**Participants**:

Participants will be fifty William & Mary students recruited through the SONA research participation system. We expect the sample to be reasonably reflective of the population of the students of the College of William & Mary.

Participants will be compensated course credit for their participation, based on their real participation time.

**Methods:**

The study will be conducted in the form of an online questionnaire. The questionnaire will approximately take 20 minutes to complete. Participants will take the questionnaires in a group of 6-8. They will be required to complete the questionnaire in a free-of-distractions room with only the interviewers present in the room. Participants will first be asked to give their consent to participate in the research and then the questionnaire will begin.

In the questionnaire, the participants will be asked three set of questions. In each set of questions, they will be given 20 scenarios and one attitude question. Participants will be asked to imagine themselves in the scenarios and indicate when in that situation, how their answer will be to the attitude question.

**Rationale**:

Typically evoked when an act reveals that the actor values the recipient, gratitude is an emotion that promotes cooperative relationships and contains important social functions. Gratitude responses are affected by three main factors: 1) the benefits received by the recipient, 2) the costs incurred by the actor (McCullough et al., 2008; Tesser, Gatewood, & Driver, 1968), 3) the extent to which the act was voluntary and intentional (Tesser et al., 1968; Tsang, 2006).

Forster et al. hypothesized that the magnitude of gratitude should also be negatively correlated with the recipient’s expectations of receiving benefits from the benefactor. Since estimates of welfare valuation are thought to be positively related to expectations of benefit delivery, gratitude should be higher when the same benefit is delivered by a benefactor with a lower welfare tradeoff ratio (e.g. a stranger) compared to a benefactor with a higher welfare tradeoff ratio (e.g. a friend). However, contrary to their predictions, gratitude was related to only the magnitude of the benefit, but not by the welfare tradeoff ratio of the benefactor.

We believe that the absence of evidence to the hypothesis is a result of how the questionnaire used in the experiments are framed. The given scale of gratitude on a 6-point Likert-type scale (1 = Not at all; 6 = Extremely) is not capable of objectively measuring the magnitude of gratitude experienced by the subjects, and that subjects would interpret the word “gratitude” differently and thus give answers unexpected by the researchers.

By conducting interviews and understanding how people feel grateful, we hope to confirm the reason for the lack of evidence in the experiments done by Forster et al., and develop a new set of questionnaire that would better measure the magnitude of gratitude participants experience under varying circumstances.

**Privacy and Confidentiality:**

The data will be confidential, in that an arbitrary code number will be assigned to each participant, and the link between this code number and information that could be used to personally identify participants will be kept in a password-protected database in a locked location. No identifying information will ever be made public. All data will be kept under lock and key with only the PI having access to that key.

**Results**:

Participants will be informed about the nature of the study in the debriefing at the end of the interviews, which will explain the hypotheses and the purpose of the experiment. Furthermore, the results of previously related studies will be outlined to them. Lastly, participants will have the option to contact the researcher if they want to know the results of the studies. All participants will be given the researcher's name and email address as contact information for this study.

**Consent Form:**

Informed Consent Form

Psychological Science Department – College of William & Mary

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between gratitude, perceived benefit and reciprocity. This experiment involves the following steps:

You will be asked a series of questions related to your perception of gratitude and your reaction in some imaginary scenarios where you receive benefits. There are no known risks or discomforts associated with the tasks in this experiment. Your participation in this research should last approximately 30 minutes.

Your privacy is important to us and we will make every effort to protect your privacy. An arbitrary code number has been assigned to you for this study. The link between this code number and information that could be used to personally identify you will be kept in a password-protected database in a locked location. The results of this experiment will not be linked to any specific individual; we are only interested in group averages. No identifying information will ever be made public.

Please read the paragraph below and type your name in the field that follows.

The general nature of this study has been explained to me. I understand that I will be participating in an interview. My participation in this study should take a total of about thirty minutes. I understand that my responses will be confidential and that my name will not be associated with any results of this study. I know that I do not have to participate in this study and that if I do choose to participate, I may stop at any time without any penalty. I know that I may refuse to answer any question asked and I also understand that any payment for participation will not be affected by my responses or by my exercising any of my rights. I am aware that I may report dissatisfaction with any aspect of this experiment to the Chair of the Protection of Human Subjects Committee, Dr. Jennifer Stevens, jastev@wm.edu. I understand that I may contact Dr. Lee Kirkpatrick about this experiment to ask any questions or to obtain the results of this study after it is completed at lakirk@wm.edu. I am aware that I must be at least 18 years of age to participate. By typing my name in the field below, I signify that I have voluntarily consented to participate in this project and that I have read and understood the content of this consent form.