



## Piliavin (1969) ~ Good Samaritan: An Underground Phenomenon

### Short Answer Question – suggested answers

1. Define Bystander Apathy. (1 mark)

This is the theory that states that individuals are less likely to offer help to a victim when there are other people present; the greater the number of bystanders, the less likely it is that one of them will help.

2. This study was based on cases such as that of Kitty Genovese, explain why? (2 marks)

Kitty Genovese was brutally murdered outside of her apartment in New York in 1964. The attack lasted around 30 minutes as she was stabbed 14 times with many people watching from their windows. Nobody went to help Kitty and she sadly died, Social Psychologists assumed this could be due to Bystander Apathy. This study wanted to test this idea in real life.

3. Identify the four independent variables in this study? (4 marks)

Victim drunk/with cane

Victim white/ black

Model help early/ late

Model help critical area/ adjacent area

4. What were the six dependent variables in this experiment? (6 mark)

Number of people who offered spontaneous help (frequency of helping)

Speed of helping

Gender of helper

Race of helper

Location of helper

Qualitative comments

5. Why was a model used in this study? (1 mark)

To offer help if participants did not spontaneously help (prevents suspicion).

6. Outline the role of the four researchers/ confederates in this study? (2 marks)

2 researchers were female and 2 were male. The females were asked to act covertly and record the dependent variables whereas the males were playing the parts of victim and model.

7. What is the difference between the critical area and the adjacent area? (2 marks)

The critical area was in the exact carriage in which the victim collapsed and the adjacent area was the one directly next to it where the female observers sat.

8. What did the victim do in both the cane and drunk conditions? (2 marks)

At approximately 70 seconds into the train journey the victim staggered forward and collapsed in the critical area of the carriage. He remained on the floor until help arrived. If no help was offered the model would help him to his feet before the next stop.

9. Give one finding that relates to the frequency or speed of helping. (2 marks)

The cane victim received spontaneous help on 62 out of the 65 trials (95%), and the drunk victim received spontaneous help on 19 out of 38 trials (50%).

10. Give one finding that relates to the sex/ gender of the helper? (2 marks)

90% of helpers were male.

11. What can we conclude about bystander behaviour and diffusion of responsibility based on the findings in this study? (3 marks)

We can conclude that in a real life setting, most people would offer spontaneous help to a person in need, even in a group situation. This was shown by the high percentages of help recorded. This study found no evidence of diffusion of responsibility, therefore suggesting that Bystander Apathy does not necessarily occur. The researchers do conclude that there are several factors that can affect this such as the 'cost-reward' analysis.

12. Explain one problem with how the data was collected in this study? (2 marks)

The data was collected using two female observers who were positioned in the adjacent carriage which may have meant they missed some of the behaviours in the critical area, as their view could have been obstructed by other passengers.

13. Describe how the generalisation of this study may affect the conclusions? (2 marks)

This study was only carried out with participants who travel on the New York subway; we may get different results if it was carried out somewhere more common. It was also conducted in America making the sample ethnocentric, limiting the generalisation.

14. Why is this study criticised for its lack of reliability? (2 marks)

It has been criticised for the lack of reliability due to the high risk of extraneous variables that could have affected each individual trial. The researcher had no control over the type of passengers entering the carriages; this may have affected the results. They also failed to conduct equal trials in both conditions as the male students felt more uncomfortable playing the drunk victim.

15. What can we say about the ecological validity of this study? (2 marks)

The ecological validity of the study is high as it was conducted in a real life setting on the New York subway which was a natural environment for many of the commuters.

