



Social Learning Theory



Individuals develop who they are through
environmental factors
= role models

Key Points

- Through observational learning, children model their behaviour by watching others.
- The Social Learning Theory can be used to explain why some young people may succumb to peer pressure and carry out risky behaviour such as drinking alcohol or taking drugs.
- If a young person feels lonely, they may start to immitate others in order to try and fit it.

Criticism of Bandura's Social Learning Theory

The Social Learning Theory ignores the influence of biological factors (nature) on behaviour and development, such as the role of hormones and genes.

Four Stages of Learning

Attention

Child pays attention to the person who they wish to imitate the behaviour of. This is usually somebody who they are close to and admire.

Retention

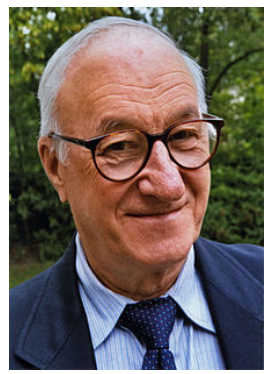
Children retain the behaviour that they have paid attention to. This includes remembering the actions that they have displayed and the responses they have received.

Reproduction

They reproduce the behaviour that they have seen with the aim of receiving the same response as their role model received (this can include acceptance)

Motivation

If children receive the response that they were looking for, they will repeat the same behaviour again.



Bandura's Bobo Doll Experiment on Social Learning

Aim In 1961, Bandura conducted an experiment to investigate if social behaviours (in this case, aggression) can be acquired by observation and imitation (copying)

A lab experiment was used, in which the doll (the independent variable) was manipulated in three conditions:

Method

- 24 children watched an adult behaving aggressively towards the doll.
- 24 children watched an adult play with the doll in a non-aggressive, quiet and subdued manner.
- 24 children did not observe an adult playing with the doll (This was the **control group**)

Results

Children who observed the aggressive model made far more imitative aggressive responses than those who were in the non-aggressive or control groups.

Conclusion

Children are able to learn social behavior such as aggression through the process of observation learning, through watching the behavior of another person. The findings support Bandura's (1977) Social Learning Theory.

