**Social Influence Pack 5**

**Unit 2 – Social Psychology – Social Influence**

**Social Change**

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**Section B - Social Influence in Everyday Life**

• Explanations of independent behaviour, including locus of control, how people resist pressures to conform and resist pressures to obey authority

• How social influence research helps us to understand social change; the role of minority influence in social change

Before we go any further, you may be asked a question on **research methods** or **ethics**. Answer the questions below.

**ASSESSMENT 12 – Taken from June 2011**

7 (a) Explain why it is sometimes necessary to deceive participants in social influence research. (2 marks)

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7 (b) Describe one way in which deception has been dealt with in social influence research. (2 marks)

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**ASSESSMENT 13 – Taken from January 2011**

Some research into obedience has been carried out in laboratories. Other studies into obedience have been carried out in the real world, including field experiments and observations.

**6 (a)** Outline **one** advantage of conducting obedience research outside a laboratory setting. (2 marks)

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**6 (b)** Outline **one** limitation of conducting obedience research outside a laboratory setting. (2 marks)

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**Social Change and Minority Influence**

What is social change?



Can you think of minority attitudes or behaviours that have changed to become the norm in the last 100 years?

The specification requires candidates to be able to discuss how psychological research can explain social change. That is, how an individual, minority or unpopular view can change the way society thinks and behaves. One example:

**The Suffragettes**

* In the early 20th Century a small **minority** group of women, the suffragettes, **resisted conformity** and **disobeyed the authority of the law** to fight for the right of women to vote in Parliamentary elections.
* The women of the Pankhurst family led this militant campaign; most famously Emmeline and her daughter Sylvia. Emmeline Pankhurst was an educated woman with politically active parents and brought her daughters up within the suffrage movement. She married a barrister who campaigned for women’s rights and supported her views. She was also surrounded by a small circle of politically active women.
* They were frequently arrested and imprisoned for their provocative campaigning methods (leading riots, throwing rocks at the prime minister’s carriage, chaining themselves to railings) and in one famous case (Emily Davison) threw herself to her death, trampled by the king’s horse.
* The Suffragettes achieved their goal through gradual change. Women over 30 were allowed to vote in 1918. Women over 21 were allowed to vote in 1928.
* Feminists achieved the introduction of laws on equal pay and sex discrimination by the 1970s. but are still campaigning for full gender equality in society in 2013.

This is typical of the early stages of social change. There was the **initial rebellion of the small minority group**, who gradually **persuaded some of the majority** to their view. When enough of the majority had been persuaded a tipping point was reached whereby **conformity** became the reason why the remainder of people accepted the views of the suffragettes.

One way to explain why social change occurs is by looking at the personal characteristics and behavioural styles of an individual or minority group. Maybe they have something special, or do something important to help change the view and behaviour of the majority.

**What qualities do the minority need to have to be influential? Refer to P.211**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Moscovici (1985)** | **Hogg and Vaughan** |
|  |  |
|  |
|  |  |
|  |

**Did the suffragettes have any of these traits?**

**TASK 5:** In one study, Moscovici wanted to find out how important a consistent minority was in changing the thoughts of the majority. Turn to **page 212** and fill in the table below

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Minority Influence – Moscovici (1969)** | |
| **Aims** | *To investigate the role of consistency in minority influence* |
| **Procedures** |  |
| **Findings** |  |
| **Conclusions** | *If a minority is to have success in changing a minority, then it must be consistent in its views, even this will not change the majority instantly.* |

**TASK 6:** *Now try to elaborate on this* ***evaluative*** *point that relates to this study:*

Moscovici used a trivial situation to demonstrate minority influence in the lab…

*Moscovici believed that minority influence was a more important area for study than conformity. Can you think of a reason why he believed this to be the case?*

**Theories of social change**

There are three theories that can be used to explain social change. They seek to explain why the majority take on the views of the minority.

These are **Social forgetting**, **Group membership** and **The Snowball Effect**.

* **Social forgetting/ socio-cryptoamnesia (also known as the dissociation model):**
* **Group Membership**
* **The snowball effect:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **TASK 3**: *Choose two behaviours that used to be displayed by a minority, but are now displayed by the majority. Then explain the process using the snowball effect for one, and social-cryptoamnesia for the other* | |
| ***The Snowball effect***  **Behaviour:**  **How it can be explained** | ***Social-cryptoamnesia***  **Behaviour**  **How it can be explained** |

**ASSESSMENT 14 – Taken from January 2011**

Mike and his grandfather were having a conversation about recycling. Mike explained that he always puts empty cans and plastic bottles in one box and newspapers and cardboard in another box and that his mum takes these to be recycled once a week. His grandfather said that when he was Mike’s age, people did not recycle. Mike said that everyone in his street recycles and that they have a big box at school especially for recycling.

Using your knowledge of the psychology of social change, explain why recycling is now behaviour carried out by a majority of people in this country. (6 marks)

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**Discuss the implications for social change of research into social influence (12 marks).**

***Advice:*** *The word* ***discuss*** *is occasionally used in exams, and this means you must* ***describe and evaluate*** *the theories. The evaluation can include the difficulties of studying social change, support for theories (ex. Moscovici’s research), mention of examples to illustrate points (suffragettes, Rosa Parks etc.) that social change can be for good or ill etc.*

**Firstly** put the essay in order to make it make sense.

**Secondly** highlight what is AO1 OR AO2.

Much social change takes places with the rebellious actions of the minority who gradually increase their influence and become the majority. Research has shown us that for this to occur the minority have to possess certain characteristics. Moscovici says that the minority need to be consistent and non-dogmatic and Hogg and Vaughan believed that the minority needed to be appear from acting on principle, have made sacrifices, be similar to the majority in terms of age, gender and class and their views must be in line with current social trends. So is what the research implies true? You need to look at historical examples to answer this question.

Once a minority has initiated social change there becomes a tipping point where the processes of conformity come into play. Normative social influence is influential with for instance women’s rights, it is no longer socially acceptable for people to disagree with gender equality and so whilst someone may not agree with it they may be reluctant to say anything.

The suffragettes defied the majority and demanded the vote and if you look at personal characteristics then they were consistent and did not back down in their opinion, they made many sacrifices (some even with their life), were acting totally out of principle. Also in terms of explaining their independence and resisting of obedience and conformity you could say that they possessed internal locus of control believing that they in fact could make a difference and had little need to social approval. However these traits are not enough for social change to occur as the suffragettes didn’t themselves get the right to vote for many years. This implies that something needs to be happening to the majority at the same time.

Social change is a general term for change in the nature, social institutions, social behaviour or social relations of a society or a community. Social change can be a quick process as in an armed revolution or political coup or will take place over many years such as with women’s rights. So what has Psychological research told us about how social change occurs and what does this in turn imply about social change?

There are three theories concerning this majority shift including the snowball effect and socio-cryptoamnesia. The snowball effect says that as a few members of the majority start to move towards the minority position, then the influence of the minority begins to gather momentum as more people gradually pay attention to the potential correctness of the minority view. This links in with the suffragettes as we know that it was easier for people to support women’s rights when there was the existence of others who were also supporting it (easier to disobey with disobedient models).

So in conclusion we can apply our understanding of social influence to understand social change. Minority groups have characteristics that make them independent of social pressure and willing to start off social change. The minorities influence the majority by displaying certain behaviours when delivering their message (consistent, principled) and this leads to internalization of the majority via snowballing and group membership and when social change occurs it is stabilised by normative social influence.

This in turn leads to group membership; that we are most likely to be influenced by those we perceive to be like us (in group). For example attitudes of straight men towards gay men are more likely to become more liberal if other straight men express such attitudes. However this still works slowly. This is indeed what appears to have happened with the suffragettes as it was easier for men to internalise the idea if other men (some leading labour politicians at the time, Robert Cecil from the conservative party) had internalized it already.

**Mark Scheme**

**Assessment 12**

1. 1 mark for a brief answer and a further mark for elaboration.

For example, deception is necessary because if participants knew the aim, they might change their behaviour (1 mark). Second mark for elaboration e.g. this might affect validity.

1. Deception has been dealt with by:

* Presumptive consent
* Prior general consent
* Retrospective consent
* Debriefing

1 mark for a brief answer and a further mark for elaboration. For example, gain presumptive consent (1 mark) by asking people similar to the participant if they think it is OK to do the experiment (further mark for elaboration). Candidates may answer this generically or they may refer to a specific study. For example, Milgram debriefed his participants (1 mark) he reassured them that they were normal and answered all their questions (further mark for elaboration).

**Assessment 13**

**AO3 = 2 marks + 2 marks Knowledge of research methods**

An advantage of research outside of laboratory settings is that it may be high in ecological validity, this means that the results can be generalised beyond the research setting.

A limitation of research outside of the laboratory settings is that there is a lack of control; other factors may have influenced the outcome.

Usually 1 mark for identification of the advantage/limitation and a further mark for elaboration. Examiners should be aware that sometimes a very concise answer can gain both marks.

**Assessment 14**

**Question 8**

**AO2 = 6marks Analysis of unfamiliar situation and application of the psychology of social change**

Social change occurs when a minority view challenges the majority view and is eventually accepted as the majority. This can take place in several ways, such as social impact theory, the snowball effect, social cryptoamnesia, or the views and beliefs of a powerful individual. Research into minority influence by Moscovici and Nemeth can be used to explain how this change happens. In the example of recycling, while the idea started with the minority of individuals, it is now a common behaviour (majority influence). Many schools are now actively teaching the importance of recycling and local authorities are introducing new schemes to encourage recycling. The majority of homes in the country have some form of recycling facility provided by their local authority. Through the snowball effect, what was originally a minority belief, the importance of recycling, has become a majority behaviour and accepted as the social norm. Candidates need to use their knowledge of how social change occurs and apply it to recycling.

Candidates may draw on other parts of the specification, such as attitude change, the role of the media and if it is sound psychology, this can clearly gain credit.

**6 marks Effective analysis and application**

Effective explanation that demonstrates sound knowledge of the psychology of social

change as applied to recycling.

**5-4 marks reasonable analysis and application**

Reasonable explanation of the psychology of social change as applied to recycling.

**3-2 marks Basic analysis and application**

Basic explanation of the psychology of social change.

**1 mark Rudimentary analysis of unfamiliar situation**

Rudimentary, muddled consideration of the psychology of social change,

demonstrating very limited knowledge.

**0 marks**

No creditworthy material.