Individualistic Theories – Learning Theories

LO1 – Describe Individualistic Theories of Criminality
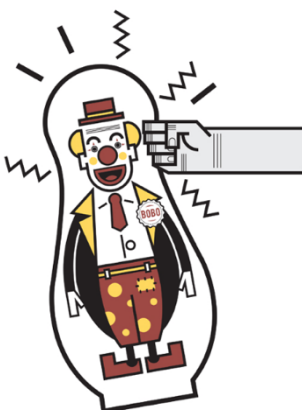
Assessment Criterion	Content	Amplification
AC1.1 *You should be able to -* Describe Individualistic Theories of Criminality	**Individualistic Theories** • **Learning Theories** • Psychodynamic Theory • Psychological Theories	You should have knowledge and understanding of: ✓ **Bandura's Social Learning Theory** ✓ **Sutherland's Differential Association Theory** ✓ Freud's Psychodynamic Theory ✓ Bowlby's Maternal Deprivation Theory ✓ Eysenck's Personality Theory

CLASSICAL CONDITONING

Classical conditioning is learning through **association** and was first demonstrated by Ivan Pavlov. Pavlov found that dogs could be **conditioned** to salivate to the sound of a bell if that sound was repeatedly presented at the same time as they were given food. Gradually, Pavlov's dogs learned to associate the sound of the bell (a stimulus) with the food (another stimulus) and would produce the salivation (a reflex response) every time they heard the sound.

ALBERT BANDURA'S SOCIAL LEARNING THEORY

Social Learning Theory proposes that we learn all of our behaviour from others. This theory can be used to explain all kinds of behaviour, including criminal behaviour.

Bandura (1961) conducted a controversial experiment examining the process by which new forms of behaviour – and in particular, aggression – are learnt. The initial study, along with Bandura's follow-up research, would later be known as the Bobo doll experiment. The experiment revealed that children imitate the aggressive behaviour of adults. The findings support Bandura's social learning theory, which emphasises the influence of observational learning on behaviour.

Bandura also conducted a number of follow-up studies during the 1960s which examined how witnessing a third party being rewarded or punished for behaving in a particular manner can influence a bystander's own actions. He concluded that vicarious learning, as well as direct rewards and punishments, can impact on an observer's behaviour.

Animals learn new associations in classical conditioning

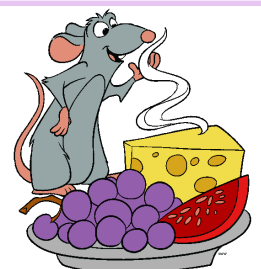Bell → Salivation
ding ding!

OPERANT CONDITIONING

Skinner believed that the best way to understand behaviour is to look at the causes of an action and its consequences. In operant conditioning there are three types of consequences of behaviour:

- **Positive reinforcement** is receiving a reward when a certain behaviour is performed; for example, praise from a teacher for answering a question correctly in class.
- **Negative reinforcement** occurs when an animal (or human) avoids something unpleasant. When a student hands in an essay so as not to be told off, the avoidance of something unpleasant is the negative reinforcement.
- **Punishment** is an unpleasant consequence of behaviour, for example being shouted at by the teacher for talking

Food is an example of a positive reinforcement for Remy the Rat

ROLE MODELS

Role models are people that we look up to and respect, such as parents, older siblings, peers, and people and characters we see in the media. We go through a process of **identification**, where we decide we want to be like these people; we watch what they do and try to copy them. These are the processes of **observation** and **imitation**.

SUTHERLAND'S DIFFERENTIAL ASSOCIATION THEORY

According to Sutherland (1939), if an individual experiences repeated attitudes which are positively associated with crime, rather than negatively – They are more likely to engage in criminal behaviour. The way in which a person becomes an offender is through:

- **Learned attitudes**
- **Imitation of (criminal) acts**

One strength of differential association is that it is compatible with other learning theories. People may learn positive associations with crime through others (**classical conditioning**); they may be positively rewarded for their criminal behaviour (**operant conditioning**) and they may see others being rewarded for their criminal behaviour (**social learning theory**)

VICARIOUS REINFORCEMENT

This is a type of learning that occurs when a person sees another rewarded for their behaviour. Vicarious means literally experiences through others. The important thing is that the reward is experienced by the person whose behaviour is being imitated.