

Example of types of people waiting in line essay

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In contemporary times, it could be interesting to observe the behavior of people in different scenarios and settings. Some situations are generally common and people could immediately anticipate or make an educational guess at people's reactions, responses, or expected behaviors. In a common scenario as waiting in line, for example, spectators could simply indicate that overall, people who are waiting in line would be manifesting irritation, anxiety, disappointment and even exasperation for being subjected in the situation. A popular byline in one of FedEx advertisements states that "waiting is frustrating, demoralizing, agonizing, aggravating, annoying, time consuming and incredibly expensive" (Maister 1).

The most common settings where people wait in line are in supermarkets, food chains, in financial institutions (banks), in payment centers, and in educational institutions (during enrollment, registration, and payment), to name a few. The reaction, response or behavior of people waiting in line is proposed to be a factor of the individual's personality, the conditions within the queuing situation, and other behavior of participants. As such, the current discourse aims to explore different types of people waiting in line and describe their facets that deem to be contributory to their manifested behavior.

According to the online article published by California State University, Sacramento (CSUS) entitled "Waiting Line Models", waiting in line is explicitly described as "affected by the design of the waiting line system. A waiting line system (or queuing system) is defined by two elements: the population source of its customers and the process or service system itself". Thus, by definition alone, one could surmise that the number of customers

that any particular establishment needs to serve at a specified time frame contributes significantly to waiting; in conjunction with the current efficiency of the system that processes needed transactions. In addition, waiting, per se, has a negative connotation in terms of indicating that time is being spent on this activity and therefore uses this time unproductively when other more important matters could be attended to. As such, as disclosed by Silverman, “ studies show that most people overestimate their wait times, sometimes by as much as 50%. Consumers also say that waiting in line in grocery stores is even more frustrating than the Department of Motor Vehicles and doctors’ offices combined” (par. 5). These descriptions are indicative of waiting lines being influenced by the population and the system.

Given the elements of waiting time, customers could be classified according to types: (1) population: finite versus infinite; (2) action: balking, reneging or jockeying; and (3) according to personality: calm and patient; anxious, impatient and irate; and indifferent. As disclosed in the CSUS website, customers and those serving them, according to finite or infinite population, react differently. For instance, in a physician’s office, the number of listed patients to see the doctor at one scheduled clinic hours could range from 10 to 50. As such, this is considered a finite number and as soon as the last few customers are served, the waiting time is decreased and lessened. In contrast, in a supermarket serving different customers from different locations, there is no way to determine how many would come in a specified time frame. Therefore, this is considered an infinite population, where customers could continue to arrive until closing time.

Concurrently, customers classified according to action were noted to be

either balking, reneging or jockeying . Balking customers were described as people who ultimately decide not to enter the waiting line . On the other hand, reneging customers are people who were noted to have entered the waiting line; but eventually within the course of waiting, opted to leave the line for one reason or another. Finally, a jockeying customer as described to occur “ when a customer changes from one line to another, hoping to reduce the waiting time. A good example of this is picking a line at the grocery store and changing to another line in the hope of being served quicker” . As explained, customers were categorized according to their actions within the waiting line.

Finally, people could be categorized according to their behavior as they wait within the line. As observed, these people exhibit the particular behavior depending on the existence (or absence) of contributory factors. For instance, there are people who wait patiently and calmly in line. These people could generally possess a calm, peace-loving and open-minded perspective; thus, waiting in line is understood as a normal and unavoidable situation that must be contended with. Thus, depending on the person’s behavior, the reaction and responses to different scenarios while waiting were detailed.

Another type of people within this behavioral classification is those that exhibit aggressive, violent, impatient tendencies which could be part of their general personality; or could be exacerbated by the system. As noted by Norman in his article on “ The Psychology of Waiting Lines”, the author noted that “ when there is a clear reason for a wait, such as a busy restaurant, or a filled amusement park, the wait can be tolerated as long as its duration is

appropriate to the reason. The wait must be perceived as appropriate, both in its cause and its duration. Similarly, the service provider should be perceived as responding appropriately.

Finally, there could be people who are just indifferent to the waiting time. People within this category are considered indifferent, callous, uncaring and silent. They just go into the line, wait patiently and walk out afterwards. No reaction or manifested action and behavior could be perceived from their appearance. But sometimes, it is people who fall into this category that is most disconcerting since they could file formal complaints and quietly observe with hidden agenda to relay their disgust of the system when totally unexpected.

The current discourse has effectively discussed the elements in waiting in line; the most common settings; as well as the different types of people classified according to population, action, and behavior. Through the studies and researches conducted on the subject, one is able to expound on the rationale for disparities in reaction and response, as well as how waiting time continues to be perceived as outrightly irritating, frustrating, and just totally unproductive. As such, contemporary organizations that continue to experience people being subjected to considerable amounts of time waiting in line should determine the real cause of the dilemma and aim to improve the system, as crucially needed.

Works Cited

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