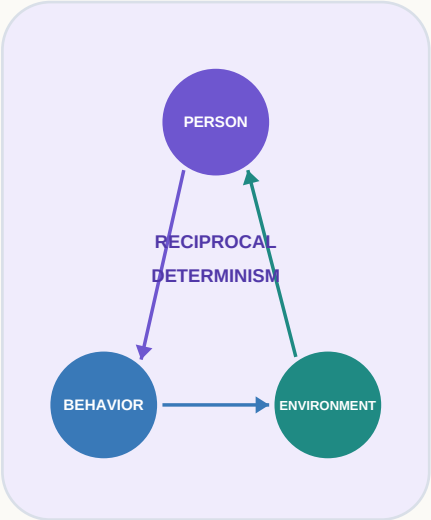
AP PSYCHOLOGY | UNIT 4

# TOPIC 4.5

## Social-Cognitive and Trait Theories

Personality reflects feedback among beliefs, behavior, and environment, as well as broad traits that describe typical patterns.




### TWO COMPLEMENTARY LENSES

**INTERACTION**

person, behavior, and environment influence one another

**SELF-BELIEFS**

self-concept, self-efficacy, and self-esteem

**TRAITS**

enduring dimensions describe typical responses

### BY THE END, YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO...

1. Explain reciprocal determinism using person, behavior, and environment.
2. Distinguish self-concept, self-efficacy, and self-esteem.
3. Identify the Big Five and explain inventories and factor analysis.

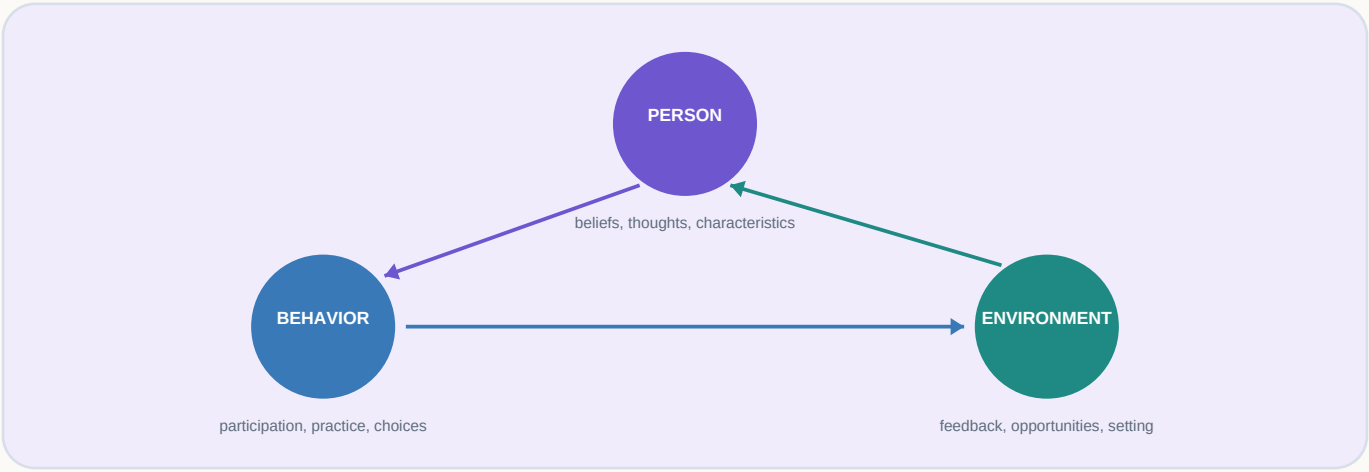
**BIG IDEA**

Social-cognitive theory explains a changing feedback system. Trait theory describes relatively stable tendencies. Neither says that one factor determines every action.

# 1 Social-cognitive personality

Personal factors, actions, and surroundings continually influence one another through reciprocal determinism.

## THE THREE-WAY FEEDBACK SYSTEM




## EXAMPLE: A STUDENT SPEAKS UP IN CLASS

**PERSON**

confidence increases

→

**BEHAVIOR**

participates more often

→

**ENVIRONMENT**

receives useful feedback

## THREE SELF-BELIEFS

**SELF-CONCEPT**

How I view myself and my relation to others.

**SELF-EFFICACY**

My belief that I can succeed at a specific task.

**SELF-ESTEEM**

My broader evaluation of my overall self-worth.

**KEY DISTINCTION** Self-efficacy is task-specific: 'I can solve this problem.' Self-esteem is broader: 'I feel worthy as a person.'

# 2 Trait personality

Trait theories describe enduring dimensions that make certain responses more typical, while still allowing behavior to vary by situation.

**TRAIT** An enduring characteristic measured on a continuum and linked to typical patterns of behavior.

## THE BIG FIVE

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| A | AGREEABLENESS | cooperation and warmth |
| O | OPENNESS | curiosity and new ideas |
| E | EXTRAVERSION | sociability and energy |
| C | CONSCIENTIOUSNESS | organization and responsibility |
| ES | EMOTIONAL STABILITY | calmness and emotional balance |

## HOW TRAITS ARE ASSESSED

**PERSONALITY INVENTORY**

A structured set of items used to estimate a person's standing on trait dimensions.

**FACTOR ANALYSIS**

A statistical method that groups related item responses into underlying dimensions.

ITEM RESPONSES → RELATED PATTERNS → TRAIT DIMENSIONS

**REMEMBER** Traits predict typical responses, not every action in every situation. A dimension describes degree, not a fixed category.