

Stanley milgram
versus diana
baumrind essay
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Obedience is when someone does what a person or rule tells him or her to do. People tend to follow orders of an authority, and this can sometimes result in a negative effect. An example would include all those people who were obedient to Hitler, and killed innocent people in the Holocaust. For instance, Stanley Milgram, in his article, Perils of Obedience, writes about his experiment, of how people obey an authority, neglecting their conscience, and how this can be a threat to real life experiences. In contrast, another Psychologist, Diana Baumrind, in her article, " Review of Stanley Milgram's experiments on obedience," states that Milgram's experiment was unsuccessful for many reasons; and therefore, it is not valid. Both Psychologists have different views on the validity of the experiment and on how this experiment shows if people would obey an authority no matter what, in real life or not.

The experiment conducted in 1963 by a Psychologist named Stanley Milgram, consisted of a diverse group of people that were forced to obey an authority. The participants consisted of a teacher, a student and the experimenter. The teacher had to read word pairs to the student once, and the students had to memorize them. After this, the teacher would read a word to the student, and the student should have already memorized the pair. Whenever the student made an error, he would receive electric shocks of increasing intensity. The electric shocks were not real, but the teacher did not know this, and thought he was really hurting the student. The experimenter would insist the teacher to continue with the shocks and the teacher would decide how far to go. Therefore, the experiment was focused

on the teacher, in order to see how human beings obey orders in real life, and if this is a problem. (Milgram, Perils of Obedience)

Both Psychologists have different opinions as to why the teacher continuously followed the experimenter's orders to give electric shocks to the student although they knew they were causing pain. According to Milgram, the teacher followed the experimenter's orders because they felt that the guilty one for any damage caused would be the experimenter; since, he is the one conducting the experiment. " Experimenter: I'm responsible for anything that happens to him. Continue please. Prozi: All right (320, Milgram).

Milgram says, " Teachers were the ones inflicting pain but still did not feel responsible for their act. According to Baumrind, teachers followed orders because they trust the Psychologist. She specifies, " The subject has the right to expect that the Psychologist with whom he is interacting has some concern for his welfare, and the personal attributes and professional skill to express his good will effectively (336, Baumrind)." By this, she states that teachers think that a professional would not let anything wrong happen.

Baumrind totally insists that the setting had something to do with the responding of the teachers. Milgram varied his settings to prove different outcomes. The setting in which teachers went the farthest in inflicting pain to the learner was when the teacher and learner were in different rooms, and the experimenter was present with the teacher. Milgram points out in his article, " Although these inhibiting emotions appear small in scope alongside the violence being done to the learner, they suffuse the mind and feelings of

the subject, who is miserable at the prospect of having to repudiate the authority to his face (Milgram, 325).” Milgram was trying to prove that people are vulnerable following orders when the authority asks them personally to do something, especially in a small tense place. It is also easier to harm when a person is not face-to-face to the victim.

Baumrind thought the victims only followed orders because they felt uncomfortable and confused. She said that, “ The laboratory is unfamiliar as a setting and the rules of behavior ambiguous compared to a clinician’s office. Because of the anxiety and passivity generated by the setting, the subject is more prone to behave in an obedient, suggestible manner in the laboratory than elsewhere (Baumrind, 330).” It is clear she believed that teachers were following orders because the setting made them uncomfortable and this looked nothing like a real doctor’s laboratory. They were just intimidated by the setting and should react different otherwise, and with other people.

Baumrind and Milgram both disagree on the effects the experiment had on the teachers. Milgram states how the participants were happy once they knew the experiment was not real and that they now are aware of how to act when an event like this happens to them in real life. Mr. Bravernman, a teacher said, “ What appalled me was that I could possess this capacity for obedience and compliance to a central idea...don’t hurt someone who is helpless and not hurting you...I hope I deal more effectively with any future conflicts of values I encounter (323, Milgram).” By this people can see that the teachers learned from this and that they are now ready to deal with such event as obedience according to Milgram.

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On the other hand, Baumrind, thought teachers felt used and ridiculized when they found out the truth. The subjects might have faced loss of self-esteem and the only reason why they acted happy when they found out the truth was because they could not express their anger after the experimenter in a very polite way points out the truth. She states, " I do regard the emotional disturbance described by Milgram as potentially harmful because it could easily effect an alteration in the subject's self-image or ability to trust adult authorities in the future (332, Baumrind)." She is saying that the effect the experiment had on teachers was negative.

Milgram and Baumrind have different views on the results the experiment portrayed. Milgram thinks his experiment was successful and that this is a threat to society, since, people are able to hurt others just because they are following orders. An event like a war could arise just because an evil authority orders people to kill. Baumrind disagreed with Milgram because she thought the experiment had many erroneous factors and that people cannot determine real life experiences with this experiment.