

Outline and evaluate social psychological theories of aggression

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Social Learning Theory Social Learning Theory is based on the fact that people learn from one another, via observation, imitation, and modeling. Social learning theory explains human behaviour in terms of continuous mutual interaction between cognitive, behavioral, and environmental influences. Outline of research: Bobo Doll experiment The Bobo doll experiment was conducted by Bandura and studied patterns of behaviour associated with aggression.

Bandura carried out this study to look at social learning, where people learn through imitation. He used children, because they generally have less social conditioning. Bandura wanted to expose children to adult models exhibiting either aggressive or nonaggressive behaviours. Then, in a new environment without the adult model, he wanted to observe whether or not the children imitate these adult model aggressive or nonaggressive behaviours. Evaluation of Research 1. Cause and effect can be established as it could be demonstrated that the model did have an effect on the child's resulting behavior because all variables other than the IV are being controlled. .

Artificial as hitting a doll isn't the same as hitting a person, as there is no evidence that young children intend to harm bobo in modeling experiments.

3. The bobo doll experiments are reliable as many other studies support the fact that children learn by imitating others. Outline of research:

Family background of aggression Patterson's study was conducted using interviews and questionnaires and comparing families with at least one highly aggressive child to other families. His findings suggested that a coercive home environment may cause aggressiveness. This is an environment <https://assignbuster.com/outline-and-evaluate-social-psychological-theories-of-aggression/>

which little affection is shown as they don't use social reinforcement they use punishment and shouting and other aggressive tactics for behavioural control. Evaluation of Research: 1.

Has high ecological Validity as it relates to real life situations. 2. the research is based on long-term influences on aggression, which therefore shows that it's more useful than studies which look at short term influences. 3. real life situations, not all variables can be controlled which could effect the behaviours which therefore means cause an effect are not conclusive.

Overall Evaluation of the theory 1. It has a lot of support from laboratory experiments such as the Bobo doll series of studies.

However it lacks ecological validity and this does reduce the theory's ability to clarify real life aggression. 2. Real life research such as Patterson demonstrates that role models are important in the development of anti-social behaviour. Therefore these studies support the SLT. 3. Lacks population validity as the key studies are done with children as the main participants so cannot be linked to older people.

Deindividuation Deindividuated people are more likely to be aggressive because of a loss of individuality which leads to reduced self-restraint.

Deindividuation is the loss of self awareness and sense of personal responsibility, people normally avoid acting in a aggressive manners partly as it's seen as vulgar behaviour and as they are identifiable to society.

However being anonymous in a crowd means reducing inner restraints and increasing behaviours that are usually inhibited, Studies such as Zimbardo have provided evidence that deindividuation can be an explanation for

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aggression. Outline research evidence: Zimbardo Zimbardo aimed to try and find if anonymity was a key factor in deindividuation. In an experiment very similar to Milgrams - he found that in his anonymous group they gave twice as many shocks as high control group even when told the learner was critical. He then concluded that anonymity was the reason for this and it led to that groups added aggression. Evaluation of research 1. Could be said that neither study actually measures physical aggression as the participants do not physically harm each other.

. Because it is not a real life situation participants may not behave in their natural and usual way, meaning it lacks ecological validity. 3. Does not show whether the uniform worn is important to behaving aggressively which raises questions as to whether it is another factor. Outline research evidence Football Hooliganism, which was where Marsh investigated the crowds of football fans to establish whether their high level of excitement and anonymity lead to deindividuation and aggression. From this experiment Marsh concluded that aggression is one of the norms of the group, as group membership is likely to lead to aggressive behaviour, however it can also be controlled aggression. Overall Evaluation of Evidence: 1.

Because it is not a real life situation participants may not behave in their natural and usual way, meaning it lacks ecological validity 2. Deindividuation means one tends to abandon personal control. The results of the research could be taken to imply that deindividuation can increase conformity to certain social norms and its high levels of conformity to a group rather than itself, which leads to aggression. . Evidence shows that it does not always

lead to aggression, which is a difficulty as its not always true. General Points All three have good supporting evidence and so they have reliability in explaining aggression. The theories all focus on socialpsychologyand tend to underestimate and ignore the other possibilities for the aggression such as biological influences.

References: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bobo_doll_experiment <http://www.learning-theories.com/social-learning-theory-bandura.html> <http://psy.ex.ac.uk/~tpostmes/PDF/05deindividuation.pdf>