2025 Social Cognitive Approach to Personality

What are the various Social Cognitive explanations for personality?
Thoughts and Emotions
Behavioral Concepts=Social Learning
Watson
Skinner
Functional Analysis = Law of Effect
Cognitions
Cognition influences behavior
Behavior influences cognition

Rotter
Cognitions
Conditioning
Locus of Control
Internals
Externals
Learned Helplessness

Bandura
Reciprocal Determinism
Self-Efficacy

Mischel
Cognitive Person Variables
Encodings
Beliefs
Expectancies
Competencies
Affects
The Situation and cognition
Behavioral signatures
Personal Disposition

The Social Cognitive Approach: AKA Social Learning Theory

- Theorists look to conscious thoughts and emotions to describe how people differ
- And Explains why they behave the way they do
- Not created out of case studies
- Based on principles of animal and human learning
- "Personality consists mainly of the thoughts and actions we learn through **observing** and interacting with family and others in social situations."

Roots in Behaviorism

J.B. Watson (1925)

- Classical Conditioning
- "All human behavior from mental disorder to scientific skill, is determined by learning"

BF Skinner

- Operant Conditioning
- Used **Functional Analysis**
- Saw behavior as a function it serves in obtaining rewards or avoiding punishment
- Functional Analysis summarizes
    - What people find rewarding
    - What they are capable of doing
    - What skills they lack

Social Learning

- Classical/Operant Conditioning
- Focused on observation/observable behavior
- Do not explore the role of thoughts in guiding behavior

Social-Cognitive Approach

- Incorporates learning theory
- Goes beyond learning to include mental processes
- "Approach to personality seeks to assess and understand how learned patterns of thoughts and feelings contribute to behavior and how behavior and its consequences alter cognitive activity and future actions."

Social-Cognitive Theorists:

- J. Rotter
- Bandura
- Mischel

J. Rotter= expectancy Theory (1982)

- Learning creates cognition + Expectancies that guide behavior
- Behavior is determined not only by positive reinforcers but also by expectancy
- An expectation that a particular behavior will result in the consequence
- Focused on expectation- said expectations shape behavior
- Found implications of behavior Locus of Control
- Locus of Control
    - Internal –expect events to be controlled by their own efforts
        - What we achieve, what reinforcements they receive are due to their efforts
    - External- Expect event to be determined by external forces they have no control

Albert Bandura + Reciprocal Determinism

- Personality as a shaped by the ways in which thoughts behavior and Environment interact and influence one another
- People learn rewards and punishment/observational…
- Behavior changes in environment
- Observing changes in environment affects how they think then effects behavior

- Reciprocal determinism is the concept that observant, changes thinking and affects behavior
- A constant web of influence on behavior
- Key Element is Self-Efficacy- the learned expectation of success
    - What we do and what we try to do is largely controlled by our perceptioins about our chances for success
    - Higher self-efficacy = higher success

Mischel = "if then theory"

Mischel's Cognitive Affective Theory

- Learned beliefs, feelings, and experiences" are part of personality and make us different."
- The person and the situation interact to produce behavior
- People learn behaviors for certain situations
- He said cognitive and emotional processes underlie overt behaviors

The **person** (personality characteristics) + **situation** (environment) interacts to produce behavior
If people encounter a particular situation then they will engage in characteristic behavior"
Basis of personality: learned beliefs, feelings and expectancies characterize each individual and make that person different.

Behavior can be predicted when variables, Cognitive Person Variables are and the features of the situation are known.

Cognitive Person Variables:

These are Cognitive Person Variables

Knowing these variables about a person can predict behavior in particular situations

1. **Encodings**- beliefs a person has about his environment and other people

2. **Expectancies**- what a person expects to follow from behaviors and what a person believes they are capable of doing

3. **Affects**- Feelings, emotions, and affective responses

4. **Goals and values-**things people believe in and want to achieve what a person expects to follow a behavior Also what a person believes he is capable of

5. **Competencies and self-regulatory plans**- the thoughts and actions the people are capable of, able to work a plan and achieve goals. Also the ability to engage in planned, self-controlled and goal directed behavior

- Basic idea personality leads to behaviors and situations altar those behaviors
- People choose situations that are aligned to their personality
- Personality affects some situations more than others

Evaluation:
Widely accepted because it blends behavioral psych with cognitive psych
Really useful in treatment approaches

Humanistic Approach (AKA- Positive Psychology)

Focuses on mental abilities- self-awareness, creativity, planning, decision making, and responsibility
"see human behavior mainly as motivated mainly by a drive toward growth or their unique potential"
They see people as naturally inclined toward goodness, creativity and joy.
It's important to understand people's view of the world = Phenomenology
Their phenomenology shapes personality and guides behavior
They try to understand people's perceptions
Humanists endeavor to see/understand how people see through your world

Positive aspects of character strengths wisdom, courage, humanity, happiness, thriving, aspects of personal development

Carl Rogers Self Theory:
Argued that personality is based on a common motivation, We all have an Actualizing Tendency- all human behavior is motivated by a desire for growth and fulfillment
He relied on the concept of the Self
People who have accurate perception of the self, progress toward Self Actualization
Problems arise when the perception of the self is distorted progress is limited

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Rogers said personality development begins early
Children learn to need other people's approval = Positive Regard
Evaluations of children by others can impact a child's self-evaluation
When an adult's positive evaluation matches the child's self-evaluation then the child experiences self-experiences.
Positive experiences become part of the self-concept
Personality is formed by Actualizing Tendency and partly by evaluations
People are socialized to conform and fit in aka adapt
Anxiety comes when there is conflict in self-concept or at odds with the their true feelings