

Abstract

This study examined the timing and contingency of leader's behavior in a public goods dilemma. In a ContingentAfter condition the leader contributed an average amount of group members' contributions after knowing how much they contributed. Yoking on the amount contributed by the leader in the ContingentAfter condition, leaders in the Before, Simultaneous, and FixedAfter conditions made a non-contingent contribution either before, during, or after the group members made their decisions. Regression analyses showed that contingency of leader's behavior helped in maintaining members' contribution while in all other conditions members contributed less over time. Lagged-correlation analyses show that leaders influenced members when leaders acted before the group did. However, leading a group does not enhance cooperation rate if the leader sets up a bad example such as contributing only an average amount. We concluded that a leader who does not contribute much should act like a follower and make a reciprocating contribution after the members have made their decisions.