

Abstract

This study examined the effect of the helper's self-sacrifice, effectiveness and empathic concern on the observer's helping behavior. On the basis of theories about observational learning, self-efficacy and empathy, it was expected that the helper's self-sacrifice, effectiveness and empathic concern would be positively related to the observer's helping behavior. 206 undergraduate students participated in a scenario experiment in which participants were asked to read about a helper's donation and determine the amount of donation they would make. Results demonstrated a positive relation between observers' donations and their perception of the helper's level of self-sacrifice, effectiveness and empathic concern. The observers made larger donations when they perceived the helper to be more self-sacrificing, effective and with empathic concern. Implications of the results and limitations of this study were discussed.