

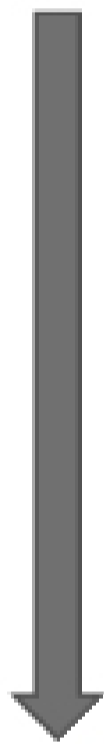
1. PSY0013 CHAPTER 7 LECTURE NOTES

CHAPTER 7: CONFORMITY

2. CONTINUUM OF SOCIAL INFLUENCE

A. Yielding to pressure; independent of how you personally may want to act (influence of other people leads you to change your behavior)

A. Weak
social pressure



B. Strong
social pressure

B. Weak

- i. **Conformity:** changes in perception, opinion, or behavior in ways that are consistent with group norms
- ii. **Norms:** informal rules about how one should behave in a particular situation
- iii. Resistance pressure is independence (resisting group norms)

C. Moderate

- i. **Compliance:** changes in behavior that are elicited by direct requests or suggestions
- ii. Resistance pressure is assertiveness (resisting direct requests)

D. Strong

- i. **Obedience:** changes in behavior produced by the commands of an authority figure
- ii. Resistance pressure is defiance (resisting commands of an authority figure)

3. CONFORMITY

A. Elevator video: confederates in an elevator face their backs to the door and the one participant turns their back, too

- i. Confederates create a counter-norm
- ii. Participants feel pressure to go against "norms" in order to do what others are doing

B. Judgments of light movement (Sherif 1936)

Task: view a point of light on a wall in a darkened room

- i. How much does the light move?
 1. *The Autokinetic Effect: the light appears to move, but doesn't*
- ii. IV: individual or group judgment
 1. *Do it first individually*

- 2. *Then, in groups of 3, do it with public reporting*
- iii. Question being asked: to what extent do judgments change when they are being made alone versus in a group?
- iv. Results: over time, judgments converged to a group norm
 - 1. *People's judgments were very different when they started with an independent judgment; judgments converged as they continued to work with a group*

C. Asch (1951)

Task: view a standard line next to 3 comparison lines and state which one matches the standard line

- i. IV: individual or group judgments
 - 1. *Alone or*
 - 2. *After most of the rest of the group (confederates) has made a clearly incorrect judgment/response*
- ii. DV: Participants make a judgment
 - 1. *Which of the three is the correct line?*
- iii. Results: judgments conform to the group norm 37% of the time

D. Two paths to conformity

- i. Sherif
 - 1. *Ambiguous judgment*
 - 2. *Uncertain of what to say, so search for information*
 - 3. *Norms give information*
 - 4. *Response consistent with norms (informational influence)*
 - 5. *Private conformity (acceptance of norm)*
- ii. Asch
 - 1. *Clear judgment*
 - 2. *Know what to say (no informational search)*
 - 3. *Norms counter knowledge*
 - 4. *Response is consistent with norms (normative influence)*
 - 5. *Public conformity (non-acceptance of norm)*

4. WHY DO WE CONFORM?

- A. **Informational Influence:** we look to others for information about how to act
 - i. Can I eat this with my fingers?
- B. **Normative Influence:** desire to be liked (or avoid punishment) determines our actions
 - i. What will they think of me if I eat this with my fingers?

C. Depth of conformity

- i. **Private conformity:** involves changes in beliefs when privately accepting position
 1. *Change in behavior lead to change in attitudes/beliefs*
- ii. **Public conformity:** involves acting in accord with social pressure while privately refuting that position
 1. *Changes in behavior without change in attitude/beliefs*

D. Private or Public: How do we know?

- i. Sherif's participants stuck with group judgments when later asked for responses alone
- ii. Asch's participants did not conform when asked to write their answers privately

5. CONFORMITY CONTEXTS

A. **Majority Influence:** when we conform to the norms set by a majority group

- i. Larger group size influences us with diminishing returns
 1. *The more people doing it, the more pressure*
 2. *As group size increases, conformity increases*
 3. *Yet, if you see a group that you think are in "cahoots," you will see them as one source and are less likely to be influenced by them*
- ii. Attention to and knowledge of norms: you cannot conform when you don't notice or know the norm
- iii. Group unanimity: but 1 dissenter can "break the spell"

B. **Minority Influence:** when dissenters can produce change (numerical minority)

- i. Characteristics
 1. *Be consistent and unwavering in your position*
 - a. *Don't flip-flop back and forth with your positions*
 2. *Be accepted as part of the mainstream*
 - a. *Play the game to change the game*
 - b. *Idiosyncrasy credits (brownie points)*

6. MODERATING CONFORMITY

A. Does gender make a difference?

- i. Depends on whether there are gender differences in familiarity with the issue at hand
- ii. Low familiarity = more conformity

B. Does culture make a difference?