

What is obedience?

Obedience is following the orders of an authoritative figure. There are two types of obedience: blind obedience and destructive obedience.

Blind obedience is following orders without asking questions and destructive obedience is obedience that leads to the harm of others.

Note that blind obedience **CAN** lead to destructive obedience.

Milgram's agency theory

Agency theory was proposed by Milgram. He believes that our tendency to obey authority is a mechanism to maintaining a **stable society**.

To exist in such a complex society, there are **social rules** that we follow. In order to follow these rules, we have to give up a degree of our **free will**.

This system is a hierarchy where the authoritative figures are at the top and the subservient individuals are at the bottom.

The reason we have a hierarchy is because it is to maintain the stable society.

The hierarchy has evolved (Darwin) to promote a stable society. Without this hierarchy, harmony would be lost.

Why might someone follow orders?

There are a few reasons as to why someone might follow orders:

→ agency theory: they believe they are an agent for someone else

→ justification: if the order makes sense to the person, then they are more likely to obey

→ buffering: if the consequences or the aftermath of the act is not immediate or close, then they are more likely to obey

Primary socialisation

This occurs when a child learns the norms, values and behaviours that should be followed to live accordingly. This comes from family.

Secondary socialisation

This is where an individual in a small group (that is still part of a larger society) learns the ideal behaviours from them.

This can be from friendship groups, media and/or a community.

What is conformity?

Conformity is where an individual changes their behaviour to fit in with a certain group.

It could be due to the fact that the group has managed to internally influence the individual or that the individual doesn't want to be the odd one out.

There are three types of conformity (**Kelman 1985**):

What is conformity? (cont)

→ compliance: complying with others' behaviours by agreeing externally but not internally.

→ internalisation: going along with others' perspectives because the individual themselves have internally changed their perspective as well.

→ identification: changing perspectives due to a strong desire to be liked by others.