

Exercise walk-through

4.4

Psychodynamic and Humanistic Theories of Personality

AP Psychology

Four accounts of where personality comes from

The **psychodynamic** approach holds that **unconscious** processes drive personality.

Ego defense mechanisms protect the person from anxiety, and the examinable set is **denial**, **displacement**, **projection**, **rationalization**, **reaction formation**, ...

Four approaches to personality

personality

a person's characteristic pattern of thinking, feeling and behaving

psychodynamic

unconscious conflicts and early experience – historically important, weak on evidence

humanistic

growth toward **self-actualisation**, given **unconditional positive regard**

social-cognitive

behaviour from the **interaction** of person and situation – **reciprocal determinism**, **self-efficacy**

trait

the **Big Five**: openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, **agreeableness**, neuroticism

All four are examinable and each answers a different question. The trait approach *describes*; the other three try to *explain*.

Personality, motivation, and the group

Trait theories

Trait theories describe rather than explain: the Big Five, of which **openness to experience** is the one most tied to creativity.

Sensation-seeking

Sensation-seeking theory explains why some people need far more stimulation for the same arousal – and take the risks that follow.

Group polarization

Group polarization: discussion among like-minded people moves the group's average view *further* in that direction.

Reducing conflict

Superordinate goals – a task neither group can achieve alone – cut hostility where contact alone does not.

The **false consensus effect** makes us overestimate how many people agree with us; **social norms** then look stronger than they are.

Four accounts of where personality comes from, in detail

	Psychodynamic	Humanistic	Social-cognitive	Trait
what drives it	unconscious conflict	drive to grow	person, behaviour, environment interact	enduring traits
key ideas	defense mechanisms: repression, projection	unconditional positive regard, self-actualization	reciprocal determinism, self-efficacy, locus of control	the Big Five: openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, neuroticism
how assessed	projective tests (weak reliability)	interviews, self-report	observation in context	self-report inventories

all four describe the SAME person from different angles

The **psychodynamic** approach holds that **unconscious** processes drive personality.

approach holds that **unconscious**

pro-

Personality: Psychodynamic and Humanistic

The **psychodynamic** approach holds that **unconscious** processes drive personality. **Ego defense mechanisms** protect the person from anxiety, and the examinable set is **denial**, **displacement**, **projection**, **rationalization**, **reaction formation**, **regression**, **repression**, and **sublimation**. It assesses personality with **projective tests**, which present an ambiguous stimulus; these have weak **reliability** and **validity**.

It emphasises **unconditional positive regard** and **self-actualization** – becoming the fullest version of oneself.

Exercises 2.1·2.2

2.1 State the central psychodynamic claim about the causes of behaviour. [2]

2.2 Name and describe one defence mechanism. [2]

Exercises 2.1·2.2

2.1 State the central psychodynamic claim about the causes of behaviour. [2]

2.1

- behaviour is shaped by motives outside awareness, formed largely in childhood and expressed indirectly
-

2.2 Name and describe one defence mechanism. [2]

2.2

- repression: keeping threatening material out of awareness to reduce anxiety without addressing its cause. (Accept projection, similarly described.)

Exercise 2.3 (a)

2.3 A counsellor accepts a client without approving or disapproving of their choices.

(a) Name the concept.

[1]

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(a)

- unconditional positive regard

Exercise 2.3 (b)

2.3 A counsellor accepts a client without approving or disapproving of their choices.

(b) State its purpose.

[1]

Exercise 2.3 (b)

2.3 A counsellor accepts a client without approving or disapproving of their choices.

(b) State its purpose.

[1]

(b)

- it allows the client to face experience honestly without fearing rejection

Exercises 3.1-3.2

3.1 Accusing others of the hostility one feels oneself is

[1]

☐

A repression

B projection

C self-actualisation

D regard

3.2 The main scientific criticism of psychodynamic theory is that its concepts are

[1]

☐

A too simple

B difficult to falsify

C based on experiments

D purely biological

Exercises 3.1-3.2

3.1 Accusing others of the hostility one feels oneself is

[1]

- ☐ A repression
☐ B projection
☐ C self-actualisation
☐ D regard

3.1 B

- one's own impulse is attributed to another

3.2 The main scientific criticism of psychodynamic theory is that its concepts are

[1]

- ☐ A too simple
☐ B difficult to falsify
☐ C based on experiments
☐ D purely biological

3.2 B

- concepts framed so that any outcome confirms them cannot be tested

Exercise 3.3 (a)

3.3 A researcher wants to test whether unconditional positive regard improves outcomes.

(a) State one difficulty in measuring the variable.

[1]

Exercise 3.3 (a)

3.3 A researcher wants to test whether unconditional positive regard improves outcomes.

(a) State one difficulty in measuring the variable. [1]

(a)

- it is an internal attitude, so it can only be inferred from behaviour

Exercise 3.3 (b)

3.3 A researcher wants to test whether unconditional positive regard improves outcomes.

(b) Explain how the difficulty could be reduced.

[2]

Exercise 3.3 (b)

3.3 A researcher wants to test whether unconditional positive regard improves outcomes.

(b) Explain how the difficulty could be reduced. [2]

(b)

- define observable indicators and have independent raters score recorded sessions, which makes the measure explicit and checkable for agreement