

An Overview of Social Learning Theory (SLT)

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Social Learning Theory -Goals

Present a historical review of SLT & identify key terms

Examine how SLT has been applied to the study of aggression & sexual aggression

Review a study that applies SLT to rape prevention education

Conclusions & Recommendations

Social Learning Theory (SLT) has a rich historical background dating back to the late 1800's

I. Social Learning Theory -Review

-Research leading to development of SLT: -William James (1890)

-Laid foundation for the study of person & environment interactions -"the social self" - Alfred Adler (early 1900's)

-Behavior is purposeful and motivated by pursuit of goals

-Individual perception and attitude towards social environment significant influences on behavior

-A person's thoughts, feelings, & behaviors are transactions with one's physical and social environments.

I. Social Learning Theory -Review

.E.C. Tolman (1930's)

-Promoted the idea that cognitions are driving force behind behavior

.Miller & Dollard (1941)

-Social Learning Theory officially launched with the publication of Social Learning and Imitation

-Humans model observed behaviors which are either reinforced or extinguished through environmental reinforcement

-Human behavior motivated by internal drives

.(1941+) Many SLT theories expanded Miller & Dollard's work

.All versions of SLT share 3 basic themes

-People learn by experience & observation

-Vicarious learning

-People model behavior based on identification

-Similarity and emotional attachment

-Consequences influence whether a person will repeat a behavior

-Reward vs.punishment contingencies

.Major SLT Theorists

-Julian Rotter

- Internal vs. external control, internal/external change influence,
- Health outcomes / Personal Control
- Robert Sears
 - Socialization processes
 - How children internalize values attitudes and behaviors of a culture
- Walter Mischel
 - Cognitive social learning
 - How new experiences affect the individual
- Ronald Akers
 - Social behavior shaped by
 - Differential association (relative influence)
 - Differential reinforcement (punishment)
 - Cognitive definitions (self schema)
- Albert Bandura
 - How cognitions influence behavior & development
 - First to study modeling (vicarious learning) as a form of social learning
 - Introduced the idea that there can be a significant time lapse between cause and effect
- SLT Social Cognitive Theory -Bandura (1986)

II. Social Learning & Aggression

.SLT has been applied to the study of deviant, criminal, & aggressive behaviors

.Aggression (and sexual aggression) is learned through the frequency, relative importance, duration, & intensity of:

- Social interactions (learning by association)
- Observations (behaviors & consequences)
- Vicarious learning (ex. media influence)
- Modeling (imitation)
- Reinforcement (negative & positive)

.SLT does not view sexual aggression as inevitable, instead aggression is:

- Learned
- Shaped by consequences
- Continues if reinforced

.According to SLT male violence against women endures because:

.It is modeled at the individual & societal levels

.It often achieves its purpose by cutting off arguments

.It is deemed to have positive results (for perpetrator):

- Relieves tension
- Leaves the perpetrator feeling better

.It is rarely associated with serious punishment to the perpetrator

.One way social learning occurs is through social information processing

.Decode -Decide/Respond -Judge effect

.Violent men may be deficient in skill needed to decode messages from women

III. Social Learning Theory & Rape Prevention Education

.Lanier et al., (1998). Evaluation of an intervention to change attitudes toward date rape.

- Used modeling with theatrical production to enhance rape prevention awareness with high and low rape tolerant students
- 436 college students responded to a College Date Rape Attitude Survey before & after watching "Scruples"

IV.Social Learning Theory & Rape Prevention Education

Script scenes:

- Addressed role of alcohol in date rape situations
- Importance of communication in relationships
- Addressed rape myths
- Portrayed men's "limitation-testing" behaviors
- Presented interaction between survivor of sexual assault & social need for supporting her legal decisions
- Depicted men as positive role models for each other

Results:

- Students with highest rape-tolerant attitude lowered their tolerance after viewing the play but were still higher on average than other students
- Limitation
- Post test was administered immediately after the play

V.Conclusions

- .SLT has implications for interventions at individual and societal levels
- .SLT may be particularly effective with interventions aimed at youth.
- .SLT /Peer Influence models
- .Need to develop creative approaches beyond classroom interventions
- .Rape continues because there are no real consequences to perpetrators/must work to change societal response to rape
- .Important to develop realistic expectations about any intervention and to address both short and long term outcomes.

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