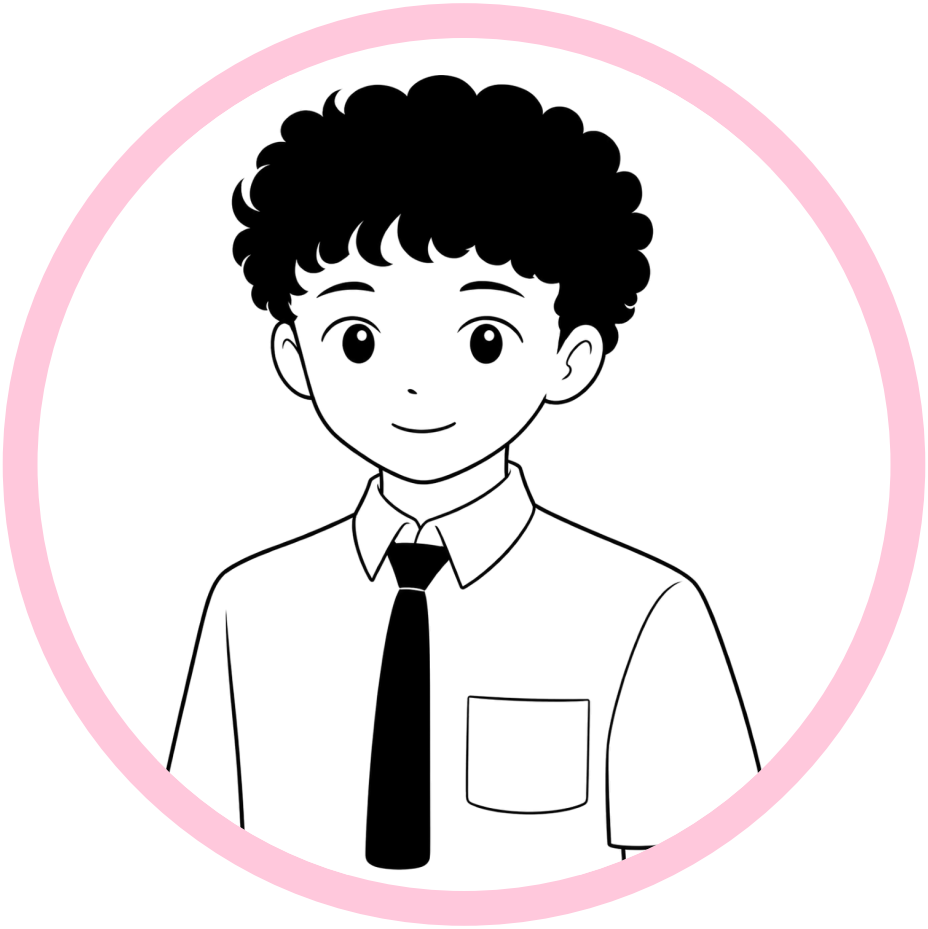
AQA A-LEVEL PSYCHOLOGY · 7182

PSYCHOLOGY



MARK SCHEME

3.3.1 HOLISM AND REDUCTIONISM

SCORE	PERCENTAGE
/46	%

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Q1.

[AO1 = 4]

1 mark for each correct match

A Cultural relativism

D Ethnocentrism

C Holism

B Universality

Can allow credit for letters without concepts, as long as the letters are in the right order. If any letter is used more than once, no credit for that letter.

[4]

Q2.

(a) **[AO2 = 2]**

1 mark for **each** of the following points:

- excitement is a broad construct / complex behaviour / has many aspects
- heart rate is a narrow, biological / physical component / unit / element / factor in overall excitement.

2

(b) **[AO3 = 4]**

For **each** outline award marks as follows:

2 marks for a clear and coherent outline with some elaboration.

1 mark for a limited / muddled outline.

Possible content:

- questionnaire measuring attitude – questions assess how the participant feels about going on the roller coaster
- rating scale of own excitement – the participant could rate their perceived level of excitement on a scale of 1 – 10
- observation of non-verbal behaviour whilst waiting in the queue; e.g. tallying appropriate behavioural categories
- interviews before / after the participant has been on the ride asking questions about how they felt / whether they enjoy other exciting occasions / events / how they cope with excitement, etc.

Do not credit measures of biological function.
Just naming a method e.g. questionnaire / interview / observation is not sufficient.

4

[6]

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Q3.

[AO3 = 4]

In **each case** award marks as follows:

2 marks for a clear and coherent strength / limitation with some elaboration.

1 mark for a limited / muddled strength / limitation.

Possible strengths:

- studying basic units of behaviour underpins the scientific approach / adds weight to scientific research
- more objective to consider basic components of behaviour
- leads to greater clarity of understanding, e.g. at the chemical, cellular level
- better able to isolate cause when studying basic units of behaviour, e.g. can see which chemicals are implicated in certain behavioural disorders, then may be able to effect treatment
- parsimonious – the simplest explanation is often the best.

Possible imitations:

- simplistic and ignores the complex interaction of many factors
- leads to us losing sight of behaviour in context
- less able to understand the behaviour because we do not understand its meaning - loss of validity
- ignores emergent properties / distracts from a more appropriate level of explanation.

Credit other relevant strengths and limitations.

[4]

Q4.

[AO1 = 1]

1 mark

B

Q5.

[AO1 = 2]

2 marks for clear and coherent outline which explains how explanations vary from those at a lower or fundamental level focusing on basic components or units to those at a higher more holistic multivariable level.

1 mark for vague or incomplete outline which refers to explanations at fundamental / basic and more holistic levels.

0 marks for mere reference to there being different levels of explanation.

Credit answers where knowledge of term is embedded in an example.

Q6.

[AO1 = 3 AO3 = 5]

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Level	Marks	Description
4	7 – 8	Outline of reductionist explanations is accurate and generally well detailed. Evaluation is effective, with some balance. The answer is clear, coherent and focused. Specialist terminology is used effectively. Minor detail and/or expansion of argument sometimes lacking.
3	5 – 6	Outline of reductionist explanations is evident. There are occasional inaccuracies. There is some effective evaluation. The answer is mostly clear, organised and focused. Specialist terminology mostly used effectively.
2	3 – 4	Outline of reductionist explanations is present. Focus is mainly on description. Any evaluation is of limited effectiveness. The answer lacks clarity, accuracy, organisation and focus in places. Specialist terminology used inappropriately on occasions.
1	1 – 2	Outline of reductionist explanations is limited. Evaluation is limited, poorly focused or absent. The answer as a whole lacks clarity, has many inaccuracies and is poorly organised. Specialist terminology either absent or inappropriately used.
	0	No relevant content.

Possible content:

- Reductionism – explaining a phenomenon in terms of constituent parts
- Studying underlying elements
- Description linked to approaches eg biopsychologists analyse brain chemicals, neurons; cognitive psychologists analyse components of models eg models of memory

Possible evaluation:

- Parsimonious thus economical
- Consistent with approach used in other sciences
- Enables a more concrete understanding
- Focus on elements enables greater testability
- Misses complexity of many behaviours
- Fails to take account of context of behaviour
- Contrast with holistic approach

Answers that focus on a particular approach that is reductionist can gain full credit as long as the focus is on the issue of reductionism.

Credit other relevant information.

Q7.

(a) **[AO2 = 4]**

Level	Marks	Description

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2	3 – 4	Knowledge of both holism and reductionism is clear and mostly accurate. Application to the scenario is mostly appropriate. The answer is generally coherent with effective use of psychological terminology.
1	1 – 2	Some knowledge of holism and/or reductionism is evident. Application to the scenario is not always effective or not presented in psychological terms. The answer lacks accuracy and detail. OR Either holism **or** reductionism explained and applied at Level 2.
	0	No relevant content.

Application:

- Holism – focus on the whole system or person
- Reductionism – focus on constituent elements or smaller, simpler aspects
- Dr Grant takes a reductionist approach focusing just on biological mechanism
- Dr Austin takes a more holistic approach focusing on broader experiences and circumstances

Credit other relevant material.

(b) **[AO3 = 1]**

1 mark for a brief valid suggestion

Possible suggestions:

- Keep information confidential
- Show respect for the patient eg listening, appreciating the patient's perspective
- Ensure the patient is not harmed – does not feel worse after the interview than before

Credit other relevant suggestions.

Q8.

Marks for this question: AO1 = 6, AO3 = 10

Level	Marks	Description
4	13 – 16	Knowledge is accurate and generally well detailed. Discussion / evaluation / application is thorough and effective. Effective use of at least one topic. The answer is clear, coherent and focused. Specialist terminology is used effectively. Minor detail and / or expansion of

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		argument sometimes lacking.
3	9 – 12	Knowledge is evident. There are occasional inaccuracies. Discussion / evaluation / application is apparent and mostly effective. Some use of at least one topic. The answer is mostly clear and organised. Specialist terminology is mostly used effectively. Lacks focus in places.
2	5 – 8	Some knowledge is present. Focus is mainly on description. Any discussion / evaluation / application is only partly effective. The answer lacks clarity, accuracy and organisation in places. Specialist terminology is used inappropriately on occasions.
1	1 – 4	Knowledge is limited. Discussion / evaluation / application is limited, poorly focused or absent. The answer as a whole lacks clarity, has many inaccuracies and is poorly organised. Specialist terminology either absent or inappropriately used.
	0	No relevant content.

Please note that although the content for this mark scheme remains the same, on most mark schemes for the new AQA Specification (Sept 2015 onwards) content appears as a bulleted list.

AO1

Marks for demonstrating knowledge and understanding relevant to the holism-reductionism debate. Likely content: the types of reductionism such as structuralism, biological, behaviourist / environmental / S-R; psychic-reductionism; levels of explanation; humanistic psychology and emphasis on the whole person / whole of experience; Gestalt psychology; interactionism.
Minimal credit for simply defining the debate: whether or not behaviour should be explained or studied as a whole or its component parts.

AO3

Marks for discussion, analysis and application of the debate to topics. Likely discussion points might stem from an evaluation of reductionism and comparisons with holism and interactionism, and include: advantages of parsimony; scientific and analytic approach; ease of testing; scientific support and credibility; control and prediction, implications for treatment.
Limitations may include oversimplification; value and reduced validity of explanation.
References to topics might cover theories of learning eg conditioning vs. insight learning; gender; perception; face recognition; schizophrenia; substance abuse; forensic psychology.
Credit references to approaches and to other philosophical debates.
Credit use of relevant evidence.

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Q1.

This question appeared to discriminate quite well. Most students could recognise holism, whilst the least well recognised was universality.

Q2.

Performance on part (a) was surprisingly poor because many students focussed on causes of behaviour rather than measurement. Answers had to be contextualised in order to gain credit.

In part (b) most students gained some credit here and there were some excellent straightforward suggestions. High scoring answers often suggested the use of a Likert scale with scale and gave example statements, or observations of behaviour in the queue, with examples of behavioural categories and details of event or time sampling. There were some ingenious suggestions, such as analysing facial expressions from the photographs taken by auto cameras at the top of the roller coaster. Other ideas were just too impractical or implausible to credit. Vague suggestions, such as ‘interview them in the queue and ask how they feel’ gained limited credit, but a few responses were just too brief, for example, simply stating ‘interview’ or ‘questionnaire’. A few biological suggestions were seen.

Q3.

Most students gained some credit and many full mark responses were seen. Quite frequently, students conflated several strengths / limitations rather than sticking to one, with the result that the strength / limitation lacked clarity and therefore did not gain full marks. In this case, the more successful answers were those where students chose one and stayed with it. Given the preceding questions, it was not entirely surprising that some students wrote entirely about biological reductionism but this did not seem to affect their ability to access to marks.

Q4.

This question was answered correctly by 62% of students.

Q8.

Answers to this question varied considerably. Less successful students produced quite muddled answers that were more to do with the idiographic-nomothetic debate and it was not uncommon for students to venture into the nature-nurture debate. Some students lost sight of the question when discussing topics and simply compared different explanations of the same topic and made evaluative points that were not in the context of the holism-reductionism debate. Indeed, some answers read more like responses to PSYB3 questions containing criticisms of studies. It was disappointing that students who did try to focus on the debate often concentrated on methodology without making thoughtful and conceptual links to the debate, for example, stating that ‘...holism does not use experiments...’. The many references to the use of client-centred therapy by humanistic psychologists frequently lacked the explanation required to make them relevant to the question. Indeed, all too often, students were side-tracked into the humanistic approach focusing on little else. Better students were able to place the main approaches in the context of the debate and use these as a focus for application to topics. Generally speaking, students were better able to respond to reductionism than holism.