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**A Study on Cognitive and Behavioural Dissonance
in a Group Setting**

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Abstract

Within a group, if the majority supports a particular idea or value judgment, those who have different opinions and perspectives or disagree with the idea tend to conform to the majority opinion in order to be accepted by the group. The power of the group has become decisive in terms of bias in consumption and choice, so along with advertisements and publicity, we are influenced by the people in the group who already consume those goods (phones, sports shoes, designer clothes, etc.); otherwise you feel alienated and rejected. The present research is based on Solomon Asch's experiment and starts from the hypothesis that people tend to conform to group norms precisely in order not to be rejected by their peers, even if their personal beliefs and standards are different. We conducted an experimental study among first-year students at the Academy of Economic Studies, applying Solomon Asch's experiment. The results of the experiment confirmed Solomon Asch's hypothesis that when we succumb to peer pressure, an identity shift occurs, and judgment distortion is manifested. Very often our choices are influenced by peer power or peer group influence, the causes being related to conformity and fear of being judged, criticized, and marginalized.

Keywords: cognitive dissonance, conformity, normative social influence.

JEL classification: B55, C91, C92.

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1. Introduction

Cognitive dissonance is a mental conflict that occurs when a person's beliefs, behaviours, and actions do not align or are contradictory. When people have contradictory beliefs or their actions contradict their beliefs, then discomfort arises, translated into feelings of unease, tension, frustration, confusion, distrust. Inconsistency between beliefs, actions, and behaviours causes uncomfortable psychological tension - called cognitive dissonance. Cognitive dissonance is not automatic, does not manifest itself to the same degree from one individual to another, and depends on the degree of tolerance and acceptance of inconsistency. When discomfort, frustration, and anxiety arise, people want to reduce dissonance by trying to maintain consistency between thoughts, feelings, and behaviours, and this is called the "*cognitive consistency principle*" (Festinger, 1957) in literature.

Cognitive dissonance has a mental and psychological cause that can apply to any field of activity, where logical confusion arises. This concept has its origins in social psychology, but over time it has been explained in various other fields, where decision-making, behavioural, and motivational processes occur. In economics, the concept appears in consumer theory, in the formation of preferences for making a purchase decision, or in any decision-making process involving a choice, whether economic or otherwise. Cognitive dissonance can occur both before and after the choice. Uzma and Nasreen, 2012, argue that if consumers are well informed before purchasing a good and are satisfied with the choice made, then cognitive dissonance is diminished; however, if a consumer is manipulated through marketing techniques or psychological methods in order to purchase a good, then cognitive dissonance increases.

Jean Jacques Rousseau (2003) stated that "*man is born free but lives everywhere in chains*", freedom is an illusion, most decisions are made by copying and imitating, the reptilian brain learns by association and repetition, and very often the consumer does not choose on principles of economic efficiency, but on emotions, when the limbic system acts. The human brain is an organ that likes comfort, it feels reassured when a situation or an event is familiar, and when unmanageable things arise, or things which do not fit with certain beliefs or ideas, then a discomfort appears translated into anxiety and mental tension which generates maladaptive, irrational actions. An example of this was the outbreak of the COVID 19 pandemic. Because of conflicting information coming from the authorities, as well as the divided opinions of experts, the promotion of ideas about possible conspiracies, some people were very upset, frightened, and, in order to reduce that mental tension, they acted in accordance with the decision of the majority group, even if they did not believe in that decision. Our minds have a tendency to simplify and very often we make decisions based on trust, we tend to look to others for some confirmation, and we act without much consideration of assumptions.

In the economics literature, to determine whether a choice is efficient, the opportunity cost is calculated, i.e. the cost of choice or the price of sacrifice. Opportunity cost tells us to choose the alternative that, at the time of choice, brings the most benefits and whose effect/effort ratio is over unity. Some people take the

cost of choice into account and have the principle of economic efficiency in mind, while others choose on psychosocial or relational criteria, ignoring the principle of economic utility. We buy to be fashionable, for appearance, to create a false idea of who and what we are, for social prestige, to demonstrate financial power, out of a desire to belong to a certain interest group, and the list goes on. Peer group opinions, preferences, and choices weigh quite heavily and can influence individual decisions, especially among teenagers, as they have a developing personality and the phenomenon of imitation is very strong. The notion of conformity arises, the desire to conform to a standard, not to stand out from the norm, because there is a mental fear of being judged and rejected, especially by the peer group and then by others. For example, how do you think a teenager who is 2 metres tall will feel in a group where the average height is 1.60 metres? Obviously, he will not think he is special, but will see this physical aspect as a defect, wanting to be like the others.

To give an example from the field of economics, after the 2008 crisis, economic agents invested in cryptocurrencies, although many were reluctant and said that it was stupid, an aberration. Yet, because certain groups invested when it was a niche phenomenon, the losses were high but the rewards were even higher, so in 2010-2011 it became a mass phenomenon and then the risk profile increased a lot. Basically, many people invested on the emotional impulse of winning groups – if your friend, neighbour, colleague invested and won handsomely, then I was confident that if I invested in Bitcoin, for example, I would win, too. When we make a decision, in this case an investment, very often we anchor ourselves in what we have read or heard from other people whom we appreciate or give credit to. That idea is implemented in the mind, and we no longer pass the actions through the filter of our mind, but act on the emotional impulse of the group.

Very often we are stuck in certain ideas, beliefs, values that are passed down from generation to generation, and when we come into contact with other beliefs, values, and conceptions then we defend ourselves and try to find evidence to support those beliefs, as acceptance could create a very uncomfortable feeling called cognitive dissonance. Of course, cognitive dissonance can cause some people to change their behaviour so that their actions align with their beliefs. In this way, it gives people the opportunity to examine their values and actions and gain cognitive consistency.

2. Literature Review

Solomon Asch (1951) conducted a groundbreaking exploration of conformity and confirmed the hypothesis that people tend to publicly conform to the majority opinion in order to be accepted by the group, even if they disagree with that opinion. Festinger (1957) started from the idea that, in order to confirm the predictions of cognitive dissonance theory, people need to maintain consistency between thoughts, feelings, and behaviours, while inconsistency between beliefs or behaviours causes uncomfortable psychological tension, called cognitive dissonance. In this sense, people will try to change or add one of the inconsistent elements to reduce the dissonance. Festinger et al. (1956) argued that, in order to

reduce cognitive dissonance in a conflict situation, the individual may turn to his or her peers to look for possible consonant elements in the form of mutual support. Clémence (1996) said that this theory explains how a subject determined to perform a behaviour contrary to his beliefs transforms his opinions in the direction of that behaviour. Cooper and Mackie (1983) studied the relationship between group apartness and the reduction of cognitive dissonance, concluding that subjects would not change a position central to their social definition, but would modify an "associated" cognition, a less central opinion in affirming their own identity in order to reduce cognitive dissonance. Turner et al. (1987) developed the self-categorization theory which refers to how we view ourselves and how we interpret our own actions. Neculau (2003) argued that cognitive dissonance involves attitudinal change because change cannot be conceived as a self-value, it must be justified and motivated, and very often people do not let go of stereotypes and habits, even if they declare a desire for transformation. According to Doise et al. (1996), there is cognitive dissonance when, out of two elements that are presented together, one implies the negation of the other, and this incompatibility is not logical but psychological. Turner and Pratkanis (1998) tried to replicate Asch's experiment to see if the same experiment would work similarly with another generation. The experiment worked, so the percentage of conformists was almost identical to that identified by Asch, including those who seemed creative, rebellious, or rallied to the incorrect answers. Aronson and Pratkanis (1993) addressed how the social world determined attitudes and beliefs and how, in turn, those individual beliefs affected the social world.

3. Research Methodology

The research method is based on an experiment to verify or confirm a hypothesis which is the result deduced from a theory, namely Solomon Asch's 1951 experiment on conformity at Swarthmore College, Pennsylvania, in which a subject was placed in a group of seven people who were presented to him as volunteers, but who were, in fact, Asch's accomplices, acting according to a predetermined scenario. The group was shown two boards, one with a single line drawn on it and three lines of varying lengths on the other, only one of the same length as the first board. The subjects had to say which of the lines on the right-hand sheet was equal to the line on the left-hand sheet (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Asch's compliance experiment

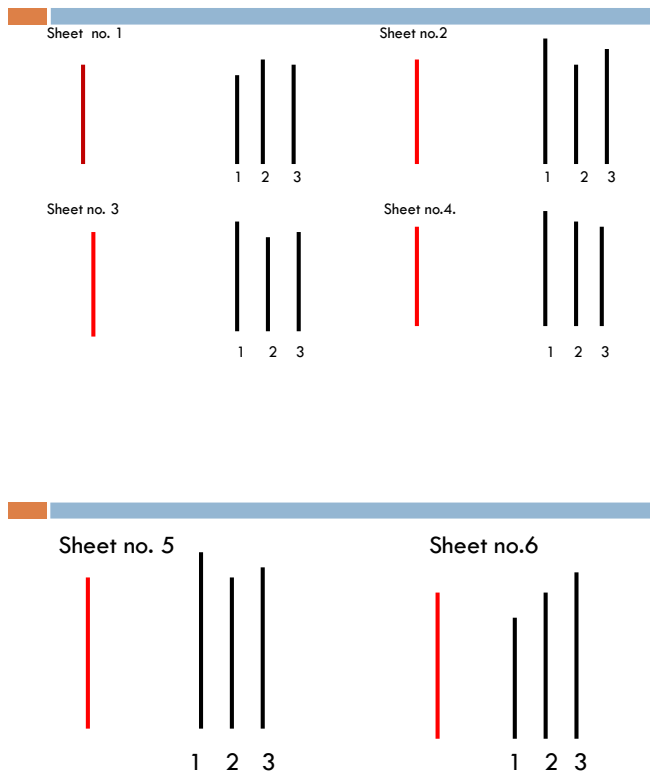


Source: One of the pairs of plates used in Asch's compliance experiments, available at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asch_conformity_experiments.

The findings of Asch's experiment were as follows: people could choose the correct line 99% of the time if judgments were individual; 25% of subjects remained independent throughout the test and did not change their judgments to align with those of the group; when accomplices answered incorrectly, subjects answered incorrectly 33% of the time; 75% of subjects answered incorrectly at least once (Cooper, Mackie, 1983).

Based on Asch's research hypotheses, we made 6 boards similar in terms of the way they are solved, but differentiated in terms of the placement and size of the lines (see Figure 2). The subjects in the experimental group had to answer orally and identify the line that is identical to the standard line. The subject was asked last after most of the accomplices had already spoken. The researcher, through manipulation techniques and by changing independent variables, aims to test the perception mechanisms and behaviours of the subjects.

Figure 2. Work sheets (1-6)



Source: The 6 plates made and used by the authors of this experiment to demonstrate the phenomenon of conformity within a group.

3.1 Design of the Experiment

We used two groups of subjects, one group representing the control group, these being the researcher's accomplices, and the experimental group. The control group was given specific tasks by the researcher as to how the experiment would be conducted. These represented the independent variables, and the dependent variables represented the behaviours or processes being acted upon. At the end of the experiment, we conducted an interview with each control group and the subjects who participated in the experiment to find out some information in terms of how they reacted, what they thought, what they felt, what their emotions and feelings were during and after the experiment.

3.2 Sample and Experimental Situation

General population: all first-year students from the Faculty of Management at the Bucharest Academy of Economic Studies who wished to participate in this experiment.

Sampling frame: first-year students who voluntarily enrolled in this experiment.

Sample: 56 subjects, aged between 19 and 23 years, of which 38 female subjects and 18 male subjects, 85% from urban and 15% from rural areas.

The type of sampling is simple randomized; probability sampling is done by random draw. The control group consisted of 24 subjects divided into 4 control groups and the experimental group consisted of 32 subjects, of which 8 participated in Sample 1 and 24 subjects in the other samples (Sample 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7).

Research limitations: All students involved in the experiment, whether they were part of the control group, or the experimental group knew each other, so it was basically a group formed by members who shared more than strictly academic relationships, friendship, sympathy, and trust.

Future directions: to carry out this experiment once at the beginning of the year and then at the end year to see what the differences are in terms of cognitive dissonance between a new group (group members do not know each other) and an already formed group; applying this experiment in economic choice theory.

4. Research Results

Exhibit 1. Individual test - this test aimed to test one of the tenets of Asch's research hypothesis, namely when people are not influenced by certain stimuli and pass through the filter of their mind a given situation, cognitive dissonance is greatly reduced. 8 subjects took part in this test. They were asked individually which answers were correct by showing them the 6 boards. The result was as expected; the subjects answered correctly to all the boards, thus testing Asch's hypothesis (see Tables 1-4).

Table 1. Control group 1

Sample	RC/P1	S1/P2	S2/P3	S3/P4	S4/P5	S5/P6 scris	S6/P7/poz.2
I	3	1	3-3-3	3-1-3	3-3-3	3-3-1	3-1-1
II	2	2	2-2-2	2-3-2	2-1-3	2-2-2	2-3-2
III	3	3	3-3-3	3-2-2	3-3-3	3-1-3	3-2-3
IV	3	3	3-1-3	3-2-2	3-3-3	3-2-3	3-2-3
V	2	2	2-3-3	2-3-3	2-2-3	2-2-2	2-3-2
VI	2	2	2-3-3	2-3-2	2-2-2	2-2-2	2-3-2

Source: Summary of the results obtained after applying the 7 samples to the first control group together with the first experimental group.

Table 2. Control group 2

Sample	RC/P1	S1/P2	S2/P3	S3/P4	S4/P5	S5/P6 scris	S6/P7/poz.2
I	3	3	3-3-1	3-1-1	3-3-3	3-3-3	3-1-3
II	2	2	2-2-2	2-3-3	2-2-2	2-2-2	2-3-2
III	3	3	3-3-3	3-2-2	3-3-3	3-1-1	3-2-3
IV	3	3	3-1-3	3-2-2	3-1-3	3-2-3	3-2-3
V	2	2	2-3-3	2-3-3	2-2-2	2-2-2	2-3-2
VI	2	2	2-3-1	2-3-3	2-3-2	2-2-2	2-3-2

Source: Summary of the results obtained after applying the 7 samples to the second control group together with the second experimental group.

Table 3. Control group 3

Sample	RC/P1	S1/P2	S2/P3	S3/P4	S4/P5	S5/P6 scris	S6/P7 /poz.2
I	3	3	3-3-3	3-1-1	3-3-1	3-3-1	3-1-1
II	2	2	2-2-2	2-3-2	2-2-2	2-2-2	2-3-2
III	3	3	3-3-3	3-2-3	3-3-3	3-1-3	3-2-3
IV	3	3	3-1-1	3-2-3	3-3-3	3-2-3	3-2-3
V	2	2	2-3-3	2-3-3	2-2-3	2-2-2	2-3-2
VI	2	2	2-3-3	2-3-2	2-3-2	2-2-2	2-3-2

Source: Summary of the results obtained from the application of the 7 samples to the third control group together with the third experimental group.

Table 4. Control group 4

Sample	RC/P1	S1/P2	S2/P3	S3/P4	S4/P5	S5/P6 scris	S6/P7/poz.2
I	3	1	3-3-1	3-1-1	3-3-3	3-3-3	3-1-3
II	2	2	2-2-2	2-3-3	2-1-1	2-2-2	2-3-2
III	3	3	3-3-3	3-2-2	3-3-3	3-1-3	3-2-3
IV	3	3	3-1-3	3-2-3	3-3-3	3-2-3	3-2-3
V	2	2	2-3-1	2-3-3	2-2-2	2-2-2	2-3-2
VI	2	2	2-3-3	2-3-3	2-2-3	2-2-2	2-3-2

Note: RC - correct answer; S1...S6 subjects; P1...P7 -probes; Poz.2 - position 2 in the group.

Source: Summary of the results obtained from the application of the 7 samples to the fourth control group together with the fourth experimental group.

Exhibit 2. The experimenter together with the subjects in the control groups decided to correctly answer all the cards presented. This variable was replicated for the 4 control groups, each testing 6 subjects from the experimental group, which showed the fidelity of the experiment because the same results were obtained.

Internal validity was ensured, removing any factors that might have influenced the outcome of the choice in a different direction. One subject in the first group and one in the fourth control group was wrong, so 92.85% of them answered correctly, explaining that at the beginning they felt some uncertainty, mistrust, fear of getting it wrong and felt the need to say something else. Although they realised that the correct version was the one the others had pointed out, they got the first one wrong and then answered correctly (see Tables 1-4).

Exhibit 3. The experimenter changed the independent variable and the rules, then agreed with the accomplices that on the first three boards the answers were correct, then on the next three boards the answers were intentionally wrong. The subject was intentionally the last to answer. In this test, the subjects were a little confused when the answers were intentionally wrong, and even at the beginning some gave the correct answer. In the last boards, the subjects in the control group intentionally gave the wrong answer, while 33.3% of the subjects in the experimental group gave the accomplices' version. Basically, the result of this test verifies another of Asch's hypotheses, namely that when the accomplices got it wrong, the subjects got it wrong too, in a proportion close to that in the experiment conducted 71 years ago (see Tables 1-4).

Exhibit 4. The experimenter changed the independent variable and agreed with the accomplices to give wrong answers to all the boards, but to say those variants that are closest to the correct variant. In this test, they were totally confused, they took a few extra seconds to think about what answer to give, and yet more than half, about 58.33% of the subjects, gave the accomplices' answer, even if they did not totally agree with their answer (see Tables 1-4).

Exhibit 5. The experimenter grouped two subjects from the control group in pairs so that two of them answered correctly and the others incorrectly. In this test, the confusion was even greater, and when the subject was asked which line most closely matched the standard line, the subject was much more attentive and most of the answers were correct, a proportion of 75% of the subjects, which shows us once again that when confusion arises, one automatically tries to find the solution that reduces psychological tension (see Tables 1-4).

Exhibit 6. The experimenter introduced a new independent variable; i.e., the subject was no longer asked orally which variant was correct, but was asked to write down the variant considered correct. The control group orally pointed out the correct variants for plates 1, 2, 5, 6 and the wrong variants for plates 3, 4. In this test, very few people made mistakes, almost the same percentage as in test 2. As the subject did not have to say the answer out loud and did not have to show the answer, they concentrated on the task and got 87.5% of the answers correct without considering the opinions of others (see Tables 1-4).

Exhibit 7. The researcher aimed to see if the position of the manipulated subject influenced distortion and confusion. It was no longer placed in the last group, but in position number 2 while the conditions of the experiment remained as in trial 3. The results of trial 3 showed that 58.33% gave the accomplice response, under the condition that the manipulated subject was in the last position, with the change of the naive subject's position. They were less influenced, which showed that the group influence decreased to 12.5%, meaning that the position is important within a group, as Asch stated "*maximum conformity is reached when we have three accomplices and one naive subject*" – the more isolated the naive subject is, the more indifferent he is and detachment occurs (see Tables 1-4).

Cognitive dissonance may be one of the causes of the great economic crises that have occurred over time, recalling the Great Depression of 1929, the financial crisis of 2008 and the pandemic crisis unleashed at the end of 2019. The crisis of 2007-2008 started in the United States and quickly spread to the global economy due to trade, banking, and financial interdependencies between countries around the world. The crisis in America was based on speculative behaviour, generated by a phenomenon of imitation, in which if one product is more desired than another, demand for that product increases because it can be resold at a higher price, and then all investors or economic agents will be interested in buying it. Banks in America gave out cheap mortgages on a massive scale, which caused prices on the housing market to rise (supply did not keep up with demand), the increase in price did not justify the real value of the property, and a speculative bubble was created, where nothing could explain the increase in price. In order to curb the speculative bubble, the Federal Reserve Board (FED) raised interest rates from 2005 onward, increasing the cost of loans already granted, and many borrowers sold their properties to the banks, which in turn auctioned them off, causing a sharp fall in prices and, on the other hand, a loss of financial and banking resources as economic agents panicked and withdrew their savings, causing massive losses and hence the chain of bank failures.

In the speculative bubble, prices rise artificially, the asset is disconnected from its real value and it is only a matter of time before it collapses, causing massive losses. The consequences are the result of mimetic behaviour and self-fulfilling prophecy, so many economic agents or investors will imitate the behaviour of other economic agents, banking on the fact that they can buy cheap and sell high. The imitation operation of buying and selling contributes to the increase in price, and this happens through simple imitation.

The entry into quarantine at the beginning of March 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, generated panic among the population, leading to compulsive and frantic behaviour in purchasing excess food and non-food products, causing an imbalance in the supply and stock chain, and accentuating certain discrepancies between those who stocked up because no limitation was imposed on the quantity purchased and those who did not react to the first impulse. This phenomenon generated a rapid and unjustified increase in prices, so that overnight for certain products prices increased by 100% or more, practically entering a speculative

bubble that generated increased inflation, increased unemployment, decreased production, increased inequality in income redistribution, and those most affected were those with low and fixed incomes and those who were caught in a discontinuity of economic activity.

Another example of cognitive dissonance and mimetic behaviour is the sudden and overnight increase in fuel prices, so at the beginning of March 2022, after a rumour appeared that the price of fuel would reach 11 lei/litre, huge queues formed at all gas stations in the country, Romanians panicked and on the phenomenon of imitation all car owners bought gasoline and diesel, some even made reserves, and according to the law of supply and demand, the price rose rapidly (at a petrol station in Beiuş the price at the pump was 11.1 lei/litre), and this increase was not only due to the rise in world oil prices and the practice of anti-competitive techniques, but also to the phenomenon of conformity and panic which led to a speculative bubble.

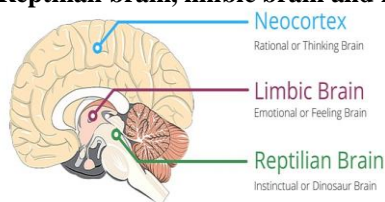
The examples could go on, and the results of our research can be interpreted in any aspect of our lives, professional, social, cultural, sporting, religious, political, etc.

5. Psycho-neural Explanations in Cognitive Dissonance

5.1 Why Does Cognitive Dissonance Occur?

The human brain is made up of 3 cortical structures that have been formed and evolved over millions of years. The three structures are the limbic brain, the reptilian brain and the neocortex, while the first two have been formed over millions of years and deal with survival, the neocortex has been formed over thousands of years and deals with logic, reasoning, the ability to use words, anticipating and planning for the future, etc. (see Figure 3). The problem is that when the limbic system is not quiet, the neocortex does not work, so the uniqueness of the human is given by the neocortex. It follows that the human mind can only trigger stress through thought, because either we think in the past or in the future, while the past cannot be changed and the future is uncertain. Stress substances induce stress hormones from the brain into the body, which produce imbalances, and this is how our own thoughts can make us sick. Thought becomes experience on a mental level as we feel the emotion of that experience, and from there we will also behave appropriately.

Figure 3. Reptilian brain, limbic brain and neocortex



Source: <https://medium.com/brand-solutions/how-to-be-more-successful-by-using-reptilian-and-limbic-hot-buttons-71c64de9b366>.

At the end of the experiment, we conducted an interview with each of the four control groups and the subjects who participated in the experiment. We wanted to find out what their thoughts, beliefs, emotions, feelings, and behaviours were before and after the experiment. A thought begets an emotion, and an emotion begets a certain behaviour.

Table 5. Thoughts - emotions - behaviours when cognitive dissonance occurs

Thoughts	Emotions	Behaviour
I'm going to be ashamed	Anxiety, regrets	Avoidance, adjournment
I will be criticized, judged	Insecurity, irritation, anger	Excessive cognitive control
I will be stigmatized	Fear, panic	Conformity, frost or flight
I'm going to be fooled	Guilt, regret	Behave differently than you would like
I will be excluded from the group	Fear, nervousness	Indifference, non-participation

Source: Aspects resulting from discussions with participants after the end of the experiment.

5.2 Issues Arising from Discussions with Participants in the Experiment

In Table 5, we caught some aspects related to the thoughts, emotions and behaviours of the subjects when they were asked why they had acted in one way and not the other. The subjects' answers were in line with the features we found in Table 5. The vast majority of the subjects felt uneasy, a mental discomfort that came from the thought that they would be laughed at, judged, or criticized, and as such some of the subjects said the wrong option, being influenced by the group's decision while following less their own opinions and opinions.

6. Conclusions

The experiment was carried out among the members of a group formed for about a year. They had developed certain relations, ranging from peer relations to friendship relations, including sympathy, appreciation, and love. When a group is in formation, at first, when there is no cohesion, the group is heterogeneous, so the members of that group act and react differently depending on the personality, character, and temperament of each. When among the members of a group more personal relationships appear, the group becomes more homogeneous and its cohesion increases. Any external stimulus no longer has the same effect as in the beginning, when the group members did not know each other. People are easy to manipulate when they trust something or someone. If 10 people share the same opinion about something, you will end up agreeing with them, even if you initially had a different opinion. There is a pressure on the cognitive level and the pressure is optimal when there is unanimity, not just a majority, because in the absence of unanimity, people find their courage and free will. We are often less resistant to the pressure of complying than we might think.

The results of our research can be applied to any decision-making and choice process, especially when we are talking about members of a group based on certain common interests, objectives, and goals, so members will react as one voice, manifesting the phenomenon of conformity and mimicry, in order not to be judged, marginalized, or excluded. This experiment can be applied to any aspect of our lives, professional, social, cultural, sporting, political, religious, etc. If we take the political side, when we have to express our right to vote for a particular political party, very often we are influenced by the group of friends or followers of a political party, and less by relevant and sustainable programmes and projects.

Organising fundraising campaigns to help certain vulnerable or disadvantaged sections of the population, the power of example, compassion, and empathy will lead to mimetic behaviour, being influenced by the limbic system and less by the logical, rational one. Attending an artistic event, for example, the Neversea Festival in Constanta, Romania, being considered the largest music festival on the beach, if the first edition in 2017 was attended by more than 130,000 people, this year 2022, the number of spectators has doubled. Practically this phenomenon has spread with great speed among young people, where the phenomenon of imitation is the one that prevails, an increasing number participated.

In this sense, our research is original because it explains that our decisions, and here we refer to any aspect of our lives, are influenced by a series of internal and external factors, internal ones related to our physiological, biological and psychological structure, and external ones related to our environment and especially to the group of influence. As the saying goes, *"tell me who you are friends with, so I know who you are and how you think!"*

The discrepancy between what we want and what happens is one of the root causes of cognitive dissonance. To reduce this dissonance, we make some recommendations: we need to have realistic expectations of our goals and of the resources we have at our disposal; try to live in the present, here and now, and not let ourselves fall prey to the past or the future; manage stressful situations so as not to generate fears and anxieties; put everything through the filter of our mind; be very well informed when we have to make a decision, whether it is to buy, produce or take any action from a possible range; not to disregard the positive and emphasise the negative; avoid "all or nothing"; avoid putting labels and making value judgements on the actions of others; avoid generalisation, amplification and personalisation, etc.

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