



Learned helplessness within the context of social interaction  
by Tommy Hauck Butler

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of MASTER OF SCIENCE  
in Psychology

Montana State University

© Copyright by Tommy Hauck Butler (1980)

Abstract:

A study was done to test the applicability of the attributional model of learned helplessness to dating approach situations. Eighty male college students were asked to make blind dating offers to female confederates over a telephone. Subjects were either told that 80% of the previous subjects received dates or that only 20% had received dates. Next, they either received two acceptances or two rejections of their dating offers, or called two telephone numbers that rang but did not answer. After this training phase, subjects were asked to make attributions about why they received, or did not receive, acceptance of their dating offers. Then subjects were tested to see how quickly and how often they made verbal contact with another female confederate waiting with them in an office. Attributions that subjects made about their ability to receive dates were significantly affected by the experimental manipulations of information about the success of relevant others, and the experience of acceptance or rejection of their dating offer. The results do not clearly support the hypothesis that internal attributions of failure impair the ability of subjects to socially interact with subsequent females.

STATEMENT OF PERMISSION TO COPY

In presenting this thesis in partial fulfillment of the requirements for an advanced degree at Montana State University, I agree that the library shall make it freely available for inspection. I further agree that permission for extensive copying of this thesis for scholarly purposes may be granted by my major professor, or, in his absence, by the Director of the Libraries. It is understood that any copying or publication of this thesis for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission.

Signature

Trinny Butler dk

Date

Aug. 13, 1980

LEARNED HELPLESSNESS WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF SOCIAL INTERACTION

by

TOMMY HAUCK BUTLER

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree

of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

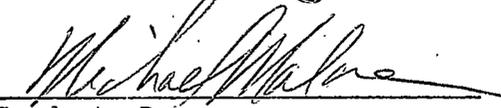
in

Psychology

Approved:

  
Chairman, Graduate Committee

  
Head, Major Department

  
Graduate Dean

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY  
Bozeman, Montana

August, 1980

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My thanks and deep appreciation are due my academic mentor, Dr. Douglas Kenrick, for his ceaseless guidance, encouragement, and good humor. Thanks are also due my confederates: Debbie, Willa, Kathy, and Connie, whose cheerful attitudes and helpful suggestions made the long hours of experimentation pass quickly.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
VITA . . . . .	ii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS . . . . .	iii
LIST OF TABLES . . . . .	v
ABSTRACT . . . . .	vi
INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
Previous Research in Learned Helplessness . . . . .	1
The helplessness paradigm . . . . .	3
Causal factors of learned helplessness . . . . .	4
The attributional theory of helplessness . . . . .	5
Hypothesis . . . . .	8
METHOD . . . . .	9
Subjects . . . . .	9
Procedure . . . . .	10
Dependent Measures . . . . .	12
RESULTS . . . . .	13
Interactions with Confederates . . . . .	13
Attributional Measures . . . . .	13
Prior Expectations . . . . .	15
DISCUSSION . . . . .	16
LITERATURE CITED . . . . .	22
APPENDIX . . . . .	26

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE	Page
1. Mean Amounts of Responding to the Subsequent Female After the Training Phase . . . . .	14

## ABSTRACT

A study was done to test the applicability of the attributional model of learned helplessness to dating approach situations. Eighty male college students were asked to make blind dating offers to female confederates over a telephone. Subjects were either told that 80% of the previous subjects received dates or that only 20% had received dates. Next, they either received two acceptances or two rejections of their dating offers, or called two telephone numbers that rang but did not answer. After this training phase, subjects were asked to make attributions about why they received, or did not receive, acceptance of their dating offers. Then subjects were tested to see how quickly and how often they made verbal contact with another female confederate waiting with them in an office. Attributions that subjects made about their ability to receive dates were significantly affected by the experimental manipulations of information about the success of relevant others, and the experience of acceptance or rejection of their dating offer. The results do not clearly support the hypothesis that internal attributions of failure impair the ability of subjects to socially interact with subsequent females.

## INTRODUCTION

### Previous Research in Learned Helplessness

Within the past ten years, much attention has been given to the phenomenon of learned helplessness, an impairment of instrumental responding and learning resulting from overexposure to uncontrollable aversive stimuli. The phenomenon was first discovered in escape-avoidance conditioning studies with dogs by Seligman and Maier (1967) and Overmier and Seligman (1967). They reported that dogs exposed to inescapable shock in a training phase subsequently showed a decrease in the number of responses to cope with solving an escape problem. The dogs were tested in a shuttle box in both experiments. By jumping the central barrier, the dogs could escape an electric shock. Upon being placed in the shuttle apparatus, dogs subjected to prior inescapable shock ran in circles, whined, barked, and eventually laid down passively upon the floor of the apparatus and made no further attempts to escape, even though they were being shocked at the time. Seligman coined the term "learned helplessness" from the appearances that the dogs had given up all attempts to respond to the noxious stimulus.

Subsequent studies focused upon the alleviation of the induced behavioral deficits (Seligman, Maier, and Geer, 1968) and the occurrence of the phenomenon in species such as cats (Thomas and Balter, in press), rats (Brand, Wepman, and Russo, 1969; Maier, Seligman and Solomon, 1969; and Maier and Testa, 1975) and fish (Padilla, Padilla, Ketterer and Giacalone, 1970). Much of the current interest in the fields of learned

helplessness is focused upon the documentation of the phenomenon in humans. Thus, much of the early animal research in helplessness is now being scrutinized for its applications to human behavior. Many studies have successfully induced the behavioral deficits that typify the behavior of helpless organisms by using experimental manipulations (aversive tones, simple cognitive tasks, escape-avoidance techniques) that are similar to those used in the early animal work (Hirota, 1974; Hiroto and Seligman, 1975; and Klein and Seligman, 1976).

The purpose of this study was to determine whether learned helplessness could be induced within the context of social interaction; that is, whether young men decrease their approach responses to females after having been rejected previously by other females. Furthermore, evidence was gathered that determined whether the resulting behavior and attributions of such rejected people parallels the behavior and attributions of people afflicted with learned helplessness.

Obviously, when one extends the helplessness paradigm to human subjects, one is not limited by strictly observational data. One may ask the subject to attribute causality to outcomes. Humans do not look merely at basic outcomes; they look at cause-effect relationships; they infer; they deduce. For example, often one is confronted with information that one has been unsuccessful in obtaining a desired outcome. In certain situations this may lead an individual to conclude that he is indeed helpless to do so generally, while in other cases the outcome

may be attributed to factors of luck, unusual task difficulty, and so on. In this experiment, we hope to see whether information about the outcomes of relevant others results in altered attributions for our subjects about their own outcomes. And in turn, we hope to determine whether subjects who make particular attributions are more likely to lapse into helplessness than are others. By varying the information supplies to a subject, it may be determined that a subject's judgment of why a woman rejected his dating offer is more important than just the fact that his offer was rejected.

The helplessness paradigm. One experimental paradigm is central to learned helplessness research. As Miller and Norman (1979, p. 94) explain:

In the typical study, subjects receive a training phase followed by a test phase. In the training phase, subjects are exposed to a training task in which they receive either; a) contingent (response dependent) reinforcement; b) non-contingent (response independent) reinforcement; or c) no treatment (control). After this training phase, the performance of the three is compared on a test task, in which reinforcement is contingent for all groups. Learned helplessness occurs when the subjects receiving non-contingent reinforcement in the training phase show deficits in the test phase relative to contingent and control groups. Thus learned helplessness refers to behavioral deficits produced by exposure to non-contingent outcomes.

Seligman (1975) proposed that learned helplessness: 1) "Interferes with learning that responding controls the outcome; 2) reduces the motivation to control the outcome; and 3) produces fear for as long as the subject is uncertain of the uncontrollability of the outcomes,

and then produces depression." These correspond to the cognitive, motivational, and affective deficits respectively.

Causal factors of learned helplessness. According to Seligman's theory (1973, 1974, 1975) the dominant causal factor in the development of learned helplessness is the organism's belief or expectancy that its responses will not influence the future probability of environmental outcomes. Seligman also postulates three factors that may limit the expectation of response-outcome independence. 1) Previous response-outcome expectancies. That is, if subjects have been strongly conditioned to associate specific responses with specific outcomes, it will be more difficult to induce learned helplessness by showing the subject that no response elicits the desired outcome. 2) Subjects may discriminate between situations. If subjects do not generalize their experience from the training task to the testing task, no helplessness will be found. The training and testing tasks must possess a minimum amount of similarity. 3) Subjects may not consider the situation to be important. The greater the subject's perceived importance of the training tasks, the more likely it is that helplessness will be observed.

Variables that have been found to affect the development of learned helplessness include amount of exposure to the uncontrollable stimulus (Roth and Kubal, 1975), instructional set (Glass and Singer, 1972; Hiroto, 1974), task importance (Roth and Kubal, 1973; Klein et al, 1976; Tennen and Eller, 1977); and the subject's perceived locus of

control (Rest et al, 1973).

The attributional theory of helplessness. In line with Seligman's notion that helplessness results mainly from causal expectancies of response-outcome independence, an attributional framework has been used as a guide for the study of learned helplessness in this paper. A specific attribution theory of helplessness has been proposed by Miller and Norman (1979). They assert that the necessary conditions for learned helplessness to occur are: a) an appropriate attribution of causality that leads to an expectation of response-outcome independence, and b) an expectation of failure. Miller and Norman further refine the etiology of learned helplessness by building on Weiner's (1974) work on attribution theory. Weiner postulates that attributions can be characterized by two dimensions: locus of control (internal vs. external) and stability (stable vs. unstable). Miller and Norman also hypothesize that the subject evaluates various aspects of the environment for information. This environmental information consists of outcome cues and situational cues.

Outcome cues are defined as "the characteristics of the feedback concerning an individual's performance in a certain situation" (Miller and Norman, 1979). This would consist of responses made and the resultant outcomes as well as the desirability of that outcome. "Situational cues refer to stimuli present in the situation itself that influences the individual's perception and the interpretation of outcomes"

(Miller and Norman, p. 107). They include: 1) instructions regarding the contingency of responses and outcomes (Glass and Singer, 1972; Hiroto, 1974); 2) instructions regarding task difficulty (Klein et al, 1976); and 3) instructions and other task cues specifying the nature of the tasks (Roth and Kubal, 1975). Other situational cues that are hypothesized by attribution theory to influence the development of attributions include social norms, observation of another's performance, and type of task (Weiner, 1975). Thus, individual differences in subjects, outcome cues, and situational cues interact to influence the formation of a particular attribution.

In the present study, situational and outcome cues will be manipulated to induce internal or external attributions. The task is the solicitation of a blind date over a telephone. The male subjects will be told either that 20% of the previous subjects received acceptances or that 80% of the previous subjects received acceptances. This information about the success of relevant others is thus a situational cue. Subsequently, subjects will either experience acceptance or rejection of their dating offer. This manipulation can be considered to be an outcome cue. It is hoped by manipulating these, internal and external attributions can be induced. Both these manipulations are intended to highlight the behavioral differences between personal and universal helplessness.

Abramson et al (1978) notes that there are different types of helplessness according to the attributions that subjects utilize:

Situations in which subjects believe they cannot solve solvable problems are instances of personal helplessness. Alternatively, situations in which subjects believe that neither they nor relevant others can solve the problem are instances of universal helplessness . . . personal helplessness entails a low efficacy expectation coupled with a high outcome expectation (the response producing the outcome is unavailable to the person), whereas, universal helplessness entails a low outcome expectation (no response produces the outcome).

This implies that one's helplessness can be due to internal or external factors. Universally helpless subjects should make attributions of causality to external factors, while personally helpless subjects should make internal attributions. Hence, it is predicted that, in the present research, male subjects who are rejected and told that only 20% of the previous subjects received dates would most likely blame the female or the situation for their failure. Also, it is predicted that they shouldn't show affective deficits. By contrast, it is thought that subjects who are rejected, yet are told that 80% of the previous subjects received dates, would most likely blame themselves for their failure. As a consequence, these personally helpless subjects will be thought to experience more affective deficits than the universally helpless subjects.

Obviously, subjects possess some prior expectations about any task. Attribution theory indicates that when learned helplessness outcomes are different from previously held expectancies, attributions

tend to be made to external, variable, and specific causes. Conversely, if learned helplessness outcomes are congruent with previously held expectancies, attributions tend to lend to internal, stable, and general causes (Feather, 1969; Feather and Simon, 1971; Gilmore and Minton, 1974). In this experiment, subjects were asked their prior expectations before participating in the training phase.

Hypothesis. It is hypothesized that college males who have previously experienced acceptances to their dating offers by females will make more approach responses toward a subsequent female than will college males who experienced rejection of their dating offers. Following the reasoning of the attribution model of helplessness by Miller and Norman (1979), it is also hypothesized that subjects who are given situational cues which lead them to make attributions of causality about their failure to internal causes will respond less quickly and less often than will males who experienced failure to receive acceptances and were led to make attributions that were external.

## METHOD

The experiment was 2 (acceptance information: high vs. low) x 3 (outcome: acceptance, rejection, and control) factorial design. Dependent measures taken were the subject's attributions of causality (attributions to self, attributions to others), latency and amount of verbal contact.

Subjects

The subjects used in the study were 80 male college students enrolled in introductory psychology courses. The subjects received class credit for their participation in the experiment. The subjects were instructed that participation in the experiment was strictly voluntary and they would receive full credit even if they declined to participate in the experiment at any time. Eight subjects were dropped from the experiment. They either guessed or heard the true purposes of the experiment, or were familiar with the female confederate leaving a total of 72 for data analysis (12 per cell).

Procedure

The training situation was conducted by a male experimenter. Male subjects arrived singly and were instructed that "the experiment that we will be conducting is concerned with the reactions of female subjects to various types of invitations for a date." The subject was asked if he was willing to "participate as a confederate in running this

experiment". Next, he was given a sheet which asked: "Generally, how successful are you with members of the opposite sex?" He was asked to respond on a scale from 1) "not at all" to 9) "very much". This constituted a measure of the subject's prior expectation of success. Then the subject was instructed to examine a bogus list of prospective female "subjects", and was told that:

The female subjects believe that they are participating in a computer-dating experiment. They are introductory psychology students like yourself, although they are not from your section. We have instructed them that they should remain home during certain hours; that they should expect a telephone call about a dating offer. We told them that they were free to accept or reject any dating offer they receive. They truly believe that they are participating in a computer-dating study.

Next, the subject was asked to select two names from the bogus list to telephone and ask for a date. The experimenter gave the male subject the telephone numbers of two female confederates, and then told the subject that either 20% or 80% of the previous subjects received acceptances. (In the control condition, subjects were told the same instructions as the subjects in the acceptance and rejection conditions, but were given telephone numbers that rang but did not answer. The experimenter explained that "these subjects were told to be home during these hours, otherwise they won't receive credit for participating".) In the

acceptance and rejection conditions, two female confederates were instructed to speak with the subject in a standard manner, and to accept or reject the offer of his date. Subjects were either given two acceptances or two rejections.

The male subject was next asked to complete a questionnaire designed to elicit his attributions of causality for success or failure in the training task (see Appendix A). Then, the subject was asked to wait for "another experiment in which you will be tested on a tachistoscope". He was brought to wait in another room in which a female confederate was sitting "while the testing machinery was being readied". The confederate was "blind" as to the experimental condition of the subjects. She was instructed to be indifferent toward the subject for the first five minutes; to answer any questions or comments tersely with one sentence; and not to stimulate conversation. As indicated above, three dependent measures were taken: 1) the length of time it took for the subject to begin talking to the confederate; 2) the total amount of time within the first five minutes that the subject talked to the confederate; and 3) the number of separate verbal responses that the subject made to the confederate during the first five minutes. After the initial five minute period, the confederate was instructed to initiate verbal contact with the subject, and show interest in him in order to remove any negative effect that may have been induced during the training phase. The subject was then fully debriefed by the experimenter,

and the purpose of the experiment were explained to him.

### Dependent Measures

The attributional measures were derived from a questionnaire given to the subjects after the training phase. The questionnaire asked the subject to assign a cause to the outcome of their first and second telephone call. Attributions to self (AS) is a self-rating on a scale from 1) "not at all" to 9) "very much", in response to the question: "Was this outcome due to something about you?" This rating was designed to tap whether the subject was making an internal or external attribution; i.e., whether he felt responsible for the outcome or not. Attributions to other (AO) is also a self-rating on a similar scale, in response to the question: "Was the outcome due to something about the female subject?" This indicated how much subjects thought the telephone confederates were responsible for the outcome. All of the other dependent measures represent the timed behavior of the subject in the testing phase. These were: 1) latency to initiate conversation, 2) number of conversations initiated, and 3) the amount of time spent talking.

## RESULTS

Interactions with Confederates

A two-way, fixed constants (subject replicated) analysis of variance was performed upon all dependent measures. No effects were found to be significant for latency of time to begin talking to the confederate, the number of responses that the subjects made to the confederate, or the amount of time spent talking with the confederate. (All  $F$  values  $< 2.35$ , all  $P$  values  $> .132$ ) Results are displayed in Table 1.

Attributional Measures

No significant effects were found for attributions about others (AO). (All  $F$  values  $< 1.95$ , all  $P$  values  $> .168$ ) Significant effects were found for attributions to self. Main effects were found for information about the previous success of relevant peers, (mean scores were 6.37 for the high information group and 4.91 for the low information group)  $F(1,71) = 170.95$ ,  $P < .001$ ; and for outcome (mean scores were 6.25 for the accepted group and 5.04 for the rejected group)  $F(1,71) = 9.75$ ,  $P = .0027$ . These results must be interpreted in light of a significant two-way interaction, as shown in Table 1.  $F(2,71) = 4.28$ ,  $P = .018$ , which suggests that both main effects were due to the fact that rejected subjects who were given low information were less likely to attribute the outcome to themselves.

Table 1

Mean Amounts of Responding to the Subsequent  
Female After the Training Phase

Information	Group	Latency to Respond	Amount Talking	Number of Responses	AS*	AO*
	CONTROL	6.75 <sup>1</sup> (5.52)	35.5 (50.39)	2.58 (2.67)	-- --	-- --
HIGH	ACCEPTANCE	6.75 (6.04)	40.66 (27.67)	4.25 (3.98)	6.50 (1.24)	6.58 (1.50)
	REJECTION	9.33 (14.33)	28.25 (71.03)	2.33 (3.14)	6.25 (1.35)	6.08 (1.37)
	CONTROL	6.58 (8.09)	36.25 (58.00)	2.33 (2.77)	-- --	-- --
LOW	ACCEPTANCE	12.50 (16.99)	41.00 (67.00)	3.41 (2.90)	6.00 (0.95)	5.91 (1.67)
	REJECTION	10.16 (10.37)	24.83 (36.67)	2.33 (2.93)	3.83 (2.16)	5.33 (2.30)

\*AS = attributions to self, AO = attributions to others.

<sup>1</sup>All times listed in seconds, standard deviations of mean listed in parentheses.

Prior Expectations

Prior expectation ratings in all groups were split at the median to create a new independent variable (high expectation - low expectation). However, no significant main or interaction effects were found for this variable with any of the dependent measures.

## DISCUSSION

Although the results of this study were generally in the predicted direction, no significant results were obtained that would clearly support the hypothesis that internal attributions of failure impair the ability of male subjects to socially interact with subsequent females.

However, results do indicate that information about the response-outcome contingency and information about the performance of relevant others did interact to influence the attributions that subjects made. The results of the attribution manipulation checks largely agreed with our predictions. Subjects presented with an experience of rejection and high information about the success of relevant others, made more internal attributions about why they did not receive acceptances to their dating offers, compared with subjects in the "rejection-low information" group. Subjects in both success conditions made relatively internal attributions. These findings are in agreement with the findings of Klein et al (1976) and Tennen and Eller (1977). Both studies manipulated response-outcome contingencies to induce varying attributions in their subjects.

Even though no significant differences between experimental groups were exhibited, one cannot automatically accept the null hypothesis; several other possibilities remain as viable explanations for the results.

Cook, Gruder, Hennigan and Flay (1979, p. 608) list several criteria for a valid acceptance of a null hypothesis:

a) When the theoretical conditions necessary for the effect to occur have been explicated, operationalized, and demonstrably met in the research; b) when all the known plausible countervailing forces have been explicated, operationalized, and demonstrably met in the research; c) when statistical analysis is powerful enough to detect at least the theoretical expected maximum effect at a pre-ordained alpha level; and d) when the manipulations and measures are demonstrably valid.

Theoretical conditions for the induction of learned helplessness in this study appear to have been met. Subjects were given prolonged exposure to learned helplessness outcomes. Subjects in the "rejection" groups found that any response that they emitted was independent of the desired outcome, and all of their attempts to control the outcome resulted in failure. Also, debriefing indicated that subjects were influenced strongly by the outcome manipulations.

Miller and Norman hypothesized that a subject's attributions of causality for a situation may have an effect upon subsequent expectations of personal control over similar situations. It was predicted that internal attributions of failure result in learned helplessness. This was operationalized by informing subjects that either 80% or only 20% of the previous subjects had received dates. This measure was thought to induce either internal or external attributions in the various groups. Manipulation checks on the attributions of the various experimental groups largely agree with the predictions made.

Several countervailing forces may have existed, however. One possibility is that the testing task (talking to a female confederate) was not important for many of the subjects. Even though they made internal attributions of failure or success, they might not have been motivated to interact with a female "on their own". From the predictions of Miller and Norman (1979) and the results of Roth and Kubal (1974) one may assume that the subjective importance of the training and testing tasks directly affects the intensity of the learned helplessness. However, it is not known how important the training and testing tasks were for the various subjects. During debriefings with the subjects, several of them noted that they were married and they thought that it affected how they reacted to the female confederate waiting in the office (the testing phase); i.e. they did not normally make approaches to unknown females. Although data was not gathered on the current dating behavior of the subjects, it is probable that many of the subjects tested were either married or involved in other steady heterosexual relationships. Thus it appears possible that the dependent measure of interacting with a subsequent female may not have been valid for subjects who were not predisposed to make any response to the unknown, female confederate. In future studies, it would be useful to record the current dating behavior of each subject.

Another possibility of a countervailing force is that subjects may not have generalized their experience of failure or success with the

telephone confederates to their meeting with the female confederate waiting in the office. This may have been due to two factors: 1) subjects may have been able to discriminate between the training and testing tasks. Seligman (1973, 1974, 1975) has postulated that discrimination between the training and testing tasks may nullify the effects of an expectation of response-outcome independence. In this experiment, it may be possible that the subjects did not perceive the solicitation of a blind date and sitting in an office with a female to be very similar tasks. If this discrimination between the two situations occurred, then no helplessness would be observed. 2) Subjects may have made specific attributions of causality about the outcome of the training task that prevented any behavioral deficits in the testing phase. Both the training and testing phases involved conversational interaction with a female. However, in the training phase, instructions given by the experimenter limited how the subjects could respond to the confederate on the telephone. No such limitations existed for the testing phase. The rigid instructional set and other manipulations in the training phase may have induced specific attributions of causality about the outcomes of the training phase. For example: a general attribution by a subject in the "reject-high information" group might be "I always do worse than other guys when I try to get a date". A specific attribution for that same subject might be "I didn't do as well as the other guys because I usually get to know girls before I ask them out".

Depending upon the specificity of their attribution, subjects may not have been induced to generalize the results of the training phase (acceptance or rejection) to their ability to interact with the female confederate waiting in the office. Miller and Norman state:

The specificity of the attribution is postulated to predict the number of future tasks that will be affected by the expectancies developed in the training phase. For example: if a subject attributed learned helplessness outcomes to his ability to solve discrimination problems, a specific cause, then expectancies for and performance on future math problems should not be affected. But if the attributions were to a general cause, ability to solve problems, then expectancies for and performance on future math problems should be affected. Thus . . . attribution of learned helplessness outcomes to a general cause will tend to increase the influence of the training phase outcomes on expectancies and performance in different types of tasks (1979, p. 110).

It is also possible that the dependent variables chosen were not valid. It may be that one would find that subjects with lowered self-efficacy expectations for social interaction would choose not to interact with others simply by removing themselves from situations where they might be induced to interact. In this experiment, the experimenter instructed the subject to wait in the office until the experimenter returned. Possibly, not to talk in such a situation would be considered rude by many of the subjects. Thus, talking to the female confederate may not have been a measure of dating approach tendencies. In future studies of this type, it would be useful to ascertain whether the dependent measures are reliable indicants of attraction or approach responses; perhaps through elaborate pre-testing.

It is also possible that the dependent variables chosen were not sensitive enough to the effects that were sought. Even though the dependent measures taken indicated that the effects were in the predicted directions, a great range was found in the data, for all dating approach measures.

In summary, the findings of this study are in agreement with the predictions made from attribution theory (Weiner, 1974) that information about how relevant others perform, and direct information about the response-outcome contingency will interact in influencing one's attributions. Attribution theory also predicts that attributions should influence both one's expectations and one's performance of future tasks. Although no significant differences between experimental groups were found, the conditions for accepting the null hypothesis were not met in this study. As indicated above, two criteria for acceptance of the null hypothesis may not have been met: 1) not all known plausible, counter-vailing forces had been explicated, operationalized, and demonstrably valid. Thus it is concluded that this study cannot in itself rule out the possibility that internal attributions of failure result in increased susceptibility to learned helplessness.

LITERATURE CITED

- Abramson, L. Y., M. E. P. Seligman and J. D. Teasdale. Learned Helplessness in Humans: Critique and Reformulation. Journal of Abnormal Psychology, 1978, 87, 49-74.
- Braud, W., B. Wepman and D. Russo. Task and Species Generality of the "Helplessness" Phenomenon. Psychonomic Science, 1969, 16, 154-155.
- Cook, T. D., C. L. Gruder, K. M. Hennigan and B. R. Flay. History of the Sleeper Effect: Some Logical Pitfalls in Accepting the Null Hypothesis. Psychological Bulletin, 1979, 86, No. 4, 662-679.
- Dweck, C. S. and N. D. Repucci. Learned Helplessness and Reinforcement Responsibility in Children. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 1973, 25, 109-116.
- Feather, N. T. Attribution of Responsibility and Valence of Success and Failure in Relation to Initial Confidence and Task Performance. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 1969, 13, 129-144.
- Feather, N. T. and J. G. Simon. Attribution of Responsibility and Valence of Outcome in Relation to Initial Confidence and Success and Failure of Self and Other. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 1971, 18, 173-188(a).
- Fosco, E. and J. Geer. Effects of Gaining Control Over Aversive Stimuli After Differing Amounts of No. Control. Psychological Reports, 1971, 29, 1153-1154.
- Gatchel, R. J., P. B. Paulus, and C. W. Maples. Learned Helplessness and Self-Reported Affect. Journal of Abnormal Psychology, 1975, 84, 732-734.
- Gatchel, R. J., and J. D. Proctor. Psychological Correlates of Learned Helplessness in Man. Journal of Abnormal Psychology, 1976, 85, 27-34.
- Geer, J., G. C. Davison, and R. J. Gatchel. Reduction of Stress in Humans Through Nonveridical Perceived Control of Aversive Stimulation. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 1970, 16, 731-738.
- Gilmor, T. M. and H. L. Minton. Internal vs. External Attribution of Task Performance as a Function of Locus of Control, Initial Confidence, and Success-Failure Outcome. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 1974, 42, 159-174.

- Glass, D. C. and J. E. Singer. Urban Stress Experiments on Noise and Social Stressors. New York: Academic Press, 1972.
- Hiroto, D. S. Locus of Control and Learned Helplessness. Journal of Experimental Psychology, 1974, 102, 187-193.
- Hiroto, D. S. and M. E. P. Seligman. Generality of Learned Helplessness in Man. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 1975, 31, 311-327.
- Klein, D. C., E. Fencil-Morse and M. E. P. Seligman. Learned Helplessness, Depression, and the Attribution of Failure. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 1976, 33, 508-516.
- Maier, S. F., M. E. P. Seligman and R. L. Soloman. Pavlovian Fear Conditioning and Learned Helplessness. Punishment. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1969 (B.A. Campbell and R. M. Church, Editors).
- Maier, S. F. and T. Testa. Failure to Learn to Escape by Rats Previously Exposed to Inescapable Shock is Partly Produced by Associative Interference. Journal of Comparative and Physiological Psychology, 1975, 88, 554, 564.
- Miller, I. W. and W. H. Norman. Learned Helplessness in Humans: A Review and Attribution Theory Model. Psychological Bulletin, 1979, 86, No. 1, 93-118.
- Overmier, J. B. and M. E. P. Seligman. Effects of Inescapable Shock Upon Subsequent Escape and Avoidance Learning. Journal of Comparative and Physiological Psychology, 1967, 63, 23-33.
- Padilla, S. M., C. Padilla, T. Ketterer, and D. Giacalone. Inescapable Shocks and Subsequent Escape-Avoidance Conditioning in Goldfish, Carassius Auratus, Psychonomic Science, 1970, 20, 295-296.
- Roth, S. and L. Kubal. Effects of Noncontingent Reinforcement of Tasks of Differing Importance: Facilitation and Learned Helplessness. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 1975, 32, 680-691.
- Seligman, M. E. P. Fall into Helplessness. Psychology Today, June 1973, 43-48.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Depression and Learned Helplessness, The Psychology of Depression: Contemporary Theory and Research. New York: Wiley, 1974 (R. J. Friedman and M. Katz, Editors).

- \_\_\_\_\_. Helplessness: On Depression, Development, and Death. San Francisco: Freeman, 1975.
- Seligman, M. E. P. and S. F. Maier. Failure to Escape Traumatic Shock. Journal of Experimental Psychology, 1967, 74, 1-9.
- Seligman, M. E. P., S. F. Maier, and J. H. Geer. The Alleviation of Learned Helplessness in the Dog. Journal of Abnormal Psychology, 1968, 73, 256-262.
- Sherrod, D. R. and R. Downs. Environmental Determinants of Altruism: The Effects of Stimulus Overload and Perceived Control on Helping. Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 1974, 10, 469-479.
- Tennen, H. and S. J. Eller. Attributional Components of Learned Helplessness and Facilitation. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 1977, 35, 265-271.
- Thomas, E. and A. Balter. Learned Helplessness: Amelioration of Symptoms of Cholinergic Blockage at the Septum. Science, In Press.
- Thorton, J. W. and P. D. Jacobs. The Facilitating Effects of Prior Inescapable Unavoidable Stress on Intellectual Performance. Psychonomic Science, 1972, 26, 185-187.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Learned Helplessness in Human Subjects. Journal of Experimental Psychology, 1971, 87, 369-372.
- Weiner, B. (Ed.) Achievement Motivation and Attribution Theory. Morristown, N. J.: General Learning Press, 1974.

APPENDIX

What was the outcome of call #2. (Circle one)

ACCEPTANCE

REJECTION

The following items ask you to assign a cause to the outcome of call #2.

We would like you to circle a number on each scale indicating how much that you feel certain factors contributed to the outcome of call #2.

Was this outcome due to something about you?

Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 very much

Explain \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Was the outcome due to something about the female subject?

Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 very much

Explain \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Was the outcome due to other factors?

Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 very much

Explain \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Generally, how successful are you with members of the opposite sex?

Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 very much

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES



3 1762 10013161 2



N378  
B9764  
cap 2

X