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SECTION 52

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

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INTRODUCTION

o *Introduce the background of the problem/issue*

Ø Get the reader's attention (provide *a 'hook')*:

- 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).

Ø Provide a brief background information:

(a) Introduce the topic of the problem (What's the issue?)

- 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.

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

- 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.

SITUATION

o *Provide the context of the problem*

Ø (a) Describe the (current) state of the problem (to show how serious it is)

- This 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 report of a harmful content which it could contribute to cyberbullying.

Ø (b) What are the causes of the problem and how they contribute to the problem?

- Boland (2023) also states that three primary psychological elements 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.

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. (2) 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. (3) 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 there is no emergency if no one else is acting.

PROBLEM

o *Describe the problem and its effects*

Ø (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 greater harm such as physical injuries, emotional trauma and even death due to absent or delayed response from bystanders 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.

Ø (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 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)./

Case 3 (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 et al, 2023)./

Ø (b) Why do you need to solve the problem? What happens if you don't solve it? How can it affect the relevant/related/affected parties?

- 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 cohesiveness and erode community trust./

- The people who need help the most right now are those who could become victims or are in distress.

Ø (e) Explain how this problem affects our society and why it is an important issue to discuss

- 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.

    ○ Bystander effect can impede efforts to address urgent social issues and erode the ties that bind a society together.

Ø State the thesis statement

- *Mention the purpose/aim of your paper*

    - This paper discusses the issue of bystander effect and proposes solutions to the problem.

SOLUTION 1

Propose potential solution to the problem

(a) State the solution

- Educational programs can raise awareness, foster empathy and provide practical skills to intervene in a situation where help is necessary.

(b) Prove how this solution will solve/improve the problem

- Educational programs and campaigns may teach people how to identify emergencies, understand their responsibilities, and know what procedures to take when someone is in need. (Campbell, 2023)

- Empathy is a source of altruistic motivation. (Batson, 2011).

- When people feel empathetic, it reduces the bystander effect by eliminating the pivotal factor of diffused responsibility. Rather than assuming someone else will help, empathetic people are more likely to lend a hand.

- Equipping participants with essential practical skills boosts the participants' confidence and willingness to intervene. (Dos Santos et al, 2019).

(c) Who should be the one solving the problem? And why?

- Educational Institutions: Schools, colleges, and universities are ideal platforms for implementing educational programs. Adding bystander intervention training into curricular promotes responsible behaviors among students from a young age.

- Government: It's essential to develop policies which can actively fund and assist the platforms started up for these very purposes. They can distribute funds, develop norms and set standards for programs which support intervention in emergencies.

EVALUATION 1

Evaluate the effectiveness of the proposed solution

(a) State why the solution was chosen.

- Raising awareness: Lack of familiarity makes us less likely to help each other. Educational programs will increase people's awareness of the bystander effect and understand the underlying mechanisms and factors influencing bystander behavior.

- Equipped with knowledge and skills: Educational programs also teach about intervention strategies, safety measures and the need to take responsibility in an emergency which can then involvebe put into practice when appropriate.

(b) Why is it feasible or a reasonable solution?

○ Educational activities can be held through a variety of channels, including schools, workplaces and local communities as well as online. With this accessibility one can hope to reach a wide audience and adapt interventions to various demographics and environments.

(c) Does it have any disadvantages?

○ Although educational programs can be effective, their effectiveness is dependent upon such factors as how the program's implemented, participant engagement, and the complexity of real-life situations. Despite receiving training or education, people might not necessarily act in an emergency because real-world circumstances are difficult to foresee (Merriel et al., 2019).

(d) Despite the disadvantage of the solution, why is this still a good solution?

○ 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 impact. This information serves as a basic tool for long-term changes in attitudes and behaviors, progressively boosting intervention rates and building a culture that is proactive in giving emergency aid.

SOLUTION 2

Propose potential solution to the problem

(a) State the solution

Creating a 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).

(b) Prove how this solution will solve/improve the problem

- 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." (Santora, 2021).

- Another psychology professor at the University of Michigan also suggests practicing a slogan that we are comfortable uttering when we see someone in distress. (Santora, 2021).

(c) Who should be the one solving the problem? And why?

- **Parents** – Family members also play a big role in teaching the youngsters to help those in distress instead of ignoring them. Can help instill morals or values to their kids so that we have a future generation that cares about society.

- **Society/Community** – People tend to feel scared to the thought of taking action alone but with the support of others, more people will help each other without being scared of being judged for being overreact.

EVALUATION 2

Evaluate the effectiveness of the proposed solution

(a) State why the solution was chosen.

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.

(b) Why is it feasible or a reasonable solution?

- Pro's –state one

- **Empowerment of the psychological** – When we see someone react positively when someone is in distress, other people also tend to lend some help. Hence, a person feels more responsible and capable when they are in a supportive setting. (Bandura, A., 1977).

(c) Does it have any disadvantages?

- ○ Con's – state one (counterargument)

  - **Time consuming (Long Term Investment)** – The process in creating a supportive environment is a long-term investment where an action from a single person is not enough where no changes will happen. Moreover, some people might face some challenges to get used to the changes. For a change to happen, it will not be in a blink of an eye.

(d) Despite the disadvantage of the solution, why is this still a good solution?

The process may require a longer time than we might have expected but support from society could bring a miracle to the changes. Besides, keeping up good values and behavior may help reduce resistance as the society changes.

EVALUATION OF BOTH SOLUTIONS

Evaluate the effectiveness of the proposed solutions

(a) State which one is the best solution

- Between the two, fostering a supportive environment proves to be a more effective solution. This is because it actively promotes a culture of help, caring for one another and enhances the lessons acquired through campaigns.

(b) Why is it a better solution than the other solution?

- ○ 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. (Glenn Blacklock, 2015)

(c) Does the other solution have benefits that could put this solution at a disadvantage?

- No, but it can help to create a supportive environment that can enhance the effectiveness of educational efforts.

(d) Despite the disadvantage of the solution, why is this still a better solution than the other solution?

- Fostering a collective sense of responsibility and shared values within a community.

- Becomes a self-reinforcing cycle where positive behaviors are not only accepted but celebrated, contributing to a cultural shift in the long term. (Madison, 2023)

CONCLUSION

Remind readers of the problem and proposed solutions and provide a call for action.

(a) Restate thesis statement

- This paper has discussed the problem of bystander effect and the proposed solution is implementing educational programs and creating a supportive environment.

(b) Summarize the actions than should be taken (based on your proposed solutions)

- The bystander effect is a psychological phenomenon where individuals are less likely to intervene in an emergency in the presence of others, is a significant societal problem because it can lead to greater harm towards the victim and weaken social responsibility. Countermeasures such as educational programs and community-level initiative is the proposed solution.

- Between the two proposed solution, it has been decided that creating a supportive environment is more effective

(c) Remind the readers why is it important to solve the problem

○ Foster empathy and support within community

○ Strengthen social bonds and collaboration

(d) Connect the proposed solutions to our lives.

○ Provide us with the knowledge and skills necessary to respond effectively in different situations.

○ Fostering a mindset where help and support are not just welcomed but valued.

(e) Call for action: Tell your readers what they should do now

○ Actively contribute to the creation of supportive environments, promoting a culture of assistance and support within communities.

○ To ensure community safety.

○ By taking part in these programs, people can significantly contribute to the creation of environments that are safer, more compassionate, and more connected for everybody.

(f) Final thought

○ It is our collective effort to take up this responsibility and actively contribute to the solutions. It is to create a future where communities are typified by empathy, solidarity, and a common dedication to the welfare of mankind.

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