

4.4 Psychodynamic and Humanistic Theories of Personality

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Total: 11 marks

Objective

Build the skills to answer exam questions on **psychodynamic** 精神动力 and **humanistic** 人本主义 theories.

You must be able to:

- outline the psychodynamic account of **unconscious** 无意识 influence
- name two **defence mechanisms** 防御机制 and describe each
- describe **unconditional positive regard** 无条件积极关注 and **self-actualisation** 自我实现
- state the main criticism made of each approach

1 Worked examples

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

■ The psychodynamic claim

Behaviour is shaped by motives outside awareness, formed largely in childhood, and expressed indirectly. The clinical value of the approach lies in that claim; its scientific difficulty lies in testing it.

■ Two defence mechanisms

Repression: keeping threatening material out of awareness. **Projection**: attributing one's own unacceptable impulse to another person. Both reduce anxiety without addressing its source.

■ The humanistic claim

People have an inherent tendency toward growth. **Unconditional positive regard** —acceptance not conditional on behaviour —allows a person to face experience honestly and move toward **self-actualisation**, the realisation of one's potential.

■ The criticisms

Psychodynamic theory is criticised for concepts that are hard to falsify and evidence drawn largely from case studies. Humanistic theory is criticised for vague central terms and optimism about human nature that is difficult to test.

2 Practice

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

2.2 Name and describe one defence mechanism. [2]

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

(a) Name the concept. [1]

(b) State its purpose. [1]

3 Exam-style questions

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

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

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

(b) Explain how the difficulty could be reduced.

[2]

4 Go further

- work through the **4.4 Psychodynamic and Humanistic Theories of Personality** lesson on the **Learn** page;
- read the **Social Psychology and Personality** section of the AP Psychology handout on the **Know** page.

Solutions

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

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

2.3 (a) unconditional positive regard. (b) it allows the client to face experience honestly without fearing rejection.

3.1 B. one's own impulse is attributed to another.

3.2 B. concepts framed so that any outcome confirms them cannot be tested.

3.3 (a) it is an internal attitude, so it can only be inferred from behaviour. (b) define observable indicators and have independent raters score recorded sessions, which makes the measure explicit and checkable for agreement.