

# Social Psychology

## Social Influence: Conformity



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## What We Will Cover in This Section

- Overview
- Conformity
- Compliance
- Obedience



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## The Abilene Paradox

- Hot, windy day in Coleman, Texas.
- Father-in-law says, *'Lets get into the car and go to Abilene and eat at the cafeteria.'*
- Everyone agrees.



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Conformity

*Change in behavior as a result of real or imagined group pressure.*

1/26/2008

Conformity.net

4

## Level 1.

### COMPLIANCE

*Acting in accord with social pressure while privately disagreeing.*

1/26/2008

Conformity.net

5

## Level 2.

### OBEDIENCE

*Behavior change in response to demands of authority.*

1/26/2008

Conformity.net

6

### Level 3.

#### ACCEPTANCE

*Acting AND believing in accord with social pressure.*

1/26/2008

Conformity.net

7

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Normative Influence

Conformity, compliance, or obedience due to a desire to gain rewards or avoid punishments.

- Depends on the outcome.

1/26/2008

Conformity.net

8

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Informational Influence

Conformity, compliance, or obedience due to a desire to gain information.

- Information dependent.
- Occurs when we doubt our own judgment.

1/26/2008

Conformity.net

9

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Conformity Continuum

Acceptance

Obedience

Compliance

**Independence**

**Assertiveness**

**Defiance**

12/6/2008

Conformity.net

10

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Sherif Studies

- Subjects in a dark room.
- Shown a pinpoint of light on a dark screen.
- Asked to determine how far the light moved.
- Eventually the people would settle on one stable guess.
- Actually no movement (AUTOKINETIC EFFECT).

12/6/2008

Conformity.net

11

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Sherif Findings

- Subjects in groups would converge on a single group norm.
- These results would be stable over time.

12/6/2008

Conformity.net

12

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Asch Studies

- Participants and five confederates are seated at a horseshoe table.
- Participant always is given position 6.
- Group is asked to select the line that best matches a reference line.
- First several trials all agree.
- Later the first five all agree on the wrong line.

12/6/2008



13

---

---

---

---

---

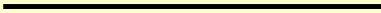
---

---

---

## Conformity Studies #2

Reference line



Which line is the same as the reference line?

**A**

**B**

**C**

12/6/2008



14

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Asch Findings

- **Results**
  - 37% always conformed.
  - 25% never conformed.
  - 50% went along at least half the time.
- **Note.**
  - Privately the person would write the correct response.
  - Alone later would give the correct response.
  - This represents public COMPLIANCE.

12/6/2008



15

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## When People Conform



12/6/2008

Conformity.net

16

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Situational Characteristics

- **Unanimity.**
  - One person breaking the group norm.
  - Someone outside the group has less effect.
- **Group cohesiveness.**
  - Social support.

12/6/2008

Conformity.net

17

---

---

---

---

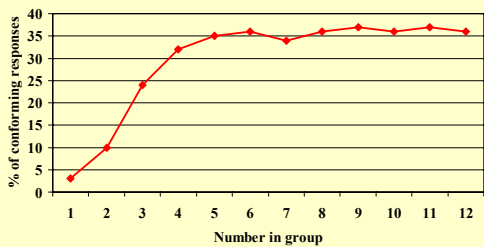
---

---

---

---

## Group Size



12/6/2008

Conformity.net

18

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Personal Factors

- **Status.**
  - Higher status people in the group have more impact.
- **Level of prior commitment.**
  - Once people have made a public commitment they stay with it.
- **Public vs. Private response.**
- **Group cohesiveness.**
- **Demographics**
  - Gender.
  - Personality.

12/6/2008



19

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Minority Influence

*Process by which dissenters produce change within a group.*

- Dissenters should be consistent and confident.
- The degree of difference between the dissenters and the majority should be small.
- Dissenters should be consistent with changing norms.

12/6/2008



20

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Anticonformity

- **Opposition to social influence on all occasions.**
  - Persistent.
  - All occasions.
  - Often caused by psychological reactance.

12/6/2008



21

---

---

---

---

---

---

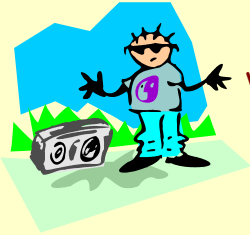
---

---

---

---

## COMPLIANCE



Acting in accord  
with social pressure  
while privately  
disagreeing.

1/26/2008

Conformity.ppt

22

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Influencing Compliance

1. How the request is made.
  - Surprise.
  - Speed of talking.
2. Positive Mood.
3. Norm or Reciprocity.
4. Giving Reasons.

1/26/2008

Conformity.ppt

23

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Two-step Request Strategies #1

### Foot-in-the-door.

Agree to small request, then  
comply to a bigger one.

### Low balling.

Gain agreement to a request  
then then reveal other  
commitments.

1/26/2008

Conformity.ppt

24

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



## Two-Step Request Strategies #2

### Door-in-the-face.

Preface real request with one so large that it is rejected.

### That's not all.

Influencer makes a large request then offers a discount or bonus before the request is refused.

1/26/2008

Conformity.net

25

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## OBEDIENCE



Behavior change produced by the demands of someone in authority.

1/26/2008

Conformity.ppt

26

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Obedience: Milgram Studies

### Background.

1/26/2008

Conformity.net

27

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Milgram Studies

- Design
  - S and confederate draw slips: teacher and learner.
  - Teacher gets mild example of a 'shock'.
  - Learner strapped in chair with electrodes.
  - Learner mentions heart condition.
  - Teacher has a 'shock generator' with switches from 15 to 450 volts.
  - When shocked the learner twitches, groans, screams, then is silent.

12/6/2008

Conformity.net

28

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Milgram Results

- 63% went to 450 volts.
- One said, "OK professor, what do we do next?"

12/6/2008

Conformity.net

29

---

---

---

---

---

---

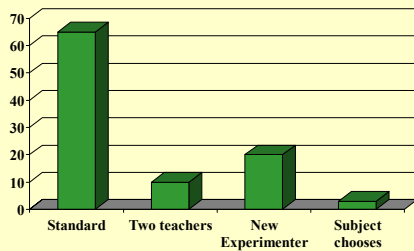
---

---

---

---

## Overall Results



12/6/2008

Conformity.net

30

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Conditions That Lead to Obedience

- **Closeness and legitimacy of the authority.**
  - Physically present.
  - Be a legitimate authority.
- **Distance from the victim.**
  - Far away and not heard...all obeyed.
  - Same room 40% obeyed.
  - Hold hand: 30% obeyed.

12/6/2008



31

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Conditions That Led to Obedience

- **When others objected, this broke the obedience chain.**

12/6/2008



32

---

---

---

---

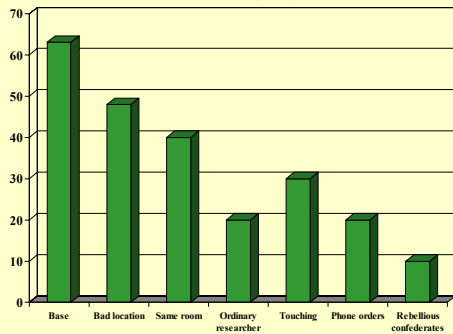
---

---

---

---

Percent who obey experimenter.



12/6/2008



33

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Summary

- Foot-in-the-door entrapment.
- Dissonance.
  - If I am doing this of my own free will (Insufficient Justification) then it must be OK.
- Power of the situation.

12/6/2008

Conformity.net

34

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

THE END

12/6/2008

Conformity.net

35

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---