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TITLE: The Bystander Effect: How can it be overcome?

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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 carried out a series of experiments to investigate the phenomenon of bystander effect (Blagg, 2023). People ignoring and not acting when they see an emergency when there are other people around is called "Bystander Effect". This effect raises an important issue regarding our moral duty, where it shows that an individual does not have integrity in himself or herself because he or she does nothing when seeing others in distress. After the notorious case of Kitty Genovese in 1964, this bystander effect has brought a lot of attention to the public. It's an event where a young woman was killed in New York City and there are a lot of onlookers who are said to have done nothing to stop the murderer or even call the police. People were angry with the news that was reported, causing many studies to be done by psychologists regarding the psychological and social factors that caused people not to do something when they saw the incident. 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.

This effect may just sound like a normal social phenomenon, but it could bring devastating consequences. 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 reports of harmful content which could contribute to cyberbullying. Boland (2023) states that there are three primary psychological elements which are: (1) 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. Beside 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. (2) evaluation apprehension

where people are afraid that if they act, those around them would judge them negatively as they might misjudge the situation or overreact. Therefore, they'll choose to just ignore what they have witnessed. (3) pluralistic ignorance, which is a 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 there is no emergency if no one else is acting.

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 greater harm such as physical injuries, emotional trauma and even death due to absent or delayed response from bystanders. 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. This pattern of inaction is evident from historical cases. The first case is the Kitty Genovese's murder case where a woman named Kitty was fatally stabbed in Queens, New York, with 37 witnesses present, yet no one intervened to offer help (Rosenthal, 1964). The phenomenon of diffusion of responsibility can be seen by the bystanders' inaction when witnessing emergency situations, where they assume that someone else will act. The other evident case reported by Flynn (2019), is a tragic incident near Oceanside High School where a 16-year-old Khaseen Morris was fatally stabbed as the bystanders watched and recorded the assault. 18-year-old Tyler Flach, who is connected with the case, was arrested. This last devastating case happened 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 et al, 2023).

Stopping the bystander effect is necessary because it can have serious repercussions when people choose not to intervene when assistance is needed. This can also weaken our empathy which perpetuates apathy and indifference in society. Other than that,This problem has significant implications for society which is that the trust of the people in the society are undermined when people hesitate to act or assist those in need which may result in an increase in the number of ignorant, self-centered individuals (Hana Hong, 2023). If this problem is not

resolved, social injustices and discrimination in emergency situations will continue. Therefore, this paper discusses the issue of bystander effect and proposes solutions to the problem.

One of the solutions to the problem of bystander effect is through educational programs. According to Campbell (2023), educational programs may teach people how to identify emergencies, understand their responsibilities, and know what procedures to take when someone is in need. Moreover, a research conducted by Batson (2011) highlights the importance of empathy as the primary source of altruistic motivation, eliminating the diffusion of responsibility in individuals. Dos Santos et al. (2019) further supports this solution by emphasizing that giving people essential practical skills, helps to boost an individual's confidence and willingness to intervene. Adding bystander intervention training into curricular promotes responsible behaviors among students from a young age. Therefore, educational institutions such as schools, colleges, and universities are ideal platforms for implementing this solution. Simultaneously, the government plays an important role in supporting this implementation by actively funding and assisting the platforms in order to develop norms and set standards for those programs. Although educational programs can be effective because of its accessibility to reach a wide audience, their effectiveness is dependent on how the program's implemented, participant engagement, and the complexity of real-life situations. As Merriel et al. (2019) note, despite receiving training or education, people might not necessarily act in an emergency because real-world circumstances are difficult to foresee. Nevertheless, despite their potential for inconsistent success, educational programs continue to be a beneficial option because of their capacity to empower individuals by raising awareness and comprehension of the bystander effect. This information serves as a basic tool for long-term changes in attitudes and behaviors in the society and progressively increasing intervention rates.

Next, by creating a caring and supportive community will develop a culture of assistance and support in the community where individuals could seek help when needed. (The Bystander Effect: A Study In Social Influence, 2023). This solution has been proven by two professionals that show great enthusiasm regarding this issue. According to Santora (2021), a professor emeritus of psychology at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst said "people learn by doing and change as a result of their own actions. " For example, this solution is the best fit for parents and society to practice in order to solve this issue. From parents' perspective, family members

play a big role in teaching the youngsters to help those in distress instead of ignoring them which can instill morals or values to their kids so that we have a future generation that cares about society. As people tend to feel scared to the thought of taking action alone, a help from others which is society can become "strength" for a person to take action. Once there is help from others, a person won't feel scared of other people's judgment. Humans tend to copy other people based on what they see no matter if it is positive action or negative action. Therefore, creating a more supportive environment would drive other people to act positively which they "copy and paste" based on what they see and hear. With a supportive community that helps each other when witnessing someone in distress, more people will react positively instead of just saying it as action speaks louder than words. Hence, a person feels more responsible and capable when they're in a supporting setting. (Bandura, A., 1977). To create the desired environment was a long-term investment which won't happen in a blink of an eye as support from everyone is required for a change to happen. It may take longer than we might expect but keeping up good values and behavior may help reduce resistance as the society changes.

The two proposed solutions are mutually reinforcing in addressing the bystander effect. This is because fostering a supportive environment actively promotes a culture of help, caring for one another and enhances the lessons acquired through campaigns. Example that we can see from fostering a supportive environment is in a Brain Games social experiment, people in a waiting room were told to stand up when they heard a beep, except for one person—the subject. Even though the subject wasn't told to stand, they started doing it after a few beeps. When others left, the subject kept standing. Later, new people entered, and most copied the subject's behavior. This experiment shows that people tend to copy what others do, so promoting positive behavior can have a strong influence and could enhance the effectiveness of educational efforts (Glenn Blacklock, 2015). Moreover, the experiment also shows how these solutions are interdependent, highlighting how supportive environments strengthen and magnify the adoption of positive behaviors, while educational programmes lay the foundation for them, all of which work together to create a community that is more thoughtful and proactive.

In summation, This paper has discussed the problem of bystander effect and the proposed solution is implementing educational programs and creating a supportive environment. Furthermore, it has been decided that the two proposed solutions are interconnected with one

another. These solutions directly impact our lives by fostering a mindset that values help and support. Readers are urged to actively contribute to creating supportive environments, ensuring community safety and promoting a culture of assistance. By participating in these initiatives, individuals play a crucial role in shaping safer, more compassionate, and connected communities. In conclusion, it is a collective responsibility to actively contribute to these solutions, forging a future where communities are characterized by empathy, solidarity, and a shared commitment to the welfare of all.

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