

Strategic and non strategic effects of benevolence when advisor-advisee interests are in conflict

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Workshop on Trust, Advice and Reputation

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When advice make us doubt

The hairdresser.— You should cut your hair more often

The wife.— You should go out with your friends more often

Trust and Benevolence

- Trust is a willingness to take a risk (Johnson-George & Swap, 1982) when there is something of importance to be lost (money, wife. . .).
- Trust is a function of the trustee's perceived ability, *benevolence*, and integrity and of the trustor's propensity to trust (Mayer, Davis & Schoorman, 1995)
- Benevolence is the extent to which a trustee is believed to want to do good to the trustor, aside from a self-centered profit motive (Mayer, Davis & Schoorman, 1995)

Benevolence as a solution for trusting advisors?

Previous studies demonstrate that perceived benevolence increases trust and advice uptake.

Perceived benevolence is manipulated through:

- on-going relationship (Van Swol & Sniezek, 2001)
- scenarios (White, 2005)
- incidental emotions (Gino & Schweitzer, 2008)
- similarities of values and physical similarities (Twyman, Harvey & Harries, 2008)

Benevolence-based trust in advisors leads to more confident decisions (Van Swol & Sniezek, 2001; White, 2005) even though there is no apparent reason for advisors to mislead the decision-maker.

Advice and benevolence-based trust

Perceiving benevolence encourages decision-makers to follow advice in situations where the advisor has nothing to earn.

What if advisors have some personal interests at stake in the decision?

Is advice-giving predicted by advisor's benevolence?

Do benevolent advisors really give reliable advice?

Do malevolent advisors really give misleading advice?

Design

2x2 between-subject design

IV:

- interests at stake: conflicting vs. non conflicting
- advisor's benevolence: benevolent vs. malevolent

DV:

- advice uptake
- advice-giving

The game : rules and financial incentives

- individual task on computer
- trivia quizz of 40 multiple-choice questions
- 3 phases:
 - 1 20 multiple-choice questions
 - 2 20 multiple-choice questions with advice
 - 3 20 recommendations to record
- a 50 euro-reward for the player who has the most of correct answers for the first two phases

Procedure

- ① self-rating of benevolence on a 11-pt scale: *'To which extent are you ready to favor others' interests rather than yours?'*
- ② presentation of the rules, the three phases and the interests at stake for advisors (IV1):
 - conflicting: other players in competition
 - not conflicting: individuals who were not taking part in the game
- ③ Phase 1
- ④ Information about advisors' benevolence (IV2)
 - advisors whose self-rating = 1 (malevolent)
 - advisors whose self-rating = 9 (benevolent)
- ⑤ Manipulation check
- ⑥ Phase 2
- ⑦ Phase 3

Examples

Which park is american ?

Zwin

Killarney

Lake District

Yosemite

Examples

What is balsam ?

a roc

a plant

a bacteria

an amino-acid



A player advises you to answer:
a plant

Examples

Which man was a president of Togo ?

Sylvanus Olympio

Judosix Hètippon

Myabdelis Kabila

Criterion Subnumide

Your recommandation for next players:

OK

Materials and measures

Materials

- multiple-choice questions coming from a website
- from the most difficult question to the easiest
 - easiest = 95% of the website users found the correct answer
 - most difficult = 1% of the users found the correct answer
- counterbalancing of the sets of questions

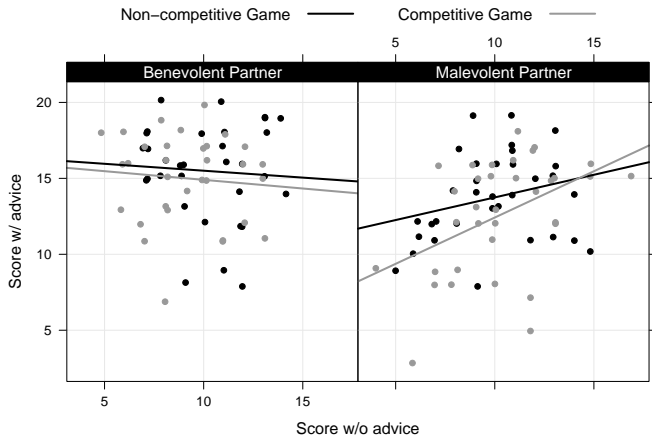
Measures

- number of correct answers in phase 1 (score 1) and number of correct answers in phase 2 (score 2) = advice uptake
- number of recommendations (phase 3): false, correct and total = advice-giving
- speed for answering questions

Results for advice uptake

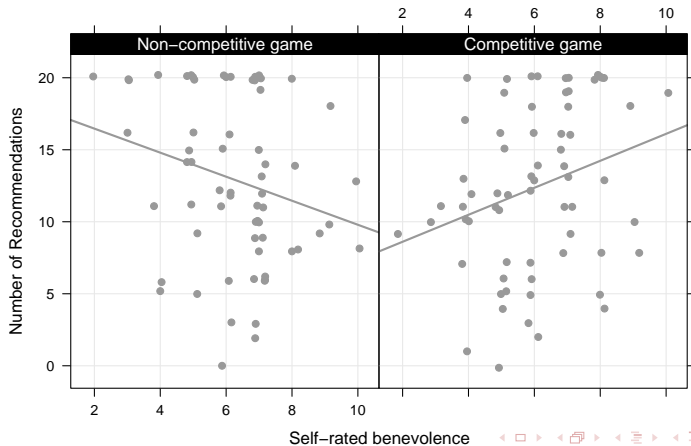
Main effect of the interests at stake on speed in phase 2: $F=4.3$, $p=0.04$

Main effect of advisor's benevolence on score 2: $F=15.6$, $p \leq .001$



Results for advice-giving

Interaction effect between the interests at stake and self-rated benevolence on the number of recommendations: $F=8.5$, $p=.004$



Conclusion

- Participants keep on trusting benevolent advisors even when they have some interests at stake in the decision
- Self-declared malevolent advisors give less recommendations when interests are in conflict
- In a situation of conflicting interests, decision-makers spend more time answering questions without effect on decision
- There is a non-strategic discard of advice given by malevolent advisors

Benevolence-based trust in advisors leads to decisions that are:

- rather intuitive than strategic
- non optimal

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