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ACADEMIC STUDY SKILLS FOR STUDENTS

ASSIGNMENT:

PORTFOLIO OF ACTIVITIES

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AI Tools Acknowledgement

I acknowledge the use of Grammarly (<https://www.grammarly.com/grammar-check>) on 11 August 2025 to check my work using the prompt(s):

1. Please check the following text for readability, grammar and syntax.

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.

I acknowledge the use of Quillbot (<https://quillbot.com/>) on 13 August 2025 to paraphrase lengthy sentences using the prompt(s):

1. Please paraphrase sentences to shorten lengthy sentences in my report at university level.

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I acknowledge the use of ChatGPT (<https://chatgpt.com/>) on 16 August 2025 to write my notes into submission format using the prompt(s):

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1.0 Paraphrase from Chapter 26: Conformity and Group Influence (pp.743-767), Psychology: The Science of Mind and Behaviour

Social psychology sets a strong emphasis on conformity and group impact, demonstrating how other people's ideas and actions shape people's own. Persuasion and compliance are two instances of direct and intentional social influence. Indirect social effect includes social facilitation, inhibition, and conformity. The essence of it is the idea of social norms, which serve as common guidelines and standards that direct collective behaviour (Turner, 1991).

Classic experiments have been used to study the influence of the majority in great detail. While Asch (1951, 1952, 1955, 1956) showed that human beings adhered to a unanimous majority roughly one-third of the time even in tasks that were not definite, Sherif (1935) demonstrated that people embrace group norms in confusing settings (autokinetic effect). Group size, unanimity, task difficulty and fear of humiliation are some of the factors that affect acceptance. The two-process model of Deutsch and Gerard (1955) makes an exemption between normative social influence (the need for acceptance) and informational social influence (the need to be correct). These methods are exemplified by adherence (public conformity without private acceptance) and internalisation (change in true beliefs). Recent theories that highlight self-categorisation and group belongingness incorporate referent social influence.

Minority influence demonstrates how persistent, dedicated minorities can bring forth change. The slideshow research by Moscovici (1969) indicated that the majority's answers were influenced consistently by a consistent minority. Likelihood perceived to the mass, sacrifice, adaptability, and consistency are all necessary for effective minority influence. Minority influence not only encourages deeper cognitive thinking but also innovation, whereas majority influence often results in acquiescence. In keeping with theories like Martin and Hewstone's (2012) elaboration model Moscovici's (1969) conversion theory, minority arguments can stimulate critical thinking and long-term change by redefining preconceived ideas.

Group processes like risky shift, group polarisation, and collaborative thinking show the dynamics of collective decision-making beyond conformity. Research revealed that groups frequently adopt more radical stances than individuals, which was originally thought to make groups more cautious (group polarisation). As evidenced by past political failures, groupthink (Janis, 1971, 1982) denotes poor decision-making in critically cohesive organisations where the need for unity hinders disagreement, frequently with fatal consequences.

Conformity is not always a bad thing. While blind conformity promotes social coordination, predictability, and collaboration, it can also reinforce negative standards like racism (Zimbardo & Leippe, 1991). The social context determines whether conformity is valued; collectivist cultures believe conformity as necessary for harmony, while individualist cultures tend to fall toward independence. Regardless of whether the minority or majority win out, group influence can ultimately serve as a catalyst for change in addition to preserving social order.

2.0 Abstract of Three Selected Journal Articles

2.1 Why We Cheat by Hank Rothgerber

Why We Cheat examines the psychological dispute between a moral self-image and immoral behaviour. While many value projecting a moral image, they often act selfishly when nobody else is looking, striking a balance between maintaining a good reputation and pursuing personal benefit. Cheating does not constitute a sign of blatant immorality; rather, it is a premeditated bargain whereby people cheat to their advantage but withholds themselves to preserve their reputation and social standing. According to research, cognitive control plays a vital role in allowing habitual cheaters to limit their behaviour when needed and honest individuals to defend occasional dishonesty. The odds of cheating is presented as an effective strategy in the “moral marketplace,” where displaying virtue frequently surpasses the damage to oneself of upholding moral principles. This perspective emphasises how difficult it is to reach moral decisions and the intricate reasons for dishonest behaviour (Rothgerber, 2023).

2.2 Workplace Friendships by Odessa S. Hamilton, Jasmine Virhia & Teresa Almeida

In corporate society, workplace friendships, defined as voluntary, trust-based connections built on common interests and values, play a complex yet important role. These kinds of connections lead to an increase in psychological fulfillment for personnel, including an increase in relatedness, autonomy, and above all, competence, which promote wellbeing and job engagement. Nevertheless, these relationships may pose disputes with perceived injustices, power dynamics, and role boundaries, when peer friendships cross over into hierarchical partnership in particular. In addition to that, an instant of the dual nature of social bonds at work, ambiguous relationships, or even “frenemies.” may offer both emotional pressure and social support simultaneously. The analysis emphasises how workplace friendships can lead to friction on justice, workload distribution, and professional identity, despite how they frequently improve in cooperation, job happiness, and organisational atmosphere. In this regard, employers ought to foster a genuine, welcoming social environment that optimises the psychological

advantages of professional friendships while addressing any possible drawbacks (Hamilton).

2.3. Gender: How Stubborn are the Stereotypes? By Paul B. Hutchings & Katie E. Sullivan

This article examines how persistent, and adaptable, gender stereotypes are, over fifty years after a revolutionary attitude poll. Hutchings and Sullivan examined how, in spite of advancements towards gender equality, ingrained beliefs regarding masculinity and femininity continue to influence social expectations, leveraging on data from the global Towards Gender Harmony endeavor as well as regional studies undertaken in Wales. The authors discuss the persistence of descriptive “what men or women are like” stereotypes, noting their influence on educational decisions, career goals and mental health performances. They highlight the fact that, despite evolution in formal attitudes, implicit biases remain stubbornly robust and frequently operate subconsciously. The finding promotes wider public involvement and awareness outside of academic circles and emphasises the need for multifaceted longitudinal research to break down complicated gender norms. By combining international and regional sources, the piece highlights both advancements and the subtle persistence of stereotype-driven barriers (Hutchings & Sullivan, 2023)

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