

Psychosocial Behavior and Its Influence in Society

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ABSTRACT: Our personality system is composed of cognitive, motivational, affective, aptitude and behavioral structures. Of all these, behavior represents the way we externalize ourselves and thus, causes us to act differently in certain situations. A category of prosocial behaviors regarding the defense of law and justice are presented, but also antisocial behaviors that defy any social norm. An important role is represented by both motivation and affectivity - mechanisms for stimulating behavior, to which are added needs and wants, those intermediate states that influence behavior. Also, the main forms of psychosocial influence, strategies of persuasion and manipulation, as well as the effects of psychosocial influence will be presented.

KEYWORDS: behavior, psychic mechanisms, manipulation, persuasion, psychosocial influence

Introduction

Behavior is defined as the set of observable reactions that an organism exhibits to stimuli in the environment. The term behavior began to be used in psychology by Watson and H. Pieron, within the current called behaviorism.

Social behavior (conduct) is modeled according to the norms of the society of which the individual is a part. Otherwise, a behavior that does not respect the institutional rules, laws and is called deviant behavior is installed, for example, delinquency, vagrancy, etc. There are numerous internal and external factors that shape human behavior, and the benchmarks of its suitability are established based on sociocultural influenced norms and standards (Cosman 2010, 86-87).

Pierre Janet introduces the concept of conduct into psychology, understanding by the latter both the totality of visible manifestations, oriented "outside", and the totality of invisible processes of its organization and regulation (Zlate 2006, 29).

Human health can be considered a state inscribed in the perimeter that defines the normality of the individual's existence, meaning the maintenance of the structural balance of the person both in the internal and external perspective, of the adaptive balance between the individual and his concrete environment.

The state of health is a state of harmony, a state of well-being regarding the evolution of the biological complex, psychological and social dimensions of human behavior (Tudose F., Tudose C. and Dobranici 2002, 32-33). In the structure of psychosocial phenomena and processes, influence holds particular importance, being one of the major factors of social integration and organization.

By influence is meant the psychosocial phenomenon that consists in the modification of cognitive-intellectual, orientative-attitudinal or behavioral-actional systems, which are produced as a result of the interaction between groups, organizations and social situations.

In a narrow sense, influence is understood as the action by which a social actor (person, group, organization or institution) determines the modification of the attitudes and behaviors of some people or groups. In this case, the influence is considered to have a predominantly unilateral character (Cristea 2010, 301).

Prosocial behaviors and antisocial behaviors

Prosocial behaviors are intentional behaviors, carried out outside of professional obligations and oriented towards the preservation and promotion of social values. Acts such as helping others, defending property, assets, defending the law, justice represent prosocial behaviors.

In establishing relationships with each other, people tend to maintain a certain balance in what is given and what is received. If this balance between "costs" and "benefits" does not work, psychological discomfort can occur.

Cooperation is a type of prosocial behavior in which individuals pool their skills and strengths to solve a task together. It is based on moral principles, being dictated by reason.

Supporting others when the situation calls for it is another positive behavior. This situation assumes that the one who gives support has greater availability than the one who receives it.

Tolerance is a characteristic of our behavior manifested when we deliberately choose not to prohibit or prevent another person's behavior, even if we disapprove of it.

Antisocial behaviors are those that defy the agreed social order, contradict by disregarding social norms and institutions. Antisocial behaviors are either willful, intentional, committed by people who consciously violate legal laws and moral norms, or by sick people with serious personality disorders (Ștefănescu, Bălan and Ștefan 2010, 122-124).

We can consider aggression as a characteristic of those types of behavior that are oriented in a destructive sense, behaviors that cause material, moral, psychological damage. Therefore, aggressive behavior can target objects (house, car, etc.), it can target the human being (individual, group, ethnicity, etc.) or both (University of Medicine and Pharmacy 2014).

Psychic mechanisms of behavior stimulation

The motivation

By motivation, we understand the totality of the internal motives of conduct, whether they are innate or acquired, conscious or unconscious, simple physiological needs or abstract ideals. Any act of conduct is motivated. Even if sometimes we don't realize why we do one action or another, even if we are not aware of all the reasons for our actions, this does not mean that motivation is absent. However, human behaviors are multi-motivated because at their base, there is never a single reason, but a multitude of reasons, which do not act independently of each other, but interdependently, forming real motivational networks, configurations or constellations in the personality structure. This fact explains the enormous variety of human behaviors.

In the overall personality, motivation has the role of triggering, supporting and orienting actions, as well as a function of self-regulation of behavior, through which behavior is given an active and selective character. Essential for motivation is the fact that it stimulates and triggers action, and action through the reverse connection influences the motivational base itself and its dynamics (Bențea, 48-49).

Motivation appears to us as an external causality transposed into the internal plane: if the object corresponding to the satisfaction of a need is missing and, therefore, has no way to trigger the corresponding behavior, its place is taken by the state of necessity in relation to it, updated spontaneously, following some physiological and psychological changes (Golu 2007, 670).

Needs and necessities

The reasons for behavior were understood through the notions of needs and wants. Originally, motives were understood as intermediate states between needs and drives. The need is a state of tension of the organism, which appears in conditions of deprivation of a function. There are primary biological needs or needs, such as hunger, thirst, etc. Secondary, psychological needs are represented by the need for personal security, the need for autonomy, the need for affirmation.

The impulse is characterized by the appearance of an increased excitability of the nerve centers corresponding to the deficient need;

Desire is a conscious need that produces a specific emotional stimulation when in proximity to the desired object or subject;

Interests are manifested by the person's tendency to pay attention to certain situations and to orient themselves towards certain activities;

The intention marks the transition from reasons to the level of goals, projects, strategies, crystallizing the direction of the reason;

Aspiration is a projection of personal desires towards goals that obviously exceed the person's present condition (Cosman 2010, 94-95).

Emotions

Man does not relate indifferently to reality, on the contrary, the objects, phenomena, events that act on him have an echo, a resonance in his consciousness, they bring to life certain needs, they correspond or not to his needs, they satisfy his interests, aspirations, ideals or not.

Between the internal stimuli and the surrounding reality, confrontations and collisions take place, the effects of which are precisely the affective processes. While the approval or satisfaction of internal requirements generates pleasure, crowding, excitement, joy, contradicting or not satisfying them leads to unpleasantness, dissatisfaction, indignation, sadness (Zlate 2006, 262).

Affective mental processes are differentiated into several categories: affective moods, affects, emotions, feelings and passions.

Affective dispositions refer to generalized, diffuse affective states of varying intensity, which play the role of background for subsequent emotional reactions and processes.

Within affective dispositions, separate categories are organic and pathological dispositions. These are diffuse affective traits that accompany the state of health, illness, fatigue, etc.

Affects are strong, intense, short-lived outbursts, accompanied by rich facial expressions. Such are, for example, the manifestations of fear, horror, anger, rage, despair, joy and exuberance, wonder, amazement.

Emotions are fundamental affective phenomena that appear either as primary, spontaneous reactions, or as more complex processes, emotions themselves. They are a result of the meaning that the events of the external world have. Man experiences several emotions simultaneously, sometimes in opposition, sometimes in agreement.

The complexity of emotions implies, in some cases, opposite tendencies that manifest themselves simultaneously: anger-relaxation, admiration-contempt, sympathy-antipathy, and pleasure-instisfaction. Feelings constitute complex and durable affective formations, of moderate intensity, which become real affective attitudes towards objects, events, values, people (Ștefănescu, Bălan and Ștefan 2010, 86-89).

The main forms of psychosocial influence

Persuasion represents the activity of influencing the attitudes and behaviors of some people in order to produce changes that are in agreement with the goals or interests of the initiating agency (persons, groups, institution or political, social, cultural, commercial organization, etc.) (Zamfir and Vlăsceanu 1993, 429).

“Persuasion is the co-creation of a state of identification between source and receiver as a result of the use of symbols” (Larson 2003, 26).

Persuasion involves a form of communication that results in attitudinal and behavioral change. Consequently, the factors of the effectiveness of the persuasion relationship are related to those of communication, respectively, factors related to the communicator, message, communication channel, auditor and the communication environment.

The communication environment, both physical and psychosocial, influences the effectiveness of the act of persuasion through the following main factors: physical comfort, psychosocial climate, suggestive capacity of the ambience, accidental disturbances.

The psychosocial climate in which the meeting takes place has a decisive role in determining a receptive or hostile attitude towards the communicator and his message (Cristea 2010, 310-316). Persuasion is a way of reasoned communication in which the user brings reasonable evidence, presents valid grounds (both formal and material) to cause the auditor to adhere to the theses, ideas presented (Dunca 2013, 294). Persuasion must be based on a rational argument, not on coercion or misinformation (Andronovici 2012, 152).

Persuasion strategies

The development of a change strategy must start from the identification and analysis of the following elements:

- a) *The nature of the source of influence*: it can be constituted by a majority or a minority of the social community to which the target belongs (recipient of the influence);
- b) *The nature of the attitudes to be changed*: attitudes can target individuals, groups or institutions; they can have a central or secondary character in the dynamic structure of the personality;
- c) *Characteristics of the conflict involved in the change* (Cristea 2010, 317).

Manipulation in social relations

The Encyclopedic Dictionary defines manipulation as “influencing public opinion through a set of means (press, radio, television) through which, without resorting to constraints, certain behaviors are imposed on it, cultivating the impression that it acts in accordance with own interests”. In modern society, the method is used mostly for political purposes (Dicționar Enciclopedic 2001, 245).

In all its forms, manipulation is a form of aggressive influence that does not respect the free will and dignity of the target. Manipulation is a particular form of social influence and, implicitly, communication. Within this process, all the elements of a communication system can be identified: the source of the manipulative influence, the information used, the message that is the encoded form in a certain form of the information, the transmission channel and the target (the recipient of the manipulation action).

Psychological manipulation consists in the use of special techniques for triggering, guiding and controlling some psychic processes and phenomena, in the sense of determining some behaviors of the target that correspond to the interests of the source. For this purpose, a multitude of processes and phenomena can be used, including cognitive dissonance, social comparison, the Oedipus phenomenon, the effects of fear and positive reward on individual choices, the phenomenon of controlled suggestion, role playing, etc. (Cristea 2010, 319-323).

Effects of psychosocial influence

The basic elements of social life are those relating to sociability, sodality, sociability, civilization, etc. Each of these dimensions corresponds to individual behaviors, specific to each field of social life (Cristea 2011, 309).

Influence is a major component of social life, with important functions in learning and social integration, as well as in the general process of psychosocial development. The main effects of positive psychosocial influence are found in the phenomena of uniformity, conformity and submission; the negative effects are found in the phenomena of anomie, reactance, deviance and delinquency (Cristea 2010, 333).

Social life would be unimaginable without behaviors that systematically confirm solidarity, support and altruism towards fellow human beings. The concrete manifestation of prosocial behaviors is conditioned by a series of factors: psychosocial and sociocultural (values, norms and cultural-behavioral models); psycho-individuals; conjunctural-situational (affective and motivational mood).

From the category of dysfunctional and disharmonious behaviors, with deeply negative effects on the psychosocial climate, are those related to aggression and delinquency. Violence in all its forms is the result of the combined action of psycho-individual, psycho-social and socio-cultural factors.

Because of the deeply negative effects that aggression has on individual and social life on the psychosocial climate, creativity and performance in all areas, it is necessary to find ways to reduce aggressive potential and violence in all its forms (Cristea 2011, 309-332).

Conclusions

Numerous specialized studies highlight the fact that in the structure of psychosocial processes, influence represents one of the most important fundamental phenomena of our social life, being related to the way of communication between peers.

The communication environment influences the mode of attitudinal and behavioral change. Thus, a psychosocial climate in which the meeting takes place can determine a receptive but also hostile attitude.

A special role is played by psychological manipulation, which consists in the use of methods to determine a behavior that corresponds only to the interests from which the message comes. Therefore, within the framework of positive social influence, we encounter phenomena such as uniformity, conformity and obedience, but also negative effects such as anomie, deviance or delinquency.

Conduct must comply with the norms of the society we belong to. If those rules are not followed, then the behavior becomes deviant.

Health also plays an important role as it maintains the person's balance both internally and externally.

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