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INDUCING COMPLIANCE BY A TWO-DOOR-IN-THE-FACE PROCEDURE AND A SELF-DETERMINATION REQUEST*

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SUMMARY

The door-in-the-face ("face") is a procedure for increasing compliance. An individual is first asked to carry out a difficult task, which is almost always refused, and this is followed by a more moderate second request, the one that was actually desired. The current study devised a two-door-in-the-face ("two-face") procedure, where the moderate request is preceded by both an extremely hard and a hard request, and examined whether this "two-face" procedure increased compliance when compared to the typical "face" procedure. In addition, the study examined whether a "self-determination" request, where the individual decides the level of help to offer, would produce more compliance than a fixed request, which specifies the level of help wanted. The *S*s, 192 persons randomly selected from the telephone directory, were called and asked to help a new radio station. The results showed that the "two-face" when compared to the typical "face" procedure, and the self-determination request when compared to the fixed request significantly increased compliance.

A. INTRODUCTION

The door-in-the-face ("face") technique is a procedure which has been found to increase compliance to a request (2, 4, 5). In the "face" procedure, an extreme request is first made, which is almost certain to be rejected, and this is followed by a more moderate second request, the one which was actually desired. Cialdini *et al.* (4) make use of the results found in bargaining studies to explain the efficiency of the "face" procedure. Results from bargaining research have shown that a concession from one party is

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generally met by a concession from the other party (1). This willingness for one party to reciprocate by moving from the original position to one more favorable to the other party has been labeled by Gouldner (6) the norm of reciprocity. In the "face" technique, the initial extreme request represents the beginning position of one party (the *E*) and the refusal of the extreme request represents the beginning position of the other party (the *S*). If the *E* now moves to a smaller request (makes a concession), the *S* should feel some pressure to reciprocate and also make a concession. If the situation only allows the *S* to make a dichotomous choice (yes or no), he can only reciprocate by moving from his original position of noncompliance to that of compliance.

To date, the research dealing with the "face" technique has used a two-request procedure, an initial hard request followed by a more moderate request, the one desired from the outset. This procedure allows the *E* to make one concession, retreating from the hard request to the moderate request. In a bargaining interaction, it is possible for one party to make repeated concessions and thus to produce repeated normative pressures for the other party to reciprocate with a concession. Thus, a compliance procedure in which the *E* makes two concessions (a two-door-in-the-face procedure) should produce greater compliance than the usual (one) "face" procedure. The first purpose of the present research was to formulate a "two-face" procedure and to test the above hypothesis.

The second purpose was to devise a variation of the "face" procedure and compare this variation with the usual "face" technique. Both the extreme request and the moderate request in the "face" procedure are fixed, and the *S* is asked to make a dichotomous choice so that he can either agree or refuse to help with the fixed request. But in many situations it is possible to allow the *S* to decide the magnitude of the help he will offer; although a certain amount of help is wanted, a lesser amount is frequently better than none at all. For example, if a person is asked to chaperone a group of youngsters for a four-hour period, he might refuse. But if he were allowed to decide the amount of time he would be willing to help, he might agree to chaperone the group for a two-hour period. The current study examines the compliance obtained when the request that is asked allows the *S* to determine the amount of help he wishes to offer. This self-determination request is combined with the one- and two-face procedure. The procedure and rationale would be as follows: the *E* first makes either one or two large requests and the *S* refuses to help. The *E* wants a great amount of assistance and has indicated this by the original request(s), but now he

compromises and is willing to accept any level of help and the *S* can decide on the level. Under these conditions, the individual might find it difficult to refuse all help. And having decided to help, he might do so at more than a minimum level.

Support for this line of reasoning comes from a study reported by Cialdini and Schroeder (3). In their study, a straightforward request for donations to the American Cancer Society was made. They found that when the phrase, "Even a penny will help," was added at the end of the request, 20 percent more *S*s gave a contribution. If even a penny would be of benefit, how could anyone have a reason for refusing? An individual, having made the decision to contribute, would be acting decidedly in poor taste to actually offer one penny. The results showed that there was no reduction in the average size of the donations.

The present experiment used a 3 × 2 factoral design: one third of the *S*s received a "two-face" procedure (they were asked an extremely hard request and a second hard request); one third received a "one-face" procedure (they were asked an extremely hard request); and one third served as controls and received no initial request. One-half in each of these groups were then asked a fixed request (a moderate request which was less difficult than the hard request); and the remaining half were allowed to decide on the level of help to offer. The dependent variable measure was the response to the fixed or decision request.

Two predictions are made: one, that the "two-face" procedure would produce greater helping responses than the "one-face" procedure; and two, that the decision request would produce greater helping behavior than the fixed request.

B. Method

1. *Subjects*

*S*s were 192 Kansas City residents whose telephone numbers were randomly selected from the Kansas City telephone directory. A male *E* phoned on weekdays between 12:00 and 4:00 p.m. The *S*s were assigned to six conditions, with each condition containing 32 *S*s. One rotation of the six conditions was completed before the next rotation began and the conditions in each rotation were randomly ordered.

2. *Procedure*

The *E* telephoned an *S* and began by saying, "Hello, my name is Chris Walters. I am calling on behalf of KCST, a new radio station in the area.

We are attempting to do a survey concerning radio programming and we need volunteers." The concession factor was then introduced and either the two, one, or control concession condition was run. In the two-concession condition, the *E* stated, "Would you be willing to call 150 names picked at random from the telephone directory and ask them a few questions?" The *E* then waited for the *S* to refuse (all *S*s refused this request) and then asked, "Well, would you be willing to call 100 names?" Again the *E* waited for the *S* to refuse (all *S*s also refused this request). In the one concession condition the *E* only asked the request for 150 names and omitted the request for 100 names. In the control condition, the *E* omitted both the 150-name and the 100-name request.

The type of request factor was next introduced. Half of the *S*s in each of the concession conditions were asked either a fixed request or a request allowing the *S* to decide the level of help to be offered (self-determined-decision request). In the fixed-request condition, the *E* stated, "Well, would you be willing to call 25 names?" In the self-determined-decision-request condition, the *E* stated, "Well, would you be willing to help, and if so how many names would you be willing to call?"

If an *S* agreed to make some telephone calls, the *E* thanked the *S* for his or her cooperation and stated, "We are currently compiling a list of people who would be willing to help with our survey. Your name will be put on the list and if it is chosen, you will be called later this month."

3. *Dependent Measure*

The response that the *S* gave to the fixed or self-determination request served as the dependent measure. For the fixed-request condition, the *S* answered with a "yes" or "no," and this response was scored 25 or 0, accordingly. For the self-determination condition, the number of calls that the *S* agreed to make served as the score.

C. Results

The mean number of telephone calls the *S*s agreed to make in each of the experimental conditions is presented in Table 1.

TABLE 1
MEAN COMPLIANCE SCORES FOR TYPE OF REQUEST AND "FACE" CONDITIONS

Type of request	Control	"Face"	"Two-Face"
Fixed	.78	6.25	10.16
Self-determined	3.59	9.28	10.72

According to Lunney (7), the analysis of variance test is appropriate for dichotomous data when certain conditions are satisfied. If the proportion of responses in the smaller response category is less than .2, then the error term must have at least 40 degrees of freedom. In the current study the degrees of freedom far exceed the required number ($df = 186$). Generally, results dealing with proportions are tested with the binomial distribution. However, the binomial distribution may be taken as an approximation of a normal distribution if np is equal or greater than five. For the fixed-request treatments, this condition was satisfied [$np = (32)(.28) = 8.96$]. For the self-determination treatments, the data, of course, are continuous. *S*s in these conditions agreed to make telephone calls varying in number from zero to 25.

In the fixed-request conditions, the "yes" response was transformed to "1" and the "no" response was transformed to "0." In the self-determination-request conditions, comparable scores were obtained by dividing the number of calls an *S* agreed to make by 25 (thus, 25, 10, and 0 calls would be transformed to scores of 1, .4, and 0, respectively).

The analysis of variance test was performed and the differences among the means for the three concession conditions were highly significant, $F(2, 186) = 15.35$, $p < .0001$. The mean for the one-concession condition was significantly greater than the mean for the control-concession condition ($t = 3.43$, $p < .01$, two-tailed), and the mean for the two-concession conditions was significantly greater than the mean for the one-concession condition ($t = 1.96$, $p = .05$, two-tailed). The mean for the self-determination-request condition was marginally, though not significantly, greater than the mean for the fixed-request condition, $F(1.186) = 2.83$, $p = .09$. The interaction was nonsignificant.

D. Discussion

The results supported the findings of Cialdini *et al.* (4), that a rejection-then-retreat concession technique increases compliance. Also supported was the prediction that a repeated concession procedure, where an extremely hard request is followed by a second hard request, would further enhance compliance. The "two-face" procedure increased compliance compared to the "one-face" procedure by 63 percent, a fairly substantial amount.

The mean compliance score obtained for the control condition, for the "one-face" condition, and for the "two-face" condition closely approximates an increasing linear relationship. If the curve were extrapolated for addi-

tional conditions, where each succeeding condition had an increasing number of compromises, it would be expected that at some point the amount of compliance would begin to level off and possibly decline. It would be interesting to find out how many compromises would be necessary before the level of compliance would begin to decline, and whether the decline would be gradual or dramatic.

The second prediction, that greater compliance to a request would be obtained if the *S* himself could decide the level of help he wished to give, received some slight support. The self-decision request was especially effective when it was combined with a two-door-in-the-face procedure. Indicating to the *S* that one is desirous of a high level of assistance, but, upon being refused, compromising and indicating that any level of help would be acceptable, makes it difficult for the *S* to refuse all help. The *S* who has made the decision to help and who knows the original levels of aid desired might offer to comply at more than a minimum level. In the Cialdini and Schroeder (3) study, the phrase, "Even a penny would help," was found to increase the helping response substantially. It was thought best not to employ a similar phrase in the current study. In their study, the helping request was for a monetary contribution to a charitable organization and it would be in poor taste to contribute a penny. But in the present study, if a similar phrase, such as "Even one phone call would help" had been used, many *S*s might take the request literally and offer to make one phone call. Thus, the phrase was omitted. However, making a request for a high degree of help indicates the number of calls that are wanted. Combining the face procedure with the self-decision procedure informs the *S* that any help would be desirable and appreciated. A high level of help is really wanted, but the requestor is willing to compromise. It would only be fair for the *S* to reciprocate and also compromise. The requestor's compromising twice would make it even more difficult for the *S* to offer no help.

The fixed request asked the *S* to help by making 25 telephone calls. The size of the number of calls requested would, of course, influence whether an *S* would agree to help. If the request was for two calls, almost all *S*s might agree to help. But the average for a group of 10 *S*s might be smaller than if the request had been for 50 calls and one of 10 *S*s had agreed to help. Thus, if the object is to receive the maximum amount of overall help for the number of requests made, the precise size of the request would be difficult to determine. In the current study, preliminary trials were made to determine the number of telephone calls to request in order to obtain the

highest average. On the basis of these preliminary trials, requesting the *S*s to make 50 calls led to almost total refusal, and making the request of 25 calls appeared to yield the greatest number of calls for the number of requests made, the maximum average.

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