Psychology: Independent behaviour

Personality Characteristics
• Oliner and Oliner (1988)
• Interviewed 2 groups of non-Jewish people who had lived through the Holocaust in Germany or in occupied territories.
• 406 had protected and rescued Jews.
• 126 had not.
• The 406 had rebelled against Nazi rule and did not conform.
• Finding: ‘Rescuers’ scored higher on measures of personal responsibility and had scores demonstrating an internal locus of control.

Locus of control
• Rotter (1966)
• Refers to the sense of control people have over the successes, failures and events in their lives.
• We can measure an individual's sense of personal control on a scale.
• This is measured on a questionnaire, where you are given 100 pairs of statements; you fill out the questionnaire and you are then graded on the locus of control.
• The more independent side is known as the internal locus of control; where personal responsibility is felt, you have control over what happens in your life. The other side is the external locus of control; there is no personal responsibility, the things that happen to me don’t occur because of me but due to other’s actions.
• People with a high internal locus of control are active seekers of information that is useful to them, so are less likely to rely on the opinions of others. They are achievement orientated and are more likely to become a leader.
• People with a high locus of control are much harder to sway to force to conform, than people who have an external locus of control.
• Example: You pass your driving test. Internal person - “I worked really hard, had lots of driving lessons and practised a lot with my parents.” External person- “I had a really good driving instructor, was a fluke.”