8.7 Holism and Reductionism in Psychological Explanation: 10-minute Pack

AQA 7182 · about 10 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions.

1 Classify the conditioning explanation as holistic or reductionist and state its level.

(Total for Question 1 is 1 mark)

2 Explain levels of explanation for aggression with one example at each level.

(Total for Question 2 is 4 marks)

3 Distinguish biological and environmental reductionism with examples.

(Total for Question 3 is 4 marks)

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Mark scheme · 8.7 Holism and Reductionism in Psychological Explanation: 10-minute Pack

Question 1

environmental (stimulus-response) reductionism; level = psychological/behavioural cao	**B1**

Answer: Environmental (stimulus-response) reductionism; level = psychological/behavioural.

Question 2

names lowest level as biological and gives an example, e.g. high testosterone linked to aggressive behaviour oe	**M1**
names a middle/psychological level and gives an example, e.g. cognitive biases or learning from reinforcement leading to aggressive responses oe	**M1**
names highest level as social/cultural and gives an example, e.g. cultural norms that tolerate aggression or groupthink in gang cultures oe	**M1**
explains hierarchy: lower levels focus on biological mechanisms, higher levels consider social context and meaning, so explanations operate at different scales oe	**A1**

Answer: Lowest: biological, e.g. testosterone or neural differences linked to aggression. Middle: psychological, e.g. learned aggressive responses or hostile attribution bias. Highest: social/cultural, e.g. cultural norms or peer-group influences that encourage aggression. The levels form a hierarchy from physiological mechanisms up to social context.

Question 3

states biological reductionism explains behaviour in terms of biological structures/processes, e.g. genes, neurotransmitters or hormones oe	**M1**
gives an example, e.g. explaining aggression as caused by high testosterone or frontal lobe dysfunction oe	**A1**
states environmental reductionism explains behaviour as learned stimulus-response associations or reinforcement histories oe	**M1**
gives an example, e.g. explaining aggression as learned by observing aggressive role models or reinforced by rewards oe	**A1**

Answer: Biological reductionism: explains behaviour via biological mechanisms, e.g. aggression linked to testosterone or neural deficits. Environmental reductionism: explains behaviour via learned associations, e.g. aggression learned by modelling or reinforcement.

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