

The Role of Guilt and Shame in Social Psychology

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Abstract:

This article substantiates the significance of the phenomena of guilt and shame in social psychology, as well as the significance of these phenomena in the process of adjusting the social behavior of individuals in social structures. The article also examines the similar and different attributes of guilt and shame. A scientific and psychological analysis of studies on this issue is underway.

Keywords: guilt, shame, social behavior, society, socialization, moral regulator, manipulation, selfishness.

Introduction

Feelings of guilt and shame attract the interest of several disciplines, such as theology, philosophy, psychology and psychoanalysis, and are also a common topic in literature. These may be minor everyday experiences or serious psychological restrictions that impede the ability to live a useful life.

Guilt and shame are part of the human being. The formation of the subject's ability to experience shame and guilt is due to his inclusion in social interaction. That is why in the works of psychologists referring to these phenomena in their studies, their socio-cultural conditioning is indicated. In the process of regulating a person's social behavior in such complex social systems as society, culture, guilt and shame play a significant role. Guilt and shame are mental phenomena that relate exclusively to the sphere of social emotions. Their source and driving force is a person in the process of socialization. The significant role of guilt and shame in social psychology is due not so much to social background as to the effects exerted on the relations of individuals and entire groups of people.

Literature Review:

In psychology, shame and guilt are often discussed together, analyzing their similarities and differences, as well as their possible relationship. One of the allegations was that they are different expressions of what should be considered the same effect, that guilt is a kind of moral shame (Tomkins 1963; Izard 1977). Some researchers regard them as similar emotions and argue that both of them are associated with the perception of themselves as a causative agent (Fridjaetal. 1989; Roseman 1984; Smithand Ellsworth 1985). Pain, tension, and arousal were presented as common symptoms (Wickeretal. 1983), and it is noted that both are dysphoric feelings that include negative self-esteem (Niedenthaetal. 1994)

In general, guilt is associated with human actions in terms of violating boundaries or violating rules, while shame is associated with a negative assessment of the self. It was noted that situations of shame and guilt are often the same, but otherwise they are different experiences. Another suggestion is that shame is a stronger and more incapable emotion than guilt (Lewis 1971; Lynd1958; Wickeret al. 1983). In addition, these two phenomena involve other people in fundamentally different ways (DeRivera 1977; Rawls 1963). Shame entails a more

obvious sense of negative self-attitude towards others (Lewis, 1971). The connection of shame with oneself underlines the element of the desire to hide oneself, and some authors note that, being ashamed, a person renounces his personality in favor of another person (cf. Kinston, 1983; Liechtenstein, 1963).

The main part:

Failure, misconduct, wrongdoing entail a position called guilt. It would seem simple, but in fact it turns out, it is not so easy to establish guilt. In addition, there are at least about twenty different forms of guilt. Naturally, behind each type of guilt there is a certain theoretical idea and a certain section of the real phenomenon, real life.

Guilt is often perceived as a humble tin, sometimes as an aggressive and vengeful act, sometimes it is considered a painful consciousness, and sometimes an agony of conscience. The attribution of guilt acts as a special type of social explanation, but it is often used to openly substitute genuine causes and perpetrators. Guilty experiences are associated with other people's anxiety. Yet the most direct associations are associated with punishment, regret, remorse and remorse.

Guilt is the state of a person who violates moral standards, or legal norms, or religious codes. Although guilt arises as a result of improper action, the main thing lies not so much in formal neglect or violation of social laws, but in causing harm, harming someone or something. Indeed, the essence of evil consists in ruin, suppression, and humiliation. Guilt is a complex psychological phenomenon with its own structure and functions. In the structure of guilt, researchers identify three components: emotional, cognitive and motivational. The emotional component includes unpleasant internal stress. If a person pleads guilty, he will feel a desire to correct, to compensate for the damage. This is a motivational component of guilt.

The cognitive component of guilt is more complex and important. First of all, a person must realize the harmful consequences of his behavior, and this

requires the ability to make causal conclusions. E.S.Kubani identified 4 components of the cognitive component related to the beliefs of a person about his role in the event, which caused an experience of guilt:

- 1) acceptance of responsibility for negative consequences;
- 2) self-condemnation;
- 3) the realization that a person has violated his moral principles;
- 4) thoughts on how to avoid or prevent a negative outcome [5].

Psychologists have no consensus on the function that guilt performs. Most psychologists agree that it would be impossible for the human community to live and develop normally without a sense of guilt. Some psychologists claim that guilt helps us curb the "beast within us" - our anger, lust and greed. Others believe that we learn from our mistakes and, thanks to a sense of guilt, later fell into a similar situation, we restrain ourselves from doing evil things, remembering the punishment and negative emotions that are caused by remorse. Finally, there is an approach where guilt is seen as a kind of stimulating factor that encourages us to fulfill our responsibilities in school and work, in relation to children, spouse, parents, and society.

But still it must be emphasized that, according to most researchers, guilt performs a number of functions. First, it acts as a moral regulator to maintain socially acceptable behavior. In this regard, Edna Rowling distinguishes between two forms of guilt: reactive and preventive. Reactive guilt is an emotional reaction of an individual to a real violation of his own internalized norms of acceptable behavior, understood in psychology as an emotion or guilt-state. Preventive guilt is an emotional experience associated with a possible violation of internalized norms, understood in psychology as a feeling or fault-trait. In turn, preventive guilt helps prevent misconduct.

Secondly, being an emotion of self-reliance or a self-esteeming emotion, guilt acts as an internal regulator. A person is capable of a responsible,

moral act and can judge how legitimate, fair and legal his move was. In this regard, the American researcher J.P. Tanney defines guilt as a feeling of self-reliance that arises as a result of a person's negative assessment of his or her specific behavior and is accompanied by tension, repentance and regret, and also motivates a person to atone for or correct his deed [5].

Guilt is the recognition of the inadmissibility of one's behavior, action or inaction, which can be committed or only conceived. A person experiencing guilty feelings has a subconscious desire to receive punishment for his behavior and inhibition of further activity occurs, which can manifest itself in a paralyzing effect. Such a reaction can be observed in patients with depression, inhibited, lethargic and accusing themselves of sinful acts.

Guilt is a person's attitude to his behavior, action or inaction, which is incorrect from his point of view, meaning their understanding of the inadmissibility of this, and guilt is a person's reaction to such an action that can be completely or only conceived. A person experiencing guilty feelings has a subconscious desire to get punished for his behavior and inhibition of further activity occurs, which can manifest itself in a paralyzing effect. Such a reaction can be observed in patients with depression, lethargic, inhibited, inactive and accusing themselves of sinful acts.

Shame is a socially determined phenomenon. Its mechanism is based on how a person sees himself in the eyes of the environment, on their perception and feelings. Shame creates situations when a person acts contrary to his ideas about social norms, morality and values. It is important to note that these ideas are subjective, because they are formed by the person himself, on the basis of his upbringing, life experience, worldview, understanding of the rules. Therefore, these ideas are often erroneous.

When studying the phenomena of guilt and shame, one should not forget that a person, in essence, is a social being with a highly developed sense of community. This is a historically determined fact, because in ancient times, in order to survive, people

had to group and create tribes. Belonging to society, a group of people, a family, and now plays a big role, because people are often focused on building trusting relationships with others. And the greater the intimacy and depth of these relations they want to achieve, the greater the risk of feeling shame, since the main reason for its occurrence is the fear of rejection. The more we strive for others, the more intolerable the idea that they will not accept us. Also at risk are perfectionists and people with excessive demands on themselves and others. After all, when the requirements are so high, and everything must be done perfectly, we create much more opportunities for self-dissatisfaction. When we are ashamed, we are ashamed of ourselves, part of our being, we are very rigid in our views on our Self.

Holistic perception is a very good and useful skill, but here it can play a cruel joke. It turns out that having committed one "bad" act (according to the person himself; it is not yet a fact that this act is really such), we automatically consider ourselves a bad person. Thus, we do not give ourselves a chance to make a mistake and "become unworthy in the eyes of society." There is such a psychological trap - "reading thoughts". The essence of this concept is clear - a person assumes that he knows what others think and feel (usually, based on the idea of his own thoughts and emotions). Does he really know everything about everyone? This is not just an erroneous and non-adaptive position, but also very self-absorbed. And she has a great influence on the formation of feelings of shame. Shame, in fact, is destructive, it is aimed at interrupting contact with the world, immersion in oneself, blocking activity. But thanks to its occurrence, we can verify our own moral and spiritual principles and coexist with other people.

K. Isard notes that an incorrect act can also cause shame, but in the case when the act is recognized as incorrect not at all, but only in connection with the recognition of one's defeat, one's bankruptcy, and the inappropriateness of this act. A person most often feels shame because he could not hide his misconduct [2].

The reason for experiencing shame may be acts that conflict with moral, ethical and religious norms. D. Osobel called this kind of shame "nemoral shame." "Moral shame," according to this author, arises from the condemnation of misconduct by other people from a moral standpoint. At the same time, it is not at all necessary to adhere to the same opinion about your act yourself. Osobel believes that the basis of shame is condemnation coming from outside, and it can be both real and imaginary. In contrast to shame, guilt does not depend on the real or perceived attitude of others to misconduct. The experience of guilt is caused by self-condemnation, accompanied by repentance and a decrease in self-esteem. According to Osobel, guilt is a kind of "moral shame."

G. Lewis sees the following difference between shame and guilt: the emotion of shame plays a significant role in the development of depressive illnesses, and the emotion of shame plays a significant role in the development of depressive illnesses, and the emotion of guilt causes obsessive-compulsive neurosis and paranoia. However, some authors do not agree with this view.

Sharing the experience of shame and guilt, K. Isard writes that shame temporarily obscures the mind, and guilt, on the contrary, stimulates thought processes associated, as a rule, with awareness of wrongdoing and with enumeration of opportunities to rectify the situation. It turns out that at first the fault arises, and then the reason for the guilt - misconduct - is realized. And this is not the only ambiguity in Isard's description of this feeling. So, he calls guilt either emotion or feeling, speaks of a situation of guilt, although it would be more logical to talk about a situation of misconduct [2].

According to some psychologists, guilt and shame help a person fight feelings such as anger, lust and greed. Others believe that we learn from our mistakes and, thanks to a feeling of guilt and shame, getting into a similar situation we restrain ourselves from evil deeds, remembering negative emotions and punishment. There is also an approach where guilt and shame are considered as factors that stimulate us

to fulfill our responsibilities in school and work, in relation to children, spouse, and society.

Guilt and shame are powerful tools for manipulating other people, since the partner's stimulation of these feelings leads to an increase in his pliability. As a result, the manipulator gets the opportunity to satisfy its needs. There is an opinion that manipulative attitudes towards other people develop in a person from childhood. Having learned to manipulate in childhood, a person in the future, without changing his habits, hones his "art". According to E.L. Dotsenko, to refer to those mental objects that are influenced by the manipulator, uses the term "target of influence" [3].

The best way to correct the feeling of shame or guilt, as evidenced by the desire to correct expressed by the guilty people, is to correct the evil that led to the feeling of guilt or shame. This may mean a simple apology for the violation, the replacement of something that was broken, or otherwise the correction of the damage.

However, after an apology, one can feel guilty and ashamed, and it is important to know how to reduce these feelings. This is often done through forgiveness of oneself, especially when a person does not receive forgiveness from the person whom he offended.

People who are prone to guilt often forgive themselves, while people who are prone to shame are less likely to forgive themselves. This is important because forgiving yourself is a way to overcome guilt and shame, without ignoring the real damage that may have been caused by this guilt and shame.

Another way to reduce shame is to try to turn them into guilt. That is, instead of feeling bad because of the harm they have done, you can instead feel bad because of the actions and behavior that they have demonstrated. While some people are more prone to guilt and some more prone to shame, this conscious transfer of guilt can occur. This can also probably be achieved by realizing that the damage done is indeed repairable, and that the feeling of shame from this damage can be overcome.

For those around us, especially in a formal working environment, our sense of guilt in itself does not bear any benefit. Adulthood requires us to correct mistakes, not self-flagellation. Responsibility and guilt are two different things. There is no such obligation - to be ashamed and feel guilty. The best thing you can do is improve the situation at the event level. If it is too late to correct, then tormenting yourself is all the more useless. It is enough to draw the right conclusions and continue life, given the experience gained.

Yes, guilt is an emotion with a minus sign. However, in life, a period can happen when something like a local revolution takes place in the emotional sphere. If a person suffers from selfishness, pride and greed, recognition of his errors is almost inevitably accompanied by guilt. And at such a moment, hiding from feelings of guilt and shame is more expensive for oneself. It's easier to calmly accept what is happening, to let this painful experience do its job - if destined, open your heart and weaken your sense of self-importance.

Shame is thought to be a much more powerful factor in stimulating depression than guilt. However, there is an opinion that it is not only accompanied by a greater risk of the collapse of the moral subject, but creates a greater likelihood of positive personality changes.

Studies show that guilt and shame are not equally moral emotions, namely guilt, in contrast to shame, is a more moral and adaptive emotion. The experience of shame, in contrast to the experience of guilt, is seen by people of Western culture as something negative and requiring concealment ("ashamed to be ashamed"). At the same time, psychologists were unable to find any definite distinction between situations generating shame and situations generating guilt. Obviously, this is due to the fact that both emotions reflect a common thing for them - conscience.

Shame can cause not only avoidance, but also retaliatory anger, hostility of a protective nature. In contrast, guilt is associated with a constructive constellation of emotions and behavioral reactions.

Guilt and shame are differently related to empathy. The tendency to guilt positively correlates with the scales of charm and empathy, while shame, on the contrary, is associated with a tendency to center on one's own distress.

Methods and Results:

Studies show that the tendency to shame, in contrast to guilt, is associated with a wide range of psychopathological symptoms. There are studies showing the different roles of guilt and shame in risky and deviant behavior (guilt is negatively associated with antisocial and risky behavior, while shame is positively correlated with intentions for illegal behavior).

Thus, empirical studies agree that guilt, in contrast to shame, actualizes the motivation for choosing a moral path in life, encourages a person to take responsibility and take a constructive position in relevant situations. Currently, the interest of psychologists mainly focuses on several areas. This is a study of the specific role of guilt and shame in specific subject areas: researchers examine shame in the context of eating disorders, linking shame to self-perception (Roberts, 1997), and trauma-related guilt (Blacher, 2000; Kubany et al., 2004; et al.).

Barrett and colleagues conducted an unexclaimed observation of two-year-old children who played with the experimenter's "favorite doll"; the doll's leg fell off after the experimenter left the room. After returning, the experimenter "noticed" a severed leg, told the child about it and only two minutes later (during which the behavior of the children was analyzed) informed the child that he (or she) was not to blame for the damage to the doll. Two main behavioral strategies were discovered: representatives of one part of the children ("correcting") immediately admitted and offered to somehow restore the doll, while the rest ("avoiding") avoided the experimenter's gaze and did not talk about the incident. If the former, according to the researchers, showed a sense of guilt, then the "avoidant", in which one could observe a "smile of

embarrassment” with a head turned away, showed a sense of shame.

In a subsequent paper, Barrett notes that these data indicate how young children perceive themselves as inadequate or who have good intentions in regulating social interaction. Thus, if Lewis considers the existence of shame as a prerequisite and emphasizes the development of the self-concept, Barrett believes that the experience of shame itself makes a significant contribution to the development of self-awareness, and highlights the functional relationship between social emotions and the development of social cohesion, subordination and harmony. At the same time, both researchers are convinced of the decisive role of the social context in the development of social emotions, despite the fact that in one case this role leads to the formation of a positive attitude towards others (a feeling of gratitude), and in the other to sociophobia. As the data of numerous observations show, when experiencing shame, individuals react by avoiding contacts, and when they feel guilty, they seek to correct the situation and come out of it with honor (Breslav G.M., 2004. P. 273-274.).

Summary

Relief from guilt has always been considered one of the main psychotherapeutic goals of gestalt therapy. According to Perls, wine, along with resentment, is the most common and worst type of incomplete action that violates the authenticity of communication. F. Perls believes that if a person allowed himself in the past to fully survive his guilt, he would not have experienced painful experiences in the present [1].

Thus, such a significant role of guilt and shame in the regulation of social behavior is due to influences exerted on the relations of individuals and entire groups of people. Guilt and shame often act as barriers to communication, make it overly intense, conflicting. Guilt and shame are a painful and painful experience that focuses on one's own person, which contributes to the development of such qualities as, for example, isolation, disrupts social

perception, makes a person overly compliant, touchy, cruel and aggressive, which destroys his social adaptation. At the same time, it is necessary to note the positive function of these feelings. Feeling of guilt and shame restrains a person from evil deeds, helps him fight the base manifestations of the human essence, stimulates him to fulfill his duties in relation to people and society.

In the end, guilt and shame are the most important social emotions, since they do not allow people to act in their pure personal interests. It is important to recognize and try to repair the damage that led to guilt and shame, but it's also important to forgive yourself when a real attempt was made to repair the damage. Otherwise, feelings of guilt and shame can put pressure on a person in a non-social way.

It is also important for people to forgive those who offended them when the offender acknowledged the damage he had done and tried to repair the damage. While everyone has the right to defend himself and demand preparatory actions after being offended, everyone also has the right to be forgiven if he corrects this damage or makes legitimate attempts to do so. In the end, guilt and shame are mainly intended to lead to a more sensitive and fair society.

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