

## HELPING PAPER

Ashvy Shah

### Introduction

When was the last time you helped someone? Maybe it was running errands for an elderly neighbor, or helping a kid cross the street. Do you remember if you did it because you genuinely wanted to help someone or was it because you were going to gain something out of it? My study is about whether or not people will help me to actually help me or if they want something in return. This is important to do a study on because helping people should be for genuine purposes and not to gain something for yourself. So in this study I want to see whether or not people will want to help me without gaining anything. The conceptual independent variable is monetary benefit and the dependent variable is when people will assist me with my work. My hypothesis is that if I offer money for people to help me, then they will be more likely to help me than voluntarily helping me, because they will gain monetary benefit. Based on the *social exchange theory: systematic review and future directions* study conducted by Rehan Ahmad, Muhammad Rafay Nawaz and others, we now know that the social exchange theory (SET) evolves based on different types of exchanges, some being through goodwill and some being through monetary benefit.

### Method

To understand the psychology of helping behavior in people, I plan to undertake this study. This will involve me going up to random people in the library and for every middle aged adult that walks in the library, I will be asking them to help me with my algebra II math assignment. For the first ten, I will just ask them for help and they can say yes or no. For the next ten, I will still ask for help but if someone says no, I will offer them \$20 to help me. My operational independent variable

is offering \$20 to people who refuse to help me and the dependent variable is people assisting me with one of my algebra II math assignment problems. To ensure internal validity, I made sure my subjects were all middle aged adults and not younger kids or senior citizens. This is to ensure that they are aware of algebra II topics. Another thing I did was making sure there was no selection bias based on gender and made sure that I had an equal number of male and female participants. Based on the result of the study, I felt that I was able to ensure internal validity throughout the study.

## Results

| <b>Study 1 - Voluntary</b> |            |           |
|----------------------------|------------|-----------|
| <b>Subjects*</b>           | <b>Yes</b> | <b>No</b> |
| Subject 1                  | I          |           |
| Subject 2                  |            | I         |
| Subject 3                  |            | I         |
| Subject 4                  |            | I         |
| Subject 5                  |            | I         |
| Subject 6                  | I          |           |
| Subject 7                  |            | I         |
| Subject 8                  |            | I         |
| Subject 9                  | I          |           |
| Subject 10                 |            | I         |
|                            |            |           |
| <b>% Yes</b>               | <b>30%</b> |           |
| <b>% No</b>                | <b>70%</b> |           |

| <b>Study 2 - Monetary benefit</b> |            |           |                     |
|-----------------------------------|------------|-----------|---------------------|
| <b>Subjects*</b>                  | <b>Yes</b> | <b>No</b> | <b>Yes w/ money</b> |
| Subject 11                        |            |           |                     |
| Subject 12                        |            |           |                     |
| Subject 13                        |            |           |                     |
| Subject 14                        |            |           |                     |
| Subject 15                        |            |           |                     |
| Subject 16                        |            |           |                     |
| Subject 17                        |            |           |                     |
| Subject 18                        |            |           |                     |
| Subject 19                        |            |           |                     |
| Subject 20                        |            |           |                     |
|                                   |            |           |                     |
| <b>% Yes</b>                      | <b>10%</b> |           |                     |
| <b>% No</b>                       | <b>50%</b> |           |                     |
| <b>% Yes w/ money</b>             | <b>40%</b> |           |                     |

Based on my experiment during study 1, the randomly picked 10 middle aged adults were asked to help me with my algebra II homework voluntarily. 30% of the participants agreed to help me voluntarily whereas the rest of them declined. In study 2, the randomly picked 10 middle aged adults were asked to help me with my algebra II work, but if they said no, I would offer them \$20 to help me. Half of the participants refused to help me even if I offered them money, 40% said no at first but then decided to help me after I offered the \$20 and only 10% of the participants helped me voluntarily.

These results supported my initial hypothesis. An alternative explanation for my results is that, after the participants said no and then I offered money, they would see that I am adamant to finish my work and get help. It is sad, but the reality of today's world is that everything revolves around money, but there were still people who were eager to help me. This study is to reflect how people should be more altruistic and not only do something for materialistic things such as money

and should focus more on helping each other. We as a society should follow the social responsibility norm where people should support each other irrespective of the cost.

If I were to do this study in a different way, I would take a broader sample size from multiple locations so I can capture more views. If I were to recommend a future study, I'll propose the same study that I did but would extend this study to be gender, race and income specific so I can see how people from these specific backgrounds will respond.

---

## Resources

Ahmad, R., Nawaz, M. R., Ishaq, M. I., Khan, M. M., & Ashraf, H. A. (2023, January 12). Social Exchange theory: Systematic review and Future Directions. *Frontiers in psychology*. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9878386/>

Staff. (n.d.). Social Psychology Helping Behavior. Sparknotes. <https://www.sparknotes.com/psychology/psych101/socialpsychology/section9/#:~:text=Reasons%20for%20Helping%20Others,norm%20also%20explains%20helping%20behavior.>