

Abstract

Impacts of goals/thresholds on contribution behaviors were explored in a public goods dilemma. This study used a real-time protocol in which people decide publicly when and how much to contribute within a time limit. “Goal” is a target of expected contribution within a certain period of time. “Thresholds” is a minimum contribution amount that the group has to reach in order to provide a public good. We differentiated between proximal and distal goals/thresholds. A distal goal/threshold is the ultimate target whereas a proximal goal/threshold is a sub-target that a group aims to achieve. We found that people contributed *more frequently* (a) in the presence of proximal thresholds, (b) in the absence of distal goals, and (c) when the number of proximal goals/thresholds increased. However, these three situations suppressed the *average amount per contribution*. The effects of increase in contribution frequency and decrease in average amount per contribution canceled each other, and the resultant total amount of contribution did not differ.