



**HAL**  
open science

# The effect of psychological needs on online conformity

Carla Capuano, Peggy Chekroun

► **To cite this version:**

Carla Capuano, Peggy Chekroun. The effect of psychological needs on online conformity. The Asian Conference on Psychology & the Behavioral Sciences (ACP2024), Mar 2024, Tokyo, Japan. hal-04653275

**HAL Id: hal-04653275**

**<https://hal.science/hal-04653275>**

Submitted on 18 Jul 2024

**HAL** is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d'enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.

# The effect of psychological needs on online conformity

Carla Capuano and Peggy Chekroun  
c.capuano@parisnanterre.fr / peggy.chekroun@parisnanterre.fr

## Introduction

### Theoretical Background

- Conformity is the process by which individuals adjust their behavior, opinions, and attitudes to align with those of the majority, a change driven by the influence exerted by the majority.
- Asch (1956) found that 75% of participants conformed to the majority at least once. Recent studies have also observed conformity (Franzen & Mader, 2023; Goodman et al., 2020; Ušto et al., 2019).
- Various factors have been identified as contributing to susceptibility to conformity, such as group size or task type. However, the role of psychological needs has not yet been emphasised.

### Objectives and hypotheses

- The study aims to confirm the induction of majority influence through a chat procedure and to test the effect of two needs on conformity scores.
- The research focuses on two psychological needs: the need to belong (NTB) and the need for uniqueness (NFU).
- It is hypothesized that a high level of NFU will result in less conformity, while a high level of NTB may lead to more conformity.

### Research Question

Do psychological needs for uniqueness and belonging play a moderating role in the tendency to conform?

## Method

### Step n°1



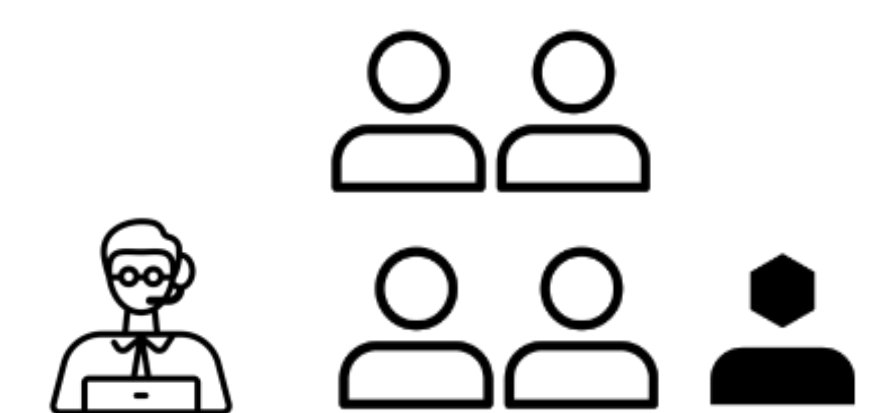
Measurement of psychological needs

### Step n°2



Online tchat with moral dilemmas

### Experimental condition



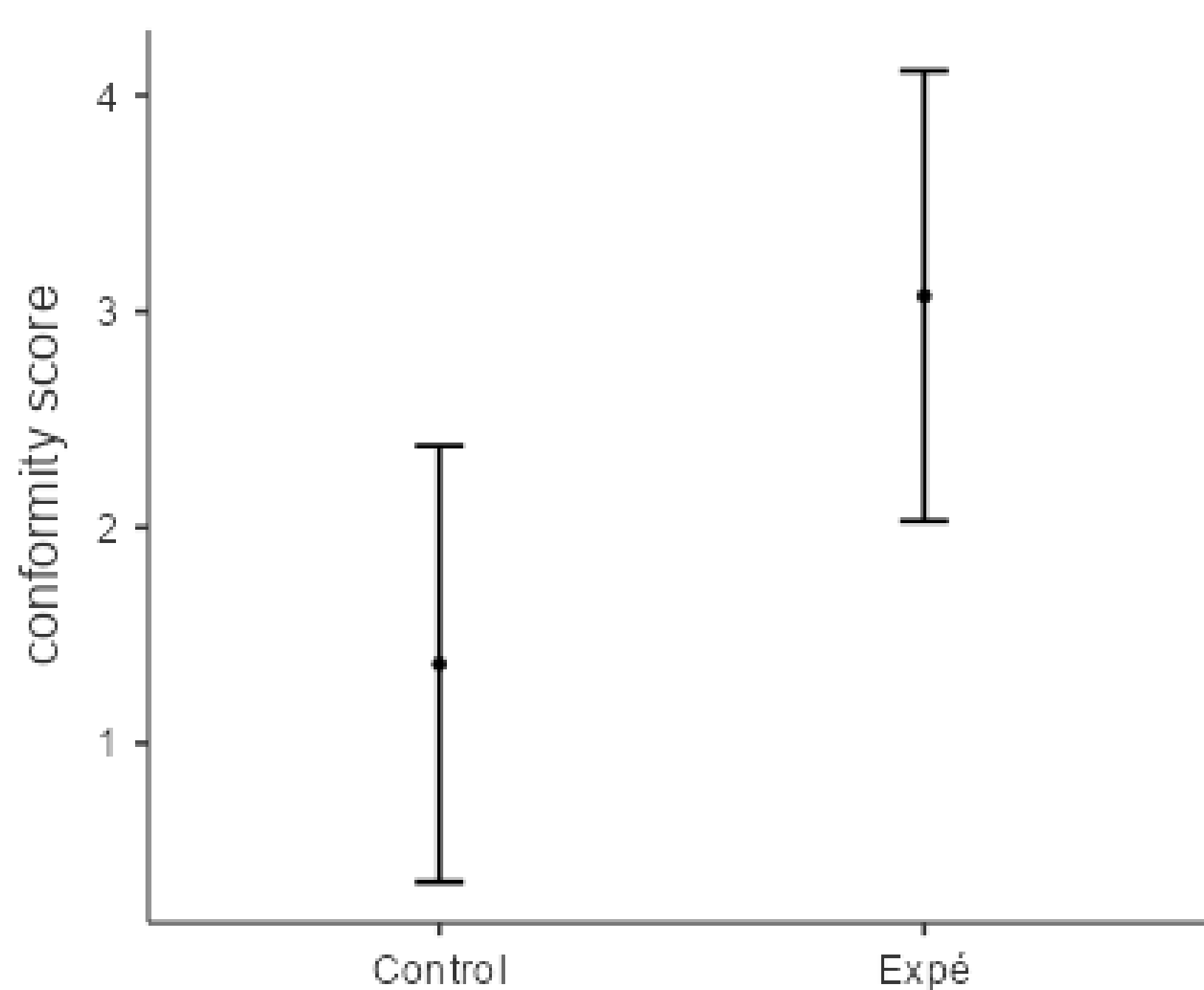
### Control condition



- Step 1: Participants are required to complete a survey measuring their need to belong and their need for uniqueness at least 48 hours prior to Step 2.
- Step 2: Participants arrived at the laboratory and responded to 11 moral dilemmas, including 7 critical scenarios. They did so through an online chat with four other students who were actually bots in the experimental condition, or alone in the control condition. In the experimental condition, the robots provided responses that differed from the responses that the majority of individuals would normally give in the seven critical scenarios.

## Results

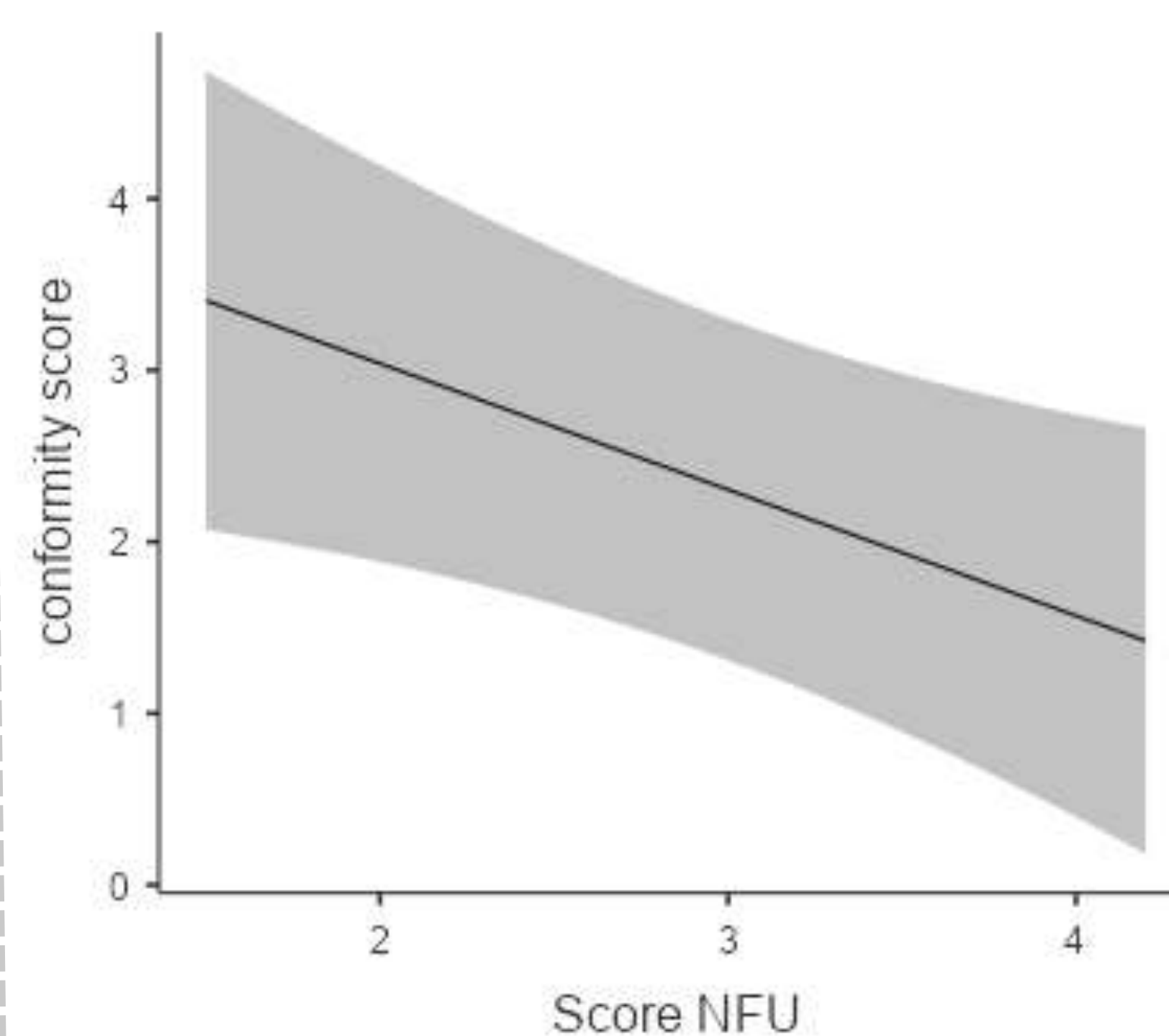
### Conformity score x condition



- Participants in the experimental condition provided more conformist responses than those in the control condition

✓  $X^2(1) = 4,46, p = .035$

### Conformity score x NFU



- Regardless of the condition, participants with a lower need for uniqueness (NFU) conform more than those with a higher NFU.
- No effect of NTB :  $F(1, 143) = 2.89, p = .091$

✓  $R^2 = 0,280, F(1, 143) = 5,29, p = .023$

## Discussion

- Our procedure enables the simulation of majority influence without confederates, allowing for the measurement of conformity.
- 96% of the participants in the experimental condition agree with the majority of the participants at least once.
- The lack of effect of the NTB can be attributed to the fact that our procedure does not make the participant's group affiliation sufficiently salient.

### References

- Asch, S. E. (1956). Studies of independence and conformity: I. A minority of one against a unanimous majority. *Psychological monographs: General and applied*, 70(9), 1. <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0093718>
- Franzen, A., & Mader, S. (2023). The power of social influence: A replication and extension of the Asch experiment. *Plos one*, 18(11), e0294325. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0294325>
- Goodman, L. B., Gavin, D. J., Urs, M., & Akus, S. N. (2020). The power of the majority: Social conformity in sexual harassment punishment selection. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 50(8), 441-455. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jasp.12672>
- Ušto, M., Drače, S., & Hadžiahmetović, N. (2019). Replication of the "Asch Effect" in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Evidence for the Moderating Role of Group Similarity in Conformity. *Psychological Topics*, 28(3), 589-599. <https://doi.org/10.31820/pt.28.3.7>