Constructive Consequences of Leaders’ Forcing Influence Styles

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In contrast to non-forcing influence styles used by leaders, their forcing influence styles are commonly found to be ineffective, evoking sheer resistance, rather than compliance. As a corollary of conglomerate conflict behavior theory, we state that forcing, if combined with non-forcing, may nonetheless be quite effective, while both styles interact in such a way that forcing tends to strengthen the compliance brought about by non-forcing. In a sample of 145

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police officers, reliable questionnaire data were collected, regarding the power use of their supervisor (forcing/non-forcing) and their tendency to comply with their supervisor’s wishes. By means of moderated regression analyses the forcing-non-forcing interaction hypothesis was tested. As expected, a significant interaction effect was found with regard to the impact of forcing and non-forcing power use by leaders on the one hand, and coworkers’ behavioral compliance on the other. The use of forcing influence styles thus appears to add to effective leadership, not because it is effective in and of itself (which is certainly not the case), but because it reinforces the impact of non-forcing power use.

INTRODUCTION

In whatever circumstances they perform their role, leaders are expected to elicit high levels of effort and cooperative behavior in the people they lead. In many conceptualisations of leadership, especially the older ones, leading is even plainly defined as deliberately influencing coworkers’ behavior. This is the case, for instance, in well-known theories such as path-goal theory (Evans, 1970; House, 1971; House & Mitchell, 1974), situational leadership theory (Hersey & Blanchard, 1988), and substitutes of leadership theory (Kerr & Jermier, 1978; Howell, Bowen, Dorfman, Kerr, & Podsakoff, 1990). In other theories, the leadership conceptualisation encompasses a number of other roles, which have nothing to do with influencing people, but even in those theories, influencing coworkers is part and parcel of it. This is the case in leadership conceptualisations such as those of Quinn, Faerman, Thompson, and McGrath (1990), Hunt (1991), and Yukl (1994, pp. 43, 72). Accordingly, the effect of leaders’ day-to-day influence styles upon coworkers’ compliance forms a central issue in leadership theory.

This issue has been investigated in a number of studies (cf. Yukl & Tracey, 1992; Yukl, Kim, & Falbe, 1996). In the outcomes of those studies forcing influence styles, such as exerting pressure and applying sanctions, in contrast to non-forcing styles, such as consulting with coworkers and trying to persuade them rationally, tend to emerge as rather ineffective ones. That is, they appeared to have a poor impact upon coworkers’ compliance at best. By now, it consequently seems to be a commonly held view that forcing constitutes counterproductive leadership behavior.

Breaking away from this view a hypothesis is proposed here, saying that forcing influence styles, in concert with non-forcing ones, may be quite effective. To start with, the key concepts forcing influence styles, non-forcing influence styles, and coworker compliance will be discussed below. Thereafter, the newly proposed research hypothesis will be put forward. Finally, a field study, performed in a police organisation in order to test the hypothesis, will be reported.

Forcing influence behavior is aimed at blocking non-compliance behavior, or making that kind of behavior too unattractive to be performed. It forms
the influence repertory that fits in with the leadership style known as “directive” (House, 1971) or “aversive” (Sims & Lorenzi, 1992). In their general categorisation of leader influence behavior, Kipnis, Schmidt, and Wilkinson (1980) identified two forcing behaviors, called “sanctions” and “blocking”. The first one, sanctions, encompasses actions such as threatening the target person’s job security and preventing the target person from getting a pay rise, if he/she does not give in. The second one, blocking, encompasses actions such as threatening to notify an outside agency or threatening to stop working with the target person if he/she does not give in. In the category system developed more recently by Yukl and Falbe (1990), and subsequently operationalised in a nine-styles questionnaire (see Yukl & Tracey, 1992), three forcing behaviors are distinguished: “pressure” (using demands, threats, and persistent reminders), “legitimating” (claiming the authority or right to make a request), and “coalition” (mobilising other people in the organisation in order to create pressure).

Two different types of compliance are distinguished in studies of responses to influence attempts (cf. Warren, 1968; Falbe & Yukl, 1992), labeled attitudinal and behavioral compliance respectively (terms coined by Rahim & Buntzman, 1988). Attitudinal compliance refers to the degree to which a target person is inclined by him/herself to conform to an actor’s wishes (with or without acting accordingly). Behavioral compliance refers to the degree to which a target person conforms behaviorally to those wishes (with or without being inclined to do so by him/herself). This dual conceptualisation of compliance derives from classic social psychological analyses of social influence processes (Kelman, 1958, 1961; Hogg & Vaughan, 1995, pp. 182–185), which made clear that behavior and attitudes, though being interconnected, are outcomes of different motivational processes, and thus basically represent two distinct responses. Behavioral compliance is the product of a target’s wish to achieve favorable reactions, or to preclude unfavorable reactions, from the actor. It results from direct or indirect social pressure from a group or an individual. It manifests itself as surface change in behavior and expressed attitudes. Since it does not reflect internal change, it usually persists only while behavior is under surveillance. In contrast, attitudinal compliance results from the actor’s impact upon the target’s self-definition, which generates genuine persuasion and true internal change that persists in the absence of surveillance (Moscovici, 1976; Pérez, 1994; 

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In the sections to follow, these two concept labels will be used. Commitment is (another) label commonly used to indicate attitudinal compliance (cf. Falbe & Yukl, 1992), but, in order to distinguish it from the more extensive commitment concept used in organisational behavior studies (cf. Meyer & Allen, 1991; Meyer, 1997) we prefer to use the label attitudinal compliance. Other labels to refer to attitudinal compliance are “internal change” and “internalisation”.

Pérez & Mugny, 1990). An actor’s influence attempt may elicit either of the two responses. For that reason both of them are to be taken into account when consequences of influence styles are studied.

Empirical studies performed up until now consistently show the use of forcing behaviors by leaders to result in low levels of both attitudinal and behavioral coworker compliance. Unequivocal evidence leading to this conclusion came from a study of Falbe and Yukl (1992). In that study, incidents, reported by targets of influence attempts, were analysed. In contrast to non-forcing types of influence behaviors, the use of pressure, legitimating, and coalition, each being clear examples of forcing behaviors, appeared to elicit attitudinal compliance in approximately zero per cent of the cases, and behavioral compliance, as evidenced by the absence of resistance, in about 50 per cent of the cases only. These findings were replicated in a study by Yukl, Kim, and Falbe (1996). Further evidence was provided by a study of Yukl and Tracey (1992). In the last study, legitimating, pressure, and coalition, operationalised as influence styles of leaders, appeared to have a low, or even negative, correlation with coworkers’ attitudinal compliance.

The causes of the ineffectiveness of forcing influence tactics are expounded by Sims and Lorenzi (1992, pp. 71–77) who analysed the consequences of “aversive” leadership from a social learning theory point of view. Aversive leadership, in their terminology, consists of the use of negative reinforcement of undesirable behavior of coworkers. Considered at a more concrete level, this type of management takes on the appearance of forcing influence behavior. Sims and Lorenzi distinguish between main effects and side effects of that type of behavior. In their view, the main effect of forcing influence attempts is restricted to short-term repression of undesired behavior, whereas side effects are dysfunctional emotional reactions, aggressive, disruptive, apathetic, and uncreative behavior, fear of the leader, risk avoidance, hiding mistakes, reducing communication, and rationalisation of the undesired behavior. Taken together, the main and side effects of forcing influence behavior thus are supposed to add up to limited short-term behavioral compliance on the one hand, and the lowest possible degrees of attitudinal compliance on the other hand.

Along with the forcing styles quite a number of non-forcing styles may form part of leaders’ influence repertoires. As put forward by Kipnis and Schmidt (1985) and by Falbe and Yukl (1992), two broad categories of non-forcing styles can be distinguished, labeled “soft” and “rational” respectively. Both are similar, in that all leader behaviors included in them can be defined as persuasive communications, and thus by definition always leave room for coworkers’ free choice. Differences between the two have to do with the way persuasion is brought about. As such, they reflect the two basic leadership styles, labeled transformational and transactional leadership, which were identified by Bass (see Hater & Bass, 1988; Bass, 1995).
Soft influence behavior impacts, first of all, upon coworkers’ value systems and ambition levels. As is the case with its leadership counterpart of transformational leadership, its ultimate effect is that coworkers are going to appreciate projects and options that they would not appreciate unreservedly on their own. It transforms value systems of coworkers in such a way that they come to believe in new ideals to be pursued. It is an attempt to bring about coworkers’ compliance by inciting positive feelings with regard to behaviors desired by the leader. Attitudinal compliance, then, comes about through an induced re-evaluation of behavioral options by coworkers. In an indirect way, and in the long run, behavioral compliance may result as well, while new behavior intentions arise as a consequence of newly developed attitudes. In the nine-styles Influence Behavior Questionnaire, developed by Yukl and coworkers (see Yukl & Tracey, 1992), this type of influence behavior is exemplified by the styles “consultation” (seeking coworkers’ participation), “inspirational appeal” (arousing coworkers’ enthusiasm, increasing coworkers’ self-confidence), “ingratiation” (displaying praise, flattery, friendly and helpful behavior to get target person in a good mood) and “personal appeals” (appealing to target person’s feelings of loyalty and friendship).

In contrast to soft influence behavior, rational influence behavior (the other type of non-forcing behavior) does not intervene in the coworkers’ value systems. As is the case with its leadership counterpart of transactional leadership, it tries to perceptually or materially model the contents of influence attempts in such a way that those contents come to fit the existing values of the coworkers. It does so by clarifying or guaranteeing the profitability of requested efforts. It is an attempt to bring about coworkers’ attitudinal compliance by showing that the desired behavior is for their own good, or by deliberately modifying communicated requests in such a way that the desired behavior evidently serves their self-interest. After a while, behavioral compliance, without being forced directly, may then readily ensue. In Yukl’s Influence Behavior Questionnaire this type of influence behavior is exemplified by the styles “rational persuasion” (using logical arguments and factual evidence in order to show that a request is viable) and “exchange” (offering benefits in exchange for compliance).

In the organisational behavior literature both non-forcing categories of influence behavior, the soft one no less than the rational one, stand out as effective approaches, fostering both attitudinal and behavioral compliance. By and large, this view is corroborated by outcomes of a study by Falbe and Yukl (1992) who analysed incidents of successful and unsuccessful influence attempts by leaders. Inspirational appeal and consultation (the soft approaches) appeared to be the most successful influence behaviors. Rational persuasion and exchange (the rational approaches) emerged as slightly less successful ones. Both, however, still surpassed the clearly less successful
forcing influence tactics. As for the effectiveness of rational persuasion, these findings were replicated by Yukl, Kim, and Falbe (1996). Corroboration was also found in a correlational study by Yukl and Tracey (1992), which showed both soft and rational influence styles to correlate positively with attitudinal compliance.

The picture drawn above, showing non-forcing (rational and soft) influence behaviors of leaders to produce solid compliance, and forcing influence behaviors of leaders to produce poor compliance, is rather firmly rooted in the underlying empirical evidence. There are, however, at least two reasons to question its unconditional validity. To begin with, it is hard to reconcile with the undeniable evidence of the occurrence of forcing influence attempts in everyday life. Ample evidence thereof can be found in the studies by Kipnis et al. (1980), Kipnis and Schmidt (1983), Yukl and Falbe (1990), Yukl and Tracey (1992), and Yukl, Falbe, and Youn (1993). In those studies the non-forcing leader behaviors invariably appeared to be the most frequently used ones. Predominance of non-forcing behaviors thus evidently is the “natural” condition. The majority of the influence styles identified in classifications such as the ones constructed by Kipnis et al. (1980) and Yukl and Falbe (1990) is, moreover, in the non-forcing category, which by itself points to the same phenomenon. Forcing behaviors tend to emerge, nonetheless, in all studies as a substantive, be it relatively small, part of leaders’ repertoires. If those behaviors were really as dysfunctional as is suggested by the picture’s content, they certainly would not have survived in the evolution of individual leaders’ repertoires. They would have evaporated, sooner or later, as a consequence of histories of negative reinforcement. Somehow, forcing behavior thus must add to a leader’s effectiveness, whatever the cited field studies make us believe.

The second reason to doubt the picture’s validity has to do with an implicit point of departure in the studies underlying it. In these studies the forcing and non-forcing influence behaviors were analysed as isolated actions, and not as components of behavioral conglomerates consisting of influence style combinations. Even within single influence attempts, however, different influence tactics are often enacted simultaneously (see for evidence: Falbe & Yukl, 1992; Yukl, Falbe, & Youn, 1993). It is quite possible that forcing influence styles play a constructive part in concert with other styles, however destructive they simultaneously may be in and of themselves.

As outlined above, the reasons why (pure) forcing influence behavior usually fails to produce compliance have to do with the mix of main and side effects resulting from that type of leader behavior, which in the end tend to add up to sheer noncompliance in coworkers. Main effects were assumed to consist of (short-term) behavioral compliance. Side effects were assumed to comprise reduction of attitudinal compliance. Articulated this way, the effects of forcing behaviors come into view as complementary to
those of non-forcing behaviors, which first and foremost generate attitudinal compliance, in contrast to behavioral compliance. If used together, they therefore might—for better or for worse—complete each other. As long as the attitudinal compliance, which is brought about by a leader’s non-forcing behaviors, is not endangered as a consequence of his/her forcing behaviors, the latter may play a positive part, in that it instantly unleashes coworkers’ tendencies to comply behaviorally. Stated otherwise, the manifestation of behavioral compliance, set off by non-forcing behaviors, may be speeded up by the concurrent use of forcing behaviors. Forcing behaviors then strengthen the impact of non-forcing behaviors upon coworkers’ behavioral compliance. Along these lines of reasoning, we come to expect an interactive effect of forcing and non-forcing behaviors, a “chemistry” of both behaviors, implying constructive consequences of forcing behaviors, if used together with non-forcing behaviors.

The discussion, so far, is highly speculative. In the theoretical, as well as the empirical literature on leader influence behavior, the phenomenon of the chemistry of different types of power use enacted simultaneously is as yet not dealt with in an explicit way. Direct empirical evidence of its consequences is lacking. In only one study (Falbe & Yukl, 1992) has the issue received some attention. In that exploratory study influence attempts encompassing more than one influence tactic were found to be more effective than influence attempts consisting of a single tactic. The study was not designed in such a way, however, that additive and interactive effects could be distinguished. Its outcomes therefore do not straightforwardly bear on forcing-nonforcing interaction. One of the findings nonetheless nicely fits the views above regarding constructive consequences of forcing behaviors: forcing and rational tactics combined turned out to be more effective than each of them used in isolation.

The “chemistry” issue thus being almost absent in the area of influence behavior research, it nowadays gets some attention in two other areas related to it: those of conflict behavior research (Van de Vliert, Euwema, & Huismans, 1995; Van de Vliert, 1997; Munduate, Ganaza, Peiro, & Euwema, 1999; Van de Vliert, Nauta, Giebels, & Janssen, 1999) and negotiation behavior research (Lytle, Brett, & Shapiro, 1999; Walton, Cutcher-Gershenfield, & McKersie, 1994). There is an interesting discussion in social science referring to the transfer of ideas and empirical findings across research domains (see Gordon, 1980; Rhoades & Arnold, 1999). Rhoades and Arnold (1999) found strong associations among behavioral responses which were taken from separate research domains, such as conflict management behaviors and styles, procedural choices, strategic choices, and power use strategies. Although these domains appear somewhat disparate, the responses were quite similar. For example, Falbo’s (1977) collection of power strategies seemed to overlap substantially with behavioral responses...
in negotiation (Pruitt & Rubin, 1986) and styles of conflict management behavior (Blake & Mouton, 1964). These and other commonalities across literatures found by Rhoades and Arnold (1999) lead them to suggest that the responses contained in each individual domain (e.g. power strategies) were not truly distinct, but rather were part of a higher-order classification system (see Van de Vliert, 1989). Specifically, Rhoades and Arnold (1999) state that the known sources and consequences of a conflict response in one research domain may be used to generate novel predictions about a similar behavior in a separate domain. Such transfer may be particularly useful in the case of “chemistry” issue in influence behavior which lacks a research history.

Focusing upon leader influence behaviour, one might argue that it is fairly akin to conflict/negotiation behavior. Both types of behavior are similar in that they apply to within-dyad interaction, with one dyad member trying to influence the other. The similarity of both concepts is reflected, furthermore, by the correspondence of the behavioral tactics that are distinguished in the two research domains. Forcing influence behavior, for instance, corresponds to forcing or fighting conflict behavior (cf. Van de Vliert & Kabanoff, 1990) and to “rights” and “power” approaches in negotiations (cf. Brett, Shapiro, & Lytle, 1998). Also, the most salient dependent variables in the corresponding research domains (level of conflict resolution and negotiation success, respectively) are not completely different from the dependent variables in influence behavior research (the compliance variables): both conflict resolution and negotiation success include some kind of mutual persuasion of the parties involved, and thus encompass induced compliance of those parties. Of course, there are also significant differences between influence behavior on the one hand, and conflict/negotiating behavior on the other hand. Conflict and negotiation behaviors are restricted to situations in which two parties have conflicting interests, whereas influence behavior applies to any two-parties situation where one of the parties has interests. Influence behavior, as a concept, is thus broader than the concept of conflict/negotiation behavior. Another difference is that conflict and negotiating behaviors are connected to more or less isolated events (conflicts, negotiations) whereas leader influence behaviour is something repetitive and continuous. Because of these differences, no direct proof or disproof of hypotheses regarding forcing-nonforcing interaction can be derived from the outcomes of studies in the conflict and negotiation field. Those outcomes form relevant background information, however. As will be shown below, they appear to support the ideas underlying the forcing-nonforcing interaction hypothesis in such a way that the present study can be characterised as an attempt to generalise findings in one domain (conflict/negotiating) to another domain (leader influence behavior).

Van de Vliert et al. (1995) investigated the conflict solving effectiveness of—so-called—conglomerated conflict behavior (combinations of different
types of conflict handling, see Van de Vliert, 1997). Their study involved the analysis of role-played conflicts by organisation members. They found a marginally significant effect, indicating forcing-nonforcing interaction in such a way that both behaviors seemed to enhance each other’s effectiveness. Munduate et al. (1999) also studied conglomerated conflict behavior in role-played situations. They identified a number of tactic combinations used by the parties in conflicts. Interestingly, the most effective combination found consisted of a combination of non-forcing and forcing behaviors, with the non-forcing ones dominating the forcing ones. Without definitely proving the interaction of forcing and non-forcing behaviors, these findings nicely line up with the views put forward above. Most definitely, the occurrence of interaction of forcing and problem solving conflict behaviors was demonstrated in a series of three behavior observation studies by Van de Vliert et al. (1999). As a robust finding of these studies, the co-occurrence of problem solving and forcing appeared to yield the highest levels of conflict handling effectiveness.

Similar outcomes were obtained in negotiation behavior research. In negotiation textbooks (cf. Fisher & Ury, 1981; Lax & Sebenius, 1986; Rubin, Pruitt, & Kim, 1994) the plea for a strategy of combining forcing and non-forcing approaches in order to reach favorable negotiation outcomes, is frequently found. Results of case studies (Lytle et al., 1999; Walton et al., 1994, pp. 321–338) show that such strategies do indeed work out successfully. Stated in most general terms, these studies, together with the studies in the areas of influence behavior and conflict behavior cited above, thus add up to a rather broad range of findings which support the assumption that forcing behavior, however destructive it tends to be by itself, may play a constructive role in interpersonal communication in concert with non-forcing behavior. Applied to the issue of leaders’ influence behavior and its effects on coworkers’ compliance, the assumption translates into the forcing-nonforcing interaction hypothesis, which is tested in the present study:

A leader’s non-forcing influence behavior produces more attitudinal compliance (A) and behavioral compliance (B) in coworkers to the extent that he/she also uses forcing influence behavior.

As can be seen, two sub-hypotheses, A and B, are formulated. Sub-hypothesis B, regarding behavioral compliance, most directly follows from the theoretical analyses, which said that forcing behavior helps to unleash behavioral compliance, and thus is complementary to non-forcing behavior. Sub-hypothesis A, regarding attitudinal compliance, is nonetheless included, with the interconnectedness of attitudinal and behavioral compliance being taken into account.
METHOD

In order to test the forcing-nonforcing interaction hypothesis, a questionnaire study was designed. Data were collected at several local police stations in the area of Andalusia, Spain. One hundred and forty-five police officers volunteered to answer questions regarding the influence styles of their direct superiors, as well as questions regarding their own compliance levels. The resulting data-matrix allowed the forcing-nonforcing interaction hypothesis to be tested correlationally, with the individual officers being the units of analysis. With 132 males, 6 females, and 7 respondents whose gender was unknown to the researchers, the sample was predominantly male. The respondents’ mean age was 33 (SD = 6.9), their mean work experience came to 9 years (SD = 5.9), and the mean number of years they had worked under their superior was 5 (SD = 4.0).

To measure superiors’ influence styles, a Spanish translation of the target version of the Influence Behavior Questionnaire (IBQ), developed by Yukl (see Yukl & Tracey, 1992) was used. This 36-item questionnaire consists of nine scales, each containing four items, corresponding to nine influence styles distinguished in the Yukl model, with three forcing styles (pressure, legitimating, coalition) and six non-forcing styles (inspirational appeals, consultation, ingratiation, personal appeals, rational persuasion, exchange). The items are rated on a 5-point scale (1 = “I can’t remember him/her ever using this tactic with me”, 2/3/4/5 = “He/she very seldom / occasionally / moderately often / very often uses this tactic with me”). The Cronbach’s alphas of the nine tactic scales, calculated with the police sample data, ranged from 0.67 to 0.87 (see Table 1).

In order to arrive at measures of supervisors’ levels of forcing and non-forcing influence styles, the corresponding scales were combined. Scales of 12 and 24 items thus resulted, with Cronbach’s alphas achieving values of 0.81 and 0.93, respectively (see Table 1), indicating adequate levels of internal consistency of the two scales. An exploratory factor analysis applied to the nine initial scale scores, performed in order to have another check of the feasibility of the two-partition of the nine scales, pointed compellingly to a two-factor (forcing/nonforcing) solution (Table 1), which accounted for 66 per cent of the total variance. A quick glance at the pattern of scale intercorrelations (see Table 2) suffices to arrive at the same conclusion, with nonforcing-nonforcing intercorrelations ranging from 0.38 to 0.76 (mean: 0.55), forcing-forcing intercorrelations ranging from 0.31 to 0.46 (mean: 0.40) and nonforcing-forcing intercorrelations ranging from -0.27 to +0.36 (mean: 0.11). The hypothesis-testing analyses could be performed straightforwardly, therefore, with regard to just two styles: forcing and non-forcing, respectively.

To measure the respondents’ behavioral and attitudinal compliance, the Spanish translation of the Compliance with Superior’s Wishes Scale, developed...
by Rahim (1988, see also Rahim & Buntzman, 1988) was used. This scale consists of two subscales, one for behavioral compliance, and one for attitudinal compliance, with five Likert-type items in each subscale. The Spanish instrument was psychometrically tested in a previous study by Munduate and Infante (1997). In the police sample the Cronbach’s alphas of the two scales were over 0.80 (see Table 1).

RESULTS

Descriptive statistics (Table 1) show low to moderate levels of both forcing and non-forcing leader influence styles, and fairly high levels of both behavioral and attitudinal coworker compliance. Correlations of the respondents’ behavioral and attitudinal compliance with their superiors’ influence styles (Table 1) reflect the results found in previous studies, with forcing styles being zero or negatively correlated, and non-forcing styles being positively correlated with compliance. The correlations with behavioral compliance consistently tend to be somewhat lower than those with attitudinal compliance, but the pattern of both correlation columns is quite similar. The values regarding attitudinal compliance nearly perfectly mirrored the values found by Yukl and Tracey (1992), with the Spearman rho correlation of values reported by them and the values found in this study being 0.93 ($P < 0.00$). These researchers applied the same IBQ instrument for the measurement of influence tactics as was applied in our study. With regard to the direct relationships between leader influence styles and coworker compliance, existing evidence thus appears to be corroborated.

The sub-hypotheses A and B, inherent in the forcing-nonforcing interaction hypothesis, were tested by means of moderated regression analysis (Aiken & West, 1991). The outcomes of the two regressions, corresponding to the two sub-hypotheses A and B respectively, are shown in Table 3. As can be seen, the regression weights of the interaction terms are, as expected, positive, indicating that higher levels of forcing behavior give rise to a more positive correlation of non-forcing behavior and compliance. Sub-hypothesis B, regarding behavioral compliance, was significantly corroborated ($P = 0.02$). In the case of sub-hypothesis A, regarding attitudinal compliance, marginal significance was reached ($P = 0.09$).

By substituting, in the moderated regression equations, a low, a medium, and a high value respectively for forcing behavior, the slope of the regression

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<th>TABLE 3</th>
<th>Regression of Compliance (Attitudinal/Behavioral) on Leader Influence Behavior Rates</th>
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<td><strong>Independent variable</strong></td>
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<td>Step 1</td>
<td>forcing influence (F)</td>
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<td>$F^*NF$</td>
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*Legends: $^{*}P < 0.05$, $^{**}P < 0.01$ one-sided; $P(R^2ch)$ = one-sided significance of $R^2$ change.*

of the compliance variables on non-forcing behavior can be estimated, given each of those fixed values of forcing. This procedure helps to clarify the interaction found. If we apply this procedure to the results of sub-hypothesis B (the clearly corroborated one), and fix forcing behavior at 1.83, 2.52, and 3.21, being the values of its mean and its mean plus/minus its standard deviance (in accordance with Cohen & Cohen’s (1983) guidelines), three equations for behavioral compliance, regressed on the non-forcing influence style, result. Given the rating scales used (see section on method), these fixed values of forcing influence behavior roughly stand for, respectively, “extremely seldom” (low = 1.83), “between seldom and occasionally” (medium = 2.52), and “more than occasionally” (high = 3.21). Visual representations of the three equations are in Figure 1. The B-coefficients,  

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2 It should be noted that each resulting simple regression line, rather than representing data in a separate subsample, represents an estimation of the regression that would result from a sample entirely consisting of respondents characterised by the chosen value of the forcing variable (Aiken & West, 1991).
representing the slopes of the lines in it, are 0.09 (n.s.), 0.25 ($P$, two-sided, $= 0.00$), and 0.40 ($P$, two-sided, $= 0.00$) for the low, the medium, and the high condition respectively (see Aiken & West, 1991, pp. 16–22 for significance test). Figure 1 thus shows that, in the sample studied, forcing behavior by a leader (to be precise: a moderate amount of it) causes two things to be simultaneously the case. The first—in line with what is commonly found—is that it more often than not decreases coworker compliance: by itself, it thus clearly is a dysfunctional approach. The second—beyond what is commonly found—is that it makes non-forcing behavior increase coworker compliance: linked up to non-forcing behavior, it thus emerges as something functional. Together, these distinct effects imply that forcing behavior reduces compliance in the absence of non-forcing behavior, whereas it helps to promote compliance, in the (co-)presence of it.

**DISCUSSION**

The present study focused upon the interactive effects of two types of leader influence styles, forcing and non-forcing ones, upon coworker compliance. In accordance with the proposed forcing-nonforcing interaction hypothesis, the use of forcing styles appeared to enhance the positive effect of non-forcing styles on coworker behavioral compliance. This positive moderating effect of forcing behavior surfaced next to the well-known simple negative effect of that type of behavior. Both effects combined in such a way that forcing appeared to reduce compliance in the absence of non-forcing, whereas it promoted compliance in the presence of non-forcing. It is thus shown that forcing behavior can play a significant catalyst role, shifting the impact of non-forcing behavior in a favorable way by turning it from low or neutral to considerably positive, in such a way that it even may undo the negative effects that it generates by itself.

The study’s results with regard to the direct relationships between leader influence styles and coworker compliance unambiguously replicated outcomes of former studies in the field (showing positive effects of non-forcing styles and negative effects of forcing styles). This can be viewed as an indication of the study’s validity. Notwithstanding obvious weaknesses of its design (cross-sectional collection of single-source self-report data), it thus most likely does not contain invalidating irregularities.

With the study’s design, however, doubts about type and direction of causalities between variables can never be eliminated definitely. The correlation between forcing leader behavior and coworker noncompliance, for instance, may be the result of effects of forcing upon noncompliance, as well as the other way around: effects of noncompliance upon forcing (the boss who, faced with noncompliance, feels compelled to use force). Or the correlation between non-forcing leader behavior and coworker compliance may
be the result of effects of non-forcing upon compliance, as well as the other way around: effects of compliance upon non-forcing (the boss who, faced with compliance, is encouraged to apply non-forcing strategies). The labels “dependent variable” or “effect” on the one hand, and “independent variable” or “cause” on the other hand, thus cannot unambiguously be attached to the variables under study. Basically, the effect-label may be substituted by the cause-label and vice versa. This kind of interpretative leeway, however, applies least of all to the core of the present study: the outcomes regarding forcing-nonforcing interaction.

Unless, in accordance with the theory inherent in the forcing-nonforcing hypothesis, compliance is assumed to be the dependent variable, and the forcing/nonforcing combination is assumed to constitute the independent variables, these outcomes are hard to understand. To take one example: when, counter to the theory inherent in the forcing-nonforcing interaction hypothesis, compliance is assumed to be the independent variable, one is forced to assume, rather unrealistically and confusingly, that forcing behavior by a boss (consequently assumed to be a dependent variable) is caused by low as well as high coworker compliance, depending on the level of enacted non-forcing behavior (see Figure 1), or, that non-forcing behavior by a boss is caused by coworker compliance, unless the boss refrains from forcing behavior (see, again, Figure 1). These kinds of complicated, not to say unimaginable suppositions are needed, when forcing and/or non-forcing are assumed to be effect rather than cause. Or, to state it in more general terms: in contrast to the interpretation of simple regression effects, the interpretation of interaction regression effects does not really permit one to freely substitute cause and effect labels. The outcomes regarding forcing-nonforcing interaction are thus most straightforwardly explained as signifying effects of forcing-nonforcing interaction indeed. A closer look at these results is therefore worthwhile.

The interaction hypothesis was confirmed straightforwardly with regard to coworker behavioral compliance. In contrast, no more than a small and marginally significant effect was found with regard to attitudinal compliance. That small effect can, furthermore, completely be accounted for by the link that exists between behavioral compliance and attitudinal compliance. A parsimonious interpretation of these results thus might be that the hypothesis is partially confirmed only, that is, that forcing/non-forcing interaction is restricted to the impact on behavioral compliance and does not apply to attitudinal compliance.

Interpreted that way, the study’s outcomes substantiate the line of thought underlying the forcing-nonforcing interaction hypothesis. According to that line of thought the positive reinforcing effect of forcing behavior is primarily linked up with its impact upon coworkers’ behavior (rather than coworkers’ attitudes) because it is only with regard to the impact upon

behavioral compliance that forcing is complementary to non-forcing. Stated otherwise, the pattern of regression results in the present study supports the view that forcing/non-forcing interaction is a matter of complementariness of both types vis-à-vis each other. This resembles the explanations given by Van de Vliert et al. (1999) and Walton et al. (1994) of the forcing-non-forcing interaction phenomena they found in the field of conflict management and negotiation. According to them, forcing and non-forcing approaches—so to say—need each other because they provide different but equally vital contributions to conflict solution or negotiation processes. Vital contributions of forcing approaches in those fields are for instance responding to emergencies, communicating clear requests, and implementing unpopular decisions, whereas contributions of non-forcing approaches comprise things like working through negative feelings, fostering satisfactory relationships, mutual understanding, and preventing escalation (Van de Vliert et al., 1999). The no-more-than-partial confirmation of our hypothesis, in the field of leader–coworker relationships, supports the view that it is indeed complementariness with regard to this type of outcome that accounts for forcing-nonforcing interaction phenomena.

A theoretical elaboration to be given attention now that basically the phenomenon of forcing-nonforcing interaction in leader–coworker relations seems to be demonstrated, has to do with the distinction between rational and soft influence styles, and with the distinction between the different styles that together make up the categories of rational, soft, and forcing styles. In the sample of the study presented here, no reasonable distinction could be made between rational and soft influence styles, let alone more refined distinctions. Also, no attempts were made, as yet, to go into detail theoretically, regarding the interaction hypothesis’s applicability to separate styles. It may be worthwhile to engage on theoretical work like that, and to look for samples and research designs suited for testing the results thereof.

A second theoretical elaboration waiting for more research has to do with contingency factors affecting the forcing–compliance relationship. The forcing-nonforcing hypothesis raised here, and, accordingly, the data collected in the survey, have to do with day-to-day behavior of both leaders in general, and coworkers in general. Specific circumstances, such as a crisis situation that suddenly comes up, which may alter the forcing–compliance relation, are beyond the study’s scope. Now that the phenomenon of constructive effects of forcing is shown to exist, it is worthwhile to elaborate in more detail the circumstances that strengthen or weaken it.

To sum up our conclusions, the study’s outcomes show that the concept of conglomerate behavior, developed in the field of conflict behavior studies, is a fruitful tool to grasp the reality of leader–coworker influence processes. More specifically, it helps to clarify the role of forcing influence...
behavior of leaders vis-à-vis their coworkers. Leaving room for many theoretical refinements, especially regarding the scope of the concept, the conclusion is that forcing influence behavior, if not conceived in isolation, is nothing to be dispensed with by leaders.

REFERENCES


