



ANALYSIS OF POWER PREFERENCES OF MANAGERS ACROSS SECTORS

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ABSTRACT

Power is understood as the capacity to influence individual or group, activities, decisions and/ or behavior towards desired goal. Leaders are known to use power. In organisations, managers usually use the process of leadership when they influence the decisions and behavior of their subordinates. There are 7 different sources of power. Any of the source may be used by managers. Infected managers may have preferences of powers. Industry has various sectors and organizations across sectors may vary in many respects. Do the manager preferences of power also vary across sectors and with age is the focus of the current study. It is found that for each sector the preferences for powers vary significantly from each other. Expert power followed by Legitimate power are the two powers preferred by managers in that order, across sectors. The only power preference which varies significantly with age is the Legitimate power.

KEY WORDS Connection power, Expert power, Leader, Legitimate power, Manager, Sector

Introduction

Power Motive is the need to manipulate others and have superiority over them (Luthans 2008). Deriving from this we may say that power is the ability to make individuals or groups do something, or change their behavior. Power is defined as the ability to influence people

(Bass, 1990) or the capacity to produce effect on others.(House, 1984). Pfeffer, the organizational behaviour theorist perhaps most closely associated with the study of power, simply defined power as a potential force and in more detail “as the potential ability to influence behaviour, to change the course of events, to overcome resistance, and to get people to do things that they would not otherwise do.” (Pfeffer, 1992). Power is thus the capacity to cause change in behavior and intent, influence is the extent of the change which occurs (Hughes,Ginnet, Curphy, 2008) . We usually believe that leaders have the power to influence their followers.

Leadership has been defined in many ways. In fact the number of definitions is equal to the number of behavioural scientists who have studied it. According to Keith Davis, “Leadership is the ability to persuade others to seek defined objectives enthusiastically. Koontz and O’Donnell define Leadership as “the ability of a manager to induce subordinates to work with confidence and zeal”. Allford and Beaty feel that “Leadership is the ability to secure desirable actions from a group of followers voluntarily, without the use of coercion.” George R. Terry defines Leadership as “the activity of influencing people to strive willingly for group objectives”. The essence of the definitions is that Leadership means influencing people to take actions which will lead to the common goal. Stogdill (1974) has suggested that power is used by leaders to influence followers.

However according to the situational theory of leadership, power is actually a function of the leader, followers and the situation. A leader will be able to use power depending on the style of leadership used by the leader, the follower maturity or readiness and the situational factors. Eg. A leader may be able to use power for influencing the decision of a subordinate if the subordinate is very new on the job and therefore appreciates the help of the boss.

In organisations, managers lead or show the way. Sometimes we may call it deciding the strategy and sometimes, decision making. Managers influence decisions in organisations. Hence managers are most of the times ‘leaders’ in organizations and influence formal decisions of their subordinates. But managers are not always leaders. There are many different opinions about the differences between managers and leaders. A manager may not always be a leader and a leader may not always be a manager. However both influence the decision making and behavior of the followers. In case of managers the subordinates are the followers whose decision making is influenced by them and these subordinates are appointed

by the organization. Thus we may safely argue that managers have to use leadership process to influence their subordinates and therefore every manager is sometimes a leader. Thus these managers will be using power to influence their subordinates. To study the power profile of leaders in organisations is therefore done by studying the managers power profile.

‘Power’ has been studied by many behavioural scientists. Probably the most accepted and popular is the study of classifying the sources of power into 5 categories as done by French and Raven (French and Raven, 1959). According to them there are five sources of power which are reward, coercive, referent, legitimate and expert. Kruglanski and Raven in 1970 have added another power base (6th) to the five power bases of French and Raven. This is the information power. Connection power was introduced by Goldsmith and Heresy (1980). In addition to the five powers given by French and Raven, information power and connection power are two other powers being studied in the current research.

The present study is of perceived use of power by managers in organisations.

A brief explanation, of the 7 different powers to be studied in this research, is given below.

1. *A-Coercive power* -This is associated with people who are in a position to punish others or threaten to bring about undesirable outcome. Even if a person can influence through others some negative or undesirable outcomes relevant to a person, he/ she is said to have coercive power over them. The source of this power is fear. Power has got a negative connotation basically because of this power.

2. *B- Connection power* -This is based on who you know. In other words it is your association with other influential and important people. If people believe that you have association with or are in contact with people who can help them or positively influence their life, you are said to have the connection power.

3. *C- Expert power*- This comes from the expertise and skill which a person has. If people attribute expertise and knowledge to you, you are said to have expert power. Therefore this power is granted to a person by others. You cannot assume the power but it is given to you by others who feel that you are credible, trustworthy, knowledgeable and relevant.

4. *D- Information power* -When a person has valuable or important information they have this power. It may also stem from the ability of a person to control important information which others need to accomplish something.

5. *E- Legitimate power*- Comes from the position the person holds or the responsibility the person has. Thus it largely depends on the prevailing culture of the organization or group which has designed the position or post from which the person is drawing the power. The hierarchy in the organization or group is the source of this power. It does not depend on the person who is holding it but only on the title, or post and its place in the hierarchy of the organization.

6. *F- Referent Power*- These are people who are well liked and respected for who they are. If people have a desire to identify with you or feel that you have some desirable qualities, resources they give you this power. This power also, therefore, cannot be taken by you but has to be given by someone who believes that you have all those qualities and resources.

7. *G- Reward Power*- Based on the ability to bestow rewards. Rewards may be in the form of schedules, assignments, pay or benefits. Having the ability to bestow positive reinforcement also means having the reward power. However if a manager offers a reward to her subordinates but the reward is not valued by the subordinates, the manager does not actually have reward power (Luthans, 2008). In the same note, if managers are giving people what they desire, but are doing so not with design but unknowingly, they are still said to have the reward power.

Industry has different sectors like the manufacturing sector, the IT sector, Public sector and so on. Managers are there in organizations of all sectors. However the formal structure of the organisations ie. the hierarchy in different sectors may be different. The cultures across sectors are different (Agarwal, 2010) or vary more across sectors than within them (Chatman, Jehn, 1994), specifically public and private sectors differ significantly in culture. (Varma, Saxena, 2012). According to situational theory of leadership, power used by leaders and the relative effectiveness often depends on the situation (Hughes, 2008). Culture and many other factors form integral parts of 'organisational situation' as discussed in Situational Leadership. Hence it may be believed that managers in different sectors may have different preferences of powers.

This is the focus of the current study. The sectors of the industry being considered by the researcher in the present research are 1) Information Technology and Information technology enabled services (ITES) sector, 2) Multi national corporations (MNC), 3) Non Government Organisations which work on the principle of 'Not for Profit' (NGO), 4) Private Sector specifically manufacturing (Private), 5) Public Sector organisations (Public)

Description of the sectors

IT Sector is unique in the sense, the employees are essentially knowledge workers (Workers who contribute only knowledge to the organization). The structure of the organization and the work policies are made so as to suit the working of these employees and hence is different than other sectors who have a combination of manual workers and knowledge workers. Multi national organisations, have as the term suggests, presence in different countries. Hence the working in these organisations is affected by international and global factors in addition to the local factors of the host country. NGO or non-government organisations are non-profit organisations founded for humanitarian causes like health, education, human rights, environment protection and so on. Public sector organisations are the organisations which are owned by the central government in India. They were formed after independence with the sole purpose of ensuring development in the strategically important sectors and also to generate employment and income for the masses. Private sector organisations are owned and operated by private owners for the purpose of profit.

Objectives of the study

1. To find if managers from different sectors differ on their preference of power used.
2. To find if there is a significant difference between the relative strengths of different powers used by the managers of each different sector.
3. To find if preference of power used by managers changes with age

Methodology

Population -The managers from 5 different sectors have been studied.

1. IT- Information Technology

2. MNC- Multi national corporation
3. NGO- Non government organisation
4. Private- Manufacturing companies in private sector
5. Public- Public sector companies

Sampling technique- Purposive sampling has been used to ensure that the managers are middle level managers and have been working in the organization for more than 5 years.

Sample Size- Total Sample size is 82. The sample distribution across sectors is as given in Table 1 and by age is given in Table 2.

Table 1: Distribution Of Sample By Sector

IT (1)	MNC (2)	NGO(3)	Private Sector (4)	Public Sector (5)	Total
23	11	12	22	14	82

Table 2: Distribution Of Sample By Age

Age Group 1	Age Group 2	Age Group 3	Age Group 4	Total
Less than 35	35-45 years	45-55 years	More than 55	
21	31	26	4	82

(Note: Since number of managers in the Age Group 4 (more than 55) is only 4, for analysis purpose this group has not been considered)

Data- Primary data are being used. Data is the perceived power preference of managers.

Tool used for data collection- The perceived power use of managers was studied using a questionnaire (paper-pencil). The Questionnaire (Tool) used is a standardized instrument 'Power Perception Profile (Self)'. A measurement devised by Hersey and Natemeyer to provide leaders with feedback on their power bases consists of two instruments: one for self-perception of power and one for others' perception of an individual's power. The Power Perception Profile-Perception of Self questionnaire provides you with 21 pairs of reasons given by people to explain why they do things . After completing the appropriate Power

Perception Profile individuals are able to obtain a score of the relative strength of each of the bases of power. Power perception self has been used in the current study.

Tool administration -The questionnaire copy was given personally to the managers or mailed by post followed by a phone call in case of outstation managers.

Data Analysis

The normality of the data was checked using the Shapiro-Wilk test. The findings are presented below in Table 3 and Table 4.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics

Descriptives			
		Statistic	Std. Error
A	Mean	6.30	.371
	Median	6.00	
	Variance	11.301	
	Std. Deviation	3.362	
	Range	14	
	Interquartile Range	5	
	Skewness	.134	.266
	Kurtosis	-.691	.526

Table 4: Tests Of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
A	.081	82	.200*	.967	82	.033

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

Since the significance using Shapiro-Wilk test is less than 0.05 we conclude that the data is not normally distributed. Hence non-parametric statistics is being used for data analysis.

Considering the entire data, the descriptive statistics of median and Quartiles for the seven powers (A-G) was computed which is presented in table 5.

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics Of The Data

		A	B	C	D	E	F	G
N	Valid	82	82	82	82	82	82	82
	Missing	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Median		6.00	5.00	14.00	9.00	11.00	6.00	10.00
Percentiles	25	3.75	2.00	12.00	7.00	9.00	3.75	8.00
	50	6.00	5.00	14.00	9.00	11.00	6.00	10.00
	75	9.00	7.00	16.00	11.00	13.00	9.00	12.00
IQR(Q3-Q1)		5.25	5	4	4	4	5.25	4

IQR- Inter quartile range

Above table 5 shows the medians and Quartiles of all the power bases denoted by letters A-G. The power which has the maximum median and is apparently most used is ‘Expert Power (C)’ followed by ‘Legitimate power (E)’. The least used power is ‘Connection power (B)’. This is in accordance with previous research (Student 1969, Bachman 1966, Bachman et.al 1968 Burke and Wilcox 1971, Natemeyer 1975). None of the above given research was conducted in India. No such findings are available in India. Thus we can say that the present research corroborates the global findings.

To get a clearer picture of the use of power bases across 5 sectors, descriptive statistics of the data was computed sector wise. It is as given below:

Table 6: Sector Wise Descriptive Statistics Of Power

SectorL			A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	N	Valid	23	23	23	23	23	23	23
		Missin	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Percentiles	25	2.00	3.00	12.00	7.00	9.00	5.00	10.00
		50	6.00	4.00	14.00	9.00	11.00	6.00	11.00
		75	9.00	7.00	16.00	11.00	13.00	8.00	12.00
2	N	Valid	11	11	11	11	11	11	11
		Missin	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Percentiles	25	4.00	5.00	13.00	5.00	9.00	3.00	9.00
		50	8.00	7.00	14.00	8.00	12.00	4.00	9.00
		75	10.00	7.00	16.00	9.00	15.00	7.00	11.00

3	N	Valid	12	12	12	12	12	12	12
		Missin	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
	Percentiles	25	2.00	.00	13.00	8.25	9.25	3.75	6.00
		50	3.00	1.50	15.50	10.00	11.50	6.50	6.50
75		9.00	4.25	17.00	12.00	12.00	9.00	11.75	
4	N	Valid	22	22	22	22	22	22	22
		Missin	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Percentiles	25	5.00	1.75	13.00	7.75	9.00	3.00	7.75
		50	7.00	3.00	15.00	9.50	12.00	6.00	11.00
75		8.25	6.50	16.25	11.25	13.00	8.25	12.00	
5	N	Valid	14	14	14	14	14	14	14
		Missin	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Percentiles	25	5.75	5.25	10.50	7.25	9.25	3.75	7.75
		50	7.00	7.50	12.00	9.00	11.00	7.50	9.50
75		9.25	10.00	15.00	10.25	12.25	9.00	10.25	

To find if there is inter sector differences for use of each power Kruskal Wallis test is used.

The findings are as presented below in Table 7 and Table 8.

Table 7: Ranks Of Sectors w.r.t Each Power

SectorL	N	Mean Rank						
		A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	23	37.24	41.04	40.83	39.65	38.54	42.22	50.50
2	11	45.41	54.68	42.27	26.50	49.27	33.36	40.05
3	12	29.75	22.33	50.13	51.13	38.88	45.75	31.17
4	22	46.09	36.27	45.07	46.91	43.73	39.27	43.70
5	14	48.29	56.54	29.00	39.57	39.00	46.57	33.25
Total	82							

Table 8: Kruskal Wallis Test

Test Statistics ^{a,b}							
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Chi-Square	5.955	17.965	6.039	7.818	2.060	2.553	7.607
df	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Asymp. Sig.	.203	.001	.196	.098	.725	.635	.107
a. Kruskal Wallis Test							
b. Grouping Variable: SectorL							

It is seen from above table 7 and Table 8 that only Connection power (B) use is significantly different across sectors. For other powers there is a difference in the medians however the

difference is not significant. The medians for the Connection power (B) in different sectors based on Table 7 is as given below-

Table 9: Connection Power Preferences across sectors

Sector	1 (IT)	2 (MNC)	3 (NGO)	4 (Private)	5 (Public)
Median	4	7	1.5	3	7.5

It is seen that maximum use of connection power is in Public sector and minimum in NGO.

To find out if, for every sector, the preference of different powers is significantly different from each other, Friedman test was used.

The findings are presented in Table 10 (1-IT, 2-MNC, 3-NGO, 4-Private, 5-Public)

Table 10: Friedman Test For Use Of Power Within Each Sector (1-5)

1		2		3		4		5	
Ranks		Ranks		Ranks		Ranks		Ranks	
	Mean Rank		Mean Rank		Mean Rank		Mean Rank		Mean Rank
A	2.50	A	2.86	A	2.50	A	2.95	A	2.86
B	2.20	B	2.50	B	1.92	B	2.05	B	2.96
C	6.80	C	6.36	C	6.88	C	6.39	C	5.93
D	3.80	D	3.09	D	4.58	D	4.32	D	4.07
E	4.87	E	5.77	E	5.04	E	5.07	E	4.82
F	2.96	F	2.36	F	3.25	F	2.70	F	3.25
G	4.87	G	5.05	G	3.83	G	4.52	G	4.11
Test Statistics ^a		Test Statistics ^a		Test Statistics ^a		Test Statistics ^a		Test Statistics ^a	
N	23	N	11	N	12	N	22	N	14
Chi-Square	80.529	Chi-Square	40.483	Chi-Square	44.106	Chi-Square	66.248	Chi-Square	23.087
df	6	df	6	df	6	df	6	df	6
Asymp. Sig.	.000	Asymp. Sig.	.000	Asymp. Sig.	.000	Asymp. Sig.	.000	Asymp. Sig.	.001

It is found from Table 10 that for each sector the use of 7 powers by the managers is significantly different from each other. The compiled result of the above table 10 is presented in Table 11.

Table 11: Chi Square Test For Preference Of 7 Powers Within Each Sector

Sector	1	2	3	4	5
N	23	11	12	22	14
Chi-Square	80.529	40.483	44.106	66.248	23.087
df	6	6	6	6	6
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.001

Based on Table 10 a simple ranking of the preferences of powers of the managers for the five sectors can be computed. It is presented in Table 12.

Table 12: A Simple Ranking Of The Powers Per Sector

1 (IT)	2 (MNC)	3 (NGO)	4 (Private)	5 (Public)
Expert	Expert	Expert	Expert	Expert
Legitimate	Legitimate	Legitimate	Legitimate	Legitimate
Reward	Reward	Information	Reward	Reward
Information	Information	Reward	Information	Information
Referent	Coercive	Referent	Coercive	Referent
Coercive	Connection	Coercive	Referent	Connection
Connection	Referent	Connection	Connection	Coercive

Expert power is the most preferred power by all and Legitimate power is the second most preferred power.

To see if the preference of power changes with age, first the descriptive statistics of power preferences w.r.t age were computed. They are presented in Table 13.

Table 13: Descriptive Statistics With Respect To Age

AgeGrpL			A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	N	Valid	21	21	21	21	21	21	21
	Percentiles	25	2.00	3.00	10.00	6.50	7.50	3.50	10.00
		50	6.00	5.00	14.00	9.00	10.00	6.00	11.00
		75	7.50	10.00	16.00	12.00	11.50	9.00	12.00
2	N	Valid	31	31	31	31	31	31	31
		Missing	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Percentiles	25	4.00	3.00	12.00	7.00	9.00	3.00	8.00
		50	6.00	5.00	14.00	9.00	11.00	6.00	10.00
75		9.00	7.00	15.00	10.00	13.00	9.00	12.00	
3	N	Valid	26	26	26	26	26	26	26
		Missing	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Percentiles	25	3.00	2.00	13.00	7.75	10.00	4.00	7.00
		50	7.50	3.00	15.00	9.00	12.00	6.00	9.50
75		10.00	7.00	16.25	11.00	13.00	8.25	11.25	

To find if the preferences of power are significantly different with age, Kruskal Wallis test is used .

Table 14: Kruskal Wallis Test For Difference Of Use Of Power With Age

AgeGrpL	N	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	21	34.29	45.79	34.71	42.00	27.02	38.57	45.95
2	31	40.45	40.90	37.90	37.03	43.00	39.00	38.42
3	26	42.58	32.75	45.27	40.42	45.40	40.85	35.58
Total	78							

Table 15: Chi Square Test For Independence

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Chi-Square	1.659	4.084	2.817	.678	9.047	.144	2.609
df	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Asymp. Sig.	.436	.130	.245	.713	.011	.930	.271
a. Kruskal Wallis Test, b. Grouping Variable: AgeGrpL							

As can be seen from Table 14 and Table 15, that the preferences of managers are significantly different for the use of only the ‘legitimate power (E)’ with respect to age. It is seen from Table 14 that the preference increases with age.

Findings

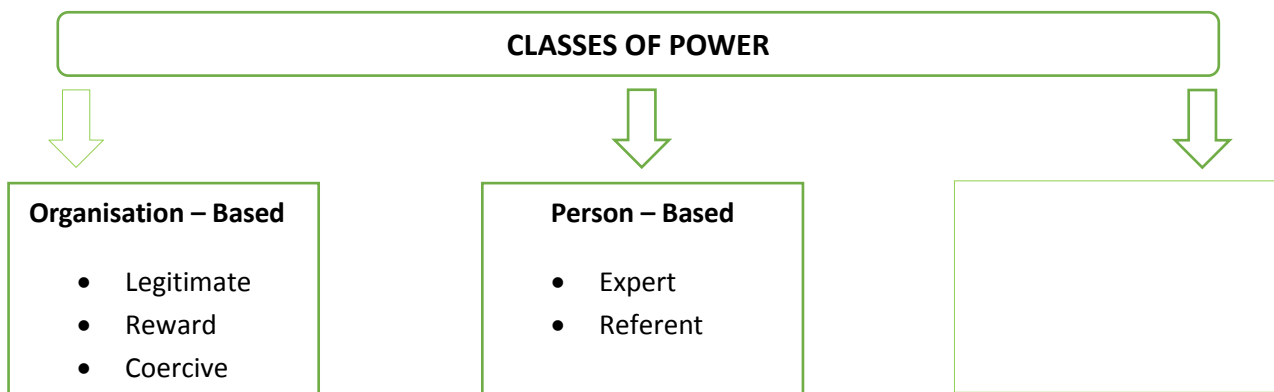
It is seen from above Table 7 and table 8 that use of Connection Power (B) by Managers is significantly different across sectors. While Managers of Public sector prefer to make highest use of this power, the Managers of NGOs pit it to minimum use.

Table 10 depicts that the use of all 7 powers by managers of each sector is significantly different from one another.

Table 12 shows that Expert power C is the most preferred one by mangers across all the sectors with Legitimate Power (E) being the second most preferred one.

Table 14 and 15 show that as Managers grow in age, the preference for use of legitimate power (E) increases.

An analysis of Powers helps in categorising them as follows:



Discussion

Managers from five sectors are being considered in the present study namely MNC, IT, NGO, Public & Private Sector (Manufacturing).

In the present questionnaire, the relative use of different bases of power and not the absolute use of any power is being tested. Power is never absolute. It is relative and depends on the relationship between the person exerting the power and the person on whom it is exerted. In order to elicit the desired behavioural outcome from B by A who exerts the power, it is important that B gives due recognition to the relevant quality in A. Drawing on a wrong power base to get things done would only have undesirable effects.

It is seen that most managers use all the seven powers in varying degrees. The variations in the use of these seven powers are found to be significantly different in each sector. It is observed that Expert power (C) and Legitimate power (E) are preferred across sectors and emerge as the first and second preferred power bases. Natemeyer (1975) had also arrived at same findings globally. In addition to this, there is no significant difference in the use of these two powers across sectors, indicating that any manager from any sector is seen to prefer these powers over the other powers.

In the light of this finding, analysis of these two powers becomes important to understand the use of them in organisations. Expert power shows a fairly consistent relationship with satisfaction of subordinates (McMahon). This is because the followers/ subordinates give the

managers this power, perceiving them to be favourable for them. As the first preference, use of Expert power will thus prove beneficial and productive to the organisation.

While Expert power is more person – based, Legitimate power, the second most preferred power of managers is organisation – based, leaving subordinates with no control over it. Under such circumstances, overuse of this power may be dysfunctional as subordinates do not see this power to be positive. A word of caution is definitely in order for managers using it.

Sector – wise analysis of power indicates that use of Connection power is significantly different across sectors. Managers in MNCs will significantly put this power to use differently when compared to Managers from Public sector or from any other sector, under study. While Managers in Public sector make maximum use of Connection power, an NGO's Manager makes minimum use of it. The difference in the use of this power by Public sector Manager and NGO Manager is primarily due to the difference in the structures of these two sectors. While the former is more bureaucratic in nature, the latter is more of an adhocracy. This along with a high power distance (Hofstede dimensions) makes an interesting mix of behavioural implication. Structure dictates procedures and culture facilitates 1) following of orders by subordinates and 2) bosses' expectation of compliance from subordinates. Informal organisation within a formal organisation gives a different dimension to the above. Informal organisations cut across the structural boundaries. The delays in procedures - inherent to bureaucracy, can be reduced if and when necessary, by using high power distance and connections with influential people within the hierarchy. On the other hand, NGO with a more informal culture and access among people never face this issue. Hence, use of Connection power is not required in NGOs. Naturally, Public sector Managers have greater use of Connection power than a manager of NGO.

With respect to age of a manager, use of legitimate power and Expert power is being discussed now. It is pertinent to note that as the manager's age increases, his preference for Legitimate and Expert power also increases though the increase is not statistically significant for Expert power but it is statistically significant for legitimate power. An experienced manager is perceived to be an expert by his subordinates. Expert power is automatically bestowed upon him by his subordinates. As the age of the manager increases, so does his expertise and therefore the preference to use the expert power with passage of time. Thus

increase in expert power with age seems easy to understand. Under such circumstances, this power could be put to productive use.

In comparison, however, it is important to understand the use of Legitimate power and it is not so apparent. The main reason for this being that this power is vested in the manager purely by the virtue of the position held by him.

Organisational structures are like pyramids. There are lesser positions as one moves up this pyramid. In the current research, the Managers' promotional histories in the sample is not known. Therefore whether the manager in the sample have received promotions due to them or not, is unknown. But assuming that fewer managers will be promoted as one moves up the pyramid, especially for middle level managers, makes sense and is a valid assumption. It can be assumed that a sizeable number of managers will not have got promotions which they perceived to be due to them irrespective of the organisation's promotional policy.

Thus, according to the findings of the present study, a person senior in age but not promoted to a higher position is preferring to use Legitimate power.

India has a high power distance. Employees expect their boss to direct them clearly on the various tasks and managers expect employees to obey those (Hofstede insights). A higher score on the masculinity dimension of Hofstede study indicates that position and post are status symbols. Individuals who do not achieve them with time will try to derive them from having a higher preference for the use of position power which they have derived purely on the virtue of their hierarchical position in the organisation.

As mentioned earlier, overuse of Legitimate power is detrimental to the functioning of the organisation as it is not given by the subordinate - like Expert Power, but derived from the position the manager holds in the organisation. The subordinates do not look at this power positively.

More details regarding the tenure and history of employment of the managers will be better to arrive at more concrete and better informed findings.

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