

## 4.5 Social-Cognitive and Trait Theories of Personality

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Total: 12 marks**

**KEY WORDS** trait 特质 • locus of control 控制点 • self-efficacy 自我效能 • conscientiousness 尽责性  
• external 外控

### Objective

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Build the skills to answer exam questions on **trait** 特质 and **social-cognitive** 社会认知 theories.

**You must be able to:**

- name the dimensions of the **five-factor** 五因素 model
- explain **reciprocal determinism** 交互决定论
- describe **self-efficacy** 自我效能 and **locus of control** 控制点
- state how personality is assessed and one limitation of each method

### 1 Worked examples

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

#### ■ Five factors

Openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism. These emerged from analysing how trait words cluster, and they predict outcomes modestly but reliably across cultures.

#### ■ Reciprocal determinism

Person, behaviour and environment each influence the other two. A sociable person seeks social settings, which reinforce sociability. Personality is not only inside the person.

#### ■ Self-efficacy and locus of control

**Self-efficacy** is belief in one's capability at a specific task; it predicts persistence. **Locus of control** is the general belief that outcomes follow from one's own actions (internal) or from luck and powerful others (external).

### ■ Assessment and its limits

**Self-report inventories** are efficient but vulnerable to social desirability. **Projective tests** are open-ended but score inconsistently. **Behavioural observation** avoids self-report bias but is costly and samples limited situations.

## 2 Practice

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**2.1** Name three of the five factors. [3]

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**2.2** Explain reciprocal determinism with one example. [2]

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**2.3** A student believes exam results depend mainly on luck.

(a) Name the construct. [1]

(b) State one likely behavioural consequence. [1]

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## 3 Exam-style questions

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**3.1** Belief in one's capability at a specific task is [1]

- **A** locus of control
  - **B** self-efficacy
  - **C** neuroticism
  - **D** reciprocal determinism
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**3.2** The main limitation of self-report inventories is [1]

- **A** they take too long
  - **B** social desirability responding
  - **C** they cannot be scored
  - **D** they require observation
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**3.3** An employer uses a personality inventory for selection.

(a) State one reason candidates' answers may not be accurate. [1]

(b) Explain one way to reduce the problem. [2]

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## Solutions

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**2.1** any three of: openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, neuroticism.

**2.2** person, behaviour and environment each influence the other two; e.g. a sociable person chooses social settings, which further reinforce sociability.

**2.3** (a) an external locus of control. (b) reduced effort, since effort is not believed to affect the outcome.

**3.1 B.** self-efficacy is task-specific capability belief.

**3.2 B.** respondents may answer as they wish to be seen.

**3.3** (a) candidates want the job, so they answer to appear desirable. (b) include validity or consistency scales and combine the inventory with structured behavioural evidence, so a distorted response pattern can be detected and does not stand alone.