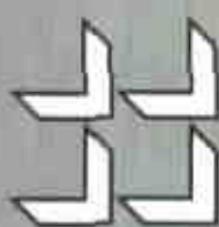


Replications and Refinements



Under this heading are brief reports of studies providing data that substantiate, disprove, or refine what we think we know. These Notes consist of a summary of the study's procedure and as many details about the results as space allows. Additional details concerning the results can be obtained by communicating directly with the author.

Direct Look Versus Evasive Glance and Compliance With a Request

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MANY RESEARCHERS have asserted that eye contact is a powerful influence. For instance, Snyder, Grether, and Keller (1974) reported that motorists stopped more easily when hitchhikers looked them straight in the eye than when hitchhikers glanced elsewhere. When a verbal interaction takes place along with direct eye contact, one may observe similar results: Participants more easily refunded coins found in a phone booth when the confederate who claimed to have forgotten the coins looked directly at the participants (Brockner, Pressman, Cabitt, & Moran, 1982). Similarly, Kleinke and Singer (1979) reported that passers-by more willingly took a leaflet offered by a confederate who looked them in the eye. A direct look may make compliance with a request easier: People on the street more readily helped a female confederate asking for a dime to make a telephone call when the confederate looked directly at the person rather than fixing

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her eyes on the ground (Kleinke, 1980). In addition, such direct eye contact led to an increase in the amount of money given to a solicitor (Bull & Gibson-Robinson, 1981; Lindskold, Forte, Haake, & Schmidt, 1977). In addition, when the request for help is not formulated verbally to the participant, eye contact may have the same positive effect: Participants were more inclined to assist someone with an arm in a sling if the person looked them in the eye before bending down to pick up a few coins she had just dropped (Valentine, 1980).

All the foregoing researchers, therefore, confirmed the positive effect of direct eye contact. However, not much research has been carried out to identify the relationship between the type or length of glance and compliance. On the whole, researchers have manipulated only eye contact versus lack of eye contact. Furthermore, research concerning the effect of the length of a glance focused solely on the participant's evaluation of the solicitor. Thus, in the preceding case, researchers showed in a quite solid way, by varying the duration of the gaze, that the longer the confederate looked participants in the eye, the more positively the participants judged the confederate (Brooks, Church, & Fraser, 1986; Droney & Brooks, 1993).

An effect that has not yet been studied is the *evasive glance*, which involves looking away as soon as another person looks one in the eye. We expected an evasive glance of the requester to induce a negative perception of him or her that, in return, would lead to less compliance with the request. We conducted the present experiment to test the foregoing hypothesis.

The present experiment involved 50 men and 50 women (ranging from 30 to 50 years of age). They were walking in a very popular spot on the streets of a medium-sized city (more than 100,000 inhabitants), the provincial town of Vannes in western France on the Briton Atlantic. The weather was particularly sunny when we carried out the experiment.

A 21-year-old woman and a 22-year-old man acted as confederates. Both were decently but casually dressed in a way appropriate for young women or men of their age. The confederates approached participants selected at random after working through a number of pedestrians in a well-defined zone. If people were unsuitable as participants (e.g., children, teenagers, older adults, or groups), then the confederate would select the next individual until someone matched the expected profile. The confederate would approach the potential participant by saying politely, "Excuse me, madam (or sir). I am a student, and my marketing teacher asked us to do a survey on natural products. Would you mind answering a few questions?" That interaction took 15 to 20 s, and we manipulated the experimental conditions while the confederates were formulating the request: They either (a) looked the participants in the eye and maintained eye contact throughout the request or (b) had an evasive glance, first looking at the participants and then averting their gaze as soon as the participants looked at them. The confederates repeated the direct eye contact or the evasive glance several times during the formulation of the request. Afterward, the confederate assessed whether the participant had complied with the request, continuing to look at the participant in

the same way (i.e., directly or evasively). If the participants refused the request, then the confederates politely thanked them. If the participants complied with the request, then the confederates presented the questionnaire as a face-to-face interview. The survey was relatively short (eight open-ended questions) and took an average of 2 min to complete. At the end of each interview, the confederate thanked the participant for responding to the survey.

According to our results, direct eye contact led more participants (66%) to comply with the request than did an evasive glance (34%). Insofar as the proportion of responses to the evasive glance was greater than 20% (df for error = 20), analysis of variance was an appropriate statistical method for analyzing those dichotomous data (Lunney, 1970). The difference between the two rates of compliance was statistically significant, $F(1, 99) = 11.46, p < .001$. On the one hand, there was no simple effect of the confederate's or the participant's gender. On the other hand, we observed an interaction between the participant's gender and the condition of eye contact, $F(1, 99) = 4.48, p < .05$. In the direct-eye-contact condition, 76% of the women consented to the request as opposed to 56% of the men, whereas in the evasive-glance condition, the reverse was true: Of the women, 24% complied with the request as opposed to 44% of the men. Nevertheless, we did not find an interaction either between the participant's gender and the confederate's gender or between the confederate's gender and eye contact.

The present participants agreed more readily to the request when the confederates looked them in the eye, as compared with the condition in which the confederates did not maintain eye contact. That result confirms those of previous research, conducted mainly in the United States (Bull & Gibson-Robinson, 1981; Kleinke, 1980; Lindsfold et al., 1977). Our results show the consistency of the effect of direct eye contact in a different cultural background. Similar to touch, direct eye contact may lead to a more positive perception of the requester—a perception that, in turn, may lead to greater compliance with the request (Hornik, 1987). Some researchers have established a linear link between the duration of the eye contact and the positive judgment of personality characteristics of the requester (Brooks et al., 1986; Droney & Brooks, 1993; Knackstedt & Kleinke, 1991). We also point out the interaction between gender and eye contact. The present women were more sensitive to direct eye contact than to an evasive gaze, whereas we obtained the opposite result among the men. The present results corroborate those of Kleinke and Taylor (1991): Women were more influenced than were men by nonverbal behavior such as a glance or a smile. Such an influence may affect helping behavior; among women, direct eye contact, compared with absence of direct eye contact, enhanced helping behavior (Valentine, 1980).

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