

Conformity – Mark Scheme

Q1.

[AO1 = 2 AO3 = 2]

| Level | Marks | Description |
|-------|-------|--|
| 2 | 3 – 4 | Outline of normative social influence as an explanation of conformity is clear and has some detail. Some evaluation relevant to conformity is clear. The answer is generally coherent with effective use of terminology. |
| 1 | 1 – 2 | Outline of normative social influence lacks clarity and/or detail and/or link to conformity. Evaluation is limited. The answer as a whole is not clearly expressed. Terminology is either absent or inappropriately used. For 2 marks, either outline or evaluation is done well. |
| | 0 | No relevant content. |

Possible Content:

- People agree with the opinion of the majority in order to be liked and gain approval/acceptance/avoid rejection/avoid ridicule.
- This often leads to compliance which is where people will agree publicly with the group but privately they do not change their personal opinions.

Possible evaluation points:

- Evidence to support, e.g. Asch – when interviewed afterwards participants said they conformed to avoid rejection by others
- There are individual differences in how much people want to be liked by others and therefore not everyone will conform due to this desire
- Other explanations, e.g. informational social influence, conformity to social roles, social identity theory.

Credit any other relevant points.

Q2.

[AO1 = 2 AO3 = 4]

| Level | Marks | Description |
|-------|-------|---|
| 3 | 5 – 6 | Two criticisms are clearly identified. There is some clear and effective discussion of each criticism. The answer is coherent and well organised, with effective use of specialist terminology. |
| 2 | 3 – 4 | Two criticisms are identified. There is some discussion of each but it is limited. The answer is mostly clear and |

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| | | organised, with appropriate use of specialist terminology. OR One criticism is presented at top of Level 3. |
| 1 | 1 – 2 | Criticism(s) are muddled but can be inferred. Discussion is absent / very limited. Specialist terminology is either absent or inappropriately used. OR One criticism is presented at Level 2. |
| | 0 | No relevant content. |

Possible criticisms:

- Ethics – psychological harm – participants soon became distressed.
- Zimbardo himself took part in the action / was a participant observer.

Possible discussion points:

- Whether or not the distress should have been anticipated.
- Whether or not the consent gained was sufficiently informed.
- Zimbardo's own behaviour affected the way in which events unfolded, thus the validity of the findings could be questioned.
- Use of examples from the study to support argument and elaborate on the criticisms given.

Credit other valid criticisms and other valid discussion points. Can credit two separate ethical criticisms.

Q3.

[AO1 = 6]

1 mark – for knowledge of each relevant variable

Plus:

1 mark for each brief outline of how the variable was manipulated by Asch

Content:

- Group size – Asch varied the number of confederates/stooges
- Unanimity – Asch sometimes arranged for a confederate to give a different answer to the majority/same answer as the real participant
- Task difficulty – Asch made the right answer less obvious by having lines of similar length

Credit other relevant variables.

Q4.

[AO3 = 4]

| Level | Marks | Description |
|-------|-------|---|
| 2 | 3 – 4 | Two suggestions for dealing with ethical issues in social influence research are clearly explained. Minor detail is |

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| | | sometimes lacking or there is slight inaccuracy. The answer as a whole is clear with use of specialist terminology. |
| 1 | 1 – 2 | Two suggestions for dealing with ethical issues in social influence research are identified. Any explanation lacks detail/accuracy. The answer as a whole lacks clarity. Specialist terminology is either absent or inappropriately used. OR one suggestion at Level 2. |
| | 0 | No relevant content. |

Possible content:

- Participants should be given the right to withdraw (at the start; throughout the study; withdraw their data at the end)
- Participants should not be put in embarrassing/uncomfortable situations
- Participants should be fully debriefed at the earliest opportunity

Credit other relevant suggestions.

Q5.

[AO1 = 4]

| Level | Marks | Description |
|-------|-------|---|
| 2 | 3 – 4 | Knowledge of the procedures and findings of Zimbardo's research into conformity to social roles is clear and mostly accurate. |
| 1 | 1 – 2 | Knowledge of procedures and findings are both incomplete/partly accurate. For 1 mark there may be some detail of procedures but no findings or vice versa. |
| | 0 | No relevant content. |

Possible content:

- Procedure: details of the sample, the basic set-up, how participants were recruited, processes used to deindividuate/establish roles, etc.
- Findings: increased passivity of the 'prisoners' in the face of increased brutality of the 'guards'; study abandoned after 5 days; pathological reactions of the prisoners, etc.

Credit other relevant information.

Q6.

AO1 = 3

For each term, 1 mark for a brief outline and a further two marks for elaboration.

Internalisation is where the behaviour or belief of the majority is accepted by the individual and becomes part of his or her own belief system. It is the most permanent form of conformity as it usually lasts even if the majority is no longer present. This type of conformity is most likely to be linked to ISI.

For example: Internalisation is where you accept the group's beliefs as yours (1 mark). You change both your public and private views (2nd mark for elaboration) and it is a permanent change as you continue to think this even when not in the group (3rd mark for elaboration).

Q7.

AO1 = 3

Compliance is where the individual changes his or her own behaviour to fit in with the group. They may not necessarily agree with the behaviour / belief but they go along with it publicly. It is not a permanent form of social influence; it lasts only as long as the group is present. Here the type of conformity is likely to be linked to NSI.

For example: Compliance is where you go along with the group to fit in (1 mark) even if you don't really believe their view point (2nd mark for elaboration) for example, in Asch's study, many of the naïve participants went along with the wrong answer so as not to look stupid (example to illustrate the point as 3rd mark).

Q8.

Please note that the AOs for the new AQA Specification (Sept 2015 onwards) have changed. Under the new Specification the following system of AOs applies:

- AO1 knowledge and understanding
- AO2 application (of psychological knowledge)
- AO3 evaluation, analysis, interpretation.

Although the essential content for this mark scheme remains the same, mark schemes for the new AQA Specification (Sept 2015 onwards) take a different format as follows:

- A single set of numbered levels (formerly bands) to cover all skills
- Content appears as a bulleted list
- No IDA expectation in A Level essays, however, credit for references to issues, debates and approaches where relevant.

AO3 = 4

Conclusions can include: there are two factors that influence conformity, the ambiguity of the task and the size of the majority. A large majority is most influential with an ambiguous task, but still exerts pressure even when the task is easy. However, a small majority has less effect and the type of task does not seem to be an important variable.

4 marks Accurate and reasonably detailed

Accurate and reasonably detailed answer that demonstrates sound knowledge and understanding of what the bar chart shows about conformity. There is appropriate selection of material to address the question.

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| <p>3 marks Less detail but generally accurate Less detailed but generally accurate answer that demonstrates knowledge and understanding. There is some evidence of material to address the question.</p> |
| <p>2 marks Basic Basic answer that demonstrates some relevant knowledge and understanding but lacks detail and may be muddled. There is little evidence of selection of material to address the question.</p> |
| <p>1 mark Very brief/flawed or inappropriate Very brief or flawed answer demonstrating very little knowledge. Selection and presentation of information is largely or wholly inappropriate.</p> |
| <p>0 marks No creditworthy material.</p> |

Q9.

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AO2 = 4

Jan is showing internalisation, she has taken the others' beliefs as her own and this behaviour continues even when she is away from the group. Norah is showing compliance, because away from the group she reverted back to her original behaviour. Explanations of conformity are also credit-worthy here and reference to NSI and ISI can gain marks. Jan believes the others were right (ISI) while Norah just wanted to be accepted by her housemates (NSI). Credit explanation in terms of private / public behaviour.

The answer must be absolutely clear to which girl it is referring in order to gain any marks. If only one girl is explained, maximum 2 marks.

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| <p>4 marks Effective analysis of unfamiliar situation Effective explanation that demonstrates sound knowledge of types of conformity and explains which type of conformity each girl is showing.</p> |
| <p>3 marks Reasonable analysis of unfamiliar situation Reasonable explanation of types of conformity each girl is showing.</p> |
| <p>2 marks Basic analysis of unfamiliar situation</p> |

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|---|
| Basic explanation of types of conformity each girl is showing, or effective explanation of only <u>one</u> girl. |
| 1 mark Rudimentary analysis of unfamiliar situation Rudimentary, muddled consideration of types of conformity either girl is showing, demonstrating very limited knowledge. |
| 0 marks No creditworthy material or no engagement with the stem. |

Q10.

(a) [AO1 = 2]

Award up to 2 marks for a definition of normative social influence. This is a type of conformity / is where people 'go along with' the behaviour of the group (1) to maintain group harmony / be seen as a member of the group / to avoid rejection / gain approval from others / to avoid being different from everyone else / likely to lead to compliance / where public behaviour and private opinion do not match / to fit in (1).
0 marks for examples.

(b) [AO2 = 2]

Award up to 2 marks for an explanation of behaviour related to the situation given. Normative social influence is likely to mean that Andrea will comply publicly with the smart dress code at work (1). She will want to be seen as like the rest of her colleagues and not as an outsider / to fit in (1).

Q11.

[AO2 = 7]

| Level | Marks | Description |
|-------|-------|--|
| 4 | 6 – 7 | Knowledge of conformity and minority influence research/concepts is clear and generally well detailed. Application to the situation described is clear and effective. The answer is coherent with appropriate use of terminology. |
| 3 | 4 – 5 | Knowledge of conformity and minority influence research/concepts is evident. There is some effective application to the situation described. The answer is mostly clear and organised but may lack clarity in places. Specialist terminology mostly used effectively. |
| 2 | 2 – 3 | Knowledge of conformity and/or minority influence research/concepts is limited. Application to the situation described may lack clarity or be inappropriate. The answer may lack accuracy and organisation. Specialist terminology used inappropriately on occasions. |

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| 1 | 1 | The answer constitutes little more than a 'list' of concepts related to conformity and/or minority influence. There is no attempted application. |
| | 0 | No relevant content. |

Possible content:

- Factors affecting minority influence: the student body are more likely to be convinced if the group of students are consistent, committed and show flexibility in their views.
- Credit examples of how the students might demonstrate this.
- Credit application of explanations of minority influence: e.g. social cryptoamnesia; the snowball effect; social impact theory.
- Application of variables affecting conformity, including group size (the campaigning group is 'small', the student body is the majority); unanimity (there may be other students who agree with the small group); etc.
- Credit application of explanations of conformity: e.g. explanations of how views may change through informational social influence/internalisation.

Q12.

[AO1 = 4 AO3 = 4]

| Level | Mark | Description |
|-------|------|---|
| 4 | 7-8 | Knowledge of the procedure of Zimbardo's research into social roles is accurate with some detail. Evaluation is effective. Minor detail and / or expansion is sometimes lacking. The answer is clear and coherent. Specialist terminology is used effectively. |
| 3 | 5-6 | Knowledge of the procedure of Zimbardo's research into social roles is evident but there are occasional inaccuracies / omissions. There is some effective evaluation. The answer is mostly clear and organised. Specialist terminology is mostly used appropriately. |
| 2 | 3-4 | Limited knowledge of the procedure of Zimbardo's research into social roles is present. Focus is mainly on description. Any evaluation is of limited effectiveness. The answer lacks clarity, accuracy and organisation in places. Specialist terminology is used inappropriately on occasions. |
| 1 | 1-2 | Knowledge of the procedure of Zimbardo's research into social roles is very limited. Evaluation is limited, poorly focused or absent. The answer as a whole lacks clarity, has many inaccuracies and is poorly organised. Specialist terminology is either absent or inappropriately used. |
| | 0 | No relevant content. |

Possible content:

- 24 U.S male student volunteers
- randomly assigned role of prisoner or guard
- prisoners unexpectedly arrested at home
- deloused, given prison uniform and ID number
- given some rights, e.g. 3 meals, 3 supervised toilet trips a day and 2 visits per week
- guards were given uniforms, clubs, whistles and wore reflective sunglasses
- Zimbardo took role of prison superintendent
- planned duration was 2 weeks
- stopped after 6 days.

Possible evaluation points:

- ethical issues: lack of informed consent, whether or not the consent gained was sufficiently informed; deception; lack of protection from psychological harm – whether or not the distress should have been anticipated
- Zimbardo playing a 'dual-role'. Zimbardo's own behaviour affected the way in which events unfolded, thus the validity of the findings could be questioned
- methodological issues: sample bias; demand characteristics / lack of internal validity; lack of ecological validity / mundane realism and their implications for the findings
- good internal validity: participant selection; random allocation of roles.

Credit other relevant evaluation that relates to the procedure of Zimbardo's Stanford Prison study.

Credit description and evaluation of procedures of other studies of social role by Zimbardo.

[8]

Q13.

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AO1 = 4

Research can include both theories and studies. The most likely study offered is Asch's research into conformity and any aspect of his research is creditworthy. Other studies, such as Sherif, Crutchfield would also be creditworthy. Students could also consider reasons such as NSI and ISI to explain why people conform.

AO2 = 4

The evaluation will depend on which route students take. If they offer studies as

their AO1, the commentary can come from a consideration of the strengths and limitations of the research. How other studies have challenged their findings. If a more theoretical route is taken, research studies to support the explanation can be used as commentary. As the question requires students to discuss, credit can be given for wider discussion points, such as implications and consequences.

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| <p>4 marks Accurate and reasonably detailed Accurate and reasonably detailed description that demonstrates sound knowledge and understanding of research into conformity. There is appropriate selection of material to address the question.</p> | <p>4 marks Effective evaluation Effective use of material to address the question and provide informed commentary. Effective evaluation of research. Broad range of issues and / or evidence in reasonable depth, or a narrower range in greater depth. Clear expression of ideas, good range of specialist terms, few errors of grammar, punctuation and spelling.</p> |
| <p>3 marks Less detailed but generally accurate Less detailed but generally accurate description that demonstrates relevant knowledge and understanding. There is some evidence of selection of material to address the question.</p> | <p>3 marks Reasonable evaluation Material is not always used effectively but produces a reasonable commentary. Reasonable evaluation of research. A range of issues and / or evidence in limited depth, or a narrower range in greater depth. Reasonable expression of ideas, a range of specialist terms, some errors of grammar, punctuation and spelling.</p> |
| <p>2 marks Basic Basic description that demonstrates some relevant knowledge and understanding but lacks detail and may be muddled. There is little evidence of selection of material to address the question.</p> | <p>2 marks Basic evaluation The use of material provides only a basic commentary. Basic evaluation of research. Superficial consideration of a restricted range of issues and / or evidence. Expression of ideas lacks clarity, some specialist terms used, errors of grammar, punctuation and spelling detract from clarity.</p> |
| <p>1 mark Very brief / flawed or inappropriate Very brief or flawed description demonstrating very little knowledge. Selection and presentation of information is largely or wholly inappropriate.</p> | <p>1 mark Rudimentary evaluation The use of material provides only a rudimentary commentary. Evaluation of research is just discernible or absent. Expression of ideas poor, few specialist terms used, errors of grammar, punctuation and spelling often obscure the meaning.</p> |
| <p>0 marks No creditworthy material.</p> | <p>0 marks No creditworthy material.</p> |

Q14.

[AO1 = 6 AO2 = 4 AO3 = 6]

| Level | Marks | Description |
|-------|---------|--|
| 4 | 13 – 16 | Knowledge of explanations for conformity is accurate and generally detailed. Discussion is thorough and effective. Application to the stem is appropriate and links between the explanations and the stem content are explained. The answer is clear, coherent and focused. Specialist terminology is used effectively. Minor detail and/or expansion of argument sometimes lacking. |
| 3 | 9 – 12 | Knowledge of explanations for conformity is evident. Discussion is apparent and mostly effective. There are occasional inaccuracies. Application to the stem is appropriate although links to the explanations are not always well explained. The answer is mostly clear and organised. Specialist terminology is mostly used effectively. Lacks focus in places. |
| 2 | 5 – 8 | Knowledge of explanations of conformity is present but is vague/inaccurate or one explanation only is present. Focus is mainly on description. Any discussion is only partly effective. Application to the stem is partial. The answer lacks clarity, accuracy and organisation in places. Specialist terminology is used inappropriately on occasions. |
| 1 | 1 – 4 | Knowledge of research into explanation(s) of conformity is limited. Discussion is limited, poorly focused or absent. Application is limited or absent. The answer as a whole lacks clarity, has many inaccuracies and is poorly organised. Specialist terminology is either absent or inappropriately used. |
| | 0 | No relevant content. |

Possible content:

Knowledge of at least two explanations for conformity (usually those named in the specification and implied in the stem):

Normative social influence

- Refers to the social rules that govern behaviour and the need to be seen as a member of the social group/fit in.
- This relates to a desire for social approval/acceptance/avoidance of rejection.
- Suggests that conformity is public agreement with the group and not private agreement (compliance).
- Change in attitude/behaviour is temporary.

Informational social influence

- Refers to the idea that the individual believes the group has more knowledge/expertise.
- Suggests that conformity is agreement with the group due to uncertainty about correct responses or behaviour on the part of the individual.
- When public behaviour and private opinion match (internalisation).
- Conformity is driven by the need to be right/have accurate perception of reality.
- Change in attitude/behaviour is likely to be more permanent.
- Credit description of evidence eg. Sherif (1935), Asch (1951), Anderson et al (1992), Baron, Vandello & Brunsman (1996).

Application

- Links to the stem: Steph – conformed for informational reasons – explanation of why this; has become 'quite passionate' suggesting the change in attitude is permanent; internalisation has taken place.
- Jeff – conformed for normative reasons – explanation of why this is; didn't want to be the 'odd one out'; suggests behaviour is temporary; compliance.

Possible Discussion

- Use of evidence to evaluate/discuss the explanations.
- Normative social influence can explain the results of conformity studies in unambiguous situations eg Asch.
- Informational influence can explain conformity in ambiguous situations in which both public and private agreement occurs eg Sherif, Jenness.
- Analysis of Asch variations when linked to normative social influence or informational social influence.
- Credit use of examples to illustrate explanations.
- Discussion of alternative explanations of conformity eg dispositional factors and other explanations such as ingratiation.
- Discussion of difficulty measuring and/or distinguishing between the two explanations.
- Only credit evaluation of the methodology used in studies when made relevant to the discussion of the explanations.

Credit other relevant material.