

The Conformity Profile of Higher Education Students

Damajanti Kusuma Dewi, Nimatus Solichah, Rizky Oktaviani Cahyaningsih, Ayu Bulan Permata Putri

Department of Psychology
Universitas Negeri Surabaya
Surabaya, Indonesia
damajantikusuma@unesa.ac.id

Abstract—The purpose of this study was to determine the profile of conformity among the students at Surabaya State University. The participants in this study were 1273 students from the Faculty of Education and Faculty of Social Sciences and Law. This study was quantitative research using a cross-sectional survey. The instrument was an adaptation Baron’s and Curt field and Gough’s Conformity Scale. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics to determine the frequency of each level of conformity. The results showed that twenty-two-point forty seven percent were at high and very high levels sixty-eight-point three percent are in the middle level, and nine-point-one percent are in the low and low levels. This proves that conformity in higher education students is still high, so it takes an effort to reduce the level of student conformity.

Keywords—conformity; profile; higher education

I. INTRODUCTION

Research on conformity has been conducted since the 1930s started by Asch [1] and Jennes [2]. Research on classical conformity shows that individual behavior is influenced by group pressure or group norms [3]. The conformity research develops not only as experimental research, but also cultural elements [4]. Researchers from cultural psychology have found that individuals show the conformity to their group opinions [5], and are less able to express their emotion in their relation [6].

Conformity is defined as an agreement with an external data source [7]. Conformity is a pressure to behave as wanted by a group [8], or following the group [9]. Conformity not only examines obedient behavior, but conformity emphasizes behavior change according to the group. [10]. Conformity is not just behavior of obeying rules but change the behavior process. In this case, conformity is the reasons chosen by individuals to change to be considered as group members.

There are two kinds of conformity, namely informational and normative [11], [12]. Informational conformity is conformity that relates to another opinion. When individuals disagree with others, they will ask themselves to decide what have to do [8]. Informational conformity occurs when individuals accept others' opinions to avoid conflicts. High and low levels of conformity are influenced by the few group members who support this information. [13]. Normative conformity is conformity taken to be accepted by a group.

Individuals take this conformity to avoid conflict with other group members by changing behavior [11] because it will be more beneficial if they follow the group [13].

Based on age division, students are individuals who are in the development stage called as late adolescence [14]. In this phase, a student should be able to make his own decisions, or be slightly influenced by others; besides that students have been able to think independently and not depend on their friends. [14]. This illustrates that a student has been able to break away from the influence of friends or groups. On the other hands, a student does not show high conformity behavior, their conformity level was still low. This study aims to determine the level of conformity in Surabaya State University students.

II. METHOD

The subjects of this study were 1273 students of the Faculty of Education and the Faculty of Social Sciences and Law. The instrument used in this study is two scales modification; The first scale was developed by Gorlow, consisting of 19 items, and the second scale was developed by Crutchfield and Gough consisted of 21 items. The scales adapted and modified results in 22 items of a new scale of conformity. Descriptive statistical analysis was used to analyze data by describing data collected without intending to make conclusions as a generalization. This analysis was basic data only in descriptions not mutual relation, hypotheses test, predictions, or conclusions.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data analysis shows the conformity profile as below

TABLE I. LEVEL OF CONFORMITY

| Level | Range | F | % |
|---------|---------|------|-------|
| Highest | 69 < | 61 | 4.79 |
| High | 63 - 68 | 225 | 17.67 |
| Middle | 50 - 62 | 870 | 68.34 |
| Low | 44 - 49 | 110 | 8.64 |
| Lowest | > 43 | 7 | 0.55 |
| Total | | 1273 | 100 |

Information:

- Sum = 73734
- Average = 58
- St-dev = 24.042

Based on table 1 above, it can be seen that the conformity of students is 68.34 categorized as middle level, while more than 20% are at high levels. This means that most students behave according to group norms. That conditions is contradict to the concept of the development task. A student who is in the late development stage should have been able to make decisions or have their values, without being influenced by the group; and should be independent, and not depend on the group [14].

Several things cause a high level of students' conformity, namely: First the subjects were students who lived separately from their parents that causes them to be more close to their friends Bukowski, Buhrmester & Underwood in [15]. Students were more influenced by friends than parents or families, especially in educational [15]. Few students behave without thinking about risks, as influenced by their friends [16]. Most students were unable to assess their performance objectively, because of their friend's judgments [16].

Second, conformity is done to avoid feeling shy [17]. Emotions such as shame and guilt occur when individuals feel as resulted from that they have violated their group norm. Thus, they feel guilty as resulted from self-assessment or the judgment from others. The more unable to judge oneself, the higher the feeling of guilt is. This causes individuals to change their behaviors and adjust to their group in order not to be rejected or looked down by other people [18].

The shame and guilt culture when one is different from the group is called cultural collectivists, where this culture prioritizes group values rather than personal values [19]. Individuals from collectivist cultures show conformity behavior towards group opinion [5] and are less able to show emotion [5].

Behavioral changes, in the form of obeying rules that apply in groups, is the way to avoid rejection from the group, even though the rule is not following him. The feeling of being rejected by the group will cause embarrassment, where this shame will be avoided by individuals. Individuals prefer to avoid social criticism rather than the consequences of criticism. Based on the normative theory that the concept of shame underlies the individual to do conformity [20]. Shyness is a painful feeling because being different is considered as selfish [21]. Furthermore, Williams said that shame is interpreted as a condition where opinions are not as group norms, violated values that are important for one's identity [22].

Most students come from Javanese culture, where Javanese culture embraces collectivists [23]. Therefore, it is not surprising that students are more concerned with obeying group rules than the rules themselves. This occurs because students developed more shame and guilt if they showed behavior that is different from group behavior.

Collective culture emphasized the value of harmony, avoid confrontation and promote compliance. This condition causes individuals to be unable to deliver different opinions

from the group [23][24]. The stronger the collectivity culture, the greater the urge to conduct behavioral conformity [25] and formulate opinions [26]. This occurs because conformity occurs in behaviors that are consistent with the behavior of a group [27].

Third, conformity is chosen to avoid the uncertainty that occurs when individuals have different opinions with groups. When seeking the truth for their opinions, individuals will ask the opinion of other individuals. The process of seeking the truth will lead to choosing to change one's own opinion and follow the opinions of others. This occurs because social truth is seen as higher than individual truth [28]. In line with Moscovici's opinion, Fussi said individuals tend to justify other people's opinions rather than their own opinions [22]. The more uncertain, the higher the desire to conform to group norms [26]. Conformity also occurs at the level of relatively simple tasks, where individuals will assume that the other's opinions are more true than their own opinions [27].

Fourth, conformity occurs through observation [29]. This occurs because the intensity of interaction with friends causes students to more easily observe other individuals as references [30]. If things that are observed often appear, the more likely there is conformity; and vice versa. This is evidenced from the results of the study, where the observed things are not general, rarely followed, rarely appear, for example, music or television program choices, getting smaller to give rise to conformity behavior [30].

Fifth, changes in socioeconomic status. Conformity occurs in individuals originating from lower SES to mimic individuals from higher SES [18]. Conversely, when moving to areas with relatively lower individual status, conformity may be less likely because these individuals may want to maintain a sense of uniqueness while remaining consistent with their original preferences [29]. Most of the research subjects came from outside Surabaya, so they experienced a shift of SES from low to higher.

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