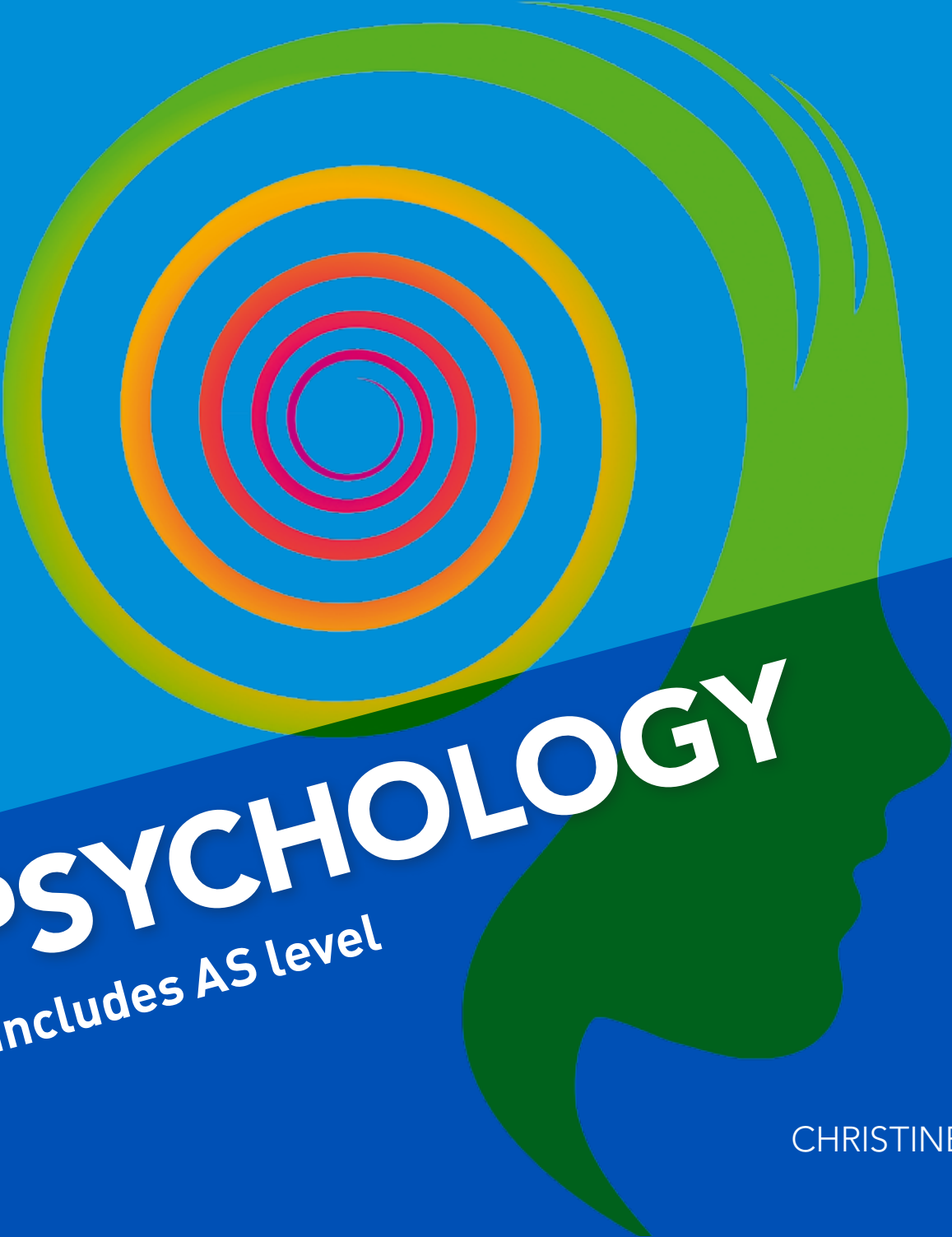


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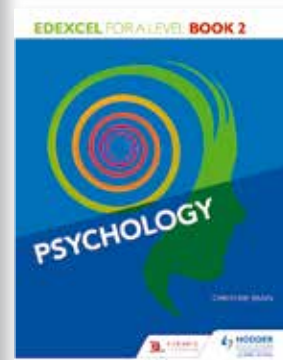
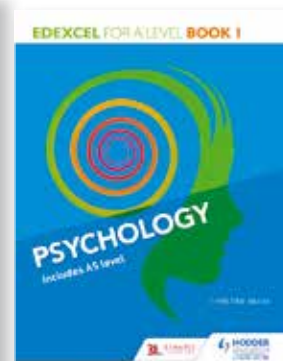
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1

Social Psychology

Explore

Consider the four pictures here and write a paragraph on each of them. Then think about how you 'knew' anything about the pictures at all. An exercise like this can help to show how we think about and have preconceived ideas about others. Perhaps do this task with someone else, and compare your answers to see if your ideas and beliefs about other people are similar. If they are, maybe this is because you come from a similar background or culture?

General overview

This chapter is about the social approach to explaining human behaviour. It is about the effects of people, society and culture, and how behaviour is guided by such effects. For example, according to a theory in social psychology (social identity theory) people belong to groups called 'in-groups'; rival groups become 'out-groups'. You could belong to several in-groups — for example, a gender group, an interest group, a psychology group, a family group, a race group or a work group. There are many others. Social psychology suggests that you will be prejudiced towards your in-groups and against your out-groups. Another theory is called 'realistic group conflict theory', which suggests that if there is competition for scarce resources, **prejudice** can arise.

Another example of social psychology is how and in what circumstances people obey other people. You might think that you would never administer strong electric shocks to another person if put into a position to do so, but social psychology holds that it is quite likely that you would, if ordered to by someone in authority. Factors affecting whether you might obey or not include personality and gender. Therefore, as with a lot of psychology, links are not as straightforward as they might seem at first sight. This chapter also considers how psychology investigates issues such as obedience and prejudice, including the use of questionnaires and interviews when researching in psychology.

Study of interest

Salvatore and Shelton (2007) carried out a study to examine the effect of racism on the individual. They asked 250 Princeton University undergraduates to read some fictitious CVs and fictitious employer comments. In some cases, there was blatant racism — for example, a white employer 'rejected' a well-qualified black applicant in favour of a white applicant saying that they had too many employees from ethnic minorities. In some cases there was ambiguous racism — for example, a white employer accepted a white applicant in favour of a better-qualified black applicant, without giving a reason. The undergraduates then carried out a task to test their cognitive (mental) abilities. It was found that the black undergraduates were more affected (when doing the task) by ambiguous racism than blatant racism; the white undergraduates were more affected by blatant racism. It was thought that black people were used to blatant racism and had strategies to cope with it; those who were white were not used to it and had no such strategies. The study highlighted the effect of racism on cognitive abilities and the seriousness of such issues for the individual.



Study hint

You will often see a name, 'et al' and a date when studies are mentioned, as with Adorno et al (1950). The date is there to say when the study was published. The name helps to identify the researchers. The main name might be the main person doing the study or it might be that the names are in alphabetical order (as with Adorno). The 'et al' is short for 'et alia' meaning 'and others' in Latin. It is shorthand to save writing out all the names. The researcher's names are Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, and Sanford in this example, so evidently it is quicker and easier to use 'et al'. When there are two names (such as Reicher and Haslam, which is an option in this specification) 'et al' is not used. The convention is only used when there are three or more names.

Explore

Use a search engine to look for a study on prejudice – perhaps use the key terms 'prejudice', 'study', 'psychology' – and explore a little. One example is Adorno et al (1950), a study that looks at personality and fascism.

Summary of learning objectives

Content:

You need to learn about theories of obedience including **agency theory** and **social impact theory**. You also need to learn about Milgram's (1963) basic study as well as three variations on the basic study in order to consider situational factors that encourage dissent (what makes us 'not obey'). Next you will cover factors that affect obedience and resistance to obedience, including someone's personality, their gender and culture, and the context of the situation itself.

Prejudice is the other topic in social psychology, including the **realistic group conflict theory** (also called realistic conflict theory) and the **social identity theory** of prejudice. As with obedience, you are asked to consider factors that affect the issue – in this case prejudice – including **personality** and culture, as well as the situation itself.

Method:

Methodology is a term for how psychology is 'done'; it is the study of the **research methods** and all that goes with them. The main methods for this chapter are **questionnaires** and **interviews**, which include the use of **self-report data**. Questionnaires and interviews can gather **quantitative data** by means of **closed questions** including **ranked-scale questions**. They can also gather **qualitative data**. You need to learn about **social desirability** as well as the effects of a researcher on the data they gathered. Questionnaires and interviews can have an **alternate hypothesis**, so you will learn about that, as well as about analysing both qualitative and quantitative data. You will learn about interviews being **unstructured**, **semi-structured** or **structured**. Another issue covered within social psychology but relevant for all research in psychology is **sampling**. Here, there are four sampling techniques for you to learn about. You will also focus on **ethics**, which apply to all research in psychology.

Method link: Chapter Five is about the methodology you will need for Year One of your course (and the AS level exam except for some A level material, which will be identified clearly for you), including the material you need for social psychology.

Explanation

When terms are emboldened in the text this means that they are defined in the glossary of terms.

Study hint

There are a lot of terms here that are likely to be new to you. Those in bold are defined in the book to help you (page numbers are in brackets XX). The methodology material is briefly outlined later in this chapter and then covered in depth in Chapter Five. So you can wait until you come to the explanations of the terms in Chapter Five before working on understanding them and perhaps adding them to your own glossary of terms. It might look like a lot now, but that is because this is a brief summary section. There is more explanation to come.

Studies

The classic study you need in social psychology is Sherif et al (1954/1961), Inter-group conflict and cooperation: the robbers cave experiment. You will choose one contemporary study from: Burger et al (2009), Replicating Milgram, would people still obey today?; Cohrs et al (2012), Individual differences in ideological attitudes and prejudice: evidence from peer report data; and Reicher and Haslam (2006), Rethinking the psychology of tyranny.

Study hint

Your learning of the methodology for social psychology links very closely to the practical investigation you will have done, so it is not as if you have to learn things twice. The practical investigation is about putting your knowledge of the methodology into practice.

Study hint

These issues and debates appear in each topic area for Year One (and Year Two, in fact) in the same order, in the specification. For each topic area there are examples against each of the issues and debates to show how material from that topic area can illustrate the issue or debate. You can use the examples to learn about the issues and debates.

Study Hint

Make the summary of learning objectives into a checklist. Table 1.XX gives a suggested list. However, you could add detail, which would help your learning.

Key question

You have a choice of key question to study. The course suggests that, focusing on how social psychology can help to explain or deal with such an issue, you choose from either reducing problem behaviour in situations such as football hooliganism or rioting, or using social psychology to explain heroism. You can, however, choose any issue.

A practical investigation within social psychology

You have to carry out one practical research exercise within social psychology using a questionnaire. You will do that within your learning, so it is hard to foresee in this book what you will have done. Chapter Seven discusses some practical investigations within all four topic areas covered in Year One/AS, to help you with this section. You may have carried out a questionnaire about prejudice looking at in-group/out-group issues, or a questionnaire to see if males or females are more obedient, for example.

You need to have used qualitative and quantitative data and considered methodological issues including **ethical issues** and **sampling** decisions. To analyse your quantitative data you need to use **measures of central tendency**, **measures of dispersion**, a **bar graph** and a **frequency table** and **graph**. To analyse your qualitative data you need to use thematic analysis. Also you have to consider strengths and weaknesses of your questionnaire and possible improvements, and then write up the procedure, results and a discussion section focusing on your own practical.

Practical link: Chapter Seven is about practical investigations covering the four topic areas that comprise Year One/AS of your course, including the material you need for social psychology.

Maths link: Chapter Six is about the mathematical skills (such as explaining bar graphs and frequency tables) you will need for Year One of your course (and the AS with some exceptions). The maths element is mentioned in this Chapter, but expanded upon in Chapter Six.

Issues and debates

Issues and debates are in the A level course but not the AS so if you are doing an AS qualification in psychology, you do not need to study this section though it is interesting and will extend your understanding of psychology.

The eleven issues and debates chosen for your course are: ethics; practical issues in research design; reductionism; comparing explanations; psychology as a science; culture and gender; nature/nurture; how psychology has developed over time; issues of social control; using psychology in society; and issues around socially sensitive research.

Learning checklist

Table 1.XX A checklist of what you need to know for social psychology and for your progress

I need to know about	Done	More work	I need to know about	Done	More work
Migram's (1963) study of obedience			Questionnaires to gather self-report data, and social desirability/researcher bias issues		
Agency theory including agentic state, autonomous state and moral strain			Open/closed-ended questions including ranked data questions		
Social impact theory (Latané, 1981) and dynamic social impact theory			Interviews to gather self-report data (structured, unstructured, semi-structured)		
Issues of individual differences (personality), and gender and culture in obedience and dissent to authority. The role of the situation and factors that encourage dissent.			Qualitative and quantitative data and strengths and weaknesses of qualitative and quantitative data		
Three of Milgram's variations: rundown office block (experiment 10), telephonic instructions (experiment 2), ordinary man gives orders (experiment 13)			BPS ethical guidelines and code of ethics and conduct (2009)		
Social identity theory (Tajfel and Turner, 1979) including social categorisation, social identification, and social comparison, and in-group/out-group ideas			Alternate hypotheses		
Realistic group conflict theory (Sherif) and superordinate goals			Analysis of quantitative data/mathematical issues in psychology including measures of central tendency, frequency tables and graphs, graphical presentation using a bar chart, measures of dispersion (range and standard deviation)		
Issues of individual differences (personality), situation and culture in prejudice			Analysis of qualitative data including thematic analysis		
A classic study in detail: Sherif et al (1954/1961), the robbers cave study			One key question that suits what you have covered in social psychology		
One contemporary study in detail from Reicher and Haslam (2006), Burger (2009), or Cohrs et al (2012)			One practical investigation you have carried out to put what you have learned in social psychology into practice		

Issues and debates

- Ethical issues in research
- Practical issues in the design and implementation of research
- Reductionism in the explanation of behaviour
- Comparisons between ways of explaining behaviour using different themes
- Psychology as a science
- Cultural and gender issues within psychological research
- The role of both nature and nurture within psychology
- An understanding of how psychological understanding has developed over time.
- The use of psychology in social control
- The use of psychological knowledge within society
- Issues related to socially sensitive research

An introduction to social psychology

Explanation

Assumptions of an area of psychology are the underpinning beliefs and ideas that support this being a particular area, such as social psychology focusing on the 'social' aspect of humans.

Social psychology examines human behaviour; the role of the individual's relationships with other people and groups, and how culture and society affect behaviour. This is a large field and the Year One/AS course covers only obedience, social impact theory, and prejudice.

Social psychology examines how individuals interact with one another and how people behave in groups. When people are studied as social beings, the social approach is involved. Areas of psychology, such as social psychology, have basic **assumptions** about human nature and human behaviour, such as in social psychology thinking of humans as being social, interacting with others and being affected by others.

The effect of interaction between individuals

Individuals interact with other individuals and they affect each other's behaviour. Agency theory suggests that people are agents for society and behave in such a way as to benefit their society. People help other people, they send signals to other people by the way they look and behave, and they obey certain people and not others. Helping behaviour, body language, the impact of others, and issues around obedience fit within the social approach. Just the last two are included in the social psychology section of your course.



People identify themselves as belonging to a group and take on the norms of the group.

The effect of being in groups within society

The social approach assumes that people live within a culture and society and that their behaviour is affected by their experiences within a society, where they are members of certain groups. For example, a child is a girl or boy, a sister or brother (perhaps), a daughter or son, a friend, a pupil at school, maybe a member of a club. Individuals describe themselves in these ways. Social identity theory suggests that by identifying oneself as being a member of a group, a person can become prejudiced against members of another rival group. Groups are prejudiced against each other, members of a peer group copy one another and crowds can become unruly. Prejudice, peer group pressure and crowd behaviour are studied within the social approach.

The effect of the social situation

It is not just people and groups that affect behaviour, but the social situation itself. For example, when out for the evening with friends, you might not worry about expressing a view about religion but in a business meeting in another country, you would probably refrain from commenting.

Social roles

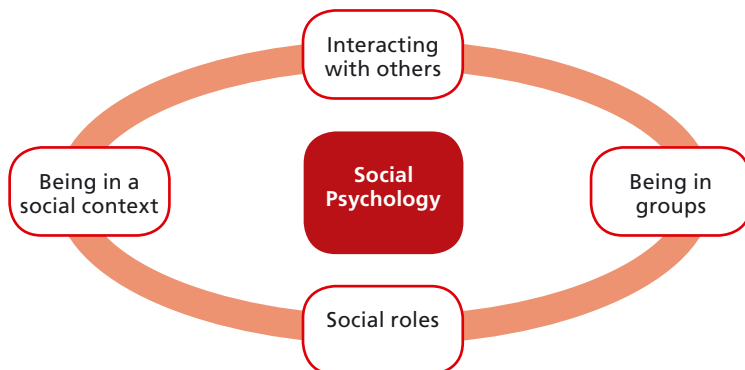
In a society people have social roles and those roles have expectations attached to them. People tend to act in accordance with their social role. A study that is explained later (pXX), by Reicher and Haslam (2006) involves the social roles of prisoner and guard and gives some evidence that people behave according to social roles. Milgram's work, which you will come to later (pXX), also involves social roles, showing that an authority figure can be obeyed more than someone 'more ordinary' – the social role begets the obedience.

Explore

Use the internet to research the theory of social constructionism. The idea is that what we do and say is set within a particular society or culture. We represent the world to ourselves through our experiences and there are no truths in the world to discover, such as what is right and wrong. All understanding is within a setting and can only be judged by knowing that setting. So, for us to have any understanding of ourselves or others, we must study society and culture. The theory holds that there are no general laws to discover and that knowledge is relative. For example, 'health' is socially constructed and what is meant by health can vary between cultures. 'Childhood' is a social construction too, for example, thoughts about children have changed over time. This goes against the idea of a scientific approach to studying human behaviour.

Explore

Try asking a few people to describe themselves briefly, in writing. They may describe themselves in terms of personality, such as generous, happy or quiet; they will probably also give their social roles. They may refer to groups they feel part of. People describe themselves according to how others see them and how they fit into their social world.



Progress Check

1.1 Explain three ways in which being 'social' influences people (this will help you to summarise what social psychology is about).

Test question

Give a definition of the social approach, drawing on two of its main assumptions. (6 marks)

Study hint

Your course covers a general overview of what 'social psychology' entails, so make some notes on this aspect.

Content in social psychology

The content for social psychology in your course includes focus on obedience and prejudice. For obedience it is the work of a well-known researcher Milgram that is examined including his agency theory explanation of obedience. Another theory, social impact theory, which looks at how others affect an individual's behaviour can also help to explain obedience and is considered in this section. Two other studies on obedience are also explained, Meeus and Raaijmakers (1986) and Slater et al (2006), to add depth to the discussion. Ethical issues in obedience work are considered as well. With regard to looking at prejudice, two main theories (social identity theory and realistic group conflict theory) are covered, as well as issues that affect prejudice such as personality, situation and culture.

Firstly, obedience is covered, followed by an examination of prejudice.

What is meant by obedience?

Obedience means obeying direct orders from someone in authority. This is not the same as conforming to the behaviour of others. **Conforming** is doing something which is against the individual's own inclinations, but not doing it with the intention of matching the behaviour of the majority. **Compliance** means going along with what someone says, while not necessarily agreeing with it, and often this is complying to peers rather than those in position of authority. **Internalising** is obeying with agreement.

Compliance is, therefore, part of obedience and is referred to as such by Milgram. His research into obedience focused on issues such as why Nazi soldiers obeyed orders to perpetrate genocide on the Jewish race. He wanted to know if all people would obey in similar circumstances or whether there was something different about those soldiers. At the time when Milgram was focusing on obedience, Adolf Eichmann was being tried in Jerusalem for crimes committed against the Jews during the **holocaust**.

Eichmann was the officer most responsible for the holocaust. He did not appear to be evil, he was mild and ordinary-looking. He kept repeating that he did it because he was ordered to. This was frightening because people wondered if they would have done the same.

Key terms

The **holocaust** was the slaughter of millions of Jews, gypsies, homosexuals and others by the Nazis during the Second World War.

Explore

Investigate the holocaust and subsequent trials of those involved in it. Do you think they were evil people? Or do you think they were 'just obeying orders'?

Millions of people were killed in Nazi concentration camps but Hitler couldn't have killed them on his own. What made all these people follow orders like this?



Progress check

1:2 Using other sources if you wish, fill in the table to explain the four terms:

Obedience	Conformity
Compliance	Internalisation

Theories of obedience

Theories of obedience are found later in this section (ppXX) as they are better understood if Milgram's work is considered first.

In 1963, Milgram carried out what is now a well-known experiment. Subsequently, he carried out variations of that study. You have to know the basic study and three specific variations.

Milgram's (1963) basic study of obedience Milgram wanted to see if people would obey orders when the consequences were severe. He decided to let people think that they were giving another person an electric shock and to see how far they would go.

Aim The aim of Milgram's (1963) basic study was to test the idea that the Germans were somehow different from other people, in that they were able to carry out barbaric acts against the Jews and other minority groups. Milgram wanted to see if volunteer participants would obey orders to give electric shocks to someone they thought was just another participant. He wanted to answer the question 'How far would they go?'

Procedure Milgram advertised for participants and told them that they were taking part in an experiment on human learning. He had a helper — called a **confederate** or **accomplice** — who was the learner who would 'receive' the (fake) shocks. There was one real shock of 45 volts, which the participants received to convince them that the shock generator was real. The confederate-learner, who was middle-aged and pleasant looking, was primed. The study took place at **Yale** University and the participants took part one at a time. In the account of the study, Milgram is treated as being the experimenter but in fact someone else took that role.

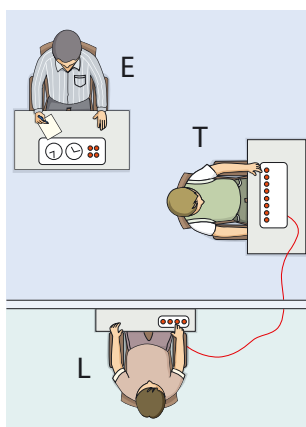
Each participant arrived at the laboratory and waited in a room with the confederate. The participant was led to believe that the confederate was also a participant. They drew lots to decide who would be the learner. However, this was rigged so that the confederate was always the learner and the participant was always the teacher. Milgram reassured participants that the shocks would be painful but that there would be no permanent tissue damage. The participant-teacher watched the confederate-learner being strapped into a chair and wired up so that the 'shocks' could be felt. Milgram then took the participant-teacher into another room where there was a long counter in front of an array of switches and an impressive-looking machine — the generator. The switches were in a row and were labelled from 15 volts to 450 volts. Above the switches there were comments such as 'slight shock' and 'danger'. This left the participant in no doubt that the shocks would be increasingly painful and dangerous as the voltage increased. Having been given instructions by Milgram, the participant sat in front of the 15-volt switch and began the experiment. The participant was to move up one switch at a time each time the learner gave a wrong answer.



Milgram, a well-known psychologist

Key terms

Yale is a prestigious university in the USA.



A plan of the experiment showing the teacher and experimenter in one room and the victim wired up in another room

The task required the participant to read out word pairs such as blue-box, nice-day, wild-duck, then read out the key word and four possible pairs. For example, he might read out blue-sky, ink, box, and lamp. The confederate-learner had four buttons and had to press the correct one. In this example, the correct response is 'box'. An incorrect response was given a 15-volt 'shock'; each successive wrong answer was given a shock 15 volts higher — 30 volts, 45 volts and so on.

At first the learner gave correct responses, then a few wrong responses. The responses were pre-set and the same each time, there being about three wrong answers to every one right answer. There was no sign of protest up to 300 volts in this basic study. At 300 volts the learner bangs on the wall and after that the learner's answers stop appearing for the participant to see. At this stage the participant tended to look to the experimenter for guidance and was told to treat the absence of a response as no response and to go on with the shocks. The learner's pounding is heard at 315 volts but he is not heard from after that. If 450 volts was reached, participants were to continue with that switch. The experimenter was in the room with the participant, so the participant would think that no one was with the learner — who was now silent and could be in a bad way. It was pointless to continue with the study because the learner was not responding — no learning would take place. Would participants continue just because they were ordered to? They were, after all, free to leave.

It is worth noting that the experimenter had a script. On occasion, he prompted the participant to continue, by saying such things as 'You must continue', or 'It is absolutely essential that you continue'. These prompts are called verbal prods, and may have affected the outcome. They are shown in Table 1.XX.

Table 1.X List of verbal prompts on the experimenter's script

Order of prompt	Verbal prod
1	Please continue/please go on
2	The experiment requires that you continue
3	It is absolutely essential that you continue
4	You have no other choice — you must go on
5	If the participant was still refusing, then the study was stopped

Milgram thought the participants would refuse to go up to 450 volts. He expected to have to modify the pattern of responses and banging on the wall because participants would not agree to continue. Before carrying out the study, he asked students and colleagues what they thought; the opinion was that 2% or 3% would continue to the end. When people were asked what they would do, none said they would continue to the end.

One more aspect of the study is important, and this is that at the end of the experiment the participants were interviewed using open questions and attitude scales. And steps were taken to make sure that each participant would leave the laboratory feeling alright. For example, the victim and the participant met up, to show the victim was not hurt, and there was work to reduce any tensions that had built up from taking part.

Results The results showed that 26 of the 40 men who took part in the study (and, interestingly, 26 of 40 women who were tested in a separate study), continued to the end. In the basic study, which used male participants, 14 participants, therefore, stopped before 450 volts (see Table 1.XX); 65% obeyed to 450 volts and 100% obeyed to 300 volts.

Table 1.XX The number of participants who stopped before 450 volts was reached

Voltage	Number that stopped
Up to 300	0
300	5
315	4
330	2
345	1
360	1
375	1
	Total stopped = 14 (out of 40)

Progress check

1:3 Decide which of these statements is right and which wrong:

Statement	True	False
The participants knew that the 'learner' was a confederate		
People Milgram asked beforehand thought that there would be a lot of obedience		
The verbal prods were pre-set and remained the same for every participant		
Milgram's participants volunteered to take part by responding to an advert		
There was just one actual shock, received by the participant		

Most participants thought that the experiment was real. After the study, they were asked to rate the shocks; most rated them as 14 on a scale in which 14 meant extremely painful. The average rating was 13.42. Many participants showed signs of nervousness, especially when 'giving' the most painful shocks. Participants were seen to sweat, tremble, stutter, groan and dig their fingernails into their flesh. Fourteen of the 40 showed nervous laughter and smiling (though after the study they made it clear that they did not think it was funny). Participants often heaved a sigh of relief when the study was ended.

Conclusions Social influence is strong and people obey orders even when this causes them distress. It was not thought that people would obey and such obedience is surprising. Milgram summarised the features that led to obedience:

- Yale University is a prestigious institution and unlikely to allow anything unethical to occur.
- The study seemed to have a worthy cause — to learn about memory.
- The victim was not unwilling and had agreed to take part.
- The participant had volunteered and had made a commitment.
- The participant was paid and so felt an obligation.
- The learner was there by chance — he or she could have been the participant.
- This was a new situation for the participant, who had no idea of what was suitable behaviour.
- It was thought that the shocks were painful, but not dangerous.
- Up to 300 volts, the learner plays the game and seems willing.

Explore

Consider the results of Milgram's study. Data can be quantitative, which means they are numbers, or qualitative, which means they are about quality of response, and as such have depth and detail.

Milgram's basic study uses quantitative data, such as the voltage at which the participant stopped or how many went to the 450 volts. However, note here that there are also qualitative data, in the form of the participant's reactions during the study.

Write a short account of how Milgram's experiment gathers both qualitative and quantitative data and consider the strengths and weaknesses of using both. Qualitative and quantitative data are explained later in this chapter (ppXX).

Study hint

When you are studying ethical issues in researching in psychology, and you look at the BPS Code of Ethics and Conduct (2009), use Milgram's study and apply the ethical issues in the Code to Milgram's work to help you learn about ethics and to evaluate Milgram's work.

Progress check

1:4 In one paragraph summarise Milgram's basic study, including the brief aim, a short account of the procedure, a statement of the results and a few conclusions.

Evaluation of the basic study by Milgram (1963)

Milgram's basic study has both strengths and weaknesses.

Strengths

- Milgram carried out a very well-controlled procedure. He had set prompts, in a set order, and had prepared the victim's responses carefully. He made every effort to make the experience of each participant the same, to avoid any bias. This lack of bias means that the conclusion — that obedience was due to a response to an authority figure — was firm. It is unlikely that other factors led to the results. This means that cause-and-effect conclusions can be drawn.
- The controlled procedures mean that the study is replicable and so can be tested for reliability. The precise procedure cannot be repeated for ethical reasons. However, there have been replications using the same idea, but with a different 'punishment', or having some difference in the procedure that made it more ethical. One replication was carried out in 2009 by Burger (ppXX) and is a study you can choose for your course. These studies have also shown that people obey those in authority, even when it goes against their own moral code.

Weaknesses

- There are ethical problems with regard to repeating it. Milgram was aware of the ethical implications. He asked colleagues and others if they thought that the participants would obey, and it was generally thought they would not — certainly not to the level that they did. So he did not expect the level of anxiety and stress that he found. He debriefed the participants carefully and introduced them to his accomplice, as well as checking on their well-being. However, he described shaking, trembling, sweating and seizures, so it cannot be denied that the study was unethical. Milgram showed himself to be competent, and asked others to confirm this. He debriefed the participants thoroughly. In theory, he gave the right to withdraw because participants could leave at any time (some did). However, he pressurised participants to stay by using prompts, which means that, to an extent, he did not give the right to withdraw. He deceived participants by saying that the study was about learning and by pretending that the shocks were real. He gained consent and asked for volunteers. He pointed out that they could keep their payments even if they did not continue with the study. However, the consent he obtained was not fully informed consent because of the deceit. More discussion about the ethics of obedience studies can be found later (ppXX).
- The basic study lacked validity. For example, the participants trusted that what happened at Yale University would be acceptable (they were right — the shocks were not real). Though Milgram says in the study that most were convinced that the experiment was 'real'. It could be argued that in a more realistic situation they would not have continued, although that is conjecture.

Table 1.XX Strengths and weaknesses of the basic study by Milgram (1963)

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Good controls avoid bias and mean that the situation was the same for all, so cause-and-effect conclusions could be drawn• The well-controlled procedures mean that the study is replicable and can be tested for reliability	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The study is unethical because the participants were deceived, did not give informed consent, were distressed and did not have the full right to withdraw• The study lacks validity because of the artificial procedures

Key terms

The BPS Code of Ethics and Conduct (2009) which you need to study for your course emphasises the importance of ‘respect’, which includes getting informed consent and giving the participant the right to withdraw. The Code also includes ‘responsibility’, which explains the need for a debrief. Other issues covered by the Code include ‘competence’ and ‘integrity’.

Psychological knowledge is really only as good as the studies that produce the knowledge. By evaluating a study, you are considering how good the knowledge is. Evaluation using two strengths and two weaknesses might not have sufficient depth in all situations, but it is a useful way to consider how good findings of a study are, and, therefore, how good the knowledge is. ‘Sound’ knowledge can be used for the good of society and for the good of individuals. Less sound knowledge is less useful. These are the principles behind considering strengths and weaknesses of studies (and the same can be said of theories) in this book.

Study hint

Learn evaluation points, and also extend the ideas, to add more strengths or weaknesses that you see elsewhere or that you develop yourself. Remember to learn material and also to balance that with noting down and learning commentary.

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