8.3 Culture Bias in Psychological Theory and Research: 30-minute Pack

AQA 7182 · about 30 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions.

1 Explain how collectivist vs individualist cultures could produce different obedience patterns and implications for universality claims.

(Total for Question 1 is 3 marks)

2 Discuss culture bias in psychological research, with definitions, examples and evaluation.

(Total for Question 2 is 16 marks)

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3 Identify and explain one cultural alternative explanation for group differences in standardised memory test scores.

(Total for Question 3 is 3 marks)

4 Outline one strength and one limitation of cross-cultural replications in testing universality, with conformity or obedience examples.

(Total for Question 4 is 4 marks)

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Mark scheme · 8.3 Culture Bias in Psychological Theory and Research: 30-minute Pack

Question 1

states that collectivist cultures emphasise group harmony, respect for authority and conformity to group norms, while individualist cultures emphasise personal autonomy and questioning authority oe	**M1**
explains that in a collectivist context participants may show higher compliance with authority commands to preserve group harmony, whereas in individualist settings participants may be more likely to resist oe	**A1**
links consequence: therefore differing obedience rates may reflect cultural values rather than a failure of the original theory, so universality claims must be qualified and cultural moderators considered oe	**A1**

Answer: Collectivist cultures stress group harmony and respect for authority, so participants may be more compliant in obedience studies; individualist cultures stress autonomy, so participants may resist more. This means different obedience rates can reflect cultural values, so claims of universality need to account for cultural moderators rather than assuming a single pattern everywhere.

Question 2

Level 4 Knowledge and understanding of culture bias is accurate, detailed and well organised. Discussion is thorough and evaluative across theory, methods and applications, using appropriate examples from intelligence testing and conformity or obedience replications. There is clear, sustained analysis of ways to reduce bias, including methodological controls and ethical considerations. Specialist terminology is used accurately throughout.	**13-16**
Level 3 Knowledge and understanding of culture bias is clear with relevant examples. There is balanced discussion and some evaluation, but one or two points may be less developed. Applications to intelligence testing and cross-cultural replications are present and generally well linked to evaluation. Terminology is mostly accurate.	**9-12**
Level 2 Basic knowledge of culture bias with limited or descriptive examples. Discussion is present but superficial and evaluation is limited. May list ways to reduce bias without fully developing why they matter. Application to examples may be brief or only partly relevant. Some terminology used, but with occasional inaccuracy.	**5-8**
Level 1 Very limited knowledge or understanding. Little relevant discussion or evaluation. Examples, if present, are vague. Terminology is missing or used incorrectly. Answer is poorly organised.	**1-4**
Level 0 No creditable content.	**0**

Indicative content:

- AO1 definitions: ethnocentrism is judging other cultures by one's own cultural standards; cultural relativism is the view that behaviour and mental processes must be understood in the context of the local culture; imposed etic is applying a method or theory developed in one culture to another without adaptation.
- AO1 examples: intelligence-testing items that assume Western knowledge, such as references to specific holidays or school experiences; conformity or obedience procedures developed in Western labs applied unmodified in cultures with different norms about public disagreement or authority.
- AO3 methodological evaluation: culturally biased test items reduce content and construct validity and can produce unfair comparisons; translation and back-translation alone may not remove cultural assumptions, so item analysis and differential item functioning checks are important.
- AO3 theoretical evaluation: claims of universality should be cautious, because cultural factors such as collectivism or power-distance can moderate behaviours like conformity and obedience; cross-cultural replications that show different levels challenge universalist theories but must be interpreted carefully.
- AO3 ethical and practical issues: exposing participants to tasks that conflict with local norms can cause distress and raises ethical concerns; researchers should obtain cultural consultation and ensure informed consent and the right to withdraw are culturally appropriate.
- AO3 solutions and applications: use emic approaches that develop concepts locally as well as etic approaches carefully adapted; involve local collaborators, pilot tests, translation and back-translation, use of culturally relevant norms for standardisation, and statistical checks for item bias; report cultural limitations in conclusions.
- AO3 balance and implication: while culture bias can undermine the validity of findings, cross-cultural research remains valuable for testing the scope of psychological theories; the best approach combines sensitivity to cultural context with rigorous methods to allow cautious generalisation or the identification of cultural moderators.

Question 3

identifies a cultural alternative, e.g. differences in familiarity with test format or practice with similar tasks oe	**M1**
explains how this could cause score differences: Group A may have more experience with test-taking or formal schooling, boosting scores independent of innate ability oe	**A1**
adds consequence: therefore attributing the difference to innate intelligence is unwarranted without controlling for cultural and educational factors oe	**A1**

Answer: An alternative is that Group A are more familiar with test formats or have greater schooling, so they perform better on standardised memory tasks; this experience, not innate intelligence, could account for the difference unless cultural and educational factors are controlled.

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Question 4

strength: replications in different cultures can reveal whether findings are universal or culture-specific, increasing external validity oe **M1**

explains with example: if obedience levels are lower in one culture replication, this suggests the original finding may not be universal oe **A1**

limitation: differences may reflect methodological or translation issues rather than true cultural differences oe **M1**

explains consequence: without careful adaptation, a failed replication could be due to an imposed etic or poor operationalisation, limiting the inference that the theory is culture-specific oe **A1**

Answer: Strength: cross-cultural replications test universality and can show whether findings generalise; for example different obedience rates suggest culture matters. Limitation: differences may be due to poor adaptation or translation rather than true cultural effects, so careful methodology is needed before concluding a theory is culture-specific.

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