

**HUMAN – ENVIRONMENT
RELATIONS (HER)
*PRINCIPLES***



Person x environment interaction

Definition

For many HER Processes, human impacts are not uniform across various individuals. The impact of the physical environment is moderated or conditioned by a personal factor.

Environmental determinism

Definition

The physical environment has a direct effect on human health or behavior. The meaning/symbolism of the environment is immaterial. Cognitive appraisal does not alter the environmental impact.

Cognitive appraisal

Definition

Human responses to the physical environment are influenced by meaning/symbolism of the object or setting. Social identities such as culture, ethnicity, gender, SES, or personality can alter our cognitive appraisals which, in turn, may modify our responses to the environment. What you think about or how the environment is perceived is an integral component of human response to the physical environment.

Manifest and latent function

Definition

Settings or objects often have a manifest function – its intended properties, functional purpose, explicit meaning. Sometimes they also have a latent function – a symbolic property that has implicit meaning or sociocultural connotations.

User-designer gap

Definition

In economically developed societies professionals design many of the objects and settings we function with. These professionals are rarely the same as users across many social identities leading to a gap in understanding of what/how the user's needs are for the objects/places the designer is making.

Congruence or person – environment fit

Definition

How well the object/setting functions for the user is often a challenge emanating in part from the user-designer gap. Note: the user-designer gap and incongruence or lack of person – environment fit can result from either manifest or latent functions not being adequately implemented in design.

Environmental justice

Definition

Environmental justice has two primary components: health inequalities and differences in environmental quality. How healthy people are is a function, in part, of the places they inhabit and the environmental conditions they must contend with. When those places systematically vary in relation to factors such as ethnicity, income, gender, disabilities or some other social identity, it can lead to social inequalities in health.

Confounding

Definition

An alternative explanation for the causal relations between variables. In the context of this course, a confounding is referring to some factor that may be causing human health/behavior other than the physical environment. A common confounding in research on the environment and human responses is selection bias created by self-selection of exposure to different environmental conditions.