

Psychology bridging project - Social Psychology and Obedience

There are different Areas of psychology – each Area of psychology makes different assumptions about the causes of human behaviour.

Aim: The purpose of this bridging project is for you to:

1. Research the Social Area of psychology. You will see how social psychology can offer explanations for real life (often unpleasant) behaviours.
2. Find out about one of the most famous studies in psychology (Milgram).
3. Identify the ethical issues associated with investigating humans.

The Social Area of psychology

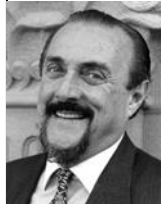
<http://robynsrevison.weebly.com/social-approach-assumptions.html>

<http://www.simplypsychology.org/social-psychology.html>

1. In your own words, outline what social psychology assumes about the causes of human behaviour.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OsFEV35tWsg>

2. The torture and prisoner abuse at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq. How does Zimbardo explain how an ordinary person crosses the boundary between good and evil behaviour to engage in what he describes as evil action?
3. Explain how Zimbardo's explanation links to social psychology.



<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-34835046>

Read the BBC News article about the Paris attack key suspect Abdelhamid Abaaoud.

4. Using examples from the article, explain how his behaviour can be explained using social psychology.

Obedience to people in authority

Obedience is when an individual acts according to orders, usually from an authority figure. It is assumed that without the order the person would not have acted in that way.

<http://www.britannica.com/biography/Adolf-Eichmann>

5. Summarise the crimes Adolf-Eichmann was accused of.
6. How did he explain his actions?
7. What do you think – was he a 'monster'/psychopath or just an ordinary person? Give your reasons.
8. How would Zimbardo (a social psychologist) explain his behaviour?



(You can watch a summary of his trial here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QaN7DR8Zj5o>)

Milgram (1963)

One of the most famous studies of obedience in psychology was carried out by Stanley Milgram (1963). Milgram (a social psychologist) set out to investigate if evil acts can be carried out by ordinary people. He was influenced by the trial of Adolf Eichmann. Eichmann's defence was based on "obedience" - that he was just following orders from his superiors.

Watch an accurate replication of Milgram's original study by Derren Brown

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y6GxluljT3w>

Watch the original study here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mOUEC5YXV8U>

Read a description of the study here:

<http://holah.co.uk/study/milgram/> - detailed

<http://www.simplypsychology.org/milgram.html> - less detailed



9. Summarise the main features of the study under the following headings.

- **Background** to the study
- **Aim** (purpose)
- **Procedure** (what happened)
- **Findings** (results)
- **Conclusion** (what does the study tell us about obedience?)

10. Do the results of the study suggest Nazis like Adolf Eichmann were 'monsters'/psychopaths or just ordinary people... like you and me? Explain your answer.

Ethical issues in psychology

Ethics refers to how participants in psychological research are treated. We have a moral responsibility to protect research participants from harm.

As a result of studies such as Milgram, the British Psychological Society (BPS) and the American Psychological Association (APA) both published ethical guidelines.

The purpose of these guidelines is to protect research participants, the reputation of psychology and psychologists themselves.

<http://holah.co.uk/page/ethics/>

11. Summarise the 9 ethical guidelines

12. Using examples from the study, explain how Milgram's study broke ethical guidelines (HINT: you could identify and explain 4 ethical problems).

If you have any questions/problems with the above tasks you can email Mr McGuire (DME) during the summer:

des.mcguire10@fearnhill.herts.sch.uk