

Influence in the real world

Factors affecting conformity

- Ambiguity
- Need to be accurate
- Crisis/emergency
- Unanimity
- Gender - conform to stimuli more traditionally familiar to other gender, no difference in conformity for gender-neutral stimuli
- Expertise
- Status and attractiveness of group - admire status of group so follow
- Group size - conformity is at full effectiveness at 3-5 members
- Culture
 - Conformity is higher in collectivist (Eastern) cultures than individualist (Western) cultures - collectivist cultures value cohesion → conformity
 - Conformity varies within cultures - low-status parents promote conformity in parenting

Milgram, Bickman and Berkowitz (1969)

- Field experiment
- 1, 2, 3, 5, 10, 15 people stopped and stared up at a 6th floor window for 60 seconds on a NYC street
- Stopping - 4% copied single person, 40% copied 15 people
- Staring - 42% copied single person, 86% copied 15 people
- Evidence that conformity changes with group size

Deindividuation - the process where reduced self-awareness and self-restraint in group settings facilitates deviant, antisocial behaviour - presence of others arouses people, fosters anonymity, reduces feelings of responsibility

Studies

Zimbardo et al. (1969)

- Participants were anonymous vs. non-anonymous
 - Anonymous (deindividuated) - lab coat with hood (KKK-style), lights off
 - Non-anonymous (identifiable) - wore name tags, lights dimmed
- “Victims” were nice or nasty - established in interview
- Everyone tested in a group setting
- Participants think they are to give a series of electric shocks to victims
- Predictions
 - Deindividuated participants would be more aggressive (more shocks, greater duration)
 - Identifiable participants would be more likely to shock nasty than nice
 - Deindividuated participants would shock both victims

- Results
 - No difference in number of shocks between deindividuated and identifiable participants
 - Deindividuated participants shocked for twice as long, increased duration over trials
 - Deindividuated participants shocked naughty and nice victims equally

Johnson and Downing (1979)

- Replicated Zimardo study
- Deindividuated - KKK-style or nurses outfit
- Participants in nurses outfit gave lowest shock levels - even lower than identifiable participants
- Deindividuation may be the result of local group norms

Mann (1981) - archival evidence

- Potential “jumper” suicides
- In 10 out of 21 cases, people would yell “jump, jump, jump”
 - Part of large crowd
 - It was dark
 - Victim and crowd far apart
- Baiting was seen when there was a high temp. and duration of the episode was long

Social identity model of deindividuation

- Deindividuation situations shift a person from the individual identity to a collective identity
- Whether deindividuation effects people for better or worse depends on the characteristics and norms of the group
- Situations that decrease self-awareness will increase deindividuation
 - Increase self-awareness to prevent deindividuation

Minority influence - processes of social influence in which a numerical or power minority can change the attitudes of the majority

- **Conversion effect** - process by which minority influence brings about internal, private change in the attitudes of a majority

Majority vs. minority influence

Majority	Minority
Public compliance or private acceptance	Private acceptance
Normative or informational reasons	Informational reasons
Not much thought	Think arguments through carefully
Direct	Indirect

Moscovici (1969)

- Based on Asch's paradigm
- Participants were in groups of 6
 - Control condition - 6 real participants
 - Minority conditions - 4 real participants, 2 actors (confederates)
- Participants presented with a blue slide - varying in intensity
- Task was to name the colour of the slide aloud
 - Control condition - 6 blue
 - Inconsistent minority condition - confederates said green 4, blue 2
 - Consistent minority condition - confederates said green 6
- Results
 - When the minority is consistent in their views, they sway the views of others
 - Participants in the consistent minority condition conformed 9% of the time
 - Participants in the inconsistent minority condition conformed 2% of the time

Consistent minority influence

- Demonstrate certainty and commitment to a position
- Position is distinct from the majority norm - disrupts the majority norm
- Not motivated by self-interest
- Perception that minority members freely chose their position and express it freely
- Draws attention to an alternative position - highlights that the only solution to a conflict is the adoption of the minority's position

Obedience

Milgrim's obedience studies

- Cover story - "The effects of punishment on memory"
- Rigged allocation of role to 'teacher' (real participant) vs. 'learner' (confederate)
- Learner's memory for a word list is tested by a teacher
- For every wrong answer teacher delivers* an electric shock - increases by 15V (15-450V) every time there is a wrong answer (*no shocks are actually delivered)
- Psychologists predicted participants would stop shocking at 135V
- In experiment 65% continued to shock until end of experiment (450V)

Why do we obey?

- Informational social influence - in ambiguous and novel situations we look to others (authorities) for information, guidance
- Normative social influence - we don't want to disappoint others, face social disapproval (even with strangers)
- Not due to personality