

4.2 Attitude Formation and Attitude Change

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Total: 11 marks

Objective

Build the skills to answer exam questions on **attitudes** 态度 and persuasion.

You must be able to:

- explain **cognitive dissonance** 认知失调 and how it is resolved
- distinguish the **central** 中心 from the **peripheral** 边缘 route to persuasion
- describe the **foot-in-the-door** 登门槛 technique
- state when attitudes predict behaviour and when they do not

1 Worked examples

Study these first. Each one shows the method for a task used later.

■ Cognitive dissonance

Holding two inconsistent cognitions, or acting against an attitude, produces discomfort. The cheapest resolution is usually to change the **attitude** to fit the behaviour that has already happened.

■ Two routes to persuasion

The **central route** persuades through the quality of the argument; it requires motivation and ability to think, and produces durable change. The **peripheral route** persuades through cues —attractiveness, length, repetition —and produces weaker, shorter-lived change.

■ Foot-in-the-door

Agreeing to a small request makes a later larger request more likely to be accepted, because the first compliance changes how people see themselves.

■ When attitudes predict behaviour

Best when the attitude is specific to the behaviour, strongly held, personally relevant, and when situational pressure is weak. General attitudes predict single actions poorly.

2 Practice

2.1 Explain what cognitive dissonance is and one way it is resolved. [2]

2.2 State the difference between the central and peripheral routes. [2]

2.3 A charity first asks people to sign a petition, then to donate.

(a) Name the technique. [1]

(b) Explain why it works. [1]

3 Exam-style questions

3.1 A person who argued publicly for a view they doubted comes to believe it more. This illustrates [1]

- **A** the peripheral route
 - **B** cognitive dissonance reduction
 - **C** the foot-in-the-door technique
 - **D** stereotype threat
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3.2 Persuasion by a celebrity endorsement rather than evidence uses the [1]

- **A** central route
 - **B** peripheral route
 - **C** dissonance route
 - **D** door-in-the-face technique
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3.3 A survey finds most people say they support recycling, but participation is low.

(a) State one reason the attitude fails to predict behaviour. [1]

(b) Explain what kind of attitude measure would predict better.

[2]

4 Go further

- work through the **4.2 Attitude Formation and Attitude Change** lesson on the **Learn** page;
- read the **Social Psychology and Personality** section of the AP Psychology handout on the **Know** page.

Solutions

2.1 discomfort from holding inconsistent cognitions or acting against an attitude; resolved by changing the attitude to fit the behaviour.

2.2 central: persuasion by argument quality, producing durable change; peripheral: persuasion by cues such as attractiveness or repetition, producing weaker change.

2.3 (a) foot-in-the-door. (b) the small compliance changes self-perception, making the larger request consistent with it.

3.1 B. attitude shifts to reduce the inconsistency with the public act.

3.2 B. the endorsement is a cue, not an argument.

3.3 (a) the attitude is general while the behaviour is specific, and situational barriers intervene. (b) a measure of the attitude toward the specific act, e.g. "I will sort my waste this week", since specificity and personal relevance improve prediction.