

# Study of darley and batson



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Darley and Batson (1973) conducted a study of situational and dispositional variables in helping behaviour. Based on the study, we rejected two hypotheses and accepted one of the hypotheses. The subsequent sections cover the result, explanation on why the particular hypotheses is rejected or accepted, limitation of the study, extraneous variables and conclusion.

## **Result**

The dependent variable is helping behaviour and the independent variables are time (hurry and not hurry) and religiosity (religious or not religious).

The study conducted on 68 students which they were divided into four groups with 17 participants per group. A two-way ANOVA was conducted to examine if there were differences in helping behaviour by time and religiosity. The first main effect, hurry was statistically significant,  $F(1, 64) = 53.76$ ;  $p < .001$ . Participants who were not in hurry were showing more helping behaviour ( $M = 2.74$ ,  $SD = 1.73$ ) than participants who were in hurry ( $M = .76$ ,  $SD = .82$ ). The second main effect, religiosity showed a significant difference,  $F(1, 64) = 24.25$ ;  $p < .001$ . Participants who were religious are more helpful ( $M = 2.41$ ,  $SD = 1.73$ ) than participants who were non-religious ( $M = 1.09$ ,  $SD = 1.33$ ). There was a significant interaction between the effects of hurry and religious on helping behaviour,  $F(1, 64) = 10.07$ ,  $p < .01$ .

Figure 1. The interaction effect between religious thought and time for helping behaviour.

## **Discussion**

The result of the study supported partially the pre-experimental hypotheses.

There are a numbers of possible explanations for this finding. The main factors appear are social, situational and dispositional.

Hypothesis one stated people who encounter a helping situation while thinking religious thoughts will be no more likely to offer aid than persons thinking about something else. Hypothesis one was not supported. In fact, the opposite occurred. From the data, the mean of helping behaviour is higher for religious thought people than non-religious thought. Based on one analysis where 117, 077 people responded to the World Values Surveys in 53 countries, religious people are more than five times more likely to volunteer compare to the non-religious attenders (Myer, 2010). Religious faiths predict long-term altruism that reflected in volunteerism. According to Myer (2010), in a Gallup survey, highly religious people are more likely to report having given away donations, volunteered and helped stranger. High religious people are those mentioned religious is important in their daily life. Study shows that people with God in their mind are more generous in donations (Pichon & others, 2007). The four main religious in the world, Christianity, Buddhism, Islam and Hinduism teach compassion and charity and social scientists have suggested that religion has an important influence on pro-social behaviour. From the study of Ahmed & Salas (2008), they found implicit priming of religious concepts significantly increased pro-social behaviour.

Besides having religious thought, personalities may have an effect on the helping behaviour. Facing with identical situation, some people may respond

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helpfully but some are not. Personality research found individual differences in term of helping behaviour and those differences persists over time. People who are high in positive emotion, empathy and self-efficacy are most likely to be concerned and helpful (Eisenberg et al., 1991).

Hypothesis two stated people encountering a helping situation when they are in a hurry will be less likely to offer aid than persons not in a hurry. The result supported this hypothesis. People help when they are not under time pressure. The experiment was investigating the effects of both personality and situational variables. It described how both priest and Levite passed a victim lying on the floor without helping but a Samaritan did. The reason was they were under extreme time pressure. The result also showed the more people were put under time pressure, the less likely they offer help to others. It was assumed that what the participants assumed to be thinking about or the type of religious did not affect helping behaviour. The result seems to show that situational factors are more important than dispositional factors. However, the type of help offered was affected by the dispositional factors which dispositional factors still play a role. Dispositional factor such as personality may influence how particular people react to a particular situation.

For the participants who are under time pressure, they did not provided help to the victim but they did appear aroused and anxious after the encounter in the alley. They may feel guilty for not providing help where it was against the social responsibility norms. Social responsibility norm reminds us on the balance of providing and accepting in social relations. It is an expectation of people will help those required help. However, it may relate to inattention

blindness where some of the participants typically step over the victims when they were in the rush.

Besides social responsibilities, bystander effect and decision making to assess the urgency of the situation affect the helping behaviour as well. The case of Kitty Genovese murder in 1964 was observed by 38 neighbours. None of them offered help or call the police till Kitty was finally killed by the murderer who returned to the crime scene. The case of Chinese toddler ran over by a van where 18 passers-by did not take any action and left the girl ran over by another vehicle (Mirror News, 2011). Those are a typical bystander effect and people dependent on others to provide help. The participants in this case study may think someone else after him could offer help to the victim since he was in a rush. Some other people may not in hurry. What makes the participant thought that the victim doesn't required immediate attention? In the experiments of Latane and Darley, the smoke and the lady in distress, it was noticed that people created pluralistic ignorance and no help rendered. This experiment dilemma parallels with real-life dilemma that we faced especially to the cases of Kitty and Chinese girl.

Hypothesis three stated helping behaviour does not depend on whether the person is thinking religious thoughts or not, but on whether or not he is in a hurry. Figure 1 showed the amount of time pressure induced in the subject had a major effect of helping behaviour. Hypothesis 3 was not supported and we accepted the alternate hypothesis. The result showed that the more people who has put under time pressure, the less likely they were to help regardless the participants were assumed to be thinking about the type of

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religiosity did not affect helping. The result showed situational factors are more important than dispositional factors. However, dispositional factors still play a role in the helping behaviour. The situational factor in the study was the degree of time pressure where the dispositional factor was the type of religiosity.

Piliavin, Rodin, & Piliavin, (1969) conducted a study to examine dispositional, social and situational factors. The result showed that ill victims are more likely to get helped than the drunk one where this illustrated the importance of situational factors. The result showed that men are more likely to help than women and there was a tendency of same-race helping to the drunk condition. These are the dispositional factors. In terms of numbers of bystanders, the more passengers who were in the immediate location of the victim the more likely help was to be given, thus there was no evidence of 'diffusion of responsibility'.

Piliavin et al. (1969) proposed a two factors-model. An emergency situation creates a sense of empathy in a bystander. The arousal can be reduced by helping. The second factor was helping behaviour is determined by a cost-reward calculation. The costs of helping are high and the rewards are low, the likelihood of helping is low and vice versa. Social exchange theory predicts the helping behaviour where helping is motivated by a desire to maximise rewards and minimise costs. For hypothesis three, the participants may access the costs of helping versus the cost of rewards. In this context, there is no reward for them.

## **Limitations**

There were some limitations of this study. First, it was an experimental method. The laboratory study lacked of ecological validity. If the environment changed, we may observe different helping behaviour as there are people who care about their self-images in the public. This is reflected in the study conducted by Piliavin et al. (1969). However it does show the cause-effect relationship of time pressure and helping behaviour. Another limitation was the group of the participants were limited to theology students and the sample size is small (17 per group). The ability to generalise the result is questionable. For future study, the scope of participant may need to expand beyond theology students and enlarge the sample size.

There are a few extraneous variables to be looked at for future study. First, if the victim is a woman, will the helping behaviour change? Woman has been perceived as less competent, more dependent and more help is required. Several experiments in 1970s found that women received more help than men in the situation of women with disable car, solo female hitchhikers (Myers, 2010).

Second, if Good Samaritan law apply to the country where it offers reasonable legal protection to people who offer help to those needed; it may increase the helping behaviour. This protection is intended to reduce the hesitation to help but fear for being sued for unintentional injury. This may probably change the helping behaviour for the case of Chinese girl ran over by the van.

Third, similarity. According to Myer (2010), similarity is conducive to liking and liking is conducive to helping, people are more emphatic and helpful toward those similar to them. The similarity bias applies to the beliefs and dress. If the victim was a nicely dress up man, the helping behaviour may probably change or it may create a better attention to the passer-by.

## **Conclusion**

A person who is in hurry is less likely to help others even if he is going to speak on Good Samaritan. The result seems to show that thinking of norm does not imply that one will act on them. It could be the hurriedness over powering the norm. This study confirms that situational and to a lesser degree of dispositional factors are influential upon helping behaviour.