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Mark R. McMinn

George Fox University, mmcminn@georgefox.edu

Scot A. Bolsinger

Stephanie A. Celley

Stephen L. Benson

Cathie J. Lebold

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PACIFISM AND EMOTIONAL AROUSAL

MARK R. McMINN
SCOT A. BOLSINGER
STEPHANIE A. CELLEY
STEPHEN L. BENSON
CATHIE J. LEBOLD
George Fox College

At the age of eighteen, American youths must make an ideological decision about war. Although most probably perceive selective service registration as little more than a rite of passage, others struggle with the ethics of military service and options of conscientious objection.

What can be said of youths who decide, for moral and religious reasons, that they will not be involved in warfare? To date, no descriptive studies have been reported that address this question. Previous studies on pacifism focus on the likelihood of pacifism in eliciting cooperation (Gruder & Duslak, 1973; Marwell & Schmitt, 1973) or aggression (Borden, 1975; Borden & Taylor, 1976; Fitz, Kimble, & Heidenfelder, 1979; Fitz, Marwit, & Gerstenzang, 1983; Kimble, Fitz, Onorad, 1977; Mander & Gaebelein, 1977). Moreover, these studies have typically recruited participants who were assigned pacifistic strategies rather than recruiting those with pre-existing pacifistic inclinations.

Clearly, there are many reasons why young people would prefer not to face combat. Some see the issue as sex-related. One of our college student respondents wrote, "I do not believe in women being drafted . . . I will be married and will not want to be away from my husband." Others identify personal fears or aversions. One respondent wrote, "I am a diabetic and would be more of a hindrance than a help." Another respondent wrote, "I would feel like it was my duty to serve, but I wouldn't want to because I would be scared." Others identify ideological or religious reasons for avoiding war. For example, "I do not agree with war as a resolution to international conflict. I would con-

sider it a responsibility to look for peaceful resolution." Another wrote, "I am a pacifist based upon my Christian beliefs."

We were interested in knowing if those with pacifistic inclinations were less aroused by frustration and less aggressive in an interpersonal situation than those willing to join military service. In other words, do their political stances reflect their personal psychological styles?

Based on previous studies showing a connection between frustration and aggression (Berkowitz, 1978), we hypothesized that frustrated participants would be more aroused and aggressive than non-frustrated participants. Second, we hypothesized that those with pacifistic inclinations would be less aroused and aggressive than those without pacifistic inclinations. We had no previous studies on which to base this second hypothesis but saw it as ideologically consistent with pacifism.

METHOD

Participants

Participants were 55 female and 17 male students enrolled in undergraduate courses at a private liberal arts college. The sample ranged in age from 18 to 35. All participants were offered extra credit for their participation and signed a voluntary consent form before participating. Since the participants came from a Christian college, most participants were professing Christians. Most participants scored in the high ranges on the Shepherd Scale (Basset, Sadler, Kobischen, Skiff, Merrill, Atwater, Livermore, 1981), a measure of Christian commitment. Only one participant scored below 100, near the mean obtained for an explicitly non-Christian sample by Basset et al. (1981).

Procedure

Several days before or after the experimental procedure, participants were asked to complete a brief questionnaire about their willingness to be involved in war. No connection between the pacifism questionnaire and the experimental procedure was articulated. During debriefing, it seemed clear that participants had not themselves made the connection. The question posed was, "In the year 1990 the United States enters World War III. Both men and women are being drafted for military service. Would you serve in the armed forces?" In

addition to answering yes or no, participants were asked to explain their response. Those who would refuse to be involved in military service or combat for moral reasons were considered to be pacifistic. Two independent raters evaluated responses, resulting in an inter-rater reliability of .90. The few responses not evoking agreement between judges were discussed among the authors and consensus reached. Because the college used has a strong Quaker tradition, there was a near equal split between pacifists and non-pacifists. No significant differences between pacifists and non-pacifists were found on the Shepherd Scale, a measure of Christian commitment.

Some in our survey refused to have any connection with military service because of their moral and religious convictions. Others, with equal moral conviction, stated they would serve the military in a non-combat role, such as a helping profession. For the purpose of this study, both groups were considered pacifists. Those objecting to war on the basis of sex-related issues, personal discomfort, or health limitations were not considered pacifists.

The laboratory procedure consisted of a brief computer task and some pencil-and-paper measures. Four upper-division students, two male and two female, were used as experimenters. Experimenters read from a script prepared in advance in order to standardize the experimental procedure. To arouse some performance anxiety, participants were asked if they had ever been given an IQ test. If so, they were asked to reveal the score. If not, they were asked to estimate their intellectual ability as below average, average, above average, or superior. Participants were then given ten solvable three-letter anagrams on the computer. Before leaving the room, the experimenter explained that the participant would be given some more anagrams to solve. The second group of anagrams were longer, five letters instead of three.

Half of the participants, selected at random by the computer, were given mostly unsolvable anagrams and music from a popular television game show was played as the participants tried to concentrate. During debriefing, participants in this condition described the situation as frustrating. The other participants comprised the control group and were given solvable anagrams with no music to impede concentration.

Measures

After the computer task, participants completed several pencil-and-paper measures including a short form of the Interpersonal Behavior Survey—IBS (Mauger & Adkinson, 1980), the Shepherd Scale (Basset

et al., 1981), the State-Trait Personality Inventory—STPI (Spielberger, 1980), the Humanistic Values Inventory (McMinn & Foster, 1988), and an evaluation of the student experimenter. Since aggression has been defined as “a behavior aimed at causing harm or pain” (Aranson, 1984, p. 183), the evaluation questionnaire was designed to be a dependent variable indicating the participants’ willingness to be aggressive toward the student experimenter. On the top of the evaluation, in large letters, participants were informed that their ratings would affect the experimenter’s grade in the project. They then rated the experimenter on clarity of instructions given, helpfulness, pleasantness, effectiveness, and efficiency. Ratings were given on a 5-point Likert-type scale with 1 being the best rating and 5 being the worst.

RESULTS

Our first hypothesis was that the experimental condition (unsolvable anagrams with irritating music) would evoke frustration and increase the likelihood of aggressive responses on the experimenter evaluation form. As expected, participants in the experimental group reported a more anxious state on the STPI than those in the control group ($t[70] = 2.369$; $p < .05$). Moreover, the experimental condition also evoked a more angry state on the STPI ($t[70] = 2.325$; $p < .05$). There were no significant differences between experimental groups on trait anxiety or trait anger. Finally, those participants exposed to frustration were more aggressive on two of the five experimenter evaluation items. Experimenters were rated more negatively by participants in the experimental condition on item #1, “the experimenter gave instructions clearly and understandably” ($t[70] = 2.039$; $p < .05$) and on item #5, “the experimenter used time efficiently” ($t[70] = 2.098$; $p < .05$). Other items on the evaluation form did not differ significantly between experimental and control groups.

Our second hypothesis was that pacifists would respond with less anxiety, anger, and aggressiveness than non-pacifists. Interestingly, our hypothesis was not only disconfirmed, there was a significant relationship in the opposite direction. Pacifists reported a greater anxiety state ($t[60] = 1.988$; $p = .05$), a greater anger state ($t[60] = 1.981$; $p = .05$), and more trait anxiety ($t[60] = 2.479$; $p < .05$) than non-pacifists. They were significantly more aggressive toward experimenters on all five evaluation items than non-pacifists ($t[60]$ values ranged from 2.344 to 3.305; $p < .05$).

We were also interested in knowing if pacifism and frustration interacted to better predict anxiety, anger, and aggressiveness. Scores on the STPI state anxiety scale are presented in Table 1. There was a main effect for pacifism, with pacifists reporting greater anxiety than non-pacifists ($F[1,58] = 4.35; p < .05$). There was a trend toward the experimental condition evoking greater anxiety, but it did not reach statistical significance ($F[1,58] = 2.8; p < .10$). There was no interaction effect.

Similarly, pacifists reported a more angry state than nonpacifists as shown in Table 2. Again, there was no main effect for experimental condition and no interaction effect. Similarly, pacifists rated experimenters more aggressively on each evaluation, but there were no main effects for experimental condition or interaction effects. Table 3 shows the sum of the five ratings with high scores being most negative. Participants were led to believe that negative ratings would adversely affect the experimenters' grades.

Another area of interest was whether the sex of the experimenter would affect the reported emotions and aggressiveness of the participants. Experimenter sex made no difference on aggressiveness or anger but did have an effect on state anxiety. As indicated in Table 4, there was a significant interaction effect with male participants reporting less anxiety with male experimenters and female participants reporting less anxiety with female experimenters ($F[1,68] = 4.465; p < .05$). There were no main effects.

An unpredicted finding of interest is that those who reported having taken an IQ test previously (and were therefore asked their IQ score) were more aggressive in the final ratings of the experimenter than those who had never taken an IQ test. This was a consistent finding for all five evaluation questions and for the sum of the evaluation form ($t[70] = 3.306; p < .01$).

No differences were found among participants based on conventional Christian commitment or attitudes toward humanism. Similarly, no differences among groups were found on the IBS, a measure of trait aggressiveness and assertiveness.

DISCUSSION

In some ways, the results confirm our hypotheses. Participants exposed to unsolvable anagrams and irritating music were more anxious and angry than control participants. This main effect was obscured in the two-way ANOVAs reported in Tables 1 and 2, pre-

TABLE 1

State Anxiety Scores After Experimental Procedure

| | Pacifists | Non-pacifists |
|--------------|------------------|------------------|
| Experimental | 24.2 (n = 16) | 19.6 (n = 16) |
| Control | 18.9 (n = 13) | 17.7 (n = 17) |

Main effect with pacifists reporting more anxiety than non-pacifists ($F[1,58] = 4.35; p < .05$).

TABLE 2

State Anger Scores After Experimental Procedure

| | Pacifists | Non-pacifists |
|--------------|------------------|------------------|
| Experimental | 16.3 (n = 16) | 11.4 (n = 16) |
| Control | 13.2 (n = 13) | 12.1 (n = 17) |

Main effect with pacifists reporting more anger than non-pacifists ($F[1,58] = 5.84; p < .05$).

TABLE 3

Sum of Five Experimenter Evaluation Ratings

| | Pacifists | Non-pacifists |
|--------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Experimental | 9.7 (n = 16) | 6.0 (n = 16) |
| Control | 7.6 (n = 13) | 6.4 (n = 17) |

Main effect with pacifists rating more aggressively than non-pacifists ($F[1,58] = 8.15; p < .01$).

TABLE 4

State Anxiety by Sex of Participant and Experimenter

| | Male Participant | Female Participant |
|---------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Male Experimenter | 15.1 (n = 9) | 21.3 (n = 28) |
| Female Experimenter | 21.9 (n = 8) | 20.2 (n = 27) |

Interaction effect with same-sex pairings evoking less reported anxiety than cross-sex pairings ($F[1,68] = 4.465; p < .05$).

sumably because of the small number of participants per cell. Also as expected, frustrated participants were more willing to be aggressive in experimenter ratings, believing poor ratings would negatively affect experimenters' grades. This was not true on all five evaluation items, but was true on items regarding clarity of instructions and efficient use of time. Perhaps frustrated participants projected their poor performance onto the experimenters by assuming inadequate instructions were given. It is important to note that experimenters were blind to the experimental condition since the computer randomly assigned the condition *after* the experimenter had given the final instructions to participants. Moreover, all experimenters used a standardized script in giving instructions and answering questions. Thus, it seems unlikely that those with unsolvable anagrams actually did receive less adequate instructions. Frustrated participants may have rated experimenters as less time efficient because they had a heightened sense of time pressure. Because the anagrams were unsolvable and each had a time limit, frustrated participants may have developed feelings of time pressure. Alternatively, participants may have rated experimenters lower on these two items because of a serial position effect. The items rated more negatively by frustrated participants were first and last on the rating form.

In other ways, the results were surprising. Those with moral and/or religious pacifistic convictions were more aroused by the experiment than non-pacifists. Furthermore, they were more aggressive in negatively rating student experimenters. Several possible explanations can be offered. First, it might be that pacifists were more forthright in their evaluation of student experimenters. Since most respondents tended to be very positive in their evaluations, it seems possible that

pacifists were simply more honest. One argument against this interpretation is that pacifists and non-pacifists were equally assertive on the IBS with the mean for both groups falling at the 50th percentile using college student norms. Consistent with this, both groups scored similarly on the denial scale. Thus, it seems unlikely that pacifists were merely more frank in evaluating experimenters.

Second, it could be that pacifists of this age tend to be more oppositional than non-pacifists. They have selected a position contrary to prevailing standards which may reflect a tendency to non-conformity and oppositionality. This oppositional quality might cause them to rate others more negatively.

Third, pacifists possibly develop an ideological stance to compensate for heightened personal emotions. Pacifists reported both greater trait and state anxiety than non-pacifists. Perhaps their moral convictions are, in part, a compensatory response to personal impulses.

Two other factors also contributed to anxiety in the study. First, those asked about IQ scores presumably felt offended or violated in some way and were therefore more aggressive in rating the experimenters. Second, the finding that same-sexed pairing resulted in lower state anxiety suggests a lower need for forming positive impressions with same-sexed pairing. The anxiety seemed higher with opposite-sexed pairings, but no effect on anger or aggression was seen.

Religious commitment and ideological humanistic values did not predict outcome on any dependent variable. In a stepwise regression equation with evaluation aggressiveness as the dependent variable, the best two predictors were whether they admitted taking an IQ test in the past and pacifist status, together predicting 33% of the variance. Religious commitment and humanistic values did not contribute to the equation. Also, pacifism did not correlate meaningfully with religious commitment, indicating the two are ideologically independent in our participants.

This is an exploratory study in an area with no existing research. Clearly, it raises as many questions as it answers. Future studies will need to look at more specific questions and measures of aggression. Two difficulties with the present study should be noted. First, pacifism is more relevant to males than females because the former must register for selective service. The present study had many more female participants than male. Second, there was an artifactual problem with the random assignment to experimental conditions made by the computer. Students in the experimental condition were significantly older than students in the control condition. This was caused by the order students were seen in the laboratory (older students

came a day after students recruited from an introductory course) and the random assignments made by the computer (more of the earlier students were assigned to the control condition). Although there is no apparent contamination of the data because of this anomaly, the results will ultimately need replication.

In summary, the results are intriguing because it appears possible that pacifists, at least young pacifists with religious commitment, may tend to be more readily aroused emotionally than non-pacifists. Their ideological commitments may reflect an oppositional nature or a compensatory response to their tendencies toward anger and anxiety.

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