

Group conformity and self-esteem essay sample



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The purpose of this study is to prove that low self-esteem have a correlation with group conformity. The group wanted to see if college students who have a high level of conforming affect their self-esteem. 40 students answered 2 questionnaires for the experimenters to get the data needed to see the correlation between the two variables. The first questionnaire that was administered was the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale to determine if students whether have high or low self-esteem. The second questionnaire that was administered was a conformity scale to measure their levels of conforming. The results that were obtained showed a fair measurement of correlation between both variables. Which leads us in accepting our alternate hypothesis; students with high level of conformity when in a group affect their self-esteem. Nevertheless, the results gathered showed a negative correlation which means that as the levels of conformity increases, student's self-esteem decreases.

A Relationship Between Group Conformity and Self-esteem

Why are people so often influenced by the opinions of the majority on controversial social and political issues? What entices people to watch popular television shows, listen to "mainstream" music, or adopt ubiquitous fashion trends? What causes adolescents to succumb to peer pressure? (Rios, Wheeler, & Miller, 2012). These are the same questions that have been questioning the researchers' mind for quite sometimes now. Among all the things happening in the world, from the natural calamities that people experience to economic fall down of a state in other country, we have been trying to do the things in which the majority made us does. That is the essence of this study. To further dig in to what is known as conformity with a

very much specific objective. The experimenter aims to find whether conformity has an effect to the decreasing or increasing of a students' self-esteem. For decades, social psychologists have been interested in the various reasons that people conform to others' opinions, judgments, and behaviors (Rios, Wheeler, & Miller, 2012). Conformity as a phenomenon has been widely studied since the beginning of the twentieth century (Reysen, 2003).

It is a strong group psychological mechanism that can make people behave inhumanely (Zimbardo, 2007), but can also be an important force keeping groups together and facilitating communication (Bond & Smith, 1996). For each of us, conformity is often a rational course of action (Sunstein, 2002). Although, view has long been held that conformity is to some extent a product of cultural conditions, and it is a stable feature of popular stereotypes that some national groups are conforming and submissive, whereas others are independent and self-assertive (e. g., Peabody, 1985). This is one of the focuses of the study of Solomon Asch (1951, 1952, 1955, 1956) which is about independency and conformity that opened a lot of doors to all the social psychologist. His findings have attracted much attention since its appearance in 1951 (Friend, Rafferty, & Bramel, 1990). Although many have misinterpreted his studies, the results found by Asch changes and widened the field of social psychology. There are many reasons why conformity has been taking part as a groups' mechanism. For sometimes, people would feel the need of being with the company of others and would even go with the decisions and/or actions of others. This is very

much sensible, because people conveys to the actions and statements which other people give.

They believe that for most of the times, what the majority believes are also the right things to believe. Nevertheless, conforming to others could make an individual feel stronger and superior. It can also boost the individual's confidence, self-worth and could even permanently change his/her outlooks in life. Other than those, fears of social isolation (Asch, 1956; Bassili, 2003), motives to hold the correct opinion (Sherif, 1936), and the need to increase one's self-esteem (Pool, Wood, & Leck, 1998) pushes an individual to conform. Given that there are a lot of things that causes conformity. In many cases, group members change as a result of direct pressure by the group (Forsyth, 2011). But what are the effects of conformity to an individual? The purpose of this study was to correlate self-esteem as one of the effect caused by conformity. The researchers would like to find out whether conformity has an effect to the increasing and decreasing of self-esteem of an individual. But before that, let's furthermore try to understand what self-esteem is all about and how it affects the behaviors of an individual. We can say that self-esteem is a realistic respect for or favorable impression of oneself (Fritton, 2009).

This could give profound changes to an individual's outlook in life. Low self-esteem could be associated with numerous consequences such as " a realistic respect for or favorable impression of oneself (Fritton, 2009). But what happen this self respect for favorable oneself got over powered by many? What would happen when, the individual started neglecting his/her personal views because the group dictates the person the things he/she

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should do? In the study of Asch, he discovered that people differed, to an extraordinary degree, in their reaction to the conformity situation. Those who conformed often became increasingly disoriented as the study progressed, hesitating before they disagreed and apologizing to the others for their temerity (Forsyth, 2011). Based on how Forsyth interpreted Asch's study, conformity seemed to be weakening the self confidence of an individual.

Conformity, based on the said study, also increases the dependency of one person to another one or group. It was also found that individuals with low self-esteem conform more than individuals with moderate and high self-esteem (Berkowitz, & Lundy, 1970). However, adolescents with high self-esteem conform more than those with low self-esteem (Francis, 1998). Now, the researchers know that self-esteem has affects the risks of an individual to conform in a group. In this study, the researchers ought to find if the effect would still be mutual between self-esteem and conformity when conformity became the causing factor and self-esteem would be the effect. And, whether there is a direct correlation between student's conformity to the group and their self-esteem. The researchers hypothesized that (a) students with a high level of conformity when in a group affects their self-esteem; and (b) students with high level of conformity when in a group does not affect their self-esteem

Methods

Participants

A class in Mapúa Institute of Technology with 40 students participated in the study. The participants consist of 25 male students and 15 female students, all with an age ranging from 16 to 18 years old.

Measurements

Two Likert-type scales were used in the study. Rosenberg's Self-Esteem scale was administered to measure the students' levels of self esteem, high to low self esteem. Another constructed scale was used, Conformity Scale, this time to measure and determine the students' levels of conformity, does not to highly conforming. Procedures

A verbal consent was given to the academic professor present in the room that a group of psychology major students is making a quantitative study in which they would need participants to answer their surveys. They asked the permission if whether they could administer the tests to the class. After the approval, the tests were administered, first was the Rosenberg's Self Esteem Scale followed by the Conformity Scale. The tests were then collected after the time allotted for them to be answered was done.

Design

In this study the researchers used a Bivariate Correlation for their statistical treatment to measure the relationships between the two variables, conformity and self-esteem. They computed for three (3) statistical measurements namely, Pearson's r , Kendall's tau, and the Spearman's rho using an SPSS statistical package for the social sciences as for their statistical tool. Results

To measure the relationship between conformity (T1) and self-esteem (T2), the researchers used a simple statistical treatment of bivariate correlation. Using SPSS as the statistical software, the researchers computed for three (3) statistical measurements to further show the reliability of the study. The

Pearson's r , Kendall's tau, and the Spearman's rho were computed all with the probability of 99% (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.01$). Pearson's r

After the tabulation of the data gathered in an excel file, it was then computed using an SPSS software in which the Pearson's r was computed (see Table1). After a series of trials, the result revealed significantly fair scores of Pearson correlation ($T1 \& T2 = -.690$; $N = 40$) between the two tests. Furthermore, the result indicate a negative correlation which implies that as the independent variable increases, the dependent variable decreases; as the level of conformity increases, the self-esteem decreases.

Kendall's tau

After computing for the Pearson's r , another correlation coefficient was computed to further test the reliability of the results. Using the same statistical software, SPSS, Kendall's tau was computed (see Table2). In contrary to the results of the Pearson's r , Kendall's tau showed a lower scores of correlation ($T1 \& T2 = -.327$; $N = 40$) between the two tests.

Although it also did gave a negative correlation which implies that as the independent variable increases, the dependent variable decreases; as the level of conformity increases, the self-esteem decreases. Spearman's rho

The last bivariate correlation measurement used was the Spearman's rho (see Table2) using the same software, SPSS. The Spearman's rho revealed a closer scores ($T1 \& T2 = -.503$; $N = 40$) to the scores measured by the Pearson's r ($T1 \& T2 = -.690$; $N = 40$). Also it shows a negative correlation which implies that as the independent variable increases, the dependent

variable decreases; as the level of conformity increases, the self-esteem decreases. Table1. Pearson's r: results

Table2. Kendall's tau & Spearman's rho: results

Discussion

The result highlighted that there is a relationship, if not strong, between conformity which affects the individual's self-esteem. What really was alarming in the results is that all three of those measurements (Pearson's r, Kendall's tau, and the Spearman's rho) showed a negative correlation between the variables presented. Which means that as one variable increases, the other variable decreases, vice versa. In that case, as the level of conformity increases, the self-esteem of an individual student decreases. The results contradicted the findings about conformity which can be used to satisfy social motives; to answer correctly, to increase one's membership or to increase or protect one's self-esteem (Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004). Nevertheless, the results also showed an obvious moderate to weak correlation between the factors. This only means, that since that the correlation between conformity affecting the student's self-esteem is not stronger than what is expected, other factors and studies should be considered.

Some research suggests that minority opinion expression arises from a desire to improve group norms (Packer, 2008). Which means that the majority doesn't really over power the minority, thus the minority if norm content and conformity pressure are considered separately, then it is possible to specify conditions under which conformity pressure can actually

promote creativity by encouraging the regular expression of creativity enhancing behaviors such as the freedom to dissent (Hornsey, Jetten, McAuliffe, & Hogg, 2006). Also, we should put to note that groups may also reach agreement because people believe the majority point of view is accurate and not because they fear the threat of social sanctions (Deutsch & Gerard, 1955), In other words, conformity. Despite limitations, the study proved that conformity does affect some decisions of the individual that would seldom lead to decreasing of self-esteem, most especially to students. Thus, it not be taken for granted that the effect of conformity is minimal, or not at all, and other factors should be considered in assessing the cause of the decreasing or the increasing of one's self-esteem.

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