

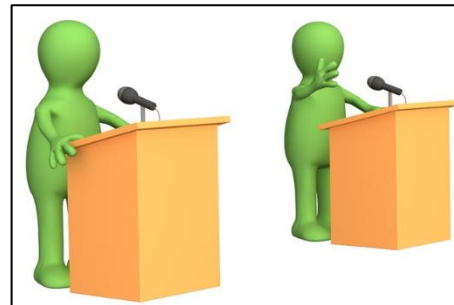
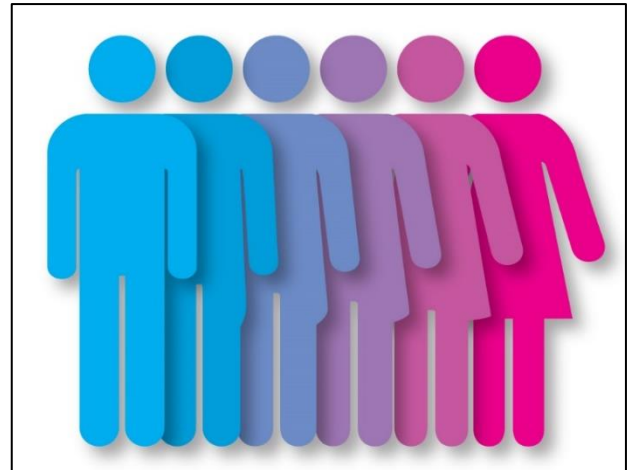
A Level Psychology

Issues and Debates

Summer work booklet



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Hello, Year 13! Yes... it's another booklet.

Use this booklet and complete it! Every debate in here could come up in Paper 3 and knowing them well will make your essays much stronger. The difference between a good essay and an A* essay is often how confidently you can weave these debates into your evaluation.

Don't just read it once and hope your brain absorbs everything by osmosis (unfortunately, that's still not how revision works). Test yourself, revisit the debates, and make sure you can explain them without looking at your notes. Have a great summer Ms Obrien 😊

- <https://senecalearning.com/en-GB/revision-notes/a-level/psychology/aqa/9-1-16-end-of-topic-test-issues-and-debates>
- <https://simplestudy.com/gb/a-level/aqa/psychology/core-issues-debates>
- <https://www.bearitinmind.org/issue-debates-past-papers>
- <https://www.bearitinmind.org/issue-debates-past-papers>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MA1savSYp5Y>

Student name:

Specification for Issues and Debates in Psychology

4.3.1 Issues and debates in psychology

- Gender and culture in psychology – universality and bias. Gender bias including androcentrism and alpha and beta bias; cultural bias, including ethnocentrism and cultural relativism.
- Free will and determinism: hard determinism and soft determinism; biological, environmental and psychic determinism. The scientific emphasis on causal explanations.
- The nature-nurture debate: the relative importance of heredity and environment in determining behaviour; the interactionist approach.
- Holism and reductionism: levels of explanation in psychology. Biological reductionism and environmental (stimulus-response) reductionism.
- Idiographic and nomothetic approaches to psychological investigation.
- Ethical implications of research studies and theory, including reference to social sensitivity.

Issues and debates

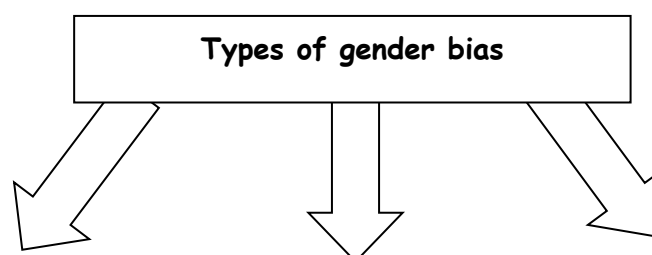
Gender bias – Key terms

Universality

When a theory is described as universal, it means that it can apply to all people, irrespective of gender and culture.

There are three ways gender bias may occur:

1. **Male sample:** Conducting research on an all male sample and then generalising the findings to women. E.g. Milgram's initial study
2. **Male behaviour as standard:** If the behaviour of a female differs from that of men then the behaviour of women is seen as deviation from the norm
3. **Biological difference emphasis:** Explanations for behaviour that emphasis the biology of an individual ignores the social and external factors and is therefore liable to infer there is a difference between the behaviour of the sexes even if this may not be true.



Alpha bias

Beta bias

Androcentrism

Type of bias	Explanation	Example(s) in research
Alpha bias		
Beta bias		
Androcentrism		

Evaluation

<u>P</u>	One issue with the presence of gender bias, particularly androcentrism, is that it may lead to the formation of negative stereotypes for a particular gender
<u>E</u>	For example, Freud's psychoanalytical theory of gender assuming that females have a weaker gender identity and are morally inferior may lead to the discrimination and the development of prejudicial views of women.
<u>E</u>	As a result of these prejudicial views, women may be treated as inferior in society and prevented from accessing the same opportunities as males and are therefore discriminated against by society.
<u>C</u>	However, alpha bias within psychological research has led to a greater understanding of how genders differ which may emphasise the strengths of women. For example, psychological research has found that females are better at learning, paying attention and being organised. This research emphasises the value of women and works to reduce or challenge

	gender stereotypes. It is also worth considering that sometimes gender bias favours females whilst discriminating against men. For example, females are more likely to be diagnosed and therefore treated with depression than males are which may highlight gender bias in the diagnostic criteria for some mental health disorders.
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<u>P</u>	Beta bias may lead to a lack of understanding about one particular gender
<u>E</u>	For example, generalising research into the fight or flight response to both genders ignored the fact that women may differ in their response. Further research including women found that, in order to increase survival of themselves and their offspring, women are much more likely to tend and befriend in a threatening situation.
<u>E</u>	This is an issue as, if research had not been conducted using females within the sample, then our understanding of evolutionary responses to stress would be largely understood.

<u>P</u>	Identifying gender bias may have a positive impact either on a particular gender or on taking steps to reduce it.
<u>E</u>	For example, accepting the fact that there are differences in the strengths of males and females allows positive steps to be made to overcome them. For example, research has found women tend to be less effective leaders than males - a finding that has been used to develop training programmes aimed at increasing these skills in women to increase the number of female leaders in the world.
<u>E</u>	Therefore, gender bias within psychological research could be considered beneficial as it is helping to improve the lives and career profile of many women.

<u>P</u>	By identifying that gender bias exists in research we can work to overcome it.
<u>E</u>	It is argued that gender bias exists because a large proportion of researchers are male and therefore research questions are of interest to males and researched from a male perspective. Many argue that the use of controlled lab experiments also may not be appropriate to research women who may feel intimidated by the setting. Instead, it has been suggested that more qualitative measures such as interviews are used in order to reduce gender bias and ensure women are accurately represented It may also be beneficial to ensure research is not gender biased by working to increase the number of female psychologists to ensure female significant topics are studied in natural settings as opposed to labs and that, when females are used within research, the sample is diverse enough that women of varying ages, socio-economic statuses, culture and race are all considered.

E	Therefore, identifying gender bias within psychological research and taking steps to minimise or overcome it will lead to a greater understanding of female behaviour in context.
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Knowledge review

A psychologist asked men aged 25 to 35 years to keep a diary record of how many miles they walked in a week. The psychologist also asked each man to climb a flight of stairs, then took each man's heart rate. For each man, the number of miles walked in the week was correlated with heart rate after climbing stairs. The findings showed a significant negative correlation. A national newspaper reported the findings under the headline 'Everyone should walk for a healthy heart'.

- (a) Explain how the newspaper headline might be an example of beta bias. (2)
- (b) Briefly suggest **one** way in which psychologists might address the problem of beta bias in their research. (1)
- (c) Explain **one** problem with the method used to determine the number of miles walked in the week. Suggest an alternative measure that would overcome this problem. (3)

Cultural bias in Psychology

Cultural bias is the tendency to judge people in terms of one's own cultural assumptions.

Universality and bias

Universality is the idea that a theory can apply to all people irrespective of gender and culture. Critics suggest that mainstream psychology has ignored culture as an important influence on mainstream behaviour and has therefore assumed that research conducted on samples in Western cultures can be applied all over the world. In 1992, **64%** of the world's 64, 000 psychologists were American and therefore critics suggest that Psychology is the study of white American males. If the 'norm' or 'standard' of behaviour is judged from the perspective of only one culture, then any cultural differences in behaviour that deviate from the standard , will be regarded as 'inferior' or 'abnormal'.

	Explanation	Example in Psychology
Ethnocentrism		
Cultural relativism		

Evaluation of culture bias in Psychology

<u>P</u>	By identifying that cultural bias exists we can recognise it when it occurs.
<u>E</u>	Smith and Bond found...
<u>E</u>	This is an issue as psychological research largely represents only Western behaviour and therefore this is considered to be the norm. By identifying this issue, researchers can select different cultural groups to investigate.
<u>C</u>	However, cultural relativism may be less important in today's society than it has been previously. Research investigating individualism and collectivism in Japanese and American citizens found no differences between the cultures in 14 out of 15 studies. This may be due to the fact the development of global communication systems and an increased interconnectedness.

<u>P</u>	Cultural bias may have damaging implications for some cultures.
<u>E</u>	For example, in Ainsworth's strange situation, a large amount of German children were categorised as insecure-avoidant which was considered to be an abnormal attachment type

	that is result of a distant or emotionally unavailable caregiver. This was a result of using a research method and attachment ideals that were based on American middle-class families.
<u>E</u>	This is an issue because...

<u>P</u>	However, contemporary psychologists are significantly more open minded and well travelled than previously and have an increased understanding of other cultures.
<u>E</u>	This has led to the development of 'indigenous psychologies' which are theories drawing explicitly on the experiences of people in different cultural contexts. For example, Afrocentrism is a movement that suggests that because black people have their roots in Africa, theories about them must recognise the African context of their behaviours and attitudes.
<u>E</u>	This is a strength because...

Knowledge Review

1. Outline two examples of culture bias in psychological research (4 marks)

2. How can cultural bias be reduced in Psychology? (2marks)

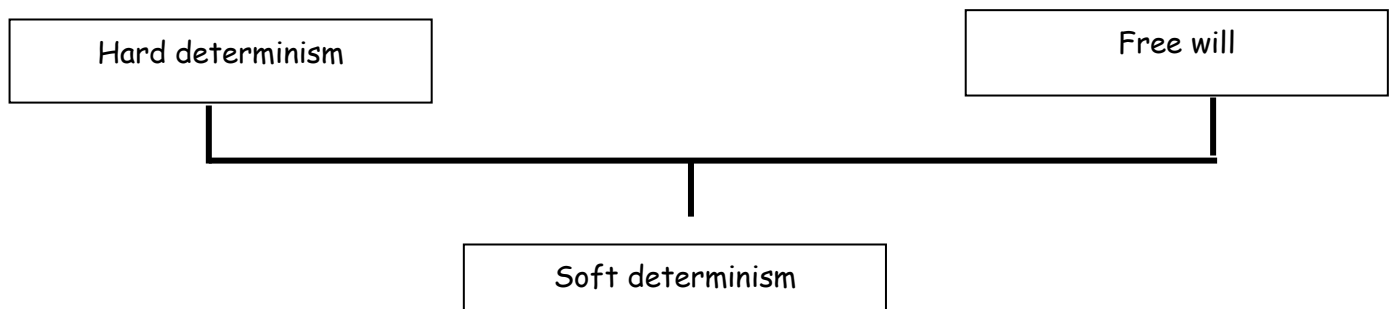
Free Will and Determinism

The free will - determinism debate is the consideration whether our behaviour is within our conscious control or governed by internal or external factors.

Determinism believes that "free will is merely an illusion" (B.F. Skinner) and that our behaviour is dictated by internal or external forces that we have no control over and as a result our behaviour can be predicted.

Free will is...

The free will - determinism debate can be viewed on a continuum with hard determinism and free will at conflicting ends with soft determinism in between



Hard determinism is....

Soft determinism is....

Determinism in Psychology

<u>Type</u>	<u>Explanation</u>	<u>Example</u>
Biological		

Environmental		
Psychic		

Scientific emphasis on causal explanations

Science indicates that every event in the universe has a cause which can be explained using general laws. Knowledge of laws and their causes is important because they enable scientists to predict and control events in the future. The laboratory experiment in Psychology enables researchers to simulate the conditions of the test tube and remove all other extraneous variables in an attempt to precisely control and predict human behaviour.



- Develop hypothesis
- Empirical testing of hypothesis
- Analyse to find significant effect

Determinism requires causation and with causation comes determinism. E.g. does hormone X cause behaviour Y? If we can empirically test and see this is the case we have found a causal relationship. We know that hormone X determines behaviour Y.

However, this is problematic. It is rare that X causes Y in 100% of cases so there must be something else that also has an influence. This could be free will!

Evaluation

<u>Determinism</u>	
Strengths	Limitations
Determinism increases Psychology's credibility as a science. This is because...	Determinism has implications for our legal system. This is because....

This is also useful in the creation of treatment because... Research evidence also supports the fact that even the most trivial behaviour may be determined by internal factors. Participants were put into an fmri scanner and asked to press a button with either their left or right hand. It was found that brain areas associated with the relevant hand were activated one second before a conscious decision was made. This shows that even simple decisions may actually be governed by biological processes.	This is a limitation because... Studies using monozygotic twins also raise concerns about the principle of determinism. This is because twin studies have found an 80% concordance for intelligence, 40% for depression and 48% for schizophrenia. This would suggest behaviour is not determined as....
<u>Free will</u>	
Strengths	Limitations
The concept of free will is high in face validity. This is because we appear to make decisions about our behaviour every day and therefore it appears to be a good explanation. If an individual believes they have free will this will increase their self efficacy (confidence in their ability). This is because they believe they have the opportunity to change their behaviour. This is a strength in relation to addiction and mental health in particular as it may lead to lower relapse rates as individuals may feel more motivated to engage in recovery.	However, the concept of free will may lead to stigma with regards to mental health. If it is assumed that disorders such as depression and addiction are under an individual's conscious control then they may be considered 'weak' or 'unwilling to change' by society which may lead to discrimination. Additionally, the behaviour seen in disorders like schizophrenia, where an individual loses complete control over their thoughts and perceptions, casts doubt over the concept of free will. Therefore, the concept of free will may have negative implications for some vulnerable members of society.

Knowledge review

1. Which **two** of the following statements describe a strongly deterministic view? Write the letters of your chosen answers in your answer booklet.

- A** People are always responsible for their own actions
- B** People behave in a random fashion
- C** People's behaviour always has a cause
- D** People exercise full choice over how they behave
- E** People have no choice about how to act (Total 2 marks)

2. With reference to a behaviour, explain the distinction between hard determinism and soft determinism. (Total 3 marks)

3. Read the item and then answer the questions that follow.

Extract from a newspaper article

Coping with Life's Pressures

Depression often runs in families, but many depressed people have serious social problems or have experienced traumatic events in the past. However, many people find ways to cope. What we need is the will to overcome our problems.

- (a) With reference to the item above, explain what is meant by 'determinism'. Refer to **three** types of determinism in your answer.

(6)

This debate within psychology is concerned with the extent to which particular aspects of behaviour are a product of either inherited (i.e. genetic) or acquired (i.e. learned) characteristics.

Nature is what we think of as pre-wiring and is influenced by genetic inheritance and other biological factors. Psychologists who take the extreme stance of nature are known as nativists. Traditionally, it has been considered that physical features are biologically determined and a result of heredity (passing down of traits from one generation to the next) which has led psychologists to question if behaviour and cognition may be determined in the same way.

Nature may be studied through the use of twin, adoption or family studies that look to assess if the similarity of behaviour increases with genetic similarity.

1. What is the difference between monozygotic and dizygotic twins?

2. If a behaviour is purely genetic what would a study using twins show?

3. If a behaviour is influenced in some way by genetics what would a study using twins show?

4. What are the issues associated with comparing MZ and DZ twins??

Year 2 topic link

Gottesmand and Shields found....

However, the risk of Schizophrenia in the general population is 1% therefore showing....

Evolution is a key aspect of the nature approach as they assume behaviours and characteristics that increase the chance of survival and reproduction (adaptive behaviours) are passed on through the process of evolution. For example, Bowlby suggested that children have an innate drive to form attachments in order to increase their chance of survival. Additionally, mate preferences may also be driven by evolution with females using intersexual selection to choose a mate with resources while males choose a partner who displays characteristics of an ability to carry children (wide hips).

Nurture

Nurture is generally taken as the influence of external factors after conception e.g. the product of exposure, experience and learning on an individual. Psychologists who take the extreme side of nurture are called empiricists and they believe that we are born a 'tabula rosa' (a blank slate) and therefore behaviour is a result of learning.

For example, the behavioural explanation of attachment suggests....

In addition, Bandura showed...

Evaluation

P	There are a number of ethical implications associated with suggesting behaviour is a result of nativism and empiricism
E	This is because assuming behaviour is purely a result of genetic or biological influences (nature) is an extreme determinist stance (hard determinism) that may lead to eugenic policies (practices to improve the genetic quality of a population). Research into genetics and IQ and mental health led to compulsory sterilisation of many citizens in 1920s America based on the grounds they were 'feeble minded' and therefore 'unfit to breed'. However, taking an extreme empiricist point of view may also be controversial. Suggesting that an individual's behaviour may be altered by the environment has led to the development of behaviour modification/behaviour shaping where desirable behaviours are reinforced and undesirable behaviours punished. This could lead to a society that dehumanises it's citizens by using this methods to control and manipulate them, for their own social agenda.
E	This highlights the need to take care to not take an extreme nature or nurture point of view so that it is not seen to scientifically justify discriminatory practice or aid control.

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P	It is not possible to completely separate nature and nurture.
E	This is because...
E	As a result, it is impossible to conclude that behaviour is purely a result of nature or nurture leading psychologists to opt for a more interactionist approach.

P	It is now generally accepted that heredity and the environment do not influence behaviour independently but the two interact.
E	The interactionist approach or diathesis stress model in terms of mental health believes that we may have a biological predisposition to behave in a certain way but this may be influenced by the environment. For example, an individual may have a genetic vulnerability to develop Schizophrenia but this is only expressed when coupled with an environmental trigger. In addition to this, bio psychologists have found that our experiences can influence brain areas. Maguire studied London taxi drivers and found that those who has acted as a cabbie for the longest period of time had a larger hippocampus (responsible for spatial memory).
E	This would suggest that it is not a question of nature or nurture but how does one influence the other.

Knowledge review

1. What is meant by the nature-nurture debate in Psychology? (2 marks)

2. Read the item and then answer the questions that follow.

Researchers used a test to measure the mathematical reasoning ability of pairs of identical and non-identical twins. If both members of a pair had a similar score on the test, they were said to be 'concordant'. This type of study is known as a concordance study.

Genetic relationship group	Concordance rate for mathematical reasoning ability
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Identical twins (100% shared genes)	58%
Non-identical twins (50% shared genes)	14%

(a) Briefly explain the outcome of the study in relation to the nature-nurture debate (2 marks)

Holism and reductionism

Reductionism

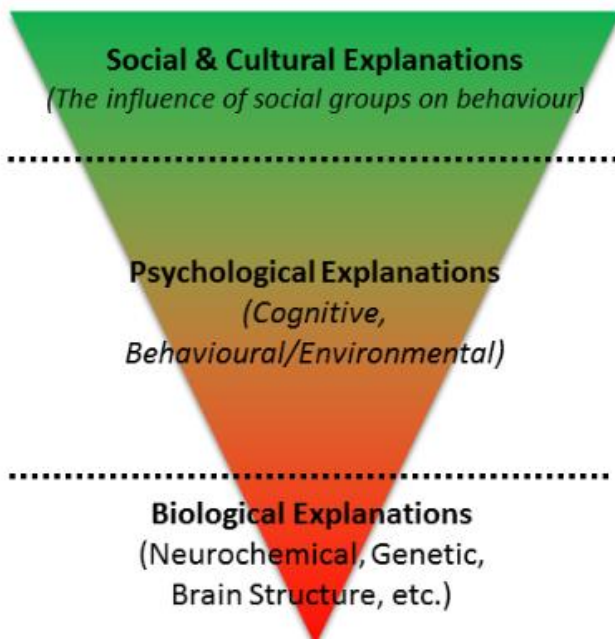
Reductionism is the belief that behaviour is best explained by closely looking at the parts that make up the system as opposed to the system (individual) as a whole. It suggests behaviour should be explained by breaking it down into smaller, constituent parts. It is based on the principle of parsimony.

Parsimony is...

Type	Explanation	Example
Biological		
Environmental		

Levels of explanation

The reductionist approach suggests that behaviour can be explained at different levels. For example, a father attacks his daughters could be explained on a number of different levels from low (biological) to high (socio-cultural).



Cultural: cultural practices may suggest retaliation is justified
Social cognition: attribute that the killer is evil so responds with violence.
Social groups, family etc: may have witnessed aggressive behaviours to others as a child so behave the same

Interpersonal interaction: father received threats from the killer previously so responds with violence
Cognition and emotion: responds with violence because of his extreme emotions
Learned associations: responded with violence because he is conditioned to do so

Genetics: may possess the MAOA gene
Physiology: frontal lobe damage so struggles to control emotion
Cellular biology: activity in synapse alters the level of serotonin leading to aggression
Biochemistry: high levels of testosterone increases his levels

Holism

Holism is the idea that behaviour of an individual should be viewed as a whole integrated system and not simplified by looking at separate parts. They believe humans to be an indivisible system and so can only be understood as a whole entity. It is based on Gestalt principles that the whole is worth more than the sum of the parts.

Humanists advocate a holistic approach because...

Evaluation

P	Reductionism is very scientific in its nature as it allows human behaviour to be studied effectively using experiments.
E	This is because... Research into holism on the other hand tends to be vague and speculative. If we consider a number of different factors as a cause for behaviour then it is difficult to identify the relative contribution of each.
E	Therefore, reductionism in Psychology increases the scientific credibility of the subject and brings it in line with the hard sciences.
C	However, The results of highly controlled lab studies are often questionable in terms of their ecological validity. For example...

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P	By isolating and manipulating variables, as reductionist research does, it increases our ability to isolate a cause of behaviour.
E	This is particularly useful when looking at mental health disorders as, if we are able to identify a precise cause, then treatments are able to be developed. For example, high levels of dopamine in the subcortex of the brain have been found to be implicated in schizophrenia. This has led to the development of antipsychotics that work by binding to dopamine receptors to decrease activity.
E	Therefore, the reductionist approach has practical application and has led to the development of treatments that work to increase the quality of life for millions of individuals.
C	However, many drug therapies (based on the lowest level of explanation) are most effective when combined with an alternative therapy such as counselling or CBT. This would suggest that it is important to consider a person as a whole entity when treating mental health disorders.

P	While holism is praised for valuing the entirety of human experience, reductionism is accused of oversimplifying complex behaviour resulting in a loss of validity.
E	Reductionist approaches such as the biological approach fail to consider the wider social context that a behaviour occurs within. For example, the physiological processes in pointing a finger will be the same regardless of context but will not explain why a behaviour occurs. Was the finger pointed to draw attention, to ask a question or to intimate another person?
E	Therefore, reductionist approaches may be said to be an incomplete explanation of behaviour.

Knowledge review

- Which of the following best describes a reductionist approach in psychology?
Write **A**, **B**, **C**, or **D** in your answer book.

- A** Explaining behaviour in a complicated way in terms of complex mechanisms.
- B** Explaining behaviour in a simple way in terms of basic units.

- C** Explaining behaviour in one way and ignoring all other explanations.
- D** Explaining behaviour in several different ways at the same time.

(Total 1 mark)

2. Explain one strength and one limitation of a reductionist approach in Psychology (4 marks)

3. Explain what is meant by the principle of parsimony (2 marks)

Idiographic and nomothetic approaches

The idiographic approach

This is derived from the Greek word 'idios' meaning _____ or personal. It is an approach to research that focuses more on the _____ case as a way of understanding behaviour, rather than trying to formulate general _____ of behaviour (nomothetic approach). The idiographic approach is associated with methods in Psychology that produce _____ data e.g. _____ and unstructured interviews.

_____ psychology is the best example of the idiographic perspective. Rogers and Maslow adopted a phenomenological approach to the study of humans and were only interested in documenting the conscious experience of the individual or 'self'. They wanted to investigate unique experiences than producing general laws of behaviour. The _____ approach is often labelled as idiographic because of Freud's use of the case study method when studying the lives of his patients.

psychodynamic qualitative individual laws Humanistic private casestudies

The nomothetic approach

This is derived from the Greek word _____ meaning 'law'. The main aim of the nomothetic approach is to produce general laws of _____ behaviour. These provide a 'benchmark' through which people can be compared, _____ and measured. The nomothetic approach is associated with methods that are _____ e.g. experimental approaches.

The nomothetic approach is a feature of the approaches that are reductionist, determinist and employ scientific methods of investigation. Hypotheses are formulated, tested under _____ conditions and generated from _____ numbers of people are analysed for statistical significance.

Much of the research conducted by behaviourist, cognitive and biological psychologists would meet the criteria of the nomothetic approach. Behaviourists and cognitive researchers have conducted research using laboratory _____ tests whilst biological psychologists have conducted brain scans on human brains to make generalisations about the localisation of brain function.

large human quantitative controlled laboratory classified nomos

Evaluation

P	The idiographic approach may be criticised as lacking scientific rigour
E	The focus on the uniqueness of the individual means it is unable to produce general laws or predict human behaviour. It also tends to seek in depth data collection and as a result utilises qualitative methods of study such as self report techniques. The analysis of such research is subjective and open to interpretation by the researchers therefore making it much weaker than nomothetic quantitative approaches.
E	Not only does this decrease the credibility of psychology as a science but it also has massive restrictions on mental health practice as it limits our ability to create diagnostic criteria and treatments for mental health disorders.
P	In contrast, the nomothetic approach is viewed as very scientific.
E	It uses experimental, quantitative methods that allow controlled measurement and highly replicable thus increasing the validity and reliability of research findings. The findings are also likely to be generalizable to the masses due to the large sample sizes used and therefore allow predictions to be made about behaviour.
E	This has led to the development of diagnostic criteria and classification systems such as the DSM-V and ICD-10 that allows the diagnosis of mental health disorders and treatments of these disorders to be developed such as SSRIs to treat the symptoms of OCD.
C	However, drug treatments are not successful for all patients. Some patients respond better to alternative idiographic based treatments such as CBT or a combination of medication and CBT. Therefore, it could be argued that taking a nomothetic approach to treatment is oversimplified and fails to be effective due to a lack of consideration of individual needs and differences.

P	The idiographic vs nomothetic is a false distinction as many psychology approaches use both idiographic and nomothetic approaches to study
E	For example, cognitive and biological approaches take a nomothetic approach by creating general laws and principles that are applied to the masses but, when the opportunity arises, they will utilise the case study method to provide evidence to support their theories.
E	This would suggest that they should be viewed as complimentary as opposed to contradictory therefore making the idiographic and nomothetic distinction meaningless.

Knowledge review

1. Which of the following best describes an idiographic approach in psychology?

Write **A**, **B**, **C**, or **D** in your answer book.

- A** Studying individuals in order to establish general laws of behaviour.
- B** Studying individuals without intending to establish general laws of behaviour.
- C** Studying large samples in order to establish general laws of behaviour.
- D** Studying large samples without intending to establish general laws of behaviour.

(Total 1 mark)

2. Read the item and then answer the question that follows.

A prison psychologist used an idiographic approach to study offending. He asked two offenders to record their thoughts about their childhood and their offending behaviour in a journal over a period of four weeks.

Qualitative analysis of the journals showed that the offenders often thought about sad childhood events and believed that their childhood experiences had influenced their offending.

Findings from idiographic research like the study described above are often used as a basis for other investigations.

Explain how the researcher might develop the above investigation through taking a nomothetic approach. (6 marks)

Ethical implications of research studies and theory

Ethical implications

Ethical issues can arise when there is a conflict between psychology's need to gain valid and valuable research findings whilst simultaneously preserving the rights and dignity of the participants. Ethical guidelines have been established to protect participants. Although researchers may exercise considerable control over the methods they select and the way they treat participants, they may have relatively little say in terms of how the research findings are represented (or misrepresented) in the media, the impact of their work on public policy, and how it may influence our perception of particular groups in society. This amounts to a concern with the wider ethical implications of research.

Socially sensitive research

Some research is subject to greater social sensitivity. Studies that tackle socially sensitive 'taboo' topics, such as aspects of race or sexuality, attract a good deal of attention.

Consider the three socially sensitive case studies below. What are the potential effects of such research?

Name	Details	Potential effects
Bowlby	Bowlby proposed that a healthy relationship with the mother is necessary for social, emotional and cognitive development. He believed that early separation between mother and infant resulted in later maladjustment and an inability to develop healthy relationships.	
Humphreys (1970)	Research into social interactions and homosexual sexual encounters. He posed as a gay man and talked to participants. He took their car registration numbers and asked a policeman to complete background and address checks. He found that gay stereotypes were false	
	Scanned the brains of violent criminals to examine impulse control.	

Raine (1986)	Found that most participants had frontal lobe damage and stated the findings would allow for the identification of people with a violent predisposition. He suggested young children should be scanned to help find potential violent criminals.	
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Ethical issues in socially sensitive research

Joan Sieber and Liz Stanley (1988) identified aspects of the research process where ethical implications in socially sensitive research may occur.

1. The research question
2. The methodology used
3. The institutional context
4. Interpretation and application of findings

Evaluation

P	Socially sensitive research can lead to discrimination of minority groups within society.
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E	Research found racial differences in IQ with those from Afro-Caribbean backgrounds. As a result of this research...
E	This raises the question whether research into topics such as ethnicity, gender and sexuality should be conducted at all as they can be used to scientifically justify discriminatory practice.
C	However, this would leave psychologists with trivial interesting and to some extent unimportant questions to investigate. Maybe a solution to this is for psychologists to engage more actively with policy makers etc. after the publication of their findings.

P	Furthermore, carrying out socially sensitive research may be beneficial to society.
E	Loftus' research into eyewitness testimony was at the time considered socially sensitive as she was questioning the accuracy of the memory of victims of crime, including rape victims. However, as a result....
E	This highlights the importance and potential positive contribution of psychology, including into socially sensitive topics.

Knowledge review

1. Read the item and then answer the questions that follow.

In a study of antisocial activity and social background, researchers interviewed 100 children aged 14 years. They then classified each child according to their level of antisocial activity. They concluded that 26 were 'very antisocial', 40 were 'mildly antisocial' and 34 were 'not antisocial'. The researchers found that the majority of the 'very antisocial' children attended Crayford secondary school, whereas most of the other two groups of children attended another local school.

- (a) The study on the opposite page is an example of socially sensitive research.

Briefly explain how the researchers could have dealt with the issue of social sensitivity in this study.

(4 marks)

2. Discuss one or more ethical implications of research in psychology. Refer to at least one topic you have studied in your answer (8 marks)