Authoritarian Personality and F-scale Created by Theodor Adorno: Analytical Essay

Psychology is a simplest word is a science that investigates human, human mind and its behaviours. Often topics investigated more are negative aspects rather than positives. After Second World War scientist were very eager to discover the origins of aggressive and violent behaviours and what is the reason of that. Two of them were Adorno -conducting authoritarian personality studies and Bandura checking if children would repeat aggressive behaviours presented to them by another person. Both of experiments were quite different however can definitely help to explain 'What makes people do harm to others.

As mentioned above both studies were trying to discover what is that people tend to harm each other.

Authoritarian personality and F-scale created by Theodor Adorno and his colleagues in sequence to explore anti-Semitism, authoritarian and after fascist likelihood within the public. The authors were willing to show that some people are more ethnocentric and intolerant than others and that these tendencies foster receptivity to authoritarian and possibly fascist beliefs. While Adorno's studies were examining tendencies to fascism Bandura and Ross focused on social behaviour like aggression whether children would copy the behaviour observed by the model. The other purpose of this study was to check other factors like gender of participants and models, also if they would repeat actions seen in live situation, or movie etc.

Methods used in both studies were completely different. First, Adorno used questionnaires and scales with points. They were asking people if they agree with statements like 'There will always be wars because for one thing there will always be races who ruthlessly try to grab more than their share '. More they agree the more points between 1-7 they indicate. The higher score the more potential for fascism. Secondly, in order to explain the reasons of that, part of the participants was invited to the interview. The people taking part in this study were middle class white American from San Francisco area. Bandura conducted a controlled experiment aiming to check if aggression can be obtained by watching and imitating. All participants were children from Stanford University Nursery school, half girls and half boys in ages 3-6years old divided into 4 groups. Also, another very important aspect was independent variable which means that research was manipulating a lot of

The findings of Adorno's research were that people scored high in anti-Semitism and ethnocentrism questionnaires also were identified as with potential for fascism. It didn't mean that they were fascists but more like kind of person how would feel comfortable in a society that accepts prejudice behaviours towards weaker or different. Afterwards, Adorno's team decided to explore the reasons and origin of authoritarian personality. Moreover, after conducting interviews they discovered that participants scored highly on authoritarianism admitted growing in more conservative and disciplined families than others. The consequences of that was unconscious process of idealising a strict parents and tendency to hater or disrespect to the weaker ones.

The Bandura famous Bobo doll research found that people could learn by observing and

imitating others behaviour. The groups in the experiment that observed the aggressive role model copied violent behaviours comparing it to the other group. As researchers predicted it was proved that boys were more likely to repeat physically aggressive behaviour more than girls. However, in case of verbally aggressive responses, there was no differences between both genders. If the model was female, girls showed more of verbal aggression. On the other hand, if the model was a male they expressed more of physical violence. Girls weren't very eager in copying the same-sex models while boys were more likely to imitate behaviour of the same sex model.

Although both studies were extremely important in psychology, have been also widely criticized for several things. Authoritarian personality by Adorno since published, initiated a huge number of other studies, experiments, discussions and criticism. A big strength of Adorno's theory is that it actually reached its support. Milgram and Elms conducted a research aiming to check if there is a link between their obedience study and authoritarian personality. The result was that people taking part in obedience study, scored much higher in F-scale comparing to the disobedient participants. In regard to criticism, Authoritarian Personality and F-scale was mainly assessed on its methods and interpretations. The way that scale was designed was that all the statements were run in the same direction therefore it means that participants could tend to agree with them. In psychology, that process is called acquiescence response bias.

Results of Bobo Doll study by Bandura supported his social learning theory. Overall, it was a well-planned experiment that procedures were very standardised. Predictions before the experiment has been conducted were mostly correct. On the other hand, it was unethical and taking place in 'lab setting 'is not normally a normal environment for child. The biggest disadvantage though was that this study might suffer from selection bias as all of the children taking place are coming from the same society and background. Therefore, the results should not be addressed to larger and more diverse population.