

CHAPTER 17 – PERSONALITY THROUGH SELF-EXPERIENCES

LEARNING OUTCOMES

After studying this chapter you should be able to:

- explain, by citing examples, the basic assumptions of the humanistic perspectives
- describe a person's self-concept by analysing the attributes which determine the self
- illustrate the meaning of the concepts of self-actualisation and peak experience
- indicate how you would use humanistic ideas to motivate people in the work situation
- sketch the process of self-development according to humanistic ideas
- explain psychological health according to the humanistic approach
- list and explain humanistic concepts that denote optimal human functioning and well-being.

KEY CONCEPTS

phenomenology – the study of the inherent potential in people, and of the subjective experiences and meanings people attach to objects and events

existentialism – the philosophy that people have freedom of choice and the ability to rise above the realities of a situation

self – a person's perceptions of him/herself

self-experience – learning about one's own self or the selves of others

wholeness – the integration of physical, psychological and spiritual levels

meaning – the purpose of life

self-esteem – worth attached to the self

self-dignity – being worthy of respect

positive regard – unconditional love and respect

self-determinism – free will, having self-control

congruence – the authentic expression of emotions

organism – the total psycho-physical individual

phenomenological field – experiences, perceptions and meanings attached to events outside the person

self-actualising – expressing the self to its fullest potential

peak experience – experiences of wonder and total involvement

constructs – cognitive representations of people or events

self-efficacy – the belief that one can be successful in tasks

self-control – reinforcing one's own behaviour, being in control of what happens

needs – deficiencies or imbalances creating a drive to achieve a goal

optimal – to the fullest

salutogenesis – the human ability to be resilient under stressful conditions

CHAPTER SYNOPSIS

This chapter focuses on the philosophical ideas of the humanistic-phenomenological school of thought. It embraces the intrinsic goodness in people, their unique subjective experiences, human striving towards self-actualisation and finding meaning in life.