions are made: -

1. There is a need for developing a scientific method of evaluating the performances of the professionals. With such method, parent bodies of the libraries should identify the finer points and productive performances of the professionals and give them due recognition. In recognition to the job well done, the parent bodies can reward them with incentives to those who deserved.
2. Library professionals' knowledge of the Human Resource Management seems to be quite poor. In-service training on Personal Relation should be an appropriate innovation for the better management of the library professionals. These innovations on personal management can be conducted along side special trainings on Computer Applications, Database Management Systems and other library software which are imparted to keep pace with the changing trend.
3. Public libraries are directly controlled by the state to which they belong and the reveal that organisational climate is less favourable than other types of libraries. Therefore, managers

of these libraries should ensure a more favourable and conducive organisational climate by interacting with the types of libraries with favourable climate.

4. Parent bodies should ensure a welfare services for more application and involvement in the job. Such welfare service will make the professionals concentrate and contribute more on their specified jobs and maximise their satisfaction to job.
5. In view of the current need in the profession, UGC/Curriculum Development Committee have emphasised on management, including personal relation, along with information technology in the model published by the UGC (2001). To accustom the library professionals with these trend libraries should sponsored and encourage the professionals to participant in courses that caters to these developments.
6. Personal interaction, during the process of data collection, with the professionals shows a very low level of motivation. Modernization of the libraries with emphasis on automation, collection development, and special services to the users should be incorporated. Keeping in tune with the technological development and satisfying the users will increase the motivational level of the professionals. Highly motivated professionals are a workforce with more productivity which can be translated into better users' satisfaction.