



# SOCIAL LEARNING THEORY: MODELING OBSERVATION ON LEARNING BEHAVIOUR OF CHILDREN

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## Abstract

*The study focuses on learning behaviour of children in relation to Social Learning Theory by Bandura. Descriptive method was used in the process of conducting the study. The population consisted of 50 children, which 14 children were drawn as sample from the population using convenient sampling technique. The findings of the study revealed i) there is a potential influence of role modeling in learning of the children through observation, ii) There is a strong relationship between the findings of the present study and the domains of Social Learning Theory. Therefore, the results made in the study suggested that observation learning technique is one of the most important techniques in the process of facilitating new information to the learners. Thus, it is advisable that opportunities should be provided to children for exposing themselves to various situation sand enable them to observe various modeling which enhance learning.*

**Key Words: Social Learning Theory, Modeling Observation, Learning Behaviour**

## 1. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The social learning theory proposed by Bandura became perhaps the most influential theory of learning and development which rooted in many of the basic concepts of traditional learning theories. Bandura believed that behaviourism alone could not explain all there is about learning (Edinyang, 2016), that direct reinforcement could not account for all types of learning behaviours (Banyard & Grayson, 2000). While the behavioural theories of learning suggested that all learning were the result of association formed by conditional, reinforcement, and punishment, Bandura's social learning theory proposed that learning can also occur simply by observing the actions of other (modeling). His theory added a social element, arguing that people can learn new information and acquire novel behaviour by watching other people or

models known as observation learning. It is believed that most human behaviour learned observationally through modeling: from observing other one forms an idea of how new behaviours are performed and on later occasions this coded information serves as a guide for action (Bandura, 1977). In his famous bobo doll experiment, Bandura demonstrated that children learn and imitate behaviour they have observed other people. Therefore, in the society, children are bounded by many influential models including of live, verbal instructional and symbolic models, such as parents within the family, characters on mass/social media, friends within their peer group, religion, other members of the society, and the school. Children pay attention to some of these agents of socialization, imbibe and reproduce the behaviours exhibited (Edinyang, 2016).

## 2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Bandura in 1961 conducted his famous experiment known as the bobo doll experiment, to study patterns of behaviour, by social learning theory, and that similar behaviour were learned by individuals shaping their own behaviour after the actions of models. It should be noted that what gives significance to relayed influence is that observers can acquire enduring attitudes, emotional reactions, and behavioural proclivities toward persons, places or things that have been associated with modeling (Edinyang, 2016). Therefore, social learning theory also known as observational learning, occurs when an observer's behavior changes after viewing the behavior of a model. An observer's behaviour can be affected by the positive or negative display of behaviour seen (Edinyang, 2016). Nabavi (2014), pointed out that this theory is based on the idea that one's learn from and interactions with others in a social context. Children exposed to the violent model tended to imitate the exact behavior they had observed when the adult was no longer present. However, it is recognized that just because something has been learned, it does not mean that it will result in change of behaviour (Mahto, 2021) or imitate others' actions blindly. With regards to gender differences in aggressiveness, researchers were also correct in their prediction that boys would behave more aggressively than girls. Boys engaged in more than twice as many acts of aggression than the girls. Boys who observed an adult male behaving violently; were more influenced than those who had observed a female model behavior aggressively. Interestingly, the experimenters found in the same girls-sex aggressive groups boys were more likely to imitate physical act of violence while girls were more likely to imitate verbal aggression. Bandura stated that children were more likely to imitate aggressive behavior if the adult model was rewarded for his or her actions. They were far less likely to imitate if they saw the adult model being punished or reprimanded for their hostile behavior (Mahto, 2021

). According to Miller and Dollard, imitations can turn into habits (Eyyam, Doğruer & Menevis, N.D.). Not everything learnt through observation have to be imitation. This act of imitation further relate to symbolic models. Rudy et al. (2010) found that children learn through media in the same manner in which they learn in real life, through repetition, messaging and role modeling. The watching of television therefore has become context which influences learning and adapting behaviors. According to Wilson (2008) it is not how much television is watched, but the type of programming. Children, learn about emotions from watching emotional experiences of television characters. Repetitive watching can lead empathy with those characters. Repetitive watching of violent television can also lead to violent behaviors in children. According to Miller and Dollard, what is necessary for observational learning is composed of observation, response based on observation and reinforcement for the said response (Eyyam, Doğruer & Menevis, N.D.). Bandura believed we could control our own behaviour through self regulation. Self regulation requires a person to self-observe, make judgments about our environment and ourselves, and self-response. People both influence and are influenced by the world around them. (Edinyang, 2016).

### 3. NEED AND JUSTIFICATION

The social learning theory focused on the change of behaviour while observing others people activities. This change occurred through the process of observation, which may result to imitation or modification of behaviour base on the consequences that has been observed. The issue is that whether the result of observation such as the bobo doll and parental aggressiveness experiment are enough to conclude the result of learning? Whether this kind of observation applies to other activities as well? Therefore, the present study felt the need to critically review on the process of observation through different activities based on the social learning theory. This would bring a significant contribution and supports to the theory and also provides valuable ideas related to it. Thus, critical study based on the theory would bring certain clarification of the doubts and justify the significance of observation with regards to learning development of the children. Models can be positive (doing the right thing and being rewarded) or negative (doing the wrong thing and suffering the consequences), however research shows that negative models are less likely than positive models to motivate behavior change. The theoretical review and comparative study in this field has not done in the area within the state. On the basis of the need to uncover the truth that may

contribute for development of the children in learning, it is reasonable to investigate the problem with a view to provide factual findings, suggestions and remedial measures for improvement.

#### 4. OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF THE TERMS USED

**i. Social Learning Theory:** Social Learning Theory refers to the theory propounded by Albert Bandura related to learning behaviour of the children. It is a theory based on experiment such as bobo doll experiment which Bandura believed that learning occurred through observation.

**ii. Modeling Observation:** It is an observation on learning process through modeling approach conducted on various activities involving the children of specific age. The results of the observation are critically discussed in relation to the social learning theory. This consists the comparison between the results of learning from the present experiments with the ideas as propounded in Bandura theory of social learning.

**iii. Learning Behaviour:** It is the process of acquiring new behaviour. This refers to the ways how children learn and modify their existing behaviours into new one.

#### 5. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Is role-modeling influence learners?
2. Is there a relationship between the results of the present study and social learning theory?

#### 6. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The following objectives were studied based on Social Learning Theory:

(i) To observe the influence of role-modeling on learners with the help of activities conducted on children

(ii) To study the relationship of the results made between the present study and Social Learning Theory

#### 7. DELIMITATION:

The area of the present study was delimited only to children of Saiden Pdeng Shnong village (aged 5 to 12), Ri Bhoi district.

## 8. METHOD OF THE STUDY

(i) **Design:** Descriptive method was used.

(ii) **Tools used:** Observation

(iii) **Population:** The population of the present study included all children in Saiden Pdeng Shnong area. This is represented in Table No. 1.

Table No. 1

### *Population of the study*

Sl.No.	Male	Female	Total
1	20	30	50

(iv) **Sample:** The sample of the present study was drawn from the population. It consisted of 14 children as the subject of the study. This is shown in Table No. 2.

Table No. 2

### *Sample of the study*

Sl.No.	Activity 1		Activity 2		Activity 3		Total	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
1	2	4	3	2	1	2	6	8
2	Total						14	

(iv) **Sampling:** Convenient sampling technique was used.

(v) **Procedure of data collection:** After the thorough study of the population the investigators identified the sample for the study. The investigators visited few selected children in the area based on the convenient, followed by seeking permission from the headman of the village and parents of the children to conduct the study through observation. After permission was given, the investigators establishing rapport with the children and divided them into three groups which each investigator perform one activity for the children, while the other two help him in organising the observation. The activities were performed as modeling in front of the children which at the end of the modeling session the children were allowed to take their own roles. This was done in three sections, which include of three types of activities that

involved the investigators and the selected children for each group. The investigators make sure that each participants is unconscious the purpose of the activities conducted. In this way the observers position themselves at the appropriate places which can be seen and hear properly the performances made by the children. Throughout the process of data collection the observers video recording each child performance focusing the objectives of the study. In this way, the whole process of collecting information was started from the 20<sup>th</sup> November, 2021 and completed on 26<sup>th</sup> November, 2022 with a span of two months.

## 9. FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION

**Objective i: To observe the influence of role-modeling on learners with the help of activities conducted on children**

*Research Question 1: How role-modeling influence learners?*

In order to find out the influence of role-modeling on learners the data was analyzed based on the three activities conducted.

**Activity 1:** The investigator intelligently set the scene for an experiment. At the very beginning the investigator prepared a number of balloons. The children were taken to an open space where the investigator made them feel comfort in the presence of many balloons. The children were now become friendly and enjoy talking about the balloons in front of them. Some were very eager to touch



the balloons however, because they have not received words from the investigator, they just staying randomly moved within the area. Then, after giving adequate instruction, the investigator took two balloons tossed each one consecutively in the air and after one balloon fell down and touched the ground the investigator punched it with a prepared sharp stick which the balloon burst out. This act was continued to the second balloon as well where the children watched at him eagerly to get chance of touching the balloons. After this modeling the investigator allowed the children to do anything in the open space if they wish. The investigator, himself leave the group without the knowledge of the children. After this, it was found that the children at once rush to the balloons and tossed them in the air. Interestingly, it was found that most of the children decided among themselves that whenever the balloon touched the ground they

would punch it with the sharp stick. However, one child (out of 6 children) imitates the way of tossing the balloon but did not punch the balloon while touching the ground. This happened because the child felt the need to keep playing with the balloon available for longer period of time.

**Activity 2:** The investigators took children of different ages inside the classroom with a bunch of plastic glasses. After establishing rapport, the group of children were organised in such a way they were able to see the act perform by the investigator. The investigator heaps the plastic glasses one after another in a pyramid



-liked shape. After few minute break the children were allow to play with many scattered plastic glasses in the room. The observation found that the children followed the act done by the investigator. They even competed among themselves to pile up the glasses as fast as possible. This shows that modeling influence the process of learning among the children.

**Activity 3:** In this activity the investigator exposed towards the children an act of preparing kitchen activities such as serving tea to few other children present in a group. The group of children was observing the act until the activity is completed. After a few minute break the children were allowed to do whatever they want in an around the area. The findings observed from the acts made by the children revealed that

majority of the children performed the same activity exposed by the investigator, while one (out of 3 children) of them did not follow the investigator act but performed in their own way. This may revealed the fact that not all children imitate the activities of the investigator in the immediate period of time.



**Objective ii: To study the relationship of the results observed between the present study and Social Learning Theory**

*Research Question 2: Is there a relationship between the results of the present study and social learning theory?*

The results made from the observation outlined the relationship between the findings of the present study and social learning theory. Therefore, the domain of relationship is discussed in the light of the theory.

The present findings based from the observation of the activities conducted revealed that 93 % of the participants imitated the actions led by the investigators while as 7% imitated only half part of the activities and then deviate from the actions made by the investigators. This shows that majority of the participants (93 %) abide themselves to the modeling guided to them. Hence, one can say that the results made from these activities are in line with the propounded social learning theory. On the other hand few amongst the participants (7% imitated only half part of the activities) did not fully behave the same way as modeling but deviate from the guided activities to certain extent. This suggest that though children learnt the activities through observation however choose the way they felt best to them and modified the way of learning observed in order to bring about the best results. This finding further revealed the relation to social learning theory which propounded that learning through observation does not necessarily lead to complete imitation. For an instance, when a driver saw another car in front bumped itself in the pot-hole on the road, automatically the driver modified the learning by turning the car to another side. However, this also proof that the driver learn and modified the behaviour through observation.

## 10. DISCUSSION

The results based from the three activities observed revealed that children develop new learning from observation of modeling. Though few of them modified the observed acts to fit their own style of learning, however, the study showed that all of them are motivated to observe the activities performed and adhered to it throughout the process of acquiring new information. Thus, the finding is congruent to the finding made by Edinyang (2016) which revealed that observers (participants) can acquire enduring attitudes, emotional reactions, and behavioural proclivities toward persons, places or things that have been associated with modeling. Further, the finding is in tune to the finding made by Nabavi (2014) which stated that an observer's behaviour changes after viewing the behavior of a model. Thus, an observer's behaviour can be affected by the positive or negative display of behaviour seen. However, it is recognized that just because something has been learned, it does not mean that it will result in change in behaviour or imitate others' actions blindly (Mahto, 2021), children may learn to fit their own style of learning as well.



They were far less likely to imitate if they saw the adult model being punished or reprimanded for their hostile behavior (Mahto, 2021), rather they modify their behaviour for better result.

Therefore, the present findings of the study revealed that there is a strong influence of the modeling towards the behaviour of children in learning processes. This means that the results of the present study showed strong relationship to the domains of learning through observation propounded by Albert Bandura in Social Learning Theory.

## 11. SUGGESTIONS

The following points were drawn from the findings made, in order to bring valuable suggestions in the field of education.

Children often learn a great deal simply by observing other people. Therefore, children are needed to provide opportunities to expose towards different meaningful situations in order to raise their observation skills. In teaching-learning situation modeling provides alternative tools for shaping new teaching behaviour. Thus, teachers should use modeling techniques while teaching children. Apart of these techniques, motivation is one of the most essential factors in learning. Therefore, teachers required to provide motivation such as direct and indirect reinforcement and encourage self-reinforcement among children throughout their activities.

## 12. CONCLUSION

There has been criticism on whether learning through observation is functioning as a method of developing learning to children as highlighted in the Social Learning Theory. The present study justified this belief of the significant role of modeling and observation on learning. Hence, modeling remains an activity which represents anything to other as an example which they could observe and learn from it. In the process of teaching-learning modeling is one of the important techniques which children may learn through observation to the actions, guidance and works of role models. With respect to children, the role model can be sister, brother, parents, elders, especially teachers. These people play a significant role in facilitating knowledge to the younger ones. Therefore, one can conclude that even today this art of learning is one of the best techniques which children feel free and easier to learn new information.

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