SOCIAL INFLUENCE

FEM 4103 WEEK 8

EVERYTHING THAT A PERSON DOES IS INFLUENCED BY SOCIETY

Debate on this TOPIC

What is social influence?

• Efforts by one or more individuals to change the attitudes, beliefs, thoughts/perceptions, or behaviors of one or more others.

  OR

• How individual thoughts, actions and feelings are influenced by OTHERS.
WHAT IS SOCIAL INFLUENCE?

- Social influence is the exercise of social power by a person or group to change the attitudes or behavior of others in a particular direction.

SOCIAL INFLUENCE

- Everyday, all of us are subjected to social influence— the influence may be intentional or non-intentional.
- Our thoughts, actions, and behavior are affected by others such as our parents, friends, organizations, political institutions, and significant others.

- Social influence takes many forms and can be seen in conformity, socialization, peer pressure, obedience, leadership, persuasion, sales, and marketing.
- What is the importance of social influence?
People with social power are more likely to initiate action. **WHY?**

**TYPES OF SOCIAL INFLUENCE**

- 2 types of social influence
  1. Normative Influence
  2. Informational Influence

**Normative Influence**

- Involves going along with the crowd in order to be liked and accepted
- Survival is more likely if we are included in a social group
• To live together, people usually need to agree on common beliefs, values, attitudes and behaviors

• Normative social influence may elicit public compliance-outwardly going along with the group but maintaining a private, inner beliefs that the group is wrong

• Informational Influence
  – Involves going along with the crowd because you think the crowd knows more than you do
  – People get valuable information from others

  – Two types of situations produce informational influence:
    • Ambiguous situations
    • Crisis situations
  – Informational social influence helps produce private acceptance – a genuine inner beliefs that others are right
There are 3 main behavioral consequences of social influence:
- Conformity
- Compliance
- Obedience

**CONFORMITY**

- A yielding to perceived group pressure by copying the behavior and beliefs of others.
- Conformity occurs when a person changes his/her attitudes or behavior on his/her own to fulfill social norms, or out of a desire to follow the beliefs or standard of others

Factors that can influence conformity

- Situational factors impact conformity
- Personal factors influence conformity
Situational factors impact conformity

• **Group size**
  – Conformity increased as group size increased

Situational factors impact conformity

• **Group cohesiveness and topic relevant**
  – Group with a strong sense of togetherness and discussing important topics increase conformity

Situational factors impact conformity

• **Social support**
  – A social supporter reduces conformity by diminishing the group’s normative influence
Personal factors influence conformity

• **Self-Awareness**
  – Being *privately* self-aware reduces conformity, while being *publicly* self-aware increases conformity

• **Self-Presentation**
  – Conformity occurs when self-presenters are alone with those trying to influence them and when the conformity will be viewed as indicating intelligent or open-mindedness

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Personal factors influence conformity

• **The desire for personal control**
  – We personally control our own action
  – Theory of psychological reactance
    • People believed they possess specific behavioral freedoms, and that they will react against and resist attempts to limit this sense of freedom

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Personal factors influence conformity

• Gender and conformity
  – Early research found women to conform more than men
  – Later studies, found little, if any, gender differences in overall conformity.
  – In more private settings, men tend to conform more than women
**CONDITIONS THAT STRENGTHEN THE CONFORMITY**

- One is made to feel incompetent or insecure
- The group has at least 3 people
- The group is unanimous
- One admires the group’s status and attractiveness
- One has made no prior commitment to any response
- Others in the group observe one’s behavior
- One’s culture strongly encourages respect for social standards

**COMPLIANCE**

- Involves a direct request, it generally induces more thinking and critical analysis by the target of social influence

**MANIPULATING MOODS AND INVOKING NORMS FOSTER COMPLIANCE**

- Positive mood
  - Others are more likely to comply when they are in a good mood
- Reciprocity
  - The expectation that one should return a favor or a good deed—reciprocity norm.
  - Reciprocity is commonly used as a strategy in making sales
- Giving reasons
  - In granting someone's request, we often require a reason for complying
TWO-STEP COMPLIANCE STRATEGIES ARE AFFECTIVE FOR DIFFERENT REASONS

• Foot-in-the-door
  – A technique that based commitment, in which one starts with a small request in order to gain eventually compliance with a larger request

• Door-in-the-face
  – A two-step compliance technique in which, after having a large request refused, the influencer counteroffers with a much smaller request

• That’s Not All Technique
  – A two-step compliance technique in which the influencer makes a large request, then immediately offers a discount or bonus before the initial request is refused
• **Low-Ball Technique**
  A two-step compliance strategy in which the influencer secures agreement with a request by understating its true cost.

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**OBEDIENCE**

Obedience is a special type of compliance that occurs as a result of a directive from an authority

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**OBEDIENCE**

• Obedient research indicates that
  – Almost two-thirds of Milgram’s participant obeyed the destructive commands of an authority figure
  – Social support helps people follow their own beliefs when confronted by powerful others
• A recent partial replication of Milgram’s original study finds no evidence that obedience levels have diminished in the past 40 years