

Social Influence

Conformity vs Compliance vs Obedience

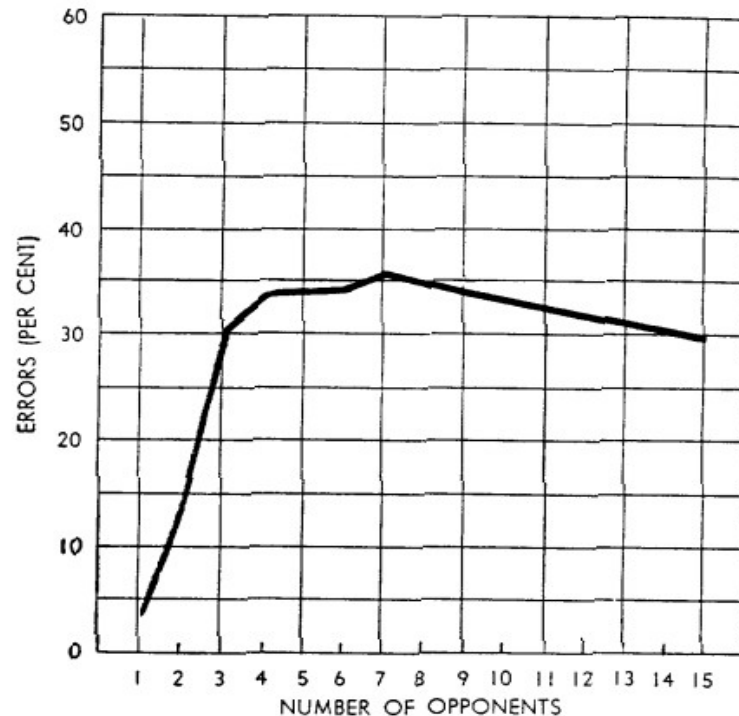
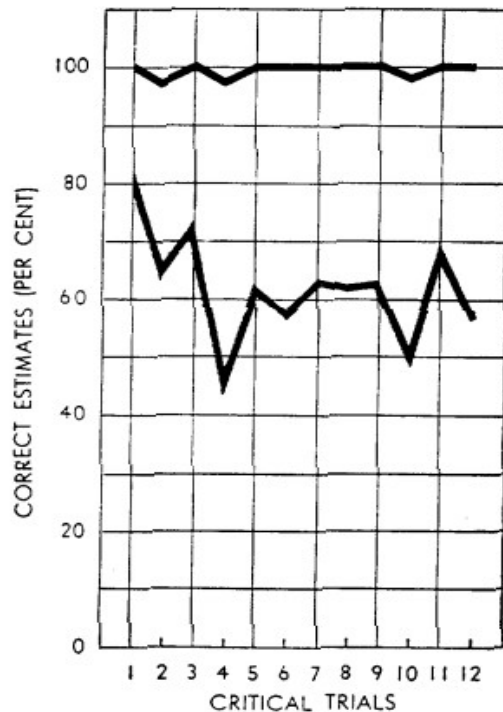
- *Conformity* refers to changing behaviour or attitudes based on social norms
- *Compliance* refers to changing behaviour or attitudes based on a direct request from another
- *Obedience* is changing behaviour based on an order from another person

Social norms

- Social norms are rules (explicit or unstated) regarding expected behaviour in a particular situation
- Implicit:
 - Facing the doors in an elevator
 - No elbows on the dinner table
 - Eye contact
- Explicit:
 - No talking in the library
 - Speed limits on city streets
 - Dress code

Conformity

- The famous Asch study (1951, 1955, 1956)
 - 24 percent did not conform
 - Unanimity is crucial
 - Public conformity \neq private acceptance



Conformity

- The following conditions make conformity more likely:
 - Group cohesiveness (shared social identity of group)
 - Larger group size (up to about 8 people)
 - Collectivist culture

Conformity

- *Normative focus theory* - salience, or reminders of social norms also affect conformity (Cialdini et al, 1990)
- Two types of social norms are often in conflict with each other
 - Descriptive social norms – what most people do
 - Injunctive social norms – what *should* to be done
- For example, driving down Highway 401...

Conformity

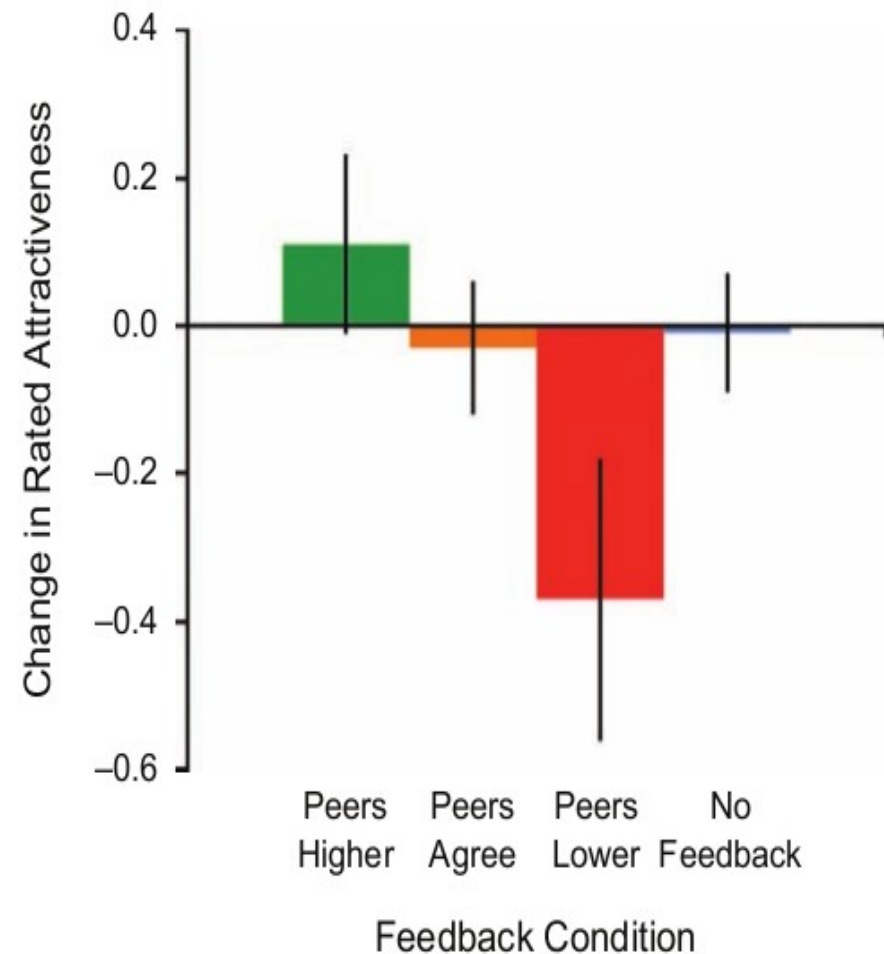
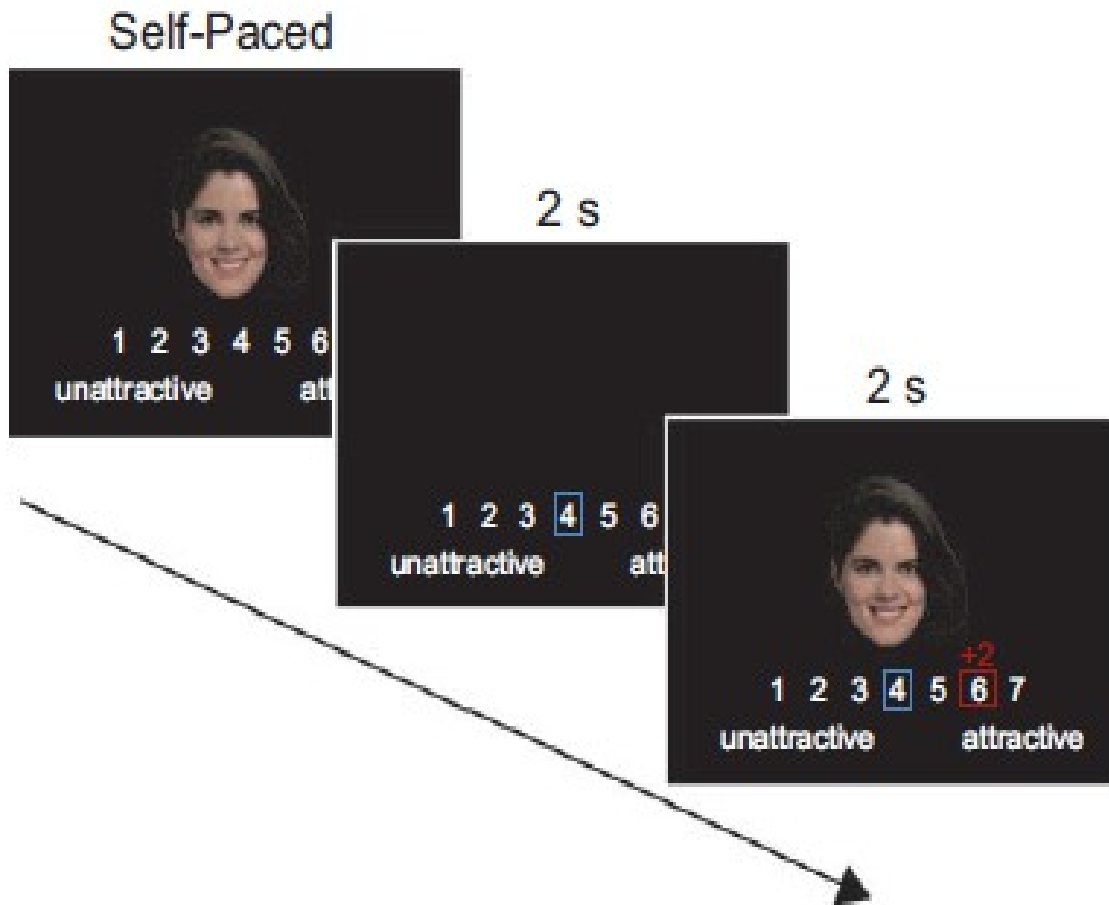
- Remember the discussion of self-concept from a couple weeks ago?
 - Which group or aspect of the self is salient at a particular time will influence which social norms we follow
 - If the injunctive norms apply to one group but not another, an individual might feel justified in ignoring those norms
 - Imagine the decision to engage in a minor law violation for someone who identifies herself as: friend, spontaneous, fun-loving, and law-abiding

Conformity

- Conforming behaviour based on situational norms is often automatic
 - Lowering voice in a church or library (Aarts et al, 2003)
 - Littering (Reno et al, 1993)
 - Portion size (Hermans et al, 2012)
 - Buying designer clothes (Khan & Khan, 2008)
 - Perception of facial attractiveness (Zaki et al, 2011)

Conformity

- Zaki et al, 2011



Conformity

- Two main reasons why we conform:
 - *Normative social influence* - The desire to be liked
 - *Informational social influence* - The desire to be right
- Interestingly, there seems to be a negative relationship between how much we *think* we are influenced and how much we *are* influenced (Nolan et al, 2008)
- A few reasons why we sometimes *do not* conform:
 - Need for individuation
 - Need for personal control
 - Inability to conform
 - Belief in free will (Alquist et al, 2013)

Compliance

- People working in sales have long known the best strategies for ensuring compliance:
 - Liking
 - Commitment/consistency (build on agreement)
 - Scarcity
 - Reciprocity (doing small favours)
 - Social validation (normative/informational social influence)
 - Authority

Compliance

- Liking – Ingratiation, flattery, and similarity
- Commitment – Foot-in-the-door and lowball techniques
- Scarcity – Deadline technique and playing hard to get
- Reciprocity – Door-in-the-face and that's-not-all techniques
- Authority and social validation – Disrupt-then-reframe technique (confusing language followed by clearly stated reason to comply; Davis & Knowles, 1999)

Symbolic social influence

- Influence based on mental representations of others
- Just being reminded of certain people can affect subsequent behaviour
 - Scowling supervisor and criticism (Baldwin et al, 1990)
 - Describing superheroes and later helping behaviour (Nelson & Norton, 2005)

Obedience

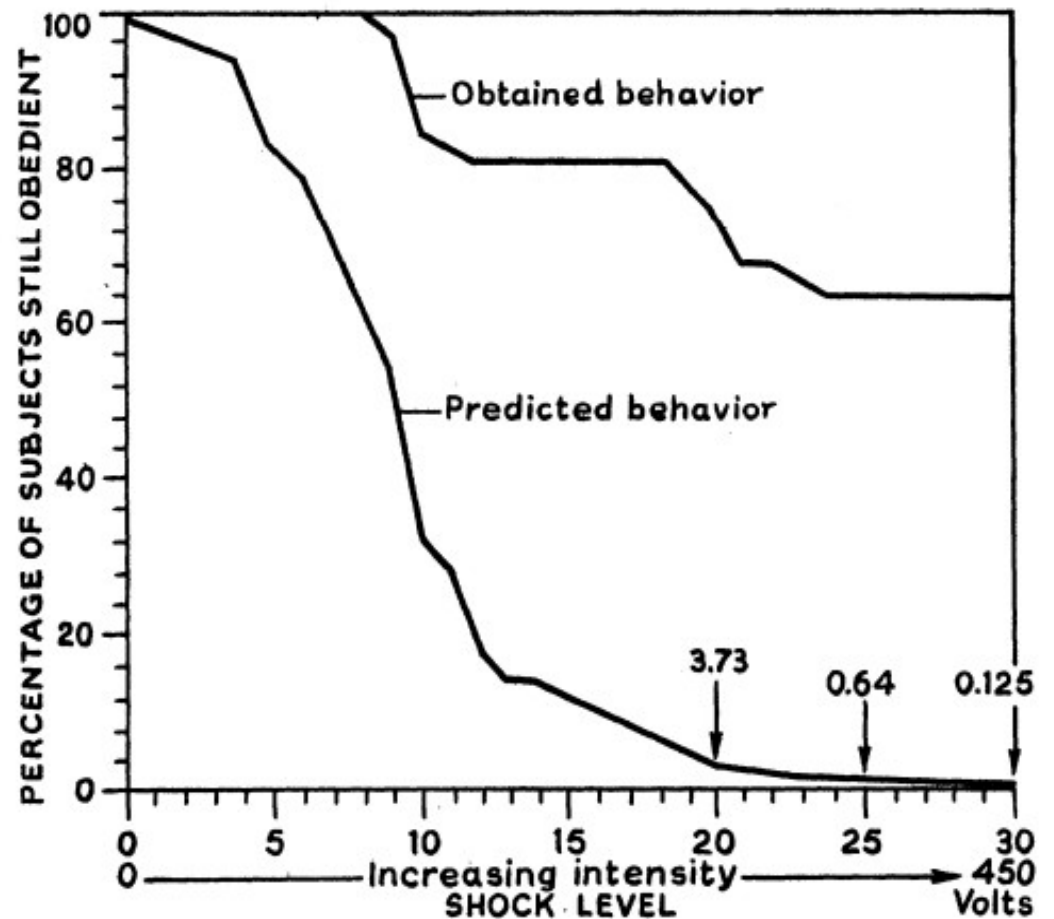
- The most direct form of social influence is obedience, in which one person tells another how to behave
- Interest in obedience exploded after WWII, in part because many Germans cited obedience to authority as a reason for their behaviour
- The famous Milgram study (1963, 1965)
 - 65% obeyed

Obedience

TABLE 2
DISTRIBUTION OF BREAKOFF POINTS

Verbal designation and voltage indication	Number of subjects for whom this was maximum shock
Slight Shock	
15	0
30	0
45	0
60	0
Moderate Shock	
75	0
90	0
105	0
120	0
Strong Shock	
135	0
150	0
165	0
180	0
Very Strong Shock	
195	0
210	0
225	0
240	0
Intense Shock	
255	0
270	0
285	0
300	5
Extreme Intensity Shock	
315	4
330	2
345	1
360	1
Danger: Severe Shock	
375	1
390	0
405	0
420	0
XXX	
435	0
450	26

FIGURE 3 PREDICTED AND OBTAINED BEHAVIOR IN VOICE FEEDBACK



Obedience

- Partial replications of Milgram's original study (Burger, 2009)
 - The 150V solution
 - Additional safeguards for the participants
 - Would people still obey today?
 - Are there gender or personality differences in obedience?

Table 3
Numbers (and Percentages) of Participants Who Stopped and Who Continued, by Gender

Condition and behavior	Men	Women
Base condition		
Stopped at 150 volts or earlier	6 (33.3)	6 (27.3)
Continued after 150 volts	12 (66.7)	16 (72.7)
Modeled refusal condition		
Stopped at 150 volts or earlier	5 (45.5)	6 (31.6)
Continued after 150 volts	6 (54.5)	13 (68.4)

Table 4
Mean Personality Scale Scores

Condition and behavior	Empathic Concern	Desire for Control
Base condition		
Continued	19.20 (4.64)	98.24 (12.22)
Stopped	19.25 (2.93)	106.92 (11.45)
Modeled resistance condition		
Continued	18.37 (4.19)	103.68 (11.30)
Stopped	20.91 (3.91)	99.64 (13.56)
Conditions combined		
Continued	18.84 (4.42)	100.59 (12.01)
Stopped	20.04 (3.46)	103.43 (12.77)

Note. Standard deviations appear in parentheses.

Obedience

- The Stanford Prison Experiment (Zimbardo, 1973; Haney, Banks, & Zimbardo, 1973)
 - Why did the prisoners obey? Why did the guards follow orders from the “warden”?
- The role of psychologists in torture of detainees
- Real life examples of obedience?

Obedience

- Is there a beneficial side to obedience?
- Only 52% of Americans correctly believe that vaccines do not cause autism
 - But approximately 80% of children are vaccinated
 - Obedience to medical authorities may be the only things preventing mass outbreaks of deadly but preventable diseases
- Tithing
- In consenting sexual partners, obedience and lack of responsibility can be liberating

Obedience

- Factors that increase obedience:
 - Physical proximity to the authority
 - Physical distance to the victim
 - Social norms (co-participants who obey)
 - High status of the authority
 - Gradual escalation
 - Automatic processing (stress, speed, cognitive load)

Obedience

- Some factors that reduce obedience:
 - Reminder of personal responsibility
 - Disobedient models
 - Questioning the motives of the authority
 - Knowledge of obedience research