

The main concern of social psychologists is to understand behaviour in a social context and the ways in which the social context can influence behaviour. Psychologists who specifically study social influence want to find out how other people affect our behaviour. An example of how people can affect our behaviour could be if you have ever laughed at a joke that you didn't find funny, just because everyone else laughed. You may not have been asked to laugh, but you chose to conform to the norms of the group. At the other extreme, people can obey to the point of killing innocent people (like in Nazi Germany). For the topic of Social Influence we will look at some of the research which has tried to discover more about why people conform and why they obey.

**From the above complete the following points:**

1. What topic does the passage above refer to?
2. Rewrite a definition of that topic stating 2 different points.
3. Two examples are referred to in the passage to highlight the topic- explain both of them.
4. Name 2 research examples that are linked to the topic described.
5. Give a strength and a weakness of both research examples.

**Research example 1**

Aim

Method

Results

**Research example 2**

Aim

Method

Results

**Name the Topic.....**

**Does it come under individual behavior or social behavior?**

**Stimulus:**

**Black people were treated unequally in 1950's America, it was standard practice for example for black people to give up their seats for white people on buses. One day a woman called Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat for a white person on a bus. She was arrested by the police. This action sparked the civil rights movement.**

1. Which type of influence is being described in the scenario above?
2. Give an example of this kind of influence in everyday life.
3. Asch found that people conformed even in an unambiguous situation. One factor which contributed to this was the size of the group.

Describe one other situational factor and one individual factor which affect conformity.

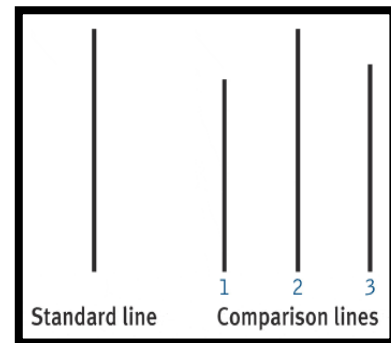
4. State the results of the results of the Mori and Arai study.
5. Give 1 strength and 1 weakness of this study.
6. Describe what is meant by informational and normative influence.
7. Explain the different levels of conformity and give relevant examples to illustrate each level.
8. Explain what is meant by conformity. (State 2 points)
9. Emma is a student. When she first went to university, she made friends with a group of students who were passionate about animal rights. At the time, Emma didn't have very strong opinions on animal research but over the past few months she has become very much against it. Now she has joined a campaign against animal research and has started attending public demonstrations with her friends. **What type of conformity does this example illustrate?**

**Key Study: Solomon Asch (1951)****Aim:**

To investigate the extent to which social pressure from a majority group could affect a person to conform.

**Procedure:**

Asch used a **lab experiment** to study conformity. Using the line judgement task, Asch put a naïve participant in a room with seven **confederates**. The confederates had agreed in advance what their responses would be when presented with the line task. The real (naïve) participant did not know this and was led to believe that the other seven participants were also real participants like themselves. Each person in the room had to state aloud which comparison line (1, 2, or 3) 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. In some trials, the seven confederates gave the wrong answer. There were 18 trials in total and the confederates gave the wrong answer on 12 trials (these were known as the 'critical' trials). Asch was interested to see if the real participant would conform to the majority view. All Pps were male, university students.

**Results:**

Asch measured the number of times each participant conformed to the majority view. On average, about one third (32%) of the participants who were placed in this situation went along and conformed with the clearly incorrect majority. Over the 18 trials about 75% of participants conformed at least once and 25% of participant never conformed.

**Conclusion:**

Why did the participants conform so readily? When they were interviewed after the experiment, most of them said that they did not really believe their conforming answers, but had gone along with the group for fear of being ridiculed or thought "peculiar". A few of them said that they really did believe the group's answers were correct.

**Evaluation:**

State 2 positive points about Asch's research.

- 1.
- 2.

State 2 negative points about Asch's research.

- 1.
- 2.