HELPFUL BEHAVIOUR AND THE BEFRIENDERS

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No. Matrik : 33751

**LATIHAN ILMIAH UNTUK MEMENUHI SEBAHAGIAN
DARIPADA SYARAT-SYARAT UNTUK IJAZAH SARJANA MUDA**

**JABATAN ANTROPOLOJI DAN SOSIOLOJI
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C O N T E N T S

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ABSTRACT

This academic exercise is an attempt to study the helpful behaviour of the Befrienders and whether individual differences, such as sex, age, academic achievement level, birth order, race and social class, affect their helpful behaviour.

For this purpose, questionnaires were given to the volunteers at the Counselling Centres of the Befrienders in Petaling Jaya and Penang. There were 43 respondents (37.2% male, 62.8% female) and 18 respondents (50% of each sex) from the respective centres.

The findings of this study generally showed that there was a higher proportion of female respondents. Most of the respondents came from the 21-30 age group, and with Form 4-5 level of education. Most of them were Chinese and also older siblings. The high social class respondents predominated the other classes.

The cost of helping, time spent and being away from home and family, did not seem to be high for most of the respondents. The majority had done some voluntary work before, but had not received help from either the Befrienders or other voluntary organisations. Most of them did not have encouragement from friends or family to join the Befrienders, but had members of the family involved in it. Their own experience seemed to be the main factor that made them volunteers. Most of them believed in helping others and reciprocating help. Befriending was considered rewarding by the majority, who believed that it affected their relationship with family and friends positively.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to find out about the
organisation of "The Befrienders" and the "Befrienders"
themselves. The reasons and factors influencing their
helping are looked into. However, the major focus is on the
effects of individual differences - such as sex, race, age,
birth order, academic achievement level and social class -
on helpful behaviour. This study was carried out on "The
Befrienders" of Petaling Jaya and Penang.

A Short History of the Befrienders

The Movement was first started by the "Samaritans" in
London in 1953. Since then, this movement has spread to many
parts of the world. In Malaysia, it began in 1970, when a
group of clergymen, laymen and psychiatrists, organised the
"Churches Counselling Centre" at the Wesley Church Hall, Jalan
Wesley, Kuala Lumpur. But it is not a religious organisation.
Later, it was renamed the "Samaritans of Selangor", and then
in 1974 acquired the name "The Befrienders". In 1975, the
Befrienders' Counselling Centre in Ipoh was formed, while the
one in Penang came into existence in 1978. Each centre ope-
rates autonomously.

Who are the Befrienders?

"The Befrienders" is an organised group of friendly
and concerned people, who volunteer to give free counselling
services through the telephone, and sometimes through face-
to-face interviews, if the callers or clients request for
such services. These operations are all carried out at the
counselling centres. Their services are advertised in the
local English newspapers – the National Star and the Malay
Mail.

According to their pamphlet, the "Befrienders" offer
their time to listen to other people's problems. They will
provide warmth and understanding, and will never condemn or
reject. They do not offer advice, money, accomodation,
arrange dates or marriages, or find employment. No charge is
made for the service rendered. It is a non-profit making
organisation, funded mainly by donations from the private
sector, the Welfare Services Ministry and sometimes from fund
raising campaigns.

The clients can trust the "Befrienders" to keep whatever
they have said in strict confidence. The clients can reveal
their identity or remain anonymous as they wish. Neither does
a Befriender divulge his real name or any information about
himself.

How to **become** a Befriender ?

During a preview, those who are interested to volunteer as a Befriender are told about the organisation - its history, objectives and what it entails to become a Befriender. Dedication and commitment are stressed.

Those who are really interested are asked to fill in an application form together with a questionnaire to find out about his/her personality. Suitable candidates are later called for an interview. Maturity, a stable mind and sound body are the minimum qualifications necessary. Other criteria for selection include being understanding, trustworthy, empathetic, warm, supportive, non-judgemental and so on. The experienced counsellors select and interview these candidates, after which, those selected will undergo a pre-service training session. Usually, a maximum of 30 volunteers are accepted for training at any one time.

The training programme totals 30 hours. In Petaling Jaya, the training is for 3 hours per week, lasting 10 weeks. All training sessions are held on weekdays, in the evenings, so that those volunteers who work in the daytime can attend them. Initially, the training course would be based on teaching communication skills, listening skills and skills of responding to feelings. The next half of the course would mainly be spent on role playing and discussing specific issues, such as - marital problems, drugs, sexuality and so on, supplemented by self-appraisal exercises and personal reflections. Speakers from outside the centre, who are experts in the fields relevant to the lectures, are sometimes invited.

During the entire training course, each trainee would be evaluated by the training team, which consists of experienced counsellors.

After a post-training interview, the training team decides who are to be accepted, based on the evaluations of the trainee's performance and their regularity in attendance. Those accepted are briefed on rules, confidentiality and other important issues. Important rules include not taking clients on as their own personal responsibility; not meeting clients outside the centre. Initially, successful candidates can join in as observers, listening in to phone-calls, followed by being permitted to handle the phone as probationers before becoming a full-fledged Befriender. The final decision concerning their promotion is left to the discretion of the duty leader.

Besides the pre-service training, there are also on-going training programmes for all members with case-study presentations, indepth study into special areas and refresher courses.

The Befrienders in Petaling Jaya

The Befrienders in Petaling Jaya is centred at 95 Jalan Templer, Petaling Jaya. There are 2 telephone lines : 568144/5, which are manned 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, by multi-lingual volunteers.

Two volunteers work as a team, on duty on 3-hour shifts. Each volunteer is on duty at least once, but not more than twice a week, and takes one night shift per month. Other

voluntary work also include clerical or fund raising work. At
the time of the study, there were 80 members.

The Befrienders in Penang

The Befrienders in Penang is based at 360 Macalister
Road, Penang. At the time of the study, it had only one tele-
phone line : 363987. It offers only a 4 hour service, from
5.30 p.m. to 9.30 p.m. for 5 days a week, Mondays to Fridays.
The Penang Befrienders operate mainly in one language -
English. The limitations of its services are mainly due to
the shortage of funds and volunteers. The organisation con-
sists of 25 members, who serve in 2 hour shifts, in teams of
threes.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RESEARCH LITERATURE

General Introduction

To volunteer as a "Befriender" is altruistic. They try to relieve other people's misery by listening to their problems through the telephone. It is a pro-social act that will help the caller or the client, but has no direct benefit to the "Befriender", and it does demand some self-sacrifices. As defined by Staub (1970) : "Helping behaviour is one of a class of pro-social behaviours that benefit the recipient of the action, but usually results in no direct benefit to the actor, and may even require self-sacrifice".

Various hypothesis have been put forward to explain altruism, that it may be instinctive or learned . Campbell (1965) has argued that altruistic behaviour may be in part instinctive, since altruism is necessary for the survival of the self, as well as of the group as a whole. No one can live alone, without help from others. On the other hand, culture may have evolved altruistic values as survival mechanisms too as suggested by Cohen (1972) and Campbell (1972).

Therefore people can also learn to be altruistic, due to either reinforcement or imitation. Reinforcement occurs when an altruistic act is rewarded, materially; or psychologically and socially, the tendency of people to be altruistic increases. Research evidence have shown this to be the case. For example,

Fischer (1963) found that 4 year-old children were more likely
to share marbles with another child, if after sharing, they
were rewarded with bubble gum. If volunteering as a Befriender
is found   to be rewarding, their services might be increased
or prolonged.

Imkitation occurs when observing a helpful model encou-
rages the observer himself to be helpful in that particular
situation. Rosenhan and White (1967) have demonstrated that
children are more likely to donate highly valued gift certifi-
cate to residents of a fictitious orphanage, if they have seen
an adult do so. Bryan and Test (1967) extend the findings over
a variety of subject population, settings and tasks. The results
hold for college students, motorists and shoppers; in the Univer-
sity laboratory, city streets and shopping centres;and when
helping is indexed by aiding others solve arithmetic problems,
changing flat tires, or donating money to the salvation army.
The findings are quite consistent. The presence of helping
models significantly increases subsequent altruistic behaviour.
If the Befrienders could be set up as models to the society at
large, such pro-social behaviour would probably be increased.

In addition, Goranson and Berkowitz (1966) postulated 2
types of helping norms which can increase altruism - the norm
of social responsibility, that is, a person should help others
who are dependent on him; and the norm of reciprocity, that is,
a person should treat others as they have treated him. So people
should help those who have helped them (Gouldner 1960). But if
the person who have helped in the first place is not available,
the receipient is more likely to generalize his debt to others.
(Berkowitz and Daniels 1964).

Berkowitz and other colleagues (Berkowitz and Daniels 1963, Berkowitz, Klanderman and Harris 1964) have also postulated the social responsibility norm. They have contended that dependency on others evokes helping responses, even under conditions where the possibility of external rewards for the helper are remote. People might have been influenced by these 2 norms to volunteer as Befrienders.

Besides norms, the consequences of an act, its reward and costs can also determine one's behaviour. Helping behaviour is most likely to occur when the rewards for helping outweigh the costs. Costs include financial costs and all the negative aspects involved in helping, for example – threat of danger and time pressure. Gross, Wallston and Piliavin (1975) have found that more subjects agreed to complete a low cost questionnaire than a high cost one. Rewards include all benefits of helping, material as well as social rewards, for example – monetary rewards or praises. Although volunteering as a Befriender would entail certain self-sacrifices, the psychological rewards would probably outweigh the costs.

Last but now least, both moods and feelings also influence the willingness of people to help others. When an individual is happy, he may be less self-occupied and so be more open to the needs of others (Berkowitz 1972), thus leads to greater incidence of helping. Levin and Isen (1975) have found that subjects who were put into a good mood by finding a dime in the coin slot of a public telephone were more helpful. They are more willing to mail a sealed and addressed letter which had been left clearly seen, at the telephone. Furthermore, when one is responsible, or is made to feel responsible for injurying someone else, or for some misfortune, he will experience guilt. To

relieve this feeling of guilt, one is more likely to help others
(Rawlings 1970; Regan, Williams and Sparling 1972). Altruism
could also be carried out because of one's feeling of empathy
(Aronfreed 1970, Bandura and Rosenthal 1966, Krebs 1970).
Lerner (1970) as well as Simmons and Lerner (1968) have argued
that people strive to maintain their belief in a "just world",
a world in which one gets what he deserves. Perceiving some-
one suffering, when he has done nothing to merit punishment,
threatens the observer's belief in a just world, which may moti-
vate the latter to bolster it by eliminating the unjust suffering
or compensating the victim for it.

These are the situational determinants of self-sacrifi-
cying behaviour, which can also influence a person to volunteer
as a Befriender. But not everyone encountering such situations
react in the same way, some people are more helpful than others.
Therefore, there could be individual differences that affect
one's behaviour of being helpful or not. These differences
include sex, age, academic achievement level, birth order, race
and social class. The altruistic behaviour of the Befrienders
can also be affected by these factors. Various studies have
looked at these differences as can be seen below.

Sex Differences

Many experimental studies have shown that there is no
consistent tendency for one sex to offer help more readily than
the other. Darley and Latane (1968), Isen (1970) and Bickman
(1972) have shown that there were no sex differences in the
respective cases of the speed in reporting fictitious epileptic
seizure; helpfulness to confederate carrying armload of items,

and helping behaviour in response to phone call, letter and person present. Chewning (1973) and Dobbs (1973) also found no sex differences in altruism for children and adolescents.

On the other hand, Thalhofer's experiment in 1971, found that women offered time/money to help a fictitious boy, who was supposed to be dependent on them; and females more that males thoughtboth that one should help another one has harmed, and that one should help another in need. Schawatz and Clausen (1970) also found that women responded more quickly, when no other bystanders are present in a situation where help is needed; but men responded more quickly when one of four bystanders is medically competent. Lantane and Dobbs (1975) also indicated that males gave more help picking up the objects than did females, when 145 experimenters 'accidentally' dropped a handful of pencils/coins on 1497 occasions before a sum of 4,813 bystanders in elevators. It was also found by Gaertner and Bickman (1971) that male subjects helped more often than females ones, with the "wrong number technique", whereby the subjects received what was ostensibly a wrong number telephone call, the caller explained that he was attempting to reach his mechanic from a public phone booth because his car had broken down. He further calimed that he had no more change to make another call to the garage. The subject could help by contacting his garage for him.

In a review of literature on sex differences, Maccoby and Jacklin (1975) looked at 40 studies, and concluded that a person's helpfulness is not consistently related to his sex; but also added that where a difference is found, the

direction somewhat more frequently favours girls and women.
Out of the 40 studies reviewed on the many manifestations of
altruism, only 17 of them showed any sex differences. Of
these, 10 showed the female sex to be more helpful. The
type of helpful behaviour could also be an important factor
as in the case of volunteering to be Befrienders, we shall
see whether there is any sex differences.

Age Differences and Academic Achievement Level

Studies done by Handlon and Gross (1959), Ugurel-Semin
(1952), Chewning (1973) and Green and Schneider (1974) have
shown that sharing increases with age, among school-age
children; thus sharing may increase with more years of
education. Lowe and Ritchey (1973) have also found that
older subjects displayed more altruism as measured by the
greater return rate of addressed but unstamped letters dropped
at 4 locations : junior high, senior high, college and adult
sites. Henceforth, altruism including volunteering as
Befrienders too may be expected to increase with age and
education.

There could be a number of reasons for it. Berkowitz
and Daniels (1963) proposed that the norm of social respon-
sibility guides helping behaviour; this hypothesized norm
prescribes that one should help those who need help. Very
young children do not have the capacity to help others in
distress. As they get older, both their competence in interacting with their environment, and
the expectation of adults around them that they will help
when help is needed, are likely to increase. Thus, an increase
with age may lead to an increase in the feeling of responsi-

bility to help others who need help.

Furthermore, Murphy (1937) and Aronfreed (1968)
suggested that an increase in helping with age may also be
expected from an increase in the capacity to empathize with
others to consider events from another's point of view, and to
experience vicariously another's emotion. Components of
empathy, such as the ability to recognize other's feelings,
(Dymond, Hughes and Baabe 1952) and the capacity for role-
taking, that is, for perceiving events/responding to them by
taking into consideration the standpoint of others, were found
to increase with age (Flavell, Botkin, Fry, Wright and Jarvis
1968).

Helping may also increase with age - through observation
of the behaviour of adults and older children, and through
direct tuition, which may increase children's knowledge of
how to help others and their feeling of competence in attemp-
ting to help. Among adults, competence in specific skills
that were needed for helping others, was found to be related
to helping behaviour in a variety of disaster situations
(Midlarsky 1968, Schwatz and Clausen 1970). Therefore,
increased knowledge and education would probably increase
competence to help. Due to these expectations of an increase
in responsibility, in empathy and in help-related skills, an
increase with age, academic achievement level and in helping
behaviour was hypothesized. However, to the author's know-
ledge, there were no studies done on the effects of education
on altruism per se. But Grant, Weiner and Rushton (1976) have
found that though generosity increases from 8 to 11 years of
age, it is unrelated to IQ. Thus, age may seem to be the more
important factor.

On the other hand, E. Staub's experiment in 1970 on children's attempt to help another child in distress, found that the rate of helping increased from kindergarten up to the 4th Grade only, and then the rate decreased down to the 6th Grade. One suggestion for the low frequency of helping in the 6th Grade was fear of disapproval and of criticism for initiating action to help. This interpretation of the decline in helping with age in terms of fear of disapproval, receives support by findings of another experiment with 7th Grade subjects (Staub 1969).

Another reason could be one effect of the socialisation process – the child's behaviour comes increasingly under the control of norms – either explicit or implicit – which determines what is the appropriate behaviour in a particular situation. In an unfamiliar environment, when the norms are unclear, he may be unwilling to initiate action, fearing disapproval for possibly inappropriate behaviour. But they can learn that there are standards of appropriate behaviour for certain time and places, for example – when someone needs help, the usual behavioural restrictions do not apply. An alternative explanation given by Shopler and Matthews (1965) and Horowitz (1968) was that under some conditions, people who are perceived as responsible for their need for help, are helped less than those who are not so perceived. Older children may be more capable than younger ones of judging/ evaluating responsibility and more likely to base their reactions on such judgements. On the other hand, Skarin and Moely (1976) have found a relatively low altruism rate in 7-9 year old females, among males and females of 3 age group: 5-6, 7-9 and 10-12 years. Thus, helpfulness does not necessarily increase with an increase in age and academic achievement level.

Birth Order

In the same experiement dealing with kindergarten up to
6th Grade kids, E. Staub (1970) has found that children who
were the youngest in their family tended to help less than
children with younger siblings. Children with younger
siblings initiated the helping response, whereas youngest
siblings tended to be inactive. In the case of the Befrienders
there might be more volunteers with younger siblings than
volunteers who are the youngest in their family.

Older siblings are generally more competent than their
younger brothers and sisters; moreover, they are probably
expected by their parents to assume responsibility and to
take charge when some kind of response to an event is required.
This response may be generalized to other children. Besides
this are, very few correlational studies in this direction
have been done.

Racial Differences

Researchers conducted in the West have tended to con-
centrate on black and white racial differences. Piliavin,
Rodin and Pillavin (1969) found some tendency for more same-
race helping on a face-to-face emergency situation. In
another study on the effects of race on the ellicitation of
helping behaviour using the "wrong number technique" mentioned
earlier, Gaertner and Bickman (1971) found that black subjects
extended relatively equivalent levels of assistance to blacks
and to whites. However, white subjects helped black callers
somewhat less frequently than white callers. On the other hand,
Wegner and Crano (1975) found that black bystanders on a

university campus helped more black than white victims whereas white bystanders helped both races equally.

Bryan and Test (1967) found significant differences between the number of persons who contributed to a Salvation Army kettle, depending upon the race of the person who was soliciting. White persons in a shopping centre tended not to contribute as often when the kettle was manned by a black woman. Thus the black solicitor received significantly fewer contributions than did the white solicitor. But Wispé and Freshly (1971) failed to observe a race effect in the willingness of passersby to assist a black/white female whose bag of groceries had just broken in front of a supermarket. They suggested that the immediacy of the onset of the incident may have attenuated a race effect.

Huang and Harris (1974) conducted a study on Chinese adults in Taipei, Taiwan and American adults in Albuquerque, New Mexico, who were alone and presumably unoccupied, were asked to mail a letter after observing either no model, a confederate serving as a refusing model, a helpful model or a helpful model rewarded with a dollar for accepting the letter. The results showed that the differences between treatment conditions and interaction between nationality failed to reach statistical significance. The only statistically significant difference found was that a higher percentage of letters accepted by the Chinese subjects were actually received. This might be due to a lesser availability of mailboxes, poorer service in Albuquerque or more likely, a true cross-cultural difference in willingness to keep a promise to carry out a commitment to help. Thus race could also affect volunteering to become a Befriender.

altruistic behaviour as a function of social economic status
(Dobbs 1973, Black, Weinstein and Tanur 1974). Neither does
socio-economic status affect the sharing behavious of kinder-
garten children (Mann 1973). In that case socioeconomic status
might not be a good predictor of altruistic responses, such
as volunteering as Befrienders.

Conclusion

Though altruism could be instinctive, it could also be
learned by reinforcement or imitation. Furthermore, help-
fulness may be induced by the norm of social responsibility,
or the norm of reciprocity too. It could also be determined
by the consideration of its consequential rewards or costs.
A person's moods and feelings could also affect his altruistic
behaviour. Henceforth to offer one's service as a Befriender
could also be affected by all these factors.

In addition, research evidence has shown that indi-
vidual differences of sex, age, academic achievement level,
birth order, race, social class differences could also affect
helpfulness. However those of sex, age, academic achievement
level, race and social class show no consistent effect, except
birth order. But this inconsistency might be due to the
different situations in which help was solicited. In the
case of Befrienders, we shall see the effect of these factors
in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

This study was carried out in 2 places - at the
Counselling Centres of the Befrienders at 360 Macalister Road,
Penang; and at 95 Jalan Templer, Petaling Jaya, during the
long vacation of the University of Malaya.

Design of Study and Sample Selection

The author personally interviewed the Executive Directors
of the Befrienders of each centre, in Petaling Jaya and Penang
to find out about the workings of this organisation.

Since the potential pool of subjects in each centre was
quite small, 25 volunteers in Penang and 80 in Petaling Jaya,
they were all given questionnaires (see Appendix A). The
criteria for sample selection was at least one month in
service.

Instrumentation

The instrument used in this study was in the form of
questionnaire, which was handed out to all the Befrienders
at both the Counselling Centres, in Penang and Petaling Jaya.

The questionnaire was designed to yield data on the
respondent's **bio**graphical data, such as sex, age, birth order,
family background, educational background, social class; as
well as other factors, such as past experiences, time cost

and psychological rewards, which could affect helpful
behaviour. The respondents were also asked for their opinions
of helping, reasons for helping and so on (Refer to questions
in Appendix A).

Since the service of the Befrienders was mainly offered
in English, the questionnaire used in this study is in English
also.

In this study, a structural questionnaire consisting of
mostly closed-ended questions was used, as this allows for
greater control over respondent differences, and is easier for
the respondent to answer; so that the response rate would be
greater, and is also less likely to be biased against the less
articulate respondents.

Data Collection

The questionnaire were distributed to the volunteers
at both the Penang and Petaling Jaya Centres.

On the cover note (see Appendix A) attached to the
questionnaire, the author assured the respondents that any
information obtained would be kept in the strictest confi-
dence.

The completed questionnaires were collected by the
author 2 weeks later from the centres. Late returns were
collected again one week later.

Total returns from Penang were 18 out of 25 (72%),
and from Petaling Jaya 43 out of 80 (53.8%) giving a total

return rate of 58.1% for both centres.

Conclusion

The questionnaire was used because of time and finan-
cial constraints, as well as the respondent's wish to be
totally anonymous. However, the author faced problems of
low returns, and subjects missing out answering some ques-
tions. Thus, the interpretation of the data ought to be
viewed in the light of these limitations.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter, the results of the study are presented and discussed. The data are analysed by sex affiliation.

Effects of individual differences on helping as Befrienders are discussed first, followed by the situational determinants of the respondents' help, both of which are mentioned in Chapter 2.

It has been proposed that an individual's sex could affect altruistic behaviour. At both the Petaling Jaya and Penang centres of the Befrienders, there was a higher percentage of female volunteers. With a membership of 80 in the former, and 25 in the latter, there were 50 (62.5%) females and 30 (37.5%) males, 15 (60%) females and 10 (40%) males in the respective centres.

Furthermore, when taking the total number of respondents of both centres, there was a higher proportion of female rather than male respondents (as seen in Table 1). The response from the Petaling Jaya Centre also showed the same pattern. But there was an equal proportion of both sexes from the Penang Centre. It suggests that females may be more willing to volunteer as Befrienders than males, considering the bigger majority of female volunteers, as well as respondents altogether. This seems to support Thalhofer's findings in 1971 that women are more willing to help.

Table 1.   Respondents by Sex Grouping

(N = 61)

Centres	Male Respondents		Female Respondents		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Penang	9	50	9	50	18	100
Petaling Jaya	16	37	27	63	43	100
Total	25	41	36	59	61	100

Age differences could also affect helpful behaviour.
As shown in Table 2, the 21-30 years age group was the most
active group, followed by the 31-40 years age group. A
slightly higher proportion of male respondents was found in
both groups. However, there was a higher proportion of
females in the older age group between 41 and 70 years. One
possible reason could be that the womenfolk between ages 21-
40, have more family commitments. But they were freer from
these family ties when they were older with their children
all grown up, therefore, they could be more helpful.

Although Skarin and Moely (1976), Lowe and Ritchey
(1973), Aronfreed (1968) and Murphy (1937) postulated that

helping behaviour increases with age, it can be seen that in this case, the majority of the respondents were in the younger age group of 21-30 years. This could be because Malaysia has a very young population, according to the 1970 General Report Population Census of Malaysia by the Department of Statistics, Malaysia.

Table 2. Respondents' Age by Sex Group (%)

(N = 61)

Age Range	Male Respondents	Female Respondents	Total
18 - 20 years	4.0	-	1.6
21 - 30 "	52.0	47.2	49.2
31 - 40 "	24.0	19.4	21.3
41 - 50 "	8.0	25.0	18.0
51 - 60 "	12.0	5.6	8.2
61 - 70 "	-	2.8	1.6
Total	100.00	100.0	100.0

A majority (37.7%) of the respondents have had up to Form 4-5 level of education (see Table 3), followed very closely by the university graduates (34.4%). The respondents were generally highly educated, as the minimum level of edu-cation was Form 4-5. The male respondents were largely university graduates, whereas the female respondents were mainly 4th-5th Formers. Thus, education per se seems to have very little effect on volunteering to become a Befriender.

Table 3. Respondents' Highest Level of Academic Achievement
          by Sex Group (%)   (N = 61)

Highest Level of Academic Achievement	Male Respondents	Female Respondents	Total
Form 4-5	28.0	44.0	37.7
Form 6	24.0	8.3	14.8
College	4.0	16.7	11.5
University	44.0	27.8	34.4
No information	–	2.8	1.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

However, combining the effects of both age and education, it is shown in Table 4 that the largest group (24.6%) of the respondents were between 21-30 years of age and had completed their education up to the 4th-5th Form.

It was hypothesized that with an increase in age and academic achievement level, helping behaviour would be increased. But the results of this study do not show this trend. This could be due to other factors. One of them could be that the population of Malaysia is very young as suggested before. Moreover, those highly educated young people might be settling down to their jobs in the early years after graduation. Therefore it was found that the younger 4th-5th Formers formed the largest group among the respondents.

Table 4. Respondents' Age and Highest Level
of Academic Achievement (%)
(N = 61)

| Age Range | Highest Level of Academic Achievement | | | | | Total |
	Form 4-5	Form 6	College	University	No Information	
18-20 years	1.6	–	–	–	–	1.6
21-30 "	24.6	9.8	1.6	13.1	–	49.2
31-40 "	1.6	3.3	4.9	11.5	–	21.3
41-50 "	8.2	–	4.9	3.3	1.6	18.0
51-60 "	1.6	1.6	–	4.9	–	8.2
61-70 "	–	–	–	1.6	–	1.6
Total	37.7	14.8	11.5	34.4	1.6	100.0

With respect to nationality the vast majority of the respondents were Malaysians as shown in Table 5. Though foreigners form a small minority, they were all females. They could be wives of expatriates, who were free to offer their help.

Considering ethnic affiliation, it is found in Table 6 that the Chinese respondents formed the majority (52.5%). This lends support to the findings of Huang and Harris (1974). They postulated that the Chinese are likely to be more helpful, on comparing the Chinese in Taiwan to Americans in New Mexico. In this study, the Chinese were found to be more helpful in volunteering to become a Befriender as compared to the Malays and the Indians. However the Indians form only a small

Table 5. Respondents' Nationality by Sex (%)
(N = 61)

Nationality	Male Respondents	Female Respondents	Total
Malaysian	100.0	80.6	88.5
British	-	11.1	6.6
New Zealander	-	2.8	1.6
Dutch	-	2.8	1.6
Indonesian	-	2.8	1.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 6. Ethnic Affiliation of Respondents
by Sex (%) (N = 61)

Ethnic Affiliation	Male Respondents	Female Respondents	Total
Chinese	40.0	61.1	52.5
Indian	44.0	11.1	24.6
Malay	4.0	5.6	4.9
Others	12.0	22.2	18.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

of the population of Malaysia (Department of Statistics 1977)
minity (9.1%). "Others" in this context include some
Europeans and Eurasians who were Malaysian citizens, as
well as foreigners too.

Most (50.8%) of the respondents were Christians, as shown in Table 7. Only a small proportion came from the other religious group. Among the Christians, there was a slightly higher proportion of male respondents.

The majority were Christians, probably because they might have more contact with the organization, as it first began as the Churches Counselling Centre situated at the Wesley Church Hall, Kuala Lumpur, and was organized with the help of some clergymen.

Table 7. Respondents' Religious Affiliation by Sex (%)
(N = 61)

Religious Affiliation	Male Respondents	Female Respondents	Total
Christian	56.0	47.2	50.8
Buddhist	4.0	30.6	19.7
Hindu	24.0	8.3	14.8
Muslim	-	2.8	1.6
Others	4.0	2.8	3.3
No Information	12.0	8.3	9.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

E. Staub (1970) has reported that children with younger siblings tended to be more helpful than the youngest in the family. The results found in this study (see Table 8) support his findings. Respondents, who were either a middle child or the eldest, formed the majority (54.1% + 23% = 77.1%). Respondents who were the only child, were the smallest group (8.2%). Only 14.8% of the respondents were the youngest in their family.

Table 8. Birth Order of Respondents by Sex (%)
(N = 61)

Birth Order	Male Respondents	Female Respondents	Total
Only Child	12.0	5.6	8.2
Eldest	32.0	16.7	23.0
Middle	36.0	66.7	54.1
Youngest	20.0	11.1	14.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

With regard to the medium of education, all the respondents with information had had some English education (see Table 9). Since the training programme of the Befrienders is conducted in English, it is necessary to have a good understanding and command of English. So it is not surprising

that most of the respondents had some English education.

Table 9.   Respondents' Medium of Education by Sex (%)
(N = 61)

Medium of Education	Male Respondents	Female Respondents	Total
English	60.0	75.0	68.9
English & Vernacular	32.0	22.2	26.2
No Information	8.0	2.8	4.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

In Table 10, it is shown that the respondents could speak the languages or dialects listed. English is the main spoken language for a great percentage of the respondents, followed by the Malay language.

Chinese dialects in this context include mainly Cantonese, Hokkien, Hakka and others. The Indian dialects include Malayana and Punjabi.

Table 10. Languages & Dialects Spoken by
Respondents by Sex (%)
(N = 61)

Languages/Dialects	Male Respondents	Female Respondents	Total
English	96.0	88.9	90.2
Malay	88.0	47.2	63.9
Mandarin	2.0	22.2	21.3
Tamil	24.0	8.3	11.5
French	4.0	5.6	4.9
Dutch	-	5.6	3.3
Tagalog	4.0	-	1.6
Chinese Dialects	24.0	50.0	39.3
Indian Dialects	12.0	1.4	6.6

The largest group (41%) of the respondents was in the
professional or managerial category (see Table 11), where
there was a higher proportion of males than females. The
second largest group consisted of those in the secretarial or
clerical sector, followed by the housewives.

The professionals or managerial included doctors, lawyers,
chemist, business men/women, management consultant, etc.
These in the social services included counsellor, medical
social worker, nurses, etc. The students were those unemployed
ones, who were waiting for their public examination results.

For those who had retired, their last occupations were recorded.

Table 11. Respondents' Occupations by Sex (%)
(N = 61)

Occupations	Male Respondents	Female Respondents	Total
Professionals/ Managerial	60.0	27.8	41.0
Technical	16.0	5.6	9.8
Sales	4.0	–	1.6
Social Services	8.0	11.1	9.8
Secretarial/ Clerical	8.0	25.0	18.0
Housewives	–	27.8	16.4
Students	4.0	2.8	3.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

The respondents could be divided into 3 general income brackets - (1) up to $600, (2) $601 - $1,200 and (3) $1,201 and above - as shown in Table 12. These income brackets could be termed - low, middle and high income groups respectively.

The high income group formed the majority (37.7%) which was predominated by males. Thus the high income group tended to be more helpful.

It is the typical Malaysian scene to show male predomination of the high income bracket as well as in the professional or managerial category (see Table 11 and 12), whereas there was only a marginal difference between the two sexes, among the other lower income groups.

Table 12. Respondents' Monthly Income by Sex (%)
(N = 61)

Monthly Income	Male Respondents	Female Respondents	Total
Up to $600	20.0	30.6	26.2
$601 - $1,201	20.0	16.7	18.0
$1,201 and above	56.0	25.0	37.7
No Information	4.0	27.8	18.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Most (78.7%) of the respondents were employed 5-8½ hours daily, as shown in Table 13. As expected in Malaysia, the males again preponderated this employed group. Men accounted for 67.7% of the labour force and women the remaining 32.3% in Malaysia (Department of Statistics 1977).

Table 13. Respondents' Working Hours by Sex (%)
(N = 61)

Working Hours	Male Respondents	Female Respondnets	Total
5-8½ hours daily	96.0	66.7	78.7
Full time housewives	-	27.8	16.4
Unemployed students	4.0	2.8	3.2
Retired people	-	2.8	1.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

A vast majority of the respondents including some house-
wives who gave information found their jobs interesting,
challenging and satisfying (see Table 14). But they found it
more interesting and challenging than satisfying. It was the
males who were more inclined to find satisfaction, challenge
and interest in their jobs than the females.

Although most of the respondents were employed 5-8½ hours
daily (see Table 13), these respondents, as well as the full
time housewives still found time to offer free voluntary
services as the Befrienders, possibly because they were happy,
with their jobs, being interested, challenged and satisfied,
they may be more open to the needs of others, a reason suggested
by Berkowitz (1972).

Table 14. Respondents' Opinion Ratings
of their own Occupation by Sex (%)
(N = 61)

Opinion	Ratings	Male Respondents	Female Respondents	Total
Interesting	Yes	92.0	75.0	82.0
	No	8.0	11.1	8.2
	No Information	-	13.8	9.8
Challenging	Yes	88.0	75.0	80.4
	No	12.0	8.3	9.8
	No Information	-	16.7	9.8
Satisfying	Yes	72.0	66.7	68.9
	No	28.0	13.9	19.7
	Sometimes	-	5.6	8.2
	No Information	-	13.8	3.2

Single respondents were slightly more than married
respondents (see Table 15). However, there were almost equal
proportions of both sexes in terms of marital status. This
indicates that marriage does not seem to be a great hindrance
towards volunteering to be a Befriender. There were slightly
more unmarried respondents probably because they had more time
to help others in need, and less responsibility to their fami-
lies, as compared to the married ones, especially those who had
young children.

Table 15.   Marital Status of Respondents by Sex (%)
(N = 61)

Marital Status	Male Respondents	Female Respondents	Total
Single	60.0	55.6	57.4
Married	40.0	44.4	42.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Out of the 26 (42.6%) married respondents, 23.1% of them did not have children (see Table 16). But most (50%) of them had 1-2 children. The other 26.9% had 3-5 children. These respondents, who were parents, generally did not have many children.

Some evidence has shown that individuals who have pro-gressed through marriage and child raising/more likely to participate and do well in telephone crisis intervention work (Ansel 1972). This may be true as quite a sizable percentage (42.6%) of the respondents were married, and among them, 76.9% had child-raising experience.

Table 16. Married Respondents' by Sex:Number of Children (%)
(N = 26)

Number of Children	Male Married Respondents	Female Married Respondents	Total
None	30.0	18.8	23.1
1 - 2	50.0	50.0	50.0
3 - 5	20.0	31.3	26.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Among the married respondents, who were parents, only 30% of them had their youngest child at less than 5 years old (see Table 17), who needed greater care and attention from the parents. In this group there was a higher proportion of fathers, perhaps because they need not have to spend as much time as their wives to take care of their young children.

The majority (60%) of the parents had children of 11 years old and above. They would relatively have more time to help others, than the parents with younger children.

Table 17. Respondents with Children by Sex :
Age of Youngest Child (%)
(N = 20)

Age Range of Youngest Child	Male Respondents	Female Respondents	Total
Less than 5 years old	42.9	23.1	30.0
6 - 10 " "	-	15.4	10.0
11 - 15 " "	42.9	38.5	40.0
16 years and above	14.3	23.1	20.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

In addition to sacrificing time away from family and home, the respondents have to spare time for travelling to and from the counselling centre of the Befrienders, depending on the distance between the centre and their home, as well as their mode of transport, as shown in the following tables. These constitute the time costs of being a Befriender.

From Table 18, it can be seen that more than half of the respondents had to travel 5 miles or more from their residences to the counselling centres. Since most (70.5%) of them travelled by car (see Table 19), the time taken would not be long. The majority (78.7%) took 30 minutes or less (see Table 20). Therefore, the time cost of travelling for the majority can be considered small. This is consistent with the findings of

Gross, Wallston and Piliavin (1975) that people are more willing to help in a low cost task than a high cost one.

Table 18. Distance between Respondents Residences
& The Counselling Centres by Sex
(N = 61)

Distance	Male Respondents	Female Respondents	Total
Less than 4 miles	44.0	41.7	42.7
5 - 10 miles	40.0	44.4	42.6
11 - 15 miles	16.0	11.1	13.1
16 - 20 miles	-	2.8	1.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 19. Respondents' Means of Transport from Residence
To Centre by Sex (%) (N = 61)

Means of Transport	Male Respondents	Female Respondents	Total
Walk	4.0	-	1.6
By bus	8.0	-	9.8
By motorbike	16.0	5.6	9.8
By car	64.0	75.0	70.5
By taxi	4.0	-	1.6
By car/walk	-	2.8	1.6
By bus/car	-	5.6	3.3
By bicycle	4.0	-	1.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 20. Time taken by Respondents from Residence
            to Centre by Sex (%)   (N = 61)

Time taken	Male Respondents	Female Respondents	Total
Less than 15 min.	36.0	27.8	31.2
15 - 30 min.	40.0	52.8	47.5
31 min.-1 hour	24.0	16.7	19.7
More than 1 hour	-	2.8	1.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Another factor that could affect altruistic behaviour is
the past experience of helping others, or the experience of
receiving help from others as shown below.

From Table 21, it can be seen that 62.3% of the respon-
dents had done some form of voluntary work before joining the
Befrienders.

Out of this group, who had volunteered in other services
before, the majority (42%) had joined voluntary organizations,
such as the Red Cross, Boy Scouts, Girl Guides, etc. Some
(37%) of them had joined both kinds of activities, voluntary
organizations as well as fund raising campaigns. A smaller
proportion (21%) participated in shorter-term fund raising

campaigns, such as walkathorns and selling lottery tickets, etc (see Table 22).

Their past experience of offering assistance seemed to have encouraged them to help others again, though in a different fashion. They seemed to be influenced by the norm of social responsibility. Prior help might have heightened awareness of the norm. This norm was postulated by Berkowitz and Daniels (1963) and Berkowitz, Klanderman and Harris (1964). Therefore, people who have rendered aid are likely to help again.

Table 21. Respondents' Experience of Voluntary Work Prior to Joining the Befrienders by Sex (%)
(N = 61)

Previous Experience of Voluntary Work	Male Respondents	Female Respondents	Total
Negative	40.0	36.1	37.7
Positive	60.0	63.9	62.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 22. Type of Voluntary Work Done Before Joining
The Befrienders : Of Respondents Who have
Volunteered Before by Sex (%) (N = 38)

Type of Voluntary Work	Male Respondents	Female Respondents	Total
Fund raising campaigns	13.3	26.1	21.1
Voluntary Organizations	40.0	43.5	42.1
Both of the above	46.7	30.4	36.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

On the other hand, only 19.7% of the respondents have
ever received help from other voluntary organizations, excluding
the Befrienders (as shown in Table 23). These respondents were
probably reciprocating the help they had received before, as
suggested by the norm of reciprocity, which was postulated by
Gouldner (1960). People supposedly live up to their social
obligations in order to pay back for the good turns they have
received in the past and those they expect to receive in the
future (Gouldner 1960). The kinds of help they received were
for example receiving advice, support, second-hand clothes and
others. Those who were helped might have felt some obligation
to pay back, such feeling of obligation could have been genera-
lized to others who need help (Berkowitz and Daniels 1968;
Goranson and Berkowitz 1966).

However, the majority (78.7%), who did not receive help from these organisations might not be motivated by this norm of reciprocity. They were probably more influenced by the norm of social responsibility, as suggest previously.

Table 23. Help Received by Respondents from Voluntary Organisations (other than The Befrienders) by Sex (%) (N = 61)

Help received	Male Respondents	Female Respondents	Total
Yes	24.0	16.7	19.7
No	72.0	83.3	78.9
No information	4.0	-	1.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Awareness of the existence of the Befrienders could affect an individual's willingness to offer help.

Table 24 shows that 61.1% of the respondents in Penang had known about The Befrienders for more than a year, but only 38.9% of them have joined the organisation for this period of time (see Table 25). Thus most of the respondents in Penang had been aware of the existence of this organisation long before joining it.

However, in Petaling Jaya, the majority (76.8%) of the

respondents had been aware of its existence for more than 4 years (see Table 24), a comparable proportion (76.7%) of them had been Befrienders for this length of time too (see Table 25).

Although the respondents in Penang had been aware of the need of help by the organisation for more than a year, they did not join the Befrienders until recently. But this is not the case among the respondents of the Petaling Jaya Centre. This indicates that the latter responded more quickly to join Befrienders than the former.

Table 25 shows that most of the respondents found out about the Befrienders through friends or relatives, through newspapers or magazines, and finally through the Befrienders themselves. These seem to be the effective ways of advertising about the organisation. There was only a handful of respondents who found out about it through the church per se. On the other hand, the church could exert an indirect influence too. The Christians gathered quite often, at the church or otherwise, whereby the need of help of the Befrienders could be easily spread among friends or relatives, or even the Christian Befrienders themselves to the other Christian members. Henceforth there was a majority of Christians respondents.

Table 24. When Respondents first got to know
about the Befrienders by Sex (%)

Centre	Period of Time	Male Respondents	Female Respondents	Total
Penang (n = 18) (3 year history since 1977)	1 year ago or less	22.2	-	11.1
	More than 1-3 years	44.4	77.8	61.1
	No information	33.3	22.2	27.8
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Petaling Jaya (n = 43) (10 year history since 1970)	1 year ago or less	6.3	3.7	4.7
	More than 1-3 years	6.3	7.4	7.0
	4-6 years	37.5	44.4	41.7
	7-10 years	43.8	29.6	34.9
	No information	6.3	14.8	11.6
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 25. Respondents' Length of Service As a
Befriender by Sex (%)   (N = 61)

Centre	Length of Service	Male Respondents	Female Respondents	Total
Penang (n = 18) (3 year history since 1977)	1 year or less	66.6	55.5	61.1
	More than 1-3 years	33.3	44.4	38.9
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Petaling Jaya (n = 43) (10 year history since 1970)	1 year or less	6.3	11.1	9.4
	More than 1-3 years	12.5	14.8	14.0
	4-6 years	50.0	59.3	55.8
	7-10 years	31.3	14.8	20.9
	Total	100.0	100.0	100..0

Table 26. Respondents' Source of Knowledge about the Befrienders by Sex (%) (N = 61)

Source of Knowledge	Male Respondents	Female Respondents	Total
Through friends/relatives	32.0	33.3	32.8
" the Befrienders themselves	32.0	27.8	29.5
Through newspapers/magazines	32.0	33.3	32.8
" youth camp	4.0	-	1.6
" the church	-	5.6	3.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

At this juncture, we shall look at the influences of friends and family on such helpful behaviour as volunteering to be Befrienders.

Only a minority (16.4%) of the respondents have friends who were involved in the Befrienders (see Table 27).

A majority (52.5%) of the respondents have members of their family involved in the organisation. This indicates that family involvement plays an important role. The members of the family might serve as models for imitation. Rosenham and White (1967) and Bryan and Test (1967) have postulated that more altruism may be displayed after observing a helpful model.

However, only a small percentage of the respondents

reported having received encouragement from friends (29.5%)
and from family (23%) to join the Befrienders, as shown in
Table 28. Henceforth, encouragement from friends and family
does not seem to be an important factor to influence helping.

Table 27. Involvement of friends & family members
of Respondents in The Befrienders by
Sex (%)   (N = 61)

Involvement in the Befrienders	Answers	Male Respondents	Female Respondents	Total
Involvement of friends	Yes	8.0	22.2	16.4
	No	92.0	77.8	83.6
Total		100.0	100.0	100.0
Involvement of family members	Yes	48.0	56.6	52.5
	No	52.0	44.6	47.5
Total		100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 28.　Encouragement from friends & Family members
of Respondents to join the Befrienders
by Sex (%)　　(N = 61)

Encouragement	Answers	Male Respondents	Female Respondents	Total
Encouragement of friends	Yes	28.0	33.3	29.5
	No	68.0	63.9	68.9
	No information	4.0	2.8	1.6
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Encouragement of family members	Yes	20.0	25.0	23.0
	No	68.0	72.2	70.5
	No information	12.0	2.8	6.6
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Besides family and friends, respondents were also asked
to rate the importance of their own experience in life, their
education, or their religion on their helping as Befrienders.

They were asked to rank these 5 factors, as shown in
Table 29, from 1 - 5 in order of importance. For purpose of
analysis, only the 42 respondents with the first 3 ranks
selected were considered. The first, second and third ranks
were given 3, 2, and 1 points respectively.

As shown in Table 29, the respondents thought that

their own past experience was the most important factor, which motivated them to join the Befrienders, followed by their education, their friends, their family and lastly their religion.

Table 29.   Factors influencing Respondents to join the Befrienders   (N = 42)

Factors	Total Weights	Average
Own experience	106	2.52
Education	64	1.52
Friends	38	0.90
Family	37	0.88
Religion	7	0.17

Besides being influenced by friends and family, the respondents' experience as Befrienders, might in turn affect their relationship with their friends and family.

Most of the respondents felt that volunteering as Befrienders affect their relationship with their friends and family positively (see Table 30). This may serve as a reinforcement to encourage altruistic behaviour. This is consistent with Fischer's study in 1963 which has found that one is more likely to be altruistic, if after displaying such an act, he is rewarded.

Table 30.   Effects of volunteering as a Befriender on
relationship with family & friends by
Sex (%)   (N = 61)

Effects on Family Relationship	Male Respondents	Female Respondents	Total
No effect	36.0	36.1	36.1
Positive	64.0	61.1	62.3
Negative	–	–	–
Both positive and negative	–	2.8	1.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Effects on Relationship with friends	Male Respondents	Female Respondents	Total
No effect	16.0	33.3	26.2
Positive	80.0	63.9	70.5
Negative	4.0	–	1.6
Both positive and negative	–	2.8	1.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

In addition to reinforcement, the respondents' belief
in the norm of reciprocity and the norm of social responsibi-
lity could affect their volunteering to aid others as Befrienders.

Table 31 shows that a large group (72.1%) of the
respondents believed that one should reciprocate help that one
has received. This provides some support for such a norm which
was suggested by Gouldner (1960) and others.

However, it is shown in Table 32 that only 3.3% of the respondents themselves have ever asked the Befrienders for help before joining them. They might have felt some obligation to repay them by helping them in return to help others.

For most of the respondents, even though they might not be indebted to the Befrienders (see Table 32) , they do believe in reciprocating help that they have received (see Table 31), therefore they might subscribe to this norm in other ways.

Table 33 shows that most of the respondents believed that they should help another who is in trouble and even when it was caused by the person himself. In addition, the majority of the respondents also thought that everyone is responsible to help those needing aid to the best of their ability.

According to the social responsibility norm, as explained by Berkowitz and others (Berkowitz and Daniels 1963; Berkowitz, Klanderman and Harris 1964) dependency evokes helping responses. Consequently, one should help others who are dependant on him. The results above seem to support this social responsibility norm.

Table 31. Respondents' belief of reciprocation of
help received by sex (%)   (N = 61)

Belief in reciprocating help	Male Respondents	Female Respondents	Total
Yes	84.0	63.9	72.1
No	12.0	27.8	23.0
Sometimes	4.0	5.6	3.3
No information	-	2.8	1.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 32. Help received by Respondents from The
Befrienders by Sex (%)   (N = 61)

Help Received from The Befrienders	Male Respondents	Female Respondents	Total
Yes	-	5.6	3.3
No	100.0	94.4	96.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 33. Respondents' Attitude towards helping others by Sex (%)
(N = 61)

Respondents' belief in helping those in trouble			
Answer	Male Respondents	Female Respondents	Total
Yes	92.0	97.2	95.1
No	8.0	-	3.3
Maybe	-	2.8	1.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Respondents' attitude of helping those in trouble caused by himself			
Yes	88.0	91.7	90.2
No	8.0	-	3.3
Maybe	-	5.6	4.9
No information	4.0	2.8	1.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Respondents' attitude on responsibility to help those needing help			
Yes	88.0	63.9	73.8
No	12.0	25.0	19.7
Maybe	-	2.8	1.6
No information	-	8.3	4.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Respondents were also asked to give reasons for joining the Befrienders. They were to rank these reasons, as shown in Table 34 from 1-9 in order of importance. For purpose of analysis, only those 59 respondents with the first 3 ranks selected were considered. Ranks 1, 2 and 3 were allotted 3, 2 and 1 points respectively.

It was found that "to help others" was the most important reason, followed by "to understand people better", "to understand yourself better", "to have a more meaningful and worthwhile life", "to give of oneself" and others as shown in Table 34. It seems that consideration for others is more important than consideration for self.

Table 34. Reasons cited by Respondents for joining the Befrienders   (N = 59)

Reasons cited	Total weights	Average
- To help others	88	1.49
- To understand people better	73	1.24
- To understand yourself better	55	0.93
- To have a more meaningful & worthwhile life	45	0.76
- To give of oneself	37	0.63
- To learn/gain special/specific experiences	24	0.41
- To work for a better world.	21	0.36
- To become a better citizen/person	10	0.17
- To do what is right	1	0.02

The respondents were also asked about their perception of their own helpfulness. As shown in Table 35, the majority (52.5%) of the respondents felt that they were not as helpful as they would like to be. Even though they were all Befrienders, most of them saw their actual self as less altrusitic than their ideal self.

Though most of the respondents wish to be more helpful, their helpfulness would be affected by the amount of free time they had. Table 36 shows that a high percentage (62.3%) of the respondents did not have much free time, even before joining the Befrienders. Therefore it would have been difficult to offer more help even if they had wanted to. There is a discrepancy between the ideal situation, where they would like to be more helpful, and the reality, where they did not have the time to do so.

Table 35. Respondents' Perception of own helpfulness
by Sex (%) (N = 61)

Perception of Helpfulness	Male Respondents	Female Respondents	Total
Helpful	52.0	36.1	42.6
Quite helpful	-	2.8	1.6
Not helpful	48.0	55.6	52.5
No information	-	5.6	3.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 36. Free Time of Respondents before joining
The Befrienders by Sex (%) (N = 61)

Free Time	Male Respondents	Female Respondents	Total
Free	32.0	41.7	37.7
Not free	68.0	58.3	62.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

In addition, it is also of interest to find out the
respondents perception of their own effectiveness as a
Befriender. Most (72.1%) of the respondents perceived them-
selves to be effective (see Table 37). Only 13% including
some new volunteers, who were not sure of their effectiveness
yet, thought that they were not very effective.

Table 37. Respondents' perception of own effectiveness
as a Befriender by sex (%) (N = 61)

Perception of own effectiveness	Male Respondents	Female Respondents	Total
Very effective	–	5.6	3.3
Effective	80.0	66.7	72.1
Not very effective	12.0	13.9	13.1
No information	8.0	13.9	11.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

However, a Befriender's effectiveness may be influenced
by several factors, such as sex - the Befriender's own sex as

well as the client's sex; moods and feelings; likelihood of
bringing other people's problem home and past experience of
crisis. These factors are discussed below.

The respondents were asked whether females are more
effective as Befrienders. The majority of the respondents
of both sexes, did not agree (see Table 38). A marginally
higher proportion of the females did not think that their own
sex is more effective as Befrienders. In contrast, it was the
male respondents who rated higher effectiveness to the females.
This seems to be in keeping with Homer's finding in 1971 that
females devalue the female role in general, as well as each
other's specific performance.

Table 38. Respondents' opinion on effectiveness of
female Befrienders by sex (%) (N = 61)

Opinions	Male respondents	Female respondents	Total
More effective	20.0	13.9	16.4
Quite effective	8.0	11.1	9.8
Not effective	68.0	72.2	70.5
No information	4.0	2.8	3.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

With regard to the influence of the client's sex, it is found that only 39.3% of the respondents thought that they would be more helpful to people/clients of their own sex (see Table 39), whereas the majority did not think so.

Among the male respondents, most of them felt that they help their own kind more, implying that males help each other more. Bickman (1974) calls this a similarity effect.

In contrast, among the female respondents, the majority thought otherwise, implying that they did not agree that females help the same sex more. They might instead feel that the opposite sex will help each other more. This is termed an ingratiation effect (Bickman 1974). However results of previous field and laboratory research on both, similarity and ingratiation, effects are somewhat confusing (Borofsky, Stollak and Messé 1971; Emowiller, Deaux and Willits 1971; Gruder and Cook 1971). On the other hand, Bickman (1974) has found that in situations where there was no face-to-face contact, subjects helped persons of the opposite sex more often than those of the same sex. Therefore, it is seen that situations play an important part.

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Table 39. Respondents' opinion of being more helpful to
people/clients of their own sex by sex (%)
(N = 61)

Opinion of helpfulness	Male Respondents	Female Respondents	Total
More helpful	60.0	25.0	39.3
Quite helpful	8.0	2.8	4.9
Not helpful	32.0	66.7	52.5
No information	-	5.6	3.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

In the case of moods and feelings, only a marginal majo-
rity of the respondents thought that their moods and feelings
would affect their effectiveness as Befrienders (see Table 40).
This contradicts Middlebrook's (1974) postulation that both
moods and feelings influence the incidence of helping.

However, when the respondents were asked whether they
could be more effective in helping their clients, when they
were in a good mood, most (68.9%) of the respondents irrespec-
tive of sex, expressed the view that they could (see Table 41).
This is in keeping with Aderman's (1972) finding that people in
a good mood were significantly more willing to be helpful than
those in a bad mood.

Although, most of the respondents thought that their
moods and feelings did not affect their services ad Befrienders,
they agreed that a good mood could increase their effectiveness.
They seem to be inconsistent on their views. Possibly, these
respondents did not like to admit that their moods and feelings
could affect their service. Since to be a good Befriender,
supposedly, one should not let one's moods and feelings, espe-
cially bad ones, affect one's efficiency. However, they were
probably glad to admit to the positive effect of a good mood.

Table 40. Effect of Respondents' moods & feelings
on own service as Befrienders by sex (%)
(N = 61)

Effect of moods and feelings	Male Respondents	Female Respondents	Total
Have effect	40.0	47.2	44.3
Have no effect	48.0	47.2	47.5
Sometimes	12.0	5.6	8.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 41. Influence of Respondents' good moods
on effectiveness as Befrienders
by sex (%)   (N = 61)

Influence of good moods	Male Respondents	Female Respondents	Total
More effective	68.0	69.4	68.9
Quite effective	8.0	-	3.3
Not effective	24.0	30.6	27.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Furthermore, likelihood of taking other people's pro-
blems home could also affect the respondents' effectiveness of
being a Befriender.

It can be seen in Table 42 that a large group (80.3%) of

the respondents thought that they were not likely to take other people's problems home. In this way, the cost of being a Befriender was probably lower for them. The reasons could be that they were mainly not in a fact-to-face interaction with their clients and were in total anonymity.

Table 42. Likelihood of Respondents to take other people's problems home by Sex (%)

(N = 61)

Answer	Male Respondents	Female Respondents	Total
Likely	16.0	2.8	8.2
Not likely	72.0	86.1	80.3
Sometimes	12.0	8.3	9.8
No information	-	2.7	1.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Past experiences of crisis could also be another factor determining the effectiveness of a Befriender. It is found that a great majority (90.2%) of the respondents felt that having faced crisis in their own lives, they were more able to help their clients (see Table 43). Such encounters could increase one's ability to understand and empathize and indirectly could produce positive results on the effectiveness of a Befriender.

Table 43. Respondents' opinions on influence of past
encounters with crisis on a Befriender's
ability by sex (%)   (N = 61)

Opinion	Male Respondents	Female Respondents	Total
Have influence	92.0	88.9	90.2
Have no influence	8.0	8.3	8.2
Sometimes	-	2.8	1.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Moreover, it has been hypothesized that rewards could be an
incentive for helpful behaviour (Middlebrook 1974). The results
of this study show that a great percentage (95.1%) of the
respondents thought that it was rewarding to be a Befriender
(see Table 44). It is also shown that most (83.6%) of them
were willing to continue being Befrienders for more than a
year (see Table 45). Thus the feeling of being rewarded is
likely to lead to continuation of service of the respondents.

Table 44. Respondents' Opinions on the rewards of
being a Befridners by sex (%) (N = 61)

Answers	Male Respondents	Female Respondents	Total
Rewarding	96.0	94.4	95.1
Not rewarding	-	2.8	1.6
Sometimes rewarding	4.0	2.8	3.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 45.   Continuation of Services of Respondents
by Sex (%)   (N = 61)

Period of Time	Male Respondents	Female Respondents	Total
Less than 1 year	-	8.3	4.9
At least 1 more year	12.0	8.3	9.8
More than 1 year	88.0	80.6	83.6
No information	-	2.8	1.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Some individual differences – such as sex, birth order, ethnic and religious affiliation – could be used to predict helpful behaviour. As in this study, it is found that females are probably more helpful. Older siblings seem more inclined to help. Chinese and Christians are also more likely to offer aid. The cost of helping, time spent and being away from home and family probably is not a great hindrance towards voluntary work. Neither involvement nor encouragement from friends and relatives seem to be an important factor to motivate such behaviour. The norms of social responsibility and reciprocity may exert a great influence too.

CHAPTER 5
CONCLUSION

Social services, such as the Befrienders, are badly needed in our society. At present, there are only 3 Counselling centres of the Befrienders in existence at Petaling Jaya, Ipoh and Penang. If possible, such centres should be found all over Malaysia, at least one in each state capital.

In order, to obtain public support and allocation of funds, which they deserve, more attention must be given to the publicity of this organization. The regular newspaper advertisements, posters, radio and T.V. announcements and cinema hall advertisements are only a few of the means at their disposal. Through this media, they could also make known to the general public their services, as well as the need to recruit volunteers for the organisation.

Pro-social behaviour, such as volunteering to become a Befriender, should be encouraged. Altruism can be taught starting from the young children. Since rewarded behaviour tends to reoccur, and children learn by imitating what the adults around them do. This implies that adults interacting with children should reward altruistic behaviour and should

themselves act altruistically. Parents and teachers are in an excellent position to emphasize and reinforce the social responsibility and reciprocity norms.

Since dependency of those needing help could motivate altruism, the extent of the need should be made clear, possibly through greater media coverage. Thus, it is also more difficult for people to ignore the needs of others.

Furthermore, helping can be encouraged by increasing an individual's feeling that he is competent to help. By circulating information about specific methods of help, others should be expected to increase the incidence of helping.

Reducing the costs of helping - such as time consumption - would increase altruism. This could also happen by making it easier and more convenient to help. Increasing the material and social rewards for altruism should produce positive results too. Giving extensive publicity to acts of altruism, would also be expected to achieve this effect.

The modern, competitive world of today is badly in need of pro-social behaviours. Altruism should be made a much more frequent phenomenon today as well as in the future.

Implication for Future Research

It is suggested that future studies should include the other counselling centre of the Befrienders in Ipoh, besides Petaling Jaya and Penang. Interviewing, if possible, should be done, to ensure better responses, instead of using just the questionnaire.

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APPENDIX   A

Dear Sir/Madam,

    I am a final year student in the Dept. of Anthropology
and Sociology, in the University of Malaya. This question-
naire is part of my graduation exercise, which will be
included as one paper in the final year examinations. It is
an attempt to study helpful behaviour, especially of the
Befrienders. I would appreciate it very much, if you could
kindly spare some time to consider and answer the question-
naire frankly. The information obtained would be kept
strictly confidential.

    Thank you for your kind co-operation.

LOKE KHOON EE

Dept. of Anthropology and Sociology

University of Malaya.

QUESTIONNAIRE   (Please fill in the blanks and tick appropriate
                        answers in the small boxes provided)

1. Sex : (* Please delete where appropriate) * Male/Female
2. Age : ....
3. Your own religion : ....
4. Parents' religion (If different) : ....
5. Race : ....
6. Nationality : ....
7. Place of birth : ....
8. No. of brothers : ....   No. of sisters : ....
9. Position in the family : An only child   ☐
                              The eldest   ☐
                              The youngest   ☐
                              Others .... ☐
10. Marital status :   ☐ Single
                       ☐ Married
                       ☐ Separated
                       ☐ Divorced
                       ☐ Widowed
                       ☐ Others ....
11. No. of children, if any : ....
12. Ages of the children :

	PRESCHOOL	STUDYING	WORKING
....			
....			
....			
....			
....			
....			
....			

13. Highest level of education completed by you :

    ☐ Primary level
    ☐ Form 1 - 3
    ☐ Form 4 - 5
    ☐ Form 6
    ☐ College
    ☐ University

    Any specialised courses/training : ....

14. Medium of education :   No. of years :

    ☐ Primary : English only   ....
    ☐   Vernacular only   ....
    ☐   English and vernacular   ....
    ☐ Secondary : English only   ....
    ☐   Vernacular only   ....
    ☐   English and vernacular ....

15. Language(s) and dialect(s) spoken : (In order of fluency)

    1. ....
    2. ....
    3. ....

16. Occupation : ....   +Full time/Part time
    ....   +Full time/Part time

17. Working hours : From .... to .... , or
    .... hour shifts.

18. Is your present job interesting ?   +Yes/No.
                challenging ?   +Yes/No.
                satisfying ?   +Yes/No.

19. Monthly income :   Below $300
               $301 - $600   ☐
               $601 - $900   ☐
               $901 - $1,200   ☐
               $1,201 - $1,500   ☐
               $1,501 - $2,000   ☐
               $2,001 and above   ☐

20. If unemployed, for those married, please state spouse's occupation : ....

21. If unemployed, for those unmarried, please state parents' or guardian's occupation : ....

22. How far away is the counselling centre from your house? Approximately ....miles.

23. How long have you been staying in your present house? ....

24. On average, how much time does it take you to travel one way from your house to the counselling centre?

    [ ] Less than 15 min.
    [ ] 15 to 30 min.
    [ ] 30 min. to 1 hour
    [ ] More than 1 hour

25. How do you usually come to the counselling centre?

    [ ] Walk
    [ ] By bus
    [ ] By motorbike
    [ ] By car
    [ ] Others (please specify) ....

26. Have you ever worked as a volunteer before joining the Befrienders?

    [ ] No
    [ ] Yes

27. If yes, what kind of voluntary services have you ever been involved with during the past 5 years?

    [ ] Fund raising campaigns : walkathorn, selling flags/lottery tickets for charity, etc.
    [ ] Voluntary organisations : Red Cross, Boy Scouts/ Girl Guides, etc.
    [ ] Others (please specify) ....

28. Have you ever received help from any of these organizations before?

[ ] No
[ ] Yes

29. If yes, what kind of help did you receive?
....

30. When did you first come to know about the Befrienders?
....

31. How did you find out about the Befrienders?

[ ] Through frienders
[ ] Through "The Befrienders" themselves
[ ] Through the newspapers
[ ] Through the radio
[ ] Others (please specify) ....

32. How long have you joined the Befrienders as a volunteer?
....

33. What kind of position do you hold in the Befrienders?

[ ] Ordinary member
[ ] Committee/Board Member

		Yes	No
34.	Is any member of your own family also involved in the Befrienders?		
35.	Are any of your close friends involved in the Befrienders?		
36.	Did your family ever encourage you to join the Befrienders?		
37.	Did your close friends ever encourage you to join the Befrienders?		
38.	Have you ever asked the Befrienders for help before joining them?		

39. What factors in your opinion has influenced you most to
    join the Befrienders? (rank these influences in order of
    importance : 1 for greatest importance - 5 for least
    importance).

    [____] Your family background
    [____] Your friends
    [____] Your education
    [____] Your own experiences
    [____] Others (please specify) ....

40. Do you find that your joining the Befrienders has affected
    your relationship with your family?

    [____] No
    [____] Yes
    If yes, how?   Positively [____]
                     Negatively [____]

41. Do you find that your joining the Befrienders has affected
    your relationship with your friends?

    [____] No
    [____] Yes
    If yes, how?   Positively [____]
                     Negatively [____]

42. Before joining the Befrienders, did you find that you had
    a lot of free time?

    [____] Yes
    [____] No

43. Why do you join the Befrienders? (rank in order of importance : 1 for most important - 9 or 10 for least importance).
- [ ] To understand yourself better
- [ ] To understand people better
- [ ] To do what is right
- [ ] To help people
- [ ] To become a better citizen/person
- [ ] To give of oneself
- [ ] To work for a better world
- [ ] To learn/gain special or specific experiences
- [ ] To have a more meaningful and worthwhile life
- [ ] Others (please specify) ....

44. What interests/hobbies do you have? (rank in order of liking)
1. ....
2. ....
3. ....
4. ....

		Yes	No
45.	Do you like to have something to do most of the time?		
46.	Do you think you are as helpful as you would like to be?		
47.	Do you think you should help one who is in trouble?		
48.	Do you think you should repay someone who had helped you?		
49.	Should you help someone who is in trouble caused by himself?		
50.	Do you feel you are more helpful to people/clients of your own sex?		

		Yes	No
51.	Do you feel females are more effective as Befrienders?		
52.	Are you likely to take other people's problems home with you?		
53.	Do you think your moods and feelings affect your service as a Befriender?		
54.	Do you think in a good mood, you can be more effective in helping your clients		
55.	Do you find being a Befriender is rewarding?		
56.	Do you think everyone is responsible to help those in need of help as best as they can?		
57.	Do you think having faced crisis in your own life, you are more able to help your clients?		

58. How long do you think you can continue your service as a Befriender?

    [ ] For less than one year
    [ ] For at least one more year
    [ ] For more than one year

59. What do you think are the suitable qualities/characteristics a Befriender should have to be an effective volunteer?

    ....
    ....
    ....
    ....

60. How effective do you think you are as a Befriender?

- [ ] Very effective
- [ ] Effective
- [ ] Not very effective
- [ ] Not effective at all

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Thank you again for your kind co-operation.