

EFFECTS OF KNOWLEDGE OF BYSTANDER EFFECT, PRESENCE OF BYSTANDERS, AND WITNESS'S GENDER ON CRIME REPORTING BEHAVIOR

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The literature has indicated that the presence of other bystanders (i.e., others who have also witnessed a crime) will reduce an individual bystander's crime-reporting behavior. In this study, two experiments were run to investigate how knowledge of such a bystander effect, existence of (other) bystanders, and oneself's gender will affect an individual's crime reporting behavior. Experiment I had 98 college students, and Experiment II had 84 college students as subjects. In both experiments subjects were arranged to witness a theft "unintentionally". It was hypothesized that subjects without knowledge of bystander effect but were told that there were other bystanders would be less likely to report the crime than would those who were not told. The former would also be less likely to report than would subjects with knowledge of bystander effect. Results in Experiment I were consistent with this hypothesis, and the contrast of group means was marginally significant ($p=.11$). These group means in Experiment II were far from significant and thus did not support the above hypothesis. However, both experiments supported the hypothesis that females were more likely to report than males. The two experiments also revealed an unexpected finding: the "With-Bystander-Effect-Knowledge, With-Bystander" group was the most likely to report crime. Though this finding was only significant in Experiment I, but since the report rate in this group was at least 13% higher than all other groups in both experiments, such a phenomenon warrants further investigation.

Keywords: bystander effect, gender, crime reporting, crime prevention.