

# Social Psychology and Personality

AP Psychology ■ Unit 4

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## What we will cover

- 1 Explaining Behaviour: Attribution
- 2 Attitudes and Attitude Change
- 3 Social Situations
- 4 Personality: Psychodynamic and Humanistic
- 5 Personality: Social-Cognitive and Trait
- 6 Motivation

# Explaining Behaviour: Attribution

An explanation is either **dispositional** 内归因 (about the person's personality) or **situational** 外归因 (about the circumstances). People are not even-handed about which they choose:

- The **fundamental attribution error** 基本归因错误 is over-using dispositional explanations for *other* people's behaviour.
- The **actor-observer bias** 行动者-观察者偏差 is explaining your own behaviour situationally while explaining others' dispositionally.
- The **self-serving bias** 自利偏差 credits success to yourself and blames failure on the situation.
- The **just-world phenomenon** 公正世界现象 is the belief that people get what they deserve.

## Explaining Behaviour: Attribution, continued

A person's **explanatory style** 解释风格 can be **optimistic** 乐观的 or **pessimistic** 悲观的, and this shapes how they respond to setbacks.

**Social comparison** 社会比较 is judging yourself against others, either **upward** 向上比较 or **downward** 向下比较.

# Attitudes and Attitude Change

A **stereotype** 刻板印象 is a generalised idea about a group; it reduces mental effort but can be inaccurate and harmful. **Prejudice** 偏见 is an attitude, and **discrimination** 歧视 is the behaviour. **Implicit attitudes** 内隐态度 are held without full awareness.

**Confirmation bias** 确认偏差 is seeking evidence that fits what you already believe.

# Social Situations

- **Conformity** 从众 is adjusting behaviour to match a group. It rises with group size (up to a point), unanimity, and ambiguity, and falls when even one other person dissents.
- **Obedience** 服从 is following an instruction from an authority. It rises with the authority's perceived legitimacy and closeness, and falls when the victim is close or the authority is distant.
- **Normative social influence** 规范性社会影响 is conforming to be accepted;  
**informational social influence** 信息性社会影响 is conforming because you think others know better.

# Personality: Psychodynamic and Humanistic

|                         | Psychodynamic                                                    | Humanistic                                        | Social-cognitive                                        | Trait                                                                                  |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| What drives personality | unconscious conflict                                             | drive towards growth                              | person, behaviour and environment interacting           | enduring characteristics                                                               |
| Key ideas               | defense mechanisms<br>(repression, projection, displacement ...) | unconditional positive regard, self-actualization | reciprocal determinism, self-efficacy, locus of control | the Big Five:<br>openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, neuroticism |
| How it is assessed      | projective tests<br>(weak reliability)                           | interviews, self-report                           | observation in context                                  | self-report inventories                                                                |

all four describe the SAME person from different angles

*the distinction this unit turns on*

## Personality: Psychodynamic and Humanistic

The **psychodynamic** 精神动力学 approach holds that **unconscious** 无意识 processes drive personality. **Ego defense mechanisms** 自我防御机制 protect the person from anxiety, and the examinable set is **denial** 否认, **displacement** 转移, **projection** 投射, **rationalization** 合理化, **reaction formation** 反向形成, **regression** 退行, **repression** 压抑, and **sublimation** 升华. It assesses personality with **projective tests** 投射测验, which present an ambiguous stimulus; these have weak **reliability** and **validity**.

It emphasises **unconditional positive regard** 无条件积极关注 and **self-actualization** 自我实现 – becoming the fullest version of oneself.



## Personality: Social-Cognitive and Trait

The **social-cognitive** 社会认知 approach explains personality through **reciprocal determinism** 交互决定论: the person, their behaviour, and the environment each influence the other two.

**Self-efficacy** 自我效能感 – belief in one's own ability to succeed at a task – is central, as is **locus of control** 控制点, which is **internal** 内控 or **external** 外控.

# Motivation

Several theories explain what drives behaviour:

- **Drive-reduction theory** 驱力减少理论 says behaviour reduces a physical need to restore **homeostasis** 内稳态.
- **Arousal theory** 唤醒理论 says people seek an optimal level of arousal; the **Yerkes-Dodson law** 耶克斯-多德森定律 states that moderate arousal gives the best performance on most tasks.
- **Self-determination theory** 自我决定理论 separates **intrinsic motivation** 内在动机 (from within) from **extrinsic motivation** 外在动机 (from reward), and **incentive theory** 诱因理论 focuses on the pull of rewards.
- **Instincts** 本能 are innate fixed patterns, seen in non-human animals rather than in human behaviour.
- **Lewin's motivational conflicts** 勒温的动机冲突理论 names three: **approach-approach** 双趋冲突, **approach-avoidance** 趋避冲突, and

## Motivation, continued

Eating shows physical and mental processes interacting.

**Ghrelin** and **leptin**, regulated by the hypothalamus, control hunger and fullness, while external factors – the sight of food, the time of day, a shared meal – change how much people eat.

# Emotion

Some facial expressions are recognised across cultures, but **display rules** 表达规则 – a culture's norms for showing emotion – and the events that trigger emotion both vary.

## Exam tips

- **Fundamental attribution error** applies to explaining *others*. If the question is about explaining yourself, the answer is usually **self-serving bias**.
- **Social facilitation** improves *simple* tasks and harms difficult ones. Say which kind of task the scenario describes.
- Separate **conformity** (matching a group) from **obedience** (following an authority).
- For **cognitive dissonance**, name the conflict and say which side changed – usually the attitude, because the behaviour already happened.
- Learn the **Big Five** as a set; questions often ask you to place a described person on one named trait.
- With emotion theories, the difference is **order**: body first (James-Lange), together (Cannon-Bard), or arousal plus label (two-factor).