**Select two theories of aggression and discuss how they might explain chronic aggression among children. Discuss with reference to relevant research.**

In social psychology, aggression is defined as a behaviour that is intended to harm another person (Bushman and Huesmann, 2010). An intended behaviour can take a form of physical injury, hurting an individuals feelings or damaging social relationships. Anderson and Bushman (2002) define aggression as “any behaviour directed toward another individual that is carried out with the proximate intent to cause harm. In addition, the perpetrator must believe that the behaviour will harm the target, and that the target is motivated to avoid the behaviour”. Criminologists treat violence and aggression as two separate topics however, some social psychologists consider violence to be a subset of aggression. Huesmann and Taylor (2006) define violence as an extreme form of aggression that carries serious physical harm such as death or injury. Like aggression, a behaviour does not have to cause actual harm to be classified as violent. Albert Bandura (1977) proposed the Social Learning Theory which aims to illustrate how child aggression is caused by a process of observation and learning; this theory will be discussed throughout the essay and explore the different ways a child can learn to be aggressive. The essay will also focus on the Frustration-Aggression Hypothesis firstly developed by Dollard et al and later revised by Berkowitz. Both theories explain the causes of aggression in children however, they give two separate view points on what causes aggression. At the end of the essay the conclusion shall provide a detailed explanation of the two theories and how they explain aggression amongst children with relevant research supporting them.

At the turn of the development's history, the child was perceived as an adult miniature, lacking specific needs or personal qualities. Little attention has been paid to the idea that the child deserves protection and special treatment. They were considered to be the property of adults, and as such it was more often the subject of ill-treatment. The idea that a child has rights that must be respected by adults is quite new. Going back into the past, you can see the child as a scare, in ancient Rome or Greece, where cruelty, infanticide, abandonment or murder were frequent. Modern times are not devoid of cruelty directed at the child. And not all children have conditions for development, and children who are already harmed by fate, with difficulties, disabled people with special educational needs are especially at risk.The need for security is one of the most important needs in a child's life because they can not defend themselves in a world of indifference, aggression and violence. The consequences of aggression and violence may disturb the development and functioning of a child also in adult life, as negative experiences from childhood are not without significance for specific ways of behaviour, values, emotional reactions or, forms of interpersonal relations.

Many psychologists, however, are convinced that the child learns to be aggressive. Therefore, one of the most influential psychological theories of aggression is the theory of social learning, developed by Albert Bandura. According to this theory, aggression is the result of learning through instrumental conditioning and modelling processes. Aggression may also be a consequence of involuntary imitation of patterns of aggressive behaviour occurring in the environment or shown by some mass media. The theory of social learning by A. Bandura aims to explain how aggressive behaviour arises, how it is raised and maintained, and how it can be controlled and reduced. The importance of such an examination of aggressive behaviour is based on the need to reduce the high level of social violence.

Bandura rejected earlier inadequate theories of aggression, such as the ones of Freud and Dollard and Miller. He hypothesised that aggression is primarily learnt by modelling the aggressive behaviour shown to others. Families, subcultures and television can be large sources of such aggressive behaviour models. Once learned and accepted into the repertoire of behaviours, aggressive behaviour can be aroused by the multitude of social conditions that provide incentives or reinforcements.

According to this theory, aggressive behaviours are shaped under the influence of

rewards, whether direct or indirect, or watching others being rewarded for them. Bandura conducted a series of studies demonstrating the learning of aggressive behaviour by children. According to Albert Bandura, the aggressive scenes currently seen on television can lead to outbreak of aggression and antisocial behaviour.

Children, by observation, conclude that aggression in certain situations brings benefits. Children can come to such conclusions by watching various media messages, eg on tv. Research on the influence of television on the behaviour of children shows that "the more violence on television, the more aggression in the behaviour of children". In particular, laboratory and field tests conducted by Eron and Huesmann allow us to conclude that "the relationship between watching violence on TV and subsequent aggression is indisputable" .

Bandura has been investigating the assumption that aggressive behaviours are learned and controlled. The author believes that man is a rational organism and possesses mechanisms that allow him to be mollified. This means that people can reflect on their behaviours and their effects, and can draw conclusions based on observing the behaviour of other people (Larson, Lochman 2012). According to Bandura, "people are not equipped with an innate repertoire of behaviours. They must learn them. Of course, biological factors play a role in the process of acquiring habits. Genetics and hormones affect physical development, which in turn may change the predisposition to certain behaviors [...]. Many so-called instinctive behaviours contain a significant learning component "(Bandura 2015). The author emphasises that children come to the world with certain skills, for example to issue basic sounds, but they can not speak at birth. This process takes place through learning (Bandura 2015). The same applies to the development of aggressive behaviour. It should be noted that this is a process in which mutually determining factors are important. Among them, Bandura mentioned:

Acquired by observation; According to the theory of social learning, new behaviours are absorbed through direct experience, or by observing this behaviour in other individuals. These behaviours that lead to the goal are assimilated and remain in the repertoire of behaviours, while the ineffective ones are rejected. Larson and Lochman believe that "children learn aggressive behaviour in part by observing the effects of aggression in others. Growing up in an environment where they observe aggressive behaviours that usually bring benefits, they can assume that they will also work in their case "(Larson, Lochman 2012).

Direct experience; Aggressive behaviour can also be absorbed by differential strengthening, by engaging in them. In an environment where there is an opportunity to achieve positive effects of aggressive behaviour, the child learns and transfers it to other surroundings. At the moment when the desire for power or pleasure is proven by using aggressive behaviours towards peers or adults, the child is convinced that such behaviours pay off. If, however, the aggressive behaviour of the child is met with the reluctance of the parents, it is less likely that it will show aggression in a different environment (Larson, Lochman 2012).

Self-regulation; An extremely important component of the social learning theory is Self- regulation, which means that you can choose behaviour based on the desired consequences. According to Larson and Lochman, "the situation and stimulating circumstances have an impact on this choice, because the consequences taken into account are different in different circumstances" (Larson, Lochman 2012).

Bandura also conducted a study which supports his theory and was carried out on 72 children aged 3-6. 24 children were shown a female model being aggressive towards a ‘’Bobo Doll’’. Another 24 children were show a model who played nicely and quietly whilst ignoring the Bobo doll. Finally the remaining 24 children were not exposed to any model at all. The study has shown that children were far more aggressive towards the Bobo doll when being exposed to the female model being aggressive towards it. The girls showed more verbal aggression if the model was female.Boys imitated more physical aggression and there was no significant difference between verbal aggression between boys and girls. Therefore this study can support Bandura’s (1977) Social Learning Theory and that children learn their aggressive behaviour through the process of observation.

Another theory which can explain the phenomenon of aggression is the Frustration-Aggression Hypothesis which indicates frustration as the cause of aggression. Genetically, this theory is derived from Freud. Frustration is understood as an unpleasant emotional state as a result of deprivation, ie the failure to satisfy important needs due to the existence of an obstacle.

The theory of frustration-aggression is the most well-known approach to aggression, and it was formulated by a group of researchers from the Yale Institute of Human Relations, such as Dollard, Dobb, Miller, Mowrer and Sears in 1939. According to Dollard and Miller, the greater the motivation to perform a given task, the greater the obstacle on the way to the goal and the greater the number of successively experienced frustrations, the more aggressive reactions are performed. According to these researchers, aggression and frustration are proportional to the social forces of repression that create a sense of frustration. There is a close relationship between the rank of unmet needs and the intensity of arousal to aggression. This means that the more important the need that is being blocked, the more intensively it stimulate aggression. An important role is also played by the lock range. Larger locks cause stronger excitement to aggression than a lock with a narrower range. Another factor is the amount of previously experienced frustration. According to Dollard, if an individual who has experienced more frustration in the past will react more aggressively to certain situations than the one who did not experience such frustration.

The theory of frustration-aggression, has two versions: the original one and the later one - reformulated. According to the original version, this is "a theory according to which aggression is an automatic reaction to the appearance of obstacles that prevent the achievement of the goal". According to this theory, aggressive behaviour would be a reactive reaction to the frustration experienced. The version was later developed by John Dollard. The theory of frustration-aggression was the first clearly expressed psychological concept of aggression and gained immense popularity, coming to both psychological and colloquial thought.

Some social psychologists, however, reported a number of objections to the hypothesis formulated in this way. Such reservations were made especially by scientists from the Yale University. "They pointed out that some aggressive activities, especially those of an instrumental character, do not have to result from frustration at all". Not all types of frustration must lead to aggression. For example, N.E. Miller argued that "frustration stimulates a range of different reactions; one of their types are some forms of aggression ". There are also other ways to respond to frustration. In addition to aggression, regression and repression may also be a reaction to frustration. R. R. Sears, based on experimental research, came to the conclusion that frustration , in addition to aggressive behaviour, may also lead to a series of non-aggressive behaviours, as a result of such defence mechanisms as regression or substitution. Reactions to frustration can be both aggressive and non-aggressive. In studies conducted by D.C. Mc Clelland and F.S. Apicella there are four types of reactions in frustration situations: attack, withdrawal, limitation and substitution, and according to J.C. Coleman only there are only three types of reactions in such situations: attack, escape and compromise. Thus, the results of various studies on the influence of frustration on behaviour indicate that frustration can trigger the functioning of various mental mechanisms, causing the occurrence of various behaviours. One of the ways of responding to frustration are aggressive behaviours.

This led Leonard Berkowitz to create the reformulated hypothesis of frustration-aggression. This is a theory according to which every unpleasant situation leads to emotional aggression, if it causes unpleasant feelings. According to L. Berkowitz, there are also additional aggression factors called aggression calling signals. They are stimuli associated with factors that arouse current or past anger .

Leonard Berkowitz proposed another theory of aggression, which he called the cognitive-neo-social theory. According to this theory, an unpleasant situation triggers a complex chain of internal states. So unpleasant stimuli leads to negative feelings and thoughts, and again to aggressive behaviours. These aggressive behaviours may be facilitated by other circumstances, such as the presence of weapons nearby, which L. Berkowitz called the "weapon effect". Sometimes, some people are inclined to create situations that increase their frustration, and this in turn leads to an increase in aggression.

From the above considerations one can deduce the conclusion that although aggressiveness in a human being may have some instinctive component, it is important for a social psychologist that situational factors can modify it.

In conclusion, aggression is a behaviour that intends to harm another human wether it takes place in a physical or verbal form. Bushman (2002) highlights that there must be an intent to carry out an act that will purposely cause harm . According to Albert Bandura children learn aggression through learning their aggressive behaviours and modelling them later on therefore he proposed the Social Learning Theory. Experiments such as the ‘’Bobo Doll’’ study show that children who are exposed to violent behaviour will accept it as a social norm and carry the act out, thinking that the behaviour is very much acceptable. To contrast this, children who were not exposed to the violent model, showed no signs of aggression towards the Bobo Doll. Therefore, one can conclude that aggression in children especially chronic is in fact learnt through different aggressive factors they are exposed to such as violence and aggression on TV. However, Social Learning Theory is not the only theory that can explain aggressive behaviour in children. Dollard et al and Berkowitz developed the Frustration Aggression Hypothesis where it explains that once a Childs goal is blocked by an obstacle, this then leads to frustration and frustration leads to aggression. If a child experiences prolonged frustration over their locks and blocked goals throughout their life then this can lead to chronic aggression as a result of a build up of frustration. However, it is important that not all frustration will lead to aggressive behaviours, frustration can be released as a form regression or repression.

Reference list:

Artino, A.R. (2007), *Bandura, Ross, and Ross: Observational Learning and the Bobo Doll,* University of Connecticut

Brannstrom et al.(2016), *Aggression and violent behaviour: Aggression replacement training (ART) for reducing antisocial behavior in adolescents and adults: A systematic review,*Volume 27, p30-41

Breuer, J., & Elson, M. (in press). Frustration-aggression theory. In P. Sturmey (Ed.), The Wiley Handbook of Violence and Aggression. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley

Breuer, J., Scharkow,M.,Quandt, T.(2015) *Sore Losers? A Reexamination of the Frustration–Aggression Hypothesis for Colocated Video Game Play,* Psychology of Popular Media Culture: American Psychological Association Vol. 4, No. 2, p126–137

Dollard J., (1939), *Frustration and aggression*, New Haven.

Hogg, M.A., Vaughan, G.M (2004)Social Psychology *4th ed.* Pearson:Prentice Hall, p444-450, p456-480

Hollin,C.R. (2013) *Psychology and Crime 2nd ed.* East Sussex: Routledge

Howitt, P. (2015) *Introduction to forensic and criminal psychology 5th ed.* London: Pearson, p65-70

Larson J., Lochman J., (2012)*, Helping Schoolchildren Cope with Anger: A Cognitive- Behavioural Intervention, Second Edition,* The Guilford Press:  New York

Miller N.E., 1941, The Frustration-Aggression Hypothesis: Psychological Review, volume 48.

Pakes, F. And Winstone, J.(2007) *Psychology and Crime : Understanding and tackling offending behaviour,* London: Routledge, p59-63

Snethen, G., Van Puymbroeck, M.(2008) *Aggression and Violent Behaviour: Girls and physical aggression: Causes, trends, and intervention guided by Social Learning Theory,* Indiana University, Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism Studies: Bloomington, p346-354