

Candidate 1 evidence

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Conformity

Conformity is a change in behaviour and/or opinion as a result of real or imagined group pressure. Internalisation is sharing the views of another, while compliance is acting according to the wishes of another, even when disagreeing with their views. There are two main types of conformity:

- Compliance
- Internalisation

Types of conformity:

- Normative social influence is to comply with the social norms because of the desire to be part of a group.
- Informational social influence is to conform because others may know something that we do not.
- Compliance is changing behaviour without changing opinion, often as a result of normative social influence.
- Internalisation is changing both behaviour and opinion, often as a result of informational social influence.
- Integrational social influence is similar to normative social influence except motivation to conform is not fear of rejection by the group. The motivation is reward by the group and results in the rest of the group admiring or praising the conformist.
- Studying conformity is of psychological importance as it circles compliance and obedience, and because it refers to any behaviour that occurs as a result of others' influence.

Jenness (1932) – lab experiment on conformity using beans in a bottle

He used an ambiguous task, involving a glass bottle filled with 811 white beans. His participants were 101 psychology students, who had to guess by themselves how many beans were in that glass bottle. The participants were then split into groups of three and asked to guess how many beans there were through discussion. After the discussion, the participants could then give another answer by themselves to estimate the number of beans to see if they changed their original answer based on what the rest of the group thought. Jenness found that nearly all participants changed their original answer when they were given another chance to guess again. On average, male participants changed their answer by 256 beans and female participants changed their answers by 382 beans. These results show the power of conformity in an ambiguous situation and are likely to be the result of informational social influence. Participants were deceived so were unable to give their informed consent, whenever stooges are used there is always a form of deception.

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Participants were clearly stressed and some must have been embarrassed if they changed answers and suffered some loss of self-esteem. This all constitutes 'psychological harm.'

Soloman Asch (1951) conformity line experiment

Aim:

- Solomon Asch (1951) conducted an experiment to investigate the extent to which social pressure from a majority group could affect a person to conform.

Method:

- Asch used a lab experiment to study conformity, where he used 50 male students to participate in a 'vision test.' Using a line judgment task, Asch put a naive participant in a room with seven other confederates. The confederates had agreed in advance what their responses would be when presented with the line task. The real participant did not know this and believed that the other seven participants were also real participants like themselves. Each person in the room had to state aloud which line (A, B or C) was most like the target line. The answer was always obvious. The real participant sat at the end of the row and gave his or her answer last. There were 18 trials in total, and the confederates gave the wrong answer on 12 trials. Asch was interested to see if the real participant would conform to the majority view. Asch's experiment also had a control condition where there were no confederates, only a "real participant."

Results:

- Asch measured the number of times each participant conformed to the majority. On average about one third (32%) of the participants who were placed in this situation went along and conformed to the clearly incorrect majority. Over the 12 critical trials about 75% of participants conformed at least once and 25% of participant never conformed. In the control group with no pressure to conform to confederates there was less than 1% of participants gave the wrong answer.

Conclusion:

- People conform for two main reasons, 1-because they want to fit in with the group (normative influence) and, 2-because they believe the group knows something that they do not (informational influence).

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Aim of experiment

Aim:

- The aim of this experiment is to find out if people will conform due to social pressure from the majority group in an ambiguous task, the aim of this is similar to Jenness (1932) experiment

Hypothesis:

- The hypothesis is that people will conform by changing their answers after hearing what other people put for this task.

Method:

- The type of research method chosen is a lab experiment. A lab experiment is an experiment conducted in a specially designed environment where variables can easily be controlled.
- Advantages to a lab experiment:
 - . You can draw a causal conclusion
 - . Extraneous variables are minimised
 - . It can be easily replicated
- Weaknesses to a lab experiment:
 - . Contrived, tends to lack mundane realism
 - . Experimenter and participant effects

The reason a lab experiment is the most suitable choice is because it is conducted in a school which is an environment where the variables can easily be controlled.

Sample:

- The sample chosen is an opportunity sample which is when you select people who are the most easily available at the time of the study, which will be high school students as they are already available and will be informed on the task and what is asked of them to do. In this study there will be 10 male and 10 female sixth year students (all over aged sixteen) from high school.

Independent variable:

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- The independent variable will be whether the people are going by their own answer or if they are changing their answers based on what other people said/

Dependent variable:

- The dependent variable will be the rate of conformity before and after you are given an idea of what most people have said.

Procedure:

- A group of 10 male and 10 female participants all aged over sixteen who have all given consent to joining this experiment are shown a picture of a celebrity and have to write on a piece of paper how old they think the celebrity is and everyone will look over the pieces of paper (their name will not be on the paper) to see what people in the room thought that celebrities ages are, they will then be told what other people outside the experiment think the age of that celebrity is and are then given another chance to write down what they think on another piece of paper to see if they stick with their original answer or change it based on what the majority of other people outside the experiment thought. After that they will again look at all the pieces of paper and make an average age from the first and second set of answers to see how much the answer had changed. After the experiment is over all of the participants will be debriefed and will be told exactly what had happened and what the experiment was about so nobody is confused.

Ethics:

- An ethical issue on the experiment could be confidentiality as if people were to conform they may feel embarrassed and may not want people to know that they conformed, so to avoid breaching the ethical standards the experiment will be completely confidential and you will not have to put your name on the paper.
- Another ethical issue could be withdrawal as a participant may not feel comfortable and may wish to back out of the experiment so to avoid breaching the ethical standards all participants are welcome to back out of the experiment during any time if they do not wish to continue.

References:

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