

Why the Door-in-the-Face Technique Can Sometimes Backfire: A Construal-Level Account

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Abstract

We put forward a construal-level account to explain why the door-in-the-face (DITF) technique can sometimes backfire in the prosocial domain. We argue that after rejecting an initial prosocial request, more abstract construals promote a more coherent selfish version of the self in people's minds, which then fosters less compliance with subsequent requests. Across three experiments, results indicated that relative to an outright request, the DITF technique was less likely to get participants to comply with various prosocial requests (e.g., writing to sick children) when participants adopted more abstract construals. Theoretical and practical implications are discussed.

Keywords

construal level, DITF, compliance, persuasion, prosocial behavior

Introduction

In the United States and abroad, public officials routinely call for citizens to engage in more prosocial behavior (Scott, 2009; Watt, 2010). Such behavior would likely result in benefits at both the personal and the interpersonal level, as donating and volunteering are linked to better health (Pillemer, Fuller-Rowell, Reid, & Wells, 2010) as well as more positive evaluations from others (Bereczkei, Birkas, & Kerekes, 2007). One factor that may encourage prosocial behavior is the usage of compliance techniques (Cialdini, 1994; Cialdini & Sagarin, 2005). In particular, the door-in-the-face (DITF) technique, whereby a person makes an unreasonably large request before making a smaller, less objectionable target request (Cialdini et al., 1975), has received considerable attention in the persuasion literature (Dillard, Hunter, & Burgoon, 1984; Fern, Monroe, & Avila, 1986; O'Keefe & Hale, 1998). In the present research, we explore the circumstances under which the technique can actually backfire. Specifically, we examine whether adopting more abstract construals reduces the effectiveness of the DITF technique in the prosocial domain.

have found that relative to an outright request, the DITF technique elicits no significant differences in behavioral compliance (e.g., Burger, 1986, Experiment 7; Cialdini & Ascani, 1976; Foss & Dempsey, 1979; Katzev & Brownstein, 1989; Millar, 2002; Spiewak, 2002).¹ Some moderators have been proposed to an account for this lack of difference (e.g., using different requesters, introduction of a delay, for a full discussion see Feeley et al., 2012).

Of course, one might argue that even if the DITF technique does not consistently increase behavioral compliance, the technique is unlikely to hurt and, thus, should continue to be used. Unfortunately, the technique does carry some risk, as some studies have shown that relative to an outright request, the technique can elicit less behavioral compliance (Hayes, Dwyer, Greenwalt, & Coe, 1984; Martens, Kelly, & Diskin, 1996; Millar, 2001; Schwarzwald, Raz, & Zvibel, 1979). Consequently, identifying which factors decrease the efficacy of the technique would be beneficial, as avoiding such factors would minimize the risk. Next, we discuss why individuals' construal level should affect the efficacy of the DITF technique.

DITF Technique

Despite the widely presumed efficacy of the DITF technique, a recent meta-analysis has called into question the robustness of the technique for increasing *behavioral* compliance (Feeley, Anker, & Aloe, 2012). Indeed, despite the fact that the technique is useful for eliciting verbal compliance, several studies

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Construal Level

Construal-level theory recognizes that individuals mentally represent objects and events at different levels of construal (Trope & Liberman, 2010, 2012). Lower level, more concrete construals extract vivid, imageable features, capture superficial information, and are based on temporary properties. Higher level, more abstract construals, on the other hand, are less vivid, but extract the overarching meaning or gist, capture central information, and are based on stable, cross-situational properties. For example, more concrete construals of the self involve thinking about one's behavior within a particular context and thus involve thinking about the means one uses to execute behavior in a situation. Conversely, more abstract construals of the self involve thinking about one's behavior across multiple contexts and thus involve thinking about one's behavior in terms of global personality traits and values.

Construal Level and the DITF Technique

Several explanations have been put forward to account for the success of the DITF technique (e.g., reciprocity, perceptual contrast; for a full discussion see Feeley et al., 2012). However, only a few explanations have been offered to explain why it might backfire (e.g., Martens et al., 1996; Schwarzwald et al., 1979). For example, Martens et al. unexpectedly found a "boomerang" effect using the technique and speculated that asking participants for a large initial commitment that they were unwilling to make fostered unfavorable perceptions of the requestor. Similarly, Feeley and his colleagues (2012) speculated the technique might elicit a boomerang effect because extreme requests increase perceptions of manipulative intent or psychological reactance. We apply a construal-level framework to understand why the technique can sometimes decrease compliance in a prosocial context.

Consistent with self-perception theory (Bem, 1972) and the information availability hypothesis (Tybout, Sternthal, & Calder, 1983), we assume that rejecting an initial prosocial request provides a salient behavioral signal that the self is more proself than prosocial. We posit that when individuals form such a selfish representation of themselves which is more coherent, they will be more inclined to continue behaving in a manner that is consistent with that representation. Construal-level theory argues that as individuals think about themselves more abstractly, they will be more likely to bring to mind a coherent view of themselves and consequently act in a manner that is consistent with that viewpoint (Wakslak, 2012). For example, studies have shown that factors that are known to elicit more abstract construals foster greater consistency with one's values and traits (Eyal, Sagristano, Trope, Liberman, & Chaiken, 2009; Giacomantonio, De Dreu, Shalvi, Sligte, & Leder, 2010; Wakslak, Nussbaum, Liberman, & Trope, 2008). Presumably, such increased self-consistency happens because more abstract construals inherently involve thinking about aspects of the self that are applicable across multiple situations (Trope & Liberman, 2010, 2012).

Hypotheses

We hypothesize that because more abstract construals promote a more coherent representation of the self, the DITF technique relative to an outright request should elicit less compliance when participants adopt more abstract construals. That is, we expect the tendency to behave in a manner consistent with individuals' selfish perceptions of themselves after they decline an initial prosocial request should be greater when individuals adopt more abstract construals. This prediction is consistent with recent research by Conway and Peetz (2012) who found that when participants recalled immoral behavior more abstractly, they demonstrated more behavioral consistency (less subsequent prosocial behavior).

Regarding more concrete construals, a basic property of such construals is that they involve less of a focus on unobservable characteristics such as one's values, motives, or traits, and more of a focus on the steps or mechanics one uses to act (Trope & Liberman, 2010; Vallacher & Wegner, 1987). Consequently, more concrete construals lead individuals to see their actions in isolation from one another rather than seeing them as interconnected and driven by higher order constructs (Burgoon, Henderson, & Markman, 2013). This property of concrete construals even emerges at a perceptual level, as concrete construals lead individuals to visually process objects in a more isolated, fragmented manner (Förster, 2012; Smith & Trope, 2006). In a compliance setting, we posit that individuals who adopt more concrete construals are unlikely to draw a connection between how they respond to one request and how they respond to another request. Consequently, we hypothesize that the DITF technique relative to an outright request should elicit no difference in compliance when participants adopt more concrete construals. That is, more concrete construals should lead individuals to view their response to an initial prosocial request as having little bearing on how they respond to a subsequent prosocial request. Thus, more concrete construals should provide a risk-free context in which the DITF is unlikely to backfire.

Pilot Study

Before examining whether individuals' construal level impacts the efficacy of the DITF technique, we wanted to gather evidence that more abstract construals promote a more coherent selfish self-perception after individuals reject an initial prosocial request.

Participants

We recruited 101 participants online in the United States via Amazon's Turk system (41 females; $M_{\text{age}} = 30.48$, standard deviation [SD] = 11.41).

Manipulations

Construal Level. Thinking about why (vs. how) an action is carried out fosters thinking at a more abstract, superordinate level,

which carries over to subsequent judgments (Burgoon et al., 2013). Therefore, we presented participants with a manipulation based on this distinction (Alter, Oppenheimer, & Zemla, 2010). Specifically, we asked participants to describe three things that they wanted to accomplish. Then, we asked those in the concrete condition to elaborate on three ways that they could accomplish each thing. Conversely, we asked those in the abstract condition to elaborate on three reasons that they wanted to accomplish each thing.

Request. We highlighted an opportunity for prosocial behavior after participants completed the construal-level manipulation. Specifically, we told participants that society really needs help making sure there is an adequate supply of blood during emergencies. We then manipulated whether participants received an extreme request that was likely to be rejected or no request. We asked participants in the extreme request condition to host a blood drive in their neighborhood. As expected, most (98%) participants said no to this request; the one participant in the concrete condition who agreed to this request was excluded from our analyses. Rather than asking participants in the no request condition to host a blood drive, we simply suggested that they be on the lookout for opportunities to host one in their neighborhood.

Measures

In order to measure how selfish participants perceived themselves to be, we asked participants to respond to the following 7-point scales: “I am concerned about those less fortunate than myself” (reverse-scored), “I think it’s best to make one’s own interest a top priority before worrying about others,” “Being selfish is sometimes a necessity for me,” “Being more concerned about oneself rather than others is a rational and proper thing to do in life,” “I feel compassion toward people in need” (reverse-scored), and “I feel it is important to help others.” (reverse-scored), (1 = *not at all*, 4 = *somewhat*, 7 = *extremely*). We randomized the order of the items and averaged across them to create an index of *perceived selfishness* ($\alpha = .82$).

Results and Discussion

A 2 (construal level: concrete vs. abstract) \times 2 (request: extreme vs. none) analysis of variance on participants’ perceived selfishness revealed the expected Construal Level \times Request interaction, $F(1, 96) = 3.40, p = .07$. Comparisons between requests revealed that when participants adopted more abstract construals, those who were solicited with a request that they rejected (vs. no request) perceived themselves as more selfish ($M = 4.32, SD = 1.25, n = 22$ vs. $M = 3.38, SD = 1.05, n = 32, t(52) = 2.98, p = .004, d = .81$). Participants in the concrete condition failed to exhibit such perceived selfishness, as participants’ self-ratings did not significantly differ in the extreme and no request conditions ($M = 3.49, SD = 1.17, n = 28$ vs. $M = 3.40, SD = .98, n = 18, t(44) = .27, p = .79, d = .08$). Further, we found that for participants who were solicited with a request that they rejected, those in the abstract condition perceived

themselves as being more selfish than those in the concrete condition ($M = 4.32, SD = 1.25$ vs. $M = 3.49, SD = 1.17, t(48) = 2.41, p = .02, d = .76$). For participants who did not receive a request, those in the abstract condition perceived themselves similarly to those in the concrete condition ($M = 3.38, SD = 1.05$ vs. $M = 3.40, SD = .98, t(48) = .06, p = .95, d = .02$). Therefore, we feel confident that more abstract construals lead individuals to form a more coherent selfish perception of themselves after they reject an initial prosocial request.

Experiment I

In the present experiment, we examined whether more abstract (vs. concrete) thinking would decrease the efficacy of the DITF technique when soliciting creative ideas for attracting new blood donors.

Participants

We recruited 167 participants online in the United States via Amazon’s Turk system. We excluded four participants for previous participation in a related study, leaving us with a sample of 163 participants (93 females; $M_{\text{age}} = 30.77, SD = 10.46$).

Manipulations

Construal Level. We used the same manipulation that we used in our pilot study.

Request Type. We solicited prosocial behavior from our participants after they completed the construal-level manipulation. We presented participants in the DITF condition with the same extreme request that we used in our pilot study. As expected, most (92.0%) participants said no to this request; the 13 participants who agreed (6 in the concrete group and 7 in the abstract group) were excluded from our analyses. We then gave participants the following target request for idea generation:

Blood donors are always needed. Organizations like the Red Cross could really use more blood donors. In fact, they are always looking for creative ways to attract new donors. Would you be willing to spend just a few minutes on the next screen listing any ideas you have about how organizations might attract new donors? There are no right or wrong answers, as organizations like the Red Cross appreciate any new ideas.

Importantly, by informing participants that we would be collecting their ideas “on the next screen,” participants were aware that we would be measuring their behavior (as opposed to simply their verbal compliance). We only presented participants in the outright condition with the above-mentioned target request.

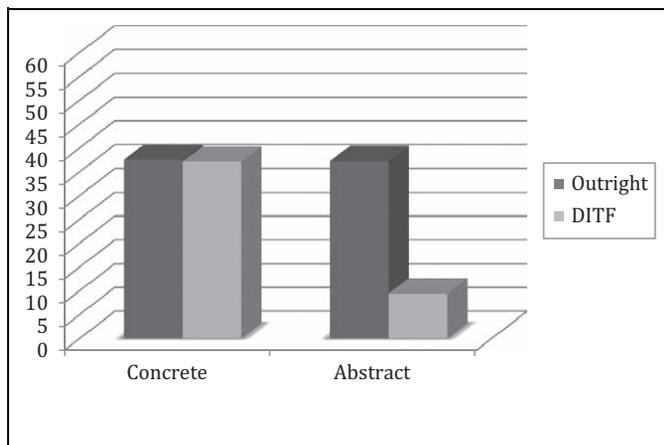


Figure 1. Percentage of participants who generated ideas for ways to recruit new blood donors as a function of construal level and request type (Experiment 1).

Measures

We asked participants whether they were willing to generate ideas (*no* coded 0; *yes* coded 1). All participants who answered *yes* typed in their ideas.

Results and Discussion

We analyzed the likelihood that participants would comply with the target request (i.e., generate ideas) using binary logistic regression, with construal level (concrete coded -1 ; abstract coded 1) and request type (outright coded -1 , DITF coded 1) entered as predictors. Results revealed the expected Construal Level \times Request Type interaction ($\beta = -.43$, $p = .04$, odds ratio [OR] = .65; see Figure 1). Comparisons between request types revealed that when participants adopted more abstract construals, those who were solicited via a DITF (vs. outright) request were less likely to generate ideas (9.4%, $n = 32$ vs. 37.2%, $n = 43$, $\beta = -1.75$, $p = .01$, OR = .18). Participants in the concrete condition failed to show such a boomerang effect, as compliance rates did not significantly differ between those in the DITF and outright request conditions (37.1%, $n = 35$ vs. 37.5%, $n = 40$, $\beta = -.02$, $p = .98$, OR = .99). Secondary analyses revealed that for participants who were solicited via a DITF request, those in the abstract (vs. concrete) condition were less likely to generate ideas ($\beta = -1.74$, $p = .01$, OR = .18). For participants solicited via an outright request, those in the abstract condition were just as likely to generate ideas as those in the concrete condition ($\beta = -.01$, $p = .98$, OR = .99).

Experiment 2

In this second experiment, to confirm the generalizability of our findings, we tested whether more abstract construals would decrease the efficacy of the DITF technique when soliciting another prosocial behavior (writing to sick children).

Participants

We recruited 225 participants (109 females; $M_{\text{age}} = 32.16$, $SD = 11.72$) online in the United States via Amazon's Turk system.

Manipulations

Construal Level. Thinking about categories (vs. exemplars) fosters thinking at a more abstract, superordinate level, which carries over to subsequent judgments (Burgoon et al., 2013). Therefore, we presented participants with a manipulation based on this distinction (Henderson, 2013). Specifically, we directed participants' attention in the concrete and abstract conditions to the examples and categories, respectively, of several different objects. For example, we presented participants with the object "soda" along with the options "a bottle of Mountain Dew" and "liquids." We asked participants in the concrete conditions, "Which of the following is an example of 'soda'?" Conversely, we asked participants in the abstract condition, "Which of the following is a group that 'soda' belongs to?"

Request Technique. After participants completed the construal-level manipulation, we informed them that many sick children suffer from severe loneliness because they remain hospitalized for months and that such children would benefit from receiving a caring message. We then asked participants in the DITF condition to list 200 people who we could contact and share information about ways to write to sick kids. All participants said no to this request. We then gave participants the following target request:

Are you willing to write a letter to four sick kids right now?

Importantly, by asking participants to write their letters "right now," participants were aware that we would be measuring their behavior (as opposed to simply their verbal compliance). We only presented participants in the outright request condition with the above-mentioned target request.

Measures

We asked participants whether they were willing to write four letters (*no* coded 0; *yes* coded 1). All but one participant who answered *yes* typed in their letters; the one participant who skipped the letters was coded as a *no*. We selected four children from the Hugs and Hope For Sick Children website and mailed all letters to them.

Results and Discussion

We analyzed the likelihood that participants would comply with the target request (i.e., write to sick kids) using binary logistic regression, with the same predictors that we used in the last experiment. Results revealed the expected Construal Level \times Request Type interaction ($\beta = -.80$, $p = .01$, OR = .45; see Figure 2). Comparisons between request types revealed

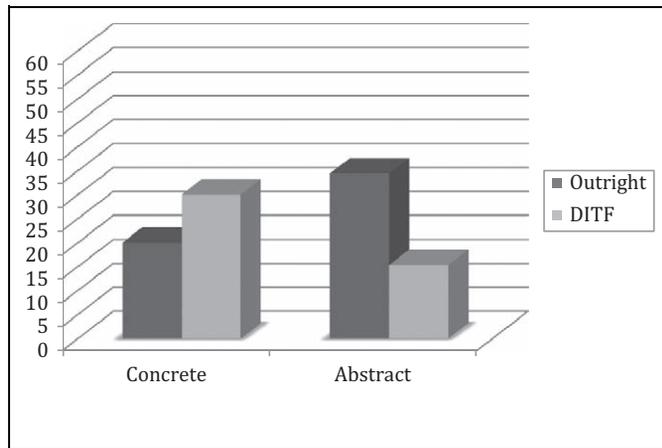


Figure 2. Percentage of participants who wrote letters to sick children as a function of construal level and request type (Experiment 2).

that when participants adopted more abstract construals, those who were solicited via a DITF (vs. outright) request were less likely to write the letters (15.3%, $n = 59$ vs. 34.4%, $n = 61$, $\beta = -1.07$, $p = .02$, $OR = .34$). Participants in the concrete condition failed to show such a boomerang effect, as compliance rates did not significantly differ between those in the DITF and outright request conditions (30.0%, $n = 60$ vs. 20.0%, $n = 45$, $\beta = .54$, $p = .25$, $OR = 1.71$). Secondary analyses revealed that for participants who were solicited via a DITF request, those in the abstract (vs. concrete) condition were less likely to write the letters, but the difference was only marginally significant ($\beta = -.87$, $p = .06$, $OR = .42$). For participants solicited via an outright request, those in the abstract condition were actually more likely to write the letters than those in the concrete condition, but the difference was not statistically significant. ($\beta = .74$, $p = .11$, $OR = 2.10$).

Experiment 3

In this final experiment, we tested whether more abstract construals would decrease the efficacy of the DITF technique when soliciting another prosocial behavior (monetary donations) in a field setting.

Participants

We recruited 217 participants on the University of Texas campus. We excluded two participants for walking away during the target request and five participants for not understanding our solicitation.

Manipulations

Construal Level. Leveraging the distinction between why versus how an action is carried out, we presented participants in the abstract condition with the following description of *why* Austin Pets Alive (a Texan nonprofit) is good for the Austin community:

Hi, I am a volunteer with Austin Pets Alive. I want to tell you WHY APA is an integral part of the Austin community. APA ensures that all Austin rescue organizations comply with the resolution from city council maintaining Austin as a no-kill city by taking the dogs and cats that are most likely to die at kill shelters. Why does APA do this? A no-kill city ensures that every animal in life is respected and cherished and each individual has a chance for a happy and fulfilling life with a loving family.

We presented participants in the concrete condition with the following description of *how* Austin Pets Alive is good for the Austin community:

Hi, I am a volunteer with Austin Pets Alive. I want to tell you HOW APA is an integral part of the Austin community. As the biggest Animal Rescue organization in the city, every year APA saves 3800 dogs and 2700 cats from dying at kill shelters. HOW does APA do this? They provide these animals with shelter, medical treatment, and behavioral interventions as long as it takes for them to get adopted into permanent homes. They also send 25% of surrendered animals back to their original homes by helping owners with behavioral problems.

Request Technique. After participants experienced the construal-level manipulation, we asked participants in the DITF condition to recruit 50 donors for Austin Pets Alive. As expected, most (84.9%) participants said no to this request; the 14 participants who agreed to this request (8 in the concrete group and 8 in the abstract group) were excluded from our analyses. We then presented participants with the following target request:

Okay. I know that's a lot to ask. Well, I'm also part of a team of students raising money for Austin Pets Alive through Petco's 5k9 program. Would you instead be willing to make a donation?

Participants in the outright condition were only presented with the target request.

Measures

We measured whether participants were prepared to give a donation (*no* coded 0; *yes* coded 1). If participants indicated that they were willing to donate, they expected the assistant would collect their money. However, once participants indicated that they were willing to make a donation, the assistant notified participants that they should instead go online to make their donation and then asked participants how much they were planning to donate online.

Results and Discussion

We analyzed the likelihood that participants would comply with the target request (i.e., make a donation) using the same predictors that we used in the previous experiments. Results

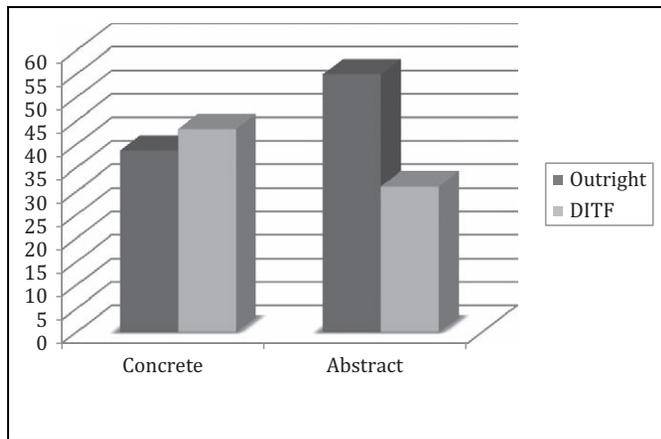


Figure 3. Percentage of participants who were prepared to make a donation as a function of construal level and request type (Experiment 3).

revealed the expected Construal Level \times Request Type interaction ($\beta = -.30, p = .05, OR = .74$; see Figure 3). Comparisons between request types revealed that when we led participants to adopt more abstract construals, those who were solicited via a DITF (vs. outright) request were less likely to make a donation (31.0%, $n = 42$ vs. 54.9%, $n = 51, \beta = -1.0, p = .02, OR = .37$). Participants in the concrete condition failed to show such a boomerang effect, as compliance rates did not significantly differ between those in the DITF and outright request conditions (43.2%, $n = 44$ vs. 38.6%, $n = 57, \beta = .19, p = .64, OR = 1.21$). Secondary analyses revealed that for participants who were solicited via a DITF request, those in the abstract (vs. concrete) condition were less likely to make a donation, although the difference was not statistically significant ($\beta = -.26, p = .24, OR = .77$). For participants solicited via an outright request, those in the abstract (vs. concrete) condition were actually more likely to make a donation, although the difference was not statistically significant ($\beta = .33, p = .09, OR = 1.39$).

General Discussion

Cognitive consistency serves as a core motive for human psychology (Gawronski & Strack, 2012). Indeed, individuals typically expect themselves to behave consistently across situations (McConnell, Rydell, & Liebold, 2002). Construal-level theory argues that individuals who adopt more abstract construals experience a particularly strong motivation to view the self in a consistent manner because abstraction promotes a more coherent self-representation (Wakslak et al., 2008). In the present research, we expected more abstract construals would reduce the efficacy of the DITF technique because abstraction would promote a more selfish self-perception after individuals rejected an initial prosocial request. Results across our pilot study and three experiments were in line with our predictions.

Regarding our secondary analyses, although the pattern of results in Experiments 2 and 3 were consistent with our hypotheses, both experiments failed to observe a significant difference

in compliance rates between the abstract and concrete conditions in the DITF condition. Note, however, that in Experiment 2, the expected pattern was practically significant ($p = .06$). Regarding Experiment 3, one possible explanation for the lack of significant difference in the DITF condition may have to do with the fact that the experiment was conducted in the field, which likely introduced noise (e.g., distractions, suspicion about the legitimacy of the requestor) that reduced our ability to detect reliable differences.

A second possible explanation for the lack of difference in the DITF condition may have to do with the effects of abstract construals on the weight that individuals place on their values. Prior research has shown that individuals differ in the extent to which they chronically endorse prosocial values (e.g., see Van Lange, Otten, Bruin, & Joireman, 1997), and participants in Experiments 2 and 3 may have simply been chronically more prosocially oriented. If this account is true, then more abstract construals might have increased the weight that individuals placed on their chronically activated prosocial values, which then prevented their rejection of the initial prosocial request from being integrated into their self. Indeed, this explanation would also explain why participants in the outright condition were somewhat more likely to comply when more abstract (vs. concrete) construals were induced. Future research should examine the interplay between chronically and situationally activated values and construal level. Subsequently, we discuss the implications of our findings and additional ideas for future research.

Implications

Social Influence. Although several studies have shown that the DITF technique works significantly better than outright requests for eliciting verbal compliance, recent meta-analytic findings have called into question the robustness of the technique for changing behavior (Feeley et al., 2012). Indeed, Feeley and his colleagues (2012) concluded, “Across 39 independent comparisons of actual behaviors associated with DITF requests, the DITF technique is not more successful, statistically speaking, than using a control request alone.” Our findings are certainly consistent with this observation, as none of our experiments found that participants were more likely to comply with a target request when the DITF technique was used instead of an outright request. Our findings suggest that relying on outright requests rather than the DITF technique might in fact be a less risky strategy for soliciting prosocial behavior, as we found only concrete individuals failed to show a boomerang effect when the DITF technique was employed.

Does this mean that we recommend that the DITF technique be completely abandoned? We are hesitant to make such a bold claim, given that individuals might comply with the initial large prosocial request. We do recommend that individuals avoid the DITF technique when situations are likely to trigger more abstract construals, including situations in which persuasive appeals are used that highlight large amounts of psychological distance from objects and events (Trope & Liberman,

2010) or utilize more abstract parts of speech (Semin & Fiedler, 1988).

Construal Level. The role that construal level plays in persuasion has been examined in previous research. For example, researchers have found that altering the construal level of a persuasive message affects its perceived veracity (Hansen & Wänke, 2010) and persuasiveness (Menegatti & Rubini, 2013). However, research has not examined whether individuals' construal level impacts the efficacy of more complex persuasion tactics (e.g., sequential request strategies). Therefore, our findings provide a valuable contribution to the construal-level literature by showing that even unrelated procedural shifts in individuals' construal level (i.e., "mindsets") can affect the efficacy of widely used persuasion tactics.

Future Directions

If our argument is correct that more abstract construals decrease the efficacy of the DITF technique because abstraction fosters a more coherent representation of the self, then more abstract construals should actually *increase* the efficacy of another commonly used compliance tactic—the foot-in-the-door (FITD) technique. The FITD is thought to work because compliance with an initial prosocial request provides a behavioral signal that the self is more prosocial than proselytizing (Freedman & Fraser, 1966). Individuals then feel compelled to behave in a manner consistent with this self-perception (Cialdini, Trost, & Newsom, 1995). We would expect more abstract construals to foster a more coherent prosocial representation of the self after individuals comply with an initial request and thus increased effectiveness of the FITD. We look forward to future research that tests this possibility.

Future research should also continue to examine the mechanism underlying construal-level effects on compliance techniques. In our pilot study, we demonstrated that construal level altered individuals' self-perception after they responded to an initial prosocial request. However, in order to avoid eliciting demand effects and to avoid inferring with our observed effects, we did not include such a measure in our subsequent experiments. Moreover, the effects in our pilot study were not very strong, potentially calling into question our explanation of construal levels' effect. One possible reason for the relatively modest changes in individuals' self-perceptions in our pilot may be that we did not rely on a pre-established measure of individuals' concern for self versus others. We look forward to future research that utilizes a more established measure (e.g., see Gerbasi & Prentice, 2013) when exploring the underlying process behind construal levels' effect on the efficacy of sequential-request techniques.

Coda

The present research provided a novel framework for understanding why a commonly used persuasion tactic can sometimes decrease behavioral compliance. Social psychology has been criticized for not studying behavior (Baumeister, Vohs, &

Funder, 2007; Hall, 2010). Indeed, several prominent researchers have called on social psychologists to shift their focus back to the study of behavior (e.g., King, 2013). The present research certainly answered this call, as we examined the consequences of construal level on prosocial behavior. We look forward to future research that continues to examine the impact of construal level across a variety of meaningful behaviors.

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Note

1. Although not significant, many of these studies found that compliance rates were actually lower in the DITF condition.

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