Normative and Informational Influence When Decision-Making in Groups

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Agenda

- Definitions and Concepts
- Background
- Hypothesis
- Operational Definitions in Methodology
- Methods
- Results
- Discussion
- References
Conformity is a change in behavior or belief as the result of real or imagined group pressure (Myers, 2009).

“Fusion of identity” is when a person becomes fused within a group, their personal and social identities become “functionally equivalent” (Swann, et. al., 2009).
• **Normative Influence** is conformity based on one's desire to fulfill others' expectations and gain acceptance (Myers, 2009).

• **Informational influence** is conformity under acceptance of evidence about reality which has been provided by others (Myers, 2009).
Background

• Holocaust, Abu Ghraib, Kamikaze pilots

  Nazi soldier: “I was afraid that Ledieritz and others would think I was a coward,” (Myers, 2008).

• Swann et.al. Research in “Fusion of Identity”

  Findings: Fused members willing to fight or die (2009).
Background

- 1950's: Solomon Asch Line Judgment Studies:
  37% Conformity to incorrect answers (Myers, 2008).
  75% Participants at least once (New Charter University, 2012).

- 1996: Abrams Line Study:
  32% Conformity to incorrect answers
  77% Participants at least once
  Condition of out-group = conformity below normal
  (Abrams, et.al.,1996)
Background

• Conformity on the Decline?

Meta-Analysis using the line judgment studies suggests that conformity in the U.S. may be declining since the 1950's (Bond & Smith, 1996).

• Our Study:

Normative and Informational Influence in naturalistic, observational setting without pressure of others to answer questions correctly.
Hypothesis

When a subject arises as a “leader” of a group, the remaining members of the group will conform to the decision, whether in accepting or denying an offering, and in most instances the rest of the group will conform.
Operational Definitions in Methodology

- **Group**: 2 or more subjects. Group sizes in data were 2-6 subjects

- **“Leader”**: First subject to initiate decision to accept or deny the offering

- **Conformity**: Every member of the group providing same response as the leader (100%)
Participants:

- 88 groups total, 65 groups with leader used
- Adults, estimated ages over 21
- Many participants couples
Methods

Procedure:

- Downtown San Diego
- Handed out tickets to popular comedy club
- Data collected in 3 week period, usually twice a week on weekend evenings
- Recorded if there was a leader and gender, if leader accepted or denied offering, and how many subjects subsequently accepted or denied
Results

Out of 65 Groups of subjects:

- 52 Groups Conformed (80% Conformity rate)
- 13 Groups did not conform (20% non-conformity rate)

Mean \( (m = 1.2) \), standard deviation \( (SD = 0.40) \)

Genders of the leaders:

- 73.8% of the leaders in the groups were male
- 26.2% were female.

Mean \( (m = 1.26) \), standard deviation \( (SD = 0.44) \)
Chi Square Test:

A chi-square test of goodness-of-fit was performed to determine whether people would conform to a group’s leader’s decision.

The test indicated a significant difference,

$$X^2 (2, N = 65) = 23.4, p < .0052$$

Groups Conformed (80% Conformity rate)
Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conformity</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>52</td>
<td>80.0</td>
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<td>80.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>no</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>20.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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</table>

Histogram

Mean = 1.20
Std. Dev. = .403
N = 65
## Results

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<th>gender</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
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<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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</table>

**Histogram**

- Mean = 1.26
- Std. Dev. = .443
- N = 65
Discussion

- Higher conformity rates than Asch study: naturalistic setting, no control of variances, no correct or incorrect responses, sample size small

- Future studies: Test varying age groups, geographical locations, collectivist vs. individualist cultures, larger sample sizes, and gender in relation to individuals who arise as leaders
http://www.radford.edu/~jaspelme/_private/gradsoc_articles/individualism_collectivism/


https://new.edu/resources/the-basics-of-power--2#ftn.fwk-bauer-fn13_003

http://homepage.psy.utexas.edu/Homepage/Faculty/Swann/docu/fusion09.pdf

