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**Judgment Studies Design Analysis And Meta Analysis**

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**Culture and Conformity: A Meta-Analysis of Studies Using Asch's (1952b, 1956) Line Judgment Task**

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An examination of conformity studies using an Asch-type line judgment task (1952b, 1956) was conducted to investigate whether the level of conformity has changed over time and whether it is related cross-culturally to individualism-collectivism. The literature search produced 11 studies drawn from 17 countries. An analysis of 113 studies found that conformity has declined since the 1970s. Studies from 19 countries were included in a meta-analysis to estimate a standardized effect size for each study. The results were found to be significantly related to individualism-collectivism. Cross-cultural studies tended to show higher levels of conformity than individualistic countries. Conformity research must attend more to cultural variables and to their role in the processes involved in social influence.

The view has long been held that conformity is to some extent a product of cultural conditions, and it is a viable feature of political ideologies that assert national groups are conforming and individualistic nations are independent and self-reliant (e.g., Pridemore, 1981). Likewise, the extent to which dissonance is tolerated in a society will vary as different nations in its history, and several commentators have suggested that the relatively high level of conformity found in experiments conducted in the early 1950s (notably Asch, 1952b, 1956) was in part a product of the MacArthur era (e.g., Levine, 1974; Mann, 1980; Perin & Spencer, 1981).

Although Asch's (1952b, 1956) seminal research is often interpreted as demonstrating that conformity is fundamental to group processes (Follett, Rafferty, & Brunel, 1995), such was as much concerned with those factors that enabled individuals to resist group pressure, factors which he saw as rooted in a society's values and socialization practices.

There has been a search for evidence to conformity in our society to argue that conformity is a well-meaning young people are willing and that it is a matter of common sense. It is not a question about our way of education and about the values that guide our conduct (Leah, 1951, p. 34)

He felt that conformity can "pollute" the social process and that it is important for a society to foster values of independence in its citizens.

The cultural conditions underpinning conformity have, then, been a long-standing concern and are important for theories of social influence. Yet, as Markus (1985) stated, cultural aspects of conformity have been relatively neglected, and only two previous reviews (Furman, 1984; Mann, 1980) have been specifically devoted to them. These issues have been addressed from two perspectives: cross-national and historical. Cross-national studies are typically cross-national comparisons, although studies that have compared different cultural groups within a society can also be included in this category. The historical perspective is represented by the literature concerned with whether conformity has changed over time in the West, particularly in the United States. This article shows that consistent findings have not emerged from these two bodies of literature but that the methodological base of most studies is severely flawed and that little attention has been paid to the cultural variables that mediate conformity. We set the context of individualism-collectivism (Triandis, 1995) as potentially of value in this regard, and we review studies as a way of reconstructing some of the methodological problems. The body of this article is devoted to a meta-analysis of Asch-type conformity studies where the relationship between conformity and measures of individualism-collectivism is explored. We conclude by discussing the degree to which studies using the Asch (1952b, 1956) paradigm can encompass the meaning of conformity within different cultures.

**Review of Studies on Culture and Conformity**

**Comparative Across Cultures**

Cross-cultural studies of conformity can be divided into three types: (a) comparisons of substance economies, (b) comparisons of developed economies, and (c) comparisons of cultural groups within a society. Comparisons of substance economies are almost entirely due to Berry (1967, 1974, 1979). Berry & Asch (1974), who has proposed a link between the level of individualism and a country's values and social structure. In his study, work by Berry, Child, and Beane (1975), who found that the relationship between individualism and conformity was stronger (positive or agricultural people) emphasized obedience and responsibility, whereas those of low-level socializing societies