

# Locus of control and conformity essay sample

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Conformity, as defined by David Myers, is the change in our behavior or belief as a result of others' influences. It may come in three forms; compliance, obedience, and acceptance. Compliance is the insincere conformity as a response to an implied or explicit request of others while Obedience is the insincere conformity as a response to a command. Meanwhile, Acceptance is the sincere, inward conformity which people genuinely believe in groups' norms. Kelman (1958) had also cited three types of conformity. First is compliance: when you go along with the crowd and publicly agree with them. However, internally you maintain your original views. Second is internalization: when people take on the views of others both publicly and privately. Third is Identification: when a person conforms to the role that society expects them to play. As with compliance there does not have to be change in private opinion. It is proven that conformity varies based on personality, intelligence and gender. Students are found to be less conformist.

This could be due to higher intelligence or to education that teaches independent thought and inquiry. People who are measured high in 'desire for personal control' are less conformist than those measured lower (Moscovici et al, 1969). Eagly and Carli (1981) found that women tend to be more conformist than men. Social Conformity is the desire to act, talk, and dress and even think like everyone else and it is considered as the human tendency that has helped glue societies for ages, while perennially irritating some of the greatest thinkers, scientist and artist (Nature and world science, 2005) Social institutions are instrumental in the formation of group norms to which people comply with. The suggestibility of the institutions itself have a

major effect on the beliefs and ideologies of the people. For example in western countries, most people enjoy or practice an individualistic way of life because of their government policies, which are made by a social institution: the government.

The AB Social Science students of Central Luzon State University are people who conform to group norms of the different institutions which require compliance from them. Examples of these institutions are the University administration office, the University Supreme Student Council and different Student councils, the University Security Force, the teachers, the student organizations, and their co-students as well. Institutions outside the university which the students comply with are the church they belong and the Mass media. Central Luzon State University's mission includes developing quality human resources and technology for sustainable development. As sustainable development was mentioned, it means that the University had a dedicated mission of protecting the environment through the development of its students. Therefore, CLSU students should be environmentally aware and conscious as their university's ultimate mission is to save Mother Earth.

In a study conducted by group of fourth year ABSS students in August 2012, it is found out that ABSS students have taken pride in protecting the environment individually. What were the reasons why ABSS students have a culture of individualism in dealing with environmental issues? Do they comply into some rules or group norms dictated by each institutions mentioned above? As a follow-up study, the same group of dedicated ABSS students will try to find out about the conformity of ABSS students in

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developing the individualistic Locus of Control. In the same study, the effects of the students' profile such as age, gender, religion, and year level are tackled.

However, the researchers noticed through the conduct of the study that the data presented and the demographic characteristics correlated with the locus of control of the respondents are insufficient. Unfortunately, only one social institution was correlated with the locus of control of the ABSS students which is religion. The following contexts are the social institutions inside CLSU which might affect the locus of control of the CLSU students particularly ABSS students. These institutions inside the university are the University rules and regulations implemented by the University Security Force, University Supreme Student Council and other student councils, student organizations, teachers, religion, and mass media.

#### Central Luzon State University's Mission Vision

This university, like most other institutions, builds itself through a system of rules or laws. The students and faculties of this university entered into a social contract wherein they became subjects of compliance of the rules in exchange of the services and security given by the university.

Central Luzon State University, as premier institution of higher learning, is living up to the mission of " The Central Luzon State University shall develop quality human resources and technologies for people empowerment, global competitiveness and sustainable development". As one of the major CLSU's mission, Sustainable development plays a major role in the principle of CLSU. It can be seen on the geographical and ecological interface of CLSU wherein

trees and animals can be seen anywhere. Adopted from the 1987 World Commission on Environment and Development definition, Sustainable development is the dynamic process in which the development and utilization of resources, orientation of technological development, institutional change are in harmony enhance both current and future potentials to meet their own needs and aspirations. “ It is the development that meets the need of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (Parico, 2010).

In short, sustainable development is preserving the environment. Several rules and policies were made by the university to conserve the environment and to avoid flooding. The “ No Plastic Policy” was implemented early in the year 2011 wherein commercial establishments and residences inside the university were banned from using plastic but still, few establishment use plastic to cut costs of merchandizing and for customers’ convenience. Central Luzon State University, as a well-known institution in the field of academe, is respected by its students. Their efforts to implement the university rules and guidelines for safety, security, and environmental preservation are personified by the University Security Force. Several forms of social control was used inside the university, however, most of these peace-keeping strategies are in a form of punishment or coercion. For safety and security violations, offenders or violators are subjects of consequences such as suspension, expulsion, and even imprisonment.

However for littering, which is a violation of the environmental rules of the university, fines, community service, and even imprisonment could be used. Located in a highly elevated area and boasting an effective drainage system,  
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Central Luzon State University rarely suffers from flooding. However, some of the university students reside in a flood-prone area like Cabanatuan city, Aurora, Bulacan, and Pampanga (David, 2012). Therefore, it is safe to say that most of CLSU students have suffered flooding. Unlike most state universities, the political atmosphere or stability among students are very neutral even though the 1987 constitution had given the students the rights to assembly inside the university.

Progressive student organizations exist inside the university but “ active activism” in CLSU seems to be a taboo. Some left-leaning instructors inside the university coined CLSU as “ fascists”. That could be true as a simple posting of campaign paraphernalia for student council elections require permission of the authorities. The demand for obedience and compliance vary between the colleges inside the University, for example, the College of Arts and Sciences tend to be less lenient than other colleges such as the College of Business Administration and Accountancy and College of Education. The basis of this theory is the attendance during university events such as intramurals, lantern parades, and different symposiums. Another indicating factor for the level of strictness of a college is the payment of fees and fines. Religion

The goal of every religion is man’s universal thirst for, peace and goodness. Man achieves the goal through many ways in which he expresses his beliefs and attitudes. No matter when or how man developed from the time he became man, his irresistible urge to worship has created and will continue to create endless forms of religious behavior. This force is so powerful in man that it has produced a Mosaic kind of beliefs, attitudes and practices. And <https://assignbuster.com/locus-of-control-and-conformity-essay-sample/>

considering the fact that each of the world religions embraces varying beliefs and practices, areas of interaction and co-operation are necessary for peaceful co-existence (Akinyemi D. Y. , 2001).

There are many things which religion and education can differently explain, yes, they maybe opposite in some things, but as an open-minded person, things discussed by these two institutions should not be taken in a sense that you have to choose whether what is right or wrong. Religious practices of students are not hindrance to ABSS students; they also show respect each other's religion. Sometimes, being a social science student affects our religious belief as well as religion affects us being a social science student. Despite of the doctrine of the separation of the church and state in the 1987 Philippine constitution, religion play a major role in the ideological and moral behavior of the Filipinos. Some religious groups in the Philippines are composed of a large portion of the Philippine population. For example, the Catholic Church which composes about 80% of the Philippine population, their parish priests and bishops enjoy political, economic, and social power. Meanwhile, local priests serve as mentor for the members of his church. Occasionally, environmental issues were tackled during the homily. Religious leaders often engage their congregations to environmental awareness programs such as tree planting, segregation of wastes, and different seminars.

In the book written by Gordon Allport (1967) entitled " The Individual and His Religion", he said that different religious groups have different interpretations of extrinsic and intrinsic religion. For example, Jews have an extrinsic view of religion wherein they value group collectivism in their faith. <https://assignbuster.com/locus-of-control-and-conformity-essay-sample/>

However, during the rise of Protestantism, personal religion or individualism was promulgated by their religious leader. He also noted that extrinsic view of religion is immature while intrinsic view of religion is mature.

This result coincides with Emile Durkheim's study on suicide where he mentioned that Jews have a collective culture and the risks of committing suicide is higher while protestants have individualistic culture and the risks of committing suicide is lower.

One of the precursors of obedience and conformity is the group size (Myers, Pg. blabla). The Catholic Church, as an organized religion with millions of members affects the conformity of its members, despite weak cohesion and unanimity due to its non-strict regulations.

Some of the religions in the Philippines demand strict obedience and conformity to its members. The most popular of these kinds of religion is the Iglesia ni Cristo. The century old church in the Philippines impose compulsory attendance every mass, they ban members from joining labor unions, and force their members to block vote during election making it politically and economically powerful (Madville Times).

Several sects of faith have established their churches in the locality or in the specific barangay to increase the obedience and conformity of the people in a certain barrio because as the one demanding compliance have less proximity or physical closeness, the compliance increases (Kleinke, 1977 cited by Meyers, pg. 199).

According to Henderson (2005) in his blog “ the church of giant spaghetti monster”, religious organizations use the name of a supreme being through the bible to get their legitimacy. In short, people comply with the institution to achieve a reward and avoid a punishment from a legitimate authority which is God characterized in a Holy Scripture. In that case, the reward and punishment is the heaven and the hell. Even though there are no concrete or statistical evidence which proves that religious groups use closeness and legitimacy of authority, it is obvious that it did a lot of work on the compliance of church members.

In a sample of 35 ABSS students which is approximately 25% of the total ABSS population, 100% of are Christians. However, 60% comply with the Catholic Church and only 40% comply with several protestant church.

Both Allport and Durkheim agreed that the Catholic Church values social acceptance, compliance and collectivism. On the other hand, protestant churches value individualism. In the same study conducted by the ABSS fourth year students entitled Locus of Control of ABSS Students with Regards to Flooding, it is correlated that Catholic students have neither internal nor external locus. However it is stunning that the ABSS protestant students have more internal locus of control than external locus of control. Actually, it is dominant among the protestant samples. Even though the measurement for correlation is subjective, qualitative, and not structured, it could give a very simple description of the phenomena.

From that study, it is found out that Roman Catholics have not affected the behavior and attitudes of their members. Mentioned above is that the Roman

Catholic Church doesn't demand too much obedience and compliance from its members while the Protestant churches value individualism more. In a Sociology lecture in Central Luzon State University, the instructor stated that "protestant churches value personal relationship with God more than the other churches". Student Councils

The political structure of the students of Central Luzon State University is very complex. There exists the University Supreme Student Council, the 8 College councils, the Councils created for the specific courses and the Common First Year Student council.

An interview with a random student who prefers to remain anonymous stated that "the student council's role is to create and implement rules and regulations which are for the students to obey". She added that "No coercive method is needed for me to obey the Student councils because it will just show my membership of the council I belong and to gain acceptance from the group". In the interview, it was revealed that the interviewee wanted acceptance from the group she belong and to assert her membership or affiliation to the student council. This scenario or reason why conforming is called normative influence where "a person bow to a group to be accepted and avoid rejection (Deutsch and Gerard, 1955). Another precursor of obedience in her situation is the

Student council officers are imposed into position through a system of election of all members of the constituents. The election had concretized the legitimacy of the positions won by the candidates because it is the summary of the decision of all constituents. Therefore, a single constituent should

respect the legitimacy of the position and the people who voted for the officer.

“ Authorities backed by institution wield social power”. In the case of the Student Councils, these are the authorities and the institution which backs them is the student population who voted for them in the election. For students who voted for a certain officer, they have now the duty to comply to their chosen leader as they have made a prior commitment for themselves and they didn't want to be inconsistent to themselves. Prior commitments as Saltzstein and Sandberg (1979) have stated that once people have created a public commitment, in our case private, they stick to it.

In our council in Social Sciences, there are a lot of rules to follow, like wearing the uniform, attending the Council assembly and pay attention to all responsibilities given by the council. Since there is no punishment (as of now) to those who do not comply with the rules formed by the council, students are not eager to follow it. Some follows, but mostly are not. One of the reasons why people conform is to gain group acceptance and avoid social rejection. Since the current ABSS council imposes no such form of motivation, then the students have no reason to comply with them. Student Organizations

These organizations are very essential in the empowerment and participation of students in every academic institution. These groups are formed by students who promote or share the same beliefs, ethnicity, course, etc.

In Central Luzon State University, several student organizations and fraternities are operating inside the university. Each member of these organizations pride themselves as a member of a group and are often identified as a member of his/her group not as an individual person.

To affiliate or become a member of a student organization, the applicants needed to survive the challenging, onerous, and sometimes humiliating tasks. Probably half of the obedience in student organizations takes place with the application alone. From easy to hard, and hard to impossible, the one who gives command uses the foot-in-the-door phenomenon wherein commands begin from simple to hard, step by step similar to the strategy done by Stanley Milgram in his obedience experiment conducted in Yale university.

As mentioned above, members of student organization share the same beliefs and purpose. Because the essence of the formation of student organizations is “ it is easier to stand up for something if you can find someone to stand up with you” proven in the experiment conducted by Grandberg and Bartels (2005) in their study of unanimity: the oneness of the group.

Since sharing the same ideology, members of student organizations attract each other therefore forming cohesion among its members. Cohesion is the extent which members of a group are bound together (Myers: Pg. 209). That could be the reason why fraternity and student organization members talk, dress, and act the same as they base their actions on their identities.

Student organizations are expected to have a significant impact on the behavior and attitudes of its members as “ the more cohesive a group is, the more power it gains over its member” (Contrada and others, 2000). The president of a fraternity in CLSU has stated that his organization is cohesive and its members comply with group norms and by-laws. Mass Media

This era in human history can be categorized into modern age.

Communication, entertainment, and production were made easier and faster because of technology. Most people can access the internet, television, and newspapers more than ever.

Mass media, one of the most powerful social institutions, can manipulate the behavior of a nation. For example during the People Power revolution of 1986, mass media have played a major role in the ousting of the dictator. It also played a major role in propaganda by the richest landlords in the Philippines to gain political power.

Pre-election surveys have affected the outcome of the recent 2010 presidential elections because of the power of suggestibility and werther effect. The voters assumed that Benigno Aquino will surely win the election therefore ending up voting for Senator Aquino.

In CLSU, forms of mass media are the university paper, college-based papers, and the university radio station though it is only limited to music. David G. Myers has found out in his experiments that “ people conform more when they must respond in front of others rather than writing their answers privately.” Considering this statement, we can analyze the use of Mass media as an institution of conformity in CLSU. Undoubtedly, articles <https://assignbuster.com/locus-of-control-and-conformity-essay-sample/>

in the University and College papers are written in private by its writers. However, the writers think as if he/she is saying it in front of his readers. Therefore, the public responses of the readers are taken into consideration by the writers and have a higher tendency to conform.

That could be the reason why these school papers seem to be a propaganda paper not a newspaper because it is filled with good news because the public response of the readers, including the faculties, was taken into consideration. Having a strong social influence on students who base their awareness on school papers, the public opinion will be swayed to maintain social order. That simply had affected the conformity and obedience of the students. An ABSS senior student have stated in an informal interview that “ the mass media have a lot of use, however not everything published by the mass media is the truth. Some news even scare-off the people and cause panic and depression. In my own observation, people tend to easily believe everything which the media are saying.” He added that “ Mass media is very dangerous especially to children who are still unaware of what is right or wrong”.

The same sentiment was elicited from an ABSS third year student. Based on the two informal interviews, it is safe to say that the ABSS students can be skeptic of the mass media. The reason for this phenomenon is that the professors and instructors who handle the courses for the ABSS program usually share their opinions about the social issues brought by the mass media. The ABSS program of Central Luzon State University has two majors: Political science and history. In the political science courses, the students of ABSS were harnessed with technical knowledge to understand political issues

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empirically and objectively usually conflicting with the public opinion graced by the mass media. In history courses, the students are trained to study documents bias-free and the system of triangulation wherein all sides will be taken into consideration.

### Teachers

The statement often used during elementary, “ Teachers are the second parents of the students”, despite of its cliché-ness, it still hold true with the situation of college students. Some teachers even serve as mentors to his/her students even through personal and family issues. Like mass media, the influence of teachers to his/her students is almost unlimited. As a person of authority to teach and of higher status, the students will easily assume that everything which the teachers are saying is true.

Educators of CLSU are of top-notch quality. They could be either alumni of a prestigious university or an academic awardee during their undergraduate courses. Professors with Ph. D. are the most respected and powerful people in the university. Some teachers who hold ABSS classes spend the whole period giving motivational speeches to his/her enthusiastic students. In the end of every class, the students are filled with joy and compassion leading them to self-reflection. Some professors are just really good. This could strengthen the cohesion of the class.

In an interview of a random student, she said that “ teachers had the authority to give an order or command to his/her students. And as a student, she is supposed to follow the commands which the teachers had given. She also added that she will gain benefits by following the teachers’ orders. From

this interview two theories were proven. First is that the institutional authority and legitimacy of authority breeds obedience, and second is that “People Respond to incentives” theory by Gregory Mankiw, an American macroeconomist.

Teachers are very influential. They are the role models of ABSS students. Their ideologies can easily be passed, believed and accepted by the students. For example, a feminist instructor can produce another or more feminists in his/her class; a Marxist instructor can produce a bunch of left-leaning minds; an environmentalist professor can produce more environmentalists.

Living in the CLSU’s mission, instructors are tasked to integrate learning with environmental issues to promote awareness. This task could be very easy for Social Science teachers as the lessons discussed in the ABSS classes are social issues, current events, and environmental problems.

When advocating social change and environment preservation, instructors and professors have different opinion on where the change should start. Some encourage students to study hard because the change will start on them; therefore advocating individualism and internal locus of control. Other faculty members of the department of Social Science blame the government therefore promoting external locus of control among their students.

Ms. Shirley Serrano, an instructor of Environmental Science, has explained the benefits and consequences of urging the students to save the environment collectively and individually. She said that “Based on my experiences, it is easier to urge a group because the information and <https://assignbuster.com/locus-of-control-and-conformity-essay-sample/>

advocacy will disseminate faster and the group will eventually grow faster relevant to its size similar to the results elicited by David Wilder (1977). In her response originally written in Filipino, it could be interpreted that she used group size (One of the predictors of conformity) to attract other potential environmentalists. In promoting internal environmental locus of control, she quoted Richard " Dick" Gordon saying " what we need is not a change of men, but a change in men". She added that " if we change ourselves individually, it will have a domino effect. The environmental awareness and action will be expanded from our privacy of our own rooms to the extent of a nation". She also stated that she serves as an example to her students to save the environment. As interpreted in her interview, Ms. Serrano's strategy of affecting her students is through group conformity. However, she believes in and has an internal locus of control.

#### Fellow Students

Most probably, the students of Central Luzon State University came from the same social status and cultural orientation. Therefore, it is possible that they act, dress, and talk the same. Most of the time, students spend time together with another student or a group of students. Obviously it has positive and negative effects. The unanimity and cohesion of these groups are high therefore the powers of the group over individuals are potent.

Let us imagine ourselves entering a room filled with students reading their lessons. Our tendency is to go along and also read the lessons. In a similar case, imagine ourselves entering a room of chaotic students. To avoid rejection and be labeled as deviant, we agree to conform to the group and be chaotic instead.

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Lydia Hopper, a post-doctoral fellow of Georgia State University, have stated that conformity is a form of adaptation very similar to chimpanzees, the closest human relative. For freshmen students who have no prior experience of studying in a university might consider it as hostile and dangerous. To avoid or minimize the feeling of hostility, these students decide to group themselves by finding someone similar to them. " When you have opportunity to choose your friends, you will tend to choose people who are similar to you; there's a lot of evidence that we like similar others," says Chris Crandall, psychology professor at the University of Kansas (Mapes, 2011). When in group, the members will establish such group norms or adapt to an already establish group norms which is for the students to conform. Therefore, conformity is one way of human adaptation.

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