Unit 4 Study Guide Social Psychology and Personality



Topic 4.1 - Attribution Theory & Person Perception [3]

- 1. What is an attribution in social psychology? An explanation or reasoning a person gives for why a certain behavior or event occurs
- Describe the difference between dispositional and situational attribution. Dispositional attribution explains a behavior as being caused by internal traits. While situational attribution explains a behavior as being influenced by external factors.
- What is the attribution theory? A theory that explains how people interpret and assign causes to the behavior of themselves and others.
 Behaviors are explained by either dispositional or situational attribution
- 4. Complete the table below.

Term	Description	Example
Self-serving bias	The tendency to attribute personal successes to dispositional attributions and failures to situational attributions	A student says, "I got an A on the test because I'm smart", but if they failed they say, "I failed the test because the teacher made it too hand"
Actor-observer bias	The tendency to attribute our own behavior to situational attributions while attributing others' behavior to dispositional attributions	When you're late, you blame the traffic, but when someone else is late you think that they are lazy and irresponsible
Fundamental attribution error	The tendency to overemphasize dispositional attributions and underestimate situational factors when explaining another person's behavior	You see a coworker arrive late to a meeting and think. "They're so lazy and disorganized," instead of considering they might have been stuck in traffic

- 5. What is an explanatory style? This is how individuals consistently explain the causes of events in their lives (Think of it as a mindset).
 6. Explain the difference between a person having an optimistic and pessimistic explanatory style. A person with an optimistic style will often credit positive outcomes to internal factors and negative outcomes to external factors. The individual believes good things happen to good people. While a person with a pessimistic style often will credit positive outcomes to external factors and negative outcomes to internal factors.
- 7. Define locus of control. An individual's belief about how much control they have over the events and outcomes in their life
- 8. Explain the difference between internal and external locus of control. Individuals with a high internal locus of control believe that their actions, decisions, and efforts determine the outcomes of their life. While an individuals with a high external locus of control believe that outside factors are what are responsible for what happens to them in life.
- 9. Complete the table below.

Concept	Description	Example
Mere exposure effect	A phenomenon where an individual develops a preference for something simply because they are familiar with it (The more familiar you become to something the more you gravitate towards it)	You hear a new song and dislike it, but after hearing it multiple times on the radio, you start to enjoy it
Social comparison	The process of evaluating oneself by comparing them to others	You compare your AP Psychology test scores to the scores of your classmates to determine how well you did
Upward social comparison	The process of comparing yourself to someone who is better off or more skilled	A college basketball player compares their own skills to other individuals in the NSA, hoping to learn from them

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Table of Contents Study Guide For Social Psychology 2nd Edit Pb 2002

- 1. Understanding the eBook Study Guide For Social Psychology 2nd Edit Pb 2002
 - The Rise of Digital Reading Study Guide For Social Psychology 2nd Edit Pb 2002
 - Advantages of eBooks Over Traditional Books
- 2. Identifying Study Guide For Social Psychology 2nd Edit Pb 2002
 - Exploring Different Genres
 - Considering Fiction vs. Non-Fiction
 - Determining Your Reading Goals
- 3. Choosing the Right eBook Platform
 - Popular eBook Platforms
 - Features to Look for in an Study Guide For Social Psychology 2nd Edit Pb 2002
 - User-Friendly Interface
- 4. Exploring eBook Recommendations from Study Guide For Social Psychology 2nd Edit Pb 2002
 - Personalized Recommendations
 - Study Guide For Social Psychology 2nd Edit Pb 2002 User Reviews and Ratings
 - Study Guide For Social Psychology 2nd Edit Pb 2002 and Bestseller Lists
- 5. Accessing Study Guide For Social Psychology 2nd Edit Pb 2002 Free and Paid eBooks

- Study Guide For Social Psychology 2nd Edit Pb 2002 Public Domain eBooks
- Study Guide For Social Psychology 2nd Edit Pb 2002 eBook Subscription Services
- Study Guide For Social Psychology 2nd Edit Pb 2002 Budget-Friendly Options
- 6. Navigating Study Guide For Social Psychology 2nd Edit Pb 2002 eBook Formats
 - o ePub, PDF, MOBI, and More
 - Study Guide For Social Psychology 2nd Edit Pb 2002 Compatibility with Devices
 - Study Guide For Social Psychology 2nd Edit Pb 2002 Enhanced eBook Features
- 7. Enhancing Your Reading Experience
 - Adjustable Fonts and Text Sizes of Study Guide For Social Psychology 2nd Edit Pb 2002
 - Highlighting and Note-Taking Study Guide For Social Psychology 2nd Edit Pb 2002
 - Interactive Elements Study Guide For Social Psychology 2nd Edit Pb 2002
- 8. Staying Engaged with Study Guide For Social Psychology 2nd Edit Pb 2002
 - Joining Online Reading Communities
 - Participating in Virtual Book Clubs
 - Following Authors and Publishers Study Guide For Social Psychology 2nd Edit Pb 2002
- 9. Balancing eBooks and Physical Books Study Guide For Social Psychology 2nd Edit Pb 2002
 - Benefits of a Digital Library
 - o Creating a Diverse Reading Collection Study Guide For Social Psychology 2nd Edit Pb 2002
- 10. Overcoming Reading Challenges
 - Dealing with Digital Eye Strain
 - Minimizing Distractions
 - Managing Screen Time
- 11. Cultivating a Reading Routine Study Guide For Social Psychology 2nd Edit Pb 2002
 - Setting Reading Goals Study Guide For Social Psychology 2nd Edit Pb 2002
 - Carving Out Dedicated Reading Time
- 12. Sourcing Reliable Information of Study Guide For Social Psychology 2nd Edit Pb 2002
 - Fact-Checking eBook Content of Study Guide For Social Psychology 2nd Edit Pb 2002
 - Distinguishing Credible Sources
- 13. Promoting Lifelong Learning
 - Utilizing eBooks for Skill Development

- Exploring Educational eBooks
- 14. Embracing eBook Trends
 - Integration of Multimedia Elements
 - Interactive and Gamified eBooks

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