

Breaking a social norm assignment

[Sociology](#)



A Rebel Without a Cause Sociology is an enticing and ever-evolving field of study that analyzes and explains important matters in our personal lives, our communities, and the world. Sociologists focus on the careful gathering and analysis of evidence about social life to develop and enrich our understanding of key social processes. Recently, my class mates and I conducted a social experiment in which we broke aimed to break various social norms. A social norm is something that is considered by the vast majority of people to be ordinary or status quo.

In this exercise, each of us arrived at school portraying different personae through our dress as well as our actions. I decided to dress as a rugged motorcycle rider, otherwise known as a biker. I wore a large scraggly beard, some fake tattoo sleeves on each arm, a black tee shirt with black work boots, and aviator sunglasses. I chose these items to wear because I saw it to represent society general vision of what a stereotypical biker would look like. Dressing the part was only half of the assignment however, the second part was dealt with through our actions.

The first thing that I realized when walking the line of a biker was that people are very judgmental based on merely looks alone. While some students I encountered instantly realized that I was only in a costume, others, teachers for example, did not see through what I was doing. Even when students realized that I was not a real biker, they still glared with non-entertained eyes as if I were some kind of fool. When I was instructed to enter the student services office to request my class schedule, I was met with great hostility by the woman working behind the desk.

I requested a simple task, but because of my appearance, the lady made it out to seem as if I had asked for her first born child. Her negative Judgment was evident through her body language and lack of motivation to help. On a more positive note, some subjects of our experiment were caught off guard, humorously, by our actions. As I paid for my slice of pizza in the cafe©, I ended my exchange of words with the cashier with a sudden and unexpected “ I love you”.

It is extremely unusual by society standards to say that you love someone to a random stranger, therefore the cashier was very much caught off guard and did not know how to respond. Another notable example of our experiment was the reactions of commuters both entering and exiting the campus via automobiles as myself and partner Nick stood out front holding hands while showcasing a sign that read “ honk for fair love”. Nick was dressed as the school mascot, a giant Seesaws, therefore the two of us expressing (false) affection while campaigning for student support was against any social norm ever established.

Some people honked with much embrace while others turned their heads as if to avoid the sight of us. From this social experiment I have acquired a new appreciation for how people designated as outcasts or outside of the “ norm” may feel on a daily basis. It amazed me just how quick people were to judge me based on my appearance and actions. It is hard to analyze a social norm without seeing it from the other side first. As a student of sociology and as a person in general I have gained a new outlook on society as a whole from this experiment.