

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

Great Plains Research: A Journal of Natural and
Social Sciences

Great Plains Studies, Center for

Fall 2012

THE RIGHT CALL: BASEBALL COACHES' ATTEMPTS TO INFLUENCE UMPIRES


Kevin Warneke

University of Nebraska at Omaha, kwarneke@steiergroup.com

David C. Ogden

University of Nebraska at Omaha, dogden@unomaha.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/greatplainsresearch>

 Part of the [American Studies Commons](#), [Geography Commons](#), [Interpersonal and Small Group Communication Commons](#), [Leisure Studies Commons](#), [Other Communication Commons](#), [Social Influence and Political Communication Commons](#), [Speech and Rhetorical Studies Commons](#), and the [Sports Studies Commons](#)

Warneke, Kevin and Ogden, David C., "THE RIGHT CALL: BASEBALL COACHES' ATTEMPTS TO INFLUENCE UMPIRES" (2012). *Great Plains Research: A Journal of Natural and Social Sciences*. 1235.

<http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/greatplainsresearch/1235>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Great Plains Studies, Center for at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Great Plains Research: A Journal of Natural and Social Sciences by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

THE RIGHT CALL: BASEBALL COACHES' ATTEMPTS TO INFLUENCE UMPIRES

Kevin Warneke

*School of Communication
University of Nebraska at Omaha
6001 Dodge Street
Omaha, NE 68182
kwarneke@steiergroup.com*

and

Dave Ogden

*School of Communication
University of Nebraska at Omaha
6001 Dodge Street
Omaha, NE 68182*

ABSTRACT—On-field conversations and confrontations between baseball coaches and umpires have long been a part of the game. An umpire's decision can alter the course of the game, but little has been written about the exchanges between a coach or manager and umpire, especially in relation to theoretical considerations. This study applies management and leadership theories in exploring the strategies baseball coaches use to contest an umpire's decision. By using leadership scholar John E. Barbuto's concept of influence tactics and the various types of social power discussed by sociologists John R. French and Bertram Raven, the study also tests the congruence theory that baseball imitates the workplace. The investigators interviewed six high school and six college baseball coaches in Iowa and Nebraska and found that the strategies used by coaches to dispute calls can be categorized into five tenets: (1) coaches say it's their duty to question umpires and to keep their players from arguing with umpires; (2) coaches expect umpires to use their fellow crew members to help during close calls and to admit their mistakes; (3) coaches say they can help their cause by showing respect for umpires and building positive relationships with them; (4) coaches believe that discretion is important in deciding when they should argue a call; and (5) coaches say their arguments aren't meant to reverse a call but to prevent the umpire from making the same mistake later in the game or in future games. Such strategies are also used in the workplace by managers who want to influence employees or fellow managers, thus reinforcing the congruence theory and demonstrating the similarities between baseball and the workplace. Future research should examine the umpire's perspective during disputed calls and whether the approaches used by high school and college coaches are the same as those used by managers of professional baseball teams.

Key Words: baseball, coaches, influence tactics, social power, umpires

INTRODUCTION

Regardless of the level at which they manage, baseball coaches know that the balance of a game often hangs on an umpire's call. That's why the strategies coaches use to dispute calls with umpires can be as important as the strategies they use when managing the game. The coach-umpire interactions can influence not only the outcome of the game but also the coach's career. College coaches

know their jobs often are weighed by their win-loss records. High school coaches attempting to build a reputation, and perhaps a résumé for moving to a larger school or making the jump to college ball, know that umpires' decisions can dictate the fate of the game, and sometimes their season.

The types of influence tactics coaches use with umpires have garnered little research interest, and there have been no studies of how influence strategies used by

supervisors to manage employees or to interact with peers in the workplace compare to those used by coaches to address umpires. This study will apply those workplace concepts of influence tactics and social power to explore coach-umpire interactions, and to determine which strategies coaches consider the most effective for getting an umpire to make the right call.

In using those workplace concepts, this study will also test a decades-old model, known as the “congruence theory,” that attributes the appeal of baseball to its similarities with the workplace: a five- or six-day work week, accountability, the assignment of specific roles, and communication between manager and employee (Lahr 1972; Gelber 1983; Trujillo and Ekdom 1985). This study will focus on one aspect of that theory—communication between a manager (the coach, in this case) and another authority figure (the umpire)—and in doing so confirm or refute whether that aspect of the theory still applies.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In exploring the interchanges between coaches and umpires, it is useful and instructive to examine research on how people in positions of authority interact with others in the same environment when attempting to influence their decisions.

The literature has shown that certain strategies can be successful in the workplace between managers and their peers, and between managers and their subordinates. Since the early 1980s, an increasing amount of research has focused on how managers attempt to influence their peers, subordinates, and in some situations, their superiors (Yukl et al. 1995). In essence, researchers have focused their attention on how one gets his or her way at work. Some of this inquiry has focused on the influence tactics used by managers in the workplace (Kipnis et al. 1980; Hinkin and Schriesheim 1990; Yukl and Falbe 1990). These inquiries led to refinement of nine proactive influence tactics used in understanding managerial effectiveness (Table 1).

Leadership theory typically focuses on how a leader’s behavior affects a follower’s compliance and motivation (Bass 1985). Much of this work has focused—from the followers’ point of view—on the behaviors used by leaders to entice followers to comply (Barbuto 2000). John Barbuto’s work brought together variables—influence tactics, sources of motivation, and bases of social power (among others)—into one framework. We argue that two aspects of this framework—influence tactics and bases of social power—can be used to investigate the approaches

TABLE 1
NINE INFLUENCE TACTICS USED
IN UNDERSTANDING MANAGERIAL
EFFECTIVENESS

Rational persuasion. Agents use logic and facts to persuade targets that the request is consistent with goals and likely to produce the best outcomes.

Consultation. Characterized by agents requesting targets’ assistance in planning or troubleshooting an activity or strategy.

Inspirational appeals. Agents create enthusiasm for their request by appealing to targets’ values, ideals, or objectives. Agents’ inspiration may increase targets’ confidence to succeed in carrying out the request.

Personal appeals. Agents appeal to targets’ feelings of loyalty or friendship when making requests or seeking support. The relationship is the primary tactic of influence in this case.

Ingratiation. Agents seek targets’ compliance by offering compliments or acting friendly before making a request.

Exchange. Agents seek target compliance in exchange for favors, the promise of reciprocity, or shared rewards.

Pressure. Agents use threats, demands, and frequent reminders to influence targets’ compliance of a request.

Legitimizing. Agents seek to establish their request as legitimate by claiming they have the requisite authority. Agents may also attempt to equate their request to organizational policies or rules.

Coalition. Agents seek the support of third parties to persuade targets to comply with requests. Agents may often leverage the support of others as a method of gaining target compliance.

Source: Yukl and Falbe 1990.

coaches use to dispute or question calls by umpires and whether the coaches feel their approaches are effective.

Each of these variables—influence tactics and bases of social power—will be explored.

Influence Tactics

Influence tactics have been described as proactive influence attempts (Mowday 1978). Such tactics can aptly describe what coaches often do to sway umpires. The specific influence strategies were clarified in constructs depicting six primary influence tactics (Kipnis et al. 1980). Subsequent work identified additional influence tactics that were expanded to eight (Yukl et al. 1995) and then nine tactics (Yukl and Falbe 1990): rational persuasion, consultation tactics, inspirational appeals, personal appeals, ingratiating tactics, exchange tactics, pressure tactics, legitimating tactics, and coalition tactics (see Table 1).

Bases of Social Power

Studies show that acquiring and keeping power is a priority (e.g., McClelland and Burnham 1976). The coach-umpire relationship boils down to a tension between the coach's influence tactics and the umpire's bases of social power. Studies have also explored how power is obtained, how it is used to garner desired results, and how it is perceived by subordinates.

Defining power is the first step. Sociologist Jeffrey Pfeffer (1997) focused on three elements: (1) people have varying degrees of influence over others based on their positions in a hierarchy; (2) power does not discriminate—it is in play among people on all levels of the organizational chart; and (3) the act of exerting influence is conscious and intentional. Pfeffer also distinguished power from authority. "Power is authorized or legitimated authority" (Pfeffer 1997:17). In addition, the exercise of authority is expected, while the use of power may not always be welcome.

Studies have sought not only the definition of power but also ways to measure its impact on other aspects of a supervisor-subordinate relationship. Several of those studies have used a scale first introduced by sociologists John French and Bertram Raven (1959). Those researchers developed a five-category framework for the bases of power: reward, coercive, legitimate, referent, and expert.

Reward power is the ability to offer tangible items, such as a raise or promotion, in exchange for compliance. Perception is paramount with this base of power. Coercive power, conversely, is the ability to punish or withhold rewards when the target fails to comply. Legitimate power is based on the premise that the agent of influence has the right to issue instructions and expect compliance based on position or standing. Expert power comes with

the target's belief that the agent of influence has sufficient experience or expertise to warrant compliance. Referent power is more personal, as the target identifies with the agent of influence and complies.

These bases of social power and influence tactics may be among the girders that support the bridge between baseball and the world of work. That is, these concepts, the results of research in the work environment, may be used to analyze relationships in the confines of baseball and to serve as indicators that the game still mirrors that environment. Historian Steven Gelber (1983) was among those scholars who championed the congruence theory as an explanation for the rise of baseball and its popularity, not only as a game to play but also to watch. Gelber argued that baseball appealed to the masses because of its mimicry of day-to-day challenges, and the responsibility and division of labor in business and industry.

Baseball provided the male business worker with a leisure analog to his job. In the game, he experienced social relationships and psychological demands similar to those he knew at work. Indeed he was working at playing, and by doing so was minimizing distance between those two aspects of his life. (Gelber 1983:7)

Proponents of the congruence theory believe those social relationships and psychological demands, whether as a baseball player or as a baseball spectator, are part of the same landscape that work and baseball share.

METHODOLOGY

To allow coaches to elaborate on how they try to influence umpires to reverse a call, the researchers took a qualitative approach by asking open-ended questions that would elicit candid responses and rich descriptions. The researchers developed a four-item bank of open-ended questions but used follow-up questions, or probes, when they wanted the coaches to elaborate on a certain point or to clarify their responses. Purposeful sampling was used with college coaches familiar to the investigators. Initial participants were asked to suggest other managers whom they viewed as likely to consider interacting with umpires as part of their duties as managers. All methods and materials used in this study were approved by the Institutional Review Board at the University of Nebraska Medical Center.

Coaches were either called or e-mailed to request their participation in the study. The investigators eventually

interviewed six high school and six college coaches in Iowa and Nebraska. Those coaches had more than 150 years of experience combined. Interviews were recorded and then transcribed. The transcriptions were studied and common themes were coded. John W. Creswell (1998) included eight coding verification procedures for qualitative research. Three of these procedures were enlisted in this study: (1) peer review or debriefing, in which the authors, individually, developed themes from their reviews of the transcripts and then compared results and found congruency; (2) clarifying researcher bias, in that the authors acknowledge they are baseball fans and have been since childhood, which allows the reader to determine whether this has a negative or positive influence on the study; and (3) member checks, which Yvonna Lincoln and Egon Guba (1985) say is the most critical technique for establishing credibility. Two participants were sent a transcript of their interviews and a list of initial themes and codes. Both confirmed the accuracy of their interviews and agreed with the initial themes.

RESULTS

Coaches downplay the influence they have with umpires. They acknowledge that getting an umpire to change a judgment call is rare. Getting a reversal on a call that involves a quirk with the playing field is more likely. The coaches pick their moments, they said, with hopes that better calls will come. "I don't ever go out if it's not going to be successful," said a coach with 21 years of experience. "I don't mean to change the call. I mean to not let it happen again."

Themes

Five themes emerged through the interviews with the 12 coaches. The themes were as follows:

1. **"It's my job . . ."** When describing their role, the coaches are insistent on how they and their players are to act with umpires.

2. **". . . So do yours."** This is the bookend to the first theme. The coaches say umpires should act as professionals who are not opposed to seeking their crew members' help and admitting their mistakes.

3. **"Pick your moments."** Coaches agree that they shouldn't constantly hound umpires; instead, they pick their moments when to argue a call.

4. **Relationship with umpires.** The relationships coaches build with umpires are created by showing respect and being accommodating—on and off the field.

5. **Changing the outcome of the game.** Coaches say their attempts to influence a call immediately are seldom fruitful but believe such attempts are more useful in preventing an umpire from making a future mistake on a call.

"It's my job . . ." Some coaches have a rule that players are not to confront or question umpires. One coach with 30 years of experience said he wants his players "to worry about playing the game. . . . I don't want them to be concerned about things that are beyond their control. I prefer to have their focus on responsibilities they have within a game, not the responsibilities of the umps. If I feel the umpire is not doing his job, I'll take care of that. I'll be the one who is talking to him."

A coach with 10 years of experience revealed that the reasons for interacting with an umpire are twofold. The first reason, he explained, has nothing to do with umpires or influencing their calls. The reason for the interaction is solely for his players, and remaining credible with them. "The team needs to know that you have their back. I think that's so important that if the call doesn't go your way, if you're not going to help defend them on a call that's not right, I think you lose some validity with your team." Another coach takes the same approach, even if he is satisfied with the umpire's response to his question. If an umpire admits his mistake (both umpire and coach know the call can't be reversed), this coach will continue the conversation anyway. "Hey, I'm going to hang out here for another minute or so, then we'll get going, because I want my guys to know I'm out there defending them."

The second reason is to lay the groundwork for the next questionable call. "So they know you didn't agree with the call. It might sway the decision on the next call," the manager with 10 years' experience said. Umpires are human, one coach explained, and they need to be reminded of that fact. Another coach agreed. He said he knows umpires make mistakes, but he wants the umpires to also realize and remember that point. He makes sure the umpire knows he didn't agree with the call, and that the umpire was in the wrong. His edict to the umpire is "After I leave, [I want you to] just think about it for a second because you blew it." This approach—focusing on an umpire's vulnerability—employs a combination of pressure and legitimating influence tactics. Pressure tactics are characterized by demands and frequent attempts to ensure compliance, while legitimating tactics involve the agent, in this case the coach, claiming to have requisite authority to make the point (Yukl et al. 1995). This same coach explained that umpires at his field have to earn their keep or he doesn't want them

back, and he will take steps to ensure that they aren't asked back.

Several managers revealed that their visits with umpires during games sometimes have nothing to do with his most recent call. The conversation is merely an attempt to break the opposing team's momentum, similar to a time-out in basketball, football, or hockey. "When things are going horseshit, I'll go out and kill their rhythm," one coach said.

Keeping umpires honest means pointing out their bad calls, which often are made when they are out of position. Pointing out mistakes to get a call reversed isn't the point, a collegiate coach said. The point is giving the umpiring crew something to discuss after the game and to plant a seed of doubt: "In the back of their minds when they finish a game, they get together and talk. 'Hey, you know what? When so-and-so came out in the third inning, he might have been right on that call. Even though we didn't reverse it, he might have been right.'"

“. . . So do yours.” Most coaches interviewed said all they ask of umpires is to call the game as objectively as possible. It may seem obvious, but coaches say umpires shouldn't care about which team wins. When coaches take umpires to task, a subtle approach, coaches said, is best. Several coaches said they ask what the umpire saw. The approach, they say, avoids putting the umpire on the defensive. This approach smacks of the coach giving the umpire referent power by taking a more subtle approach to begin their conversation about a call (French and Raven 1959). Taking this approach, according to one coach, allows him to gauge the umpire's reaction based on the response. "I'm getting a feel for the guy," the coach explained. "I'm not questioning his manhood. I'm not questioning his strike zone. I just want to know what he saw. And if he feels uncomfortable telling me what he saw, I know he didn't see it." If the umpire responds, the coach explained, he walks away. "If they tell me to go away, now we're talking about something totally different."

The coaches said they will remind an umpire that he is working with a crew. The logical progression for an umpire who missed the action is to ask for help. That's what the coaches often suggest to the umpires. "The biggest thing is if you can convince them to ask for help," a coach said. "Sometimes, an umpire's ego gets in his way, but at least if they got together and discussed, they've done their job."

Another coach echoed the lament: "Why are we paying two guys to umpire if you [the umpire] are not willing to ask to make sure we got this right?" The coach will

remind the umpire, "Hey, you're a crew today. Can we use the crew today?" In such cases coaches are using a combination of coalition and pressure tactics by seeking the support of a third party (the other umpire) and reminding the home-plate umpire of his duty to seek every means for calling a fair game.

Positioning to get the best view of the play is another officiating responsibility that coaches say umpires don't do well at times. On one occasion, as related by a coach, the home-plate umpire called a player out (when the player would have been the winning run) for missing third base on the way to home. Not only was the home-plate umpire not positioned to get the best view of third base (according to the coach), but he was also staring into the outfield during the play in question. The coach recalled that he approached the umpire, "And I said, 'Could I ask you something? Did you see him miss third?' . . . and the ump said, 'Yes, I did see him,' and I said, 'You're a lying son-of-a-buck,' and then he threw me out of the game."

Some coaches will give umpires the benefit of the doubt if there are only two umpires officiating the game. Said one coach: "If there are two of them out there, obviously they aren't going to get everything right. They're going to miss plays because there are only two of them, and that's a lot of area to cover."

Several coaches said umpires can end arguments about their job performance during a disputed call. One college coach said when he takes an umpire to task, he tries to be "cordial" to them. "I'll ask them what they saw. The most disarming answer is 'I blew it,' and I just turn around and walk away."

"Pick your moments.” Coaches said there are times to question an umpire and there are times to remain in the dugout. One coach said he was recently thrown out of a game when he questioned the umpire who called a balk on his pitcher. The coach first asked the umpire if he could ask a question, then asked what his pitcher did. "I didn't say, 'What did he do wrong?' That's where you need to phrase your words a little bit, because if I say, 'What did he do wrong?' you're conceding that he did something wrong."

The story continues. As their discussion heated up, the umpire asked the coach if he wanted to be thrown out of the game. The coach conceded that the decision rested with the umpire but reminded him that he would have to explain the ejection to the coordinator of umpires. This comment suggests that the coach is attempting to establish coercive power over the umpire and to use pressure tactics under the assumption that the umpire will have to

explain the ejection to his boss, and that could be construed as an unpleasant or undesired task.

Too many visits to home plate to argue a call can also put an umpire on the spot and make him look bad, one coach said. "If you're out there all the time, first of all, they're not going to give you the benefit of a doubt because they don't want you out there all the time making them look bad. You pick your spots. It's their judgment that's being questioned, repeatedly, over and over. I think for sure it has an effect." The coach who makes repeated visits to argue a call may be knowingly, or unknowingly, arousing the umpire's coercive power (French and Raven 1959). The umpire may tire of the badgering he is receiving and allow his annoyance with the coach to influence his judgment or, ultimately, he may punish the coach by ejecting him from the ball game.

The authority to eject a coach from a game is the pinnacle of an umpire's coercive power over coaches. One coach pointed out that in his conference, ejection automatically means the coach is suspended for the next game. This coach advised his peers to be aware that the umpire grows tired of the coach who is consistently questioning his calls. For example, it's the first game of a doubleheader. The umpire knows that by ejecting that coach, the coach will be suspended for the subsequent game and the umpire no longer will have to deal with his antics *for the remainder of the day*. The coach explained:

They'll want to toss me. [The umpire may think,] "I'm here the rest of the day and that clown [the coach] isn't." We just gave him (the umpire) an escape clause rather than making him do what you're supposed to do and get the calls right. Gave them an easy out. "You know what, Coach So-and-So, you're out. I'm going to be here the rest of the day and you're not."

That coach just gave the umpire coercive power, and he can mull his failed influence attempt as he waits in the parking lot for the remainder of the day.

Relationships with Umpires. Umpires talk with other umpires, just as baseball coaches talk with their peers. A coach with 19 years' experience explained how he knows: "These guys are geared up when they come into here [his home field], and I have a reputation. I'll keep them honest and things like that." A coach with 30 years' experience said coaches want umpires with whom they feel comfortable working. "You want guys out there that you trust, and you know are going to work hard. For me, the biggest

thing is that an umpire is going to work hard for you and they're going to check their egos at home plate." However, because he knows umpires talk, the coach said he expects umpires working his games to know about him before they arrive at the field. "I think umpires probably know what they're getting when they come to work our games. My guess is that I have an idea what we're getting when they come to work our games as well. So it's a two-way street."

The coaches said they do little things to show respect for umpires and to make their jobs easier. One approach is to keep conversations private and near home plate rather than yelling from the dugout. Several coaches said they try to greet umpires when they arrive at the field. They make sure they have water, especially on hot days, and try to bring balls to them before they ask. Finally, as a sign of respect, they try to call umpires by their first names rather than "Blue." Umpires, one coach said, do not like to be called by that moniker. Not only are the coaches giving referent power to umpires by attending to their needs and demonstrating some respect (French and Raven 1959), but their actions may also be viewed as influence tactics through ingratiation (Yukl et al. 1995). The coaches are showing respect due to the position of umpire, not the person filling the role. Finally, the coaches are doing little things to ingratiate themselves to the umpires, partly in order to receive that important call with the game on the line.

One coach takes a different approach to his initial greeting before a game. He said he believes umpires must earn their pay when they are at his field, especially the ones who have yet to earn his respect. The coach's perspective might be a bit of wishful thinking. That is, the coach is expecting the umpire to grant him legitimate power just because the game is being played at his field, and the umpire may be expecting the same of the coach because of his position of authority in the game. Each feeling that he is deserving of being granted legitimate power by the other can create a tension that could carry into the game.

It is worth considering how that tension plays out in the type of influence tactics used by the coach when playing on his home field: "When they [umpires] come in, I won't give them the time of day because I will be as straight as dotting the *i*'s and crossing the *t*'s because I know later on I will be having a heart-to-heart with them during the game." He added: "It's my field. I'm paying. When my athletic director calls me, I jump. Hey, 'when I'm talking to you, you listen. I'm paying you to listen.'" This approach could be viewed as similar to the

use of exchange tactics, seeking support in exchange for favors (being paid, being asked to umpire again), or pressure tactics by using threats (not being asked back) or demands to influence the target's compliance with a request (Yukl et al. 1995).

Changing the Outcome of the Game. The baseball coaches who participated in this study generally agree that their attempts to influence umpires have little immediate effect. The value, they explain, can come in a close call later in the game, in a future game, or may not come at all. "I put it in their minds that they're human," said one collegiate coach when describing the value of his visits with umpires during games. "I tell them, 'After I walk away, just think about that for a second—what you just called. It wasn't even close. Just think about it.' I walk away. I just put the seeds in their heads."

One coach admitted he doesn't like coming out to talk with umpires, and he tells them this. Sometimes, he explained, he can't avoid the visits. "You're making me come out and back my team because you continually want to blow calls."

Still, they leave their dugouts to argue calls. Makeup calls do happen, although the coaches concede they shouldn't be part of the game. Better yet, they said, is getting the umpire to call a consistent game.

The coaches notice when umpires make adjustments. One coach recalled talking with the umpires about the opposing pitcher, who wasn't getting set before coming home. "He was balking and they didn't call it. And we talked to the umpires and we got two balk calls in the next two innings. Sometimes they're not noticing it because everything else is going on. Umpires are human." And coaches will point that out.

Coaches must question calls because they might occur again. "If you don't question it, the umpire doesn't have any reason to talk to you about it, and he's not thinking about it." Consider this approach as an attempt by a coach to use a pressure tactic on the umpire, which includes use of reminders to bring about compliance (Yukl et al. 1995).

Some interactions between umpires and coaches are classic and reinforce the notion that influence tactics, especially pressure tactics, do work. The coach with 13 years' experience recalled how an umpire changed his strike zone in a state tournament game. The coach wasn't happy with the home-plate umpire's strike zone and told him so in a demonstrative way. A photographer from the local newspaper snapped a photo of the coach showing what a strike zone should be, and the image subsequently was used in the following day's edition. "I went back and

sat in the dugout. All of a sudden the zone opened up. Struck the guy out. Struck the next guy out. Game over. I'll never forget that."

The opposing coach wasn't happy with the adjusted strike zone and had a legitimate complaint, the winning coach said. Umpires are human, the coach said. "I think all umpires sit back and go until someone questions them. Then doubt comes into their mind."

DISCUSSION

Are coaches able to influence calls and get umpires to see their points of view? That was the basic question that drove this qualitative study.

While the coaches included in this study claimed they have little immediate influence over the umpires who call their games, they continue to argue calls and ask for explanations. They may not win their argument, they say, but there is always that next close play.

As in baseball, influence attempts are common in the workplace. Managers attempt to influence their superiors, their peers, and their subordinates. Influence attempts are upward, downward, and lateral attempts to get one's way (Yukl et al. 1995).

Whether influence attempts, along with the other workplace tactics to get one's way, translate to the baseball diamond hasn't previously been studied. This study attempted to determine whether baseball coaches use their influence and social bases of power to get umpires to see their points of view.

Coaches used pressure tactics more often than any other influence tactics. The results, however, aren't always positive from the coaches' perspective. There were times when pressure tactics seemed to alter an umpire's calls to the benefit of the coach who is making the complaint. There were other times when a coach's use of pressure tactics got him thrown out of the game. The lesson workplace managers may take away from this study is that using pressure tactics too often does not generate the desired results. Like baseball coaches, workplace managers may want to "pick the moment" when pressure tactics may be most effective. This study intimates that for workplace managers, the "right moment" may be when employees or fellow managers need to be reminded of certain responsibilities or what is expected of them. Similarly, the coaches' use of ingratiating and exchange tactics to build positive relationships with umpires provides evidence that small favors, being responsive to a person's needs, and showing the other person respect can strengthen relationships, including

those between workplace managers and their employees and peers.

The extent to which recognition of social power or lack of it affects the success of influence tactics is a question left unaddressed by this study. Determining whether there is a relationship between social power and influence tactics can enhance the understanding of the dynamics of coach-umpire interactions and can provide coaches with evidence as to which influence tactics are most effective with umpires in game situations. Further exploring that relationship between social power and influence tactics can also result in a better understanding of workplace relationships. In other words, certain influence tactics that employees or managers use when communicating with fellow employees may work better than others when certain bases of social power are in place or are conceded. In demonstrating that the same influence tactics and social power bases that are used in the workplace are used in baseball, this study confirms that the congruence model of baseball, that of the game mimicking the workplace and its ethos, still applies. This may suggest a certain amount of stability in baseball's social meanings in which play copies work. But questions raised by this study apply to both the playing field and the workplace. Do coaches' and managers' self-perceived bases of social power hinder or handicap communication in certain situations? That question leads to another: is there added tension during interactions between coaches and umpires (or managers and their peers in the workplace) who perceive themselves, but not necessarily each other, to be deserving of a specific base of social power (such as legitimate or expert power)?

One group of researchers stated that employing influence attempts and/or flexing social power implies that there are winners and losers in the process (Mumford et al. 2000). For baseball coaches, the winners and losers are obvious.

FUTURE RESEARCH

Expanding the number of coaches in a study like this would provide greater depth and insight into strategies used to deal with disputed calls. More research is needed to verify the findings here. Beyond that, a logical extension of this work would be to focus on umpires and determine whether they view attempts by managers to influence their calls as effective, a waste of their time, or merely part of the game. Seeing disputed calls from the umpire's perspective would add balance to this current study and provide insight for both coaches and umpires in how best to navigate those "questionable" calls.

The current study also could serve as a base for examining manager-umpire relationships at the professional level, in the minor and major leagues. Are the influence tactics used by coaches of high school or college teams the same as those used by managers of professional teams? How do managers of professional teams view umpires, and themselves, in terms of social power?

A more general research question that stems from the current study focuses on exchanges of social power between two individuals who see themselves as having the same social power bases. Are interactions and communication between such individuals hamstrung by unfulfilled expectations that one will grant certain social powers to the other? This question applies not only to scenarios on the baseball diamond but also to any workplace where interactions between people at various levels of management occur.

REFERENCES

- Barbuto, J.E., Jr. 2000. Influence triggers: A framework for understanding follower compliance. *Leadership Quarterly* 11:365–87.
- Bass, B.M. 1985. *Performance Beyond Expectations*. Free Press, New York.
- Creswell, J.W. 1998. *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among Five Traditions*. Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA.
- French, J.R.P., and B. Raven. 1959. The bases of social power. In *Group Dynamics*, ed. D. Cartwright and A. Zander, 150–67. Harper and Row, New York.
- Gelber, S.M., 1983. Working at playing: The culture of the workplace and the rise of baseball. *Journal of Social History* 28:3–15.
- Hinkin, T.R., and C.A. Schriesheim. 1990. Relationships between subordinate perceptions of supervisor influence tactics and attributed bases of power. *Human Relations* 43:221–37.
- Kipnis, D., S.M. Schmidt, and I. Wilkinson. 1980. Intra-organizational influence tactics: Explorations in getting one's way. *Journal of Applied Psychology* 65:440–52.
- Lahr, J. 1972. The theater of sports. In *Sport in the Sociocultural Process*, ed. M. Hart, 105–15. Wm. C. Brown Company, Dubuque, IA.
- Lincoln, Y.S., and E.G. Guba. 1985. *Naturalistic Inquiry*. Sage Publications, Beverly Hills, CA.
- McClelland, D.C., and D.H. Burnham. 1976. Power is the great motivator. *Harvard Business Review* 54:100–110.

- Mowday, R. 1978. The exercise of upward influence in organization. *Administrative Science Quarterly* 23:137–56.
- Mumford, M.D., F. Dansereau, and F.J. Yammarina. 2000. Followers, motivations, and levels of analysis: The case of individualized leadership. *Leadership Quarterly* 11:313–40.
- Pfeffer, J. 1997. Developing and exercising power and influence. In *Organizational Influence Processes*, ed. L.W. Porter, H.L. Angle, and R.W. Allen, 15–32. M.E. Sharpe, New York.
- Trujillo, N., and L. Ekdorn. 1985. Sportswriting and American cultural values: The 1984 Chicago Cubs. *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 2:262–81.
- Yukl, G., and C.M. Falbe. 1990. Influence tactics in upward, downward, and lateral influence attempts. *Journal of Applied Psychology* 75:132–40.
- Yukl, G., P.J. Guinan, and D. Sottolano. 1995. Influence tactics used for different objectives with subordinates, peers, and superiors. *Group and Organization Management* 20:272–96.