

Social Influence

Fewer and fewer people use single-use plastic items, such as water bottles and plastic straws.

Using your knowledge of social influence processes in social change, explain why fewer and fewer people are using single-use plastic items.

[6 marks]

Mark Scheme:

Marks for this question: AO2 = 6

Level	Marks	Description
3	5–6	Application of knowledge of social influence processes in social change is clear and generally well detailed. The answer is generally coherent with appropriate use of terminology.
2	3–4	Application of knowledge of social influence processes in social change is evident. The answer lacks clarity in places. Terminology is used appropriately on occasions.
1	1–2	Application of knowledge of social influence processes in social change is limited. The answer as a whole lacks clarity and has inaccuracies. Terminology is either absent or inappropriately used.
	0	No relevant content.

Possible content/application

Minority influence processes:

- examples of the influence of environmental campaign groups/celebrities and how they may convince the majority through consistency, commitment (augmentation principle), flexibility
- the snowball effect – how behaviour/views on use of plastic change gradually over time.

Conformity processes:

- normative social influence/compliance – the group norm among young people particularly is to care about the environment; people who go against this norm (by ignoring the costs to the planet) risk rejection from the group/are less likely to fit in
- informational social influence/internalisation – more is now known about the harmful effects of single-use plastic items on the environment/climate change, people may have become convinced by such evidence.

Obedience processes:

- rules on single-use plastic items have changed, eg charges for plastic shopping bags, etc.

Credit other relevant material.

If there is no application, maximum mark of 2

Examiner Comment:

Question 02

Again, many answers demonstrated impressive knowledge of social influence processes and applied them effectively. There was occasional confusion over the elements of minority influence, while some answers tried to cover too many approaches (e.g. minority influence, informational and normative social influence).

Discuss the authoritarian personality as an explanation for obedience.

[8 marks]

Mark Scheme:

Marks for this question: AO1 = 3 and AO3 = 5

Level	Marks	Description
4	7–8	Knowledge of the authoritarian personality is accurate with some detail. Discussion of the authoritarian personality as an explanation of obedience is thorough and effective. Minor detail and/or expansion of argument is sometimes lacking. The answer is clear, coherent and effective. Specialist terminology is used effectively.
3	5–6	Knowledge of the authoritarian personality is evident but there are occasional inaccuracies/omissions. Discussion of the authoritarian personality as an explanation of obedience is mostly effective. The answer is mostly clear and organised but occasionally lacks focus. Specialist terminology is used appropriately.
2	3–4	Limited knowledge of the authoritarian personality is present. Focus is mainly on description. Any discussion of the authoritarian personality as an explanation of obedience is of limited effectiveness. The answer lacks clarity, accuracy and organisation in places. Specialist terminology is used inappropriately on occasions.
1	1–2	Knowledge of the authoritarian personality is limited, poorly focused or absent. The answer as a whole lacks clarity, has many inaccuracies and is poorly organised. Specialist terminology is either absent or inappropriately used.
	0	No relevant content

AO1 Possible content:

- authoritarian personality is a collection of traits developed from strict/rigid parenting
- examples of traits – conformist/conventional/dogmatic/hostile towards those of perceived lower status (scapegoating)
- obedient/servile towards people of perceived higher status.
- assessment of the authoritarian personality using the F-scale

AO3 Possible discussion points:

- dispositional explanations cannot explain obedience in entire societies
- research findings in obedience studies, eg Milgram can be more readily explained by situational factors
- use of evidence/analysis of evidence to illustrate the validity of the explanation, eg using the F-scale
- methodological evaluation of evidence if used to discuss the strength, or otherwise, of the explanation
- comparison with alternatives.

Credit other relevant information.

Answers that just describe the authoritarian personality with no reference to obedience can receive a maximum of 3 marks

Examiner Comment:

Question 06

Although there were some impressive answers to this question the majority of students spent far too long providing extensive descriptions of the authoritarian personality (AP) and the background to Adorno's work. The question required discussion of the AP as an explanation for obedience, not simply a description. Even when discussion was attempted, it was often unsuccessful; for instance, methodological issues with the F-scale only earned credit if linked to the discussion of the AP as an explanation for obedience. There were some effective references to the role of the AP in Milgram's studies, while at the weaker end answers confused the AP with 'legitimate authority'. Most common were general comments on the role of AP in Nazi Germany, a relevant issue but often presented with little detail or discussion; for instance this would have been an opportunity to introduce alternative explanations for obedience, but few students attempted this.

