(A) INTRODUCTION

- *How do we **define** Helping Behavior?*

Helping can be conceptualized as an interaction between helper and client that has the specific aim of resolving the client's presenting problem. (Processes in Helping Relationship, Thomas Ashby Wills) The helper provides benefit to others but it is not beneficial for the person who carries them out. (Baron, R. A., Byrne, D., & Johnson, B. T. 1998) This is called Altruism which is action intended solely to benefit another and not to gain external or internal reward for self.

- *How are **Empathy** and **Helping Behavior** related?*

Empathy is compassionate feelings caused by taking the perspective of a needy other and it sometimes called sympathy which is a form of feeling sorry for a separate other and it is easily moved by other's suffering. Since empathy is generally perceived to be a cause leading to helping behavior, we take this opportunity to investigate whether this perception is justified.

(B) THE IDEOLOGY of our experiment

- *Why did we choose this **Independent Variable**?*

Psychologists' perspectives

Referring to **empathy-altruism hypothesis**, (Batson, Klein, et al., 1995; Batson & Weeks, 1996) at least some helping behavior is motivated by the unselfish desire to help someone who needs help. According to **empathic joy hypothesis**, (K. D. Smith, Keating, and Stotland 1989)

empathy leads to helping because the helper anticipates feeling good about accomplishing something. The ones who give help is more powerful than the one who receive it. Those who provide mercy can then accept consideration for their own needs without feeling guilty and helping arrangements can be structured toward the aim of achieving a balanced exchange. (Counting on Kindness, Wendy Lustbader)

Our perspectives

1) We believe that "**Injury triggers empathy; empathy triggers helping**". We have chosen "slipping on the floor" as our Independent Variable. Why not other kinds of injuries? We believe that "Falling down", is relatively trivial, visible and reasonable. It may be unnoticeable to use illness like having headache or fever as our IV; it is also unreasonable for experimenter to get injured with things like knife when doing the survey.
2) We segregate helping behaviors into **2 levels**; it is common sense that lending a friend $5 is completely different from $500,000. The lower one is the agreement to help, while the higher one is to help with greater sacrifices.

Base on our perspectives, we came up with the following hypotheses:

H_1: empathy makes helping behavior more possible

H_2: empathy makes a greater extent of helping behavior

(C) METHODS adopted in our experiment

- *What have we done to test the validity of this **perception**?*

The **variables**

Independent Variable	whether the experimenter falls or not when approaching the object
Dependent Variables	occurrence and magnitude of helping

The **process** of the experiment:

For the **Test** group,

1) One of the two experimenters falls on the floor when approaching the target interviewees (30 in total).
2) The slipped one invites the target to fill in the prepared questionnaire.
3) Interviewees are asked to take a photo with the experimenters.

For the **Control** group,

The same experimenters as the test group simply approach the target interviewees and ask them to fill in the questionnaires

- *How did we deal with the **conceivable error** in the experiment?*

The following measures were taken to ensure the effectiveness and consistency throughout the experiment:

1. **Consistent demonstrations** of the experimenters.

Standardized action and script were designed. Experimenters should kick their left leg with the right one, and at least one of their knees touched the floor. They fell right

in front of the objects and showed painful expressions when asking the objects to complete the questionnaire. Pilot test for the DV were done before the ex periment.

2. Elimination of the **gender differences**

Experimenters and interviewees should be the same in gender.

3. Elimination of the **circumstantial differences**

The experiment should be carried out at a same day, time and location.

- *How did we measure the **occurrence** and **magnitude** of helping?*

The agreement of the interviewees in filling in the questionnaire is a measure testing the **lower level** of helping behaviors. The **higher level** is measured by whether the interviewees are willing to take a photo with our e xperimenters. Taking photo is regarded as a higher sacrifice as interviewees are risking the disclosure of the photos, which is their personal information.

(D) EXECUTION of our experiment

Our experiment was conducted on 7th, May, 2004, at 12:00 noon, at the Academic Concourse of the HKUST. Two of our male group-mates, Kenneth and Calvin were selected to be the experimenters. The Control experiment was firstly done and the Test experiment followed. Experimenters approached females who walked alone with her perceived age range from 18 to 25. Experimenters exercised standardized script and behavior. The experiment took around 3 hours to complete.

(E) FINDINGS of our experiment

		Test		Control	
Accept	Photo	15	(15/21) 71.43%	16	80.00%
	No Photo	6	(6/21) 28.58%	4	20.00%
	Total	21	(21/30) 70.00%	20	66.67%
Reject	Total	9	(9/30) 30.00%	10	33.33%
		30	100.00%	30	100.00%

- *What is the result for H_1? (Re. Fig.1)*

To summarize the data, 70% of the objects helped complete our questionnaire in the Test setting while in the control experiment, it was just 66.67%. It is shown that respondents are slightly more helpful in the Test setting when compared to the Control one. However, it is just a slight difference; the error term may already outweigh the difference, so it is not significant enough to deduce the usefulness of the test to affect object's behavior. We concluded that there is a **low correlation** in the two variables, "Empathy" & "the possibility of Helping".

- *What is the result for H_2?(Re. Fig.2)*

To test $\mathbf{H_2}$, respondents are requested to take a photo after filling in the questionnaire. To our surprise, there were 71.43% of the objects accepted our request, while 80% of them did so in the control one. The result, which means the weighting between the test and control group, is just the opposite to that of the experiment for $\mathbf{H_1}$.

(F) DISCUSSION

- *Do the findings justify our hypotheses?*

Based on the findings obtained, there are just tiny differences between the test group and the control group. Such a tiny difference is not enough in justifying our hypotheses that sympathy really makes helping behavior more possible. What's more, relatively speaking, there were slightly more people who agreed to take picture with our interviewers in the control group (80%) when compared with the test group (71%). Such finding contradicts with our hypothesis that sympathy makes a greater extent of helping behavior.

- *How did we analyze the findings?*

We tried to analyze our findings by thinking in **two ways**, that is **whether the findings are really reflecting the reality or not**.

1) Refer to Fig.3, we hypothesized that there should be more helping in the test group. However findings showed that people seemed to be equally helpful in both situations. If we do not think the finding are reflecting the reality, we would conclude that there was an increase or a decrease in the helping behavior in the control group and the test group respectively that makes the convergent result of the two groups.

Base on this logic, we came up with 2 questions from our findings, they are

	Fall	**Help**
Why did people help even without the falling of experimenter?	No	Yes
Why didn't people help even the experimenter fall in front of them?	Yes	No

a) *Why did people help even without the falling of experi menter?*

If we attribute the helping behavior in the test group to empathy, why are people seemed to be equally helpful even without the emotion of empathy? Are there any reasons enhancing people's helping behaviors in the Control group setting? Below are some possible reasons proposed by our group.

i. The **Venue** of the survey conducted

We had chosen our campus to conduct the survey; most likely, schoolmates would naturally become our interviewees. From their point of view, it may be nothing but the fellowships that made them help, which means the sense of sympathy is not necessary.

ii. The **Day** of the survey conducted

We conducted our survey on Friday afternoon; people are generally in holiday mood and are more willing to help even without empathy.

b) *Why didn't people help even the experimenter fe ll in front of them?*

i. **Pre-exposure** to our experiment

Some interviewees might have seen the experimenter fall ing down before. There are too many passer-bys in the Concourse that experimenters could not

distinguish who might have witnessed the falling before and taken the injury as fake.

ii. **Unexpected circumstances**

Other groups of SOSC 195 came and conducted the researches at the time when we were doing the Test group experiment. People may feel annoyed when they see so many researchers at the same time. Such kind of ill-feeling may discourage people from helping even if they see someone falls in front of them.

c) *What did we see beyond the data?*

Although the findings did not reflect significant differences between the two groups, there were obvious differences in terms of the eagerness to help as **observed by our interviewers**. According to our interviewers, Kenneth and Calvin, they generally tried more than two times inviting and persuading the person to fill in the questionnaire after approaching him/her for the control group; while the test group agreed to help immediately in general.

If both the errors and interviewers' personal opinions mentioned above are justified, it is possible that the findings may not be reflecting the reality. **Empathy may still be an effective means to trigger helping behavior.**

2) If our findings are reflecting the reality, we would like to suggest a few practical consequences.

By applying our research in our daily lives, we try to give a few examples in this report.

It is normal to see from media that beggars try very hard in appealing to be pathetic. Many of them were reported to borrow ill babies, or pretend disable with peg legs. If empathy does not trigger helping behavior, these beggars are using wrong strategies in doing so. How about those charity organizations? Posters with pop stars hugging malnourished children, or TV programs showing famous people visiting some developing countries are everywhere nowadays. The charity organizations, to a certain extent, is trying to arouse empathy in the public and thus leading to more donations. Again, if empathy is not an effective means, is it more efficient for those organizations to save the publication expenses and sponsor a few more needy children.

G. CONCLUSION

In our experiment, we linked "Falling down" with "Empathy, and tested whether "Empathy" would bring more "Helping Behavior". Our findings showed that the result did not match with our expectation. The result obtained in testing $\mathbf{H_1}$ was even in contrary to our hypotheses.

Yet, we learned far beyond the research result itself.

- *What should we do* ***to improve in doing experiment****?*

  Throughout the experiment, we learnt that a successful experiment requires an in-depth design of experiment procedures, variables and possible error which makes the research

results inaccurate. Those are things that we may underestimate their importance in the past.

If we got the chance to conduct this experiment again, we will choose a better venue, possibly not HKUST. Sai Kung may be a good place as people there are all strangers to us, and people there are generally relaxing, having time to help, it is more likely to test out the real helping behavior.

Apart from venue, we will increase the sample size to make our result more significant and accurate. We would probably try a sample size of 200.

- *What did we learn* ***to work in a team****?*

Cooperation within the group, mutual support and involvement of group members are indispensable in making the success of a project. We have had many different opinions since we designed our DV and until we came up with this report. We shared but never argued. We are typical UST students, with piles of work and thousands of meetings. But we have worked closely no matter in doing the experiment, or consulting our professor and TA. Our group is definitely a cohesive one!