

Group thinking essay



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Have you ever been in a group of people where the group decision is different from your thoughts but you reject to speak up because of the group pressure? The Sociological idea of an individual losing control of their behavior when they are in a group is defined as Groupthink. Some recent studies prove that when humans are in group, their actions are directly affected by the interaction with the group. In addition, there are evidences in which proves that groupthink can produce negative outcomes. The desire to be socially accepted and blend in with the rest is a powerful force.

Numerous studies on groupthink have been done to illustrate human's desire to be socially accepted. In the essay, "Conformity and Group Mentality" Samantha P. Lambert discussed one of the studies in which "college students often engage in...drinking games because of an anticipated outcome, or rather an outcome that some individuals intend to induce by participating such as new friendship relationships, and greater popularity" (Lambert). This demonstrates how humans do whatever it takes just to fit in. It seems that our ambition of being socially accepted is so strong that we tend to be unconscious to our behavior.

Despite the concerns of the negative impacts in absorbing alcohol, yet college students participate in drinking games just to be accepted by others. People's behavior in a group can be motivated by their confidence. Self esteem determines how much influence a group has over an individual. People with low self esteem can easily be affected by the group. They quickly accept the group decision without questioning. The fear of being pressured by the group, or appearing unsupported leads those individuals to follow the group decisions without expressing their perspective.

All that can be determined by how confident an individual is. However, individuals with high self-esteem are not easily affected by groupthink. They are the ones who sometimes disagree with the group decisions. If the group arrives to a decision in which contradicts their accordances, they are more likely to stand out (Lambert). This is all shown when Lambert affirms " Self-esteem can be a factor in how much influence a group has over an individual... individual with low self-esteem will be more likely to accept group decision.

However, individual with high self-esteem who believes that his or her answer is correct tries to point it out. " The influence of group think upon individuals with low (sometimes high) self esteem can prevent those individuals to share their views; even if they have the right decision. Another powerful force of groupthink is the group leader. The group leader can lead the group to dramatic or erroneous decision just to see their point perceived by the group. That is, some leaders during the process of groupthink can hurt the group in order to illustrate his or her views.

This idea is supported by Smith and Fodor when they pointed out that " persons who are assigned to the authority role would have strong desire to see their point of view prevail in group discussion" (178-185). This point can be directly related to the Nazi leader Adolf Hitler. As we all know Hitler influenced the majority of German population to think similar to him. His idea of taking over the world, and eliminate all " impure individuals," was wrong and unfair. However, he influenced Germans in such a way that caused them to support his erroneous beliefs.

As we can see, this process of groupthink is clearly producing negative outcomes to the society. Not all outcomes of groupthink are negative according to McCauley C. " Groupthink can sometimes produce a good decision and high-quality decision" (McCauley 251). With that in mind, let's analyze how groupthink can relate to sport teams. Consider a soccer team that is losing at half time and they go into the locker room discouraged. The players boost each other back up and get into a positive mentality. In this case, the players are practicing the process of groupthink in a positive way. They are thinking in a group in order to win the game.

However, none of the players are thinking for themselves. In short, the process of groupthink can cause people to lose control of their behavior, and often preclude the group to reach rational decision. In fact all types of group mentalities are more likely to produce negative results because of the irrational decisions. As I previously stated, groupthink causes individuals to be unconscious to our behavior, it prevents individuals to share their thoughts; even if they have the right decision, and the most important the presence of groupthink in the decision making can lead to horrible outcomes to our society.