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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the influence of teacher characteristics (age, gender, and dogmatism) and situational factors (self-motivated, other-motivated and in-class, out-of-class behavior) upon the judgments that are made regarding discipline decisions and perceived causal factors of alcohol related problem behaviors. Eighty educators read scenarios describing four problem behaviors involving alcohol and were instructed to respond in three ways. The educators also completed the short form of the Rokeach Dogmatism Scale. The causal attributions of the educators were analyzed separately for each of the four drug problems. From the comparison of scores, it was apparent that the "age" main effect was a strong one. Younger educators consistently recommended less severe discipline techniques than did the older group. The low dogmatism educators recommended the most severe disciplines while the high dogmatic educators recommended the least severe discipline. (Author/PC)

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Influence of Situational
Factors and Teacher Characteristics
on Drug-related Disciplinary Decisions

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The Influence of Situational Factors and Teacher Characteristics on Drug-related Disciplinary Decisions

The investigation of the judgmental processes underlying the perception of individuals; generally called person perception, has been extensive (Taguiri, 1969). The model often employed in these studies identifies three major components: the judge, the situation, and the person being judged. The application of the person perception findings and this model to applied situations such as the judgmental process underlying disciplinary decisions in educational settings has been limited. Investigations in this area have primarily dealt with the teachers' influences upon student behavior and the attitudes and behaviors of students receiving discipline (Woodruff, 1958). The variables which affect educator's judgments and perceptions when dealing with problem behavior have not received much attention (Letchworth and Stansell, 1974) especially in drug related problem behaviors.

Various studies have shown that person perceptions are affected by the authoritarian or dogmatic traits of the perceiver (Secord and Backman, 1964). Rokeach (1959) describes dogmatism as the relative degree of open or closed-mindedness, basically determined by the extent to which a person can receive, evaluate, and act on relevant information on its own merits. Dogmatism has been investigated with respect to teacher effectiveness (Soderbergh, 1969; Charters, 1969; and Eulau, 1965) and with respect to its influence upon discipline decisions made by teachers (Letchworth and Stansell, 1974). A number of studies have shown that person perceptions vary systematically with the age and sex of the perceiver. Gender of

the judge has been found salient in several studies investigating person perception (Shrauger and Altrochi, 1964; Cline, 1964) and in investigations of teachers' discipline decisions (Letchworth and Stansell, 1974). The teacher characteristic, age, has been shown to affect decisions concerning discipline in drug offenses at a junior college (Dotson, 1973).

Not only are teacher characteristics important in the judgmental process but the judgment of an individual's behavior is also influenced by the context in which it occurs (Secord and Backman, 1964). Judgments of behaviors of an individual are often quite different depending upon the interpretation of the cause as being either internal or external in nature; that is, the perceived motives of the actor (Secord and Backman, 1964). The present study investigates the influence of teacher characteristics (age, gender, and dogmatism) and situational factors (self-motivated, other-motivated and in-class, out-of-class behavior) upon the judgments that are made regarding discipline decisions and perceived causal factors of alcohol related problem behaviors.

METHOD

Eighty subjects were selected from a group of 140 graduate students in education who were experienced teachers, counselors, and administrators. The educators read scenarios describing four problem behaviors involving alcohol that varied as to self or other motivated and occurred in or out of class. The educators were then instructed to respond in three ways. They first responded to an open-ended request to "List in your own words what disciplinary

action you would recommend." They were then instructed to choose from a set of eighteen disciplinary techniques the one they would recommend. The techniques had been chosen from a list of thirty-seven obtained from a survey of techniques used in public schools (Porter, 1972) and then scaled using the Thurstone technique (Edwards, 1957) on a dimension of severity from one--being most severe--to eleven--being least severe. The third response was: "In the problem situation what do you see as the cause or causes of the student's behavior. Please feel free to speculate as to the possible cause or causes."

The educators also completed Troldahl's (1965) short form of Rokeach's Dogmatism Scale. High scores indicating close mindedness and low scores indicating open mindedness. The possible range is 20-140.

The educators were classified according to their gender, age, and dogmatism. The dogmatism classification was accomplished by a median split with scores sixty and below being classified as low dogmatism and those sixty-one or above being classified as high in dogmatism. The subject scores on the severity of discipline were cast into a 2 (teacher dogmatism) X 2 (teacher age) X 2 (teacher gender) X 2 (self, other motivated) X 2 (in, out of class behavior) design and an analysis of variance with repeated measures on the last two factors was performed.

The causal attribution of the educators were analyzed separately for each of the four drug problems by means of the coding system devised by Elig and Friege (1974).

Elig and Friège (1974) in devising the coding system for perceived causability present three sources to which caused attribution may be assigned: internal, external, and mutual. An internal attribution according to them is one that states that the person is the source of the cause; where as the external attribution states that the source of the cause is external to the person; such as, in other people, in luck, in pressures from peer groups and in social norms, etc. Mutual sources are often grouped with external sources since "the person's perspective mutual sources depend on the presence of external objects or other people."

The coding system also provides for stable attributes relatively fixed and unchanging from situation to situation, and unstable attributes which are situational and variable. The causal attributions of the educators (the third open ended response) were categorized into a 2 (stable-unstable) by 2 (internal-self or external-other) matrix and a Chi Square was performed on each of the four scenarios.

RESULTS

The results of the analysis of variance are shown in the summary table in the Appendix. In addition, another analysis of variance was performed with only the six extreme dogmatism scores (high and low) in each category. This was done in order to get a group that was more representative of low and high dogmatism than was obtained by splitting dogmatism scores at the median. A comparison of the significant findings of each analysis is shown in the table in the appendix.

The Chi Square analysis of the causal attributions indicated only one scenario (self-out of class behavior) as being significantly differentially attributed.

DISCUSSION

From the comparison of the two analyses of variance it is apparent that the B (age) main effect is a strong one. Although not as interpretable as it should be because of interaction effects, the age (B) main effect does indicate that the younger (30 and under) educators did consistently recommend less severe discipline techniques than did the older group.

The AE (dogmatism by in or out of class situation) interaction also was consistent across the two analyses ($p < .10$ for $N=10$ and $p < .05$ for $N=6$). The low dogmatism educator, reading an in-class situation consistently recommended most severe disciplines while the high dogmatic educator reading a scenario involving in-class situations consistently recommend the least severe discipline.

Since there were several interaction effects significant in each of the analyses, it appears that the three educator characteristics of dogmatism, age, and gender operated differentially with perceived motivation and situational factors in producing discipline decision, concerning alcohol related problem behaviors.

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SCENARIOS

1. SELF-MOTIVATED, IN-CLASS: A student falls asleep during class obviously intoxicated. Upon questioning, the student says "school is a real drag and drinking helps."
2. OTHER-MOTIVATED, IN-CLASS: A student comes into class intoxicated. Upon questioning, the student says "I am new to the school and in order to become one of the group I agreed to drink with the group during the lunch break."
3. OTHER-MOTIVATED, OUT-OF-CLASS: A student (along with several others) is found to be intoxicated at a football game. The student states that "I was only getting into the school spirit and besides all the students always drink before the games."
4. SELF-MOTIVATED, OUT-OF-CLASS: At a school dance a student who came to the dance (alone) is found to have been drinking. The student states that "such school activities are uptight and a person has to have a drink in order to make it through them."

CELL MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS

	30 AND UNDER		31 AND OVER			
	Male	Female	Male	Female		
Low Dogmatism	$\bar{X} = 4.83$ S.D. = 3.25	$\bar{X} = 7.00$ S.D. = 1.55	$\bar{X} = 4.33$ S.D. = 1.97	$\bar{X} = 5.17$ S.D. = 2.71	In-class	Self-Motivated
	$\bar{X} = 7.00$ S.D. = 2.53	$\bar{X} = 8.33$ S.D. = 1.97	$\bar{X} = 4.33$ S.D. = 1.97	$\bar{X} = 5.83$ S.D. = 3.13	Out-of-class	
	$\bar{X} = 7.83$ S.D. = 2.14	$\bar{X} = 5.50$ S.D. = 2.35	$\bar{X} = 3.67$ S.D. = 1.97	$\bar{X} = 6.00$ S.D. = 3.29	In-class	Other-Motivated
	$\bar{X} = 6.67$ S.D. = 1.97	$\bar{X} = 8.50$ S.D. = 1.64	$\bar{X} = 5.50$ S.D. = 3.33	$\bar{X} = 5.67$ S.D. = 3.14	Out-of-class	
High Dogmatism	$\bar{X} = 7.00$ S.D. = 1.55	$\bar{X} = 7.50$ S.D. = 1.64	$\bar{X} = 5.83$ S.D. = 2.23	$\bar{X} = 6.50$ S.D. = 1.22	In-class	Self-Motivated
	$\bar{X} = 7.17$ S.D. = 1.94	$\bar{X} = 7.50$ S.D. = 2.59	$\bar{X} = 7.50$ S.D. = 2.07	$\bar{X} = 4.17$ S.D. = 2.86	Out-of-class	
	$\bar{X} = 8.50$ S.D. = 1.22	$\bar{X} = 8.67$ S.D. = 1.63	$\bar{X} = 7.33$ S.D. = 1.51	$\bar{X} = 5.83$ S.D. = 3.54	In-class	Other-Motivated
	$\bar{X} = 7.17$ S.D. = 2.79	$\bar{X} = 8.17$ S.D. = 2.32	$\bar{X} = 6.17$ S.D. = 3.19	$\bar{X} = 5.33$ S.D. = 3.20	Out-of-class	

SIGNIFICANT RESULTS OF ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE
FOR N = 10 AND N = 6

	10 Subjects	6 Subjects	Common to both
MAIN EFFECTS:			
A (Dogmatism)		$p < .10$	
B (Age)	$p < .01$	$p < .01$	*
C (Gender)			
D (Self-other motivated)	$p < .05$		
E (In-out of class)			
INTERACTION EFFECTS:			
AE	$p < .10$	$p < .05$	*
DE	$p < .05$		
BCE		$p < .10$	
ABCDE		$p < .05$	

MEAN SEVERITY SCORES FOR
N=10 AND N=6

B Main:	30. and under	31 and over
N=10	7.413	5.738
N=6	7.333	5.573

AE Interaction:

	in-class	out-of-class	
N=10	5.963	6.688	low dogmatism
	6.888	6.763	high dogmatism
N=6	5.542	6.479	low dogmatism
	7.146	6.646	high dogmatism

ITEM	QTY	UNIT	PRICE	TOTAL
A	14.77	1.	1.534	22.6518
R	22.114	1.	1.0341	22.8551
C	1.21	1.	1.0131	1.2252
AM	0.245	1.	0.0134	0.00328
AC	1.2	1.	0.1131	0.1357
MC	1.51	1.	0.113	0.1696
AMC	1.502	1.	0.1134	0.1695
REC	15.547	72.		

ITEM	QTY	UNIT	PRICE	TOTAL
AD	15.515	1.	0.1778	2.7460
AD	2.11	1.	0.5700	1.2027
AD	1.117	1.	0.017	0.0196
AD	5.510	1.	1.5134	8.3281
AD	1.005	1.	0.1032	0.1037
AD	1.115	1.	0.113	0.1265
AD	1.11	1.	1.11	1.2321
AD	1.11	1.	1.11	1.2321
AD	1.11	1.	1.11	1.2321

ITEM	QTY	UNIT	PRICE	TOTAL
F	1.11	1.	1.0343	1.1477
AE	10.851	1.	3.6617	39.7350
RE	0.452	1.	0.1151	0.0519
CE	1.245	1.	1.3172	1.6387
AME	0.044	1.	1.0313	0.0454
ACE	7.202	1.	1.8350	13.2150
HCF	0.104	1.	0.0012	0.0012
AME	0.125	1.	0.2027	0.0253
REC	5.025	72.		
DE	15.411	1.	3.0003	46.2300
AME	1.010	1.	0.1778	0.1798
HDF	1.112	1.	2.2507	2.5007
QUE	1.121	1.	0.2904	0.3254
AMUE	0.120	1.	0.0057	0.0068
ACTE	0.120	1.	0.0071	0.0085
MCDE	2.112	1.	0.0154	0.0325
AME	3.501	1.	1.0511	3.6800
REC	5.020	72.		

* EIRSTAT JOHN F. FISHER *

		F.F.	F-RATIO	P
TOTAL	6,762	191		
RETAIN	14,433	47		
A	37,830	1	3.3822	0.0700
B	148,757	1	13.3701	0.0010
C	4,340	1	0.3937	0.5408
AB	0,877	1	0.0789	0.7769
AC	22,003	1	1.9777	0.1640
BC	5,004	1	0.4497	0.5132
ABC	14,634	1	1.3153	0.2572
XEK	11,126	40		

WITHIN	4,259	144		
D	7,922	1	1.8473	0.1786
AD	0,422	1	0.0984	0.7536
BD	1,506	1	0.3511	0.5636
CD	1,879	1	0.4382	0.5187
ABD	1,173	1	0.2736	0.6099
ACD	3,798	1	0.8857	0.6453
BCD	3,250	1	0.7580	0.6067
ABCD	3,261	1	0.7603	0.6075
XEK	4,288	40		
E	2,297	1	0.5464	0.5494
AE	2,795	1	0.4388	0.0145
BE	2,755	1	0.7155	0.5827
CE	0,129	1	0.0335	0.8499
ABE	1,176	1	0.3054	0.5901
ACE	3,803	1	0.9875	0.6727
BCE	14,632	1	3.7996	0.0553
ABCE	0,123	1	0.0319	0.8533
XEK	3,851	40		
DE	2,752	1	0.6611	0.5736
ADE	0,883	1	0.2121	0.6522
BDE	2,297	1	0.5517	0.5315
CDE	11,509	1	2.7643	0.1005
ABDE	0,419	1	0.1006	0.7510
ACDE	2,295	1	0.5513	0.5313
BCDE	3,258	1	0.7824	0.6145
ABCDE	24,790	1	5.9539	0.0182
XEK	4,164	40		

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