



Portfolio of Activities

Shadan Zeinelabdien Taha Elsherif 2436823

BSc Psychology (Dual Award) UMW

IUPS4005: Academic Study Skills for Students

Assoc Prof Paul B. Hutchings

5th September 2025

I acknowledge the use of ChatGPT (<https://chatgpt.com/>) on 5th September 2025 to check my work using the prompt:

1. check for typos and grammatical error

I confirm that I have not presented any AI generated text as my own work. I confirm I have copies of my drafts, notes, and other resources I used before, and after the use of AI tools which I may be asked to provide in evidence.

Task 1:

According to Gross (2020), influence is inevitable when one socializes with people. Social norms combine active social influence where one deliberately follows, and passive influence where social conformity is what influences a person's behaviour. Furthermore, conformity can refer to the desire to fit into a group or feeling that it is necessary and fearing exclusion from said group. Sherif (as cited in Gross, 2020) conducted an experiment to test this theory where he showed participants visual illusions and asked them to estimate the distance light travelled, both with and without discussing with a group. He found that the results had a group norm and individual results started becoming more like each other, where they truly believed the answer from the group discussion. However, many were not satisfied with this experiment, hence Asch (as cited in Gross, 2020) conducted experiments where the participants were asked to identify matching lines, with stooges providing correct or incorrect answers in varying patterns. In this experiment, the participants did not truly believe the wrong answers were correct but instead pretended to believe them to avoid being ridiculed by other members. In addition, Asch (as cited in Gross, 2020) found that the participants were more likely to conform when 2-3 stooges disagreed, as opposed to only one; however, beyond three, rather than the number of stooges disagreeing, the stooges' agreement with each other is what pushed the participants to conform instead. Additionally, they also found that participants gained confidence when even one stooge's answer was similar to theirs. Therefore, this suggests that conformity occurs more with greater ambiguity and uniformity in behaviour, rather than the size of the majority. In fact, minorities can also be the source of influence, where Moscovici (as cited in Gross, 2020) suggested that conformity pushed by the minority is not direct yet has more

longevity. Furthermore, conformity can also be related to the relationship between group members, where one would more likely feel the need to be accepted by those they have pre-existing, close relationships with. On a similar note, culture may also have an impact on conformity, as collectivist cultures are more likely to conform, and especially with those they have a close relationship with, as opposed to more individualistic cultures. Moreover, influence can also be separated into informational influence, or requiring to be correct, and normative influence, or requiring feeling accepted by peers, where both can be present at once and encourage conformity. In addition, in some cases where a group makes a decision, it results in a decision the individual normally would not make, also known as the risky shift phenomenon, leading to the larger phenomenon, group polarization. Hence, the group decision becomes more unreasonable, opposed to what one might assume of a decision based on shared knowledge. An example of this is in groupthink cases where the group members' judgements become too unified, often leading to negative outcomes. In summary, despite the negative aspects of conformity in this age of popularized independence, conformity remains an essential part of our society.

Task 2:

Article 1: Why we cheat

Rothgerber (2023) claimed that cheating, whether in games and sports or any other task, is a moral offense many partake in. Oftentimes people cheat for social or financial gains; however, this is also committed in the absence of a reward at times, where he also suggested it could be to make them feel better about themselves. Furthermore, he also suggests that people sometimes feel more capable after performing better through cheating, deceiving themselves into becoming confident in skills needed for the task they cheated on. However, some avoid cheating, not only due to moral dilemmas surrounding cheating, but also increased fear of the risk that comes with greater rewards. Hence, people are more prone to cheating when the reward isn't suspiciously high, and in an experiment, many chose to obtain rewards through cheating their partner, then attempted to justify their actions to maintain their sense of morality, displaying moral hypocrisy.

Article 2: Workplace Friendships

Workplace friendships have long been a controversial topic due to their large impact on people's work and private lives. Hamilton et al. (2022) mention that while they can provide a supportive environment that can increase productivity, it can depend on many factors, as a relationship built solely on negative shared experiences may cause problems in the long run. Furthermore, power dynamics and blurred boundaries at work may cause strain in relationships, both in and out of the workplace, eventually hindering work performance. Hence, implementing

boundaries and finding a way to balance distance between work and private relationships offers a middle ground solution to this dilemma. However, work friendships wouldn't have been such a popular topic if it were that simple; therefore, it is essential to identify peers' as well as one's own boundaries at work and outside of work for better and more sustainable work relationships.

Article 3: Gender: how stubborn are the stereotypes?

According to Hutchings & Sullivan (2023), despite major development towards gender equality, gender stereotypes remain as a hurdle in the way of achieving this goal, even in this contemporary era. These stereotypes can imply how a person of a certain gender should act (prescriptive) or usually acts (descriptive). For instance, the title “Dr”, commonly associated with men, led to an error in a gym's changing room assignment system and assigned a female Dr. to the men's room. Furthermore, research conducted by “Towards Gender Harmony project” across many countries, showed that despite some differences, many traits which were commonly associated with their respective gender remained constant. Moreover, inequality varied across countries, yet even in “progressive” countries, men did not feel the need to support this cause as they believed equality was already achieved or that it would cost them personally to be achieved. Dismantling these stereotypes may be a difficult journey; however, it is essential for societal change to achieve gender equality.

Task 3:

References

- Bennett, P. (2011). *Abnormal and clinical psychology: an introductory textbook* (3rd ed.). Open university press.
- Davey, G. C. (2014). *Psychopathology: Research, Assessment, and Treatment in Clinical Psychology* (2nd ed.). Blackwell.
- Day, S. (2015, September 9-11). *Families experience of Poverty Stigma in Education* [Oral Presentation]. Developmental Psychology, University of Central Lancashire.
- Evans, L., Mitchell, I. D., Jones, S. (2006). Psychological Response to Sport Injury. In Hanton, S., Mellalieu, S. D. *Literature reviews in Sport Psychology* (pp. 289-319). Nova Science Publications.
- Geekie, J., & Read, J. (2009). *Making sense of madness: Contesting the meaning of schizophrenia*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203878422>
- Hefferon, K., & Boniwell, I. (2011). *Positive psychology: theory, research and applications*. Open University Press.
- Hill, E. M. (2015). The role of narcissism in health-risk and health-protective behaviors. *Journal of health psychology*, 21(9), 2021-2032. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1359105315569858>
- Mazetti, G., Schaufeli, W. B., & Guglielmi, D. (2014). Are workaholics born or made? Relations of workaholism with person characteristics and overwork climate. *International journal of stress management*, 21(3), 227-254. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0035700>

- Mental Health Foundation. (2017, 10 September). *Computerised cognitive behavioural therapy* [Audio podcast]. Mental Health Foundation. <http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/podcasts-and-videos/computerised-cognitive-behavioural-therapy>
- Mohamed, S. (2011). *Stigma and mental illness: are there cultural differences?*. [Doctoral dissertation, University of East Anglia]. EThOS.
- Office for National Statistics. (2017, May 3). *Adult drinking habits in Great Britain: 2005 to 2016*.
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/drugusealcoholandsmoking/bulletins/opinionsandlifestylesurveyadultdrinkinghabitsingreatbritain/2005to2016>
- Phelps, C., Minou, M., Baker, A., Hughes, C., French, H., Hawkins, W., Leeuwenberg, A., Crabtree, R., & Hutchings, P. B. (2017). Necessary but not sufficient? Engaging young people in the development of an avatar-based online intervention designed to provide psychosocial support to young people affected by their own or a family member's cancer diagnosis. *Health Expectations*, 20(3), 459-470.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/hex.12473>
- Tarrier, N., Liversidge, T., Gregg, L. (2006). The acceptability and preference for the psychological treatment of PTSD. *Behaviour, research and therapy*, 44(11), 1643-1656.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.brat.2005.11.012>
- Ulleberg, P., & Rundmo, T. (2003). Personality, attitudes and risk perception as predictors of risky driving behaviour among young drivers. *Safety Science*, 41(5), 427-443.
[https://doi.org/10.1016/S0925-7535\(01\)00077-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0925-7535(01)00077-7)

Van Hasselt, V. B., Romano, S. J., Vecchi, G. M. (2008). Role playing: Applications in hostage and crisis negotiation skills training. *Behavior Modification*, 32(2), 248-263.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0145445507308281>

Vartanian, L. R., Trewartha, T., & Vanman, E. J. (2015). Disgust predicts prejudice and discrimination toward individuals with obesity. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 46(6), 369-375. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jasp.12370>

Voigt, D. C., Dillard, J. P., Braddock, K. H., Anderson, J. W., Sopory, P., & Stephenson M. T. (2009). Carver and White's (1994) BIS/BAS scales and their relationship to risky health behaviours. *Personality and individual differences*. 47(2), 89-93.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2009.02.003>

Welsh Government. (2015). *Well-being of future generations (Wales) act 2015*. The Stationery Office Limited.

Williamson, H. (2016, October 12- 14). *Supporting adolescents struggling with appearance-altering conditions: the feasibility of using an online psychosocial intervention (YP Face IT) in primary care* [Conference poster]. Annual Primary Care Conference, University of the West of England.

Young, E. (2017, September 18). *Women know better than men what other women are thinking and feeling*. The British Psychological Society.

<https://digest.bps.org.uk/2017/09/18/women-know-better-than-menwhat-other-women-are-thinking-and-feeling/>

References

Gross, R. (2020). *Psychology: the science of mind and behaviour* (8th ed.). Hachette Learning.

Hamilton, O. S., Virhia, J., & Almeida, T. (2022, October 31). *Workplace friendships*. BPS.

<https://www.bps.org.uk/psychologist/workplace-friendships>

Hutchings, P. B., & Sullivan, K. E. (2023, April 18). *Gender: how stubborn are the*

stereotypes?. BPS. [https://www.bps.org.uk/psychologist/gender-how-stubborn-are-](https://www.bps.org.uk/psychologist/gender-how-stubborn-are-stereotypes)

[stereotypes](https://www.bps.org.uk/psychologist/gender-how-stubborn-are-stereotypes)

Rothgerber, H. (2023, October 11). *Why we cheat*. BPS.

<https://www.bps.org.uk/psychologist/why-we-cheat>