8.9 Ethical Implications of Research Studies and Theory: Test Pack

AQA 7182 · about 20 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions.

1 State Sieber and Stanley's four categories of social sensitivity concerns in psychological research, naming the category that relates to how findings may be interpreted by the public.

(Total for Question 1 is 2 marks)

2 Identify one difference between ethical responsibilities involved in everyday participant-level protections and the wider responsibility scientists have for public interpretation of their work, as emphasised in the social sensitivity literature.

(Total for Question 2 is 3 marks)

3 Outline one reason why Sieber and Stanley argue that social sensitivity is not fully covered by standard ethical procedures such as consent or debriefing.

(Total for Question 3 is 2 marks)

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4 Outline one ethical concern from Sieber and Stanley about the research question itself, using research into the genetic basis of intelligence as the example.

(Total for Question 4 is 3 marks)

5 Identify two steps a researcher could take, before publishing, to reduce the social harm that might follow from a sensitive study on genetic links to behaviour.

(Total for Question 5 is 4 marks)

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Mark scheme · 8.9 Ethical Implications of Research Studies and Theory: Test Pack

Question 1

lists at least three of Sieber and Stanley's categories: the research question itself; the treatment of individual participants; the institutional context in which the research is conducted; how findings may be interpreted and applied oe **B1**

identifies the category relating to how findings may be interpreted as 'how findings may be interpreted and applied' or 'interpretation and application' cao **B1**

Answer: The four categories are: the research question itself; the treatment of individual participants; the institutional context of the research; and how findings may be interpreted and applied. The category about public interpretation is 'how findings may be interpreted and applied'.

Question 2

identifies a difference, e.g. participant-level protections focus on individuals in the study while wider responsibility concerns societal impacts of dissemination oe **M1**

explains the implication, e.g. informed consent protects present participants but cannot prevent harmful public uses of findings after publication oe **A1**

gives a brief example or consequence, e.g. a study may be ethical procedurally yet its published conclusions might increase stigma for a whole group oe **A1**

Answer: Participant-level protections (consent, debriefing) focus on safeguarding individuals in the study, whereas broader responsibility involves anticipating how findings may affect public understanding and policy. Consent cannot prevent harmful public interpretation, so researchers must consider dissemination, framing and possible misuse.

Question 3

identifies reason: standard procedures protect individuals in the study but do not address wider social consequences or how findings will be used oe **B1**

briefly explains implication: even ethically run studies can generate public harms when findings are misapplied or used politically oe **B1**

Answer: Standard procedures protect participants during research but do not control how findings are interpreted or applied. Sieber and Stanley note that research can cause wider social harm even when consent and debriefing are handled correctly.

Question 4

identifies a concern about the research question itself, e.g. that asking whether intelligence is genetic may stigmatise groups or presuppose a deterministic view oe **M1**

explains using the example, e.g. such a question could be used to justify unequal treatment of certain populations or influence education policy in harmful ways oe **A1**

shows why this matters ethically: the choice of question shapes potential social harms beyond the immediate study oe **A1**

Answer: E.g. the research question 'is intelligence genetic?' is ethically concerning because it can presuppose genetic determinism and stigmatise groups. This could be used to justify discriminatory education policies or social inequality, so the mere framing of the question has wider social consequences.

Question 5

identifies one step, e.g. include clear limitations and effect sizes in publications and press releases oe **M1**

explains why this helps, e.g. it prevents overclaiming and clarifies the strength and uncertainty of findings oe **A1**

identifies a second step, e.g. consult with stakeholders and ethicists or engage with affected communities before publication oe **M1**

explains why this helps, e.g. it anticipates possible harms and improves responsible framing and dissemination oe **A1**

Answer: Two steps are: 1) include explicit limitations, confidence intervals and effect sizes in all publications and press materials, which reduces overclaiming; 2) consult ethicists and representatives of affected communities before publication, which helps anticipate harms and frame findings responsibly.

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