

Social Learning Theories

Limitations of Behaviorism:

1. ignores motivation, thought, and cognition
2. based on research with animals
3. ignores social dimensions of learning
4. treats the organism as passive

Dollard & Miller – attempted to blend Freud's psychodynamic theory with behaviorist learning theory

- coined the term "social learning theory"
- stress the role of learning in personality over structure
- structure of personality can be defined as *habits*

Habits – learned associations between a stimulus and a response

- a temporary structure
- acquired during *drive reduction*

Primary drives – associated with physiological processes

Secondary drives - "elaborations" on the primary drives

Primary reinforcers – reduce primary drives

Secondary reinforcers – originally neutral

- acquire reward value through association with primary reinforcers

Habit hierarchy (Hierarchy of Response) – list of possible responses within a given situation

- learned on the basis of what has worked in the past

The Learning process

Drive – stimulus *impelling* a person to act

- does not direct or specify behavior

Cue – specific stimulus

- tells when, where and how to respond

Response – one's reaction to the cue

Reinforcement – the effect of the response

- no drive satisfaction: response is inhibited (extinction), and one that works will become stronger

- *learning dilemma*: when no responses are reinforcing, the person will try to develop a new response that works

- all human behavior is the result of learning, including mental processes
- culture determines what is reinforced
- normal behavior differs from one society to another

Elaborating on Conditioning

Expectancies – thoughts about the possible outcome of a behavior

- expectancies about outcome play a causal role
- learning requires seeing a link between behavior and a reinforcer

Rotter

"...the potential for a behavior to occur in any specific situation is a function of the expectancy that the behavior will lead to a particular reinforcement in that situation and the value of the reinforcement" (1975, p. 57)

Behavior potential – the probability that a behavior will occur in a situation

- includes subjective interpretations
- cognitive activity, such as rationalizing, planning, reclassifying, etc.

Expectancy – a belief about an object or event

- based on past experience
- can vary in strength from 0% to 100%
- modifiable by experience
- can be specific to a situation
- can be generalized across situations

Reinforcement Value – "the degree of preference for...[a] reinforcement to occur"

- based on past experience

Psychological situation – the situation as defined by the person

- includes past experiences of the person *and* current situational cues

Rotter on Personality Development

- hinges on experiences with people
- parents satisfy early physiological needs
- parents become reinforcers: provide love, praise, etc.
- *stimulus generalization*: children work to get approval, from parents and others in similar roles
- development involves acquiring and modifying expectancies and reinforcement values
- peers and school act as socializing agents

Control Expectancies (Locus of Control)

- will one's actions influence outcomes?

External locus of control – the belief that consequences are controlled by outside forces

Internal locus of control – the belief that consequences are the result of my actions

The I-E Scale

- Promotions are earned through hard work and persistence vs. Making a lot of money is largely a matter of getting the right breaks
- Getting along with people is a skill that must be practiced vs. It is almost impossible to figure out how to please some people.
- People like me can change the course of world affairs if we make ourselves heard vs. It is only wishful thinking to believe that one can really influence what happens in society at large.

- a continuum of belief about outcomes
- extreme belief in either internal or external is unrealistic and unhealthy

Healthy individuals:

- high "freedom of movement:" the belief that a particular set of responses will lead to a desired reinforcement
- realistic goal levels

Maladjusted individuals:

- own efforts will be ineffective
- may behave in ways to avoid or defend against failure