

Attitude towards Social Conformity and Social Influence

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ABSTRACT

As the society sets certain norms to keep its people in safety, harmony and for smooth functioning, likewise social groups establish norms for its members to follow, thus inspiring among members the idea of fair play. The present study is aimed at understanding the attitude towards conformity and group influence. The study was conducted on 200 participants from the age of 17 to 47. Of the 200 participants, 100 were females and 100 were males. Google forms were used as a means of data collection. The methodology adopted for this research was descriptive survey method. A self-developed questionnaire consisting of 15 items with multiple options was developed. Descriptive analysis and percentage analysis were computed for comparison and to observe the general trends as indicated by the data. The results of the survey show that the majority of the participants, though from a collective society value and respect the opinion of being unique and true to oneself at the same time it shows the participants belief about the positive aspects of conformity.

Keywords: *Attitude, Social Conformity, Social Influence*

Conformity is the predisposition to change one's beliefs or behavior to match that of the others. Imitation is the bias in conformity with changes in one's beliefs concerning others. Individualist cultures such as those of the western underline personal freedom and independence; young people are given an honest treat on independence, and creativity is encouraged. Group pressure to conform is viewed as an impairment of private autonomy. On the other hand socialist cultures such as those in the eastern underline the importance of ties to the associative bunch. Conformity is seen as a way to be allied with others. The willingness to adjust oneself in accordance with group norms is seen as acceptable and an essential trait one must have. One reason for conformity is that the behavior of other people repeatedly provides beneficial information. Another reason that increases conformity is the desire to be liked or accepted by others. Many studies confirmed that the more ambiguous or difficult the task, the more likely people are to conform to opinions and judgments. The largeness of a group, the unanimity on group opinions and obligations to the society can all

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affect conformity. On occasion, a forceful minority together with a new accepted wisdom and a unique viewpoint may successfully trade the spot on the majority. Humans vary in their assent to do things that publicly discriminate among them. Some blend in with the group and others decide to be unique, this indicates the desire for individuality

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Rosander & Eriksson (2012) investigated conformity on the Internet, the role of task difficulty and gender differences. The intention of the study was to investigate conformity behavior in use of the Internet. Four assumptions were tested by a survey containing knowledge and logic questions. The participants in the Conformity group (n =477) 52.6% conformed at least once, with an average 13.0% of participants conforming to each critical question. The conformity increased with higher task difficulty, both subjective and objective. The results showed higher conformity for men on both difficult and logical questions.

Duck and Fortey (2003) conducted a study on the role of distinctiveness in adolescent conformity. The results from a survey of adolescents, aged 14-17 years, reviewing individual needs for distinctiveness and inclusion, peer-group identification, perceived group distinctiveness, and conformity. Results indicate that the need for distinctiveness predicted peer-group conformity for adolescents high in the need for inclusion and for adolescents who perceived their peer group as highly distinctive.

Objectives

The following were the objectives of the study

1. The objective of the study was to investigate the attitude towards social conformity and group influence
2. To examine the gender differences towards social conformity
3. To assess the strength of people's desire for individuality
4. To examine why people conform
5. To examine when people conform
6. To examine people's commitment to their social group

METHODOLOGY

The methodology adopted was descriptive survey method.

Sample

Convenience sampling and snowball methods were used. The sample consisted of 200 participants in the age range 17-47 in this sample the number of students and adults were 100 female and 100 male participants.

Tools used: A self-developed questionnaire consisting of 15 items to measure attitude towards conformity, the respondents had to rate themselves using a seven-point Likert format – very untrue of me, untrue of me, Somewhat untrue of me, neutral, somewhat true of me, true of me, very true of me was developed by authors.

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Data collection

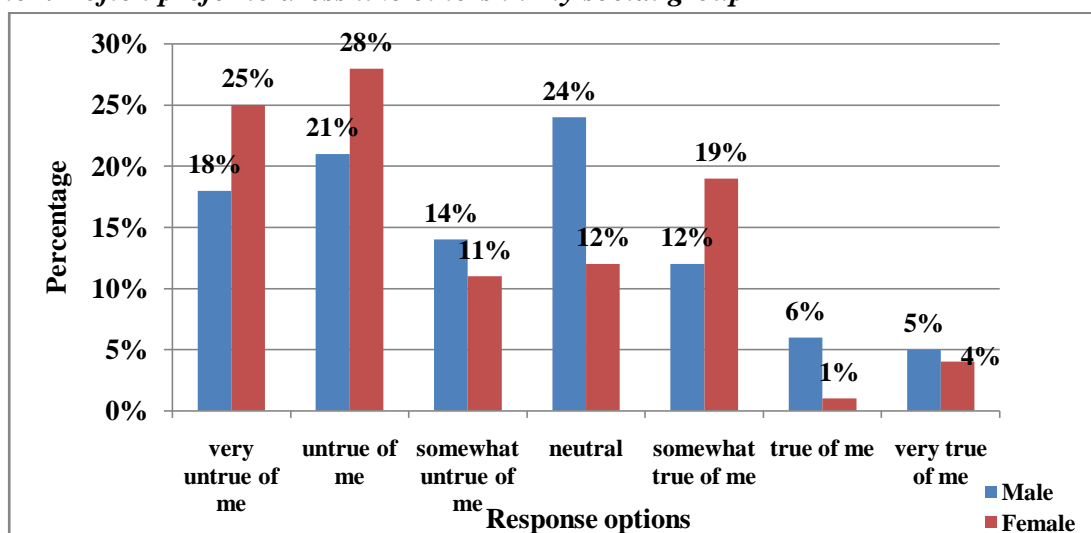
Participants were invited to participate in an online survey that was distributed through social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Twitter, Instagram, and Line. Data was collected online using Google forms.

Statistics used

Descriptive analysis and percentage analysis were computed for comparison and to observe general trends indicated by the data.

RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION

Table1: I often prefer to dress like others in my social group



Interpretation

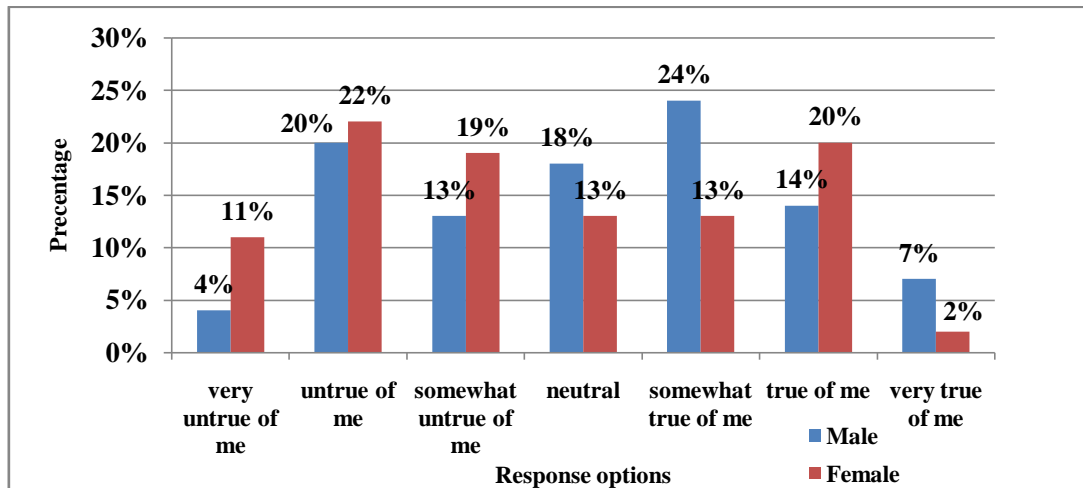
From the graph, it is seen that majority of the females and males do not prefer to dress like others in their social group.

Amongst them a few (25%) females reported very untrue of me, a few (28%) reported untrue of me, and not more than (11%) reported somewhat untrue of me. A few (14%) males have reported it's somewhat untrue of me, a few (21%) reported it's untrue of me and a few (18%) reported it's very untrue of me.

Comparing male and female responses, a greater number of female respondents reported do not prefer to dress like others in their social group. This may be because they strive for individualism and like to be their unique self.

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Table 2: I often go along with my social group to get along with them



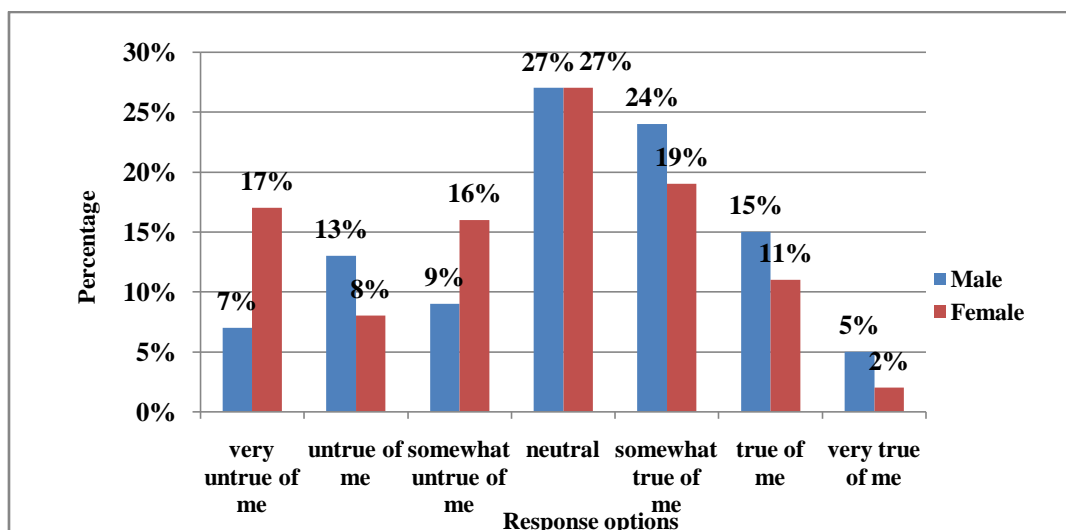
Interpretation

From the graph, it is seen that majority of the males often go along with their social group to get along with them and a majority of females do not.

Amongst them a few (18%) males and a few (13%) females are neutral to this opinion, a few (24%)_males reported it's somewhat true of me, a few (14%) reported it's true of me and a small amount (7%) reported it's very true of me. A few (11%) females reported it's very untrue of me, a few (22%) reported untrue of me, a few (19%) reported somewhat untrue of me.

This may be because they want to feel belonged and be accepted by their social group.

Table 3: I tend to follow my social group's opinion or idea when situations are ambiguous



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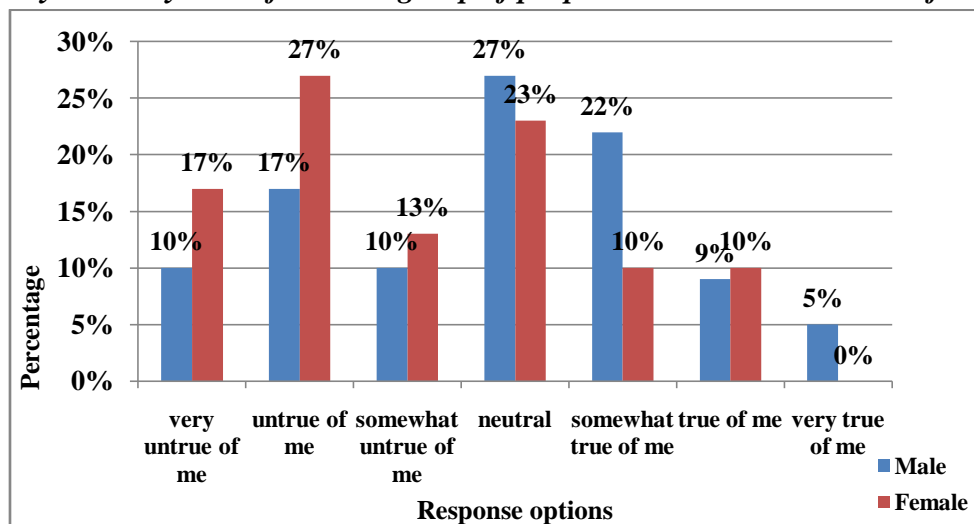
Interpretation

From the graph, it is seen that majority of the males have a tendency to follow their social group's opinion when situations are ambiguous. However, it is seen that the female respondents don't have this tendency.

Amongst them a few (24%) males reported it's somewhat true of me, a few (15%) reported it's true of me and very few (5%) reported it's very true of me. A few (19%) females reported it's somewhat true of me, a few (11%) reported it's true of me and only (2%) reported it's very true of me.

This may be because they find it hard to trust their intuition when they are unsure of what's going on.

Table 4: My tendency to conform to a group of people increases with the size of the group



Interpretation

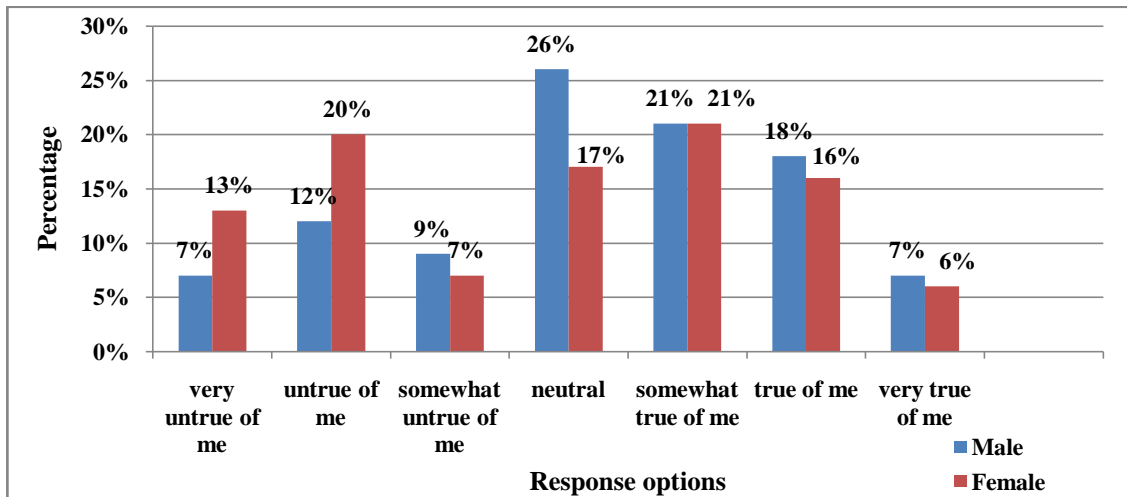
From the graph, it is seen that majority of the females do not conform to a group of people when the size of the group increases. Similarly, for the males, it is also seen that a majority do not conform to a group of people when the size of the group increases.

Amongst them a few (13%) females reported it's somewhat untrue of me, a few (27%) reported it's untrue of me; a few (17%) reported it's very untrue of me and a few (23%) reported neutral. A few (22%) males reported it's somewhat true of me and a very few (9%) reported it's true of me.

Comparing male and female responses, a larger number of females reported that they do not conform to a group of people when the size of the group increases.

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Table 5: I like to follow and associate myself with appealing group

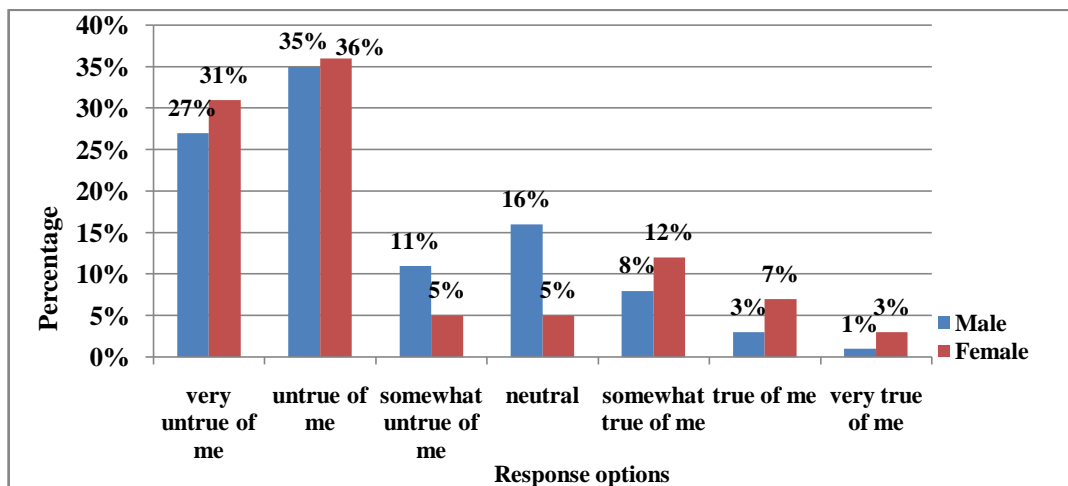


Interpretation

From the graph, it is seen that majority of the males are like to follow and associate themselves with an appealing group. Likewise, a similar number of females also like to follow and associate themselves with appealing group.

Amongst them a few (26%) males reported neutral a few (21%) reported it's somewhat true of me, a few (18%) reported true of me and a very few (7%) reported very true of me. A few (17%) females reported neutral and a few (21%) reported somewhat true of me, a few (16%) reported true of me, a very small number (7%) reported very true of me. This may be because they feel associating with an appealing groups will help them gain popularity and will open to them various opportunities to grow.

Table 6: I do things because everyone does it



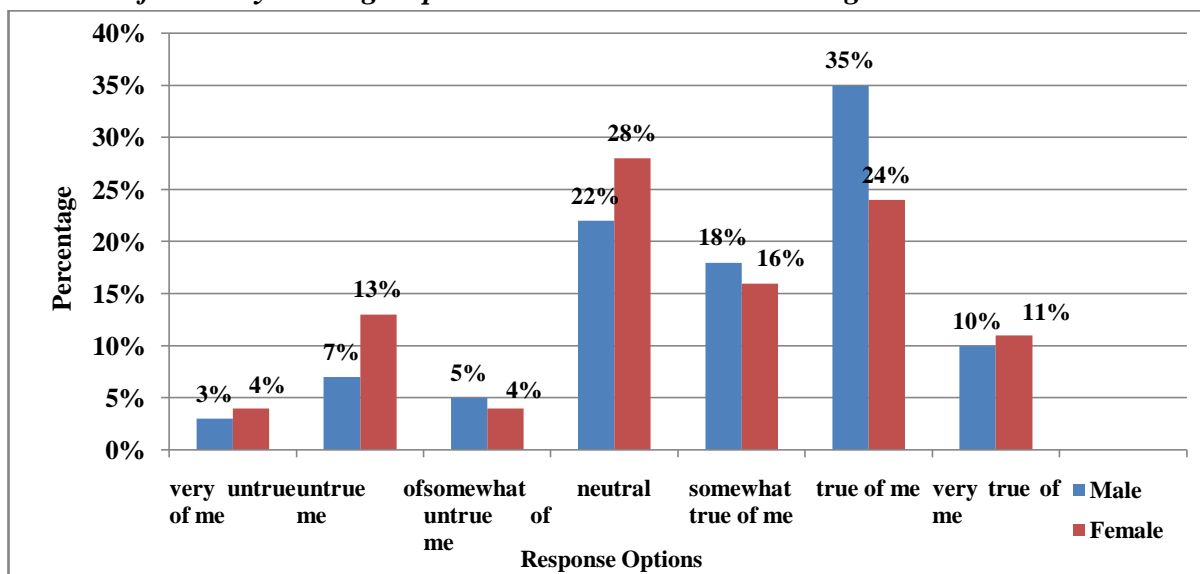
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Interpretation

From the graph, it is seen that majority of the females and males do not do things because everyone does it.

Amongst them Less than half (31%) females report very untrue of me, less than half (36%) reported untrue of me, a minority (5%) reported somewhat untrue of me and a very few (5%) are neutral. A few (16%) males reported neutral, a few (11%) reported it's somewhat true of me, less than half (35%) reported untrue of me and a few (27%) reported very untrue of me. Comparing male and female responses its is seen that there is a chiefly little dissimilarity in opinion about doing things because everyone does it, a greater number of males reported that they do not do things because everyone does it.

Table 7: I follow my social group because I like and value their goals

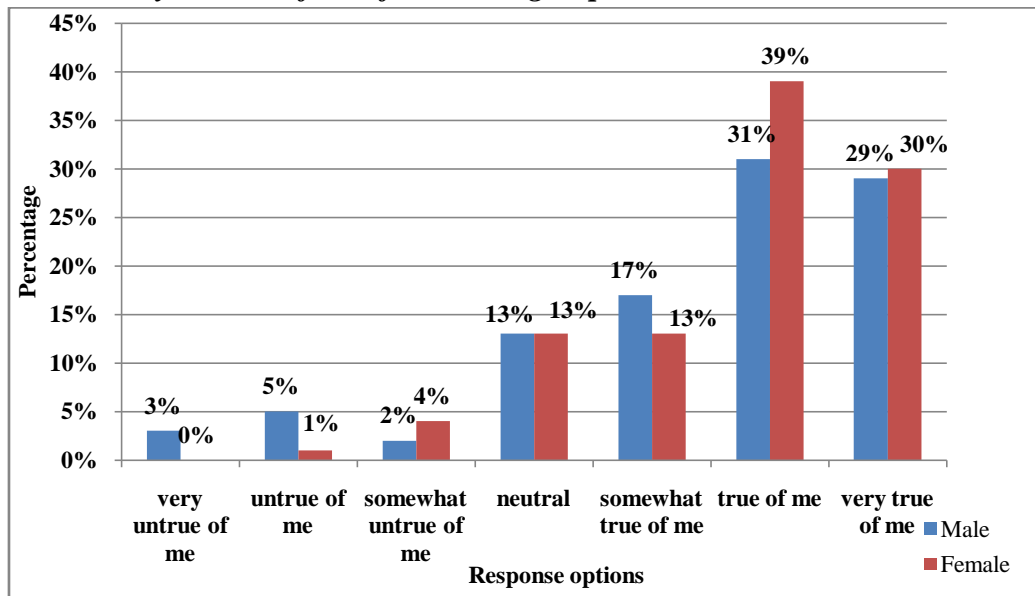


Interpretation

From the graph, it is seen that majority of the males follow their social group because they like and value their goals and similarly a majority of females also like to follow their social group because they like and value their goals. Amongst them a few (22%) males reported neutral, a few (18%) reported it's somewhat true of me, less than half (35%) reported it's true of me and a very small number(10%) reported it's very true of me .A few (28%) females reported neutral, a few (16%) reported somewhat true of, a few (24%) reported true of me and a minority of (11%) reported very true of me.

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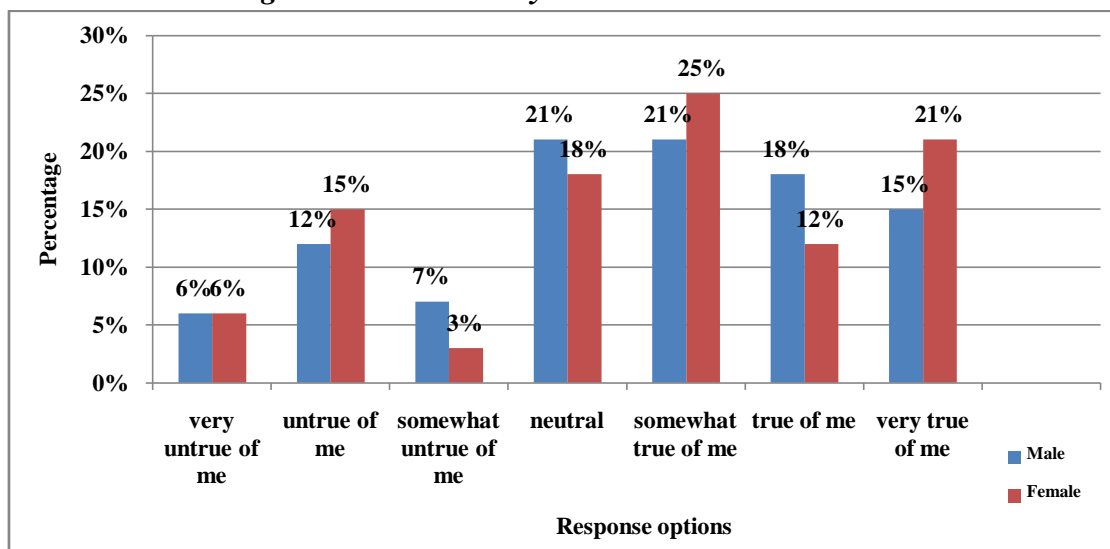
Table 8: I have my own set of beliefs within a group



Interpretation

From the graph, it is seen that majority of the females and males have their own set of beliefs within a group. Amongst them a few (13%) females reported neutral, a few (13%) reported as somewhat true of me less than half (39%) reported true of me and less than half (30%) say it is very true of me. A few (13%) males reported neutral, a few (17%) reported it's somewhat true of me, less than half (31%) reported true of me and a few (29%) reported very true of me. Comparing male and female responses, more females reported that they have their own set of beliefs within a group.

Table 9: I have a strong desire to be liked by others



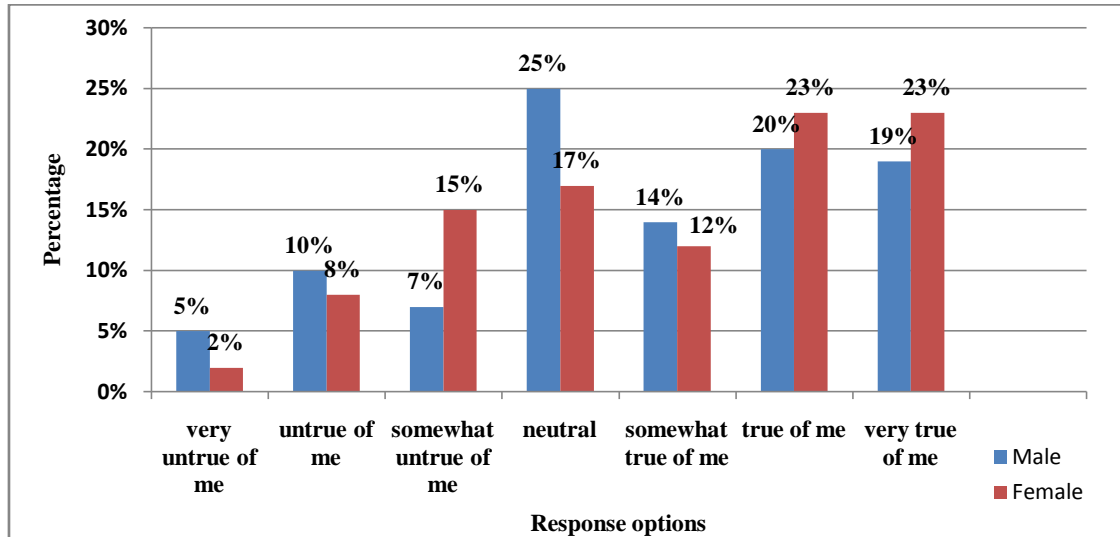
Interpretation

From the graph, it is seen that majority of the females have a strong desire to be liked by others and a similar number of males also a strong desire to be liked by others. Amongst them

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a few (18%) females reported neutral, a few (25%) reported somewhat true of me, a few (12%) reported true of me and a few (21%) reported somewhat true of me. A few (21%) males reported neutral, a few (21%) reported it's somewhat true of me, a few (18%) reported true of me and a few (15%) reported very true of me. This may be because they *want* to avoid internal bad feelings such as fear of rejection

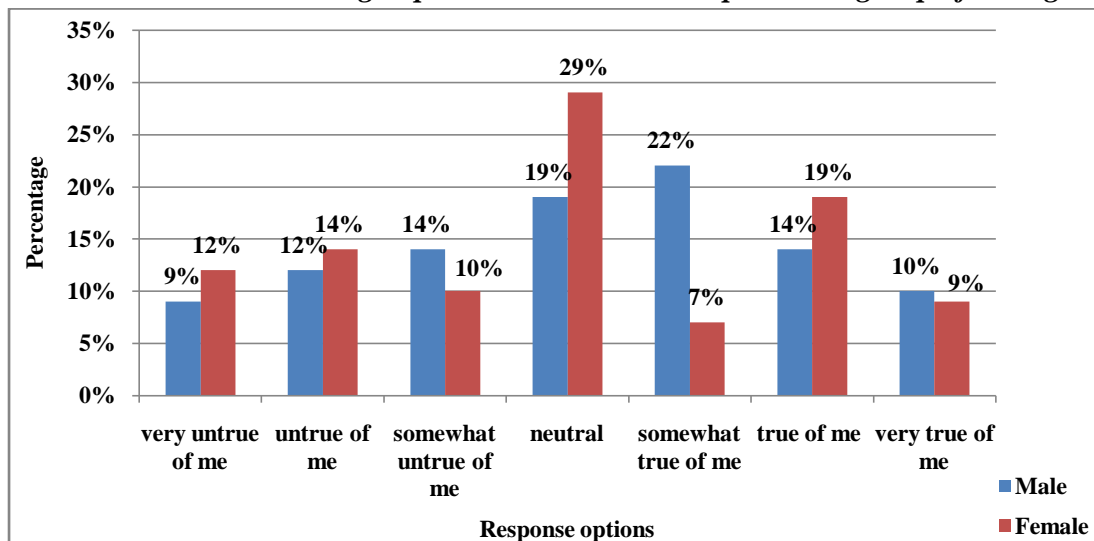
Table 10: I prefer to stand out in public



Interpretation

From the graph, it is seen that majority of the females prefer to stand out in public and similarly a majority of males also prefer to stand out in public. Amongst them a few (17%) females reported neutral, a few (12%) reported somewhat true of me, a few (23%) reported true of me and a few (23%) reported very true of me. A few (25%) males reported neutral say, a few (14%) reported somewhat true of me, a few (20%) reported true of me and a few (19%) reported very true of me.

Table 11: I would be willing to present a controversial point to a group of strangers



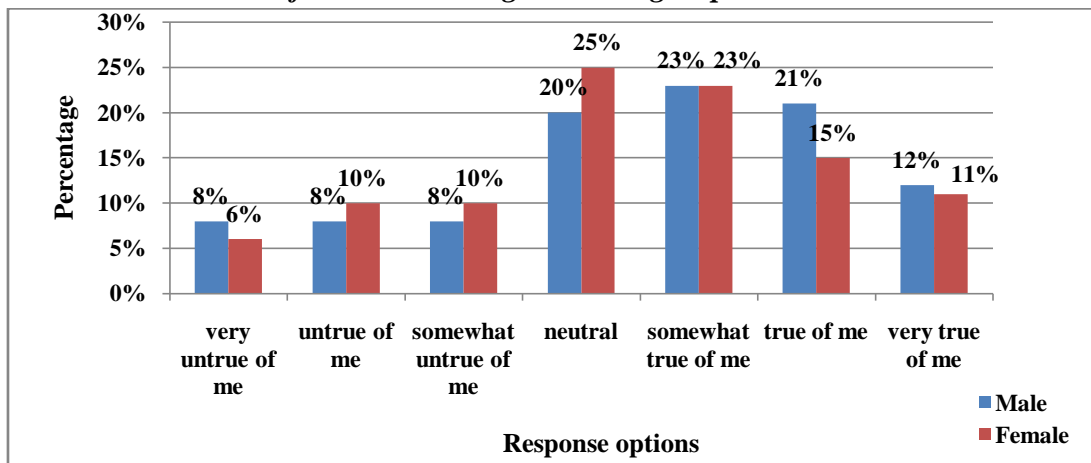
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Interpretation

From the graph, it is seen that majority of the males would be willing to present a controversial point to a group of strangers and a majority of females, on the other hand, wouldn't be willing to present a controversial point to a stranger.

Amongst them a few (19%) males reported neutral, a few (22%) reported somewhat true of me, a few (14%) reported true of me and a small number (10%) reported very true of me .A few (29%) females reported neutral, a very small number (7%) reported somewhat true of me a few (19%) reported true of me and very few (9%) reported very true of me.

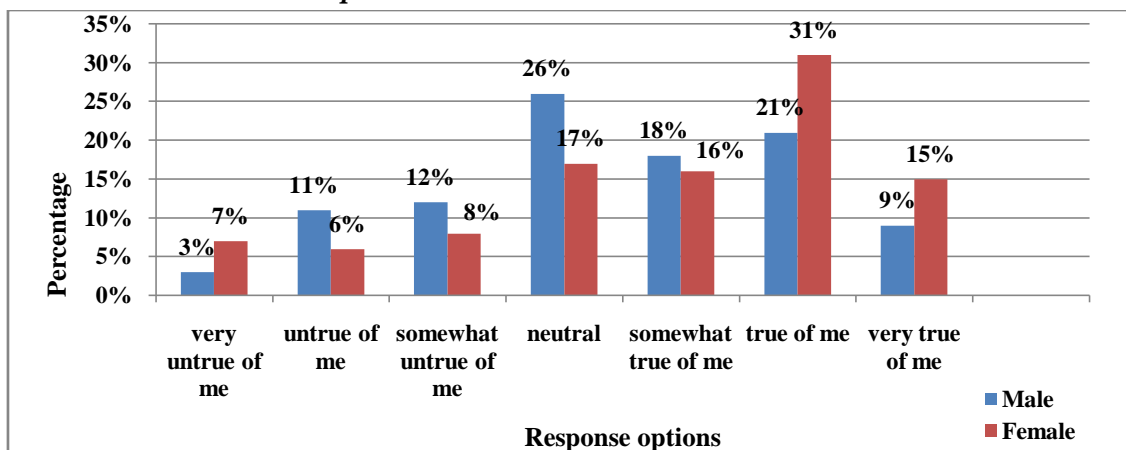
Table 12: I am more comfortable blending in with a group



Interpretation

From the graph, it is seen that male respondents are more comfortable blending in with a group and similarly a majority female respondents prefer the same. Amongst them a few (20%) males reported neutral, a few (23%) reported somewhat true of me, a few (21%) reported true of me and a few (12%) reported very true of me. A few (25%) females reported neutral, a few (23%) reported somewhat true of me, a few (15%) reported true of me and a small number (12%) reported very true of me. Comparing male and female responses it is apparent that a more number of female reported that they are comfortable blending in within a group.

Table 13: I am reluctant to speak out in class unless I am correct



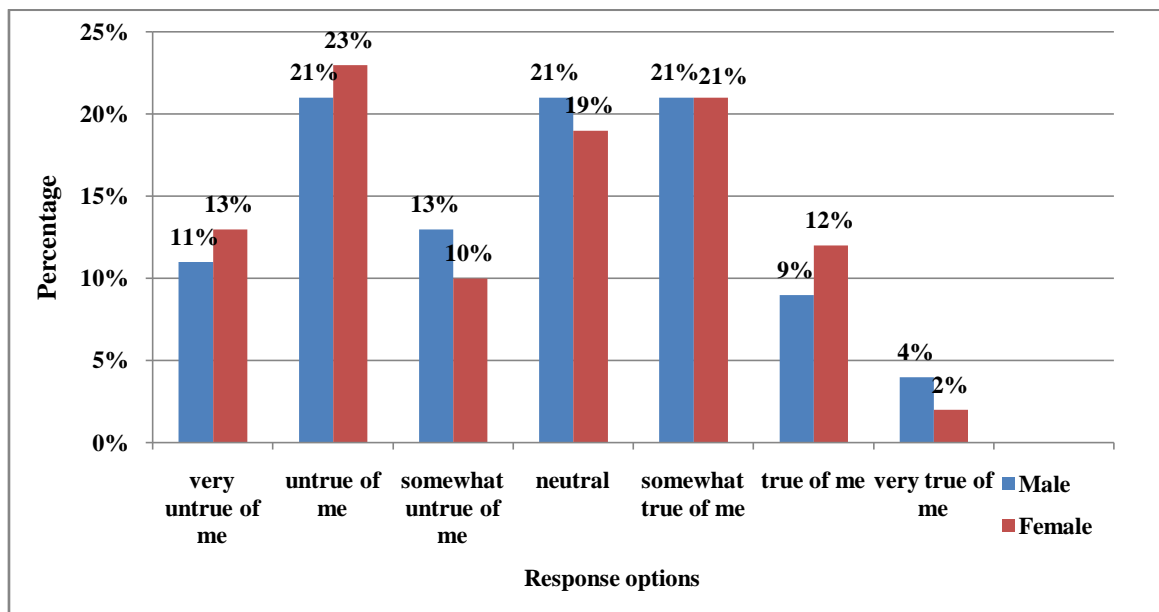
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Interpretation

From the graph, it is seen that majority of males and females are reluctant to speak out in class unless they correct. Amongst them a few (26%) males reported neutral, a few (18%) say reported somewhat true of me, a few (21%) reported it as true of me and a minority of (9%) reported very true of me. A few (17%) females reported neutral, a few (16%) reported somewhat true of me, less than half (31%) reported true of me, and a few (15%) reported very true of me.

Comparing male and female responses it is evident that a greater numbers of female respondents reported they are reluctant to speak in class unless they are correct than the male respondents.

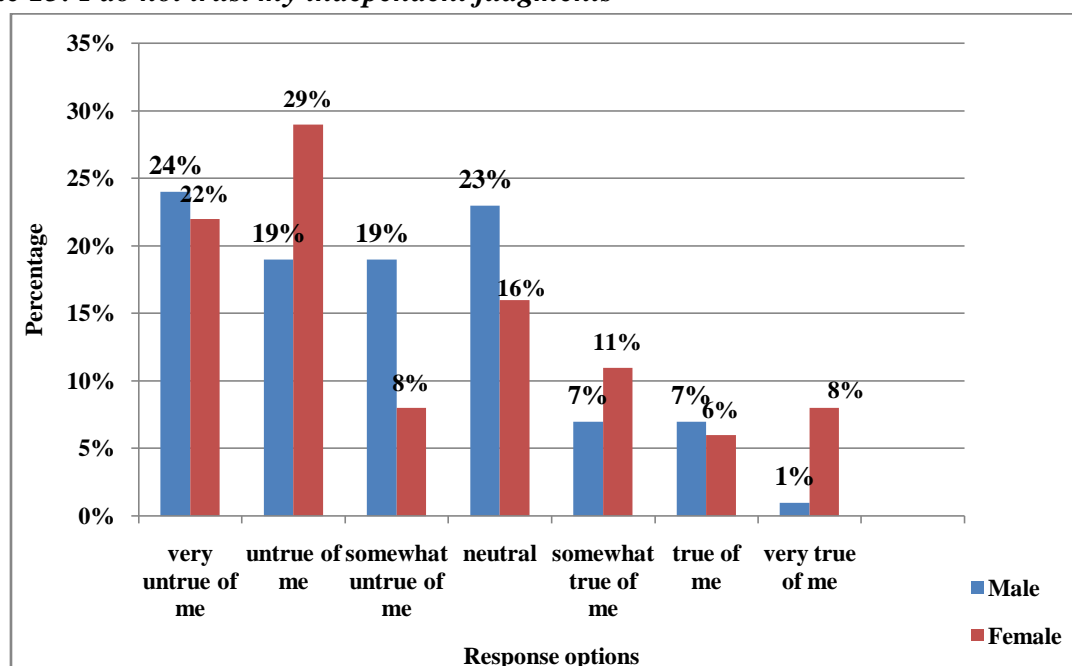
Table 14: I alter my behavior or acts to that of the group to avoid being rejected



Interpretation

From the graph, it is seen that majority of the females do not alter their behavior or acts to that of the group to avoid being rejected, likewise, a similar number of male respondents say they do alter their behavior or acts to that of the group to avoid being rejected. Amongst them a few (19%) females report neutral, a very small number (10%) report it's somewhat untrue of me, a few (23%) say it is untrue of me and few (13%) reported it's very untrue of me. A few (21%) males reported neutral, a few (12%) reported it's somewhat untrue of me, a few (21%) reported untrue of me and very few (11%) reported it's very untrue of me.

Table 15: I do not trust my independent judgments



Interpretation

From the graph, it is seen that majority of the males trust their judgments and similarly a majority of females trust their judgments. Amongst them a few (23%) males reported neutral, a few (19%) reported it’s somewhat untrue of me, a few (19%) reported untrue of me and (24%) reported very untrue of me. A few (16%) females reported neutral, very few (8%) reported somewhat untrue of me, a few (29%) reported untrue of me and a few (22%) reported it’s very untrue of me. Comparing male and female responses, more males reported that they trust their independent judgments.

CONCLUSION

1. Most of the **male and female** respondents do not prefer to dress like others in their social group, likewise, they do not have the tendency to conform to a large group nor do they do things because everyone does it.
2. A majority of **male and female** respondents like to associate themselves with appealing groups and value their group’s goals. At the same time, they like to hold their own beliefs within a group and have a strong tendency to trust their independent judgments.
3. Most of **the male and female** respondents hold a negative opinion about altering their behavior or acts to that of their social group to avoid rejection.
4. A large number of **male respondents** often like to go along with their social group to get along with also they have a tendency to follow their social group’s opinion when situations are ambiguous.
5. A majority of both male and female respondents like to stand out in public.
6. Majority of the respondents are reluctant to speak out in class unless they are correct but at the same time a larger number of male respondents agree that they would present a controversial point to a group of strangers.

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Limitations

1. The research was done with only 200 participants.
2. The geographical area was restricted only to Chennai city.

Suggestions for Further Research

1. A large sample could have been studied.
2. Other psychological and social variables related to conformity can be studied.

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