

Persuasion Versus Manipulation

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ABSTRACT

This report aims to identify the ethical foundations of persuasion and manipulation strategies in interpersonal communication. The study addresses the research query: which methodology (persuasion or manipulation) is more effective in accomplishing tasks and gaining support, and what distinguishes the tactics involved in each strategy, other than a person's intentions? The analysis employs a mixed-method approach that incorporates interviews, experimental social experiments, single-blind data collection, and a combination of quantitative and qualitative data analysis. The investigation findings demonstrate that the influence of persuasion vs manipulation on participants' beliefs and attitudes toward capital punishment varies significantly. Although individuals subjected to manipulation were unable to recognize it and were convinced that they were being persuaded, their general opinion on the death sentence did not alter. Those who were exposed to persuasion, on the other hand, were able to recognize it, but their levels of confidence in their beliefs altered, albeit to a lesser proportion than those who were subjected to manipulation. The findings show that whereas persuasion is more readily identifiable and less effective, manipulation is more difficult to identify with certainty but has a greater persuasive factor. These discoveries have significant ramifications for individuals striving to develop their communicative skills and create sincere networks of support while remaining conscious of the moral implications of the communication methodologies they utilize.

Introduction

A loose and imprecise definition of persuasion and manipulation has existed for centuries. It is not uncommon for the terms to be used almost interchangeably. Understanding the fact that humans are full of beliefs and hold the desire to convince, lights the importance of verbal communication as people are often reliant on words to accomplish this goal. Without words, there would be no social, cultural, religious, or political life. The use of words is essential to the development of these aspects of human life since man wouldn't have developed different forms of social organization without language. In addition to communicating, man can exert influence over his interlocutors with language. Brian Leget (2008, p. 1) remarks, "In today's environment, uncertainty is part of our lives and we need to sell our ideas, points of view, products, services, policies, and, in a strange way, our own talents and reputations." Accordingly, there must be a certain finality to communication, whether verbal or nonverbal. Hence it can be concluded with conviction that words are useful for expressing facts, educating others, and finally convincing.

As the main purpose of subjective communication is to convince others, this goal can be achieved only by using influential techniques such as persuasion and/or manipulation. Many individuals believe that one singular committed person can change the world for the better of others if they are motivated internally. Meanwhile, others believe that implementing sophisticated communication strategies and dedicating enough time and effort will at the very least help them improve their own lives, sometimes at the expense of others. Though there are major differences in the mindsets of both groups, one thing remains common; extrinsic success depends on one's ability to influence others intrinsically.

Literature Review

Persuasion

This dilemma prompts a critical question; what is persuasion at its core? We live in a world where persuasion is ubiquitous. Cristina Lucia Şutiu (2014) illustrates that whether we persuade or become persuadees, we use it every day as persuasion is present everywhere and it changes our lives and our minds. Communication is very evidently about reaching a goal, which every communicator can share with their audience if they will. When the true purpose of the message is revealed to those who receive it, one can refer to persuasion (Şutiu, 2014). Inversely, it is clear that we are dealing with a manipulative act if the purpose is obscured by people. Persuasion, however, is not the result of persuasion itself. For the persuasive agent to achieve the desired result, the persuadee's participation is crucial as per Şutiu (2014). Persuasion cannot occur if the persuadee does not possess free will. "There is a high degree of consent in the process of influencing others; and all persuasion involves self-persuasion, simply because one cannot be persuaded if they do not effectively participate in the process" (Şutiu, 2014, p. 104)

The study of social influence includes the study of persuasion. Michael D. Miller (2019) believes that social influence means modifying, reinforcing, or creating other people's cognitions or behaviors. As a communicative act, persuasion excludes force (i.e., coercion) and achieves private acceptance (Miller, 2019). According to Miller (2019), three categories of research can be found on the phenomenon of persuasion. Firstly, researchers have sought to isolate the factors that enhance or inhibit persuasion. Secondly, there is an explanation of why persuasive messages are persuasive. This issue has been addressed by several theories of persuasion. Finally, researchers have thoroughly examined the techniques used in the generation of persuasive messages (Miller, 2019). According to Ralph G. Nicolas (1987), to be a successful persuader, three guiding principles should be carefully analyzed and pondered. Firstly, it is imperative to use inductive reasoning. Doubts, fears, worries, or questions should never be presented as arguments or points. Secondly, the speaker's emotions should indicate his or her concern. While discussing the issue at hand, listeners should be able to detect the speaker's sincerity and depth of emotion. This concern should, however, be completely controlled. Thirdly, the key to persuasion is truth. Aristotle (4 BC/2004), the great philosopher, once proclaimed in his book *Rhetoric*, "When the two are presented with equal skill, truth is always more persuasive than falsehood, as falsehood is detectable." Discovering the truth requires compromise, mutual commitment, and advocacy.

Timothy R Levine (2019) assesses that in general, we are more likely to be convinced by people who portray themselves as powerful, authoritative, attractive, likable, or similar to us than by people who do not appear to possess these characteristics. To explain how, when, and why people are persuaded, a variety of theories relating to power have been proposed. Pablo Briñol (2017) is an associate professor of social psychology and has studied power and its effects on persuasion which has a long history in psychology. He (Brinol, 2017) discovers that in the early days of persuasion research, understanding wartime propaganda as a means of social control was one of the motivations. The consequence of this surge in interest, however, is that power plays a much more complicated and subtle role in persuasion today than in the past. Brinol (2017) emphasizes that despite early studies showing that persuasion was usually enhanced when the recipient's power decreased relative to the source, contemporary studies have shown that sources' power can either increase or decrease persuasive effects due to emotions such as - but not limited to - arrogance and jealousy. Although every theory from the past has some value in understanding some aspect of persuasion concerning many factors (such as social power), no theory is capable of explaining all of persuasion (Levine, 2019).

Persuasive Tactics

One of the most influential methods to sway individuals is by tapping into their authentic emotions. Utilizing affirmative emotions such as joy, solace, or protection is another potent technique that can inspire an audience to take action. Highlighting emotions such as affection, admiration, and anticipation have been demonstrated to be more compelling

in various research studies. The objective of this tactic is to provoke a powerful emotional reaction, whether it be positive or negative, that will have a long-lasting effect on the individual. Research has shown that messages that evoke emotional responses can significantly increase their efficacy. The research done by Cacioppo and Gardner in 1999 demonstrated this point. For example, messages that stimulate fear may be more prosperous in urging individuals to adopt a specific behavior than neutral messages.

Drawing upon reputable sources of information is a persuasive strategy that can be particularly effective. Petty and Cacioppo's (1986) study found that a message backed by credible data, expert opinions, or personal experiences tends to be more persuasive to the audience. In fact, this technique can not only improve the message's persuasiveness but also enhances credibility and trustworthiness in the eyes of the listener.

Using rhetorical questions is another persuasive tactic that can create a sense of agreement with the audience and boost the effectiveness of the message. Rhetorical questions are questions that do not require an answer but are used to make a point. For example, a message that asks, "Who wouldn't want to live a long and healthy life?" may be more persuasive in encouraging individuals to adopt a healthy lifestyle compared to a message that does not pose rhetorical questions.

Appealing to intrinsic stimuli such as religion or morals is another persuasive tactic that can influence an individual's attitudes and actions. Cialdini and Goldstein's (2004) investigation has shown that messages that appeal to an individual's moral values or religious beliefs are more likely to be persuasive. For example, a message that emphasizes the importance of honesty and integrity may be more effective in encouraging individuals to act honestly compared to a message that does not appeal to moral values.

Comforting vocal cues, such as a warm and reassuring tone of voice, can also enhance the persuasiveness of a message. Burgoon, Buller, and Woodall's (1996) research has shown that messages that are delivered in a friendly and warm tone of voice are more likely to be persuasive. Comforting vocal cues can create a sense of trust and empathy with the audience and enhance the effectiveness of the message.

Using open-hand gestures is another persuasive tactic that can build trust and rapport with an audience. For instance, a politician may use open-hand gestures to signal that they are trustworthy and sincere. Similarly, a salesperson may use open-hand gestures to convey that they are honest and transparent. Riskind and Gotay's (1982) research has found that people are more likely to be persuaded by a message when the speaker uses open-hand gestures that signify honesty and transparency.

Manipulation

Another crucial question is brought into the picture; what exactly is manipulation? Dolly S. Higgins and Karen Lauterbach (1987, p. 1219) from Harvard University believe "manipulation is one means by which environments are altered to correspond to characteristics of individuals and that natural selection favors people who successfully manipulate objects in their environment." Based on this theory, manipulation isn't a simple communicative strategy that allows one to convince another person but instead is a crucial aspect of survival. Sutiú (2014) emphasizes that despite appearing as a persuasive process, manipulation conceals its true motives. Therefore, only through this deceitful method can it operate, and for that reason, it is deemed immoral and intrusive on people's minds and souls (Sutiú, 2014).

Manipulation has both positive and negative sides, but they are both relative manifestations of human subjectivity. In order to be objective, Livia Fiedaros (2016) from the University of Suceava in Romania draws attention to the unclear definition of manipulation through an idealistic solution; these impartial assessments should, through a perfect objective lens, refer to the relationship between manipulation mechanisms, results, and ethical principles. According to social psychologist Oliver Crangle (2013), there is a difference in various aspects of manipulation itself. Using underhanded, deceptive, or abusive tactics, psychological manipulation aims to change others' perceptions and behaviors (Crangle, 2013). These methods could be considered exploitative, abusive, devious, and deceptive since they advance the interests of the manipulator at the expense of others. Conversely, the effects of social influence are

not always negative. Crangle (2013) uses the example of how a doctor can promote healthy habits by persuading patients who are hesitant about it. Accordingly, social manipulative influence is generally regarded as harmless when it respects the right of the influenced person to accept or reject and does not coerce the person too much. In some cases, social influence may constitute a positive underhanded manipulation, depending on the context and the motivation.

Sapir Handelman (2009) craftily states, “manipulation is not exactly persuasion, not precisely coercion, and not merely similar to deception.” He acknowledges the difficulty of defining this term as he proceeds to assess that it is nearly impossible to characterize and measure the elusive phenomenon of manipulation and its ambiguous nature as it falls somewhere between these contrasting motivating actions (Handelman, 2009).

Manipulative Tactics

It is a common observation that people tend to employ manipulative tactics in their everyday communication, particularly in persuasive or argumentative conversations. These tactics are utilized to sway or control others by taking advantage of their vulnerabilities or weaknesses, including their emotions, beliefs, and biases. In this article, we examine some of the most prevalent manipulative tactics, such as the appeal to authority, misinformation, ad hominem, slippery slope, vocal cues, manipulative concealing hand gestures, and targeting negative emotions.

The appeal to authority is a widespread tactic where one uses the credibility or reputation of an expert or authoritative figure to support their argument or position. It is often effective since individuals tend to trust and follow those they consider experts or authorities in a particular field. However, the appeal to authority can be faulty if the authority figure or expert lacks adequate knowledge or relevance to the argument being presented (Bok, 1978). For instance, a celebrity endorsing a product outside their field of expertise can be considered a fallacious appeal to authority.

The act of spreading falsehoods or misleading information to bolster one's argument or position is known as misinformation. It is frequently employed in propaganda and marketing, but it can also be utilized in interpersonal communication. Misinformation can be difficult to identify, especially when presented in a convincing or authoritative manner. The ramifications, however, can be significant, as they can sway public opinion or decision-making (Pennycook & Rand, 2019).

Ad hominem is a manipulative tactic where one attacks the character or personal traits of an opponent rather than addressing their argument or position. It is often employed to discredit or undermine the opponent's credibility or authority, rather than engaging with their ideas or evidence. Ad hominem attacks can be faulty if they are irrelevant to the argument being presented (Walton, 2008). For example, attacking a politician's personal life instead of addressing their policy proposals can be considered a fallacious ad hominem attack.

The slippery slope is a manipulative tactic that involves suggesting that a particular action or decision will lead inevitably to a chain of negative consequences or outcomes. It is often employed to evoke fear or anxiety and to discourage people from taking a particular course of action. However, the slippery slope can be faulty if there is no clear causal connection between the initial action or decision and the predicted consequences (Eemeren & Grootendorst, 2004). For instance, suggesting that legalizing same-sex marriage will inevitably lead to the legalization of bestiality is a fallacious slippery slope argument.

The strategic use of vocal elements such as tone, pitch, and volume, among others, is commonly known as vocal cues. These elements are utilized to express emotions or convey a specific message. They can emphasize or downplay certain aspects of the message, such as indicating sarcasm, sincerity, or authority. The impact of vocal cues can be substantial in evoking emotions and influencing people, yet it can also be misleading or deceitful (Noller 1991).

Manipulative concealing hand gestures are a tactic that involves using nonverbal cues, such as hand gestures, to conceal or manipulate information. This tactic is often used in situations where the speaker intends to deceive or mislead the listener, such as in negotiations or sales pitches. For instance, a speaker may use a hand gesture to indicate that a certain aspect of a product is unimportant while concealing vital information (Ekman & Friesen).

Unmeasurable Intentions

Manipulation and persuasion certainly go hand-in-hand, and denial of that reflects a denial of reality. There is a certain consistency between both based on human action and interaction. These principles are understood and utilized effectively by good persuaders and manipulators alike. Thus, a perceived “bad” person with subjectively “good” people skills is perhaps the most dangerous and malicious kind of person; making the intention a factor that can tip the scales of ethics and balance. It is common to find similarities between these principles; they are even sometimes the same. However, in practice, the results are very different. It is the intent that makes the biggest difference in the eyes of all communicators.

To determine the roots from where manipulation and persuasion may sprout, analyzing intention is crucial. Thousands of years have passed since people have debated the difference between persuasion and manipulation on the basis of intention. People communicate in a way that promotes certain beliefs and behaviors, both intentionally and unintentionally. The ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle, the father of persuasion, faced off against the Sophists, another group of teachers, during the 4th century BC. The historical arguments made by both parties were documented within Aristotle’s (4 BC/2004) ancient Greek book, *Rhetoric*. Despite teaching various disciplines, the Sophists gained notoriety for teaching manipulative rhetoric. Aristotle’s (4 BC/2004) conflicting view was that the Sophists did not care about truth but promoted any idea for money and personal gain. As per Aristotle (4 BC/2004), the Sophists were manipulating people by intentionally deceiving them.

There is a strong correlation between intentions and actual behavior. In powerless language, one often hears hedges, hesitation forms, polite forms, and questioning intonations, which indicate superior social status and power than the speaker. Powerful languages, fueled by purpose, are not frequently used with these features. As per a professor of psychology at the University of Pennsylvania Dolores Albarracín (2018), a person’s intention is their willingness and reason for determination to do something. Albarracín (2018, p. 7) further continues her report by stating “Intentions often emerge from broader goals – desirable end states – that can be achieved via multiple, sustained behaviors, are not fully controllable results, and require external help or resources.” For instance, adding physical activity to lose weight, is an intention, but it is not a guarantee that the action will be successful. In the same way that attitudes can be specific or general, goals can also be either (Albarracín, 2018). A goal, such as wanting to quit smoking, has generally been studied by attitude-behavior researchers. It can also be helpful to set specific actions to accomplish these goals, such as avoiding smoking friends or throwing away smoking paraphernalia. Therefore, it can be stated that the intention to cessate smoking or achieve a similar goal is an exceptional predictor of actual behavior and outcome.

Unknowns

A dispute arises naturally when one questions the intent and result of each methodology. This phenomenon has been researched by scientists and psychologists alike in order to draw a tangible line between the two ideas yielding little to no success. The gap or unknown also considered the missing piece in research, is the area that has not yet been explored or is under-explored. A clear distinction other than the internal intention of a person has not been recognized yet through actions, techniques, and communication processes. Listed below are the fundamental unknowns that will be explored and researched throughout this report:

- Effectiveness: Which method of communication is more effective in accomplishing tasks?
- Tactics: What similar non-verbal and verbal techniques are used in both methods?
- Intention: Other than the inherent, “unmeasurable” intention of a person, what differentiates them?
- Social Encounters: Which tactic allows for successful convincing within interactions?

The researcher intends to amalgamate successful manipulation and persuasion methods that have been previously researched and validated. These techniques have undergone extensive scrutiny in diverse disciplines, including marketing, psychology, and communication. The purpose of the investigator’s study is to categorize these methods

and develop a fresh combination of strategies adaptable to multiple situations. Through this fusion of tactics, the investigator aims to amplify their effectiveness and obtain a more all-inclusive comprehension of the mechanics behind manipulation and persuasion.

One aspect to consider is that although the specific strategies highlighted in the study have undergone thorough examination and been deemed successful individually, their collective application has yet to be scrutinized. Consequently, the researcher's proposed amalgamation of these tactics represents a groundbreaking approach to merging established techniques in the area of persuasion and manipulation. The researcher anticipates that their findings will enhance comprehension regarding the dynamic interplay of these tactics when employed in conjunction and identify methods to optimize their potency.

The aspect of effectiveness is relevant as it can assist in choosing the most efficient method of communication that will help one accomplish their goals. These goals can be within interpersonal communication, business, and relationships. The term "effectiveness" can be visualized through numbers on a quantitative level by measuring the outcomes or results of the experiment using numerical data. This approach allows you to objectively evaluate the effectiveness of your experiment and draw conclusions based on empirical evidence. The tactics that will be explored in this report will help differentiate both methods and will allow a clear understanding of tangible and intangible actions. Once the definition of intention has been established, this paper plans to dive deeper into how intention can be measured, since it is generally internal and unmeasurable. This paper will then search for further qualitative or nonquantifiable such as emotions evoked by each communicative process. Finally, to establish a real-world connection between the causes and effects of persuasion and manipulation, business encounters such as Shark Tank pitches may be investigated. This will allow one to see a direct correlation between the unknowns mentioned above and their relation to business proposals and success within social spheres.

Significance

Thus, the significance of this paper is demonstrated through the many interpersonal communicative techniques one can implement. Increasing the understanding of persuasion and manipulation tactics allows one to increase communicative skills in interpersonal relationships. Understanding the differences in ethical intentions allows one to create genuine bonds of support effectively. Sometimes, due to constant betrayal of trust from others in the past, people often tend to be hesitant to genuineness when it approaches them in the form of persuasion. On the other hand, in spite of the fact that manipulation appears to be an appealing process, it hides its true purpose. Due to the fact that manipulation can only operate this way, it is considered immoral and invasive in the minds and souls of people. In this age of increased psychological invasion, humans must look for ways to protect themselves. Information needs to be differentiated between true and false. Information needs to be differentiated between moral and immoral. Between persuasion and manipulation. A solution must be found.

As part of this study, this paper will examine persuasion and manipulation from an ethical perspective and investigate ways in which one can protect themselves by being able to see tangible distinguishing signs. The primary question this analysis works to answer is: which methodology (persuasion or manipulation) is more effective in accomplishing tasks and gaining support; and what differentiates the tactics involved in each strategy other than a person's intentions?

Methodology

Research Design / Instrumentation

This experiment will have a multi-step analysis and will be using components of numerous interviews, experimental social experiments, briefed single bind data collection, and a mixture of quantitative and qualitative data in order to collect and analyze a well-rounded understanding of the topic.

The research experiment will incorporate a systemic method with multiple moving parts. Firstly, two research groups will be made. One group will be named the Persuasion Group, and the second group will be named the Manipulation Group. The Persuasion Group will consist of ten AP Capstone students (preferably from the AP Seminar) along with one Presenter who will play the role of the persuader. The Manipulation Group will also consist of ten AP Capstone students (preferably from the AP Seminar) along with one Presenter who will play the role of the manipulator.

The two groups of ten people each that will consist of the audience will be selected from a pool of AP Capstone students. The two presenters (manipulator and persuader) will also be selected from AP Capstone students, preferably students currently enrolled in AP Research. The twenty-two total AP Capstone students who participate as the audience in this study will receive permission from their respective teachers, as a result of an email communicating the goal of the study between the researcher and the teacher. The respective email is linked in the appendix.

The students selected to be in the experiment will be interviewed about their pre-existing knowledge, emotions, and stances on the topics they will be persuaded or manipulated about. According to the pre-selected intentional groupings, the researcher will conduct pre-session interviews with all participants in the study for five-ten minutes each. These interviews will take place at school and the timings will vary depending on availability. This will allow the researcher to get an understanding of the beliefs of each participant and get inside knowledge of their mental processes and values. With this valuable information, the researcher is more capable to make an effective argument to the participants during the group sessions. For example, in the pre-session interview, the researcher may discover that a certain student feels a strong emotion when a specific moral or scenario is discussed. Now the researcher can better develop his argument by targeting that emotion, that would have previously been unknown, and either persuade or manipulate the participants.

The researcher will intentionally make groups with an even balance of people who believe both polar opposites of the topic presented. For example, for the session relating to the issue of abortion, the students in the Persuasion group will be divided into groups of five pro-choice and pro-life in order to add depth to the study and account for variables that could lead to uneven data.

To brief and prepare the group consisting of the individual persuader and the manipulator, up to six hours will be spent over the course of multiple weeks. The two groups of ten people each that will consist of the audience will spend thirty minutes per session and will be required to attend two ten-minute interviews (pre and post-session) individually. The students who play the roles of the Presenter (manipulator and persuader) will be briefed and coached by the researcher about what their 10-minute presentation will consist of. In this presentation, they will either work towards selling a product, an idea/ belief, or a service to the audience. The briefing period will consist of multiple coaching meetings and will ultimately produce a script of the presentation. Along with this, the presenter will understand the full goal of their presentation (whether they are persuading or manipulating) and will incorporate tone, emotion, communication styles, and intentions, along with other factors. The entire presentation that the persuader/manipulator will proceed to deliver will be scripted, pre-revised, and edited multiple times in order to get efficient and clear data. The outline of the general agenda for the briefing/ coaching sessions can be considered and examined in the appendix. The full scripts for each respective presenter (persuader and manipulator) are also linked in the appendix.

After the audience groups have been designed, the pre-session interviews have been completed, and the presenter has been briefed, the researcher will then plan a date, time, and location for the presentation session, in accordance with the availability of the audience and presenters. This meeting can be conducted at school, during school hours if permissible, or outside the school location. Once a time and place are fixed, the two groups will meet in separate rooms and the presentations will begin. In the presentation, the Presenter will try and persuade/ manipulate the audience to buy or agree with a product, a service, or an idea. For example, a product they are selling may be a water bottle. An example of a possible service proposed may be a tutoring service. And a presentation on an idea or

moral may be about abortion or the death penalty. They will use the pre-written script and pre-practiced techniques from the coaching sessions. The meeting and presentation will be video-recorded and the consent to keep the recording confidential will be signed.

After the Presenter has completed their 10-minute presentation, and the persuader/ manipulator has effectively followed the script, the audience members will go through a process that allows the researcher to collect quantitative and qualitative data both. Thus, the post-session interview process begins. The researcher will then have individual interviews with each audience member (twenty in total) for ten minutes each. The interviewer will initially ask simple yes-or-no questions but then will proceed to ask more insightful thought-evoking questions. Some inquiries will relate to the questions previously asked in the pre-session interview and the changes if any in the responses will be observed. These interviews will be video-recorded and consent to keep the recording confidential will be signed. The tentative interview questions that will be used during both the pre and the post-interviews can be viewed and analyzed in the appendix. The informed consent form that each participant will sign for audio and video recording permissions is also in the appendix. The researcher will then gather the data together and then proceed to attempt to make the connection between the quantitative and qualitative data. The data will then be analyzed and written in the final report.

Data Analysis

Qualitative Data

Thematic Analysis

In qualitative data sources such as interview transcripts, social media profiles, or survey responses, thematic analysis can provide valuable insights into people's views, opinions, knowledge, experiences, and values. Researchers can interpret large data sets in a meaningful way by sorting the data into broader themes using this method. Data should, however, be carefully examined to prevent oversimplifying subtleties. To avoid subjective interpretations that can lead to biased conclusions, the researcher must reflect carefully on the theme. When rigorously and thoughtfully conducted, thematic analysis can provide rich and nuanced insights into the data. The research process must be documented, a systematic approach used, and ongoing critical reflection carried out throughout to ensure the validity and reliability of the findings. It is a robust method for understanding the perspectives of people on many different topics: a thematic analysis.

The inductive analysis involves forming themes and categories based on raw data, which is a bottom-up approach. Deductive approaches begin with a hypothesis or theory and then test them using data, while this approach begins with a preconceived theory or hypothesis. Researchers who use an inductive approach do not approach data with preconceived themes or categories but rather let the data speak for themselves. A thorough analysis of the data is done by the researcher in order to spot any patterns, topics, or categories that may have developed. Following the development of themes and categories as a result of this process, theoretical knowledge of the phenomenon under inquiry is created. With an inductive method, data analysis can be done more skillfully and nuancedly. Because of their freedom from preconceived preconceptions, researchers are able to investigate data in an open-ended manner. Furthermore, it can reveal fresh, unexpected perspectives on the subject under study. There may be difficulties with an inductive method, though. It can be time-consuming and require a lot of effort to analyze data. Together with a thorough comprehension of the data, researchers must also be able to recognize patterns and themes that appear in the data.

Familiarization

The initial step that a skilled analyst would take is to become familiar with the collected data. To accomplish this, the analyst would begin by examining the data thoroughly and comprehensively before analyzing individual items. The process may entail various techniques such as transcribing audio, reading through textual data and taking initial notes,

and generally exploring the data to gain a comprehensive understanding of it. The process of becoming acquainted with data requires an analytical mindset and proficiency in data analysis tools. Through this process, the analyst can identify patterns, trends, and significant features that may indicate potential research avenues. Moreover, a comprehensive overview of data allows the analyst to gain insights into data quality, identify data inconsistencies, and determine which data points are crucial.

The students who have been chosen to participate in the experiment will be questioned about their prior knowledge, feelings, and opinions on the subjects they will be convinced or manipulated about. The researcher will conduct pre-session interviews with every study participant for five to ten minutes each, based on the carefully chosen deliberate groupings. These interviews will take place in the school, with different times scheduled according to availability. The interview will be recorded and transcribed manually. The vital documents for this step in the analysis are in the appendix (both pre and post-session interview transcripts).

Coding

These transcripts were thoroughly analyzed and were crucial to making the qualitative data into codes which were displayed in a table format for easy viewing. The transcriptions of each participant were analyzed, and key emotions and takeaways were listed in their respective columns as “codes” to differentiate them and even find similarities. Table 1 below shows the transformation from written transcriptions to table format that is “code” significant.

Participants																		
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R
Death Penalty																		
Agree/ Disagree	D	D	D	A	A	A	D	D	A	A	D	D	A	D	A	A	D	D
1-10 Ranking	9/10	10/10	9/10	5/10	5/10	5/10	7/10	8/10	4/10	5/10	8/10	8/10	6/10	8/10	5/10	9/10	7/10	6/10
Emotion/ Notes	immorality	injustice	unnecessary	questioning	N/A	darkness	sensitivity, psych	discomfort	fear	unsure	shock harshness	jail is worse unjust	life is serious	sadness	justice	reverse incentive	second chance	second chance
Abortion																		
Agree/ Disagree	A	D	A	D	A	D	A	A	A	A	A	A/D	A	A	A	A/D	A	A/D
1-10 Ranking	9/10	10/10	7/10	7/10	6/10	5/10	9/10	6/10	9/10	10/10	10/10	9/10	9/10	9/10	9/10	7/10	6/10	5/10
Emotion/ Notes	sympathy	sadness	sadness	defense	freedom	sadness	sadness	sadness	N/A	anger	sorrow, shock	depends on time	freedom	confused	frustrated	situational	sadness	situational
Tutoring Service																		
Agree/ Disagree	A	D	A	D	D	A	A	A	A	A	D	A	A	A	A	D	A	D
1-10 Ranking	9/10	6/10	7/10	7/10	5/10	8/10	10/10	8/10	6/10	7/10	4/10	5/10	7/10	6/10	7/10	8/10	8/10	4/10
Emotion/ Notes	excitement, curiosity	pride, shame	dumbness	N/A	embarrass	N/A	proactivity	hope, independent	n/a	satisfaction	no time	busy yet curious	needs help	stress	already in tutoring	self-learner, its extra	helpful	unnecessary
Water Bottle																		
Agree/ Disagree	D	A	A	A	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	A	A	D	D	A/D	A	A
1-10 Ranking	9	6	8	10	10	10	10	9	8	8	6	5	7	5	8	5	9	6
Emotion/ Notes	guilt	N/A	recycling	ease	reusable	environment	inefficient	reusable	environment	environment	reusable	doesnt care	doesnt care	environment	reusable >	doesnt care	doesnt care	doesnt care
Intention																		
Agree/ Disagree	A	A	D	A	A	A/D	D	A	A	A	A	A	D	A	A	A	A	A/D
Emotion/ Notes	tone	physical appearance	listening, speech	logic	speed of speech	of body language	N/A	interactions	personal actions	body language	flattery	vocal fluctuations	N/A	personal gain or loss	attention span	personal gain or loss	facial features	situational

As a result of this chart, the researcher will be able to comprehend each participant's beliefs and gain insight into their thought patterns and values. With this important knowledge, the researcher is better equipped to persuade the participants throughout the group sessions. For instance, the researcher may learn through the pre-session interview that a certain student has a significant reaction whenever a particular moral or scenario is discussed. By focusing on that emotion, which was previously unknown, the researcher can now more effectively establish his case and either persuade or manipulate the subjects. As stated in the Methodology section, the presentation scripts (for both persuasion and manipulation) were carefully curated to target specific phrases, emotions, or morals discussed in the interviews. The link to the presentation scripts is in the appendix.

Theme Generation

The critical duty of developing themes is carried out by researchers in the third step of the qualitative research method. This entails a careful analysis of the numerous codes that have been applied to the data as well as the recognition of any patterns that appear. The main themes that include the fundamental ideas and concepts contained in the data are then found using these patterns. Themes are more general and offer a wider framework for comprehending the data than codes, which are more specialized and concentrate on certain features of the data. In order to effectively depict the underlying patterns in the data, the researcher must carefully evaluate which codes to combine and how to divide them into themes. As the curation of the scripts was perfected, these developed emotions and reasonings that were provided by the participants were considered when creating the two groups of persuasion and manipulation. These groups were divided into polar opposites of agreement and disagreement about certain beliefs towards the death penalty (pre-session themes). The division of the two groups can be seen below in Table 2.

Participants	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R
Manipulation Group (Presenter - Pro Death Penalty)																		
Pre-Session Interviews																		
Agree/ Disagree	D	D	D		A	A	D		A									
1-10 Ranking	9/10	10/10	9/10		5/10	5/10	7/10		4/10									
Emotion/ Notes	immorality	injustice	unnecessary		N/A	darkness	sensitivity, psych		fear									
Persuasion Group (Presenter - Anti Death Penalty)																		
Pre-Session Interviews																		
Agree/ Disagree								D	A		D	A			A	D	D	
1-10 Ranking								8/10	5/10		8/10	6/10			9/10	7/10	6/10	
Emotion/ Notes								discomfort	unsure		jail is worse unjust	life is serious			reverse incentive	in-second chance	second chance	second chance

Quantitative Data

An essential study technique for understanding people's opinions and perceptions was qualitative data analysis. The analysis of data on the change in beliefs on a 1-10 scale was the main topic of this analysis. The organization of the data was the initial stage in qualitative data analysis. The information gathered on the evolution of beliefs was arranged in a variety of ways, such as grouping replies according to the degree of change from the initial to the final level of belief. As a result, patterns and trends in the data were easier to spot.

After the data had been organized, the researcher began data analysis. To examine qualitative data, the researcher could employ a number of techniques, such as thematic analysis, content analysis, and discourse analysis. In this example, the data were analyzed using thematic analysis. Finding themes or patterns in the data was the goal of the thematic analysis. To acquire a broad overview of the data, the researcher started by going through the responses. The researcher then classified the responses based on similar themes found in the responses. When examining the shift in beliefs on a scale from 1 to 10, the researcher got started by figuring out the most frequent initial belief levels. For instance, the researcher might have discovered that a large number of participants had initial belief levels of 5 or 6. The researcher then classified the replies based on the most prevalent final belief levels. The amount of change for each responder was also determined by the researcher. The researcher might have discovered, for instance, that some respondents' attitudes changed significantly while others changed only slightly. Based on the degree of change, the researcher grouped the responses into different categories and looked for any recurring themes.

The researcher was able to assess the shift in beliefs on a scale of 1 to 10 after examining the data. The degree of initial belief may have had an impact on the size of the change, the study found. For instance, people who initially held fewer views were more likely to have experienced a considerable shift in their opinions. The researcher also found that certain factors contributed to the change in opinions. The impact of new information, social contacts, or personal experiences may have been felt by respondents. The researcher identified these components and was then able to assess how they contributed to the change in beliefs.

As groups were made with different codes and themes, numerical values were also incorporated. During each interview, every participant was asked a question pertaining to their confidence in their belief against or for the death penalty. This question made two sections; those who agree with the penalty, and those who disagree. Along with the qualitative emotional section as to why the participants feel their certain ways, the confidence in these beliefs allows for an understanding of a quantitative measurement of their beliefs. After the group experimental session was completed, the second round of interviews (post-session interviews) began. Table 3 and Table 4 below show the addition of the results from the post-session interviews along with the original chart displayed in Table 2.

Participants	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R
Manipulation Group (Presenter - Pro Death Penalty)																		
Pre-Session Interviews																		
Agree/ Disagree	D	D	D		A	A	D		A									
1-10 Ranking	9/10	10/10	9/10		5/10	5/10	7/10		4/10									
Emotion/ Notes	immorality	injustice	unnecessary		N/A	darkness	sensitivity, psych		fear									
Pos-Session Interviews																		
Agree/ Disagree	D	D	D		A	A	D		A									
1-10 Ranking	5/10	7/10	3/10		10/10	10/10	4/10		10/10									
Persuade/ Manipulate	M	P	P		P	P	P		P									
1-10 Ranking	2/10	6/10	6/10		7/10	9/10	8/10		8/10									
Intention	coercive	emotional	supportive		positive	neutral	fact-based		emotional									

Participants		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R
Persuasion Group (Presenter - Anti Death Penalty)																			
Pre-Session Interviews																			
Agree/ Disagree									D		A		D	A			A	D	D
1-10 Ranking									8/10		5/10		8/10	6/10			9/10	7/10	6/10
Emotion/ Notes									discomfort		unsure		jail is worse unjust	life is serious			reverse incentive	second chance	second chance
Pos-Session Interviews																			
Agree/ Disagree									D		A		D	A			A	D	D
1-10 Ranking									9/10		5/10		8/10	5/10			9/10	9/10	7/10
Persuade/ Manipulate									P		M		P	P			P	P	P
1-10 Ranking									5/10		9/10		2/10	5/10			3/10	3/10	4/10
Intention									bad and good		ill		positive	positive			neutral	emotional	genuine

Again, during each interview, every participant was asked a question pertaining to their updated confidence in their belief against or for the death penalty after their specific session. This question made two sections; those who agree with the penalty, and those who disagree. It also created the discussion and opening of analysis towards the difference in numbers for confidence. Along with the second round of questioning which builds up on the previous belief of agreement or disagreement, a new question was asked to further add depth to the study. The new question that was asked was questioning whether the participants felt they were part of the persuasion session or the manipulation session. Tables 3 and 4 show their responses as well as their confidence in selecting that method on a scale of 1 to 10. After viewing this a separate table was created for the comparison of both 1-10 scales and for the changes in average agreement as well as accuracy in picking which methodology (persuasion or manipulation) pertained to each participant. The comparison of the different methodologies can be seen in Table 5 below:

Participants																		
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R
Manipulation Group (Presenter - Pro Death Penalty)																		
Change in Agreement	4	3	6		5	5	3		6									
Average Change: 4.57 / 10 average change in confidence on original stance for death penalty																		
Persuade/ Manipulate: 6 / 10 average confidence with the belief that session was persuasion (incorrect)																		
Persuasion Group (Presenter - Anti Death Penalty)																		
Change in Agreement								1		0		0	1			0	2	1
Average Change: 0.86 / 10 average change in confidence on original stance for death penalty																		
Persuade/ Manipulate: 1.86 / 10 average confidence with the belief that session was persuasion (correct)																		

Assessment

The results of the present study suggest that there are notable differences in the effects of persuasion versus manipulation on participants' beliefs and attitudes toward the death penalty. Participants who were exposed to manipulation were unable to detect it and instead believed that they were being persuaded with high confidence levels (the average confidence level within the manipulation group that they were being persuaded was 6/10). Despite this, the manipulation did not result in a significant change in participants' overall position on the death penalty. Instead, their confidence levels regarding their pre-existing beliefs changed significantly. Those who originally agreed with the death penalty became even more convinced of their position, while those who disagreed with it became less confident in their beliefs. This margin of change in confidence with the original belief was a tremendous change: 4.57/10 increase or decrease.

On the other hand, participants who were exposed to persuasion were able to detect it but were uncertain and had low confidence levels regarding their beliefs (the average confidence level within the persuasion group that they were being persuaded was 1.86/10). Despite this, the persuasion did not result in a significant change in participants' overall position on the death penalty. However, their confidence levels regarding their pre-existing beliefs changed, albeit to a lesser extent than those who were manipulated. Those who originally agreed with the death penalty became slightly less convinced of their position, while those who disagreed with it became slightly more confident in their beliefs. This margin of change in confidence with the original belief was a minuscule change: 0.86/10 increase or decrease.

Interpretation

Evaluation

The results of this study are in line with earlier social psychology studies that have shown the subtle yet potent impacts of manipulation on people's beliefs and attitudes. This study lends support to the idea that even when subtle and undetectable, manipulation can be a potent weapon for influencing people's ideas without their understanding.

A well-known psychological issue, confirmation bias has been thoroughly investigated in social psychology studies. Individuals who already have an opinion on the matter are more likely to retain and believe information that supported that opinion and were more likely to forget or discount information that did not. Those participants with strong preconceived notions regarding the death sentence were less likely to be persuaded by the evidence that refuted those notions and was more likely to selectively attend to evidence that supported those notions. These results imply that participants with strong pro-death penalty beliefs may have been more susceptible to the study's manipulation because they may have deliberately sought out and interpreted data that supported their convictions.

When people feel emotionally involved in their views, confirmation bias can have a particularly potent impact on belief reinforcement. Participants who had strong opinions in support of the death penalty may have been more vulnerable to manipulation in the current study because of how emotionally heated the topic of the death sentence is. More consideration should be given to the possibility that other cognitive biases, such as the backfire effect, may have contributed to the confirmation bias's reinforcement of preexisting beliefs.

Although persuasion is a strong technique for influencing someone's beliefs, it seems that manipulation might be more successful in doing so. The fact that the participants in the persuasion group were able to identify the attempts at persuasion shows that they were more skeptical of the arguments made to them. This can be attributable to a higher degree of education or skepticism, which may have resulted in a wary attitude toward accepting new views.

It's interesting to note that the participants' confidence levels remained low in the identification of the methodology despite their ability to recognize the influence of persuasive acts. Even if they were unsure about the new perspective, this might suggest that they were more willing to reevaluate their opinions. In contrast, despite being

persuaded by incorrect arguments, the participants who were subjected to manipulation still maintained high levels of trust in their opinions. The lack of a significant shift in the participants' general opinion of the death sentence following persuasion may indicate that persuasion alone may not be adequate to alter deeply embedded ideas. This is consistent with studies that have demonstrated that people are more likely to modify their ideas when they are given time to think about the various lines of support.

Also, it's possible that the marginal changes in confidence levels seen in the persuasion group are a result of the persuasive arguments being weaker than those used to persuade the manipulation group. Past study has demonstrated that the effectiveness of persuasive arguments is influenced by factors such as the credibility of the speaker and the quality of the evidence.

Implication

Research on the efficiency and morality of persuasion and manipulation in a variety of contexts, such as advertising, politics, and healthcare, is expanding. The potential for these strategies to damage people and take advantage of their vulnerability is one of the key ethical issues with the use of persuasion and manipulation. Manipulation has been shown to be effective in reinforcing existing beliefs and biases, particularly when these beliefs are already strongly held. Individuals are more likely to believe and share false information when it is presented in a way that confirmed their pre-existing beliefs.

The findings of this study may have significant practical ramifications for the use of manipulation and persuasion in advertising, politics, and other situations. Policymakers and advertisers should think about the ethical ramifications of utilizing such approaches given the potential for manipulation to have long-lasting effects on people's beliefs and attitudes. This study also emphasizes the significance of communication transparency and the necessity of alerting people to communications that are manipulative or persuasive. Persuasion, for instance, maybe a more moral strategy for encouraging healthy behavior changes in healthcare settings because it helps people to critically assess their pre-existing beliefs and make defensible choices. On the other hand, in political and advertising settings, where people might already have strong opinions and biases, can be where manipulation is most effective. Yet, the use of manipulation involves moral questions about abusing the weak and disseminating false information, thus it should be handled carefully.

The current study contributes to this body of research by emphasizing the differences between the impacts of manipulation and persuasion on participants' levels of confidence in their pre-existing views. While both methods have the potential to affect confidence levels, persuasion may be more effective at prompting a critical assessment of pre-existing ideas than manipulation is at reinforcing current beliefs. These findings have significant ramifications for our comprehension of the potential advantages and moral issues associated with using manipulation and persuasion in everyday situations.

Conclusion

Aristotle (4 BC/2004), the great philosopher, once proclaimed in his book *Rhetoric*, "When the two are presented with equal skill, truth is always more persuasive than falsehood, as falsehood is detectable." This study and its analysis report have shown that on a small scale, during a controlled investigation, this assumption is not the case. Denial of the relationship between manipulation and persuasion is a reflection of rejection of reality. Based on human behavior and interaction, both have a certain regularity. Good manipulators and persuaders alike are aware of these ideas and know how to use them. Previously, the research question "which methodology (persuasion or manipulation) is more effective in accomplishing tasks and gaining support, and what distinguishes the tactics involved in each strategy, other than a person's intentions?" was asked in order to prompt this study. Although done with pure and genuine intent, persuasion is a powerful tool for changing someone's ideas, manipulation appears to be more effective in doing so.

The distinguishability of manipulation seems more hidden and almost undiscoverable while the communicative technique of persuasion has an increased chance of being unearthed. This, therefore, displays that intention remains something elusive and unmeasurable. Further research can look deeper dive into this phenomenon.

Limitations

Sample Size

A research study's limitations are any elements or conditions that may affect the reliability or validity of the results. These are potential study faults or defects that might have an impact on how the results are interpreted and extrapolated. It is critical to recognize the study's limitations, particularly those related to sample size and representativeness. Because the study's sample size was so tiny, there are questions about whether the results can be applied to a wider population as a whole. Although the study may offer crucial insights into how manipulation and persuasion affect sentiments regarding the death penalty, care should be taken when extrapolating general generalizations from a small group.

Demographic

Also, the study's subjects were probably chosen from a certain demographic, which could limit how broadly the results can be applied. For example, if the study was done on a college campus, the participants may not represent the broader population in terms of age, education level, socioeconomic status, and other significant demographic aspects. These elements may significantly affect attitudes and views about the death sentence, which may restrict the study's findings' external validity. Moreover, the results may have been influenced by the study design. For instance, the study's use of manipulation and persuasion strategies may not fully reflect the kinds of strategies applied in real-world situations. Due to the controlled atmosphere of the study, the participants may have been more vulnerable to manipulation or persuasion, which may not accurately reflect how individuals respond to manipulation or persuasion in real-world situations.

Ecological Validity

The study's single-session manipulation of participants' opinions toward the death sentence may not truly reflect the setting in which persuasion and manipulation strategies are frequently employed. Real-world persuasion and manipulation may take place over a longer time span, incorporate several messaging sources, and employ a more subtle strategy. To sway consumer behavior, for instance, advertisers frequently employ persuasive strategies in their ads, such as emotional appeals and social proof. These strategies are frequently used repeatedly over time, leveraging a variety of communications platforms like social media, television advertisements, and celebrity endorsements to produce a message that is hard for customers to ignore. The ecological validity of the study's conclusions can be constrained by its shortcomings. The degree to which study findings can be extrapolated to actual environments is referred to as ecological validity. Although the study's findings are insightful into the impacts of manipulation and persuasion in a controlled laboratory environment, it's possible that they don't precisely reflect how these strategies work in everyday life. To better understand how these strategies affect beliefs and attitudes over time, future studies might investigate the impacts of persuasion and manipulation in more intricate, real-world contexts.

Social Desirability

In research studies, social desirability bias is a prevalent problem where participants may feel under pressure to fit in and present themselves in a positive way rather than disclosing their genuine opinions or behaviors. Social desirability bias may have affected the outcomes of this study on the influence of persuasion vs manipulation on participants' beliefs and attitudes on the death penalty by causing individuals to give answers they thought were socially desirable rather than their actual beliefs. Researchers frequently employ a variety of techniques to reduce the possible effects of

social desirability bias, including safeguarding participant confidentiality and employing indirect measures to gauge attitudes. For instance, researchers could employ a more subtle metric like reaction time tasks to gauge participants' implicit sentiments toward the death penalty instead of asking them directly.

Susceptibility

Finally, individual differences in susceptibility to manipulation and persuasion were not taken into consideration in the study. Some participants might be more or less receptive to these strategies than others, which could affect the study's conclusions. Future studies could look into how individual differences in receptivity to manipulation and persuasion affect the efficacy of these strategies.

Acknowledgements

I would like to genuinely thank Dr. Chris Ham of Liberty high School (Frisco, Texas, United States) for his total support in completing this project successfully. He provided me with the guidelines and resources necessary to complete my research as an extension of the course curriculum in AP Research. He also assisted me through difficulties and hardships with my data intake and analysis. I would also like to acknowledge Mr. Chad Doty of Liberty high School (Frisco, Texas, United States) for allowing me to incorporate my study without any hesitation into his classes with his students. I would finally like to thank my mother, Gazala Jabin Memon, for displaying unwavering encouragement through the many tireless nights of work and the numerous prayers throughout my research process.

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