8.1 Gender Bias in Psychological Theory and Research: 30-minute Pack

AQA 7182 · about 30 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

At least four questions require full sentences. Total time suggested 30 minutes.

1 Define androcentrism with an example

(Total for Question 1 is 2 marks)

2 Explain a social consequence of gender-biased research

(Total for Question 2 is 4 marks)

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3 Discuss gender bias in psychological research

(Total for Question 3 is 16 marks)

4 Identify bias in a male-only stress study

(Total for Question 4 is 4 marks)

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Mark scheme · 8.1 Gender Bias in Psychological Theory and Research: 30-minute Pack

Question 1

defines androcentrism as male-centred research or interpretation where the male experience is treated as the norm oe	**B1**
gives an example, e.g. using a male-only sample and assuming findings apply to women, or interpreting female behaviour as deviant relative to male norms oe	**B1**

Answer: Androcentrism is male-centred research or interpretation that treats the male experience as the default; for example using male-only samples and assuming results apply to women.

Question 2

identifies a social consequence, e.g. biased research used to justify discrimination in hiring, education or policy oe	**M1**
explains the mechanism: how a biased claim becomes taken as scientific evidence to support unequal treatment oe	**A1**
gives a short, relevant example, e.g. arguing women are less suited to leadership based on flawed research leading to fewer promotions oe	**B1**
explains why this matters, e.g. incorrect policy decisions, reduced opportunities and reinforcement of stereotypes oe	**B1**

Answer: Biased research can be used to justify discrimination, for example flawed claims that women are less suited to leadership can be treated as scientific evidence and lead to fewer promotions and entrenched stereotypes.

Question 3

Level 4 Knowledge of gender bias is accurate and detailed. Discussion and evaluation are thorough and integrated, addressing alpha and beta bias, androcentrism and gynocentrism, consequences for individuals and science, and appropriate methodological and theoretical solutions. The Kohlberg example is applied effectively. Specialist terminology is used appropriately and the answer is well organised.	**13-16**
Level 3 Knowledge is clear with some detail. There is effective evaluation with some integration of points and an appropriate example. Solutions are discussed but may not be fully developed. The response is mostly well organised with good use of terminology.	**9-12**
Level 2 Knowledge of concepts is present but limited or partially imprecise. Evaluation is present but superficial, and the example or solutions may be only briefly applied. Organisation and use of terminology may be inconsistent.	**5-8**
Level 1 Answer contains limited knowledge and little or no evaluation. Points may be brief or asserted without development. The response lacks structure and appropriate terminology.	**1-4**
Level 0 No creditworthy material.	**0**

Indicative content:

- AO1: Definitions of alpha bias (exaggerating sex differences) and beta bias (minimising or ignoring differences and generalising from one gender to both).
- AO1: Definitions of androcentrism (male-centred research and norms) and gynocentrism (female-centred research and norms).
- AO1: Distinction between universality and bias: universality claims that findings apply across genders and contexts; bias undermines claims of universality when samples, measures or interpretations are gendered.
- AO2: Kohlberg as a worked example of historical beta bias: male-dominated samples and a justice-oriented scoring system that undervalued female care-based reasoning, leading to claims of lower moral maturity for women; mention Gilligan's critique and methodological implications.
- AO3: Consequences for individuals: biased diagnosis, inappropriate treatments, workplace discrimination, educational inequality and reinforcement of gender stereotypes. Consequences for science: limited generalisability, skewed theory development and unjustified universality claims.
- AO3: Methodological critiques, e.g. sampling bias, androcentric measures, gendered operationalisation, lack of intersectional perspectives; explain why these lead to invalid conclusions.
- AO3: Evaluation of proposed solutions: gender-balanced sampling, development of gender-sensitive measures, use of feminist and intersectional frameworks, replication across cultures and contexts, reflexivity in researchers. Discuss limitations of each solution, e.g. balancing samples alone does not fix conceptual bias, and practical constraints in some research areas.
- AO3: Consideration of contemporary progress, for example increased awareness, mixed-sex sampling and editorial policies, balanced against persistent problems in some fields and publication bias.
- AO3: Balanced argument including counter-evidence or complexity, e.g. some sex differences are robust and important to study, but researchers must distinguish between biologically driven differences and socially constructed ones, and avoid essentialism.
- AO3: Conclude with a judgement on how psychological science can move towards more valid, inclusive theories while recognising the complexity of gender, interact with culture and other variables, and avoid simple universality claims.

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Question 4

identifies β bias (generalising from male-only results to all humans) cao	**M1**
justifies by noting the sample used only males and the conclusion claims universality without evidence from females oe	**A1**
might mention the omission of female-typical responses such as tend-and-befriend as evidence the conclusion ignores gender differences oe	**B1**
explicitly links sample limitation to inappropriate universal claim oe	**B1**

Answer: This is β bias: the researcher generalises from a male-only sample to claim a universal human fight-or-flight response, ignoring evidence that females may show different stress responses.

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