SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY: METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES

AS PSYCHOLOGISTS, WE NEED TO LOOK **CRITICALLY** AT OUR EVIDENCE.

WHY?

OUR EXPLANATIONS ARE BASED ON THE STUDIES WE DO, SO OUR EXPLANATIONS CAN ONLY BE **TRUSTED** IF THE STUDIES WERE CONDUCTED WELL.

HOW?

TWO THINGS TO ASSESS

RELIABILITY.

IF WE REPEAT THE STUDY, DO WE FIND CONSISTENT (**RELIABLE**) RESULTS EVERY TIME? IF NOT, WE MAY BE LOOKING AT A 'FREAK' RESULT THAT ISN'T USEFUL TO US.

VALIDITY.

IS THE STUDY TELLING US THE **TRUTH** ABOUT WHAT WE'RE TRYING TO INVESTIGATE?

TWO SETS OF ISSUES HERE

INTERNAL VALIDITY: DID THE INVESTIGATOR MEASURE WHAT THEY INTENDED TO, OR DID THEY ACCIDENTALLY MEASURE SOMETHING ELSE?

- WERE THE KEY VARIABLES PROPERLY **OPERATIONALISED** TO OBTAIN MEASUREMENTS?
- WERE **EXTRANEOUS VARIABLES** CONTROLLED TO REMOVE THEIR INFLUENCE?
- WERE THE PARTICIPANTS RESPONDING TO **DEMAND CHARACTERISTICS**?

EXTERNAL VALIDITY: DO THE RESULTS OF THE STUDY GENERALISE TO OTHER SAMPLES OR CONTEXTS?

- WAS A REPRESENTATIVE SAMPLE USED (**SAMPLING VALIDITY**)?
- WAS A REALISTIC SETTING USED (**ECOLOGICAL VALIDITY**)?

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