CHAPTER 10

THE SOCIAL COGNITIVE LEARNING APPROACH

part 1

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Background

- Social Cognitive Learning Theory
  - Agrees with behaviouristically-oriented theories that behaviour is learnt
  - Differs from these theories in that it uses unobservable phenomena (thoughts, expectations, beliefs etc) to explain behaviour
  - Regard observational learning as the most important method of learning (as opposed to emphasizing reinforcement)
  - Theory was developed by a number of individuals

- Julian Rotter
  - Behaviour is mainly learnt (predominantly in social situations)
  - Expectations and the value attached to the expected outcomes influences behaviour
  - Expectations and Values are more important in the learning process than environmental reinforces
  - Introduces the concept of internal and external locus of control

- Albert Bandura
  - Often considered the most important representative of SCLT
  - Individual behaviour is the outcome of the interaction between the individual, the environment, and the behaviour itself
  - Imitation of others plays an important role in learning behaviour (observational learning)
**Background**

- **Walter Mischel**
  - Emphasizes the interaction between the individual and the situation
  - Critical of a personistic view of behaviour (that behaviour is determined by the personality characteristics of the person)
  - Focused on the role of **expectations** and **self-control** in human behaviour

**The View of the Person**

- Balanced, positivistic and optimistic view of the person
  - Life is about more than achieving drive satisfaction
  - Humans determine their own lives and development
- Behaviour has multiple, identifiable causes situated within the individual and the environment
- Human beings, in interaction with their social environment, are capable of regulating their own behaviour
  - **Reciprocal Determinism**
    - Behaviour is determined by the interaction of the **person**, the **environment**, and the **behaviour** that takes place in a given situation

**The View of the Person**

- **Cognitive Learning Theorists** do not agree with behaviourists that behaviour is determined by forces outside of the individual's control
  - People actively perceive and evaluate stimuli
  - People actively strive to achieve specific goals (Planning)
  - People judge past behaviour, influencing their future behaviour
- **Mischel:**
  - Cannot predict behaviour from individual characteristics (these vary from situation to situation)
  - Cannot predict behaviour based on situational characteristics (individuals react differently in similar situations)
  - Interaction between individual characteristics and situational characteristics determine behaviour

**The View of the Person**

- **Bandura:**
  - **Reciprocal Determinism**
    - Behaviour is the result of continuous interaction between personal, environmental, and behavioural determinants \(G = f(P \times S \times B)\)
    - In any given situation, people have various possible behaviours at their disposal
    - The specific behaviour people produce in a given situation is determined by the interaction between
      - **Nature of the situation**
      - **Learning experiences**
      - **Expectations and Goals**
      - **The behaviour produced in situation**
The Structure of the Personality

• Social cognitive learning theorists do not regard the personality as consisting of various components
• They emphasize the functioning and dynamics of the personality
• Given the emphasis on the interaction between the person and the environment in determining behaviour, the person and the situation could be regarded as structural concepts

The Dynamics of the Personality:
SCLT View of Motivation

• Motivation is the result of interaction and learning (and not the result of specific motives or drives)
• Bandura’s criticism: drives are used to explain motivations, which are then used as evidence of drives (circular logic)
  ▪ Complex human behaviour can only be understood when taking into account the interaction between the environment and cognitive processes (expectations)

The Dynamics of the Personality:
SCLT View of the Functioning of the Person

• Rotter:
  ▪ A person is more likely to behave in a specific way if they expect the behaviour to have a desired outcome (high reinforcement value / reward)
  \[
  BP = f(E, RV)
  \]
  ▪ BP = Behaviour Potential
  ▪ E = Expectancy
  ▪ RV = Reinforcement Value
  ▪ Expectancies and perceived reinforcement values differ across situations as perceived by the individual
## The Dynamics of the Personality: SCLT View of the Functioning of the Person

- **Identified the well known expectancy of Locus of Control**
  - **Internal Locus of Control:**
    - Feel you have control over the outcomes of your behaviour
    - Less easily influenced by others
    - Have a high achievement motivation
  - **External Locus of Control:**
    - Feel you have no control over the outcomes of your behaviour
    - More easily influenced by others
  - Locus of control can vary across situations

## The Dynamics of the Personality: SCLT View of the Functioning of the Person

- **Bandura:**
  - Individuals possess capabilities that underlie their functioning and distinguish them from animals
    - Symbolising: can store and manipulate experiences and use them to plan future behaviour
    - Forethought: can devise plans and goals for the future and behave according to them
    - Self-regulation: people live by their own standards and are relatively independent of the control and approval of others
    - Self-reflection: people have a self-image and can evaluate themselves

## The Dynamics of the Personality: SCLT View of the Functioning of the Person

- **Mischel:**
  - Encoding Strategies:
    - Linked to Bandura’s Symbolising person variable and self-efficacy perception
    - People differ in the way they symbolise (or encode) experiences
    - How a person perceives a situation determines how they react to the situation
The Dynamics of the Personality: SCLT View of the Functioning of the Person

- Expectancy:
  - Corresponds to Rotter’s person variable of expectancy
  - Expectations regarding the outcomes of a person’s behaviour
  - Individual difference is largely due to the differences in people’s expectancies

- Subjective values:
  - Corresponds with Rotter’s concept of Reinforcement Value
  - People with the same expectancies may behave differently in a situation because they attach different subjective values to the outcome of the behaviour

- Self-regulating systems and plans:
  - Includes a person’s standards they have set for themselves, their goals, how they react to success and failure etc
  - Provide an individual with some control over their life

- Competencies:
  - The ability to deal with the environment
  - Includes knowledge, skills, the ability to generate appropriate cognitions and actions