



ABSTRACT

NAME OF INSTITUTION: De La Salle University - Dasmariñas

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TITLE: Denying the Obvious. The Use of College Course as a Factor in Affecting the Judgments of Political Science Freshmen upon a Visual Stimulus.

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DATE COMPLETED:

April 1998

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

A. GENERAL:

The study set out to prove that an individual's perception of a majority can affect his judgment about a visual stimulus.

B. SPECIFIC:

1. To determine the mean scores of conformity among the respondents with group pressure coming from confederates posing as Psychology, Computer Science, and Political Science majors.
2. To prove that a significant difference exists among the judgments of the respondents exposed to Psychology, Computer Science, and Political Science confederates.
3. To determine the significance of this study to the conformity research of Abrams (1990) that explored the use of college courses as a factor.



**SCOPE AND COVERAGE:**

The study was designed to find out through experimentation, the influence of college course on the way Political Science freshmen judged a visual stimulus. The study was a further exploration of Abrams (1990) findings on Asch's (1956) type conformity experiments. The study was exclusive to the college environment.

**METHODOLOGY:**

In this experiment, A Multi Group design was used. Using a table of random numbers, the researcher took 40 percent from the freshmen population of Political Science leaving a sample size of 21 individuals. Afterwards, the sample was randomly assigned into three groups for different exposures. Group A experienced group pressure coming from confederates posing as Psychology majors. Group B experienced group pressure from confederates posing as Computer Science majors. Group C experienced group pressure from Political Science confederates.

All groups were oriented with a fixed sequence of verbal instructions before beginning the Asch's experiment. An Asch's experiment makes use of a naïve subject placed in a confederate majority. Then, the subject is made to judge which of three lines possess the same length as a standard line on a separate illustration board, while the confederates continually insist on a wrong answer. This is to see if the subject will conform to the group even if their answers are objectively incorrect. For this study, the researcher added the dimension of the college course factor relying on the idea that the way one perceives a majority (status, competence, relationship to the target of influence), can influence one's judgment. The results of the experiment



were subjected to a One- Way Analysis of Variance or ANOVA, to be followed by a Scheffe's test.

#### MAJOR FINDINGS:

The group exposed to Psychology confederates (Group A) obtained the highest mean (5.86), while the groups exposed to Computer Science and Political Science confederates got 4.43 and 3.71, respectively. At 0.05 level of significance, these results did not exhibit any significant difference, so a further analysis was no longer possible. However, these results support the findings of Abrams (1990) since Group A obtained the highest mean. When he first used the college course factor in an Asch's type experiment, he found that subjects were more likely to conform to Psychology majors than to other courses.

#### CONCLUSIONS:

Although a deeper statistical analysis was not possible, the results hold true with the findings of Abrams. The nonsignificance of the analysis of variance lends itself to the high-within-group variability simply because the subjects' scores in the treatment groups are extreme. This is consistent with Asch wherein the average subjects made judgment errors 37 percent of the time, and 74 percent of the subjects made an error at least once. Conformity had occurred in each group varying only in degree.



**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Here are the refinements that would make the experiment more effective.

- 1) The treatments should be rendered simultaneously. A simultaneous treatment was not possible because of room schedule conflicts.
- 2) The confederates should be properly trained. Any inconsistencies with their responses can have dire effects on one's research. There should be no initiative among elements in a controlled experiment.
- 3) The use of a more ordinal approach for data gathering is recommended.
- 4) The use of a larger sample should be used, so it would be more appropriate for the ANOVA.