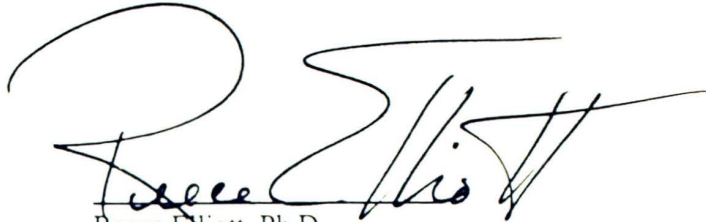


EXAMINATION OF ARMY SUBORDINATES' PERCEIVED QUALITY OF
LEADER-MEMBER EXCHANGE AND
THE MAINTENANCE COMMUNICATION TACTICS UTILIZED BASED ON
THOSE PERCEPTIONS

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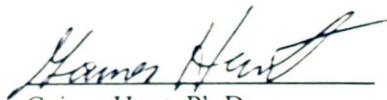


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**Examination of Army Subordinates' Perceived Quality of Leader-member Exchange and
the Maintenance Communication Tactics Utilized Based on Those Perceptions**

A Thesis

Presented for the

Master of Arts

Degree

Austin Peay State University

Douglas Joseph Hurley

April 1998

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ABSTRACT

Utilizing the vertical dyad linkage approach proposed by Dansereau, Graen, and Haga, (1975), this investigation analyzes the model and its applicability to certain aspects of leader-member relationships. In this approach, two styles of leadership emerge: (a) “leadership”--influence without authority, and (b) “supervisory”--influence based primarily upon authority. Research (Wayne and Ferris, 1990 and Waldron, 1991) illustrates the subordinates’ use of upward influence through maintenance communication tactics, thus producing opportunities for role-negotiation. Most of the findings, however, indicate a problem exists with external validity--specifically with population validity. Krone (1992) demonstrates how subordinate role-negotiating tactics may be partially dependent on the general climate of the member’s organization. Because this study was conducted in a highly formal and structured organization like the Army, this review will illustrate the need to apply the vertical dyad linkage approach to the Army in order to determine whether a service member has role-negotiating communication capabilities. The objective of this research is to determine whether subordinates in this type of organization are able to negotiate their roles.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of Research

The purpose of this research is to study supervisor/leader and subordinate/member relationships and the communication tactics that members use to negotiate their roles based on the quality of the leader-member relationship. The reason for studying such a dynamic entity as the leader-member relationship is to continue to establish a psychometrically sound measurement for analyzing relations and behaviors within these kinds of relational, managerial dyads. For example, subordinates who reported better relationship quality with their superiors assumed greater job responsibilities, contributed more to the organization, and were given higher performance ratings by their superiors (Liden and Graen, 1980). These data contribute to the understanding of superior-subordinate relational dynamics.

This study will help communication researchers and individuals in the work force better understand the consequences of subordinates' communication tactics that are used to maintain and influence the relationships with their leaders. Waldron (1991) found that "Maintenance of the supervisory relationship is arguably the most important of the communication objectives pursued by subordinates. Maintenance communication creates the context in which other goal-oriented messages are constructed by the subordinate and evaluated by the supervisor," (p. 289). To understand the importance of this needed research a brief explication of this area's previous work is required.

Background of Problem

Prior to 1975, the leader-member relationship was studied using the work group method (Dansereau, Cashman, and Graen, 1973): the supervisor was expected to treat each of his/her subordinates in the same manner. With the establishment of the vertical dyad linkage approach by Dansereau, Graen, and Haga (1975), however, researchers began to examine how the techniques of leadership and supervision--two different styles of interacting with one's members--contribute to the development of social exchanges within the dyad. Quite simply, the leadership technique is influence without authority. The supervisory technique, at the opposite end of the spectrum, is influence based primarily upon authority. A leader may treat one member under the leadership approach and another member under the supervisory approach. In this concept, each leader-member relationship should be approached as unique, for supervisors will typically employ both techniques within the organization.

Expanding on the vertical dyad linkage approach, Yukl and Fable (1990) and Wayne and Ferris (1990) explored the use of influence, or maintenance, tactics in upward communication finding the subordinate's use thereof will have an effect on the quality of exchange within the leader-member dyad. For example, the more tactfully a subordinate communicated their negative impressions about the job, the less conflict and greater liking the superior had for their subordinate. In these researchers' studies, the vertical dyad linkage approach had transformed in name to the leader-member exchange model. Waldron (1991) and Waldron and Hunt (1992) demonstrated how the use of upward communication maintenance tactics by a subordinate will vary across different dyadic leader-member relationships using communication tactics categorized as personal,

contractual, direct, and regulative (Waldron, 1991). The former three being used more by the in-group, or those subordinates who negotiate their role; and the latter, regulative, being used more by the out-group personnel, or those individuals who have little to no role negotiating capabilities.

Combining the results from all of these studies, Waldron, Hunt, and Dsilva (1993) illustrated how the quality of the relationship between a leader and his/her member will have a direct impact in what communication maintenance tactics a subordinate uses in order to maintain positive relations; which, in turn, affords the ability to negotiate his/her role. The type of quality was largely decided by whether the style of management was leadership (influence without authority) or supervisory (influence based upon authority only). The results of this study were measured by analyzing respondents' answers to a survey of how they would deal with a situation in which they needed something from their supervisor. By using a twenty-nine item Likert-type scale describing the use of relationship maintenance tactics, these researchers addressed leader-member exchange and which subordinates use which tactics. The existence of both leadership and supervisory styles between a supervisor and his/her subordinates were demonstrated.

In short, members of the in-group, which were those organizational members of the leadership relationship, perceived positive relational quality with their superiors making them less likely to feel threatened by upward influence situations (Waldron et al., 1993). Conversely, out-group members, which were those subordinates indicative of the supervisory relationship, and perceiving a poorer quality of the leader-member exchange, are more likely to feel threatened by upward influence situations, thus affecting their decision to engage in particular maintenance communication tactics.

CHAPTER 2

HYPOTHESES AND RATIONALE

Statement of Problem

All of these studies share a common problem: It is questionable whether they can be generalized to the population. Most of these studies were conducted with convenient samples; researchers often did not leave the university setting to draw a sample. Most, if not all, of the subjects were representative of a loosely structured and informal organization. It is possible that the large numbers of opposing style relationships, that of leadership and supervisory, found in these studies may have been prevalent due to the lack of both centralization of authority and a clearly defined hierarchy between the vertical boundaries of the organizations' job descriptions. The Army, a highly formal and structured organization, is significantly different from organizations where previous research has been conducted. Can the vertical dyad linkage approach/leader-member exchange model be applied internally to gauge whether there are different, unique dyads between the leader and his/her members? Does the service member have the opportunity, through upward influence by the use of maintenance communication tactics, to negotiate his/her role? Or, is such an organization pervasively managed by leaders exhibiting the supervisory style of management--influence based primarily upon authority?

Krone (1992) asserted that subordinate communication choices are dependent on the general climate of an organization. This was measured by a similar questionnaire to the researcher's predecessors (Graen, Liden, and Hoel, 1982). The difference, however, was that this sampling was from a wide array of different organizations numbering from one hundred to several thousand employees, and ranging from organizations providing

life insurance to aerospace technology and manufacturing. Krone did examine different types of organizations, yet still not one as clearly defined or structured throughout the vertical hierarchy as the military. This suggests the need for more research to determine the generalization of the vertical dyad linkage approach in studying such a highly structured organization as the Army.

Based on existing research, it cannot be concluded whether the leader-member exchange model can be applied to the Army, or if a service member can negotiate his/her role through certain communication tactics. Reviewing the minimal research by Krone, however, it can be inferred that some subordinate role-negotiation exists in even highly structured organizations. Krone did not include any elements of the military in the sample but did use highly centralized samples in comparison to previous researchers' loosely structured and decentralized authoritative samples/organizations. Krone's results may suggest that there is role-negotiation latitude in the Army. Loosely structured organizations exhibited greater variance in leader-member exchange quality and, therefore, a greater use of maintenance communication tactics; and those organizations deemed highly structured exhibited less variance in leader-member exchange quality and, therefore, a lesser use of maintenance communication tactics. Nevertheless, all samples indicated varying degrees of leader-member exchange quality which correlates with changes in the use of maintenance communication tactics. In sum, all organizations previously studied in this field of research, whether highly structured or not, exhibited some measure of role-negotiating tactics. Thus, it appears that the leader-member exchange model may be applicable to the Army. Different perceptions of leader-member

exchange will be present thus producing varying levels of use of different maintenance communication tactics.

Hypotheses

1. There will be variances in subordinates' perceived leader-member exchange quality with their specific supervisor throughout the Army sample.
2. Those members of the in-group will use more personal, contractual, and direct tactics than those members of the out-group.
3. Those members of the in-group will use fewer regulative tactics than those who are members of the out-group.

Definition of Terms

It is important to understand the following terms as they are used throughout the research.

1. Convenient sampling: Picking a sample because of its accessibility.
2. Work group: A homogeneous group of subordinates in terms of similar perceptions, interpretations, and reactions as a member.
3. "Leadership" style: Influence without authority.
4. "Supervisory" style: Influence based upon authority only.
5. "In-group" members and cadre: Those subordinates who negotiate their role and are subjected to a "leadership" style of management.
6. "Out-group" members and hired hands: Those subordinates who have little to no role negotiating capabilities or opportunities and are subjected to a "supervisory" style of management.

7. Vertical dyad linkage approach/vertical dyad linkage model/leader-member exchange model: Describes the process by which organizational members' evolve their roles through interaction with their supervisor. As a result, a quality of communication exchange from high to low develops between a supervisor and a subordinate.

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

Vertical Dyad Linkage Approach

Prior to the groundbreaking research by Dansereau, Graen and Haga (1975), the study of supervisors' and subordinates' interactions focused on examining exchanges between the leader and his/her entire set of members. These three researchers, however, focused on examining various vertical dyads within an organization as opposed to a supervisor having only a single, homogeneous relationship to a collective, single entity of subordinates.

Prior to this study, previous research assumed all members fell into one work group because the individuals were considered to be identical on certain dimensions of perceptions, interpretations and reactions. Simply stated, it was thought the superior behaves in the same manner toward each of his/her subordinates, thus giving no allowance for leadership style or member individuality. To ensure proper functioning within the organization, superiors relied solely upon their formal authority: "I am the boss, I say do it, so do it."

It was further expected under this research approach that the subordinate roles were just as real in practice as they were in the formal job descriptions. Once again, the assumption was made that adequate unit functioning would result if a member complied with a legitimately prescribed organizational role. People, however, are not quite so predictable, nor are they that regimented in their behavior (Dansereau et al., 1975).

Concentrating on examining various vertical dyads, Dansereau et al. (1975) examined how early attempts to employ the managerial techniques of supervision and

leadership contributed to the process of social exchange within the leader-member dyad. These two techniques are not isolated styles employed independently by a supervisor, but rather bi-polar representations of leadership which illustrate the extreme differences on a continuum. Most likely, a supervisor will not be at one total extreme, but leaning toward either the leadership or supervisory style. Further, as proposed by the vertical dyad linkage approach, a supervisor may differ in style from subordinate to subordinate.

“Supervision” is a style, or technique, used by a leader who constructs the interactive atmosphere he/she will have with his/her members. With this style, the supervisor relies exclusively on the formal employment contract during his/her exchanges with the subordinate. There is minimal social exchange between the two individuals and very little discussion of organizational activities. In this relationship, there is no need to discuss the activities within the unit when the members already know what they need to do in order to complete the tasks of their job. Failure to do so will result in consequential action. Therefore, as a condition for continued employment, the subordinate agrees to complete all prescribed duties within the formal organization, even though there is little to no interaction with the supervisor. The subordinates, simply stated, are treated like cogs in a machine.

The leadership style, however, is more humanistic (Dansereau et al., 1975). This approach does not rely only on the employment contract. Interpersonal exchange is needed for the leader to influence the member and the member to influence the leader. In this setting, there is an exchange of open and honest communication, support for the member's actions, and confidence and consideration for the member. Conversely, the member spends more time and energy at work and acts more responsibly thereby exuding

more commitment to organizational success. There simply is a noticeable interdependence between the leader and the member. Thus, comparing the supervision style to the leadership style, Dansereau et al. (1975) asserted the latter has a greater amount of vertical dyadic exchange.

As the vertical exchange increases, the more superiors must be ready to negotiate unit-related matters with subordinates. Specifically, these researchers hypothesized: A wide latitude to negotiate one's role within the vertical dyad will produce leadership relations, and little to no role-negotiation latitude will produce supervision relations.

Subjects for the Dansereau et al. (1975) study consisted of a convenient sample of 60 managers of a university. All subjects served as members with a direct supervisor, and 17 of the group were also tested as leaders who directly supervised someone else. At the time of the study, 90% of the vertical dyads were new due to recently implemented re-organization initiatives. Subjects were interviewed on four occasions: At one, three, six, and eight months into the new academic year. To determine the independent variable--the amount of negotiating latitude--subjects were asked questions which ascertained how much members were able to influence their roles, such as "How flexible do you believe your supervisor is about evolving changes in your job activity structure?"

The dependent variable (either supervision or leadership styles) was measured by analyzing three elements, the first of which was the supervisor's contribution to vertical exchange in terms of activities toward the member and consequences of the supervisor's activities for the member. The first element focused on two categories: (a) the supervisor's contribution to the exchange process and (b) consequences of superior's activities for the member.

The first category, the supervisor's contribution to the exchange process, evaluated two areas: (a) Leadership attention and (b) measuring leadership support. Leadership attention gauged how much a supervisor demonstrated leadership style behaviors. First, questions were structured emphasizing whether such styles were prevalent in the superior-subordinate relationship, such as allowing member to make decisions, provide information and feedback, assuring confidence in member, and paying attention to the member's feelings and needs. Next, members evaluated these behaviors based on these questions of how much of this style they were receiving and how much they preferred to be getting. Lastly, the superior was asked to report how much attention members needed to perform their roles adequately and without undue satisfaction.

The second area of the supervisor's contribution to the exchange process measured leadership support. Several actions were listed which indicated how often the superior engaged in such activity: a.) standing up/fighting for member and b.) keeping promises. Both leader and member were asked relevant questions: The member indicated how often they preferred the superior to be active in such behaviors--either more or less--and the supervisors indicated how often they supported the member.

The second category, consequences of supervisor's activity for the member, asked several questions of both the supervisor and the subordinate. Some questions dealt with dyadic problems, such as "strains in the workplace with my supervisor" and "unsure of what my supervisor wants me to do." While others dealt with supervisor sensitivity, such as "the extent to which the supervisor lets me know where I stand" and "whether they understand my problems and needs."

The second dependent variable element measured the member's contribution to vertical exchange in terms of role behavior. Simply stated, this portion of the interviews determined how much time and energy each member invested in several work-related activities. Several activities were listed, but were grouped into one of four categories: (a) counseling, (b) programming, (c) communication, and (d) administrative activities. Members were asked how much time and energy they spent on each of the activities, and supervisors were asked how much time and energy each member was spending, and how much they preferred that member to spend, on each of the activities.

The last element measured was various outcomes of the exchange process. Members were asked about their attitudes toward and reactions to their current working relationship. Descriptions were given about the intrinsic value of their work and the psychological value of their job performance. Also given was a description of rewards such as pay and promotions, the technical competence of their supervisor, and the interpersonal relationship with their supervisor.

The results of the study supported the hypothesis that generous amounts of role-negotiating latitude correlates to leadership relations and meager amounts of role-negotiating latitude correlates with supervisory relations. In-group members, or cadre as referred to in this study, appeared to be the supervisor's primary concern. Qualitative analysis of leadership attention revealed that cadre members had more influence in negotiating their job and demonstrated more confidence. The out-group, defined in this study as hired hands, said they preferred more traits, such as confidence and role negotiation, which they considered valued outcomes of a vertical exchange. Additionally, supervisors reported that cadre required higher levels of vertical exchange to perform

their jobs without undue dissatisfaction. This may suggest that differential treatment of members by the supervisor may be necessary for adequate unit functioning, a finding which directly opposes most previous research which indicates that leaders treat all members the same.

On the subject of member exchange, cadre members were seen by the supervisor as more dependable, expended more time and energy, and received more support for actions than the hired help. Cadre members reported more involvement in communication activities, and hired hands reported they preferred more support from the supervisor.

Consequences of vertical exchange portions of the study revealed hired hands had more problems with their supervisors' behaviors. Additionally, problems with hired hands remained severe over time, where cadre members were able to resolve most discrepancies. Thus, there was noticeable differential treatment with more rewards for the cadre over time.

Based on these results, Dansereau et al. (1975) theorized that supervisors devote most of their time and energy to a select group of people, the cadre, who they feel can carry the load of the organization which is indicative of a leadership style. The hired hands, conversely, are more apt to receive a supervision style of leadership. The separate treatment exists because a supervisor does not realistically have the time and energy to act in a leadership manner to the entire subordinate staff, so the preferential treatment goes to the individuals who are actively negotiating their roles.

Therefore, cadre members' working situations are improved or maintained by their engaging in behaviors which are desirable from their superior's perspective. An interdependent relationship forms: The superior is dependent on having the members

who can perpetuate adequate unit functioning and organizational problems, and the member is dependent on rewards and supervisor contributions. The result is the forming of a clique, or the in-group, which eventually becomes difficult for the out-group to penetrate because of the upward and maintenance tactics demonstrated by the cadre members.

There are some obvious problems with this causal-comparative study. Although the independent variable appeared to precede the dependent variable in time, based on the similar results of the interviews spaced out over an eight month period and over 90% of the dyads being new, reverse causality still seems plausible. This study did not determine how one attains the ability to negotiate one's role outside of leader acceptance. With that in mind, this study also did not ask the question "do leadership relations instigate negotiating tendencies from the member?" Another, and more important, question is: Are these findings generalizable? The method of sampling, after all, was out of convenience, and not the ideal random method which would have been more reliable.

Testing the new vertical dyad linkage model, Graen and Schieman (1978) later attempted to ascertain whether there is an interdependency between the leader and member. In a correlational/causal-comparative study, these two researchers countered most of the previous research in the area of leader-member agreement. Prior to the Dansereau et al. study (1975), attempts to document such research have produced results asserting such leader-member relations were rarely achieved. However, a work group approach had always been used and never a dyadic approach.

Using the dyadic approach, Graen and Schieman (1978) hypothesized:
Agreement between a leader and a member regarding the meaning of certain mutually

experienced events and situations will vary as a positive function of the quality of their dyadic exchanges; and the vertical dyadic linkage model of leader member exchange states that as the quality of dyadic exchange increases, the agreement between the leader and the member will increase as well. To measure this, the researchers used Dansereau et al. (1975) leader-member exchange similar type interviews.

Using quantitative and qualitative analysis, the researchers evaluated answers to three categories of questions: (a) quality of leader-member exchange assessed via judgments of the members, (b) severity of the member's job problems based on opinions of both the leader and member, and (c) various relational measures of aspects of the dyad based on judgments of the leader and member. The results showed that, indeed, leader-member agreement can be studied by employing the vertical dyad linkage model. Furthermore, and specifically supporting the hypothesis, as quality exchange increased between the leader and the member, agreement increased as well.

This study essentially expanded the Dansereau et al. (1975) results by implying that not only is the vertical dyad linkage model more accurate and appropriate than the work group approach, but within the dyad the leadership style is more successful from a leader, member, and probably organizational perspective than the bi-polar supervisory style. To have an increase in quality exchange, engagement in the leadership traits posed by Dansereau et al. (1975), such as interpersonal interaction, must be achieved. This was alluded to in the Dansereau et al. (1975) study, but it did not determine the best mix of leadership and supervisory styles for optimum organizational effect. Graen and Schiemann (1978) do not answer this issue specifically either, but they do make headway

in showing empirical evidence supportive of the “leadership” style being more effective. The Dansereau et al. (1975) study theorized more than confirmed.

Primarily, and in direct relation to this research problem, will leader-member agreement and quality within the dyad be affected if the vertical dyads are drawn from different types of organizational units? The research results lacking generalizability was a major limitation of the Dansereau et al. (1975) study, and, unfortunately, in the Graen and Schiemann (1978) study as well. The population was accessible, gathering a convenient sample within another university setting. Granted, two locations and two samples were taken, but all of the subjects were still from the same organizational atmosphere. Therefore, it is hard to say whether the results from Graen and Schiemann (1978) are likely to hold for the entire population and/or situation. The most pervasive problem is one of external validity, specifically, of population validity.

Previous studies of the vertical dyad linkage approach/model analyzed the dyadic interaction between the supervisor and his/her subordinate. Never, though, had the supervisor or subordinate been a foreman, what Liden and Graen (1980) labeled an individual who supervised repetitious daily tasks. Liden and Graen (1980) were curious if the dyad approach to studying leader-member relationships would be more effective than the old work group method.

Foremen are generally responsible for ensuring that typical day-to-day tasks get accomplished by their subordinates. On the surface, it sounds sensible that less leadership type attributes would be needed to accomplish this. In other words, do foremen treat their members all the same, or does the vertical dyad linkage approach apply to all types of superior-subordinate relationships? Vice versa, and more relevant, do foremen--as

subordinates--have the potential to have their relationships with their supervisors examined by the vertical dyad linkage approach?

In a descriptive/correlational study, Graen, Liden, and Hoel (1980) compared the leader-member exchange quality groups of the in, middle, and out-groups to the variables of performance, job problems, job satisfaction, job needs, work activities, interpersonal sensitivity, and willingness to contribute. The measurement, as expected, was very similar to that used by Dansereau et al. (1975).

The subjects were once again conveniently selected in a university setting. Three points of data collection were attained over a nine month period with three month intervals from three semi-autonomous schools. Both the managers and subordinates were interviewed replicating the previous studies mentioned in this section. Important to note, however, is that the foremen were questioned as supervisors and managers but their subordinates were not part of the study.

The results were similar to those found in the previously mentioned studies. The supervisor-foreman dyad was found to be the same as supervisor/manager-subordinate. For the in-group individuals demonstrated the same positive attitudes as the in-group subjects from Dansereau et al. (1975) and Graen and Schiemann (1978). That is, high exchange dyads revealed the subordinates spent more time on work activities, were higher performers, carried out tasks beyond their job descriptions, were more trusted, and, lastly, were deemed as more responsible.

There are limitations in Liden and Graen's (1980) study as well. They did not include the foremen's subordinates in the sample. Doing so would have made the research more comprehensive. The Liden and Graen study does not succeed in

generalizing results to the population as a whole. Granted, they did look at a vertical dyad which had not been previously considered, but how applicable are the findings to completely different organizations such as the military, a far more structured organization than any used in other studies?

Influence and Maintenance Tactics

Addressing influence tactics and objectives in upward, downward, and lateral influence attempts, Yukl and Falbe (1990) extended previous research to include these types of role-negotiating behaviors: (a) pressure tactics, (b) upward appeals, such as going over the supervisor's head, (c) exchange tactics, trading favors, (d) coalition tactics, (e) ingratiating tactics, (f) rational persuasion, (g) inspirational appeals which arouse emotions and values, and, (h) consultation tactics, or seeking help in decision making. Questionnaires, to both sources and targets of influence attempts, were administered to two separate groups. The sources of influence attempts were asked how often they used these tactics and appeals, and targets of the influence attempts were asked how often these behaviors were used against them. Both groups were asked to measure vertical and lateral communication. There were eight objectives in which the subjects compared the appropriate behavior: (a) seeking to do a new task, (b) doing a task faster/better, (c) changing policies, (d) providing advice, (e) providing additional resources, (f) formal approval, (g) support of proposal, and (h) needed information about work.

There were many hypotheses in this study, and not all of them were convincingly supported. The major point that needs to be raised, however, is that the findings implied a majority of the influence tactics are used in downward communication much more than in upward or lateral communication. At first, this might appear to be indicative of a work

group rather than a vertical dyad linkage approach; for the influence tactics are, in large part, pointed downward in the communication process hinting that the subordinate does not have much role-negotiating latitude. Yukl and Falbe's (1990) study, however, does not examine the exchange quality in supervisor-subordinate interactions and its implications therein, thus not disproving the vertical dyad linkage approach. Furthermore, Yukl and Falbe's study is important because they do address influence attempts. Even though their findings assert many of the influence tactics are used in downward communication, the results also identify that subordinates, indeed, use influence behaviors to attempt achievement of several objectives as well--just not as much as their leaders.

Wayne and Ferris (1990) also studied influence tactics along with the exchange quality in superior-subordinate interactions. They applied the vertical dyad linkage approach of Dansereau et al. (1975) to the leader-member exchange model, a description of the process by which organizational members evolve their roles through interaction with their supervisor. The evolution made in the leader-member exchange model is the relationship produced by the leader-member is not just measured by the leadership style, but by the subordinates' efforts as well. In essence, Wayne and Ferris (1990) were examining potential determinants of leader-member exchange quality.

They thought subordinate impression management tactics and performance affect the superior-subordinate exchange quality by influencing the superior's liking for the member and the performance ratings of his/her job. Specifically hypothesized was: (a) impression management has a positive effect on exchange quality through its influence on liking, (b) liking has a positive effect on exchange quality and performance ratings, (c)

performance ratings have a positive effect on exchange quality, and (d) objective performance has a positive effect on performance ratings.

Two studies were conducted in order to demonstrate high internal and external validity: one in a laboratory and the other in the field. The experimental study set up a scenario in which the subordinates, acting from a script, engaged in an observed task with a subject acting as a supervisor. The acting subordinate was ordered by the researchers to engage in either high, "this is fun!", or low, "this is boring!", impression management tactics. After the task, researchers provided supervisors with manipulated objective performance results of high, average, or low quantity production. The supervisors then evaluated the subordinates' performances describing their liking for each individual and their perceptions of the exchange quality of those relationships.

The field study surveyed several employees of a large bank. Data concerning how often they engaged in certain influence behaviors were collected from subordinates, and supervisors completed a questionnaire measuring liking, performance appraisal, and exchange quality of their subordinates.

Most of the findings supported the hypotheses. The laboratory study showed performance level positively related to performance ratings. Both studies demonstrated the superior's liking positively affected performance ratings and, impression management was positively related to the supervisor's liking of the subordinate. Therefore, high exchange quality, once again, has desirable outcomes such as more influence in decisions. Henceforth, it may be advantageous for the member to manage quality exchange in the dyad by using various impression management tactics.

Prior to this study, very little research had been done on the effects of upward influence tactics. Wayne and Ferris (1990), however, found that certain influence attempts impact the actual leader-member dyad. In short, certain communication tactics used by a member can help define his/her desired role with his/her supervisor. In this research, there is no indication that the results can be applicable to the Army.

This paper has addressed upward influence tactics and how the leader-member relationship will, to some degree, dictate such upward communication. Yet, how are maintenance tactics used by a subordinate to help sustain the status-quo of a leader-member relationship? To say subordinate communication maintenance tactics can be and are present in the work environment further implies subordinates do have an impact in negotiating their roles.

Waldron (1991) addressed how subordinates communicate upwardly in order to maintain their relationships with their superiors and, additionally, which is the best atmosphere, either leadership or supervisory, to conduct such communication.

Interviewing over 500 subordinate individuals who were randomly selected, Waldron hypothesized that an open dyadic relationship between the superior and subordinate uses more direct maintenance tactics than a closed and highly structured one; that is, comparing leadership style to supervisory style. It was also predicted that managers are more likely to invest their own personal resources, that is, more interpersonal initiated interactions such as disclosing personal, non-work-related information, in the open-type relationship.

When the leadership style is present, subordinates are more apt to use direct maintenance tactics with their supervisor. Subordinates will not be apprehensive about

negotiating their role, but will directly communicate their feelings on personal and organizational topics which they want to keep intact (Waldron, 1991). Quite simply, if something is good, the subordinate will directly say, without hesitation: "...project X is a good thing, we need to keep doing what we are doing Boss!" Henceforth, leadership styles allow a greater amount of direct maintenance tactics thus allowing the subordinate greater freedom in defining the terms of the leader-member relationship.

Within this same study, three other tactics were found to provide leader-member relationship maintenance: (a) personal tactics, or joking around, (b) contractual tactics, or politeness towards the formal structure of subordinate to superior, and (c) regulative tactics, or strategic self-preservation and emotional control. Personal and contractual tactics were used more in the leadership relationship. Regulative tactics were used more in the supervisory relationships, implying the subordinate had to resort to more subversive means to maintain certain aspects of the organization, such as the relationship with his/her superior (Waldron, 1991).

Waldron's study (1991) demonstrates that the leadership style appears to have the greatest impact in allowing members to negotiate certain elements of their roles within the organization. Considering the results of Wayne and Ferris (1990) that impression management has a positive effect on exchange quality through its influence on liking, as well as Waldron's (1991) study, it is clear that specific communication tactics can impact the exchange quality between members and their leaders. It may be argued by some researchers that the impression tactics from the former study are comparable to the regulative tactics in the latter study. But the impression tactics serve more to selectively choose communication in a favorable manner for the subordinate. On the other hand,

regulative tactics serve to avoid communication with one's superior. The result is still more communication serving to negotiate roles for the leadership-style subordinate and less communication in the supervisory-style relationship, with the attempt to maintain certain qualities of the leader-member relationship and develop role autonomy. If nothing else, the leadership relationship provides many more role-negotiating communication opportunities than its counterpart.

Continuing with maintenance tactics research, Waldron and Hunt (1992) reinforced some of the findings of Waldron (1991). Specifically, subordinates who perceived lower quality relationships with their supervisor used more regulative maintenance tactics than individuals in a high-quality relationship. Additionally, Waldron and Hunt (1992) showed not only that out-group subordinates' use more regulative tactics than the in-group, but the in-group uses more direct, personal, and contractual tactics as well. This shows, through more available channels of communication, the in-group members have more latitude, opportunities, and accuracy in determining, influencing, and/or maintaining leader-member relations. This is because of the four maintenance tactics, regulative is the most discrete and covert.

Waldron, Hunt, and Dsilva (1993) found in-group subordinates are more likely to engage in influence tactics than out-group subordinates. Further, the former type of subordinate is more likely to use direct maintenance tactics than the latter, subsequently implying the in-group member has more of an impact on the leader-member relationship because he/she can say exactly what is on his/her mind. This directly correlates to the findings of Dansereau et al. (1975), Graen and Schiemann (1978), Liden and Graen (1980), and Wayne and Ferris (1990); in that the more opportunity for communication

between the superior and the subordinate, that is, leadership style, the more opportunity for the development of social exchange, thus maintaining and influencing high quality vertical dyadic communication exchange.

Again, the problem with all of these previous studies is their generalizability to a highly structured organization. Most of the studies had their sample conveniently chosen, with the subjects coming from a university setting, an organization tending to have a less clearly defined ranking structure and centralization of authority. That does not necessarily mean the results are not applicable to the stated research problem, but it also does not assure an assumption of generalization can apply.

Organization

A study by Schilit and Locke (1982) did not focus on organizational structure as a possible determinant for types of leadership style. In fact, the concentration was on upward influence tactics, such as the most commonly used tactics, consequences of attempts at upward influence, perceptions of upward influence, etc. What is most important and applicable, however, is not what was hypothesized and supported, but rather the educated assumptions made by the researchers after the study.

In comparing small organizations to large ones, the researchers postulated that:

- (a) subordinates challenged supervisor's power more in small/private organizations,
- (b) favorable leader-member relations were more prevalent in smaller organizations,
- (c) subordinates in a public organization were more likely to fail because of hierarchical position, and (d) the causal factor for success in small organizations was favorable interpersonal relations.

This further questions whether the vertical dyad linkage approach can be used to study leader-member relationships within the Army. Large organizations do not appear to have the extensive role-negotiating latitude, leadership characteristics, lack of hierarchical structure, and high quality exchange as the counter-type small organizations. Further, comparing large organizations to each other, the military epitomizes the specific and clearly structured rank/role position, hierarchical structure, and discipline/recognition for the formal authority within that organization. Due to lack of research, it is not known what the vertical dyad linkage approach would show when applied to an Army organization.

One study did directly examine whether organizational membership and centralization of authority had an effect on a subordinate's selection of upward maintenance tactics (Krone, 1992). Drawing from a random/cluster sample of five organizations, a public utility company, life insurance company, human services company, aerospace technology manufacturer, and computer software company, 411 subordinates were surveyed on typical influence/leader-member exchange.

Certain results found in this study did not differ from previous findings, that is, individuals in high-participation leader-member relationships and/or in-group members used much more open tactics than the out-group. Important, however, was the comparison from organization to organization. Keeping intact the cluster sample results, Krone compared not individuals but organizational findings. Those subordinates who were members of a highly centralized genre found fewer in-group members when collectively compared to a decentralized organization.

With the exception of organizational-specific research, most of the research discussed herein has shown: (a) The more pronounced the leader-member relationship is towards the style of leadership, which is indicative of social exchange being present, the more latitude the subordinate will have in negotiating his/her role, (Dansereau, Graen, and Hage, 1975); (b) Mutual agreement between a leader and a member is directly dependent upon whether there is a high quality of exchange present, (Graen and Schiemann, 1978); (c) If a subordinate is in the in-group then high quality exchange will commence, (Liden and Graen, 1980); (d) The existence of influence tactics, and the effect it has on an existent quality of leader-member exchange, states that the leadership style does exist (Yukl and Falbe, 1990 and Wayne and Ferris, 1990). If it did not, one would not be able to negotiate or influence his/her role, or exchange, in the formally structured supervisory style; (e) Subordinates who have more mediums to maintain their role have more negotiation freedom, more opportunity for a high exchange quality, and, therefore, a stronger representation of a leadership style relationship (Yukl and Falbe, 1990 and Wayne and Ferris, 1990); (f) Relationship quality, more than anything else, accounted for a subordinate's use of personal, contractual, direct, and regulative maintenance tactics (Waldron, 1991 and Waldron and Hunt, 1993); and, lastly, (g) With the Waldron, Hunt, and Dsilva (1993) study, leadership, or in-group, subordinates are more likely to engage in influence and direct maintenance tactics, thus affording these individuals greater opportunities for communication, high quality exchange, and role determination within the organization.

Schilit and Locke (1982) and Krone (1992) do not have confirming empirical evidence to support whether the vertical dyad linkage approach can be applied to the

Army. Moreover, their findings imply greater applicability of this model to smaller, less structured, and more de-centralized organizations rather than large, heavily structured, centralized units like the Army. Nevertheless, there was not a complete absence of differential leader-member relations, exchange, and role-negotiation even in these researchers' samples of more highly structured organizations. This displays some optimism for applying the vertical dyad linkage approach to the Army.

The general climate of an organization may impact a subordinate's choice, and even opportunity, for the usage of upward maintenance tactics. Such data support the demand to study the structure and centralization of authority and leader-member relations in organizations that are extreme in structure formality and authority, thus providing the impetus for the following research. By applying the vertical dyad linkage model to the Army, one will not only establish if the capacity exists for both leadership and supervisory relationships in such an organization, but also the impact that such a highly structured organization has on subordinates' choices/amount of upward communication influence and maintenance tactics that aid in their personal role-negotiation.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

Subjects

The fifty male subjects of this correlational study were soldiers from two different United States Army battalions. It may appear that the sampling was of a convenient nature since the group was not chosen randomly but strictly because of the internal group dynamics. That, however, is the heart of the study. The Army is a highly structured unit and because it has a clearly defined formal hierarchy throughout its organization a biased cluster sample was drawn.

One surveyed battalion was chosen out of three possible Infantry units. The two battalions not used in the study had military commitments that prevented their participation. Within the battalion that was surveyed, the researcher isolated a company of soldiers that was not involved in any training the week the study was conducted. The researcher obtained permission to solicit the soldiers for the study from the unit's chain of command, and the subordinates voluntarily agreed to complete the questionnaire. The other battalion, an Aviation support unit, was chosen after soliciting many support units and receiving permission from the participating unit's chain of command. Once again, the subjects voluntarily agreed to complete the questionnaire.

Within the Infantry battalion, as with all ground-combat units, there were no females. There are women in military support units, however they are small in numbers in comparison to the number of male personnel. Therefore, an all-male population was inadvertently chosen, a simple by-product of a highly male-dominated organization.

Recent empirical findings demonstrate that the supervisor is less honest about the quality of leader-member exchange and less aware of what communication maintenance tactics their subordinates use (Waldron, 1991). Therefore, all subjects were subordinates to a direct supervisor. Eight groups of subordinates numbering from three to ten made up the total number of subjects. Each group represented the genre for a particular supervisor; therefore, there were eight supervisors in all that were being evaluated by the subjects.

Instruments

Collecting the data was accomplished via a questionnaire using formats similar to those utilized by previous researchers in this area (see Appendix A). A standard Likert-type scale was used based on Graen, Liden, and Hoel's (1982) leader-member exchange scale, producing a Cronbach coefficient alpha of .80 in their study and .91 in Waldron's (1991) study. In this study a Cronbach coefficient alpha of .80 was achieved. Five questions, with a scale of one to four, were summed for each subordinate resulting in a range of scores from five to twenty. A low score indicates a negative leader-member exchange and a high score indicates a positive leader-member exchange. This section of the study demonstrated the perceived quality of leader-member exchange which, in turn, associates with how much activity the subordinate actively develops in his/her role. Analysis was accomplished for each of the eight supervisory groups for hypothesis one. The entire sample was then split into one group above and below the mean in order to establish the in-group and out-group for hypotheses two and three.

To identify the relationship communication maintenance tactics, there were twenty questions similar to the Likert scale format used in the Waldron and Hunt (1992) study. One correlation coefficient represented each of the four items: personal,

contractual, direct, and regulative. Subjects were asked to respond to those items describing "...behaviors people might do to maintain their relationships with their supervisors" (Waldron and Hunt, 1992, p. 85). The respondents answered that they performed each activity on a one (strongly disagree) to five (strongly agree) scale, with five questions for each tactic compiling the list of twenty questions. Reliability coefficients associated with the composites from the Waldron and Hunt (1992) study were .79 (personal), .72 (contractual), .66 (regulative), and .72 (direct). In this study, high internal consistency and reliability were once again witnessed for these tactics by Cronbach's alpha: Personal (.80), Contractual (.75), and Regulative (.85). The exception was an unexpected low of .54 for the Direct tactic.

The product correlation coefficient (Pearson r) was employed to compute the correlation coefficient since "...the Pearson r results in the most reliable estimate of correlation" (Gay, 1992, p. 271). Four variables, personal, contractual, regulative, and direct tactics were quantified in numerical form by using the computer program Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The closer the correlation coefficient was to +1.00, the stronger the correlation. Standard one-tailed t-tests were employed to test the second and third hypotheses, also accomplished by using SPSS. T-tests were run and in-group and out-group usage of personal, contractual, regulative, and direct tactics were compared.

Procedures

Fifty subjects were surveyed during the summer of 1997. Anonymity was guaranteed by the researcher. This was insured by the security of the data, the coding of the data, and the absence of any personally identifying questions on the survey. Approval

to conduct the study was obtained from the organizations' leaders prior to any data collection. Participation was voluntarily, and it was noted that completion of the survey indicated the subjects' authorization for study use.

Due to constraints on the accessibility of all fifty subjects, two methods for collection of the questionnaires were used. One battalion was addressed by the researcher. Respondents were informed about the purpose of the study, filled out the questionnaire, and then returned it to the researcher upon completion. Maximum time needed for answering the questionnaire was 20 minutes. For the second battalion, the researcher addressed key leaders within the organization about the study. The key leaders then passed out the questionnaires instructing the respondents to fill out the survey if desired, and to return them in a sealed unidentifiable envelope, provided by the researcher, when completed. None of the key leaders passing out the survey was one of the eight supervisors evaluated by the subjects. The following chapter presents a summary of data collected and the statistical analyses of them.

CHAPTER 5

RESULTS

In analyzing the data for hypothesis one by the means of sub-group *t*-tests (SPSS), little statistical support is found for the eight individual groups. Under supervisor one and seven, as with many of the other eight groups, an even split between the in-group and out-group was attained, thus demonstrating a difference in perceived leader-member exchange quality. However, only with personal maintenance tactics within these two supervisor groups were there significant results. With six subordinates under supervisor one and seven respectively, three members were part of the in-group and three members were part of the out-group (see Table 1).

TABLE 1

T-Test Results for Independent Supervisor Groups Demonstrating Significance

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Group</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>Significance</i>
Personal	supervisor 1 out-group	3	9.67	-5.03	.007*
Personal	supervisor 1 in-group	3	19.00	-5.03	.008*
Personal	supervisor 7 out-group	3	12.00	-3.70	.021*
Personal	supervisor 7 in-group	3	20.00	-3.70	.050*

*Significant at $p < .05$.

Notwithstanding the significance of this data, there are too many other supervisory groups out of the eight that were found to be insignificant considering that

the significance level was at $p < .05$. Therefore, hypothesis one, that there will be variances in subordinates' perceived leader-member exchange quality with their specific supervisor throughout the Army sample, was not supported. There were no variances in subordinates' perceptions of leader-member exchange quality for their supervisors' throughout the sample.

Of the 50 questionnaires distributed, all but two were returned. Of the 48 received, all but two were unusable for the study. The inability to use two of the 48 surveys was due to incomplete data. As stated in the methodology chapter, the in-group and the out-group were decided at the split at the mean of the leader-member exchange scale. With a mean of 13.41, the out-group personnel were identified as such: out-group ≤ 13 . The in-group were identified as such: in-group ≥ 14 . The slight uneven deviation from the mean for the two groups was because of the whole numbers used to score the individual leader-member exchange quality totals. An out-group of 22 subordinates and an in-group of 24 subordinates were designated.

After the out-group and the in-group were identified, hypotheses two and three were analyzed by using *t*-tests for groups (SPSSX). The groups compared by the *t*-tests consisted of the four variables personal, contractual, direct, and regulative maintenance communication tactics.

Hypothesis two, those members of the in-group will use more personal, contractual, and direct tactics than those members of the out-group, was partially supported. The analysis of the data for personal tactics was significant (see Table 2). The results show that the in-group members did use significantly more personal maintenance communication tactics than the out-group.

TABLE 2

T-Test Results for In-group and Out-group Personal Maintenance Tactics

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Group</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>Significance</i>
Personal	out-group	22	13.45	-4.13	.000*
Personal	in-group	24	17.79		

*Significant at $p < .05$.

Those subordinates who perceive a more positive leader-member exchange quality with their supervisors engage in personal-type communication more often than those subordinates who perceive a negative leader-member exchange quality. The relational status, or quality, of the leader-member dyad appears to affect the medium and opportunities for personal maintenance communication tactics. Those individuals who have a positive relationship with their superior are able, and feel less threatened, to communicate to their supervisor in a personal manner, thus supporting previous research in this area. Therefore, this segment of hypothesis two was supported.

Significant results, however, were not achieved for the rest of hypothesis two.

Little to no variance in the use of contractual and direct tactics was found in the comparisons of the out-group and in-group (see Table 3). The use of both contractual and direct tactics by the two groups were close to equivalent. This did not support previous research in this area. Other less highly structured samples used in previous studies showed a significantly higher frequency of contractual and direct tactic usage by the in-group members. The leader-member dyad was maintained by communicating an understanding of the formal agreement between the leader and the member, and by also

being direct, open, and honest in disclosing what problems or concerns one might have with his/her supervisor. Analysis of the data did not support this leader/member quality.

TABLE 3

T-Test Results for In-group and Out-group Contractual and Direct Maint. Tactics

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Group</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>Significance</i>
Contractual	out-group	22	19.68	-.74	.462*
Contractual	in-group	24	20.38		
Direct	in-group	22	18.59	.42	.678*
Direct	out-group	24	18.21		

*Significant at $p < .05$.

It is important to note that the significance test for direct tactics did not yield the required .70, but rather an unimpressive .54. Therefore, the hypothesis that out-group members would use more contractual and direct tactics than the in-group members was not supported.

The results of the t -test that compared in-group and out-group members' usage of regulative tactics demonstrated high significance in favor of hypothesis three. In relation to the data (see Table 4), in-group members used much less regulative maintenance

TABLE 4

T-Test Results for In-group and Out-group Regulative Maintenance Tactics

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Group</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>Significance</i>
Regulative	out-group	22	17.64	3.45	.001*
Regulative	in-group	24	12.79		

*Significant at $p < .05$.

communication tactics than their counterparts--the out-group. Therefore, those subordinates who perceived negative leader-member exchange quality with their supervisors were more likely to use regulative tactics when interacting with their leaders. Communication from the member to the leader was censored, strategic, and reserved. Poor perceived quality by subordinates instigates the feelings of having to watch what they say and how they say it when communicating with supervisors. Thus, the out-group reported a much higher frequency of regulative maintenance communication tactic usage, supporting hypothesis three that members of the in-group will use fewer regulative tactics than those who are members of the out-group.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION

This research predicted that subordinates under a specific supervisor would vary in their perceptions of the leader-member exchange with him/her. However, this was not statistically supported by the data. With eight groups of subordinates, and one supervisor for each group, only two groups demonstrated any significant variance--and this was only for the personal communication tactic.

Although the individual *t*-test results did not indicate a significant difference in the subordinates' perceptions, it is noteworthy that six of the eight groups showed a split of subjects on both sides of the total mean ($M=13.41$). In fact, five of the eight groups displayed a generous division of personnel with a minimum of 1/3 of each supervisor's subordinates representing either the in-group or out-group. Thus, regardless of the results of the statistical analysis, inferential analysis would deem that the majority of the supervisors in this sample did not treat their members the same. Both leadership and supervisory techniques were employed by most supervisors to their subordinates.

The two supervisor groups that showed absolutely no variance were those who had all of their subordinates in either the in-group or the out-group and had a relatively small sample to begin with. One group had only three subordinates and the other group had five. It is possible that the sample was too small to begin with. Wayne and Ferris (1990) and Waldron (1991) discussed the possibility that supervisors may use different styles of managing--either leadership or supervisory--with their subordinates in order to increase overall productivity and effectiveness within the organization. Treating everyone under the ideal method, leadership, takes too much time and energy. Therefore,

supervisors have to be selective in choosing in whom they will invest their personal leadership resources. Those are usually the members whom the leaders feel will get the job done, whatever that may be.

With the small sample taken for these two supervisory groups (three and five), it is possible that too much time and energy to achieve a leadership style of supervising was not an issue. In dealing with such small groups, the two supervisors were able to fashion one principle of management for all of their subordinates. Interestingly, these two groups both fell above the total mean, thus placing them in the in-group and supporting the speculation of the previous researchers that a supervisor's inability to attain a leadership relationship with all of his/her subordinates is due to the large numbers of subordinates and the required time and energy for that type of relationship (Dansereau, et al., 1975, Wayne and Ferris, 1990, and Waldron, 1991).

In the future, it may be wise to collect a larger sample. Each supervisor group should have a larger number of subordinates. Graen, Liden, and Hoel (1982) omitted any subordinate groups smaller than two. Small groups "...do not allow for a comparison between average and individualized leadership and hence cannot contribute to testing the differences between the two models. Moreover, units of only two subordinates are considered too small for acceptable estimates of average leadership," (Graen, Liden, and Hoel, 1982, p. 869). Additional relevant studies should consider increasing the minimum number of participants required in the Graen, Liden, and Hoel (1982) study.

Statistical analysis of hypothesis two was not fully supported. The data did not show that in-group members would use more contractual and direct tactics than the out-

group members. The reverse did not happen either, but rather no significance for either group was evidenced.

A research question arises with the analysis of this data. With contractual tactics, what are the boundaries of these tactics in such a highly structured organization like the Army? One would think these boundaries to be very narrow in comparison to a civilian counterpart. The median for contractual tactic use ($M=20.04$) was much higher in comparison to the three other tactics. This indicates a high use of contractual maintenance tactics for the entire sample and a narrow Likert response range for this particular item. If a service member does not adhere to the contractual agreement with the military and their superior, as venued through contractual maintenance tactics, punishable action could be enforced. It is possible that the latitude for contractual maintenance tactics could be much narrower in the military than the civilian workplace. Further research in the specific area of contractual tactic use would need to be accomplished in order to determine the difference in this sample's results from previous research.

With the lack of support for in-group members using more direct tactics, a possible extraneous variable could have been the subjects perceived themselves as being more "direct" with their supervisors than they actually were. Waldron (1991) speculated that his study's subjects may have extraneously inflated his statistics on direct maintenance tactic usage for this exact reason. An opportunity to personally shape one's self-concept is to consciously answer a self-behavior questionnaire a certain way (Waldron, 1991). Henceforth, many of the out-group members may have reported a higher use of these tactics than they actually perform. Nevertheless, this is once again sheer speculation.

The most detrimental factor to supporting this portion of the hypothesis, however, was that direct tactics did not pass the reliability test. The direct tactic questions of the Graen, Liden, and Hoel (1982) leader-member exchange scale needs to be re-tested prior to future employment. Therefore, the portion of hypothesis two on direct maintenance tactics was not supported by the data.

The rest of hypothesis two, however, was fully supported. In-group members did show a significantly higher use of personal maintenance tactics than the out-group. These results support the previous studies by Krone (1992), Waldron, Hunt and Dsilva (1993), Waldron and Hunt (1992), and Waldron (1991). A higher quality of exchange between the supervisor and the subordinate correlates with a higher use of personal maintenance tactics. Assumed, then, is the maintaining of a high-quality relationship by the use of these de-arming tactics, thus allowing more role-negotiation latitude for the member.

Hypothesis three was fully supported. Out-group members significantly used regulative tactics more often than the in-group. This coincides with the research by Waldron, Hunt and Dsilva (1993) and Waldron and Hunt (1992). It is probable, as predicted in the Waldron and Hunt (1992) study, that in-group members feel less threatened by disclosing most of their thoughts and concerns in an open and honest manner. By perceiving a healthy relationship with his/her supervisor, the subordinate does not feel that it is necessary to censor upward messages. The positive relational stability may provide a communication stability allowing the in-group member to be less guarded with the context of his/her speech as an out-group member. In short, the members' perceptions of a high-quality relationship with their supervisor removes a necessary variable to regulate their communication.

Out-group members, however, may feel more threatened by engaging in such communicative activity, thus producing censored and evasive communication messages. This also coincides with the Waldron, Hunt, and Dsilva (1993) study and the Waldron and Hunt (1992) study. By perceiving a poor quality relationship with their supervisor, out-group members may feel that open and honest communication will make them vulnerable to supervisory retaliation. Used as a defensive weapon, regulative communication tactics enable the out-group members to conceal true thoughts and feelings that, if exposed, could cause further strain in their relationship with their supervisor. The result is out-group members use regulative maintenance communication tactics more frequently.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

As Waldron, Hunt and Dsilva (1993) stated, "LMX [leader-member exchange] quality is fundamentally a psychological assessment of the relationship's character, but communication processes are often implicated in conceptual discussions of how LMX quality is behaviorally enacted," (p. 255). By researching the perceived quality of leader-member exchange, correlations can be made as to what maintenance communication tactics members will use in maintaining relationships with their supervisors. In working to maintain a positive relationship, subordinates create a context in which they have better opportunities to negotiate their roles, or other goal-oriented desires, within the organization.

For the supervisor, this research may affect his/her awareness that he/she may not treat all of his/her subordinates the same. Probably, both supervisory and leadership relationships exist. By understanding this research, the leaders can possibly direct their own downward communication attempts towards establishing the preferred method of managerial style--that of leadership. For, as Dansereau, Graen, and Haga (1975) found, leadership style is indicative of open and honest communication, mutual support for both leader and member actions, and confidence and consideration for the member.

For the subordinate, understanding the results of this research and previous research related to this study, the individual can attain an understanding of what communication venues, personal, contractual, and direct maintenance tactics, are generally indicative of a positive leader-member relationship. Wayne and Ferris (1990), in a causal-comparative study, found that certain superior-focused communication tactics

affected the superiors' liking for the subordinate which, in turn, influenced the quality of the leader-member exchange. Granted, many of the previous researchers listed in this study refused to draw any conclusions on what variables cause what action. But most studies, including this one, concluded that there are definite correlations with leader-member exchange and maintenance communication tactic usage.

A specific example would be in personal tactic usage. Waldron and Hunt (1992, p. 88) believed that a subordinate may gain insight into a supervisor's performance expectations through informal interaction. This could aid the subordinate in formal and informal job requirements. Furthermore, subordinates in low quality relationships who regulate their behavior with their supervisor may participate in nothing more than surface-level conversation, (Waldron and Hunt, 1992, p. 88). These research results will aid the subordinate in comprehending the context desired for a healthy and robust relationship with his/her supervisor.

A positive leader-member relationship perceived by the subordinate benefits the organization as well. Schilit and Locke (1982) concluded that certain upward communication influence attempts that were achieved by subordinates resulted in an overall positive outcome for the organization. Granted, this was found more in small, informal organizations than large, formal ones. However, a degree of success was still found in those large samples. Additionally, most of the results in this study parallel the previous research accomplished in smaller organizations. Therefore, even highly structured organizations like the Army can benefit by striving for high-quality relational communicative processes. The result is that the organization will prosper. Dansereau et al. (1975) found that members who perceive a high-quality leader-member exchange

spend more time at work, are more energetic, seek more responsibility, and are more committed to organizational success than their counterparts. By understanding the maintenance communication tactics that in-group members use, personal, contractual, and direct, organizations can then make the effort to solidify those relationships. More importantly, characteristics of low-quality relationships can be identified, and attempts to rectify such relationships can be made.

Future research should consider using larger supervisor group samples in order to determine a more accurate estimate of perceived subordinate leader-member quality. Researchers may also want to delve into the specifics of contractual tactics within large organizations, and, more relevant to this study, the Army. If a civilian member fails to comply with a supervisory order, the ramifications seem much less severe than those a service member could face, such as a court martial or incarceration. It is possible that the range for contractual tactic use is much narrower in the military than a loosely structured civilian organization.

Additionally, a more accurate model should be developed for assessing the use of direct tactics. Possibly a study more experimental in nature would enable researchers to document communicative behavior themselves, thus producing more realistic data. In the Wayne and Ferris (1990) experimental study, subordinates were actors who were instructed to communicate to the subject supervisors in different ways (ranging from energetic to lethargic, eager to discouraged). After a mock supervisor-subordinate scenario, the subjects--the supervisors--were asked to give their perceptions of the subordinates. Perhaps a similar study could be done using the subordinates as the

subjects. Possibly, a more accurate illustration of subordinate direct maintenance usage would be obtained.

Lastly, future researchers may want to add an important element of the communication process absent from this study; the element of interpersonal skills. In this area, researchers could examine what interpersonal skills are more effective in helping to establish and maintain positive relations between a leader and his/her member. What interpersonal skills does a supervisor feel a subordinate needs to possess in order to be successful? Are supervisors generally inclined to establish more positive relationships with subordinates displaying certain interpersonal skills and attributes? How does self-awareness have an affect on what communication tactics a subordinate will have the opportunity to use? How do the qualities of assertiveness, listening, and feedback affect the quality of the vertical boundaries found within a leader-member relationship? These are all important questions that future researchers should consider in order to make their studies more comprehensive for the academic field of communication.

This research was by no means conclusive, yet progress has been made in applying the vertical dyad linkage model to a very highly structured organization. Even with a clearly defined centralization of authority and ranking structure, Army supervisors do not rely exclusively on the formal employment contract. Social exchange does take place and leaders treat their members differently. Consequently, members perceive a variance in the quality of the relationship they have with their supervisor thus affecting their choices in the use of maintenance communication tactics.

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APPENDIX

Survey For a Graduate Study on Supervisor-Subordinate Communication

The following questions will greatly aid in a university study being conducted on communication in a highly structured organization--the Army. Please answer the questions as honestly and accurately as possible. Absolute anonymity will be guaranteed by the researcher. The only individuals that are going to see and know the specific results are you--the surveyee--and me--the researcher. All study results will be generalities only--no specifics. Thanks for your help.

SECTION I

1. What is your pay grade?
2. What is your direct supervisor's pay grade?
3. In months, how long have you been working with this individual?
4. For generic research grouping of all the surveyees only, what squad or section (whichever is applicable) are you in?

SECTION II (Please circle the number of the most appropriate response for each of the five following questions)

1. How flexible do you believe your supervisor is about evolving change in *your* job?
 - 1 = Supervisor sees no need for change.
 - 2 = Supervisor sees little need to change.
 - 3 = Supervisor is lukewarm to change.
 - 4 = Supervisor is enthused about change.
2. Regardless of how much formal organizational authority your supervisor has built into his position, what are the chances that he would be personally inclined to use his power to help *you* solve problems in your work?
 - 1 = No chance.
 - 2 = Might or might not.
 - 3 = Probably would.
 - 4 = He certainly would.

3. To what extent can *you* count on *your* supervisor to “bail you out,” at his expense, when *you* really need him?
 - 1 = No chance.
 - 2 = Might or might not.
 - 3 = Probably.
 - 4 = Certainly would.
4. How often do *you* take suggestions regarding *your* work to *your* supervisor?
 - 1 = Never.
 - 2 = Seldom.
 - 3 = Usually.
 - 4 = Almost always.
5. How would *you* characterize *your* working relationship with *your* supervisor?
 - 1 = Less than average.
 - 2 = About average.
 - 3 = Better than average.
 - 4 = Extremely effective.

SECTION III

Listed below are behaviors people might do to maintain their relationships with their supervisors. Please respond numerically to how you perform each described activity with your supervisor according to this scale:

1=Strongly disagree

2=Disagree

3=Undecided

4=Agree

5=Strongly Agree

1. Ask about his personal life:
2. Am sure to follow the rules he has established:
3. Avoid delivering bad news to him:
4. Speak up when I feel he has treated me unjustly:
5. Share jokes or amusing stories with him:
6. Remain polite toward him:
7. Sometimes stretch the truth to avoid problems with him:
8. Explicitly tell him how I expect to be treated at work:
9. Talk with him frequently even when I have nothing important to discuss:

10. Respond with a positive attitude when he asks me to do something:
11. Make sure supervisor is in a good mood before discussing important work related matters:
12. Make it known when I am unhappy about something at work:
13. Frequently engage him in small talk:
14. Make sure I have a clear understanding of what my supervisor thinks my responsibilities are:
15. Talk only superficially with him:
16. Discuss openly any problems in my relationship with him:
17. Treat him like a friend:
18. Accept criticism from him:
19. Avoid appearing too ambitious when we talk:
20. Frequently offer my opinions: