## 2. Background

- The social cognitive learning theory **agrees** with other behaviouristically-oriented theories in:
  - Regarding behaviour as primarily learnt.
  - Focusing on the study of observable behaviour.
- SCLA also **differs** in other respects:
  - Make use of *unobservable matters* (thoughts, symbolic processes, expectations and convictions) in their explanation of behaviour, while radical behaviourists (Skinner) strongly oppose mentalistic explanations.
  - Make use of concepts originating in cognitive & Gestalt psychology and phenomenology rather than psychoanalytical concepts.
  - Regard **observational learning** as most important method of learning.
  - Don't view reinforcement as an essential part of learning.
- Social cognitive learning approach (SCLA) is product of a number of psychologists.
  - In essence, their basic points of departure correspond, but different concepts are used to convey their thinking and emphasis of various aspects of behaviour differ.
  - Julian Rotter, Albert Bandura and Walter Mischel regarded as most important figures in development of SCLA.

3. The view of the person underlying the theory

- View of person underlying SCLA is a balanced one as it is not linked with any extreme one-sided standpoint.
- Positivist approach:
  - Behaviour is the result of knowable causes
  - A variety of causes is acknowledged (various factors within individual & environment)
- NOT environmental determinism
  - Although environmental influences are important determinants of behaviour, allowance is made for individual's ability to influence their own behaviour and development.
  - Individual and situation regarded as co-determinants of behaviour: humans are capable of self-regulation but always in interaction with the situation.
- Central to view of person is **interactional view** a.k.a. **reciprocal determinism**
  - Behaviour is determined by interaction of 3 factors:
    1. Person
    2. Situation
    3. Behaviour taking place in situation
  - Behaviour is result and part of a continuous process in which individual, situation and individual's behaviour constantly influence one another.
- Extreme behaviourist view:
  - Behaviour is selected and reinforced by environmental influences.
  - Behaviour is determined by forces beyond individual's control.
  - Cognitive learning theorists disagree with this view because:
    - Individuals are not regarded as passively reacting to environmental stimuli drives, but as active participants who perceive and evaluate stimuli, strive towards goals and devise plans to achieve them, plan their future behaviour and judge their past behaviour and re-plan and change their behaviour in light of self-evaluation.
- **Mischel ⟶ Interactional point of view.**
  - Behaviour cannot be predicted on basis of individual's measured characteristics as 'characteristics' are not fixed and vary from situation to situation.
  - Behaviour cannot be predicted on basis of situational characteristics either, as individuals behave differently in the same situation.
  - **Concluded**: behaviour is not determined exclusively by individual or situation but by interaction of characteristics of individual and situation that determine an individual's behaviour in a certain situation – theory of specificity.

- **Bandura⟶ reciprocal determinism**
  - o Behaviour is the result of continuous interaction between personal, environmental and behavioural determinants.
  - o G= f (P x S x B) – behaviour is the function of an interaction between person, situation and behaviour.
  - o Individuals determine their own behaviour while being influenced by environmental factors and their behaviour.

P

S   B
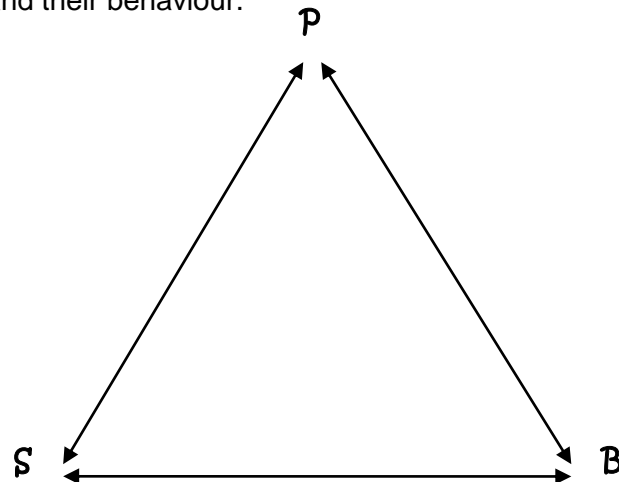
Reciprocal determinism: the person, the situation and the person's behaviour are in continuous interaction.
  - o **Bandura's viewpoint**:
    - → In every situation, individual has various behaviours at their disposal called response repertoire. Which one of the behaviours used in a given situation is the result of an interaction between the following factors:
      - • Nature of situation
      - • People's learning experiences
      - • People's expectations and goals
      - • Behaviour produced in situation
- Human life is more than a matter of drive satisfaction.
- Humans determine their own lives and development within limits and can choose what they regard as valuable and rewarding.
- However, SCLA has not been fully or clearly developed, It is not clear:
  - o To what extent the existence of basic biological needs have been acknowledged.
  - o To what extent human behaviour is regarded as being determined by biological characteristics
  - o Whether they allow for the possibility that humans striving for meaning may be stronger than their biological needs.

5. The dynamics of the personality

5.1. The social cognitive learning view of motivation
- Motivation is not attributed to specific motives or drives; instead it is seen as the result of 2 processes, interaction and learning.
- Individuals are not motivated only by intrapersonal drives or external stimuli, but are motivated by the interaction between individual and situation.
- **Bandura's views on motivation**:
  - ▪ Rejects attempts to explain behaviour by referring to needs, drives and unconscious impulses.
    - o Explanation rests on a circular argument
      - → Behaviour is proof that corresponding need or drive exists, while need is simultaneously used to explain behaviour.
    - o This reasoning leads to discovery of unlimited drives which explains nothing.
    - o Behaviour is too complex to be explained by referring to underlying drives.

- Rejects extreme behaviourists' view that behaviour is product of only environmental influences.
  - This view does not account for observed fact that individuals persist with one form of behaviour in spite of environmental changes.
- Human behaviour can be explained as an interaction between the environment and cognitive processes (thinking, interpretation of stimuli & expectations of future events)
- Behaviour is motivated by probable results – individuals' expectations of results of their behaviour.
  - Whether behaviour is carried out by individual depends on their expectations of whether it will bring valued benefits, no noticeable effects or feared disadvantages.
- Individual's needs are determined by interaction between individual and environment.
- Bandura does not deny existence of biological needs but focuses on complex interplay of cognitive processes whereby behaviour is selected and on how these processes are learnt.
- People's expectations of the results of their behaviour are shaped by two types of learning, namely:
  - Experiences with regard to results of their own behaviour
  - Observations of the results of others' behaviour
- Expectations are not the automatic result of environmental influences: individuals play and active role through interpreting and evaluating the results of their own and others' behaviour.
- However, behaviour is not only motivated and regulated by expectations concerning its external results, but also by individual's self-evaluation.
  - Individuals have standards against which they evaluate their behaviour, thus their behaviour is not only determined by immediate external or expected circumstances, but usually remains constant in spite of changing circumstances.
- Individuals are also motivated to behave in a way that leads to self-reward rather than self-punishment.
- Mischel's view of self-regulation:
  - Human ability to self-regulate and self-control is reflected in:
    - Willpower, mastery, competence, helplessness and hopelessness.
  - All concepts involve volition (will) and deal with ability of people to self-regulate to increase mastery in light of certain goals.
  - Summary: **View of motivation is that individuals to a great extent, in interaction with the situation, determine their own motivation, and human behaviour is therefore determined by a large variety of different individual motives.**

5.2.1. Rotter – locus of control

- Individuals develop certain generalised expectancies about results of behaviour and there are many individual differences in this regard.
- **Locus of control**: the extent to which people perceive and internal or external point of control in their lives.
- **Internal locus of control**:
  - People perceive whatever follows their behaviour as result of their actions or of their own relatively permanent attributes.
  - People believe they can exercise considerable control over what happens to them.
- **External locus of control**:
  - People perceive the outcome of their behaviour depends on external influences (good fortune, coincidence, fate or influence of other people).
  - People believe they can exercise little control over their lives.
- An individual's view of the locus of control is related to various other aspects of the personality and behaviour.
  1. People with an external locus of control are usually more influenced by other people and internal locus of control is usually associated with high achievement motivation.

- Locus of control is not an either/or proposition.
  - People with a general tendency toward external locus of control can still use and internal locus of control and vice versa, depending on their past learning experiences in a certain situation.

5.2.2. Bandura – self-reflective capability
- *Self-reflective capability* is the uniquely human ability to:
  - Have a self-image
  - Reflect on oneself
  - Evaluate oneself
- The central component of the *self-reflective capability* is the **self-efficacy perception** – people's beliefs about their capabilities to function effectively in a given situation.
- Bandura's findings about self-efficacy are:
  1. People's self-efficacy perception determines whether they will make an attempt to deal with a situation or not.
  2. Self-efficacy perception influences people's choice of situation as they tend to choose situations in which they believe they will achieve success.
  3. Persons with high self-efficacy are likely to be more strongly motivated and to be more persistent in attempting to take control of a situation. High self-efficacy produces more success experiences which increase self-efficacy. Low self efficacy produces less successful experiences, resulting in decreased self-efficacy.

5.3. Learning from the social cognitive learning perspective
- Social cognitive learning theorists believe that all behaviour is acquired through learning.

Differences between social cognitive and standard behaviourist views of learning

Social Cognitive Views of learning	Behaviourist views o learning
1. The role of the individual in the learning process	
Individuals are active participants who can influence their own learning process in a number of ways, namely: • Choosing what they want to learn, through their values, which will determine what they will regard as a reward for behaviour, and by rewarding or punishing themselves.	Individuals learn in a passive way on the basis of inputs from the environment.
2. The form of learning	
Three forms of learning are acknowledged, namely: • Learning through direct experience (includes conditioning). • Observational learning. • Learning through self-regulation.	Conditioning is regarded as the only form of learning
3. The concept of reinforcement (& punishment) and forms of reinforcement recognised	
Three types of reinforcement, namely: • Direct reinforcement • Vicarious reinforcement • Self-reinforcement	Learning is always linked with reinforcement by an external agent.

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Direct Reinforcement
- Individual receives rewards for behaviour from external agents.
- Something unpleasant is taken away from individual.

Direct Punishment
- External agent subjects individual to painful or unpleasant stimuli.
- Something pleasant is withheld from the individual.

Vicarious Reinforcement
- An individual observes another being rewarded for their behaviour.

Vicarious Punishment
- An individual observes another being punished for behaviour

Vicarious punishment and reinforcement play important role in observational learning.

Self-reinforcement
- Individuals reward their own behaviour by praising themselves, feeling proud, or giving themselves a concrete reward.

Self-punishment
- Individuals punish their own behaviour by blaming themselves or feeling ashamed, or by punishing themselves in a concrete way.

NB. Self regulation plays an important role in all three types of learning (learning through direct experience, observational learning, and self-regulation.)

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5.3.1. Learning through direct experience

- Behaviour changes as a result of performing the behaviour, for which they are **rewarded or punished by someone else.**
    - This form of learning was singled out for study by other behaviouristically-oriented psychologists and is a.k.a. *operant or instrumental learning* and *classical or respondent conditioning.*
- (SCLA) Learning through direct experience is not the only form of learning as other types of learning (observational learning and self-regulation) make a far greater impact on the life of the individual.
- SCLA define learning differently from Skinner in that they believe that learning and conditioning should not be regarded as automatic processes, and cognitive processes play a significant role even in this type of learning.
- **Bandura** points out:
    - People don't just produce behaviour, but also consciously perceive and think about results of their behaviour.
    - Thinking is an important factor.
    - Individual not only reacts to stimuli but interprets them and makes hypotheses about results of various possible behaviours in a specific situation.
    - All available info plays role in process of interpretation, including what others say about results of behaviour.

- **Even if people regularly received positive reinforcement for behaviour, they will not persist with the behaviour if other people tell them that the behaviour will not be rewarded in future.**
- According to SCLA, operant and respondent conditioning are not only linked to direct reinforcement, but also to self-reinforcement. The success of conditioning depends on whether the person subjectively accepts the reinforcement as reward or not.
- **Direct reinforcement succeeds only when it occurs with self-reward.**

5.3.2. Observational learning

- Observational learning (learning by observing other people's behaviour) is the most important form of learning and people only learn a small proportion of their behavioural repertoire through direct experience.
- Many behaviours are too complex/dangerous/removed from reflexes that it's unlikely that they could be learnt without mediation of social influences (verbal instructions & practical demonstrations)
- Terms associated with observational learning:
    - **Social learning**: All learning phenomena in which social and cognitive factors play a role.
    - **Model**: The figure whose behaviour is observed
    - **Observer**: The individual who observes someone else's behaviour.
    - **Reinforcement agent**: The person who rewards or punishes the *model's* behaviour.
    - **Observational learning**: The behaviour of the observer changes as a result of observing the behaviour of the model.
    - **Vicarious reinforcement**: When the model's behaviour is reinforced and the observer learns the behaviour.
    - **Modelling**: The behaviour of the model.
    - **Imitation**: The behaviour of the observer.
    - **Counter-imitation**: Observers do the opposite of what they observed in the model and arises because:
        1. Vicarious punishment occurs in which the observer witnesses the model being punished and behaves differently to avoid punishment.
        2. A negative attitude from the observer towards the model.
- Observational learning ≠ automatic/consistent, fairly complex process that is influenced by a variety of factors.
- To grasp factors, the aspects of observational learning need to be kept in mind:
    - **Attention**
        → The observer needs to pay attention to the model's behaviour.
    - **Retention**
        → If the model's behaviour is observed with attention, retention takes place.
        → However, just because retention of behaviour is attained, it does not necessarily mean that reproduction of the behaviour will occur.
    - **Reproduction**
        → The repetition of the model's behaviour.

5.3.3. Factors influencing observational learning

- When working through the factors that influence observational learning, you should keep reciprocal determinism in mind.
- Factors do not function in isolation, but always in the context of interaction between the individual, the situation and the immediate behaviour.
- Factors influencing observational learning are as follows:

    - **The nature of the modelled behaviour**
        1. Nature of behaviour influences 3 aspects of observational learning.
        2. Depends on observer's motivation and situation in which modelling occurs.
        3. New, unknown/striking behaviour attracts attention and is more easily acquired. (aggressive behaviour more readily imitated due to this)

4. Information given to observer in advance influences/draws observer's attention to modelling.
5. Interaction between nature of observed behaviour & individual moral values influences retention and reproduction.
    → Socially unacceptable behaviour is acquired as readily as desirable behaviour but is less likely to be reproduced unless a reward is offered, or the individual expects and attractive result.

- **The characteristics of the model**
    1. Individual's age, sex, status & personality characteristics
    2. A model with **high status** or **similar characteristics** to those of the observer is more readily imitated.
    3. Symbolic models are often copied as readily as live models.

- **The characteristics of the observer**
    1. Observer's motivation, interests, values, self-confidence, opinions, intelligence and perceptiveness.
    2. Observer's personality (expectancies, values, self-perceptions) are important in determining:
        → Which models they will select
        → Which behaviour will hold their attention
        → Which behaviour they will acquire and produce
    3. Individuals' expectations about outcome of behaviour influence the reproduction of the behaviour.
    4. When observers expect rewards for certain behaviour, they are more likely to reproduce it.

- **The results of the model's behaviour**
    1. Vicarious reward leads to imitation of modelled behaviour, vicarious punishment leads to counter-imitation of behaviour.
        → Conclusion ≠ entirely accurate – influence of vicarious outcomes is more complex.
    2. Vicarious outcomes don't automatically influence observer's behaviour; this is mediated by observer's cognition.
        → Vicarious outcomes provide observers with information which they interpret and use in light of the situation and previous experiences.
    3. Vicarious consequences (outcomes) have following influences on the observer:
        o Provide observers with information about factors they have to take into account in planning their behaviour (results expected if they produce the same behaviour.)
        o Influence observer's motivation in that observed reinforcement encourages them to produce the same behaviour & observed punishment discourages them.
        o Model's reaction to consequences of their behaviour influences observer's emotional reactions and values. If a model reacts a certain way to something, it is likely that the observer will act the same way towards the same thing.
        o Influence observer's perception of model and reinforcing agent. If model's behaviour is punished unfairly by reinforcing agent, in observer's opinion, status of reinforcing agent decreases and model increases. (Vice versa).
    4. Vicarious outcomes don't affect reproduction and retention in the same way.
        → Vicarious punishment and reward has the same effect on retention but vicarious reward is more likely leads to reproduction of modelled behaviour.
        → Vicarious reward and punishment both lead more frequently to acquisition than modelled behaviour without an outcome.

- → Observer's attention is increased when modelled behaviour leads to an outcome.
- → Relative outcome – observers judge the outcome of modelled behaviour and compare it to their own past experience
  - o **Bandura:** specific outcome is regarded as reward or punishment depending on the observer's past experience.
- → Observer's who do not directly imitate the modelled behaviour may do so indirectly by producing similar behaviour. This may also occur with counter- imitation (an event that is punished causes all punishable events to be avoided)
  - o Behaviouristically-oriented theorists would say this is due to generalisation.
  - o SCLA theorists would say the observer was acting in terms of a rule or principle that they had deduced.

- ▪ **Self-efficacy**
  1. Reproduction of acquired behaviour influences the individual's self-efficacy perception (their confidence in their ability to reproduce the behaviour).
  2. Individuals acquire the behaviour and will be able to describe the model's behaviour, but reproduction of the behaviour depends on self-confidence.

5.3.4. Learning through self-regulation
- An individual's ability to regulate their own behaviour, particularly their learning processes - ∴ includes self-reinforcement and self-punishment.
- **Bandura:**
  - ▪ Individuals continually regulate their behaviour by choosing situations that will expose them to particular environmental influences, and by evaluating their own behaviour.
  - ▪ Distinguishes 2 types of self-regulation: *internal and external self-regulation*. Both can operate positively (self-reinforcement) and negatively (self-punishment).
    1. **Internal self regulation**:
       - → People's subjective evaluation of their own behaviour.
       - → *Self-reinforcement*: A particular response will be repeated in the future (even if no external reinforcement is received) as individuals tell themselves that it is a good response and feel proud of themselves.
       - → *Self-punishment*: individuals punish themselves for unacceptable behaviour by using standards based on their previous experiences, their self-efficacy, future expectations and values.
    2. **External self regulation**:
       - → Arranging the situation and the outcome of behaviour so that individuals reward or punish themselves in a concrete way.
  - ▪ Self regulation (internal self-reinforcement and self-punishment) is fundamental to all other types of learning. Even when an individual is rewarded and punished by and external agent, the effect of the reward or punishment depends on the individual's interpretation.
  - ▪ SCLA theorists apply self-regulation to other aspects of behaviour as well.
    1. **Rotter** – distinguishes between individuals with an external locus of control or an internal locus of control.
    2. **Mischel** – draws attention to relationship between people's self-regulating systems and willpower in their striving towards goals, excellence and success. His research on the ability to postpone reward also shows considerable individual differences as to how much self-regulation people are capable of.

6. The development of the personality
- Individual develops throughout the lifespan and continually learns new and modified behaviours.
- Development is an ongoing process of change resulting from the interaction between genetic and environmental factors.

7. Optimal development

- No specific pronouncements made on optimal development.
- **Rotter** – SCLA is '*a theory about learned behaviour – not good/bad behaviour, or adjusted/maladjusted behaviour.*'
- Implicit point of view:
    - Optimally developed people are able to recognise & take into account factors that are relevant to effective functioning in a given situation, even though they may be relatively complex, and succeed in producing behaviour that meets their own standards. Such people also have a realistic self-efficacy perception (they neither overestimate nor underestimate their abilities).
    - However, environment (social and cultural) determines what they will regard as desirable and valuable.
    - Standards held by various societies differ, as will the behaviours they aspire to acquire and reproduce.

8. Views on psychopathology

Comparisons between SCLA and other behaviouristically-oriented theorists	
Agreement	Difference
1. Pathological behaviour is learnt	1. SCLA theorists emphasize role of observational learning with regard to the presence & influence of models
2. Do not look for underlying dynamic causes of psychopathological behaviour and ignore organically based disturbances	2. SCLA theorists developed more specific ideas about origin of undesirable behaviour.

- **Bandura**: a *lack of self-efficacy* is important in the development of undesirable behaviour.
- **Seligman**: identifies certain cognitive styles/encoding strategies (learnt helplessness & pessimism) are linked with development of pathological behaviour patterns.
    - Cognitive styles/encoding strategies responsible for pathological behaviour:
        - **Learnt helplessness** – characterised by emotional disturbance (feeling of being at the mercy of the situation).
        - **Reduced motivation** (decrease in attempts to change situation)
        - **Cognitive deficiency** (inability to make a connection between behaviour & results, even when situation is controllable)
    - Individuals develop characteristic styles in attempts to explain their environment – **Explanatory style:**
        - **Has three bipolar components:**
            - → Preference for either *internal or external locus of control.*
            - → Tendency to see situations as either *stable or transient*
            - → Tendency to view matters *globally or in a limited way*.
        - Individuals with a style that is internal, stable and global tend towards depression.
        - Individuals with extreme external style blame things that go wrong on other people or circumstances which gives rise to paranoia.
- ***SCLA therapy focuses on changing an individual's unhealthy expectancy patterns & encoding strategies and improving their self-efficacy***.

9.2. Psychotherapy

- Basic purpose of SCLA therapy is to improve client's functioning in the types of situations they find problematic.
- Therapists attempt to teach clients more effective cognitive styles and improve their self-efficacy.
- Advantages of SCLA therapeutic techniques:
    - Usually relatively brief ∴ economical
    - Can be used with individuals and groups
    - Can be linked with various other techniques

- Lay persons can be taught to use them so they can cope without therapist's help
- Most obvious form of therapy is ***modelling*** – model demonstrates desired behaviour to client.
    1. Model can play role of someone who is learning behaviour concerned instead of appearing as an expert.
        → This modelling is more effective than normal modelling as clients identify with someone who is a learner & provides them with various steps in the learning process.
    2. Modelling can be used in conjunction with systematic desensitisation.
        → Client observes a model gradually losing their initial fear of a situation through systematic desensitisation
    3. Modelling can be further enhanced by combining it with direct reinforcement of client's behaviour (***participant modelling***).
        → Client observes model performing desired behaviour, is encouraged to reproduce the behaviour and is rewarded when they do.
- Modelling used in psychotherapy does not necessarily make use of a human model.
    4. Clients can be encouraged to use covert modelling.
        → Clients imagine another person performing the behaviour.

- SCLA therapists developed techniques which clients can use after being trained by a psychologist.
    o Stress inoculation – clients are taught various ways of dealing with stress.
        ▪ Clients learn to restructure situations cognitively so that they experience them as less stressful.
        ▪ Clients learn correct breathing and muscle relaxation techniques.
- **Mahoney & Thoresen**:
    o Developed a method whereby individuals become their own therapists.
        ▪ In accordance with self-regulation, they plan their environments so that they reward and punish their own behaviour according to a 'contract' they draw up themselves.
- **Beck**:
    o Developed a cognitive therapy for treating depression.
        ▪ It rests on the notion that depression is caused by negative thinking & assumptions.
        ▪ Therapy consists of teaching clients to see the relationship between negative cognitions and melancholy feelings, and to replace negative ideas with more realistic thinking.

9.4. The interpretation and handling of aggression

- View of aggression – it is behaviour that develops from inborn & acquired behaviour patterns in a lifelong process in which direct experience, observational learning and self-regulation all play a role.

- Potentially aggressive modes of behaviour are part of the behavioural repertoire of each individual.
    ▪ Due to genetic & environmental factors, each individual has certain ways of behaving at their disposal that can be harnessed for aggressive purposes.
- Chances of specific aggressive responses being repeated increase when they lead to rewarding consequences as a result of direct reinforcement.
    ▪ This can be prevented b curbing aggression at an early age.
- New aggressive responses can be learnt through observing aggressive models.
    ▪ Low level aggression (bullying, cursing) can grow into high-level aggression (murder, assault).
    ▪ This can be prevented by curbing low-level aggression.

- Likeliness that aggressive responses are performed depend on number of factors and interactions.
    - Expectancies regarding the results of behaviour.
    - Self-efficacy perceptions
    - Individual interpretations of situations
    - Self-regulating strategies and values.
- Aggressive responses can be provoked by unpleasant stimuli and the expectation of rewarding outcomes.
- Persistence in aggressive behaviour is regulated by the results of the aggressive behaviour.
    - Rewarding outcomes strengthen the repetition of behaviour.
        1. Extraneous, vicarious and self-reinforcement can all fulfil this function.
- Regulation of aggressive behaviour is a complex function of interaction between person, environment and their behaviour (reciprocal determinism).
- Individuals' contributions to this interaction depend on their development up to that point.
    - Development determines:
        1. Which aggressive responses already in the behavioural repertoire,
        2. What generalised expectancy patterns are
        3. What standards are used when evaluating expected outcomes of their own behaviour.

- Aggression is not under the exclusive control of the environment and there are considerable differences in how people act to exhibitions of violence.
- Aggression is influenced by such a wide variety of factors that it is difficult to control fully or eliminate completely from society.
- Bandura:
    - Investigated socio-cognitive, self-regulatory mechanisms governing transgressive (anti-social) behaviour and found that academic and self-regulatory efficacy prevented transgressiveness directly and by fostering prosocialness and the ability to apply moral self-sanctions for harmful conduct.

The social cognitive learning theory does not offer and easy solution to aggression as a social problem but places responsibility where it belongs:
With each individual in society (each person contributes to regulation of their own behaviour) and especially with leaders & others who exercise influence in social contexts.