



Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David

MODULE NAME: STUDY SKILLS IN PSYCHOLOGY

SEMESTER: JUNE 2026

LECTURER'S NAME: KAREN EATON THOMAS

ASSIGNMENT 2 (PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN)

STUDENT'S NAME	MATRIC NO. / STUDENT ID
CLARISSE YEO WEI LING	2538281

AI Acknowledgement

I acknowledge the use of ChatGPT [<https://chatgpt.com/share/6a9a2ffb-d2fc-83ec-9a07-e4e987381bac>] on Monday, 31 August 2026 at 2.10pm to understand what exactly I need to do. I used

the prompt(s):

1. Can you help me understand what I need to do (Includes files of Chapter 26 and Summary Tips Doc)
2. Instructions of Task 1 in the module guide

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 – Paraphrase Book Chapter 26 (600 Words)

People are constantly influenced by those around them, making social influence an important aspect of human behaviour. Chapter 26 examines how groups affect individual thoughts, attitudes, and actions through processes such as conformity, majority influence, minority influence, and group decision-making. Together, these processes help explain why people often adjust their behaviour in response to others and how group interactions influence beliefs and decisions.

Conformity occurs when an individual changes their behaviour, beliefs, or attitudes because of real or perceived pressure from a group. This pressure does not necessarily involve direct instructions; simply being aware of the opinions of others can influence behaviour. Conformity can help maintain social harmony and allow people to fit into social groups, although it may also cause individuals to act against their own judgement.

One way conformity occurs is through majority influence, where an individual is affected by the views of a larger group. Research conducted by Asch (1952) demonstrated the strength of this influence. Participants were asked to judge line lengths in a situation where confederates intentionally gave incorrect answers. Although the task was straightforward, many participants agreed with the incorrect majority. The findings showed that social pressure can influence people even when they believe the group is wrong. Further research found that conformity is affected by factors such as the size of the majority, whether the group is unanimous, and the difficulty of the task. When people are uncertain, they are generally more likely to follow others.

Cultural factors can also affect the extent to which people conform. Studies have found that people living in collectivist cultures, where group harmony is highly valued, are more likely to conform than those in individualist cultures that place greater emphasis on personal independence. Findings such as these suggest that social and cultural contexts play an important role in shaping conformity.

Deutsch and Gerard (1955) proposed two main explanations for why people conform: informational social influence and normative social influence. Informational social influence

occurs when people look to others for guidance because they believe others have more accurate knowledge. This is especially likely in situations where the correct answer is unclear. Sherif's (1935) autokinetic experiment demonstrated this form of influence, as participants relied on the judgements of others when estimating the movement of a stationary light. Normative social influence, in contrast, occurs because people wish to gain acceptance or avoid rejection. In these situations, individuals may publicly agree with a group even though they privately hold a different opinion.

These forms of influence are closely linked to internalisation and compliance. Internalisation occurs when a person genuinely adopts the beliefs of a group and accepts them as their own. Compliance, however, involves publicly agreeing with others while privately maintaining a different belief. Sherif's participants mainly demonstrated internalisation, whereas many of Asch's participants demonstrated compliance.

The chapter also examines minority influence, which occurs when a small group changes the attitudes or behaviour of the majority. Moscovici et al. (1969) demonstrated that a consistent minority viewpoint could influence people to reconsider their existing beliefs. Unlike majority influence, which often produces temporary compliance, minority influence has the potential to create more lasting changes in attitudes.

Beyond conformity, social influence can affect the quality of group decisions. Stoner's concept of risky shift suggests that groups may make riskier decisions than individuals. This idea developed into the concept of group polarisation, where discussion strengthens existing opinions and pushes them towards more extreme positions. The chapter also describes groupthink, a process in which the desire for agreement becomes more important than careful evaluation, often resulting in poor decisions.

Overall, the evidence presented in Chapter 26 highlights the powerful role of social influence in shaping behaviour. Whether through conformity, majority and minority influence, or group decision-making processes, people are often influenced by the beliefs, opinions and actions of those around them. These processes demonstrate how group interactions can shape individual thinking and behaviour in everyday life.

Reference

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

Task 2 – Summarise three selected journal articles into abstracts (450 – 600 Words)

Journal Article 1 – Workplace friendships

The article examines both the benefits and challenges of workplace friendships, suggesting that they can improve employee wellbeing by fostering trust, support and a stronger sense of belonging, while also contributing to greater collaboration, creativity and job satisfaction. However, the article also highlights potential drawbacks, including favouritism, gossip, exclusion and perceptions of unfair treatment. The authors explore the concept of social capital and explain how personal relationships can provide access to opportunities and resources, although these advantages are not equally available to all employees. The discussion also considers challenges that occur when friendships overlap with workplace hierarchies, particularly when one employee becomes another's manager. The article concludes that workplace friendships can be highly beneficial when managed appropriately through professional boundaries, transparency and inclusive organisational practices. Rather than discouraging workplace friendships, organisations should develop strategies that maximise their benefits while reducing risks associated with bias and exclusion.

Reference

Hamilton, O. S., Virhia, J., & Almeida, T. A. (2022, October 31). *Workplace friendships*. The British Psychological Society. <https://www.bps.org.uk/psychologist/workplace-friendships>

Journal Article 2 – Why we cheat

Rothgerber (2023) explores the psychological reasons why individuals engage in dishonest behaviour despite wanting to view themselves as moral people. Drawing on theories of cognitive dissonance, self-deception and moral hypocrisy, the article argues that people often justify unethical behaviour to protect their self-image. Examples from online chess, Wordle and experimental studies suggest that people may engage in dishonest behaviour even when the rewards are relatively small. The author reviews research showing that individuals commonly engage in small acts of dishonesty that provide personal benefits without significantly challenging their belief that they are honest people. Studies discussed in the article illustrate how people manipulate situations to favour themselves while continuing to perceive their actions as fair. The article also examines moral outrage and suggests that criticism of others' behaviour can sometimes reflect an attempt to reinforce one's own moral identity. Rothgerber concludes that dishonesty is a common feature of human behaviour and that self-deception plays a major role in maintaining positive self-perceptions despite unethical actions.

Reference

Rothgerber, H. (2023, October 11). *Why we cheat*. The British Psychological Society.
<https://www.bps.org.uk/psychologist/why-we-cheat>

Journal Article 3 – Gender: how stubborn are the stereotypes

Hutchings and Sullivan (2023) explore whether gender stereotypes have changed over the past fifty years. Drawing upon previous research and findings from the international Towards Gender Harmony project, the article distinguishes between descriptive stereotypes, which describe perceived differences between genders, and prescriptive stereotypes, which define expected behaviour. Data collected from participants across 62 countries suggest that traditional gender expectations remain widespread despite progress towards gender equality. Men continue to be associated with characteristics such as strength, dominance and independence, whereas women are more commonly linked with nurturing and communal traits. The article also examines concepts including hostile sexism, zero-sum beliefs and precarious manhood beliefs, which influence attitudes towards gender equality. Although more egalitarian countries show reduced differences in attitudes, stereotypical expectations continue to affect both men and women. The authors conclude that meaningful progress towards gender equality requires challenging deeply rooted social and cultural expectations that continue to shape perceptions of gender roles.

Reference

Hutchings, P. B., & Sullivan, K. E. (2023, April 18). *Gender: How stubborn are the stereotypes?* The British Psychological Society.
<https://www.bps.org.uk/psychologist/gender-how-stubborn-are-stereotypes>

Task 3 - Create a reference list (600 words)

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