

ETS Major Field Test Psychology Practice Test (Sample)

Study Guide



Everything you need from our exam experts!

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SAMPLE

Questions

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- 1. What happens during a manic episode?**
 - A. Individuals often withdraw from social activities**
 - B. Individuals may experience states of elevated mood and energy**
 - C. Individuals feel persistently low and sad**
 - D. Individuals avoid taking risks in life**
- 2. Which of the following describes nominal measurement?**
 - A. Measurement involving ranking**
 - B. A measurement that uses standard distances**
 - C. A measurement that categorizes or labels items**
 - D. A measurement that has an absolute zero point**
- 3. When determining the impact of a variable, which is NOT a necessary consideration?**
 - A. Effect size**
 - B. Sample size**
 - C. Random sampling**
 - D. Reliability of statistical tests**
- 4. What is a main characteristic of substance abuse?**
 - A. Maintaining relationships**
 - B. Excessive reliance on a drug**
 - C. Positive coping strategies**
 - D. Active engagement in hobbies**
- 5. According to social-exchange theory, interactions between individuals are viewed as what?**
 - A. Conflicts of interest**
 - B. Transactions to maximize rewards and minimize costs**
 - C. Emotional transactions only**
 - D. Irrelevant exchanges**

- 6. Which concept refers to the tendency for novel stimuli to be rated more positively after repeated exposure?**
- A. Mere-exposure effect**
 - B. Illusion of control**
 - C. Frustration-aggression theory**
 - D. Lowball technique**
- 7. What kind of performance do neuropsychological tests assess?**
- A. Motor and perceptual performances only**
 - B. Emotional stability and aggression patterns**
 - C. Cognitive, perceptual, and motor performances**
 - D. Social interaction skills**
- 8. Which theory suggests that we infer our attitudes by observing our own behavior?**
- A. Cognitive dissonance theory**
 - B. Self-perception theory**
 - C. Motivation theory**
 - D. Social comparison theory**
- 9. Which error can result in a researcher concluding that a treatment has effects when it actually does not?**
- A. Type I error**
 - B. Type II error**
 - C. Systematic error**
 - D. Descriptive error**
- 10. What does longitudinal research involve?**
- A. Collecting data from different groups at a single time**
 - B. Data collected repeatedly from one sample over time**
 - C. Using existing datasets to analyze trends**
 - D. Research conducted without any time constraints**

Answers

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1. B
2. C
3. C
4. B
5. B
6. A
7. C
8. B
9. A
10. B

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Explanations

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1. What happens during a manic episode?

- A. Individuals often withdraw from social activities
- B. Individuals may experience states of elevated mood and energy**
- C. Individuals feel persistently low and sad
- D. Individuals avoid taking risks in life

During a manic episode, individuals typically experience significant changes in mood and energy levels, characterized by an elevated, expansive, or irritable mood. This heightened state can lead to increased activity levels, exuberance, and often an overwhelming sense of energy. People going through a manic episode may engage in activities that are more intense than usual, showcasing risk-taking behaviors, impulsivity, and a reduced need for sleep. These changes can also manifest in speech that is rapid, racing thoughts, and difficulty concentrating. The correct response highlights the key features of this episode, distinguishing it from depressive features or social withdrawal, which apply to other mood disorders.

2. Which of the following describes nominal measurement?

- A. Measurement involving ranking
- B. A measurement that uses standard distances
- C. A measurement that categorizes or labels items**
- D. A measurement that has an absolute zero point

Nominal measurement refers to a system of classification that categorizes or labels items without any quantitative value or order. This type of measurement is used in situations where data can be divided into distinct categories that are mutually exclusive. For example, distinguishing between different types of fruits (apples, oranges, bananas) or assigning gender roles (male, female) falls under nominal measurement. In nominal scales, the categories do not have any inherent order or ranking; they simply represent different attributes or characteristics. This lack of hierarchy distinguishes nominal measurement from ordinal measurements, which involve ranking. Additionally, nominal measurement does not involve standard distances or any form of numerical scaling, nor does it possess an absolute zero point, characteristics associated with other types of measurement scales, such as interval or ratio measurements. Thus, the most accurate description of nominal measurement is that it categorizes or labels items without any further quantitative implications.

3. When determining the impact of a variable, which is NOT a necessary consideration?

- A. Effect size**
- B. Sample size**
- C. Random sampling**
- D. Reliability of statistical tests**

In research, particularly when assessing the impact of a variable, various factors must be considered to ensure the results are valid and meaningful. Random sampling, while beneficial for ensuring the generalizability of findings to a broader population, is not strictly necessary for determining the impact of a variable within a specific sample. It is possible to analyze data from a non-random sample and still draw conclusions about the relationships and effects present in that data; however, those conclusions may not extend to the wider population if the sample is biased. Effect size is crucial because it quantifies the magnitude of the impact and helps researchers understand the practical significance of their findings. Sample size is also vital, as larger samples generally provide more reliable estimates of the population parameters and reduce the likelihood of statistical errors. The reliability of statistical tests ensures that the findings are consistent and replicable across different studies or samples. Thus, while all of these considerations add value to research, random sampling is not a determining factor for assessing the impact of a variable within the confines of the gathered data.

4. What is a main characteristic of substance abuse?

- A. Maintaining relationships**
- B. Excessive reliance on a drug**
- C. Positive coping strategies**
- D. Active engagement in hobbies**

The primary characteristic of substance abuse is excessive reliance on a drug. This behavior is often marked by an individual's compulsive use of substances despite the adverse consequences that may occur in their life, such as health issues, legal problems, or relationship difficulties. This reliance can lead to physical dependence, where the person feels they need the substance to function, as well as psychological dependence, where the drug becomes a significant part of their daily routine and coping mechanisms. The focus on this excessive usage captures the essence of substance abuse, highlighting the challenge of addiction and the struggle to control consumption despite recognizing its negative impacts. In contrast, maintaining relationships, positive coping strategies, and active engagement in hobbies do not align with the defining aspects of substance abuse, as these behaviors typically indicate a healthier approach to life and stress management. They suggest a balanced lifestyle where individuals can navigate challenges without the need for substances.

5. According to social-exchange theory, interactions between individuals are viewed as what?

A. Conflicts of interest

B. Transactions to maximize rewards and minimize costs

C. Emotional transactions only

D. Irrelevant exchanges

Social-exchange theory posits that social behavior is the result of an exchange process, where individuals aim to maximize their benefits and minimize their costs in their interactions. This theory views relationships as a series of transactions, where individuals assess the potential rewards and costs of any given interaction. Rewards can include emotional support, companionship, or material benefits, while costs might involve time, effort, or emotional strain. In this framework, people are rational actors who evaluate the value of their relationships based on the balance of these rewards and costs. Therefore, if the perceived rewards outweigh the costs, individuals are more likely to continue the interaction or relationship. Conversely, if the costs appear to outweigh the rewards, they may seek to withdraw or alter the nature of the interaction. This approach emphasizes a pragmatic and calculative understanding of human relationships, rather than focusing solely on conflicts, emotions, or dismissing certain interactions as irrelevant.

6. Which concept refers to the tendency for novel stimuli to be rated more positively after repeated exposure?

A. Mere-exposure effect

B. Illusion of control

C. Frustration-aggression theory

D. Lowball technique

The correct answer, the mere-exposure effect, refers to a psychological phenomenon where individuals tend to develop a preference for stimuli simply due to repeated exposure. This occurs because familiarity can often increase liking; as people encounter a stimulus more frequently, they may find it more appealing. This effect has been widely researched and documented in various contexts, showing that even when individuals do not consciously remember the repeated exposure, their positive ratings for those stimuli tend to improve. The other concepts listed do not relate to the effect of repeated exposure on preferences. The illusion of control refers to the tendency of individuals to overestimate their influence over events, which does not involve repeated encounters with stimuli. Frustration-aggression theory posits that frustration can lead to aggressive behavior, focusing more on emotional responses than preference formation. The lowball technique is a compliance strategy in which a person is initially presented with a low-cost request and subsequently faced with higher costs, influencing decision-making but not involving familiarity or exposure. Hence, the mere-exposure effect is specifically linked to the positive rating of stimuli after they are encountered multiple times.

7. What kind of performance do neuropsychological tests assess?

- A. Motor and perceptual performances only**
- B. Emotional stability and aggression patterns**
- C. Cognitive, perceptual, and motor performances**
- D. Social interaction skills**

Neuropsychological tests are designed to evaluate a wide range of cognitive functions, which encompass cognitive, perceptual, and motor performances. These assessments help in understanding how different brain functions influence behavior, thought processes, and overall understanding of the environment. Cognitive performance refers to a wide array of mental processes, including attention, memory, problem-solving, and language abilities. Perceptual performance pertains to how an individual interprets and organizes sensory information from the environment. This can involve visual and auditory processing, as well as spatial awareness. Motor performance assesses the ability to execute movement tasks, whether fine motor skills or gross motor coordination. Thus, by assessing these diverse areas, neuropsychological tests provide a comprehensive picture of an individual's cognitive health and neurological function. This multi-faceted approach assists in diagnosing various neurological conditions and cognitive impairments, which is essential for creating tailored intervention plans.

8. Which theory suggests that we infer our attitudes by observing our own behavior?

- A. Cognitive dissonance theory**
- B. Self-perception theory**
- C. Motivation theory**
- D. Social comparison theory**

Self-perception theory posits that individuals form their attitudes and beliefs by observing their own behavior and inferring what their attitudes must be based on that behavior. This theory, developed by psychologist Daryl Bem, challenges the traditional view that attitudes lead to behavior. Instead, it suggests that in situations where a person's internal states are ambiguous or unclear, they look at their own actions as a basis for understanding their feelings or attitudes toward an object or situation. For example, if someone finds themselves volunteering often for community service, they might conclude that they have a positive attitude towards helping others based on that behavior. This self-observation can provide insights into personal beliefs that might not have been previously recognized. Other theories listed do not focus on self-observation as a basis for inferring attitudes. Cognitive dissonance theory deals with the discomfort individuals feel when holding conflicting cognitions, leading them to change their beliefs or attitudes to reduce dissonance. Motivation theory explores the internal and external factors that drive behaviors, focusing more on the reasons behind actions rather than the inference of attitudes from those actions. Social comparison theory examines how individuals evaluate their own abilities and opinions by comparing themselves to others, which does not directly address how attitudes are inferred from personal behavior.

9. Which error can result in a researcher concluding that a treatment has effects when it actually does not?

- A. Type I error**
- B. Type II error**
- C. Systematic error**
- D. Descriptive error**

A Type I error occurs when a researcher incorrectly rejects the null hypothesis when it is true. In the context of a treatment effect, this means that the researcher concludes that the treatment has a significant effect on the outcome, even though, in reality, it does not. This can happen due to random chance or variability in the data, leading to the misconception that the treatment is effective when it is actually not. Type I errors are particularly problematic in research because they can lead to the development of ineffective treatments or interventions, wasting resources and potentially harming participants. Researchers strive to control the probability of making a Type I error, often by setting a significance level (e.g., $p < 0.05$) to minimize the likelihood of incorrectly declaring a treatment effect. Understanding this concept is crucial for interpreting research findings accurately and maintaining the integrity of scientific inquiry.

10. What does longitudinal research involve?

- A. Collecting data from different groups at a single time**
- B. Data collected repeatedly from one sample over time**
- C. Using existing datasets to analyze trends**
- D. Research conducted without any time constraints**

Longitudinal research is characterized by the collection of data from the same sample repeatedly over time. This method allows researchers to track changes, developments, and patterns within the same group of individuals, which provides a rich understanding of how variables evolve or shift across different periods. By observing the same subjects at multiple time points, researchers can make more informed inferences about cause-and-effect relationships and developmental trajectories. This type of research is particularly valuable for studying changes in behavior, attitudes, or health outcomes over time, as it captures the dynamic nature of human development and social phenomena. Longitudinal studies can address questions about how early experiences can influence later outcomes, which is often not possible using other research designs that only capture data at one point in time. In contrast, collecting data from different groups at a single time, using existing datasets, or conducting research without specific temporal considerations do not involve the repeated collection of data from the same individuals over an extended period, thus distinguishing them from true longitudinal studies.