



**Bandura et al (1961) ~ Transmission of aggression through imitation of aggressive models**

**Short Answer Question – suggested answers**

1. What was the aim of this study? (1 mark)

To see if children would imitate the behaviour of role models they observe, particularly if they are acting aggressively.

2. Who was the sample used in this experiment, e.g. age, sex? (2 marks)

The sample was 72 children selected from Stanford University Nursery (36 girls and 36 boys) with an average age of 4yrs 4months.

3. How many role models were used and in which conditions? (2 marks)

There were two role models one male and one female that acted in all conditions – aggressive, non-aggressive and control.

4. How were children matched in the experimental design? (2 marks)

The children were matched on pre-existing levels of aggression which were rated by an observer from the experiment and their nursery schoolteacher (using a 5 point scale).

5. Identify the three independent variables. (3 marks)

(i) Condition – aggressive, non-aggressive or control

(ii) Sex of the role model (male or female)

(iii) Sex of the child (male or female)

6. Briefly outline what happened in stage one of the procedure? (3 marks)

In stage one; children were invited to observe a role model playing in a playroom which was filled with an array of different toys including a large inflatable Bobo doll, a mallet and some tinker toys. They simply watched the behaviour of the corresponding role model (aggressive male, non-aggressive male, aggressive female, non-aggressive female or nothing) for 10 minutes before moving to stage two.

7. What behaviour was recorded in stage three of the procedure? (3 marks)

In stage three children were observed through a one-way mirror and their behaviour noted if any (i) imitation of any physical aggression (ii) imitative verbal aggression and (iii) imitative non-aggressive verbal responses were shown.

8. Outline the main findings of this study in relation to the three independent variables? (3 marks)

Children in the aggressive condition were more aggressive than those in the non-aggressive condition. Also boys were generally more aggressive than girls and boys in the aggressive condition showed more aggressive responses if the model was male.

Whereas girls in the aggressive condition showed more physical aggression if the model was male but more verbal aggression if the model was female.

9. How does the conclusion support Bandura's theory of social learning? (2 marks)

This conclusion supports the Social Learning Theory in that children do imitate the behaviour of role models they observe, especially if the models have been acting aggressively.

10. Explain one problem with the generalisation of this study. (2marks)

One problem is that there were only 24 children in each condition and when subdivided by sex and role model meant that there were only 6 children in each condition for comparison. This is an extremely limited sample size and prevents wider generalisation.

11. Give one strength related to the reliability of the method used in this study. (2 marks)

One strength is that the environment was a strictly controlled structured observation in a lab setting which reduces the risk of extraneous variables and increases the reliability.

12. Give one weakness related to the ethical considerations of this study. (2 marks)

One weakness is that the children could have been harmed by observing role models acting aggressively (stress/anxiety). This could have left an impression on them long-term which may affect their future behaviour.

