

Social Psychology – Replication of Asch's Study

Ethical Debate

Against	For
Embarrassment	People embarrassed everyday
Keeping them waiting intensified the anxiety	This added to the realistic nature of the study
Deception	Debriefed
Caused people to ask questions of themselves afterwards	Had every chance to exit experiment
Caused anxiety during experiment	
Laughed after experiment	No laughing during the experiment
More pressure - observers	

The Aim

To replicate Asch's 1951 study to see whether people would conform in a group situation.

Procedures

- Selected 8 standard lines, 2cm different in length – 20cm-6cm.
- The other card had three lines, 2cm different. Real answer in a different position each time to avoid participants falling into pattern.
- Characteristics:
 - "Stooges" appeared to be volunteers
 - Simon randomly giving out numbers
 - Random lines
- Standardised instructions – experimenter bias:
 - Deception – "an experiment into visual perception"
 - No conferring
 - Holly didn't move with the card
- Control group – first 7 volunteers to compare against the experimental group results. DID NOT CONFORM.
- Experimental group – 8 groups. 6 stooges, one real. Stooges had to decide which were the critical trials – 5 for each participant chosen.
- End of each "run" – debrief, ask for participant's feelings.

Findings

- Every volunteer conformed at least once
- There was an average conformity rate of 53.4%
- 6/8 volunteers conformed 3 times

Conclusions

- Fulfilled our aim
- Distorted cognitions or blatant conformity?
- Conformity increased as trials went on
- Normative AND informational influence clearly demonstrated.