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Bandura Essay

A) The Bandura study aimed to see if children copying aggression that they see in adults. In the study a male or female model was aggressive toward a bobo doll, the children were then observed to see if they imitated any behaviour shown by the model, or if they were/weren't aggressive. There were also 2 control groups, one of which had seen a non aggressive male/female model and another group was observed after seeing no model. The results showed that the children were more aggressive when they had seen the aggressive model. Boys were, on average, more aggressive than girls. The gender of the model also had an effect on the behaviour of the children. Boys were more aggressive (both verbally and physically) when they had seen the aggressive male model. Girls were more physically aggressive when they had seen the aggressive male model BUT were more verbally aggressive when they had seen the aggressive female model.

B) Snapshot studies can be very useful for looking at specific details of behaviour or if the experimenters are lacking time and money. There are, however some problems of snapshot studies, like the one carried out by Bandura.

1. Snapshot studies are time specific; this means that the results are dependant on whatever is going on at the time. For example the mood of the participants or experimenter can change on a daily basis and therefore affect the results, because it can change the way people behave or change the way that the experimenter will look at the data. Cultural change over time may also have an effect on the results or the interpretation of the results. In the Bandura study things could have happened to affect the behaviour of the children e.g. they had been told off by the parents that morning. This may have made the child more aggressive than it would usually have been which would show that child as being more aggressive and so affecting the results. There was also a big cultural change in the years following Banduras' study. When this study took place there were very stereotypical views of men and women, this means that the children may have been reluctant to copy the behaviour of the aggressive female model, but were more likely to copy the behaviour of the aggressive male model, because society at the time expected more aggression from men. Girls may also have been less aggressive at that time because it was what was expected from society and vice versa with the boys.

2. Another problem with snapshot studies as they really go against the point of developmental psychology. They don't look at how children develop and change over time, a snapshot just looks at one aspect over a very short period of time. Generalisations are then made of all children and young people, from the results of a few children of a certain age. In the Bandura study he used children of a nursery age and observed them for only 20mins; the results are then seen as having big implications on television and computer games. The results could have been like they were because children of that age are impressionable or that they feel that they have to copy

adults more than older children, because they are at the age where they want to seem more grown up.

3. When a snapshot study is carried out less information is obtained from the results, there is a lot less detail in any results that are gathered and you don't see the reasons behind why the participants acted the way they did. The results of the Bandura study were all just numbers showing how many children showed particular types of behaviour e.g. copying one of the phrases that the model used. This doesn't give much information to be analysed and so, maybe, the results won't be as informative as other types of data. The results obtained don't show the reasons as to why the children copied/didn't copy the model that they saw and the children weren't really questioned as to how they felt after the experiment had been carried out e.g. how they felt about the models behaviour, was it appropriate?

4. Snapshot studies usually rely on some form of manipulation to induce the behaviour that they want to observe. This means that these studies are more artificial and less realistic resulting in the results being less valid and less ecologically valid. It also increases the chances of the participants showing demand characteristics, this may not have been such a big issue in the Bandura study, but the fact it was quite an unrealistic and artificial study is bound to have had an affect on the validity. The Bandura study was carried out in a lab and the models were told how to behave, the room that the children were put in with the model was in itself a very unnatural situation to find themselves in. They must have felt awkward or even scared, being left in a room with a stranger, who was possibly beating up a bobo doll.

C) There are various ways in which a longitudinal approach could be used in this study.

1. The amount of violent TV that a child watches and its use of computer games could be looked at over a period of time and see if this has an affect on the Childs' behaviour. If some children were allowed to watch what they normally do on TV and play with their computer games when other children's TV viewing was restricted and they weren't allowed to play on games. The children could then be observed in the playground as to how they relate to their peers and questionnaires could be given both to the parents and to the Childs' teacher at regular intervals over the course of the study. This would make the study a lot more realistic and therefore more valid. More qualitative data and just more data mean that the analysis and the results would be a lot more detailed. Generalisations could be made with more confidence because most children watch TV and have access to computer games and so are more likely to be affected by it. This would then mean that there would be bigger implications from the results.

2. The same type of study could be conducted but instead of looking at the children being affected by the media, they could look at the affect of the more violent toys that boys are usually encouraged to use when they are young, by restricting access, to toys that are seen as violent, to some children and letting others go on as normal. By doing observations and questionnaires to parents and teachers, it could be seen if they have an affect.