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AI Acknowledgement

I confirm that I have not used any AI tools in the assignment. I confirm that I have not presented any AI generated materials as my own work. I confirm I have a copy of my drafts, notes, and the sources I used.

1) Paraphrase a section from a selected book chapter (500 words)

The behaviour of human beings is highly influenced by the existence and the expectations of other people, whether the influence is direct or indirect. These dynamics are studied in social psychology, and conformity and group influence are some of the main processes. Conformity may be described as a movement of beliefs or behaviours because of actual or perceived pressure of the group, often without direct training. At the heart of the concept of conformity lies the notion of social norms: shared standards within a group that determine acceptable attitudes and behaviours (Gross, 2020).

Initial studies showed how judgement is influenced by a group. The famous experiment conducted by Sherif (1935) on the autokinetic effect demonstrated that people in an unclear situation move toward a group standard, taking the opinion of others as their own. But according to Asch (1951, 1952, 1956), true conformity is to be tested in a clear-cut situation. His line-judgement experiments revealed that subjects often deferred to unanimous yet obviously wrong group answers, and about 32 percent conformed on key trials. Asch emphasized that conformity is most strongly driven by unanimity, not the size of the group, and that even the dissent of a single group member significantly decreases it.

Additional studies looked into reasons as to why people conform. To explain these two opposing motives, Deutsch and Gerard (1955) suggested the primacy of informational social influence (ISI) in which individuals conform in order to lessen uncertainty and gain accuracy, and normative social influence (NSI) in which people conform to meet the need of acceptance and avoidance of rejection. These processes are associated with two patterns of conformity, internalisation whereby the group opinions are independently adopted and compliance whereby people outwardly surrender but inside their minds they disagree with the group. Subsequent work, including referent social influence (Turner, 1991) emphasises the fact that conformity is greatest when individuals perceive themselves in terms of an ingroup, demonstrating how self-categorisation processes determine the resolution of social influence.

The results of Asch have been reproduced and criticised over many times and across cultures and times. Rates of conformity differ across social-historical context: a lesser rate of conformity was observed among the American students in 1970s than in 1950s as a response to the independent changes. Cross-cultural studies also indicate that collectivist group cultures that uphold the importance of group harmony exhibit greater levels of conformity as compared to groups with individualist orientation (Bond & Smith, 1996).

It is not only the power of majority that determines conformity. Moscovici (1969) proved that consistent minorities are also in a position to shape group judgements as evident in his experiments in colour perception. In contrast to majorities, which are inclined to impose compliance, minorities are likely to facilitate deeper thinking and slow internalisation, which

leads to social change and innovation. Minority influence is promoted by consistency, flexibility, and the perceived similarity to the majority.

The chapter addresses related group processes beyond conformity. The research on risky shifts demonstrated that groups can make riskier choices than individuals do, although this became the more general theory of group polarisation, in which group discussion reinforces predispositions towards a more extreme position. Groupthink, as described by Janis (1971, 1982), explains how undue cohesiveness and pressure to make a unanimous decision can supersede rational decision-making, and such a process results in poor political and organisational decision-making.

On the whole, conformity is not necessarily a good thing or a bad thing. It makes predictability, social coordination and learning of others possible, but it may also inhibit independence and even lead to unhealthy consensus, like prejudice or political extremism. Conformity is usually perceived either positively or negatively depending on cultural norms: in individualist societies the conformity may be perceived as a sign of weakness, in collectivist cultures the conformity is regarded as a key to functioning in society (Fiske et al., 1998). Finally, conformity brings out the issue of individuality and group membership in the development of human thoughts and behaviour (Gross, 2020).

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2) Summarise three selected journal articles into abstracts (400-500 words)

1) Article 1 : Why We Cheat

Rothgerber (2023) in *Why We Cheat* examines the paradox of dishonesty and hypocrisy the way individuals justify the dishonest actions and still think of themselves positively. Using cases like online chess, Wordle, and sharing passwords, the article demonstrates that cheating is frequently committed in low-stakes circumstances in which people contend that a little bit of dishonesty is not harmful. Rothgerber attributes this tendency to the research on cognitive dissonance, especially his studies of the so-called meat paradox in which people justify their treatment of animals and consumption of meat. There is a discussion of empirical works by Ariely and Batson, which show how self-deception allows individuals to think of themselves as moral when they are behaving in a selfish way. The results point at the fact that individuals cheat as much as they need to in order to gain material benefits without endangering their self-concept as well as the fact that moral outrage can serve as a protecting mechanism against perceptions of personal inadequacy. In the end, Rothgerber comes to the conclusion that dishonesty is prevalent and frequently hidden behind the parade of morality as the human ability to self-justify runs deep.

2) Article 2: Workplace Friendship

This paper will discuss the two-sided aspect of work friendships, including some of the positive attributes as well as possible negative outcomes. Work friendships can promote trust, a sense of belonging, psychological safety, creativity and enhanced performance, and decrease turnover and stress. They are also able to come up with social capital that strengthens cooperation and career growth. Nevertheless, workplace friendship can result in gossip, exclusion, cronyism, nepotism or favoritism, a factor that can be detrimental to fairness and professional integrity. The article explains the difference between friendships and networking, especially the difference in intent and presents the problematic situations when power dynamics change for example when a friend becomes a boss. The approaches to maintain boundaries and fair results are offered, such as open communication, avoidance of exclusionary practices, and the fair treatment of the relationships between bosses and friends. Conclusively, friendship in the work place can be fruitful to the individuals and the organizations, provided that it is balanced with professionalism, fairness and limits.

3) Article 3: Gender : How Stubborn Are Stereotypes

This paper discusses how gender stereotypes have persisted in the last 50 years starting with the results of Broverman et al. (1972) who identified men with agency and competence and women with warmth and expressiveness. The prevalence of these stereotypes was later verified in cross-cultural studies (Williams & Best, 1990). Although gender equality has advanced, the available studies in the modern world reveal that prescriptive stereotypes, which are the expectations about the way men and women should act, are still very influential. The Towards Gender Harmony project (more than 30,000 respondents in 62 countries) has shown not only long-lasting gender trait differences, but also unstable beliefs in manhood, and opposition to gender equality, especially in less gender-egalitarian countries. Paradoxes arose, like

that of high gender equality countries having a high rate of intimate partner violence. The article ends with the conclusion that stereotypes continue to influence self-concept, relationships, and attitudes of the society and that it is necessary to make concerted efforts to break prescriptive norms in education, media, and policy to promote equality around the world.

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3) Jumbled Reference List

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