

Core Study: Bandura, Ross & Ross (1961)

Background: Social Learning Theory



Recap Test

1. How many students took part in Samuel and Bryant's study? (1)
2. What 4 age groups were participants split into? (4)
3. What were the three materials that students were tested on? (3)
4. What were the three conditions in the study? (3)
5. State one result from the Samuel and Bryant study? (1)
6. What did Samuel and Bryant conclude? (1)
7. What type of research method did Samuel and Bryant use? (1)
8. What type of experimental design did Samuel and Bryant use? (3)
9. What learning theory was linked to learning through observation and imitation of models
10. According to behaviourism why are some people aggressive? (1)
11. What did Albert Bandura study? (1)

Social Learning Theory

Watch the clips and answer these questions:

- Who do we learn our behaviour from?
- What do the clips suggests about how we learn behaviour?

Video Clips

- Anti-smoking advert
- Children see, Children do..

Social Learning Theory – Background to Bandura



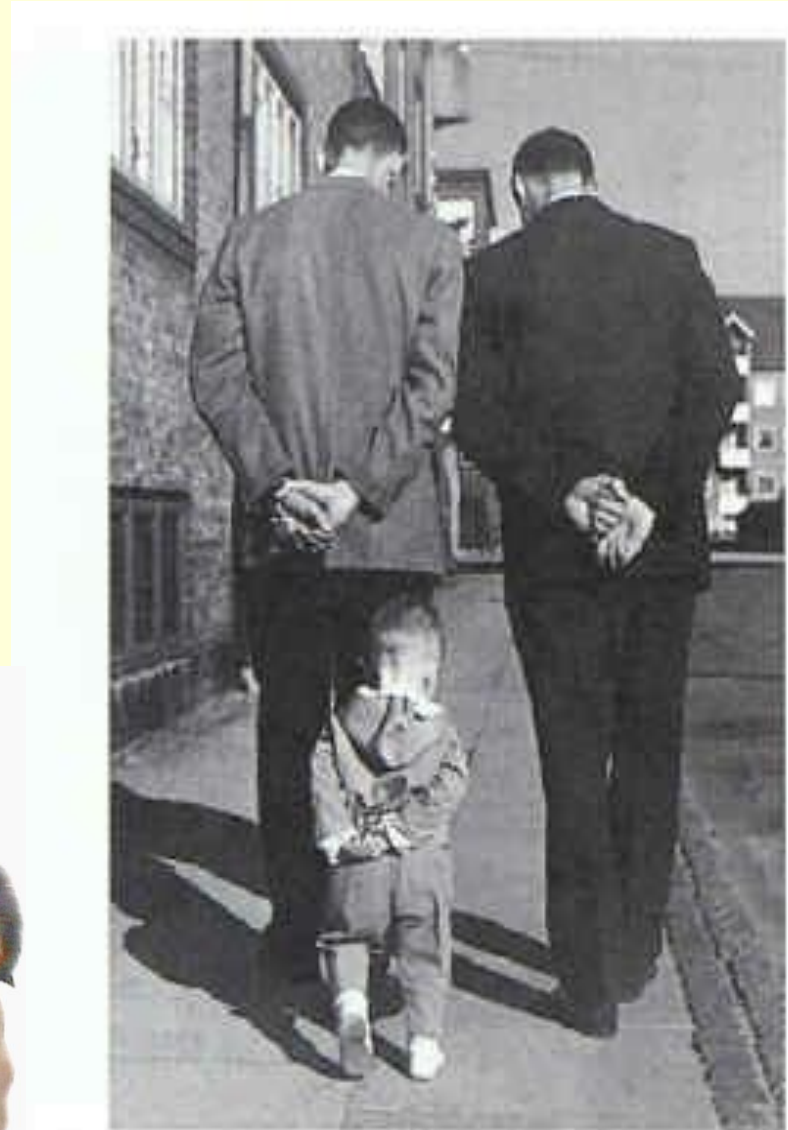
- Before half term you answered this question:
Outline what is meant by social learning theory
[4]
- So...
- What is Social Learning Theory?

Social Learning Theory

- **Social learning theory** or SLT is the theory that people learn new behaviour through **observational learning** of the social factors in their environment. If people observe positive, desired outcomes in the observed behaviour, then they are more likely to model, imitate, and adopt the behaviour themselves.
- Bandura: Individuals observe role models and the consequences of their actions. If the consequences are positive (or at least not punished) they imitate the behaviour. For example, if children observe a naughty child, not being punished, and in fact benefiting from their action through teacher attention, they are likely to copy.

What is Modelling?

- Modelling involves learning through the observation of other people (models), which may lead to imitation (repetition) of the behaviour.



Task:

1. List as many different models as you can that would influence a child growing up in the 21st Century.
2. What would children learn from these models?

Key Terms for you to research...

- Observational learning
- Imitation
- Vicarious reinforcement



Answers...

- Observational learning involves being able to **automatically** learn behaviour from just being exposed to models, without the need for reinforcement.
- Imitation involves copying whole units of behaviour
- Vicarious reinforcement involves seeing **another person being reinforced** for a particular behaviour and therefore being more likely to produce the behaviour yourself.

How would social learning theorists explain aggression...

- Theorists like Bandura suggested that aggression is **learnt from the environment**
- Mainly through **observational learning** and **imitation**
- This leads us on to the core study...

Core Study:



Bandura, A., Ross, D. & Ross, S.A. (1961) Transmission of aggression through imitation of aggressive models.

Aim

- To see whether children would imitate aggressive behaviour



Hypotheses

1. Children exposed to an aggressive model would produce more imitative aggressive acts than both the other conditions (control and non-aggressive).
2. Children exposed to the non-aggressive model will show less aggression than the group that saw no model.
3. Children more likely to copy a same-sex model than one of the opposite sex.
4. Boys will imitate more aggressive acts than girls, especially with a same-sex (male) model.

Participants

- 72 children (36 male, 36 female)
- From Stanford University Nursery School,
- Mean age of 4.4 years
- Range from 3 years and 1 month to 5 years and 9 months



Method

- Laboratory Experiment
- What are the features of a lab experiment?

Design

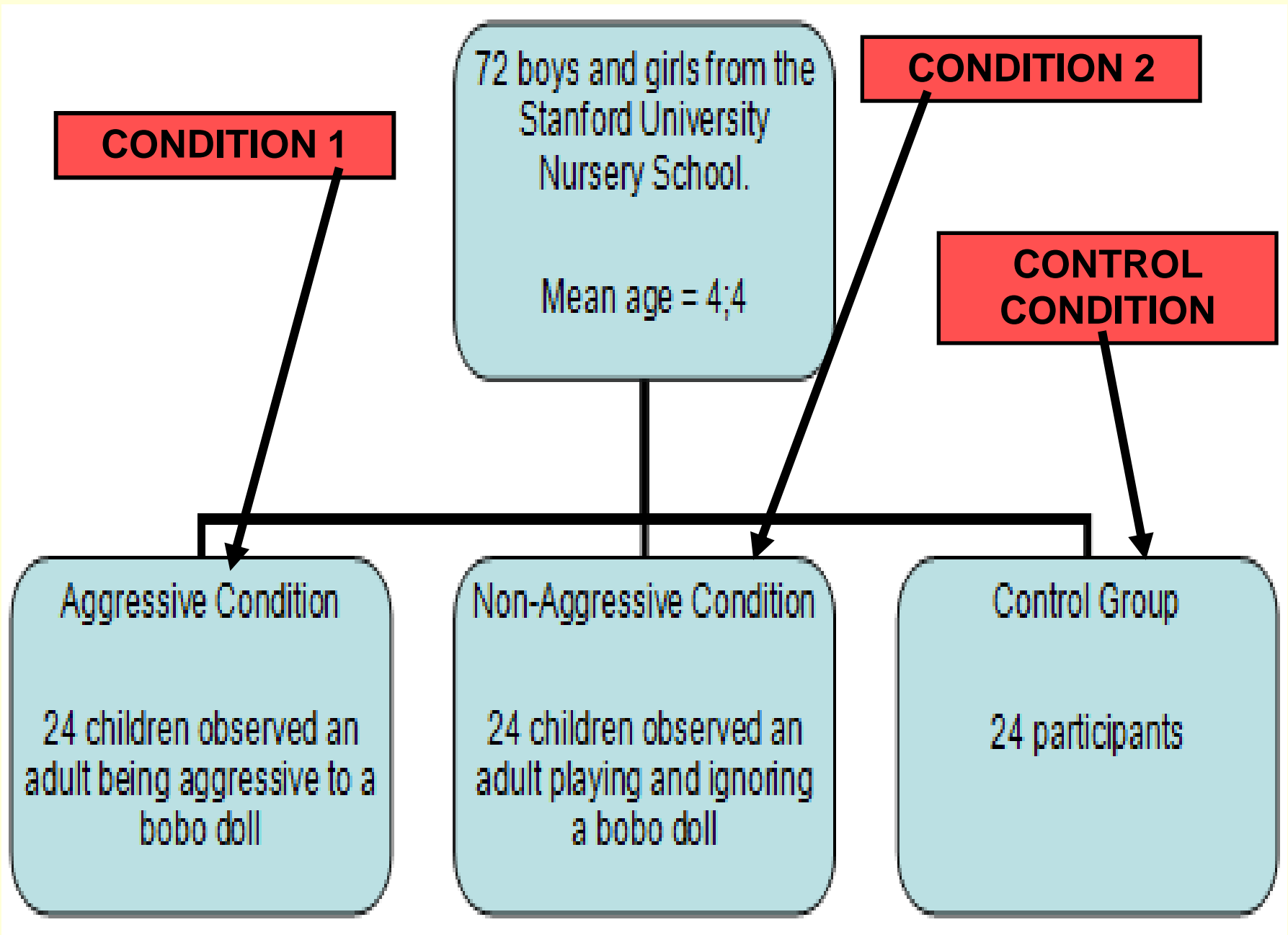
- Matched = Children matched on pre existing aggression before the study began
- This was determined by a 5 point likert scale filled in by teachers who had observed the children in the playground
- **Why is this good? (Think about what is good about matched pairs)**
 - To control for individual differences in levels of aggression so all the aggressive children did not end up in the same group.
 - To make it a fair test so not all the aggressive children ended up in the same group.
 - So level of aggression was not a confounding variable that could have influenced results.

Independent Variables

- **Conditions**
 - 1. Aggressive**
 - 2. non aggressive**
 - 3. Control**
- **Sex of the model – male/female**

Dependant Variables

- Aggressive acts observed
- Experimenters used **covert** observations to record the data



CONDITION 1

72 boys and girls from the Stanford University Nursery School.
Mean age = 4;4

CONDITION 2

CONTROL CONDITION

Aggressive Condition

24 children observed an adult being aggressive to a bobo doll

Non-Aggressive Condition

24 children observed an adult playing and ignoring a bobo doll

Control Group

24 participants

Aggressive
Condition

24 children

6 boys with same
sex model

6 boys with
opposite sex
model

6 girls with same
sex model

6 girls with
opposite sex
model

Non-Aggressive
Condition

24 children

6 boys with same
sex model

6 boys with
opposite sex
model

6 girls with same
sex model

6 girls with
opposite sex
model

PROCEDURE

- Children tested individually and each went through three rooms (APART FROM THOSE IN CONTROL CONDITION)

Condition 1 ROOM 1

Hit him
down!



ROOM 1

1. AGGRESSIVE CONDITION

- Children taken to room with toys in it and watched:
- Aggressive model = played with toys then started acting aggressively towards BoBo doll

Condition 2 ROOM 1

ROOM 1

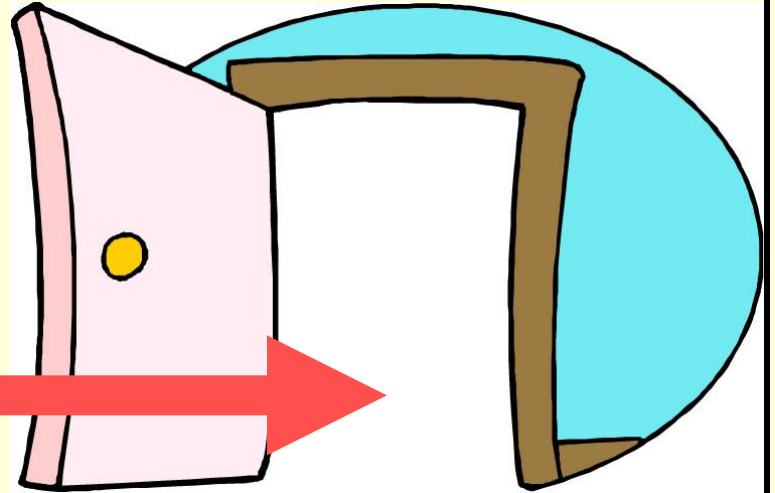
I just like to play with these toys not the Bobo Doll



NON AGGRESSIVE CONDITION

- Children taken to room with toys in it and watched:
- Non aggressive model = played with the toys and did not play with the BoBo doll at all.

After ten minutes child was taken by experimenter to the next room



After ten minutes child was
taken by experimenter to
ROOM 2....

ROOM 2

AGGRESSION AROUSAL

- Aggressive and non aggressive condition children taken to a room with attractive toys e.g. fire engine, colourful spinning top and allowed to start playing
- The child was then told that they were the experimenter's best toys and were for the other children.



You cannot play
with these toys
they are my best
toys for other
children

Then the observations of behaviour
began in ROOM 3...



I can play
with any
of the
toys
now!!



ROOM 3

- This room contained aggressive and non-aggressive toys and a 3-foot BoBo doll.
- Child was in the room for 20 minutes
- Their behaviour was rated by observing through a one-way mirror.
- The twenty minutes was divided up into 240 5-second intervals and child's behaviour recorded at each interval (time sampling)

Controls

- The children were **matched** on the basis of their **pre-existing aggression**: rated by one female experimenter and a nursery school teacher before the experiment.
- **Same toys** available for each child in each room
- **Models** had **standardised behaviours** (both physical and verbal)



RESULTS

1. Boys more physically aggressive than girls

I don't feel like hitting the BOBO right now but I might shout at it later



GRRR
PUNC
H



2. The children in the aggressive model condition made more aggressive responses than the children in the non-aggressive model condition



Novel Ways of being aggressive also used
Such as Doll/Hammer/Gun
Even though it was not modelled



3. Girls in the aggressive model condition showed more physical aggression if the model was male and....



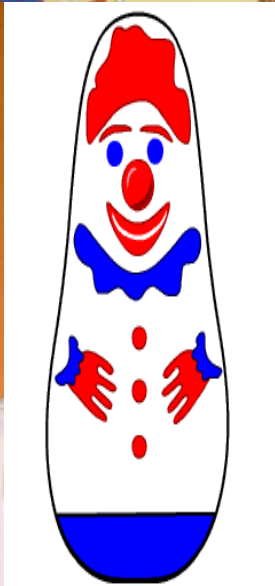
'He's a good fighter like Daddy'



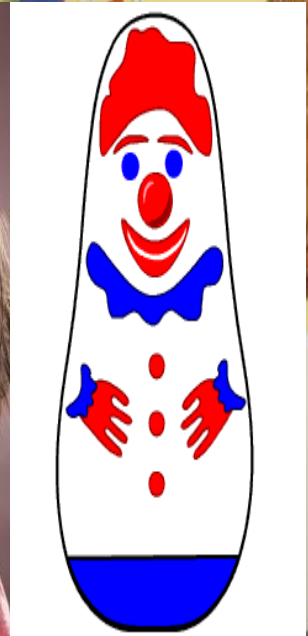
'I want to sock like Al...'



- ...More verbal aggression if the model was female



'That's not the way for
a lady to behave'
No surprises
here I am sure??



4. Boys more likely to imitate same sex models than girls



Conclusions

- The findings support Bandura's Social Learning Theory.
- That is, children learn social behaviour such as aggression through the process of observation learning - through watching the behaviour of another person.



. . . monkey do

Evaluation

Strengths

- High Control – can establish cause and effect
- Qualitative & Quantitative Data collected
- Replicable – similar results consistently found

Weaknesses

- Low ecological validity
- Demand Characteristics
- Ethnocentric
- Ethical Issues
- Is it actual aggression or just harmless play?

Changes and Implications

- **What 3 changes could you make to the study?**
- Pass you work to the person next to you
- They must then note down what is good and bad about the changes you have suggested...

Section A question

- **In this study by Bandura, Ross and Ross, all the participants were taken individually into a second room and subjected to mild aggression arousal.**
- **Describe how the children's aggression was aroused in this room [2]**
- **1 mark** – Partial or vague answer e.g. children had toys taken away from them.
- **2 marks** – Clear description of the procedure as detailed above.

Answer

- The children were taken into the room and allowed to play with attractive toys e.g. fire engine, jet fighter plane, colourful spinning top. After about two minutes the experimenter said the toys had to be reserved for other children, so took them away.

Section B Question

- Describe two ethical issues raised by Bandura's study [6 marks]
- **0 marks** – No or irrelevant answer.
- **1 mark** – One ethical issue is identified, not linked to chosen study and with little or no elaboration.
- **2 marks** – Description of ethical issue is basic and lacks detail. Some understanding may be evident. Expression is generally poor.
- **3 marks** – Description of ethical issue is accurate, is elaborated and clearly linked to the study. Understanding is good.

Section B question

- **Explain one reason why the researcher's needed to break ethical guidelines and one reason why they should not have done so. [6 marks]**
- **0 marks** – No or irrelevant answer.
- **1 mark** – Reason for breaking/not breaking ethical guideline is identified, not linked to chosen study and with little or no elaboration.
- **2 marks** – Description of why the researcher(s) needed to/did not need to break ethical guidelines is basic and lacks detail. Some understanding may be evident. Expression is generally poor.
- **3 marks** – Description of why the researcher(s) needed to/did not need to break ethical guidelines is accurate, has elaboration and is clearly linked to the study. Understanding is good.

Answers

- Ethical Issues: No consent gained from children + stress caused to children by being shown aggressive acts.
- Why they should: Bandura: if children had not been exposed to aggression researchers would not have been able, so easily, to see how readily children imitate the behaviour modelled by significant others.
- Why they should not: It is not fair to put children in such stressful situations especially if they challenge the morals of society.

Section B Questions

- **Suggest how your chosen study could be made more ethical. [8 marks]**
- **0 marks** – No or irrelevant answer.
- **1-3 marks** – One or two changes suggested which are very basic and lack detail (eg one or two general statements are identified such as: get informed consent). Some understanding may be evident. Expression is generally poor. The answer is unstructured, lacks organisation, grammatical structure is poor and there are many spelling errors.
- **A maximum of three marks if not linked to chosen study or if list with no detail.**
- **4-6 marks** – Description of one or more appropriate changes is accurate. Detail is good and some understanding is evident. Expression and use of psychological terminology is reasonable. The answer has some structure and organisation, is mostly grammatically correct and has few spelling errors.
- **7-8 marks** – Description of at least two appropriate changes is accurate. Detail is appropriate to level and time allowed. Understanding is very good. Expression and use of psychological terminology is good. The answer is competently structured and organised and is grammatically correct with only occasional spelling errors.

Answer

- Get informed consent from parents before the study
- Debrief them afterwards so they appreciate both the positive and negative sides of the behaviours they model in front of children.
- Let parents know children can withdraw
- Show non aggressive behaviour to protect from harm

Section C Questions

- **Describe one similarity and one difference between Bandura's study and Samuel and Bryant's conservation study. [6]**
- **0 marks** No or irrelevant answer.
- **1 mark** – Similarity/Diff is identified, with little or no elaboration.
- **2 marks** – Description of similarity/Diff is basic and lacks detail. Some understanding may be evident. Expression is generally poor.
- **3 marks** – Description of similarity/Diff is accurate and has elaboration. Understanding is good.