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The Importance of Relational Context in Interpersonal Influence:
Investigating the Role of Third Parties

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Abstract

It is well known that relationship concerns are major factors determining compliance with interpersonal influence attempts. This study expands this notion and presents a model of interpersonal influence that incorporates receivers' concerns both for their relationships with message sources and for their relationships with third parties affected by the advocated behavior. Specifically, $C = I_s * O_s + I_t * O_t$, where "C" denotes the likelihood of a receiver's compliance, "I" the subjective importance of the receiver's relationship with either source or third party, and "O" the anticipated relational outcome that complying with the message has for the receiver with either source or third party. An empirical test found strong evidence for the validity of this model. Results further suggested that anticipated changes in the relationship quality with requester and in relationship power with the third party are associated with greater compliance, whereas anticipated changes in the relationship quality with the third party and in the relationship power with the requester are associated with less compliance.

The insight that communication is not just about content but always also about the relationship between communicators (i.e., Watzlawick, Beavin, & Jackson, 1967) is a profound one not only for interpersonal communication in general, but for social influence and persuasion in particular. Unlike most other areas of interpersonal communication where the influence of the interpersonal relationship between communicators on the phenomena under investigation is relatively well understood, however, the importance interpersonal relationships play in the process of persuasion has not been fully appreciated in research and theory of persuasion. That is, research on the relational factors affecting interpersonal influence has essentially been limited to the source-receiver relationship and ignored receivers' other social relationships that affect their compliance with influence messages. In this paper, I will attempt to remedy this situation and argue that relationships play a more central role in the persuasion process than is suggested by current models of persuasion. I will further argue that receivers' acceptance of, and compliance with, persuasive messages is always also a function of two different relationships: first, receivers' perceived relationship with the message source, and second, receivers' perceived relationship with third parties that are affected by the attitudes or behaviors advocated in the message. This discussion will lead me to conclude that because of their central role in the process of persuasion, relationships between receivers and third parties cannot safely be ignored by persons interested in either creating persuasive messages or in studying their effectiveness.

Two Interpersonal Relationships in Interpersonal Influence Situations

A discussion of the role that interpersonal relationships play for persuasion and social influence must begin by recognizing that influence situations usually involve two distinct relationships for message receivers and that both relationships differentially influence receivers' compliance with the message. The first and most obvious relationship in a persuasion context is

that between message sources and receivers. As the discussion below will show, this relationship has received considerable attention in persuasion research and its influence on persuasion is comparably well understood (e.g., Boster & Stiff, 1984; Miller, Boster, Roloff, & Seibold, 1977; Miller, 1982). The second and less obvious relationship is the relationship between message receivers and third parties affected by the attitudes or behaviors advocated in the persuasive message. This second type of relationship has received only minimal attention in past research. Consequently, the extent to which compliance is affected by it is less well understood. To illuminate the influence this second relationship has on persuasion is the main goal of this paper. Nonetheless, a discussion of the first relationship is also at order and follows next.

The Relationship Between Message Source and Receiver

The prominence of cognitive theories in the field of persuasion notwithstanding, receivers do not only comply with messages for solely rational reasons (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). The idea that message receivers comply with persuasion attempts because of their relationships with the message sources has been formalized in communication theories at least as early as Aristotle. His concept of ethos addresses the qualities of a speaker, whether expressed in the message or being external to it, that make receivers' compliance with a message more likely. More recently, these reasons for why receivers comply with speakers have been conceptualized as source attributes such as source power (i.e., French & Raven, 1960; Milgram, 1963, 1974; Kelman, 1958, 1961) and source credibility (i.e., Birnbaum & Stegner, 1979; Hovland, Janis, & Kelley, 1953). Although often treated as attributes of the source that are independent from the source's relationship with the audience, a more careful reading reveals that these source attributes actually are better understood to be attributes of the specific relationship between source and receiver. Given traditional rhetoric's focus on speakers rather than on receivers, it is understandable that

these qualities historically were attributed to the message source rather than to the relationship between source and receiver, where most researchers would locate them today (i.e., Donohue & Kolt, 1992). This misattribution has had the unfortunate consequence that it directed researchers' attention away from the relationship and led them to overemphasize the source's role in the persuasion process rather than recognizing that whatever attributes a source has is a direct outcome of the relationship between source and receiver.

How much these attributes traditionally thought of as pertaining primarily to the source actually pertain to the relationship between source and receiver can be demonstrated by an investigation of the concept of source credibility. Although on the surface monolithic, source credibility is a more complex construct that consists at least of the two components of trustworthiness and expertise (Hovland, Janis, & Kelley, 1953). Both aspects of source credibility, however, illuminate two different dimensions of the relationship between message source and receiver. Trustworthiness is operationalized in such concepts as the source's goodwill and honesty (i.e., McCorskey, 1966), concepts that depend on the receivers' perception that the source is acting in a way that protects receivers' interests. Clearly, for receivers to have such a perception they need to make assumptions about the source's motivation in regard to them, which in turn requires them to make assumptions about their relationship with the source. If the relationship is such that receivers can expect the source to act with the receivers' best interest and welfare in mind, than they will perceive the source to be trustworthy. Conversely, if the relationship between source and receiver is such that the receiver cannot assume that the source will act with the receiver's best interest and welfare in mind, than the receiver will perceive the source as not trustworthy. That is, in final analysis, receivers' perceptions of a source's trustworthiness are ultimately receivers' judgments about their relationship with the source and

not their judgments about some attribute of the source that exists independently from their relationships with them.

This observation is accurate even though operationalizations of trustworthiness often encompass ostensibly personal attributes of the source, such as reputation and character (i.e., McCorskey, 1966). Receivers' perceptions of a source's reputation and character, however, also depend largely on the extent to which receivers perceive such personal attributes as accurate descriptions of the source in the context of their personal relationships with them. That is, receivers' perceptions of the source's personal attributes will always depend on the relationship between source and receivers and will never reflect judgments that are made without regard for that relationship. Ultimately then, even factors such as character and reputation that ostensibly are source specific attributes, upon closer examination turn out to be in fact dependent on receivers' perceptions of their relationship with the source.

The same conclusion can be reached for the other aspect of source credibility, expertise. Although on the surface even more obviously a source characteristic that should be independent of the relationship between source and receiver, upon closer examination expertise proves to be as relational as trustworthiness. After all, expertise must always be relational, because expertise is a function of the difference in knowledge between the source and the receiver. A large differential results in relatively more expertise of the source, a small differential in relatively less expertise of the source. If there is no knowledge differential or if the receiver is more knowledgeable than the source, the source has no expertise relative to the receiver. Thus, much like trustworthiness, source expertise is fully dependent of the relationship between source and receiver. It is not an independent attribute of the source.

Credibility, however, is not the only source attribute that is a direct function of the relationship between source and receiver. The relationship between interpersonal power and relationships also is one of functional dependency, not only because interpersonal power presupposes a relationship, but also because power directly results from the relationship. Power in interpersonal relationships is most generally defined as the ability to get a person to do something the person otherwise would not have done. There are several theories on the sources of power. The most influential is still probably the one by French and Raven (1960), who proposed that persons are influenced by others who can give rewards (reward power), inflict punishments (coercive power), that occupy socially defined positions of authority (legitimate power), are socially desirable (referent power), or that have specific knowledge that receivers lack (expert power). Of these five, Kaplan (1987, 1989) identified all but expert power as types of power associated with normative influence. That is, as a type of power that is the direct result of receivers' desire to maintain their relationship with the source. Without that desire and without the relationship, these sources of power would not exist. Assuming Kaplan's assertion is valid, and considering the above argument that identified expertise as dependent on the relationship between source and receiver as well, it is obviously impossible to regard power as anything but an attribute of the relationship between source and receiver.

As the preceding discussion has shown, source credibility and power are two aspects that are of great importance to message compliance that can only be fully understood when taking the relationship between source and receiver into consideration. These are, however, only two of several aspects of the relationship between source and receiver that are important for the persuasion process. They have been used as examples because they are often conceptualized as source attributes rather than as relationship attributes, but that should not be interpreted to mean

that they are the only relevant relational factors in persuasion. Relational resource goals (Dillard, 1990; Dillard, Segrin & Harden, 1989) are another way to conceptualize the impact that the relationship between source and receiver has on persuasion and interpersonal influence.

Relational resource goals refer to a communicator's desire to maintain valuable relational assets, such as emotional support or attention. Although originally discussed in the context of message generation rather than in the context of message compliance, relational resource goals show that an analysis of the process of interpersonal influence is incomplete without regard for the relational goals and concerns that at least partially motivate the behavior of communicators. Certainly, there are more ways than those discussed here in which the relationships between sources and receivers play a role for persuasion. My intent here, however, was to show how a focus on relationship informs our thinking of persuasion, not to summarize all research on this topic. Thus, I now turn my attention to the relationship between message receiver and the targets of the attitudes or behaviors advocated in persuasive messages.

The Relationship Between Receiver and Third Parties Affected by the Advocated Attitude or Behavior

The second interpersonal relationship that is of consequence for social influence and persuasion is the relationship between receivers and the targets of the attitude or behavior advocated in a persuasive message. For example, an adolescent's compliance with her parents' request to use condoms will not be only influenced by her relationship to her parents, but also by her relationship with her partner. This important relationship has generally been neglected in persuasion research, although it is quite obvious that receivers should be at least as much influenced by their relationships with the targets of the behavior that results from the persuasion as by their relationships with the advocates of the behavior. The logic behind this claim is quite

clear. If, as Kaplan (1987, 1989) argues, receivers' motivation to maintain their relationships with message sources is one reason for why receivers comply with messages, receivers' motivation to maintain their relationships with the targets of the advocated behaviors should also be a factor in complying with the message. To use Dillard's (1990) terminology, receivers should be motivated by their relational resource goals in respect to their relationship with the targets. Especially because in many cases, receivers' relationships with the targets of their behavior is equally if not more affected by receivers' compliance with the message than receivers' relationships with message sources.

One reason for why in past research the relationships between receivers and targets may have been ignored in favor of the relationships between sources and receivers is that in many cases, both relationships are with the same person. For example, in many interpersonal influence situations (such as a request for help) the message source is also the target of the behavior. Thus, for message receivers, the relational outcomes of complying with the request are identical to the relational outcomes of enacting the advocated behavior. Compliance will be perceived as positive by the message source, both because of the intrinsic positive value the compliance has for the relationship and because the source benefits from the receivers' behavior. Conversely, noncompliance will usually have negative relational outcomes, both because of the intrinsic negative value of noncompliance and because the source is not able to benefit from the receiver's behavior. Thus, from a pragmatic standpoint, there is no obvious reason to distinguish between the relational outcomes of compliance and the relational outcomes of the enacted behavior, as they are often undistinguishable.

In situations where the source is not the only party affected by the advocated behavior, however, the different relationships that concern a receiver when considering a persuasive

message become immediately apparent. The relational outcomes of compliance with the request and of enacting the advocated behavior are potentially quite different. Similar to the case where source and target are identical, receivers' compliance with the request will usually strengthen their relationships with the message sources. Unlike the previous case, however, the implications of enacting the advocated behavior for the relationship between the receiver and a third party are not necessarily positive, but depend on how the third party is evaluating the behavior. In cases where such an evaluation is negative or the receiver expects it to be negative, receivers will anticipate negative outcomes for their relationships with the third party. That is, in such cases receivers' compliance will be influenced by their anticipation of two conflicting relational outcomes: A positive outcome for their relationship with the source, and a negative outcome for their relationship with the third party. These conflicting outcomes occur not only when receivers comply with the message, but in cases of their non-compliance as well. Only that in such cases receivers would anticipate negative outcomes for their relationships with the sources, and positive or neutral outcomes for their relationship with the third party.

The obvious question that arises from the description of these conflicting relational outcomes is which relational outcomes have a greater impact on receivers' compliance. To determine this a priori is difficult, because at least two factors play a role in determining the relative influence of the expected relational outcomes on receivers' message compliance. The first factor is the relative importance of the two different relationships to the receivers. Clearly, one would expect that the relative influence anticipated relational outcomes have is a direct function of the relative importance of the relationships for the receiver. If receivers consider their relationships with the sources as more important than their relationship with the targets, their behavior should be more influenced by their desire to maintain their relationships with the

sources and comply with the requests. Conversely, if receivers consider their relationships with the third party to be relatively more important, they should be more influenced by the perceived impact their behavior has on their relationships with the targets.

The second factor that influences receivers' compliance with a message is the quality (i.e., perceived value) of the relational outcomes that receivers anticipate in their relationships with sources and targets. In regard to receivers' relationships with sources, compliant behaviors that are more beneficial to the message sources should be higher evaluated. Similarly, behaviors that are easy for the receivers to perform should be less valuable for their relationships with the sources than behaviors that are more difficult to perform or otherwise are more costly, independent of the potential benefit for the source. This idea was eloquently expressed in the bible story of the poor widow, whose gift of a few pennies was valued more highly by Jesus than a rich merchant's gift of a gold coin.

In regard to receivers' relationships with targets, behaviors advocated in messages vary in how much they are beneficial or costly to third parties. If third parties also benefit from the advocated behavior, their relationships with the receivers should also benefit. If the advocated behavior is costly for the third parties, however, their relationships with receivers should suffer. How much the relationships benefit or suffer should depend on the extent to which the third parties either benefit or are disadvantaged. For example, a receiver might be more likely to comply with a request to tell on a friend who was late for class than to tell on a friend who cheated on an exam because she would anticipate more negative relational consequences in the latter case, assuming the repercussions for the friend would be more severe.

Although it is true that in most cases of interpersonal influence where source and affected third parties are not identical the relational outcomes of compliance and enacting the behavior

are diametrically opposed, that is not necessarily always the case. There are instances where third parties benefit from the advocated behaviors. For example, if a teacher asks a student to help another student with an assignment, the third party also benefits from the receiver's compliance. Thus, receivers in such situations should be motivated to help the other student based on the positive relational outcomes for both their relationships. As far as the relationships' influence on the receiver's compliance is concerned, this case is therefore similar to the case where source and target are identical, because both relationships provide reason for the receiver to comply with the request.

To determine the relative influence of the two relationships involved in persuasion, one has therefore to take both the perceived importance of the relationships and the perceived relational outcomes of compliance into consideration. More formally, $C_m = I_s * O_s + I_t * O_t$, where "C_m" denotes the likelihood of a receiver's compliance with the message, "I" the subjective importance of the receiver's relationship with either source or third party, and "O" the anticipated relational outcome that complying with the message has for the receiver with either source or third party.

Even in cases where a message source is the only persons affected by the behavior, potentially a lot can be gained from a separate analysis of two different relational roles played by receivers. The reason is that compliance in itself should be less important to a relationship than the enacted behavior. After all, requests are usually not an end in themselves that are made for the sole purpose to experience compliance, but are primarily made to obtain specific outcomes, which usually result from the receivers engaging in the requested behavior. In other words, the relational outcomes that result from the receiver enacting the advocated message (i.e., the receiver-target aspect of the relationship) are usually more important for the relationship than the

relational outcomes resulting from the receiver complying with the request (i.e., the receiver-source aspect of the relationship).

As this discussion has shown, a receiver's compliance with a persuasive message is potentially influenced by the relational outcomes of compliance for two distinct relationships: receivers' relationships with the sources of persuasive messages, and receivers' relationships with third parties that are affected by the advocated behavior. The influences these two relationships have on receivers are independent from one another and range from being identical to diametrically opposed. Of these two relationships, the influence that is exerted by the relationship between source and receiver is relatively well understood and discussed, often under the headings of source credibility and source power. The influence exerted by the relationship between receiver and target, however, is less well researched and therefore ripe for investigation.

Specifically, the hypothesis tested in this study was that compliance with an interpersonal influence message is predicted by receivers' perceptions of the quality of their relationship with source, by receivers' perceptions of the quality of their relationship with an affected third party, and by receivers' perceptions of how their compliance would affect their relationships with the source and with the third party.

Method

Participants and Procedure

Participants were 320 undergraduate students enrolled in various speech communication courses at a large Midwestern University. Of the students, 123 were male (38.4%) and 197 were female (61.6%); 262 students were Caucasian (81.9%), 31 were Asian (9.7%), 12 were African-American (3.8%), 4 were Hispanic (1.3%), and 9 students were of undetermined ethnic background (2.8%). Their mean age was 21.1 years (range: 16-59) and they have been enrolled

in college for an average of 2.86 years (range: 1-5). Participants were recruited during class time to come to the laboratory during a two-week period to complete a questionnaire outside of class-time in exchange for extra credit in their courses.

Instruments

The questionnaire consisted of 165 questions that constituted several measures regarding relationships and interpersonal influence, not all of which are relevant to the study reported here. The first instrument respondents were asked to complete dealt with three of their interpersonal relationships (dating partner, close friend, & acquaintance) and was designed to measure respondents' relationship satisfaction and the underlying cognitive schemas of the relationships. Of relevance for this study are the scales measuring relationship satisfaction because they were used to operationalize relationship importance. The scales consisted of five Likert-type items with 7-point scales anchored by "not at all true for this relationship" and "absolutely true for this relationship" (e.g., "this relationship is important to me" and "all in all, this is a very satisfying relationship"). These scales proved very reliable, with Cronbach's alpha for dating partners of .91, for close friends of .86, and for acquaintance of .86.

The second part of the questionnaire contained the most relevant set of questions for this study. Participants were given descriptions of two social influence situations in which complying with an interpersonal request would compromise their relationships with a third party. The situations involved two of the three relationships participants were asked about in the first part (i.e., with dating partners, friends, or acquaintances), such that the requester in the first situation would be the affected third party in the second situation and vice versa. While the roles for requester and affected third party were reversed, the two situations were different. In all, three different scenarios were devised for this study (see Table 1), resulting in 3 X 3 design

(relationship pair = dating partner/friend, dating partner/acquaintance, & friend/acquaintance; by situation = apartment/class notes, apartment/party, & class notes/party).

Whether participants would have complied with the request was measured by their responses to five semantic differentials about how they evaluated complying with the request (e.g., good-bad, wise-foolish). Reliability of this measure was high, with a Cronbach's alpha of .94. Participants' assessment of how complying with the request would have impacted their respective relationships with the requester and the third party was measured by seven Likert type questions, using the same 7-point scale employed in part one of the questionnaire. Five items operationalized the perceived change in the quality of the relationship as a consequence of performing the requested behavior (e.g. "complying would have increased the quality of our relationship) and two items operationalized perceived changes in the power relationship as a consequence of performing the requested behavior (e.g. "complying would have increased my power in our relationship). These measures also proved very reliable, with the measure of changes in the relationship quality having a Cronbach's alphas of .93, and the measure of power changes having a Cronbach's alpha of .82. The third and final part of the questionnaire contained an unrelated measure of collectivism and individualism, and a demographic section.

Results

The first test conducted was an ANOVA to check whether the manipulations of the factors had the desired effects on participants' compliance with the requests. Results showed overall significant main effects for requester ($F [2,629] = 3.66, p = .026, \eta^2 = .01$) and for request situation ($F [2,629] = 29.05, p < .001, \eta^2 = .09$). The interaction, however, was not statistically significant ($F [4,629] = 0.78, p = .86$). Comparisons of the marginal means revealed that the main effect for requester was due to participants complying more with requests by dating

partners and friends than with requests of acquaintances. Similarly, the main effect for request scenario was due to participants greater rate of compliance for the party request as compared to the requests for apartment and class-notes (see Table 2).

These results suggested the appropriateness of reducing to 3 x 3 factorial design to a 2 x 2 design by combining the friend and the dating partner for the requester factor and by combining the apartment and the class-notes request for the scenario factor. The resulting 2 (intimate/non-intimate relationship) by 2 (high/low cost request) ANOVA of compliance showed statistically significant main effects for intimacy ($F [1,634] = 7.57, p = .006, \eta^2 = .01$) and cost ($F [1,634] = 47.47, p < .001, \eta^2 = .07$), but not for the interaction ($F [1,634] = 0.64, p = .42$).

These results are consistent with the theoretical model proposed earlier in this paper (i.e., $C_m = I_s * O_s + I_t * O_t$), but not unequivocally so. Whereas relationship types constituted an intuitively valid operationalization of relationship quality (i.e., friendships and dating relationships are more important and valuable than relationships with acquaintances), the different types of requests are a more ambiguous operationalization of relational outcomes for the participants. First, although likely, it is not entirely certain that the requester's gain is proportional to the third party's loss as implied in the factorial design. Second, while it is reasonable to assume that participants' relationships with the third party are more strained by letting another person use their apartment than by bringing an uninvited guest to a party, it is also possible that there is something inherent in the request themselves that made participants less compliant. For example, many participants might have considered it unethical to lend someone another person's class-notes, regardless of whom they belong to. Ultimately then, the results of the ANOVA were encouraging, but a better test of the theoretical model was clearly desirable.

Fortunately, such a test was available by using linear regression analysis to predict compliance from participants' evaluations of the quality of their relationships with requesters and third parties and their estimates how compliance would change the quality and power in these relationships. Because the zero-order correlations of compliance and the measures of change in relationship quality and power were in opposite directions, rather than combining these two measures into one index of relationship change, both measures were retained in the analysis. To keep as closely as possible to the theoretical model, both measures were multiplied by the general measures for relationship quality. As expected, the overall regression was statistically significant and explained about 20% of the variance in compliance ($F [4,634] = 37.87, p < .001, R = .44$). All four of the individual variables also had statistically significant coefficients (see Table 3). The model that combined both measures of change for each relationship (i.e., quality & power) had a significantly worse fit, further buttressing the decision to use relationship quality and relationship power as separate factors.

Across all three request scenarios, the regression showed that the best predictor of compliance was the anticipation that compliance would increase the relationship quality with the requester. The other three variables had about equally strong coefficients that showed that increased power in the relationship with the requester was associated with less compliance, perceived increases in the relationship with the third party also led to less compliance, and perceived increases in power with the third party led to more compliance.

To test whether the different requests had unique demand characteristics, the regression was repeated for each request scenario individually (see Table 3). Results showed that coefficients were very similar, suggesting the validity of the model for various request situations. The fact that for some scenarios not all coefficients reached statistical significance is probably a

function of power, given that coefficients of similar size were significant for the larger sample. The one notable difference between the three scenarios was observed in the regression for the apartment request, where anticipated changes in power with the requester did not influence compliance. Instead, a greater importance was given to the relationship quality with the third party, presumably because trusting the receiver with the apartment was perceived by receivers to entail greater relationship significance.

Discussion

The results of this study have shown convincingly that in interpersonal influence situations, receivers of an interpersonal request are motivated by considerations regarding the relational outcomes with both the requester and a potential third party that also is affected by the compliance behavior. In regard to perceived changes in relational quality, the findings were as expected. Perceptions that compliance would increase the relationship quality with the requester led to increased compliance, whereas for third parties perceptions of increased relational impact lead to decreased compliance. For relational power, the reverse was observed. The more receivers perceived that compliance would imbalance power in their relationship with the requester, the less likely they were to comply. Conversely, in their relationships with third parties, increased perceptions of a change in relational power led to increased compliance, suggesting that benefiting one party at the expense of another is perceived as a means to increase power in the relationship with the underbenefited party.

Overall, the results strongly suggest the validity of the $C_m = I_s * O_s + I_t * O_t$ model outlined at the beginning of this paper and further suggest that perceived relationship outcomes have to be conceptualized and measures in regard to both relationship quality and relationship power, because these two factors have opposed effects on compliance. In and by themselves

these findings are clearly not earth shattering, because any sensible person would expect that receivers of interpersonal influence messages would consider the impact of their compliance on their relationships with both the source and with potentially affected third parties. Considering that this thinking thus far has found little or no consideration in persuasion and interpersonal influence research, however, these results should provide an urgently needed impetus for persuasion researchers to look beyond the narrow confines of the source-receiver relationship when considering how relationship concerns influence interpersonal compliance. Interpersonal influence rarely occurs in a social vacuum, and as the results of this study have shown, receivers of interpersonal influence messages are aware of how their compliance might impact their relationships with third parties and their compliance behavior is affected by these considerations.

This study investigated how concerns for different relationships influence compliance with interpersonal influence messages by creating situations in which relational outcomes were diametrically opposed. That is, where compliance would enhance receivers' relationships with message sources, but at a cost for their relationships with affected third parties. The theoretical model, however, should apply to all situations, including those where relational outcomes are not in direct conflict with one another. It is possible that this configuration served to highlight receivers' relationships with third parties that under less conflicting situations are paid less attention to. To claim that relational concerns with third parties are always influential on compliance would require to test the model under a range of potential outcome configurations. Other avenues for future research include an investigation of the factors that determine how receivers of interpersonal influence messages assess the various relational outcomes of compliance, especially those that differentiate between relationship quality and power. Such factors might include the types of relationships receivers have with sources and third parties, social rules and

norms that govern compliance, and the awareness that source and third party have of one another.

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Table 1. Request Scenarios Used in the Study.**Scenario #1: Apartment**

Your close friend went on a three week trip to New Zealand. (S)he asked you to keep an eye on their apartment in the meantime, water the flowers and get the mail. On the way to their place you run into your acquaintance, who just returned from studying abroad in Italy for a year. (S)he is looking for a place to stay for a couple of weeks until (s)he finds an apartment. After you mentioned that you are house sitting your close friend's apartment, your acquaintance asks you whether (s)he could stay at your close friend's apartment for a couple of weeks. (S)he's really broke after the trip abroad, so this would help tremendously.

Scenario #2: Party

Your close friend is having a party Friday night and has invited you, but explicitly told you not to bring any guests, because their last party got too large and went out of hand. On the way to the party you meet your dating partner. After (s)he hears where you are going, your dating partner tells you that (s)he has no plans for the evening thus far and asks you to bring her/him along.

Scenario #3: Class Notes.

Your dating partner, who is a conscientious note taker, has forgotten her/his class notes at your house and you have agreed to bring them to school to give to your dating partner the next day. That afternoon, your acquaintance, who is in the same course as your dating partner but who skipped many classes and therefore has only incomplete class notes is visiting you. After seeing the notes, your acquaintance asks whether (s)he could borrow the notes to study for an exam in the course in two days.

Note. Depending on condition, relationship partners and their ordering varied. All together, 18 different combinations were used (3 scenarios * 3 requesters * 2 third parties).

Table 2. Mean Compliance and Standard Deviations by Requester and Request Situation.

Requester	Request Situations			
	Party	Class-Notes	Apartment	All Requests
Dating Partner	4.29 (.18)	3.15 (.16)	3.05 (.21)	3.50 _a (.11)
Friend	4.03 (.19)	3.14 (.19)	3.04 (.20)	3.40 (.12)
Acquaintance	3.66 (.18)	2.90 (.17)	2.75 (.19)	3.11 _b (.11)
All Requesters	3.99 _a (.11)	3.06 _a (.10)	2.95 _b (.11)	3.33 (.06)

Note. Marginal means with the same sub-script are different at $p < 0.05$ (Bonferroni). Higher scores indicate more compliance (Range: 1-7).

Table 3. Compliance as a Function of Perceived Changes in Relationship Quality and Power with Requester and Third Party.

Request Scenario	Requester		Third-Party		Equation			
	Quality	Power	Quality	Power	<u>R</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>p</u> .
All Requests	.44***	-.17***	-.18***	.17***	.44	37.87	4/632	.001
Apartment	.48***	-.05	-.25***	.21*	.43	11.38	4/207	.001
Class-Notes	.40***	-.22**	-.11	.15*	.44	12.50	4/206	.001
Party	.41***	-.17**	-.13	.11	.43	12.15	4/209	.001

Note. Coefficients for individual variables are standardized β ; *** = $p < .001$, ** = $p < .01$, * = $p < .05$.