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Will a confederate's initial decline of assistance influence people's willingness to help others?

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WILL A CONFEDERATE'S INITIAL DECLINE OF ASSISTANCE INFLUENCE PEOPLE'S
WILLINGNESS TO HELP OTHERS?

A Thesis

by

ISRAEL VELA

Submitted to the Graduate School of
The University of Texas Pan American
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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WILLINGNESS TO HELP OTHERS?

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December 2013

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ABSTRACT

Vela, Israel, Will a Confederate's Initial Decline of Assistance Influence People's Willingness to Help Others? Master of Arts (MA), December, 2013, 26 pp., 2 tables, references, 37 titles.

Observational study testing the effect a confederate has on social influence. The study examined whether overhearing a prior refusal to assist from a confederate had an influence on a subsequent person's willingness to help in time of need. Similarity characteristics between model and participant were also examined to determine if they contributed to an increased likelihood of helping. Observation was held at the University of Texas-Pan American and consisted of 60 male participants. Participants were approached, and asked for assistance, in two separate conditions: Experimental (confederate) condition ($n=30$) and Control (non-confederate) condition ($n=30$). Assistance was determined by a participant's willingness to assist with a vehicle's battery. Chi-square analysis was used to examine willingness to assist between control and experimental conditions. In conjunction, an independent samples t-test was used to explore similarity characteristics. Analyses found no statistical significance for this sample.

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate the completion of my Master of Arts Degree in Experimental Psychology to my loving family, who provided me with the support and words of encouragement to further my education. Without them the completion of my graduate studies would have not been possible.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | Page |
|------------------------------------|------|
| ABSTRACT..... | iii |
| DEDICATION..... | iv |
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS..... | v |
| TABLE OF CONTENTS..... | vi |
| LIST OF TABLES..... | vii |
| CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION..... | 1 |
| CHAPTER II. LITERATURE REVIEW..... | 3 |
| CHAPTER III. METHODOLOGY..... | 12 |
| Participants..... | 12 |
| Procedures..... | 13 |
| CHAPTER IV. RESULTS..... | 16 |
| CHAPTER V. DISCUSSION..... | 19 |
| REFERENCES..... | 23 |
| BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH..... | 26 |

LIST OF TABLES

| | Page |
|---|------|
| Table 1: Cross Tabulations for Assistance in Control (non-confederate) and Experimental (confederate) Conditions..... | 18 |
| Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation for Similarity Variables Age and Style of Dress | 18 |

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

People have evolved from a Darwinian process of natural selection which ensures adaptive behaviors are passed on for species survival. According to the classical ethological perspective, members of all animal species are biologically programmed with instinctual responses that promote species survival and development (Darwin, 1859). Regardless of the severity of the situation, humans are naturally predisposed to respond to suffering or distressing signals of our fellow man (Batson & Shaw, 1991). An infant's cry is inherently designed to elicit a natural human response of distress which attracts attention from caregivers (Bowlby, 1973). Theoretically, every person should be genetically engineered to respond to different forms of distress from other humans (Batson & Shaw, 1991). Evolutionary psychologists argue humans are programmed with impulses that allow individuals to risk injury in favor of others, and such impulses can be associated to the catecholamine release from our adrenal glands in response to stressful situations (Goldstein, 2003). Based on this predisposition, it would be safe to suggest humans are naturally programmed to assist others in time of need, as is evident in self sacrifice and altruistic behavior (Batson & Shaw, 1991).

Social psychologists have investigated whether the presence of others has an effect on the way people respond in social interactions (Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004). Outside the research and psychology field, the question remains open: does the presence of others affect an individual's willingness to intervene in time of need? Social influence on helping behavior is a concern as

we live in a world filled with billions of people, some of whom are our neighbors who we would turn to in time of need (Population Reference Bureau, 2012). For an intervention to occur, the helping individual must experience several psychological processes before reaching a conscious decision to intervene (Latanè & Darley, 1970). What if people were reluctant to assist others because they were previously influenced not to? According to Batson et al. (1988), in a situation where participants were led to believe previous potential helpers had rejected help, participants also felt less need to help. A decrease in pro-social interactions would ensue, leaving individuals to deny assistance and intervention. This would further lead individuals to question whether they should help a person in time of need (Latanè & Darley, 1970).

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Experimental studies have consistently replicated the social psychological phenomenon known as the “bystander effect,” where the likelihood of individuals intervening in an emergency situation significantly decreases when in the presence of other bystanders (Darley & Latané, 1968; Latané & Darley, 1968, 1970). The perception that others are within the vicinity or a witness to a critical situation decreases the likelihood of intervening behavior. However, the likelihood of intervening behavior increases when the potential intervener is alone (Darley & Latané, 1968). Latané and Darley (1970) proposed another social psychological phenomenon which frequently sabotages pro-social motives and encourages an individual to become a passive bystander. This co-occurring phenomenon, known as diffusion of responsibility, allows an individual to mentally divide assisting responsibility among the other bystanders present, enabling the bystander to feel less accountability for nonintervention and high justification in not helping (Baston et al., 1988; Fischer et al., 2011; Latané & Darley, 1970). Individuals are less likely to feel liable for their lack of action when surrounded by others; thus, their responsibility is “diffused.”

Based on these past studies, the researchers believe these social phenomena are responsible for our daily social encounters, with certain social influences inhibiting our willingness to help others in times of need. Levine and Crowther (2008) investigated how certain

social groups can influence an individual's willingness to intervene. In their results, it was found that participants were less likely to intervene when in the presence of five strangers as opposed to one; conversely, it was also found that participants were more likely to intervene when in the presence of five friends as opposed to one friend, revealing that certain social imperatives can influence intervention (Levine & Crowther, 2008).

According to Batson et al. (1988), a person's decision and willingness to intervene could be diminished based on the inaction of previous potential helpers. Theoretically, the conscious responsibility to intervene should diffuse onto other surrounding witnesses (Latanè & Darley, 1970). Therefore, a person will feel less inclined to help after believing a previous potential helper also denied assistance, thus leading an individual to feel less self-censure and guilt (Batson et al. 1988). The natural remorse a person would normally experience after encountering and denying a request for assistance should be weakened or nonexistent (Batson et al. 1988).

Individuals constantly struggle between the desire to be right, and the need to be socially accepted by others (Insko, Sedlak, & Lipsitz, 1982; Ross, Bierbrauer, & Hoffman, 1976). Past research on social interactions has demonstrated that humans are social beings and consciously entangled in the social pressures of others (Deutsch & Gerard, 1955). People carry a social weight on their shoulders and are in constant fear of making a bad impression, thus are reluctant to help in fear of not fitting in with those around them (Levine & Crowther, 2008). Levine, Cassidy, Brazier, and Reicher (2002) also discovered that individuals are more likely to offer assistance to those who seem similar to them and are considered to belong to their own in-group. It was found that fellow bystanders influence the likelihood of helping when they are in-group members as opposed to out-group members (Levine, et al., 2002).

In Asch's (1951) line judgment task, people went along with the incorrect answer and conformed to the majority of the confederates' responses. As people conform, an aspect of sociability is weakened, and a form of human interaction is influenced by a secondary variable; the unconscious desire for social homeostasis (Asch, 1951). Conformity can lead to a form of social interaction that can deter a person's innate biological willingness to assist (Batson & Shaw, 1991).

Following the Genovese incident, the "Bystander effect" can be seen as one of the most documented and researched social psychological events between people and their surroundings. Kitty Genovese was murdered in 1964 while thirty-eight of her neighbors witnessed the incident, but did not intervene. The question remains open: since the human race is theoretically programmed to respond to the distressing calls of individuals in need, why did witnesses in the Genovese case stand by and do nothing?

After the death of Kitty Genovese, Latané and Darley wanted to investigate the psychological phenomena that hindered individuals from pursuing pro-social motives. Several of their experiments investigated college students in emergency situations.

In one experiment, participants were communicating with each other over intercom; participants were then led to believe one of the other participants had suffered a seizure over the intercom and had stopped communication (Latané & Darley, 1970). Their results indicated that participants' responses to intervene and offer help were influenced by the size of the group. Intervening behavior decreased once a participant believed there were a greater number of other participants present.

Many of these experiments have found that people are naturally responsive to individuals in need of assistance when there is less of a crowd (Latanè & Darley, 1968). Once a crowd becomes larger, the intervening sense of responsibility individuals once faced seems to dissipate onto other surrounding members. Garcia, Weaver, Moskowitz, and Darley (2002), discovered that this is not only seen in physical interactions, but can also be manifested implicitly. Garcia et al. (2002) investigated the theory that individuals who imagine being in a group will exhibit less helping behavior. Referred to as the implicit bystander effect, just priming or cognitively processing being in a large group is sufficient to elicit this effect (Garcia et al., 2002). Their results indicated that participants who imagined being with a large group of individuals were less likely to help than participants who had imagined being alone.

The implicit bystander research further supports Darley and Latanè's theory of diffusion of responsibility, not only as a conscious phenomenon but also as an implicit human reaction toward larger crowds. The larger a crowd becomes, the more a person is reluctant to intervene (Latanè & Darley 1970). Following the technique established by Garcia et al. (2002), Levine and Crowther found when bystanders are imagined as strangers, a larger group size will serve to inhibit the likelihood of bystander intervention (Levine & Crowther, 2008).

Furthermore, this is consistent with the classic diffusion of responsibility theory, but now implicitly being elicited in a person's imagined state (Garcia et al., 2002). Latanè and Darley (1970) have suggested the indication of social surroundings affects a person's willingness to take responsibility. Whether explicitly or implicitly conveyed, it is evident that diffusion of responsibility and bystander intervention play a significant role in social interactions. Perhaps this diffusion is justified on the basis of anonymity with members of groups who are similar to each other usually offering more help than dissimilar groups (Levine et al., 2002).

Further research which investigated the bystander effect phenomenon was the experiment of the smoke filled room by Latané and Darley (1968). Their results indicated people were quicker to report the smoke filling the room when they were alone, as opposed to groups of three. It was reported the groups of three either did not report the potential emergency situation or took significantly longer (Latané & Darley, 1968). This was shown to be based on how the participants witnessed the reactions of the confederates in the room. Since the confederates displayed no signs of distress or concern, the participants also became convinced nothing was wrong (Latané & Darley, 1968). The study demonstrated when individuals were confronted with a room filling with smoke; people were less likely to report the situation when others were present. Therefore, a bystander is less likely to intervene when they perceive the situation as ambiguous (Clark & Word, 1972).

Moreover, Bickman (1972) examined the effect social influence has when trying to interpret an emergency situation. The study investigated people's interpretation to the emergency, and its affect on the participant's decision to intervene (Bickman, 1972). Participants helping behavior was revealed to be influenced by the interpretation of the situation given by a confederate (Bickman, 1972). Results also demonstrated a diffusion of helping behavior, as response time to intervene was found to be slower when participants believed a bystander was available to help. Therefore, people's willingness to help should be affected by the examination of the assistance that is needed.

Hurley and Allen's (1974), low danger stranded motorist scenario discovered a significantly greater proportion of individuals rendered aid in a nonemergency low traffic density area versus a nonemergency high traffic density area. It was unexpectedly found that time to render aid was shorter in the high density area versus the low density area. This suggests that

nonemergency situations can be interpreted differently from the point of view of the potential helper (Hurley & Allen, 1974). Interpretations of the situation can prove to be counter intuitive as individuals may inhibit their interventions in an emergency situation due to the number of non-reactive individuals present, but may also inhibit helping in nonemergency situations due to ordinary encounters (Hurley & Allen, 1974). It was also found with increasing group sizes in a nonemergency situation, individuals were less likely to respond (Jones & Foshay, 1984).

Fischer, Greitemeyer, Pollozek, and Frey (2006), discovered that more help was given in a low potential danger or a non-emergency scenario when individuals were alone. This would prove beneficial to the study, as the current research is designed in a common and low danger scenario. Perhaps an individual's intervention is not necessarily attributed to the level of emergency but to what Zajonc (1965) termed as social facilitation. The experiment found the presence of others facilitated performance on easy tasks while performance on difficult tasks was impaired (Zajonc, 1965). The presence of an audience could then be said to inhibit a person's dominant response of helping behavior if conceptualized by the bystander as being a difficult task to perform, thus denying their ability to intervene.

Audience presence could also be theoretically attributed to pluralistic ignorance, where individuals privately reject a norm, but mistakenly believe the majority of others accept it. Miller and McFarland (1987) found that pluralistic ignorance tends to occur when there is a fear of embarrassment. In this case, everyone mistakenly believes that other people are not responding or reacting to the emergency because they somehow believe there is no such emergency. Several studies suggest this is not only restricted to emergency situations and most notably found in social situations of uncertainty (Miller & McFarland, 1987; Miller et al., 2000; Monin & Norton, 2003; Sabini et al., 1999; Suls & Green, 2003). People fear humiliation and rejection so they

succumb to the pressures of conformity (Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004). Past research has found that individuals who do not conform to the group norm are often ostracized and ridiculed (Levine, 1989; Schachter, 1951). Therefore, individuals feel the need to follow what others are doing in order to fit in to the current social situation.

People have the tendency to change their perceptions or behavior in ways that are consistent with group norms (Deutsch & Gerard, 1955). The presence of bystanders reduces intervention, and when other individuals are present a person is less likely to offer intervening action and have justification in their non-action (Latanè & Darley, 1968, 1970; Batson et al., 1988). Social influence can play a role in people's decision making as is evident from normative influence (Deutsch & Gerard, 1955). Deutsch and Gerard (1955) discovered that conformity increases in face to face interactions or groups. Perhaps the passive bystander account can be attributed to what Bandura (1961) would define as observational learning, or rather, learning by watching other people perform the behavior as was found in his famous Bobo doll experiment.

Bandura (1961) discovered children acquire and imitate behaviors they have observed in other individuals. The study demonstrated once children observe adults exhibit violent aggressive gestures toward a Bobo doll, children would later imitate the aggressive actions they had previously observed toward the doll. Bandura identified certain criteria contingent in observational learning, two of which will be employed in the current research. A live model will involve an actual individual demonstrating the behavior to be observed, as well as a verbal instruction model which will involve descriptions of behaviors. It has also been discovered that mimicry behavior increased helping behavior toward the mimicker (Gueguen, Martin, & Meineri, 2011). McGuigan, Makinson, and Whiten (2011), also discovered that as individuals mature, their level of imitation increases based on the observation that adult models can be

viewed as more competent, thus adults will regard the actions of other adults as worthy. Based on this research, observable stimuli can have an effect on an individual's overt behavior.

The present research will draw from several of the overlapping research categories outlined above. Using a confederate to model a negative response to helping will not only result in socially influencing a bystander's behavior in a pro-social situation negatively but, will also serve as an inhibition of helping. The primary focus will incorporate social influence and diffusion of responsibility, as the confederate's presence and refusal will provide the participant with the perception that it is not their responsibility to intervene because there are other people present. The refusal will also encourage the participant to deny assistance, after overhearing a previous denial.

The current research is intended to examine the effect social influence by a confederate will have on a person's willingness to help others in a time of need. In addition, the research will explore whether similarity between individuals will lead to a greater tendency to help. Individual responsibility should be reduced as people are more likely to believe they will pass on that responsibility to others (Latanè & Darley, 1970). Can and will a confederate's initial decline of assistance influence people's willingness to help others? As was evidenced in past research, I hypothesize that social influence will make it easier for a person to decline help after overhearing a refusal of help by a confederate. If this turns out as hypothesized, having a greater understanding on the social influences and occurrences that happen in interactions and exchanges can be used to interpret real life situational emergencies.

The present study is designed to test the following hypotheses:

1. Witnessing a refusal to help in a public, social situation will result in a participant's subsequent agreement to help less often than when there is a neutral model.
2. A participant's similarity to overt characteristics of a model, regardless of the willingness to help, will lead to a greater tendency to help than when the participant is dissimilar to the model.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Participants

The study consisted of 60 male participants from the University of Texas-Pan American, who were approached while walking toward the campus parking lots. Participants ranged from 18 years of age and above and needed to have access to a motor vehicle. The sample was divided into two groups of 30 participants each (i.e., “refusal confederate model” and “no-refusal neutral control model”) for the experimental manipulation. The participant’s and confederate’s sex was held constant as male to avoid gender differences, since the study only focused on helping or non-helping behavior.

One assistance seeker, one confederate, and one researcher were involved in the observation. The assistance seeker’s role was to request help from the confederate as well as the participants. The confederate’s task was to refuse help and the researcher’s responsibility was to observe and tally the participants’ responses on helping or not helping, and make a judgment on the participant’s similarity to the individual asking for assistance on age and style of dress.

Procedures

To test the hypothesis, witnessing a refusal to help in a public, social situation will result in a participant's subsequent agreement to help less often than when there is a neutral model. An unobtrusive measure was used. This preserved the natural environment and allowed the observation to take place without interfering with the individual's genuine behavior. Deception was used to get the full social influence effect. There was no informed consent or debriefing, since the participants did not need to know their behavior was going to be observed and recorded. This allowed naturally occurring events to unfold and kept within the ethical guidelines for human subject testing.

Data collection was conducted over the course of three weeks, with the observation split into two groups; no-confederate control group and confederate experimental group. Observation took place at the walkways leading up to university parking sections C, D, E1-E3, F1, and F3. The research team consisted of a person seeking assistance with their vehicle, a confederate denying that request, and a researcher tallying the observed data. The control group did not involve a confederate. The request for assistance consisted of "I'm sorry to bother you, but my battery died. Would you be able to help me with a jump start?" When asking for assistance, the individual making the request was holding onto a pair of jumper cables.

The team set up observation along the walkways at the respective parking lots, with the researcher positioned out of view, the confederate positioned along the walkway, and the assistance seeker positioned at the immediate entrance of the parking lot. Communication with the team was conducted over cell phone text message; this allowed the researcher to select a participant of interest and relay that message to the confederate and the assistance seeker.

Participants were chosen based on availability of students on the walkway at that particular time. Once a participant was selected, the confederate would merge himself into the same path the individual of interest was walking and blended in as a normal university student heading toward the parking lot. As the confederate started walking, the assistance seeker would walk with cables in hand toward the confederate and initiated the request for assistance. The confederate would then reply loud enough for the participant to hear by saying “No I can’t, I’m busy,” then shake their head and hands in a negative manner to visually convey the body language response of refusal, and keep walking toward the parking lot.

After the refusal by the confederate, the assistance seeker approached the participant who was subsequently positioned behind the confederate and repeated the same request for assistance. When the participant was willing to help, the assistance seeker proceeded to introduce himself and started a conversation on how he had been calling his friend for help but had yet to answer, while they both walked toward the parking lot. Ensuing this, the individual seeking assistance received the call he had been “waiting for” from the researcher. Dialogue was exchanged over cell phone to make it known to the participant that “the friend” was on campus and willing to help. Following this, the assistance seeker stated to the participant, “My friend is going to help me out, I appreciate your help,” shook their hand and thanked them for their assistance.

The researcher then recorded the instances of helping and not helping, and rated the participant using a 6-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (very dissimilar) to 6 (very similar) on two dimensions of similarity-dissimilarity to the assistance seeker: age, and style of dress. This procedure was used in both groups when the request for assistance was granted. Conversely, in the neutral, no-confederate control group, the individual asking for help approached participants in the same manner minus the confederate and waited for the participant’s response. Regardless

of the condition or willingness to assist or not, all participants were further observed to determine if they actually did have access to a vehicle.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

A chi-square test of independence was performed to examine whether a confederate's refusal to assist had a social influence on a person's willingness to help in time of need.

Cross tabulations of the chi-square test indicated that individuals in the confederate group were more likely to refuse assistance than the non-confederate group (see Table 1). However, there was no statistically significant association between confederate presence and assistance $\chi^2(1, N=60) = .606, p > .05$. As a result, the chi-square test failed to support the hypothesis: Witnessing a refusal to help in a public, social situation will result in a participant's subsequent agreement to help less often than when there is a neutral model.

In addition, an independent samples t-test was used to explore whether similarities between a model (individual requesting assistance) and a participant led to a greater tendency to help. Although greater similarity seemed to be related to a higher likelihood of helping, as seen in table 2, results indicated there was no statistically significant difference in age similarity between the model (individual requesting assistance) and the participant, for those who helped ($M = 4.04, SD = 1.40$) and did not help ($M = 4.15, SD = 1.39$); $t(58) = .316, p > .05$. There was also no statistically significant difference in style of dress similarity, between the model (individual requesting assistance) and the participant, for people who helped ($M = 4.52, SD = 1.19$) and people who did not help ($M = 4.30, SD = 1.26$); $t(58) = -.675, p > .05$. Therefore, the

independent samples t-test did not support the second hypothesis: A participant's similarity to overt characteristics of a model, regardless of the willingness to help, will lead to a greater tendency to help than when the subject is dissimilar to the model. As a result, it cannot be said higher similarity characteristics on age and style of dress, led to a greater tendency to help.

Table 1
Cross Tabulations for Assistance in Control (non-confederate) and Experimental (confederate) Conditions

| Condition | Did they Assist? | | Total |
|-----------------|------------------|-----|-------|
| | No | Yes | |
| Non confederate | 15 | 15 | 30 |
| % | 50% | 50% | 100% |
| Confederate | 18 | 12 | 30 |
| % | 60% | 40% | 100% |
| Total | 33 | 27 | 60 |
| % | 55% | 45% | 100% |

Note. No statistically significant association found in assistance between Non-confederate and Confederate groups.

Table 2
Mean and Standard Deviation for Similarity Variables Age and Style of Dress

| Similarity | Did they assist? | M | SD |
|----------------|------------------|------|------|
| Age | Yes | 4.04 | 1.40 |
| | No | 4.15 | 1.39 |
| Style of dress | Yes | 4.52 | 1.19 |
| | No | 4.30 | 1.26 |

Note. No significance found between Age and Style of Dress variables, Similarity measured on (Likert scale 1-6).

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Previous research has investigated pro-social modeling and its effects on altruism and empathy, while few studies have used negative models to elicit self-interest behavior and responses. The current study employed the negative model approach as it examined bystander behavior in regards to a confederate's negative response to helping.

The study investigated two hypotheses: First, people who overhear a refusal of help by a confederate will also refuse assistance. The second examined overt similarity characteristics between a model (individual requesting assistance) and a participant and its regards to helping. Results indicate the presence of a prior refusal has no effect on assistance. Findings also revealed no support that greater similarity characteristics between a model and a participant led to increased likelihood of helping. As such, the original hypotheses were not supported for this sample.

Although the outcome of the experiment was not as predicted, an association may still exist between a confederates negative response to helping and social influence. Current findings may be restricted due to several potential faults in the study's methodological design. Given this, results might not mirror a generalized population, as the study sampled a fraction of the college population. Other populations may display lower incidences of helping when overhearing a confederate's refusal; as was evident in a similar scenario where justification for not helping was

found through the inaction of peers (Batson et al., 1988). With differing sample populations, a link between similarity and helping behavior may also be speculated as individuals are more likely to offer assistance to those who seem similar and considered to belong to their own in-group (Levine et al., 2002).

The current results show no significance on a population of 60 college males. These unexpected results could be interpreted as follows: 50% of people in the non-confederate condition helped, whereas only 40% in the confederate condition did. This 10 percentage-point decrease translates into a 20% reduction in individuals helping when witnessing a refusal compared to the control condition (see table 1). Additionally, the frequency distribution may indicate that participants were less inclined to display assistance while in the presence of the confederate. Since assisting has been reduced, this suggests the confederate had some form of influence on the individual's responses. I would speculate that, in a more representative population, significant results could be found.

In addition, perhaps the situation was affected by the low degree of the emergency's potential danger and did not merit interaction (Fischer et al., 2006). Individuals might have interpreted a stranded motorist as a non-emergency and wished to not intervene. Contrary to results reported by Fischer et al., (2011), non-emergencies demonstrated less intervention, therefore, the present study's non-emergency scenario should have also demonstrated less intervention. Given this, it is safe to assume a larger group of participants may show this effect. Alternatively, it could be that the confederate had no effect on the participant's responses as helping did not drop significantly. Therefore, it may be suggested that some unsuspected confound might have affected the results.

The current study did provide some insightful information as well as present several limitations. Not only did the study draw from a limited number of participants, but as previously mentioned, to avoid confounding gender variables, the study only used male participants. Effects are harder to detect in smaller samples, and the study did not have sufficient statistical power to rule out sampling error or chance. Therefore, it is advisable to increase the sample size to improve the statistical sensitivity of the analysis. Future research should also focus on including both male and female participants for a more representative sample. It might also be useful to switch the confederate and the individual who is requesting assistance from male to female, and examine whether gender has an effect on an individual's response (Eagly & Crowley, 1986).

Furthermore, the study's geographical location might have also contributed to a less than favorable sample. The study was conducted at the University of Texas-Pan American, where the majority of the student body commutes to campus. During the observation, several instances arose where assistance was denied based on that participant not wanting to lose their parking space. This was mainly due to the limited amount of parking areas available, and the difficulty of trying to attain that space. In other occasions, students would suggest contacting the university campus police for assistance with the vehicle's battery. Thus, the university environment may not have given a valid representation of helping behaviors. In future designs, choosing a more general and public area such as an amusement park or retail store could provide a more representative sample.

The study did provide some beneficial interpretations. When examining the frequency distribution of participants on assistance (see table 1), it is evident individuals are willing to employ pro-social bystander behaviors. The distribution shows that individuals are capable of exhibiting assistance, based on the observation that both groups are relatively equal in terms of

assisting and not assisting. If all individuals were inclined to not assist regardless of the condition, incidence of assistance would be nonexistent. This proves beneficial as it supports the predisposition that people are willing to respond to distressing signals (Batson & Shaw, 1991).

In conclusion, the study provided an experimental examination of a real world situation through the use of field research. Despite the current findings for this sample, the study's hypotheses cannot be entirely disregarded. If not for the limitations presented, the study might have found some effect, as findings were contrary to those discovered in past research. Having a better understanding of a bystander's behavior following a confederate's refusal to help could help researchers explain why people exhibit certain behaviors in the real world. People might be inclined to help others but are often conflicted with their own problems or situations. The study alone may prove beneficial in facilitating assisting behavior, as it has been found that individuals who have learned about the bystander effect are more likely to intervene at a later date than individuals who were unfamiliar with the effect (Beaman, Barnes, Klentz, & McQuirk, 1978).

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