Psychology Assignment

Name

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Contents

Chapter 1

Introduction

Social psychology is the study of individuals psychology in a group setting, how the group may affect the individual and where certain traits within social interaction come from Conformity is where one individual is pressured into changing their actions or beliefs based on the effect a group has on them. Normative influence stems from the desire to be normal, and will often be affected by the group norms of the influencing party, and informational influence stems from a genuine belief that others will know more about the task at hand than they will, and therefore they look to them for guidance, so that the individuals desire to be correct is sated. One common factor which affects conformity is the size of the influencing party. Typically, larger groups will incite more conformity, as individuals believe a large majority to be correct. Another factor which could affect the conformity is similarity. If the individuals within the group are similar in other areas, they will be more likely to look to each other when undergoing an unknown task.

1.1 Background Research

1.1.1 Jenness(1932)

Aim

To find whether or not people will conform due to informational influence

Method

Jenness (1932) gave participants a jar of beans, and asked them to estimate how many beans are in the jar. He then grouped participants together and allowed them to discuss their answers, then asked them to guess again. This was in order to allow the majority to influence the individual.

Results/Analysis

Jenness found that most participants changed their answer to conform to the majority. These results show that, when given an ambiguous task, people will look upon others to inform their own answer. This is therefore a landmark study into informational conformity, as the participants believed that the answer of the group was more likely to be correct than their own individual answer.

1.1.2 Asch (1951)

Aim

In 1951, Solomon Asch carried out a study on the effects of social pressure from a majority, and whether it could cause someone to conform.

Method

Asch gathered 50 male students in America, to carry out the task of judging the lengths of line. They would be shown a target line and three comparison lines. The participant had to guess what comparison line was closest to the target line. The participant was placed in a room with seven confederates, who had already decided on their answers before the task. The participant was not aware that the other people in the room were confederates, and believed that they were all genuine participants. The person had to state out loud which comparison line they believed to be the correct answer, but the true participant would always go last or second to last. There were 18 trials held, with 12 of them where the confederates decided to lie about the length of line.

Results/Analysis

Asch found that 32% of the participants conformed to the answer of the confederates, even if it was clearly incorrect. 75% of participants conformed at least one time, and 25% of participants did not conform once. This is a landmark study into normative conformity as it shows that the people didnt actually believe that the answer they were choosing is correct, but they went along with the majority anyway. This study is biased as the sample only compares across American male college students. Therefore this study is difficult to generalise. This study also has low ecological validity as it is a very artificial task that people are unlikely to be asked about in daily life.

Chapter 2

Study of Informational Conformity with an unknown majority (2018)

2.1 Aim

The aim of this study was to determine whether or not an individual would conform to a group majority, even if they cannot directly see the majority themselves.

2.2 Hypothesis

The individual will conform to the majority, even if they do not know who the influencing party is directly.

2.3 Method

2.3.1 Design

The study was conducted in a lab environment, with an experimental format.

2.3.2 Research of Extraneous or Confounding Variables

The students intelligence level could have interfered with the task, as they would be able to judge the task better. The students personality and individual independence could have also affected the results of the experiment.

2.3.3 Sampling Method and participants

The participants involved were opportunity sampled. There were 24 participants taking part in total. The participants were all aged between 15 and 18, in high school education. Two people in the class were not able to take part due to the fact that they were already aware of the task at hand. There were 18 males and 6 females.

2.3.4 Procedure

Upon entering the class, the students were briefed. They were not able to be informed about the exact task at hand as that would confound results. They were told that they were to guess how many pieces of pasta were in a jar. They were shown the jar, and subsequently given guess sheets. Half of these guess sheets had falsified previous guesses already written on them by researchers, and half were blank. This was in order to determine whether or not the results would show a higher level of conformity on the sheets with previous answers

2.3.5 Materials needed

- One transparrent 50g bag of Tesco's own fusilli pasta

- Documents that must be signed in order to ensure informed consent

- Two sets of othewise identical "guess sheets", half of which would contain falsified "previous guesses"

2.4 results

All raw data can be found in the appendix section

2.4.1 Statistics to analyse results data

There were a number of calculations performed on the raw data. These include:

- Finding the mean. In condition 1 (with previous guesses) this was found to be 450. In condition 2 (without previous guesses) the mean was 391. The false guesses averaged at 527. The mean was calculated by finding the sum of all the guesses and then divided it by the number of guesses in total.

$$M_1 = \frac{5 + 360 + 389 + 397 + 405 + 415 + 462 + 289 + 532 + 567 + 669 + 712}{12} = 450$$

$$M_2 = \frac{119 + 128 + 266 + 280 + 297 + 305 + 366 + 369 + 418 + 429 + 765 + 956}{12} = 391$$

$$M_{F}alseguesses = \frac{421 + 536 + 435 + 537 + 598 + 635}{6} = 527$$

- Finding the range. The range is a way to statistically measure a spread of a data array dependant on the highest and lowest values. The lowest value is deducted from the highest to find the range. For condition 1 this value is found to be 503. For condition 2, the value is found to be 305. For the previous false guesses, this is found to be 214

$$R_1 = 712 - 5 = 707$$

$$R_2 = 956 - 119 = 837$$

$$R_{F}alseguesses = 635 - 421 = 214$$

2.4.2   Table comparing Condition 1 to Condition 2
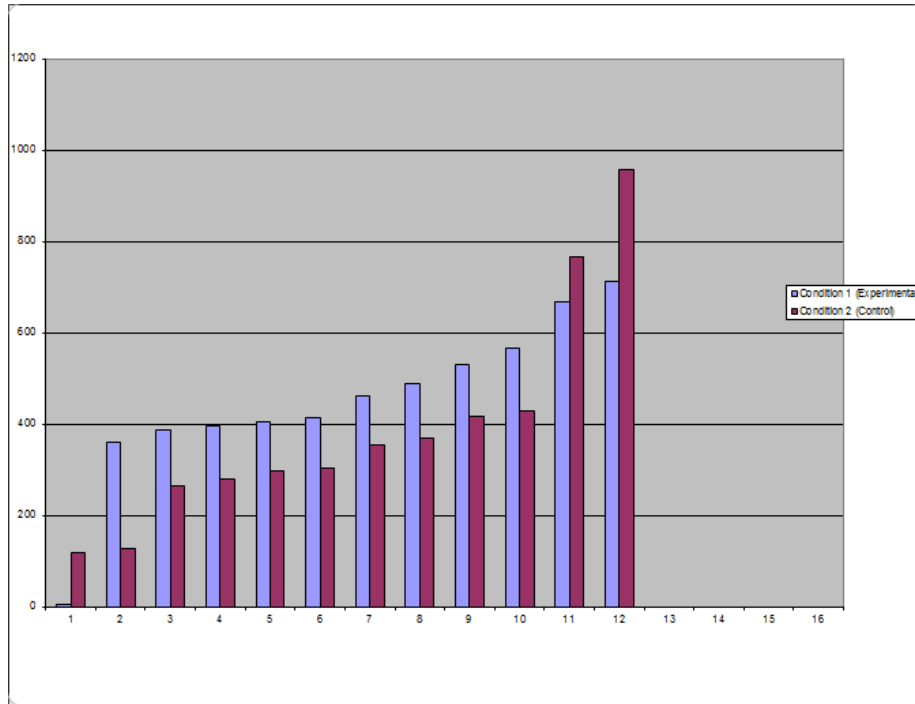
2.4.3 Comparison of mean values of given groups

2.4.4   Range of given groups values

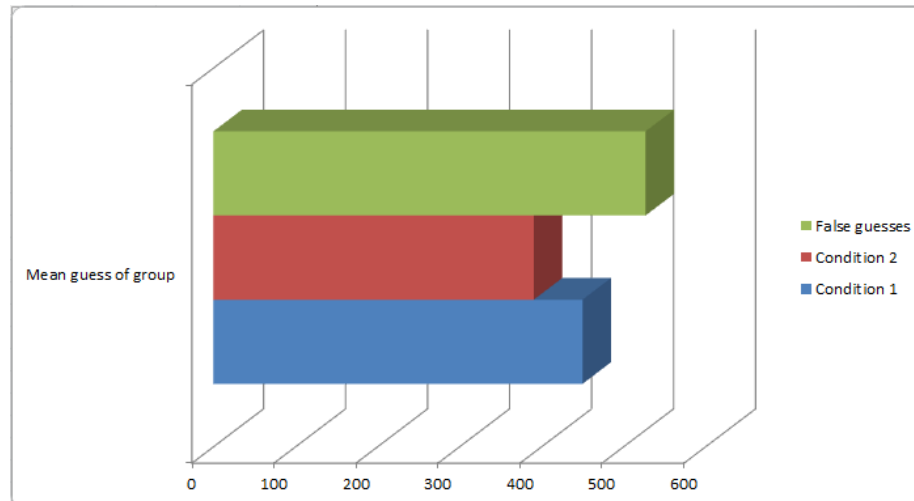|	Condition 1 (Experimental)	Condition 2 (Control)		False Guesses
	5	119		421
	360	128		536
	389	266		435
	397	280		537
	405	297		598
	415	305		635
	462	356		
	489	369		
	532	418		
	567	429		
	669	765		
	712	956		
Mean	450	391		527
StDev	180	243		86
Median	438.5	330.5		536.5
Mode	#N/A	#N/A		#N/A
Range	707	837		214

2.5   Analysis

Analysis The results shown highlight that the experimental group (condition 1) had an average answer closer to the previous guesses than the control (condition 2). This suggests that the individuals conformed to the previous guesses, despite the influencing majority being unseen. The lower range in condition 1 than condition 2 also supports the hypothesis as it shows that the individuals in condition 1 were more consistent with their answers, as they had the answers of the false guesses for guidance. Some confounding variables may have been identified; one of these is the fact that one individual guessed 5 in condition 1 (see Figure 3 - Raw data table). This has been identified as a statistical anomaly or outlier. This individual either did not fully understand the task at hand or they were not taking the experiment seriously. This did not sway the results enough to change the overall conclusions drawn from the data however, so the experiment neednt be done again. Another confounding variable identified is that the individuals may have been pressured by the situations and may have

not answered in their true answer. This is a potential weakness of the study, as it means that individuals are not answering naturally in an ecologically valid environment. The results shown in Study of Informational Conformity with an unknown majority (2018) show an example of informational influence as only the results of the falsified previous guesses were present. There were no physical bodies there to inflict normative influence. The individuals in this study were purely influenced by the information of the previous answers alone. The individuals in this study believed the previous answers to be a guidance point for them. The results found in the Study of Informational Conformity with an unknown majority (2018) relate to the factor affecting conformity of group size. The optimal group size for conformity was found by Asch (1956) to be between 3 and 7. This study operates on this optimal level as there was 6 previous guesses on the falsified guess sheets, therefore increasing potential conformity. The Study of Informational Conformity with an unknown majority (2018) connects with the work of Asch as it is again a study which shows individuals conforming to a majority on a given task. The 2018 study differs from Aschs landmark study in that in the Study of Informational Conformity with an unknown majority (2018), the majority was not seen. The Study of Informational Conformity with an unknown majority (2018) also connects to Jenness In that it involved individuals making a judgement in an ambiguous task, with the hope that the individual will be affected by informational conformity and will look to the others for guidance on their answer.

Appendices

Appendix A

Guess sheets with previous falsified guesses

Please write your guess in first empty space.

421
536
435
537
598
635

Please write your guess in the first empty space.

421
536
435
537
598
635

Appendix B

Blank guess sheets

Please write your guess in the first empty space.

Please write your guess in the first empty space.

Appendix C

Raw results table

	Condition 1 (Experimental)	Condition 2 (Control)		False Guesses
	5	119		421
	360	128		536
	389	266		435
	397	280		537
	405	297		598
	415	305		635
	462	356		
	489	369		
	532	418		
	567	429		
	669	765		
	712	956		
Mean	450	391		527
StDev	180	243		86
Median	438.5	330.5		536.5
Mode	#N/A	#N/A		#N/A
Range	707	837		214

Appendix D

Informed consent document

INFORMED CONSENT FORM
Higher Psychology Research Investigation

Investigation _____

The British Psychological Society requires that all students who agree to participate in psychological research must give their written consent.

Please read the following and sign if you agree and are willing to take part in the research investigation.

I voluntarily consent to be part of the research investigation on the topic of
_____
to be conducted by Higher Psychology students.

I have been told that my responses will be kept strictly confidential. I also understand that if at any time during the session I feel unable or unwilling to continue I am free to leave. That is, my participation in the study is completely voluntary, and I may withdraw from it at any time without negative consequences. My name will not be linked with any research materials, and I will not be indentified or identifiable in any report subsequently produced by the researcher.

I have been given the opportunity to ask questions regarding the procedure and my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I have been informed that if I have any general questions abut this research investigation I should feel free to contact the researcher or their supervisor.

If I have any comments or concerns abut the ethics procedures employed in this study I can contact the teacher responsible for Higher Psychology.

I have read and understood the above and consent to participate in this research investigation. My signature is not a waiver of any legal rights. Furthermore, I understand that I will be able to keep a copy of the informed consent form for my records.

Participant's Name_____

Participant's Signature_____

Date_____

I have explained and defined in detail the research procedure in which the respondent has consented to participate. Furthermore, I will retain one copy of the informed consent for my records.

15

_____
Researcher Signature   Date

Appendix E

Information sheet for participants

Standardised Instructions for Research Investigation Experiment

INFORMED CONSENT

The area we are studying is Social Psychology.

The experiment should only take 5 minutes.

The results will be confidential.

If you do not wish to continue, other than for reasons of illness or discomfort, please remain in your seat until the experiment is complete.

Please do not confer with any other participant.

Do you have any questions?

Please read and sign the informed consent sheet you have been given.

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this psychology experiment.

INSTRUCTIONS

On your desk is a sheet of paper. You will be shown a bag of pasta by one of the experimenters.

You will then be asked to turn over the sheet and write in your estimate of the number

of pieces of pasta in the bag.

Condition 1

On the sheet you will see the estimates of previous participants. Please write your estimate in the first empty space.

Condition 2

Please write your estimate in the first empty space.