Good Samaritanism: An Underground Phenomenon?

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1969
What would you do?

- On your way home from school, a person you think you recognize from school is being harassed by another person you think you recognize from school. Some adults have come out to watch. Do you:
  - Go to his assistance?
  - Call the police?
  - Keep walking?
On your way home from school, a person you think you recognize from gym class is lying on the sidewalk. No one else is around. Do you:

- Go to her assistance?
- Call the police?
- Keep walking?
You are in a crowded grocery store and a woman has begun to beat her child in an abusive way. A store employee and a family are also on the same aisle. Do you:

- Say something to her?
- Go get the store manager?
- Continue to shop?
You and an elderly lady are sitting in the waiting room of a hospital late at night. No one else is there. She falls from her chair and begins to moan. Do you:

- Ask her if she is okay?
- Go get a nurse?
- Keep waiting?
You are asleep in your huge apartment complex. In the middle of the night you are awaken by the screams of a woman. You look out and notice that other neighbors have also been awaken, as you see other lights coming on. Do you:

- Go out to see what is happening?
- Call the police?
- Go back to sleep?
The Story of Kitty Genovese

- **Kitty Genovese and the Bystander effect**
- In 1964 at 3:30 AM 28 year old Kitty Genovese was stabbed to death by an attacker outside her apartment in New York City.
- She was attacked for 30 minutes and her attacker twice returned to inflict further injuries.
- Her screams woke up 38 of her neighbors although no one intervened or called the police for 20 minutes.
- Why didn’t anyone help her?
Bystander Effect

- Bystander effect - Can be caused by
  - Diffusion of responsibility
  - Pluralistic ignorance
  - Cost-benefit analysis
  - Attribution
AIM

• To test bystander effect/behavior in a real life setting (the New York subway)
• To see the effect of the type of victim on helping behavior
• To see the effect of modeling on helping behavior
• To see the effect of group size (diffusion of responsibility) on helping behavior
Hypothesis

• People who are regarded as partly responsible for their troubles would receive less sympathy and consequently less help than people seen as not responsible for their circumstances

• What are some examples of someone being partly responsible for their troubles?
Independent Variables: IV

- The type of victim
  - Drunk or Ill
- The race of the victim
  - Black or White
- The type of role model
  - Adjacent area or critical area
  - Early or late
Dependent Variable: DV

- Number of people who helped
- Time taken to help
- Gender, race, and location of helpers
- Whether people moved away and any comments that were made
Sample

- Opportunity Sample
- 45% Black and 55% White
- Average number in a car was 43
- Average number in the critical area was 8.5
Method, Design, Procedure

- **Field Experiment**
- 16 Researchers (2 male/2 female in each group) were used in 4 teams.
- Males were either the victim or the model, females were observers. Always working in the same teams and roles.
There were 103 trials between 11am and 3pm from 15th April to 26th June 1968 (3 month period). A and D trains between 59th and 125th streets (7 ½ minute journey).

On each trial, a team (two males and two females), boarded the train using different doors.

Each team varied the location of the experimental compartment from trial to trial.
Procedure continued

• The female confederates sat in the adjacent area to recorded data as discreetly as possible
• The male role model and the male victim remained standing
• The victim always stood next to a pole in the center of the critical area
Bell Ringer

• Cost-Benefit Analysis.
• You will each be provided with 6 different scenarios where you are to do a cost-benefit analysis. You will decide here if you would stop to help 😊
• Partner up!
As the train passed the first station (approximately 70 seconds after departing) the victim collapsed.

Until receiving help from a passenger, he remained motionless on the floor.

Four Victims (one from each team)
- Males
- Aged 26-35
- 3 White, 1 Black
- All identically dressed in casual clothing.
Procedure continued

• 38 trials the victim smelled of alcohol & carried a bottle wrapped in a brown bag (drunk condition)

• 65 trials the victim appeared sober and carried a black cane (cane condition)
• The role models (males aged 24-29) were all casually, but not identically dressed.

• There were four different role model conditions used across both the drunk and ill conditions:
  – Critical area – early: model stood in critical area and asked if victim needed help after 70 seconds.
  – Critical area – late: role model helped after 150 seconds.
  – Adjacent area – early: model stood in adjacent area and asked if victim needed help after 70 seconds.
  – Adjacent area – late: helped after 150 seconds.

*If Victim received no other help by the time the train stopped the role model helped him to his feet.
What type of data was collected?

• Qualitative:
  – Comments made by passengers during the incident

• Quantitative:
  – Number of helpers & speed at which they offered help
  – Race, gender, location of helpers
  – If anyone moved out of the critical area
Results

• The ill victim received help in 95% of the trials (62/65) compared to 50% for the “drunk” victim (same for both races)

• 90% of the spontaneous first helpers were male although 60% of the passengers are male. Why?
Results

• There was no difference in the number of white/black helpers except in the drunk condition. People were more likely to help their own race in this condition.

• On 60% of the trials the victim was helped by more than 1 helper.
Reflective

• Partner up!
• Each pair is going to be given the original article written in the New York Times about the Kitty Genovese murder. You are going to do a 6 panel story board showing the build up and public reaction to the attack.
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Results

• Out of the 103 trials 34 passengers left the critical area (mostly in the drunk condition)
• Response time was less when there were more people present, contradicting previous research and the diffusion of responsibility hypothesis
Conclusion

• Someone who appears drunk will get less help than someone who appears ill
• With a male victim and a public helping situation, men are more likely to help
• Same race helping- drunk condition
The drunk is helped less often because the perceived cost is greater - helping a drunk is likely to cause disgust, embarrassment or harm. The cost of not helping is less because nobody will blame another for not helping a drunk because he is perceived as partly responsible for his own victimisation.

Women help less often than men because the cost to them in terms of effort and danger is greater and, since it may not be seen as a woman’s role to offer assistance under these circumstances, the cost of not helping is less.

Diffusion of responsibility is not found in the cane-carrying situation because the cost of not helping is high and the cost of helping is low.

As time without help increases, so does the arousal level of the bystanders.
Strengths

• High level of ecological validity. The study was done in a true to life environment and consisted of an incident, which could and does happen. However, some of the participants were very close to the victim and were in a situation where they could not escape. This is often unlike many other situations where we come across emergency situations and this may be one of the reasons why diffusion of responsibility did not occur.

• The sample size was also very large and we would assume a fairly representative sample of New Yorkers. The researchers should therefore be able to generalize their findings with much more certainty than if they had carried out a study on say 40 students.
Weaknesses

- **Ethical:** A problem with the field experiment is that the participants cannot give their consent. Similarly, the participants are being deceived because they are unaware that it is not a genuine emergency. After, it is possible that participants had feelings of guilt, distress, and anxiety.

- A further problem with field experiments is that they are more difficult to control than laboratory experiments. For example, we could question whether travelers on the trains saw more than one trial. Field experiments are also more difficult to replicate and more time consuming and expensive.
Reflective

• Knowing the strengths and weaknesses of this study, create a new procedure, including the variables, that you would use if you were to do this study all over again.
• Each group will present their ideas😊