

AQA 

Approved

AQA PSYCHOLOGY

FOR A LEVEL
YEAR 1 & AS

CARA FLANAGAN

DAVE BERRY

MATT JARVIS

ROB LIDDLE


Illuminate
Publishing



CONTENTS

4 HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

6 WHAT IS PSYCHOLOGY?

THE CHAPTERS

14 CHAPTER 1 SOCIAL INFLUENCE

44 CHAPTER 2 MEMORY

72 CHAPTER 3 ATTACHMENT

102 CHAPTER 4 APPROACHES IN PSYCHOLOGY (INCLUDING BIOPSYCHOLOGY)

132 CHAPTER 5 PSYCHOPATHOLOGY

164 CHAPTER 6 RESEARCH METHODS

211 APPENDIX: A LEVEL AND AS SKILLS

222 REFERENCES

226 INDEX WITH GLOSSARY

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Doing psychology consists of three skills: describing what you know, applying your knowledge and analysing/evaluating this knowledge. This applies to all students – AS students and A level students.

On page 211 we give you an overview of practice questions, which will help you to see why we have designed our spreads as they are.

Describing what you know

Assessment objective 1 (AO1) is concerned with your ability to report detailed descriptions of psychological knowledge and demonstrate your understanding of this knowledge. On most spreads in this book we have presented all the AO1 material on the left-hand side. We have divided the text up with subheadings to help you organise your understanding. Each heading should act as a cue for material to recall and matches the material in the summary at the end of each chapter.

Applying your knowledge

Assessment objective 2 (AO2) is concerned with being able to apply your psychological knowledge. It is a really good way to assess whether you do understand psychological knowledge. On every spread we usually have two or three 'Apply it' questions which give you a chance to practise this AO2 skill of application in relation to both concepts and research methods. Research methods topics are covered in Chapter 6 but we have given you a chance to apply them throughout the book.

Analysing and evaluating

Assessment objective 3 (AO3) is concerned with your ability to evaluate the concepts and studies you have learned about. On most spreads in this book we have presented the AO3 material on the right-hand side. Generally we have focused on three criticisms, each one clearly elaborated to demonstrate the skill of evaluation. For Year 1 A level students slightly more evaluation is required and this is supplied in the 'Evaluation extra'.

What is an 'assessment objective'?

It is something that is used to assess your ability.

You can demonstrate what you know by describing it but there is more to knowledge than that. There is the further skill of being able to use your knowledge in new situations (applying your knowledge). And a further skill is to be able to judge the value of your knowledge (evaluation).

All three of these skills are part of your studies.

CONFORMITY: ASCH'S RESEARCH

THE SPECIFICATION SAYS

Variables affecting conformity including group size, unanimity and task difficulty as investigated by Asch.

Asch has done more than most to increase our understanding of conformity and the circumstances in which it arises. Perhaps his greatest contribution to psychology was to devise a procedure to assess how much people will conform to the opinion of others even in a situation where the answer is certain (unambiguous).

KEY TERMS

Group size – Asch increased the size of the group by adding more confederates, thus increasing the size of the majority. Conformity increased with group size, but only up to a point, levelling off when the majority was greater than three.

Unanimity – The extent to which all the members of a group agree. In Asch's studies, the majority was unanimous when all the confederates selected the same comparison line. This produced the greatest degree of conformity in the naive participants.

Task difficulty – Asch's line-judging task is more difficult when it becomes harder to work out the correct answer. Conformity increases because naive participants assume that the majority is more likely to be right.

Standard and comparison lines

In the Asch studies, the line X on the left-hand card is the standard line. The lines A, B and C are the three comparison lines. The participants have to say which of the comparison lines is the same length as the standard line X.

The physical arrangement of the participants in the study. The naive (genuine) participant was always seated either last or (as here) next to last in the group. Participants gave their answers out loud, one at a time, beginning with the 1st person.

Evaluation

A child of its time

Perrin and Spencer (1980) repeated Asch's original study with engineering students in the UK. Only one student conformed in a total of 396 trials. It may be that the engineering students felt more confident about measuring lines than the original sample and therefore were less conformist. But it is also possible that the 1950s (when Asch carried out his research) were an especially conformist time in America, and therefore it made sense to conform to established social norms. But society has changed a great deal since then, and people are possibly less conformist today.

This is a limitation of Asch's research because it means that the Asch effect is not consistent across situations and may not be consistent across time, and so is not a fundamental feature of human behaviour.

Artificial situation and task

Participants knew they were in a laboratory and may simply have gone along with the demands of the situation (demand characteristics). The task of identifying lines was relatively trivial and therefore there was no reason not to conform. Also, although the naive participants were members of a 'group', it didn't really resemble groups that we are part of in everyday life. According to Fiske (2014), Asch's groups were not very 'groupy'.

This is a limitation because it means that the findings do not generalise to everyday situations. This is especially true where the consequences of conformity might be more important, and we interact with other people in groups in a much more direct way.

Limited application of findings

Only men were tested by Asch. Other research suggests that women might be more conformist, possibly because they are more concerned about social relationships (and being accepted) than men are (Heine 1999). The men in Asch's study were from the United States, an individualist culture, i.e. where people are more concerned about themselves rather than their social group. Similar conformity studies conducted in collectivist cultures (such as China where the social group is more important than the individual) have found that conformity rates are higher. This makes sense because such cultures are more oriented to group needs (Bond and Smith 1986).

This shows that conformity levels are sometimes even higher than Asch found. Asch's findings may only apply to American men because he didn't take gender and cultural differences into account.

Evaluation extra

Findings only apply to certain situations

The fact that participants had to answer out loud and were with a group of strangers who they wanted to impress might mean that conformity was higher than usual. On the other hand, Williams and Sogon (1984) found conformity was actually higher when the majority of the group were friends than when they were strangers.

Ethical issues

The naive participants were deceived because they thought the other people involved in the procedure (the confederates) were also genuine participants like themselves. However, it is worth bearing in mind that this ethical cost should be weighed up against the benefits gained from the study.

Consider: Why is this a limitation of the study?

What do you think the benefits of the study were? On balance, do you think they outweighed the ethical issues or not? Explain your answer.

Apply it

Methods: Group size

variation of Asch's baseline study. Group size.

Size of majority (number of confederate)	% Conformity rates
1	0
2	5
3	35
4	35
5	35
6	35
7	35
8	35
9	35
10	35
11	35
12	35
13	35
14	35
15	35

Questions

- The results from Asch's research on the effects of group size are shown above. Approximately what was the conformity rate when there was one confederate? (1 mark)
- What was the rate when there were three confederates? (1 mark)
- What was the rate when there were nine confederates? (1 mark)
- Asch used a volunteer sampling method to recruit his participants. Explain one strength and one limitation of this sampling method. (4 marks) (See page 175.)
- When the group size was four there would be only one naive participant and the others were confederates. Express the number of confederates as a fraction and a percentage of the total group size. (2 marks) (See page 196.)

CHECK IT

- One variable that affects conformity is unanimity. Explain what is meant by unanimity in relation to conformity. (2 marks)
- Apart from unanimity, identify two variables that have been shown to affect conformity. Briefly outline how each of these variables affects conformity. Refer to evidence in your answer. (6 marks)
- Describe Asch's study of conformity, include details of what he did and what he found. (6 marks)
- Describe and evaluate Asch's research into conformity. (12 marks AS, 16 marks A1)

STUDY TIPS

Ethical criticisms are only relevant when considering a study. Such issues do not challenge the validity of the findings.

Extra features on each spread

What the specification says

The spread begins (top left) with an excerpt from the specification showing you what is covered on the spread. There is also a brief analysis of what the specification entry means.

Definition of specification terms

The specification terms are explained, mirroring what you might be expected to know if you were asked to explain the terms. These key terms are emboldened in blue in the text.

Other important words are emboldened in the text and explained in the **glossary**, which forms part of the index.

Study tips

This book has been written by very experienced teachers and subject experts. When there is room they give you some of their top tips about the skills necessary to develop your understanding of psychology. They may also include pointers about typical misunderstandings.

Check it

A sample of practice questions to help you focus on how you will be using the material on the spread.

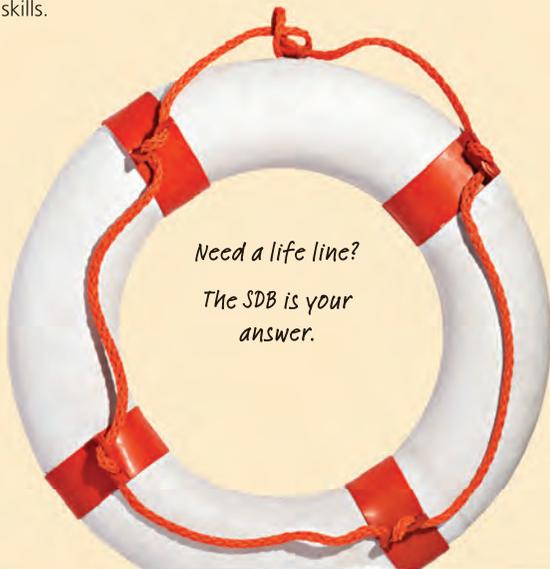
The final question is an extended writing question. AS students should aim to answer a 12-mark version whereas A level students will need to practise a 16-mark version. Extended writing skills are discussed on pages 218–219.

Student digital book

A digital version of this student book is also available if your school has access to our Digital Book Bundle of student and teacher resources. You can view this digital version via a tablet or computer at school, home or on the bus – wherever it suits you.

There are extra features in the student digital book that support your studies. For every spread in this book there are:

- **Lifelines:** Very straightforward, easy-to-digest key descriptive points for the spread topic.
- **Extensions:** Extra information, studies or activities to challenge and stretch you further.
- **Web links** to YouTube videos or other sites.
- **Answers** to the **Apply it** and **Evaluation extra** questions in this book (invaluable!).
- **Quizzes:** Interactive, self-marking quizzes that help to check and reinforce your understanding on a topic.
- **Practice questions:** Extra questions to help you practise your skills.



Extra features in each chapter

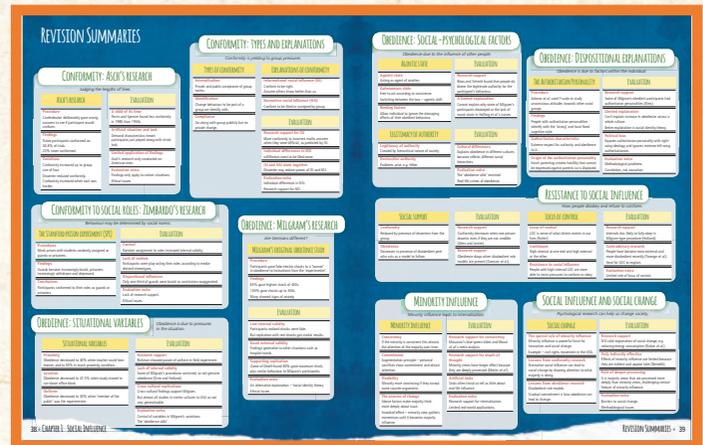
Chapter introduction

Each chapter begins with discussion points that might help you start thinking about the topic.

Chapter summary

Each chapter ends with a useful spread summarising the key points from each spread.

These summaries should help you revise. Look at each key point and see what you can remember. Look back at the spread to remind yourself. Each time you do this you should remember more.



Practical corner

Questions on research methods account for a minimum of 25% of the assessment, therefore you should devote a lot of time to understanding how psychologists conduct research. There is no better way to do this than being a researcher yourself. We offer some ideas for research activities and provide additional opportunities to practise mathematical skills.

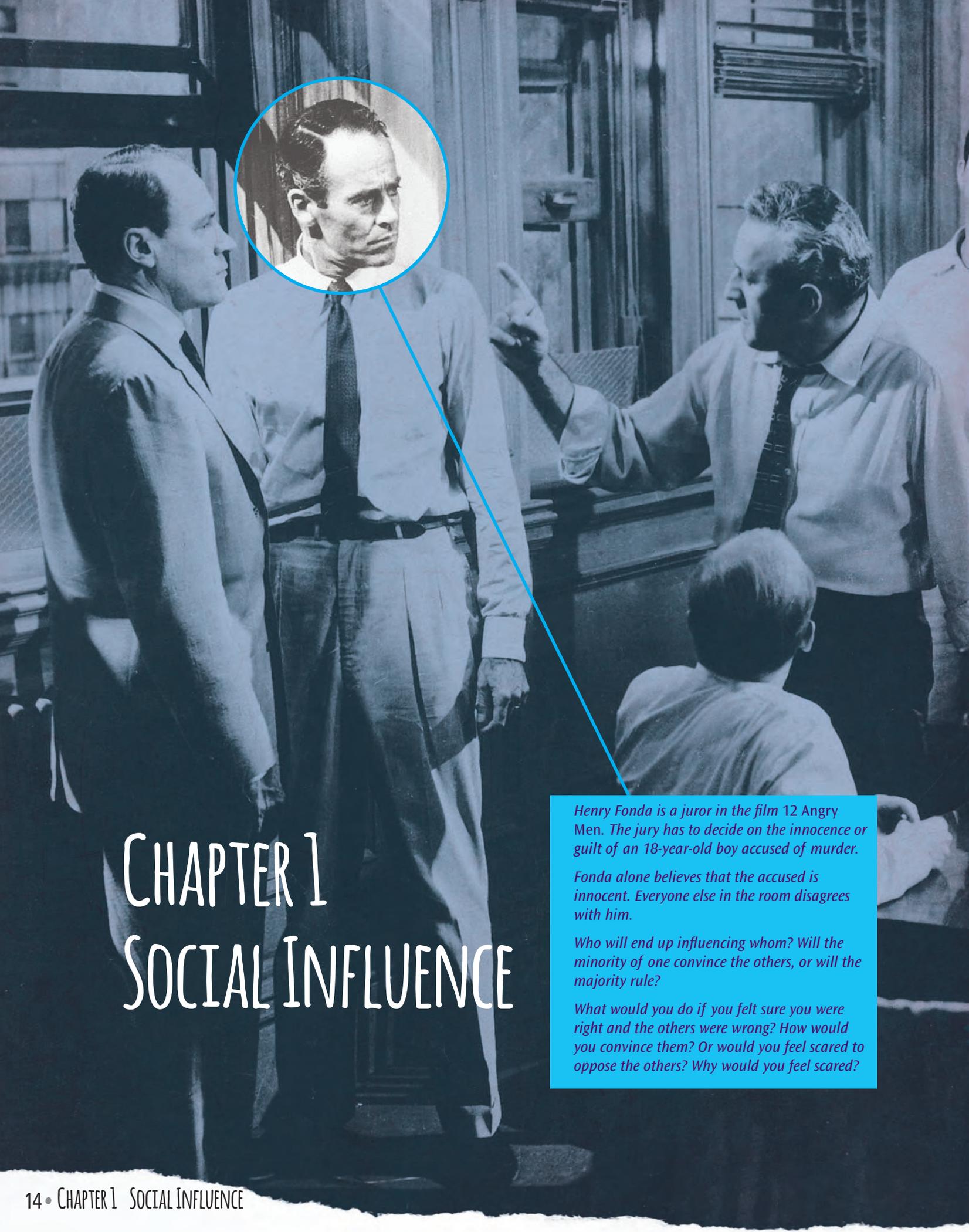
Practice questions, answers and feedback

Learning how to produce effective question answers is a SKILL. On this spread in each chapter we look at some typical student answers to practice questions. The comments provided indicate what is good and bad in each answer.

Multiple-choice questions (MCQs)

Here's a chance to test your new-found knowledge. Questions on each spread in the chapter, with answers at the bottom right of each spread. Keep trying until you get 100%.





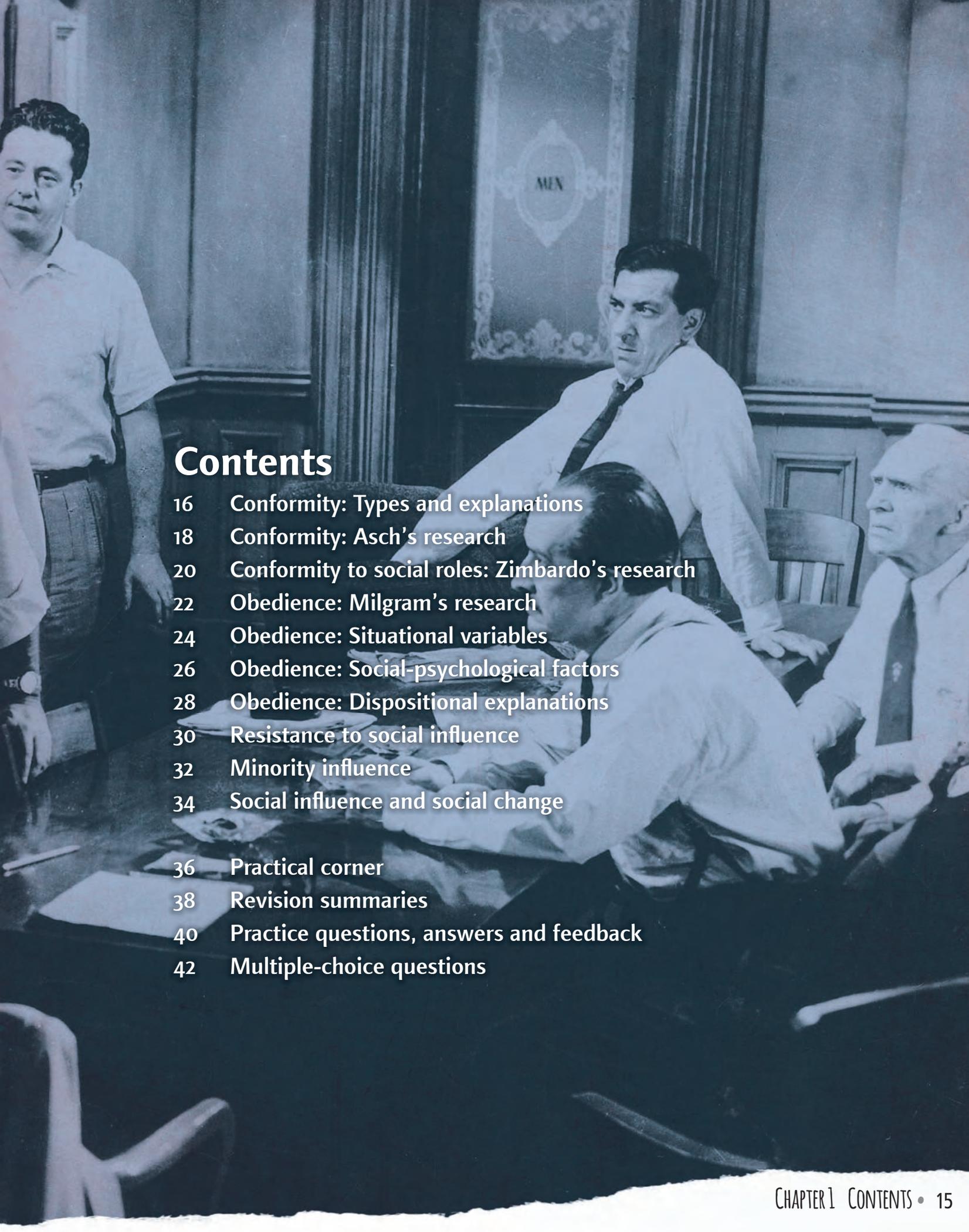
CHAPTER 1 SOCIAL INFLUENCE

Henry Fonda is a juror in the film 12 Angry Men. The jury has to decide on the innocence or guilt of an 18-year-old boy accused of murder.

Fonda alone believes that the accused is innocent. Everyone else in the room disagrees with him.

Who will end up influencing whom? Will the minority of one convince the others, or will the majority rule?

What would you do if you felt sure you were right and the others were wrong? How would you convince them? Or would you feel scared to oppose the others? Why would you feel scared?



Contents

- 16 Conformity: Types and explanations
- 18 Conformity: Asch's research
- 20 Conformity to social roles: Zimbardo's research
- 22 Obedience: Milgram's research
- 24 Obedience: Situational variables
- 26 Obedience: Social-psychological factors
- 28 Obedience: Dispositional explanations
- 30 Resistance to social influence
- 32 Minority influence
- 34 Social influence and social change

- 36 Practical corner
- 38 Revision summaries
- 40 Practice questions, answers and feedback
- 42 Multiple-choice questions

CONFORMITY: TYPES AND EXPLANATIONS

THE SPECIFICATION SAYS...

Types of conformity: internalisation, identification and compliance.

Explanations for conformity: informational social influence and normative social influence.

We all like to think that we know our own minds, that we make our own decisions and can tell when someone is trying to manipulate us. In short, we like to think we act *independently*. But is it possible that this is just an illusion? Psychologists believe that we are all subject to the forces of *social influence*. Many of our everyday decisions are the result of pressures to conform to the opinions and behaviours of other people.

KEY TERMS

Conformity – A change in a person's behaviour or opinions as a result of real or imagined pressure from a person or group of people' (Elliot Aronson 2011).

Internalisation – A deep type of conformity where we take on the majority view because we accept it as correct. It leads to a far-reaching and permanent change in behaviour, even when the group is absent.

Identification – A moderate type of conformity where we act in the same way with the group because we value it and want to be part of it. But we don't necessarily agree with everything the majority believes.

Compliance – A superficial and temporary type of conformity where we outwardly go along with the majority view, but privately disagree with it. The change in our behaviour only lasts as long as the group is monitoring us.

Informational social influence (ISI) – An explanation of conformity that says we agree with the opinion of the majority because we believe it is correct. We accept it because we want to be correct as well. This may lead to internalisation (see above).

Normative social influence (NSI) – An explanation of conformity that says we agree with the opinion of the majority because we want to be accepted, gain social approval and be liked. This may lead to compliance (see above).

Types of conformity

Herbert Kelman (1958) suggested that there are three ways in which people **conform** to the opinion of a majority:

Internalisation

Internalisation occurs when a person genuinely accepts the group norms. This results in a private as well as a public change of opinions/behaviour. This change is likely to be permanent because attitudes have been internalised, i.e. become part of the way the person thinks. The change in opinions/behaviour persists even in the absence of other group members.

Identification

Sometimes we conform to the opinions/behaviour of a group because there is something about that group we value. We identify with the group, so we want to be part of it. This may mean we publicly change our opinions/behaviour to achieve this goal, even if we don't privately agree with everything the group stands for.

Compliance

This type of conformity involves simply 'going along with others' in public, but privately not changing personal opinions and/or behaviour. Compliance results in only a superficial change. It also means that a particular behaviour or opinion stops as soon as group pressure stops.

Explanations for conformity

Morton Deutsch and Harold Gerard (1955) developed a **two-process theory**, arguing that there are two main reasons people conform. They are based on two central human needs: the need to be *right* (ISI), and the need to be *liked* (NSI).

Informational social influence (ISI)

Informational social influence (ISI) is about who has the better information – you or the rest of the group. Often we are uncertain about what behaviours or beliefs are right or wrong. For example, you may not know the answer to a question in class. But if most of the class agrees on one answer, you accept that answer because you feel they are likely to be right. The reason individuals follow the behaviour of the group (the majority) is because people want to be right. ISI is a cognitive process because it is to do with what you *think*.

ISI is most likely to happen in situations that are new to a person (so you don't know what is right) or situations where there is some ambiguity, so it isn't clear what is right. It is also typical in crisis situations where decisions have to be made quickly. It also occurs when one person (or group) is regarded as being more of an expert.

Normative social influence (NSI)

Normative social influence (NSI) is about norms, i.e. what is 'normal' or typical behaviour for a social group. Norms regulate the behaviour of groups and individuals so it is not surprising that we pay attention to them. People do not like to appear foolish and prefer to gain social approval rather than be rejected. So NSI is an *emotional* rather than a cognitive process.

NSI is most likely to occur in situations with strangers where you may feel concerned about rejection. It may also occur with people you know because we are most concerned about the social approval of our friends. It may be more pronounced in stressful situations where people have a greater need for social support.

Apply it

Concepts: Social influence at college

It is Oliver's and Lola's first day at college and they are keen to make a good impression. Oliver pretends to be interested in the other students' conversations even though he really finds them boring. Lola watches other students very carefully because she wants to complete her work just like they do, to avoid making any mistakes.

Questions

Whose behaviour is being influenced by informational social influence, Oliver's or Lola's? Whose is being influenced by normative social influence? Explain both of your answers.



Practical activity
on page 37

There are many reasons for going along with the other people in a group. Often, it's so we can be accepted and liked by them, even if we don't really share their values and opinions.

Evaluation

Research support for ISI

Lucas *et al.* (2006) asked students to give answers to mathematical problems that were easy or more difficult. There was greater conformity to incorrect answers when they were difficult rather than when they were easier ones. This was most true for students who rated their mathematical ability as poor.

The study shows that people conform in situations where they feel they don't know the answer, which is exactly the outcome predicted by the ISI explanation. We look to other people and assume they know better than us and must be right.

Individual differences in NSI

Some research shows that NSI does not affect everyone's behaviour in the same way. For example, people who are less concerned with being liked are less affected by NSI than those who care more about being liked. Such people are described as **nAffiliators**. These are people who have a greater need for 'affiliation' – a need for being in a relationship with others. For example, McGhee and Teevan (1967) found that students high in need of affiliation were more likely to conform.

This shows that the desire to be liked underlies conformity for some people more than others. Therefore there are individual differences in the way people respond.

ISI and NSI work together

The idea of Deutsch and Gerrard's 'two-process' approach is that behaviour is *either* due to NSI *or* ISI. But the truth is that, more often, *both* processes are involved. For example, conformity is reduced when there is one other dissenting participant in the Asch experiment (see the next spread). This dissenter may reduce the power of NSI (because the dissenter provides social support) or may reduce the power of ISI (because there is an alternative source of information).

This shows that it isn't always possible to be sure whether NSI or ISI is at work. This is the case in **lab** studies, but is even truer in real-life conformity situations outside the lab. This casts serious doubt over the view of ISI and NSI as two processes operating independently in conforming behaviour.

Evaluation eXtra

Individual differences in ISI

As with NSI (above), ISI does not affect everyone's behaviour in the same way. For example, Asch (1955) found that students were less conformist (28%) than other participants (37%). Perrin and Spencer (1980) conducted a study involving science and engineering students and found very little conformity (details on the next spread).

Consider: Explain why such individual differences are a limitation of the ISI explanation.

Research support for NSI

Asch (1951) found that many of his participants went along with a clearly wrong answer just because other people did (see next spread). So he asked them why they did this. Some of the participants said they felt self-conscious giving the correct answer and they were afraid of disapproval. When Asch repeated his study but asked participants to write down their answers instead of saying them out loud, conformity rates fell to 12.5%.

Consider: How does this research support the NSI explanation? Why is this a strength of the explanation?

Apply it

Concepts: Real-life application

Schultz *et al.* (2008) found they were able to change the behaviour of hotel guests by using printed messages encouraging them to save energy. The messages that suggested other guests were using fewer bath towels were the most successful.

Question

Does this demonstrate ISI or NSI? Explain your answer.

Apply it

Methods: Conformity at work

A psychologist studied conformity by observing five people starting new jobs in an office of a major British retail company.

Questions

1. Explain why this could be considered to be a **naturalistic observation**. (2 marks) (See page 180.)
2. Explain *one* strength and *one* limitation of naturalistic observation. (2 marks + 2 marks)
3. The psychologist needed to devise some **behavioural categories**. So she had to decide which behaviours could be considered examples of conformity. Explain what is meant by behavioural categories. (2 marks) (See page 182.)
4. Give *three* examples of possible behavioural categories in the context of this study. (3 marks)
5. The psychologist used **event sampling** to observe conforming behaviours over a two-week period during break-times and lunchtimes. Explain what is meant by event sampling. (2 marks) (See page 182.)
6. When the psychologist analysed her results, she found high levels of conforming behaviour by people starting new jobs. Use your knowledge of informational social influence and normative social influence to explain why people might conform in this situation. (4 marks)

STUDY TIPS

• The 'Apply it' questions on every spread give you an opportunity to practise the skill of applying your knowledge – which is a good test of your understanding.

CHECK IT

1. One type of conformity is internalisation. Explain what psychologists mean by the term *internalisation* in this context. [2 marks]
2. Explain what is meant by the term *informational social influence* in relation to conformity. [2 marks]
3. Outline normative social influence as an explanation for conformity. [4 marks]
4. Describe and evaluate informational social influence **and** normative social influence as explanations for conformity. Refer to evidence in your answer. [12 marks AS, 16 marks AL]

CONFORMITY: ASCH'S RESEARCH

THE SPECIFICATION SAYS...

Variables affecting conformity including group size, unanimity and task difficulty as investigated by Asch.

Asch has done more than most to increase our understanding of conformity and the circumstances in which it arises. Perhaps his greatest contribution to psychology was to devise a procedure to assess how much people will conform to the opinion of others even in a situation where the answer is certain (*unambiguous*).

KEY TERMS

Group size – Asch increased the size of the group by adding more confederates, thus increasing the size of the majority. Conformity increased with group size, but only up to a point, levelling off when the majority was greater than three.

Unanimity – The extent to which all the members of a group agree. In Asch's studies, the majority was unanimous when all the confederates selected the same comparison line. This produced the greatest degree of conformity in the naïve participants.

Task difficulty – Asch's line-judging task is more difficult when it becomes harder to work out the correct answer. Conformity increases because naïve participants assume that the majority is more likely to be right.



Standard and comparison lines

In the Asch studies, the line X on the left-hand card is the standard line. The lines A, B and C are the three comparison lines. The participants have to say which of the comparison lines is the same length as the standard line X.



The physical arrangement of the participants in the study.

The naïve (genuine) participant was always seated either last or (as here) next to last in the group. Participants gave their answers out loud, one at a time, beginning with the 1st person.

Asch's research

Procedure

Solomon Asch (1951, 1955) tested conformity by showing participants two large white cards at a time. On one card was a 'standard line' and on the other card there were three 'comparison lines'. One of the three lines was the same length as the standard and the other two were always substantially different (i.e. clearly wrong). The participant was asked which of the three lines matched the standard.

The participants in this study were 123 American male undergraduates. Each naïve participant was tested individually with a group of between six and eight **confederates**, as shown in the diagram (below left). The naïve participant was not aware that the others were confederates.

On the first few trials all the confederates gave the right answers but then they started making errors. All the confederates were instructed to give the same wrong answer. Altogether each participant took part in 18 trials and on 12 'critical trials' the confederates gave the wrong answer. A *trial* was one occasion identifying the length of a standard line.

Findings

The naïve participant gave a wrong answer 36.8% of the time. Overall 25% of the participants did not conform on any trials, which means that 75% conformed at least once. The term *Asch effect* has been used to describe this result – the extent to which participants conform even when the situation is unambiguous.

When participants were interviewed afterwards most said they conformed to avoid rejection (**normative social influence**).

Asch's variations

Asch was further interested in the conditions that might lead to an increase or a decrease in conformity. He investigated these by carrying out some variations of his original procedure.

1. Group size

He wanted to know whether the size of the group would be more important than the agreement of the group. Asch found that with three confederates conformity to the wrong answer rose to 31.8% (see graph on facing page). But the addition of further confederates made little difference. This suggests that a small majority is not sufficient for influence to be exerted but, at the other extreme, there is no need for a majority of more than three.

2. Unanimity

Asch also wanted to know if the presence of another, non-conforming, person would affect the naïve participant's conformity. To test this, he introduced a confederate who disagreed with the others – sometimes the new confederate gave the correct answer and sometimes he gave the wrong one.

The presence of a dissenting confederate meant that conformity was reduced by a quarter from the level it was when the majority was unanimous. The presence of a dissenter enabled the naïve participant to behave more independently. This suggests that the influence of the majority depends to some extent on the group being unanimous.

3. Task difficulty

Asch made the line-judging task more difficult by making the stimulus line and the comparison lines more similar in length. He found that conformity increased under these conditions.

This suggests that **informational social influence** plays a greater role when the task becomes harder. This is because the situation is more ambiguous, so we are more likely to look to other people for guidance and to assume that they are right and we are wrong.

Apply it Concepts: The big night out

Some students are celebrating the end of their exams by having a night out. They have been in the pub all evening and are now discussing which nightclub to go on to. Imogen prefers Rotting Flesh but the majority of the group wants to go to Scar Tissue.

Question

Briefly explain how each of the following factors might affect whether or not Imogen conforms to the majority: (a) Group size. (b) Unanimity. (c) Task difficulty.

Evaluation

A child of its time

Perrin and Spencer (1980) repeated Asch's original study with engineering students in the UK. Only one student conformed in a total of 396 trials. It may be that the engineering students felt more confident about measuring lines than the original sample and therefore were less conformist. But it is also possible that the 1950s (when Asch carried out his research) were an especially conformist time in America, and therefore it made sense to conform to established **social norms**. But society has changed a great deal since then, and people are possibly less conformist today.

This is a limitation of Asch's research because it means that the Asch effect is not consistent across situations and may not be consistent across time, and so is not a fundamental feature of human behaviour.

Artificial situation and task

Participants knew they were in a research study and may simply have gone along with the demands of the situation (**demand characteristics**). The task of identifying lines was relatively trivial and therefore there was really no reason not to conform. Also, although the naïve participants were members of a 'group', it didn't really resemble groups that we are part of in everyday life. According to Fiske (2014), 'Asch's groups were not very groupy'.

This is a limitation because it means that the findings do not generalise to everyday situations. This is especially true where the consequences of conformity might be more important, and we interact with other people in groups in a much more direct way.

Limited application of findings

Only men were tested by Asch. Other research suggests that women might be *more* conformist, possibly because they are more concerned about social relationships (and being accepted) than men are (Neto 1995). The men in Asch's study were from the United States, an **individualist culture**, i.e. where people are more concerned about themselves rather than their social group. Similar conformity studies conducted in **collectivist cultures** (such as China where the social group is more important than the individual) have found that conformity rates are higher. This makes sense because such cultures are more oriented to group needs (Bond and Smith 1996).

This shows that conformity levels are sometimes even higher than Asch found. Asch's findings may only apply to American men because he didn't take gender and cultural differences into account.

Evaluation eXtra

Findings only apply to certain situations

The fact that participants had to answer out loud and were with a group of strangers who they wanted to impress might mean that conformity was higher than usual. On the other hand, Williams and Sogon (1984) found conformity was actually higher when the majority of the group were friends than when they were strangers.

Consider: *Why do you think conformity might be higher in a group of friends rather than strangers? Is it possible that conformity changes from situation to situation? Explain why this is a serious limitation of Asch's studies.*

Ethical issues

The naïve participants were **deceived** because they thought the other people involved in the procedure (the confederates) were also genuine participants like themselves. However, it is worth bearing in mind that this **ethical** cost should be weighed up against the benefits gained from the study.

Consider: *Why is this a limitation of the study?*

What do you think the benefits of the study were? On balance, do you think they outweighed the ethical issues or not? Explain your answer.

STUDY TIPS

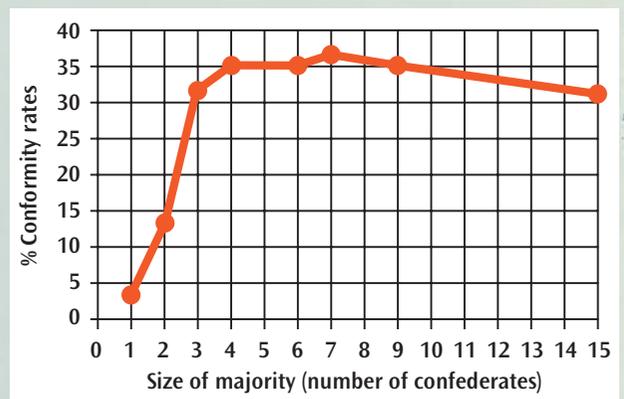
• Ethical criticisms are only relevant when considering a study. Such issues do not challenge the validity of the findings.



Conformity is usually assumed to be a bad thing. But sometimes situations demand that everybody pulls in the same direction.

Apply it Methods: Group size

Variation of Asch's baseline study: Group size.



Questions

1. The results from Asch's research on the effects of group size are shown above. Approximately what was the conformity rate when there was one confederate? (1 mark)
2. What was the rate when there were three confederates? (1 mark)
3. What was the rate when there were nine confederates? (1 mark)
4. Asch used a **volunteer sampling** method to recruit his participants. Explain *one* strength and *one* limitation of this sampling method. (4 marks) (See page 175.)
5. When the group size was four there would be only one naïve participant and the others were confederates. Express the number of confederates as a fraction and a percentage of the total group size. (2 marks) (See page 196.)

CHECK IT

1. One variable that affects conformity is unanimity. Explain what is meant by unanimity in relation to conformity. [2 marks]
2. Apart from unanimity, identify **two** variables that have been shown to affect conformity. Briefly outline how each of these variables affects conformity. Refer to evidence in your answer. [6 marks]
3. Describe Asch's study of conformity. Include details of what he did and what he found. [6 marks]
4. Describe and evaluate Asch's research into conformity. [12 marks AS, 16 marks AL]

CONFORMITY TO SOCIAL ROLES: ZIMBARDO'S RESEARCH

THE SPECIFICATION SAYS...

Conformity to social roles as investigated by Zimbardo.

We turn our attention on this spread to a special kind of conformity. Previously, we've looked at how we have a tendency to conform to the behaviours or opinions of other people when they form the majority of a group. But to what extent do we conform to the *expectations* that people have of us? These arise out of the roles we play in society and are powerful influences on our behaviour.

KEY TERMS

Social roles – The 'parts' people play as members of various social groups. Everyday examples include parent, child, student, passenger and so on. These are accompanied by expectations we and others have of what is appropriate behaviour in each role, for example caring, obedient, industrious, etc.



In the Stanford prison study both prisoners and guards were given uniforms that would dictate their social roles.

Apply it

Concepts: A mock psychiatric ward

This scenario is based on an actual study by Norma Jean Orlando (1973).

A researcher decided to investigate how conformity to social roles can influence people to behave in extreme ways. She selected staff at a psychiatric hospital to play the roles of patients on a ward for one week. After two days, several mock patients experienced symptoms of psychological disturbance, some cried uncontrollably, others became extremely withdrawn, and a few tried to escape. As time went on, most of the participants became more anxious and depressed, and felt very strongly that they were trapped and isolated. The study had to be ended early because some 'patients' were losing their sense of self-identity.

Question

Use your knowledge of Zimbardo's research into conformity to social roles to explain why the mock patients behaved as they did.

The Stanford prison experiment (SPE)

Following reports of brutality by guards in prisons across America in the late 1960s, Philip Zimbardo and his colleagues wanted to answer this question – do prison guards behave brutally because they have sadistic personalities, or is it the situation that creates such behaviour?

Procedure

Zimbardo set up a mock prison in the basement of the psychology department at Stanford University (Haney *et al.* 1973). They advertised for students willing to volunteer and selected those who were deemed 'emotionally stable' after extensive psychological testing. The students were **randomly assigned** the roles of guards or prisoners. To heighten the realism of the study, the 'prisoners' were arrested in their homes by the local police and were then delivered to the 'prison'. They were blindfolded, strip-searched, deloused and issued a uniform and number.

The **social roles** of the prisoners and the guards were strictly divided. The prisoners' daily routines were heavily regulated. There were 16 rules they had to follow, which were enforced by the guards who worked in shifts, three at a time. The prisoners' names were never used, only their numbers.

The guards, to underline their role, had their own uniform, complete with wooden club, handcuffs, keys and mirror shades. They were told they had complete power over the prisoners, for instance even deciding when they could go to the toilet.

Findings

After a slow start to the simulation, the guards took up their roles with enthusiasm. Their behaviour became a threat to the prisoners' psychological and physical health, and the study was stopped after six days instead of the intended 14.

Within two days, the prisoners rebelled against their harsh treatment by the guards. They ripped their uniforms, and shouted and swore at the guards, who retaliated with fire extinguishers. The guards employed 'divide-and-rule' tactics by playing the prisoners off against each other. They harassed the prisoners constantly, to remind them they were being monitored all the time. For example, they conducted frequent headcounts, sometimes in the middle of the night, when the prisoners would stand in line and call out their numbers. The guards highlighted the differences in social roles by creating plenty of opportunities to enforce the rules and punish even the smallest misdemeanour.

After their rebellion was put down, the prisoners became subdued, depressed and anxious. One prisoner was released on the first day because he showed symptoms of psychological disturbance. Two more were released on the fourth day. One prisoner went on a hunger strike. The guards attempted to force-feed him and then punished him by putting him in 'the hole', a tiny dark closet. Instead of being considered a hero, he was shunned by the other prisoners. The guards identified more and more closely with their role. Their behaviour became more brutal and aggressive, with some of them appearing to enjoy the power they had over the prisoners.

Conclusions

The simulation revealed the power of the situation to influence people's behaviour. Guards, prisoners and researchers all **conformed** to their roles within the prison. These roles were very easily taken on by the participants – even volunteers who came in to perform certain functions (such as the 'prison chaplain') found themselves behaving as if they were in a prison rather than in a psychological study.

Apply it

Concepts: Abu Ghraib

From 2003 to 2004, United States Army Military Police personnel committed serious human rights violations against Iraqi prisoners at Abu Ghraib prison in Baghdad. The prisoners were tortured, physically and sexually abused, routinely humiliated and some were murdered. Zimbardo noticed some remarkable similarities between the behaviour of the personnel at Abu Ghraib and the guards in the Stanford prison study.

Question

Using your knowledge of Zimbardo's research, explain what happened at Abu Ghraib in terms of conformity to social roles.

Evaluation

Control

A strength of the SPE is that Zimbardo and his colleagues had some control over variables. The most obvious example of this was the selection of participants. Emotionally stable individuals were chosen and randomly assigned to the roles of guard and prisoner. This was one way in which the researchers tried to rule out individual personality differences as an explanation of the findings. If guards and prisoners behaved very differently, but were in those roles only by chance, then their behaviour must have been due to the pressures of the situation.

Having such control over variables is a strength because it increases the **internal validity** of the study. So we can be much more confident in drawing conclusions about the influence of roles on behaviour.

Lack of realism

Banuazizi and Mohavedi (1975) argued the participants were merely play-acting rather than genuinely conforming to a role. Their performances were based on their **stereotypes** of how prisoners and guards are *supposed* to behave. For example, one of the guards claimed he had based his role on a brutal character from the film *Cool Hand Luke*. This would also explain why the prisoners rioted – because they thought that was what real prisoners did.

But Zimbardo pointed to evidence that the situation was very real to the participants. **Quantitative data** gathered during the procedure showed that 90% of the prisoners' conversations were about prison life. 'Prisoner 416' expressed the view that the prison was a real one, but run by psychologists rather than the government. On balance, it seems that the situation was real to the participants, which gives the study a high degree of internal validity.

Role of dispositional influences

Fromm (1973) accused Zimbardo of exaggerating the power of the situation to influence behaviour, and minimising the role of personality factors (dispositional influences). For example, only a minority of the guards (about a third) behaved in a brutal manner. Another third were keen on applying the rules fairly. The rest actively tried to help and support the prisoners, sympathising with them, offering them cigarettes and reinstating privileges (Zimbardo 2007).

This suggests that Zimbardo's conclusion – that participants were conforming to social roles – may be over-stated. The differences in the guards' behaviour indicate that they were able to exercise right and wrong choices, despite the situational pressures to conform to a role.

Evaluation eXtra

Lack of research support

Steve Reicher and Alex Haslam's (2006) partial replication of the Stanford prison experiment was broadcast on BBC TV, so has become known as the *BBC prison study*. Their findings were very different to those of Zimbardo and his colleagues. It was the prisoners who eventually took control of the mock prison and subjected the guards to a campaign of harassment and disobedience. The researchers used **social identity theory** (SIT – Tajfel 1981) to explain this outcome. They argued that the guards failed to develop a shared social identity as a cohesive group, but the prisoners did. They actively identified themselves as members of a social group that refused to accept the limits of their assigned role as prisoners.

Consider: Explain why this finding challenges Zimbardo's conclusions about conformity to social roles.

Ethical issues

A major **ethical** issue arose because of Zimbardo's dual roles in the study. For example, on one occasion a student who wanted to leave the study spoke to Zimbardo in his role as superintendent. The whole conversation was conducted on the basis that the student was a prisoner in a prison, asking to be 'released'. Zimbardo responded to him as a superintendent worried about the running of his prison rather than as a researcher with responsibilities towards his participants.

Consider: Explain why this is an ethical limitation of the Stanford prison study.

Apply it

Methods: Gender roles

In our society there are many social roles in which males and females are expected to behave differently, such as parenting behaviour. A psychologist was interested in studying conformity to gender roles in parenting. She decided to conduct an **observational** study of parents of one-year-old children.

Her **hypothesis** was that the parenting behaviour of mothers and fathers would conform to traditional gender roles – mothers would behave in traditionally 'feminine' ways and fathers in traditionally 'masculine' ways. More specifically, she predicted that mothers would show more 'caring' behaviours and fathers more 'aggressive' behaviours.

Questions

1. Identify *one behavioural category* to record 'caring' behaviour and *one* to record 'aggressive' behaviour. (2 marks) (See page 182.)
2. The psychologist decided to use **time sampling** to record her observations. Explain what is meant by time sampling. (2 marks)
3. Explain why the psychologist might carry out a **pilot study** before the main observation. (3 marks) (See page 178.)
4. Identify *two ethical issues* the psychologist should consider before conducting her investigation. (2 marks) (See page 176.)
5. Explain how she could deal with *one* of these issues. (2 marks)
6. The psychologist's hypothesis was supported by her findings. Use your knowledge of conformity to social roles to explain this outcome. (3 marks)

The abuses at Abu Ghraib prison woke the whole world up to how the power of the situation and of social roles can make apparently ordinary people do evil things.



CHECK IT

1. Explain what is meant by the term *social roles*. Use an example to explain the concept. [2 marks]
2. Outline Zimbardo's research into conformity to social roles. In your answer, refer to what the participants did and what was found. [6 marks]
3. Discuss research into conformity to social roles. [12 marks AS, 16 marks AL]

PRACTICAL CORNER

THE SPECIFICATION SAYS

Knowledge and understanding of research methods, practical research skills and maths skills. These should be developed through ethical practical research activities.

This means that you should conduct practical investigations wherever possible. On this spread you have an opportunity to try a correlational study as well as collecting data by using questionnaires and by using interviews.

Ethics check

Ethics are discussed in detail on pages 176–177. We suggest strongly that you complete this checklist before collecting data.

1. Do participants know participation is voluntary?
2. Do participants know what to expect?
3. Do participants know they can withdraw at any time?
4. Are individuals' results anonymous?
5. Have I minimised the risk of distress to participants?
6. Have I avoided asking sensitive questions?
7. Will I avoid bringing my school/teacher/psychology into disrepute?
8. Have I considered all other ethical issues?
9. Has my teacher approved this?



This is where all your friends want to go next. But you don't. Will you be susceptible to their persuasion?

Practical idea 1: Susceptibility to social influence

In this chapter you learned that **internals** are more likely to resist **social influence** (see page 30). In contrast **externals** are more susceptible to social influence because they believe that what happens to them is down to luck. Is this true?

This practical investigates the **correlation** between **locus of control** and resisting social influence. You will use **questionnaires** to measure the **co-variables**.

The practical bit

Locus of control scale

You could create your own scale to measure **locus of control (LOC)**. You will need items that tap into internality and externality. You could produce a scale that is tailored to your likely participants and their daily experiences.

Alternatively, you could use Rotter's LOC scale, which has the benefit of being a well-established instrument that has been used in literally thousands of research studies. Plus it's already done for you. Use the term 'Rotter locus of control scale' in the search engine of your choice. Note that a low score indicates an internal locus of control, a high score is external.

Susceptibility to social influence scale

This one you will have to create yourself. Think of social influence scenarios that your participants might find familiar. For example, 'You are on a night out with a group of friends. Most of them want to go on to a nightclub that you hate. Will you go along with them?' Devise ten items that cover situations of conformity and obedience.

Your participants' responses need to be quantifiable, so use a **Likert scale** to rate each answer (see page 186). If 5 means 'very likely' then the higher a participant's score, the more susceptible to social influence they are.

Response bias

People sometimes give the same responses to all the items on a questionnaire just out

of habit. This is a particular problem in this practical because people who are susceptible to social influence will probably just agree with all the items. The solution is to mix up the 'directions' of the items – half of them should be worded 'negatively' so that when scoring for these items 1 becomes 'very likely', 2 becomes 'quite likely', and so on.

Ethical issues

It's tempting to believe that **ethical issues** don't matter a great deal in studies like this. But using questionnaires to measure personal variables does involve asking sensitive questions. So you should be aware of the importance of **anonymity** and **confidentiality**. Make sure the items on your scales are not going to cause any degree of psychological harm (anxiety, humiliation, embarrassment, and so on). You should also, as always, consider the issues of **informed consent** and the **right to withdraw**.

Selecting your participants

The most convenient sampling method to use is **opportunity sampling**. It might be useful to ask them to complete the questionnaires in a quiet place so they can give the task their full attention.

Analysing your data

A correlational relationship can be positive or negative (see page 188). The clearest way to assess this is by drawing a **scattergram**. You will have two scores for each participant, and will need to present your results in a table as well as a graph.

A set of example data.

Participant	LOC Score	Social influence Score
1	21	38
2	12	20
3	17	32
4	3	14
5	7	19
6	19	47
7	15	27
8	23	42
9	16	15
10	2	12

A high LOC score is external.
A high social influence score reflects high obedience/conformity.

Apply it Methods: The maths bit 1

1. A sample set of data is given on the left. Draw a **scattergram** of the results. Remember to plot the pairs of scores precisely and label your axes carefully. (3 marks) (See page 188.)
2. What kind of **correlation** does this scattergram show? Explain your answer. (2 marks)
3. Explain why the **median** would be the most suitable measure of central tendency. (2 marks) (See page 192.)
4. Calculate the median for each variable. (1 mark)
5. Calculate the **range** for each variable. (1 mark) (See page 193.)
6. Based on your analysis, what conclusion could you draw about the relationship between locus of control and susceptibility to social influence? (2 marks)
7. Do these findings support previous research into this relationship? Explain your answer. (2 marks)

Practical idea 2: Social influence and lifestyle choices

Social psychologists are interested in the lifestyle choices that people make from the perspective of social influence. Is it possible that people's choices are affected by the attitudes and behaviours of others?

The purpose of this practical is to find out the reasons why people engage in positive or negative lifestyle-related behaviours, and to see if any of them are linked to social influence processes.



The practical bit

This practical uses an **interview** as the research method to collect **qualitative data**. You need to choose a socially relevant topic that interests you and involves social influences such as **conformity** and **obedience**. Here are some examples for you to think about: giving blood, donating organs, getting involved in sporting activities, leading a healthier and more active lifestyle, reducing alcohol intake, giving up smoking, volunteering for good causes or getting your baby vaccinated.

Designing the interview

The first decision you need to make concerns the type of interview you'll conduct. A good choice is a **semi-structured interview**. You have questions that you want to ask but are willing to follow-up the interviewee's responses where necessary, especially if they highlight a social influence process.

Next, what type of questions will you ask? **Closed questions** are possible, but a more useful option is **open questions**. This gives your interviewees the opportunity to respond in their own words, but this does make it more difficult to record their responses as you go along. So you should consider using a device to record the whole interview for analysis later.

You should create some questions around the four social influence processes

of: **compliance**, **internalisation**, **identification**, and **obedience**. For example, take blood donation. If the interviewee donates blood on a regular basis, you could ask them *'Have you ever talked about giving blood with any of your friends or family? What happened?'* Or, *'Has anybody ever told you that you should give blood? What were their reasons?'* Or even, *'Would you still give blood even if nobody else you knew did? Why is that?'*

Finally, you should think about rapport between yourself and the interviewee. What can you do to put them at their ease so they are relaxed and more willing to respond to questions truthfully?

Selecting your participants

Once again, opportunity sampling should be suitable as it's convenient. But because you are interviewing people face-to-face, you will need to give some thought to location – somewhere quiet and relaxing would be ideal. You should aim to interview no more than eight participants on the same topic.

Ethical considerations

When getting consent, make sure participants are fully informed, for example by making them aware that you will ask questions about your chosen issue. Give due consideration to **privacy**, confidentiality and the right to withdraw. Avoid questions that are intrusive, or might cause offence or **psychological harm** (including embarrassment).

Lives depend on people donating blood and coming back again and again to give more. But are some people put off by social pressures to conform or obey? Interviews are an ideal method to research this question.

Apply it

Methods: The maths bit 2

The table below summarises the reasons people gave for donating blood in a hypothetical sample.

Calculate all of the following:

1. The total number of responses for each type of social influence. (1 mark)
2. The total number of responses for each participant. (1 mark)
3. The total number of responses for each type as a percentage of the overall number of responses (that is, calculate four percentages). (1 mark) (See page 196.)
4. The **mean** number of compliance, identification, internalisation and obedience responses per participant (that is, calculate four means). (1 mark) (See page 192.)

Also:

5. Draw a suitable **bar chart** to represent the data in the table for each type of influence. Label your axes carefully. (3 marks) (See page 194.)
6. Do any of the participants stand out as especially vulnerable to social influence or resistant to it? Explain your answer. (2 marks)
7. Explain what the **qualitative** data tell us about the reasons the interviewees gave for donating blood. (2 marks) (See page 190.)

A set of example data.

Participant	Compliance	Identification	Internalisation	Obedience
1	2	3	2	0
2	4	1	2	2
3	1	0	3	0
4	0	2	0	3
5	0	3	2	0
6	2	1	1	0
7	5	4	4	3
8	1	2	3	1

Analysing your data

The challenge you face is turning your answers into **quantitative data**.

For each answer decide what kind of social influence was being assessed and then decide whether or not the participant was showing this behaviour (e.g. being compliant or identifying).

It may be more reliable to ask a second person to also score the data and compare the outcome.

REVISION SUMMARIES

CONFORMITY: ASCH'S RESEARCH

Judging the lengths of lines.

ASCH'S RESEARCH

Procedure

Confederates deliberately gave wrong answers to see if participant would conform.

Findings

Naive participants conformed on 36.8% of trials.
25% never conformed.

Variations

Conformity increased up to group size of four.
Dissenter reduced conformity.
Conformity increased when task was harder.

EVALUATION

A child of its time

Perrin and Spencer found less conformity in 1980 than 1950s.

Artificial situation and task

Demand characteristics meant participants just played along with trivial task.

Limited application of findings

Asch's research only conducted on American men.

Evaluation extra

Findings only apply to certain situations.
Ethical issues.

CONFORMITY: TYPES AND EXPLANATIONS

Conformity is yielding to group pressures.

TYPES OF CONFORMITY

Internalisation

Private and public acceptance of group norms.

Identification

Change behaviour to be part of a group we identify with.

Compliance

Go along with group publicly but no private change.

EXPLANATIONS OF CONFORMITY

Informational social influence (ISI)

Conform to be right.
Assume others know better than us.

Normative social influence (NSI)

Conform to be liked or accepted by group.

EVALUATION

Research support for ISI

More conformity to incorrect maths answers when they were difficult, as predicted by ISI.

Individual differences in NSI

nAffiliators want to be liked more.

ISI and NSI work together

Dissenter may reduce power of ISI and NSI.

Evaluation extra

Individual differences in NSI.
Research support for NSI.

CONFORMITY TO SOCIAL ROLES: ZIMBARDO'S RESEARCH

Behaviour may be determined by social norms.

THE STANFORD PRISON EXPERIMENT (SPE)

Procedures

Mock prison with students randomly assigned as guards or prisoners.

Findings

Guards became increasingly brutal, prisoners increasingly withdrawn and depressed.

Conclusions

Participants conformed to their roles as guards or prisoners.

EVALUATION

Control

Random assignment to roles increased internal validity.

Lack of realism

Participants were play-acting their roles according to media-derived stereotypes.

Dispositional influences

Only one-third of guards were brutal so conclusions exaggerated.

Evaluation extra

Lack of research support.
Ethical issues.

OBEEDIENCE: MILGRAM'S RESEARCH

Are Germans different?

MILGRAM'S ORIGINAL OBEEDIENCE STUDY

Procedure

Participants gave fake electric shocks to a 'learner' in obedience to instructions from the 'experimenter'.

Findings

65% gave highest shock of 450v.
100% gave shocks up to 300v.
Many showed signs of anxiety.

EVALUATION

Low internal validity

Participants realised shocks were fake.
But replication with real shocks got similar results.

Good external validity

Findings generalise to other situations such as hospital wards.

Supporting replication

Game of Death found 80% gave maximum shock, plus similar behaviour to Milgram's participants.

Evaluation extra

An alternative explanation – Social identity theory.
Ethical issues.

OBEEDIENCE: SITUATIONAL VARIABLES

Obedience is due to pressures in the situation.

SITUATIONAL VARIABLES

Proximity

Obedience decreased to 40% when teacher could hear learner, and to 30% in touch proximity condition.

Location

Obedience decreased to 47.5% when study moved to run-down office block.

Uniform

Obedience decreased to 20% when 'member of the public' was the experimenter.

EVALUATION

Research support

Bickman showed power of uniform in field experiment.

Lack of internal validity

Some of Milgram's procedures contrived, so not genuine obedience (Orne and Holland).

Cross-cultural replications

Cross-cultural findings support Milgram.
But almost all studies in similar cultures to USA so not very generalisable.

Evaluation extra

Control of variables in Milgram's variations.
The 'obedience alibi'.

OBEEDIENCE: SOCIAL-PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS

Obedience due to the influence of other people.

AGENTIC STATE

Agentic state

Acting as agent of another.

Autonomous state

Free to act according to conscience.

Switching between the two – agentic shift.

Binding factors

Allow individual to ignore the damaging effects of their obedient behaviour.

EVALUATION

Research support

Blass and Schmitt found that people do blame the legitimate authority for the participant's behaviour.

A limited explanation

Cannot explain why some of Milgram's participants disobeyed or the lack of moral strain in Hofling *et al.*'s nurses.

LEGITIMACY OF AUTHORITY

Legitimacy of authority

Created by hierarchical nature of society.

Destructive authority

Problems arise, e.g. Hitler.

EVALUATION

Cultural differences

Explains obedience in different cultures because reflects different social hierarchies.

Evaluation extra

The 'obedience alibi' revisited.
Real-life crimes of obedience.

OBEEDIENCE: DISPOSITIONAL EXPLANATIONS

Obedience is due to factors within the individual.

THE AUTHORITARIAN PERSONALITY

Procedure

Adorno *et al.* used F-scale to study unconscious attitudes towards other racial groups.

Findings

People with authoritarian personalities identify with the 'strong' and have fixed cognitive style.

Authoritarian characteristics

Extreme respect for authority and obedience to it.

Origin of the authoritarian personality

Harsh parenting creates hostility that cannot be expressed against parents so is displaced.

EVALUATION

Research support

Some of Milgram's obedient participants had authoritarian personalities (Elms).

Limited explanation

Can't explain increase in obedience across a whole culture.

Better explanation is social identity theory.

Political bias

Equates authoritarian personality with right-wing ideology and ignores extreme left-wing authoritarianism.

Evaluation extra

Methodological problems.
Correlation, not causation.

RESISTANCE TO SOCIAL INFLUENCE

How people disobey and refuse to conform.

SOCIAL SUPPORT

Conformity

Reduced by presence of dissenters from the group.

Obedience

Decreases in presence of disobedient peer who acts as a model to follow.

EVALUATION

Research support

Conformity decreases when one person dissents even if they are not credible (Allen and Levine).

Research support

Obedience drops when disobedient role models are present (Gamson *et al.*).

LOCUS OF CONTROL

Locus of control

LOC is sense of what directs events in our lives (Rotter).

Continuum

High internal at one end and high external at the other.

Resistance to social influence

People with high internal LOC are more able to resist pressures to conform or obey.

EVALUATION

Research support

Internals less likely to fully obey in Milgram-type procedure (Holland).

Contradictory research

People have become more external and more disobedient recently (Twenge *et al.*).
Hard for LOC to explain.

Evaluation extra

Limited role of locus of control.

MINORITY INFLUENCE

Minority influence leads to internalisation.

MINORITY INFLUENCE

Consistency

If the minority is consistent this attracts the attention of the majority over time.

Commitment

Augmentation principle – personal sacrifices show commitment and attract attention.

Flexibility

Minority more convincing if they accept some counter-arguments.

The process of change

Above factors make majority think more deeply about issue.

Snowball effect – minority view gathers momentum until it becomes majority influence.

EVALUATION

Research support for consistency

Moscovici's blue-green slides and Wood *et al.*'s meta-analysis.

Research support for depth of thought

Minority views have longer effect because they are deeply processed (Martin *et al.*).

Artificial tasks

Tasks often trivial so tell us little about real-life influence.

Evaluation extra

Research support for internalisation.
Limited real-world applications.

SOCIAL INFLUENCE AND SOCIAL CHANGE

Psychological research can help us change society.

SOCIAL CHANGE

The special role of minority influence

Minority influence is powerful force for innovation and social change.

Example – civil rights movement in the USA.

Lessons from conformity research

Normative social influence can lead to social change by drawing attention to what majority is doing.

Lessons from obedience research

Disobedient role models.
Gradual commitment is how obedience can lead to change.

EVALUATION

Research support

NSI valid explanation of social change, e.g. reducing energy consumption (Nolan *et al.*).

Only indirectly effective

Effects of minority influence are limited because they are indirect and appear later (Nemeth).

Role of deeper processing

It is majority views that are processed more deeply than minority views, challenging central feature of minority influence.

Evaluation extra

Barriers to social change.
Methodological issues.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND FEEDBACK

Question 1 Explain what is meant by the term *social roles*. Use an example to explain the term. (2 marks)

Morticia's answer A social role is something that people do when they are with others. For example, being a mother or teacher. That is a social role.

Luke's answer They are the parts that people play when they are in social situations, i.e. with other people. They create expectations of what we have to do. For example, being a doctor or a mother has expectations attached.

Vladimir's answer A role is something you do, social is being with other people. So a social role is what you do as affected by other people.

Morticia's definition is weak but there is a discernible example.

In contrast Luke's definition here is much better than Morticia's and there are relevant examples too, a great answer.

Vladimir has missed the point. His definition lacks clarity and is a little too much like common sense to be of any value. There is no example either, which was required in the question.

Question 2 Proximity is one situational variable affecting obedience. Outline one other situational variable affecting obedience. (3 marks)

Morticia's answer One other situational variable is location. This refers to the place you are when being ordered to do something. In Milgram's study when people were in a run down office they obeyed less.

Luke's answer Location is a situational variable. It's where you are and it affects how much people will obey an order. It relates to the situation that's why it is a situational variable.

Vladimir's answer Proximity is a situational variable. It is how close you are physically to the person giving the orders or the person you may be harming. Closer proximity reduces willingness to obey.

Morticia has provided sufficient detail for a question of this kind. A situational variable is identified and explained. Detail of a Milgram variation is further elaboration.

The boys didn't do as well. Luke has identified a variable but the elaboration is not strong. There is also no account of the effect of this factor on obedience levels. Vladimir just says 'proximity' which is ambiguous – it does make sense because there is further clarification. However, the idea that proximity to the authority figure reduces obedience is inaccurate. Both of them have included something of merit but on balance, weak answers.

Question 3 Outline Asch's study of conformity. In your answer you should describe the method used by Asch and state what he concluded. (4 marks)

Morticia's answer Asch conducted a study in the 1950s where he had between 6 and 8 confederates and one naïve participant (all men). The confederates gave a wrong answer on 12 out of the 16 trials when asked to identify the line that was the same length as three other lines. On these 12 critical trials the true participants gave a wrong answer 30% of the time though 25% of the participants never conformed.

Luke's answer Asch did a study on conformity to see whether people would conform to an unambiguous stimulus. He used lines to measure conformity. There was one standard line and 3 comparison lines. A group of confederates gave the wrong answer. Asch found that the true participant also gave the wrong answer 25% of the time. This is the Asch effect – conforming even when the answer is obviously wrong.

Vladimir's answer Participants had to judge the length of a line. There were confederates giving the wrong answers on some of the trials. The participant always went last and was quite anxious when he saw that the others were giving the wrong answer. Nevertheless they conformed most of the time to the wrong answer. All the participants were men and were American.

There is a slight error (16 trials) in Morticia's answer but the rest is clear and accurate. There is no conclusion though – only findings – so the answer only partially meets the requirements of the question.

In Luke's answer the method is not as strong as Morticia's but there is a discernible conclusion this time which unfortunately lacks development. On balance this makes it as good as Morticia's answer.

Vladimir gives some accurate description of the method. The rest of the answer is vague and includes evaluative comment rather than focussing on the question, a weak answer.

Question 4 Briefly outline and evaluate the Authoritarian Personality as an explanation for obedience. (4 marks)

Morticia's answer The Authoritarian Personality is an explanation for why some people are more obedient than others. It may be because they are born like that or it may be because they are brought up that way. Such people tend to be quite conformist as well and right wing in their politics. People were measured using an F scale to see how authoritarian they were and this matched up with how obedient they were.

One limitation with this explanation is that there isn't much other research evidence to support the explanation. It might not really be an Authoritarian Personality but it could be situational factors that make people obey.

Luke's answer This is a dispositional explanation for why some people obey. Essentially some people have high respect for authority figures and are more dismissive of inferiors, which is why they obey. There was support for this from Milgram's research where participants who had been most obedient were found to be high in Authoritarianism, thus demonstrating the link.

Vladimir's answer People with authoritarian personality have a strict upbringing and look to authority figures. They are afraid of being the odd one out so they think they have to listen to being told. They are afraid of punishment and concerned with norms and values.

Morticia's answer is inaccurate ('born like that' is wrong) and the description focuses a little too much on method rather than theory. There is relevant content though (reference to upbringing and right-wing views). The limitation is relevant though the first sentence is generic. Overall a reasonable but not good answer.

In Luke's answer the first two sentences summarise the explanation very well and there is a clear link to obedience (which answers to this question often lack). The use of evidence as evaluation is good too but there is room for a little more of this.

Vladimir is correct in mentioning 'strict upbringing' but that's about all that is relevant in his answer. There is some relevance further on in the answer but also confusion with conformity. Although Authoritarian Personality has been used to explain conformist attitudes the focus of the question is on obedience.

On this spread we look at some typical student answers to questions. The comments provided indicate what is good and bad in each answer. Learning how to produce effective question answers is a SKILL. Read pages 211–221 for guidance.

Question 5 Betty and Sue are two newly qualified teachers who are discussing their decision to support a recent one-day strike.

'I wasn't sure at first', said Betty, 'but having spoken to the other teachers, they really convinced me it was a good idea. And I would do it again in similar circumstances'.

'Oh dear', replied Sue. 'I'm a bit embarrassed really. I'm afraid I only did it because everyone else did'.

Discuss normative social influence and informational social influence as explanations of conformity. Refer to Betty and Sue in your answer. (12 marks AS, 16 marks AL)

Morticia's answer Normative social influence is when people go along with the group to avoid rejection and not stand out and to fit in with others. Although the person may do one thing in public, in private their opinion doesn't change, e.g. smoking in front of friends. This kind of influence is most likely in unfamiliar situations.

Informational social influence is when we look to others for information on how to behave in a new situation when we are unsure. We take the group's views into account and change both private and public opinion, e.g. we follow our friend's answer in class when we don't know the answer. This kind of influence is most likely in situations where there is uncertainty such as something that is new or something that is contradictory.

So in the example of Betty and Sue, Betty is an example of informational social influence (ISI) and Sue is an example of normative social influence (NSI).

This understanding was demonstrated by Asch's study. When Asch arranged for the number of confederates to be reduced conformity also fell because there was reduced NSI on the participant. When the conformity task was made harder conformity went up because participants were unsure of the answer and therefore they looked to others which was a result of ISI. When participants wrote their answer down there was no conformity because there was then no normative pressure because no one knew about it.

In Asch's original study there was NSI because participants went along with the majority view so they didn't stand out and to avoid rejection. They didn't really believe they were right but went along with the group answer.

NSI and ISI are difficult to measure. It's hard to know why someone has conformed. Also there might be other reasons for conformity such as identification where someone actually identifies with the people in the group and changes their views both publicly but not privately. There is also compliance and internalisation. (327 words)

Luke's answer Normative social influence is the desire to be liked and accepted into a group and could also be from fear of ridicule. Normative influence leads to compliance which is where a person changes their public behaviour whilst maintaining their private views. In the example Sue is behaving in this way because she changed her behaviour to fit in with the others because she wanted to be liked – she did it because everyone else did (the majority). But she didn't necessarily believe in what she was doing.

In contrast Betty clearly changed her private views. So in this case it would be an example of informational social influence where someone changes what they think and do this both publicly and privately. This is often done out of a desire to be right. A person may feel uncertain about the right thing to do and turns to the majority as a way of establishing what is right. This leads to internalisation where a person changes their private opinion along with public behaviour.

Evidence for normative social influence was demonstrated by Asch in a variation of his classic study. The participant is told that they're late for the study involving a simple unambiguous task of having to judge the length of lines so they have to write their answer down. The confederates said their wrong answers out loud before they wrote down their answers. In this condition conformity rates fell from 32 to 12.5%. This shows conformity decreases when fear of group ridicule is removed, so it shows the influence of normative social influence.

One strength of normative social influence is that it is the only explanation for conformity in unambiguous situations. How else can you explain the levels of conformity in Asch's study where the answers were clearly wrong? The participants showed they were confused and yet they conformed. This is a situation where they didn't know the other people so it might not have mattered but they still clearly didn't want to look foolish.

Support for informational social influence comes from Lucas et al. who asked students to give answers to easy and difficult maths problems. They found that conformity increased when the problems were more difficult. This is because people feel less sure and therefore look to the majority to find the answer. The increased conformity was especially high in those students who were not confident about their maths skills supporting the idea of informational social influence when there is uncertainty or ambiguity.

Examples of internalisation appear in real-life. For example political speeches where a person listens to the majority view and takes on those views because they are unsure of what is right. (444 words)

Morticia's essay is an AS response whereas Luke's is an A level response.

Morticia presents a concise and well-focused answer. The description of the two explanations is clear and accurate. Perhaps 'compliance' and 'internalisation' could have formed part of the description though they are mentioned at the end.

In terms of evaluation and analysis, Morticia has used the Asch variation effectively and linked these to the two explanations in each case. This is something that students rarely do well in this type of question. There is relevant evaluative comment at the end of the answer also.

The weakest part of the answer is the application to the question stem. Although Morticia has successfully matched the two characters with the two explanations, there is little engagement with the stem beyond that. The lack of engagement with the stem would cost proportionately more in an A level answer than an AS one.

This is an excellent answer because there is a lot of knowledge and understanding shown.

Luke's answer is also excellent, in fact marginally better than Morticia's. The description of both explanations is clear and accurate. There is also description of relevant evidence (Asch, Lucas) in support of the explanations.

Notice how engagement with the stem is much more effective here than in the answer above. Luke 'embeds' his application points within the description of the explanations.

There is effective analysis and evaluation too. Normative social influence is analysed in the context of the Asch study and informational social influence in relation to Lucas. There is also good use of examples.

AQA PSYCHOLOGY FOR A LEVEL YEAR 1 & AS

Written by leading psychology authors, Cara Flanagan, Dave Berry, Matt Jarvis and Rob Liddle, this book's engaging visual style and tone will support you through the AS or Year 1 course and help you prepare for your exams.

- * Approved by AQA, this book offers high quality support you can trust
- * The attractive layout will help you engage with the information
- * Each topic is presented on one spread to help you instantly see the whole picture, with description and evaluation clearly separated
- * Unique 'Apply it' activities provide plentiful opportunities to help you practise your application skills
- * New mathematics requirements are thoroughly supported throughout
- * Practical research activities support the development of your research methods skills
- * Visual summaries help ensure you have a good grasp of the basics
- * Exam practice and skills guidance is provided for the new assessment objectives and mark schemes.

About the authors:

Cara Flanagan is a well-known and respected author for A Level Psychology. A practiced teacher with examining experience and a well-known conference presenter, Cara is renowned for creating resources that students love to use.

Dave Berry is a practiced psychology teacher with examining experience. He regularly leads face-to-face and online training courses for a major awarding body. Dave teaches psychology at Bolton School, Lancashire.

Matt Jarvis currently teaches psychology at a sixth form college in Hampshire. An experienced teacher of psychology from GCSE through to postgraduate level, Matt has authored numerous psychology textbooks. Matt is Honorary Research Fellow at Keele University and also has examining experience.

Rob Liddle has more than twenty years' teaching experience in psychology, from GCSE to postgraduate study. A psychology graduate with a Masters in Organisational Psychology, Rob is an experienced examiner who currently writes psychology books and resources. He teaches at a sixth form college in Southport, Merseyside.

Also in this series:

AQA Psychology for A Level Year 2 – Student Book (978-1-908682-41-3)

Digital Books:

AQA Psychology for A Level Year 1 & AS – Digital Book Bundle (978-1-908682-42-0)

AQA Psychology for A Level Year 2 – Digital Book Bundle (978-1-908682-43-7)

Study & Revision Guides:

AQA Psychology for A Level Year 1 & AS – Study & Revision Guide (978-1-908682-44-4)

AQA Psychology for A Level Year 2 – Study & Revision Guide (978-1-908682-45-1)

Revision Apps:

AQA Psychology for A Level Year 1 & AS – Revision App

AQA Psychology for A Level Year 2 – Revision App



**Illuminate
Publishing**

www.illuminatepublishing.com

ISBN 9781908682406



9 781908 682406