

Peer Pressure

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Peer pressure refers to the influence exerted by a peer group in encouraging a person to change his or her attitudes, values, or behavior in order to conform to group norms. Social groups affected include membership groups, when the individual is "formally" a member (for example, political party, trade union), or a social clique. A person affected by peer pressure may or may not want to belong to these groups. They may also recognize dissociative groups with which they would not wish to associate, and thus they behave adversely concerning that group's behaviors.

In young people, youth peer pressure is considered as one of the most frequently referred to forms of peer pressure. It is particularly common because most youth spend large amounts of time in fixed groups (schools and subgroups within them) regardless of their opinion of those groups. In addition to this, they may lack the maturity to handle pressure from 'friends'. Also, young people are more willing to behave negatively towards those who are not members of their own peer groups. However, youth peer pressure can also have positive effects. For example, if one is involved with a group of people that are ambitious and working to succeed, one might feel pressured to follow suit to avoid feeling excluded from the group. Sometimes the child is pressuring themselves. They feel like they need to be in this group to be "cool" or "in." Therefore, the youth would be pressured into improving themselves, bettering them in the long run. This is most commonly seen in youths that are active in sports or other extracurricular activities where conformity with one's peer group is strongest.

Risk behavior

While socially accepted children fare the best in high school due to having the most class resources, the most opportunities and the most positive experiences, research shows that being in the popular crowd may also be a risk factor for mild turtles

to moderate deviant behavior. Popular adolescents are the most socialized into their peer groups and thus are vulnerable to peer pressures, such as behaviors usually reserved for those of a greater maturity and understanding, such as the use of drugs. Adolescence is a time of experimentation with new identities and experiences. The culture of high school often has its own social norms that are different from the outside culture. Some of these norms may not be especially positive or beneficial. Socially accepted kids are often accepted for the sheer fact that they conform well to the norms of teen culture, good and bad aspects included. Popular adolescents are more strongly associated with their peer groups in which they may together experiment with things like alcohol, cigarettes and drugs. Although there are a few risk factors correlated with popularity, deviant behavior is often only mild to moderate. Regardless, social acceptance provides more overall protective factors than risk factors.

The Third Wave

The Third Wave was an experiment to demonstrate the appeal of fascism undertaken by history teacher Ron Jones with sophomore high school students attending his Contemporary History as part of a study of Nazi Germany. The experiment took place at Cubberley High School in Palo Alto, California, during the first week of April 1967. Jones, unable to explain to his students how the German populace could claim ignorance of the extermination of the Jewish people, decided to show them instead. Jones started a movement called "The Third Wave" and convinced his students that the movement is to eliminate democracy. The fact that democracy emphasizes individuality was considered as a drawback of democracy, and Jones emphasized this main point of the movement in its motto: "Strength through discipline, strength through community, strength through action, strength through pride". The Third Wave experiment is an example of risk behavior in authoritarian and peer pressure situations.

Benign peer pressure

Management

In management, benign peer pressure refers to a technique used to boost team members' motivation, proactiveness and self goal settings. It's one useful tool in leadership. Instead of direct delegation of tasks and results demanding, employees are in this case, induced into a behaviour of self propelled performance and innovation, by comparison feelings towards their peers. There are several ways peer pressure can be induced in a working environment. Examples are: training, team meetings. Training since the team member is in contact with people with comparable roles in other organizations. Team meetings since there will be an implicit comparison between every team member especially if the meeting agenda is the presentation of results and goal status.

School

In school, benign peer pressure refers to the achieving of school discipline and internal self-discipline (inner discipline within each individual) by democratic means. It is adduced that appropriate school learning theory and educational philosophy is decisive in preventing violence, and promoting learning, order, and discipline in schools. Children should be accorded the same human rights and freedoms as adults; they should be granted responsibility for the conduct of their affairs; and they should be full participants in the life of their community. Children of all ages are entitled to participate in all decisions affecting the school, without exception. They have a full and equal vote in deciding expenditures, in hiring and firing all employees (including teachers), and in making and enforcing the rules of the community. Typically, rules are made and business is handled at a weekly School Meeting, where each student, like each staff member, has one vote: freedom on individual rights' matters and peer justice.

Neural mechanisms

Neuroimaging identifies the anterior insula and anterior cingulate as key areas in the brain determining whether people conform in their preferences in regard to its being popular with their peer group.

Explanation

An explanation of how the peer pressure process works, called "the identity shift effect," is introduced by social psychologist, Wendy Treynor, who weaves together Festinger's two seminal social-psychological theories (on dissonance, which addresses internal conflict, and social comparison, which addresses external conflict) into a unified whole. According to Treynor's original "identity shift effect" hypothesis, the peer pressure process works in the following way: One's state of harmony is disrupted when faced with the threat of external conflict (social rejection) for failing to conform to a group standard. Thus, one conforms to the group standard, but as soon as one does, eliminating this external conflict, internal conflict is introduced (because one has violated one's own standards). To rid oneself of this internal conflict (self-rejection), an "identity shift" is undertaken, where one adopts the group's standards as one's own, thereby eliminating internal conflict (in addition to the formerly eliminated external conflict), returning one to a state of harmony. Although the peer pressure process begins and ends with one in a (conflict-less) state of harmony, as a result of conflict and the conflict resolution process, one leaves with a new identity--a new set of internalized standards.