

CHAPTER 15 – PERSONALITY BY LEARNING

LEARNING OUTCOMES

After studying this chapter you should be able to:

- explain the behaviourist view of human nature
- describe the main assumptions of behaviourism or learning perspectives
- explain personality structure according to learned responses
- discuss learning principles in human motivation
- explain how the person and environment contribute to personality development
- use concepts and examples to illustrate the role of self-control in human behaviour
- explain how faulty learning influences psychological health.

KEY CONCEPTS

behaviour – a way of behaving or acting, a response

environmental determinism – environmental forces determining human action

stimulus responses (S-R) – environmental stimuli resulting in predictable responses

person-situation interaction – where people and their characteristics have an intervening effect between the stimulus and the response (S-O-R)

learned responses – behaviour conditioned by the environment

respondent behaviour – behaviour that follows on from certain known stimuli in the environment

operant behaviour – behaviour that is shaped or reinforced by positive consequences or rewards

response patterns – a recurrent response or responses

habituation – associations between stimuli and responses resulting in a set pattern of behaviour

conditioning – learning through mental associations

reinforcement – behavioural reactions acquired when the consequences are agreeable

drives – stimuli that activate certain responses

modelling – providing an example of desired behaviour

shaping – changing behaviour gradually through reinforcement

self-control – self-regulating behaviours indicating people being able to cope on their own with life's demands

cognitive control – people's perceptions, interpretations and thoughts about stimuli and rewards, and how they want to react

expectancies – beliefs that certain reinforcement will result from certain behaviours in certain situations

self-efficacy – a person's belief that he/she does have the ability to attain a goal

external locus of control – a person's belief that he/she does not control the outcomes of his/her behaviour

internal locus of control – a person's belief that he/she controls the outcomes of his/her behaviour

learned helplessness – people's real or perceived inability to be in control of their lives

faulty learning – incorrect ways of responding to stimuli

self-handicapping – fearing success and failure

behaviour modification – making partial changes to behaviour

CHAPTER SYNOPSIS

This chapter focuses on behaviourist or learning perspectives. The emphasis is on observable behaviours, that is, personality consisting of response or behaviour patterns in personality structure, motivation, development and psychological adjustment, various learning or conditioning processes, and also environmental and situational influences that are instrumental in the formation and functioning of personality.