

## Abstract

Yamaguchi (1995) found that people believe they are more safe in a group than alone in risky situations. He suggested the interdependent heuristic bias and the affiliation motive in a fearful situation to explain this phenomenon. Three experiments were conducted to demonstrate the effect of group size on perceived risk in Hong Kong, to examine Yamaguchi's hypotheses and to investigate an alternative explanation based on the availability heuristic bias. Experiment 1 successfully demonstrated the group size effect for self and for others. The empirical data did not support Yamaguchi's hypotheses. Experiments 2 and 3 reduced the group size effect when participants were able to recall a large scale tragedy, either prompted by the background of the target or by priming. These two experiments provide initial evidence to support the availability heuristic bias as the cause of the effect of group size on perceived risk.