

Influence Resources and Power from the Teachers' Perspective: An Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

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Abstract

In the face of the public, having certain types of influence is perceived to may help practitioners and even ordinary employees to draw the people's attention into believing the news or story which spreads to serve any particular purpose. However, it is believed that previous researchers are yet to develop a set of items that can help to interpret the role of influence and power dimension among employees. This study aims to identify the key factors that can help to affirm the suitability of a set of items, namely, Influence Resources Scale (IRS). A total of 187 respondents consisting of school teachers in Kelantan had voluntarily participated in providing feedbacks towards the Influence Resources Scale (IRS). The completed questionnaires were analysed in the exploratory factor analysis procedure to identify the role of influence and power dimension among employees. A principal component analysis procedure, along with the varimax rotation was conducted. The factors generated from the procedure are Relational: Internal, Informational: Access to Information, Individual: Skills, and Individual: Professional. The study concludes that the four –factors derived from principal component analysis with varimax rotation can help to assess the role of Influence Resources among Teachers in Kelantan, Malaysia. The study also suggests that the Influence Resources Scale (IRS) can be replicated to other local and Asian respondents as a predicting factor towards additional variables such as gossip engagement and individual work performance.

Keywords: *Influence resources, power, teachers, exploratory factor analysis*

1. Introduction

Communication has always involved emotion such as trust, courage, timidity, grief and shame in enhancing human ability in expressing their desire and needs [1]. In any organizational setting, organizational communication is defined as a network of information that flows in an organization in order to achieve organizational goals [2]. Furthermore, organizational communication is also aligned with workplace communication due to their nature of involving social collectives or groups of people, having the same agenda and doing tasks that are coordinated towards achieving both individual and collective goals. In other words, organizational communication can also be described as the ways in which in-group participants utilize symbolic interactions to preserve order and structure, thus allowing individual and organizational goals to be accomplished [3]. Influence Resources (IR) can be defined as any valuable assets, which can help organizations to get things done and achieve their goals [4, 5]. Categories of IR proposed are consisting of Individual, Structural, Relational, Informational, and Systemic [4]. In the perspective of communication experts and practitioners, IR can help in determining organisational verdicts, activities, and means of communication [6]. Thus, in order to achieve the desired goals, influence can be one of the major contributors

especially in getting people's attention and support in many occasions.

Educators play an essential role in dictating the aftermath of our young generation. Educators in general and teachers in specific is also a key player in the schools' organizational setting due to their close engagement with the students. Nevertheless, IR still plays a significant role in determining the goals that need to be achieved despite the diverse setting between schools and other general organizations. Influence Resources can help teachers to appear as a self-reliant person, especially when it involves conflicting situation such as negative workplace gossip. This is because if a negative gossip appears to be circulating in the school setting, the person 'being attacked' can uphold all the resources that he has in the effort to persuade the public that he does not fit whatever traits that are being described in the gossip. There were also conditions whereby a teacher who was affected by gossip and verbal attack at the workplace, could not handle the heat and failed to convince the public as the influence that she had was not strong enough in defending her [7].

Such notion is supported by the act of political figures who tend to gain influence from vast numbers of followers through social media applications. Nowadays, intimacy can be considered as limitless as reaching to potential voters by the mean of social media is by far to be considered as the best way to develop personal relationships [8]. Nevertheless, even if the political figure is not at the peak of his career, being able to be portrayed as someone who has always been there for his followers has managed to eliminate any negative thoughts and opinion thrown from those who are not in favour [9]. Thus, it is believed that if a person manages to gain such power and influence regardless of online or offline related, the reputation of the person will be preserved from malevolent intentions.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Influence Resources

In the face of the public, having certain types of influence may help practitioners in general and even education employees in specific to draw the people's attention into believing the news or story which spreads to serve any particular purpose. There are many working definitions of Influence Resources proposed by scholars of communication and public relations in the past. In the study of corporate communication, personal characteristics, which fall under power and influence, play a major role in dealing with strategic issues such as decision-making [10]. On the other hand, Influence Resources can be defined as any valuable assets which can help organizations to get things done and achieve their goals [4, 5]. It is believed that greater influence will urge greater power to take place in many aspects, thus promoting self and group potential, which can be the drive towards achieving both power and influence in communication.

Table 1. Categories of Influence Resources [4]

Category	Example of Resources
Individual	Professional: expertise, education, years and type of experience, performance record, organizational knowledge. Skills: interpersonal, technical, leadership, managerial, problem solving, political and conflict resolution. Personal characteristics: intelligence, charisma, integrity, energy, willpower, character, risk taking, endurance, flexibility, focus and vision
Structural	Authority: reporting position, membership in decision-making groups, job description, project responsibilities, policies and practices. Controllable resources: budgets, personnel, technologies, physical space, equipment and time/timing.

	Communication team: size and capabilities of work unit, collective voice, training and development programs.
Relational	Internal: mentors, sponsors, access to decision makers, teams, coalitions, alliances, shared identity groups and social networks. External: other professionals, associations, coalitions, clubs, community organizations and social networks.
Informational	Access to information: research data, case studies, benchmarking results, organizational memory, material information and political intelligence. Control over information: control the access to, collection of, or timing and distribution of information; editorial control over content.
Systemic	Professional associations, professional codes and standards, image or reputation of profession, measures of professional value, alliances and activist groups, and developments in political, social and economic systems and institutions.

One of the proposed working definition of influence from a study conducted with communication professionals, in which some have been working as communication executives and public relation officers. The initial definition of influence coined can be implied as having the ability of getting things done by the means of handling other people's perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, opinion, decision, statement and behaviour. A sample of 65 practitioners suggested a few definitions of influence which include getting things done by having the power to convince and persuade others, although initially the authority do such things does exist. Other respondents also highlighted the ability of gaining attention as one of the definitions of influence. Furthermore, influence is also described as taking in a decision-making process from the beginning, and not just participating in the aftermath of the decision. Another noticeable definition does highlight the importance of being involved in strategies and objectives development by communicating essential information that can help to reach organizational goals [6].

The five categories of Influence Resources are identified as individual, structural, relational, informational, and systemic [4]. Influence and power can also be the key in gaining attention once it involves interpersonal communication. When it comes to interpersonal contact, communication is perceived to be creating a closer connection and mutual understanding between both participants. This is due to the existence of interpersonal communication features within the conversation that involve a lesser number of people, whereas mutual chances of speaking and also listening occurs [3, 11]. Most of the time, the intimacy projected from the interaction would also trigger a mutual respond from the listener as well whereby they might be the one who configures the message again to another person within their circle of connections [12]. Therefore, each IR serves different roles in determining effective communication by practitioners themselves, especially when it involves an organization or even the mass crowd.

Power and Influence Resources are highly utilized in the study involving practitioners of public relations [4, 6, 13]. The term "power" and "influence" are used interchangeably to indicate the same goal of "getting things done" [6, 13]. Therefore, the notion of having power or influence is both relevant in helping the organizations to achieve desired outcomes in their daily operations. In general, individual traits are believed to indicate the different ways of how a person act, think and feel [14]. Individual traits also indicate the unique patterns of how different people are thinking, feeling, and behaving towards their surrounding [15]. Other than that, individual traits also comprise a set of complex qualities which determine the patterns or characteristics of behavioural reactions towards the surrounding [16]. Thus, in order to achieve the desired goals, influence can be one of the major contributors especially in getting people's attention and support in many

occasions. This is because the personal inner power, or also known as “biopower” is very important in gaining influence from the public [6, 17]. The term “biopower” or inner power is believed to be the individual traits which are embedded within each person. Therefore, by making full use of one’s potential, a person with the right persona can present a much influential character when dealing with the public. Above all, the individual or the personnel himself can play a major role in getting the crowds’ attention, thus making it much more influential and effective in initiating, performing and achieving desired goals.

Structural Influence Resources can be described as having an institutional or hierarchical position within an organization [6]. Thus, Power and influence can also be interpreted within an organizational rank whereby individuals in organizations do possess a certain amount of power over others. When it comes to power and influence held by the government, the public is always seen as the best target to ensure the goal and vision of the public service is delivered via resourceful communication [18]. Therefore, having authority over other personnel can be the symbol of power and influence, especially in directing the goals and desire of a particular organization. Relational Influence Resources, on the other hand, represents the internal and external relationships of personnel who have authority and influence. The relational factor could provide crucial information as well as multiply other forms of influence. Informational Influence Resources plays major roles in accessing and distributing the content of information which can help to increase influence among practitioners. Such information can be in forms of empirical data, insights of organizational performance, benchmarking, research analysis and many more [6]. Systemic Influence Resources represents associations among professional organizations, alliances and having the opportunities to work together with other organizations. Such resources can help to establish contacts, access to important information and build up a reputation among personnel involved [4].

Scholars have highlighted that the organizational decision-making process is highly involving PR practitioners due to the amount of resource and influence that they possess [19]. Nevertheless, when vision and strategy come hand in hand, practitioners tend to experience some difficulties in coming out with a strategic decision due to the lack of influence in such situation [4, 19]. Thus, it is crucial for not only public practitioners but also other professions which involve crucial decision-making process to further enhance their power and influence in order to ensure that the organization aims will be achieved. To be able to connect the organization to people and society reflects a leader’s efforts in communication effectiveness." Communication effectiveness is also highlighted as one of the main tactics that could increase the practitioners’ influence on coming out with strategic decision-making process [19]. Furthermore, exceptional understanding is crucial in order to achieve an excellent communication process within the organization and the public that it serves [19, 20]. Thus, it can be highlighted that influence resources do involve any valuable assets such as good communication skill which can help organizations to get things done and achieve their goals [4, 5].

Another definition of influence has been put forward by utilizing the term “having a seat at the table” which indicates participation in decision-making, being persuasive and having access to decision-makers. Therefore, being vocal and attractive to listen to plays a major role when “seated at the table” [4, 21]. In contrast to popular opinion, membership in the dominant group of an organization is assumed to be unnecessary to achieve effective communication if the personnel good relationship with others and have formed alliances with important and “powerful people” [21, 22]. Influence resources is also found to be crucial in managing and executing marketing-related tasks, especially when it involves executive-level marketers [21].

Chief Marketing Officer or CMO were found to be gaining influence through the resources of informational, skills, knowledge, relational and exhibiting competency in running the organization. It is also found that when the CMO is entirely in charge of the sales and marketing tasks, they have experienced more power in running the flow of the company, whereas when there are members of top management with more experience, the CMO will have lesser power compared to the experienced professionals [21, 23]. This indicates that ones' power can be substituted with others who possess better quality in terms of experience and managerial skills. Thus, it is preferable for other professions other than public relation practitioners to have the skills and resources needed in order to gain more power and influence in their respective organizations.

3. Methodology

3.1. Pre-test

Pre-test usually involve the stage whereby content validity is obtained through the input provided by the experts in the field. This stage is also important to identify the suitable items that can be distributed for pilot testing prior to the actual study. The input received from the experts will be used in to achieve face validity by customizing the items or statement that will be used in pilot testing to ensure its suitability towards the current setting of this research [24]. Other than that, language experts were also consulted to attain verification over the back to back translation made to the items. Preceding to the questionnaires' distribution, the items were included in a pre-test form to be reviewed by five experts in language, education, statistics, and communication. The items were then revised to meet the standards of a comprehensive set of items. 20 potential respondents were also consulted to gain insights on their understanding towards the items and content of the questionnaire. Such insights are important to ensure that the set of questionnaires would be fully comprehensible prior to its distribution to future respondents.

3.2 Participants

Data collection took place in January and February 2019. The process was conducted from the third week of January until the first week of April 2019. The participants were teachers from schools in Kelantan. A total of 187 participants were randomly selected from a list of teachers' populations in Kelantan. The preferable size of sample adequate to conduct the exploratory factor analysis (EFA) should be 100 or larger [25].

3.3. Questionnaire Distribution

The respondents were verbally briefed to ensure the clarity of the items that will be utilised in the study. The participants were given a one-week period to answer all of the items. This is because schools have just started in January and the students and teachers were spending a lot of time in fulfilling the annual sporting calendar such as sports day and cross-country event which took place in January every year. The teachers took 15-20 minutes to complete the questionnaire once they have had adequate time and space to answer them.

3.4. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

The items utilized, which is known as Influence Resources Scale (IRS) were developed based on the concept of Influence Resources (IR) [6]. 67 items, which represent five factors, were initially developed based on the examples of resources mentioned in the categories of IR. The data collected were then analysed using SPSS version 21. The exploratory factor analysis procedure was conducted on the data derived from IRS using principal axis factoring and varimax rotation to determine the factors that will be

generated from the IRS. This is important in order to extract the factors that will best represent the suitability of the developed items [26]. The internal consistency and reliability of the scale were then determined by computing the Cronbach's alpha coefficient (α). Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) procedure was conducted on the items of IRS to determine the underlying factors of Influence Resources among Teachers in Kelantan. EFA was conducted to ensure that the constructs are consistent with the understanding of the researcher himself [27]. Other than that, scholars also suggest that EFA can help to determine the suitability of the items in the current study [24]. This is because the previous study that was conducted in a different setting might contain items which can be removed in order to group together a set of items into a few common underlying factors. There are four major steps suggested which are correlation matrix computation, extraction of necessary factors to represent the data, factor rotation; making the factor interpretable through the varimax rotation, and Kaiser normalization, and the number of factors determination; assigning a label to the interpreted factors [26, 28].

Principle Component Analysis (PCA) with varimax rotation was conducted to determine the validity of the construct. Necessary rotations of PCA with varimax rotation were conducted until the non-suitable items were removed and adequate items can be achieved before undergoing the interpretation and labelling process. A visual inspection that was carried out by examining the correlation matrix has indicated a substantial number of correlations exceeding 0.3 in the output. The anti-image correlation matrix has pointed out the adequate level of 0.5 for the measure of sampling adequacy [25]. After necessary rotations were conducted, four factors representing the construct of Influence Resources has emerged. Table 2 demonstrates the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity outcome:

Table 2. KMO and Bartlett's Test

KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy		0.906
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx, Chi-Square	3446.486
	df	120
	Sig.	0.000

In Table 2, the KMO of Sampling Adequacy is 0.906, which is an adequate value as it the minimum requirement of 0.5. This has indicated that there is a good correlation among the items [25]. The Bartlett's Test of Sphericity is also significant after the PCA procedure was conducted. The aforementioned outcome has proven that the items in the IRS are finally acceptable for factor analysis. This is because the items have met the criteria of Eigenvalue >1 [29], loading score .0.50 for each item [25], and obtaining not less than three items under a factor [30].

4. Results and Discussion

The PCA with varimax rotation has managed to retain four significant factors consisting of 22 items which best represents the IRS. Table 3 visualizes the 4-factor solution for 16 items derived from the PCA with varimax rotation, indicating the total variance of 85.54%. Such value is deemed to be adequate as it has exceeded the minimum requirement of 60% [27].

Table 3. Total Variance Explained

Factor	Eigenvalue	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	9.173	57.330	57.330

2	1.724	10.773	68.103
3	1.621	10.132	78.236
4	1.168	7.302	85.538

A total of 51 items were deleted from the list as they have not achieved the criteria of Eigenvalue >1 [29], loading score .0.50 for each item [25], and obtaining not less than three items under a factor [30]. Most researchers will follow certain guideline pertaining to the limit of item factor loadings and cross-loadings in determining the removal of unnecessary items [31]. Nevertheless, the standards for defining the degree of loadings and cross-loadings have always been a matter of researchers' preference [32]. A guideline of cross-loadings, which is more than 0.15, was put forward in deciding on the items that need to be removed [31]. Researcher's preference in determining cross-loadings is also tolerable in removing unnecessary items; thus, the researcher has set more than 0.20 as a standard of acceptable cross-loadings for items which are group in more than one factor [32].

The Cronbach's alpha (α) value for factor one is 0.972, factor two; 0.962, factor three; 0.917, and factor four; 0.899. The total Cronbach's alpha (α) value for all 16 remaining items is 0.948. Many researchers have been setting a standard of more than 0.70 in assessing the reliability of the entire scale [24, 25]. Therefore, it is believed that all the items listed in IRS are consistent and reliable, as they have met the satisfactory criterion. There are four items grouped under the first factor known as Relational: Internal. The three items listed under factor one is item 42, 39, 41, and 40. These items have significantly high loadings which are 0.851, 0.850, 0.848 and 0.841 respectively. The alpha value of factor one is 0.972. Factor one specifies the internal relationship of personnel in their organization. Such relationship can help to establish a good platform for information transferring, besides enhancing interpersonal relationship within the organizational sphere. Factor two is consisting of 4 items as well, namely item 55, 56, 57, and 53. The items also have significant loadings which are 0.886, 0.886, 0.864, and 0.790. Factor two is best known as having clear access to important information. Such information can be described as empirical data, insights of organizational performance, benchmarking, research analysis, and many more [4]. Therefore, factor two can be classified as the factor of Informational: Access to information. The alpha value of this factor is 0.962 respectively.

Four items were found to be grouped into factor three, which are item 9, 8, 11, and 10. The loadings of these items are 0.870, 0.867, 0.808, and 0.752. Factor three can be identified as the Individual: Skills factor due to the items which embraces individual traits such as leadership and interpersonal communication skill. The alpha value for factor three is 0.917 respectively. The final factor derived can be described as the Individual: Professional factor. Four items were derived from factor four, namely item 2, 3, 1, and 5. The loadings for these items are 0.824, 0.823, 0.815 and 0.705. Factor four explains mainly on the educational, professionalism, and the expertise of the personnel in an organization. The alpha value for factor four is 0.899 respectively. Table 4 demonstrates the Cronbach's alpha (α) values for all of the items.

Table 4. Factor Loading of the Items in Influence Resources Scale

Factor	α	Items	Loadings
Factor 1 Relational: Internal	0.972	42. I build a good relationship with my colleagues to achieve common goals	0.851
		39. I have a good relationship with my superiors	0.850
		41. I have a good relationship with my team	0.848

		40. I have a good relationship with decision-makers in my field of work	0.841
Factor 2 Informational: Access to information	0.962	55. I have access to important documents related to my organization	0.866
		56. I have access to information pertaining to the organization's performance.	0.886
		57. I have access to information pertaining to the organization's strategic plan	0.864
		53. I have access to benchmarking results of my organization.	0.790
Factor 3 Individual: Skills	0.917	9. I am always assigned to manage my colleagues	0.870
		8. Whenever group work is involved, I will be appointed to lead	0.867
		11. My colleagues always listen to what I have to say	0.808
		10. My colleagues ask for my opinion whenever there is an issue in our organisation	0.752
Factor 4 Individual: Professional	0.900	2. The education level that I have complements my field of work	0.824
		3. I have a lot of experience in my field of work	0.823
		1. I am an expert in my field of work	0.815
		5. I keep on improving my knowledge to fulfil the needs of my field of work	0.705

5. Conclusion

This study is believed to have indicated that the IRS is reliable and valid to be use an instrument in analysing IR among personnel in any given organization. This study also aims to identify the key factors that can help to affirm the suitability of a set of items namely Influence IRS. A total of 187 respondents consisting of school teachers in Kelantan had voluntarily participated in providing feedbacks towards the Influence Resources Scale (IRS). Nevertheless, the sample for this study is only applicable towards teachers in Kelantan, Malaysia. Therefore, the outcome might be different if it is to be tested in other professions as well as in different settings. As it is believed to be a pioneer study among teachers in Kelantan, Malaysia, it is suggested that a larger sample should be utilized to reiterate the findings. The completed questionnaires were analysed in the EFA procedure to identify the role of influence and power dimension among employees. The factors generated from the procedure are Relational: Internal, Informational: Access to Information, Individual: Skills, and Individual: Professional. The study concludes that the four-factors derived from the PCA with varimax rotation can help to assess the role of Influence Resources among Teachers in Kelantan, Malaysia. The study also suggests that the IRS can be replicated to other local and Asian respondents as a predicting factor towards additional variables such as gossip engagement and individual work performance.

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