Empathy in Kentucky High School Students

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Abstract: Empathy rates are declining rapidly, especially in adolescents. Studies show empathy is an important skill used in several fields of work. The lack of empathy led to the research question: Do High School Students of a Highly Rated High School in Kentucky display more Sympathy or Empathy? An online survey with five hypothetical scenarios — each with a different age group — was given to a convenience sample within the school. The responses were coded and analyzed on Atlas.ti, an online qualitative coding software, converting the qualitative data to quantitative data. The results were categorized into one of four categories: Empathy, Sympathy, Mix of Both, or None. The research showed that students showed less empathy to older age groups than younger ones, illustrating Psychological Closeness, where people show more empathy to people with whom they share similarities. The research concluded that high school students in a highly rated high school in Kentucky are more empathetic to individuals they can relate to most.
Keywords: Empathy, adolescents, Sympathy, survey, age groups, Atlas.ti

INTRODUCTION

It is pervasive to feel pity for anything, be it a person, an animal, or even a toy that is being crushed under a chair leg. There are two ways to show pity to another person: Sympathy and Empathy. Empathy rates are rapidly decreasing in the United States today, especially with the recent COVID-19 pandemic (United Way NCA, 2022). To measure empathy burnout, the United Way of the National Capital Area surveyed 1,022 Americans across various demographics and from all 50 states to obtain the results that empathy levels have gone down by 10% on average compared with two years ago for the whole American population. Within this, Gen Z respondents had an empathy level decrease of 14% from two years ago (United Way NCA, 2022). This statistic is alarming because Gen Z comprises today's adolescents, who will lead the next generation of humans. Therefore, the researcher wanted to measure the amount of empathy in adolescents in their community. However, it is not easy to generalize the psychological patterns of adolescents. Therefore, for accuracy, the researcher chose a small scope and generalized the results to only one school in a Kentucky school district. With the study's gap in location and scope, this research explores whether high school students have more sympathy or empathy in a Jefferson County, Kentucky, school.

LITERATURE REVIEW

ON EMPATHY

Empathy is a complex term to define, and different psychologists have different definitions of empathy. American-Canadian psychologist Paul Bloom defines empathy in his book "Against Empathy" as the ability to "feel what others are feeling and to be able to put yourself in the situation of others" (Bloom, 2018, p. 11). In other words, it is the ability to put yourself in the shoes of others and feel their emotions through their lens. As it may sound, empathy is not an instinct for several people and often must be learned through others or outside experience.

First of all, why is empathy important? Empathy is essential to the social world and is used in several professions, such as teaching and medicine. Emily Wender says in her journal article about teaching methods that empathy is critical in the real world to be a good teacher. She gives several examples of how to use empathy in teaching, such as telling or asking for stories from the listeners. In several places, Wender observes ways that empathetic teaching techniques in the classroom have proven effective. She states that "offering empathic feedback on first-person writing helps [her] show students [she is] aware of and interested in their experiences" (Wender, 2014, p. 37). Showing empathy towards students can help them improve their mental health by letting them know someone is aware and interested in their experiences.

In the medical world, empathy is vital, along with sympathy, because medical personnel must have social interactions with other people constantly. In his analysis of empathy in the medical world, David Jeffrey states that "...the best understood pathway by which empathy improves health outcomes is in the generation of trust between the patient and doctor" (Jeffrey, 2016, p. 450). Empathy can help make these interactions more enjoyable and make people happier. Studies also show that empathy is also shown to significantly raise happiness rates, even when the problem is not solved (Thin, 2014).

ON SYMPATHY

On the other hand, sympathy is a common alternative to empathy. It involves simply expressing pity for another person and not putting themselves into the shoes of others. Even though sympathy is often downplayed by empathy, it is a reasonably good alternative (Clark, 1987). Clark, a professor at Montclair State College, explains that even though empathy truly is the better option to respond positively to a person in pain, it is often difficult for some people to learn the skill of empathy. In those cases, sympathy is a better alternative to not doing anything (Clark, 1987).

Moreover, experiments show that showing sympathy to a person would decrease their happiness. However, showing empathy to a person would increase their happiness (Thin, 2017), which shows empathy's power over other people's emotions. Both these studies communicate the powerful effects of empathy and their impact on a person's happiness levels. Sympathy also has a powerful effect on happiness levels but is more pessimistic than empathetic responses.

Although almost opposites, sympathy and empathy are very closely related. While both are feelings of pity, "[e]mpathy is our ability to understand how someone feels[,] while sympathy is our relief in not having the same problems" (Rjr, 2022). Empathy is the ability to relate to how someone is feeling and being able to communicate with them while putting themselves into their situation, while sympathy is when the person feels grateful that they do not have the same problems and feels a sense of pity that the other person must go through this type of experience. Sympathy is the more common response to a person in pain, while empathy is the type of response that creates a more positive impact on the person's happiness levels. Therefore, even though sympathy is an excellent type of response, it is preferred that people respond with empathy.

ON EXISTING RESPONSE THEORIES

There are existing theories on how people react to a person in pain or who needs help. One type of response is called the bystander effect. According to James Hudson and Amy Brockman of the Georgia Institute of Technology, the bystander effect is when "individuals are less likely to offer assistance in an emergency when other witnesses are around" (Hudson, 2004, p. 168). This effect comes into play when a person is in a large crowd or a public area. This type of response was studied after the murder of Catherine Susan Genovese, who was brutally killed despite sev-

eral people knowing she was being chased.

The murder case tells the story of Catherine Susan Genovese, a lesbian bartender living with her girlfriend in New York. She was being chased by her killer, Winston Moseley, and was later stabbed and killed in a nearby parking lot. Upon further investigation, the police found out that she cried out for help to at least 38 people in a nearby apartment, none of whom offered to help Genovese. All of them assumed that someone else would call the cops or offer help to Genovese, and this reaction coined the psychological effect known as the bystander effect (Ruhl, 2023).

This idea is most likely to play in this type of environment because people think that since there are more witnesses to a situation, there are more people to potentially help the person, which can cause diffusion of responsibility (Bickman, 1971). The concept of diffusion of responsibility happens when several people witness an event. Everyone subconsciously assumes that everyone is responsible for taking action on that specific event and that someone else will eventually take action. This subconscious thought process transpires in everyone's brains, resulting in almost nobody taking the necessary action. The diffusion of responsibility is often paired with the bystander effect because it causes the diffusion of responsibility, which results in almost no one wanting to help the person in need since people assume that someone else will do it when, in reality, no one will.

Another type of response is called psychological closeness. According to an article called "Pity," psychological closeness is when a person feels pity for someone to whom they can most closely relate. As defined by the article, psychological closeness "depends on the relationship you have with a person…, proximity…, and similarity in background" (Pity, 2022). In other words, people can relate better to people with whom they share certain similarities. For example, a musician's broken hand may not evoke as much pity from a non-musician as a musician since there is a similarity in the background. The differences between the amount of empathy or sympathy shown and the person needing assistance can also be confounding, influencing how much empathy or sympathy a person shows another person.

ON ADOLESCENT BRAIN DEVELOPMENT AND SCOPE

The adolescent brain is complicated to analyze. Sarah-Jayne Blakemore conducted a study using neuroimaging techniques and discovered that the adolescent brain starts to grow new gray matter, which produces different hormones in the brain. It grows at different rates, causing different types of outputs for each adolescent (Blakemore, 2006). This study shows that the adolescent brain is highly unpredictable, and it is nearly impossible to create a theory that applies to all adolescents simultaneously. Sudha Chhikara's results from her experimental study with school-age students also display the vast differences adolescents can have between their ages through her studies on adolescent brains ages 12-18. She stated in her research that the study resulted in vastly different results for each age, with almost entirely different statistics for each age number, further showing that an adolescent's mind is difficult to generalize (Chhikara, 1996). There are vast differences between each adolescent's brain, so the scope must be small enough to generalize to a group of adolescents with a common similarity. Taking smaller samples of adolescents and analyzing them separately as distinctive groups would reduce the chance that the research makes false assumptions about the entire population of adolescents or make the research insignificant. With a smaller sample size with a certain similarity, the research can apply to a specific subdivision of adolescents, making the research more accurate to that subpopulation.

THE GAP

Several studies on empathy show how much happier people tend to become when others are empathetic rather than sympathetic. They also show how teenagers' brains are incredibly unpredictable on a large scale, and trends can only be traced when studied with a small scope. However, there has been no research on whether these adolescents tend to show more sympathy or empathy toward other people. There are no studies on the correlation between empathy and sympathy in Jefferson County, Kentucky. There is one research experiment conducted related to empathy, done by the Christian Science Monitor, called "Does Empathy Training Boost Math Scores?" It is a research study where several high

school students were given empathy training and asked to take a math test after the training to see whether empathy affected their math scores. The experiment lasted for six years, proving that empathy training "showed an 11 to 17 percent increase in students' academic performance and had better problem solving and conflict resolution skills[,]" increasing the need for empathy training in the school setting (The Christian Science Monitor, 2016). The fact that this is the only research study done in this location makes room for a gap in the body of knowledge. The researcher chose to research only adolescents of a highly rated high school in Kentucky since it is the researcher's school and, therefore, the most feasible scope for study for the researcher.

Another pair of researchers, Ruth Feldman and Jonathan Levy, conducted an experimental research study called "Can teenagers feel the pain of others? peeking into the teenage brain to find empathy." They have a similar research question to the selected one, which is why this study is necessary to explain. This experiment's research question is, "Can teenagers show empathy towards others?" The experiment used a machine called a MEG machine, which tracks brain activity when a student shows empathy to another person of either the same or different race as themselves. The conclusion of this study showed that students of Arab and Jewish descent tended to show more empathy towards people of the same race as themselves (Feldman, 2017).

That experiment had three significant differences from the researcher's study. The first major difference is the scope of the research. Feldman's study experimented with Jewish and Arab people specifically, whereas this research is not racially classified. However, the scope of this research study is set to high school students in a highly-rated high school in Jefferson County, Kentucky. The scope is not restricted by race but is restricted by the school. This restriction may produce different types of reactions compared with the experimental research conducted by Feldman.

The second significant difference is the methodology. The study uses the MEG machine, which analyzes brain function and classifies whether it is empathy. This research uses mixed methods, posing hypothetical scenarios to high school students through an online survey. The main advantage of using mixed methods is that the students will present more accurate results than if the MEG machine had inaccuracies that might

have affected the results. A qualitative method of collecting data is potentially authentic because it comes directly from the students. The third and last significant difference is the results themselves. The results of Feldman's study showed whether the participants showed more empathy regarding their cultural background. In contrast, this research will show whether the high school students showed more sympathy or empathy without concern about their cultural or racial background. The scope has been restricted to one school for increased feasibility.

With the gaps in both location and scope of research, there is a defined gap in the book of knowledge, bringing up the research question, do students of a highly rated high school in Kentucky display more sympathy or empathy towards other people? This research would help contribute to this gap, making this research significant for inquiry.

METHODS

METHOD DESIGN STATEMENT

A qualitative content analysis method will present hypothetical scenarios to several high school students in a highly rated high school and analyze whether these students show more empathy or sympathy towards people of different age groups. The Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved the method for ethical research techniques. The researcher used a qualitative open-response survey modeled similarly to the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) Situational Judgement Test.

ALIGNMENT JUSTIFICATION

The AAMC Situational Judgement Test is designed to accept medical students into residency. Used in several parts of the United States, it is designed with hypothetical scenarios with four multiple-choice options to analyze the effectiveness of the student's methods and the student's character in general in the real world. The AAMC Situational Judgement test questions simulate the common difficulties medical students encounter in medical school. An article written by Dr. Sahil Mehta summarizes several scholarly articles on the topic of the AAMC Situational Judgement Test. It states that it ac-

curately represents the efficiency of the accepted medical students and adds value to the admission process (Mehta, 2023). The test is a multiple-choice format with four actions that the students would rank from most effective to least effective.

Following this method, the researcher selected this test to model their research because it provides a practical and feasible way to analyze a person's personality and methods. The researcher created hypothetical scenarios specifically to provoke a sense of pity in the student. However, the researcher changed the multiple-choice response to an open response to allow for greater freedom in responses and for the students to state their true intentions instead of confining the several possibilities into four multiple-choice answers. The instructions given to the students are provided in Appendix 1, and the five questions asked are provided in Appendix 2 in the same order as they were asked.

SAMPLING METHODS

Since schools are unlikely to release students' demographic data to the researcher, the researcher decided to take a convenience sample and spread

the survey through text messaging to the researcher's existing contacts, giving out flyers, and posting it on schoolwide Google Classroom pages.

The survey was created on Google Forms and used five open-ended hypothetical scenarios, which consisted of practical scenarios with a person needing help or in pain. The hypothetical scenarios assign age and role to the participants, along with a detailed scenario to allow the students to picture the scenario. After the assignment, they are given a description of the environment they are in and the current situation of the other imaginary people. Then a situation description with one person from a specific age group needs help.

The different age groups were toddlers, high school students, adult coworkers, older adults, and newborns, respectively. The age groups were selected based on the differentiation established by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The age groups were crucial in analyzing the results since they showed significant trends and specific psychological effects. The trends are explained in detail in the discussion section of this paper.

The participant was then asked to describe what they would do in such a situation in the position they were given in that scenario. Using the response given, the researcher determined whether they showed sympathy, empathy, or neither and used the online coding software to code the data and create graphic visualizations, which were used to create the bar graphs that are used in Figures 1-6 in the data and results section.

DATA COLLECTION METHODS

Responses were recorded in the "Responses" section of the Google Form. Once there were no more incoming responses for more than a week, the responses were exported to a spreadsheet. From there, the responses were formatted and uploaded to Atlas.ti, coded, and analyzed by the researcher into four categories: Empathy, Sympathy, a Mix of Both, or None. There were two rounds of coding and analysis, and the online software provided visualizations of the data.

DATA ANALYSIS METHODS

Since this research is a non-experimental mixed-methods project without a control variable, a regular
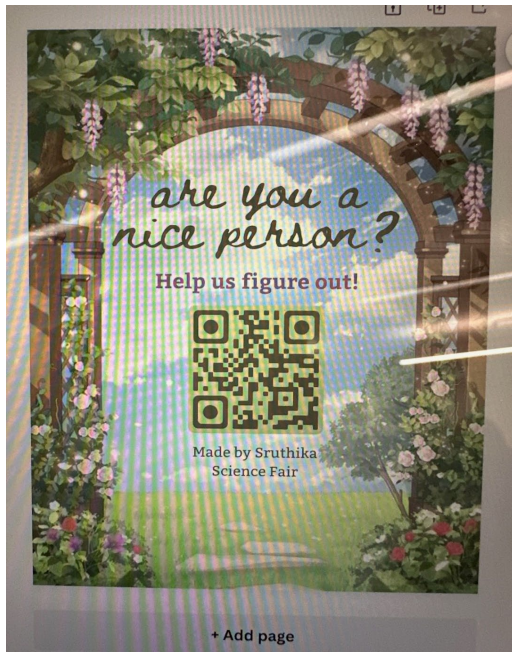
t-test statistical analysis cannot be conducted because it requires a control variable to show statistical significance. Therefore, the researcher had to find a different way to calculate statistical significance. The ANOVA is an alternative analysis method that can be used on qualitative data. The more widely used t-test analyzes and compares the means between the control and experimental groups. The ANOVA, also called the f-test, measures the variances between the data groups if there is no control group (Kim, 2017). A one-way f-test was used since the research needed to measure the overall types of responses of the high school students, and there was only one sample of students. The ANOVA results are provided in the Data and Results section.

DATA AND RESULTS

Thirty-three responses were collected in the survey and exported to an Excel spreadsheet to view all the data at once. From the Excel spreadsheet, they were transferred into a Word document where the raw data was formatted and labeled by question number and student number. The responses were then transferred directly into Atlas.ti for coding and analysis. On Atlas.ti, the qualitative responses from the Google Form were converted into quantitative, numerical data. The below bar graphs were generated by Atlas.ti using the question numbers and the codes given to each response. The questions in the survey are provided in order in Appendix 2.
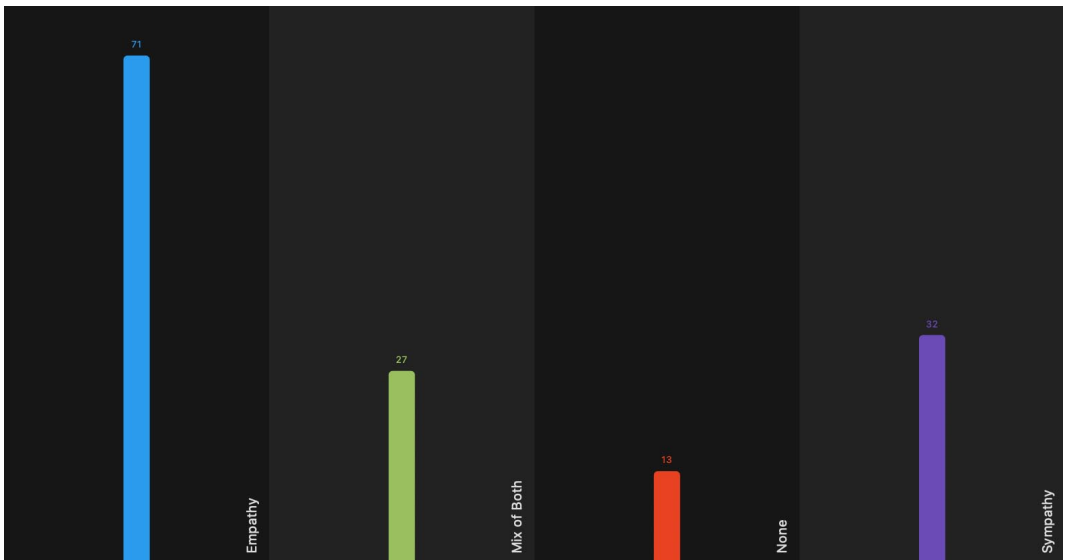

Figure 1:
Overall coded data derived from the survey responses.

Note. This figure shows the trend shown across all five questions. There were 143 total responses. The blue bar represents empathetic responses, the purple bar represents sympathetic responses, the green bar represents responses that were a mix of both, and the red bar represents responses that displayed neither sympathy nor empathy.

The above chart shows the overall data across all five questions, with 71 empathetic responses, 32 sympathetic responses, 27 responses with a mix of both, and 13 responses that do not show either. As shown, most respondents responded with empathy to each scenario. Below are all the charts with the individual amounts of empathy and sympathy for each question.

Figure 2:
Question 1 responses - bar graph

Note. This figure displays the bar graph for Question 1. There were 29 responses. All responses can be found in Appendix 3.

In question one, 16 students showed empathy, 5 showed sympathy, 7 showed a mix of both, and 1 showed none. There was a clear majority of empathetic responses.
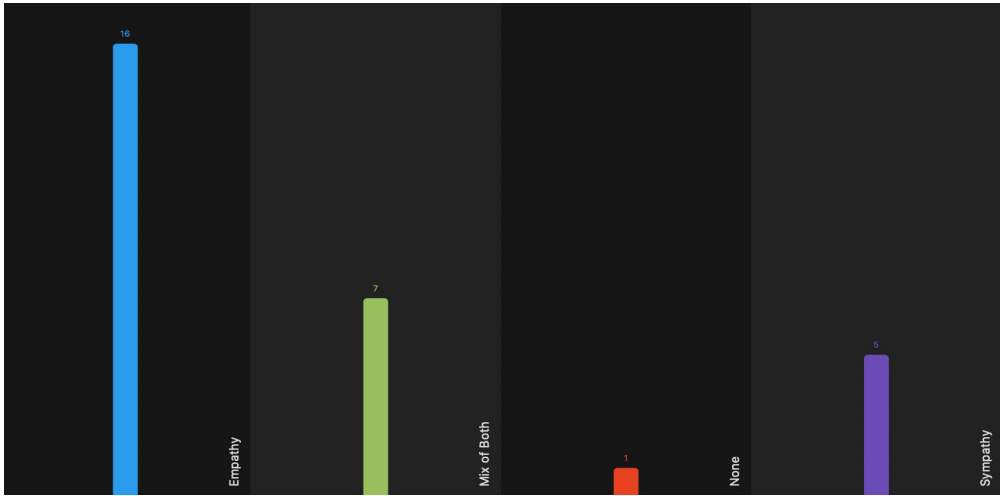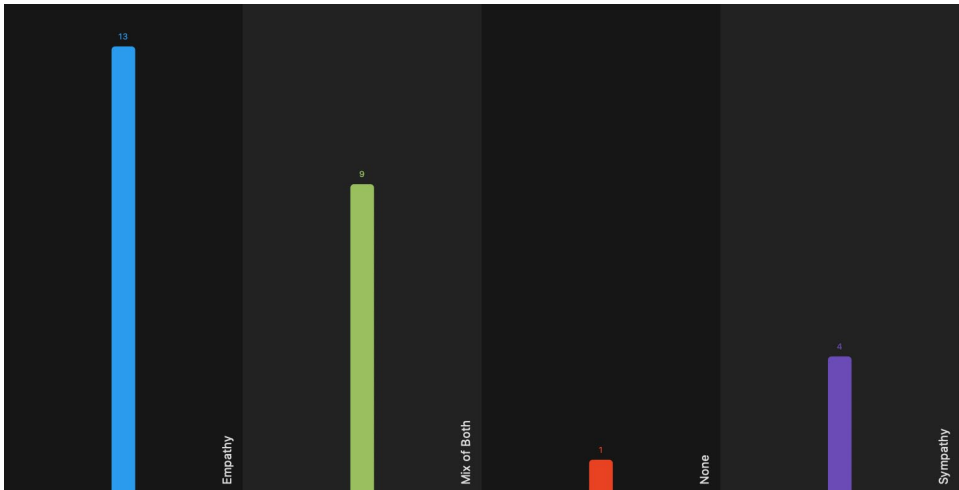

Figure 3:
Question 2 responses - bar graph

Note. This figure displays the bar graph for Question 2. There were 27 responses. All responses can be found in Appendix 3.

In question two, 13 students showed empathy, 4 showed sympathy, 9 showed a mix of both, and 1 showed none. There is a clear majority of empathetic responses.

Figure 4:
Question 3 responses - bar graph

Note. This figure displays the bar graph for Question 3. There were 29 responses. All responses can be found in Appendix 3.

In question three, 7 showed empathy, 13 showed sympathy, 3 showed a mix of both, and 6 showed none. There is a clear majority of sympathetic responses.

Figure 5:
Question 4 responses - bar graph

Note. This figure displays the bar graph for Question 4. There were 29 responses. All responses can be found in Appendix 3.

In question four, 16 students showed empathy, 6 showed sympathy, 3 showed a mix of both, and 4 showed none. There was a clear majority of empathetic responses.
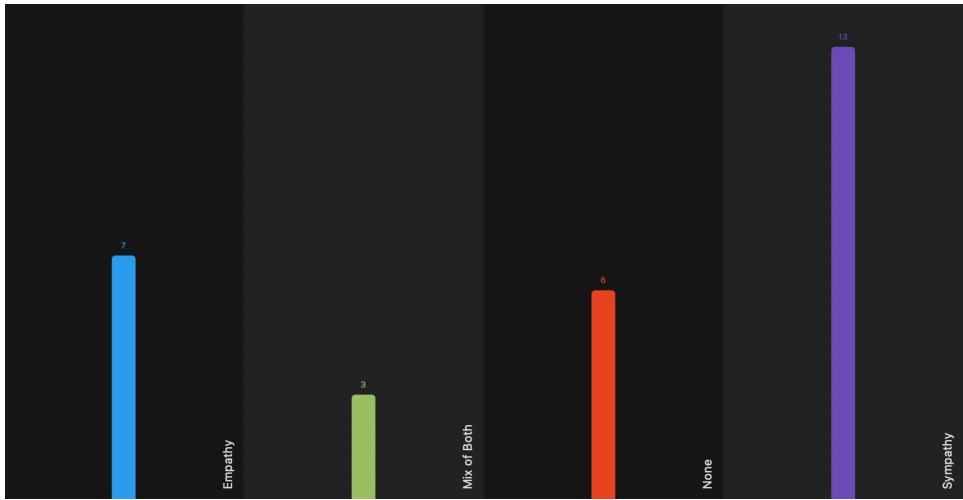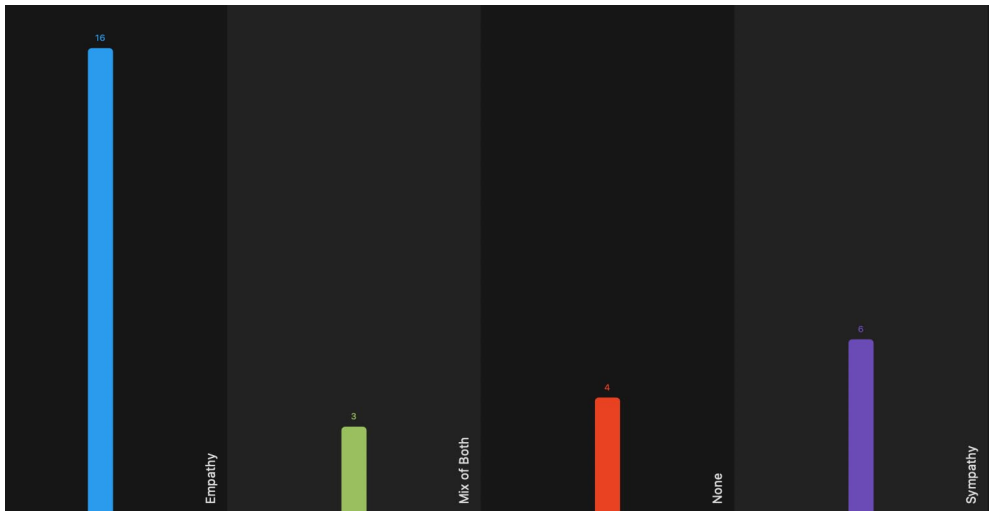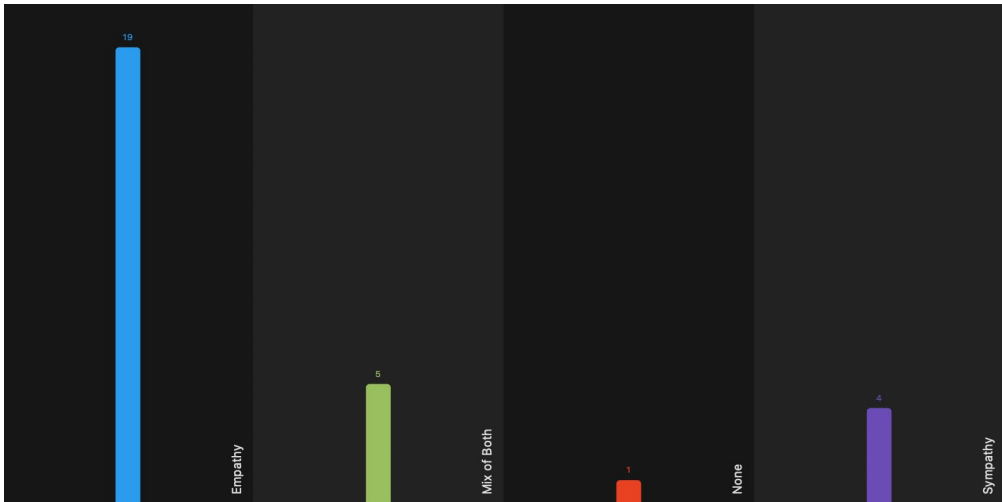
Figure 6:
Question 5 responses - bar graph

Note. This figure displays the bar graph for Question 5. There were 29 responses. All responses can be found in Appendix 3.

In question five, 19 students showed empathy, 4 showed sympathy, 5 showed a mix of both, and 1 showed none. There was a clear majority of empathetic responses.

Figures 7 and 8 show the output of the statistical analysis done on XLMiner Analysis ToolPak, a widely used statistical analysis tool used on Google Sheets to conduct several types of statistical analysis, including the ANOVA test (Zach, 2023). The researcher used XLMiner Analysis ToolPak to generate the above results from the ANOVA test (Figure 8). The p-value is shown in the second-to-last column in Figure 8. As shown, the p-value of the collected data is less than the standard alpha level of 0.05, making the collected data statistically significant.

Along with the empathetic and sympathetic data, the researcher also analyzed the type of language used in each question's responses. The researcher found that certain age groups elicited more empathy than others. For example, Student 27's response to ques-

SUMMARY				
Groups	*Count*	*Sum*	*Average*	*Variance*
Empathy	5	71	14.2	20.7
Sympathy	5	32	6.4	14.3
Mix of Both	5	27	5.4	6.8
None	5	13	2.6	5.3

Figure 7:
Statistical analysis - Mean and Variance of groups

Note. This figure displays the Mean and Variance of the different categorical variables from the coding analysis. An average of 14 students showed empathy for all age groups.

ANOVA						
Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	370.15	3	123.3833333	10.47841472	0.0004679304081	3.238871522
Within Groups	188.4	16	11.775			
Total	558.55	19				

Figure 8:
Statistical analysis - p-value and Degrees of Freedom

tion 2 (Appendix 3) was two sentences long and was highly empathetic to the high school student who was the person in need. However, Student 27's response to question 3 (Appendix 3) was much shorter and barely even showed sympathy to the adult coworker. These two responses by the same student show a difference in the levels of empathy toward each age group, which poses an interesting pattern described in further detail in the Discussion section of this paper.

DISCUSSION

The research aimed to determine whether high school students at a highly rated school show more sympathy or empathy towards people of other ages. A survey with five hypothetical scenarios was distributed to students through schoolwide Google Classroom pages. The survey was voluntary, so it was up to the student whether they wanted to complete it. The directions on the survey asked the students to state in as much detail as possible the steps they would take in that given situation. The questions state where the student will be, who is around them, what age they are to assume they are, and which person in particular needs help. Thirty-two responses were collected and analyzed by the researcher. For each question, each response was categorized into one of four categories: Empathy, Sympathy, Mix of Both, or None. The results showed that empathy was the dominant reaction in students when showing pity. However, among the questions, specific trends were noteworthy. Students tended to show more empathy to people younger than or the same age as them, whereas the empathy rates decreased if the person was older or a stranger. The research concluded that while students mostly show empathy, these levels may be lower if the other person is older or a stranger. Therefore, students from a

highly rated high school in Kentucky tend to show more empathy towards people to whom they can most closely relate.

THE ANALYSIS

There may be different scientific reasons for some of the results shown. One reason the students may have reacted with less empathy for the stranger was a psychological effect called the bystander effect. As previously stated in the literature review, the bystander effect is when "individuals are less likely to offer assistance in an emergency when other witnesses are around." (Hudson) Studies show that when many people are around, one person is less likely to help someone in need because they think someone in the crowd would do it for them instead. It becomes a distribution of responsibility. Additionally, experimental research done by Maria Plötner shows that children exhibit the bystander effect, like adults (Plötner, 2015). In this research project, in the question about the stranger, they were given the assumption that they were in a public place with several people around them.

Along with the bystander effect, the students also displayed diffusion of responsibility. To reiterate, the diffusion of responsibility is when a person believes that several people witnessed something and at least one person in the crowd would act. It is usually associated with the bystander effect since the bystander effect causes the diffusion of responsibility. Some students responded that someone else would help the woman since they were in a crowd, which is a clear sign of the diffusion of responsibility. For example, Student 19 clearly stated that other people could help her, so they said they would refuse to help her (Appendix 3). Several other students also responded that they would not help the stranger be-

cause they thought someone else would help, exhibiting the bystander effect.

A scientific reason these students tended to have much more empathetic responses towards the high school student, specifically compared to the other age groups, is because of a factor called "psychological closeness." As previously mentioned, psychological closeness is when a person feels pity for another person when both share a common factor, such as a musician feeling pity when another musician hurts their fingers.

Similarly, in this research, the high school students could relate to the imaginary student more since there is a similarity in their backgrounds: high school. The students could think back to their experiences as high school students. The high empathy levels and the average response length for that specific question can be the reason for this. The second question had the most extended responses on average, which shows that the respondents had more to say for a person their age and likely felt a subconscious closeness to the imaginary student.

THE CONCLUSIONS

There were different levels of empathy between each presented age group. Upon analysis, the research results showed that the high school students of a highly rated high school in Kentucky showed empathy to people to whom they can relate the most, displaying psychological closeness and signs of the bystander effect.

THE IMPLICATIONS

The main implication of this research is extensive empathy training. A meta-analysis by Emily Teding van Berkhout, a researcher at the Department of the House of Representatives in Australia, states that "... empathy training programs tend to be effective in increasing empathy levels" (Teding van Berkhout, 2016). Based on the conclusions of this research, empathy training would increase the student's empathy levels. It would increase empathy towards all age groups, not only the ages they have come across thus far, increasing overall empathy levels in adolescents attending this school in Kentucky.

THE LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The research comprised a survey with under 100 participants, with only five questions. The low number of questions may have led to certain inaccuracies in the research. With only five age groups with only one question per age group, the current research may need to be more representative of all the types of responses that students may give. The student may assist a particular age group more in a different situation than the one mentioned in this survey. Future research on this topic may use more hypothetical scenarios and have more participants complete the study to get more accurate results. With more scenarios, there can be a broader range of age groups and possibilities to analyze further which types of scenarios the students tend to show empathy or sympathy. The number of participants may also pose selection bias, since most participants were part of a convenience sample. Additionally, the results apply to this school only since this school is known for selecting the highest achieving students in the county. Therefore, results may be different in other schools that are rated lower. More participants can cover a more comprehensive range of students' perspectives and potentially make the research more accurate by having a larger sample size and lesser selection bias.

The new understanding also poses certain limitations. The generated knowledge cannot necessarily be applied to the adolescent population since the scope is only set to one school in Kentucky and may apply only to those students who study there. Moreover, the new understanding may only prove effective in some circumstances. As mentioned, there may be scenarios where students would show more empathy than others, not covered by the small number of scenarios. The students may react with more empathy in one type of situation than another within a single age group. Minor changes to the scope of the study and adding more scenarios for future studies may increase the range for generalization. They may also be more accurate to that specific group.

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Appendix 1: Instructions from Researcher

Please read of the hypothetical scenarios carefully and respond with how you would react to these situations. Please respond with actions that you would perform in real life. If you would do nothing in reality, please respond with honesty. The responses can be as detailed as you like. However, the researcher would like the responses to at least be detailed enough to know what actions you are performing. These will not affect the way other students perceive you as a person. Everything types here will stay between you and the researcher. Have fun!

Instructions from researcher: I will present five scenarios to you now. For each scenario, I would like you to say truthfully what you would do in this situation. Assume that there are people around you, but no one can help solve the problem or take over the problem themselves. Your name will not be recorded, and your responses will not be given to any other unauthorized person. This questionnaire will not judge your character. Please answer as truthfully and as practically as possible. You are always permitted to leave during the survey or refuse to answer specific questions. I will now present the scenarios.

Appendix 2: Questionnaire

Question 1: Imagine you are a kindergarten teacher, and one of your students comes crying to you about how they made a mistake on one of their drawings, how they wanted it to be the best drawing ever, and how they messed up. How would you handle this child, and what would you tell them to console them? Assume the child is crying and is not acting violently.

Question 2: A friend who isn't doing well in school calls you one day and starts ranting about how they feel they aren't doing enough and that they will fail all classes. How would you respond to this friend to console them and convince them that they are doing great? Assume this friend is not one of your best friends but is not too distant.

Question 3: A coworker of yours comes to you and tells you how they had a terrible day and got a parking ticket for no reason. What would you say to this coworker? Assume you both know each other.

Question 4: Imagine you are walking home from work, and you stop by a grocery store. You see an old lady on the road trying to ask someone for a phone to call their son. What would you do in this situation? Assume that there are people around you. Did you say anything to her?

Question 5: You are now 30 years old, and your friend just had a baby. You go over to visit them, and your friend tells you their baby has not eaten since the morning. She leaves to get something for you, and she leaves the baby in your arms. As soon as your friend leaves, the baby starts to cry out of hunger. What would you do to help the child?

Appendix 3: Responses

Question 1:

Student 1: U can't make a mistake while drawing. Beauty is in the eye of the beholder. Don't worry kid it's about if you are satisfied with it and if u love what u made.

Student 2: I would tell that it's alright to make mistakes and that they can try again. I would give them a new piece of paper so that they can start over. I would also talk in a gentle manner, so as to not upset them any further.

Student 3: I would tell the child that everyone makes mistakes and it is natural and that nothing is impossible to solve. I would console the child to stop crying and tell them to start over their drawing.

Student 4: I would console the child by telling them that mistakes are common in life and you have to learn from them and then hand them a new piece of paper to start the drawing over again.

Student 5: Tell them that mistakes and imperfections is what makes it unique and even more beautiful.

Student 6: I would probably tell them that it's okay and that every artist goes through art that isn't perfect and offer another opportunity where the child could feel better about their art. I would explain how in their eyes it may look bad but in my eyes it looks really good.

Student 7: I would sit down with them and ask them what they did wrong, and what they wanted to do instead. I will

tell them that I love their idea of what they wanted the piece to be, but that it still turned out to be an awesome drawing even with the mistakes, because mistakes don't make something good or bad. They are "happy accidents" and happy accidents often end up being super cool!

Student 8: I would first try to console the child trying to explain that mistakes are inevitable but practice makes perfect and I will show them how to use that mistake to make their drawing better.

Student 9: I would tell the child that every peice of art is beautiful, and there are no mistakes, only happy accidents.

Student 10: Probably that it's okay to make mistakes and perfection makes life boring. Even picking up a brush/pencil is progress to become more confident in your craft.

Student 11: I'll tell them eveything is okay and that life is a learning process. That mistakes make people better it's always good to keep trying don't give up.

Student 12: I would calmly let them know and reassure them that everything will be okay, and let them know that their work is still good, and there is always time to create more art. also for the main point of it's okay to make a mistake, and with their imagination, they could challenge themselves to try to fix the mistake to their liking, hence creating more art.

Student 13: Give the child to its mother and tell it to stop.

Student 14: I would tell them that perfection is not capable and mistakes are apart of artistry and that I love their drawing still

Student 15: I tell them that their drawing is already good and that perfection isn't real.

Student 16: I would try and calm them down, then explain how all artists mess up on their work, and sometimes the mistakes make the art piece better

Student 17: I would probably try to help them fix the mistake they made or help them re-paint it, if I didn't have time to do it I think I would tell them I really liked the painting and ask if they could draw/paint me something.

Student 18: I would try to calm the child down and once the child calms down, I would probably try to find a way to fix the mistake or cover it up some how by tells the child it looks like something so they can paint over it or add more to it. If I can't, then I would tell them it's ok to make mistakes and that it will be a great drawing anyways or I would get them a new paper and tell them that they can make a new even greater drawing. I would also ask them why that drawing was so great and ask them to recreate that feeling again.

Student 19: I would comfort the child and tell them they could make a new drawing or making their original drawing different.

Student 20: I would do my best to comfort them, reassuring them that they could erase the mistake, or start again. Additionally, I would reassure them that everyone makes mistakes, and that even great artists like Picasso had to restart or erase things.

Student 21: I would tell the child that everyone makes mistakes and that they can still keep trying to produce the best drawing ever. I would encourage them to keep trying and not give up on their goal.

Student 22: Tell them it's okay and show them how they could fix it once they calm down.

Student 23: i would tell them even though they feel they messed up that their art work was still very beautiful . i would as them if they want a new paper to start over and try to comfort them as best as i could.

Student 24: I would console them, tell them their drawing looks good, and give them another piece of paper to try again.

Student 25: I would first calm them down by telling them that everything is ok and that there are solutions to this problem. I would offer them help on fixing the picture to make it the way that the child wants it, or offer them a few more pieces of paper and materials so they can try again.

Student 26: I would hug them and tell them it's okay and the mistake is unintentionally beautiful. I would tell them that they can learn from their mistakes and they can used this knowledge to even improve their art in the future. I would also draw something purposely worst than what they drew on a different piece of paper hopefully to make them laugh and feel happy.

Student 27: I would start by telling them that not everything has to be perfect all the time, and it's more important that they tried. I would also tell them that every drawing is just practice for the next one, so they should try and learn from their mistake and focus more on making something that they are proud of next time, rather than striving for perfection.

Student 28: I would console the child with such statements as 'Don't worry, just learn from your mistakes and you can make it perfect the second time'

Student 29: I would asked them to explain why and what they messed up and then try to reason with them and find a way they can fix it.

Question 2:
Student 1: I will listen to their rant and say don't worry I've done worse and I survived, u will too.

People tend to feel better other people have gone through the same senecio and they turned out okay.

Student 2: I would respond saying that sometimes we have our ups and downs, and that they shouldn't take this as them being a failure. Instead, I would tell them to think about what they can do to fix this. Why do they feel they are not doing enough? If they have an answer to that, we can work on a solution. If not, I'd recommend they talk to their teacher or counselor to see what they can do to do better in school.

Student 3: I would tell them that school is very hard and they are going to do great and that they just have to try a little hard.

Student 4: I would console my friend by reassuring them that grades aren't everything in the world and theres more to do than just study, however you have to find a balance between both of them and if my friend is struggling to do that I would just continue listening to the rant and not do anything. Sure you may feel bad right now but things only get worse if you give up so hopefully things get better.

Student 5: I would console and assure that they aren't alone and that i'm stressed as well so they'll feel less alone

Student 6: I would console and assure that they aren't alone and that i'm stressed as well so they'll feel less alone

Student 7: I would tell them that as long as they are trying their best, they're doing enough. As for failing classes, it depends on the situation the person is actually in with grades. If they are truly on a track to fail their classes, I will remind them that grades are ultimately just another number. If they aren't on the track to fail and are just panicking, I will remind them that they are a great student and have always passed their classes in the past so they can do it now.

Student 8: I would remind them of all their past achievements and show that they are capable and have the potential to step back up and do good in their classes in even the short amount of time and tell them that I am willing to help them do so.

Student 9: I would tell them to stop comparing themselves. And that they're always better than someone.

Student 10: I'm also failing all my classes. It's chill. We should start a commune in the woods!

Student 11: Convince them to spend more time in school and not to stress about it too much that it can ruin your mental health

Student 12: i wouldn't know how to respond other than to say it's gonna be alright. maybe ask them questions specifically to what they are frustrated with, to let them speak it off their chest.

Student 13: I would tell then that they are smart and that grades do not define you

Student 14: I would tell the friend that the grading period isn't over till it's over

Student 15: I don't do that, I tell them that my grades are also failing (I'm not lying) and that in the grand scheme of things, it'll be okay because we all choose to live another day anyway, and that tomorrow can bring new things.

Student 16: I would start off with a rant of my own, about how the standardized testing and nomination of such sets kids up to fail and feel like a failure, then offer to help them

Student 17: I think I would just ask them if I could help them with any assignments, or if I could help them with anything.

Student 18: I am would listen to them and try to encourage them to find ways to improve their study methods and habits while complimenting them on what they are currently doing.

Student 19: I would tell them that they have achieved and accomplish a lot that they don't give themselves enough credit for and it's hard to feel like you are doing well when there are constant assignments needing to be done. I would tell them they work really hard and aren't going to fail but if they feel like they need to do more we could study together or they could try making to do lists and focusing more time on work.

Student 20: I would gather some more information about why they feel this way, and how they are doing, and do my best to reassure them that it's just a high school class, there's always next year/semester. I would also try to offer them comfort in the fact that I have my own feelings of not doing enough, and that they aren't alone.

Student 21: I would remind them of how many things they already have to manage and how the transition to high school is difficult but that they have managed to handle it, which is impressive in itself. I would tell them that they are always good enough despite what the people around them are doing. I would also encourage them to talk to their teacher and seek help if they have legitimate evidence that they are struggling in the class.

Student 22: Tell them to list what classes they have and why they feel like they aren't doing great. Tell them about any extra credit they could do to bring it up. If it's too late to do that, tell them that colleges won't just care about grades and bring up what they excel at

Student 23: firstly i would ask if they need help with anything work / school wise. then i would ask what type of grades they have and see what all i could do to help.

Student 24: I would listen to them vent and be sympathetic. If they are open to advice I would give them advice. However I wouldn't directly try to convince them that they are wrong

Student 25: I would tell them that everything is going to be ok, and that their grade doesn't reflect their effort. I would tell them that a lot of the material they are learning is difficult, and not fully mastering the material doesn't mean that you are an awful student.

Student 26: I would tell them to not give up and that these feelings are temporary. Just to be sure that they won't take their own life, I would tell them that I love them (in a friend way ofc) and they can't solve a temporary problem with a permanent solution. I would tell them they got this and tell them similar situations of mine since tbh, I feel like I'm not good enough everyday lol and give them advice and self care tips. Since they're not one of my best friends, I would try to spend time with them more because obv we're not that close but clearly they need support since they choose to rant to someone who is not close to them/a best friend to them. If I meet them in person, I would give them a big hug since hugs make me calm and hopefully they will feel less sad.

Student 27: I would try and remind them of things that I know they are good at to try and soothe their fears of not doing enough. In addition, I would tell them that it will be okay and that their reaction just shows that they care about doing well, indicating that they have the motivation to get their grades up.

Student 28: LMAO this is me, i'm the ranting friend

Student 29: I would ask them to tell me why they are feeling this way and give them ways they can fix this, if they are doing okay I would reassure them of that.

Question 3:

Student 1: Ask if they have dashcam footage or something and take it to the police. They can't do that. Sue them

Student 2: I would tell them that I'm sorry they had such a horrible day and I hope that the next day will be better.

Student 3: I would tell them that it's going to be okay and if there are bad days then there are good days to which will come very soon.

Student 4: I would tell the coworker that they could've been more responsible with where they park there car however after that I would try and comfort them to the best of my ability and tell them that they can take it easy at work and try and cover for them as much as I can

Student 5: I would ask them what i could do to make their day better

Student 6: I would probably reassure them and possibly help them pay it. I don't think I would offer to pay it fully but I would help a bit and offer them a space where they can rant or let things off their chest from the day. If it's a coworker I would also tell them to just take the job a little more easier than usual

Student 7: I would say that I am sorry they got a parking ticket and had a terrible day. Some days are just like that but that's ok because bad days make good days feel even better when they come around.

Student 8: I would say that there was probably a specific reason for why that happened and if they really think it's unfair then could probably go take a picture of the scenario and report it but I would say that's unnecessary.

Student 9: Try and park better. Or that daily inconveniences happen

Student 10: Man, that sucks. Public transport should be the norm. There are too many cars and we can't afford to make a concrete world to get enough parking.

Student 11: That's it's okay you can go to court and fight it if you didn't deserve a parking ticket and to not overthink it that life will be okay.

Student 12: ask them what happened that day in order to gain more info about their current situation

Student 13: Thats so stupid im so sorry

Student 14: The police are so stupid in this area and why do traffic cops have nothing better to do

Student 15: I tell them that that sucks and that they should do one thing that makes them happy for that day.

Student 16: Just let them rant, sometimes that's the best thing

Student 17: I think I would let them rant to me about anything and tell them I hope they have a better day tomorrow.

Student 18: I would listen and try to give advice if I can by comforting them first and telling them they'll have a better day tomorrow. The coworker might be offended if I try to explain why they got a ticket so I won't. I will mostly listen and comfort.

Student 19: I tell them that i am sorry and that must be very annoying to deal with.

Student 20: I would tell them that that really sucks, and ask if there had been anything else that made that day terrible. If there had, I would do my best to console them. If it had just been the parking ticket, then I would try to remind them that it's just one thing that's sucked, and there have been plenty of good things that day.

Student 21: I would ask what happened during their day and show them I understand how they feel about their day.

I would then assure them everyone has bad days, but this is just another one they have to get through, and they will hopefully have a better day tomorrow.

Student 22: I'd not talk about it much, instead saying "that sucks"

Student 23: i would ask what the parking ticket said and if it was a valid reason for them to have it then i would explain to them why they have it and how they were in the wrong.

Student 24: I would say something along the lines of "wow that sucks"

Student 25: I would tell them that tomorrow will be a better day for them, and I would give solutions to the parking ticket problem, as in helping them pay it off if they are low on money, etc.

Student 26: I would tell them multiple stories of my dad getting a parking tickets in the past lol to reassure them since my dad is fine still to this day. I would tell them that everything is going to be fine, don't stress out but also tell them to be careful of signs and park in spaces that you're sure is parking ticket free.

Student 27: I would say "that sucks" and then ask them for more details.

Student 28: I'd say 'that sucks, wanna talk about it or do you just want some coffee?'

Student 29: I would tell them that I am sorry that their day is going that way

Question 4:

Student 1: The others would be shopping or something. I would let her use my phone.

Student 2: If I'm not in a rush, I'd approach her and ask her if I could help her with anything. If she asks to use my phone, I'd give it to her but I'd stay close by since that is my phone afterall. If I am in a rush, I'd feel bad but I'd continue on with my day.

Student 3: I would give the lady my phone and try to help her in any way possible.

Student 4: I would keep on walking, she'll probably find someone to hand her a phone. I wouldn't say anything to her and just hope that someone does give her a phone.

Student 5: I would give them my phone to call their son

Student 6: I probably wouldn't approach her first. I typically feel too anxious to do those things so I would probably see if she approached me. If she approaches me I would give her my phone to borrow but if she doesn't there's a chance I might not let them borrow the phone incase it's something dangerous.

Student 7: I would ask her if she can access a public phone booth. If so, I would give her enough change to call her son. If not, then I would give her directions to the nearest phone booth and public transportation stop as well as change to call her son.

Student 8: I would happily give her my phone and stay with her until she gets her problem if any resolved and I would do my best to help her out.

Student 9: I say I'll dial the number and let her talk on speaker

Student 10: I'd offer my phone.

Student 11: Illl tell her to use my phone people are always in need for some help and you never know when you'll be in need.

Student 12: i would let her borrow my phone to call her kid

Student 13: I would give her my phone or ask her to tell you the number.

Student 14: I'd hold the phone and she can tell me the number and I'd put the phone on speaker so that she can hear

Student 15: I would direct her to somewhere public with a phone.

Student 16: Give her my work phone, that has insurance, and let her call her son

Student 17: If I'm not busy I would try to lend the woman my phone, if I am in a rush, I would just ignore it.

Student 18: I would try to help her find like a public phone nearby because I can't fully trust that this person will not steal my phone. If I can't, I'll ask her for the number and call him my self, if he answers, I'll put the phone on speaker and hold the phone.

Student 19: I probably wouldn't say anything to her because it's hard to trust strangers and there would be other people around and i would assume someone else would help.

Student 20: I would ask for her son's phone number, and try to call the son for her. If he picks up then I'd letter her use my phone. If he doesn't I'd apologize, ask if I can do anything else, then move on with my day.

Student 21: I would allow her to borrow my phone to call her son.

Student 22: I would go up to her and ask her if I could help her. I would take her into the grocery store and ask someone if I could place a call, input her sons number and then pay for it if need be.

Student 23: i would take her into the grocery store so that she could use the stores phone just in case her son calls her back and so she has somewhere to be with other people

Student 24: I would probably not help her especially if it is getting dark outside just in case it was a ploy to steal my phone.

Student 25: I would probably continue walking because, even though I would want to help the lady, I wouldn't know her intentions of having my personal device in her possession. For all I know, she may try to steal my phone.

Student 26: I would ask her what's her son number and call him first. Then after he picks up, I would hand the old lady with my phone. I would ask her what's she doing since I'm worried about her safety (I keep on hearing news about old people with alzheimer's getting lost). If she's lost, I would gladly take her to her destination and maybe show her pictures of my cats since cats pictures can lead to good conversations and my grandma loves cats too and she's always happy to see cats.

Student 27: I would probably leave her alone, since there were other people around who could have helped her.

Student 28: I'd help her out by holding my phone out to her and telling her to put in the phone number, but I would remain highly cautious through out the encounter.

Student 29: I would offer to give my phone and ask if she needs any extra help

Question 5:

Student 1: Go to my friend and ask her to feed the child. Cause I don't know how to. Also I don't even think I would hold the baby because I'm actually scared of them until they can walk. But before that nawwwwww.

Student 2: Assuming that I am aware that this a cry of hunger specifically, I'd try to find something to feed the baby. I'd be suspicious of the fact, however, that the baby only started crying after the friend left. I'd keep a close eye on the mother-child duo afterwards just in case.

Student 3: I would try to distract the child with a toy, or by singing or by showing it something.

Student 4: Hand the baby back to the parent

Student 5: i would wait for the mother because i don't want to give the baby food it might cause harm

Student 6: I would probably try to see if they drink formula or if there's something they could chew on to simulate their feeding but if not I would try to find the mom to see if it's an opportunity to possibly feed her. I would try to comfort the baby the best I could without making it look like I'm trying to be the mother figure

Student 7: I would call the mother back in and say that I think the child is hungry and needs food. It is technically the mothers decision as to whether the child needs food at the moment but if it is obviously hungry then I would keep trying to urge the mother to give it food.

Student 8: I would probably have more experience about this when I'm 30 but as of now what I can think of is I will console the baby by trying to find any food that he or she can eat and if not, I will put on rhymes or get their favorite toy or walk them around.

Student 9: Give the baby food

Student 10: If I have food, feed them and help the mother if they're unable to help their child. Teach them to forage and grow food if they can't afford it. Get them in contact with my comrades and etc. Make her a revolutionary by midnight. Raise the kid in a commune and then they can choose whether or not they want to help save the world, cuz like no pressure!

Student 11: I'll rush to get a baby bottle to feed the child or call the mother for advice or what to do wether not being experienced or not. I'll rock it back and forth but look for in the need of help to call the baby.

Student 12: i would try to find something the baby can eat or get the baby some baby food at least. and tell my friend they need to feed their kid.

Student 13: Call the mom and ask where formula is

Student 14: Call the mom and ask where the formula is???

Student 15: Text the mom and ask if I should give the baby anything.

Student 16: Make a batch of fake milk, and try and feed the baby

Student 17: I would try to look for something the baby could eat, or I would call their mother to come back.

Student 18: It depends if I was really close to the friend or only semi close. If I was only semi close, I would express concern when she came back and try to find the baby something to eat in the meantime and tell one of the closer friends or if it's that bad, call relatives or spouse if available. I would not call CPS because it would traumatize the child way more later on. If it was a really close friend, I would walk to her kitchen and look through everything to find the baby something to eat and tell her that she needs to get it together and tell her to ask her doctor to make a feeding schedule or something and tell her spouse.

Student 19: I would wait for my friend to come back and tell her the baby needs to eat. but before she comes back i would rock the baby and make shh noises to try to calm them down.

Student 20: I would gently rock the baby, and start moving to the friend, and ask them what we need to do to feed the baby. I do not know how to handle babies.

Student 21: I would try to get food for the baby as soon as possible.

Student 22: Call the mother or the other parent and ask

them what I should do. I would give it some water, but, as I don't know any of the child's medical needs, I wouldn't feed it anything else.

Student 23: i would make a bottle and try my best to feed the baby.

Student 24: I would give my friend a suggestion to feed it

Student 25: I would ask the mother if there was any milk or formula for the baby since it is showing clear signs of hunger. If neither of those resources were available for some reason, I would offer help to the mother and baby by offering to get some food and resources so the baby could be nourished.

Student 26: I legit don't know how to take care of a crying baby. I would probably swing my arms with the baby since I see that a lot in the tv shows. I would tell the baby it's okay, wait a little longer and say random words like googogaga. I would not feed the baby without my friend's permission since I do not want to cause any mistakes. I would wait for the friend to return and tell her what's going on and apologize to her for making the baby cry and request her to feed the baby since I don't how to feed babies either.

Student 27: I would try and console the baby and then call my friend to ask if she wants me to feed the baby.

Student 28: Probably try to put the child to sleep, or play COCOMELON

Student 29: I would give them food because there is no reason not to