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| **Theory …**FAH suggests that experiencing frustration leads to arousal, which leads to a drive to be aggressive towards the object of frustration, in order to relieve it (catharsis).Aggression towards the frustration is not always possible, or appropriate, resulting in aggression being inhibited, in such cases aggression is displaced from the source on to something else - the “kicking the dog” effect. This is because when the impulse to attack the source of their frustration is not met, they in turn look to target a scapegoat instead to still experience catharsis. | **Research support*****Green (1968)*** – ppts undertook three levels of difficulty on a jigsaw task before undertaking a ‘shock the learner’ type experiment. Those in most frustrating jigsaw task condition, ‘shocked’ confederate the most. | **Strengths**Face validity in terms of real life events e.g. Germans using Jews as scapegoats for frustration anger from WWI | **Weaknesses**Bushman (2002) found that people who behaved aggressively were more likely to be aggressive in the future. He found aggressive behaviour kept angry feelings and aggressive thoughts active in memory resulting in more aggression which undermines catharsis reducing aggression. Theory lacks STRONG EMPIRICAL research support, particularly in regards to the concept of catharsis. |
| **….. further detail**Proximity to the frustration, the likelihood of aggression relieving the frustration, and the level of justification for the aggression are all factors that contribute to the likelihood of aggressive behaviour being exhibited. | **Research support*****Buss (1963)*** - had college students experience one of three types of frustration (failure to win money, failure to earn a better grade, or failure on a task). All three groups showed more subsequent aggression than a control group that was not frustrated. ***Priks (2010)*** - position of team in Swedish football league, correlated with number of objects thrown during match, and were more likely to fight with others. | **Strengths**Significant evidence that frustration does lead to generalized arousal. (HOWEVER, Bandura argues that it is SLT which determines how that arousal then influences the individual’s aggressive behaviour). | **Weaknesses**Doesn’t explain planned and premeditated acts of aggression by psychopathic killers, nor fight or flight situations where aggression is in the interest of self-preservation. Similarly, ignores significant empirical support for the role of other social processes (e.g. Bandura SLT), as well as the significant strong evidence for the role of biological factors, such as the MAOA gene and testosterone.Both suggest the theory is incomplete and too simplistic as quite clearly other elements explaining aggression. |
| **Theory ….**Children observe ‘role models’ and imitate their behaviour. Also learn whether others are rewarded or punished for aggressive behaviour by observing (vicarious reinforcement). If others are rewarded more likely to imitate the behaviour themselves.Characteristics and status of ‘role model’ (status, gender etc.) likely to affect probability of imitating behaviour (identification). | **Research support****Bandura’s (1961**) - ‘Bobo doll’ experiment – Children that watch an adult behave aggressively towards ‘bobo’, more aggressive than those who see adult play nicely. A follow up study by Bandura found that children who saw the model being rewarded for aggression, imitated even more behaviour, and children who saw an aggressive model being punished imitated less aggressive behaviour (evidence for vicarious learning). | **Strengths**Explains cultural differences in levels of aggression. (Aggression levels differ across the world. In some cultures, aggression in adults is hidden from children – levels therefore lower).Can explain individual differences in aggression (mediating cognitive processes and different upbringings). | **Weaknesses**One of the most cited studies in support of theory has been heavily criticised for obvious demand characteristics, and low ecological validity (doll, not person), meaning some consider it only weak support for the theory. However, a follow-up study using real clowns produced the same results, reducing these criticisms. Explains some forms of aggression better than others, e.g. cannot easily explain impulsive aggressive behaviours |
| **…. further detail**Mediating cognitive processes (attention, retention, motivation, and ability reproduce behaviour) determine whether behaviour is imitated. This explains individual differences in aggression.Other social processes such as operant conditioning and classical conditioning, also thought to be involved simultaneously. | **Research support****Patterson et al (1982)** - studied the origins of children with problem behaviour including aggression and found that parents had both modelled aggressive behaviour and rewarded problem behaviour. Training parents to model more appropriate behaviour helped the children. | **Strengths**Mirror neurons are active not only when we perform an action, but also when we observe it performed. This might be a biological basis for the theory.Can explain why people become aggressive only in certain situations – biological explanations cannot (only seen aggression reinforced in specific contexts or because the mediating factors prevent aggression in certain circumstances) | **Weaknesses**Not a great deal of evidence with adults, nor into the long-term effects.Ignores the established importance of biological (e.g. brain neurotransmitters), genetic and evolutionary (e.g. sex differences in jealousy) factors, for which there is some compelling empirical evidence. Likely aggression is more fully explained through a combination of ‘nature’ and ‘nature’ factors, such as the diathesis-stress model. |