

The Bystander Effect

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In situations where strangers need help, the decision to offer them a hand may depend less on who a person is in character and more on how many people they are with at that time. This is demonstrated in a video where a young man, a woman and a gentleman in office suit pretend to have fallen down in sickness and analysis is done on the reaction of bystanders (Cool psychologist, 2009). A contradiction in terms of nature, the more big a crowd is, the less likely anyone offers help. The young man is ignored for quite a long time compared to the woman. Surprisingly, the smartly dressed gentleman is identified in seconds with people offering help referring to him as sir. This situation is known as the bystander effect, and it may hinder people from showing empathy (Cherry, 2020).

People tend to feel they do not need to do anything when in large groups because someone else will take care of it, a characteristic known as diffusion of responsibility. The result is nobody does anything to help, leading to more physical and emotional damage to those in need of help. The equity or justice theory claims that people are motivated to ensure equity is restored when faced with an injustice where rights have been violated (AHRC, n.d.). However, several situational and social-psychological barriers prevent bystander's action from offering help. Often ill-prepared, bystanders may not notice a person in need of assistance due to factors like social interaction engagement, intoxication, or distraction from self-focus. Lack of adequate information about the situation leads to a misdiagnosis by bystanders, where they assume that their intervention is unnecessary and someone else can help.

From the YouTube video, we learn that the urge to offer help is influenced by people's perception of the people requiring assistance (Cool psychologist, 2009). Regarding the social identity theory, a smartly dressed person is likely to receive help quickly compared to a street person because the crowd assumes he is part of the right group, and they all want to help. People tend to associate themselves with people deemed of high social status, which puts the lives of the minority in more danger.

Social Psychology

The cognitive and intrapersonal theory stands out as unique in the bystander effect. Just by having other people who are doing nothing around us can cause us to do nothing ourselves. Thinking that a person will be okay or someone else will assist without us getting involved is just a way to rationalize the decision to keep walking and feel better for not helping. The consequences of the diffusion effect can be severe as no one may step up to help. Social psychology basis its arguments on the strength of the situation. It investigates we reason, relate, and influence each other in various conditions. The attribution theory states that someone's behavior can be explained by crediting their disposition that is stable and enduring traits, or the situation at hand. A common error in attribution is bystanders' tendency when evaluating another's behavior to underestimate the crisis's impact while overestimating the result of personal disposition. Despite a person having or being known for good traits, he or she may end up offering no help due to the behavior of those around (Cherry, 2020).

Social Cognitive Personality Theory

Cognitive psychologists view perceptions of the environment and recognition as the core of what it means to be a person. Theory-based behavior is the product of learning and past experiences, cognition, and the immediate environment. In the bystander effect, the cognition

theory views personality as a byproduct of daily social interactions. A person's decision to ignore a person who needs help in public is mainly based on their environment; that is how other people are behaving. They fail to stick to personal traits they envy to have but assume other people will. As personality traits interact with the environment, behaviors are influenced. Social influencers like the public, family, and peer control beliefs, thoughts, and values. Observational learning by bystanders analyses how people react towards the person in need of help, and in that situation, they tend to follow what others are doing, moving along (Seidel, 2019). Understanding this personality theory helps analyze why people behave in certain situations, such as the bystander effect.

Psychological disorders caused by the Bystander Effect

Bullying in workplaces and schools repeatedly occurs as people watch and only do something when the situation is already worse. This leads to depression of the person being bullied, resulting in poor performance at work and experience stress-associated problems. Anxiety disorders are characterized by persistent fear and worry about a certain threat or perceived unpredictable occurrence (Cherry, 2020). People who have sudden seizures or asthma attacks may fear being in public as they are not sure people will come to their rescue if something happens. To avoid being morally guilty, bystanders should help people if they are not putting their lives at risk by doing so. Not expecting other people to act fast in a crisis will go a long way to turn people into active bystanders.

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