

THE RELATIONSHIP OF AUTHORITARIANISM AND BEHAVIOR MODELING IN PROSPECTIVE TEACHERS

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This study was concerned with the relationship between authoritarianism and tendencies toward behavior modeling in a population of 23 students involved in a teacher training program at the University of Houston. Of specific interest was whether or not subjects rated as highly authoritarian demonstrate a significantly greater tendency to model neutral teaching behavior than do subjects who were rated as less authoritarian. Selected items of the Rokeach Scale of Dogmatism (D Scale) were used to measure authoritarianism. Subjects observed a videotaped model while she taught a linear math concept, then each subject was asked to teach the same concept. A panel of five judges observed the teaching performance and rated subjects according to the degree of imitative behavior which was evidenced. A Kendall's tau was used to investigate the relationship between level of authoritarianism and degree of imitative behavior. This procedure yielded a correlation of $\tau = 0.47$ and a z of 2.879. These results indicated a statistically significant ($p < 0.002$) relationship between subjects' ratings on the authoritarian variable and their tendencies to model the behavior of teaching experiences which they observed.

Imitation is generally defined as the situation in which observation of the behavior of a model affects the observer so that the observer's subsequent behavior becomes more similar to the observed behavior of the model (Flanders, 1968). Imitative learning is one of the significant educational processes because of the social environment in which most learning takes place. Without demonstrations of desired behaviors, learning can be very slow. Imitation, often referred to as modeling, has been well documented as a means of influencing the behavior of others (Bandura, 1969; McDonald, 1970). Research on this topic has been concerned with the types of behaviors that are imitated and the effect of manipulation on the imitation situation.

Very little consideration has been given to the authoritarian personality as it relates to imitative behavior. The findings of Epstein (1966), however, suggest a positive relationship between the observer's level of authoritarianism and the degree of imitation of a model's aggressive behavior. Epstein states that authoritarian attitudes are shaped by punishment of independence and reinforcement of conformity and imitation. It therefore seems probable that highly authoritarian persons

would imitate the behavior of a model more closely than low authoritarians even though individual variability is to be expected (Akamatsu and Thelen, 1974), especially in the low authoritarian personality category.

Though little research has been done to associate authoritarianism and modeling in a teacher population, other aspects of imitation learning have been examined within this group. Numerous studies (Koran, 1969, 1971; Lange, 1971; Koran *et al.*, 1971, 1972) have demonstrated a change in teaching behavior by employing modeling or imitation learning as a treatment variable.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this study was to further examine the personality variable of authoritarianism as it occurs in a population of university students who are enrolled in a teacher training program. Of specific importance was determining whether subjects rated as highly authoritarian demonstrate a significantly greater tendency to model teaching behavior than do subjects who were rated as less authoritarian. Establishing such a relationship would be of particular importance to educators. Such information might suggest alternative teaching-learning strategies for both college students and school-aged children, as well as suggesting potential methods for modifying authoritarian teacher behaviors in a classroom setting.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

Subjects for this study included 23 education majors enrolled in the Competency Based Teacher Education Program at the University of Houston. Five of the participants were male and 18 were female. Two of the subjects were black and the remaining 21 were white. The subjects were a subset of a group of 76 CBTE students who had all received university training together. Each subject volunteered after having been invited to participate in the study. At the time of the request, each potential subject was told the basic requirements of the study, and was assured that he would remain anonymous and that his participation in the study would not affect his course grade in any way.

The study was conducted at three stations which were set up in the subjects' university classroom. Only one subject was permitted in the room at a time. At the first station, the subject was asked to fill out an opinion questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of 16 items included in the Authoritarianism and Intolerance subsets of the Rokeach Scale of Dogmatism (1960). Subjects are required to read each item and mark the extent to which they agree or disagree with its content.

Response choices on the questionnaire included strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree and strongly disagree. For scoring purposes, these response choices were assigned a value of 2, 1, 0, 1 and 2, respectively. This scoring procedure was used in place of the standard procedure in order to obtain a single measure of authoritarianism. Following data collection, the subject's response to each item was tabulated and the numbers for all 16 items were then summed to yield a general measure

of authoritarianism for each subject. Scores ranged from 10 to 28, with higher scores representing a higher measure of authoritarianism.

Upon completion of the questionnaire the subject was asked to move to station two. This station provided the observational experience upon which the measure of degree of imitative behavior was based. Each subject was asked to view a six-minute videotape which showed a model teacher teaching a linear math concept. At the beginning of the tape the model explained what she would be teaching, and that after the observational experience the subject would be asked to teach the same concept. She stressed that subjects could use any teaching style they deemed appropriate and could use any available materials regardless of whether or not these were the ones she had employed.

Every effort was made to insure that the model in the videotaped presentation appeared neutral to the subjects. She exhibited no behaviors which are associated with authoritarianism. Also, her teaching skills were as neutral as possible. She used only a few of the teaching materials which were available to her and employed only a few of the learning strategies to which students had been previously exposed.

After viewing the videotape, the subject moved to station three. Station three was organized to exactly replicate the environment observed on the tape. Following the instructions previously given on the videotape, each subject taught the same linear concept which he had seen the model teach.

A panel of five judges concealed behind a two-way glass mirror rated each subject according to the degree to which he imitated the model. The judges were all graduate students majoring in Special Education at the University of Houston. Three of the judges were female. Each of the five judges rated the degree of imitation for each subject's behavior. Specific points of imitation which the judges were instructed to note were whether subjects imitated the model's vocabulary, style of presentation, body position, position in space, concept terminology, teaching aids, instructional materials, arrangement of materials, sequencing of materials and lesson format.

An 11-point scale ranging from zero to 10 was used for the rating procedure. Each judge rated each subject according to the overall degree to which the subject imitated the model in his teaching behavior. A rating of zero indicated a total lack of imitation in the subject's performance. Any rating above three was used to indicate progressively more than an incidental amount of imitation. A rating of 10 indicated an exact reproduction of the model by the subject. The five ratings given a subject were ranked from highest to lowest. The highest and lowest scores were dropped. The mean of the middle three scores was calculated and used as the rating for each subject's behavior modeling. The judges were instructed not to discuss the subjects' presentations until after the last subject had been rated. Subjects' scores on the rating form ranged from a low of 3.3 to a high of 9.

Prior to the day on which the subjects were to be rated by the judges, each judge was provided with a script of the videotape and a list of the imitable behaviors. In addition to studying the script, each judge

was allowed to view the videotape as many times as he wished in order to become thoroughly familiar with the model.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

A Kendall's tau correlation coefficient was computed to determine the relationship between subjects' measure of authoritarianism and subjects' measure of imitative teaching behavior. The correlation coefficient was then transformed to a z statistic and referred to the tables for statistical significance. A summary of the results of these procedures is shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1: RELATIONSHIP OF AUTHORITARIANISM TO IMITATIVE BEHAVIOR

Source	N	M	τ	z
Authoritarianism Rating	25	6.1926	0.47	2.879*
Imitative Behavior Rating	23	18.6522		

* $p < 0.002$.

As indicated in the table, a correlation of 0.47 was found to exist between the variables measured. This correlation coefficient resulted in a z statistic of 2.879. This z was statistically significant at $p < 0.002$. The results, therefore, indicate that for this population of subjects, those rated as highly authoritarian had a significantly greater tendency to imitate teaching behaviors which they observed.

CONCLUSIONS

The findings here seem to suggest a positive relationship between authoritarianism and behavior modeling. If these findings are supported by further research, possibly some alternative strategies for changing the long-criticized authoritarian behavior of classroom teachers would be suggested. Also, some indications are evident concerning the possible relationship of highly authoritarian teacher trainees to the previous type modeling experiences they have had. Of further interest might be an investigation of the consequences of present teacher trainers who operate as an authoritarian role model.

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