

OBEDIENCE

How can we resist obedience?

[Milgram] educating people about dangers of blind obedience

encouraging people to question authority

Brehm [1966] exposing people to actions of disobedient models

'foot-in-the-door' tactic (FITD) [Freedman & Fraser, 1966]

Six basic tendencies involved in generating a positive response when one person tries to influence another:

- social validation
- authority
- scarcity
- reciprocity (reciprocation)
- liking
- consistency

[Cialdini, 2004]

= complying with request/instruction of an authority figure

- In conformity = no explicit requirement to act in a particular way, unlike obedience
- In conformity, we're influenced by our peers (equals) and → homogenisation of behaviour. In obedience = no mutual influence
- Obedience relates to differences in social power/status within a hierarchical situation

Differences between conformity and obedience

- Example (conformity) vs. direction (obedience) [Brown, 1986]

Power of social situations

Uniforms/other visible symbols of authority

conformity

Zimbardo's research

[Zimbardo et al., 1973]

Prison simulation experiment

Reicher & Haslam [2001]

Dispositions vs. Roles

stereotyped expectations → 'role-playing' [Banuazizi & Mohavedi, 1975]

Why do people obey?

personal responsibility

Hamilton [1978]

diffusion of responsibility

perception of legitimate authority

agentive vs. autonomous state

Genocide: 1

- authorisation
- routinisation
- dehumanisation [Hirsch, 1995]

banality of evil [Arendt, 1965]

Nazi atrocities

My Lai massacre

Bickman [1974]

Bushman [1984]

'foot-in-the-door'

[Gilbert, 1981]

socialisation

[Brown, 1986]

Ethics?

Experimental studies of obedience

Milgram's research

[Milgram, 1963, 1965, 1974]

'Germans are different' hypothesis

- remote-victim condition (original experiment) → 65% obedience
- voice-feedback (experiment 2) → 62.5% obedience
- institutional context (variation 10) → 47.5% obedience
- proximity/touch proximity (variations 3/4) → 40% /30% obedience
- remote authority (variation 7) → 20.5% obedience
- two peers rebel (variation 17) → 10% obedience
- a peer administers the shocks (variation 18) → 92.5% obedience

methodological issues

- unrepresentative sample: more/less authoritarian?
- gender
- lack of experimental realism [Orne & Holland, 1968] and mundane realism
- cross-cultural replicability
- Sheridan & King [1972]
- Rank & Jacobson [1977]
- Hofling et al. [1966]