

# Who Wants Power More: Men or Women?

James Ike Schaap<sup>1</sup>

## Abstract

This study examined gender differences of various types of leaders in acquiring and exerting power. This paper followed the format, at least tangentially, used by French and Raven (1959), examining the impact of gender differences regarding by referent, expert, reward, coercive, and legitimate power. The research question was, “Do men or women use power more, and how do they acquire it?” Subjects were surveyed using a closed-ended questionnaire. Quantitative, descriptive, and qualitative data were analyzed. The results suggest that women want power more than men do in order to make a positive contribution to the organization. The outcomes also indicate that a high percentage of people have witnessed leaders exerting power use coercion, rewards, special knowledge, and respect to get subordinates to comply with them. This study is consistent with the findings of other researchers that women use transformational leadership as an integrative management approach for their own personal power. It does offer some theoretical and practical inferences.

**JEL classification numbers:** A13

**Keywords:** Reward, coercive, expert, legitimate, and referent power.

## 1 Background

### 1.1 General Information

Gender can be defined as both men and women, and it is understood within the context of society. Gender is also a belief system. It is a principle about the characteristics of men and women. These convictions may or may not be accurate, but they are powerful tools influencing how we perceive men and women, how we interpret what they do, and how we interact with members of both groups (Sultana & Lazim, 2011).

What is power? Is it influence over others? Is it the ability to be a strong and inspiring leader? Is power an attribute we possess naturally at birth, or is it acquired during a lifetime (Combs, 2006)? This researcher, an academician and former successful business

---

<sup>1</sup>James Ike Schaap, Ph.D.

person, believes that it is everywhere. You can see it, hear it, and feel it. Power is abundant—it is pervasive.

There are two types of power—socialized and personalized power. Socialized power is used to persuade, to get things done, to achieve goals, and to meet the needs of others. Socialized power is not used for personal benefit. Personalized power, in contrast, is used to gain power in order to satisfy a strong need for appreciation/esteem and status. An individual employing personalized power tends to exercise this power spontaneously, have little inhibition and self-control, and have a strong desire to dominate others (Kinicki & Kreitner, 2007). It is personalized power that we will concentrate in on this study,

Power received substantial attention during the metaphysical era of social psychology. The classic reference is Hobbes (1651), who analyzed the motivation for power and some of its social consequences. More recent discussions in the metaphysical era are those of Nietzsche (1912) and Adler (1917). Many other philosophical and theoretical treatments could, of course, be cited.

Fast forward a bit: Noted social psychologists French and Raven (1959), the godfathers of the five bases of power, specifically described five relevant but different sources of social power by which people wield power over one or more other people. The French and Raven power forms were introduced with consideration of the level at which they could be observed and the extent to which power is dependent or independent of structural conditions (Lazarsfeld & Herbert, 1961).

According to their model, the extent to which a person, P, may be swayed by another individual or group, O, depends on the relationship between the two individuals and the way P understands or comprehends O. The following example illustrates the usage of these five sources of power: reward, coercive, expert, legitimated, and referent. An individual possesses *reward power* when others believe that person can provide them with desired rewards, and *coercive power* when others believe that person can punish and/or reprimand them. Bosses, therefore, would have both reward and coercive power over their subordinates because of their apparent ability to provide rewards, such as giving workers raises and promotions, and to provide punishments, such as firing or demoting workers. Individuals perceived to have expertise or knowledge in a specific domain or more generally possess *expert power*. Physicians typically have expert power relative to their patients and lawyers relative to their clients, at least with regard to their knowledge of medicine and law, respectively. An individual possesses *legitimate power* to the extent that others believe that person has the right to wield influence over others. This may occur because that person holds a specific social role that commands respect or authority, or because others feel a certain obligation to defer to that individual. Parents typically have legitimate power with respect to their children, as do priests or ministers with respect to members of their congregations. Finally, *referent power* refers to an individual's or group's likeableness or social attractiveness to others. Friends have referent power in relation to each other, and a social group may have referent power with respect to a teenager who would like membership in the group (Carli, 1999).

## 1.2 Theoretical Review

In face-to-face interactions, people do not contribute to conversations equally. The leader, the one with the power, or one clique usually controls the discussion. In general, those with the higher status tend to talk more, even if they are not experts on the subject. Not surprisingly, leaders speak more than subordinates, and men speak more than women

(Thompson, 2000).

Looking at the theoretical background of power, it can be seen that the concepts of power and leadership are closely linked. Thus, different forms of power affect one's leadership and success, which is an idea that permeates organizational communication.

The French and Raven (1959) power forms are selected because, in addition of their level of observability, the extent to which power is dependent or independent of structural conditions. Dependency refers to the degree of internalization that occurs when a person is subjected to social control. Using these considerations, it is possible to link personal processes to structural conditions (Lazarfeld & Menzel, 1961).

Within this general conception of power, French and Raven (1959) were interested in the situation where a person's power consists of the ability to determine whether or not another person reaches an important goal. This ability to control another's means of goal attainment undoubtedly affects the powerful person's ability to influence the other's behavior in a wide realm of activities and thus has broad repercussions. Thus, French and Raven (1959, p. 36) further defined power as: "the ability of one party of a relationship to determine whether or not the other party is carried toward his/her goals or away from them, over and above the second party's own efforts." This definition excludes power that derives from personal characteristics, power that is helpful, and power that aims to set up its own forces in the other person (French & Raven, 1959). A more recent definition of power, as described by Johnson (2006) and cited by Kruse and Prettyman (2008, p. 454), is: "As a social phenomenon, power is something that is exercised when two or more parties interact. Within the logic of social systems and structure, power can be thought of as, the capacity of an individual or group to realize desired ends in spite of resistance offered by others."

Important social problems that demand our attention, such as coercion, raise questions about the use of power—questions that we cannot necessarily answer. And quite apart from any real-world considerations, a social psychological theory without the concept of power or equivalent is inadequate. Such concepts as communications, role, attitude, expectation, and norm cannot, by themselves, account realistically for the processes of influence to which they refer, nor can they deal effectively with social change and resistance to change. Moreover, a concerted attack on the problem of coercive power (i.e., only as one example) should produce a major advance in the field of social psychology. Such a development will consist of an improved understanding of the proper subject-matter of social psychology and a reorganization of its conceptual systems (French & Raven, 1959).

This researcher had informal discussions about the relationship of gender to power, especially as it related to French and Raven's (1959) five unconnected and distinctive forms of power. As a result of these casual conversations prospective participants, the author decided to conduct this study to determine who wants power more, men or women?

## **2 Review of the Current Literature**

The author based this study on French and Raven's (1959) five sources of power—reward, coercive, expert, legitimated, and referent—to examine how men and women relate to these forms of power.

Much of the contemporary sociological debate on power revolves around the issue of the

enabling nature of power. While almost 40 years old, a comprehensive account of power can be found in the discussion by Lukes (1974) of the three dimensions of power. Lukes wrote that power can be seen not only as various forms of constraint on human action but also as that which makes action possible, although in a limited scope. Much of this discussion by Lukes is related back to the works of the French philosopher Michel Foucault (1926–1984), who, following the principles of Italian political philosopher Niccòlo Machiavelli (1469–1527), saw power as "a complex strategic situation in a given society social setting." Being deeply structural, Lukes's concept involves both constraint and enablement (1974, p. 87).

The following review of the literature encompasses a chronological series of top-level scholarly discussions about the topic of power that are directly and tangentially related, even though some are at a distance from this study. These recent works highlight development of the thinking of various writers about this stimulating and confrontational topic over the past 25 years. The author approached the literature review from a chronological slant, even though it has time-line gaps, rather than a content-oriented format so that the reader can clearly understand the thinking of the various writers over this, more current, time period.

Hinkin and Schriesheim (1989) stated that the power of coercion has been proven to be associated with punitive behavior that may be outside one's normal role expectation. Still, strong-arming has also been connected positively with generally punitive behavior and negatively with contingent reward behavior. This source of power can often lead to problems and in many situations involving abuse. These types of leaders use intimidations, often threatening to fire or demote a subordinate. Hinkin and Schriesheim (1989) also mentioned that reward power is based on the notion that we, as a society, are more disposed to do things and to do them well when we are getting something out of it. In addition, they stated that legitimate power has the ability to control another's feelings of obligations or the view of accountability. Legitimate power is typically based on one's role; therefore, people customarily follow the person with this power merely based on his or her position or title rather than the individual explicitly as a leader (Hinkin & Schriesheim, 1989); not surprisingly, this type of power can easily disappear with the loss of a position or title. Legitimate power, however, is not strong enough to be one's only reliable form of manipulating or persuading others. Hinkin and Schriesheim (1989) stated that referent power is the power to convey a feeling of personal acceptance or personal approval and, in other words, an overall likability to lead people and to strongly identify with them in one form or another.

In a field study, Ragins (1990) posited that reward, legitimate, expert, and referent power were all inter-correlated—but unrelated to coercive power. Male and female managers studied, however, did not show the expected differences in combined, reward, coercive, legitimate, and referent power. In addition, and contrary again to expectations of the author, female managers were observed having more expert power than male managers in like-kind positions. This could reflect, at least from this researcher's perspective, female managers' development of professional expertise as a means of overcoming organizational barriers to advancement as documented in other research by Ely (1995), Carli (1999), Nicolson (2000), and Kickul & Ingols (2005). Ragins's study (1990) illustrated the significance of equating power and using real managers in research on gender differences in perceived power in organizations.

Rosener (1990), in his field analysis, theorized that when it came to the sharing of power and information, women were willing share power and information rather than guard it.

For example, although many leaders see information as power and power as a limited commodity to be coveted, women seem to be comfortable letting power and information change hands Rosener (1990). In addition, women believe that sharing power and information accomplished several things—it created loyalty, it enhanced the general communication flow, and it increased the odds that leaders would hear about, say, a threatening problem before it exploded. Finally, Rosener (1990) suggested that sharing power and information gives employees and coworkers the wherewithal to reach conclusions, solve problems, and see the justification for decisions. That said, this researcher submits that allocating power and information has its risks—it allows the possibility that people will reject, criticize, or otherwise challenge what a leader has to say.

Ely (1995), who contacted just women, found that in power-based perspectives, women will evaluate women's attributes less favorably in relation to their firm's requirements for success than will male counterparts in sex-integrated firms. Furthermore, women in male-dominated firms will evaluate characteristics they attribute to men more favorably than those they attribute to women. In organizations in which women are better represented in powerful positions, women's evaluation of men and women will be comparable (Ely, 1995).

In a ten-year research investigation, Molm (1997) concluded that coercive power has many virtues, one finding being that the powerful can extract more value from their relationships.

Carli (1999, p. 81), in a literature review, concluded that:

Evidence indicates that men generally possess higher levels of expert and legitimate power than women do and that women possess higher levels of referent power than men do. These differences are reflected, to some extent, in the influence strategies used by men and women and, more clearly, in gender differences in social influence. Women generally have greater difficulty exerting influence than men do, particularly when they use influence that conveys competence and authority.

Fennell (1999) as outlined by Grisoni and Beeby (2007, p. 195), discussed three types of power: "Power over," "power through," and "power with." "Power over" is the traditional view of power as domination that has winners and losers; "power through" is a conservative and masculine use of power; and "power through" is power that incorporates enabling negotiating and supporting the team. It is not surprising that Fennell (1999) suggested that women identify more with the actively exercised "power through" and "power with" forms of leadership. Several other authors also found that women in leadership roles are more readily associated with transformational skills and alternative power strategies (Eagly & Carli, 2003; Rosener, 1990).

Nicolson (2000) stated that men in power are wary of powerful women because when they were being groomed for power at school or university they found themselves in formal and informal decision-making contexts only with men.

Groshev (2002) mentioned, in his article about gender perceptions of power, that power relations alter the individual's behavior. At the same time, new approaches about power are evolving in society, new interpretations, and new perceptions of it. That which was on the fringe of power relations not long ago is now moving to the center. The obscurity of power exists in people's perceptions side-by-side with individualized images and meanings. In the social sciences, a conceptual shift is taking place in the treatment of power that identifies fixed points where it comes into contact with the life of each individual and with the many differences between individuals. The characterizing features

of this shift may be its emphasis on a phenomenological approach, which addresses the social, psychological, cultural, and gender prerequisites of people's interaction.

Groshev (2002, p. 19) concluded from his research that society gives more power to men while depriving or limiting the power of women and that "men and women perceive and define power differently."

O'Neil (2004) posited that gender differences do not affect the choice of tactics used to facilitate upward movement. In addition, however, a rich variety of measures of power predict the use of some upward-influence tactics (O'Neil, 2004). The more formal, static measures of power that are predictors include reporting relationship, employee support, organizational role, and the gender ratio of dominant coalition. The more informal measures of power that predict some upward influence tactics are participation in the networks of the dominant coalition and perceptions of value. That such a multitude of measures of power affect upward influence tactic usage supports the argument of structuralist theorist Kanter (1977), who contended that power results from multiple factors that are embedded within the overall organizational system.

Hede (2005), in a comparative management investigation, stated that women were more likely than men to exhibit the "No High Power" pattern and the "High Referent Power." He also found that women were more likely than men to use high referent power in combination with high expert power. However, males were more likely than females to rely on "High Position Power" and also to use both position and expert power (Hede, 2005).

In another study about women and power, Merrill-Sands, Kickul, and Ingols (2005) avowed that females were often undecided about power—but they were comfortable with power, respected it, and liked what they could accomplish with it. They also found that females were not shunning leadership and power. Moreover, the majority were exercising power and leadership in ways that are all-encompassing and collaborative, focusing on engaging and empowering followers to achieve organizational goals. Finally, Merrill-Sands et al. (2005) found noteworthy interrelationships between how women were using power with others to obtain outcomes that benefited not only their organization and organizations' strategies, but also society more broadly.

Grisoni and Beeby (2007), strictly from a theoretical perspective, indicated that sense-making is a core component of leadership that involves the exercise of power through processes of decision-making. Moreover, they stated that, "in relation to the power dynamic of leadership, the ability to influence others is central, and that power is the ability to define situations with and for others" (Grisoni & Beeby, 2007, p. 194).

Kinicki and Kreitner (2007) determined that the use of leadership power has three possible outcomes—compliance, resistance, or commitment. Compliance is gained through the use of reward, coercive, and negative legitimate power. Resistance on the part of another is usually a result of using coercive power. The target opposes the demands of the powerbroker and actively tries to avoid following through with any requests. Commitment, however, is produced through the use of expert, referent, and positive legitimate power. Leadership should seek for commitment from employees as it intrinsically motivated rather than settle for compliance as it may be given grudgingly (Kinicki & Kreitner, 2007). This study is related, at least tangentially, to the original work of French and Raven's (1959).

Kruse and Prettyman (2008, p. 457), argued, as a follow-up to Brunner's (2005, p. 131) work, that: "women often use their power different from men. This traditional feminine model casts power as power with instead of power over, focusing on connection and

collaboration in the leadership process.”

Schaap, Stedham, and Yamamura (2008), in a research paper on whether male and female managers differ with respect particularly to the strategy implementation process, concluded that women used transformational leadership and an interactive management approach more than men for personal power. When looking at motivation, these same researchers found that men emphasized individual financial reward while women were rewarded not only by financial means but also through the management of subordinates and resources. Further, their results indicated that women consider task enjoyment, making friends, working with people, and helping others to be rewarding aspects of power. In contrast, men used a transactional approach to leadership with an emphasis on contingent rewards and focused on extrinsic factors such as monetary rewards. In addition, these writers felt that men tended to rely on position power as indicated by the factor they call “Need for Power.” Schaap et al. (2008) also found that men preferred to base their influence on their position although this factor did not materialize for women. They concluded that the factors identified in their study supported the conclusion that men tend to be concerned with dominance and women with affiliation.

Wilke and Speer (2011) found, using survey data, that there is a direct relationship (i.e., understanding of power through relationship), but that it is significantly mediated by two sets of organizational factors: empowering organizational characteristics and a sense of community within an organization.

In a research study of 74 undergraduate students, Mead and Maner (2012) determined that authoritative leaders try to uphold power over valuable yet potentially threatening group members. Further, they determined that leaders high in dominance motivation sought to be close to a skilled yet threatening partner, suggesting a desire to monitor and maintain control over the partner(s).

It appears, according to the review of recent literature performed in this study that the relationship of power and gender is a well-researched subject in the scholarly community. It is apparent, as stated in this researcher’s opening dialogue, that power is everywhere.

### **3 Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this paper is threefold: (1) to review the present state of knowledge from current articles in this research field, (2) to determine if the results from this study challenge some key assumptions already made by other researchers in this field, and (3) to situate the findings of this study in the existing scholarly research stream.

### **4 Research Question**

In *Studies of Social Power*, French and Raven (1959: 150) stated that: “The processes of power are pervasive, complex, and often disguised in our society.” They distinguished five key types of social power: “referent power, expert power, reward power, coercive power, and legitimate power” (p. 165). This researcher, with the work of French and Raven (1959) in mind, wanted to *find out whether men or women use power more and what technique they employ most often to achieve this status*. Taking this notion into account, this researcher developed the following questionnaire (see attached).

## **5 Research Hypotheses**

Based on the research question, this researcher developed six hypotheses that are directly as well as obliquely related to the initial five separate and distinct forms performed by French and Raven (1969).

Hypothesis 1: Men, as leaders, are more likely than women to use coercion to get their subordinates to obey to their instructions.\_

Hypothesis 2: Men, as leaders, are more likely than women to use rewards to get their subordinates to conform to them.

Hypothesis 3: Men, as leaders, are more likely than women to use their authority to get their subordinates to conform to them.

Hypothesis 4: Men, as leaders, are more likely than women to use their special knowledge in order to influence subordinates.

Hypothesis 5: Women, as leaders, are more likely than men to get subordinates to conform with them out of respect.

Hypothesis 6: Women want power more than men do because they feel they can make a positive contribution to the organization.

## **6 Methods**

### **6.1 Sample**

The questionnaire, which was based on the participants own perspectives about this topic, was developed in two stages. First, a pilot study was performed using a convenience sampling approach. A self-designed survey was given to 26 adult men and women who work in different types of organizations, and their comments were incorporated into the final instrument. A second but very similar self-designed instrument (see attached questionnaire) was then selected because this researcher could not find, through the literature-review process, an intact feedback form that was developed by another researcher(s).

From a convenience sampling standpoint, data from this study were collected from graduate students and their family members, who came from all over the United States, at one university, who were attending commencement ceremonies and who were about to graduate.

The intention of this feasibility investigation, which was based on the participants' perceptions, was to determine if there were any ambiguous or irrelevant questions as well as establish the face validity of this instrument. Although the author did not find any vague or irrelevant questions in the pilot study, he did change a few words to make them easier to understand. Then a small experiment was designed and implemented to test logistics and gather information in order to improve the larger study's quality and efficiency.

Once the pilot study was completed, which data was included in the total contributor count, 224 potential participants were asked a total of 22 close-ended and one open-ended question. Since two subjects declined to participate, the total questionnaires received were 222, comprised of the 26 subjects of the original survey and 196 people of the larger survey, for an overall response rate of 99%.

Table I summarizes the sample statistics. In reviewing the sample statistics, the survey

contributors ranged in age from 21 to over 60, with the highest percent (i.e., 35.1%) falling in the 31-40-year age group. Another 29.7% of the respondents fell in the 21-30-year age group. The remaining 35.2% of the participants were from the other three age group categories (i.e., 41-50, 51-60, and over 60). From an ethnicity standpoint, 76.6% of the participants were White; Latinos made up 7.7% of the respondents, while Blacks and Asians each made up 5.9% of the total responses. The remaining participants made up 4.1%, all from different ethnicity groups. From an education standpoint, and because of the author's convenience sampling approach, 72.1% of the participants had earned a master's degree. Another 13.1% of the respondents had received a bachelor's degree. The remaining 14.7% of the participants held other types of educational diplomas. From a job description/title standpoint, 18.5% of the respondents were middle-level managers. An additional 17.1% of the participants were front-line employees. Still, another 12.6% of the partakers were in the Armed Forces. The remaining 51.8% of the survey contributors held 14 other different types of jobs, including some being retired, unemployed, or disabled (i.e., and does not work).

## 6.2 Statistical Analysis

Expected frequencies were computed using the marginal totals for answers and for genders. For example, the expected frequency of responses for men choosing *answer 1* was the proportion of all respondents choosing *answer 1* multiplied by the number of men answering that question and divided by the total number of respondents for that question. The adjusted frequency tables were tested for differences in response distributions between men and women using a chi-square ( $X^2$ ) test of independence in Microsoft Excel 2010. The probability of the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ : no difference in distribution by gender) was computed using  $P(H_0) = \text{CHISQ.TEST}$  function. The actual chi-square value was computed from the resulting  $P(H_0)$  using  $\text{CHISQ.INV}(P(H_0), df)$  where degrees of freedom ( $df$ ) = number of response categories – 1.

For verification of the calculations, the chi-square for independence was computed separately for each table as  $X^2 = \sum(o-e)^2/e$  where  $o$  = observed frequency and  $e$  = expected frequency for each cell. Each  $X^2$  was compared automatically to the previously computed value to identify any errors. The  $P(H_0)$  for each  $X^2$  was also independently computed as  $P(H_0) = \text{CHISQ.DIST.RT}(X^2, df)$  and independently compared with the previously calculated  $P(H_0)$  to identify any errors.

## 6.3 Results – Quantitative Analysis

The following question (see below) showed statistically significant results. All the others had  $P(H_0) > 0.05$  and could, therefore, not be shown to have statistically significant differences in responses (i.e., at least by gender).

Question 12: Which sex pursues power more to make a positive contribution?

DESCRIPTION	MEN	WOMEN	TOTAL
<b>Males</b>	16	7	23
<b>Females</b>	31	48	79
<b>Both males and females want power equally</b>	67	30	97
<b>Not sure</b>	18	5	23
<b>Total</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>222</b>

Note:  $X^2 = 21.463$  with 3 df  $P(H_0) = 8.43E-05^{***}$

Regarding the tests of significance, if the tests of independence are non-significant, there is insufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis that the answer distributions are the same for men as for women in a specific question. To this point, and in reviewing the six hypotheses developed for this study, here is what this researcher found:

Hypotheses 1 – 5: In the first five hypotheses that this researcher tested, unfortunately, he could not find any significant differences (e.g., H1. – (P [H<sub>0</sub>] = 0.485), H2. – (P [H<sub>0</sub>] = 0.316ns), H3 – (P [H<sub>0</sub>] = 0.687ns), H4 – (P [H<sub>0</sub>] = 0.612ns), and H5 – (P [H<sub>0</sub>] = 0.525ns)).

Hypothesis 6: Women want power more than men do so that they can make a positive contribution to the organization. Fortunately, there are significant dissimilarities in the perceptions of women and of men differences (P [H<sub>0</sub>] = 0.0000843\*\*\*).

#### 6.4 Results – Descriptive Analysis

From a descriptive standpoint, where explanations (i.e., using Likert-scale responses) were provided by the participants, nine different queries provided the most interesting numerical results (refer to Table II). For example: In analyzing the statistical findings of Q2, 66.6% of the respondents responded (i.e., either very often and sometimes) that they have witnessed using coercion to get subordinates to comply with them. In examining the numerical effects of Q3, 86.0% of the participants replied (i.e., either very often, fairly often, and sometimes) that they have witnessed a leader using rewards to get subordinates to comply with them. In analyzing the mathematical results of Q4, 68.0% of the partakers responded (i.e., fairly often and very often) that they have witnessed a leader using his/her authority to influence subordinates. In studying the statistical findings of Q5, 65.3% of the respondents reacted (i.e., sometimes and very often) that they have noticed if a leader used his/her specialized knowledge to influence others. In examining the numerical effects of Q6, 63.9% of the participants answered (i.e., fairly often and sometimes) that they have noticed if a leader used respect to get others to comply with him/her. In analyzing the statistical outcomes of Q10, 39.6% of the contributors responded, as it specifically relates to which sex has a stronger attitude toward power, that they both want power equally. In examining the numerical findings of Q11, 41.9% of the respondents, specifically as it relates to which sex wants power more, stated that they both want power equally. In analyzing the mathematical results of Q12, 43.7% of the partakers responded, particularly as it relates to which sex pursues power more to make a positive contribution, that they both want power equally. And finally, in reviewing the outcomes of Q13, 50.9% of the participants, mainly as it relates to which sex is more likely to assert control over others, replied that males are more likely to assert control over others.

## **6.5 Results – Qualitative Analysis**

Because a convenience sampling approach was used, respondents were asked, via one open-ended question, to identify, strictly from their own point of view, specific/real-world factors that further led to their concern of this topic. This researcher wanted to determine if there were some common themes that the participants shared in the open-ended query. Explanations were provided by 78 of the 222 participants, or 35.1% of the contributors. Thirty percent of the total respondents indicated that they had witnessed some type of coercive power in action. Another 20% specified that the use of coercive power definitely created problems within their organization, and another 20% of the participants specified that power was used, in some way, to break people down.

## **7 Summary and Discussion**

In reviewing the quantitative results of the six hypotheses, only hypothesis H6 (i.e., Women want power more than men do because they feel they can make a positive contribution to the organization) showed a significant difference in perceptions between sexes. Women definitely wanted power more than men did so that they can make a positive contribution to the organization. This was verified at the 0.99 confidence level.

None of the other hypotheses, from a perception standpoint, showed any statistical significance. Still, from a descriptive analysis standpoint, the results showed that a very high percent of the participants (i.e., 86.0%) have witnessed a leader using rewards to get subordinates to comply with their directions. Knowing that, this researcher has been thinking of what those rewards may have been. Strictly from a qualitative standpoint, this researcher further found it quite interesting that 30.0% of respondents indicated that they had witnessed some type of coercive power in action. Therefore, the author concludes that coercion is still alive and doing well—as it pertains to power.

In performing a thorough literature review in this all-important provocative subject, one that spanned 24 years of publications, this researcher found that prior research has devoted a fair amount of attention to further studying French and Raven's (1959) five distinctive outlines of power.

The researcher's results (i.e., where women want power more than men do so that they can make a positive contribution to the organization), at least indirectly, corroborate with Rosener's (1990) work in that Rosener suggested that sharing power and information gives employees and coworkers the wherewithal to reach conclusions, solve problems, and see the justification for decisions. And lastly, the author's results agree, at least in part, with a study by Schaap, Stedham, and Yamamura (2008), in which these investigators determined that women used transformational leadership as an integrative management approach for their own personal power.

## **8 Limitations And Implications**

This study's results must be interpreted with certain caveats in mind. First, survey data are prone to errors of leniency, acquiescence, and halo effects (Brownell, 1995). Biases related to such errors may be present in the data. Second, survey respondents were not randomly selected, thus possibly affecting the internal validity of this study—they were

selected strictly out of convenience (i.e., the author only interviewed, after the pilot study was completed, graduate students and their friends/family members who attended the graduation ceremonies at a specific university). Further to this point, while this group was readily available, and while this is a very practical method for collecting data, the participants, themselves, may be unlike most of the constituents in a given target population (Fink, 2003). Third, the population of 224 people with a total of 222 responses might be considered small and could still be perceived as significantly limiting. Nonetheless, this researcher had replies that were larger in number than some of the other researchers cited in this study. And, fourth, this study's survey questions did not really test reality because they were observations of behavior and/or perceptions used by the participants. As such, the data is based on subjective opinions of the participants and may/may not be authentic. Therefore, the survey instrument used in this study only measured attitudes and were reflections of opinions. The outcomes, therefore, are considered generalizable and not necessarily conclusive. Still, Groshev (2002) also studied gender perceptions of power, and that power relations alter the individual's behavior.

Even though much more work needs to be pursued in this alluring and provocative topic, these admonitions notwithstanding, the outcome of this report, has some theoretical and practical implications.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:** Statistical analysis was performed by M. E. Kabay, PhD, CISSP-ISSMP, Professor of Computer Information Systems, School of Business and Management, College of Professional Schools, Norwich University, Northfield, Vermont.

## References

- [1] A. Adler, A Study of Organ Inferiority and Its Psychic Compensations, *Trans. Nerv. Ment. Dis Monogr. Ser.*, (1917).
- [2] P. Brownell, Research Methods in Management Accounting, *Accounting Research Methodology Monograph No. 2*. Coopers & Lybrand, Melbourne, Australia, (1995).
- [3] C. Brunner, Women Performing the Superintendency, Problematizing the normative alignment of conceptions of power and constructions of gender. In J. Collard & C. Reynolds (Eds.), *Leadership, Gender and Culture in Education: Male and Female Perspectives*, New York: Open University, (2005), 121 - 135.
- [4] L.L. Carli, Gender, Interpersonal Power, and Social Influence. *Journal of Social Issues*, **55**, (1999), 81 - 99.
- [5] E. Combs, *Women in Power*. Stockton, CA: More Heart than Talent Publishing, Inc., (2006).
- [6] A.H. Eagly and L.L. Carli, The Female Leadership Advantage: An Evaluation of the Evidence, *The Leadership Quarterly*, **14**, (2003), 807 - 834.
- [7] R.J. Ely, The Power in Demography: Women's Social Constructions of Gender Identity at Work, *Academy of Management Journal*, **38**, (1995), 589 - 634.
- [8] H.A. Fennell, Power in the Principalsip: Four Women's Experiences, *Journal of Educational Administration*, **37**, (1999), 23 - 49.
- [9] A. Fink, *How to sample in surveys* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, (2003).

- [10] W. Fox, *Social Statistics: A Text Using MicroCase®* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning, (2003).
- [11] R.P. French, Jr. and B. Raven, The Bases of Social Power. In D. Cartwright (Ed.), *Studies in Social Power*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, (1959).
- [12] L. Grisoni and M. Beeby, Leadership, Gender, and Sense-Making, *Gender, Work and Organization*, **14**(May), (2007), 191 - 209.
- [13] I.V. Groshev, Gender Perceptions of Power, *Sociological Research*, **41** (January-February), (2002), 5 - 20.
- [14] A. Hede, *White paper. Patterns of power and leadership: Understanding total behaviour leadership*. The Australian Institute of Management – Qld & Nt,(June), (2005), 1 - 18.
- [15] T.R. Hinkin and C.A. Schriesheim, Development and Application of New Scales to Measure the Bases of Social Power, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, **74**, (1989), 561 - 567.
- [16] T. Hobbes, *Leviathan*. Reprint of 1<sup>st</sup> ed. Cambridge: University Press, 1904 (1651).
- [17] B. Johnson, The Political Context of Decision Making in Educational Leadership, *Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the University Council for Education Administration*, San Antonio, Texas, (2006).
- [18] R.M. Kanter, *Men and Women of the Corporation*, New York, NY: Basic Books, (1977).
- [19] A. Kinicki and R. Kreitner, *Organizational Behavior*. Boston, MA: Irwin McGraw-Hill, (2007).
- [20] S.D. Kruse and S.S. Prettyman, Women, Leadership, and Power Revisiting the Wicked Witch of the West, *Gender and Education*, **20**(5), (2008), 451 - 464.
- [21] P. Lazarsfeld and H. Menzel, On the Relation between Individual and Collective Properties. In A. Etzioni (Ed.), *Complex Organizations: A Sociological Reader*. New York, NY: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, (1961).
- [22] S. Lukes, Power: A Radical View, *Crossroads*, **6**, (1974), 87 - 95.
- [23] N.L. Mead, and J.K. Maner, On Keeping Your Enemies Close: Powerful Leaders Seek Proximity to Ingroup Power Threats, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, **102**(3), (2012), 576 - 591.
- [24] D. Merrill-Sands, J. Kickul, and C. Ingols, Women Pursuing Leadership and Power: Challenging the Myth of the “Opt Out Revolution.” *Insights*, Boston: MA, (2005, February).
- [25] L.D. Molm, *Coercive Power in Social Exchange*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, (1997).
- [26] P. Nicolson, *Psychology, Evolution & Gender*, **2**(1), (2000, April), 91 - 96.
- [27] F. Nietzsche, *Der Wille Zur Macht*, Book 3, sec. 702, In Nietzsche’s complete *Werke*, vol. 16., Leipzig: Alfred Kröner, 1912, (2000, April).
- [28] J. O’Neil, Effects of Gender and Power on PR Managers’ Upward Influence, *Journal of Managerial Issues*, **16** (Spring), (2004), 127 - 144.
- [29] B.R. Ragins, Gender and Perceived Power in Manager-Subordinate Relations, *Journal of Occupational Psychology*, **63**(December), (1990), 273 - 287.
- [30] J. Rosener, Ways Women Lead, *Harvard Business Review*, **68**, (1990), 119 - 125.
- [31] J.I. Schaap, Y. Stedham, and J.H. Yamamura, Casino Management: Exploring Gender-Based Differences in Perceptions of Managerial Work, *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, **27**(March), (2008), 87 - 97.
- [32] A.M. Sultana and A.S. Lazim, Gender Studies in Teacher Education: An

- Empirical Research, *Asian Social Science*, 7(12), (2011, December), 168 - 174.
- [33] L. Thompson, *Making the Team*. Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, (2000).
- [34] L.A. Wilke and P.W. Speer, The Mediating Influence of Organizational Characteristics in the Relationship Between Organizational Type and Relational Power: An Extension of Psychological Empowerment Research, *Journal of Community Psychology*, 39(8), (2011), 972 - 986.

---

**Appendix**


---

Table 1: Sample Statistics (N = 222)

Category	Male	Female	Total
<b>AGE</b>			
21-30	39	27	66
31-40	48	30	78
41-50	26	16	42
51-60	13	16	29
Over 60	<u>6</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>7</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>222</b>
<b>ETHNICITY</b>			
White	105	65	170
Latino or Hispanic	11	6	17
Black	7	6	13
Native American	3	2	5
Pacific Islander	0	1	1
Asian	4	9	13
<b>Other</b>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>3</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>222</b>
<b>EDUCATION</b>			
12 <sup>th</sup> Grade or Less	1	0	1
High School	2	1	3
Some College	5	6	11
Associate Degree	1	4	5
Bachelor Degree	17	12	29
Master Degree	93	67	160
Professional Degree	4	0	4
Doctoral Degree	9	0	9
Other	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>222</b>
<b>TITLE</b>			
Business Owner	5	5	10
CEO and/or President	1	1	2
GM or Assistant General Mgr.	1	5	6
Senior or Executive VP	1	0	1
Vice President	3	1	4
CFO, Controller, COO, CIO	3	1	4
Director	5	4	9
Senior-level Manager	9	2	11
Middle-level Manager	20	21	31
Supervisor	11	9	20
Front-line Employee	18	20	38
Armed Forces	22	6	28
Educator	9	8	17
Retired	3	1	4
Unemployed	7	4	11
Disabled – does not work	0	1	1
Other	<u>14</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>15</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>222</b>

Table 2: Descriptive Analysis

Question	Responses
Q2. Have you witnessed a leader using coercion to get subordinates to comply with them? N = 222.	While 66 (29.7%) participants answered <i>very often</i> , another 82 (36.9%) respondents replied <i>sometimes</i> .
Q3. Have you witnessed a leader using rewards to get subordinates to comply with them? N = 222.	While 52 (23.4%) participants answered <i>very often</i> , and while another 65 (29.3%) respondents replied <i>fairly often</i> , still another 74 (33.3%) partakers retorted <i>sometimes</i> .
Q4. Have you witnessed a leader using his/her authority to influence subordinates? N = 222.	While 59 (26.6%) participants answered <i>fairly often</i> , another 92 (41.4%) respondents replied <i>very often</i> .
Q5. Have you noticed if a leader used specialized knowledge to influence others? N = 222.	While 62 (27.9%) participants answered <i>sometimes</i> , another 83 (37.4%) respondents replied <i>very often</i> .
Q6. Have you noticed if a leader used respect to get others to comply with him/her? N = 222.	While 70 (31.5%) participants answered <i>fairly often</i> , another 72 (32.4%) respondents replied <i>sometimes</i> .
Q10. Which sex has a stronger attitude toward power? N = 222.	While 85 (38.3%) participants answered <i>males</i> , another 88 (39.6%) respondents replied that <i>they both want power equally</i> .
Q11. Which sex wants power more? N = 222.	While 69 (31.1%) participants answered <i>males</i> , another 93 (41.9%) respondents replied that <i>they both want power equally</i> .
Q12. Which sex pursues power more to make a positive contribution? N = 222.	While 79 (35.6%) participants answered <i>females</i> , another 97 (43.7%) respondents replied that <i>they both want power equally</i> .
Q13. Which sex is more likely to assert control over others? N = 222.	While 57 (25.7%) participants answered that <i>they both want power equally</i> , another 113 (50.9%) respondents replied that <i>males</i> are more likely to assert control over others.

### Questionnaire About Power General Question

1. *Merriam-Webster's Online Dictionary* defines POWER as (a) the ability to act or produce an effect; (b) the capacity for being acted upon or undergoing an effect; (c) legal or official authority, capacity, or right; and (d) the possession of control, authority, or influence over others. Do you agree with these various meanings of the word of POWER?

- \_\_\_\_\_ a. Strongly agree  
 \_\_\_\_\_ b. Agree  
 \_\_\_\_\_ c. Neither agree nor disagree  
 \_\_\_\_\_ d. Do *not* agree  
 \_\_\_\_\_ e. Strongly Disagree

#### Power-Related Questions

2. Have you witnessed a leader using *coercion* (e.g., pressure, threats, bullying, intimidation, duress, browbeating, strong-arm tactics) to get subordinates to do what they are told?

- \_\_\_\_\_ a. Always  
 \_\_\_\_\_ b. Very often  
 \_\_\_\_\_ c. Fairly often  
 \_\_\_\_\_ d. Sometimes  
 \_\_\_\_\_ e. Almost never  
 \_\_\_\_\_ f. Never  
 \_\_\_\_\_ g. Not applicable

3. Have you witnessed a leader using *rewards* for worthy behavior or *withholding rewards* because of undesirable behavior to get subordinates to obey them or to comply with their directives?

- \_\_\_\_\_ a. Always  
 \_\_\_\_\_ b. Very often  
 \_\_\_\_\_ c. Fairly often  
 \_\_\_\_\_ d. Sometimes  
 \_\_\_\_\_ e. Almost never  
 \_\_\_\_\_ f. Never  
 \_\_\_\_\_ g. Not applicable

4. Have you witnessed a leader relying on the *authority* of his/her position (e.g., his/her title) in order to influence subordinates?

- \_\_\_\_\_ a. Always  
 \_\_\_\_\_ b. Very often  
 \_\_\_\_\_ c. Fairly often  
 \_\_\_\_\_ d. Sometimes  
 \_\_\_\_\_ e. Almost never  
 \_\_\_\_\_ f. Never  
 \_\_\_\_\_ g. Not applicable

5. Have you witnessed a leader relying on his/her *specialized knowledge* in order to influence subordinates?

- \_\_\_\_\_ a. Always  
 \_\_\_\_\_ b. Very often  
 \_\_\_\_\_ c. Fairly often  
 \_\_\_\_\_ d. Sometimes

\_\_\_\_\_ e. Almost never

\_\_\_\_\_ f. Never

\_\_\_\_\_ g. Not applicable

6. Have you witnessed a leader getting subordinates to comply with him\her *out of respect or admiration*?

\_\_\_\_\_ a. Always

\_\_\_\_\_ b. Very often

\_\_\_\_\_ c. Fairly often

\_\_\_\_\_ d. Sometimes

\_\_\_\_\_ e. Almost never

\_\_\_\_\_ f. Never

\_\_\_\_\_ g. Not applicable

7. Do you believe that your immediate (first-line) supervisor likes to wield the power of his/her leadership position to influence or coerce subordinates?

\_\_\_\_\_ a. Always

\_\_\_\_\_ b. Very often

\_\_\_\_\_ c. Fairly often

\_\_\_\_\_ d. Sometimes

\_\_\_\_\_ e. Almost never

\_\_\_\_\_ f. Never

\_\_\_\_\_ g. Not applicable

8. Do you believe that your immediate (first-line) supervisor likes to wield the power of his/her leadership position to help subordinates grow?

\_\_\_\_\_ a. Always

\_\_\_\_\_ b. Very often

\_\_\_\_\_ c. Fairly often

\_\_\_\_\_ d. Sometimes

\_\_\_\_\_ e. Almost never

\_\_\_\_\_ f. Never

\_\_\_\_\_ g. Not applicable

9. Do you believe that your immediate (first-line) supervisor likes to share the leadership power of his/her position with his/her subordinates?

\_\_\_\_\_ a. Always

\_\_\_\_\_ b. Very often

\_\_\_\_\_ c. Fairly often

\_\_\_\_\_ d. Sometimes

\_\_\_\_\_ e. Almost never

\_\_\_\_\_ f. Never

\_\_\_\_\_ g. Not applicable

#### **Attitudes Toward Power**

10. Based on what you have witnessed in the workplace, which sex has the stronger attitude toward wanting power?

\_\_\_\_\_ a. Males

\_\_\_\_\_ b. Females

\_\_\_\_\_ c. Both males and females want power equally

\_\_\_\_\_ d. Not sure

11. Based on what you have witnessed in the workplace, which sex wants power more in order to move up the organization ladder?

- a. Males
- b. Females
- c. Both males and females want to move up the organization ladder
- d. Not sure

12. Based on what you have witnessed in the workplace, which sex pursues power more so that they can make a positive contribution to their organizations?

- a. Males
- b. Females
- c. Both males and females want power equally in order to make a positive contribution to their organization
- d. Not sure

13. Based on what you have witnessed in the workplace, which sex is more likely to assert control over others?

- a. Males
- b. Females
- c. Both males and females want power equally so that they can assert control over others
- d. Not sure

**Background Information Questions**

14. Your gender?

- a. Male
- b. Female

15. Which best describes your ethnicity?

- a. White, not Latino
- b. Latino or Hispanic
- c. Black
- d. Native American
- e. Pacific Islander
- f. Asian including Southeast Asia
- g. Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

16. Your age on your last birthday?

- a. 21-30
- b. 31-40
- c. 41-50
- d. 51-60
- e. 61 or older

17. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- a. 12<sup>th</sup> grade or less
- b. High school graduate or equivalent
- c. Some college but no degree
- d. Associate degree (academic or occupational)
- e. Bachelor's degree
- f. Master's degree
- g. Professional degree (such as JD, MD, DDS, DVM)
- h. Doctoral degree (such as Ph.D., Ed.D., DBA)
- i. Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

18. What type of organization do you work for?

- a. Manufacturer
- b. Wholesaler
- c. Retailer
- d. Service
- e. Professional
- f. Non-Profit
- g. City, County, State, or Federal Agency
- h. One of the branches in the United States Armed Forces
- i. Education
- j. Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- k. I am retired - I do not work
- l. I am unemployed
- m. I am disabled – I do not work

19. How long have you been employed, full- or part-time, including any military experience, since graduating from high school (even if you are now retired)?

- a. 0–4 years
- b. 5–9 years
- c. 10–14 years
- d. 15–19 years
- e. 20–24 years
- f. 25 years or more
- g. Not sure
- h. I am disabled – I do not work

20. How many employees (full- and part-time), including yourself, are employed in the organization?

- a. 1–49
- b. 50–99
- c. 100–249
- d. 250–499
- e. 500–999
- f. 1,000 or more
- g. I do not know
- h. I am retired - I do not work
- i. I am unemployed
- j. I am disabled – I do not work

21. Your current title:

- a. Business Owner – Self Employed
- b. CEO and/or President
- c. General Manager or Assistant General Manager
- d. Senior or Executive Vice President
- e. Vice President
- f. CFO, Controller, COO, CIO
- g. Director
- h. Senior-Level Manager
- i. Middle-Level Manager
- j. Supervisor
- k. Front-Line Employee

- \_\_\_\_\_l. I am in one of the branches of the Armed Forces
- \_\_\_\_\_m. Educator
- \_\_\_\_\_n. Retired
- \_\_\_\_\_o. I am unemployed
- \_\_\_\_\_p. I am disabled – I do not work
- \_\_\_\_\_q. Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

22. Which best describes your personal income?

- \_\_\_\_\_a. \$24,999 or less
- \_\_\_\_\_b. \$25,000 to \$49,999
- \_\_\_\_\_c. \$50,000 to \$74,999
- \_\_\_\_\_d. \$75,000 to \$99,999
- \_\_\_\_\_e. \$100,000 or more

**Just as a friendly reminder: did you answer every question by checking the appropriate answer?**

23. I would like to know about a circumstance or occurrence that you have directly experienced about this topic – POWER. Just describe in your own words, without using anyone’s name, how you have been directly affected by the use of power in your organization (current or past).

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

The amount men and women work varies from country to country. Here's a little question for you: Who works hardest, men or women? It's women, isn't it? Indeed, most people (and academics) think it's women but it appears they are wrong. A study from America's National Bureau of Economic Research has found that across northern Europe and America, the total workload combining activity both at work and home is now shared almost equally. More than 70% of sociologists thought women worked considerably longer than men. And many are sceptical about the research. Anna Thorburn from Global Women's Strike, a body campaigning for greater recognition of the work women do, says it doesn't recognise how women work. While women and men believe they are equally able to attain high-level leadership positions, men want those positions more than women do, according to new research from Harvard Business School. Compared to men, women have more life goals, but fewer of them are focused on power. Women perceive professional power as less desirable than men do. Share to Facebook. Share to Twitter. Share to LinkedIn. By Carmen Nobel. New research from Harvard Business School reveals a stark gap in the professional ambitions of men and women. Having surveyed a diverse sample of more than 4,000 men and women, a team of social scientists reports a list of potentially controversial findings: Compared to men, women have more life goals, but fewer of them are focused on power. The sexist belief that men have stronger sex drives than women shows no sign of abating as a new study shows that almost half (42 per cent) of Britons think it's still the case. Research commissioned by the End Violence Against Women Coalition analysed the views of 3,922 British adults on heterosexual relationships. Their findings showed that a third of people (32 per cent) think men need sex more than women, compared to just 1 per cent who said they feel the opposite. In addition, 45 per cent of the study's participants said that they felt a man is more likely to initiate sex, compared with 3