

Social Psychology

Lesson 9: Group Influence

Lecturer: Maria Heidi P. Arconado

Topics

- ☑ Functions of Group
- ☑ How Group Influence Individual Behavior
- ☑ Group Decision-making
- ☑ Causes of Group Conflicts
- ☑ Resolving Group Conflict

Learning Objectives

- ☑ Identify the functions of groups.
- ☑ Explain how group influence individual behavior.
- ☑ Evaluate the psychological and social factors that influence decision-making.
- ☑ Deconstruct the root causes of conflict between different groups.
- ☑ Evaluate the effectiveness of various conflict resolution strategies within groups.



Social Group

- Two or more people who interact, influence each other, and share a common identity.
- Perceive themselves as "us" (not "them")
- They know each other personally and work together in order to achieve a common goal.

Social Aggregate



- A collection of people who are in the same place at the same time, but who otherwise have nothing else in common.

Functions of Groups

1. Companionship
2. Security
3. Social identity
4. Goal achievement

How Group Influence Individual Behavior?

- A. Social Facilitation
- B. Social Loafing
- C. Deindividuation

A. SOCIAL FACILITATION

Original Meaning

The tendency of people to perform simple or well-learned tasks better when others are present.

A. SOCIAL FACILITATION

3 conditions:

- Race alone against clock
- With another cyclist, but not competing
- With another cyclist, in competition

Cyclists performed faster whenever another rider was on the track with them, regardless of whether they were explicitly competing or not.



Fishing Reel Experiment

2 conditions:

- **Alone:** The child turned the reel by themselves with only the researcher watching.
- **With a Peer:** The child was paired with another child, turning their reels side-by-side at the same time (co-acting).

Result: The presence of the other child made them wind the reel much more rapidly.

“The bodily presence of another contestant . . . serves to liberate latent energy”

A. SOCIAL FACILITATION

- Later research found conflicting findings:
 - The presence of others enhances performance
 - The presence of others hinders performance
- A modern reanalysis of Triplett's data revealed that the difference did not reach statistical significance.

A. SOCIAL FACILITATION

Current Meaning

The strengthening of dominant (prevalent, likely) responses in the presence of others.

Robert Zajonc

- Presence of others increases general level of arousal
 - Improved performance for easy, familiar tasks
 - Impaired performance for hard, unfamiliar tasks
- **Arousal** increases tendency to perform behaviors that are most **dominant** (the ones we know best)
 - ** **Dominant response** is the reaction or behavior that is most likely to occur because it is the most "pre-potent," well-learned, or habitual for that person.
 - Experts + Audience = Success
 - Novices + Audience = Failure

Why Are We Aroused in the Presence of Others?

- **Evaluation Apprehension** – occurs when those others are seen as potential evaluators.
- **Distraction conflict theory** – the conflict between paying attention to others and paying attention to the task overloads our cognitive system
- **Mere Presence** – mere presence of others is sufficient to produce social facilitation effects.

B. SOCIAL LOAFING

- Formerly known as Ringelmann Effect
- The tendency of an individual in a group to exert less effort toward attaining a common goal than when tested individually
- Contributes to declines in the productivity of a group

Why it occurs?

Diffusion of Responsibility

- Shared presence = shared accountability.
- Individuals feel less personal pressure to perform when in a crowd.

Free Riders

- The "Parasite Effect"
- People who slack when in group.
- Reap all the benefits while contributing little to nothing.

Sucker Effect

- A self-protective reduction in effort.
- Members match the lowest contributor's pace to avoid being exploited.

The noise produced by six people shouting or clapping “as loud as you can” was less than three times that produced by one person alone (Latané, 1979)



When Social Loafing Occurs

1. When the group is large
2. When it is difficult to evaluate individual contributions to a task
3. When people expect their co-workers to pick up the slack

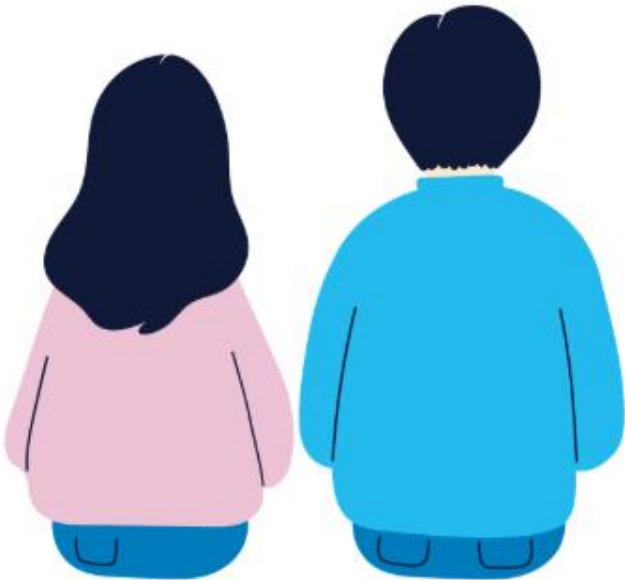
Social Loafing is less when...

1. Task is challenging
2. Other group members are unreliable
3. High effort will bring reward
4. Group members are friends rather than strangers
5. Group members believe that their individual work will be acknowledged by the assessor

Differences:

Collectivist < Individualistic

Women < Men



C. DEINDIVIDUATION

- Coined by Leon Festinger, Albert Pepitone, and Theodore Newcomb (1952)
- The **loss of self-awareness** and self-restraint in group situations that foster arousal and anonymity.
- Explains rioting behaviors.

What Elicits Deindividuation?

A. Group Size

B. Anonymity

A. Group Size

- A group has the power not only to arouse its members but also to render them unidentifiable.
- The bigger the mob, the more its members lose self-awareness and become willing to commit atrocities.

B. Anonymity

- Being anonymous makes one less conscious, more group conscious and more responsive to cues present in the situation, whether negative.
- **Philip Zimbardo** asked New York University women to deliver electric shocks to woman under one of these conditions:
 - ▶ Group A – they were made anonymous through the wearing of oversized laboratory coats and hoods.
 - ▶ Group B – they were made visible though large name tags

Result: Anonymous participants held the shock button 2x longer those wearing visible name tags.

Ed Diener's Halloween Experiment (1976)



- They observed 1,352 Seattle children trick-or-treating on Halloween.
- Children (alone or in groups) were told to take only one candy from an unattended bowl.
- Kids were either left anonymous or asked for their name/address.

Results:

- Children in groups were 2x more likely to steal extra candy than solo kids.
- Kids who shared their names were less than half as likely to steal compared to anonymous kids.
- Anonymous kids in a group stole the most.



**Does becoming
physically
anonymous always
unleash our worst
impulses?**

Experiment: Johnson & Downing (1979)

- Female participants wore nurses' uniforms and decided on electric shock levels.
- Result: When made anonymous, they actually became less aggressive.
- Meta-analysis of 60 deindividuation studies shows that being anonymous makes one **less self-conscious, more group-conscious**, and **more responsive to situational cues**, whether negative or positive (Postmes & Spears, 1998).

Self-awareness



- A self-conscious state in which attention focuses on oneself.
- It makes people more sensitive to their own attitudes and dispositions.
- Deindividuation is less likely when self-awareness is high.
- Alcohol consumption decreases self-awareness and increases deindividuation (Hull et al., 1983).

Group Decision- Making

- A. Group Polarization**
- B. Groupthink**
- C. Minority Influence**

A. Group Polarization

- The tendency for an attitude or belief to become magnified for individual group members after discussing an issue with the group as a whole.
 - **Risky Shift** – a group with an initial risky view tends to reach an even riskier consensus.
 - **Cautious Shift** – an individual adopts a safer approach when deciding within a group than when acting alone.

Cautious shifts are:

- ▶ Rarer than the opposite risky shift
- ▶ Driven by majority

B. Groupthink

- The tendency for a close-knit group to emphasize consensus at the expense of critical thinking and rational decision-making.
 - ▶ Attack on Pearl Harbor
 - ▶ Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961

Conditions that Foster Groupthink:

- ✘ High cohesiveness
- ✘ Isolation from outside influences
- ✘ A strong leader

Symptoms of Groupthink

- ✘ An illusion of invulnerability
- ✘ Unquestioned belief in the group's morality
- ✘ Stereotyped view of opponent
- ✘ Direct pressure on dissenter
- ✘ Illusion of unanimity

C. Minority Influence

- A committed minority viewpoint can change the majority opinion in a group.
- Group members are more likely to be influenced by a minority opinion when the minority holds the opinion firmly.

Causes of Conflict Among Groups

- A. Realistic Group Conflict Theory
- B. Communication Error
- C. Biased Perception
- D. Hostile Attribution Bias

Realistic Group Conflict Theory

- The theory that conflict stems from competition for limited resources such as money, land, power or other resources



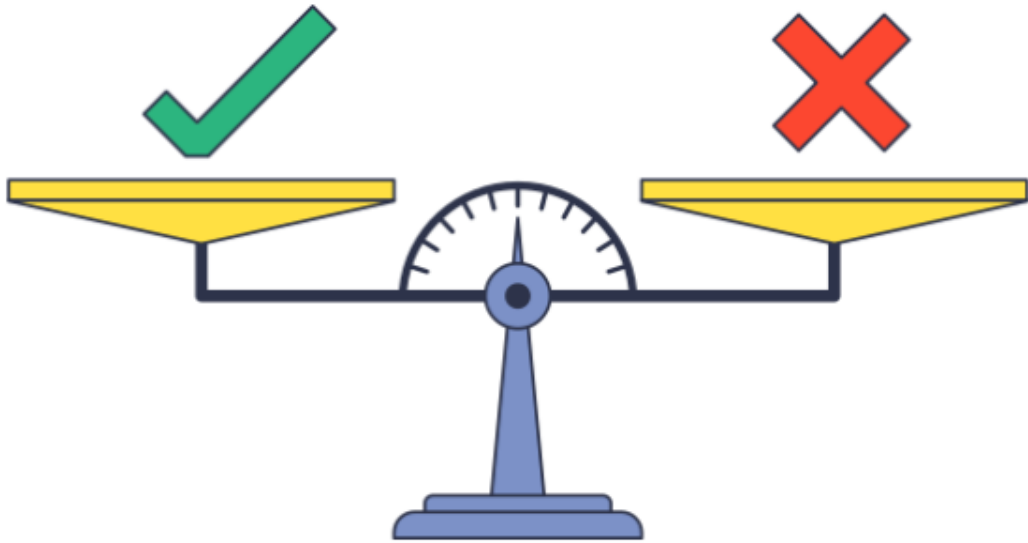
- **Experiment:** Muzafer Sherif's Robber's Cave Experiment
- **Real life example:** Sierra Leone's "blood diamonds"

Communication Error



- The way we communicate with each other often leads to conflict since all of us have different ways of expressing ourselves.

Biased Perception



- The belief that we are justified in our own thoughts and actions but that others are biased in their beliefs and behaviors

Hostile Attribution Bias



- Occurs when people assume that the intentions of another person are hostile.

How to Resolve Group Conflict?

A. Bargaining

B. GRIT

A. Bargaining



- A means of resolving conflict that occurs when two disputing parties come together, either in person or through representatives, to discuss ideas for resolving their disagreement.
- It typically involves each party making offers, counter offers and concessions.

GRIT – Gradual Reduction in Tension

- “Graduated and Reciprocated Initiatives in Tension Reduction”
- A step by step formula for de-escalating a conflict that involves unilateral concessions and quick reciprocation by the opposition.

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Images

- All graphic images were taken from Canva at <https://www.canva.com>