

Obedience and conformity

Business



The quality of being obedient can be described as an act of being actuated or an act of carrying out a command. People have to be extremely explicit to differentiate between obedience and conformity. The latter is mostly behavior influenced by a majority, whereas obedience is an act performed in response to an order from a person in authority.

In fact, everyone is allowed to do what he/she wishes, there would be so much disorder since there would be no authority in charge. There exists sinful obedience and virtuous obedience. For instance, if a person orders another to steal or to kill another person without his free will to do so, this is considered to be a crime. Therefore, it is possible to distinguish between obedience and conformity. Obedience is predetermined behavior as instructed by the person in authority, while the latter is determined by pressure mounted by the crowd.

In most cases, no one manages the collective behavior of a crowd, which acts in a particular way in response to a various issues; unlike in obedience, whereby authority dominates and directs a person/people on how to behave. Obedience is paramount to avoid punishment or bad consequences, while the latter make a person fit in a certain crowd or to be accepted by peers. It is crucial to sought where not to cross the line since obedience to authority may become dangerous. The essay will focus on both the acceptable and unacceptable levels of obedience. According to Stanley Milgram, the perils of obedience, depicts that a person's moral can conflict with the completion of tasks ordered by an authority.

In his experiment taken through tests, pain is inflicted to another person, who is an actor. Subjects do not wish to harm anyone who does not hurt, thus moral tendencies of human beings do not cause pain on others.

Although the need to complete the orders dictated by the authority is so compelling within their mind, the subjects are in conflict with their moral stand. Milgram depicts these people, as the ones willing to resist the authority, regardless of the outcome. Milgram's experiment deduces that most people will do what an authoritative figure orders at the expense of their own moral conscience.

He used two individuals who were willing to carry out the study. The teacher was a real subject, and the learner was an actor. They were both aware of what participation was expected of them in the study. The experiment was said to study the effect of punishment in learning. In fact, the learner (actor) was made to sit on an electric chair.

In this case, the learner was aware of that the chair would not hurt. On the other hand, the teacher was unwitting on the situation. When time to administer the shock came, the teacher got tense and, at some point, she wanted to quit the experiment, but she received a reprimand and was made to continue. She hesitantly did so, since the order was coming from an authoritative figure. At the end of the experiment, she even admitted that she was not responsible for any harm caused to the learner. Thus, she refused to go on inflicting 'pain' and finally quit the experiment.

Unlike predictions made earlier that the subjects would refuse to carry out the experiment, some teachers only refused go beyond some voltage. The

predictions were ultimately wrong. Over 50% of the first experiments run accepted the orders. It is recorded that other similar experiments were carried out, and most people were obedient. As we expound on dangerous obedience, we cannot ignore the fact that a person's deeds and actions are governed by social influences or the environment. Hence, people's opinion or attitudes leave applicable issues on whether the social sources constrain a person's ways.

According to Solomon Asch, a social psychologist who tries to provide clear answers on how consistency of independence of behavior is functionally related to the personality of an individual, it is noteworthy that social influence also determines a person's behaviour. He carries out an experiment using visual judgment where students are asked to compare the lines that have differed length. The subjects in this case announce their similar outcomes. The second one receives unanimous responses, while the third one is faced with a series of disagreements. One of the subjects finds himself to be in a minority.

It was concluded that there was a disturbance of the majority's unison. A truthful partner was introduced to support or rather deplete the majorities' power. This eased the tension and pressure to the disturbed party, hence creating a feeling of warmth and closeness. Going back to the ancient days described in the Bible, it is obvious that human history witnessed a number of disobedient acts. This is depicted in the scenario where Adam and Eve defied an order of God.

According to religion, the prophets believed that a man had been right in his disobeying, since it led to development of powers, emergence of reason and love. Thus, other schools of thoughts consider obedience to be the cause of the fall of humanity. This is supported by the fact that disobedience gives a possibility to destroy civilization. It is, therefore, worth noting that in heteronymous obedience, a person accepts a foreign judgment instead of his/her personal judgment. On the other hand, the autonomous obedience means the self-affirmation, this is when a personal judgment is a part of an individual (Asch, 1955).

In my opinion, there is a connection between the autonomous obedience and reasonable obedience, where one does something he or she would not have done if they were at free will. However, doing it should be in personal interest or interest of others. For example, where a country bans smoking in public places, it is likely to find people defying or even protesting against this order/law, yet they protect their own interest and interests of others. It is unlike in dangerous obedience, where one does what he/she is ordered without considering the harm inflicted on others. For instance, where people were hired to demolish houses where squatters lived with their families. The demolishers did so without caring where the desperate people would go.

These people were following the orders blindly. In conclusion, I have a personal experience that happened to me, while I was in high school. My parents were very strict on my academics to a point I was grounded and I could not go out with my peers. This was just to ensure that I had more time to concentrate on my studies and improve on my grades. I rebelled and hardly listened to my parents and teachers. Instead, I chose to go by my <https://assignbuster.com/obedience-and-conformity/>

peers' words, they even introduced me to smoking and binge drinking, which really affected my social life.

I did this against my conscience. My grades subsequently went down, and this saw me being expelled from school. This was a great disappointment not only to my family but also to me. I can draw a test from Erich Fromm's (2006) study about disobedience as a psychological and moral problem. Indeed, in this case, I am paying a price for being unreasonably obedient.