

Replications and Refinements



Under this heading appear summaries of studies which, in 500 words or less, provide useful data substantiating, not substantiating, or refining what we think we know. Additional details concerning the results can be obtained by communicating directly with the investigator or, when indicated, by requesting supplementary material from Microfiche Publications.

The Effect of Touch and Gaze upon Compliance and Interest of Interviewees

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A VARIETY OF EXPERIMENTS has lent support to the proposition that touch and gaze can arouse compliance. Kleinke (1977, 1980), for example, found that both touch and gaze resulted in increased compliance to lending the experimenter a dime for a telephone call, but the requests in Kleinke's studies were all made by females. Later studies revealed that touch was particularly effective in opposite sex pairs (e.g., Heslin, Nguyen, & Nguyen, 1983; Stier & Hall, 1984).

We assumed in the present study that, when male and female subjects were touched and gazed at by interviewers, the subjects would not only comply with the interviewers' request but also, at the end of the task, evaluate the interviewer more positively and perceive the interview to be more important. We also assumed that the interviewer/subject gender combination would affect compliance.

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The subjects were 288 adult shoppers (144 male and 144 female) who were approached by trained interviewers at the entrance of a suburban Chicago shopping mall. Following Kleinke's (1980) recommended procedure, one-half of all the male and one-half of all the female subjects were touched lightly on the upper arm by one of the four male or four female interviewers while the interviewers made their request. In addition, the interviewers looked into the eyes of the subjects in this group. The other subjects were not touched and not gazed at. Interviewers asked all subjects to participate in an interview and to fill out a short, self-administered form, which they were to return in a sealed envelope.

We examined the effect of the experimental manipulation on different types of outcome: (a) subject compliance—defined as the percentage of subjects approached who agreed to participate in the study; (b) item omission rate and response bias were used to measure response quality (Hornik, 1982); and (c) respondent burden (Sharp & Frankel, 1983) variables were included to ascertain subjects' reactions to the interview, interviewer, questions, and overall task. Burden also included respondent unwillingness to be reinterviewed later (in a few days) and interviewer's report on subject behavior during the session. The final variable examined was a possible experimental effect on the request for subjects' signatures. This was done for practical and theoretical reasons. First, the request for a signature appears to function as another measure of the respondent's sense of involvement. Second, informed consent is considered a major sensitive item (Singer, 1978).

The overall compliance rate in the touch and gaze groups was 76.4%, compared to 54.2% in the no touch/no gaze condition. This difference is highly significant. On separate analysis of variance tests for main and interaction effects, the data showed that significantly more subjects complied when the request was made by a female interviewer, $F(2, 242) = 3.87, p < .05$. The three-way interaction (Nonverbal Form \times Interviewer \times Subject) was also significant, representing a gender effect along with the nonverbal appeal. The two main effects for nonverbal communication and sex of interviewer on response quality and bias were insignificant. Also, no significant interaction effects were revealed on these two measures. The main effect for nonverbal stimuli, however, was significant for some response burden items and for the informed consent measure. Specifically, respondents who were touched and gazed at did not feel that the interviewer was "not so important," $F(2, 218) = 2.91, p < .01$; and they believed that the interviewer conducted the interview professionally, $F(2, 218) = 2.76, p < .01$. In addition, subjects in this group were more willing to be reinterviewed, $F(2, 222) = 2.32, p < .01$. The results for reported burden by interviewers were marginally significant, $F(2, 186) = 2.14, p = .81$. This confirms that touch and gaze produce not only higher compliance but also improved interpersonal feeling between solicitors and subjects. Finally, significantly more subjects in the

nonverbal inducement groups than in the other groups signed the questionnaire, $F(2, 218) = 3.13, p < .01$.

The present results clearly confirm that touch and gaze are important techniques in inducing subjects to comply, and that interviewer/respondent gender has an effect on reluctant subjects. Evidence is also provided that the touch and gaze manipulation reduced the perceived burden of subjects and interviewers. Finally, these findings provide support for the view that interviewers can use more personal nonverbal techniques to secure larger samples and subject involvement, which should improve the overall validity of the data.

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