

The Power of Negative and Positive Communication

¹Nada Tawfik, ²Raniah J. Ajeeb, ³Saddiga Al-Ghalib, ⁴Nadin Murshid

Abstract--Humans feel more comfortable with a positive attitude while being approached. The positive attitude approach for a request participant will have higher self-esteem and higher interest in conducting the research. The aim of this research is to look at the reaction of participants towards a negative and positive attitude in communication. The experiment was run on faculties from a private university in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. The sample of faculties was selected randomly out of four departments assigned. The faculties selected included genders, different employment types and different collage departments. Observational method was used to observe the reaction of participants in a request to complete a happiness scale survey. Twenty participants were approached with a positive attitude and twenty one participants were approached with a negative attitude. The results showed significance towards the participants and attitude of communication used. The results are evidence to assure the importance of attitude in communication.

Keywords--Negative Communication; Positive Communication; Self-Esteem Negative Attitude; Positive Attitude

I. INTRODUCTION

Compliance refers to being familiar with a certain way of response or the ability of an individual to have knowledge about a specific way of communication for a response. Humans are social beings who strive to maintain social relationships with others [1]. Communication is a crucial aspect of managing those relationships. The focus is on the response given by the participants is acquired in the best way. Requests came in different varieties; it may range from political advertisements for politicians without necessarily asking for votes or door to door campaigns asking for donations [2]. The common assumption is, if an individual takes part in activities that most people agree with, it will directly make other people like the person. Gaining the approval of others helps individuals to build and maintain the relationships they have with others. One is also able to measure the level of closeness they have with others.

One can use impression management to help acquire compliance that may be used to influence responses to requests. This may include small details like remembering someone's name or commending a person for the nice appearance of clothing. People like to be noticed and this will make them feel good. According to a research conducted on the effects of flattery, it was found that most participants were motivated when the researcher ingratiated and had a positive view of the study [3, 4]. Raising the self-esteem of the person the researcher wishes to

¹College of Humanities, Effat University, An Nazlah Al Yamaniyyah, Jeddah 22332, Saudi Arabia. E-mail: natawfik@effatuniversity.edu.sa

²College of Humanities, Effat University, An Nazlah Al Yamaniyyah, Jeddah 22332, Saudi Arabia. E-mail: rjajeeb@effatuniversity.edu.sa

³College of Humanities, Effat University, An Nazlah Al Yamaniyyah, Jeddah 22332, Saudi Arabia. E-mail: salghalib@effatuniversity.edu.sa

⁴College of Humanities, Effat University, An Nazlah Al Yamaniyyah, Jeddah 22332, Saudi Arabia. E-mail: nmmurshid@effatuniversity.edu.sa

request will have an impact on the research. It also removes the doubts that subjects might have about the research, and therefore the participant will fully comply with the belief that the requests have true intentions [5].

Abiding by societal norms can help one to achieve interesting goals. Most societies use reciprocity as a social norm to help in relationships among individuals. Reciprocity is where individuals in a social setting share items or assist each other in different situations without necessarily asking for help [6, 7]. When a member is in a situation that needs assistance, people tend to provide assistance because they believe they will need the assistance at some point in the future [8]. Nurturing the relationships and affiliations that exist between people directly influences the response one gets from the research target [9]. This proves that there is a strong relationship existing between fondness and the extent of compliance, therefore, influencing the generation of response and avoiding apathy.

Some surveyors may greatly influence the ability of an individual to comply with the request for participation. As social beings, humans are surrounded by other people from whom they seek advice and different opinions. Information from others provides insight into the production and increasing the level of obedience one has towards different aspects of life [10]. Before engaging in a study, organizations need to take part in assessments, where the researcher uses experimental designs and different dependent measures to be able to better understand the target group and the nature of people the group is made up of. Active role playing method can also be used as an alternative, where the test group of people is requested to act and put themselves in the position of a would-be participant. They are then expected to genuinely demonstrate what they believe the participant will be saying. In one way, the people will be complying and giving responses to the requests put forward.

II. METHODOLOGY

Four researchers acted as communicators and surveyors with the sample population of faculties at a private university. The Independent variable was the surveyor's attitude in communication. The dependent variable was the response of participants to the attitude. The research hypotheses of this study are:

- 1) Faculty will have a statistically significant rejection to negative attitude communication.
- 2) Faculty will have a statistically significant acceptance to positive attitude communication.
- 3) There will be a statistically significant positive correlation between communication attitudes and departments.
- 4) Males will be more aggressive towards negative attitude communication.
- 5) Professors will be more aggressive towards negative attitude communication.

Participants/Sample Size

The sample was from a private university in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. The total number of employees in the university was 342 both male and females with different employment types. The sample of this study was a total of 41 from 342 (25 female/16 male), which translates to 12% of the university employees population. The sample of faculties used was selected using random procedure from four assigned departments.

Materials

The happiness scale was used as the survey tool in the experiment, which was made up of four questions. The participant was asked to record their gender and department to see the reliability of the scale. The participant answers were rated based on a scale of 1 (very happy) or 5 (not very happy). There was only an English version of the scale.

After acquiring the response of the participant, the researcher records the findings and observation by reporting four questions that include an anger scale out of ten for negative attitude researchers, and reasons of faculty doing the survey and not doing the survey for both negative and positive attitude researchers. The scale was valid and accurate to the assessment.

Procedure

The four researchers were divided into two surveyor groups; two researchers approached the faculty with a positive attitude, while the other two did so with a negative attitude. Each researcher was assigned a building, with random selection of university faculty genders and employment possessions. All selected participants were requested by the four surveyors to complete the happiness scales survey. The main purpose of this exponential research was to test participants' reaction to positive and negative attitude in communicating a simple survey request, not to answer the four happiness scale survey questions.

The generation of actual data to test the research hypothesis was performed by the four surveyors. After the first encounter with participants, the researcher surveyor steps outside the setting for three minutes, records her observation, then come back to the setting and inform the participant about the purpose of the experiment, and ask the participant about her or his feelings towards the experience and experiment.

Surveyor's observation of participants' response to both type of attitudes are recorded in the form of three possible responses (comply, declining to participate with or without reason, and rejection reaction). Declining to participate was reasoned by being busy and rejection ranged from declining without a reason, while participant's reaction was rated on a scale of 1 – 10 from very calm to very anger. The scale answered by the researched was valid it was measuring what should be measured. All responses to the request and observed reactions were methodologically recorded and logged into the SPSS statistical application.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section presents a tabularized statistical outcomes of the conducted on-campus experimental survey, where the selected sample were asked to respond to a request for completing the happiness scale survey presented by the four female students acting as surveyors communicated in positive and negative attitudes.

All responses to the request and observed reactions were logged into the SPSS statistical application. Table 1 shows all 41 validity of the various categories of university staff selected as participant in the experiment. Table 2 exhibits the almost equal division of participants among the two groups of surveyors, with one group performing the

opposite roles positive and negative attitude in communicating the request for completing the happiness scale survey, while Table 3 shows the gender division of sample population.

Table 1: Validity of the university staff

N	Group	Building	Gender	Employment type
Valid	41	41	41	41
Missing	0	0	0	0

Table 2: Distribution of participants among the two groups of surveyors

Valid	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Positive	20	48.8	48.8	48.8
Negative	21	51.2	51.2	100
Total	41	100	100	

Table 3: Gender distribution within the sample population

Valid	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	16	39	39	39
Female	25	61	61	100
Total	41	100	100	

Table 4 exhibits the distribution of the sample population. The table shows that out of the 41 participants, there were 22 university professors and 19 other department and faculty staff. The same negative or positive attitudes were performed by the surveyors, disregarding the actual rank or position of participant. Table 5 categories the sample population within university building and departments, other than that of social studies and psychology. The table shows that 10 of the participants were from the business building, 11 from the engineering building, 4 from the architecture building and 16 from the admission building. The results of the experiment indicated that no statistical significance between departments in their staff response to surveyors' negative or positive attitude in communicating the request for completing the happiness scale survey. Table 6 illustrates the statistical outcome of using negative and positive attitudes in communicating the request to complete the happiness scale survey. Table 6 shows statistical mean and standard deviation of the participants' response to negative and positive attitudes in communicating the request, categorized into four possible response variance: building or department within the university, position of employment, the observed reaction (1 – 10) rating from calm to angry, the reasoned compliance or declining to participate, and participant's gender.

Table 4: Distribution of the sample population between professors and other staff

Valid	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Prof	22	53.7	53.7	53.7
Staff	19	46.3	46.3	100
Total	41	100	100	

Table 5: Distribution of the sample population within university departments

Valid	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Business	10	24.4	24.4	24.4
Engineering	11	26.8	26.8	51.2
Arch	4	9.8	9.8	61
Admission	16	39	39	100
Total	41	100	100	

Table 6: Statistical outcome of using negative and positive communication of the request

Variables	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Building	Positive	20	2.3	1.38	0.309
	Negative	21	2.95	1.024	0.223
Employment type	Positive	20	1.45	0.51	0.114
	Negative	21	1.48	0.512	0.112
Anger Scale	Positive	20	1.3	0.801	0.179
	Negative	21	7.05	2.202	0.48
Reason for response	Positive	20	1.45	0.686	0.153
	Negative	21	4.14	0.793	0.173
Gender	Positive	20	1.6	0.503	0.112
	Negative	21	1.62	0.498	0.109

Table 7 illustrates the SPSS statistical outcome of data analysis. The results showed a high statistical variation among university staff approached by the surveyor group with positive attitude in complying with request to participate in the happiness scale survey, where 18 of the 20 approached staff completed the survey, 13 of which were influenced by surveyor positive attitude alone, and 5 were interested in the topic of happiness scale, as well as due to surveyor positive attitude. Only 2 university staff approached by the positive attitude surveyors declined to participate, and apologized for being very busy.

Table 7: SPSS statistical outcomes

Variables	Types	T-test for Equality of Means				
		95% confidence interval of the difference		Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
		Lower	Upper			
Building	Equal variances assumed	-1.417	0.113	0.092	-0.652	0.378
	Equal variances not assumed	-1.426	0.121	0.096	-0.652	0.381
Employment type	Equal variances assumed	-0.349	0.297	0.871	-0.026	0.16
	Equal variances not assumed	-0.349	0.297	0.871	-0.026	0.16
Anger Scale	Equal variances assumed	-6.805	-4.69	0	-5.748	0.523
	Equal variances not assumed	-6.803	-4.692	0	-5.748	0.513
Reason for response	Equal variances assumed	-3.162	-2.223	0	-2.693	0.232
	Equal variances not assumed	-3.161	-2.225	0	-2.693	0.231
Gender	Equal variances assumed	-0.335	0.297	0.904	-0.019	0.156
	Equal variances not assumed	-0.335	0.297	0.904	-0.019	0.156

On the other hand, the results of compliance were significantly different for the university staffs approached by the surveyor group that have used negative attitude in communicating the request participate in the survey. Of the 21 university staff approached, only 8 completed the survey but reacted or commented negatively on the bad communication, while another 8 rejected to participate, and 5 declined to participate in the survey for being busy. Neither gender, nor building or employment type shows statistical variance from the mean affecting the respond to negative and positive communication.

IV. OVERALL DISCUSSION

The survey outcomes revealed a high statistical significance of 62% across all categories of the university faculty (male and female faculties and department's staff, as well as teaching professors) participants responded with rejection or declined to comply student's request when communicated with a negative attitude. This compared to another high statistical significance of 90% across all categories of participants responded with compliance to student's request when communicated with a positive attitude.

The form of participants' rejection to respond when the request was communicated in negative attitude spanned between being too busy to respond the request for completing the happiness scale survey and asking the research surveyors students to leave the research setting (i.e., faculty office).

After looking at the results and observation of the response and reflecting on the literature review presented earlier in this report, including the social and psychological theories and experimental models, and previous research findings, the researchers found that communication skills and the way to approaching others is of significant

importance in the world of research, as it is for societies day to day lives. The researchers and surveyor's moods and attitudes will influence participant's behavior and compliance to respond to request to participate in surveys.

Looking at hypotheses 2 out of 5 of this study, the researchers expected to observe different correlation for employment types, gender, and departments, for the negative as well as the positive attitudes. However, the results have shown that these variables has no statistical significant in changing participants positive response to positive communication of the request and negative reaction when the request is communicated with negative attitude. Naturally everyone wants to be treated with respect and feel appreciated when being asked to comply with a request.

To ensure participant comfort and controlled research environment, sampled university staffs were approach at their on-campus offices. To avoided error in the results, descent appearance of surveyors was taken into consideration when approaching the potential participants of this research. Researches wore the same colored clothes and were aware of environmental factors that might have affected the results.

It should be noted that the negative approach to 21 participants used by the surveyors group that have communicated the request to complete the posed four questions was within the limit of norms behavior, and the researchers adhered to the university established Student's Approach to ensure compliance to appropriate surveys involving university faculty.

V. CONCLUSION

After looking at the results of this experiment and the theories of previous researchers, there is evidence to garnet the importance of positive communication and its strong effect on responding to a request. Students and researchers should take this mater seriously and into consideration while conducting their research because it can play a factor in the outcomes. Going back to the theory of authority and power mentioned in the literature review, the experimenters were students and the participants were university faculty. As the results show the technique of using positive communication was significant to the hypothesis regardless the employment type or gender differences.

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