

AS Level Psychology 9990 syllabus content

Social approach

Main assumptions of the social approach:

- behaviour, cognitions and emotions can be influenced by other individuals
- behaviour, cognitions and emotions can be influenced by groups or social contexts.

Milgram (obedience)

Milgram, S. (1963), Behavioral Study of Obedience. *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 67(4): 371–378

The Milgram study is based on the conflict between obedience to authority and personal conscience and how far a person would go in obeying an instruction if it meant harming another person. This includes considering dispositional and situational hypotheses.

Piliavin et al. (subway Samaritans)

Piliavin, I.M., Rodin, J. and Piliavin, J. (1969), Good Samaritanism: An Underground Phenomenon? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 13(4): 289–299

The Piliavin et al. study is based on bystander apathy. The study looks at how bystanders behave in real life situations and the factors that can affect their desire to help. This includes considering diffusion of responsibility.

Yamamoto et al. (chimpanzee helping)

Yamamoto, S., Humle, T. and Tanaka, M. (2012) Chimpanzees' flexible targeted helping based on an understanding of conspecifics' goals. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 109(9): 3588–3592

The Yamamoto et al. study is based on chimpanzees and whether they have the ability and flexibility to help another chimpanzee depending on his/her specific needs. This includes considering prosocial behaviour and instrumental helping.

The requirements are the same for each of the four approaches at AS Level.

For each of the core studies above, candidates should show understanding of:

- the **psychology** that is being investigated
- the **background** to that particular study
- the **aim(s)** of the study
- the **procedure** of the study, including as appropriate, the research methods used, sample size and demographics [if known] and sampling technique [if known]), experimental design, controls, question types, tasks, measured and manipulated variables
- **ethical issues** regarding the study
- the **results** of the study, including key quantitative and qualitative findings
- the **conclusion(s)** the psychologist(s) drew from the study
- the **strengths and weaknesses** of all elements of the study.

Candidates should be able to:

- describe and evaluate the **research methods** used
- consider how the study relates to **psychological issues and debates**
- apply the **findings of the study** to the real world.