

The following sample SAQ is for the learning objective: *Describe one attribution error.*

### What is the question asking for?

- A clear definition of the term "attribution."
- A clear definition of one attribution error - for example: self-serving bias, FAE.
- One study clearly outlined that demonstrates the error.
- A statement explaining why this study is an example of this error.



### Sample response

The attribution error is identified. However, there is no definition of "attribution".

There is a clear definition of FAE here. It would be stronger if this could be developed a bit more. The goal of the SAQ is to clearly describe the error, not just the study.

An appropriate study is clearly identified.

Those this is not necessarily incorrect, it is important to note that the roles were "randomly assigned."

One error commonly seen in attribution is the Fundamental Attribution Error [FAE]. FAE occurs when individuals take dispositional factors into consideration over situational factors - that is, internal attributes are addressed in explaining human social behaviour while external factors are overlooked.

One study that supports this theory is Ross's game-show study. The aim of this study was to determine whether or not situational factors were taken into account when explaining human behaviour. University students were given one of three roles: game-show host; game-show contestants; or the audience. The game-show hosts were asked to create their own list of questions which were to be asked to the contestants.

At the end of the show, the audience members were asked to rank the intelligence of the show members; they were asked to declare whom they believed was the most intelligent out of the show hosts and contestants. The majority of the audience members reported that they believed the participant playing the role of the game-show host was the most intelligent.

They ranked the game-show host as the most intelligent in spite of the fact that they knew that it was a fellow student playing the role, and that the host had written his own questions. It was because the actor playing the host was in a position of authority that s/he was believed to be the most intelligent. They failed to take the situational factors into consideration.

The results of this study support the FAE theory and imply that when we evaluate human behaviour, individuals are much more likely to focus on dispositional factors rather than situational ones. One limitation of this particular study is its participant sample. While university students are easily accessible and participant variability is lower, the very fact that they were students may have affected the reliability of the study results. Because university

A satisfactory outline of the study. More precision to demonstrate understanding of the methodology would make this stronger.





This is not a requirement of the question. Students are not required to evaluate the studies in SAQs.



students spend much of their time being lectured by an authoritative figure, they were used to the fact that the person asking the questions is the most intelligent. The results do, however, illustrate that situational factors are rarely considered as opposed to dispositional when individuals try to explain and understand human behaviours.

**Predicted score: 5/8**

**What are common problems with this question?**

-  More than one attribution error is addressed. If more than one error is described, then only the first one is assessed, even if the study is clearly linked to the second example.
-  The attribution error is identified but not described in any detail.
-  The study is poorly described or not clearly linked to a correct attribution error.
-  There is only a study described, but no clear description of an attribution error.

