

CONFORMITY AT ITS FUNNIEST

handout number

1.1

Activity type Flipped

This activity is a good starting point for the Social Psychology part of the course and is mentioned in the student digital book – here an alternative (Flipped) approach is facilitated by the provision of a full handout. Students can be given this to prepare and research for homework. The clip is of a classic candid camera type scenario of people in a lift. The ‘confederate’ aims to

get everyone to conform to a behaviour whether that is removing their hat or facing the wrong way in the lift. Students are encouraged to think around the subject of conformity before the lesson and perhaps look up some of the ideas and be ready to apply this knowledge in the class.

This classic clip identified on the handout can be found here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BgRoiTWkBHU>

Practical use

Homework activity with handout to promote thinking skills and independent research

Additional notes

Students can also be asked to find out what research tells us about key aspects of conformity, e.g. what factors affect it and why people conform. Once this background

has been established then the lesson might focus on actually answering exam questions effectively, etc.

Answers

1. The student definitions can be compared to the textbook and any differences discussed. The focus on majority can be stressed.
2. The aim here is to encourage them to think of reasons for conformity. If they find this difficult they should be encouraged to imagine that they were the person entering the lift – what might they be thinking?
3. This links with the above discussion.
4. Most will say no – opportunity to discuss the fact that we underestimate our conformity.
5. Here they are encouraged to think about how personality and previous experiences might impact on conformity.
6. This is to stimulate the idea that Psychology is applied around us and can in fact be used as evaluation for research! If they need help they might be promoted to think about schools, friendship groups, etc.
7. This could lead on to discussions of how Psychologists can lose control of their research and ethics as below. They might also consider socially sensitive issues.
8. This is a chance to encourage weighing up of costs and benefits and not simply declaring it is unethical because people were embarrassed.

INTERNALISATION, IDENTIFICATION OR COMPLIANCE?

handout number

1.2

Activity type Application

This sheet provides everyday examples of conformity and asks students to suggest which type of conformity they illustrate. It gives practice at identifying types of

conformity from scenarios which could be asked in the exam.

Practical use

Individual class exercise

Additional notes

Could be a useful plenary or starter.

Answers

Liz – identification	Lewis – compliance	Harsa – compliance	Len – internalisation
Winston – identification	Jack – compliance	Jenny – identification	

IS IT A TYPE OR IS IT AN EXPLANATION?

Activity type Consolidation

Students sometimes get confused between what constitutes a **type** of conformity or an **explanation** of conformity. This is potentially serious when it comes to the exams because they could offer the wrong sort of

information and score zero.

This is a gapped handout that encourages them to check their understanding of the distinction. All the answers are provided and they just need to find them.

Practical use

Individual activity with class plenary

Additional notes

This could usefully be followed up with some exam question examples. They could, for example:

- Be given a description of someone's behaviour and asked what type of conformity was being depicted.
- Be given a scenario and then be asked to explain why people conformed.

Answers

- 1. Compliance** is a type of conformity because it suggests sometimes people only superficially go along with group norms. For example, a pupil who is asked to straighten their tie by a teacher later loosens it.
- 2. Normative social influence** is an explanation of conformity because it suggests that people conform because they seek social approval. For example, the new student looks around to see if others put their hand up in class.
- 3. Internalisation** is a type of conformity because it suggests that sometimes people genuinely change their private opinions and beliefs to those of the group norms. For example, a student returns from the first term at university as a vegetarian like his flatmates.
- 4. Informational social influence** is an explanation of conformity because it suggests that people conform when they feel that others have the right answer. For example, on the first day in a new job you watch to see whether everyone else goes home in their uniform.
- 5. Identification** is a type of conformity because it suggests some people conform to the opinions of the group without necessarily agreeing with all the group's ideas. For example, a student returning from the first term at university desperate for roast beef, having been a vegetarian along with the rest of her flatmates all term.

PRACTICAL USING BOGUS MAJORITY – HOW MANY JELLY BEANS IN THE JAR?

Activity type Practical / Research methods

This is a practical suggestion using the activity familiar from charity events of guessing the number of jelly beans in the jar. Under the guise of being interested in how people make judgements about quantity, students ask participants to anonymously guess the number of beans in the jar. Two conditions are established, one in which there is a set of guesses with severe underestimates and one in which there are gross overestimates.

The extension activity requires some knowledge from the research methods section and can be offered at an appropriate time when they have covered these concepts.

Ethics – Please print out the handout 'Practicals and Ethical Issues' for all students and ensure that they incorporate all considerations into their design.

Practical use

Practical – best done in small groups but with whole class pooling of results.

Additional notes

This study lends itself to variations that still test informational conformity (guessing other things such as the weight of the cake).

It also lends itself to normative conformity: students devise attitude questionnaires with agree/disagree alternatives and see if participants are influenced by a bogus majority.

Maths content

The analysis of results (and indeed the preparation of the bogus sheets) require calculations of mean values, range, standard deviations and a graph.

STUDY REVISION CARD

Activity type Consolidation

After the full details of a study are noted, students could be given a record card or small piece of paper and be shown how to construct a summary that can be more easily learned.

They could be encouraged to see how few words they need to note down in order to remember the study. They could use pictures (Asch's lines are an ideal example) and colours or highlighters. The idea here is to get them to think about what might work best for them. They may have evaluation on one side and the methods and findings on the other.

Once they have done this they could be encouraged to pass them around in groups of around six students. Get them to read how others have summarised the study – how do they differ from their own? What might they do differently as a result?

If they and (you) are feeling brave you could then point out how well they probably know the study now and get them to put away the card and write down as much as they can remember – or you could leave it until the next lesson and show them how much they have retained.

Practical use

An individual activity with group sharing

Additional notes

This activity could be repeated at intervals through the course and students can do it for all key studies as part of their consolidation activities.

UP, DOWN OR THE SAME?

handout number

1.5

Activity type Consolidation

This handout provides students with a list of variations on Asch's original study and requires them to say whether

the rate of conformity increased, decreased or stayed the same.

Practical use

Individual task in class or homework. Could be quiz with mini whiteboards.

Additional notes

The suggested headings for the extension task are group size, unanimity and task difficulty as listed in the box on page 18.

Answers

- | | | | |
|---------|---------|---------|----------|
| 1. up | 4. down | 7. up | 10. down |
| 2. down | 5. down | 8. same | |
| 3. down | 6. same | 9. down | |

Extension

Any three of the following suggestions are suitable:

- Conformity rates depend on the difficulty of the task: the more difficult the task, the higher the conformity rate.
- Conformity rates depend on the degree of proximity between the individual and those with whom (s)he is expected to conform: the closer the individuals are to each other, the higher the conformity rate.
- Conformity rates depend the number of other non-

conformists present: the more non-conformists, the lower the conformity rate.

- Conformity rates depend on the number of people present: conformity increases as the number present increases up to 4 people but not thereafter.

The conclusion from the variations indicates that conformity very much depends on situational factors rather than (or in addition to) personality.

CONFORMITY IN THE GYM

handout number

1.6

Activity type Research methods

This activity exposes students to some research that has applied and tested our knowledge about conformity. In this case the researchers suggest that we can use conformity to encourage people to hold the plank position for a bit longer, thereby strengthening their core muscles. The data shows the difference, depending on whether participants were told that others similar to them could hold it longer second time round or told

nothing. The suggestion is that they conformed to the majority as suggested by the researcher. This is startling when you realise the effort involved in the exercise and the likelihood that the second time around would not be as easy.

The major focus of the handout is the research methods content and the potential applications of this type of research.

Practical use

Individual or paired exercise for class or homework

Additional notes

This may lead to discussions as to how else conformity could be used for 'good'.

What about in school for problem behaviours?

Maths content – percentage change

Answers

1. What was the research design?

Independent groups

2. State two ethical issues that would have had to have been considered by the researchers and explain why they would be a problem:

- *Protection from harm – from trying to hold the move longer.*
- *Informed consent – they were not fully aware of what was involved.*
- *Right to withdraw – need to be reminded that they do not have to carry on.*
- *Deception – one group were misinformed.*
- *Confidentiality – their performance score should be kept securely and not disclosed to others.*

3. What does the data show? Refer to the percentage change that you have calculated in each case.

The control participants, as expected, achieved a significantly shorter time on their second plank attempt (76.38 seconds vs. 90.09 seconds on their first attempt – a drop of 18%) whereas participants given the social norms message achieved a 5% increase on their second attempt – first attempt average was 95.82 seconds; second attempt average was 99.79 seconds.

4. What are the potential applications of this research for increasing the nation's fitness?

Potentially, giving messages about the fitness of peer groups may encourage the less fit to engage in activity, etc.

5. What concerns would you have about generalising from this research?

This group were already gym goers and may have just had a more competitive personality than the general public.

6. From what you have learned about the factors that affect conformity, how might the impact of the social norms be intensified by changes in the way that the norms were communicated to the participants?

They might refer to factors such as group size (telling them that in a sample of a 1000 people of your age ...) or unanimity – telling them that 100% of people could hold the plank longer the second time.

YOUR SOCIAL ROLES

Activity type Idea

Zimbardo's research concerns conformity to social roles. In order to illustrate how much social roles affect behaviour, get students to think out loud about the social roles which they occupy. Social roles are the part people play as members of a social group. For example, within the family you are a son or daughter (you may need to adapt this example for mature students!). With each social role you adopt, your behaviour changes to fit the expectations both you and others have of that role.

Suggest to them that they start with son/daughter; after that they will probably add student, friend and then

maybe dry up but there are all manner of others that might not seem so obvious.

Others they could include are grandchild and other relationship ones (distinguishing older sibling from younger sibling), employee, mentor (if some of them help in reading groups lower down the school), customer, team member (e.g. in sport), even patient for those who have recently been to the doctor

Then get them to write down examples of behaviour that conform to those roles.

Practical use

Group exercise for discussion purposes

MY PRISON DIARY

Activity type Idea

Students could write a six-day diary (obviously in the first person) pretending that they were either a guard or a prisoner in the Stanford prison study. It's probably necessary to draw lots for prisoner or guard or the majority may choose to be a guard!

Their 'roles' could be a little more detailed than simply prisoner or guard – if so, it's essential to draw them

out of a hat, e.g. prisoner who rebelled, prisoner who conformed but had sympathy with the rebel, prisoner who conformed and was angry with the rebel, guard who enjoyed his role, guard who felt uncomfortable with his role, etc. You could even have a couple of specific prisoners: 8612 and 819 (see notes below for their roles).

Practical use

Homework followed by class discussion

Additional notes

Excerpts from some of the diaries could be read in class (anonymously or otherwise) especially if the class has the different roles as suggested above.

Below there is a day-by-day description of events quoted from Forsyth, D.R (1987) *Social Psychology*. Brooks/Cole page 427. This could be useful for guidance purposes.

Day 1: Prisoners are brought to the 'Stanford County Prison'.

Day 2: The guards awaken the prisoners at 2.30 am and make them shout out their prison identification number, which is sewn to their shifts.

The prisoners rebel, remove stocking caps and numbers and barricade themselves in their cells. Guards counter by hosing them down with a chemical fire extinguisher.

To prevent rebellious incidents, the guards set up a privilege cell and a solitary confinement cell.

Day 3: Using the bathroom becomes a privilege. After 10.00 pm prisoners must urinate in a bucket in their cells.

Prisoner 8612 is released because of 'acute emotional disturbance'.

Visiting day: all parents, relatives and friends agree to the prison's arbitrary visitation rules.

Day 4: A priest visits the prisoners, encourages them to contact a lawyer or public defender.

Prisoner 819 is released after breaking down and crying hysterically.

Day 5: Parole board meets: all subjects say that they will forfeit all the payment they have earned as participants up to this time if paroled.

Prisoner-guard relations stabilise; prisoners join guards in an attempt to force one subject to end a hunger strike.

Several factors – the increasing malice of the guards, the depression levels of the prisoners and the reaction of a colleague to the prisoners' degradation – prompt Zimbardo to consider ending the study.

Day 6: Experiment terminated.

ZIMBARDO'S PRISON STUDY – A TEST

handout number

1.7

Activity type Assessment

It's obviously important that students know this study well so a test that covers the basics is a useful exercise.

Practical use

Test in class done under timed test conditions.

Additional notes

Students can mark each other's work. Saves you time and is a useful exercise for them if they have a clear mark scheme.

Answers

1. Haney et al. (1973)
2. Volunteer.
3. On the basis of them being emotionally stable, psychologically well balanced.
4. Randomly.
5. Prisoner and guard.
6. Prisoner – strip-searched, deloused, head covered, dressed in loose smock with no underwear, referred to by number.
Guard – issued with khaki uniforms, billy clubs, whistles and reflective sunglasses (like those in the film *Cool Hand Luke*).
7. Guards adopted their roles with enthusiasm: their behaviour was a threat to prisoners' psychological and physical well-being. Some, but not all, appeared to enjoy domination and humiliation of prisoners. Prisoners also adopted their roles: were depressed and anxious. Study had to stop after 6 days.
8. The situation has a huge influence on people's behaviour. Social roles are easily adopted.

ETHICAL ISSUES OF ZIMBARDO'S PRISON STUDY

handout number

1.8

Activity type Evaluation

Most textbooks spend a great deal of time discussing the ethics of Milgram's obedience research but somewhat less on the ethics of Zimbardo's prison study. This handout asks students to consider the ethical issues raised by this study. It provides four basic ethical

points and requires students to develop each one, thus providing them with a thorough coverage of the issues as a basis for a well-structured essay on the subject.

Practical use

Homework

Additional notes

There are hints provided but teachers may wish to encourage students to cover these up, at least at first.

A lot of the criticism is aimed at demonstrating how difficult it is to assess ethical issues in advance.

It is fair to point out to students that Zimbardo thought carefully about the ethics of his study but there were things he overlooked and others that he didn't anticipate.

WANNA BE IN MY GANG?

Activity type Evaluation

One of the evaluation points for the situational approach to conformity is the alternative explanation of Social Identity Theory. This exercise reinforces that theory.

Split the class into groups by drawing names from a hat. Each group is now a gang. They need a gang name, a location where they meet, an initiation ceremony and 10 rules, at least one of which applies to non-gang members. They then think of one way in which they are all the same as each other but different from the members of the other gangs. This needs to be a genuine difference.

This is usually an exercise for prejudice and discrimination but can be used to communicate how Social Identity Theory can be used as an explanation for conformity. This theory is based on the idea that once

you identify with a group you tend to perceive the world in terms of ingroups and outgroups; you conform to the norms of your own group and favour them over the outgroup even if it's to your mutual disadvantage.

This exercise helps to give students an understanding of the influence of ingroups and outgroups and to show how identification with an ingroup leads to unfair treatment of the outgroup, especially when the outgroup is at a disadvantage. This is seen in the shared social identity of the guards in Zimbardo's study and their treatment of the prisoners (the outgroup). It can be seen in the Reicher and Haslam study where the guards lacked a social identity but the prisoners had a sense of social identity. It can also be seen in the appalling situation at Abu Ghraib.

Practical use

Class exercise in groups

Additional notes

As a further discussion, you can talk about how people do tend to identify with certain groups even if they are not aware of it. For example, the students might moan about their school but they will soon jump to its defence if an outsider criticises it. It's the same with the place where they live in terms of area within the country or with people from another country criticising Britain (or whichever country they come from).

HOW OBEDIENT ARE YOU?

Activity type Starter

This is an activity to get students thinking generally about obedience and can form the basis for class discussions on, for example, individual differences, factors that impact on obedience, etc. Some further issues that might be considered are identified in the answers section below.

No doubt students will also have a few comments about the difficulty of answering the questions definitively.

(‘Well it depends whether it’s a Monday morning when I am tired or a Wednesday when I am in a good mood after games!’)

Ethics: Data for the questions should be given in anonymously and collated on the board.

Some questions for later discussion are provided on the handout.

Practical use

Individual questionnaire completion with pooling of class data

Additional notes

Maths content: Mean, mode and median – calculators may be required.

Further discussion may involve questions such as:

- Were the students honest given that you may have wandered round the class and seen their answers?

- What are the advantages of the questionnaire technique? How quickly was this set of data collated with only minimal ethical issues? (Advantages of self-report and questionnaires.)

Answers

1. Answers to this first question will depend on data.
2. They may mention situations, authority and personality, for example.
3. They may mention the fact that they were not sure about how to answer some questions, e.g. it might

depend on other things. They may also consider how honest they were; whether they want to be categorised as obedient (social desirability bias); how difficult it was to think hypothetically?

DIY MILGRAM QUESTIONS

Activity type Idea

The following exercise will help students learn the variations on Milgram’s studies by dint of them having to write their own questions.

Ask students to write a list of 15 multiple choice questions on Milgram and the variations for homework.

Follow this up by getting them to do each other’s tests in the lesson and comment on them. They have to research them quite well to ask this number of questions. This way they teach it to themselves.

Practical use

Homework to write the questions. Classwork to complete them.

ETHICS COMMITTEE: THE GREAT MILGRAM DEBATE

handout number **1.10**

Activity type Application

This activity involves splitting the class into groups of four. All have to take a specific role as they imagine Milgram proposing his original research study to the university ethics committee. There are three members of the ethics committee to ensure that a definitive response is achieved in all cases.

Once in their fours they should decide who will take each of the four roles – Milgram, a psychologist, a prison specialist and a lay person. The handout provides guidelines on both the nature of their personal interests and the issues that they should consider. Milgram should

prepare to argue his case for two minutes and then be questioned by each of the ethics committee in turn (three minutes). At the end of each role play debate votes should be cast by the ethics committee – ‘Yes’ he can go ahead or ‘No’ he cannot. The votes should be based on the arguments of ‘their Milgram’ and his responses to their questions.

After all the role plays have been heard then you can reveal how many Milgrams would have been allowed to go ahead.

Practical use

Small group class activity

Additional notes

Could of course be adapted for other studies at other points in the course.

COMPARING STUDIES OF NURSES' OBEDIENCE

handout number **1.11**

Activity type Evaluation

The studies of Hofling *et al.* (1966) and Rank and Jacobson (1977) yield very different results. Are nurses dangerously obedient to doctors' orders or not? This

handout requires students to compare the two studies in order to consider the difference in their results.

Practical use

Homework

Answers

	HOFLING <i>ET AL.</i> (1966)	RANK and JACOBSON (1977)
How was the instruction given to the nurses by the doctor and how was he/she introduced?	By telephone using a false name (not one that any doctor in the hospital had).	By telephone using a familiar name.
Were the nurses alone or with others when they received the instruction?	Alone.	With others.
What type of drug were they asked to administer?	An unknown one (Astroten) above the recommended dose.	A known drug (Valium) at 3 times the recommended dose.
What were the main findings?	21 of 22 nurses obeyed.	2 of the 18 obeyed.
What conclusions were drawn from the findings?	The majority of nurses will obey dangerous orders.	Only a small minority of nurses will obey dangerous orders.

Extension

Reasons offered:

An increased willingness to challenge doctors' orders.

Self-esteem increasing within the profession.

Increased fear of litigation for incorrectly administering drugs.

CONFORMITY OR OBEDIENCE?

Activity type Consolidation

Students are often very happy with the idea of conformity until they meet obedience and some get mixed up. The distinction is an important one because, given an essay on research into obedience, if they write about Asch and conformity they will score zero. If they think about the differences, they are obvious – so that is what it suggested here – get them to think!

Simply ask them in pairs or threes to come up with as many differences between the two as possible. After the class have added their own ideas they all should have a table of differences to refer back to and a better understanding. A few examples are given afterwards to test this.

Practical use

Pair and share activity culminating in a class discussion

Additional notes

It is useful to encourage sharing ways to remember which is which by asking direct questions about 'How

will you remember/learn this?', 'What should you look out for, e.g. word hints?'

Answers

Some example differences

CONFORMITY

Can occur between people of equal status

Emphasis on acceptance

Behaviour adopted is similar to the source

Pressure to change implicit

Not always conscious of conformity

OBEDIENCE

Occurs within a hierarchy

Emphasis on power

Behaviour may be different from source

Requirement to change usually explicit

Will explain behaviour by obedience

Anne – Conformity

Wilf – Obedience

Recruit – Obedience

Car driver – Conformity

Flora – Conformity

OBEDIENCE TO A MAN IN UNIFORM

Activity type Idea

Below is a link to a YouTube clip showing an experiment similar (in the second part) to Bickman 1974. In the first part a man in uniform asks a passer-by to 'mind' an individual and, if he walks off, to give him a shock with a laser stick he has provided him with. The confederate then says he is leaving and you see the response of the participant.

The second part involves someone in uniform asking people to do pointless tasks like changing their shopping to another hand and jumping on a stepping stone. It compares the responses to a person in uniform to the

response to the same person in everyday clothes (jeans). The difference is amazing.

You can talk to the students about the reason to obey someone in uniform as opposed to an 'ordinary' member of the public and use it as a discussion point about legitimate authority.

You can also discuss the ethics which are somewhat dubious!

YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=16QMQXijYVU>

Practical use

Class demonstration and discussion

USE THE OTHER DOOR

Activity type Research methods

Students answer questions related to a hypothetical study of obedience.

Practical use

Homework

Additional notes

Maths content

Ratio, calculation of percentages, bar chart

Answers

1. a. Define the term obedience. (2)

Obedience is a form of social influence which involves following a direct order (it involves doing as you are told by an authority figure).

- b. In this study how did Greg and Ella operationalise obedience? (1)

The number of people who used the side door.

- c. How was disobedience operationalised? (1)

The number of people who used the main door.

2. What was the independent variable in this study? (1)

Whether or not a confederate walked through the main door.

3. Suggest **two** factors, other than the one investigated here, that might reduce obedience rates. (2)

E.g. Location: how official the building is.

Uniform: how official the authority figure appears.

Proximity: the further away the authority, the lower the obedience rate.

4. In the first hour, 45 people walked to the side door and 5 people used the main door with the notice on it.

- a. What was the ratio of people who obeyed to those who disobeyed? (2)

9:1

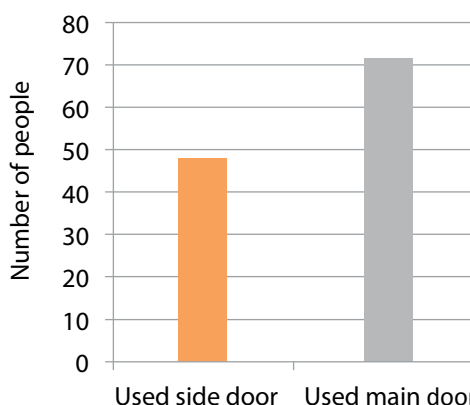
- b. What percentage of people walked through the side door? (2)

90% of people used the side door

5. In the second hour, 48 people used the side door and 72 people went through the main door. Draw a bar chart of these results, giving it a heading and appropriate labels. (4)

Bar chart to show the number of people using the side door (obeying) and using the main door (conforming).

Number of people using each door



6. Suggest **three** extraneous variables that might be a problem in this study and, for each one, suggest how this extraneous variable might have affected the results. (6)

1. Number of people – The total number of people using either door was far greater in the second hour than the first. This may have affected whether people obey because the fact that it is busier may make people be in more of a hurry so may be more likely to use the main door or even not to notice the notice.

2. People arriving in the second hour may be doing a different course of study than those arriving early and this may affect whether or not they are likely to do as they are told.

3. The weather may be an extraneous variable – if it's cold or wet, people may be less likely to obey because they want to get inside quickly.

7. Suggest **two** ethical issues that are raised by the study. (4)

1. They cannot get informed consent from participants. They have to consider whether to use presumptive consent.

2. They may cause moderate distress to participants by requesting them to use another door, especially in the second hour when they can see someone else disobeying.

AGENTIC STATE – GAPPED HANDOUT

Activity type Evaluation

This gapped handout covers the description and evaluation of the agentic shift. The answers are provided on the sheet.

Practical use

Individual homework

Additional notes

When completed this handout provides a good description and evaluation of the agentic shift.

Answers

Description

Milgram (1973) proposed the concept of an agentic state to explain why people are prepared to go against their **conscience** and do as they are told even if it causes them considerable distress. He suggested that there are two distinct modes of social consciousness. One is the **autonomous** state in which we act according to our own conscience and we feel **responsible** for our actions. In this state, the vast majority of people behave decently towards others. The second is the **agentic** state in which we are no longer independent but act according to instructions from someone else. When in this state people justify their behaviour by saying that they acted that way because they were **instructed** to do so.

People move from the **autonomous** state into the **agentic** state when confronted with an **authority** figure. This shift from autonomy to 'agency' is called the **agentic shift**.

If we obey an order that goes against our conscience, we are likely to experience **moral strain**, which results when we have to do something we believe to be immoral in order to function as an agent of authority. Although people in such a situation may want to stop, they feel unable to do so due to **binding factors** – aspects of the situation that allow a person to minimise the damaging effect of their behaviour.

Evaluation

The theory is supported by several studies. Milgram's own research demonstrated how the majority of ordinary people will follow **instructions** even when they are acting against conscience. **Blass** and Schmitt (2001) found that people who saw Milgram's study blamed the **experimenter**, indicating that they believed the participants were agents of **authority**. The explanation is also supported by many historical events which demonstrate that as a result of **social pressure** normal people can act in a callous and inhumane way.

On the negative side, there are alternative reasons why people obey an authority figure. It could be due to **personality** rather than the situation. In addition, agency theory cannot explain why some people **disobey** as was shown by about a third of the participants in the original Milgram study.

EXPLAINING OBEDIENCE

Activity type Application

This activity is simply to get students applying the explanations of legitimate authority and agentic state for why people obey. Students need to read the scenario

and decide which might be a good explanation and finally outline a simple explanation.

Practical use

Individual or paired class activity

Additional notes

Further discussion might focus on, for example, whether the recruit might obey the instructor outside of the barracks.

Answers

Answers will depend on which explanations students choose.

An example of how this might be done:

Scenario: A new recruit to the Army drops to the floor and completes fifty press ups having been ordered to do so by the Physical Training Sergeant.

Application of legitimate authority – the recruit recognises that the PT Sergeant holds a position of authority over them and therefore obeys.

THE AUTHORITARIAN PERSONALITY AND OBEDIENCE

handout number

1.16

Activity type Research methods

This resource describes a correlational study (measuring obedience and F-scale scores). It then asks questions, most of which are concerned with research methods but some require students to know the characteristics of an authoritarian personality.

Practical use

Individual homework or class assessment

Additional notes

Maths content

- Modal scores
- Drawing a scattergram from data
- Sketching a scattergram demonstrating different relationships.

Answers

1. What is the modal score for
 - (a) The obedience score. (1 mark) = 11
 - (b) The F-scale score. (1 mark) = 9
2. The F-scale measures the authoritarian personality. Give **three** characteristics of such a personality. (3 marks)

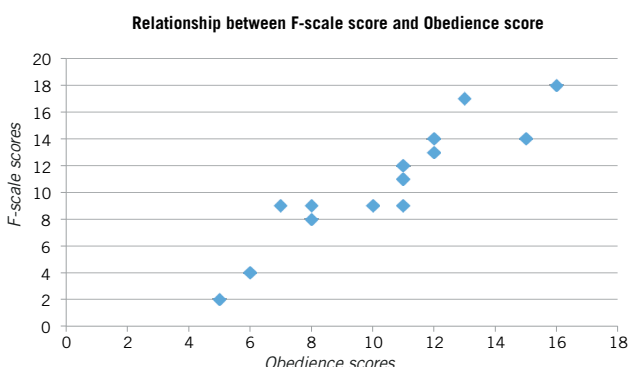
Any relevant, e.g.

- Inflexible in outlook
- Traditional values (nationalistic, patriotic, unquestioning respect for religion)
- Conventional attitudes (e.g. to sex, race, gender)
- Excess deference to authority
- Contempt for those lower down the social scale
- Extremely prejudiced

3. The F-scale was originally used by Adorno *et al.* (1950). They found a problem with acquiescent bias. What is this and why is it a problem? (2 marks)

The tendency to agree on every item. Scores are therefore not an accurate reflection of attitudes.

4. Draw a scattergram of the results. Make sure you provide a heading and label each of the axes. (6 marks)

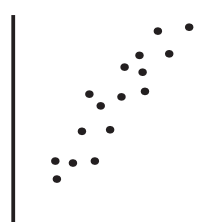


5. What kind of relationship does the scattergram indicate? (1 mark)

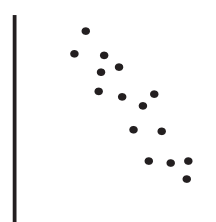
Positive.

6. Draw a rough sketch of a scattergram showing:

- (a) Positive relationship. (1 mark)
- (b) Negative relationship. (1 mark)
- (c) No relationship. (1 mark)



positive correlation



negative correlation



no correlation

7. Give **one** limitation of correlational research. Explain your answer in relation to this study. (3 marks)

It does not show a cause and effect relationship. It is quite possible that a third factor, such as upbringing, is responsible for any relationship.

8. Suggest **one** strength of correlational research. Apply your answer to this study. (3 marks)

It can be used to make a prediction. In this case, it is likely that personality factors (as measured by the F-scale) can predict tendency to obey.

PICTURE THAT!*handout number***1.17**

Activity type Consolidation

The authoritarian personality is something students often find difficult to digest so this activity encourages them to think about it in depth but then distill it down to its key elements.

The handout requires them to think about the key things that lead to an authoritarian personality, e.g. harsh parenting, affection only linked with good behaviour, etc., and the key behaviours that lead us to recognise such personalities, e.g. people who display stereotyping, inflexibility, status orientation, etc. These are all covered in the student book and can be used as support for this task.

What the students should try to do is to depict these factors as images or drawings that will help them remember. This is a challenge but many will rise to it after only a short time!

In the cloud labelled 'past' students should put in pictures of events that may have happened in the past to people who ultimately have an authoritarian personality.

In the cloud labelled 'behaviour' students should put in pictures of behaviours that are characteristic of people who have an authoritarian personality.

The extension task is to think about what it would be like to be around someone we have been describing.

Practical use

Individual activity that could be done in class or for homework

Additional notes

If there is access to computers, or students complete for homework, they can easily Google the phrases to come up with suitable pictures. For those who really do not like the picture idea then they could just see how few words they could use.

USES FOR RESEARCH ON RESISTANCE

Activity type Idea

Two people who may be interested in why people resist social influence are:

A teacher who wants to ensure that students resist peer pressure to conform.

A new army sergeant who wants to reduce the possibility that his new squad disobey his orders.

Ask students to consider what they have learned about why people resist conformity and obedience. They

should apply that understanding here.

If they need more help, you may point them to the role of social support. You may also want to point out that Milgram's variation experiments tell us about aspects of situations that might promote or reduce obedience. For example, obedience fell when the study took place in a run-down office building rather than a university laboratory.

Practical use

Paired class activity for class discussion

Additional notes

Students might think of other people/professions who might wish to encourage resistance to obedience and

consider how they could put the research into practice.

Answers

The teacher

Social support: They could encourage role models (e.g. other members of the school community) to talk about their own experiences of resisting conformity as students are more likely to resist conformity when they are aware of someone else doing the same.

LOC: teacher should encourage development of internal locus of control – for example, through PSHE lessons on self-efficacy and self-confidence. Those with a high internal LOC are more likely to resist pressure to conform.

The sergeant

Social support: Where there is any disobedience then the focus should be removed from that person as people are likely to resist obedience when they see others disobeying.

LOC: Reinforcing obedience in tasks in the early days will increase the likelihood of obedience to those tasks as LOC only comes into play when the task is a novel one.

LOCUS OF CONTROL – IT'S NOT MY FAULT!

handout number

1.18

Activity type Application

This handout is designed to help students fully understand the concept of locus of control. The handout requires students to categorise various statements as representing an internal or external locus of control. The

statements cover aspects such as intelligence and self-esteem as well as the more obvious attributes of either end of the scale.

Practical use

An individual activity for classwork or homework

Additional notes

If used as classwork, it can easily lead into a discussion of this dimension especially as it relates to obedience and conformity. It might be worth suggesting to students that

maybe it's not uni-dimensional – that people might have an internal LOC in one area (e.g. academic studies) but not in others (e.g. relationships).

Answers**INTERNAL**

- No I'm not a killjoy, I just don't want another drink, I've had plenty already.
- I don't care what my teacher says, I'm not doing the cross country run at the weekend.
- I never found maths easy so I made sure I got extra help and worked at it.
- I'm going to get to the top.
- I'm a confident person and I'll manage it somehow.
- I've never had a problem passing exams, I'm fortunate that I'm bright but I always work hard too.
- I failed my driving test because I can't park well.
- I did it my way.

EXTERNAL

- I never vote, I don't see the point. A single vote can't make a difference.
- No, I didn't audition for a part – I'd never be any good at acting no matter who directed the play.
- We lost the domino game – we were just so unlucky in the tiles we got.
- My parents brought me up not to question what I'm told to do and I respect that.
- I always take my lucky mascot into exams.
- I'm going to join a religious sect and live entirely by their rules.
- I'm just an unlucky person – I never win in raffles.
- I had no choice – I had to marry him or my parents would have disowned me.

MINORITY INFLUENCE OF THE FAMOUS

Activity type Idea

Right at the start of teaching minority influence ask students if they can think of any famous people throughout history who have started with ideas that were considered ridiculous/dangerous/subversive, etc., but were eventually accepted.

This can generate a list and a discussion about why these people's ideas were eventually accepted. Some suggestions of such figures are provided in the additional notes but political movements, such as the environmental lobbyists, may also raise issues of minority influence.

Practical use

Class discussion

Answers

Suggestions:

Galileo – insisted the planets revolved around the Sun rather than the Earth.

Mohandas Ghandhi – leader of the Indian nationalist movement refused to submit to the colonial authority despite repeated imprisonment and abuse.

Sigmund Freud – theorised that children have sexual feelings and that everyone has an unconscious mind full of repressed sexual desires. These ideas were at

first considered outrageous yet Freud's work has had a significant influence on psychology.

Martin Luther King Jnr – was brutalised and demeaned for advocating racial equality but continued to do this until his death.

Charles Darwin – was ridiculed and vilified for his theory of evolution.

These examples demonstrate that the majority does not always overwhelm the minority.

PSYCHOLOGY REVISION ON CHRISTMAS DAY?

handout number

1.19

Activity type Application

This activity helps students review how minority influence works in real life. The task is to convince the rest of the students that the secret to success in Psychology A level is simply to ensure that you do eight hours revision on Christmas Day. No other day will do.

They are asked to plan a campaign to persuade the rest of the class, applying the terms consistency, commitment, flexibility and the snowball effect (the latter of course just happens to fit in with the theme!).

So what if you're doing this lesson in a heatwave in May? Everyone likes a little Christmas spirit right?

Practical use

Paired activity

Additional notes

Encourages students to apply the ideas of research into minority influence to a familiar scenario and provides a useful lead into social change. Background Christmas Carols optional!

Answers

Consistency – they might suggest that the three in the minority meet to plan the message of the campaign, they may all use the same PowerPoint perhaps to ensure consistency and all should agree on the benefits of the plan.

Commitment – they may suggest dressing up in Christmas outfits for the next lesson to ensure that they draw attention to their campaign, or show

templates of the note to go in Christmas cards 'Happy Christmas to you – sorry I will not be in touch on the day I really want to do well in my Psychology so will be glued to my revision notes!'

Flexibility – a difficult one because only Christmas day will do. They may think of suggesting you could get up at 6 am revise until 2 and then open presents and still enjoy the festive meal.

Snowball effect – the key point here is for them to realise that if each of them converts one person in the class, there will then be six of them, then if those six each convert one, the task will soon be complete?

Or will it? The last question asks them to consider the factors that might stand in the way of a successful campaign – e.g. those who resist social influences.



GIVING CONVINCING ADVICE ON MINORITY INFLUENCE

handout number

1.20

Activity type Application

This exercise involves students writing a leaflet for a minority group to use in order to get people to change their views. The group wishes to convince people that cars should be banned on three non-consecutive days of the week.

Students are given guidance on the handout where it is emphasised that the leaflet should not be concerned with the policies of the group per se but the way their arguments are presented. Reinforcement of this by the teacher would be a good idea! They must emphasise the need for consistency, commitment and flexibility.

Practical use

Students could work in pairs (recommended) or individually

Additional notes

The leaflet should be written in such a way that it applies to ANY minority group.

This exercise is designed to give students an opportunity to learn the principles of consistency, commitment and flexibility by writing a leaflet that emphasises these factors. For example, on the point of consistency, the leaflet might tell the group that whichever member of the group is interviewed, they must be repeating the same message in reflecting the views of the group.

In terms of commitment, the group members must not be seen to waiver from the principles they are advocating whilst being flexible in their approach (e.g. that the occasional exception might be made in cases of extreme hardship).

Obviously the idea could be adapted to preparing leaflets for other groups – perhaps of the students' own choice.

PICTURE STARTER

presentation

1.21

Activity type Starter

One of the things that students may find difficult (being so young) is to appreciate the fact that the world is changing all the time. Some of the social changes may not be as monumental as the Suffragette movement but they are still changes and these may be some that have happened in their lifetime.

The suggestion is that such changes are shown to students and the students are asked to think about:

- A) How they might have occurred in the first place.
- B) How their impact might have grown.

The idea is simply to get them thinking about how what they have learned so far might relate to this. Can they see a role for obedience and conformity already?

Practical use

Class discussion starter

Answers

Suggestions

Teacher police checks – people who have a history of crimes against children needed to be prevented from working with those groups. Information about convictions needed to be shared outside of the police records. If people want jobs in this area they have to have the check.

Students may suggest that some people campaigned for this.

Social media – a small number people wanting to widen their social circle and use the Internet to find friends, etc. Those who did not have the facility felt as if they were missing out on something. Others will have been convinced to join in by early adopters singing the praises of social media. Once a majority of people were connected then others would have conformed to avoid being left out.

Smoking ban – as people realised the health problems of secondary smoking they began demanding the right to be able to eat and drink in public without the prospect of people smoking around them and harming their health. Those who smoked became unpopular and to avoid this conformed at least in public! Finally, as there were still those that resisted, a law was passed so individuals and establishments had to obey.

Vacuum cleaner ban! The EU believe that we will save money and the environment. Likely to have been started and encouraged by Green lobbyists. Consumers will have no choice once the stock runs out!

A HISTORY LESSON: SOCIAL CHANGE

handout number

1.22

Activity type Application

Students are asked to help historians make a presentation for secondary school children on one aspect of social change from the last 70 years, using psychological principles (steps involved in minority

influence, lessons from conformity research, lessons from obedience research). They can choose their own topic but there is an extensive list of suggestions provided.

Practical use

Small group work inside or outside the classroom initially. They can then give their presentation to the class.

Additional notes

The exercise could be some form of presentation, as suggested, but could also be a poster if that is preferable.

LAST PERSON STANDING

presentation

1.23

Activity type Quiz

This is a 'millionaire' type quiz. There are 12 questions, all with 4 options and getting progressively more difficult.

Students make 4 cards to hold up: A B C D. They vote

on each answer and if they are wrong they are out! If you make them stand up at the start then it's easy to tell who is out! Hence the title.

Practical use

Class exercise

Additional notes

A fun quiz especially useful at end of term. A prize could be provided for anyone getting all 12 correct and still standing at the end.

Ask students to make up further questions, or on another topic.

Answers

Answers are provided on the slides. The slide after each question provides the question and answer, the correct one is in yellow.

A SOCIAL CRISS CROSS

handout number

1.24

Activity type Consolidation

A final reminder for students of the key terms from this area of the specification. Could be against the clock if

you have a competitive bunch – who will finish first?

Practical use

Individual activity in class

Answers

Across

- 3. quantitative
- 5. F
- 6. legitimacy
- 9. Sheridan
- 12. Stanford

Down

- 1. collectivist
- 2. compliance
- 4. volunteer
- 5. field
- 7. moral
- 8. Asch
- 10. locus
- 11. Adorno