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Going green to help your genes: The use of kin-based appeals

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November 30, 2011

The Raptor Project



Difficulty of Promoting Conservation for the Future

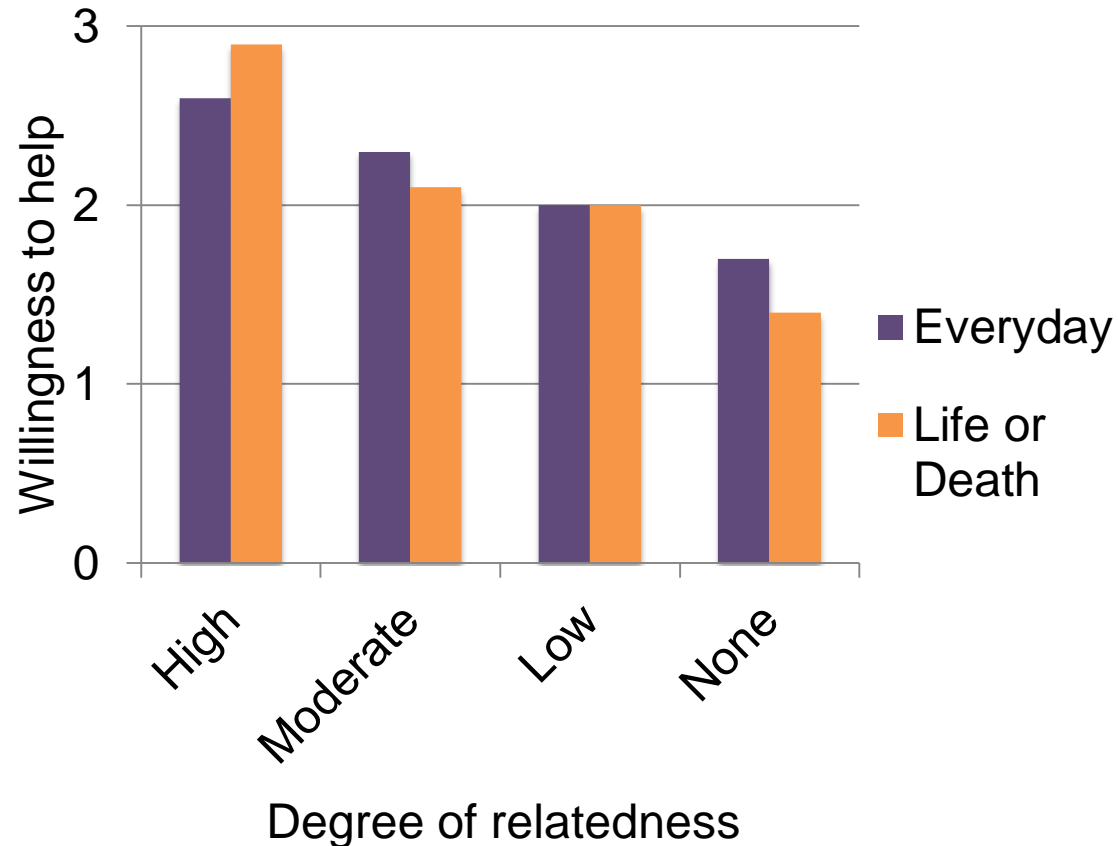
- Negative consequences of poor environmental behaviors are far into the future, not perceived as relevant
- Helps if people can take a future-focused perspective, but we are short-term thinkers
(Skinner, 1953; Critchfield & Kollins, 2001)
- How can we bring the future negative consequences to the *present*?

Appeal to Kinship



- Children: future-oriented, and high relatedness
- People are more likely to help their relatives than non-relatives, in both everyday and life-or-death situations

(Burnstein, Crandall, & Kitayama, 1994)

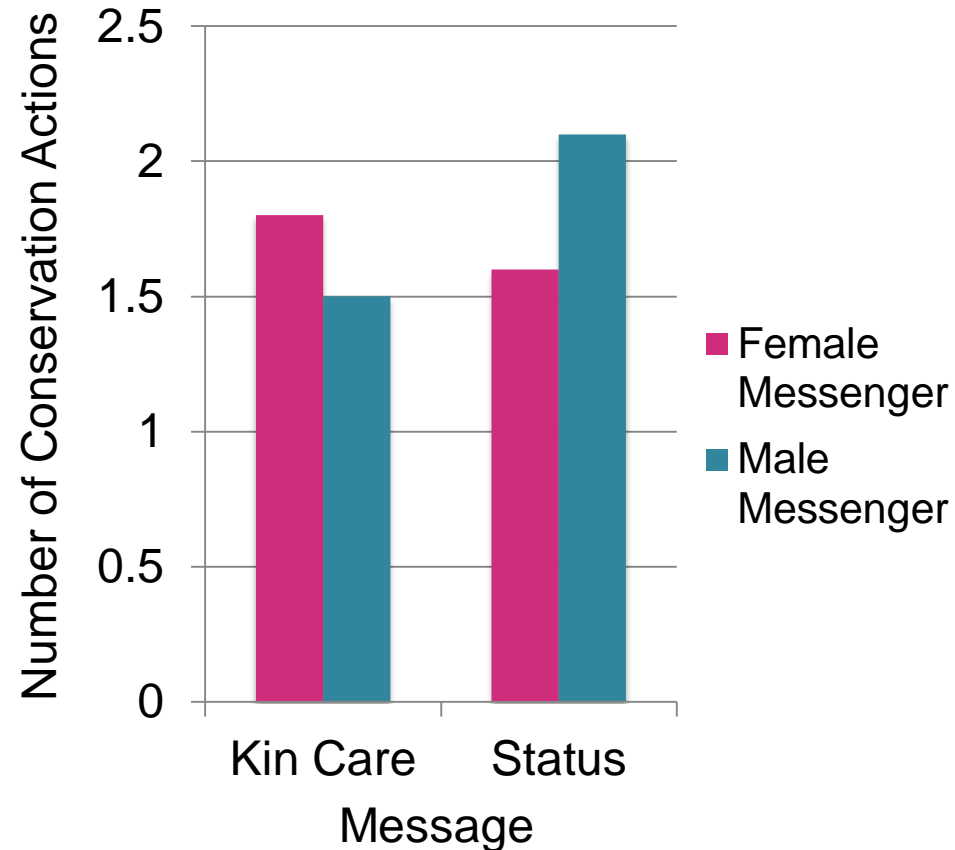




Consider the Messenger



- Will a kin appeal be more persuasive when it comes from a female messenger than a male?
- Prior research (Neel et al., 2011)
 - “Preserve the environment for your children” – more effective from a female
 - “Preserve the environment to be a leader in your community” – more effective from a male



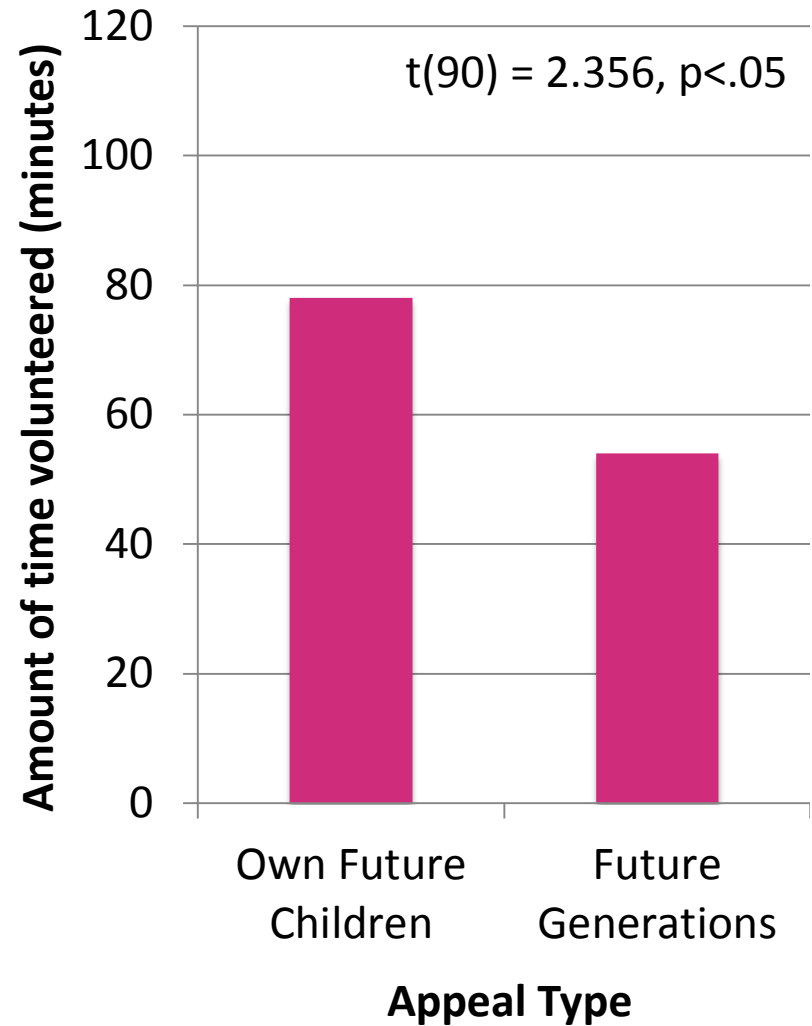
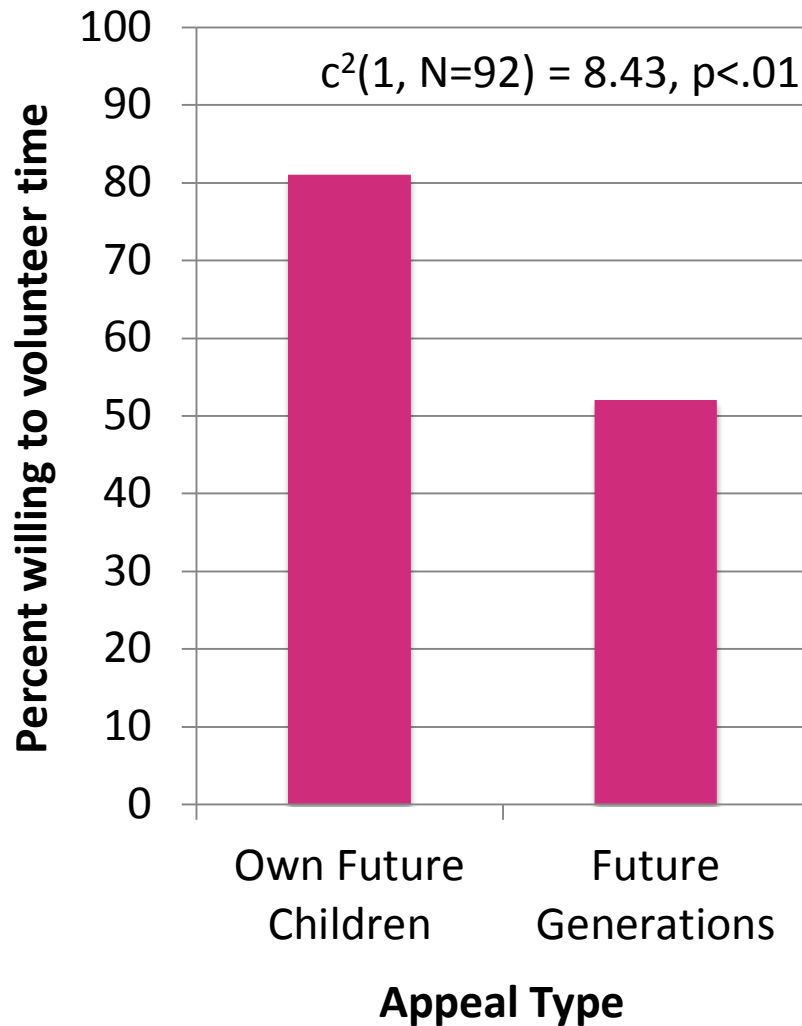
Research Hypotheses

- **Main effect of kin appeal:** Participants asked to think about their own future children (as opposed to future generations in general) will be more likely to volunteer time and money for an environmental cause
- **Moderating effect of messenger sex:** Female messengers will be more effective than males when delivering kin appeals

Study 1: Your Future Children vs. Future Generations

- N=92 ASU undergraduates, volunteer appeal:
 - **Kin appeal:** “Imagine your own children growing up in a world poisoned by everyone now. Your future family needs you now.”
 - **Non-kin appeal:** “Imagine people in the future growing up in a world poisoned by everyone now. The future needs you now.”
- DVs: Volunteering for an environmental cause
 - Would you be willing to volunteer some time? Y/N
 - How much time are you willing to volunteer? 0m – 2h+

Main Effect: Willingness to Volunteer



Study 1: Conclusions

- People are more willing to self-sacrifice for an environmental cause if they foresee their genetic relatives (i.e., children), rather than other people, benefiting from such sacrifices.
- That was with undergraduates – replicable with adult population?



Study 2: Kin Appeal in Community Sample

- N=127, MTurk Study

2x2	Female Messenger	Male Messenger
Kin appeal	“Imagine your children...” -Jennifer Taylor	“Imagine your children...” -John Taylor
Non-kin appeal	“Imagine future generations...” -Jennifer Taylor	“Imagine future generations...” -John Taylor

- DVs:
 - How many MTurk HITs are you willing to volunteer?
 - How much of your \$0.50 are you willing to donate?
 - Also collected personal demographics



Before you begin the actual task, please read this short message from the Earth Awareness League.



“Imagine your children growing up in a world that has been poisoned and polluted by the actions of everyone today. Your children need you to act now.”

Earth Awareness League is a nonprofit environmental advocacy group that works to preserve natural resources so that your children can appreciate them. We are asking mTurk workers like you to volunteer to help preserve the environment for your own children.

After you complete this \$0.50 task, you will have the opportunity to volunteer for one or more short (5-minute) mTurk tasks (HITs). If you can spare even just 5 minutes, any little bit would help.

Even if you don't have time to volunteer, Earth Awareness League is collecting donations to fund our organization's environmental preservation efforts. If you would like to, this \$0.50 task is set up so that you may donate any amount of your earnings to Earth Awareness League. We thank you for your support!

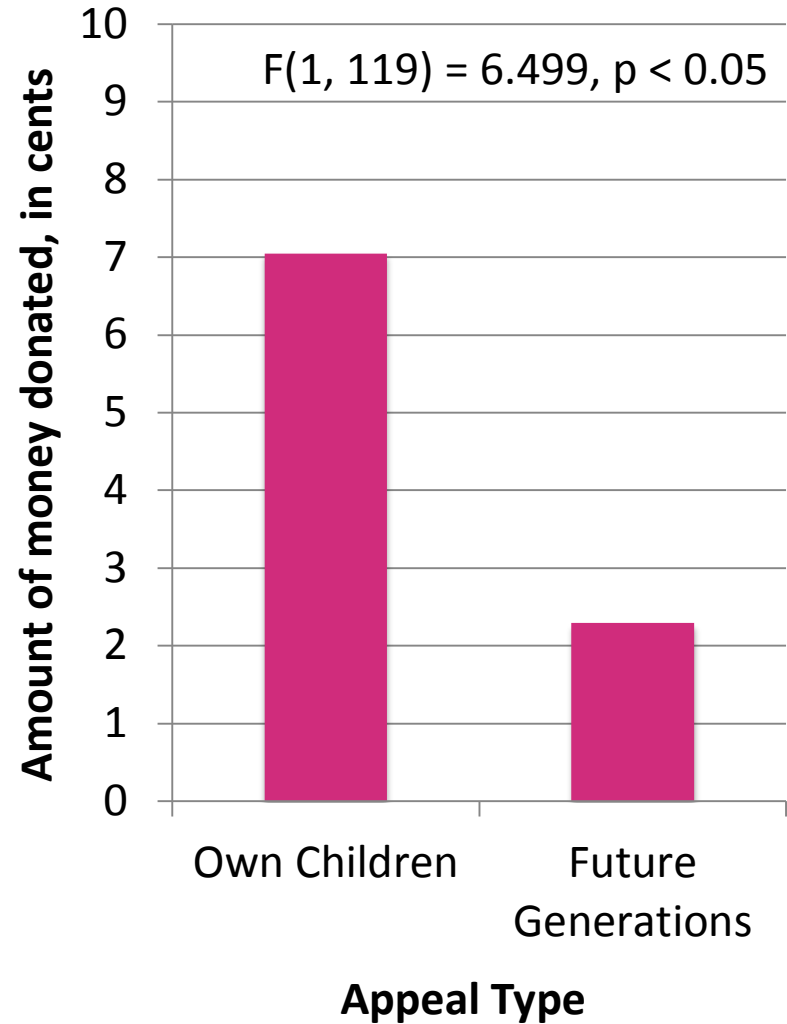
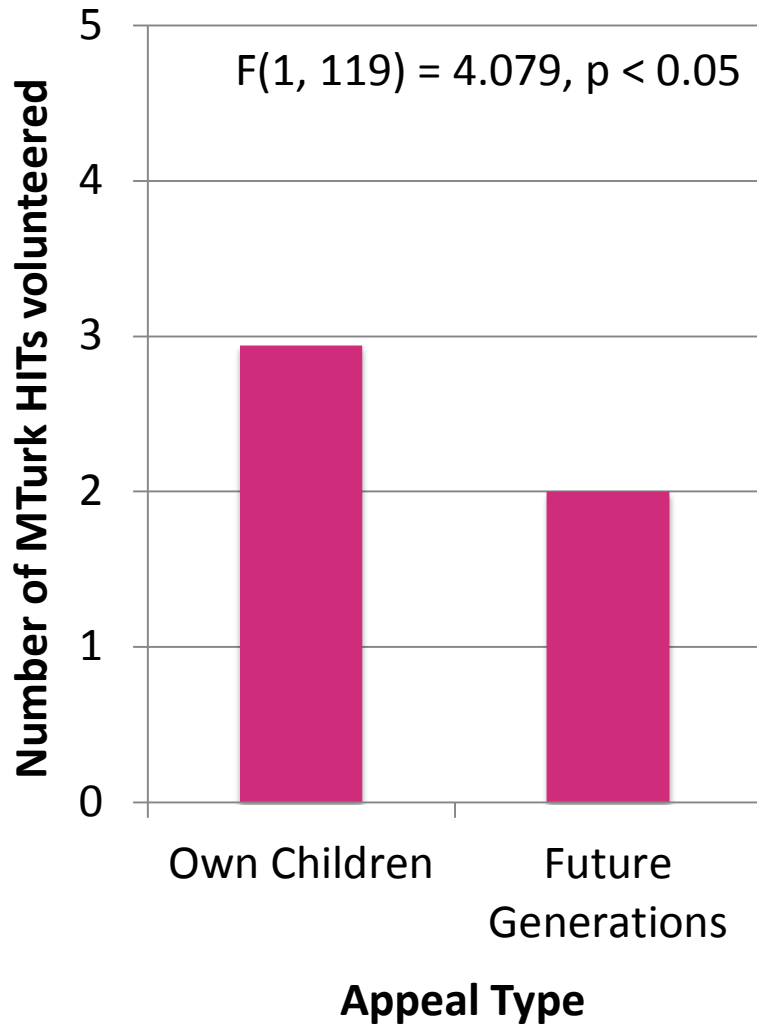
Jennifer Taylor
Director Volunteer Coordination, Earth Awareness League

2. How many 5-minute HITs are you willing to complete?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

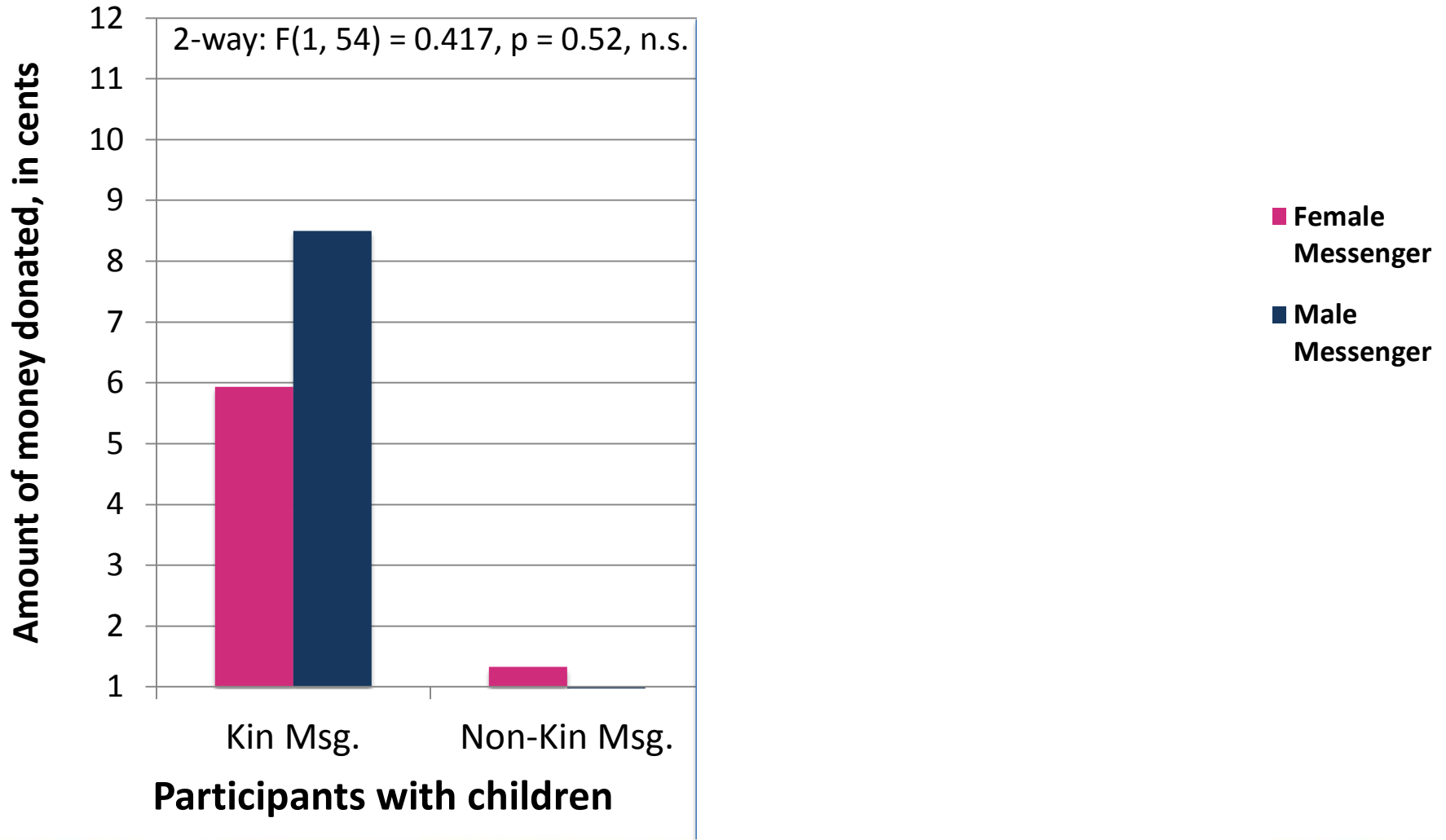
3. How much of your \$0.50 payment would you like to donate? (please enter any amount, from 0-50) \$0.____

Main Effect: Willingness to Volunteer



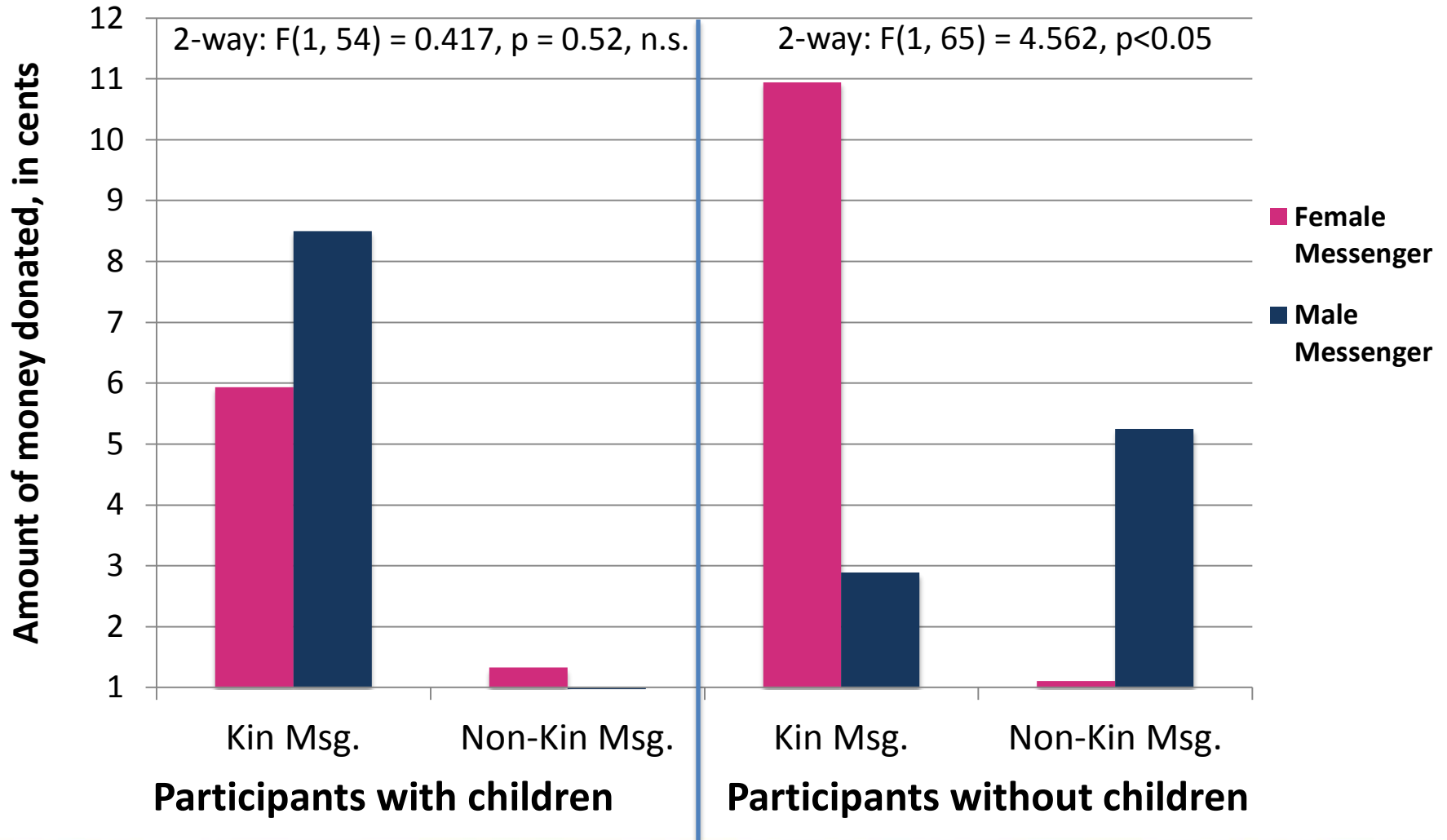
3-way interaction: Kin message, Messenger sex, and whether participants had children

3-way: $F(1,119) = 3.924, p = 0.05$



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Study 2: Conclusions

- **Replication of Kin Appeal Main Effect:** People are more willing to self-sacrifice for an environmental cause when thinking about their children, as opposed to “future generations”
- **Moderators:** Messenger matters in some cases
 - Kin-based appeals to conserve were more effective coming from women than men, but only for those who *don't* have children

Conclusions and Future Directions

- Kin-based appeals are more compelling than those about “future generations”
- Messenger and audience interact
- Examine the mechanism behind messenger effect
- Explore other kin – parents, siblings, nieces – may see effects of relatedness and age



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Thank you!

Collaborators:

Susan Ledlow

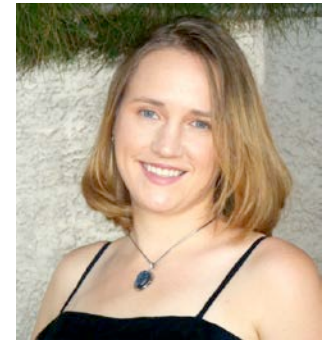
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Funding graciously provided by the Global Institute of Sustainability's DCDC grant, from the National Science Foundation