

Vennela Gangasani, Kushi Manjegowda, Bhuvan Dwarasila

Mrs. Price

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Dance Trend Research and Background

In our study, we are exploring the idea of mob mentality. We want to show how a new trend can rapidly spread through the internet due to the human nature of adapting behaviors from others and their proneness to follow trends under a circle of influence. Human's have a weakness for imitating one another's behavior, and this helps explain how one's decisions can easily be affected by others. Our social experiment falls under the emergent-norm theory which is the combination of like-minded individuals who share anonymity and emotions leading to overall group behavior, especially on the internet. We plan to show how mob mentality will influence individuals to follow a trend just because their peers are. In creating a new dance challenge and circulating it through social media, we will be able to observe the phenomenon of people blindly following a new trend. This also brings to light the tendency of humans to follow the 'crowd' rather than think for themselves, which is an important trait that will be observed through this experiment. Trends such as the tide pod challenge, the ALS Ice Bucket challenge, and even something as simple as clapping shows the willingness of humans to look to others on how to behave and act. These current day examples of mob mentality have intrigued us in how such challenges can become so widespread, and thus this is why we are conducting this experiment. We hypothesize that as the trend garners more attention on social media and spreads among more people, individuals will become more likely to follow this challenge that has been set up.

Once enough people have participated in this challenge, it will rapidly spread through their peers as everyone tries to imitate and replicate that same behavior. The summaries that we have created have helped us improve our experiment by facilitating new research to supplement our experiment. In addition, all three summaries relate in the sense that they all mention mob mentality taking away self-awareness. However, each summary shows how mob mentality can have different effects on people. Specifically, the tide pod challenge results in a negative impact, the ALS Ice Bucket Challenge had a positive effect, and lastly, clapping has a neutral impact. With the acknowledgment of how mob mentality can turn either violent or potentially helpful, we have explored the different avenues of which this experiment could go down.

A recent trend that has blown up on the internet is the tide pod challenge. It has caused a lot of controversy with many young people willingly putting themselves in harm's way for the sake of following their peers in making an internet video. Observing this trend that is similar to the experiment we are setting up, we decided to use a study on the tide pod challenge to start our research. The article, *Why teenagers eat Tide pods*, analyzed what drove so many people to follow this challenge. Many followers of this challenge are well versed with the risks of eating these detergent pods, and it is common knowledge that they aren't food, and yet there are still so many making videos of themselves consuming them. The article explains how despite these known risks, the pressure placed on teens from peers and social media influences their decision in making risky choices for the sake of pleasing others, an effect of mob mentality.

In the world we live in today, where practically our whole lives are consumed with our online social presences, we tend to use these social media platforms for most of our everyday social interactions. The psychological need to not only want to fit in but feel valued pushes many to make illogical decisions. Especially online, where there are potentially millions of people to interact with, all of who help curate the experience of what we are exposed to everyday, the chance of following what we see everyone else doing increases. This ties into the experiment that we hope to do because we wish to study how widespread of an effect such spontaneous trends can have. By starting an entirely new challenge out of the blue and putting it on different social media platforms, we want to see not only how many people will feel the need to do this once their friends do, but also if we can reach people outside our peer group and potentially move this challenge further than just our school.

Four years ago, another trend known as the ALS Ice Bucket challenge, went viral in July and August of 2014. The Ice Bucket Challenge was a campaign which promoted awareness and encouraged donations for research for amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS). A person was filmed dumping water and ice on him or herself and nominating three other people to complete the challenge under a 24-hour frame and make a donation to the Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis Association. Using social media as a platform, more than 17 million people around the world posted videos online including Bill Gates and former president, George W. Bush. Overall, the Ice Bucket Challenge raised more than 115 million dollars for the ALS Association to fund for research and patient recoveries. This is similar to our experiment since both involve an audience following a trend through social media platforms. Unlike many other examples of mob mentality, the ALS Ice Bucket Challenge had a positive effect. The use of social media led to herd mentality influencing vast numbers of people. If the challenge had not existed, many people would not have known what ALS nor would they have donated to it. The ice bucket challenge is based on the premise that people publicly post videos of themselves doing the challenge, and by nominating other people, they are encouraging imitation. By earning the right to nominate others to take the challenge next, participants spread the challenge to people around them. Since the challenge was on social media, public visibility encouraged herd mentality. Celebrities getting involved in the challenge increased popularity giving their fans a desire to copy their idols. This research can be used to understand how we can get our experiment to be successful. The ALS Association used different methods to make their challenge gain an audience. For example, the challenge was a fun but easy way to raise awareness. Our experiment, similarly, will be entertaining as well as simple to get others to respond.

As explained before, mob mentality, or herd mentality, can have various effects on people, but one of the more humorous examples of mob mentality would be clapping when it is unnecessary. The article, *Students Give Into The Mob Mentality*, evaluated a whole cafeteria singing happy birthday to a peer. Generally, most of the students did not know whom they were singing it to. Both situations are neither positive, nor negative, yet they show how subconscious thinking can cause a whole cafeteria of students to clap or sing for pointless reasons. The article explained how students in a school setting are prone to falling into mob mentality because there are always around large groups and peers. This relates to our experiment, as people may or may not fall prone to doing the dance trend, based on peer pressure or influence. This study further states how when you are around a large group of people, you begin to mimic the actions of the large group, regardless of the intentions. Specifically, the author of this article, Gianna Stathakis, mentioned how self-awareness is lost, and it can cause senseless actions. One note we want to make from this article would be how following things that you do not like is the worst type of mob mentality because people only follow others to stay away from isolation. This sets a basis of what our experiment should stay away from, as my group members and myself are aiming for an unharmed experiment. A dangerous experiment would be to peer pressure someone to follow an appearance-related trend; we would instead encourage tests such as causing one to watch a Netflix show because everyone else is as this does not have a drastic effect.

A finding we would like to test on our experiment would be whether the people wanted to try the challenge for themselves or do it just to fit in with a group of friends. This can be easily found as we can add a poll or survey to be filled out by whoever submits their dance clips.

Works Cited

McCarthy, Claire. "Why Teenagers Eat Tide Pods." *Harvard Health Blog*, Harvard Health Publishing, 30 Jan. 2018,

www.health.harvard.edu/blog/why-teenagers-eat-tide-pods-2018013013241.

This article, written by Claire McCarthy, shows the importance of how social media affects young adolescents. Specifically, it mentions how young kids can be put at risk through situations like this where mob mentality can bring one to eat something lethal. The article holds truth and has good accuracy, as it is written by an MD who works at Harvard. In addition, having a .edu source further authenticates the article's accuracy.

The

quality of the source is rich with information pertaining to the psychology of why and how kids fall under bad influences, thus making it a good source.

Polito, Kristen. "What Is 'Mob Mentality?'" *Inpathy Bulletin*, 8 Mar. 2017,

www.inpathybulletin.com/what-is-mob-mentality/. 2 January 2019

This article, written by Kristen Polito, shows the powerful force behind creating violent mobs and explains the human behavior behind mimicking others' behaviors. She further states how these behavioral changes can cause either good or bad outcomes. Polito even goes onto to say how economics and pop culture can be drastically affected by these changes in people. This article's accuracy is shown to be good as the author of this article holds a Master of Business Administration in Finance from East Carolina University and a Bachelor of Science in Economics from Florida State University. The quality of the writing has good standards as the author mentions real life events such as the Salem

Witch Trials, and makes a connection to sporting events.

Stathakis, Gianna. "Students Give Into The Mob Mentality." *The Student News Site of Four Corners Upper School*,

fcuscoyotejournalism.com/770/uncategorized/students-give-into-the-mob-mentality/.

The author of, *Students Give Into The Mob Mentality*, is an 8th grade student at a school in which mob mentality occurs. Gianna Stathakis, being the part of the Newspaper Staff, must provide truthful information to the public regarding her school. Stathakis shows the importance of peer pressure at a school setting and explains the positive, negative, and neutral effects of mob mentality. Although there is no specific research or experiments being held by the student, she still is a reliable source as she has witnessed these actions taking place in front of her eyes. The quality of the information is once again good, as Stathakis had questioned students at her school about their feelings and experiences. Stathakis comes to the conclusions of how mob mentality is not always intentional and how mob mentality that affects isolated people is the most harmful.