1. What is attribution? Describe the types and theories of attribution.

Ans: Attribution is the process of inferring the causes of events or behaviors. In real life, attribution is something we all do every day, usually without any awareness of the underlying processes and biases that lead to our inferences. For example, over the course of a typical day, you probably make numerous attributions about your own behavior as well as that of the people around you.

When you get a poor grade on a quiz, you might blame the teacher for not adequately explaining the material, completely dismissing the fact that you didn't study. When a classmate gets a great grade on the same quiz, you might attribute his good performance to luck, neglecting the fact that he has excellent study habits.

Why do we make internal attributions for some things while making external attributions for others? Part of this has to do with the type of attribution we are likely to use in a particular situation. Cognitive biases often play major roles as well.

What impact do attributions for behavior really have on your life? The attributions you make each and every day has an important influence on your feelings as well as how you think and relate to other people.

Types

- Interpersonal Attribution: When telling a story to a group of friends or acquaintances, you are likely to tell the story in a way that places you in the best possible light.
- Predictive Attribution: We also tend to attribute things in ways that allow us to make future predictions. If your car was vandalized, you might attribute the crime to the fact that you parked in a particular parking garage. As a result, you will avoid that parking garage in the future in order to avoid further vandalism.
- Explanatory Attribution: We use explanatory attributions to help us make sense of the world around us. Some people have an optimistic explanatory style, while others tend to be more pessimistic. People with an optimistic style attribute positive events to stable, internal and global causes and negative events to unstable, external and specific causes. Those with a pessimistic style attribute negative events to internal, stable and global causes and positive events to external, stable and specific causes.

Theories

Psychologists have also introduced a number of different theories to help further understand how the attribution process works.

Heider's "Common Sense" Theory

In his 1958 book The Psychology of Interpersonal Relations, Fritz Heider suggested that people observe others, analyze their behavior, and come up with their own commons sense explanations for such actions. Heider group these explanations into either external attributions or internal attributions. External attributions are those that are blamed on situational forces, while internal attributions are blamed on individual characteristics and traits.

Correspondent Inference Theory

In 1965, Edward Jones and Keith Davis suggested that people make inferences about others in cases where actions are intentional rather than accidental. When people see others acting in certain ways, they look for a correspondence between the person's motives and his or her behaviors. The inferences people then make are based on the degree of choice, the expectedness of the behavior, and the effects of that behavior.

2. Define attitude. Discuss the factors instrumental in making attitude predict behavior.

Ans: Attitude is a favorable or unfavorable evaluative reaction toward something or someone, exhibited in one's beliefs, feelings, or intended behavior. It is a social orientation - an underlying inclination to respond to something either favorably or unfavorably.

Some of the theories of attitude formation and change are as follows:

1. Functionalist theory - Daniel Katz proposed a functionalist theory of attitudes. He takes the view that attitudes are determined by the functions they serve for us. People hold given attitudes because these attitudes help them achieve their basic goals. Katz distinguishes four types of psychological functions that attitudes meet:
   A. Instrumental
   B. Knowledge
   C. Value-expressive
   D. Ego-defensive

   According to Katz, an attitude changes when it no longer serves its function and the individual feels blocked or frustrated. That is, according to Katz, attitude change is achieved not so much by changing a person's information or perception about an object, but rather by changing the person's underlying motivational and personality needs.

2. Learning theory stresses attitude formation - There are several means by which we learn attitudes.
   a. Classical conditioning.
   b. Instrumental, or operant, conditioning.
   c. Observational learning.

3. Cognitive dissonance theory - stresses attitude change - and that behaviors can determine attitudes.