

UHLB 2122 (OUTLINE PART 1)

Section: 52

Name of Group: Honeystar

Group members:

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Title: Bystander Effect Leads To Tragic Outcomes

INTRODUCTION

- *Introduce the background of the problem/issue*
- Get the reader's attention (provide a 'hook'):
 - *e.g., startling statistic, interesting fact, an anecdote, a quote, a rhetorical question)*

Imagine you are in the middle of the city, walking down a busy street full of people and you witness a situation where a person is desperately in need of help. Would you lend a hand to help that person, or would you just ignore it and walk past that person hoping that another person would help in your place? This situation exemplifies the bystander effect, a complicated and frequently uncomfortable phenomena.

The bystander effect is a social phenomenon where individuals are less likely to help others who are in an emergency when other people are present. According to Blagg (2023) this effect was first discovered by American social psychologists Bibb Latané and John Darley in 1968 where they carry out a series of experiments to investigate the phenomenon of bystander effect (Blagg, 2023).

- Provide a brief background information:
 - (a) Introduce the topic of the problem (What's the issue?)

The topic at hand is the bystander effect, which is a complicated and unsettling phenomenon that focuses on people's action while people need help. People tend to ignore and do not act during emergencies when surrounded by other people is called "Bystander Effect". This effect raises important issues regarding our moral duties, where it shows that we lack integrity in ourselves while we are witnessing the pain of others. This issue has a big impact on both people's and society's health. Therefore, knowing its details is crucial in dealing with issues and lessening its effects.

- (c) Describe the historical background of the problem and its development (if it is related to your topic) – summarise it into a short paragraph

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After the notorious case of Kitty Genovese in 1964, this bystander effect has brought a lot of attention to public. It's an event where a young woman was killed in New York City and there are a lot of onlookers are said to have done nothing to stop the murderer or even call the police. People were enraged with the news reported by the reporter which caused a lot of studies to have been made by the psychologist regarding psychological and social factors that causing people to do a thing. Research over the years has shown that this effect occurs due to fear of embarrassment, social pressure and spreading of blame. Since then, this effect has been studied and understood by a lot of people and it has shed light on how much courage does a person need to help those in need when others are around.

SITUATION

- *Provide the context of the problem.*
- (a) Describe the (current) state of the problem (to show how serious it is)

This effect may just sound like a normal social phenomenon, but it could bring devastating consequences where we live near to a time ticking bomb. Besides, this effect would remain as a pressing and concerning issue with significant implications for society. Moreover, it also could anxiousness among people where people will live in fear that cause them to be cautious all the time.

With the advancing of the technology nowadays with the presence of the online platforms and social media, a new digital version of the bystander effect has surfaced, where the viewer we're refraining themselves from making report of a harmful content which it could contribute to cyberbullying.

- (b) What is the cause of the problem?

As this effect is caused by the social phenomenon where it is a complex phenomenon with multiple causes, first and foremost, one of its primary causes is due to the interconnection of many social groups causing them to expect other people to act (Boland, 2023). Also, according to Bolland (2023), feelings of guilt may be reduced because everyone in the group has the responsibility for inaction, even if they believe no one else will assist.

Besides, Bolland (2023) also states that three primary psychological elements are proposed in another [article from 2018](#) as potential causes of this effect. Firstly, the diffusion of responsibility, where if there are more people there, they can feel as if they have a shared obligation, which could discourage them from acting. Besides that, they don't have any intention of helping them as they're simply just a stranger to them where people nowadays tend to judge by their appearance.

Next, evaluation apprehension where people we're afraid that if they act, those around them would judge them negatively as they might misjudging the situation or overreacting. Therefore, they'll choose to just ignore what they have witnessed. Finally, is pluralistic ignorance, which is the false idea that one's own way of thinking is superior to that of others in a group. That's why the bystanders may conclude that

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there is no emergency if no one else is acting.

➤ (c) How does the “cause” contribute to the problem?

First and foremost, the diffusion of responsibility contributes by making everyone think that all of them can help and this causes their sense of personal responsibility to decrease. This will also cause them to hesitate to act. Besides that, the worst scenario would occur where people might interpret this inaction as the norm. This kind of normalization could put a lot of people in danger as it is hard for a person to offer some help to those in need.

Moving on to the next point is evaluation apprehension. As people fear being embarrassed, most of them would just choose to ignore what they have witnessed. Since nobody else is acting, a bystander may believe the situation is not an emergency and fail to act. In the worst case is when it is normalized by the public, they won't even budge an inch even if it happens right in front of them.

Lastly is pluralistic ignorance. Same with diffusion of responsibility and evaluation apprehension, pluralistic ignorance makes people feel unsure and hesitant. People think that other people know better than them, which causes them to do a thing after what they have witnessed

PROBLEM

- *Describe the problem and its effects.*

- (a) What is the effect of the problem?

One of the primary effects of the bystander effect is that individuals are less likely to intervene or offer help in a situation where someone is in distress. This can cause the victim a greater harm such as physical injuries, emotional trauma and even death due to absent or delayed response from bystander caused by the bystander effects.

Other than that, the bystander effect can contribute to a broader weakening of social responsibility, where individuals feel unaccountable for the well-being of others in their community or society causing disconnected society. Frequent cases of this could reinforce the norm of inaction, making it more likely that people will continue to hesitate to offer help.

- (a) Provide evidence to show that the problem is real / serious

Case 1 (provide a summary of the case)

In 1964, Kitty Genovese was murdered in New York City. The case gained attention because many people witnessed the attack but didn't intervene, illustrating the bystander effect (New York Straits Time 1964).

Case 2 (provide a summary of the case)

In Delhi, a 16-year-old girl was fatally attacked in a public space while bystanders, mostly unresponsive, walked past. The victim's father expressed frustration at the lack of help. The case underscores the pervasive issue of bystander inaction in the face of violence against women, sparking renewed calls for societal change (Subramaniam, 2023).

Case 3 (provide a summary of the case)

In September 2019, 16-year-old Khaseen Morris was fatally stabbed during a gang-related brawl in Long Island, New York. Many witnesses observed the attack, but few intervened. The case highlighted concerns about both youth violence and the bystander effect (Flynn, 2019).

- (b) Why do you need to solve the problem? What happens if you don't solve it?

Stopping the bystander effect is necessary because it can have serious, even fatal, repercussions when people choose not to intervene when assistance is needed. Bystanders put the victim or person in distress at risk of unnecessary suffering and jeopardizing their safety when they choose not to step in. When bystanders hesitate in an emergency, valuable time can be lost and more damage could be done. The bystander effect can also weaken our empathy and sense of social duty, which perpetuates apathy and indifference in society. This may also give rise to a fear of being judged by others for whether or not people made the correct decision (Hana Hong, 2023). The bystander effect has the potential to perpetuate a society in which people are less inclined to assist those in need, which could undermine social

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cohesiveness and erode community trust.

- (c) Who are affected or could be affected by the problem?

Many different people may be directly or indirectly impacted by the bystander effect. The people who need help the most right now are those who could become victims or are in distress.

- (d) Explain in what way the problem has affected them?

The bystander effect affects different people in different ways as well as the larger community. It primarily impacts the victims or those in need of help, putting them at risk of increased suffering, harm, or even death if bystanders choose not to step in. Bystanders themselves go through emotional upheaval because they might feel morally distressed or guilty for not acting when they had the chance. The diffusion of responsibility, wherein members of larger groups may experience a sense of shared accountability, may deter members from taking action because they feel less accountable in the company of others, resulting in a sense of general indifference (Matthew Boland, 2023). These emotions may have a long-term negative impact on their well-being and sense of self due to psychological and emotional fallout.

The bystander effect affects not just the individuals directly involved but also the community and society at large. It fosters a climate of apathy and indifference, which may erode community members' sense of social responsibility and empathy as well as their ability to trust and cooperate with one another. Consequently, this erodes the social fabric and makes it more difficult for the community to deal with problems and emergencies. By encouraging a culture of apathy and undermining the sense of collective responsibility and compassion, the bystander effect, which is made worse by the diffusion of responsibility, essentially has an emotional toll on bystanders as well as direct effects on victims.

- (e) Explain how this problem affects our lives / our society / our world

Our society is significantly and broadly impacted by the bystander effect. It contributes to a culture of apathy and indifference by undermining a sense of social responsibility and group empathy within communities. The trust and cooperation that are the cornerstones of a peaceful and compassionate society are undermined when people hesitate to act or assist those in need. This effect may result in an increase in the number of ignorant, self-centered individuals. This can show up in a number of ways, such as the continuation of social injustices and discrimination or the delayed response to emergencies or accidents. In summary, the bystander effect can impede efforts to address urgent social issues and erode the ties that bind a society together.

SOLUTION

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- (f) Give significance of attending to the problem
 - Establishing a culture in which it is genuinely considered people's responsibility to assist those in need. By doing this, local communities may benefit from increased safety and support systems as well as strengthened ties to cooperation and trust. (Jamie Al Vernon, 2016)
 - Assists in the development of a society that is more sympathetic and caring, where people actively work to advance the well-being of others.
 - Overcome the diffusion of responsibility.
- Solution to the problem
 - Educational programs that can give people a thorough grasp of its subtle psychological aspects. By increasing awareness and knowledge, people learn to identify the bystander effect in a variety of circumstances, which opens the door to making thoughtful and proactive decisions when they see others in need.
 - Creating supportive environments that prevent bystander involvement. Community-level initiatives honor and acknowledge acts of intervention, creating a climate that values and promotes this kind of behavior. By creating diverse and inclusive spaces, these settings foster a sense of belonging and lessen people's fear of being judged, which increases the likelihood that people will volunteer and help others.
 - Implementing the five "Ds" of intervention plan.(Hana Hong,2023). These five Ds include distract, delegate, document, delay, direct. These strategies offer a flexible framework that individuals can adapt based on the specific context and nature of the situation.

CONCLUSION

- State the thesis statement
 - *Mention the purpose/aim of your paper*

The bystander effect, a psychological phenomenon where individuals are less likely to intervene in an emergency situation in the presence of others, is a significant societal problem because it can lead to greater harm towards the victim and weaken social responsibility. Hence, countermeasures such as educational program, community-level initiatives, and five “Ds” of intervention plan should be implemented in order to solve these serious issues.