

Socialization

- The process whereby an individual learns to adjust to a group or society and behave in a manner approved by the group or society. According to most social scientists, socialization essentially represents the whole process of learning throughout the life course and is a central influence on the behavior, beliefs, and actions of adults as well as of children.
- Socialization is a process of learning the customs, attitudes, and values of a social group, community, or culture. Socialization is essential for the development of individuals who can participate and function within their societies, as well as for ensuring that a society's cultural features will be carried on through new generations. Socialization is most strongly enforced by family, school, and peer groups and continues throughout an individual's lifetime
- A continuing process whereby an individual acquires a personal identity and learns the norms, values, behavior, and social skills appropriate to his or her social position.

Definition: Socialization is the process by which a child learns the norms and expected behavior of his culture, usually by imitation or group pressure.

Examples:

Because of their socialization, little girls learn to be nurturing and sensitive while little boys learn to have a sense of independence and mastery.

Gender socialization

- Gender socialization is the process of learning the social expectations and attitudes associated with one's sex. Sociologists explain through gender socialization why human males and females behave in different ways: they learn different social roles. For example, girls learn to do different household chores than boys; girls learn to bake and clean, and boys learn to mow lawns and take out garbage. Gender socialization occurs through such diverse means as parental attitudes, schools, how peers interact with each other, and mass media.
- Gender socialization refers to the learning of behavior and attitudes considered appropriate for a given sex. Boys learn to be boys and girls learn to be girls. This "learning" happens by way of many different agents of socialization. The family is certainly important in reinforcing gender roles, but so are one's friends, school, work and the mass media

Social Learning Theory

The social learning theory proposed by Albert Bandura has become perhaps the most influential theory of learning and development. While rooted in many of the basic concepts of traditional learning theory, Bandura believed that direct reinforcement could not account for all types of learning.

His theory added a social element, arguing that people can learn new information and behaviors by watching other people. Known as observational learning (or modeling), this type of learning can be used to explain a wide variety of behaviors. This theory explains human behavior in terms of continuous reciprocal interaction between cognitive, behavioral, and environmental influences.

Basic Social Learning Concepts

There are three core concepts at the heart of social learning theory. ^① First is the idea that people can learn through observation. ^② Next is the idea that internal mental states are an essential part of this process. ^③ Finally, this theory recognizes that just because something has been learned, it does not mean that it will result in a change in behavior.

1. People can learn through observation.

Observational Learning

In his famous "Bobo doll" studies, Bandura demonstrated that children learn and imitate behaviors they have observed in other people. The children in Bandura's studies observed an adult acting violently toward a Bobo doll. When the children were later allowed to play in a room with the Bobo doll, they began to imitate the aggressive actions they had previously observed.

Bandura identified three basic models of observational learning:

1. A live model, which involves an actual individual demonstrating or acting out a behavior.
2. A verbal instructional model, which involves descriptions and explanations of a behavior.
3. A symbolic model, which involves real or fictional characters displaying behaviors in books, films, television programs, or online media.

2. Mental states are important to learning.

Intrinsic Reinforcement

Bandura noted that external, environmental reinforcement was not the only factor to influence learning and behavior. He described intrinsic reinforcement as a form of internal reward, such as pride, satisfaction, and a sense of accomplishment. This emphasis on internal thoughts and cognitions helps connect learning theories to cognitive developmental theories. While many textbooks place social learning theory with behavioral theories, Bandura himself describes his approach as a 'social cognitive theory.'

3. Learning does not necessarily lead to a change in behavior.

While behaviorists believed that learning led to a permanent change in behavior, observational learning demonstrates that people can learn new information without demonstrating new behaviors.

The Modeling Process

Not all observed behaviors are effectively learned. Factors involving both the model and the learner can play a role in whether social learning is successful. Certain requirements and steps must also be followed. The following steps are involved in the observational learning and modeling process:

- **Attention:**
In order to learn, you need to be paying attention. Anything that detracts your attention is going to

have a negative effect on observational learning. If the model interesting or there is a novel aspect to the situation, you are far more likely to dedicate your full attention to learning.

- **Retention:**

The ability to store information is also an important part of the learning process. Retention can be affected by a number of factors, but the ability to pull up information later and act on it is vital to observational learning.

- **Reproduction:**

Once you have paid attention to the model and retained the information, it is time to actually perform the behavior you observed. Further practice of the learned behavior leads to improvement and skill advancement.

- **Motivation:**

Finally, in order for observational learning to be successful, you have to be motivated to imitate the behavior that has been modeled. Reinforcement and punishment play an important role in motivation. While experiencing these motivators can be highly effective, so can observing other experience some type of reinforcement or punishment? For example, if you see another student rewarded with extra credit for being to class on time, you might start to show up a few minutes early each day.

Conclusion:

In addition to influencing other psychologists, Bandura's social learning theory has had important implication in the field of education. Today, both teachers and parents recognize the importance of modeling appropriate behaviors. Other classroom strategies such as encouraging children and building self-efficacy are also rooted in social learning theory.

Criticisms:

The social learning theory advocates that individuals, especially children, imitate or copy modeled behavior from personally observing others, the environment, and the mass media. Biological theorists argue that the social learning theory completely ignores individuals biological state. Also, they state that the social learning theory rejects the differences of individuals due to genetic, brain, and learning differences (Jeffery, 1985: p.238). For example, if a person witnessed a hanging or a violent murder, he or she might respond in many different ways. "Biological theorists believed that the responses would be normal and come from the autonomic nervous system. In the autonomic nervous system, the heart rate, increase blood pressure, nausea, and fainting would be normal symptoms of the responses that individuals might expressed in this particular situation. Therefore, the symptoms and behavior are not learned, but partially inherited." In addition, the social learning theory rejects the classical and operant conditioning processes. The biological preparedness of the individual to learn as well as the role of the brain in processing information from the social environment, are critical to learning theory, but they are ignored by the social learning theory. "Social reinforcement is conditioned reinforcement based on the relationship of the conditioned stimulus to an unconditioned stimulus" (Jeffery, 1985: p.239).

In the Bobo doll experiment, critics have argued that the children were manipulated into responded to the aggressive movie. The children were teased and became frustrated because they could not reach the toys. Many critics believed the experiment conducted was unethical and morally wrong because the children were trained to be aggressive. "How many more of the experiments finding a link between violence on television and aggressive behavior have ethical problems? It is not surprising that the

or
↓
situation
theories

children had long-term implications because of the methods imposed in this experiment" (Worthman and Loftus, p.45)

There have been many debates over whether or not violence on television causes aggressive behavior in children. Many studies have indicated that television does not lead to aggressive behavior. For instances, psychologists have found that some cartoons are very violent and cause children to illustrate aggressive behavior. However, the general public believes that children view cartoons such as Elmer Fudd shooting the rabbit as funny and humorous. It is the parents' responsibility to inform their children that the cartoons are not real.

Feshbach and R.D. Singer believed that television actually decreases the amount of aggression in children (Feshbach: 1971). They conducted a study within a six-week study on juvenile boys who regularly watched television violence compared to juvenile boys who were exposed to non-violent shows. After the six-week period, Feshbach and R.D. Singer found out that the juvenile boys that viewed the non-violent shows were more likely to exhibit aggressive behavior than the juvenile boys that witnessed the violent shows. "The study show that the violence on television allows the viewer to relate with the characters involved in the violent act (Feshbach & Singer, 1971: p.247). In doing so, the viewer is able to release all aggressive thoughts and feelings through relation, causing them to be less aggressive than they would have been without watching the violent television. This theory that viewing violence on television leads to a decrease in aggression is called the ~~Catharsis effect~~ (Gerbner, G., Gross, L., Melody, W.H., pg.40).

Cooke believed that individuals tend to support the theory that television violence causes aggression because the public needs to justify the aggression they see in others. He also believed television was a form of education and positive role models. "If violence in television causes people to be more aggressive, than shouldn't the good-hearted qualities in television cause its audience to be kinder to others (Cooke, 1993, p.L19)? Therefore, television can serve as deterrence if individuals focus on the positive qualities. Despite these criticisms, Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory has maintained an important place in the study of aggression and criminal behavior. In order to control aggression, he believed family members and the mass media should provide positive role models for their children and the general public (Bandura, 1976).

Environmental Criticism

The prevention of criminal behavior by fear of punishment a negative motivational influence

Because social cognitive theory posits a dynamic interaction between the environment and the individual, it supposes that one is largely determined by one's situation and that changes in that situation will thus change behavior. However, it has been argued that for many people, behavior is much more consistent regardless of situation and that simple changes in environment do not always lead to changes in behavior.

Biological Criticism

It has been argued that because social cognitive theory places so much emphasis on cognitive abilities such as modeling and forming expectations, it ignores biological or hormonal determinants. Some psychologists argue that biological or hormonal processes can largely shape the way people reason and make decisions regardless of past experiences or cognition(mental process).

Innate Criticism

It has been argued that social cognitive theory ignores innate genetic differences and differences in learning ability. For instance, it has been argued that some people may be innately better at learning some skills than others. Additionally, some people with learning deficiencies may not be as good at observing and modeling behavior. Social cognitive theory has been criticized for ignoring these differences.