The Effect of Conversation Topic on Dominance Behaviour
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Introduction
- Individuals with higher power may feel they have the authority to demand other’s attention
- Men disproportionately fill positions of social, political, and economic power

Speaking Time
- More dominant people talk more (Cutler & Scott, 1990)
- Others may allow a more “powerful” individual to talk for longer (Daigen & Holmes, 2000)
- Even when a minority, men contributed larger proportions to discussions (Daigen & Holmes, 2000)

Interruptions
- High dominance relates to more interruptions (Daigen & Holmes, 2000)
- Men interrupt significantly more than women (Daigen & Holmes, 2000)
- People with masculine traits are more likely to interrupt (Daigen & Holmes, 2000)
- Some research has found that status, not gender, explains differences in interruptions (Liao & Kinicki, 2000)

Main Study
- How do dominance behaviors occur in a group outside a workplace setting?
  - Fewer gender based hierarchies within undergraduate students vs. workplaces
  - Does topic of conversation influence differences in dominant conversation behaviours?

Hypotheses
H1. Main effect of gender: men will on average display more dominance behaviours than women
  - H1a. Men will speak longer than women
  - H1b. Men will interrupt more than women

H2. Main effect of condition: participants on average will display more dominance behaviours in the Soft Skills focus group than the Gender Wage Gap focus group:
  - H2a. Longer speaking times in Soft Skills vs. Gender Wage Gap
  - H2b. More interruptions in Soft Skills vs. Gender Wage Gap

H3. There will be an interaction of gender and condition:

Method
- SONA participants
  - Planned N=64, Final N=14
  - 2 focus groups (equal men and women)

- Noldus Observer to code behaviours in video
  - Length of speaking in seconds
  - Number of interruptions
  - Number of times speaking first (exploratory)

- Two-way MANOVA

Results

Discussion
- H1a: Main effect of gender on speaking time, men talked significantly more than women did.
- H1b: No main effect of gender on interruptions, men and women interrupted each other the same amount.
- H2a: No main effect of condition on speaking time, there was no significant difference in speaking time between the Soft Skills and Gender Wage Gap groups.
- H2b: Main effect of condition on interruptions, but contrary to expected: Wage Gap condition had significantly more interruptions than Soft Skills condition.
- H3: No interaction between gender and condition. Must be interpreted with caution because of the low power.

Limitations
- Participants did not show up to the focus groups they signed up for.
- Most focus groups had unequal genders and were therefore unusable.
- Small sample size, therefore there is low power and may have resulted in Type-2 error.
- Must be interpreted as a case study and cannot be generalized.
- Participants were hesitant to make conversation with each other therefore may not be representative of real world conversations.

Future Directions
- Overbooking focus groups to accommodate for absences, ensures there is equal gender ratio.
- Removing the interviewers from room to encourage more natural conversation.
- Exploring dominance behaviours in other minority/majority groups like racial or sexual minorities.
- This research can be used to encourage more inclusivity, innovation, and equality in the workplace.