

Subject- Psychology (Hons), B.A. Part-I
Paper-II (Social Psychology) ch- Groups

Topic - Group Norms (Explicit Norms)

Explicit Norms:

Sometimes group norms are stated outright, either orally or in writing; then they are explicit norms. Such explicit rules may be imposed by an authority figure such as an executive or designated team leader. They may be part of formal policies or regulations. Wearing a uniform or answering the telephone in a certain way, for instance, may be written requirements in a work place group.

Manuals, and even books, have been composed to provide members of groups with norms of how to behave. A manager in one organization we know wrote a policy in response to almost every problem or difficulty his division experienced. Because the manager served for more than 15 years in his position, the collection of these incident-based policies

eventually filled a large tabbed binder. The bigger the group, the more likely it is that its norms will be rigid and explicit like these (Lamberton, L., & Minor-Evans, L., 2002). Lamberton, L. Human relations: Strategies for Success (2nd ed). New York: Glencoe McGraw-Hill.

Table: Implicit, Explicit, Individual, and whole-Group Norms.

	Individual	Whole-Group
Explicit	Each member receives a copy of the group's bylaws	The group keeps minutes of all its meetings.
Implicit	A person should raise his/her hand to signal a desire to speak	Someone brings doughnuts or other treats every time the group meets.

Interaction, Procedure, Status, and Achievement Norms:

Norms may relate to four aspects of a group's identity: interaction, procedure, status and achievement (Engleberg & Wynn, p. 37). Engleberg,

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T. N. & Wynn, D. R. (2013). working in groups (6th ed.). Boston: Pearson.
Let's look at each of these kinds of Norms.

Interaction norms: Interaction norms specify how people communicate in the group. Is it expected that everyone in the group should have an opportunity to speak about any topic that the group deals with? How long is it okay for one person to speak?

Procedure-oriented norms

identify how the group functions. Does it hold meeting according to an established schedule? who speaks first when the group gets together? Does someone distribute a written record of what happened after every time the group gets together?

Status norms indicate the degree of influence that members possess and how

that influence is obtained and expressed. Who decides when a group discussion has concluded? when and how are officers for the group elected?

Achievement norms related to standards the group sets for the nature and amount of its work. Must members cite reading or the comment of authorities when they make presentations to the group? what happens to a group member who completes tasks late or fails to complete them at all?

As we shall discover in the next chapter, enforcing and changing the norms of a group throughout its life cycle may present substantial challenges. Those challenges can best be overcome if members share a common understanding of their group's norms.

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