

4.2 Attitude Formation and Attitude Change

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Total: 18 marks

KEY WORDS peripheral 边缘 • central 中心 • cognitive dissonance 认知失调
• foot-in-the-door 登门槛 • attitudes 态度

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

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

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]

3.4 Applied research task. A campaign to reduce single-use plastics runs two adverts. Advert **1** presents six pieces of evidence about the volume of plastic reaching the sea. Advert **2** shows a well-known athlete on a beach saying nothing about the evidence. In a follow-up, people who had earlier been asked to sign a small pledge card were far more likely to change their shopping habits than those asked directly to change them.

- (a) Name the model that distinguishes the two adverts' routes to persuasion, and name each route. [3]

- (b) Explain which audience each advert is better suited to. [1]

- (c) Name and explain the technique shown by the pledge-card result. [2]

- (d) Explain how cognitive dissonance could lead someone who signed the card to change their attitude, not just their behaviour. [1]

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.

3.4 (a) The **elaboration likelihood model** (1); Advert 1 takes the **central route** (1) and Advert 2 the **peripheral route** (1).

(b) The central route works for an audience that is motivated and able to think carefully about the issue; the peripheral route works when motivation or ability is low, because it relies on cues such as the source's attractiveness or fame (1).

(c) The **foot-in-the-door** technique (1) — agreeing to a small request makes a person much more likely to agree to a larger one later, because the first agreement changes their view of themselves (1).

(d) Having publicly committed to the pledge, a person who then shops as before holds two inconsistent cognitions (1); the discomfort is resolved most easily by adjusting the attitude to match the commitment already made.