

Social influence

Social Influence

- Social influence is the process by which attitudes, perceptions and behaviors can be affected by the real or implied presence of others.

Categories of Social Influence

Social Norms

- Rules or standards that are understood by a group and that guide behavior without the force of laws.

Conformity

- Changing one's behavior to match the responses or actions of others (no pressure necessarily)

Compliance

- Changing one's behavior in response to a direct request

Goals of Social Influence

People yield to social influence to achieve one or more of three basic goals:

- to choose correctly and behave effectively (to be right)
- to gain social approval (to be liked)
- to manage self-image

Social Norms

- Social norms – rules and standards that are understood by a group and that guide behavior without the force of laws
- Emerge out of interaction with others
- May or may not be stated explicitly
- Sanctions are not legal but come from disapproval within social networks

conformity

- Change own position to a contradictory position because of presence of others
- Perceived or real pressure
- Why do people conform?
 - To be right
 - To be like
 - To clarify who we are

Factors that influence conformity

- Unanimity of majority
- Group cohesion (may lead to groupthink)
- Private responses
- Prior commitment
- Task difficulty
- Size of group

Compliance

- Particular kind of response – acquiescence - to a request
- Changing one's behavior as a result of other people directing or asking for change
- May be implicit or explicit

Principles that increase compliance

- **Authority Rule**

one should be more willing to comply to the suggestions of a legitimate authority

Social Validation rule

one should be more willing to comply to a request if it is consistent with what similar others are thinking or doing.

Scarcity Rule

One should try to seek those opportunities that are scarce or dwindling

- Psychological reactance
- Censorship

- **Affiliation Rule**

one should be more willing to comply to a request of friends or other liked individuals
Physical attractiveness, similarity, liking, compliments, cooperation

Reciprocity

effective societies depend on the obligation of an individual returning the form of behavior that he or she has received from another

Consistency Rule

after making a commitment to a position, one should be more willing to comply to a request that is consistent with that position

Obedience

- Obedience is a form of social influence that involves performing an action under the orders of an authority figure.
- It differs from compliance (which involves changing your behavior at the request of another person) and conformity (which involves altering your behavior in order to go along with the rest of the group) Instead, obedience involves altering your behavior because a figure of authority has told you to.

How Does Obedience Differ From Conformity?

- Obedience differs from conformity in three key ways:
 - 1 Obedience involves an order; conformity involves a request.
 - 2 Obedience involves following the order of someone with a higher status; conformity usually involves going along with people of equal status.
 - 3 Obedience relies on social power; conformity relies on the need to be socially accepted.

Milgram's Obedience Experiments

- During the 1950s, a psychologist Stanley Milgram became intrigued with the conformity experiments performed by Solomon Asch. What Is the Milgram Obedience Experiment?
- Asch had demonstrated that people could easily be swayed to conform to group pressure, but Milgram wanted to see just how far people would be willing to go.
- The trial of Adolf Eichmann, who had planned and managed the mass deportation of Jews during World War II, helped spark Milgram's interest in the topic of obedience. Throughout the trial, Eichmann suggested that he was simply following orders and that he felt no guilt for his role in the mass murders because he had only been doing what his superiors requested and that he had played no role in the decision to exterminate the captives.

- Milgram wanted to explore the question "are Germans different?," but he discovered that the majority of people are surprisingly obedient to authority. After the horrors of the Holocaust, some people, such as Eichmann, explained their participation in the atrocities by suggesting that they were just doing as they were commanded. Milgram wanted to know – would people really harm another person if they were ordered to by an authority figure?

- Milgram's Obedience Experiments. Milgram's studies involved placing participants in a room and directing them to deliver electrical shocks to a "learner" located in another room.

Unbeknownst to the participant, the person supposedly receiving the shocks was actually in on the experiment and was merely acting out responses to imaginary shocks. Surprisingly, Milgram found that 65 percent of participants were willing to deliver the maximum level of shocks on the orders of the experimenter.