9.2 Factors in Attraction: Self-Disclosure and Physical Attractiveness: Test Pack

AQA 7182 · about 20 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

At least three of the short-answer questions require full sentences. Complete the whole pack in about 50 minutes.

1 Outline Altman and Taylor's (1973) social penetration theory of self-disclosure in the context of romantic attraction, naming the two key metaphors 'breadth' and 'depth'.

(Total for Question 1 is 2 marks)

2 Describe the halo effect as it relates to physical attractiveness and first impressions in romantic attraction research.

(Total for Question 2 is 2 marks)

3 Explain, with reference to self-disclosure, why two people might feel closer after sharing personal hopes and worries during a series of dates.

(Total for Question 3 is 3 marks)

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4 A small study finds that couples who rate each other as similarly attractive report higher relationship satisfaction. Identify whether this finding can support the matching hypothesis causally, and explain one alternative explanation using self-disclosure.

(Total for Question 4 is 4 marks)

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5 Explain two methodological critiques of Walster et al.'s computer dance study (1966), including one regarding ecological validity, and how these matter for applying the matching hypothesis to real-world dating.

(Total for Question 5 is 4 marks)

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Mark scheme · 9.2 Factors in Attraction: Self-Disclosure and Physical Attractiveness: Test Pack

Question 1

states that social penetration theory describes how relationships deepen through increasing self-disclosure oe — **B1**

identifies breadth and depth as key dimensions: breadth means range of topics and depth means personal significance of topics oe — **B1**

Answer: Social penetration theory says relationships develop as partners gradually disclose more about themselves; breadth is the number of topics shared and depth is how personal or intimate disclosures become.

Question 2

defines the halo effect as the tendency to assume someone with one positive quality, such as attractiveness, has other positive traits oe — **B1**

applies it to attraction by noting that physically attractive people are often judged as more kind, sociable or trustworthy on first impressions oe — **B1**

Answer: The halo effect is the bias where a physically attractive person is assumed to have other positive qualities; in attraction this means attractive people are judged more favourably on traits like warmth or intelligence based on looks alone.

Question 3

applies social penetration theory: revealing personal information increases depth of disclosure oe — **M1**

explains that greater depth leads to increased trust and intimacy and so feelings of closeness oe — **A1**

may note reciprocity: each partner responds with similar disclosure, reinforcing the relationship oe — **A1**

Answer: Sharing personal hopes and worries increases depth of self-disclosure, which builds trust and perceived intimacy; if disclosure is reciprocated this further strengthens closeness between the two people.

Question 4

identifies that correlation does not equal causation, so the finding does not establish that matching causes satisfaction oe — **M1**

explains that third variables or reverse causation could account for the association, such as happier couples perceiving each other as more attractive oe — **A1**

offers alternative explanation: similarity in self-disclosure could produce both higher perceived similarity and greater satisfaction oe — **M1**

explains that mutual disclosure builds intimacy and satisfaction which could lead partners to rate each other more positively, independent of initial matching on looks oe — **A1**

Answer: The finding is correlational and cannot prove matching causes satisfaction; happier couples might see each other as more attractive. Alternatively, reciprocal self-disclosure could increase satisfaction and perceived similarity, explaining the association without invoking causal matching on physical attractiveness.

Question 5

identifies ecological validity as a problem, e.g. the dance event is an artificial, brief situation oe — **M1**

explains that partner choice in a one-off dance may not reflect long term mate choice, where many factors matter oe — **A1**

identifies another methodological issue such as sample bias: participants were university students and mostly young oe — **M1**

explains this limits generalisability to other ages and cultures, so the matching hypothesis may not hold universally in everyday dating contexts oe — **A1**

Answer: The dance study is artificial and measures brief partner choice, not long term relationship formation, reducing ecological validity; combined with a student sample, the findings may not generalise to real-world dating across ages and cultures.

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