Lecture Series: *Chapter 7  Cognitive and Social-Cognitive Aspects of Personality*


Principal Features

**Introduction**

"People think about and try to understand the world around them."

"This fact is so important that all personality theories attempt to take into account."

Complete the following:

"The way that people interpret their environments is seen as central to their humanness, and the ways in which people …"

**Roots of Cognitive Approaches**

**Question:** What is meant by the following statement?

“… it was not until Charles Darwin’s theory of evolution liberated thinking about human nature that cognitive psychology could begin in earnest.”
Roots in Gestalt Psychology

Complete the following:

“The central tenets of Gestalt theory are threefold:

(1) human beings seek …

(2) we organize the sensations we receive from the world around us into …

“and (3) complex stimuli are not …

“The German word gestalt means …

“The view from Gestalt theory is that the configuration of a complex stimulus is …

“The essence of the original resides in its …

Example: A Typical Gestalt Perceptual Figure.

“Although Gestalt theory was primarily applied to the areas of perception and problem solving, several aspects were put to use in the developing discipline of personality as well.”
Roots in Gestalt Psychology
(Continued)

Example: Gestalt theory and the discipline of personality. (233)

Kurt Lewin’s Field Theory

Question: What is Kurt Lewin’s field theory? (234)

Question: What was Kurt Lewin’s notion of life space?

Question: What was Kurt Lewin’s idea of contemporaneous causation?

Field Dependence as a Personality Variable

Question: What is field dependence? (234)
Field Dependence as a Personality Variable
(Continued)

Illustration: Field dependence.

Question: What is the difference between a field dependent and field-independent person?

Table 7.1 Characteristics Associated with Field Independence
Pages 226-227

Question: What is the relationship between field independence and gender?
Field Dependence as a Personality Variable
(Continued)

Question: What is the relationship between field independence and culture?

Question: What are some cognitive style variables that may have relevance to personality?

Question: What is cognitive complexity?

Cognitive and Perceptual Mechanisms

Schema Theory

Question: What is Jean Piaget’s notion of schemas?
Cognitive and Perceptual Mechanisms
(Continued)

Illustrations: Schemas in children and adults (Note schema as script).

Categorization

Question: What is the cognitive notion of categorization?

Examples: Categorization.
Categorization (Continued)

Question: What are meant by the following statements?

“The same informational efficiency that provide us with useful expectations and interpretations can lead us to premature judgments (prejudice).”

“Another related characteristic of human cognition … encourages the use of stereotypes.”

Control of Attention

Question: What is the cognitive notion of control of attention?

Individual Differences in Attention: ADHD

Question: What is attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder?
Individual Differences in Attention: ADHD
(Continued)

Example: Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder.

Question: What is meant by the following statement?

“(The) variability across people in how their attentional processes operate is directly relevant to personality …”

"Recently, several theorists have linked the hyperactivity and impulsivity symptoms associated with ADHD-Hyperactive/Impulsive and ADHD-Combined types with Gray's Behavior Inhibition System (BIS) …"

Evidence: Relationship of ADHD to behavioral inhibition.
Individual Differences in Attention: ADHD

"Children with ADHD are commonly treated with Ritalin or Concerta …"

Question: Why is drug treatment of ADHD controversial?

Humans as Scientists: George Kelly’s Personal Construct Theory

Question: What is George Kelly’s personal construct theory?

Individuals as Amateur Personality Theorists

Question: Why did George Kelly say that we are each a personality theorist?

The Role Construct Repertory Test

Question: What is the Role Construct Repertory Test, or Rep test?
The Role Construct Repertory Test
(Continued)

Illustration: Role Construct Repertory Test.

Social Intelligence

Question: What is social intelligence?

Question: Howard Gardner is a prominent educational psychologist interested in individual differences. How has he related social intelligence to cognitive aspects of personality?
Explanatory Style as a Personality Variable

Question: What is the personality variable known as explanatory style?

Optimism and Pessimism

Question: What is meant by the following statement?

“… optimism and pessimism (are) the extreme poles of explanatory style.”

Examples: Optimistic and pessimistic explanatory style.

Question: What is meant by the following statement?

“In general, having an optimistic explanatory style is associated with better outcomes.”
Question: What is the personality variable known as learned helplessness?

Evidence: Learned helplessness.

“The consequences of (optimism and pessimism) personality differences sometimes can be seen in terms of differential memory.”

Evidence: Explanatory style and memory.

“Interestingly, purely cognitive, explanatory attempts at psychotherapy sometimes run up against unconscious processes.”

Example: Explanatory style psychotherapeutic outcomes.
"The cognitive approach can be combined with social learning theories to produce a quite sophisticated view of personality."

Example: Cognitive approach combined with social learning theory.

Complete the following:

"According to (Julian) Rottor, our final choice of behavior depends both on how strongly we expect that our performance will have a …

" … and how much we value the …

**Generalized versus Specific Expectancies**

**Question:** What is Julian Rottor’s notion of **behavioral potential**? (251)

**Question:** What is Julian Rottor’s notion of *specific* expectancies?

**Question:** What is Julian Rottor’s notion of *generalized* expectancies?
Generalized versus Specific Expectancies
(Continued)

Question: When do generalized expectancies influence our behavior more than specific expectancies, and vice versa?

The Role of Reinforcements

Complete the following:

“According to Rottor, the reinforcer that will have the highest value is the reinforcement that …

“Rottor describes six psychological needs that develop out of biological needs.”

Question: What are these six psychological needs?

The Psychological Situation

Question: What is Julian Rottor’s notion of “the psychological situation?”
Locus of Control

Question: What is Julian Rottor’s notion of **locus of control**?

Question: What is Julian Rottor’s notion of **internal locus of control**?

Question: What is Julian Rottor’s notion of **external locus of control**?

Question: What is meant by the following statement?

“(Julian) Rottor does believe that individuals have enduring dispositions …”

Complete the following:

“… locus of control (LOC) has been found to have three somewhat orthogonal (independent) dimensions— …

“Internal-LOC individuals are more likely to be achievement-oriented because they see that their own behavior can …
**Albert Bandura’s Social-Cognitive Learning Theory**

**Question:** What is the observational learning process?  

**The Self-System**

**Question:** What is Albert Bandura notion of the “self-system?”

**Observational Learning**

**Question:** What is Albert Bandura notion of observational learning or vicarious learning (also referred to as modeling)?

**Question:** What is meant by the following statement?

“In Bandura’s view, people do not mindlessly copy the behavior of others …”
Learning of Aggressive Behavior

“Bandura and his colleagues conducted a series of studies … on the observational learning of aggressive behavior in children.”

Evidence: Learning of aggressive behavior. (254-255)

Outcome Expectancy

Question: What is Albert Bandura notion of outcome expectancy? (255)

Whose Behavior is Modeled?

“In addition to outcome expectancy, other factors also influence the likelihood that another person’s behavior will be modeled.”

Question: What are the other factors that influence behavior?
Whose Behavior is Modeled?

(Continued)

“The likelihood of modeling is also influenced by some attributes of the observer …”

Question: What are the attributes of the observer that influence behavior? (255-256)

“Observational learning provides a mechanism for the acquisition of behavior that is so dangerous that one might not live to learn to perform it if it had to be acquired by shaping.”

Example: Observational learning and the acquisition of dangerous behaviors. (256)

Complete the following:

“Another insight of this approach is the acceptance that complex behavior can …

“As any parent can attest, children can, with very limited exposure, …

“According to Bandura, observational learning allows the child not only to acquire specific behavioral sequences from the parent, but also to …
Comparison with Reinforcement-Oriented Learning Theory

Complete the following:

“In contrast to Skinner’s and other conditioning theories that are completely dependent on the construct of reinforcement, Bandura’s cognitive social learning theory accounts for the learning of …

“It allows for the learning of behavior for which neither model nor observer is …

“Observational learning also explains how a person learns to inhibit socially unacceptable behaviors without first having to …

“In addition, observational learning offers reasons why an individual will disinhibit …

Illustration: Observational theory and disinhibited behavior.

Complete the following:

“… observational learning can explain the acquisition of personality characteristics and behaviors that are uniquely human and not well accounted for by traditional learning theories — …
Complete the following:

“According to Bandura, the observation of models and the repetition of the models’ behavior are not just matters of simple imitation; observational learning also involves active cognitive processes with four components: attention, retention, motor reproduction, and motivation.”

"Attention is …

"Retention is …

"Motor reproduction is …

"Motivation most influences the …

"That is, even a person has observed and acquired a behavior, it will be performed when it leads to valued outcomes and not performed if it is expected to lead to negative outcomes."

Example: Observational learning, performance, and valued outcomes
Processes Underlying Bandura’s Observational Learning
(Continued)

**Question:** What is Albert Bandura notion of **self-regulation**? (258-259)

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**Self-Efficacy**

**Question:** What is Albert Bandura notion of **self-efficacy**? (260)

Complete the following:

“Our self-efficacy beliefs are the result of four types of information:

(1) our experiences trying to perform the …

(2) watching others perform …

(3) verbal persuasion …

and (4) how we feel …

“Of these, the most important source of information is …

“The next most important is …
Self-Efficacy
(Continued)

Complete the following:

“We use these four sources of information to determine whether we …” (260)

Question: What does Albert Bandura say about the connection between self-efficacy and the health domain?

Question: What is meant by the following statement?

“… self-efficacy is … situationally determined.”

Example: Situational determination of self-efficacy. (260-261)

Self-Regulation Processes

Complete the following:

"Self regulation is the process by which people can control their own …” (261)
**Self-Regulation Processes**  
(Continued)

**Question:** What is meant by the following statement?

"… (self regulation processes have) very broad relevance to many applied areas …"  
(261)

"… individual's cognitive schemas and styles of information processing normally produce consistencies in behavior (can) break down."

**Illustrations:** Self-regulation processes.  
(261-262)

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**Figure 7.3** Alcohol and Deindividuation Trigger Dysregulation  
Pages 262
Humans as Computers

Question: Is it reasonable to think we can build a computer that has a “personality”?

Question: What is meant by the following statement?

"Human characteristics are commonly ascribed to computers."

Question: What is the Turing Test?

Summary and Conclusion

Complete the following:

“All … cognitive approaches to personality … have in common the view that the essence of personality is to be found in the way …"
Summary and Conclusion

(Continued)

Question: What are meant by the following statements?

“… cognitively oriented theories of personality were outgrowths of prior theories that were more directly cognitive.”

“Cognitive and perceptual mechanisms of expecting, attending, and information processing are a central part of our understanding of human behavior …”

“Categorization processes are central to human cognition.”

Question: What was George Kelly’s contribution to personality theory?

Complete the following:

“Social intelligence theory proposes that people …”
Summary and Conclusion
(Continued)

Question: What are meant by the following statements?

"Explanatory style refers to a set of cognitive personality variables that captures a persons’ habitual means of interpreting events in his or her life."

"Rottor's social-cognitive theory claims that people choose their behaviors … "

"Bandura's social-cognitive learning theory can be seen as an application and refinement of … classical learning theory … "

Complete the following:

"All of these cognitive approaches to personality share the view that human perception and human cognition are at the …"