1.4 The Authoritarian Personality as a Dispositional Explanation for Obedience: 10-minute Pack

AQA 7182 · about 10 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions.

1 Compare dispositional and situational explanations and give one strength each.

(Total for Question 1 is 4 marks)

2 Describe the purpose of the F-scale in Adorno et al.'s research.

(Total for Question 2 is 2 marks)

3 Identify and explain one political-bias criticism of the F-scale.

(Total for Question 3 is 3 marks)

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Mark scheme · 1.4 The Authoritarian Personality as a Dispositional Explanation for Obedience: 10-minute Pack

Question 1

comparison: dispositional focuses on individual personality traits and childhood origins, situational focuses on features of the immediate context and authority figures that encourage obedience oe — **M1**

strength of dispositional: explains individual differences, why some people obey more than others in the same situation oe — **A1**

strength of situational: supported by experimental evidence showing that authority and context can produce high obedience even in ordinary people (e.g. Milgram-type findings) oe — **M1**

explains why this matters: situational evidence demonstrates how powerfully context can shape behaviour, which dispositional accounts alone cannot explain oe — **A1**

Answer: Dispositional accounts highlight stable individual traits and childhood origins to explain obedience, explaining individual differences. Situational accounts emphasise the power of authority and context, backed by experimental evidence showing ordinary people can obey under certain conditions. Each account has a strength: dispositional explains why some people differ, situational explains powerful contextual effects.

Question 2

states the F-scale was designed to measure levels of authoritarian personality traits in individuals oe — **B1**

states it used a series of items where agreement indicated more authoritarian attitudes, producing a total score to compare between people oe — **B1**

Answer: The F-scale was designed to measure how strongly a person holds authoritarian traits, using questionnaire items where higher agreement produced a higher authoritarianism score.

Question 3

identifies criticism: the F-scale may conflate right-wing political beliefs with personality pathology oe — **M1**

explains how: agreement with conservative or traditional social attitudes could increase F-scale scores even if these are political positions rather than evidence of deep authoritarian personality traits oe — **A1**

explains consequence: this political bias undermines the claim that the F-scale measures a stable personality cause of obedience oe — **A1**

Answer: The F-scale has been criticised for political bias because agreement with conservative social attitudes could raise scores without indicating a pathological authoritarian personality, undermining its claim to measure a stable dispositional cause of obedience.

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