

Study of conformity

Psychology



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Topic: study of conformity of Introduction Persuasion refers to the process of reinforcing or changing other peoples' or another person's beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors towards someone or something (Cialdini, 2007). Among the most powerful and valuable communication skills that one may possess is the ability to persuade others. There are two main types of persuasions; group and individual persuasion both of which may be used by a group or an individual to get what they want whenever they want it. An important element in persuasion is therefore the ability to understand other peoples' psychology (why they act and think in certain ways). Researches by renowned scholars, more so psychologists, have discovered that group persuasions are more effective in changing or influencing other peoples' behaviors, attitudes, and perception of objects and people. This paper explores the reasons group persuasion has greater impact on changing peoples' attitudes than individual persuasion.

Individual versus Group Persuasion

According to conformity researches, the extent to which a person may be influenced or persuaded depends on numerous factors that appear at different levels. Majority influence, situations, and individual attitudes/behaviors are some of the factors found to influence peoples' response to persuasion. One intriguing aspect of the ease of conformity to group persuasion is that people conform to group persuasion even in the absence of pressure, rewards for conformity or punishment for non-conformity (Cialdini, 2007). Nevertheless, there are certain individual situations that make people easily persuaded by groups. For instance, the feeling that one is distant from the rest could be a reason for the quick conformity to group persuasion. Second, in cases where a leader is involved, <https://assignbuster.com/study-of-conformity/>

people easily conform, believing they have to follow orders and be obedient to and subordinate their leaders. The third reason for the ease of conformity to group persuasion is to belong or to be part of a larger group.

Group and leadership persuasions also prosper in situations where an individual does not know what to do and thus have to look for guidance from groups or leaders. Most importantly, it becomes easier for a task-oriented leader or group to persuade a person, citing the completion of the said task as the reason for conformity. In addition, socially-oriented groups and leaders have more persuasive powers over people than individual persuasion. Credibility and trustworthiness have also been cited in many a research as reasons for the quick conformity to group and leadership persuasions. This situation is contrary to individual persuasions that are mostly marred with mistrust and lack respect. The ease with which an individual conforms to a group also depends on personal attitudes and behaviors. That is, individual attitudes influence behaviors and vice versa. On the contrary, individual persuasion lags behind group persuasion for various reasons. Most important among these reasons is the lack of persuasion skills in individual persuaders (Cialdini, 2007). In addition, there is always some level of mistrust in individual persuasion. While group persuasion focuses on the need of the group in persuading a person, individual persuasion emphasizes the needs of the persuader. The mistrust stems from the fact that such a persuasion is only interested in the needs of the one doing the persuasion. Therefore, the person being persuaded is less likely to trust or respect the persuader. The other weakness of individual persuasion is the inability of individual persuaders to logically argue their case to those being persuaded (Cialdini, 2007). Moreover, individual

persuaders often use negative language while trying to convince others to conform to their attitudes or behaviors. For example, in many cases, a persuader will tell his/her listener that he/she is wrong about something and the right way is the persuader's.

Conclusion

Group persuasions have been found to be more effective than individual persuasions in changing peoples' behaviors, beliefs, and attitudes for various reasons. These include the need to belong to a group, group pressure, personal attitudes/behaviors, and obedience among others. Similarly, persuasions from authorities are often effective since individuals have to obey orders from their seniors. Moreover, the need to socially- and goal-oriented group persuasions is more effective than individual persuasions, which are always marred with incredibility, mistrust, and disrespect.

Reference

Cialdini, R. B. (2007). *Influence: the psychology of persuasion*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers.