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Analysis of the influence of forced compliance on the individual behavior

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ABSTRACT

The study was based on the theory of cognitive dissonance, theory of expectation to analysis the relationship among forced compliance, cognitive dissonance and conformity intention under the affect of power, then further analysis of the affect of Success Expectations as a moderator in the process of behavior change. The result showed that forced compliance would lead to cognitive dissonance in the organizations; under the high Success Expectations situation, cognitive dissonance leads to individual cognitive change, resulting in conformity intention; in low Success Expectations situation, cognitive dissonance cause the individual to distort real information or selectively interpret inconsistent information, in order to reduce cognitive dissonance, which can't formed conformity intention.

KEYWORDS

Cognitive dissonance; Forced compliance; Success expectations; Conformity intention; Individual behavior.



INTRODUCTION

Behavior and attitude is not always consistent, and in the complex social environment, the individual will be affected by outside forces, but not fully acts in accordance with their own attitudes. Previous studies suggest that attitudes influence behavior, and Festinger's study considered when individual behavior is inconsistent with the original attitude will produce cognitive dissonance, this emotional experience will drive an individual try to reduce or eliminate this incongruous emotional experience, individuals may change their attitude to match with existing behavior^[1]. Based on Festinger's conclusions, this study attempts to explain how does behavior change the attitude? Explain under what scenario, subject will change the behavior due to the original existing attitudes and which behavioral intention will produce after the changing of attitude.

RESEARCH REVIEW

Study of forced compliance, originated from S. Milgram's social psychologist experiment of obedience to authority at Yale University in 1963, the United States, the results show that there is a human instinct to compliance the authority of command. As we all know, the power in the east Asian countries is higher than in most western countries, in this social context, the prevalent phenomenon with using the power to solve management problems is common^[2]. When using the coercive power in an organization, the individual would obey the behavior on the surface in order to obtain rewards or avoid punishment. But deeply down do not agree with this action which is called forced compliance^[3]. As a result of the forced compliance, Festinger think after the forced compliance happened, individual behavior inconsistency with cognitive which will cause cognitive dissonance, in some situations, people will betray their own behavior or attitude standards to comply with existing behavior and accept others' opinions, beliefs, make their own attitudes consistent with others, and ultimately the individual in the heart to believe and accept the views of others^[1,4], in the process of execution the behavior, the individuals show more initiative, formed conformity^[5]. So what will scenario will affect the individual choice after the cognitive dissonance? Victor H. Vroom's research shows that when a person is difficult to predict the result of a number of possible options for choose, will subjectively determine desired outcome of various action and the value of various action, tend to adopt the attitude when can leads to the best results, refusing to adopt attitude will leads to poor results. His behaviors not only affected by the desired results, but also affected by self-efficacy^[6]. success expectations is conclude self-efficacy and outcome^[7], the high success expectations will lead to higher motivation, and thus lead to the generation of behavioral intentions^[8], instead the opposite is also.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

Individual psychological processes in forced compliance Circumstances

Cognitive theory believe that the cognitive gestalt has closed, self-regulatory and the instinct of resistance to different information, so that it is not easy to change attitudes, only when external information cause a large gap which can't be self make up, when it may induce its original cognitive gestalt collapse and possibly accepting information of persuade and responsive to form a new perception gestalt, leading to a corresponding change in the entire structure of attitude. Based on this, Festinger proposed cognitive dissonance theory that, if two cognitive elements are consistent in logically, so they are coordination; otherwise they are offset. When cognitive elements Incompatible with each other, the individual will have a psychological anxiety and stress and other emotional experience, that is defined as cognitive dissonance. The higher cognitive dissonance, the more strong motivation individual tries to reduce cognitive dissonance^[1].

When behavioral is consistent with itself cognitive elements, the internal of individual keep in harmonious state, that is to maintain the cognitive gestalt. However, in situations of forced compliance,

when the individual forced by the pressure of punishment or to get the organization rewarded, obey the behavior acquired by the organization^[3]. In this case, behavioral and cognitive is opposite, a huge difference promote individual had a strong cognitive dissonance. The more intense cognitive dissonance, people will want to reduce or eliminate contradictory between the behavioral and cognitive motives^[1]. So, not only with cognitive dissonance theory can well explain the emotional reaction under the authority of the role of individual behavior, but also proved that forced compliance is one of the important causes of changes in individual behavior and attitudes.

According to Taylor's define: "compliance is to have the power to request the authority of faith"^[9]. Basis on this, Festinger. L defined compliance as surface obey in public situation but without accompanied with no changes in the heart in a conditions, such public obey generated by punitive threats, or promises to give reward^[3]. Power distance in China is higher than in most Western countries^[2], by virtue of the power can promote members of the organization to produce compliance. When the objective face to subjective and psychologically ambiguous situations, forced compliance making organization members to take a consistent behavior, thereby to directly and effectively change the behavior of members. Based on this, we put forward the following hypothesis:

H1 Forced compliance has a negative impact on conformity intention.

H2 Forced compliance has significant positive effects on cognitive dissonance.

H3 Cognitive dissonance has a significant negative impact on conformity intention.

The way of individuals to reduce cognitive dissonance

Studies suggest that there are two ways to reduce cognitive dissonance, one is faced mechanism, the other is avoidance mechanism, the faced mechanism refers to the individual changes cognitive element of dissonance relationship in order to reduce cognitive dissonance, such as changing attitudes, reducing self-involvement, behavioral changes et; avoidance mechanism refers to the individual distorting reality or selectively interpret inconsistent information so as to reduce cognitive dissonance, such as denial, distortion, slander inconsistent information^[5]. In this study, if the individual adopted the faced mechanism, they will reduce cognitive dissonance by change their attitudes or behaviors. Attitudes changes accompanied with compliance decline, conformity stimulating, and producing conformity behavior. If the individual is taken avoidance mechanism, they will find a reasonable explanation to eliminate cognitive dissonance which caused by emotional stress. Because no accompanied with a change of attitudes, so the exhibit compliance behavior.

Behavior attitude is also known as the expectations of success^[7-8], refers to the individual's overall evaluation of an act, which includes two components, belief of behavioral outcomes that is self-efficacy expectations and evaluate of the consequences of behavior after participating in an act^[10]. Success Expectations affected by characteristics of mission and the ability of the individual's self-concept^[11]. Research found that expectations are a moderator, affecting relationships between supply and results of the work^[12]. Victor H. Vroom believes that when a person choose a number of possible outcome in unpredictable scenario, will subjectively determine the value of desired outcome of various actions, tend to take the attitude can lead to the best results, refused to take the attitude can lead to the poor results.

His behavior is not only influenced by its preference of expectation effect, and but also influenced by the possible of these results^[6]. In forced compliance scenario, individuals produce cognitive dissonance of the emotional experience, based on the reality and past of the existing empirical evaluation, the individual bring about very high expectations on this behavior. He thinks this behavior is sure to succeed, the result of the behavior is the individual's higher desire which will cause the high motivation^[9,13]. At this time, individual will adopt faced mechanism, change his attitude in order to reduce cognitive dissonance, this kind of attitude changes will cause the individual takes object's behavior or attitudes as the criteria, judgment and reasoning, then produce the behavior or attitude that is consistent with the object. And the results of behavior in low expectations and the possibility of success in a lack of confidence, individual will be taken to avoid the mechanism, to find reasonable explanation

to maintain the original attitude, individual thinks the behavior as a "other requirements", their behavior is passively with negative emotional experience^[5,8], which is still compliance^[6]. Therefore, conformity needs a process of transition from compliance. Based on this, we put forward the following hypothesis:

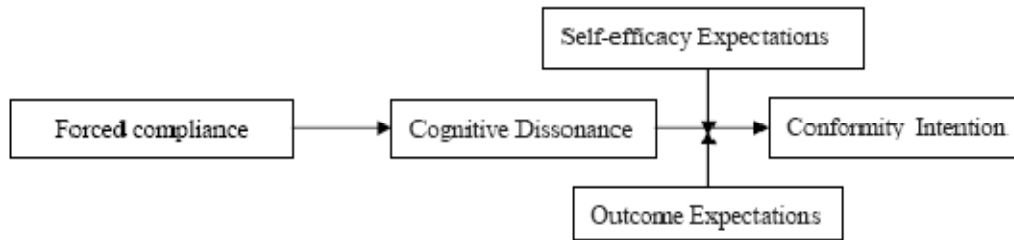


Figure 1 : Theoretical model

H4 Success expectations as a moderator in the relationship between cognitive dissonance and conformity intention

H4a Self-efficacy expectations as a moderator in the relationship between cognitive dissonance and conformity intention

H4b Outcome expectations as a moderator in the relationship between cognitive dissonance and conformity intention

RESEARCH METHODS AND DATA COLLECTION

The participants

Through the deduction of the theory mentioned above, this study put forward individual psychological processes and behavior under forced compliance the will of the empirical model. In order to validate the empirical model, choose college students as the research object. This study chose Wu Han in central, east of Shanghai, Harbin in northeast and south of Guang Zhou, in view of the above four cities using stratified random sampling, select four university first, and then two classes randomly chosen to fill out the questionnaire.

Variable measure and its reliability and validity

Self-efficacy expectations and outcome expectation scale adopt Gaski J F's scale^[14]; Cognitive dissonance adopt the scale of Soutar Geoffrey N and Sweeney Jillian C^[15]; Conformity intention adopt the scale of Dai Qi and Mao Rongjian^[16,17]; Forced compliance adopt the scale of Morisky D E, Green L W, Levine D M, and Dai Qi et^[18]. This study using confirmatory factor analysis and reliability analysis for variable on the reliability and validity test. Using SPSS20 statistical software to analyze the sample data from the formal scale, found that six variables reliability coefficient respectively obey behavior, cognitive dissonance, compliance to intend to 0.813, 0.919, 0.697 morning exercise results expected, morning exercise self-efficacy expectations of 0.874 0.973. Five subscales of alpha coefficient between 0.697~0.973, shows that scale with good reliability. Exploratory factor analysis revealed that Bartlett KMO = 0.563, spherical inspection significantly ($p < 0.000$), eutectoid out five factor, the cumulative variance of 85.769%, the corresponding WenXiang respectively and the corresponding factors, shows that the scale has high reliability and validity.

DATA ANALYSIS AND HYPOTHESIS TESTING

Testing of the main effect

TABLE 1 shows that forced to obey behavior and comply with intention significantly negative correlation ($\beta_1 = 0.458$, $p < 0.05$), preliminary verified the hypothesis H1. The results also showed that compelled obedience expect significant negative correlation of self-efficacy ($\beta_2 = 0.592$, $p <$

0.01); The self-efficacy expectations and expectations and follow the intention significantly positive correlation ($\beta_3 = 0.815$, $p < 0.01$; $\beta_4 = 0.696$, $p < 0.01$).

Testing of the mediating effect

This study adopts the method of hierarchical regression inspection of cognitive dissonance intermediary role steps: first step, the three demographic variables as control variables to return; The second step, in the first step on the basis of introducing forced compliance the independent variable; The third step, introduced in the first step on the basis of cognitive dissonance mediation variables; The fourth step, on the basis of the third step put into forced compliance in the independent variable, the results are shown that, forced compliance have the positive effects on conformity intention ($\alpha_1 = 0.458$, $p < 0.05$); after cognitive dissonance join in the equation, forced compliance has no significant influence on conformity intention ($\alpha_2 = 0.052$, $p = 0.384$); cognitive dissonance have a significant influence in the relationship between forced compliance and conformity intention ($\alpha_3 = 0.433$, $p < 0.01$), while cognitive dissonance has the positive influence on conformity intention ($\gamma_4 = 0.049$, $p = 0.049$), which shows that complete mediating effect of cognitive dissonance, hypothesis H2, H3 has been supported.

Testing of the moderating effect

This study adopts the method of multivariate hierarchical regression to test moderating effect, the independent variable cognitive dissonance to interact with moderating variable self-efficacy expectation and outcome expectations forming Z1, Z2, standardizing the results. The three control variables gender, age, education to be putted into model. Second add cognitive dissonance into equation, the results showed that cognitive dissonance to follow will have the positive effect on conformity intention ($B_1 = 0.752$, $p < 0.01$). Third, introduce the self-efficacy expectations and outcome expectations in model to test the moderating effect. Results showed that self-efficacy expectations and the outcome expectations have a positive influence on conformity intention ($B_2 = 0.319$, $p < 0.01$; $B_3 = 2.594$, $p < 0.01$). Finally to add interactive Z1, Z2 model, the results show that the adjusted R square change obviously, Z1, Z2 to comply with intention to the positive effect of ($B_4 = 0.275$, $p < 0.01$; $B_5 = 1.361$, $p < 0.01$), therefore, the moderating effect of self-efficacy expectations and outcome expectations have been supported, H4, H5 was confirmed.

RESEARCH DISCUSSIONS AND MANAGEMENT IMPLICATION

The conclusion of this study has the following several aspects: (1) The forced compliance has positive effects on cognitive dissonance, but has a negative effects on the conformity intention; self-efficacy expectations and results expectations as a moderator in the relationship between cognitive dissonance and conformity intention. For individual analysis, we found that when organizations managers make members to do a task reluctantly, members' heart will undertake pressure which is named cognitive dissonance. At this time, he may find plenty of reasons to support their own so as to keep consist with attitude. A case is that he found enough external reason to support his behavior; another situation is that the external reason is not enough, unable to make its inner pressure eased. For the former, the individual undertake cognitive dissonance, so the individual suffers inner pressure, behavior of attitude will not change; And for the latter, the inner pressure is released, if the success expectations is high, The individual of organization has strong expectations and the firm faith of results, which makes the individual emotional experience is positive. In addition, it also causes the individuals to produce strong behavior intention. Individual show more initiative and enthusiasm in the act which was name compliance. Under the low success, compliance would produce in a short time, individual still maintained a compliance behavior.

CONCLUSIONS AND LIMITATIONS

Forced compliance is not conducive to the standardization of organization behavior management, but under the high success expectations, individuals will internalize behavior norms and standards into their value system, to follow the object. This research will provide theory for organization management practice, to make the manager using reasonable enforce compulsory in order to regulate the behavior of members in the organizational management. In addition, this study provides a theory which will improve the efficiency of organization integration.

This study is mainly limited to investigate the influence of success expectations on the members' behavior, and there are still a lot of factors that affect behavior such as situational factors and psychological. Future research should strengthen the study on factors of organizational level such as pressure of person relationship, psychological contract, subjective norms, individual characters and the style of leadership and so on. It is important to note that in this study the use of forced compliance, although forced compliance can quickly standardize the behavior and attitude of members, but the cost of forced to obey is very high, and is not conducive to brainstorm and democratic decision-making within the organization. If we do not deal with it properly, forced compliance would lead to resistance of the members. In addition, this way of management will lead to corruption of leader, on the other hand, is not good for the long-term development of organization.

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