1.7 Conformity: types, explanations, Asch's research and Zimbardo's Stanford Prison Experiment: 30-minute Pack

AQA 7182 · about 30 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions.

1 Asch (1951) conducted a laboratory experiment on conformity using a line-judgment task.

(a) Outline the aim and basic task used in Asch's (1951) study. **(3)**

(b) Describe how Asch used 'critical trials' to measure conformity. **(3)**

(Total for Question 1 is 6 marks)

2 Zimbardo (1971) investigated conformity to social roles using a simulated prison environment.

(a) Outline how Zimbardo set up his Stanford Prison Experiment (1971). **(4)**

(b) The study was originally intended to run for two weeks. Outline what actually happened. **(3)**

(Total for Question 2 is 7 marks)

© Revision Library | revisionlibrary.co.uk

3 At a monthly book club meeting, a new member, Tom, has read the chosen novel and privately thinks the ending is weak. When it is his turn to comment, every other member has already praised the ending enthusiastically. Tom says he 'loved' the ending too. Later, reflecting at home on his own, he still privately feels the ending was weak.

(a) Using the information given, identify which type of conformity Tom has shown (internalisation, identification or compliance), and justify your answer using evidence from the scenario. **(3)**

(b) Identify which explanation for conformity, ISI or NSI, best accounts for Tom's behaviour, and justify your answer. **(3)**

(Total for Question 3 is 6 marks)

---

4 Zimbardo's study has been evaluated on ethical grounds and for what it suggests about the causes of behaviour.

(a) Identify one ethical issue raised by Zimbardo's study, and explain how it arose. **(4)**

(b) Explain what the findings of Zimbardo's study suggest about the relative power of social roles (situational factors) compared with individual personality (dispositional factors) in determining behaviour. **(4)**

(Total for Question 4 is 8 marks)

© Revision Library | revisionlibrary.co.uk

Mark scheme · 1.7 Conformity: types, explanations, Asch's research and Zimbardo's Stanford Prison Experiment: 30-minute Pack

Question 1

(a) aim: to investigate the extent to which people would conform to an obviously incorrect majority view oe **M1**

(a) male American participants were placed in a group with several confederates who the participant believed were also genuine participants oe **M1**

(a) the group was shown a standard line and three comparison lines, and had to say aloud which comparison line matched the standard line in length, with the real participant answering last or near-last oe **A1**

(a) Answer: Asch tested conformity using a line-judgment task, with a lone real participant among several confederates.

(b) on most trials the confederates gave the obviously correct answer oe **M1**

(b) on certain (critical) trials, all the confederates unanimously gave the same, obviously wrong answer oe **M1**

(b) the researchers recorded whether the genuine participant conformed to (agreed with) the incorrect majority answer on these critical trials oe **A1**

(b) Answer: On critical trials the confederates unanimously gave a wrong answer; conformity was measured by whether the real participant agreed with them.

Question 2

(a) Zimbardo converted the basement of the Stanford University psychology department into a mock prison oe **M1**

(a) male student volunteers, screened as psychologically stable, were randomly assigned to the role of 'prisoner' or 'guard' oe **M1**

(a) 'prisoners' were unexpectedly arrested at home, then processed and given a uniform and an identifying number oe **A1**

(a) 'guards' were given uniforms, sunglasses and batons, and told to maintain order but not to use physical violence oe **A1**

(a) Answer: A mock prison was built at Stanford; volunteers were randomly assigned to 'guard' or 'prisoner' roles and given corresponding uniforms/props.

(b) the study was stopped after only six days oe **M1**

(b) this was because the guards had become increasingly abusive/authoritarian towards the prisoners oe **M1**

(b) and several prisoners were showing signs of extreme stress/emotional breakdown oe **A1**

(b) Answer: It was stopped after six days (not the planned two weeks) due to the guards' abusive behaviour and the prisoners' distress.

Question 3

(a) compliance cao **B1**

(a) justification refers to Tom's private opinion remaining unchanged (he still privately feels the ending was weak) oe **M1**

(a) only his public statement/behaviour changed, which is the defining feature of compliance rather than internalisation or identification oe **A1**

(a) Answer: Compliance - his public statement changed but his private opinion, reflected on later, did not.

(b) normative social influence (NSI) cao **B1**

(b) justification refers to Tom wanting to be accepted/liked by the group or avoid standing out from their enthusiasm, rather than being genuinely persuaded oe **M1**

(b) since his private opinion is unaffected, this rules out ISI (which would involve him genuinely coming to believe the group's view is correct) oe **A1**

(b) Answer: NSI - Tom goes along publicly to fit in with the group, without genuinely changing his private view.

Question 4

(a) identifies a genuine ethical issue, e.g. protection of participants from psychological harm, or a conflict of roles/interest oe **M1**

(a) explains that Zimbardo himself took on the role of prison superintendent within the study, compromising his objectivity and ability to intervene promptly oe **A1**

(a) some prisoners experienced significant psychological distress before the study was stopped oe **A1**

(a) this raises questions about whether participants were adequately protected and whether the study should have been stopped sooner oe **A1**

(a) Answer: Zimbardo's dual role as researcher and prison superintendent compromised participants' protection from psychological harm.

(b) ordinary, psychologically stable individuals behaved in ways inconsistent with their usual personality once placed in a particular social role oe **M1**

(b) this suggests situational factors (the social role and the power associated with it) can have a very strong influence on behaviour oe **A1**

(b) and can outweigh individual personality/disposition in determining how a person behaves oe **A1**

(b) supporting a situational rather than a purely dispositional explanation of behaviour in this context oe **A1**

(b) Answer: The findings suggest situational factors (social roles) can override individual disposition in shaping behaviour.

© Revision Library | revisionlibrary.co.uk