

Module Name: Study Skills for Psychology

Module Code: MWPS4005

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Assignment Component 1: E-Portfolio

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Task	Word Count
1: Summary of Book Chapter	668
2: Abstracts of Journal Articles	187
	134
	155
3: References	532
TOTAL	1676

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AI Acknowledgement

I confirm that I have not used any AI tools in the research and creation of this assignment. I confirm that I have not presented any AI generated materials as my own work. I confirm I have copies of my drafts, notes, and other resources I used, which I may be asked to provide in evidence.

Task 1: Summary of Book Chapter

Conformity is when an individual adjusts his or her behaviour or belief due to the perceived or real pressure from a group of people even when there are no explicit instructions or requests to follow what the group thinks or does (Zimbardo & Leippe, 1991). While there are different definitions from different psychologists, the common idea revolves around the group pressure exerted by membership groups, such as peers or family.

Sherif (1935) is often regarded as the start of the study on conformity. This study found that individuals adjusted their answers towards a group norm using an ambiguous visual task involving the autokinetic effect. While this study kick-started research on conformity, it was criticised for using an ambiguous task as participants may have conformed because they were genuinely unsure about the answer rather than because of group pressure (Asch, 1951, 1952, 1956). Thus, Asch (1951) conducted a different study by having stooges in the groups give an obviously wrong answer to examine whether individuals would conform and agree with the majority. Interestingly, Asch found a mean conformity rate of 32 percent, showing the impact of a unanimous majority even when the correct answer was obvious. However, the relationship between the size of the majority and conformity rate is not always directly proportional as increasing the percentage of the majority does not lead to unlimited increases in conformity. Over the years, different studies were conducted. For example, Perrin and Spencer (1981) found low conformity rates in university students, but the rates increased when young offenders faced authority-figure stooges. Mori and Arai (2010) also found similar results to Asch's study using a different setup, although there was no majority influence among male acquaintances. Cross-cultural research further found that collectivist cultures generally display higher conformity rates than individualist cultures (Bond & Smith, 1996). These studies generally support Asch's results while expanding conformity research into different populations and situations.

The dual process dependence model (DPDM) suggested two primary motives for why people conform, which are informational social influence (ISI) and normative social influence (NSI) (Deutsch & Gerard, 1955; Turner, 1991). While ISI emphasises internalisation or true conversion of an individual's belief because of the need to be right and accurate in uncertain situations, NSI involves individuals complying with others even though they disagree because of the need for social acceptance and to avoid ridicule. While the DPDM separates the two motives, further research suggests that they can also operate together (Insko et al., 1983). Additionally, referent social influence (RSI) was introduced by

Turner (1991) to emphasise that people conform because they psychologically self-categorise as members of an ingroup and hence align their behaviour with expected group norms.

Conformity can also take place when a minority shifts the majority's perspective within a group (Moscovici & Faucheux, 1972). Moscovici et al. (1969) demonstrated that a consistent minority could significantly influence majority judgements. Minorities influence the majority not only through consistency, but also through negotiation and ingroup similarity, allowing the majority to become more accepting of the minority's ideas (Gardikiotis, 2013).

Beyond conformity, group influence can also affect the decisions and attitudes of the entire group. Risky shift was initially discovered by Stoner (1961) who found that groups sometimes made decisions that were riskier than the average of the individuals. However, further research showed that this was not universal, as groups could also become more cautious depending on the situation (Myers, 1994). This may then lead to group polarisation where group discussion makes the group's attitudes or opinions become more cautious or risky in an extreme way (Moscovici & Zavalloni, 1969). This can occur through informational exchange, the desire to fit in and see themselves as part of the same group (Brown, 1986; Turner, 1991). Finally, when a close and highly connected group focuses too much on reaching agreement and avoids disagreement to prioritise harmony, groupthink happens (Janis, 1971, 1982). This can be viewed as an extreme form of normative influence and has been associated with major political and military decision-making failures such as Pearl Harbor and the Vietnam War.

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Task 2: Abstracts of Journal Articles

Gender and stereotypes

Abstract

This article demonstrates the persistence of perception on gender roles and traits over the past 50 years. The authors use several studies ranging from the Broverman et al. (1972) and Rudman and Glick (2001) to the Towards Gender Harmony project in 2019 to examine the similarities and differences in the perceptions of genders roles and traits over time. This article discusses the difference between descriptive and prescriptive stereotypes. While descriptive stereotypes describe the general observation of how each gender behaves, prescriptive stereotypes describe how each gender is expected to behave. Although much effort has been put into improving gender equality over the years in many countries, some stereotypes about gender traits continue to persist. This highlights the need to continue establishing a deeper understanding of gender stereotypes. Beliefs such as zero-sum beliefs and precarious manhood beliefs are mentioned as factors influencing attitudes towards gender equality today. Overall, the authors suggest that achieving gender equality requires addressing not only legal and social inequalities. More importantly, the persistent stereotypes and expectations surrounding the roles and traits of different genders should be addressed as they are often harder to shift.

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Why We Cheat

Abstract

This article analyses the phenomenon where people engage in dishonest behaviours despite wanting to view themselves as honest and moral. Rothgerber explains cheating through the concepts of moral hypocrisy, self-deception, motivated reasoning and moral wiggle room. Several studies were used to demonstrate how people often cheat when they can gain personal benefits but still find ways to justify their behaviour. However, individuals often tend to only cheat within certain boundaries so as to preserve their positive self-image. This article also demonstrates how people can reinterpret fairness and use different justifications to make decisions that are self-favourable appear more morally acceptable. In conclusion, Rothgerber suggests that cheating is not necessarily caused by a lack of moral values. Instead, cheating takes place when individuals manipulate their reasoning to satisfy both their self-interest and their positive self-image.

Workplace Friendships

Abstract

This article discusses whether forming friendships at work is beneficial or harmful for an organisation. Several studies suggested that workplace friendships can build supportive working environments, improve employees' work morale, and overall performance. However, workplace friendships can also become problematic when the lines between colleagues and friends are blurred. Hamilton et al. uses examples such as gossip and humour to demonstrate how elements of friendships may both benefit and harm the workplace relationships. The article then goes on to discuss how workplace friendships can become social capital that may increase cronyism, the real or imagined unfair practice of a person in power giving favour to a friend. This can affect the organisation's merit system and may impact employees' perceptions of the organisation's culture. Finally, the article discusses four approaches proposed by Lee and Jablin (1995) for maintaining workplace friendships while keeping professional boundaries clear: avoidance of interaction, indirect conversational refocus, direct conversation refocus and openness.

Task 3: References

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