Final Inquiry Project

Erica Johnson

Ivy Tech Community College

**Materials Needed:**

1. 7 textbooks
2. I phone or some kind of video recording device
3. 4 subjects (male, female, teacher, and poorly/nicely dressed person)
4. Someone to video the experiment
5. 2 Tuesdays @ 11:30am
6. One Monday @5pm

**ROUND #1-October 30, 2012 @ 11:30am**

Subjects: Erica (female), Vince (male), and Barbara (female teacher)

**Question #1**

When a male, female, and teacher drop a stack of textbooks, who is more likely to get help picking them up?

**Claim:**

We believe that the teacher and the female will get the most help picking up their books when they drop them.

Procedure:

1. Gather 7 textbooks of any size
2. Subjects (male, female, and teacher) and video recording person go to the second floor of the IFC building at Ivy Tech Community College by the bathrooms right above the cafeteria at 11:30am.
3. Sit in the chairs by the windows on the 2nd floor
4. Watch for a group of people or person to start walking towards you.
5. As you see someone or a group of people approaching stand up and tell the person you are with goodbye and start walking away towards the group of people or one person carrying the 7 textbooks.
6. When you get near the group of people or person accidentally drop the stack of 7 textbooks
7. Start to pick up books and see if you receive any help from the person or people around.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Subject** | **Helped/No help** | **Helped by?** | **Time** (until someone helped or walked by) |
| Erica | No help |  | 11 seconds |
| Erica | No help |  | 8 seconds |
| Erica | Helped | Group of people-family | 1 second |
| Vince | Helped | Female | 5 seconds |
| Vince | No help |  | 7 seconds |
| Vince | Helped | Male | 3 seconds |
| Barbara | Helped | Male | 3 seconds |
| Barbara | Helped | Female | 2 seconds |
| Barbara | Helped | Male | 1 second |

We were shocked at the results of this round of experimentation. We thought that someone would help me (Erica) each time. Vince was helped two out of the three times he dropped his stack of textbooks, which confused us because we thought a female would definitely get more help. Barbara was helped each time. These results did not shock us because she is a female and a professor at the school.

**Research:**

For our first round of Inquiry our results related to pro social behavior, altruism, and operant conditioning. There are many questions as to why people stop and why people do not stop to help someone that is in need of assistance. There are two main reasons why people stop to help, pro social behavior and altruism. According to Wilson and Akert (2011), “Prosocial behavior can be broadly defined as any voluntary behavior intended to benefit another person” (p. 1). Pro social behavior happens when someone helps another person with no intention of getting any kind of reward. Many people like to do things for people just to be kind. Pro social behavior is often linked with empathy. People consider the way other people are feeling when they stop to help. They think of what they would want someone else to do for them if they were in that situation. According the Whitford (2005), “Altruism is the desire to help another even if it involves a cost to the helper”. Neill (2006) believes, that altruism can also be described as unselfish behavior towards the welfare of another person. Neill (2006) also believes in the theory of Hedonism. This theory states that acts of altruism can also be selfish acts that benefit the actor. The person helping can benefit in two different ways; emotional satisfaction and reduction of negative feelings. Altruism is often linked to moral obligation. The helpers feel they are obligated to help because it is the right thing to do. Different people will respond in their own way to situations and there is no way to predict how they will respond.

**Round #2- November 6, 2012 @ 11:30am**

**Question:**

How will the way a person is dressed affect the amount of help they get when they drop a stack of textbooks in the hallway at Ivy Tech Community College?

**Claim:**

We believe the person who is dressed “nicely” will get the most help because they will be more “approachable” than the person who is dressed down.

**Procedure:**

1. Gather 7 textbooks.
2. Subjects (student who is nicely dressed and student who is poorly dressed-both females) and video recording person go the 2nd floor of the IFC building at Ivy Tech Community College by the bathrooms right above the cafeteria at 11:30 am.
3. Sit by the windows on the 2nd floor.
4. Watch for a group of people or person to start walking towards you.
5. As you see someone or a group of people approaching stand up and tell the person you are with goodbye and start walking away towards the group of people or one person carrying the 7 textbooks.
6. When you get near the group of people or person accidentally drop the stack of 7 textbooks
7. Start to pick up books and see if you receive any help from the person or people around.

Round #2

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Subject** | **Helped/No help** | **Helped by?** | **Time** (until someone helped or walked by) |
| Erica | Helped | Male | 3 seconds |
| Erica | Helped | Male | 3 seconds |
| Erica | No help | 1 female and 1 teacher just looked and walked away | 5 seconds |
| Taylor | No help | 2 females looked and walked away | 5 seconds |
| Taylor | No help | 3 males looked and kept walking | 6 seconds |
| Taylor | No help | 1 female looked and kept walking | 8 seconds |

We were confused about these results. We thought that Taylor, who was nicely dressed, would be helped more times than Erica who was poorly dressed. Erica was helped two out of the three times she dropped the books.

**Research:**

According to Ferguson (2004), “Stereotypes involve generalizations about the "typical" characteristics of members of the groups. Jane is a female, so she probably has characteristics x, y, z,”. Most people have the stereotype that women need more help than men. Some people believe that as a child we form certain stereotypes based on the upbringing of the family. One can stereotype even if they are not meaning to. It is just a natural behavior. According to Ferguson (2004), once we have developed a stereotype it comes to mind very easily. Growing up, many males where taught to: open the door for the female, pay for the female on a date, and help a female when they are in need. According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, sexism is defined as, “prejudice or discrimination based on sex; especially: discrimination against women, and behavior conditions, or attitudes that foster stereotypes of social roles based on sex”. Aronson (2005) states, Eagly and Crowly (1986) found that men are more likely to help in chivalrous, heroic ways, and women are more likely to help in nurturant ways involving long-term commitment. We decided to interview people of different ages and ask who they would be more likely to help: a male or female. Bobby Tomlinson, a male, who is 25 years old stated, (2012) “I would probably only stop and help the female…if she was hot.” Out of 14 people surveyed 13 people stated they would help a female before they would help a male. This just goes to prove that people are more likely to stop and help a female than they are a male. When I asked Kenzi, a ten year old girl if she would help the teacher she said, (2012)“Yes, because I would be afraid if I didn’t I would get into trouble.” It is interesting to see the comments between the different age groups. People might have also stereotyped Barbara because she was older than the other two subjects not just because she was a female.

**Round # 3: November 15, 2012**

**Question:**

How likely are students that are in a hurry to stop and help a student that has dropped books in the hallway at Ivy Tech Community College?

**Claim:**

We believe that people that are in a hurry are less likely to stop and help someone who is in need of help.

**Procedure:**

1. Gather 7 textbooks.
2. Subject (female student) and video recording person go to first floor of the IFC building by the entrance and exit doors.
3. Sit in the chairs by the windows close to entrance and exit doors
4. Watch for a group of people or person to start walking towards you.
5. As you see someone or a group of people approaching stand up and tell the person you are with “goodbye”, and walk away towards the group of people or person approaching carrying the 7 textbooks.
6. When you get near the group of people or person accidently drop the 7 textbooks.
7. Start to pick up the books and wait and see if you receive any help from the person or people around you.

We had to change two variables in this procedure/experiment. We had to change the location and time. We think the location we were at for the first two rounds of experimentation wouldn’t have been busy enough to test what we wanted to test.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Subject** | **Helped/ No Help** | **Helped By?** | **Time** (until someone helped or walked by) |
| Erica | No help |  | 11 seconds |
| Erica | No help |  | 6 seconds |
| Erica | Helped | Female | 8 seconds |
| Taylor | Helped | Female | 7 seconds |
| Taylor | No help |  | 10 seconds |
| Taylor | No help |  | 11 seconds |

After performing this inquiry, we found that our claim was correct. Due to the fact that Thanksgiving break had started, students were eager to get home and were not concerned with anything going on around them. We thought it was sad to think that students would not stop and help someone in need just because they were in a hurry to leave.

**Research:**

The Good Samaritan Experiment and Bystander Effect prove our results we got in our third round of inquiry. For our use the Good Samaritan experiment performed by Darley and Batson had one hypothesis that stated a person in a hurry would be less likely to offer assistance than others. During this experiment they recruited 67 students from Princeton Theological Seminary. They did not know they were going to be part of their own “good Samaritan experiment”. They gave the participants a personality questionnaire and then told them they were going to have to speak about it in another room. On their way to the other room they would encounter someone in need of help. According to Gilbert Harman (1996),

“Some of the subjects were told they were late and should hurry; some were told they had just enough time to get to the recording room; and some were told they would arrive early. Judging by their responses to a questionnaire, they had different religious and moral orientations. The only one of these variables that made a difference was how much of a hurry the subjects were in. 63% of subjects that were in no hurry stopped to help, 45% of those in a moderate hurry stopped, and 10% of those that were in a great hurry stopped.”

According to this experiment they proved that people that were in a hurry are less likely to stop and help someone in need of help. During our experiment only one person out of six stopped to help the subject when they were in a hurry to leave school.

Kendra Cherry states, “The term bystander effect refers to the phenomenon in which the greater the number of people present, the less likely people are to help a person in distress. When an emergency situation occurs, observers are more likely to take action if there are few or no other witnesses.” People believe the more people around the more help the person will get, but that is not true. Karen Sternheimer talks about the term diffusion of responsibility and what it means in her article *The Bystander Effect: A Case Study.* According to Sternheimer (2011), “Diffusion of responsibility takes place when we believe that we are not personally responsible to help, that the others around us will surely take action. This is more likely to happen when an emergency happens in a crowd”. Latane and Darley also tested a theory of pluralistic ignorance. Genovese talks about Latane and Darley’s experiment on her website about factors that influence pro social behavior. According to Kendra Cherry, (2012) “Pluralistic Ignorance describes a state of thinking in which individuals in a group take their cues from other individuals in a group. For example, if everyone else is being calm about the person sleeping on the sidewalk, and no one is offering assistance, then the situation must not be an emergency and therefore doesn't require my help”. In our third round of inquiry the first two times I dropped books there were two or more people around and nobody stopped to help. The third time I dropped the books there was only one female around and she hesitated to stop, but she did stop and help.

As you can see there are many different factors that affect why people help and why they do not help. One question keeps coming to my mind as I am finishing up with this experiment, “How could we teach people that helping someone is the right thing to do in any situation.” It really bothered me to see some of the results from these three rounds of experimentation.

References

Aronson, E., Wilson, T., & Akert, R. (n.d.). *Social psychology* (Fifth ed.). Pearson.

The bystander effect. (2012, February). Retrieved November 24, 2012, from http://www.whatispsychology.biz/about-bystander-effect-definition

Cherry, K. (2012). Bystander effect. Retrieved November 24, 2012, from http://psychology.about.com/od/socialpsychology/a/bystandereffect.htm

Cherry, K. (2012, January). The person and the situation. Retrieved November 24, 2012, from http://www.netplaces.com/psychology/social-interactions-and-interpersonal-behavior/the-person-and-the-situation.htm

Darley and batson good samaritan experiment. (1973). Retrieved November 21, 2012, from From Jerusalem to Jericho website: http://faculty.babson.edu/krollag/org\_site/soc\_psych/darley\_samarit.html

Ferguson, T. J. (2004). Prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination. Retrieved November 24, 2012, from Chapter 5- Perceiving Groups website: http://www.usu.edu/psy3510/prejudice.html

Fournier, G. (2012). Bystander effect. Retrieved November 24, 2012, from http://psychcentral.com/encyclopedia/2008/bystander-effect/

*Merriam-Webster*. (n.d.).

Neill, J. (2006, October). Social psycology. Retrieved November 24, 2012, from Social Psycology website: http://www.wilderdom.com/psychology/social/introduction/Altruism.html

Sternheimer, K. (2011, September 22). The bystander effect: A case study. Retrieved November 24, 2012, from http://www.everydaysociologyblog.com/2011/09/the-bystander-effect-a-case-study.html

Tomlinson, B., & Jackson, K. (2012, November 18). [Personal interview by E. Johnson].

Virtue ethics and the fundamental attribution error. (1996). Retrieved November 21, 2012, from Moral Philosophy Meets Social Psychology website: http://www.princeton.edu/~harman/Papers/Virtue.html

When situations not personality dictate our behaviour. (2009, December). Retrieved November 24, 2012, from Psyblog website: http://www.spring.org.uk/2009/12/when-situations-not-personality-dictate-our-behaviour.php

Wilson, B. (2008). Media and children's aggression, fear, and altruism. *The Future of Children*, *18*(1), 1-5.

**SCIENTIFIC JOURNAL:**

**October 30,2012**

Today was our first day of experimentation. Last week (October 23, 2012) we looked for our area that we wanted to do our experiment. We came to the conclusion that the 2nd floor in the IFC building of Ivy Tech would be a good spot for our first round on inquiry. We used me (Erica), Vince (male), and Barb (teacher & female) in this round.

**First Round Question.**

**Question:** When a male, female, and teacher drop a stack of textbooks, who is more likely to get help picking them up?

**Claim:** We believe that the female will get the most help.

**WHAT WE FOUND OUT:**

We thought that we were pretty set on our claim and that we would be correct and the female would receive more help than the male. After doing the experiment we were shocked that Vince received more help than me (Erica –female). We weren’t shocked at all of the results of Barb’s round. She is female and an Instructor at the college.

I was also shocked to see how many people just looked at the subjects (Me, Vince and Barb) and just continued to walk away. Even though Vince and Barb got helped the most, there were still people that looked at them and clearly saw they needed help watched the person helping and continued walking away.

I was disturbed by one specific round that I was involved in. There was a group of ladies that clearly saw me drop my books, and one of them just looked at me, looked away, walked around me, and went into the bathroom until I was done picking up my books.

**Further Questions:**

* How will our appearance reflect our results?
* Do we need to keep the same setting and time in all of our rounds of inquiry?
* What is our main focus in research for this round?
* Should we research stereotypes that pertain to gender?
* What other topics can we research during this round?

Research These things: Stereotypes, Pro Social Behavior, and Altruism.

**November 6, 2012**

We did our 2nd round of inquiry today. Taylor and I planned to bring clothes with us to class to dress differently. Taylor brought clothes to dress business casual and I brought pajamas and slippers. After we changed our clothes we headed to the same setting (2nd floor of the IFC building in Ivy Tech).

**Second Round Question:**

**Question:** How will the way a person is dressed affect the amount of help they get when they drop a stack of textbooks in the hallway at Ivy Tech Community College?

**Claim:** We believe the person who is “nicely” dressed will receive more help than the subject who is poorly dressed because the nicely dressed person will be more approachable.

**WHAT WE FOUND OUT:**

We were really wrong with our claim today! Taylor was dressed nicely and received NO HELP! I could not believe this! I was helped two out of the three times that I dropped the books. We were a slight bit confused about these results. After talking amongst each other we came to the conclusion that people probably felt sorry for me and that’s why they stopped to help me. After watching some of the videos we realized that maybe Taylor wasn’t “direct” enough. I felt like I was more “dramatic” dropping my books, so that could have made a difference also.

Further Questions:

* Does socioeconomic status play a part in the data we received this round?
* Have other students gotten the same results as us?
* What makes people decide if they are going to stop and help or not?
* What major things should we research about the results we found?

**November 15, 2012**

We decided that we needed to change the time and location this round of inquiry. We decided together that we wanted to change our location to somewhere that would be busier. We decided that we would change our time and location to 5:00pm by the entrance/exit doors of the IFC building. We thought this would be the perfect time and place because Thanksgiving break started Monday and we thought students would be in a hurry to get home.

**Third Round Question:**

**Question**: How likely are students that are in a hurry to stop and help a student that has dropped books in the hallway at Ivy Tech Community College?

**Claim**: We believe that people that are in a hurry are less likely to stop and help someone who is in need of help.

**WHAT WE FOUND OUT:**

We were not shocked of our results this round. We received little to no help during this round of inquiry. We believe that students were to wrapped up into their own thoughts about getting out of school that they didn’t even realize someone was in need of help. Some people even stepped over and around our books to continue on their path. Our claim was right on for this round.

**Further Questions:**

* How are we going to interpret this into a 40 min presentation?
* What holes to we need to fill in to finalize this project
* Figure out why some of our research is overlapping in each category. Are they all connected somehow?
* How can we make people realize that it is the right thing to stop and help someone who is in need?

DATA TABLES FOR ALL THREE ROUNDS OF INQUIRY:

ROUND #1

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Subject** | **Helped/No help** | **Helped by?** | **Time** (until someone helped or walked by) |
| Erica | No help |  | 11 seconds |
| Erica | No help |  | 8 seconds |
| Erica | Helped | Group of people-family | 1 second |
| Vince | Helped | Female | 5 seconds |
| Vince | No help |  | 7 seconds |
| Vince | Helped | Male | 3 seconds |
| Barbara | Helped | Male | 3 seconds |
| Barbara | Helped | Female | 2 seconds |
| Barbara | Helped | Male | 1 second |

ROUND #2

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Subject** | **Helped/No help** | **Helped by?** | **Time** (until someone helped or walked by) |
| Erica | Helped | Male | 3 seconds |
| Erica | Helped | Male | 3 seconds |
| Erica | No help | 1 female and 1 teacher just looked and walked away | 5 seconds |
| Taylor | No help | 2 females looked and walked away | 5 seconds |
| Taylor | No help | 3 males looked and kept walking | 6 seconds |
| Taylor | No help | 1 female looked and kept walking | 8 seconds |

ROUND #3

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Subject** | **Helped/ No Help** | **Helped By?** | **Time** (until someone helped or walked by) |
| Erica | No help |  | 11 seconds |
| Erica | No help |  | 6 seconds |
| Erica | Helped | Female | 8 seconds |
| Taylor | Helped | Female | 7 seconds |
| Taylor | No help |  | 10 seconds |
| Taylor | No help |  | 11 seconds |

This experiment made me sit back and really think. Would I stop and help these people if the roles were reversed? I would like to think I would, but only being put in the situation would I be able to answer that question. After experiencing what it feels like needing help and not receiving it, I have realized that I need to help anyone that is in need of help.