

Detection of Mechanisms of Social Facilitation

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Abstract

In this article within the framework the ontological approach, the mechanism of social facilitation consists in considering the facilitator as an observer, who helps to look at oneself and the situation from the outside and change the subject's from personal to social. As a result, the essence of social facilitation lies in the non-directive management using psychological mechanisms for changing ideas in the presence of an observer in a pre-conflict situation. In conclusion, readiness for the social interaction facilitation is associated with the optimal values of communicative competence, volitional potential and choice of behavior strategy in a conflict situation.

Keywords: Social Facilitation, Observer, Ontological Approach.

Detección de mecanismos de facilitación social

Resumen

En este artículo dentro del marco del enfoque ontológico, el mecanismo de facilitación social consiste en considerar al facilitador como un observador, que ayuda a mirarse a sí mismo y a la situación desde el exterior y a cambiar el tema de lo personal a lo social. Como resultado, la esencia de la facilitación social reside en la gestión no directiva que utiliza mecanismos psicológicos para cambiar ideas en presencia de un observador en una situación previa al conflicto. En conclusión, la disposición para la facilitación de la interacción social está asociada con los valores óptimos de competencia comunicativa, potencial volitivo y elección de la estrategia de comportamiento en una situación de conflicto.

Palabras clave: Facilitación social, Observador, Enfoque ontológico.

1. Introduction

With regard to the growing pace of human development (economy, technology, transport, communications, etc.), the density of social interaction increases, and the range of ideas of the interaction subjects expands — the boundaries of ideas are becoming blurred and stretched. And accordingly, psychosocial dissonance (mismatch of ideas and mental tension) arises between the interaction subjects as a pre-conflict state that can be developed in two scenarios: either 1) conflict and relevant consequences (destruction of social relations, illness, etc.), or 2) cooperation as a prerequisite for the development of social relations and the interaction subjects themselves. According to Khalitov (2012), the choice is made by the interaction subject consciously or unconsciously. What does make an influence on this choice? Estimated factors influencing the choice are: 1) personal features of the interaction subjects; 2) situation in which they interact. Most likely, the images (ideas) about these factors in the memory matrix of the interaction subjects. Changes in these images in the memory matrix of the interaction subjects lead to changes in the social interaction.

When it arises a psychosocial dissonance (inconsistencies between perceptions and mental tension) between the interaction subjects in the pre-conflict state, as noted by Vasina and Khalitov (2014) two scenarios may be developed: conflict or cooperation. The interaction subject consciously or unconsciously makes the choice, which is influenced by the facilitator (observer) through a change of images (representations) of the interaction situation and personal features of the interaction subjects in the memory matrix of the interaction subjects. This problem was also considered in the paper of Zhuravlev (2017a) *Mentality, Society and Psychosocial Person and others* (Portugal and Perez, 2012).

The study problem was that research usually conducted in the aspect of a systemic approach in psychology according to Leonov (2013). Let us consider the study of the mechanism of social facilitation through the prism of ontological approach. The priority in the formulation of the ontological approach to human in Russian psychological science belongs to S. L. Rubinstein, who has analyzed the key aspects of being and has characterized a human as a subject of life, which was also mentioned in the following papers: Vasina (2016) *Facilitation in Social Interaction, Facilitation of Social Interaction Within the Ontological Approach*. Currently grounded by Leonov (2013), the ontological approach for conflict behavior is implemented in the study of socio-psychological phenomena by such researchers as Portugal and Perez (2012), as well as such Russian researchers as: Zhuravlev (2017b) (conflict behavior), Zhuravlev (2017b) (political behavior), Leonov (2013) (dependent behavior), Vasina (2016) (socially active behavior), etc.

2 Methodology

In our research, we rely on the systemic, ontological and probabilistic approaches. We use the concept of psychosocial dissonance, its model and mathematical (method) definition. On this basis, to identify the influence of the facilitator-observer on social interaction, we developed such techniques as Tendency to perceive facilitation impact in conflict situations (according to behavior strategies by K. Thomas in the modification of Vasina (2018) and Sensitivity to facilitation impacts (according to the test of communicative skills by L. Michelson in the modification by Vasina, 2016). We analyzed the communicative potential (joining, empathy, sensitivity to rejection)

according to Vasina (2016) test and volitional potential (externality-internality) according to J. Rotter test to determine the integral features of Readiness for facilitation. We conducted the aerobic research. The sample consisted of 300 students and employees of the Timiryasov Kazan Innovative University (Kazan), average age of 26 (± 7) years old (Rienties et al., 2013; Cory et al., 2011).

3 Results and discussion

The word facilitation is found in English not very frequently and almost exclusively in a psychological context - as a derivative of the verb to facilitate - to help, to ease, to promote, which is also specified by Holland (2011) in his research. It was shown that the presence of an observer has a noticeable effect on the implementation of almost every activity by a person. Moreover, the effect can be both positive and negative. The latter phenomenon is called social inhibition (suppression). Along with this theory, there are other theories (Fertonani et al., 2010). Let us single out the mechanism of social facilitation, where the presence of other people who do not directly interact at this moment — an outsider, an observer, or a facilitator, plays an important role. In our opinion, the main feature that changes the state levels during social interaction is identification: when changing personal to social, and vice versa, there is a change in the system state level. Thus, there are the system states (person, group): main and excited (modified). Our vision and understanding of the ontological approach is based on a 4-level model for describing socio-psychological phenomena (and its correspondence to a three-level model in philosophy):

1 - Separable, substantive, material, physiological level (real - from the point of view of philosophy); I am in the world; external world;

2 - Energy, field, emotional, level of sensations;

3 - Informational, mental, conceptual, categorical level (real - from the point of view of philosophy); the world in me; inner world;

4 - Nonseparable, transcendental, quantum level (possible - from the point of view of philosophy), the whole world in general.

Any psychological tasks can be viewed from the perspective of these four levels and the phase psychological space of the features. The interaction takes place at all four levels at the same time, but any one level dominates at any given moment. Since the person who is the facilitator is not important, but the role that he/she plays in the interaction is important, let us consider the levels:

Level 1 - the facilitator is perceived as a separable person who can mechanically influence an individual.

Level 2 - the facilitator is perceived as a mass organizer, creating sensations and emotions.

Level 3 - the facilitator is perceived as an idea, raising to a new level.

Level 4 - the facilitator is perceived as everything, that is, as God, as a patron, beloved and loving, giving, etc.

Based on the foregoing, we will give the following definition of the concept of social facilitation - it is an increase (change) in the productivity of the social activity of the subject (individual, social group, or society) due to the actualization (change) in the subject's mind of the image (representation) of another subject and situation in the continuum; a facilitation-inhibition in the presence of an observer (facilitator).

Vasina (2018) proposed the concept of facilitating social interaction on the basis of diagnostics of sensitivity to facilitative influence according to an adapted test by L. Michelson and a tendency to

perceive the facilitative influence in conflict situations according to the behavioral strategies by K. Thomas. Diagnostics of communicative potential: adherence, empathy, sensitivity to rejection according to Vasina (2016) test, fully consistent with the facilitation position by K. Rogers and the basics of humanistic psychology, pedagogy, and social policy. Based on the correlation analysis, it was proved that the main facilitator's features may include unconditional acceptance, empathic listening and understanding, congruence of self-expression and manifestation of one's feelings. Table 1 presents the empirically obtained correlations, where Δ is the difference in the values of the behavior strategy (BS) in the presence of an observer-facilitator and without a facilitator, that is, $\Delta = BS (\text{with } F) - BS (\text{without } F)$. Let us analyze, for example, the correlation: $(\Delta_{\text{collab}} \div \text{collab}) = -0.55$. The more important the collaboration feature (x) is, the less influence the facilitator-observer has on the feature change (Δx), since $\Delta x \sim k \cdot x$. Similarly, for other behavioral strategies obtained in an empirical study, all diagonal correlation coefficients for all behavioral strategies are negative and rather high. This suggests that the observer-facilitator maintains group sampling rates for these features.

Δx	Confrontation	Cooperation	Compromise	Avoidance	Assignment
Confrontation	-0.36	0.10	0.15	0.13	0.08
Cooperation	0.08	-0.55	0.00	0.17	0.25
Compromise	0.14	0.08	-0.48	-0.06	0.28
Avoidance	0.01	0.26	0.14	-0.38	-0.04
Assignment	0.20	0.16	0.12	0.07	-0.55
Identification-Personal	-0.30	0.33	0.08	-0.20	0.16
Identification-Social	0.30	-0.33	-0.08	0.20	-0.16
Passivity	0.21	0.34	0.03	-0.24	-0.38
Activity	-0.21	-0.34	-0.03	0.24	0.38

Table 1- Correlation dependencies of the influence of the facilitator on the strategy of behavior

Δx	Identification-Personal	Identification-Social	Passivity	Activity
Confrontation	-0.24	0.24	0.21	-0.21
Cooperation	0.24	-0.24	0.32	-0.32
Compromise	-0.12	0.12	-0.01	0.01
Avoidance	-0.26	0.26	-0.25	0.25
Assignment	0.35	-0.35	-0.34	0.34
Identification-Personal	-0.48	0.48	0.01	-0.01
Identification-Social	0.48	-0.48	-0.01	0.01
Passivity	0.06	-0.06	-0.45	0.45
Activity	-0.06	0.06	0.45	-0.45

Continuation of Table 1- Correlation dependencies of the influence of the facilitator on the strategy of behavior

Table 2 shows the empirical correlation data between the behavior strategy (X) and the change in the DC coefficient ΔK_D in the presence of an observer-facilitator. Comparing both tables, one can see the difference in the correlation coefficients: diagonal elements, changing their quantitative value, remain qualitatively the same (with a negative sign). However, the off-diagonal elements differ in their behavioral strategies.

ΔK_D ↓	X →	Confrontation	Cooperation	Compromise	Avoidance	Assignment	Identification- Personal	Identification- Social	Passivity	Activity
Confrontation		-0.41	0.15	0.24	-0.03	0.14	-0.30	0.30	0.17	-0.17
Cooperation		0.13	-0.49	0.03	0.23	0.12	0.29	-0.29	0.28	-0.28
Compromise		0.14	-0.11	-0.56	0.34	0.12	0.18	-0.18	0.16	-0.16
Avoidance		0.07	0.10	0.06	-0.42	0.16	-0.22	0.22	-0.17	0.17
Assignment		0.19	0.26	0.13	-0.09	-0.52	0.15	-0.15	-0.44	0.44
Identification- Personal		-0.32	0.21	0.09	-0.28	0.34	-0.45	0.45	0.09	-0.09
Identification- Social		0.32	-0.21	-0.09	0.28	-0.34	0.45	-0.45	-0.09	0.09
Passivity		0.25	0.25	-0.06	-0.25	-0.26	0.02	-0.02	-0.42	0.42
Activity		-0.25	-0.25	0.06	0.25	0.26	-0.02	0.02	0.42	-0.42

Table 2- Empirical data: the correlation between the behavioral strategy (X) and the change in the DC coefficient (ΔK_D) in the presence of a facilitator

Thus, the negative correlation between x and its change in Δx for one feature (x) indicates the resistance of this feature to changes in the facilitation process, the facilitator's influence. The more pronounced are the features of social interaction (behavior strategy), the less is the facilitator's impact on this feature (diagonal elements in the correlation matrix). The essence of social facilitation lies in non-directive management using psychological mechanisms for changing ideas in the presence of an observer in a pre-conflict situation. The proposed diagnostic complex for measuring the difference in values in the presence and absence of the facilitator-observer allowed us empirically identifying susceptibility to facilitative effects of the subjects, associated with a high level of empathy, adherence, sensitivity to rejection, communicative tolerance, and the ability to switch from personal to social identification with change in the behavior strategies in a conflict situation and with high externality.

4 Summary

We have found out that susceptibility to facilitation impact is a change in the parameters of communicative competence, strategies of behavior in conflict situations, personal identity and social activity under the influence of the presence of a third person in social interaction. Readiness for the social interaction facilitation is associated with the optimal values of communicative competence, volitional potential and choice of behavior strategy in a conflict situation, it is an integral feature of a professional, which is made up of optimal values of readiness for organizational communication, communicative (empathy, sensitivity, affiliation) and volitional (externalism-internality) potential, self-control in communication.

5 Conclusions

Within the framework of the ontological approach, the mechanism of social facilitation consists in considering the facilitator as an observer, who helps to look at oneself and the situation from the outside and change the subject's from personal to social by his presence. We empirically clarified the susceptibility to facilitation impact and readiness for social facilitation, which are associated with the optimal values of communicative competence, volitional potential and choice of behavioral strategies in a conflict situation.

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