

# Banduras social cognitive theory children and young people essay

[Family](#), [Children](#)



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Topic: Bandura's social cognitive theory This essay is deal with Bandura's social cognitive theory which shows to people that children or even adults learn behaviors and manners from observation and modeling. The first section of this essay will introduce readers on what is child development? Explanations on stages of child development are included. Next, the details on basic concepts of Bandura's theory and factors affect modeling learning. In third and forth section, readers will encounter with the application of social cognitive theory on child development and children of preschool and early primary schools. This essay is concluded with summary of Bandura's social cognitive theory.

1. Introduction Child development refers to improvement of biological, psychological and emotional that occurs in human between births to puberty. Development and growth are two different aspects. Development shows qualitative traits of child such as intellectual, spiritual, emotional and social interaction however growth display quantitative features like physical changes. Growth is the largest changes occur in human. From have to sleep almost 16 to 17 hours a day until they can dresses themselves is the growth of children. This changes are differing from each stage; newborn, infants, toddler, preschooler, school-aged child and adolescent. Newborn are babies up to 28 days. At this stage, they only develop basic senses such as sight, hearing, smelling, touching, tasting and pain. Then, they become infants; 1 month till 12 month old. Some said it is ' doing' stage because infants' sensory and motor abilities start to improve. They start to cry, coo and mumble most of vowels and some baby words that we can't understand but they can grasping and recognize their mothers' odor. When infants slowly learn to walk, they are call as toddlers. From age 1 until 3, toddlers' motor,

cognitive and language abilities start to strengthening. They can walk with support, and then they can walk alone about 10 to 20 minutes until they can ride tricycle. It is ' thinking' stage since they will obey to simple command but at the same time they think for themselves much. In preschool stage; self awareness and imagination stage, children can jump up and down and they already begin to use adult-like words since their cognitive system can store over 2, 000 words. They also able to cooperate on playing with other children and practice more social skills in their daily play activities. When they move to school-aged and adolescent; 7 to 19 years old, they create more worries as they having conflict with parents and they fare more affected by peers. At this stage, most girls and boys start to reach puberty thus they having problems with emotional stability, seeking for new identity and start growing in sexual interest. All this stages involve in psychology and cognitive development as these changes will affect other area of human body systems. Psychology growth is connected to development of social contact. This improvement is not innate because Bandura and Skinner were two psychologists that claimed, behavior is learned. Nevertheless, Skinner's behavior learning process was through the causes and the effects of an action but Bandura emphasis on interaction of human with one another to learn a behavior. Throughout this essay, I will explain more on Bandura's social cognitive theory and how it affects in child development. The reasons I choose Bandura's theory is because I agreed that human learn behaviors by imitate others. For instance, my mother always advice my siblings to use polite words because our two years old niece will try to imitate us some time later. Bandura's theory was focused mainly on behavior modeling process

since according to Bandura, children learn from imitate others' behaviors which involve manners, actions, values and customs. 2. Basic Concept of Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory Social cognitive theory is about the process of learning behaviors through observation, modeling and repetition for positive and negative reinforcement. Bandura believed that human shaped and improved their behavior by involved in social context. To strengthen this claim, Bandura came up with two methodologies; observational learning and vicarious reinforcement. Human especially children learn new behavior by modeling others' behaviors through observational learning processes whereas children learn new behaviors and strengthen their behavior by observing the effect of others' behaviors and copy it through vicarious reinforcement processes. In observational learning processes, children require model such as parents, siblings, teachers and peers but not reinforcement. Models are important because it allows children to cognitively process, encode and store displayed behaviors. Models might purposely or not purposely show certain behaviors to children and children probably go through modeling processes from various models. Apart from that, vicarious reinforcement processes need both models and reinforcement and it is often used to remind or inform others the advantages or disadvantages of doing something. Tradition of using famous celebrities in promoting products is based on the idea of vicarious reinforcement. When Aishwarya Rai said she uses L'oreal Paris Total Repair 5 shampoo to get ravishing and healthy hair, it reinforces others to model her by buying and using L'oreal Paris shampoo too. There are three factors which stimulate modeling behavior which go through observation learning processes. First is

Models' Characteristics which included live model, verbal instruction and media. Models' traits influence our probability to imitate them. We tend to copy someone who is similar in age and sex group, in high status and prestige; parents, older siblings and teachers and models show simple behaviors. A child will imitate his or her peers' actions who are already know how to use bubble maker rather than asking their own parents. It is because they find it more comfortable to communicate with same age friends. In modeling learning, children have high tendency to copy simple adults' behavior such as waving, shaking hands and nodding head rather than complex action. Next aspect is Observers' Characteristics. Modeling learning is effective when someone is in low self-confidence and self-esteem and when someone is reinforcing to copy the modeled behaviors. Children especially newborns, infants and toddlers are more probability to imitate other as there are still in 'doing' and 'thinking' stage. They learn by observe and imitate others. The third factor is Consequences of the Behaviors. Rewarding and punishment give impact on observers' imitation. When someone is rewarding for imitate modeled behaviors, its reinforce them to continue the behavior. If someone get not meaningful rewards for imitate modeled behaviors, its reinforce them to discontinue the behavior. In preschool stage, children already face with limitation from parents especially involving home rules and norms. At this stage, children love to play outdoors and be friends with others; as they imitate their parents' social skills. This worries the parents as the children might become too friendly with strangers or even with kidnappers. Thus, parents will stop them from playing outside of the house for a certain time. This limitation depressed the children and

affects their development. 3. How social cognitive theory apply on child development? In behavior development, children will observe and imitate their models around them. Children are leaning from observation as early as they born. For example, according to Harris and Liebert (1992), a six days old baby girl stick out her tongue after her mother showed the action repeatedly in front of her. Based on theory of modeling, newborns are having problems to immediately imitate their models' behavior. It is because newborns' brain equipped with 100 billion brain cells or neurons. Only few of them are connected through connection or synapses. The more the babies interrelate with environment, the more the process of synapses occur which can increases the growth of intelligence of children. Due to this phenomenon, there are two basic ideologies children' models especially parents need to know. First, parents need to repeat their action several times. The reason is infants' cognitive capacities such as memories and imagination are not fully developed yet. Secondly, action of parents that they wish the infants to imitate need to done within the development of sensorimotor of the infants; about 2 years old. Before age two, children begin to imitate their models' action some time later. It is due to the growth of their sensorimotor and cognitive system. After age two, children can imitate their models' action immediately in form of verbally response or repetition actions. Young children imitate their models' behavior due to reinforcement. Earlier in this essay already introduce to reinforcement but what is exactly reinforcement means? Reinforcement is process of giving rewards or punishment to someone for successfully or fails to fulfill someone's expectation. For instance, mothers always teach their newborns

to call them "mom" and they will give kisses to the babies if they can utter it in their own language. It acts as a reward to the infants. Frequently children are reinforced by food, affection and punishment in modeling process. The question is how this reinforcement methodology by Bandura affects child development? The parents and caretakers are the one who set some standards of the young children performance in reinforcement process. As the process of reinforcement continues, the children will normalize with many behaviors. Models will show some behavior like pronouncing words, showing face expression, holding things and more so that young children can imitate it. If they can imitate it, models will reward them. For example, a mother tries to teach her little son to hold his toy. She holds it first in front of the son hence the son can imitate it. She repeatedly demonstrates the steps and when she gives the toy to her son, he successfully holds it. She will hug and kisses him as a reward for his effort. This will motivate her son to try hold the toy again. Eventually, these rewards strengthen the children's self efficacy; feeling of ability to survive in life. Self efficacy or self effectiveness will slowly develop in infancy stage as they start to involve in physical and social environments. They begin to learn about the effects of their own action which they imitated from models and these effects give them strength or weaken their development. The little boy might think that the more he tries to hold his toy, the more kisses he can get from his mother. Same goes as aggressive behavior shown by children because of their family environment; violent fathers, short-tempered siblings or even being ignored by the mothers will affect the children's self efficacy. They might have fears and phobias with adults, feeling insecurities to make friends and become a

quiet, gloomy child or involve in bullies. This certainly affects children performance as they grow. For instance, siblings who show violence in the families of bullies will encourage the children in showing the same aggressive actions towards other children in school (Duncan, 1999). As I remembered, when I tried to snatch television remote control from my younger sister, I accidentally pulled her hair. My two years old niece saw that and unexpectedly she tried to imitate our 'pulling' hair action with her baby toy. Fortunately, she done that aggressive action to her toy but from this experience and connection to the theory, it will not a surprise if my niece will pull her friend's hair in preschool later. As mention before, this is because, children observe and imitate adults' behavior. Reinforcement and self efficacy which learn by modeling parents' behavior and action give impact on child development; childhood till adolescence. This is because children will steadily build their self-esteem and self-awareness that influence their life progression. Inspiration of 'I think I can do it' will boost their confidence level to socialize with others. When children in kindergarten saw their friends can make an attractive Mother's Day Card, they think 'if they can do it, I can do it too'. Hence, they will try hard to make the best card too. As they grow, children need to cope with new challenges and pressure such as making peers, learning new things, personality problems and more. Level of self efficacy and confidence will assist them either they can effectively go through each stage of improvement and growth or they might fail to adjust.

4. How social cognitive theory apply on children from preschool and early primary level? As mention in this essay, children learn behaviors by observation. Thus, we need to clearly understand the process in



observational learning. These process always occur in preschool and early primary stage; 5 to 8 years old in Malaysia. Observational learning is run by four connected processes. First is Attention Processes. Cognitive system and perceptual ability in children are developing in order to assist them in paying attention to model. They will observe the displayed behavior of model accurately so that they can imitate it some time later. Next is Retention Processes. Children use their cognitive system to remember the models' behavior so they can imitate it later. Methods of remembering displayed behavior are through either forming mental images or verbal descriptions. Third, Production Processes. The children need to translate the mental image or verbal descriptions same as the displayed models' action by produce it physically and they will receive feedback from models either they done it correctly or they need some modification. Lastly, Incentive and Motivation Process. After observing the models' behaviors, children realized that the models will be rewarding either by physical objects, affection or feeling of satisfying come from other person or themselves. Hence, children expecting that if they successfully imitate and perform the models' action, they will get the same rewards. Example: However, Bandura claimed that reinforcement not exactly can stimulate children to learn. Sometimes, reinforcement is not necessary for learning processes to take place but it might be environment factors, emotional factors or curiosity factors of the children themselves to observe, imitate and perform models' actions. Although, close models of the children such as parents, caretakers or siblings wish the children grow in positive manners, but children have more tendencies to accurately imitate aggressive behavior of models. According to Bobo Doll Studies conducted by

Albert Bandura, it is possible that children can give responses that they never displayed before when they keep observing the models' behavior. In short, the object in this study was a Bobo Doll and the subjects were a group of preschool children. They watched an adult hit and kick the doll while shouted curse words. 80% of the children were repeating the aggressive actions to the doll when they were left alone with the doll. They imitate the adult behaviors towards the doll and this shows that children can act aggressively as they copy models' behavior that they saw live, from television and cartoons. A child modeled aggressive actions towards the doll after observing the model's actions. In 2012, police of Malaysia released a statistics that 432 youths were arrested due to bullying problems aged between as early as seven to 18. 341 youth aged between 16 and 18, 87 youth aged 13 to 15 and that's means 4 bullying cases involved seven to 12 years old children! (School bullies getting younger, say police, 2012). According to the report, the highest number of recorded bullying cases among children is Selangor with 66 cases. The main factor of this problem is influence of family environment which include negativity surroundings, restricted environment and development and chaotic family interactions. Seefeldt, Castle and Falconer (2010) found that children use the image of parents' social life to start their own effort in life. If the parents displayed good social interaction, the children will progress in life as good as the parents. On the other hand, if the parents demonstrated violent behaviors, the children will imitate it and faces many problems in life. Thus, models need to be careful with their actions; behaviors, attitudes and manners since it give impact on children especially preschool and early primary children. 5.

Summary Social cognitive theory by Albert Bandura focuses on learning of behavior through observation and modeling which in some situation, reinforcement is needed. Reinforcement can be in any form such as food, affection, punishment, limitation or even money. There are three causes of modeling behavior which are models, observers and impact of the imitation. Cognitive system of children is developing by stages. They go through changes from basic senses development, imaginal skills and sensorimotor slowly shows progression until they move to much challenging phrases, adolescents. Children learn behaviors from parents, siblings' interactions, teachers' instructions, television cartoons and other media sources. All of these medium play important roles in children observation and modeling learning. In observational learning, there are four processes involved; attention, retention, production and incentive and motivational processes. Result from Bobo Doll studies shows that children can learn all types of behavior, positive manners or negative actions. Hence, the impact of this theory can cause either helpful or harmful behaviors learning. Bandura studied that behavior learning are connected to cognitive abilities. However his studies excluded the human aspects of personality such as motivation and emotion influence. He also failed to explain precisely on the affect of cognitive abilities on behavior learning.