

# Good research paper about obedience to authority

[Business](#), [Management](#)



\n[[Table of Contents](#)]\n

\n \t

1. [Introduction](#) \n \t

2. [Conclusion](#) \n \t

3. [Work Cited](#) \n

\n[/toc]\n \n

## **Introduction**

Obedience regards to social influence whereby an individual accepts and follows the issued directions or policies. A general assumption has it that if there were no such an order, the person would likely not have acted in such a manner. Obedience often happens when one is obliged to follow a certain regulation. The individual issuing the order is usually of a higher power or status than the recipient of the order. This means that obedience is all about hierarchy of status. The paper assumes a neutral position to discuss a controversial argument of whether to obey or disobey authority. Even though for a civilized society there needs to be the authority, to obey or disobey is not always clear-cut because people have the choice to choose between right or wrong and circumstances play a part in what they do.

Obedience may be viewed as immoral, moral and amoral. For instance, a scenario where an individual orders one to kill a dangerous person who may harm many innocent people and he obeys the order willingly, can be described as moral (Colman 1074). Obedience is an element in the social life structure that anyone can refer to; a system of authority is required in all communities. An exception to this norm is a man leading an isolated life,

thus not obliged to obey or disobey orders from others.

The principles and lessons obtained from various experiments and researches showing the powerful tendency of human to obey authorities affirm the significance of being obedient. Initially, obedience experiments have previously been widely utilized in several domains to come up with organizational changes in the better part of the society (McLeod 2). Several studies covering the significance of observing ethical habits warn the society on the detrimental consequences for disobeying laws. In the same view, various Supreme Court briefs and more than 180 law reviews have also emphasized the need of obeying authority (Barrio 251). Examples identified from these sources highlight that obeying law translates to a peaceful wellbeing. In contrast, disobeying authority would result to serious conflicts and a messy community.

The Milgram's study shows the wiliness and readiness of humanity to obey the authority. An individual is not likely to interrogate a police personnel's right to conduct a search in his/her house or be searched when requested (Milgram 377). Evidential example of people's wiliness to obey the authority is highlighted by the legal occupation in the time of South African trial of 13 defendants who were accused of killing in the process of the mass action. Professional testimony that showed obedience to authority and other psychosocial processes was mitigating circumstances, ended up in nine out of the 13 defendants being saved from the death penalty (Colman 1071). Furthermore, it offers a point of reference to some phenomena that would render our understanding difficult, thus making them more reasonable. Evidently, the implications of some of these studies have been good for

understanding the Holocaust. A good example is a historian, recounting the conduct of a Nazi mobile unit roving the countryside of Poland that murdered 38000 Jews brutally at their commander's bid. The scenario resolved, " Many of Miligram's intuitions find relevant confirmation in the testimony as well as the behavior of the men of Reserve Police Batalion101" (Browning 309).

Individuals can utilize the obedience studies to modify their behavior, or justifying the need of being obedient. Many individuals who have already learned about obedience research are evidently better capable of standing up against unjust and illogical authority.

On the other hand, people have been and are able to free themselves through disobeying and learning how to say no to commands and authoritative powers. Through freedom, individuals are able to run their own activities. A free state brings satisfaction and sense of happiness to human. One is obliged to gain courage to stand out solely in order to disobey. A person not only needs just courage, but one's development state determines his/her capacity for courage. Freedom is equally the condition to one's disobedience. One's capacity to disobey and freedom cannot be separated. Consequently, any system whether social, religious or political system that declares to have freedom cannot do without disobedience (Aristotle 13). An example of this is a human history that was brought about by disobedience. Adam and Eve lived peacefully with the nature since they were part of it, but never transcended to it. They also were human yet not human. Every other thing changed when they decided to go against an order by God (Fromm 635).

In " The Problem with Followers," David challenges people to be rational

thinkers by reflecting on the social norms instead of following them blindly. He observes that the humanity is cultured in a manner that people easily tends to associate moral status to the victims of power instead of individuals who wield power. In this context, people minds have focused on the stories of victims who have suffered cruelty, oppression and racism. Furthermore, there is the assumption that all people are equal, thus merit equal respect and recognition. Although these are important ideologies, David notes that the major problem with the modern generation is that people lack knowledge of how power can strategically be used to bind and build the society (David 3). This has created a situation where people are blindly following unproductive policies or guidelines.

The lessons and principles obtained from obedience researches and studies are also relevant because they suggests preventive moves that people can assume to resist unnecessary and undesired pressures coming from authorities. A good way of resisting is by questioning the legitimacy of the authority (Lee & Richard 690). People mainly give too much attention to those who project a kind of commanding presence. This may be through their conduct or their way of dress. People follow the commands and orders of individuals even when it is unrelated to their authority. For instance, a study by Milgram found out that putting on a fireman's uniform improved an individual's convincing powers to have a passerby offer change to someone else (Milgram 378).

A clear lesson from such studies is that when ordered to do something that one find quite abhorrent, one should take a moment and question the rationality of the directive. The likely answer to this is " No" simply because

ethical considerations play an important role in those actions influenced by an individual's own willingness. This is hardly found in actions that come from authoritative forces. It is pointless to think of beginning to conform to commands that one think and feel uncomfortable about them (David 5).

Compliance to orders of an authority that are somewhat obnoxious is mainly the genesis of an escalating course of entrapment. It further extends in the same line of progressively destructive deeds thereby becoming difficult to free self from the commanding authority. This is simply because doing so is equal to challenging the fact that the previous acts of acquiescence were not right.

Some scholars argue that when belongs to a certain group that has been ordered to undertake actions that might not be moral in the society; one should look for an ally from the same group who has the same perceptions as yours, to work together and challenge the obnoxious commands. Being a lone rebel is enormously difficult due to the robust human need of belonging. Moreover, through the course of pluralistic ignorance, the acquiescence of other people makes the deed look acceptable and eventually make one question his or her own bad judgment (Jonah 24). According to Doris Lessing, almost all the pressures that emanate from outside are in the form of group beliefs, needs of the group as well as the national needs, patriotism and those demands of loyalties like one's city and all sorts of local groups. More importantly are the pressures that come from the inside. They demand that one should comply with the social norms (Lessing 5).

## Conclusion

Whether to obey or disobey authority remains a controversial discussion. Obeying authority is essential in establishing a harmonious and organized society. However, disobeying authority is justified especially in situations where individuals are obliged to observe obnoxious, discriminative or unjustifiable directions. The majority of experiments on obedience to authority provide a clear highlight of the consequences of obeying or disobeying authority. Individuals are obliged to obey authority to avoid conflict and foster peaceful coexistence. Laws are formulated to maintain order in the society. This ascribes the rationale of abiding by the formulated regulations. However, individuals should not obey authority blindly without thinking about the implication and the consequences of the issued directions. In some situations, disobeying authority is justified. Although disobeying authority can make a person experience serious sanctions, the challenge is often worth taking for a better future. However, individuals planning to disobey a particular exploitive regulation should lobby for support from other people of similar interest to stage an influential force that can prompt a change.

## Work Cited

Aristotle. " Politics." Web. 7th May 2014. <http://socserv2.socsci.mcmaster.ca/econ/ugcm/3ll3/aristotle/Politics.pdf>

Barrio, Adrian. " Rethinking Schneckloth v. Bustamonte: Incorporating obedience theory into the Supreme Court's conception of voluntary consent." University of Illinois Law Review, pp. 225-251. 1997. Print.

Browning, Colette. Ordinary men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the final

<https://assignbuster.com/good-research-paper-about-obedience-to-authority/>

solution in Poland. New Harper/Collins. 1992. Print.

Colman, Andrew. "Crowd Psychology York: in South African Murder Trials." *American Psychologist*, Vol. 46, pp. 1071-1079. 1991. Print

David, Brooks. "The Follower Problem." *The New York Times*. 7th May 2014. [http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/12/opinion/brooks-the-follower-problem.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/12/opinion/brooks-the-follower-problem.html?_r=0)

Fromm, Erich. "Disobedience as a Psychological and Moral Problem." Web. 7th May 2014. <http://english2010information.pbworks.com/f/Erich+Fromm+Disobedience+as+a+psychological+and+moral+problem.pdf>

com/f/Erich+Fromm+Disobedience+as+a+psychological+and+moral+problem.pdf

Jonah, LeTeen. "Power Trip". Web. 7th May 2014. <http://bidask.tumblr.com/post/951293441/the-power-trip-weekend-essay-by-jonah-lehrer-how>

Lee, Ross & Richard Nisbett. "The Power of Situations." Web. 7th May 2014. <http://english2010information.pbworks.com/f/Lee+Ross+and+Richard+E+Nisbett++The+Power+of+Situation.pdf>

com/f/Lee+Ross+and+Richard+E+Nisbett++The+Power+of+Situation.pdf

Lessing, Doris. "Group Minds." Web 7th May 2014. <http://loh.loswego.k12.or.us/mcnealm/Senior%20English/Group%20Minds.pdf>

McLeod, Saul. *Obedience to Authority*. 2007. Web. 7th May 2014. <http://www.simplypsychology.org/obedience.html>

Milgram, Stanley. "Behavioral study of obedience." *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, Vol. 67, pp. 371-78. 1963. Print.

Milgram, Stanley. *Obedience to authority: An experimental view*. 1974. New York: Harper & Row. 1974. Print.