

Psychology experiment

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Abstract

This experiment investigated the impact of group pressure on the individual. The hypothesis is that group pressure does indeed impact on the individual and in this case the individual's estimate of the number of ginger granules in a jar. Participants were asked to make a judgement of the number of ginger granules in a jar, first individually and then as a group.

The individual participants were then interviewed again to see if their estimates had changed. The results proved the hypothesis that group pressure does make an impact upon the decision of the individual. Each individual changed their original estimate to be closer to the number of the group estimate. Introduction The subject of conformity was first formally studied by 1Jenness in 1932. Jenness' experiement consisted of three phases. Firstly, he asked individual participants to guess the number of beans in a glass jar.

He then assembled the individuals into a group and asked them to make a group estimate, through group discussion, of the number of beans in the glass jar. Finally Jenness interviewed each of the participants individually, during which he allowed each individual to change their estimate if they wished to do so. The purpose of this was to see if anyone changed their original estimate to align with the group estimate, thus showing 'influence of the majority'. He found that the majority of individuals changed their original estimate, giving a figure that lay closer to that of the decision of the group.

This suggests that individuals generally strive to conform to the group. This experiment was followed by a famous conformity experiment by Solomon Asch (1951), which again tested the effect of group pressure on an individual's decision. The current experiment will investigate the effect of group pressure on an individual's estimate of the number of ginger granules in a glass jar. It will be performed using a method similar to the one used by Jenness in his experiment. This will in effect test the reproducibility and validity of the Jenness experiment.

There are no contentious or controversial issues surrounding this experiment and its method, and it is certainly within the law i. e. there are no deceptions or misleading intentions toward the participant; it is fair. Hypothesis The influence of group pressure will affect individuals' estimates of the number of ginger granules in a glass jar. The estimate of the individual will change after a group decision to lie closer to the figure of the group. Method The IV was the group or individual, and the DV was the number of ginger granules in the glass jar.

Two separate rooms were used; one for interview of the individual – one at a time. When not being interviewed the individual was instructed to go the second room where the rest of the group resided - for the period of the experiment. Both rooms contained only the subjects of the experiment, and of course the experimenter, and no one else was permitted into the aforementioned areas. Television, radio and other forms of communicative devices were forbidden from these areas. The participants were three members of a family.

The first was male and 67 years of age. The second was female and 52 years old. The third member of the family was male, and 25 years old.

Materials

- Jar of ginger granules
- Watch
- Sheets of paper + pen

Procedure

Initial tests were carried out to ensure that the participants fully understood what they had to do. Participants were asked to describe what they saw i. e. the jar of ginger – colour and dimensions, in order to ensure colour blindness, other impairments, or general misunderstandings of the task would not cause any anomalies to the experiment. Each participant was asked “ please can you guess the number of ginger granules in the jar” – with no variation to this language. Strict rules were also stated, and these included that there be no touching of the jar/granules in question, no counting and a two three minute time limit was enforced. This happened in one room, and once an estimate had been received, the individual returned to the other room and <https://assignbuster.com/psychology-experiment/>

the next individual collected. The question was repeated to the remaining two individuals. The estimates were recorded. The group was then asked the same question: " please can you guess the number of ginger granules in the jar", and the rules were restated. The figure for the group decision was recorded.

The participants were then interviewed individually once more, with the same question asked and a restatement of the rules. The estimates were recorded.

Results

Individual| Number of beads estimate (before)| Number of beads estimate (after)| Group estimate| A| 200| 350| 300| B| 500| 400| | C| 100| 300| | Graph showing the distribution of estimates in comparison to the group estimate

Discussion

As we can see from the results and graph, the estimates of the individual are closer to the group estimate of the number of ginger granules in the jar after the group discussion has taken place. Each participant changed their original estimate after a group discussion had taken place, to make their estimate closer to the group estimate. Therefore we can conclude that group pressure has a great impact on an individual's decision, and that the individual will seek to conform to the ideas of the group. It is interesting to see that participant C changed their original estimate by the largest figure - a difference of 200, and more importantly, participant C altered their original number to the number of the group estimate. We can say that participant C was most impacted on by group pressure; wanting to conform the most. Although participants A and B did not change their original estimate to the <https://assignbuster.com/psychology-experiment/>

exact number of the group estimate, they did make their alterations closer to the group estimate. Therefore it can be said that participants A and B were impacted by group pressure, seen by a change in their estimates, however not completely – as was the case with participant C.

Analysis of the group dynamic revealed that the more charismatic and extrovert the participant the greater the input into the final group decision, the greater the inclination of other group members to align with the view of the apparent leader.

Reference list

1. Mcleod S. What is conformity? SimplyPsychology 2007. <http://www.simplypsychology.org/conformity.html>
2. Mcleod S. What is conformity? SimplyPsychology 2007. <http://www.simplypsychology.org/conformity.html>