

PROJECT DISSERTATION
GROUP INFLUENCE ON INDIVIDUAL'S
DECISION

SUBMITTED BY:

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ROLL NO. 2K14/MBA/01

UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF

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JAN-MAY 2016

CERTIFICATE FROM THE INSTITUTE

This is to certify that the Project Report titled Group Influence on Individual's Decision is a bonafide work carried out by Ms Aarti of MBA 2014-16 and submitted to Delhi School of Management, Delhi Technological University, Bawana Road, Delhi -42 in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of the Degree of Masters of Business Administration.

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DECLARATION

This is to certify that the report titled “**Group Influence on Individual’s Decision**” which is submitted by me in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of Degree of Masters of Business Administration from “**Delhi School of Management, Delhi Technological University, Bawana Road, Delhi-42**” comprises only my original work and has not submitted in part or full for any other degree or diploma of any university.

Aarti

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

It gives me immense pleasure to acknowledge and to express my gratitude to all those who have helped me throughout this project.

Firstly, I am thankful to Dr. Shikha N. Khera Assistant Professor, Delhi School of Management, as without her guidance this project would have been impossible. Her constructive ideas, unending patience, valuable criticism and faith in me inspired me to work towards my objective. Needless to say, I would have never reached this stage without her support.

I would also like to express sincere gratitude to Mr. Sahil Malik Research Scholar, Delhi School of Management for providing me with constant support and many valuable inputs. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all respondents to the survey as their input was indispensable for the successful completion of this work.

Finally, I would like to thank my parents and family for motivating me and directly or indirectly helping me in successfully completing this project.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The project was focused on the interpretations by social psychologist Solomon Asch's widely cited study of independence and conformity, known as Asch Conformity Study. The main goal of the study is to investigate the effects of group pressure on the amount of independence that is put forth in a situation.

The study is about if the individual would conform to others before saying his/her answer out loud or if they will keep their independence and say what they exactly think. The study will determine how and at what extent a group behavior influences an individual's decision making power and his/her productivity in an organization.

Project was divided into various phases:

1. The first phase mainly concentrated on getting a theoretical knowledge about the Asch Conformity Study and various concept of Social Psychology. During this tenure, an in depth knowledge about the topic was achieved. Then, three experiments were prepared in order to examine the interpretations of Asch Conformity Study.
2. In this phase, the experiments were mailed to students of different age group.
3. In the subsequent phase of the project, analysis of the data was conducted. It was done by recording the data in an excel sheet and analyzing it was the main part of this phase.
4. The last phase suggested practical recommendations to the organizations based on the study and research done on the topic.

Objective of the study

- To examine the interpretations of a well-known investigation in social psychology, the set of studies by Solomon Asch of the effects of a unanimous majority upon the independence and conformity of individuals.
- To determine how and at what extent a group behavior influences an individual's decision making power and his/her productivity in an organization.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Man is by nature a social animal; an individual who is unsocial naturally and not accidentally is either beneath our notice or more than human. Society is something that precedes the individual. Anyone who either cannot lead the common life or is so self-sufficient as not to need to, and therefore does not partake of society, is either a beast or a god.

-Aristotle

Humans are social animals. Their behavior is influenced by ecological, historical, social and cultural foundations. An individual's behavior can easily be influenced by some factors like environment, strangers, peer groups, parents and even media. Modern society tends to change drastically in terms of morality and moral principles. Certain basic amount of goodness exists in every individual. Expressing kindness, offering help, sharing emotions (happiness/sadness) are some of the human behaviors. These behaviors can get easily influenced. Being "human" can have a conflict of interest with being "selfish". An individual can at times behave selfishly, where prior importance is given to one's own safety and happiness. At times it even wipes away certain parts of humanity. Human beings can also get biased in their decision making processes. At times they blindly follow a mass action without trusting upon individual abilities and intellectual capabilities.

In an organizational context, groupthink and group behavior are important concepts as they determine the cohesiveness and coherence of the organizational culture and organizational communication.

Groupthink

Groupthink, a term coined by social psychologist Irving Janis (1972), occurs when a group makes faulty decisions because group pressures lead to a deterioration of "mental efficiency, reality testing, and moral judgment". Groups affected by groupthink ignore alternatives and tend to take irrational actions that dehumanize other groups. A group is especially vulnerable

to groupthink when its members are similar in background, when the group is insulated from outside opinions, and when there are no clear rules for decision making.

Symptoms of Groupthink

Janis has documented eight symptoms of groupthink:

1. Illusion of invulnerability –Creates excessive optimism that encourages taking extreme risks.
2. Collective rationalization – Members discount warnings and do not reconsider their assumptions.
3. Beliefs in inherent morality – Members believes in the rightness of their cause and therefore ignore the ethical or moral consequences of their decisions.
4. Stereotyped views of out-groups – Negative views of “enemy” make effective responses to conflict seem unnecessary.
5. Direct pressure on dissenters – Members are under pressure not to express arguments against any of the group’s views.
6. Self-censorship – Doubts and deviations from the perceived group consensus are not expressed.
7. Illusion of unanimity – The majority view and judgments are assumed to be unanimous.
8. Self-appointed ‘mindguards’ – Members protect the group and the leader from information that is problematic or contradictory to the group’s cohesiveness, view, and/or decisions.

When the above symptoms exist in a group that is trying to make a decision, there is a reasonable chance that groupthink will happen, although it is not necessarily so. Groupthink occurs when groups are highly cohesive and when they are under considerable pressure to make a quality decision. When pressures for unanimity seem overwhelming, members are less motivated to realistically appraise the alternative courses of action available to them. These group pressures lead to carelessness and irrational thinking since groups experiencing groupthink fail to consider all alternatives and seek to maintain unanimity. Decisions shaped by groupthink have low probability of achieving successful outcomes.

Groupthink can be a powerful motivator as well as inhibitor. The motivating aspect happens when because of groupthink; employees feel bonding with their peers and colleagues and hence ensure that they give their best to the job. The inhibitor works when employees feel that their individual creativity and brilliance are being sacrificed at the altar of conformity. Hence, the leadership as well as the HRD function has their task cut out to ensure that group behavior does more good than harm. There is a need for a nuanced and balanced approach towards group behavior to leverage the individual creativity and at the same time not sacrifice organizational cohesiveness and coherence.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In this chapter, an attempt has been made to review the existing literature on the types of Social Influence. In depth discussion of various researches is done to enhance our insights on the topic.

Influence

Influence is defined as the capacity to have an effect on the character, development, or behavior of someone or something, or the effect itself.

Influence can be defined as two types:

1. Majority Influence
2. Minority Influence

Conformity / Majority Influence

Conformity is a type of social influence defined as a change in belief or behavior in response to real or imagined social pressure. It is also known as majority influence.

Types of Conformity

- Compliance

This refers to instances where a person may agree in public with a group of people but the person actually privately disagrees with the group's viewpoint or behavior. The individual changes their views, but it is a temporary change. For example a person may laugh at a joke

because their group of friends find it funny but deep down the person does not find the joke funny.

- Internalization

Publicly changing behavior to fit in with the group while also agreeing with them privately. An internal (private) and external (public) change of behavior. This is the deepest level of conformity where the beliefs of the group become part of the individual's own belief system.

An example of internalization is if someone lived with a vegetarian at university and then decides to also become one too because they agree with their friends viewpoint / someone converting religions would also be a good example.

- Identification

Identification occurs when someone conforms to the demands of a given social role in society. For example, a policeman, teacher or politician. This type of conformity extends over several aspects of external behavior. However, internal personal opinion remains same.

Minority Influence

Minority influence occurs when a small group (minority) influences the opinion of a much larger group (majority). This can happen when the minority behaves in the following ways.

Types of Minority Influence

- Consistency

Moscovici stated that being consistent and unchanging in a view is more likely to influence the majority than if a minority is inconsistent and changes their mind.

A distinction can be made between two forms of consistency:

- (a) Diachronic Consistency – i.e. consistency over time – the majority sticks to its guns, doesn't modify its views.

(b) Synchronic Consistency – i.e. consistency between its members – all members agree and back each other up.

Consistency may be important because:

1. Confronted with a consistent opposition, members of the majority will sit up, take notice, and rethink their position (i.e. the minority focuses attention on itself).
2. A consistent minority disrupts established norms and creates uncertainty, doubt and conflict. This can lead to the majority taking the minority view seriously. The majority will therefore be more likely to question their own views.

Moscovici conducted an experiment in which female participants were shown 36 blue slides of different intensity and asked to report the colors. There were two confederates (the minority) and four participants (the majority).

In the first part of the experiment the two confederates answered green for each of the 36 slides. They were totally consistent in their responses. In the second part of the experiment they answered green 24 times and blue 12 times. In this case they were inconsistent in their answers. A control group was also used consisting of participants only – no confederates.

When the confederates were consistent in their answers about 8% of participants said the slides were green. When the confederates answered inconsistently about 1% of participants said the slides were green.

- Commitment

When the majority is confronted with someone with self-confidence and dedication to take a popular stand and refuses to back down, they may assume that he or she has a point.

- Flexibility

A number of researchers have questioned whether consistency alone is sufficient for a minority to influence a majority. They argue that the key is how the majority interprets consistency. If the consistent minorities are seen as inflexible, rigid, uncompromising and dogmatic, they will be unlikely to change the views of the majority. However, if they appear

flexible and compromising, they are likely to be seen as less extreme, as more moderate, cooperative and reasonable. As a result, they will have a better chance of changing majority views.

Some researchers have gone further and suggested that it is not just the appearance of flexibility and compromise which is important but actual flexibility and compromise. This possibility was investigated by Nemeth. Their experiment was based on a mock jury in which groups of three participants and one confederate had to decide on the amount of compensation to be given to the victim of a ski-lift accident. When the consistent minority (the confederate) argued for a very low amount and refused to change his position, he had no effect on the majority. However, when he compromised and moved some way towards the majority position, the majority also compromised and changed their view.

This experiment questions the importance of consistency. The minority position changed, it was not consistent, and it was this change that apparently resulted in minority influence.

- Social Change

Social change occurs when a whole society adopts a new belief or behaviour which then becomes widely accepted as the 'norm'. Social influence processes involved in social change include minority influence, internal locus of control and disobedience to authority.

Social change is usually a result of minority influence. This is when a small group of people (the minority) manage to persuade the majority to adopt their point of view.

This also links to independent behavior, because the minority resists pressures to conform and/or obey. Usually the minority have an internal locus of control.

Moscovici found that **consistency** is the most important factor in deciding whether the minority are influential or not. This means that the minority must be clear on what they are asking for and not change their minds, or disagree amongst themselves. This creates uncertainty amongst the majority.

It has been found that once the minority begins to persuade people round to their way of thinking, a **snowball effect** begins to happen. This means that more and more people adopt the minority opinion, until gradually the minority becomes the majority. At this point, the

people who have not changed their opinion are the minority, and they will often conform to the majority view as a result of group pressures.

The majority opinion then becomes law, and people have to obey this law. Once this happens, the minority opinion has become the dominant position in society, and people do often not even remember where the opinion originated from. This is a process known as **crypto amnesia**.

Some experiments of Majority Influence, which can explain how thoughts, feelings and behaviors are influenced by the presence of others, are as follows:

- Asch's conformity study
- Stanford prison experiment

ASCH'S CONFORMITY STUDY

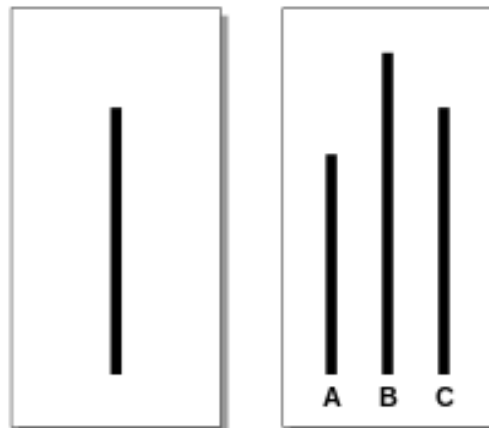
Solomon Eliot Asch (September 14, 1907 – February 20, 1996) was a Polish gestalt psychologist and pioneer in psychology in the United States. He created seminal pieces of work in impression formation, prestige suggestion, conformity, and many other topics in social psychology. He is most well known for his conformity experiments, in which he demonstrated the influence of group pressure on opinions.

Solomon Asch set out to study social influences and how social forces affect a person's opinions and attitudes when he began his conformity study in the 1950's (Hock, 2005). After studying the works of Jean Martin Charcot, and subsequent psychologists, Asch noted that participants in these past studies often changed their differing opinions to those of the majorities, when confronted with opposing views (Asch, 1955). The conformity study that he subsequently designed tests whether or not one can change someone's judgment of a situation without changing their knowledge or assumptions about the situation (Asch, 1955).

Methodology

Asch gathered seven to nine male college students for what he claimed was an experiment in visual perception (Asch, 1955). All were confederates but one, and when he entered the room, the others were already seated in a row. After taking his seat, the study began. The experimenter revealed two large white cards: one with a single line (the standard line) and one with three lines of differing lengths (the comparison lines). One of the three lines was the same size as the standard line, and the other two were of varying differences: from three quarters of an inch longer or shorter to one inch and three quarters longer or shorter.

Participants were asked to verbally announce which of the three comparison lines was equal to the standard line. On the first two trials, the group unanimously answered correctly, but on the third trial, the confederates all gave the wrong answer. Each study had 18 trials, 12 of which the confederates gave unanimous incorrect answers. They gave correct answers occasionally so that the participant did not suspect collusion.



One of the pairs of cards used in the experiment.

The card on the left has the reference line and the one on the right shows the three comparison lines.

Src: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Asch_experiment.svg

Results

Asch tested 123 different young men from three different institutions of higher learning. He found that when alone (the control group) participants made mistakes less than 1% of the time, but in the group situation described in methodology, participants made errors in line judgment 36.8% of the time. About one fourth of participants never submitted to the majority, whereas some individuals conformed almost every single time. Every participant that conformed to the majority underestimated the frequency of their conformity when interviewed later.

Possible Explanations

Participants were interviewed at the end of the study. Explanations given for participants' nonconformity included: confidence in one's own judgment or the obligation to stick to their answers. Conformists gave explanations such as: "I am wrong, they are right," "not to spoil your results," or the idea that something was wrong with them for seeing the answer differently, so they wished to hide this. Even those who conformed believed that, perhaps, the group members were simply "sheep" following the first to give an answer or that the members giving a wrong answer were seeing an optical illusion, yet they responded incorrectly with the majority anyway.

Variations on Size, Unanimity, and Accuracy

After completing the initial study, Asch conducted additional research to see if the size or unanimity of the majority was more important in influencing conformity.

One variation included only one confederate giving an incorrect answer and the participant, and this did nearly nothing to change the participants' answers, the participants answered independently in almost all of the trials. However, when there were two people giving incorrect answers along with the subject, subjects gave an incorrect answer 13.6% of the time. With three confederates answering incorrectly, participants gave erroneous answers 31.8% of the time. However, after any increase after three confederates did not result in a substantial increase in conformity; he found that size only had an effect up to a certain point.

When participants had a dissenting partner, their incorrect answers decreased to one fourth of the incorrect answers seen when the majority was unanimous. Then, the study was changed so that the partner joined the majority after six trials, which resulted in the subject immediately increasing incorrect answers.

Another variation on the partner condition occurred when the partner left the entire study after six trials. This way, the participant would not feel "deserted" by his partner when the partner switched to the other side. So, when the partner simply left the trial (with the excuse at the beginning that he had somewhere to be), errors increased, but not as much as when the partner switched to the majority.

Another test of unanimity occurred when the confederates started out on the first trial giving unanimous answers, and slowly broke away so that by the sixth trial the participant was the only one in the minority. The participant typically stayed true to his answers up until the point where he was completely alone and then conformity increased greatly.

Asch also manipulated the degree to which the majority was wrong. He tried to reach a point where the error was so blatantly obvious that the subject would certainly choose the correct answer despite the majority. However, when the difference between the correct line and the line chosen by the incorrect majority was as much as seven inches, some participants still went with the majority.

Impact

Asch's research paved the way for many additional studies on conformity. Newer studies have shown that attraction and commitment to the group also increases conformity. Other studies have also explored the impact of shame, age, sex, cultural influences, information availability, social norms, and personal privacy among others on conformity.

Criticisms

Although Asch's results have been upheld by many other studies, a common criticism is that it is difficult to generalize his results to real world situations. Critics believe that something as trivial as judging the length of a line in a laboratory does not relate to conformity on important real life issues. Another criticism is that participant's may be conforming to the expectations of the experimenter, not the group.

Based on Perrin & Spencer's results, as well as their own results that showed no conformity when the test stimuli were more ambiguous, Lionel G. Standing and Marie-France Lalancette argue that Asch's results were merely a phenomenon rather than a stable characteristic of human behavior (Standing & Lalancette, 1990).

Conformity to Social Rules

Social roles are the part people play as members of a social group (e.g. student, teacher, policeman etc.). There is considerable pressure to conform to the expectations of a social role. Conforming to a social role is called identification.

STANFORD PRISON EXPERIMENT

If you put good apples into a bad situation, you'll get bad apples."

- Philip George Zimbardo

Philip George Zimbardo (born March 23, 1933) is a psychologist and a professor emeritus at Stanford University. He became known for his 1971 Stanford prison experiment and has since authored various introductory psychology books, textbooks for college students, and other notable works, including *The Lucifer Effect*, *The Time Paradox* and *The Time Cure*. He is also the founder and president of the Heroic Imagination Project.^[2]

Zimbardo wanted to investigate how readily people would conform to the social roles of guard and prisoner in a role-playing exercise that simulated prison life.

Procedure

To study the roles people play in prison situations, Zimbardo converted a basement of the Stanford University psychology building into a mock prison. He advertised for students to play the roles of prisoners and guards for a fortnight. Participants were randomly assigned to either the role of prisoner or guard in a simulated prison environment.

Prisoners were issued a uniform, and referred to by their number only. Guards were issued a khaki uniform, together with whistles, handcuffs and dark glasses, to make eye contact with prisoners impossible. The guards worked shifts of eight hours each (the other guards remained on call). No physical violence was permitted.

Zimbardo observed the behavior of the prisoners and guards (as a researcher), and also acted as prison warden.

Findings

Within a very short time both guards and prisoners were settling into their new roles, with the guards adopting theirs quickly and easily. Within hours of beginning the experiment some guards began to harass prisoners. They behaved in a brutal and sadistic manner, apparently enjoying it. Other guards joined in, and other prisoners were also tormented.

The prisoners soon adopted prisoner-like behavior too. They talked about prison issues a great deal of the time. They 'told tales' on each other to the guards. They started taking the prison rules very seriously, and some even began siding with the guards against prisoners who did not obey the rules.

As the prisoners became more submissive, the guards became more aggressive and assertive. They demanded ever greater obedience from the prisoners. The prisoners were dependent on the guards for everything so tried to find ways to please the guards, such as telling tales on fellow prisoners.

Evaluation of Zimbardo's Study

- Demand characteristics could explain the findings of the study. Most of the guards later claimed they were simply acting. Because the guards and prisoners were playing a role their behavior may not be influenced by the same factors which affect behavior in real life. This means the study's findings cannot be reasonably generalized to real life, such as prison settings. The study has low ecological validity.
- The study may also lack population validity as the sample comprised US male students. The study's findings cannot be applied to female prisons or those from other countries. For example, America is an individualist culture (where people are generally less conforming) and the results may be different in collectivist cultures (such as Asian countries).

- Strength of the study is that it has altered the way US prisons are run. For example, juveniles accused of federal crimes are no longer housed before trial with adult prisoners (due to the risk of violence against them).
- The study has received many ethical criticisms, including lack of fully informed consent by participants as Zimbardo himself did not know what would happen in the experiment (it was unpredictable). Also, the prisoners did not consent to being 'arrested' at home.
- Also, participants playing the role of prisoners were not protected from psychological harm, experiencing incidents of humiliation and distress. For example, one prisoner had to be released after 36 hours because of uncontrollable bursts of screaming, crying and anger. However, in Zimbardo's defence the emotional distress experienced by the prisoners could not have been predicted from the outset. In addition Zimbardo did conduct debriefing sessions for several years afterwards and concluded they were no lasting negative effects.
- Another strength of the study is that the harmful treatment of participant led to the formal recognition of ethical guidelines. Studies must now gain ethical approval before they are conducted. An ethics committee reviews whether the potential benefits of the research are justifiable in the light of possible risk of physical or psychological harm. They may request researchers make changes to the studies design or procedure, or in extreme cases deny approval of the study altogether.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND EXPERIMENTS

This chapter encompasses of the analysis of the experiments, Research methodology and findings.

Research methodology

Experiments were being performed which contains descriptive and qualitative questions.

Objective of the study

- To examine the interpretations of a well-known investigation in social psychology, the set of studies by Solomon Asch of the effects of a unanimous majority upon the independence and conformity of individuals.
- To determine how and at what extent a group behavior influences an individual's decision making power and his/her productivity in an organization.

Scope of the Study

The study focuses on the changes in behavior of person in social environment due to presence of other people. Various Social Psychology experiments have been carried out on a group of students from various institutions to judge the changes in their behavior. The research will help organizations to know up to what extent and how groupthink and conformity can influence an individual's decision making power.

Implications of the study

The research will provide the opportunity to explore the field of Human Resources and Social Psychology. The research will help in analyzing the results of various experiments based on

Solomon Asch Experiment and will determine whether people would conform to the majority in situations where an answer was obvious and how their decision making power gets affect.

Hypothesis used

1. Human behavior is influenced even by the society. The basic level of kindness exhibited by a person can be completely turned off by making the individual aware of the risks he/she can encounter in life as an outcome of being generous. People learn from incidences around them and try to avoid similar situations every time.
2. Individuals tend to be stable in their decision even when they are provided with a significant amount of false data, proving the Solomon Asch's Experiment, which proves that an individual tends to follow the decision of the group instead of trusting their own views, wrong.

DESIGNING THE EXPERIMENTS:

EXPERIMENT 1

In order to validate the first hypothesis I conducted a survey using the following questionnaire:

Tell us what you feel

Suppose there is an abandoned child in a school uniform sitting near the road and crying/yelling "HELP". How will you respond to the child?

Will you be kind enough to go and take it to the address where the kid asks you to take it?

Read the following cases:

CASE 1:

I am not sure when did this happen, but it is best to be careful and safety comes first. She was just discharged from the hospital...Today after office hours; I heard from my sister-in-law that there is a new way to rape women. It happened to one of our good friends. Feeling pity for the child, she went and asked what happened. The child said, "I am lost. Can you take me home please?" Then the child gave her a slip and told the girl where the address is. And the girl, being an average kind person, didn't suspect anything and took the child there. And there when they reached the "child's home", she pressed the door bell, yet she was shocked as it the bell was wired with high voltage, and fainted.

The next day when she woke up, she found herself in an empty house up in the hills, naked. She has never even got to see the face of the attacker... That's why nowadays crimes are targeted on kind people.

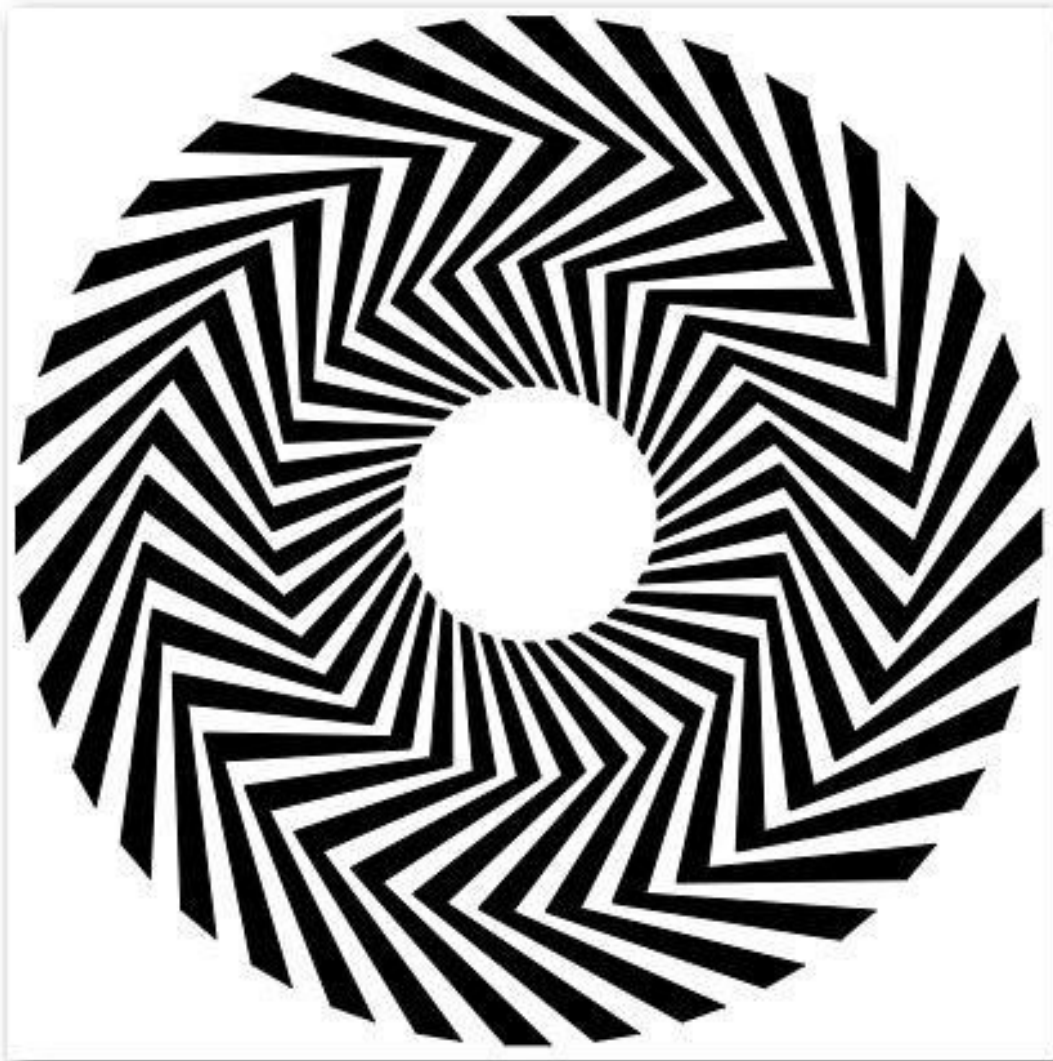
CASE 2:

Ryan and I were just at the Kitsap mall. We walked out to our car and Ryan noticed there was a baby crying in this car with no adult. So we pulled over to it and Ryan got out looking and finding out the window was rolled down and it was a recording. There was another car parked several spots down with blacked out windows. These are the kind of set ups psychopath killers do to abduct you.

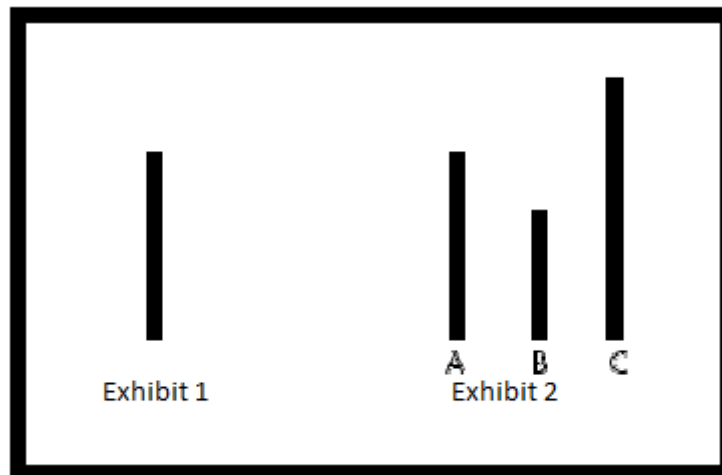
Q: Now if you encounter an abandoned child in a school uniform sitting near the road and crying/yelling "HELP". Will you be kind enough to go and take it to the address where the kid asks you to take it? If not how will you respond to the child?

EXPERIMENT 2

The following pattern was used to evaluate the second hypothesis. The subject was asked to count the number of lines in a single circle after providing a hint that a significant group of people answered it to be 35. (Note: The correct number of lines= 36).



EXPERIMENT 3



A group of 8-10 college students is selected to participate in “visual perception” experiment.

- Only 1 person is real subject.
- Others were actors asked to give wrong answer 2/3rds of the time
- Answers given aloud; subject is 2nd from last to answer always.
- 18 trials (out of which the actors give wrong answer 12 times)

All the participants are asked; one at a time, to choose which of the three lines on the right card matches the length of the line on the left card. The task is repeated several times with different cards. On some occasions the other "subjects" unanimously choose the wrong line. It is clear to you that they are wrong, but they have all given the same answer.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION & FINDINGS

EXPERIMENT-I

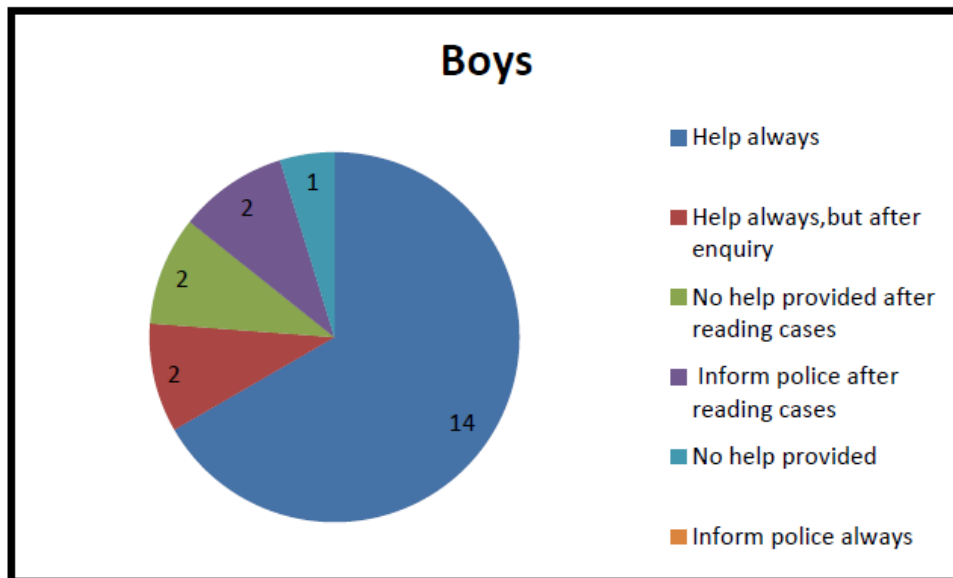


Fig 4.1

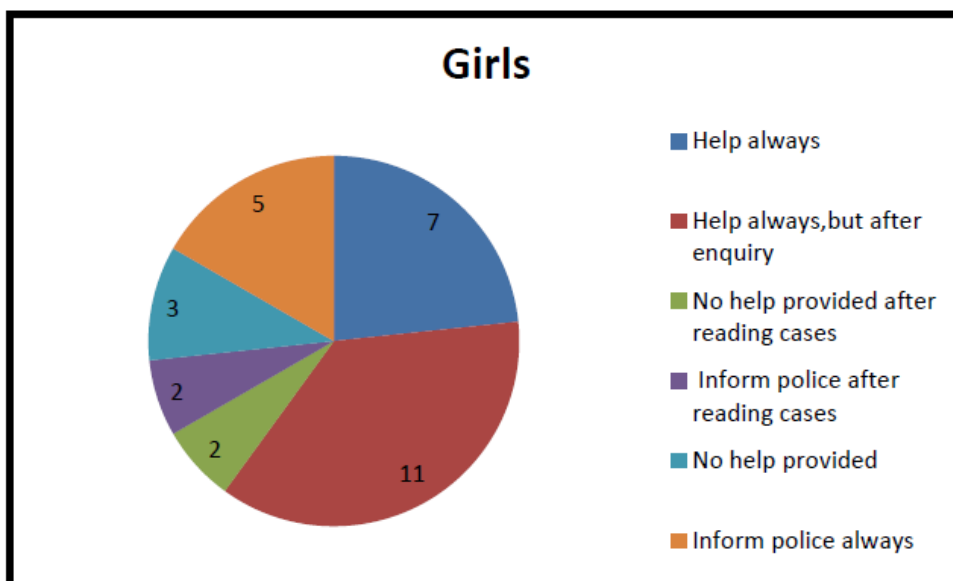


Fig4.2

I conducted a survey of 51 people. A range of behaviors was observed which includes

Helping always

Helping always, but after enquiry

No help provided after reading cases

Inform police always

Inform police after reading cases

No help provided

The results are given in Fig4.1 & fig4.2. In the sample size of 21 boys and 30 girls, following is the observed behavior:

- 14(66.66%) boys responded that they will always help, whereas one refuse to provide any help and 2(9.5%) boys refuse to help after reading the above mentioned case in Experiment 1.
- 11(36.66%) girls responded that they will always help, whereas 3(10%) girls refuse to provide any help and 2(6.66%) girls refuse to help after reading the above mentioned case in Experiment 1.

According to the hypothesis, Human behavior is influenced even by the society. The basic level of kindness exhibited by a person can be completely turned off by making the individual aware of the risks he/she can encounter in life as an outcome of being generous. People learn from incidences around them and try to avoid similar situations every time. But the study shows varying results and an analysis of these different behaviors are shown below:

1. “Helping” behavior:

People feel that the probability of encountering the event mentioned in the case study is rare. For these people, humanity is more important. Risking their own life is considered as “pride” and “worthy-living for”. They tend to help always. There are people who tend to help, but after enquiry. They have background knowledge on such crimes. So they tend to be more cautious. Informing police is also a way of helping without being in a danger zone.

2. “No help”

Some people refuse to help after reading the crime cases. They value their own life more than generosity. They learn from their experience. Refusing help in both cases implies, either being selfish or being more careful.

Interesting observations:

- Most of the boys tend to help than girls. Boys feel they have “nothing to lose” (may be a false notion). It could also be due to a feeling of responsibility/strength.
- Humanity still exists at least in opinions.

EXPERIMENT 2

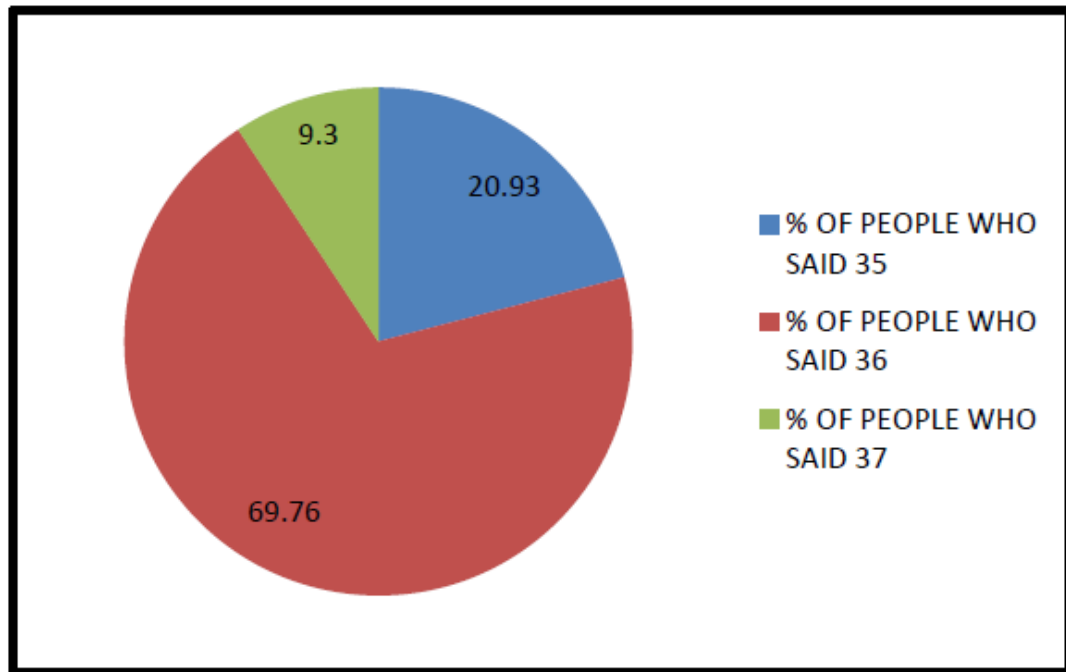


FIG 4.3

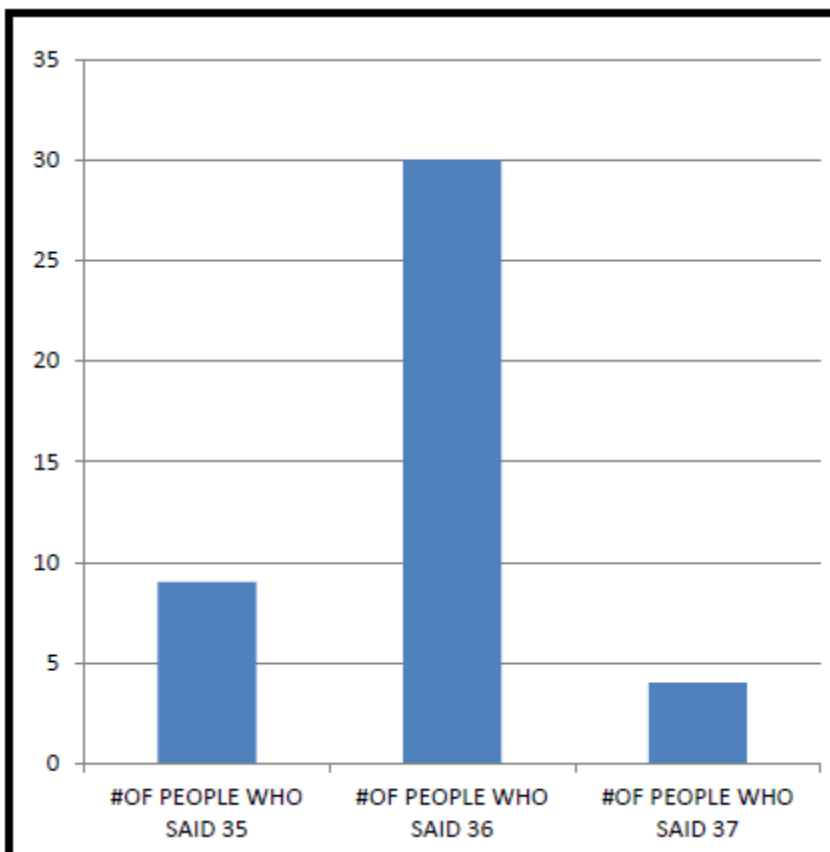


FIG 4.4

The results are given in Fig4.3 & fig4.4. In the sample size of 43, 9 people counted the number of lines as 35(20.93%), 30 people counted it as 36(69.76%) whereas 4 people counted as 37(9.3%).

According to the hypothesis, individuals tend to be stable in their decision even when they are provided with a significant amount of false data. The result supports this hypothesis.

The result that a large proportion (69.76%) of people counted the number of lines as 36 can be interpreted as below:

- This could be because the chosen subjects are students. They are in an environment where they are trained to question/analyze any provided data. They are confident to stand against the bias (false data) provided by the experimenter.
- Some people ignored the false data.

The result that 20.93% of the people counted the number of lines to be 35 can be interpreted as below:

- The subjects were easily biased by the false data.
- Due to human error (counting mistakes).
- The subjects with least interest answered without counting properly.

The result that 9.3% of the people counted the number of lines to be 37 can be interpreted as below:

- Due to human error (counting mistakes).
- Few subjects preferred being “exceptions”.

Interesting observations:

- Subjects were confused and counted the pattern more than 3 times!
- Some of them counted both white and black lines despite of white background.
- Different number of lines was counted in inner and outer rings of the pattern even if they were all connected.

EXPERIMENT 3

- 25% were unaffected by hearing wrong answers
75% gave wrong answer at least once
- 30% gave wrong answers in at least 50% of trials in which peers gave wrong answers.
- Subsequent experiment showed that conformity was less when asked to write down right answer.

Factors

- Contextual

Group Size- conformity increases with group size up to about 5.

Social Support – Just need one ally to stand ground.

- Individual

Status- higher status individuals conform less.

Gender – Women conform more than men in face to face groups.

Reasons for Conformity

- Need for social respect and acceptance as groups will reject deviants.
- Using others as data points and triangulating, evolutionary advantage in making use of group wisdom.
- Norms of behavior develop that affect how we think, feel and act.

RESULT

The above research results prove that the hypothesis, that the human behavior is influenced by the society and an individual tends to follow the decision of the group instead of trusting their own views, is true.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Organization itself is defined as group of people coming together to achieve common objectives. A group is not just a collection of people. It is considered as a set of two and more interacting individuals to achieve certain goals and meet certain needs. These groups work in a systematic manner (Structure, hierarchy) and use the resources of the organization to attain their goals.

A group has certain common objectives and goals and members are bound together with certain values and culture.

Importance of Group:

- The group can influence the thinking of its members. The members are always influenced by the interactions of other members in the group.
- The group can give the effect of synergy, that is, if the group consists of positive thinkers then its output is more than the double every time.
- Group dynamism can give job satisfaction to the members.
- The group can also bring team spirit among the members.
- Even the attitude, perceptions, and ideas of members depend on group dynamism. For example, the negative thinkers can be converted to positive thinkers with the help of the facilitator.
- If the group works as a cohesive group, the cooperation and convergence can result in maximization of productivity.
- Lastly, group dynamism can reduce the labor unrest and labor turnover due to emotional attachment among the group members.

But along with all these advantages, a group has negative aspects too, which is called as Groupthink. It is one of the greatest inhibitors of effective group decision. Groupthink is a psychological phenomenon that occurs within a group of people in which the desire for harmony or conformity results in an irrational or dysfunctional decision-making outcome.

By isolating themselves from outside influences and actively suppressing dissenting viewpoints in the interest of minimizing conflict, group members reach a consensus decision without critical evaluation of alternative viewpoints.

Loyalty to the group requires individuals to avoid raising controversial issues or alternative solutions, and there is a loss of individual creativity, uniqueness, and independent thinking.

The dysfunctional group dynamics of the in-group produces an illusion of invulnerability (an inflated certainty that the right decision has been made).

As proven by Asch Solomon Conformity test and the above research suggests that an individual can get influenced easily by society or a group because of following reasons:

- To gain social approval and acceptance from members of a group.
- To avoid being criticized.
- To avoid being ignored.
- To behave in a manner that is perceived to be right or correct.
- To avoid feeling inferior to others.

But one should not get influenced or follow the majority. Some suggestive measures to avoid Groupthink are as follows:

1. Stop Being on Auto-Pilot

When we don't stop and take the time to consider our options, we go through the motions as if we're on auto-pilot. Instead of conducting our own research, we'll look around at what others are doing and simply copy what we see. Once you are aware of the natural tendency to go with the "social default," you can begin making more conscious decisions for yourself.

2. Make a Conscious Effort to Form Your Own Opinion

Rather than simply saying, "I'll have what he's having," develop your own opinion. Researchers discovered that when people knew they would need to justify their choices, they were much less likely to blindly mimic other people. Rather than adopt the herd mentality, educate yourself about your choices so you can make a well-informed decision.

3. Take Time to Make Decisions

Participants in the study were more likely to copy other people when they felt pressure to hurry. Take time to make decisions by asking questions and thinking about your options – even if that means you risk looking “stupid” or holding up the line. Just because everyone else seems to be making a quick decision doesn’t mean they know best.

4. Be Aware of Ways in Which Stress Affects Your Decision Making

When participants were thinking about something else – such as numbers they were asked to memorize – they were much more likely to mimic other people. If you’re stressed about something going on in your personal life, or you’re distracted by something another problem that’s weighing on your mind, you’re at greater risk of being a copycat. Recognize that risk, and when possible, put off decision making until you can concentrate on the task at hand.

5. Be Willing to Stand Out

The study shows that we’re more likely to copy other people when we lack social acceptance. In an attempt to fit in with the crowd, we go along with the consensus. But, successful people don’t make it to the front of the pack by sticking with the crowd . Instead, they strive to stand out and dare to do things differently.

Don’t allow anyone else to tell you what you should think, feel, or do. Instead, be conscious of how other people are likely to influence your choices. Take time to evaluate whether or not the choices you’re making are really *your* choices. Remember, it’s better to be known as a lone wolf than a copycat

CHAPTER 6

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