

3.3 Gender and Sexual Orientation

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____ **Total: 11 marks**

KEY WORDS gender 性别 • sex 生理性别 • gender roles 性别角色 • sexual orientation 性取向
• self-report 自我报告

Objective

Build the skills to answer exam questions on **gender** 性别 and **sexual orientation** 性取向 as psychological topics.

You must be able to:

- distinguish **sex** 生理性别 from **gender** 社会性别 as the terms are used in psychology
- explain how **gender roles** 性别角色 are transmitted socially
- state what research indicates about the origins of sexual orientation
- explain why **self-report** 自我报告 data on these topics is difficult to gather

1 Worked examples

Study these first. Each one shows the method for a task used later.

■ Two terms

In psychology, **sex** refers to biological characteristics, and **gender** to the social and psychological categories a culture builds around them. Keeping them distinct is required to state most findings clearly.

■ How roles are transmitted

Gender roles are the behaviours a culture expects of each category. They are learned through observation, reinforcement and the models available in family, peers and media, and they vary across cultures and over time.

■ Origins of sexual orientation

Research indicates that orientation is not chosen and is not readily changed. Evidence points to biological influences, including genetic and prenatal factors, though no single determinant accounts for it.

■ Why self-report is hard here

Where a topic is stigmatised, respondents may under-report. Sampling is also difficult, because the people willing to participate may not represent the population. Both problems bias estimates in the same direction.

2 Practice

2.1 State how psychology distinguishes sex from gender. [2]

2.2 Explain how gender roles are transmitted and give one source. [2]

2.3 A survey estimates the proportion of a population with a given orientation.

(a) State one reason the estimate may be too low. [1]

(b) State one sampling problem. [1]

3 Exam-style questions

3.1 Evidence that gender roles vary across cultures indicates that they are [1]

- **A** entirely biological
- **B** substantially social in origin
- **C** unrelated to expectation
- **D** fixed at birth

3.2 Research on sexual orientation most strongly indicates that it is [1]

- **A** freely chosen
- **B** readily changed by instruction
- **C** influenced by biological factors and not chosen
- **D** determined by a single gene

3.3 A study recruits participants through one advocacy organisation.

(a) State the sampling problem.

[1]

(b) Explain how it affects the conclusions.

[2]

Solutions

2.1 sex refers to biological characteristics; gender to the social and psychological categories built around them.

2.2 through observation, reinforcement and available models; e.g. family, peers or media.

2.3 (a) stigma leads to under-reporting. (b) those willing to participate may not represent the population.

3.1 B. variation across cultures points to socially transmitted expectations.

3.2 C. evidence indicates biological influences and no element of choice.

3.3 (a) a self-selected, non-representative sample. (b) the participants may differ systematically from the wider population, so results cannot be generalised beyond that group.