

The milgram experiment

Psychology



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The Milgram Experiment Outline Topic: The Milgram experiment I) The experiment A) Who was involved with the experiment? B) How they got participants C) What the subjects thought was happening i) Learning Task ii) Memory Study iii) Electric shock for wrong answer iv) " Prods" to continue the shocks D) What actually happened i) It was a test for obedience not memory ii) Vocal response from the victims (staged and set beforehand) II) The results A) How many experiments were performed B) How many people were tested C) How many continued the experiment D) The video of obedience E) What types of people were tested, and what difference that made F) Differences between each test and results G) High levels of stress for subjects III) Why did he do the experiment A) To get an understanding of Nazis B) To prove the " answer to destructive obedience lay less in the power of personality and more in the power of situation" C) Social projection D) Test the idea that some people consider themselves better than others IV) The reaction A) Self realization B) Unethical i) Manipulation ii) Disregard for rights iii) Negligent of emotional well being C) Argument in ethics caused new rules in APA guidelines V) Applications A) Nazi Germany B) U. S. wars C) Watergate

Many experiments have been performed throughout the years. One of the most shocking would have to be the Milgram experiment performed by Stanley Milgram. The experiment was to test a person's " Obedience to Authority" by seeing if he or she would cause harm to another just because they were told. The idea of obedience has been instilled in people since the time of Cain and Able, with regard to doing as God says. There are multiple reasons for Dr. Milgram to perform this experiment, however, some did not accept this and still believed it to be a violation of the subjects human rights. The results showed that even though people believed they would not cause

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extreme harm to another, they would if put in the position where they were pressured to by an authoritative person. This resulted in chaos in the psychological community, and concluded in major changes to what is moral, and ethical, under the guidelines provided by APA. However, his results may be used to consider what happened during World War II, along with other U. S. wars, as well as what happened during the Watergate scandal. This experiment was performed many times. It began with Dr. Milgram placing an ad in a New Haven newspaper. The advertisement asked for people between the ages of 20 and 50, those who were not currently attending school, and from all types of professions. It also claimed the experiment would last one hour, and that it was to study memory. Those who participated in the experiment would receive four dollars for participating, and fifty cents for carfare, for the one hour of participation. From this ad, he did not get enough of a response so Dr. Milgram took names from a phone directory, and send fliers in the mail. The experiment itself was performed in the Interaction Laboratory of Yale University. It consisted of two people who were aware of what was happening, one called the " experimenter, " the person in charge of managing the experiment, and another called, " the victim. " A third, was one other person involved with the experiment called the " naïve subject" who was the one being tested in this experiment. The experiment called for two different perspectives, which were what the " naïve subject" believed to be happening, and what was really happening. The experiment was set up so that according to the " naïve subject, " " the victim" was told to memorize a list of word pairs such as: blue box nice day wild duck etc. then in the testing sequence he [the naïve subject] would read: blue: sky ink box lamp (Obedience 18). If " the victim" was able to select the correct

corresponding word, the "naïve subject" continued by saying the next word. However, if "the victim" did not answer correctly, or took too long in answering, the "naïve subject" would have to administer a shock. After each wrong answer, the next wrong answer would result in a stronger shock. The generator, which was to administer the shocks to "the victim": Ranged from 15 to 450 volts. The labels showed a 15-volt increment from one switch to the next, going from left to right. In addition, the following verbal designations were clearly indicated for groups of four switches, going from left to right: Slight Shock, Moderate Shock, Strong Shock, Very Strong Shock, Intense Shock, Extreme Intensity Shock, Danger: Severe Shock. Two switches after this last designation were simply marked XXX. (Obedience 20)

The authenticity of the generator was validated by giving the "naïve subject" a 45 volt shock to the wrist. The test which the "naïve subject" thought was a test for memory, was actually to test a person's willingness to follow authority. Therefore, as the voltage was to increase, there were acted protests by "the victim" which made the "naïve subject" less willing to continue. However, if the "naïve subject" was having second thoughts about continuing, the "experimenter" was to give "prods" each more aggressive as the "naïve subject" continued to protest, Prod 1: Please continue, or, Please go on. Prod 2: The experiment requires that you continue. Prod 3: It is absolutely essential that you continue. Prod 4: You have no other choice you must go on (Obedience 21). Feeling obligated even though "the victim" responded with cries of pain and eventually no answer, the majority of those did continue. The results of this experiment were interesting. In the primary experiment 26 out of 40 people continued to shock a person with what he or she believed to be 450 volts for an incorrect

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answer, or if they did not respond within a time limit set by the “ experimenter. ” Another variation of this experiment he performed in which he: placed the learner closer to the teacher, including one in which the teacher actually had to force the learner’s hand onto a shock plate in order to punish him; about 30 percent of subjects continued the variation until the end (Fermaglich 86). There was another variation which used only women. The results were the same as those for men. Over three years, Dr. Milgram performed 24 different variations of his original experiment, and tested over 1, 000 people. There was also one case in which Dr. Milgram videotaped a subject’s obedience, “ In the full version of Milgram’s film Prozi [the subject] is shown ending up being completely obedient- that is, administering a 450-volt shock to the unseen learner” (Blass). Another result of this experiment was the experiment had a huge impact on those who were the subjects. It resulted in high levels of stress in those who were subjects, whether they obeyed or disobeyed, which Dr. Milgram himself admitted to happening, and so he had to provide a meeting for the subject and the learner, in order to try to alleviate that stress (Fermaglich 87). Although the experiment was performed many times, and on many different people, this proved that the majority will follow orders when they are given, even if it goes against their conscience. These were not the only results from this experiment; people had other thoughts about Dr. Milgram’s experiment. There have been many who have wondered why a man would perform a test that many people consider to be a violation of a person’s basic rights. Dr. Milgram had many reasons behind performed these experiments. Dr. Milgram believed “ When you think of the long and gloomy history of man, you will find more hideous crimes have been committed in the name of obedience than have ever been

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committed in the name of rebellion" (Obedience 2). He wanted to be able to prove his belief that the " answer to destructive obedience lay less in the power of personality and more in the power of situation" (Slater 31). He also performed it with relation to the Holocaust, and since Milgram, " a Jewish man whose relatives had hidden from the Nazis and been interned in concentration camps, [he] constructed his experiments in order to understand Nazi evil" (Fermaglich 84). Another idea posed as a reason for Dr. Milgram's performance was the thought of " self-other bias (Brown, 1986) [which] is the general tendency for people to rate themselves as better than ' typical others'" (Geher, Bauman, Hubbard, and Legare 3). There were those who believed the experiment to be unethical, and others who seem to be enlightened with a sense of self realization. One person found Dr. Milgram's experiment to give him a better sense of who he was: I felt a shock of recognition, and the immediate knowledge that I could do such a thing, unsteady as I am. And I knew I could do such a thing, not because some strange set of circumstances propelled me to, no...It was not external. It was internal (Slater 62) However most other people who did not participate in the experiment did not feel this way, they felt this experiment was " the subject of enormous controversy, centered on the contention that his research subjects had been unethically manipulated, without due regard for their rights or emotional well-being" (Schwartz). In the field of psychology there was an uproar, with those who found the experiment to be reprehensible. One of those people was Diana Baumrind who questioned the obedience experiment, with concern for the welfare of the subjects, and curiosity over measures taken to protect those involved and voiced her concerns in American Psychologist (Individual 140). Dr. Baumrind's article concerning the <https://assignbuster.com/the-milgram-experiment/>

experiment resulted in the revision of APA ethical guidelines, which went with those laid down by the federal government, which limited the use of humans as subjects in the medical and psychological field (Fermaglich 103). Many found what Dr. Milgram did to be unethical, however because of it people now have a better understanding of what they are able to do, and they are able to apply his findings to other situations that have occurred, and may happen in the future. This experiment may be applied to a multitude of different subjects that are in a person's every day life. The major subject would be the Nazis during World War II, which was a motive for Dr. Milgram to do the experiment in the beginning. It explores why a citizen who "ran the death camps seemed to be ordinary "decent" citizens, with consciences no different from those of any of us" (Velasquez et al). Dr. Milgram also compares the killing of Jews in the gas chambers to the manufacturing of appliances, and he says all of those deaths could not have occurred if a large number of people did not obey orders (Obedience 1). The ideas that Dr. Milgram came up with were applied as an explanation for "the massacre of hundreds of Vietnamese civilians at My Lai and the criminal activities in Nixon's White House: 'Stanley Milgram... demonstrated in the laboratory what Lt. William Calley and his unit would dramatize later in Mylai- that man's behavior is almost invariably dominated by authority rather than by his own morality'" (Fermaglich 111). This idea is also exemplified on television, as on a recent episode of "Law and Order: S. V. U. " viewers encounter a manager of a fast food restaurant who blatantly obeys the orders of a voice over the phone saying that he is "Detective Milgram. " The manager is told that an employee stole the wallet of a customer, and "Detective Milgram" tells the manager to strip the girl of all of her clothing

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except for her apron, and to perform a cavity search, to look for the wallet. Later in the episode we encounter the man who posed as " Detective Milgram" who performed his own variation of the experiment, because he had been like the manager, when he allowed the doctor to go against his advice, which resulted in the death of his wife. During school, a person may be faced with a similar situation. One being seeing a person cheat on a test. The person is put in a situation with two choices, neither desirable. The person may tell the teacher, which results in anger from the person who was told on, as well as a loss of time for that person to take their own test. The other option is to do nothing, which in the long run will hurt the student as he or she never learned the material, as he or she was suppose to. Typically a student will choose the latter, and ignore the situation, which ends up hurting the other student. This examination can be viewed on a vast number of levels, but that does not change the facts and ideas behind what happened. Dr. Milgram performed a venture which is thought to have been unethical, as he tested a person's willingness to follow orders and do as he or she was told. He discovered the majority would actually do so, even if they believed they were hurting an innocent person. The controversial research has had a variety of impacts on every different person. For some they have a self realization, thinking of why type of person he or she is and if they are sheep, blindly following authority. Works Cited for Research Paper: Blass, Thomasm. " The Milgram Obedience Experiment: Support for a Cognitive View of Defensive Attribution." The Journal of Social Psychology (1996). elibrary. Web. 24 Nov. 2009. . Fermaglich, Kirsten. American Dreams and Nazi Nightmares : Early Holocaust Consciousness and Liberal America, 1957-1965. Waltham, Mass.: Brandeis University Press, 2006. Geher, Glenn, <https://assignbuster.com/the-milgram-experiment/>

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