

Social Psychology: Group Influence

(p.656-661- Myers 6th Edition)



How do groups affect our behaviour? To find out, social psychologists study the various influences that operate in the simplest of groups- one person in the presence of another- and those that operate in more complex groups- such as families, teams and committees. Many times social influences can be so subtle that we do not even notice them. Or, if we do notice them, we think that we are immune. (ie: "Yes TV affects others, but not me....")

A) Individual Behaviour in the Presence of Others:

- Appropriately, social psychologist's first experiments focused on the simplest of all questions about social behaviour: How are we influenced by the mere presence of others- by people watching us or joining us in various activities?

- 1) Social Facilitation:** improved performance of tasks in the presence of others; occurs with simple or well-learned tasks that are difficult or not yet mastered.
- 2) Social Loafing:** the tendency for people in a group to exert less effort when pooling their efforts towards attaining a common goal than when individually accountable.
- 3) Deindividuation:** the loss of self-awareness and self-restraint occurring in group situations that foster arousal and anonymity.

B) Effects of Group Interaction (p.658)

- 1) Group Polarization:** the enhancement of a group's prevailing attitudes through discussion within the group
- 2) Group Think:** the mode of thinking that occurs when the desire for harmony in a decision-making group overrides a realistic appraisal of alternatives.

C) The Power of Individuals (p.660)

1) Self-Fulfilling Prophecies: occurs when one person's belief about others leads one to act in a way that induce the others to appear to confirm the belief.

2) Minority Influence: the power of a minority to sway the majority. Example: Gandhi, or the idea of Communism

?

QUESTIONS:

?

Please read/review pages 649-661 and then answer the following questions on a SEPARATE piece of paper.

1. Name two examples of social influence that you have experienced during the past week. (remembering that influence may be informational)
2. Explain how the conformity and obedience studies can help us understand our susceptibility to social influence.
3. Describe conditions in which the presence of others is likely to result in social facilitation, social loafing, or Deindividuation.
4. Discuss how group interaction can facilitate group polarization and groupthink.
5. Identify the characteristic common to minority positions that sway majorities.

Due at the beginning of next class.