

Behavioral Responses to Hate Crimes: A Study of Asians and Asian-Americans on a University Campus

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The researchers hypothesized that when a student of a particular ethnicity is the victim or target of a hate crime, members of that student's ethnic community may experience behavioral changes as a result. The study was conducted three months after a hate crime at the study institution claimed the life of a minority student. Changes in extracurricular involvement, multiple support systems, and emotional responses manifested through behaviors were reported by the participants.

An apparent rise in campus homicides and assaults through shootings, beatings, and other random acts perpetuated by hate (Barnes & Ephross, 1994) demands action on the part of higher education professionals dealing with the aftermath of such crimes on their campuses. In order for higher education professionals to sufficiently address the issues and actions that result from hate crimes on college and university campuses, they need to be aware of the emotional and behavioral effects on members of the student body. The purpose of this study is to examine how a hate crime at a college or university affects members of the targeted racial or ethnic group. In contrast to the significant research concerning the emotional responses of victims, there is a paucity of research focusing on the behavioral responses of hate crime victims which provides the impetus for further research in this area. Behavioral responses in this study center specifically around utilization of counseling and community support services, changes in campus involvement, and steps taken to prevent personal injury.

In response to the lack of information focusing on the behavioral responses to campus hate crimes, this study strives to determine what those responses are by seeking answers to the following research questions. First, do members of the targeted community seek counseling and/or turn to community networks for support? Second, do academic and extra-curricular involvement of members of the target community change as a result of the hate crime? Finally, are greater steps taken by members of the targeted community to avoid personal injury?

Literature Review

In this section, the researchers outline what it means to be a victim and specifically a victim of hate crimes or the subset of hate crimes motivated specifically by race, ethnicity, and religion known as ethnoviolence (Jeness & Broad, 1997). Next, the researchers show that victims are not just defined as the persons who are targeted in the crime, but are also members of that person's community, specifically those members who share the same ethnicity of the targeted person. The psychological, emotional, and behavioral effects of being victimized by ethnoviolence are given and applied to members of the victim's ethnic group where a hate crime has occurred. Finally, the research hypotheses are stated, placing particular attention on the behavioral effects on the victim's ethnic community at a college or university.

In 1990, the National Institute Against Prejudice and Violence reported that each year one out of every five minority college students will be a victim of a racial act (Ogawa, 1999). Acts of racism include written and verbal epithets, damage to property, threats to personal safety, physical assault and murder. Some of the worst forms of racism are violent crimes motivated by hate. A hate crime is defined by the U.S. Department of Justice (as cited in Downey & Stage, 1999) as: "a criminal offense committed against an individual, group of individuals, or their property because of their race, religion, sexual orientation, or ethnicity" (p. 3). The most frequently cited incidents of hate crime include verbal harassment, physical assault, and mail or telephone threats. Other forms include acts of vandalism, attempted robbery, and theft (Barnes & Ephross, 1994).

Although acts of hate are not new to society nor to higher education, they have become more publicized and increasingly violent (Barnes & Ephross, 1994). Unfortunately, today's college students are experiencing such acts at higher levels and are more likely than ever to be victims of hate crimes (Barnes & Ephross, 1994). Bayley (1991) states that people are victims of crime:

"...if and only if, 1) they have suffered a loss or some significant decrease in well-being unfairly or undeservedly and in such a manner that they were helpless to prevent the loss; 2) the loss has an identifiable cause; and 3) the legal or moral context of the loss entitles the sufferers of the loss to social concern" (p. 53).

One may assert that these criteria also apply to the surrounding community of a victim of a hate crime. In fact, Stephenson (1985)

theorizes that a community also experiences a psychological assault when someone close to them is victimized. One study, conducted on victims of sexual assault, found that the victims experienced a loss of trust in others, the environment, and their own judgement, and that those close to the victims also displayed some of the same sentiments (Roark, 1989).

It may also be reasoned that much of the research previously conducted to determine effects to the direct victim of a hate crime apply to the victim's community as well. Downey and Stage (1999) support this reasoning and report that such effects are not strictly limited to the person that was directly and personally victimized but also apply to the members of the targeted group.

Additional research proposes that victims of hate crimes experience similar effects as victims of non-race-related crimes (Barnes & Ephross, 1994). These studies indicate that people who are of the same ethnicity or sexual orientation as the direct victim of a hate crime are, in essence, victims themselves. As a result, they will exhibit psychological and behavioral responses similar to those of the direct victim, though to a lesser degree. Violence on campus impacts the psychological, social and academic lives of students even outside the bounds of their established populations (Cerio, 1989). Because of this, classmates and other peers may be indirectly and emotionally damaged by the occurrence. Although the research shows that effects of hate crimes can go beyond racial or ethnic lines, this study will focus specifically on the effects to the ethnic community of the victim. It is worth mentioning for clarification purposes, that the authors are using the terms *targeted group* and *victim's community* interchangeably throughout this study. It is the goal of this study to examine the effects and responses of the victim's community when one of their community members is targeted in a hate crime.

Victimization produces "a collection of reactions" (Cerio, 1989, p. 55). Research reveals that hate crimes provoke both emotional and behavioral reactions or responses. Emotional responses include anger, fear of injury, denial, selective ignoring, sadness, passive acceptance, the feeling of being out of control, and feelings of helplessness (Barnes & Ephross, 1994; Bird & Smith, 1991; Phillips, 1993). Feeling a loss of control is one of the more commonly cited effects and often triggers maladaptive responses to stress, eventually leading to attempts to accommodate, adapt, and regain control (Phillips, 1993; Roark, 1989).

Emotional responses, such as feeling powerless, often cause a

victim to change behaviors that were once part of his or her daily routine and may continue into the long-term stages with lasting results (Hoffman, Schuh & Fenske, 1998; Roark, 1989). Emotional responses are often manifested in the victim's behaviors, thus creating behavioral responses. Fear of one's safety and the desire to regain control of one's life may cause victims to move geographically, purchase a gun, and increase safety precautions (Barnes & Ephross, 1994). Anger may motivate the crime victim to speak out against racism and hate speech. Depression and guilt may prompt a victim to seek counseling or turn to community groups for support. These feelings might also cause the victim to isolate himself or herself and decrease participation in social activities. Acts fueled by racism marginalize particular groups, force them to live in fear, and diminish efforts to improve relations between different social and ethnic groups (Downey & Stage, 1999). In the area of higher education specifically, Asian or Asian-American students who experienced racism did not adjust as well academically or socially compared to Asian or Asian-Americans not subjected to racism (LeSure, 1994).

Thus, the researchers hypothesize that when a student of a particular ethnicity is the victim or target of a hate crime, members of the student's ethnic community at the university will experience behavioral effects as a result. In addition, we hypothesize that these effects will include the following behavioral responses: changes in methods of seeking community support and counseling; efforts to take greater steps in ensuring one's personal safety; and changes in the type and level of involvement on campus. For the purposes of this study, we have adopted Astin's (1993) definition of the second class of involvement measures that includes academic involvement, involvement with faculty, and involvement with student peers. This is distinguished from the first class of involvement measures, bridge measures, that include characteristics of the entering student as well as environmental characteristics (Astin, 1993). These are the measures that all students who are enrolled in college are exposed to simply by virtue of attending college.

Examples of the second class of involvement, those that result from curricular and co-curricular choices the student makes, can be seen in the following measures. Academic involvement may be measured through such means as determining the amount of time a student attends classes and labs, studies, or does homework. Faculty involvement can be measured by the amount of time a student spends interacting with his or her instructors outside of class or working on a

research project with a professor. The frequency with which students socialize with friends, participate in student clubs or groups, and attend parties are all measures of student peer involvement (Astin, 1993).

It is the researchers' intention that this study will add to the body of research and add support to existing theories on community effects of hate crimes. Furthermore, it is suggested that the results of this study be used as a basis for developing support for the community of victims of hate crimes, specifically at colleges and universities where the number of hate crimes is increasing.

Method

The Incident and Response

This study was conducted at a large, public university in a small Midwestern city of approximately 65,000 residents (including students of the University). Most of the ethnic diversity in the city is due to the University population, which is approximately 17 percent minority. The local community recently dealt with hate speech that was distributed in the form of flyers throughout town and the neighborhoods surrounding the University. The incident that motivated this study occurred on a Sunday morning in July, when a Korean graduate student was shot and killed in front of a church located just yards from the edge of the University campus. The perpetrator was a young, white male, who was a former University student and a known distributor of hate literature.

Sample

A purposive sample was used in this study due to time constraints and convenient access to participants. The intent of the study was to examine the effects of a hate crime on the ethnic community of the victim. For that reason, only Asian or Asian-American students were selected to participate. The sample consisted of both graduate and undergraduate members of three Asian student organizations. Graduate students were included in the sample because the victim was a graduate student, and therefore it is likely that his peer group would include members of this population. Undergraduates were also surveyed because all members of the targeted group, regardless of class standing, may have been affected by the incident.

The sample included both American and international students because the Asian student groups on campus are comprised of both citizenry, and the potential for interaction between the two groups is high. Furthermore, the perpetrator did not know the victim personally

and thus did not know whether he was a graduate or undergraduate, American or international student. Finally, because an ethnic community is comprised of males and females, both genders were also included in the study.

The Asian and Asian-American student organizations that were contacted were chosen based on the number of members and the diversity they represent in terms of age, year in school, gender and citizenry. Forty-four participants were involved in the study. The actual number of participants from each of the student groups was dependent upon the size of each group and the number of members present at the time data were collected.

Survey Procedure

A survey, consisting of 64 questions, was administered during the general meetings of Asian and Asian-American student groups. The participants were given approximately 15 minutes to complete the questions. The first set of questions related to participants' demographics, followed by questions assessing their level of involvement in their organization. Demographic information included items such as gender, year in school, citizenship, and race or ethnicity. Organizational involvement questions centered on status within the group, frequency of attendance, and length of membership.

The majority of the survey focused on potential behaviors that may occur among a group targeted by a hate crime, specifically changes in levels of involvement, changes in academic performance, changes in safety precautions taken, and changes in use of community support and counseling. Participants were asked to indicate how certain actions have or have not changed as a result of the campus tragedy. Answers to these questions were given using a five-point Likert scale ranging from "Increased Significantly" (5) to "Decreased Significantly" (1). Changes in behavior were determined by phrases such as "Your participation in class discussions has..." followed by the participants' choices on the Likert scale.

Questions relating to involvement explored changes in campus and academic life and peer interaction. Phrases such as "Your involvement in campus activities in general has..." and "Your interaction with faculty has..." were presented in this section. The section highlighting changes in safety included expressions such as, "Walked a different path on or around campus after dark" and "Participated in a self-defense course." Examples from the support category included "Attended health/personal wellness workshops in the community" and

"Spoke with your friends regarding your feelings about the tragedy."

In order to address the behavioral manifestations of emotions commonly exhibited by victims following a crime, a section was added exploring the degree to which participants experienced anger, fear, depression, guilt and anxiety. In this section, respondents were asked to use a Likert scale to indicate whether the emotion was felt "Severely" (5) to "Not at all" (1). One open-ended question requesting participants to indicate the ways in which they dealt with any of the five emotions completed the section.

A brief section addressing whether respondents had experienced certain racial incidents, such as being ignored or threatened because of their race or ethnicity, was also included. Again, a Likert scale was used ranging from "Frequently" (5) to "Never" (1). The last set of questions focused on information such as if participants were living in town when the tragedy occurred and whether or not they knew the victim or perpetrator. Finally, an open-ended question soliciting additional comments or thoughts concluded the survey.

Limitations

In conducting this study, there were several limitations. A few were inherent to the nature of the study while others were a result of the population researched. The final sample size of forty-four students, in part due to the small number of Asian or Asian-American students on the University campus, limited the effectiveness of the study. In choosing to survey students in organizations, survey-gathering activities were limited to student organization meetings and activities. The relative disorganization of many of the student groups made it logistically difficult to reach large groups of Asian and Asian-American students. This limitation was further exacerbated by the amount of time allotted to complete the study.

The shortage of previous research about behavioral effects on members of target populations was also identified as a limitation because of a lack of theoretical knowledge to guide the researchers in formulating the methodology and the survey instrument. Moreover, there was no way to have a measure of behavior prior to the incident because the researchers were not able to collect these data before the tragedy occurred. Rather, they were asked to recall their previous behaviors and determine whether or not any behavior changes were directly attributable to the shooting. This situation may have caused some data to be reported differently.

The survey did not inquire if students were aware of counsel-

ing and psychological services that were available to them when they made the decision to not seek support from counselors. It should not be assumed when reviewing the results that students knew that support services and student affairs professionals were in place to help them cope after the tragedy occurred. Furthermore, it should be understood that first-year students were included in the sample and answered questions regarding change in their levels of involvement. Since they were not given the opportunity to be involved in the groups that were surveyed prior to this semester, their reported involvement in those organizations clearly shows an increase. While it could be inferred that some students chose to join these organizations because of the shooting and would not have otherwise, this cannot be assumed. Finally, only three areas of behavior were surveyed. It is possible that more areas could be identified and surveyed that may add to the body of research on behavioral effects of hate crimes.

Results

The goal of this study was to increase the amount of information regarding behavioral responses to campus hate crimes by answering the following research questions: 1) In what ways do students who are members of a hate crime victim's community respond to that crime? 2) Do members of the targeted community seek counseling and/or turn to community networks for support? 3) Do academic and extra-curricular involvement of members of the targeted community change as a result of the hate crime? and 4) Are greater steps taken by members of the targeted community to avoid personal injury? The answers to these questions are explored in greater depth in the following section, which is broken down into several primary areas labeled "demographics," "involvement," "safety," "support," and "emotional responses."

Demographics

Forty-four surveys were completed. Twenty-six of the respondents were female students and 16 were male. Two students did not report their gender on the survey. The survey participants represented a total of 11 different ethnic identities, nine of them of Asian descent. The greatest number of participants identified themselves as being Korean or Korean-American (12 students) or Chinese or Chinese-American (10 students), followed closely by Indian or Indian-American students (7). In addition, one Caucasian student, one African-American student, and one student of both African-American and

Asian-American heritage completed the survey because they identified themselves as being part of the Asian community. When asked how long they had been a member of their particular organization, over one-third (36.4%) reported that they had just joined the group this year, and just over one-quarter (29.5%) indicated that they had been a member for at least two years. Over one-half (63.6%) of the survey participants were officers in their organization, eight were members, and eight were visitors.

Involvement

In response to the question of whether or not academic and/or extra-curricular involvement of members of a targeted group change as a result of a hate crime, the findings suggest that some change does occur. Approximately one-third (36.4%) of respondents reported that their level of involvement in their organization had "increased" or "increased significantly" as a result of the tragedy, and an even larger percentage (43.1%) reported an increase or significant increase in their overall involvement in University organizations.

The mean scores for change in involvement in Asian or Asian-American organizations for female students (3.75) compared to that of male students (3.13) indicate that involvement increased more for females than males after the incident. This difference was found to be statistically significant through t-test analyses. In addition, t-test results show that the greater increase in the level of overall involvement of students who are officers, compared to that of other members or visitors, was also statistically significant.

These findings were supported by comments students made when responding to an open-ended question about the ways students deal with emotions evoked by the incident. For example, one organization officer stated that her political and student involvement had greatly increased within the University as well as the community. Another officer wrote that she dealt with the tragedy by "taking up a 'crusade' to ensure that diversity remains a priority goal" at the University.

In terms of academic involvement, measured by such behaviors as class attendance and participation in class discussion, the greatest change was seen in student interaction with faculty. However, most students did not appear to considerably increase or decrease other academic involvement as a result of the tragedy.

Safety Measures

Upon examining whether or not greater steps are taken to avoid

personal injury, analyses of data revealed that, with the exception of being more aware of one's surroundings, there were no significant changes in behavior. Analyses showed that 47.7% of the students are more aware of their surroundings (lighting, presence of strangers, etc.) than they were prior to the incident. Other possible changes in behavior (i.e. taking a different path on campus, walking with a friend after dark, and participating in a self-defense course or workshop) did not yield any significant findings.

Support

The degree to which members of the targeted community sought counseling and/or turned to community networks as a result of a campus hate crime produced varying results. These results primarily depended upon a student's place of residence during the time of the crime, and his or her status in the student organization (officer, general member, or visitor). In general, students reported obtaining most of their emotional support from their parents, friends, and other members of their organization, but did not appear to solicit a significant amount of support from external sources such as faculty members, professional counselors, clergy, or campus health specialists.

The majority of participants (66.9%) indicated that they spoke with their parents regarding their feelings about the tragedy, 65.6% spoke with their friends, and 56.8% spoke with members of their organization. T-test analyses also indicated that participants who resided in the University town at the time of the incident reported speaking with members of their organization more frequently than did those participants who were not living in town ($p \leq .01$).

Additionally, t-test analyses revealed that participants who were officers in their organization spoke about the tragedy significantly more with their parents, friends, and other members of their organization than did other participants. One respondent stated that her organization held "open forums and lectures about these issues," while another wrote that her organization "gave students the opportunity to discuss issues concerning the tragedy." Finally, two participants indicated that they did not seek support from others, but instead, dealt with their emotions on their own.

Emotional Responses

The survey used in this study was designed specifically to obtain data regarding behavioral effects of hate crimes. However, in order to gain a more thorough understanding of the changes in behavior

that occurred as a result of this particular hate crime, the survey also included five questions asking participants about their emotional responses to the incident. These questions examined the five major emotions (anger, fear, depression, guilt, and anxiety) that psychologists report are most experienced by crime victims and members of the victims' communities (Downey & Stage, 1999). Although only six participants had heard of the perpetrator, and only one participant noted that they knew or had heard of the victim, they still reported being emotionally affected by the crime. Interestingly, t-test analyses show that participants who attended the same church as the victim indicated feeling lower levels of anger than participants who did not attend church or who attended other churches ($p \leq .05$).

Although a large number of students reported feeling anger and fear ranging from "somewhat" to "severely," and one-third experienced feelings of guilt as a result of the incident, most did not report feeling depression or anxiety to any notable degree. One particular finding of significance revealed by t-test analyses indicated that female participants experienced higher levels of fear as a result of the incident than did male participants.

Further analyses did not result in significant differences among males and females regarding the four remaining emotions. Other feelings were also noted in the responses to open-ended questions. For example, sympathy was expressed in the response of one participant who commented that she "felt sorrow for the family of the victim." Another participant noted that his feelings of anger were exacerbated by events following the incident in which members of a White supremacist group defended the actions of the perpetrator.

Discussion

Several conclusions can be drawn from the results of this study about behavioral changes regarding involvement, support, and safety of the target group, as well as implications for student affairs professionals working with members of a target group in the aftermath of a hate crime. It is important for student affairs professionals to understand how hate crimes affect college students in order to effectively address the behaviors and emotions that may result. The self-reported data from the study participants lend support to the theories that students who are members of the same ethnic or racial target group will exhibit behavioral responses somewhat similar to those of an actual hate crime victim. Although overall significant changes in behavior occurred less frequently than were originally anticipated by the researchers, there

were some behavioral modifications reported. It was also interesting to note the differences in behavior and emotional responses between males and females. Although the researchers did not expect to find any differences in gender, the fact that some were identified may indicate the need for further research or inquiry in this area.

Many of the surveyed students indicated that the crime did not affect them to a great extent, nor did they think very much about it. This may stem from the fact that 93.2% of respondents indicated that they did not know of the victim before the shooting. Furthermore, the victim had enrolled but had not yet started classes during the previous semester in which most of the respondents were last enrolled; therefore a lack of personal investment in the tragedy was to be expected. In addition, 50% of the participants reported being physically absent from the campus community at the time of the incident. Therefore, the absence of significant changes in behavior may be partly due to their distance, both emotionally and physically, from the actual crime and the victim. It is unknown whether or not the students would have been more strongly affected by the shooting had it occurred during a fall or spring semester when the majority of students are on campus.

Support

Contrary to our original predictions, some of the traditional victim support strategies (i.e. an increase in campus or professional counseling) were underutilized by the students in this study. Although a large number of respondents indicated no increased use in campus or community counseling services, some did report emotional changes, implying that such support services may have been helpful in the coping process.

Students who sought help in dealing with their emotions and issues regarding the hate crime often went to family and friends rather than counselors, faculty or staff members, clergy, or campus health professionals. Therefore, student affairs professionals may find it beneficial to make all students more aware of the availability of resources and counseling services on campus immediately following a campus tragedy, especially one motivated by hate or resulting in death. A particular emphasis might be placed on heightening the awareness of available services among the victimized community. Since the survey did not ask students if they knew that such services were available, it was not possible to determine if their failure to seek counseling was by choice or because they were not aware that the services existed. Even if students resist counseling, it may be beneficial for students to at least

know where to find information and professional help should they need it.

In another area of support, officers of Asian and Asian-American organizations were more likely to speak with their peers and other members of the organization about the tragedy than students who did not hold officer positions. Since students did not readily use the resources on campus to cope with any emotions regarding the incident, it may be helpful to provide family members and officers of organizations with literature and information to help them in responding to the needs of the target group. The direct influence of the counselor would be somewhat diluted, but more students would be served using this "trickle-down" approach. Since college-age adults are inclined to be more comfortable talking to and depending on their peers and family members as opposed to a "stranger" in the counseling office, student affairs professionals could enact special outreach efforts to these circles of familiar support. Other suggestions include having a counselor or student affairs professional ask to speak to student organizations during regular meetings and to offer group counseling sessions that would allow students to talk to, counsel, and support each other.

Involvement

The 36.4% of students that increased involvement in their ethnic group organization may have had very different reasons for doing so. Perhaps their Asian or Asian-American student group was viewed as a vehicle through which they could seek support from peers who were also dealing with the ramifications of the tragedy. This speculation implies that further action is needed from professionals working with student organizations on campus. The leaders of organizations whose student populations are targeted in the hate incident should be contacted immediately following an incident. Student affairs professionals should consider working closely with these organizational leaders to increase recruitment efforts and provide more programmatic interventions for that specific population. This may give target group victims a common forum to connect with, depend on, and help with assisting others in the group.

The fact that 43.1% of the participants indicated an increase in their campus and co-curricular involvement in general lends further support to the hypothesis of overall increased involvement. This increase may be attributed to the participants' need for support from other students of all races. Further, this behavioral change may afford additional opportunities for students to share their feelings and confide

in other students. Since involvement in student organizations increased to a greater degree, a stronger emphasis should be placed on marketing involvement opportunities to students of the hate crime target group.

Safety

In the area of personal safety, the hypothesis proposed by the researchers was not supported. While students did indicate that they had experienced an increased awareness of their surroundings, they did not report any significant behavioral changes as a result. Again, since the tragedy occurred during the summer months while exactly half of the respondents were away from the campus community, it is likely that these respondents had an opportunity to contend with their emotions prior to returning to campus. It is also possible that respondents felt that the tragedy was an isolated incident and they were no longer at risk. Students indicated virtually no changes in other behaviors that would seem to increase their safety on the college campus. While increased awareness may be seen as a behavioral response, it would not always lead to more observable modifications in behavior. These findings are somewhat alarming, as students seemed complacent about their personal safety following such a brutal murder close to the campus. While it would not have been prudent to incite fear in students, this incident presented an opportunity for campus safety personnel to provide timely and effective information regarding personal safety to the campus community. Furthermore, women may be more receptive to programming as they indicated a higher level of fear as a result of the tragedy.

Suggestions for Further Research

Le Sure (1994) recommends future research be done to investigate specific coping strategies (often demonstrated through one's behavior) that students of color use when faced by racism. Most of the research on the effects of crime on victims focuses on the emotional responses of being a crime victim or a member of the victim's community. The need for greater study of behavioral responses is apparent.

Additional inquiry into the differences regarding gender, status of involvement within the organizations, and the use of support networks is also suggested by the researchers of this study. Furthermore, studying the responses of students outside of the target group will provide a greater understanding of the effects of hate crimes on the community. If student affairs professionals are to respond effectively

and appropriately to the behavioral changes manifested by members of a hate crime target group, more literature must be written to assist them in achieving this goal.

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