Logical Fallacies Types, Examples, and Effects on Arguments

Posted on September 27, 2019

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Fallacies are considered defects that weaken one's argument. It is very important that you realize two things about one: fallacious arguments are common and can, at times, be very persuasive to some casual readers or listeners. Dozens of fallacious arguments can be found in magazines and newspapers, advertisements and some other sources (Aldisert, 2015). The second thing about fallacious arguments is that their evaluation is usually very hard. An argument can sometimes be very weak in certain sections and very strong in some other sections. Identifying fallacies in others' arguments and avoiding them in your own argument is not only valuable but also highly rare in most cases. Fallacious reasoning prevents one from knowing the truth, and this limits one's ability to think critically and in an upright manner. The inability to think critically and in an upright manner can make one vulnerable to manipulation by individuals skilled in rhetoric art.

Recognizing fallacies is one part of developing strong critical-thinking skills.

Hasty Generalization

This type of logical fallacy is where people make assumptions concerning a whole group or rather a range of cases, basing their proofs on inadequate samples. This type of fallacy usually applies to stereotypes of people. For instance, when one says Liberians are usually smart and shy or even when one says wealthy people are snobs. Those are the most common hasty generalizations about a group of people or individuals. In relation to criminal justice, a prosecutor in the court of Virginia presented some overwhelming proof that a boy was responsible for the murder of his parents based on the boy's behaviour in comparison to an earlier case, which proved a boy with the same characteristics was surely responsible to the murder (Aldisert, 2015). This argument is wrong since similar characteristics are not enough to prove the boy guilty.

Post Hoc (Also Called False Cause)

This type of fallacy has a Latin phrase in it, and that is post hoc. This phrase in Latin means after this, and it therefore means because of this. In the description, one would say that since A comes right before B, it then means A caused B to happen. This argument is considered a fallacy, given that not all events coming prior can cause the next ones (Andrews & Bonta, 2014). It is true that I can register

for a class, and then my name appears in the class list. In that case, the fallacy may look right, but at times, the two events are not related to cause and event. Relating this fallacy to criminal justice, in the case of the boy in Virginia court, it is a fallacious argument for a lawyer to argue that just because the boy is behaving in the same way the boy in an earlier case did can lead to him having committed murder just as the other boy did. This may end up affecting the professionalism of the lawyer posing such an argument, besides interfering with his preparedness in the presentation of the case.

Slippery Slope

In this kind of logical fallacy, the person arguing claims that some sort of reaction chain that ends with dire consequences takes place, but in the real sense, there is not enough evidence to reaffirm this statement. The person arguing in this case claims that if we take even a single step on the slippery slope, all of us will end up sliding to the bottom. In this fallacy, the arguer claims that we cannot stop the partway down the slippery hill. Relating this fallacy to criminal justice, it is by any chance wrong to argue in a court that simply because a suspect has scars on his body, he must have been the criminal who committed a given crime (Andrews & Bonta, 2014). It is barely wrong since scars do not only arise from criminal activities. Even non-criminals have scars. This will interfere with the justice in that particular case.

Appeal To Authority

In this category of fallacy, one always tries to add some strength to their argument by referring to certain sources or even authorities in their explanations to assert their positions on their arguments in a discussion. However, by trying to get readers to agree with us through impressions of famous names or, in other words, appealing to the authority who is not even an expert, we commit the appeal to authority fallacy (Jackson et al. 2015). Relating this fallacy to criminal justice, it is very incorrect for a lawyer or even a prosecutor in a court of law to cite a source supporting his side of the argument when the person of authority he or she is referring to is famous but not in the line of criminal justice. This will negatively affect his or her reputation and even ruin his preparedness for the case he or she is handling at that particular moment.

Begging The Question

The term begging the question is usually misused to serve as the meaning to raise the question. Despite that, the intended meaning of this statement is assuming a conclusion to a question raised by someone. This fallacy is mostly similar to circular reasoning, where an argument is compelling a conclusion to a question even though it is not the same as circular reasoning since the question begged can, in this case, be a very separate point from that of circular motion. An example of this type of fallacy is the situation where the begging question is asking someone whether they have

stopped beating their wife (Jackson et al. 2015).. In a real sense, this statement means the person has always been beating their wife. In relation to criminal justice, a lawyer cannot ask a suspect if they have ever stopped beating their wife if there is no reported and confirmed case of the criminal having done that since this kind of reasoning, if proven wrong, can lead to the suspect getting ground to mess with the whole case. He or she may find grounds for thwarting the lawyer's claims on the case, hence affecting his or her preparedness for the case and interfering with his or her professionalism.

References

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