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PSY-355
August 3, 2024
Project One

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Part One: Analyzing the Socio-Psychological Foundations of Conformity

1. Describe the difference between **acceptance, compliance, and obedience**, and provide examples of how these concepts present within the group dynamic.

   Acceptance, compliance, and obedience are all distinct aspects of conformity. Conformity is defined as "a change in behavior or belief to accord with others" (Myers &Twenge, 2018). Acceptance is when you believe that the group's actions are right. A prime example of acceptance that we saw recently during the COVID 19 pandemic is wearing a mask because you accept that not doing so could be dangerous to your health or others'. Compliance is doing something due to pressure, but not genuinely believing in why you are doing it. An example of compliance is doing your homework because you were told to by your teacher and parents even though you do not believe it is helping you learn. Obedience is following an order and is a firmer alternate form of compliance. An example of obedience is getting a COVID shot because your work says you have to remain employed, however you may personally not want to.

2. Describe the difference between **normative influence and informational influence and** provide examples of how these concepts impact the group dynamic.

   Normative influence is a type of conformity where the person does something to avoid rejection. An example of normative influence is smoking a cigarette because your friends are doing it. Informational influence is using information from others that affect your decisions. An example of informational influence is when a friend buys a car, using their liking of their vehicle to influence your car choice.

3. Describe why **cognitive dissonance** is not always easy to recognize in ourselves.

   Leon Festinger defined cognitive dissonance during his psychology research. He stated that "the feeling of psychological discomfort produced by the combined presence of two thoughts that do not follow one another" (Grohol, 2008). It is hard to recognize cognitive dissonance is ourselves because we will often adjust our behavior to fit the situation that we are in. One example of this could be when you decide to eat meat even though you are a devout animal lover.

4. Describe ways to reduce cognitive dissonance and shift to a state of cognitive consonance in the **group setting**.

   The first way to reduce cognitive dissonance is to reduce the importance of dissonant beliefs. This can be achieved by an attitude change. This could be wanting to lose weight but eating fast food every day, so you adjust by getting premade salads at the grocery store. The second way is to add consonant beliefs that are more important than dissonant

beliefs. An example of is switching to plant-based meals in order to support the welfare of animals, even though it may not be your first choice in a meal. The final way is changing the dissonant beliefs, so they are no longer incongruent. An example of this would be a person who smokes cigarettes and knowing they are unhealthy, quitting smoking.

5. Describe the factors that may impact a person's ability or desire to deviate from the norm and choose not to conform to **group pressure.**

    People are more influenced by the size of the group they are in, and who else is in the group. If the group is small, they are less likely to be pressured to do something. If the group is small but consists of family or friends, the person may be more inclined to conform to the group. Larger groups also foster more conformity, since there are more people involved and the need to avoid rejection is greater.

Part Two: Reflecting On the Conformity Experience

1. Describe the influence of **unanimity** on the tendency of group members to conform to the majority opinion.

    Conformity experiments are especially useful when examining unanimity. Myers and Twenge (2018) discuss how when even just one person does not conform to the majority opinion, the social power is deflated. An example of this at home my family all shares the same religious affiliations, I tend to agree with them even if I do not agree to avoid arguments.

2. Describe the influence of **cohesion** on the tendency of group members to conform to the majority opinion.

    Cohesion is the concept that a person from within the group will persuade more than someone from outside the group. An example of this at work is how I work with women, holding the majority. When the one male suggests something, I am less likely to use it constructively, but when a female co-worker says the same thing, it is much more likely that I use her advice.

3. Describe the influence of **status** on the tendency of group members to conform to the majority opinion.

    "Higher-status people tend to have more impact" (Driskell & Mullen, 1990). Higher status people are typically seen as people to admire or use as role models. An example of this Donald Trump. People listened to him simply because he was president, and did not acknowledge when he was being racist, sexist, or homophobic.

Part Three: Integrating the Negative and Positive Aspects of Conformity Within the Group Dynamic

1. Describe the **negative effects** of conformity on group collaboration. Include the potential impact of conformity on each of the following:
    A. The motivation of group members
    B. The identity and individuality of group members
    C. The perceptions of fairness toward group members
    D. The creativity and diversity of ideas of group members

    As it is with a lot of group situations, all individuals within the group want to feel included and heard. If you are in a group with an individual who has a more dominant personality, other members may feel as if their ideas and opinion are not heard and therefore will not want to participate. The concept of fairness can vary among group members, especially if members of the group feel as if they are being talked over or not listened to. This would cause the creativity and diversity of the group members to dissipate simply based on their fear of not being heard or listened to and therefore their ideas would not be shared.

2. Describe the **positive effects** of conformity on group collaboration. Include the potential impact of conformity on each of the following:
    A. The cohesiveness of group members
    B. The intergroup harmony between group members
    C. The productivity level of group members
    D. The learning amongst group members

    In order to ensure successful cohesion of a group it is crucial to make sure the individuals feel confident enough in the strength of the group to share their ideas. This will allow for an increase of intergroup harmony as the people in the group will not only feel better about themselves but will also give support to their team members. This can also do wonders for productivity, as it will allow for an increase of interwork comradery that will also transfer to the work product itself. Learning among group members will constantly evolve as they teach each other, learn from each other and produce current ideas.

3. Using the various socio-psychological concepts examined in this project to support your position, share three **recommendations** for optimizing the group collaboration experience.

    I have learned through my time in my current position that communication is key when trying to establish a cohesive work experience. Establishing this base level of communication for all will take the stress off the group when working together. My second recommendation would be inter-team bonding. We have all been a part of (and slightly victimized) by cheesy ice-breaker games or questions during team meetings. However, no matter how silly they may feel, they actually do a great job and break down

that wall of "seriousness" to get everyone to see each other as people. Lastly, I recommend would be recognizing and praising successful teamwork. No matter you job, sometimes it is really difficult to finish a task and also rely on others to help make everything run smoothly. By praising individuals and groups who successfully work together and provide a good work product, it allows them to feel good about themselves, as well as the group as a whole.

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