

Social Psychology Artifact: Additional Information

When I was younger, I remember scrolling through the video streaming service YouTube and coming across a series of videos from the channel, “What Would You Do?” Curious, I began to watch one of their videos and was both fascinated and uncomfortable by what I watched. The show revolves around actors who stage scenarios, often in which a person, usually with some form of disability or of some minority, is insulted in front of a public audience to try and see if anyone will step in to defend the person being insulted. Many times, people would intervene and come to the person’s defense, yet other times people would not. This show partially serves as the inspiration for my artifact this week.

For this week’s artifact on social psychology, I created both an infographic and video podcast talking about the bystander intervention effect. I had originally intended to create another slideshow presentation or possibly write a paper on how politicians can use persuasion to get people to vote for them. While this would have been interesting to write on, I felt like I did not have enough terms and concepts from the chapter on that subject matter to meet artifact criteria. As a result, I decided to take a different approach, eventually choosing to cover the bystander intervention effect. I initially started to write a paper examining the bystander intervention effect, however, after designing an infographic for our lab on psychological disorders, I wanted to try that approach once again. In addition, I felt like this would be very effective as my other artifacts were either papers or presentations and the bystander intervention effect was not only something I can inform people about, but I could also educate people on how

they can actively be vigilant in intervening as bystanders. I felt as if the infographic, although very detailed and time-consuming, may not have been enough to provide sufficient evidence of my understanding and reflection of the course material in this chapter. Therefore, I decided to additionally make a video podcast talking about the infographic and connecting the bystander intervention effect with other terminology and concepts from our chapter on social psychology. In total, this artifact took me about five to six hours to complete, not including the time I am taking to write this now. I wish I had started much earlier than I did, however, I am pleased with how it turned out!

As I mentioned above, the infographic provided information on the bystander intervention effect and highlighted ways in which people can counter the effect and be vigilant in situations in which they may find themselves needing to intervene as a bystander. The *bystander intervention effect* occurs when people fail to assist someone who is in need of help in the presence of others (Gazzaniga, 487). I discussed how this effect may seem strange, as most people may assume that the more bystanders there are around the more likely the person will receive help, and I explained four reasons the textbook provided as to why this phenomenon occurs. I discussed *diffusion of responsibility* first, which occurs when people justify not assisting someone in need of help as they believe other people nearby will help (Gazzaniga, 487). I then discussed another explanation for the bystander intervention effect, the fear of making a *social blunder*, when people do not intervene as they are afraid of looking foolish should the person not need serious assistance (Gazzaniga, 487). I related this to two other terms we learned earlier in the chapter, conformity and normative influence. *Conformity* is when one changes one's actions or behavior to match those around them or the

expectations of those around them (Gazzaniga, 475-476). *Normative influence* is one of two primary reasons that people conform, and it occurs when people go along with the crowd to fit in so as to avoid looking foolish (Gazzaniga, 475-476). I believe normative influence plays a role in the bystander intervention effect as people sometimes do not assist out of fear of looking foolish. I also referenced ingroups and outgroups and how even a sympathetic member of an ingroup is likely not going to help a member of an outgroup, out of fear of looking foolish or soft and consequently being ostracized by members of their ingroup. Next, I acknowledged how people sometimes do not intervene after weighing the possible risks and benefits of their interference, giving the example of someone running late for work and not stopping to help someone in need (Gazzaniga, 487). I related this reasoning of weighing risks and benefits to my earlier discussion on the diffusion of responsibility. The last reason the book gave that I expanded on was people's desire to remain *anonymous*, especially in uncomfortable or scary circumstances (Gazzaniga, 487). In addition, although the book did not say that social psychologists listed this as a reason for the bystander intervention effect, in my video podcast I listed another reason, one I came up with on my own, as informational influence. *Informational influence* is the other one of two primary reasons that people conform, and it occurs when people assume that a crowd's behavior is the appropriate way to respond (Gazzaniga, 476). I feel like this could possibly be related to the earlier reasoning of someone being afraid of making a social blunder, however, I do feel like this reasoning is different as it talks about one's interpretation or even speculation of what other people are thinking about.

I ended the infographic by talking about how we can use the information we learned regarding the bystander intervention effect to counter it. If one finds oneself in a situation where they need help with many people around, by recognizing that anonymity and diffusion of responsibility lead people to not want to help and get involved, one way to counter the effect is by pointing at someone and telling them how they can help (Gazzaniga, 487). This is powerful and effective as it makes the person feel like they must perform the task or else feel responsible. In addition, if you are in need of assistance, it is helpful to clearly communicate that you are in need of help so that people do not feel constrained to seek help (Gazzaniga, 487). I advocated that if one finds oneself in the opposite situation, being a bystander themselves, that they act as if they are the only person the individual is asking for help from. They can then delegate tasks to others nearby and get more people involved. After all, people are more likely to get involved once they see that others have gotten involved (*Bystander Effect*, n.d.).

The bystander intervention effect is an unfortunate reality and occurs all too often in our world. I referenced in both the infographic and more in depth in my video podcast about personal experiences I have had as a lifeguard in which I was unsure whether an individual was drowning or merely holding their breath underwater and felt hesitant to help as I was afraid of making a social blunder. I want to be a politician one day, and one way that the bystander intervention effect can apply in the world of politics is when nations of the world see corruption occurring in another nation, yet they do nothing about it. If I become a politician, I want to be vigilant about not falling prey to the bystander intervention effect and being concerned about how people and nations are doing rather than my own image. In addition, I want to add that infographics such as

the one I created can be used as a form of social norm marketing, which aims to change a behavior by marketing to make it a social norm (Gazzaniga, 479-480). By making people aware of the dangers of the bystander intervention effect, they will be better prepared in situations in which they either need to seek help or help someone else.

Bibliography:

Gazzaniga, Michael. (2018). *Psychological Science (Sixth Edition)*. W. W. Norton.

Bystander Effect. (n.d.). Psychology Today.

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