

Psychology



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Running head: PSYCHOLOGY Psychology It is necessary to talk about the Stanford Experiment in the body of this paper. We are going to answer specific questions about the Stanford Prison Experiment with various details and focus our attention on its ethical sides and outcomes having an interest in social psychology. First of all, it is important to mention that the experiment with an artificial prison was not intended by its creator as something unethical or harmful to the psyche of its participants, but the results of this study shocked the public. Nowadays, we can mention that the ethical nature of the experiment has a disputable character because researchers call it both ethical and unethical. Explaining this fact we see that, on the one hand, it was ethical because it followed the guidelines of a special Stanford ethics committee that allowed and approved it.

Experiment's participants were told that they would be assigned either the role of the guard, or the role of the prisoner in a completely random manner, and they all volunteered to play any of these roles for \$ 15 a day for a period not exceeding two weeks. They signed a contract guaranteeing them a minimally adequate diet, clothing, shelter and medical care, as well as monetary rewards, and instead signed an 'intention' to perform an interim role during the whole experiment. On the other hand, it was unethical because the participants-prisoners were forced to stay in a simulated prison for the whole day during the study period and they were suffered, being humiliated by their fellows over the period of the experiment. Continuing the discussion of this ethical question we can mention that it was not right to trade 'sufferings' experienced by participants for the knowledge gained by the research, and understanding this fact the experiment was stopped much earlier. In this part of the paper it is necessary to discuss the results of the

Stanford prison experiment and explain why it influences people in such a stress way. The first point was the lack of individualization and depersonalization. A person who was a unique personality yesterday, distinguished by his own characteristic features, both externally and internally, getting in prison he loses this individuality and becomes just a 'prisoner number so and so'. Thinking about the conformity, obedience, compliance and some other concepts in social psychology we can say that the main focus of this research was to explore the psychological impact of performance roles of a 'guard or 'prisoner' in the context of the experimental simulation in a prison environment. The plan of an experiment was rather simple and involved only in one variable - the random distribution of people on the role of guards and prisoners. Thus, the experiment tells us about the above numerated concepts that the result is likely to be interpreted as follows: good and evil intricately intertwined in the nature of any person, and the most respectable citizens are not spared from the low-lying latent tendencies, as a man himself will show in real life - depends on a situation in which a person will find himself. Accordingly, efforts should be made to the level of such life situations that awaken a beast in a man, and cultivate those which lead to behave decently. In conclusion, we have discussed all necessary details of Stanford Prison Experiment and answered all necessary questions. Reference: Zimbardo, P. (2009). Stanford Prison Experiment. Retrieved from [http://www. prisonexp. org/](http://www.prisonexp.org/)