

## 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

### Background

#### • 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**

### Background

#### • 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 Motivation**

- People actively interpret and evaluate the results of their own behaviour and that of others – this is how they develop expectations about the outcome of future behaviour
- Behaviour is also shaped by self-evaluation (personal standards) – strive to achieve self-reward rather than self-punishment
- **Individuals to a great extent, in interaction with the situation, determine their own motivation, and that human behaviour is determined by a large variety of different, individual motives**

### **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**

- Given a person's ability to reflect upon their self-image, they develop a **self-efficacy perception** (beliefs about their ability to function effectively in a given situation)
- A person's self-efficacy perception
  - ❖ determines whether they will try to deal with a situation or not
  - ❖ influences their choice of situations – people chose to be in situations where they believe they will achieve success
  - ❖ can motivate them to take control of a situation (if the self-efficacy perception is high)

**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

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

- 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