

Social influence

Ways in which individuals are influenced by the beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors of others

Types of social influence:



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Social influence (cont)

Conformity Adjusting one's thoughts, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors to align with those of a group or social norm
may conform due to a desire to fit in, be accepted, or avoid social rejection
can be explicit (overtly agreeing/adopting the group's behavior) or implicit (adjusting behavior w/o overt response)

Sherif's Research on the Autokinetic Phenomenon:Muzafer Sherif (1937)

investigated (1)how norms emerge and (2)their influence on behavior in a social group

In this study, participants were individually shown a small dot of light in a dark room and asked to estimate its movement. When participants were later placed in groups and asked to make their estimates together, they gradually converged on a common estimate, demonstrating the emergence of a group norm. Sherif's study highlighted the role of *informational social influence*, where individuals rely on others' judgments and conform to establish a shared understanding.

Autokinetic phenomenon- when placed in a completely dark room and exposed to a single, stationary point of light, most people perceive the light as moving about - in the dark room, there are no clear cues to distance or location, this perceived movement is known as the autokinetic phenomenon

Asch's Research on Conformity:focused on understanding conformity in the context of perceptual judgment

Participants were shown a line and then asked to match it with one of several comparison lines. There were 9 confederates (individuals working with the researcher) and 1 participant in each case, the confederate deliberately gave incorrect answers. Asch found that participants often conformed to the incorrect majority answer, even when it was clear that the majority was wrong. This experiment demonstrated the power of *normative social influence*, where individuals conform to fit in and avoid social disapproval.

Social Foundations of Conformity:

Normative social influence-conformity driven by the desire to gain social approval, be liked, or avoid social rejection - to 'fit in' and maintain +ve rxns, we alter our behavior to meet others' expectations

Informational social influence- conform because they believe that others have accurate information and can provide valuable guidance - based on the desire to possess accurate perceptions of the social world

Factors Affecting Conformity:

Cohesiveness-degree of attraction and closeness among group members, high levels can increase conformity

Conformity and group size- as group size inc, so does conformity. but if the group size is too large, dec in conformity

Descriptive norms- reflect what people typically do in a given situation (what most do)

Injunctive norms- reflect what is socially approved/disapproved (expected behavior)

Normative focus theory- norms will have an influence on behavior only when they are prominent in the minds of the individuals involved at the time of the behavior (norm should be focal/imp thought in their minds)

Why we don't conform:

Power- people with high power/status conform less

Sexual motives- women find non-conforming traits (assertive, decisive etc) attractive on men

Desire to be unique- desire to stand out and be distinct- resist conformity



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Social influence (cont)

Compliance adjusting one's behavior in response to a direct request or demand from another person or group done due to influence of social norms, expectations, or the desire to gain rewards or avoid punishment

6 underlying factors:

1. **Friendship/liking**- more likely to comply with requests from those they like or have a positive relationship with/admire

Ingratiation- seek to gain compliance or favor by using flattery, compliments etc, to create a positive image and establish rapport with the target person

self-promotion- showcasing their accomplishments, credentials, or skills to establish credibility and convince others of their competence to increase compliance

Incidental similarity- creation of similarity between oneself and others, even when the similarity is unrelated to the request itself, it can influence compliance due to a sense of connection/identification

2. **Authority**- natural tendency to obey and respect authority figures, leading to increased compliance

3. **Social validation**-individuals use the behavior or opinions of others as a cue for how they should behave, due to desire to conform to social norms or to gain social acceptance

4. **Commitment/consistency**- desire for consistency or commitment towards particular belief/behavior/task etc can lead to increased compliance

The Foot-in-the-Door- involves making a small initial request and then following it up with a larger request - feel sense of consistency

The Lowball-presenting an attractive initial offer, but after the person agrees, additional hidden costs or conditions are revealed - feel sense of commitment

5. **Reciprocity**- people feel obliged to give back or repay others for what they have received, so they comply.

The Door-in-the Face making an initial large and unreasonable request that is likely to be rejected, followed up with a more reasonable and smaller request

That's-Not-All- making an initial offer or request, but before the person responds, additional incentives or benefits are added to make the deal more attractive

6. **Scarcity**-When individuals perceive that an opportunity or resource is scarce, they are more motivated to comply with requests to obtain it.

Playing Hard to Get- creating the perception of scarcity/high demand by initially showing disinterest or reluctance, increasing the perceived value of the person/object and may motivate others to comply with the request or desire for attention

The Fast-Approaching-Deadline Technique- creating a sense of urgency and time pressure, compelling individuals to act quickly and comply to avoid missing out on the opportunity



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Social influence (cont)

Obedience act of following the orders, instructions, or commands of an authority figure
can involve actions that may go against an individual's personal beliefs

Zimbardo's Prison Study (Stanford Prison Experiment): Conducted by psychologist Philip Zimbardo in 1971 investigated the psychological effects of perceived power in a simulated prison environment
Participants were randomly assigned to play the roles of either prisoners or guards. The study had to be terminated early due to the extreme behavioral changes observed in both groups. The study demonstrated the powerful influence of the social role and the potential for individuals to engage in abusive and dehumanizing behaviors when placed in positions of authority.

important conclusion- just because there are social norms and structures in place that create inequality doesn't mean that people automatically accept or agree with those inequalities - it depends on how much they identify with those roles (if they don't, they might resist and fight against the system)

Stanley Milgram's obedience experiment (1960s): aimed to study individuals' willingness to obey authority figures, even if it meant causing harm to others

Participants were instructed to administer electric shocks to a person (actually an actor) in another room when they answered questions incorrectly. The experiment revealed that a significant proportion of participants were willing to administer potentially lethal shocks when directed by an authority figure, highlighting the power of obedience to authority - pressure to obey in this situation was difficult to resist.

Destructive Obedience: obedience that leads to harmful or unethical behaviors
occurs when individuals prioritize obedience to authority over their own moral judgment or empathy towards others

Contributing factors:

1. Perceived Legitimacy of Authority - when individuals perceive the authority figure as legitimate and credible - more likely to obey
2. Gradual Commitment - can escalate gradually, with small initial requests leading to larger and more extreme actions - become progressively desensitized to the harmful nature of their actions
3. Diffusion of Responsibility - bcz they don't feel responsible for their actions - easy to obey
4. Conformity to Group Norms: others within a group obey, they also obey
5. Fast paced events - less time to consider options, more likely to obey

Factors to reduce destructive obedience: to be aware and remind others of-

1. Assume shared responsibility for actions
2. Beyond a point, obedience is inappropriate
3. Question authority motives
4. Spread awareness to public on this topic

Definitions

Social psychology a scientific field that seeks to understand the nature and cause of an individual's thoughts, feelings, and actions in social situations.

Research methods in social psych

Systematic observation observe only desired variable

Survey methods census, questionnaire, interview

Correlational method observing 2 or more variables to determine if changes in one accompanies changes in the other

Experimentation testing if IV influences DV

Cross cultural research

self presentation

self promotion convey positive info about one's behavior or accomplishment to others

self verification emphasizing a part of yourself that you want others to see and underplay other traits

ingratiation flattery - 3 types: acquisitive (to obtain smth), protective (to prevent negative consequence), significance (to gain respect/approval)

self presentation (cont)

modesty/self deprecation underrepresenting positive traits to be humbler

exemplification strategy a person uses to make other people regard them as highly moral and virtuous

intimidation produces fear and gains power by convincing others they are powerful and/ or dangerous

self handicapping creating an obstacle to his or her own performance - 2types: self reported (complaints), behavioural (drugs, alcohol)

supplication advertise weakness hoping for solicit help for sympathy out of a sense of social obligation

Attitude - behavior theories

Theory of reasoned action decision to engage in a particular behavior = alternate options + consequences - leads to behavioral intentions - influences overt behavior

Theory of planned behavior Theory of reasoned action + one's ability to perform that behavior

Attitude - behavior theories (cont)

Intentions are determined by 3 factors (Ajzen, 1991) - Attitudes toward the behavior, Subjective norms, Perceived behavioral control

Attitude-to-behavior process model attitude + stored knowledge of appropriateness in given situation - influences overt behavior (Fazio, 1990)

Social comparison theory

Festinger (1954) suggested that people compare themselves to others because they want to evaluate themselves in terms of opinions, values, capabilities, achievements etc

upward compare ourselves with those who we believe are better than us

downward compare ourselves to others who appear to be worse off than us

horizontal comparing with one's peers for the purpose of self-enhancement and emotional well-being

Attitude - behavior theories

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Theory of planned behavior Theory of reasoned action + one's ability to perform that behavior



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Bullying

Definition intentional use of power or dominance to harm, intimidate, or control others
form of aggressive behavior typically occurs in a social context where there is an imbalance of power between the bully and the victim

Types verbal (spoken/written threats)
physical (beating, kicking etc)
relational/social (to harm reputation - rumors, exclusion)
cyber (digital/social media)
sexual (inappropriate touching, jokes etc)

Why do people bully Power and Control
Insecurity and Low Self-esteem
Desire for Attention or Popularity
Modeling Behavior

Bullying (cont)

Characteristics of bullies lower in self-esteem, aggressive against others to build up their self-image
believe that others are not to be trusted
low tolerance for change/diversity
bad at managing -ve emotions

Characteristics of victims may be physically or socially weaker
lack of assertiveness
display signs of fear, anxiety
no social support
history of bullying

How to deal with bullying authorities (parents, supervisors, teachers etc) must pay attention and stand against it
victims must be told exactly what to do and whom to inform

Social perception

process by which individuals interpret, analyze, and make sense of social information

Nonverbal Communication facial expressions, gestures (body movements), posture, eye contact, proxemics, touch

negative facial expressions are easier and quicker to notice than neutral or smiling faces

Social perception (cont)

extent a person's neutral facial expression resembles an actual emotion is interpreted as them showing that emotion

Facial Feedback Hypothesis William James (1894)- facial expressions are not only external signs of internal states, they can also trigger or influence internal emotional experiences

Sources of error in social cognition

Optimistic bias tendency to overlook risks and expect things to turn out well - can lead to unrealistic expectations and poor decision-making

Overconfidence barrier tendency for individuals to be overly confident in their own abilities and judgments

Caputo & Dunning (2005) - we may be over confident because:

1. We lack critical info (we don't know enough to know what we have missed)
2. Error of omission (we don't do something that must be done)

Planning fallacy tendency to underestimate the time, resources, and effort required to complete a task
more focus on getting task done than the steps to do it
prediction and motivation - key aspects



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Sources of error in social cognition (cont)

Counterfactual thinking	imagine alternative outcomes to past events (what ifs)
Magical thinking	belief that some consequences are beyond one's control - external locus of control (eg: superstition, karma),
Terror management	ways in which individuals cope with the awareness of their own mortality (they will die) - leads to increased preference to shared beliefs, engaging in risky behavior (yolo)

Social cognition

	How we think abt the social world, our attempts to understand it, how we gain info from it and our place in it.
Schemas	mental framework we use to organise info, process info wrt context and guide our actions
Heuristics	mental shortcuts (simple rules used to make complex decisions or draw inferences in a rapid and efficient manner)

Social psych is influenced by

Cognitive process	what we know and how our behavior changes
Biological factors	influence of inherited traits in social situations

Social psych is influenced by (cont)

Other people	their actions and characters
environmental variables	teperature, transport, social conflicts etc

Cross cultural research

Psychological method validation	checking applicability and generalizability of the test
Indigenous cultural studies	study of minority ethnic groups in their native location
Cross-cultural comparisons	comparing findings of two or more cultures

Importance of cross cultural research

maximises variables
increases inter culture awareness
helps separate variables
reduce bias in research
searate behavior from context
apply theories in different norms
check generalizability
identify influence of culture on behavior
determine if measurable tests and tools are applicable to other countries

Self-knowledge

Introspection	privately contemplating 'who we are'
From Other's standpoint	seeing ourselves from an observer's perspective

Attitudes

Explicit	consious, controllable, easy to notice and report
Implicit	unconscious evaluation towards objects or self

Influence of attitudes on behaviors

Attitude extremity	how much the situation effects or interests you (vested interest)/how strong ur emotional reaction is
Attitude certainty	2 types - attitude correctness and attitude clarity
Attitude correctness	extent to which an attitude aligns with objective reality or with the views of others
Attitude clarity	clear and consistent understanding of one's attitude, including its strength, importance, and the reasons behind it
Personal experience	Attitudes formed on the basis of direct experience are likely to be stronger
Situational constrains and Consistency	we continue to have same attitudes for a long period of time



Social identity theory

aims to predict the circumstances under which individuals think of themselves as individuals or as group

Social categorization process by which people group others into categories based on shared characteristics

Social comparison process by which people evaluate themselves and their social identities by comparing themselves to others in their in-group or out-group

Social identification process by which an individual associates themselves with a particular social group and adopts the norms, values, and beliefs of that group as part of their self-concept

Social competition rivalry that exists between individuals or groups competing for social status, resources, or recognition

Social creativity ability of individuals or groups to generate new and innovative ideas, solutions, or products that are valued by society

Individual mobility allows people to pursue individual position improvement irrespective of the group

Heuristics

We use heuristics when there is:

Info overload when our ability to process info is exceeded

Conditions of uncertainty when it takes lot of effort and time to understand a situation/problem

Types of heuristics:

Representativeness heuristic judging the likelihood of an event based on how well it fits with our prototype and stereotype

Can cause error due to ignoring base rates leads to base rate fallacy (actual frequency or probability of an event based on statistical information)

Availability heuristic estimating the likelihood of an event based on how easily we can recall or retrieve examples of it from memory - ease of retrieval

Heuristics (cont)

Anchoring and Adjustment Heuristic involves using an initial starting point (the "anchor") and then adjusting our estimate based on additional information

Status Quo Heuristic: belief that the current situation is the norm, and any change from that norm may be risky or uncertain - hesitant to make changes

Social facilitation

individuals' performance on a task is influenced by the presence of others

can lead to improved performance on simple / well-practiced tasks (facilitation effect) and decreased performance on complex/ novel tasks (inhibition effect)



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Social facilitation (cont)

Drive Theory of Social Facilitation	the presence of others increases physiological arousal and this strengthens the tendency to perform dominant responses If the dominant response is a well-learned or automatic behavior, such as a simple task, the presence of others will facilitate performance and improve outcomes. However, if the dominant response is more complex or unfamiliar, the presence of others can lead to heightened anxiety and hinder performance.
Evaluation apprehension theory	presence of others enhances performance because individuals are concerned about being evaluated or judged - motivated to perform well to avoid negative evaluations and gain social approval

Social facilitation (cont)

Distraction Conflict Theory	presence of others creates a conflict between attending to the task at hand and attending to the social stimuli - attentional focus is divided between the task and the social context, leading to increased arousal and decreased performance (for complex tasks)
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Social loafing

refers to the tendency for individuals to exert less effort or contribute less to a group task when working collectively compared to when working individually

occurs when individuals feel that their individual efforts will be less noticeable/important in a group, leading to a decrease in motivation and productivity

additive tasks	tasks in which the contributions of individual group members can be combined to create an overall group performance (group projects, brainstorming sessions etc)
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Social loafing (cont)

Tips to reduce social loafing-

1. Clearly Define Individual Roles - so that output and effort is readily identifiable
2. Establish Group Identity and Cohesion - built group identity by communicating, collaborating etc
3. Enhance Task Significance - Emphasize the importance and meaningfulness of the task
4. Give a standard for the performance

Influence of affect on cognition

Positive mood	view everything (situation, people, ideas) in +ve terms, more likely to judge info as true, increases confidence in our understanding of the world and actions of people, can result in less accuracy
Mood congruence effects	more likely to store or remember positive information when in a positive mood and vice versa
Mood dependent memory	what we remember while in a given mood may be determined by what we learned when previously in that mood
Creativity	+ve mood activates wider range of ideas, associations - increasing creativity



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Influence of affect on cognition (cont)

Heuristics	+ve mood = more likely to engage in heuristics to deal with current issues
Understanding motives of people	Positive affect tends to promote attributions of positive motives and vice versa

Scope of social psych

Psychology of personality
Applied psychology
Psychological cognition
Sociology
Biology
Anthropology
Economics
Political science
International relations
Communication science
Leadership science
Philosophy
Education
Health sciences

Social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986)

we can perceive ourselves differently at any given moment in time, depending on where we are on the personal-versus-social identity continuum

personal identity	comparisons with others in the same group (intragroup comparisons)
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Social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) (cont)

social identity	comparing our group with other groups (intergroup comparisons)
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Self aspect

contextual	diff personalities in diff situations
distinctive	if you're a minority, you represent your entire population
important to the self	personal traits more than social traits
linguistics	more adjectives to explain personal identity

Self esteem

overall attitude people hold toward themselves	
Key elements:	
Self-confidence	Sense of belonging
Feelings of security	Identity
Feeling of competence	Self-awareness
realistic personal expectations	Good expression of needs

Low self esteem

sensitivity to Criticism	
social Withdrawal	
hostility - defense mech	
excessive Preoccupation with Personal Problems	
physical Symptoms	alcohol abuse, drug use
mental issues	depression, anxiety, and anorexia

Factors affecting self esteem

Age	SES	Genetics
Disability	Illness	
Culture	Discrimination	

Attitude formation

Social learning	learning through social interaction -acquire new information, forms of behavior, or attitudes from other people
Observational learning	learning by observing others' behavior, without necessarily interacting with them
Social comparison	comparing ourselves to others to evaluate our social reality
Reference groups	people with whom we identify and whose opinions we value
Classical Conditioning	Learning Based on Association
Subliminal conditioning	Classical conditioning of attitudes by exposure to stimuli that are below individuals' threshold of conscious awareness
Mere exposure effect	people tend to develop a preference for things simply because they are familiar with them



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Attitude formation (cont)

Illusion of truth effect tendency of people to believe something to be true simply because they have heard it before

Instrumental conditioning Attitudes that are followed by positive outcomes tend to be strengthened and negative weakened

Identity

individual's sense of self, defined by a set of unique physical, psychological, and interpersonal characteristics

Distinctiveness

Continuity same over time

coherence same in diff situations (school, home)

Macia's identity theory

expansion on erikson's theory

identity formation during adolescence involves both exploration and commitment with respect to ideologies and occupations

high exp - HE low exp - LE

high com - HC low com - LC

identity diffusion LC,LE - identity crisis

identity foreclosure HC,LE - peer/parental pressure

Identity moratorium LC,HE - precursor to identity achievement

Identity achievement HC,HE - stable self-definition

Schemas

Influence of schemas on 3 basic processes - consistent and strongly inconsistent schemas receive more attention, encoding and retrieval

Attention refers to what info we notice and what enters our consciousness

more frequently used when there's cognitive overload (trying to handle lot of info)

Encoding process through which info we notice gets stored in memory Info sharply inconsistent with our schemas get stored in a separate memory location

Retrieval how we recover information from memory

Concepts related to schemas:

Priming when one stimulus triggers retrieval of another similar schema

Unpriming how previous schema is deactivated or suppressed in memory - when contradicted or through passage of time

Perseverance effect tendency for beliefs and schemas to remain unchanged even in the face of contradictory info - as schemas bias attention, memory etc

Schemas (cont)

Automatic processing performing task with rapid, effortless, and unconscious manner after extensive experience - allows individuals to quickly categorize and make judgments but can also cause bias

Influence of cognition on affect

Two-factor theory of emotion (Schachter, 1964) - we infer the nature of our feelings and attitudes from the external world (cognitive appraisal)

Activate schemas containing strong affective component (eg: how we feel with in-grp id diff from our feelings to out-grp)

Affective forecasts - Predictions about how we would feel about events we have not actually experienced can influence affect

Attribution

efforts to understand the causes behind ones' and others' behavior

Causes of aggression

frustration aggression hypothesis frustration is a very powerful determinant of aggression

excitation transfer theory arousal from one situation can cause intense reactions in a later, unrelated event



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Causes of aggression (cont)

TASS model Traits as Situational Sensitivities (TASS) personality traits (like aggression) only influence behavior when specific situations activate/ evoke them

biological factors genetic predispositions, hormonal influences (such as testosterone), brain abnormalities or imbalances, and neurological conditions

provocation condescension (showing aggrogance/disdain to others), mocking, harsh and unjustified criticism, teasing

culture some cultures find aggression acceptable in response to insult of honor

sexual jealousy individuals perceive a threat to their relationship or when they experience feelings of inadequacy or betrayal

biological factors genetic predispositions, hormonal influences (such as testosterone), brain abnormalities or imbalances, and neurological conditions

Causes of aggression (cont)

gender differences men show more physical aggression, women show relational aggression (social exclusions, rumors)

manhood aggression can be a defence when their manhood is challenged or they feel inadequate traditional masculinity expects men to be more aggressive in nature

narcissism narcissists show aggression if their ego or self-image is threatened

substance abuse under the influence

temperature men show more physical aggression, women show relational aggression (social exclusions, rumors)

sexual jealousy individuals perceive a threat to their relationship or when they experience feelings of inadequacy or betrayal

Causes of aggression (cont)

manhood aggression can be a defence when their manhood is challenged or they feel inadequate traditional masculinity expects men to be more aggressive in nature

temperature hotter temp is linked to more aggression

failures, inconveniences'

invalidation, injustice, betrayal, disrespect

hostile aggression prime objective is to inflict harm on victim

instrumental aggression primary goal is to attain some other goal—eg, access to valued resources



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