Social Psychology

Authoritarian Personality
Jenness (1932)

- Jenness (1932) was one of the first psychologists to study conformity. His experiment used an ambiguous situation involving a glass bottle filled with beans. He asked participants individually to estimate how many beans the bottle contained.
- Jenness then put the group in a room with the bottle, and asked them to provide a group estimate through discussion.
- Question: What do you think Jenness (1932) found?
- Task: Answer questions 1 and 2 on handout provided.

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Obedience Essay

- Over the last two lessons you have examined research examining obedience and the factors affecting obedience.

- Task: On a mini whiteboard explain what the difference is between the following two essay questions:
  - Describe and evaluate one or more studies of obedience. (12 marks)
  - Discuss one or more explanations of obedience. (12 marks)

- Be ready to share your thoughts.
Essay Deconstruction

- Task: You will be provided with two model essays.

- Part 1: Highlight the AO1 and AO3 in different colours, e.g.
  - AO1 = Yellow
  - AO3 = Blue
Essay Deconstruction

- Part 2: Re-read essays 1 and 2 and turn the essay into a bullet point plan, outlining the key information and assessment objectives...for example (next slide):
Essay Deconstruction - Modelling

AO1: Milgram
AO1: Aim
AO1: Method (40 male volunteers, deception)
AO1: Results (65% 150, 100% 300)
AO1: Conclusion

AO3: Lack of ecological validity; laboratory at Yale.

Etc.
Essay Deconstruction

**STRUCTURE 1:** Describe and evaluate one or more studies...

- AO1
- AO3x3(AS)

**STRUCTURE 2:** Discuss one or more explanations of...

- AO1 → AO3
- AO1 → AO3
- AO1 → AO3

**Part 3:** Read the 10 essay questions on the handout provided and decide whether structure 1 or 2 would be more appropriate and justify your choice.
Lesson Objectives:

- To **define** authoritarian personality.

- To **outline & evaluate** Elms & Milgram’s research into authoritarian personality and **apply** their findings to obedience.
Questionnaire

- Task: Complete the following questionnaire by reading each statement and deciding whether you agree or disagree, using the scale provided.

- Once you have done this, calculate your score (out of 50), and consider the three questions.
The Authoritarian Personality

- Milgram’s study created a conflict in participants:
  
  “Don’t harm an innocent person”
  vs. “You must obey authority”

- However, not all participants fully obeyed, which led psychologists to suggest a dispositional (personality) theory of obedience.
The F Scale

This questionnaire you completed is used to measure authoritarian personality. People that strongly agreed with these statements would be said to have an authoritarian personality.

- 40+ Strongly Authoritarian
- 30-39 – Authoritarian

- Question: Do you agree with the results of your questionnaire?
- RM Question: What are the strengths/limitations of gathering data from a questionnaire?
Task: Read the Elms and Milgram study on ‘The Authoritarian Personality’ and answer the questions on your handout.

Be ready to discuss your answers in 15 minutes...

Elms and Milgram (1966)

Elms and Milgram’s study

Aim: To see if the obedient participants in Milgram’s research were more likely to display authoritarian personality traits in comparison to disobedient participants.

Method: Their sample consisted of 20 obedient participants, who administered the full 450 volts and 20 disobedient participants who refused to continue. Each participant completed several personality questionnaires, including Adorno’s F scale, to measure their level of authoritarianism. Participants were also interviewed about their relationships with parents and their insights about the experimenter and learner in Milgram’s original experiment.

Results: The obedient participants scored higher on the F scale in comparison to the disobedient participants. Furthermore, the obedient participants were less likely to obey their fathers during childhood and admired the superintender in Milgram’s experiment, which was the opposite for disobedient participants.

Conclusions: The obedient participants in Milgram’s original research displayed higher levels of the authoritarian personality, in comparison to disobedient participants.

1. Outline one key finding of Elms and Milgram’s research?

2. The data collected was correlational, why might this be a problem?

3. Elms and Milgram used the F scale (a questionnaire) to determine levels of authoritarian personality. Why might this be a problem?

4. Research by Midlendrep and Melen (1990) found that low-educated people are more likely to display authoritarian personality characteristics in comparison to well-educated people. If these claims are correct then why does this pose a problem for the authoritarian explanation of obedience?
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## Authoritarian Personality

**Task:** Complete the questionnaire below, using the following scale. Once you complete the questionnaire consider the three questions below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1: Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>2: Disagree</th>
<th>3: Neither Agree/Disagree</th>
<th>4: Agree</th>
<th>5: Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Children should learn to obey authority.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Children should be disciplined.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Children should learn to respect authority.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Some jobs are more important for society. For example, businessmen are more important than artists.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>It is better to avoid problems and not think about them. If you encounter a problem, you should keep yourself busy with more cheerful activities.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Society would be a better place if people spent more time working and less time talking.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Serious crimes (e.g. rape) should receive a punishment which is more severe than prison.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Society would be a better place without less intelligent people.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Homosexuals should be treated the same as criminals and severely punished.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Children who are not taught manners at an early age cannot expect to mix with decent people later on in life.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
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1. What type of data is this questionnaire collecting?

2. What is the name of the scale (1-5) used in this questionnaire?

3. What do you think this questionnaire is measuring and why?
Elms and Milgram (1966)

**Aim:** To see if the obedient participants in Milgram’s research were more likely to display authoritarian personality traits, in comparison to disobedient participants.

**Method:** Their sample consisted of 20 obedient participants, who administered the full 450 volts and 20 disobedient participants who refused to continue. Each participant completed several personality questionnaires, including Adorno’s F scale, to measure their level of authoritarian personality. The participants were also interviewed about their relationships with parents and their thoughts about the experimenter and learner in Milgram’s original experiment.

**Results:** The obedient participants scored higher on the F scale in comparison to the disobedient participants. Furthermore, the obedient participants were less close to their fathers during childhood and admired the experimenter in Milgram’s experiment, which was the opposite for disobedient participants.

**Conclusion:** The obedient participants in Milgram’s original research displayed higher levels of the authoritarian personality, in comparison to disobedient participants.

1. Outline one key finding of Elms and Milgram’s research.

2. The data collected was correlational; why might this be a problem?

3. Elms and Milgram used the F scale (questionnaire) to determine levels of authoritarian personality. Why might this be a problem?

4. Research by Middendorp and Meleon (1990) found that less-educated people are more likely to display authoritarian personality characteristics in comparison to well-educated people. If these claims are correct then why does this pose a problem for the authoritarian explanation of obedience?
Overview

The aim of this activity is to introduce students to the different types of essay and help students with essay planning – something that many students forget to do in their exams. Students will be provided with two sample essays and have to reduce the essays into two plans, highlight the AO1 (knowledge) and AO3 (evaluation) sections!

Resources Required

- Two example essays (see attached)
- An essay planning sheet (see attached)

Teacher Instructions

Part 1

It’s important that the students understand the requirements of this task. Students should work individually or in pairs, to complete this task.

Firstly, students should be introduced to the assessment objectives:

- **AO1** = Knowledge and understanding
- **AO2** = Application of knowledge and understanding
- **AO3** = Analysis, interpretation, and evaluation

Once students have been introduced to the assessment objectives, provide each student with a copy of the sample answers. Students should highlight the different learning objectives in three different colours, for example AO1 = **Red**, AO2 = **Green**, and AO3 = **Blue**.

Please note: neither of these sample answers contain any AO2.
Part 2
The students should re-read essay 1 and turn the essay into a bullet point plan, outlining the key information and assessment objectives. You may wish to model your expectations for this task, for example.

- **AO1**: Milgram
- **AO1**: Aim
- **AO1**: Method (40 male volunteers, deception)
- **AO1**: Results (65% to 450 volts, 100% to at least 300)
- **AO1**: Conclusion

**AO3**: Lacks ecological validity. Laboratory at Yale University. Unable to generalise to every-day situations of obedience.

Etc.

The students should then do the same for essay 2. Once the students have done this for both essays, you should then discuss the structure of these two essays. Students should realise that the first essay has all of the AO1 (knowledge) points, followed by three AO3 (evaluation) points, whereas the second essay has an AO1 (knowledge) point, followed by supporting evidence (AO3), which is replicated three times.

Questions that require students to ‘Describe and evaluate research...’ typically follow the essay 1 structure, whereas questions that require students to ‘Discuss one or more explanations...’ typically follow essay 2 structure. Students can then apply their learning on the final task, by deciding which of the two structures would be the most appropriate for the 10 different essays. Suggested answers are included.
Milgram wanted to see if ordinary citizens would obey an unjust order from an authority figure. 40 male volunteers took part in what they thought was an experiment on ‘punishment and learning’ (although they were deceived). The real participant took on the role of a ‘teacher’ and was instructed to administer an electric shock to the ‘learner’ (confederate), every time he gave an incorrect answer. 65% of the participants went to 450 volts and 100% went up to at least 300, suggesting that under the right circumstances, ordinary people will obey unjust orders from an authority figure.

One limitation of Milgram’s research is that it lacks ecological validity. Milgram’s experiment took part in a laboratory at Yale University and the idea of being ordered to give electric shocks during a memory experiment on ‘punishment and learning’ is an unrealistic situation. Everyday examples of obedience don’t usually involve such extreme requests. This matters because we are unable to apply Milgram’s results to everyday situations of obedience and do not know if people would demonstrate such high levels of obedience in more ‘normal’ situations (e.g. from a police officer).

Another criticism of Milgram’s study is that he broke several ethical guidelines. Milgram deceived his participants, he did not give them the right to withdraw (due to the experimenter prods), and he did not protect them from harm. Therefore, he did not respect his participants who may have felt exceptionally anxious during the experiment and very guilty following the experiment, knowing that they could have harmed another human being.

A final criticism of Milgram’s study is that it lacks population validity. That is because Milgram used a biased sample of 40 male volunteers. Therefore, we are unable to generalise the results to other populations, in particular females, and cannot conclude if female participants would respond in a similar way.
One explanation of obedience is known as **agnostic state**. Here an individual carries out the orders of an authority figure and acts as their ‘agent’, allowing them to deny personal responsibility. Evidence to support this explanation comes from one of Milgram’s variations, where an additional confederate administered the electric shock on behalf of the teacher. In this variation obedience rose from 65% to 92.5% of participants giving the full 450 volts.

*This supports the agentic state explanation,* as the teacher was able to shift his responsibility onto the other confederate, allowing him to deny personal responsibility, which made him more likely to obey.

Another explanation of obedience is the idea of **legitimate authority**. Here a person is more likely to obey if they believe the authority figure or situation is genuine / real. Evidence to support the idea of legitimate authority comes from one of Milgram’s variations, where the experiment was replicated in a run-down building in Connecticut. In this variation obedience levels dropped from 65% to 48%. *This supports the idea of legitimate authority,* as the participants did not believe that the context was a legitimate environment for the experiment to take place and were therefore less likely to obey.

One explanation of obedience is the idea of **uniform**. According to this explanation, we are more likely to obey a person if they are wearing a uniform, as this suggests that they are a legitimate source of authority. Evidence to support the idea of uniform comes from one of Milgram’s variations. In one of the variations the professor was replaced by another participant in ordinary clothes who came up with the idea of increasing the electric shocks. In this variation, obedience dropped from 65% to 20%. *This supports the explanation that uniform makes people more likely to obey,* as more participants obeyed the professor (in a lab coat) in comparison to another person in ordinary clothes.
Essay 1: Describe and evaluate one or more studies of obedience (12 marks)
Read essay 1 and turn the essay into a bullet point plan, using the space below.

Essay 2: Discuss one or more explanations of obedience (12 marks)
Read essay 2 and turn the essay into a bullet point plan, using the space below.
ESSAY DECONSTRUCTION, PLANNING & STRUCTURE STUDENT WORKSHEET

Decide which structure the following essays should use:

- **Essay 1 Structure** = AO1 followed by 3-5 AO3 points
- **Essay 2 Structure** = AO1/3 repeated.

1. Outline and evaluate the multi-store model of memory (12/16 marks)

2. Outline and evaluate different types of long-term memory (12/16 marks)

3. Discuss research on the effect of misleading information on eyewitness testimony (12/16 marks)

4. Describe and evaluate the learning explanation of attachment (12/16 marks)

5. Outline and evaluate research into group size, unanimity, and task difficulty as variables affecting conformity (12/16 marks)

6. Discuss conformity to social roles as investigated by Zimbardo (12/16 marks)

7. Discuss two or more situational variables that affect obedience (e.g. proximity, location, uniform) (12/16 marks)

8. Outline the functions of the endocrine system and discuss the role of the endocrine system in behaviour (12/16 marks)

9. Outline and evaluate research into lateralisation and/or the split brain (12/16 marks)

10. Outline and evaluate two ways of defining abnormality (12/16 marks)
Decide which structure the following essays should use:

- **Essay 1 Structure** = AO1 followed by 3-5 AO3 points
- **Essay 2 Structure** = AO1/3 repeated.

1. Outline and evaluate the multi-store model of memory (12/16 marks)
   - *Essay 1 Structure* – Outline the MSM, followed by 3-5 AO3 points

2. Outline and evaluate different types of long-term memory (12/16 marks)
   - *Essay 2 Structure* – Outline one type of LTM (e.g. episodic) and then bring in supporting evidence. Then repeat this process for the other types of LTM (e.g. procedural and semantic).

3. Discuss research on the effect of misleading information on eyewitness testimony (12/16 marks)
   - *Essay 1 Structure* – Outline one study (e.g. Loftus and Palmer) followed by 3-5 AO3 points

4. Describe and evaluate the learning explanation of attachment (12/16 marks)
   - *Essay 1 Structure* – Outline one learning theory of attachment, followed by 3-5 AO3 points

5. Outline and evaluate research into group size, unanimity, and task difficulty as variables affecting conformity (12/16 marks)
   - *Essay 2 Structure* – Outline group size and then bring in supporting evidence (e.g. variations of Asch). Then repeat this process for the other factors.

6. Discuss conformity to social roles as investigated by Zimbardo (12/16 marks)
   - *Essay 1 Structure* – Outline Zimbardo’s research followed by 3-5 AO3 points, making specific reference to conformity to social roles

7. Discuss two or more situational variables that affect obedience (e.g. proximity, location, uniform) (12/16 marks)
   - *Essay 2 Structure* – Outline one situational variable (e.g. proximity) and then bring in supporting evidence (e.g. variations of Milgram). Then repeat this process for two other factors

8. Outline the functions of the endocrine system and discuss the role of the endocrine system in behaviour (12/16 marks)
   - *Essay 2 Structure* – Outline one function of the endocrine system and then bring in supporting evidence. Then repeat this process for other functions

9. Outline and evaluate research into lateralisation and/or the split brain (12/16 marks)
   - *Essay 1 Structure* – Outline one study (e.g. Sperry and Gazzaniga) followed by 3-5 AO3 points

10. Outline and evaluate two ways of defining abnormality (12/16 marks)
    - *Essay 2 Structure* – Outline one definition of abnormality (e.g. deviation from social norm) and then bring in supporting evidence. Then repeat this process for one other factor