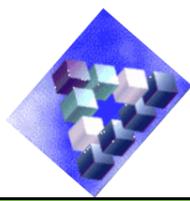


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AO1

Knowledge and understanding

Key terms:

Describe—Give a detailed account in clear, concise English of the theory, study or process specified by the examiner.

Outline—Give a less detailed account of a specified theory, study or process, identifying only its main features.

Explain— Give a clear and precise definition of the meaning of the term as outlined by the examiner

AO2

Commentary, criticism and evaluation

Comment— Present an interpretation of the psychological theory or finding.
Criticise—Draw attention to the strengths and/or weaknesses of a theory or research study.
Evaluate—Present an overall conclusion about the value of a particular concept, theory or area of research.

AO3

Experimental or non-experimental methods used?
 Ethical issues raised?
 Are findings contradictory (unreliable) or consistent (reliable)? External validity - ecological - population validity?
 Internal validity - confounding variables - demand characteristics - investigator effects - social desirability bias? Use of animals - extrapolation - ethical issues?

AO2 —Sentence starters and Connectives

Exam Mat

Evaluation Frames

because..... 's study lacked ecological validity. It was set..... This is a weakness because.....
 is.....'s research was unethical. One ethical issue that was violated was..... This is unacceptable because.....
 The sample used in was very small. The sample was.... This is a weakness because.....
 The theory is reductionist. It simplified the complex behaviour of to cause..... This suggests that this is not a complete explanation of because.....
 The research method used is scientific but it is artificial so are not valid because..... This is a problem because.....
 Biological explanations of are deterministic. They are deterministic because..... free will.
 theory is ethnocentric because. Therefore.....
 Most of the evidence supporting..... comes from animal studies. This is a problem because.....

Therefore... However... This suggests that... This would imply... This provides support for... This contradicts previous evidence because... This idea is supported by..... Therefore we can conclude..... This suggests that there is little support for..... In contrast..... An alternative explanation might be... One strength/limitation of this is..... One consequence of this would be... This is supported by.... This is challenged by.... Not everyone reacts in the same way, for example.... On the other hand..... There may be cultural variations..... Therefore we can conclude.... However, there are flaws in the methodology, for example.... An important ethical consideration is... Another psychologist disagreed, arguing that This has important implications The advantage of this study is An alternative explanation could be This has been applied to This study lacked ecological validity because This theory could be considered..... deterministic/ reductionist This is difficult to test.....

Point - Evidence - Evaluate- Counter

- What point are you trying to make?
- Explain the point using research or theory
- Then evaluate the research

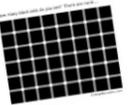
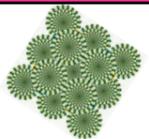
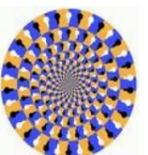
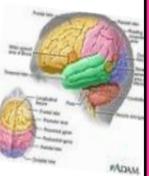
As a result of... or any of the AO2 connectives

- Then elaborate!
- This means that**
- Include your judgement
- Compare the strengths and weaknesses of something
- Include a counterpoint

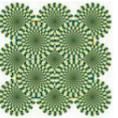
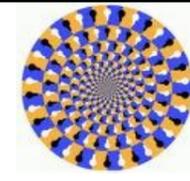
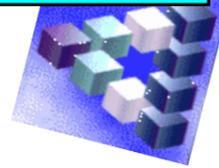
In comparison with...

This contradicts... similarly

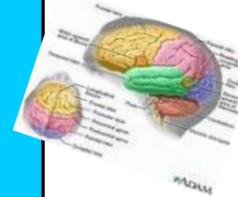
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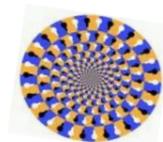
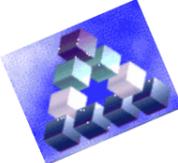


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Issues

Ethical issues

Virtually all psychological studies involve ethical issues such as deception, privacy, psychological and physical harm. Has this been accounted for in the research?

The use of non human animals in psychological research

Psychology has a long tradition of using non human animals in a variety of ways. The basic principles of behaviourism were largely based on Skinner work with rats and pigeons.

Gender bias

This form of bias in psychological theories and studies is not the same as gender differences.

Alpha bias – Theories that acknowledge real differences between men and women. These can be promoting or devaluing either sex i.e. Freud’s theory of psychosexual development view that women in many respects are ‘failed men’.

Beta bias – Theories that ignore or minimise and difference between men and women. For instance a study which only uses male participant’s findings then applied to females’ as well. In the attachment theory ignores the role of fathers.

Androcentrism

o Similar idea to ethnocentrism
 Taking male thinking/behavior as normal, regarding female thinking/behavior as deviant, inferior, abnormal, ‘other’ when it is different.

Cultural bias

Psychology is predominantly a white, Euro-American enterprise
 In some texts, >90% of studies have US PPs
 Samples predominantly white middle class

Ethnocentrism This occurs when a researcher assumes that their own culturally specific practices or ideas are ‘natural’ or ‘right’.

Approaches

The **Biological approach** believes us to be as a consequence of our genetics and physiology. We become ill, medically and/or psychologically, because of physiological or genetic damage, disease, or accident. It is the only approach in psychology that examines thoughts, feelings, and behaviours from a medical/ biological, and thus physical point of view.

The **Behavioural approach** assumes all behaviours are learnt (operant and classical conditioning *see Pavlov’s dog experiment), and that our experiences and environment make us who we are.

The **Cognitive approach** in psychology is a relatively modern approach to human behaviour that focuses on how we think, with the belief that such thought processes affect the way in which we behave.

The **Psychodynamic approach** proposes that our behaviour is influenced not just by our conscious experience but by experiences and processes buried in our unconscious.

The **Evolutionary approach** Evolutionary psychology examines behaviours in terms of their adaptive value for a species over the course of many generations

Evaluation

Research methods

- what methodology has been used?
- what is the design?
- Are there demand characteristics?
- Is there social desirability bias?
- Does it show validity?
- Correlational?
- Replicated?
- Ecological validity? Internal validity?
- Is it a scientific design – whereby it has good control?
- Lab experiment
- At what time period did the research take place (historical bias)?
- Imposed etc (studied in one culture through another’s viewpoint)

Debates

Reductionism in Psychology

In psychological terms, Reductionism is the belief that our behaviour can be explained entirely by one factor or group of factors. For example, a common criticism of Evolutionary Psychology is that it does not consider either our conscious thoughts external influences; it only explains our behaviour in terms of genetic or biological factors. Similarly, the Behavioural approach only considers external stimuli and not evolved, predetermined behaviours.

Free will and determinism

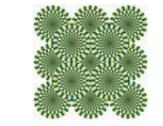
In this sense most approaches in psychology are ‘deterministic’. If we can explain someone’s behaviour fully then there is no room for free will.

We assume that individuals take responsibility for their own actions and therefore have the free will to choose whether to do wrong or right. However, if behaviour is fully by factors outside the person’s control, then they do have free will and cannot be responsible for their own actions.

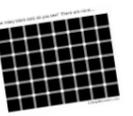
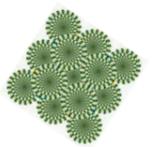
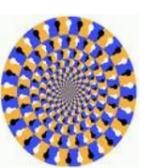
Nature and nurture

The central question is the extent to which our behaviour is determined by our genes we inherit from our parents versus the influence of environmental factors such as home school and friends. The extreme position is that behaviour entirely determined by genes or conversely by our environment.

Topics which are hotly debated under the nature vs. nurture argument:
 IQ
 Attachments
 Aggression



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