

1) Milgram wanted to measure the degree of obedience a participant demonstrated by examining their willingness to follow instructions from an authority figure which directly conflicted with their moral conscience. Specifically, the participant (playing the role of the teacher) was ordered to administer powerful electric shocks on a learner if a wrong answer was given. Milgram was interested in documenting the level of compliance shown by the participant once they discovered the learner was in serious agony and experiencing heart complications.

2) One benefit of Milgram's design was the insightful data it produced. This famous experiment clearly demonstrated the "power of the situation" and the enormous influence exuded by an authoritative figure. It expresses the many psychological tendencies and behavioral reactions which take shape during very stressful and confusing circumstances. The study also raised important, yet disturbing questions regarding the extent to which a normal person will submit to a direct order even if it compromises their personal moral standards. The major drawback of Milgram's design was the unethical nature of the experiment. Specifically, the participant was subjected to a large amount of unnecessary psychological harm from the fear and anxiety that their actions were physically harming another human being. Also, the potential post-experiment trauma faced by participants, who realized they possessed the capacity to willingly engage in abusive actions towards another person on the sole basis of an authoritarian command, could have been psychologically devastating. Another ethical concern was a lack of informed consent because Milgram was deceptive when describing the purpose and characteristics of the experiment to participants.

3) I would set up my research design by first advertising the opportunity to participate in a psychological experiment on punishment and learning which would offer a large sum of money to subjects. I would make it clear that relatively painful electrical shocks would be involved, but they would not be harmful to one's health. I would also inform participants that they could quit the experiment at any time without hassle. I would proceed in a fashion similar to Milgram's study by having the subject be the teacher and the confederate be the learner. On the electrical charge unit, I would only label the level of voltage and disregard the intensity labels. The experiment would be conducted exactly like Milgram's, but I would inform the teacher that the confederate was actually a member of the lab and had been exposed to these shock levels previously without much complaint. Therefore, the teacher would not be concerned about harming the confederate and would simply believe the electric shocks were being used to determine if punishment improved the learning of word phrases. As the experiment was underway and the voltage increased after the confederate's intentional wrong answers, I would have the confederate yell in pain after every shock but refrain from indicating any medical problems or desires to quit. Whenever the teacher became concerned over the confederate's pain tolerance, the experimenter would remind him that the confederate had experienced these voltage levels before and the experiment should continue. As the shocks increased in strength, the confederate would in turn continue to increase the amplification of his pain responses so as to

keep the teacher second guessing himself. The study would measure to see if the teacher would defy the experimenter and cease giving the electrical shocks at any point during the experiment.

4) First, my design is more ethical because I am using less deception in my explanation of the experiment. Specifically, I am indicating ahead of time that the study will involve punishment in the form of electrical shocks so as to not violate the rule of informed consent. My experiment is also more ethical because it substantially decreases the amount of psychological stress experience by the participant. For example, the teacher may be concerned and slightly fretful regarding the pain cries from the confederate, but he or she is constantly reminded that the shocks are not harmful, have been subjected to the confederate previously, and the confederate was a lab member willing to participate. This information would thereby reduce the anxiety of the participant to an certain extent while still allowing them to question the situation.

5) I believe my research design does an adequate job at addressing issues of obedience and compliance, but because of the ethical issues I took into account, the study would not be as informative or insightful compared to Milgram's experiment. Even though my experiment is a definite improvement on ethical standards, I am not sure if it would be approved by the KU Institutional Review Board because it still involves some questionable procedures. Overall, I believe it is almost impossible to replicate Milgram's experiment accurately in the present day due to the numerous guidelines in conducting research. In order to conduct an acceptable obedience study under the current rules, it would most likely require one to invent a completely new and unique experiment which was dissimilar to Milgram's.