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The Effects of the "Even a Few Minutes Would Help"
Strategy, Perspective Taking, and Empathic Concern on
the Successful Recruiting of Volunteers On Campus

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Junko Takada

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Master's degree in Communication-Urban Studies

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THE EFFECTS OF THE “EVEN A FEW MINUTES WOULD HELP” STRATEGY,
PERSPECTIVE TAKING, AND EMPATHIC CONCERN
ON THE SUCCESSFUL RECRUITING OF VOLUNTEERS ON CAMPUS

By

JUNKO TAKADA

A THESIS

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ABSTRACT

THE EFFECTS OF THE “EVEN A FEW MINUTES WOULD HELP” STRATEGY, PERSPECTIVE TAKING, AND EMPATHIC CONCERN ON THE SUCCESSFUL RECRUITING OF VOLUNTEERS ON CAMPUS

By

JUNKO TAKADA

The purpose of the study was to test the effectiveness of a strategy for getting more university students involved in volunteering activities by adding the sentence, “even an hour would help.” In addition, the relationship between the even-a-few-minutes-would-help strategy and empathy was examined when recruiting volunteers on campus. One hundred and seven students who were walking on the university campus during school hours were approached. Adding one sentence, “Even a few minutes would help” increased the compliance rate by 9.3 % compared to the request without that sentence. The increase was not statistically significant, however, the compliance rate was in the predicted direction. The data suggested that empathy moderated the prediction of compliance to volunteer. However, the mechanism of the moderator is more complicated than anticipated. None of the people who had low empathic concern complied with the request, and all the people who complied with the request had high empathic concern. Of those, perspective taking moderated the effects of the even-a-few-minutes-would-help strategy when a person decided to volunteer on campus. “Even a few minutes would help” was more effective when people had high perspective taking as opposed to those who had low perspective taking.

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Introduction

Even subtle differences in wording can result in surprisingly large differences in the probability of successfully gaining another's compliance (Langer, Arthur, & Benzion, 1978). For instance, Cialdini and Schroeder (1976) examined the effectiveness of a small request in the donation context by adding one sentence, "Even a penny helps." They showed that a minimal request was hard to refuse and that this technique did not diminish the amount of money that people donated. Perhaps a similar strategy would be effective in recruiting settings for volunteers on campus.

Tackling social problems by participating as a volunteer plays an important role in this society. Every year millions of Americans volunteer at more than one million nonprofit organizations throughout the United States (Lawson, 1998). In fact, almost half of the adult population volunteers for nonprofit organizations each year (Fuchsberg, 1990). Further, a substantial proportion of nonprofit groups rely on volunteers to meet their objectives. Historically, volunteers were the first detectors of existing community needs and they chose to spend their own time involved in their communities (Ellis, 1986).

A variety of volunteer recruiting campaigns including Ret. General Powell's call to action and Oprah's Angel Network try to make a difference in the communities throughout the country. Although volunteering is becoming popular among the retired, the frequency of university student's participation remains relatively low (Michigan Nonprofit Association, 1999).

The purpose of this research is to test the effectiveness of a strategy for getting more university students involved in volunteering activities by replicating the Cialdini and Schroeder (1976) study with a volunteering request. In addition, the notion of

perspective taking and empathic concern should be taken into consideration as potential independent or moderating variables. Perspective taking is defined as “the ability of an individual to adopt the viewpoint of another” (Stiff, Dillard, Somera, Kim, & Sleight, 1988, p.199). Empathic concern is defined as “a general concern and regard for the welfare of others” (Stiff et al., 1988, p. 199). Eisenberg and Miller (1987) discovered a modest, but significant, association between perspective-taking constructs and helping.

In the first section of this paper, sequential requests including the foot-in-the-door (FITD), the door-in-the-face (DITF), low-ball, that’s not all, and even-a-penny-helps strategies are reviewed. The even-a-penny-helps strategy, however, is the primary focus here. Then, perspective taking and empathic concern are considered as important variables to help us to understand the dynamics of recruiting volunteers.

In order to replicate the study of Cialdini and Schroeder (1976) in the context of recruiting volunteers on campus, the sentence needs to be modified into, “even a few minutes would help.” Half of participants are simply asked to volunteer, and the rest of them hear “even a few minutes would help” in addition to the standard request. Also all of the participants are asked to fill out a questionnaire containing a measure of empathy including perspective taking and empathic concern. This study predicts a significant increase in the frequency of volunteering by adding, “even a few minutes would help.” It is also predicted that perspective taking and empathic concern will be related to volunteering, although the exact nature of the relationship is unclear.

Literature Review

Sequential Request Strategies

A large number of research studies have tested the effectiveness of various sequential request compliance-gaining strategies. Studies testing specific strategies such as the foot-in-the-door, the door-in-the-face, low ball, that's not all, and even-a-penny-helps are plentiful. The literature concerning the even-a-penny-helps strategy is paid close attention. The literature on these strategies is summarized briefly below.

The foot-in-the-door technique was introduced by Freedman and Fraser (1966), and involves an initial small request that increases the likelihood of compliance with a subsequent larger request. The subsequent larger request was more likely to be accepted when the request was made by the same or different person, and even with different kinds of requests. The fundamental principal is that once someone has agreed to any action, no matter how small it is, he or she tends to feel more involved than before. Therefore, once a person agrees to a request, one's attitude may change. The change in attitude directs a person to comply with any aspect of the situation or with the whole business (Freedman & Fraser, 1966). The basic idea is that the change in attitude may not be toward any particular issue or person or activity, but may be toward activity or compliance in general.

Eisenberg, Cialdini, McCreath, and Shell (1987) tested the FITD technique on children and showed that the FITD appeared effective among the second and fifth graders. However, the FITD was not effective among children before the age of 7, and these children did not seem to evaluate their current behavior in light of past behavior. Further, the more the children perceived their prior behavior as predictive of their future behaviors, the more the FITD effect was influenced by preference for consistency in behavior.

Specifically, children's preference for consistency seemed to influence the effect of the FITD technique. As this study showed, the notion of commitment and consistency appears to be one of the reasons why this technique works. Once human beings take a stand, they will encounter personal and interpersonal pressures to behave consistently with that commitment (Cialdini, 2001). When people comply with a small request at first, then they feel obligated to comply with the second larger request as well.

The door-in-the-face (DITF) technique (Cialdini, Vincent, Lewis, Catalan, Wheeler, & Darby, 1975) is the opposite of the foot-in-the-door (FITD) technique. In this technique, an extreme request is made first, which a target is most likely to turn down, then a smaller request is proposed subsequently. A target regards the second request as a concession and feels inclined to comply with a second request. This technique is involved in the norm of reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960).

For instance, Brownstein and Katzev (1985) found that individuals who were simply asked for a \$ 1 contribution to a museum were less likely to comply with the target request, as compared to people who were first asked for a \$5 contribution. Cialdini et al. (1975) contend that the reduction in request size in the DITF technique is considered as a concession on the part of the requestor. People feel obligated to make concessions to those who make concessions to them (Cialdini et al., 1975).

It is also important to note that several meta-analyses have found results consistent with the effectiveness of both the FITD and the DITF strategies. First, Cantrill and Seibold (1986) found results consistent with the relative effectiveness of the FITD and the DITF techniques compared simply to making the second request alone and that both sequences increase the possibility of compliance to approximately the same degree.

Perceptual contrast processes were predicted as an important factor, in which the initial request is employed as an anchor against either to assimilate or contrast to further requests. The study, however, showed that perceptual contrast processes did not account for the sequential request efficacy.

The meta-analysis of Dillard, Hunter, and Burgoon, (1984) concluded that the FITD and the DITF techniques are effective in increasing the likelihood of compliance to requests that are prosocial in nature. Although they sought a common theoretical explanation for why the FITD and the DITF are effective, they failed to propose one. They examined the applicability of a reciprocal concession in FITD and of a self-perception in DITF. They found that a reciprocal concession is only relevant to DITF, and a self-perception is only applicable to the FITD.

Despite its effectiveness, some have argued that the DITF lacks a consistently supported theoretical explanation. In order to fill the gap, many researchers have focused on other reasons why the DITF enhances compliance (e.g., Abrahams & Bell, 1994; Bell, Abrahams, Clark, & Schlatter, 1996; Reeves, Baker, Boyd, & Cialdini, 1991; Tusing & Dillard, 2000).

Of those studies, guilt has been tested to see whether it could be an explanation of the effectiveness of the DITF strategy (O'Keefe, 1999, 2000; O'Keefe & Figge, 1997, 1999). O'Keefe and Figge (1997) found that refusing the first request creates guilt and accepting the second request reduces guilt. Therefore, guilt seemed to play a role in examining the DITF technique. O'Keefe and Figge (1999) conducted another study to confirm the role of guilt as a moderator. They found that refusing a request from a prosocial organization creates more guilt than a request from a for-profit organization.

Although they expected to find a reduction in the amount of guilt feelings from people who complied with the second request, no significant difference of guilt reduction between people who rejected the initial large request and accepted the second small request, and people who denied both requests was evident. Based on these findings, O’Keefe and Figge (1999) shifted their focus from actual guilt feelings to anticipated guilt feelings. Then, they found that people are more likely to comply with the second smaller request in order to reduce the additional guilt that is expected to occur if they turn the second offer down (O’Keefe & Figge, 1999). Therefore, anticipated guilt seems to play an important role in examining the effectiveness of the DITF technique.

The low-ball technique (Cialdini, Cacioppo, Basset, & Miller, 1978) is another sequential strategy. Individuals are asked initially to make a commitment to a request and then to maintain their pledge when this request is made more costly. For instance, a museum fundraising study found that subjects first asked to contribute 75 cents and then increasing this amount by 25 cents to support the children’s program was a more effective way to raising money for the museum than the DITF technique (Brownstein & Katzev, 1985). Katzev and Brownstein (1988) also tested the effect of knowledge of compliance techniques on subsequent behavior. The results failed to show significant differences between those who knew of the techniques and who did not.

As with the FITD, the low-ball strategy is also thought to reflect the notion of commitment and consistency (Cialdini, 2001). People are asked to make commitments in the first place. Commitment decisions make people feel pressure to comply with the subsequent requests. Therefore, once people committed to pay 75 cents, they continued to pay even if the fee was increased.

Burger (1986) examined the that's-not-all technique, in which a salesperson proposes a product and a price but does not allow the buyer to respond immediately. A few seconds later, the buyer is told, "That's not all" and an additional small product that goes along with the larger item is included in the deal. Alternatively, the buyer could be told, "just for you" or "today only" then the price is reduced from the original one. The seller intended to sell the items together or at the lower price all along. The seller, however, proposes the higher price or single item first. Burger (1986) reported several studies showing the effectiveness of this procedure in comparison to the message without containing the that's-not-all technique.

The norm of reciprocity and altering an anchor point were considered as explanations for the effectiveness of the that's-not-all strategy. As with the DITF strategy, the that's-not-all technique is thought to work, in part, for the same reason. The seller proposes higher price or single item first, and next an offer is proposed with a lower price or additional products. In this way, a target regards the second request as a concession and he or she is more likely to comply with a second request.

The foot-in-the-door, the door-in-the-face, low ball and that's not all strategies were reviewed. All strategies were more effective in gaining compliance than a direct request. However, the focus of this study is on applying the even a penny helps strategy.

Even a penny helps

Numerous studies have demonstrated that people are more willing to comply with a small request than a larger one (e.g., Cialdini & Schroeder, 1976; Freedman & Fraser, 1966). Small requests are thought to yield higher compliance rates compared to large requests because respondents' costs are smaller and it is easier for a target person to say yes. At the same time, people may find it difficult to say no for small requests (Cialdini & Schroeder, 1976). Thus, by legitimizing a small request, people are more likely to donate and the amount of donated money does not shrink (Cialdini & Schroeder, 1976).

Specifically, Cialdini and Schroeder (1976) sought to increase the frequency of monetary contributions to the American Cancer Society, by adding the sentence, "even a penny will help." Their results showed that asking a small favor reduces the probability of rejection as making a target feel comfortable to donate a penny is more effective and efficient than simply requesting favors.

Cialdini and Schroeder (1976) conducted a door-to-door solicitation for charity to examine the effectiveness of a small request. In Experiment 1, pairs of experimenters, a male and a female, approached a middle-income suburban house and requested funds for the American Cancer Society. A solicitor who was the same sex as the target person said, "I'm collecting money for the American Cancer Society." Then for half of the cases (i.e., the control group), the solicitor said, "Would you be willing to help by giving a donation?" In the rest of the cases, the solicitor added one more sentence after that, "Even a penny helps." The results showed that the frequency of donations was significantly increased by adding the sentence, "Even a penny will help" without decreasing the size of

the donations. As a result, 28.6% of the control subjects contributed, whereas 50% of the even-a-penny subjects donated.

Experiment 2 was conducted in the similar suburban middle-class neighbors with different pairs of experimenters. The solicitor began with the same sentence as in the experiment 1, "I'm collecting money for the American Cancer Society." In the control condition, the solicitor said, "We've already received some contributions, and I wonder if you would be willing to help by giving a donation." In the even-a-penny-helps condition, the solicitor said, "Even a penny will help." In the even-a-dollar-helps condition, the solicitor said, "Even a dollar will help." In the social legitimization condition, the solicitor said, "We've already received some contributions, ranging from a penny on up, and I wonder if you would be willing to help by giving a donation."

The results showed that social legitimization condition received donations 64.5% of the time, the even-a-penny-helps condition yielded 58.1% compliance, the control condition was 32.2%, and the even-a-dollar-helps condition produced the lowest compliance rate, 19.35%. Thus, experiment 2 replicated the results of experiment 1 and found that social legitimization is as effective as the sentence of even a penny helps. There was ambiguity in the even-a-penny-helps condition in that people could perceive that a penny was a legitimate donation, and at the same time people might assume that the charity agency was badly lacking donations. By saying, "We've already received contributions ranging from a penny on up," a penny donation was justified through the information that others had already given only a penny. At the same time, the perception that the charity agency was seriously short of funds should also be reduced. Consistent with this, the combination of the even-a-penny-helps and social legitimization conditions

were significantly more effective compared to the combination of the control and even-a-dollar conditions.

Reingen (1978) studied the effectiveness of various compliance induction techniques in a fund-raising context as well. In the first condition (i.e., the control group), subjects were asked the standard request for a donation as follows; “as part of our annual fund-raising drives, I’m collecting money for the Heart Association. Would you be willing to help by giving a single donation?” In the second condition, a small favor (to answer four questions concerning the Heart Association) were asked first, then those who agreed to answer the questions were asked the standard request for a donation. This condition followed the foot-in-the-door technique. In the third, the standard request was followed by the sentence, “Even a penny helps.” In the fourth, the sentence, “Even a penny helps” was added to the second condition to combine the even-a-penny condition with the FITD strategy. The result showed that the third case, which included “even a penny helps,” achieved the highest compliance rate. The combination of FITD and even-a-penny-helps yielded the second highest compliance rates, followed by the FITD only and control message respectively. Simply adding one sentence to the request, “even a penny helps” significantly increased compliance rate compared to control group and other two cases, both of which employed the FITD technique.

Weyant (1984) replicated Cialdini and Schroeder’s study (1976) by comparing three different sentences: “people like you”, “people in neighborhoods like this are likely to contribute”, and “any amount will help.” The results showed that the even-a-penny condition received a higher frequency of donations and the greatest average donation size

than the “neighborhood like this”, “any amount”, “people like you” and control group conditions.

Thus, three studies show that by adding only one sentence, “even a penny helps,” the effectiveness of collecting money is considerably improved. Further, the literature suggests that “even a penny helps” may be more effective than alternatives such as foot-in-the-door or social proof. However, these studies are only employed in the context of monetary donations to charity. It is worthwhile to replicate these studies in the recruiting volunteers’ setting.

Empathy

Empathy is considered to be one of the most important predictors of why some people are more likely to help others (Davis, 1994). Empathy is also considered to be one of the catalysts that lead people to perform prosocial behavior (Stiff et al., 1988). For instance, Rogers (1957) contended that empathy was a “necessary and sufficient condition for therapeutic personality change” (p.99).

Empathy is believed to have three dimensions; perspective taking, emotional contagion, and empathic concern (Stiff et al., 1988). Perspective taking is the ability of an individual to understand an other’s viewpoint (Coke, Batson, & McDavis, 1978; Davis, 1980, 1983; Detsch & Madle, 1975; Feshbach, 1975; Krebs, 1975). Emotional contagion is an affective aspect of empathy, and it is created when one person experiences an emotional response parallel to and as the result of observing another person’s actual or anticipated display of emotion (Coke, Batson, & McDavis, 1978; Davis, 1980, 1983; Deutsh & Madle, 1975; Feshbach, 1975). Empathic concern is also an affective component (Davis, 1980, 1983). Empathic concern has two characteristics.

First of all, it involves “a general concern and regard for the welfare of others” (Stiff et al., 1988, p. 199). Secondly, the assumption is “the stipulation that the affect is not parallel to that of the target person” (Stiff et al., 1988, p. 199). In emotional contagion, the emotion corresponds to some extent with the other’s emotion. However, empathic concern assumes that emotional feelings of the target and of the perceiver differ.

Several studies indicated that higher perspective taking increases the likelihood of helping (Coke, Batson, & McDavis, 1978; Dovidio, Allen, & Schroeder, 1990; Shelton, & Rogers, 1981; Smith, Keating, & Stotland, 1989; Toi, & Batson, 1982). Coke, Batson, and McDavis (1978) introduced a two-stage model of the empathic mediation of helping. This model posits that taking the perspective of another in need increases empathic emotion, which, in turn, will increase motivation to help or protect another.

Similarly, Stiff et al. (1988) conducted two studies examining the relationships among different dimensions of empathy, communication, and prosocial behavior. Their results were consistent with a model specifying that perspective taking leads to empathic concern which, in turn, influences emotional contagion, communicative responsiveness, and particular prosocial behaviors, including volunteering and comforting. In this model, perspective taking is the first step to process empathy. Perspective taking leads to empathic concern and empathic concern leads to prosocial activities. Thus, both perspective taking and empathic concern should be measured.

When a person feels empathy, one is more likely to engage in prosocial behaviors. More importantly, the empathy process creates multiple outcomes. Some results stem from simply caring about others (empathic concern), while others are a function of both empathic concern and emotional contagion. Empathic concern has been found to be

positively associated with prosocial behavior, while emotional contagion can reduce prosocial outcomes (Stiff et al., 1988). For example, imagine an undergraduate class is recruited to participate as volunteers for orientation programs for new students. Some students may think how grateful they would be if they were helped by volunteers (perspective taking) and some of them may feel that they need to do something for them (empathic concern). These students should be more likely to volunteer. Some of them, however, may feel that they do not want to think about the insecure feelings that the people in the program might have (emotional contagion) and they would not participate as volunteers for orientation programs. Thus, empathic concern may facilitate prosocial behavior while emotional contagion may inhibit it.

Being a volunteer is considered a prosocial activity. Since many studies have supported the relationship between empathy and prosocial activities (e.g., volunteering), perspective taking and empathic concern need to be investigated in this study. Specifically, it is important to examine whether perspective taking and empathic concern play an independent role or they play a moderating role in the even-a-penny-helps technique. If perspective taking and the even-a-penny-helps technique play independent roles, the independent main effects for both the even-a-penny-helps strategy and perspective taking on the probability of compliance would be observed. Two main effects are expected, but no interaction effects are in this model. On the other hand, empathic concern may be a moderating variable in the effectiveness of even-a-penny-helps technique. In this case, an interaction occurs between the even-a-penny-helps technique and empathic concern.

The two-process model and the moderator model will help us to understand the roles of the even-a-penny-helps technique and empathy in recruiting volunteers. If an interaction is present between an even-a-penny-helps technique and empathic concern, the moderating model will help to specify the conditions when the even-a-penny-helps technique is effective. If there is no interaction, perspective taking is independent from the even-a-penny-helps technique and perspective taking independently influences compliance. Thus, when recruiting volunteers on campus, perspective taking and empathic concern need to be included to understand the mechanism of how these influence the effectiveness of the even-a-penny-helps technique.

Hypothesis

The “even a penny helps” study has been replicated several times, but only in charity drive contexts. Thus, this technique should be investigated in other domains to see if its effectiveness generalizes. The fundamental assumption of the even-a-penny-helps strategy is that people are more likely to comply with a small request. When a target person encounters an extremely small request, he or she simply cannot come up with an excuse for denying the request. First of all, the request is so small that the target’s cost is low, and a target can easily comply with a request. Second, such small requests make it difficult for a target to refuse. Simply adding one sentence, “even a penny helps,” apparently provides justification for a target, because he or she does not have to worry about being considered cheap by donating a penny since it was vocalized. People also seem to feel anticipated guilt for refusing a request (O’Keefe & Figge, 1999).

This study focuses on recruiting students for volunteering activities. By modifying the sentence into “Even a few minutes would help,” a study of recruiting

volunteers may derive the same kind of results as Cialdini and Schroeder did (1976). A request, “even a few minutes would help,” is so small that a target will feel obligated to say yes and harder to say no. Therefore it is hypothesized that:

H1: Targets are more likely to comply with a request when the sentence “Even a few minutes would help” is added in recruiting volunteers on campus than when the request is made absent this phrase.

Two Rival Models

A number of studies have shown that empathy enhances the likelihood of prosocial activities. Volunteering activities are considered to be prosocial and their importance is well understood in society. Empathy may play an important role in volunteering activities (i.e., prosocial behaviors) and enhance our understanding of the process of compliance. In order to reveal the relationship between the “even a few minutes would help” study and empathy, two rival models are proposed; the two-process model and the moderator model.

In the two-process model, empathy and an even-a-few-minutes-would-help condition are independent predictors of volunteering. That is, in both an even-a-few-minutes-would-help condition and a direct request control condition, more empathic message recipients will be more likely to comply with the requests than less empathic message recipients. Similarly, the two-process model predicts that an even-an-hour-would-help will be effective for people regardless of their degree of empathy. Evidence for a two-process model would be obtained from two main effects (one for empathy, and one for even-a-few-minutes-would-help), and no interaction.

The Stiff et al. (1988) model indicates that perspective taking leads to empathic concern, then empathic concern leads to prosocial activities. Therefore, measuring empathic concern is as important as measuring perspective taking. The first process of this model is that perspective taking leads to empathic concern, then empathic concern leads to compliance (volunteering). The second process is that the sentence, “even a few minutes would help” would directly lead to compliance (volunteering). Both an even-a-few-minutes-would-help strategy and empathy may function independently.

For instance, in the recruiting volunteer context on campus, a combination of the absence of an even-a-few-minutes-would-help strategy and low perspective taking will produce the lowest compliance rate. There is no effect of an even-a-few-minutes-would-help strategy, and students with low perspective taking are less likely to engage in volunteering activities. Thus, this combination should produce the lowest compliance. A combination of the absence of an even-a-few-minutes-would-help strategy and high perspective taking will produce moderate compliance. The students with high perspective taking are more likely to comply to volunteer on campus. However, there is no effect of an even-a-few-minutes-would-help strategy. Therefore, this combination should produce moderate compliance. A combination of an even-a-few-minutes-would-help strategy and low perspective taking will also produce moderate compliance. Students with low perspective taking are less likely to volunteer on campus. However, there is an effect of “even a few minutes would help” sentence. Thus, this combination should produce moderate compliance. Finally, a combination of an even-a-few-minutes-would-help strategy and high perspective taking will produce the highest compliance rate. Students with high perspective taking are more likely to engage in volunteering activities.

In addition, the effects of “even a few minutes would help” technique may remain constant across perspective taking. Therefore, this combination produces the highest compliance. These are the anticipated results if both perspective taking and an even-a-few-minutes-would-help technique independently predict compliance. That is, it is possible that perspective taking effects are general across strategy conditions and vice versa.

The alternative model is the moderator model. Based on the Stiff et al. (1988) model, perspective taking leads to empathic concern, then empathic concern leads to prosocial activities (i.e., empathic concern directly leads to the compliance of the request). However, empathic concern can be a moderator for helping. An individual’s degree of empathic concern is a moderating factor when a person decides to be or not to be a volunteer on campus. In this case, an interaction effect exists between an even-a-few-minutes-would-help strategy and empathic concern. Interaction is present when we find that the simple effects associated with one independent variable (presence or absence of an even-a-few-minutes-would-help strategy) are not the same at all levels of the other independent variable (high or low empathic concern) (Keppel, 1991). In the moderating model, compliance is expected in three of the four combinations (a combination of absence of an even-a-few-minutes-would-help strategy and high empathic concern, a combination of even-a-few-minutes-would-help strategy and low empathic concern, and a combination of even-a-few-minutes-would-help strategy and high empathic concern).

An absence of an even-a-few-minutes-would-help strategy will produce compliance when students have high empathic concern. When students are high in perspective taking, they are more likely to feel empathic concern, which will lead to

volunteering activities. Thus, students with high in empathic concern are more likely to volunteer despite of an absence of an even-a-few-minutes-would-help strategy.

An even-a-few-minutes-would-help strategy will also produce compliance when students have low empathic concern. Students with low empathic concern are less likely to engage in volunteering activities compared to students with high empathic concern. But, an even-a-few-minutes-would-help technique may maximize its effectiveness to students with low empathic concern. Stated differently, the even-a-few-minutes-would-help strategy is predicted to be relatively more effective on people who are less empathic concern because these are the people who need persuading.

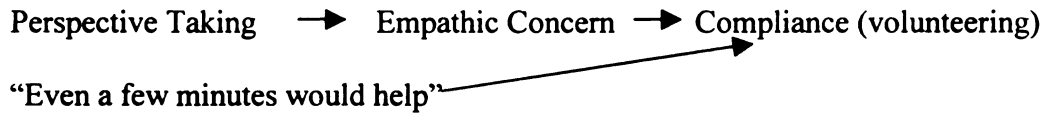
An even-a-few-minutes-would-help strategy will produce compliance when students have high empathic concern. However, the even-a-few-minutes-would-help strategy may produce minimal gains in the effectiveness to students with high empathic concern. Students with high empathic concern are more likely to engage in volunteering activities regardless of the sentence, “even a few minutes would help.” Thus, students are less likely to be influenced by the sentence, “even a few minutes would help.”

Finally, the absence of an even-a-few-minutes-would-help strategy and low empathic concern will produce no compliance. In this case, students with low perspective taking are less likely to feel empathic concern, and will be less likely to lead to volunteering activities. Since there is no the even-a-few-minutes-would-help strategy, students will not comply.

Table 1

Two Rival Models

1). The two-process model



	Even a few minutes would help		
Empathy		No	Yes
	Low	Low (-1)	Moderate (0)
	High	Moderate (0)	High (+1)

2). The moderator model

	Even a few minutes would help		
Empathic Concern		No	Yes
	Low	No compliance (-3)	Compliance (+1)
	High	Compliance (+1)	Compliance (+1)

Distinguishing the relationship between an even-a-few-minutes-would-help strategy and empathy into either the two-process model or the moderator model is crucial. Examining how perspective taking and empathic concern are related to an even-a-few-minutes-would-help strategy will help to understand better the effectiveness in the process of recruiting volunteers.

Method

Participants

One-hundred-seven people who appeared to be students and were walking on the university campus during school hours were approached. Of those, 63 people (58.9 %) listened to the solicitor's request. Of those, 55 agreed to the consent forms. The demographics of those who agreed to the consent forms were 22 males (40 %) and 33 females (60 %). Of those, 10 people (18.2 %) complied with the volunteering request and 45 people (81.8 %) did not comply. The participants ranged in age from 18 to 28 ($M = 21.64$, $SD = 2.26$).

In addition, data concerning perspective taking and empathic concern were collected in class as a comparison group. Forty students (14 males, 25 females, 1 sex not disclosed) agreed to fill in the questionnaires. Their ages ranged from 20 to 25 ($M = 21.68$, $SD = 1.19$).

Design

This experiment was a two (even-a-few-minutes-would-help and control) independent groups experiment with two measured independent variables (perspective taking and empathic concern). The agreement to volunteer or not was the dependent variable.

Procedure

Two female students' solicitors who were blind to the hypothesis in the study were trained before the experiment. Before approaching potential participants, a random assignment to the experimental or control condition was made. The solicitors then approached individuals who were walking on the university campus during school hours. A solicitor introduced herself and said:

I am recruiting volunteers for administrating orientation programs for new international students. Volunteers are involved in a range of activities, for example, picking students up from the airport, taking them to campus tours, coordinating orientations, or being at reception center to welcome new students and check them in. Would you be interested in being a volunteer for one of those activities?

In addition, for half of potential participants, the request included one more sentence, “Even a few minutes would help.”

When a participant refused the request, then the solicitor told him or her that the request was made as part of an experiment, and informed consent was requested. If consent was granted, the person was asked to fill out a questionnaire concerning measures of perspective taking, empathic concern, and demographics. If consent was refused, his or her response was discarded. If a participant complied with the request, the same procedures were followed, except that the participant was also given a volunteer form from the office for international students and scholars and information on volunteering.

Measurement

The questionnaire consisted of measures of perspective taking, empathic concern, and demographic questions. Perspective taking is measured with six Likert-type items with 5-point response formats. Similarly, empathic concern is assessed with six Likert-type items with 5-point response formats. Both scales were developed by Stiff et al. (1988). Stiff et al. (1988) provided evidence of acceptable reliability and unidimensionality. The alpha coefficients for perspective taking was .70. One empathic

concern item was deleted because it was negatively correlated with other items. Items were then summed as measures of their respective constructs. The alpha coefficients for empathic concern was .72. The distributions of both scale totals approximated normality. The demographic questions address respondent's age and sex.

Results

To ensure that the perspective taking and empathic concern scores of the experimental subjects were not unique to people who volunteered to listen to the request, data were collected both in the experiment and the classroom. For comparison for a perspective taking, 55 participants ($M = 3.54$, $SD = .74$) were observed in the experiment and 40 participants ($M = 3.56$, $SD = .55$) were collected in the classroom. For empathic concern, 55 participants ($M = 3.99$, $SD = .68$) were observed from the experiment and 40 participants ($M = 3.91$, $SD = .53$) were collected from the classroom. Scale totals were normally distributed in both groups. In independent sample t-tests, there was no significant differences for perspective taking, $t(93) = -0.28$, $p = ns$, nor empathic concern, $t(93) = 0.63$, $p = ns$, between the experiment and the classroom conditions. Potential age differences between the experiment and the classroom were also examined. The participants from the experiment ranged in age from 18 to 28 ($M = 21.64$, $SD = 2.26$). The ages from the classroom ranged from 20 to 25 ($M = 21.68$, $SD = 1.19$). In the two independent sample t-test, a significant age difference was not found between in the experiment and the classroom conditions, $t(93) = -0.09$, $p = ns$.

As an additional check, independent sample t-tests were conducted to test if perspective taking and empathic concern scores differed between the experiment and the control groups. Perspective taking did not differ significantly, $t(53) = 1.65$, $p = ns$.

Neither did empathic concern, $t(53) = 0.36$, $p = \text{ns}$. Therefore, the degrees of perspective taking and empathic concern did not differ between in the control and the even-a-few-minutes-would-help situations.

Hypothesis 1

The effectiveness of the sentence, “Even a few minutes would help,” was tested with a Chi Square test. Fifty-five participants consented. Of those, 29 people (52.7 %) heard the control question and 26 people (47.3 %) heard the even-a-few-minutes-would-help question. In the control group, 25 people (86.2 %) rejected the requests and 4 people (13.8 %) complied with the requests. In the even-a-few-minutes-would-help group, 20 people (76.9 %) rejected the requests and 6 people (23.1 %) complied with the requests. These data were presented in Table 1. Adding one sentence, “Even a few minutes would help” increased the compliance rate by 9.3 % compared to the request without that sentence. This increase, however, was not statistically significant, $\chi^2(1) = 0.79$, $p = \text{ns}$. Similarly, an independent sample t-test between the control group ($N = 29$, $M = .14$, $SD = .35$) and the even-a-few-minutes-would-help group ($N = 26$, $M = .23$, $SD = .43$) showed that they did not differ significantly, $t(53) = 0.88$, $p = \text{ns}$, one-tailed. Therefore, hypothesis 1 was not supported by the data, even though compliance rate were in the predicted direction.

Table 2

Percentage of Subjects Compliance in the Control and the Treatment Groups

	Comply		Total
	No	Yes	
Control	25(86.2 %)	4 (13.8 %)	29 (52.7 %)
Treatment	20 (76.9 %)	6 (23.1 %)	26 (47.3 %)
Total	45 (81.8 %)	10 (18.2 %)	55 (100 %)

A binary logistic regression was computed with perspective taking and empathic concern as independent variable and compliance as the dependent variable to initially test the two-process model. As anticipated, perspective taking did not contribute significantly to the prediction of compliance, $b = -0.07$, $p = \text{ns}$, but empathic concern did, $b = 2.74$, $p < .05$. Because a causal string was anticipated, correlations were also computed among compliance, perspective taking and empathic concern. Perspective taking and empathic concern were significantly correlated, $r(53) = .44$, $p < .01$, and empathic concern was also significantly correlated with compliance, $r(53) = .42$, $p < .01$. However, perspective taking was not significantly correlated with compliance, $r(53) = .17$, $p = \text{ns}$. These results were presented in Table 3. This pattern of correlations is consistent with perspective taking leading to empathic concern and empathic concern leading to compliance. The predicted indirect effect for perspective taking on compliance was .18, and was within sampling error of the observed effect. These data were consistent with perspective taking leading to empathic concern, which, in turn, lead to a greater probability of compliance.

Table 3

Correlations Among Perspective Taking, Empathic Concern and Compliance

	Perspective Taking	Empathic Concern	Comply
Perspective Taking	1.00		
Empathic Concern	.44**	1.00	
Comply	.17	.42**	1.00

Note: Correlation is significant at $p < .01$, $df = 53$.

Model Testing

In the two-process model, empathy and the even-a-few-minutes-would-help strategy are independent predictors of volunteering. The alternative model is the moderator model. An individual's degree of empathy is a moderating factor when a

person decides to be or not to be a volunteer on campus. In this case, an interaction effect exists between the even-a-few-minutes-would-help strategy and empathy is expected.

Correlations among compliance, perspective taking and empathic concern were computed in both the control and the even-a-few-minutes-would-help conditions. In the control situation, perspective taking was negatively correlated with compliance, $r = -.23$ $p = \text{ns}$, and empathic concern was positively correlated with compliance, $r = .34$, $p = \text{ns}$. Perspective taking was also positively correlated with empathic concern, $r = .26$, $p = \text{ns}$. None of these correlations, however, were statistically significant. These data were presented in Table 4.

Table 4
Correlations in Control Group

	Perspective Taking	Empathic Concern	Comply
Perspective Taking	1.00		
Empathic Concern	.26	1.00	
Comply	-.23	.34	1.00

Note: $df = 27$.

When the sentence “Even a few minutes would help” was added, perspective taking was significantly correlated with compliance, $r = .60$, $p < .01$. Empathic concern was also significantly correlated with compliance, $r = .48$, $p < .05$. Perspective taking was significantly correlated with empathic concern, $r = .65$, $p < .01$. These data were presented in Table 5.

Table 5

Correlations in Treatment Group

	Perspective Taking	Empathic Concern	Comply
Perspective Taking	1.00		
Empathic Concern	.65**	1.00	
Comply	.60**	.48*	1.00

Note: **Correlation is significant at $p < .01$, *correlation is significant at $p < .05$, $df = 24$.

In the control group, perspective taking and empathic concern were positively associated with each other, but perspective taking was negatively correlated with compliance, whereas empathic concern was positively correlated with compliance. None of these variables were significantly correlated with each other in the control group. On the other hand, perspective taking, empathic concern and compliance were significantly and positively associated with each other in the even-a-few-minutes-would-help situation. Especially, perspective taking was more strongly correlated with both empathic concern ($z = 1.78$, $p < .08$) and compliance ($z = 3.24$, $p < .01$) in the treatment group, although the difference for empathic concern was not statistically significant.

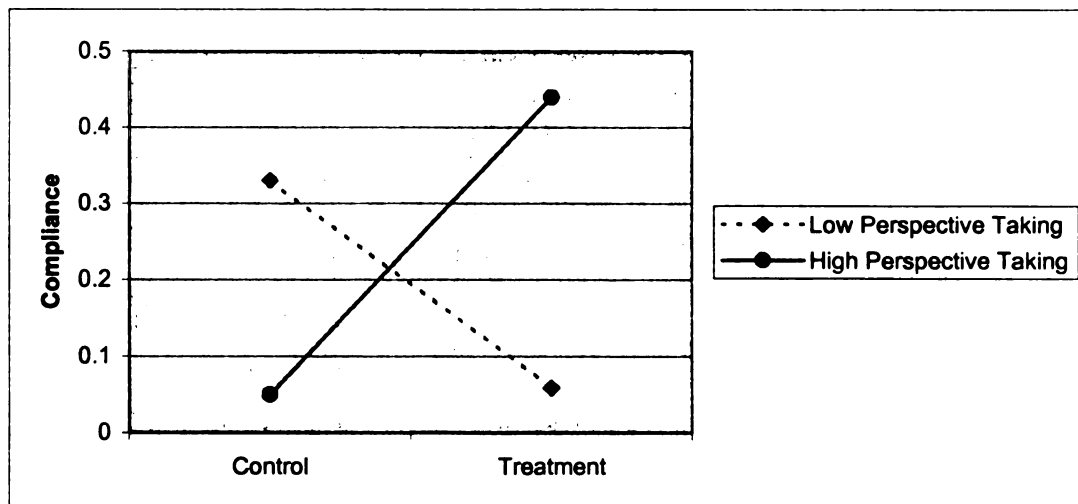
Separate binary logistic regressions were computed in both the control and the even-a-few-minutes-would-help conditions. In the control group, perspective taking did not contribute significantly to the prediction of compliance, $b = -1.79$, $p = \text{ns}$, however, empathic concern significantly contributed to the prediction of compliance, $b = 3.04$, $p < .05$. In the even-a-few-minutes-would-help condition, perspective taking again did not significantly contribute to the prediction of compliance, $b = 2.05$, $p = \text{ns}$, but neither did empathic concern, $b = 1.41$, $p = \text{ns}$. The slope for perspective taking was negative in the control group, but positive in the even-a-few-minutes-would-help condition. Therefore, perspective taking was negatively associated with the prediction of compliance and

empathic concern was positively associated with the prediction of compliance in the control condition. In the even-a-few-minutes-would-help condition, both perspective taking and empathic concern were positively associated with the prediction of compliance.

For a further analysis, perspective taking and empathic concern were recoded with a median split into high and low. The median of perspective taking was 3.6 and the median of empathic concern was 3.9. A 2 (request type) $\times$ 2 (perspective taking) $\times$ 2 (empathic concern) independent groups analysis of variance revealed an interaction between request type and perspective taking with compliance as the dependent variable, $F(1, 51) = 15.33, p < .001, \eta^2 = .18$. These are presented in the Figure 1.

Figure 1

An Interaction Between Request Type and Perspective Taking with Compliance as the Dependent Variable



Since an interaction was found in the experiment, the data are consistent with the moderator model. However, the moderator model is more complicated than anticipated. Perspective taking moderated the effects of the even-a-few-minutes-would-help strategy when a person decided to be or not to be a volunteer on campus. These data suggest that people who had low empathic concern did not comply with the request, whereas people who had high empathic concern complied with the request. However, people who had high perspective taking complied more when the even-a-few-minutes-would-help request was made than when that request was not made, whereas people who had low perspective taking complied more when the even-a-few-minutes-would-help request was absent than when the request was present. These were presented in the table 6.

Table 6

The New Model

Even a few minutes would help		
	No	Yes
Low Perspective Taking	High Compliance	Low Compliance
High Perspective Taking	Low Compliance	High Compliance

Note: People high in empathic concern are only considered in this case.

Volunteering Time

In the volunteering form, participants who agreed to volunteer were asked to fill out how much time they would volunteer. The question was, “how much time are you willing to volunteer?” Ten people agreed to volunteer out of 55 people who agreed to the consent forms. Of those, 4 people complied with the request in the control group, and 6 people in the even-a-few-minutes-would-help group complied. Hours were converted into minutes. The mean number of minutes ($N = 4$, $M = 195$ minutes per week, $SD =$

165.23) that people signed volunteer forms in the control group was greater, but not significantly so, than that of in the even-a-few-minutes-would-help group ($N = 6$, $M = 140$ minutes per week, $SD = 97.98$), $t(8) = -0.67$, $p = ns$. Correlations among perspective taking, empathic concern and time were computed. The correlation between perspective taking and time was not statistically significant, $r(8) = -.20$, $p = ns$. The correlation between empathic concern and time, $r(8) = .24$, $p = ns$, was also not significant.

Discussion

The purpose of my study was to test the effectiveness of a strategy for getting more university students involved in volunteering activities by adding the sentence, “even a few minutes would help.” To uncover the relationship between “even a few minutes would help” study and empathy, two rival models were proposed. In the two-process model, empathy and the-even-a-few-minutes-would-help condition are independent predictors of volunteering. The alternative model is the moderator model. In other words, an individual’s degree of empathy is a moderating factor when a person decides to be or not to be a volunteer on campus. In this case, an interaction effect exists between the even-a-few-minutes-would-help strategy and empathy. People who were walking on campus were asked to volunteer by confederates and also were asked to fill out the questionnaires concerning perspective taking and empathic concern.

The effectiveness of the sentence, “even a few minutes would help” was not statistically greater than the request absent of that sentence. However, the frequency was increased by 9.3 % when the sentence “even a few minutes would help” was added. The sample size might have been too small to produce statistical significance, because only 10 people complied out of 55 participants who agreed to listen to the request.

Stiff et al.'s model (1988) was consistent with the data. Perspective taking was only significantly correlated with empathic concern, and empathic concern was correlated with compliance. However, this model appeared to change depending on the request type. In the control group, none of the variables were significantly correlated with each other. In addition, perspective taking was negatively correlated with compliance. In a regression, however, empathic concern significantly predicted the compliance in the control group. In the even-a-few-minutes-would-help group, compliance, perspective taking, and empathic concern were all significantly and positively correlated with each other. Perspective taking was especially highly correlated with compliance of the request. Therefore, it might be assumed that a person who had high perspective taking was less likely to comply in the control condition. On the other hand, a person who had high perspective taking was more likely to comply in the even-a-few-minutes-would-help condition. In the control condition, people who had low perspective taking were more likely to comply with the request, whereas people who had high perspective taking were less likely to comply with the request. In the even-a-few-minutes-would-help condition, people who had low perspective taking were less likely to comply with the request, whereas people who had high perspective taking were more likely to comply with the request. Therefore, adding one sentence, "Even a few minutes would help" was effective for people who were high perspective taking.

As hypothesized, this study showed that the degree of empathic concern was the key to predict the effectiveness of the request. None of the people who were low in empathic concern complied with the request regardless of the request type or the degree of perspective taking. That is, people should have a feeling of caring for others at first.

Based on people who have a feeling of caring for others (high empathic concern), the sentence, “even a few minutes would help” derives different consequences depending on people’s degree of perspective taking.

The predicted moderator model was consistent with the data to the extent that an interaction occurred. When people have more ability to understand an other’s viewpoint (high perspective taking), the even-a-few-minutes-would-help strategy is more effective than the absence of this strategy. On the other hand, when people have little ability to understand an other’s viewpoint (low perspective taking), the even-a-few-minutes-would-help strategy is not effective compared to the absence of this strategy.

People who have low perspective taking and high empathic concern may need to hear the needs of volunteers directly rather than hearing a minimum request, because they may not understand the true meaning of a minimum request. A minimum request is made because a solicitor fears rejection by asking too much. In this case, the sentence, “even a few minutes would help,” may not be an effective message. Alternatively, people who have high perspective taking and high empathic concern may feel obligated to comply with the request when they hear a minimum request because they are more likely to understand solicitor’s feeling. In this case, the sentence, “even a few minutes would help,” can be an effective message.

The difference in reported volunteering time from those who agreed to sign the volunteering sheet cannot be explained by the differences of the degrees of perspective taking and empathic concern. Perspective taking was negatively correlated with reported volunteering time, but empathic concern was positively correlated with reported volunteering time. But neither of these correlations was statistically significant.

Reported volunteering time in the control group was larger than that in the treatment group. Thus, the result of this study was not consistent with the study of Cialdini and Schroeder (1976), in which the amount of money donated from the treatment group was bigger than that of control group.

In this experiment, the effectiveness of the sentence, “even a few minutes would help,” was not confirmed except for people high in perspective taking. The experiment did show that people’s degree of perspective taking and empathic concern played important roles when people heard the recruiting messages. Thus, it is more effective to target people who have high empathic concern than those who have low empathic concern. Furthermore, for people who have low perspective taking, it is more effective to send a direct message, “will you be a volunteer for the OISS?” than to ask a minimum request, “even a few minutes would help.” On the other hand, for people who have high perspective taking, it is more effective to ask a minimum request, “even a few minutes would help,” than to ask directly, “will you be a volunteer for the OISS?”

As an implication of this study, targeting people who have high empathic concern and high perspective taking is crucial. However, none of the studies specified the particular groups that were more likely to have high empathic concern. Likewise, no study articulated that the certain groups were more likely to have high perspective taking. Obviously, it would be efficient if we can target groups that tend to have higher empathic concern and perspective taking when recruiting volunteers on campus.

This study has a limitation. Because the sample size was small, no significant difference between in the control and the even-a-few-minutes-would-help groups was found, although the compliance rate was in the predicted direction. Therefore, future

research needs to be done with larger sample sizes to test the effectiveness of the sentence, “even a few minutes would help.”

Overall, the results showed that adding one sentence, “Even a few minutes would help” was more effective when people had high perspective taking and high empathic concern than when people had low perspective taking and high empathic concern. The experiment also showed that the even-a-few-minutes-would-help strategy and the degree of perspective taking had no impact on people who had low empathic concern. Thus, people who were low in empathic concern did not comply with the volunteering requests. Furthermore, replication of this study needs to be done to test whether people who have low empathic concern are not affected by any messages with regard to recruiting volunteers. Finally, the relationship among the degrees of perspective taking, empathic concern and compliance requires further investigation as well.

Appendix

The Questionnaire For Perspective Taking and Empathic Concern

Instructions: Please answer the following questions by using the scale below.

5 = *Strongly Agree*
4 = *Agree*

3 = *Not sure or
Neutral*

2 = *Disagree*
1 = *Strongly Disagree*

1. Before I criticize somebody, I try to imagine how I would feel in their place.

Strongly Agree 5 4 3 2 1 Strongly Disagree

2. If I'm sure I'm right about something, I don't waste much time listening to other people's arguments.

Strongly Agree 5 4 3 2 1 Strongly Disagree

3. I believe there are two sides to every question and I try to look at both of them.

Strongly Agree 5 4 3 2 1 Strongly Disagree

4. I sometimes find it difficult to see things from the other person's point of view.

Strongly Agree 5 4 3 2 1 Strongly Disagree

5. I try to look at everybody's side of a disagreement before I make a decision.

Strongly Agree 5 4 3 2 1 Strongly Disagree

6. When I am upset at someone, I usually try to put myself in his or her "shoes" for a while.

Strongly Agree 5 4 3 2 1 Strongly Disagree

7. When I see someone being taken advantage of, I feel kind of protective toward them.

Strongly Agree 5 4 3 2 1 Strongly Disagree

8. When I see someone being treated unfairly, I sometimes don't feel much pity for them.

Strongly Agree 5 4 3 2 1 Strongly Disagree

9. I often have tender, concerned feelings for people less fortunate than me.

Strongly Agree 5 4 3 2 1 Strongly Disagree

10. I would describe myself as a pretty soft-hearted person.

Strongly Agree 5 4 3 2 1 Strongly Disagree

11. Other people's misfortunes do not usually disturb me a great deal.

Strongly Agree 5 4 3 2 1 Strongly Disagree

12. I am often touched by the things that I see happen.

Strongly Agree 5 4 3 2 1 Strongly Disagree

I am (circle one) Male Female

My age is _____ (years)

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