To determine whether correspondence in appearance between helper and helped will increase the rate of helping behavior, two types (Hippie and Straight) and two sexes of experimenters approached each of the four corresponding types of subjects and asked to borrow a dime for a telephone call. As predicted, a significantly greater number of persons were willing to lend money to someone who resembled them in appearance. Furthermore, as predicted, his tendency to match on the basis of appearance was stronger for male subjects than for female subjects. It was hypothesized that dress styles, like race, provide a basis for assumptions about other areas of similarity and create a greater willingness to help a similar other.

Research on helping behavior has pointed to a number of factors that increase or decrease the frequency of assistance in an emergency or need situation, such as number of people present (Latané & Darley, 1970), the example of an altruistic model (Bryan & Test, 1967), and the state of the victim (Piliavin, Rodin, & Piliavin, 1969). Relatively little work, however, has been done in terms of correspondence of characteristics between the helper and the person in need of help, though other research would suggest that such correspondence is a potentially important factor. From an assumption that similarity leads to attraction (e.g., Byrne, 1971), predictions have been verified regarding an individual's willingness to approve loans (Golightly, Huffman, & Byrne, 1971), make judicial decisions (Mitchell & Byrne, 1971), and select research assistants (Griffitt & Jackson, 1970), all pointing to the fact that individuals tend to be more charitable to those sharing some similar characteristics. While the majority of this research stresses similarity of attitudes, it might
a'so be asked what effect similarity of appearance will have on responses to another individual, particularly in those situations which, by nature of their brevity, offer information solely about appearance rather than underlying attitudes, personality traits, and the like.

Piliavin et al. (1969) approached this question in their study of bystander intervention in a subway emergency, using both black and white experimenters and observing whether black or white passengers volunteered assistance to the experimenter who had fallen on the train. Their data indicated that individuals were more likely to offer help to unfortunates of the same race than to those of the other race. Research dealing with aspects of physical appearance other than race, e.g., manner of dress, is more difficult to locate. Yet dress is clearly a major source of information when a person initially encounters another. Webb, Campbell, Schwartz, and Sechrest (1966) report a number of disparate studies that use clothing as an index of social class, taste, and behavioral intent. In addition, general observation would suggest that the individual with a beard and sloppy clothes is immediately conceptualized in a particular fashion by the majority of those who observe him. Manner of dress may lead to assumptions of political and social values, which the observer then considers in terms of their similarity to his own.

Some years ago, Lefkowitz, Blake, and Mouton (1955) demonstrated that the average citizen will conform more to the behavior of an individual who violates a traffic light if that person is well-dressed (high status) than if he is not (low status). Unreported in their data, however, are the characteristics of those who conformed. In the absence of specific information, we might speculate that followers of high status individuals tended themselves to be well-dressed, proper-looking individuals.

It is reasonable to predict, therefore, that individuals will be more likely to grant a favor to those persons who bear some resemblance to themselves and less likely to grant a favor to someone markedly different in appearance.

Sex is clearly another characteristic immediately apparent to the observer and one that could be considered as a basis for similarity judgments. Previous research, however, would suggest that sex does not operate in this way. In a favor request situation similar to the one used in the present study, Latané (1970) found no tendency for individuals to be more generous to members of their own sex. Rather both sexes were more likely to give money to a female than to a male, with the amount of difference approximately equal for male and female subjects. While Latané's data do not indicate differences between the sexes in terms of the weight given to granting favors to one or the other sex, it is nevertheless possible that sex differences might arise when combined with appearance differences. Sarbin (1954) reported that in a social perception setting, men are more likely to take note of physical characteristics and physical appearance than are women. By extension, we might then predict that men
would also show a greater tendency to respond differentially to individuals who differed in appearance, assuming that they were more attendant to those cues than women, who tend to make personality trait judgments on initial impressions.

To test the validity of these predictions, it was necessary to specify two distinct appearances which would be easily discriminated by the average person. At a university location, the clearest cases seemed to be: (a) a clean-cut, typically collegiately dressed individual (i.e., Straight), and (b) a rather sloppy, long-haired individual (i.e., Hippie). Male and female experimenters of each type made the request of a dime for a phone call to persons who also fulfilled one of the two types in order to test the following predictions:

1. Individuals will be more likely to grant a favor to a person similar in appearance to themselves than to a person different in appearance from themselves.
2. This tendency to grant a favor on the basis of appearance will be stronger for males than for females.

No main effect predictions for Hippies versus Straights were made, for although intuitive notions abound, no logical basis for predicting differences was apparent.

**METHOD**

**Summary of Design**

Responses to a request for a small favor were determined as they were related to four variables in a $2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 2$ design. Experimenters, either male or female, were dressed to approximate either a "Straight" or a "Hippie"; they in turn approached either a male or a female, also classified on the basis of dress as Straight or Hippie. Each S so encountered was asked to loan a dime to the E, and responses were classified dichotomously as giving help or refusing to help.

**Subjects and Procedure**

Subjects were 192 male and 192 female students who were approached randomly by the Es in the Student Union at Purdue University. The method of selection of subjects was as follows: Each of the four E's (Male Straight, Male Hippie, Female Straight, Female Hippie) positioned themselves in the hallway near one the eating units in the Student Union. The first student who was walking alone and who clearly fell into one of the four categories was then approached by the E.

Previous standards of categorization were agreed upon by all Es and applied both to the dress of the Es and to that of the potential Ss. An individual defined as Hippie was required to meet the following criteria: long hair, jeans, a worn
shirt or blouse, beat-up shoes or sandals, and some type of typical accessory (e.g., beads, headband, or duffle bag). Criteria for those persons classified as Straight were: straight wash or dress pants for males, skirt or pants suit for females; short or moderate length hair styled in neat fashion; and stylish, reasonably polished shoes. If a potential S did not fulfill all the criteria for one of the two types, he was not approached by an E. An equal number of Ss was approached for each of the four conditions and by each of the four Es, constituting 24 observations for each of the 16 cells of the design. An additional 15 Ss were approached by an E but are not included in the data because they said that they had previously been asked by another E.

The study was conducted in the Student Union, a building consisting of several cafeterias at which many students gather. This building was considered the best place on the campus to obtain a representative cross section of the general student population. Three sessions a day were run at selected locations in the Student Union: 8:00-10:00 a.m.; 11:00 a.m.-1:30 p.m., and 2:00-4:30 p.m. The times were chosen on the basis of maximum traffic flow.

Prior to conducting the experiment, Es agreed upon the basis for classifying individuals into types and had some practice observation sessions to ensure consensus. In addition, they rehearsed their “script” to verify constancy of the request among experimenters.

Each E took a position near one of the cafeterias at the stated times, and requested a favor from each individual who fulfilled one of the four types. Es rotated their position approximately every half hour, and continued to make requests until an equal number of Ss of each type had been encountered. In approaching a potential S, who was walking alone in the direction of E, the E stopped in front of the S and said: “Excuse me, could I borrow a dime for a long distance phone call. It’s kind of important.” In half of the cases, E added: “As soon as I get the operator, I’ll give your dime back.” Subsequent analysis of the data showed that this alteration had no effect on the rate of giving, and all data have been combined in the reported analysis.

After the S responded, E thanked him or her and walked in the direction of the phone booth. Each E recorded his obtained responses unobtrusively on his personal tally sheet, classifying responses as either positive (dime was given) or negative (dime was not given). In addition, an observer watched the approach of each E toward the four subject types in an attempt to verify that the manner of request was constant across conditions, as it was not possible to have the E blind to which condition was being run.

**RESULTS**

The data were analyzed by a factorial chi-square procedure (Winer, 1962, pp. 631-632), the results of which are presented in Table 1. Table 2 indicates the percentage of helping responses in each of the 16 cells of the design.
The overall chi-square was significant ($\chi^2 = 44.506$ with $15 \text{ df}, p < .001$), indicating deviations from expected frequency among the 16 cells. As indicated, there were significant main effects for both sex and type of experimenter, but no significant effects for subject characteristics. Hippie requestors were more likely to receive help than were Straight requesters ($\chi^2 = 4.22, p < .05$), and, somewhat surprisingly, male solicitors received more help than did females ($\chi^2 = 6.10, p < .02$).

The major interaction of interest was that of type of experimenter by type of subject. As Table 1 shows, this interaction was highly significant ($\chi^2 = 18.839, p < .001$), indicating that persons are more likely to grant a favor to someone of their own type than to someone quite different from them in appearance. Furthermore, the significant three-way interaction between type of experimenter, type of subject, and sex of subject suggests that this effect is not equally strong for both sexes. Analysis of the two-way interaction (type of $E \times$ type of $S$) within each sex of $S$ classification indicates that this tendency to match on the basis of appearance is primarily true for male $S$s ($\chi^2 = 21.29, p < .001$), whereas the trend is not significant for females ($\chi^2 = 2.55$).

In addition, there was a strong trend in the sex of $E \times$ sex of $S$ interaction, suggesting that $S$s were more likely to give to the opposite sex, although this trend did not reach conventional levels of significance ($\chi^2 = 3.51, p < .10$).
Table 2
PERCENTAGE OF HELPING BEHAVIOR IN EACH EXPERIMENTER-SUBJECT CONDITION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experimenter condition</th>
<th>Subject condition</th>
<th>MH</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>FH</th>
<th>FS</th>
<th>Mean totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MH</td>
<td>75.0</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>79.2</td>
<td>29.2</td>
<td>54.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MS</td>
<td>58.3</td>
<td>79.2</td>
<td>54.2</td>
<td>70.8</td>
<td>65.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FH</td>
<td>70.8</td>
<td>54.2</td>
<td>54.2</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>53.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FS</td>
<td>75.0</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>54.2</td>
<td>56.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean totals</td>
<td>69.8</td>
<td>57.3</td>
<td>55.2</td>
<td>46.9</td>
<td>57.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note.—Numbers in cells represent percentage of positive responses. N = 24 in each cell.

Discussion

Our results have indicated that granting a request for a small favor is not a random process on the part of individuals, but rather that some characteristics are weighted more heavily than others when the individual decides to give or not give a dime to a stranger who requests it. Similarity of appearance played a major role in determining the favor-giving response, with this tendency being particularly strong among men. We have thus extended the findings of Piliavin et al. (1969), in which racial similarity affected helping behavior, but in a situation that presumably involves much less cost than did their situation. Even when the request is a minor one, individuals are more charitable toward similar others. Such similarity may in fact be more important when the situation is not an emergency. In contrast to the situation in which help for an epileptic appears imperative, a request for a dime is a much less salient event, and thus the person being approached may take the opportunity to assess characteristics of the requester and his similarity to the person himself. Our results for comparability of type between experimenter and subject are, in fact, much stronger than those obtained by Piliavin et al. (1969), though of course the dissimilarity of situations makes any stringent comparison of data impossible. Such reasoning would suggest that when asking a small favor, the person should select his target much more carefully than when presenting a clear emergency situation.

Comparison of the present results with a similar study by Latané (1970) shows some puzzling differences. In contrast to Latane, who reported females receiving more dimes than males, our data show the opposite to be true, and at approximately the same level of significance though in the opposite direction. It
is possible that New York City residents and Purdue University students do not react equivalently to requests for money from the two sexes. As a purely ad hoc explanation, we might suggest that a woman's begging for money is less acceptable in the more conservative Indiana environment. In partial support of this speculation, we have recently collected data in an attempt to delineate expected sex-role behaviors and have found that asking for money is clearly perceived as a male-related behavior. Furthermore, ratings of the desirability of a given behavior for each sex indicate that asking for money is less desirable for the female than for the male. Another possible explanation of the $E$ sex difference is that the male $Es$ were more attractive on some dimensions than the female $Es$. Although it was not possible to get $S$ ratings of the $E$ attractiveness, this possibility was considered in advance, and the four $Es$ chosen were thought to represent parallel degrees of attractiveness.

Although not predicted, a significant difference in the amount of help received between Hippie and Straight requesters was found. Again it is possible that differential attractiveness was a factor, although the initial selection procedure attempted to minimize this possibility. Alternatively, we might again rely on admittedly ad hoc role assumptions, suggesting that it is more permissible and expected for a Hippie to beg for money than for a Straight.

Although the use of four different $Es$ for the four $E$ conditions is a potential source of bias, numerous steps were taken to minimize potential contamination. As mentioned earlier, observers made careful checks on the manner of each $E$'s request to each type of subject. Furthermore, the $Es$, with the exception of one (MH) were unaware of the hypotheses, thus preventing them from systematically biasing their results.

The present findings extend the generality of similarity as a powerful factor in interpersonal transactions, influencing a wide variety of social behaviors. In even the most trivial of situations, individuals appear to make judgments regarding the shared characteristics between themselves and others and differentially respond according to the degree of similarity present.

Style of dress can serve as a basis for these judgments as is indicated both in the present study, and in a recent study by Suedfeld, Bochner and Matas (1971). This latter study essentially provides a parallel of a portion of our design and again indicates that individuals respond more favorably to those who dress in a fashion similar to theirs. Whether these differences in response rate would hold if the appearance cues were more subtle is unknown. Straight and Hippie types are rather blatantly obvious to the average person, and both types have their share of associated stereotypes. Nevertheless, as in the case of race, the very existence of these stereotypes can result in assumptions regarding corresponding belief systems, and in the absence of disconfirming evidence, such assumptions can be potent motivators of behavior.
REFERENCES


