

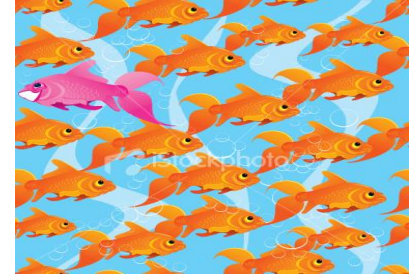
DEBATES IN PSYCHOLOGY



INDIVIDUAL & SITUATIONAL
EXPLANATIONS

DEFINITIONS

- This is a debate that runs through psychology
- **Individual (dispositional) Explanation:** this explains behaviour according to some feature or characteristic of the person
- (eg; personality, genetic inheritance, etc)



- **Situational Explanation:** this explains behaviour according to wider context of the environment (eg; upbringing, poverty, peer group, etc)



INDIVIDUAL & SITUATIONAL EXPLANATIONS

- **STRENGTHS:**
- **Usefulness:** discovering which behaviour is individually determined & which is situationally determined, can influence interventions/treatments
- **Can direct further study:** discovery of complex interactions between individual & situational factors
- **WEAKNESSES:**
- **Difficult to separate out** effects of a situation & disposition of a participant
- **Problems with investigation:** lab settings are low in ecological validity whereas natural settings are difficult to control
- Explanations may be **too simplistic**

RESEARCH EXAMPLES:

INDIVIDUAL EXPLANATIONS	SITUATIONAL EXPLANATIONS
AS CORE STUDIES:	AS CORE STUDIES: Rosenhan: diagnosis of insanity or abnormality due to situation of mental hospital.
A2 KEY STUDIES: Gottesman & Shields: Genes & schizophrenia	A2 KEY STUDIES: