Positive Psychology 1st edition Zelenski Test Bank

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Instructor Questions

Question Banks

for

Positive Psychology: The Science of Well-Being

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Note: This file contains two sets of questions for each chapter. One set is designed for *instructors* and includes approximately three short answer questions (with text excerpts relevant to answers) and ~12 multiple-choice questions. Another set is designed for students as a self-study tool and includes ~12 multiple-choice questions (short answer study questions are included in the book at the end of each chapter). Correct answers are colour coded in violet.

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Chapter 1: Describing the science of positive psychology

Short answers

1. What is a third variable problem? What does this problem look like in correlational designs? In experimental designs?
    - We cannot conclude a causal link between two things that are correlated because a 'third variable' may account for correlation—that third variable may cause both parts of the correlation. Even when we do not know what the potential third variables are, we know it is possible that they exist, and so we must avoid narrow causal interpretations of correlations.
    - Experimental studies are also not completely immune from the third variable problem we discussed with the correlational approach. Experiments do a good job of ruling out some third variables, particularly those that participants would 'bring to the study' (like personality, gender and life histories) because random assignment makes experimental groups equivalent in these ways (things average out). However, in psychology, it is very difficult to directly manipulate many of the things we are interested in studying. Thoughts and feelings are internal, so we usually take an indirect route (e.g. showing a happy or sad video to manipulate mood). Also, when we manipulate one thing, we may unintentionally manipulate other things—those other things are like our dreaded third variables in the correlational approach.
    - In experimental studies, these potential third variables are called confounds. The third variable is 'confounded' with what the experimenter intended to manipulate.
2. Why are less rigid but appreciative stances on human nature, and positive topics more descriptive of positive psychology than positive intention of psychologists, and positive ideology for human nature? Support your statement with relevant examples.
    - However, 'good intentions' does not seem like the best way to define positive psychology. Many psychologists whose work does not seem to fit under the positive psychology umbrella still care deeply about improving the lives of others.
    - If we define positive psychology as positive assumptions about human nature, we risk having positive psychology 'disproven'. Analogies to other fields help underscore the

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issue; is it possible to falsify biology, chemistry, or economics in their entirety? No, even though prominent ideas in those fields have been revised over time. If positive psychology is defined by rigid assumptions about human nature, it is difficult for credible science to come from it. We do not want to produce easily dismissed or agenda-driven 'evidence'.

- Thus, it seems healthy and useful that (positive) psychologists cultivate a sense of appreciation for human nature, but to do so with some flexibility, open-mindedness and lucidity. This need not make them different from all other psychologists, but it does seem a reasonable feature of positive psychology.
- In this vein, one way we can define the 'positive' in positive psychology is via its topics; positive psychology is about positive things. For example, positive psychology is about forgiveness rather than revenge, joy rather than sadness, cooperation rather than competition and resilience rather than defeat. Positive psychology seems to be about the positive poles in dichotomies such as these.

3. What is the 'greater than zero' analogy? Why is this an important feature of positive psychology?

- Greater than zero analogy: Positive psychology is not about bringing people from negative to 0, but, rather, focusing on what lies in the positive territory of this metaphorical number line (or literally interpreted as a scale of happiness). When we focus on terms or topics in the positive zone, it goes beyond word games, instead prompting new domains of study and application.

Multiple choice

1. Positive psychology is *primarily* concerned with _____.

a. happiness

b. optimal human functioning

c. reducing mental health problems

d. self-help

e. seeing the world with 'rose coloured' glasses

Ans: B

2. What are common topics of study of mainstream psychology?

a. Mental illness

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b. Maladaptive behaviour

c. Irrationality

d. Prejudice

e. Aggression

f. All of these

Ans: F

3. The greatest strength of positive psychology has been _____.

a. its ability to rebalance psychology

b. its lack of focus on the negative

c. its ability to study fun subjects

d. its optimistic approach to science

e. its application to all fields of psychology

f. its resemblance to self-help psychology

Ans: A

4. In his blog Data Colada, Nelson (2014) described the classic _____ as the phenomenon where people draw on their own behaviour when judging the behaviour of others.

a. bias effect

b. false consensus effect

c. ego effect

d. psychology effect

Ans: B

5. Positive psychologists typically consider _____ to know whether or not something is positive.

a. habits, choice of career and relationships

b. cognitive ability, personality and perception

c. choices, values and subjective experiences

d. mental health, social functioning and performance

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Ans: C

6. Positive psychologists rely on _____ to understand people.

a. strong opinions

b. historical documents

c. the self-help method

d. the scientific method

e. the humanistic method

Ans: D

7. In a longitudinal study by Harker and Keltner (2001), women who expressed more positive emotions in their photos were more likely to _____.

a. be married by age 27

b. score higher on the traits of affiliation and competence

c. score low on the trait of negative emotionality

d. All of these

Ans: D

8. What does the correlation coefficient describe?

a. The causal direction of the association between two things

b. The strength and direction of the association between two things

c. The longitudinal association between two things

d. All of these

Ans: B

9. A longitudinal study is _____.

a. conducted over multiple points in time

b. synonymous to an experimental design

c. conducted with different age groups

d. the only way to infer causality

Ans: A

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10. An important characteristic of an experimental manipulation is that _____.
a. participants are randomly assigned to conditions
b. participants choose their own condition
c. participants are not assigned to any condition
d. there is only one condition
Ans: A

11. Why do we not have to worry about the causal direction of findings in an experiment?
a. Because the experimental manipulation comes after the dependent variable
b. Because the outcome comes after the experimental manipulation
c. Because the dependent variable comes after the independent variable
d. Both because the outcome comes after the experimental manipulation and because the dependent variable comes after the independent variable
e. Both because the experimental manipulation comes after the dependent variable and because the dependent variable comes after the independent variable
f. None of these
Ans: D

12. What do we call a variable that is the outcome of a manipulation?
a. An independent variable
b. A confound variable
c. A random variable
d. A dependent variable
Ans: D

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