

Outline and evaluate research into obedience essay sample



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Milgram carried out a series of studies to try to shed some light on the aspect of human behaviour. He studied a thousand participants who were representative of the general population. He discovered that under certain situational influences most of us would conform to what is needed to be done. His study of obedience was done in a lab in Yale University and the experimenter wore a long grey coat which reinforced his authority and status. Then the learner who was the teachers were told to be executing was a man with a heart condition who complained as they went on and then said he couldn't take any more. To see if the learners conformed they used prods such as ' please go on' and the experiment requires you to carry on' although they didn't have too. Milgram found that most participants resented verbally but obeyed behaviourally and 65 per cent gave the learner the maximum shock of 450 volts even though the teacher was complaining after only 100 volts. Therefore this research shows that under certain circumstances some people are willing to go against their conscious.

Also he found out the fact that people will obey when someone who is a dominance in a social hierarchy as they become liable to lose feelings of empathy and morality. However Orne and Holland have challenged the generalization of Milgrams findings claiming that the situation within Milgrams laboratory bore little resemblance to real life situations. Also the study was said to have lacked ethics and there is a case for prosecution. These were aspects such as the lack of respect for participants as they may suffer from long term problems such as depression as they might not have thought they were evil. Also they study was advertised as being a memory test but participants did not conform to the actual study they were doing to

see if people conformed in certain situations. On the other hand some people have argued that in order for the study to be as realistic as possible it must have meant that the teachers didn't know the true meaning of the study as it may have lead to demand characteristics. Also Milgram sent out an experiment to see if participants were feeling down from the experiment but got a positive feedback as not one participant felt depressed.