

Conformity and discrimination being different psychology essay



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This paper attempts to define the causes of conformity and discrimination by exploring the causes and effects of conformity and the relationship of discrimination in regards to its causes, consequences, and ways to combat discrimination. We look at the social dispositions that affect our character and the role of social context on these dispositions. The social standards of behavior are explored with regards to social roles, standards, and norms and the relationship to conformity. An in-depth look into conformity is done by analyzing Solom Asch's research and factors that increase conformity. The difference between prejudice and discrimination is analyzed. We take into account prior research conclusions to consider further causes of discrimination that have been explored through time. In regards to the causes of discrimination, we concurrently explore ways to combat racism while empowering and education both the in-group and out-group.

Introduction

Attempts to alleviate discrimination have been at the center of many debates and policy creation. We have made great strides towards attempting to reduce discrimination for those seen as non-conforming. It has been through such historical acts such as the end of slavery, creating opportunities for the disadvantaged, the civil rights movement, and Affirmative action that we have made great strides to include the out-group.

Discrimination is often the result of behaviors, attitudes, lifestyles, and thoughts that are seen as deviating from the social norms and social roles. We see that the majority of the discriminated are biased by any form of inherent beliefs that attribute either positive, negative, or neutral

characteristics to a faction. (Bagley & Verma, 1979). We often see the groups targeted by negative attributes to be the African-American community, the LGBT community, the non-religiously affiliated, and the less privileged. A few of the groups attributed with positive characteristics consists of those that offer a benefit such as employers, politicians, and institutional supports.

The individuals seen as having positive attributes are seen as the conforming majority whereas those that don't are the non-conformists whom are discriminated. A few characteristics that are believed to produce conformity include isolation of the group, high group cohesiveness, directive leadership, lack of norms requiring methodical procedures, homogeneity of member's social background and ideology, and high stress from external threats with low hope of a better solution than that of the group leader

Behavioral Influences

We must first discern the forces that influence human behavior in order to better comprehend the origins and nature of discrimination. In this text we will look at two factors that greatly impact our individual biases. First, we must understand individual dispositions and the way in which they skew our perceptions. Dispositions are defined as being the tenets, assurances, and ethics that guide our comportments towards, others that is predicted by our innate temperament and personality. Gordon Allport believed this disposition motivates us to initiate action or guide our actions (Neyrinck, Lens, Vansteenkistie, & Soenens, 2010). Second, Social Context refers to the influences that affect our perception of the world, which can be ascribed or achieved. Ascribed influences refers to the status assigned or assumed at <https://assignbuster.com/conformity-and-discrimination-being-different-psychology-essay/>

birth that affect our world perspective. Opposite ascribed influences are achieved influence or status which depends on the many dynamics set in childhood. (Hornsey, 2008).

Social Standard for Behavior

The Theory of social behavior holds that we shape our behavior according to incorrect beliefs of how others act and rationalize. There are two types of social norms: perceived and actual. Perceived norms are the individual's often incorrect interpretations of actual norms. Actual norms refers to rules of behavior shared by a culture or community.

Social roles are socially defined patterns of behaviors expected of individuals in a given class or group such as gender roles. Much importance is ascribed to social categories with expectations of role uniformity from individuals in order to fit into the group. (Kalish & Lawson, 2008). Social roles can be exemplified in daily role responsibilities such as those behaviors deemed appropriate of women such as caring, nurturer, warm, welcoming, submissive, etc. As we gain titles throughout our adult lives the roles we are expected to play changes such as becoming a parent or behaviors deemed socially correct of the elderly population. Social norms view stigmas as a way to combat an individuals or society's feelings or physical and psychological threat that lead to the creation of social norms which allow people to share and communicate a personalized representation of individuals (Madon, Smith, & Gyll, 2005).

Conformity

Attributions are conclusions drawn up by people concerning the reason for behaviors. On occasions an individual makes an attribution that is merely an inquiry, these inquiries are predominantly incorrect. Incorrect attributions biases consist of the fundamental attribution theory and the ultimate attribution error that attempt to explain the reason we make faulty inferences.

Just world hypothesis holds that because we desire to see the world as a just place we often blame victims for their victimization. Humans tend to assign personal responsibility for any inequitable outcome that is otherwise difficult to explain. Ultimate Attribution Error This view contends that make attributions consistent with their own beliefs and prejudices when they perceive an action or actions as negative and when they view what they regard as positive.

In a study conducted by Solomon Asch, Asch attempts to explore the role and tendency to conform based on attributions. For his research Asch drafts students and incorrectly informs them he is conducting research on visual perception. Each individual recruit is placed in a room with 6 subjects aware of the experiment; unknown to the participant. Each subject is given a task in which they looked at a card with a line on it and a card with three lines of differing lengths. Subjects were assigned to choose a line on the second card equivalent to the line on card one. On the first two tasks, the accomplices announced the correct answer to the group, as did the subject. The accomplices picked a line on the second card that was clearly a wrong answer. One-third of the subjects conformed to the choices made by their

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group. The Asch studies identified three factors that influence whether a person will yield to pressure and conform. First it acknowledge the probability of an individual conforming to the majority's opinion depends upon the size of the majority. Second, a participant is more likely to defect from their original response when in the presence of a partner who dissented from the majority. Lastly, the size of the discrepancy between the correct answer and the majority position made the predictability of the subjects' choice higher.

Prejudice and Discrimination

Prejudice can be defined as a negative perception of a social group, or a negative perception of a person that is largely based on the person's membership to a specific group. Prejudice is often seen as an attitude and discrimination as the manifestation of the prejudice. (Crandall & Schaller, 2004) " Stigma" can also to describe theses prejudices that incorporate a variety of unrelated social groups. A common factor of these stigmatized social groups is that they are regarded as imperfect. (Madon, Smith, & Guyll, 2005)

Causes of Discrimination

The following research explore the causes of discrimination and the way in which is disseminates throughout the community. The causes sited as being causing agents for discrimination are as follows: Family process and direct training, Cultural learning, Instrumental attitudes, Social categorization and identity process, Negative group contact, Novelty, deviation, strangeness, Intergroup conflict are a few of the explanations, and Religion.

Family processes and direct training influence our prejudices from childhood. Research suggests that parents transmit their prejudices therefore, a child with strong identification to the parents and their value system further strengthening the socialization of prejudice (Crandall & Schaller, 2004).

Another reason is stated to be cultural learning. Neighborhoods and the media for the majority the neighborhoods in which they live in propagate prejudices to their inhabitants. Young adults in these situations are more likely to further share these prejudices with peers. The media has the power to reach the masses by imparting national and international views. The media exhibits already stigmatized groups in an undesirable or ostracized role while emphasizing deleterious news regarding these minorities (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, Signorielli, & J., 2002).

Instrumental Attitudes Stigma or prejudice can be developed from environmental and media evaluation representing a group as dangerous, despite the absence of intergroup interaction creating distancing among groups. This perceived danger creates an even greater hostile environment. (Crandall & Schaller, 2004)

Social categorization and identity processes amplifies the prejudices of a faction. Population grouping increases perceived faction similarity and directly influences perceptions of stigmas toward the targeted group. Research has shown that grouping is enough to create discrimination. (Brown, 1995)

Negative group contact through prior experiences with a group either y oneself or by others can cause prejudice against them. Commonly, humans
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have slight prejudice towards a faction towards a group they've never interacted with; prejudice can form promptly when contact has occurred (Henderson-King & Nisbett, 1996).

Novelty, deviation, strangeness affects prejudices towards people that are perceived as acting in a different manner or of dissimilar appearance are commonly stigmatized as objects of ridicule. In a study it was found that students elude physically different individuals and giving students the chance to stare covertly decreases the uniqueness (Langer, Fiske, Taylor, & Chanowitz, 1976).

Intergroup conflict views that conflict among groups has the capability of increasing prejudice. In an experiment conducted by Sherif, Harvey, White, Hood and Sherif (1961) it was concluded the intergroup conflict creates and propagates discrimination, anger, and violent acts towards the discriminated.

Lastly, religion cause prejudices through the deviating interpretations of biblical passages that can discriminate against out-groups. (Isherwood & McEwan, 1994). Religion greatly differentiates depending on the affiliation to certain religious denominations.

Researchers have recently discovered that conformity also increases when an individual admires a group, a person is being observed by a group admired by the individual, and an individual expresses feelings of doubt and incompetence. Reasons for conforming include the desire to feel and/or be accepted by the admired group or the fear of rejection by the majority, the in-group offers the individual a beneficial advantage, seeking a financial
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gain, and the admiration along with the need to be accepted by the in-group. (Crandall & Schaller, 2004)

Combating Racism

One manner in which individuals can combat discrimination and prejudices is by seeking out unbiased information that is accurate in portraying the strengths, limitations, and truths concerning an out-groups origin of disconformity.

Education is the predominantly seen as the doorway to disseminating racial prejudices. Obtaining not only education exclusive to the problems and prejudices plaguing a group, but also overall academic education that emphasizes rational thought processes.

Also, intergroup contact allows for both in-groups and out-groups to be exposed to physical, behavioral, and psychological biases that without contact may otherwise not be disseminated. Allowing both groups to experience the reality of a groups characteristics in comparison to imagined biases decreases discrimination towards a group and fosters inclusion.

Conclusion

It is our childhood education, social perceptions, and attributions that contribute to discrimination. It is in the exploration of our personal and societal biases that we can begin to disseminate attributed group fallacies. We must seek to educate, inform, and understand ourselves and others on the either favorable, or negative characteristics which created prejudice and discrimination from the conforming majority.