Knowledge Map: Social influence

This topic looks at why social influence affects our behaviour how social factors and dispositional factors affect the likelihood of a change in our behaviour.

Memory	Perception	Development	Research methods	Social influence	Language thought and communication	Brain and neuropsychology	Psychological problems

Asch's study	Milgram's agency theory	Adorno's theory of the authoritarian personality	Piliavin's subway study

Conformity
Effect of real or unseen group pressure (majority influence)

Social Factors (Asch's study of conformity, 1956)

Group size
The more people in a group the greater the pressure to conform. Asch found that with two confederates conformity to the wrong answer was 13.6%; with three it rose to 31.8%. Adding more had little difference.

Task
When there is no obvious answer, there is no conformity until 8+ people.

Anonymity
Conformity is lower if participant writes down answers rather than saying them aloud.

Stranger vs. Friend
If participants are friends conformity rates are higher

Task difficulty
If a task is harder, participants are more likely to conform.

Expertise
People with more experience and ability are far less likely to be affected by task difficulty so will not conform (Lucas, 2006).

Dispositional factors

Personality
High internal locus of control are likely to conform less (Burger, 1987).

Familiarity
Locus of control is less important in familiar situations (Rotter, 1954).

Expertise
People that are more knowledgeable conform less (Lucas, 2006).

Stranger vs. Friend
Experts may conform in the presence of strangers, so the group accepts them (Lucas, 2006).

Obedience
Response to a direct order from an authority figure

Social Factors (Milgram's agency theory, 1974)

Agency
Agentic state: following orders with no responsibility
Autonomous state: Own free choice

Authority
Agentic shift: moving from making own free choices to following orders, occurs when someone in authority gives an order.

Culture – Social hierarchy
Some people have more authority than others do. Expertise, wealth, power, job, and position in the social hierarchy affect a person's authority.

Proximity
Being closer to victims of a destructive order causes moral strain and reduces obedience.

Dispositional factors (Adorno's theory of the Authoritarian Personality, 1950)

Authoritarian personality
Some people have a strong respect for authority and look down on people of lower status.

Cognitive style
Prone to rigid stereotypes and do not like change.

Childhood
Strict parents who give conditional love when behaviour is correct. Internalised values view everyone as the same.

Scapegoating (displacement)
Hostility felt towards parents for being strict/critical. Displaced anger at other people especially those of lower status or position in social hierarchy.

Prosocial behaviour
Behaviour that is beneficial to other people

Social Factors (Piliavin's subway study, 1969)

Presence of others
The more people present the less chance an individual will help.

Cost of helping
Includes danger to self or embarrassment. Cost of not helping includes guilt or blame.

Situation
In serious emergencies, response correlates to the severity of the situation (Faul et al., 2016).

Interpretation of the situation
Married couples arguing cause 19% to intervene. Strangers arguing 85% intervene (Shotland and Straw, 1976)

Dispositional factors (Piliavin's subway study, 1969)

Similarity to victim
Help is more likely if the victim is more similar to others.

Expertise
People with specialist skills are more likely to help (Cramer et al 1988).

Quality of help
Some studies have shown that non-experts are no less likely to help. Experts do, however, give better quality of help (Shotland et al., 1985)

Crowd and collective behaviour
A large gathering of people who may behave differently

Social Factors

Deindividuation
Taking on a group identity. Group norms determine crowd behaviour (Zimbardo, 1969).

Social loafing
When working in a group people put in less effort as you cannot identify individual effort (Latane et al, 1979).

Culture
Collectivist cultures do not put in less effort when in groups (Earley, 1987).

Crowding
Being packed tightly together may increase anti-social behaviour (Freedman, 1975)

Dispositional factors

Personality
Internal locus of control enables individuals to be less influenced by crowd behaviour.

Morality
Strong sense of right and wrong helps resist pressure from group norms (The story of Sophie Scholl 1921-1943).