**Study about the ethics in subway experiment**

The subway study operated by Irving M. Piliavin and Judith Rodin in 1969 which aimed to learn more about how people's reaction of helping others related with the amount of people around them is very well known in social psychology area. The experiment's validity and ethic was also discussed a lot. The limited experiment environment and equipment caused many weaknesses, but this doesn't make this experiment a failure. Just the opposite, it became an example for us to learn how to enhance the strength and improve the mistakes. This Essay will discuss about the advantage and disadvantage of this experiment.

Basically, the strength and weakness of this experiment can be simply separated into four points, two for strength and the rest for the weakness. As for the strong point, firstly, the experiment did no physical nor psychological harm to the participants, the participant feels nothing but a normal working day. Next, the participants have the choice to stop participating the experiment by just walk away or leave the train, although it is obvious that they can’t jump out from the train when the train is moving, they did have the opportunity to not getting on the train or go to another part of the train.

Besides these strengths we’ve mentioned above, this experiment also got some weaknesses. The most important issue is that it didn’t notify the participant about anything of the experiment before it is started, they thought they were in a normal trip to work. Moreover, the psychologists who operated this experiment also didn’t tell the participants their real aim before they started the next round of experiment. Overall, they experiment had much more strong and weak points except just these, but I think they are the most significant ones, so I used them for further analyses.

Focusing on the first advantage, the experiment didn’t do any harm, no matter physical or psychological to the participants. The experiment was done by only “act” and “record”, the participants didn’t even feel the experiment. The advantages brought by this is huge, not only the psychologists are able to get better and more natural results, but they also don't have to do the “helping” part in order to remove the affects brought by the experiment to the participant. Secondly, allowing the participants to leave whenever they want promised their safety and avoid harm or ethical issues, so the experiment can have higher validity and reliability.

Then it comes to the negative part. In my opinion, the most serious ethical problem in subway study is that the participants didn’t know they are a part of an experiment, which will definitely make people feel strange and unhappy. It broke the “informed consent” part of the ethic rule. Although the researchers need people to perform naturally, at least they should inform people who took part in the experiment after it was operated. However, they didn’t do either of them. What more, end the experiment without informing the participant about the aim and the result broke another ethic rule:” debriefing”.

In summary, the experiment followed two ethic rules, which are protection and withdraw perfectly, while also broke two other rules at the same time ---- informed consent and debriefing. From the view of psychology research, this experiment explored the effect of crowd to people’s behavior and got some excellent result so the psychologists could make their final conclusion, made a huge step in psychology field.