

Additional Try It Yourself Exercises Chapter 8

Imagine you were a participant in Asch's experiment. Do you think you would conform? Why or why not? If you did conform, how would you feel when the true nature of the situation was explained during debriefing? Do you think the study is ethical?

The issues presented in Asch's experiment have significant implications for the real world. Consider situations in which a group of people meet seeking agreement (to make sure they are "all on the same page"). Sometimes, the discussion is open, but in some cases the majority may be seeking to influence others, much as in Asch's situation. For example, it could be a group of medical professionals who would like a patient to agree to a certain treatment, a group of teachers who wish to persuade parents to change the class of a student with special needs, a group of business people seeking support from a politician, and so on. When the majority, who are all in agreement, meet with the person they wish to persuade, this individual is put in a situation not unlike that created by Asch. Does this increase the chances of conforming to the majority? Should we be concerned? Why or why not?

Try It Yourself

Gordon Allport once observed that no one is consistent all the time, but if no one were consistent at all, the world would be chaotic. He was suggesting that personal differences exist, but aren't absolute. Thinking about your own behaviour, do you agree? Consider the following situations, and imagine how you would act and what you would say in

each:

- You are meeting a friend of a friend for the first time.
- You are meeting a friend's grandmother for the first time.
- You are meeting a job interviewer for the first time.
- You are meeting a four year-old child for the first time.

Is your behaviour consistent in all these situations? What does this say about the person–situation debate?

Try It Yourself

Research on violent crime clearly indicates that such behaviour varies considerably across nations; for example, homicide rates in the USA are five times higher than in Canada on a per capita basis. How would you explain the difference in homicide rates, in terms of theories of aggression? What extra information would you need to have to make a decision about what approach is most plausible? For example, consider these facts: Suicide rates are higher in the USA when guns are present in the home, and suicide rates in Canada have decreased since the inception of stringent gun control laws (Hadad 2008). What approach seems best able to explain these data?