AQA Psychology A-level

Topic 1: Social Influence
Flashcards

Define social influence.

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The process by which individuals and groups change each other's attitudes and behaviours.

Define legitimacy of authority.

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An explanation for obedience which suggests we are more likely to obey people who we perceive to have authority over us due to the position of power that they hold within the social hierarchy.

Identify three features of an authoritarian personality.

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- Submissive to superiors
- Dismissive of inferiors
- Highly prejudiced

Explain how an authoritarian personality develops.

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An authoritarian personality develops from having a harsh parenting style in childhood. This harsh parenting style consists of strict discipline, criticism of failings and impossibly high standards. As the child cannot express their feelings to their parents so they displace these to others they deem weaker which is known as scapegoating.

Which scale measures the authoritarian personality?

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The F-scale.

Give some limitations of the F-scale.

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- Has acquiescence bias - all questions are worded in the same direction.
- Is politically biased - is very right wing, it does not account for left-wing authoritarianism.

What does Milgram's original study tell us about obedience?

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Milgram's study showed us that people obey those they consider to be authority figures. The results suggest that obeying authority is normal behaviour in a hierarchically organised society . We will obey orders that distress us and even go against our moral code.

Outline two situational variables and the impact of these on obedience

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- Proximity - describes the physical closeness between the person giving the order and the person receiving it. It decreases obedience rates. In Milgram's variations study when the learner and teacher were in the same room the obedience level decreased to 40% from 65% in the original study, where they were in different rooms.
- Uniform - describes the outfit the person giving the order is wearing, In Milgram's original study the experimenter wore a lab coat so was dressed smartly. In Milgram's variations study the experimenter was switched with someone who wore casual clothes. Obedience levels dropped from 60% to 20% in this case.

Define the agentic state.

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This is when individuals obey an order even if they are aware that it is wrong, because they feel that they are acting for an authority figure so feel no responsibility for their actions.

What keeps a person in the agentic state?

What keeps a person in the agentic state?

Binding factors which allow a person to minimise the damaging aspects of their actions reduce the moral strain they feel. These can include:

- Guilt or anxiety about the thought of leaving
- Not wanting to appear rude/ arrogant
- Unwillingness to break commitment to experimenter
- Shifting responsibility to victim
- Denying the impact of their actions

Give two explanations why people are able to resist social influence.

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- Social support - this is when the presence of people helps others resist the pressures of conforming or obeying.
- Locus of control - describes a person's perception of their control over behaviours, successes, failures and events. A person with a high internal locus of control believes they are responsible for their lives so are more likely to resist.

What's the difference between internals and externals?

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Internals believe they are responsible for what happens to them and that they direct their own lives whereas externals believe outside forces direct their lives and their lives and they do not have control.

What are the two theories that Deutsch & Gerard proposed to explain conformity?

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- Normative social influence - when you conform to fit in and to be liked.
- Informative social influence - when you conform due to the need to be right or correct.

Define identification.

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This is when you go along with others because you have accepted their point of view and you identify with them.

Give a limitation of Asch's (1951) conformity study.

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Asch's study has been criticised for being 'a child of its time'. The 1950s was a conformist time in America so this could have been the reason for the results. Perrin & Spencer (1980) found only one conformity response out of 396 trials in a replicate of Asch's study. This provides evidence that Asch's results are not consistent over time.

Describe the difference between compliance and internalisation.

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Compliance is a temporary type of conformity whereby a person goes along with the majority in public but does not agree with the view in private whereas internalisation is a permanent type where the person accepts the majority view in public and in private (a deeper form of conformity than compliance).

List the stages of minority influence.

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1) Draw attention to their beliefs.
2) Consistency, commitment and flexibility shown.
3) Deeper processing of the issue in the majority group.
4) Augmentation principle.
5) The snowball effect.
6) Social cryptomnesia.

List three characteristics of minorities which make them influential.

List three elements of minorities which make them influential.

- Consistency.
- Commitment.
- Flexibility.

Define social cryptomnesia.

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This is part of the process of minority influence which takes place after the snowball effect. It describes how people have a memory that social change has occurred but don't remember how it happened.