

The Three Elements Involved in Causality and Their Correspondence

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Causality is the most basic connection, rule, logic and fact of the phenomenal world, so finding the causal connection between things and utilising it to achieve the goal of avoiding harm and ultimately attaining happiness are the fundamental motivation for all human intellectual activities. This paper first points out that any causal inference in any field can and should be analysed from three dimensions: cause, condition and result. And then it introduces the six-causes doctrine, ten-causes doctrine, four-conditions doctrine and five-effects doctrine in Buddhist philosophy. This provides a complete analytical framework for causal reasoning, and any causal analysis in any field can be integrated into this comprehensive framework for study.

Keywords: six-causes doctrine, ten-causes doctrine, four-conditions doctrine, five-effects doctrine

INTRODUCTION

The fundamental motivation and method of all human intellectual activities, whether scientific research, philosophical thinking, religious belief, or other forms of intellectual inquiry, are inseparable from the discovery, recognition and utilisation of cause-and-effect relationships between things, i.e. objective laws, to achieve the purpose of avoiding suffering(/harm) and pursuing happiness(/benefit) (Morton 2013; Xiao 2023).

Then, what is causality? Causality, in fact, refers to the primordial, underlying, transcendental, inherent, intrinsic, ultimate, essential, fundamental, inevitable, invariable, timeless, universal, complex, multidimensional, dynamic connection, law, logic and fact among the three elements of cause, condition and result in the phenomenal world (Losee 2017; Xie 2024). Therefore, causality means that everything in the phenomenal world must be in the causal relationship of cause, condition and result, and their causality must be complex, multidimensional and dynamic. In other words, when we need to make a causal inference, we can analyse it from the three dimensions or elements of cause, condition and result.

This article attempts to establish a universal framework for causality analysis based on the profound meaning of causality in Buddhist philosophy. Therefore, the main content of this article is divided into four parts. The first three parts will analyse the connotation of causality from the perspectives of cause, condition and result, respectively. The last part will analyse and summarise the correspondence between the three elements of cause, condition and result in causality.

THE CONNOTATION OF CAUSE IN CAUSALITY AND ITS CLASSIFICATION

Depending on the criteria used, the cause in causality can be categorised in various ways (Michotte 2017; Anscombe 2018). These include the one-cause theory, two-causes theory, three-causes theory, four-causes theory, five-causes theory, six-causes theory, seven-causes theory, eight-causes theory, nine-causes theory, ten-causes theory, eleven-causes theory, twelve-causes theory and sixteen-causes theory, among others (Xiao 2017; 2023). Among these, the twelve-causes theory, also known as the twelve-linked chain of dependent origination, is one of the most renowned doctrines in Buddhism and is widely recognised. Therefore, let us briefly explore the six-causes theory and the ten-causes theory (Xiao 2023).

Six-causes Doctrine

According to the six-causes doctrine, the causes in causality can be distinguished into six categories: active cause, concurrent cause, same-type cause, concomitant cause, omnipresent cause and ripening cause, which are briefly introduced below.

First, the active cause refers to the reason that contributes to or does not prevent the occurrence of a result, e.g. eyes are the active cause of seeing visual objects; the excellent climate is the active cause of plant growth.

Second, the concurrent cause refers to the reasons that exist simultaneously, and cause and affect each other, e.g. mental health is the concurrent cause of physical health, and vice versa; freshness is the concurrent cause for the juiciness of the fruit, and vice versa.

Third, the same-type cause refers to the reasons leading to similar or like results. For example, animals and plants of different kingdoms, phyla, classes, or orders cannot interbreed to produce offspring, but only that of the same species and genus, or at most the same family, can interbreed to produce offspring.

Fourth, the concomitant cause refers to the reason that echoes results, e.g. charitable acts earn a good reputation, and a good reputation inspires more philanthropic acts. Positive emotions can stimulate certain forms of creativity, and rich creativity can in turn generate more positive emotions, such as a sense of happiness (Diržytė et al. 2021).

Fifth, the omnipresent cause refers to the ignorance of the origin of the universe and the what is what of life, which results in various worries, sorrows, and even suffering. For example, misinterpretation and misunderstanding of causality are the omnipresent cause of the many worries, sorrows, and even sufferings of mortal beings.

Sixth, the ripening cause refers to the reason that induces the future to manifest itself in different forms and functions at various times and places. For example, the current five aggregates of sentient beings are the manifestation of their past ripening cause, while their current actions are creating the ripening causes of their future retributive effect.

The above is just a brief introduction to the six-causes doctrine, in fact, its connotation is quite complex. For example, the aforementioned active cause can be further subdivided into the positive cause and negative cause. The aforementioned concurrent cause can be further subdivided into the bidirectional concurrent cause and unidirectional concurrent cause (Xiao 2023).

Ten-causes Doctrine

According to the ten-causes doctrine, the causes in causality can be distinguished into ten categories, namely, name-based cause, expectation-based cause, inductive cause, produced

cause, gathering cause, evocative cause, intrinsic cause, integrated cause, obstructive cause and non-obstructive cause, which are briefly introduced as below.

First, the name-based cause refers to various ideas, languages, words, nouns, concepts, labels, ideograms, vocabulary, sentences, etc. As we all know, everything in the phenomenal world is complicated and different and needs labels, concepts and ideograms to identify it. Based on the inherent way of thinking and cognitive habits, people naturally assign different labels, concepts and ideograms to different perceptible objects. Similarly, when faced with different labels, concepts and ideograms, people naturally associate them with different perceptible objects. For example, people accustomed to Coca-Cola will immediately associate the carbonated drink in their mind and even feel it in their mouth whenever they hear, see, or even think of it.

Second, the expectation-based cause refers to the requirement or condition that can lead to some result. For example, the hand is the expectation-based cause for holding things; feet are the expectation-based cause for walking; hunger and thirst are the expectation-based causes for eating and drinking; worry, sorrow and pain are the expectation-based causes for avoiding suffering(/harm) and pursuing happiness(/benefit).

Third, the inductive cause refers to the reason that is not yet mature but will lead to future results. For example, ignorance of causality is the inductive cause of trouble and suffering; the rice seeds are the inductive cause of rice; the kernels are the inductive cause of fruits.

Fourth, the produced cause refers to the reason that is now mature and leads to a corresponding result. For example, the sexual desire seed is the produced cause of sexual behaviour; the rice seeds are the produced cause of rice-grain sprout; the bean seeds are the produced cause of bean sprout; the kernels are the inductive cause of fruits.

Fifth, the gathering cause refers to the auxiliary conditions other than the root cause in forming a result. For example, sunlight, rain, soil, temperature, fertiliser, etc., other than the seeds, are the gathering causes for rooting, germination, flowering and fruiting. To give another example, for most people, having enough money is a gathering cause for happiness, in addition to health, family and love (Kačerauskas, Valantinaitė 2023).

Sixth, the evocative cause refers to the reason that induces sequential results. For example, in an argument or quarrel, unkind words lead to more unkind words, and the former is the evocative cause of the latter. The stream of consciousness of sentient beings is continuous to achieve the function of perception, and the former is the evocative cause of the latter. The seed takes root, then sprouts, flowers, and bears fruit, and then regenerates the seeds, and then takes root, sprouts, flowers, and bears fruit again, etc.; the former is the evocative cause of the latter.

Seventh, the intrinsic cause refers to the distinguished reason that induces related congeneric results. For example, the different behaviours of good or evil of sentient beings must lead to the corresponding different consequences of good or evil. Sesame seeds can grow into sesame but not watermelon, and vice versa.

Eighth, the integrated cause refers to the cooperation of six of seven causes mentioned above, except the first name-based cause. In other words, the synergy of these six causes produces everything in the universe.

Ninth, the obstructive cause refers to the reason that hinders the formation of a result. For example, in the growth process, seeds need soil, water, fertiliser, sunlight, temperature, etc., which can make the seeds grow and bear fruit. However, in addition to these supporting factors, there are also some obstructive factors, such as wind, rain, lightning, frost, hail, snow, water, drought, insects, etc., that hinder the growth of the seeds.

Tenth, the non-obstructive cause refers to the reason that does not hinder the formation of a result. For example, proper soil, rain, fertiliser, sunlight, temperature, humidity, etc. are the non-obstructive causes of normal plant growth. As independent backgrounds unrelated to mass and motion, time and space are the non-obstructive causes of the three laws of motion in the classical mechanical system.

The above is just a brief introduction to the ten-causes doctrine, in fact, its connotation is quite complex. Because the vast majority of the reasons mentioned above can be further broken down to a more granular level, if necessary. For general causal inference, the above-mentioned ten categories are already sufficient to use (Xiao 2023).

THE CONNOTATION OF CONDITION IN CAUSALITY AND ITS CLASSIFICATION

According to the four-conditions doctrine, the conditions in causality can be distinguished into four categories: root condition, antecedent condition, referential condition and contributory condition, which are briefly introduced below.

First, the root condition refers to the most direct, significant, intimate and fundamental cause for the formation(/occurrence) of various results. This root condition is precisely the original face of sentient beings, i.e. the creator as stated in monotheism, i.e. the noumenon/thing-in-itself as stated in ontology, i.e. the being/existence as expressed in epistemology (Tsai 2007), i.e. the sutra, eighth consciousness, Alaya-consciousness (Yu 2008) etc. as stated in Buddhist philosophy (Xiao 2023). In short, the root condition refers to the origin of all forms and functions of the phenomenon world (Tsai 2008, 2011). For example, seeds are the root condition of germination, growth, flowering and fruiting compared to ancillary conditions such as water, soil, fertiliser, temperature, etc.

Second, the antecedent condition refers to the cause that induces sequential-related congeneric results. Formally, it is similar to the evocative cause in the aforementioned ten-causes doctrine. In essence, it means that the functions of mind consciousness of sentient beings flow out without interruption, with a similar succession of previous and subsequent thoughts, forming an uninterrupted stream of consciousness (Chen 2023 a; b). It is an essential condition for the occurrence, existence, and completion of perceptive activities, so it is also called similar and immediately antecedent conditions.¹ For example, an important feature of cognitive impairment in Alzheimer's patients is disrupting the stream of consciousness. In daily life, people also occasionally suffer the interruption of the stream of consciousness, e.g. someone suddenly couldn't remember one's original question in the questioning session, someone suddenly forgets what (s)he went into the room for.

Third, the referential condition refers to the perceptible object corresponding to the perceptive subject. The perceptible object will cause the perceptive subject to produce the recognition function. Still, it also limits the scope of its functions. The perceptible object will react to the perceptive subject, so the perceptible object can be called referential condition (Xiao 2023). For example, the wavelength of light waves is the perceptible object of eye-consciousness; the frequency of vibration serves as the perceptible object of ear-consciousness; odour molecules serve as the perceptible object of nose-consciousness; food particles serve

¹ Almost all mortal beings believe that they have ever had and are touching external perceptible objects; however, this is only a habitual delusion. In fact, the mind-consciousness of sentient beings has never directly perceived and distinguished any external perceptible object, which is the factual basis for the thought experiment of the 'brain in a vat'.

as the perceptible object of tongue-consciousness; the force between molecules serves as the perceptible object of body-consciousness; the six sense-objects of sight, sound, smell, taste, touch, and mental dharma serve as the perceptible objects of the sixth mind-consciousness; all the mental dharma and its changes are the perceptible objects of the seventh manas-consciousness; all cognitive objects other than those perceived by the first six mind senses are the perceptible objects of the eighth Alaya-consciousness (Prince 2017; Chen 2022).

Fourth, the contributory condition refers to the other external conditions that play a vital role in the formation/occurrence of the result. Formally, it is similar to the obstructive cause and non-obstructive cause in the aforementioned ten-causes doctrine. Everything in the phenomenal world can and must be the contributory condition of other phenomena, except that it cannot be the aforementioned root condition and the contributory condition of itself. For example, sunlight, air, rain, fertiliser, etc. may be the contributory condition of the seed's healthy growth but also that of its damage.

The above is just a brief introduction to the four-conditions doctrine, in fact, its connotation is quite complex. Because the other three conditions can be divided in more detail except for the first root condition.

THE CONNOTATION OF RESULT IN CAUSALITY AND ITS CLASSIFICATION

According to the five-effects doctrine, the results in causality can be distinguished into five categories: retributive result, concomitant result, cooperative result, contributory result and unbound result, which are briefly introduced below.

First, the retributive result refers to the corresponding effect of the ripening cause in the aforementioned six-causes doctrine. As mentioned earlier, the core impetus behind all human intellectual endeavours, encompassing scientific inquiry, philosophical contemplation, and religious beliefs, is the pursuit of understanding, uncovering and harnessing causal relationships within the observable world. This endeavour is fundamentally aimed at mitigating suffering and harm while actively seeking happiness and benefit. Regarding the current Spatio-temporal background, the retributive result refers to the corresponding effect of the ripening cause, which occurred in other spatial and temporal contexts. The immortal mind of each sentient being contains its unique ripening causes, so there are different forms of retributive results (Tsai 2007; Yu 2008; Xiao 2017, 2023). According to the different forms of their existence, all sentient beings can be roughly divided into three realms, four kinds of birth, five/six/seven destinies, nine levels, twelve groups, categories, and twenty-five (stages of) existence(s) (Editor 2006; Chen 2023 b; Contributors 2024). If it is classified in detail, there are as many as tens of trillions, even uncountable.

Each sentient being has its unique stream of consciousness, so each has its behaviours of mind, mouth and body. These behaviours, in turn, produce the power of inertia that forms corresponding ripening causes, i.e. the so-called karma in Buddhist philosophy, which is stored in each individual's unique immortal mind (Chang 2011; Prince 2017; Chen 2022). And they will manifest themselves again as retributive results when the conditions are right and the time is ripe. As stated above, the current five aggregates of different sentient beings are exactly the manifestation of their past ripening causes (Xiao 2023). Meanwhile, their current behaviours create the ripening causes of their future retributive effect. What is true of causality for sentient beings is also true for insentient beings. For example, why do plants of different kingdoms, phyla, classes, orders, families, genera and species mature, e.g. blossoming and bearing fruit, at different times? Scientists have no idea. This difference is mainly due to their different ripening causes.

Of course, it is also influenced by different contributory conditions, such as geographical, environmental, climatic, etc. For the time being, humans cannot precisely control when and where a plant seed germinates, grows, blooms and bears fruit. However, based on the exploration, discovery and mastery of its causality, experts can understand and grasp its growth process and development results with a high probability. Therefore, there are various kinds of anti-seasonal fruits and vegetables with the improvement of human cognition.

Second, the concomitant result refers to the corresponding effect of the same-type cause and omnipresent cause in the aforementioned six-causes doctrine. It is often similar or identical to its corresponding cause in terms of good and bad, so it is also called homogenous production or natural outcome. For example, long-term smoking and alcohol abuse will lead to significantly higher cancer risk.

Third, the cooperative result refers to the corresponding effect of the expectation-based cause, inductive cause, gathering cause and integrated cause in the aforementioned ten-causes doctrine. Specifically, it is the effect sentient beings have acquired and can use by themselves in interacting with others. For example, the fame, fortune, wealth and glory of the elites in politics, agriculture, industry, commerce, academia, the military, etc. are their corresponding cooperative results.

Fourth, the contributory result refers to the corresponding effect of both the active cause in the aforementioned six-causes doctrine and the contributory condition in the aforementioned four-conditions doctrine. Specifically, it refers to the other external causes or conditions that play a crucial role in the formation/occurrence of the aforementioned retributive result and cooperative result. For example, as mentioned in the previous example, there are various levels of elites in various fields, such as agriculture, industry, commerce, academia and the military in each era. The political and commercial climate of their time is just the contributory result of their retributive result and cooperative result. Therefore, their fate varies in the same or different backgrounds of the times. Some people are like meteors that fall quickly after a moment of glory, while others are like the sun and the moon, always shining brightly for thousands of years.

Fifth, the unbound result refers to the state of freedom from bondage. The aforementioned four results are available to everyone, but this unbound result is not available to mortal beings. As stated above, the fundamental driving force of all human intellectual activities, including scientific research, philosophical thinking, religious beliefs, etc., is to explore, discover, reveal and utilise the causality of the phenomenal world to achieve the fundamental purpose of avoiding suffering(/harm) and pursuing happiness(/benefit). However, all mortal beings are bound by the dichotomous thinking mode and cognitive inertia² and cannot achieve this fundamental purpose. Mortal beings are ignorant of the origin of the universe and the what is what of life confined to the habitual dichotomous way of thinking and cognition (Xiao 2022; 2023). And thus, they misinterpret and misunderstand the causality of avoiding suffering(/harm) and pursuing happiness(/benefit). And therefore, they often get half the result with twice the effort or even the opposite of what they want.

² The dichotomous way of thinking and cognitive patterns are mainly manifested in three aspects. First, always get used to perceiving and thinking from the perspective of the first person 'I'. Second, always get used to replacing 'what it is' with '(I think) what it should be', i.e. always be used to self-appraisal. Third, always get used to separating and opposing the perceptive subject and the perceptible object. These three points are the root of all debates, criticisms, and even battles in this world. In fact, they are also the root of all upset, worries, and even suffering in this world.

In summary, all mortal beings must be bound by various afflictions, the greatest of which is inescapable death. However, if one does not realise this, one will not seek liberation and must not get the unbound effect. If one figured out what 'I' is and where 'I' comes from, one must have attained the primary unbound effect. Mortal beings tend to be shortsighted when weighing the benefit and harm, thus gaining small profits but losing significant benefits, achieving small happiness but suffering great afflictions.

THE CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN CAUSE, CONDITION AND RESULT IN CAUSALITY

Through the above brief introduction, it is not difficult to notice that there are corresponding relations among the three factors in the causality – cause, condition and result, shown in the Table below.

The correspondence shown in the Table above involves the three elements of cause, condition and result. The relationship between these three elements is not one and not different. Why is this? There are two reasons:

First, the root condition and all phenomena in the phenomenal world are neither identical nor dissimilar. As mentioned above, all phenomena in the phenomenal world, whether material dharma(/existence) or mental dharma(/existence), whether sentient beings or insentient beings, originate from the root condition (Tsai 2007; Yu 2008). In terms of causal logic, all phenomena in the phenomenal world are the direct or indirect results of the fundamental cause, i.e. the root condition here, under the other three types of conditions. Thus, the root condition and all phenomena in the phenomenal world are neither identical nor dissimilar.

Table. Correspondence among cause, condition and result of causality

Effect	Six causes	Ten causes	Condition
1st, retributive effect	6th, ripening cause	3rd, inductive cause 4th, produced cause 7th, intrinsic cause 8th, integrated cause 10th, non-obstructive cause	All 4 conditions are involved
2nd, concomitant effect	3rd, same-type cause 5th, omnipresent cause	3rd, inductive cause 4th, produced cause 5th, gathering cause 6th, evocative cause 7th, intrinsic cause 8th, integrated cause 10th, non-obstructive cause	All 4 conditions are involved
3rd, cooperative effect	2nd, concurrent cause 4th, concomitant cause	2nd, expectation-based cause 3rd, inductive cause 5th, gathering cause 8th, integrated cause 10th, non-obstructive cause	All 4 conditions are involved
4th, contributory effect	1st, active cause	All 10 causes are involved	All 4 conditions are involved
5th, unbound effect	All 6 causes are not involved	5th, gathering cause 6th, evocative cause 7th, intrinsic cause 8th, integrated cause 9th, obstructive cause	1st, root condition 4th, contributory condition

Second, cause, condition and result in the phenomenal world are neither identical nor dissimilar. As is well known, a cause in a causal chain must also be the condition or(/and) result in other causal chains. Similarly, a condition in a causal chain must also be the cause or(/and) result in other causal chains, and a result in a causal chain must also be the cause or(/and) condition in other causal chains (Hesslow 1981; Rothman, Lanes 1988; Michotte 2017). Thus, in terms of the causal connection in the phenomenal world, the three involved in the causal network, cause, condition and result are neither identical nor dissimilar.

The non-duality of cause, condition and result has the above two meanings, and accordingly, it is also reflected in two levels.

First, the non-duality of cause, condition and result is always and everywhere reflected in the relationship between the root condition and all phenomena in the phenomenal world. All phenomena in the phenomenal world originate directly or indirectly from the fundamental cause, i.e. the root condition here. Regarding the relationship between cause, condition and result, all phenomena are the condition and result of the fundamental cause but not the fundamental cause itself. Therefore, the cause, condition and result are neither identical nor dissimilar.

Second, the non-duality of cause, condition and result is always and everywhere reflected in the universal connection of phenomena in the phenomenal world. It is well known that all phenomena in the phenomenal world are in a three-dimensional, multidimensional, dynamic cause-and-effect relationship. It is easy to see that each element in this causal network must simultaneously play different roles (cause/condition/result) in different causal chains, and it will change with the roles of other relevant elements. The logic and fact that cause, condition and result are neither identical nor dissimilar seem simple, but in fact, it is complex and challenging to understand.

CONCLUSION AND PROSPECT

As mentioned earlier, causality refers to the primordial, underlying, transcendental, inherent, intrinsic, ultimate, essential, fundamental, inevitable, invariable, timeless, universal, complex, multidimensional, dynamic connection, law, logic and fact among the three elements of cause, condition and result in the phenomenal world (Xie 2024). This article analyses the connotation of causality from three perspectives: cause, condition and result, and summarises the corresponding relationship between these three dimensions or elements in causality. This provides a universal analytical framework for causal inference. Factor inference in any field, including natural sciences, social sciences and humanities, can and should be integrated into this comprehensive framework for analysis. However, due to the space limitation, this paper only outlined the three elements of causality and their correspondence. As revealed by complexity science, there are some primordial, underlying, transcendental, inherent, intrinsic, ultimate, essential, fundamental, inevitable, invariable, timeless and universal principles in complex, multidimensional, dynamic causality, which will be revealed in the coming papers.

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Trys priežastingumo elementai ir jų atitikimas

Santrauka

Priežastinis ryšys yra pagrindinis fenomenalaus pasaulio ryšys, taisyklė, logika ir faktas, todėl priežastinio ryšio tarp daiktų radimas ir jo panaudojimas, siekiant išvengti žalos ir galiausiai pasiekti laimę, yra pagrindinė visos žmogaus intelektualinės veiklos motyvacija. Šiame darbe pirmiausia atkreipiamas dėmesys į tai, kad bet kokia priežastinė išvada bet kurioje srityje gali ir turi būti analizuojama remiantis trimis aspektais: priežasties, sąlygos ir rezultato. Pristatoma šešių priežasčių doktrina, dešimties priežasčių doktrina, keturių sąlygų doktrina ir penkių pasekmių doktrina budizmo filosofijoje. Tai sudaro visą analitinę priežastinių samprotavimų sistemą, o bet kokia priežastinė analizė bet kurioje srityje gali būti integruota į šią išsamią tyrimo sistemą.

Raktažodžiai: šešių priežasčių doktrina, dešimties priežasčių doktrina, keturių sąlygų doktrina, penkių efektų doktrina