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Introduction

This resource has been produced by a senior member of the AS Level Psychology examining team to offer teachers an insight into how the assessment objectives are applied.

As these responses have not been through full moderation, they are banded to give an indication of the level of each response.

Please note that this resource is provided for advice and guidance only and does not in any way constitute an indication of grade boundaries or endorsed answers.

The sample assessment material for these answers and commentary can be found on the AS Level Psychology web page and accessed via the following link: http://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/as-a-level-gce-psychology-h167-h567-from-2015/
Unit 2: Psychological themes through core studies

Section A: Answer all the questions in Section A

Question 1(a)
From Grant et al's study into context-dependent memory:
Identify the two types of tests undertaken by participants to assess their memory. [2]

Sample answer(s)
(a) Short answers and multiple-choice answers.
(b) A short answer test.
(c) Participants were asked questions.

Examiner commentary
(a) 2 marks would be awarded here for the correct identification of both types of test used in this study to assess memory.
(b) This response would gain 1 mark as only one of the tests used has been identified.
(c) This response would not be considered creditworthy as it does not refer to any type of test, and so 0 marks would be awarded.

How the answer could be improved/model answer
The two types of tests (undertaken by participants to assess their memory) in Grant et al’s study were a short answer test and a multiple-choice test.

Question 1(b)
From Grant et al's study into context-dependent memory:
Draw one conclusion from the findings of this study. [2]

Sample answer(s)
(a) Studying and testing in the same environment has a positive effect on cognitive performance.
(b) Environmental context may be more important for the recognition of newly learned material than for familiar material.
(c) Environmental context is important.
Examiner commentary

(a) This would be considered an appropriate conclusion that has been fully contextualised to the named study. The full 2 marks would be awarded.

(b) This would be considered an appropriate and fully contextualised conclusion which would be awarded the full 2 marks.

(c) This would be considered a partial answer as the suggested conclusion has not been contextualised to the named study i.e. there is no reference to learning/memory/cognition of material. 1 mark would therefore be awarded.

How the answer could be improved/model answer

(a) There are context-dependency effects on memory for newly learned meaningful material, regardless of whether a short-answer test or a multiple-choice test is used.

(b) There is a strong context-dependency when processing novel complex cognitive material.

(c) Environmental context may be important in the retrieval of newly learned meaningful material.

Question 2

From Loftus and Palmer’s study into eyewitness testimony:

Describe the two kinds of information that go into an individual’s memory for a complex occurrence.

Sample answer(s)

(a) One type of information that Loftus and Palmer proposed is the initial perception of the event. This is what the person sees themselves at the time of the event. In this study for example, it was the viewing of the seven film clips of car accidents shown in Experiment 1. The other type of information that Loftus and Palmer proposed is the external information received after the event. For example in Loftus and Palmer’s study this information would be the inclusion of glass in the crash from the question, “Did you see any broken glass?” when participants returned a week later to complete a questionnaire in Experiment 2.

(b) One type of information is the memory of the event as seen at the time the event occurred like seeing the car accident. The second type of information is the post event information which is supplied after the event has occurred, such as the misleading information like the word smashed suggested the car was going fast.

(c) Information at the time and information after.

(d) If there was any external object e.g. broken glass. If someone asks a leading question or uses a strong/weak verb e.g. smashed.

Examiner commentary

(a) Although contextualisation is not required to gain full marks for this question. This response would be awarded the full 4 marks. It is a clear, accurate description of both kinds of information identified by Loftus and Palmer.

(b) This response would also gain the full 4 marks as both kinds of information, as identified in the Loftus and Palmer study, are described clearly and accurately.

(c) This response would gain 2 marks as it is a mere identification of the two kinds of information.

(d) 0 marks would be awarded here. Although there is reference to ‘leading questions’ this is not linked in any way to either of the kinds of information identified in the named study.

How the answer could be improved/model answer

Memory is determined by two sources: (i) one’s own perception gleaned at the time of the original event (i.e. In Loftus and Palmer’s study whilst watching the film(s) of the car accidents); (ii) external information supplied after the perception of the original event (i.e. in this study through the leading questions in relation to vehicular speed and/or the recollection of seeing broken glass).
Question 3
Outline one difference between Sperry’s split brain study and Casey et al’s study of neural correlates of delay of gratification. [3]

Sample answer(s)
(a) The sample size was different. Sperry’s sample was smaller than Casey’s. In Sperry’s study 11 only split-brain patients were used, while Casey had a huge sample which was originally over 500 nursery school children.

(b) The type of data gathered was different. Sperry gathered qualitative data whereas Casey et al. gathered quantitative data.

(c) Sperry’s was a snapshot study whereas Casey’s study was longitudinal.

(d) The length of the study was different.

Examiner commentary
(a) An appropriate difference is identified (sample size) and it is clear how the two sample sizes differed between the two studies (Sperry’s was smaller than Casey’s). The full 3 marks would be awarded.

(b) An appropriate difference is identified (type of data gathered) but although it is correctly identified that Sperry gathered qualitative data, there is no recognition of the fact that Casey gathered both qualitative and quantitative data. This is not therefore a totally accurate response and would be awarded 2 marks.

(c) Although an appropriate difference is described, the difference itself is not identified, so this is a partial answer and would be awarded 2 marks.

(d) This is a basic response as an appropriate difference (study length) has merely been identified. The response is not contextualised with evidence from either of the named studies. 1 mark would be awarded.

How the answer could be improved/model answer
(a) The length of the study was different. Sperry’s study was a snapshot study with participants only being tested once (on each task) whereas Casey’s was longitudinal with participants being tested more than once.

(b) The type of participants was different. All of Sperry’s participants had a history of epilepsy whereas Casey et al’s participants were not known to suffer from any illness.
Question 4
From Bandura’s study into the transmission of aggression:
Outline how the model displayed aggressive behaviour.

Sample answer(s)
(a) The model came into the room and started to play with the tinker toy set. After a little while, they turned to the Bobo doll and started to be verbally and physically aggressive to it. They did such physical acts as punching and kicking it whilst also saying such things as “kick him” and “Pow”.

(b) The model came into the room and started to play with the tinker toy set. After a little while, they turned to the Bobo doll and started to be verbally and physically aggressive to it.

(c) The model came into the room and started to play with the tinker toy set. After a little while, they turned to the Bobo doll and started to behave towards it in an aggressive manner by kicking it, punching it, hitting it with a mallet etc.

(d) The model was physically aggressive to the Bobo doll.

Examiner commentary
(a) This is a clear and accurate outline, with examples, of how the model showed both physical and verbal aggression. The full 3 marks would be awarded.

(b) This response would be awarded 2 marks as reference is merely made to the fact that the model showed physical and verbal aggression to the Bobo doll. There are no examples to HOW the model displayed aggression in this study.

(c) This is a clear and accurate outline of how the model displayed physical aggression. No reference is made to the use of verbal aggression. 2 marks would therefore be awarded.

(d) This is a vague answer that merely refers to the model showing physical aggression to a Bobo doll. 1 mark would be awarded.

How the answer could be improved/
model answer
The model began by assembling the tinker toy set but after approximately a minute had elapsed, they turned to the Bobo doll and spent the remainder of the period aggressing towards it. The model punched the Bobo doll, laid the doll on its side, sat on it and punched it repeatedly on the nose. The model then raised the Bobo doll, picked up a mallet and struck the doll on the head. Following the mallet aggression, the model tossed the doll in the air aggressively and kicked it about the room. The physically aggressive acts were interspersed with verbally aggressive responses such as, “Sock him in the nose...”, “Hit him down...”, “Kick him ....”, “Pow...”; and non-aggressive comments, “He keeps coming back for more” and “He sure is a tough fella.”
Question 5
Suggest one strength of the sample used by Freud in his study of Little Hans. [2]

Sample answer(s)
(a) Because Freud only had one participant – Little Hans – he was able to gather a great amount of detail about his fears and fantasies.

(b) One strength of the sample used is that because it only consisted of one participant, Freud was able to conduct a detailed study to show developments in Little Hans’ behaviour as he experienced the Oedipus complex.

(c) One strength of the sample used is that because Freud only had one participant he was able to gather lots of in-depth, detailed data.

Examiner commentary
a) An appropriate strength of the sample used is provided (only one participant so an in-depth study could be conducted). This is fully contextualised through the reference to fears and fantasies, so the full 2 marks would be awarded.

(b) Again, an appropriate strength of the sample used is provided (only one participant so a detailed study could be conducted to show developments/changes in behaviour). This is fully contextualised through the reference to the Oedipus complex, so the full 2 marks would be awarded.

(c) Although an appropriate strength of the sample used is suggested (because there was only one participant, an in-depth, detailed study could be conducted), there is no contextualisation to the named study so only 1 mark would be awarded.

How the answer could be improved/model answer
(a) One strength of the sample used by Freud is that because it consisted of only one participant – Little Hans – Freud was able to conduct an in-depth study to explore his theories of psychosexual development.

(b) One strength of the sample used by Freud is that because it consisted of only one participant – Little Hans – he was able to conduct an in-depth study to explore his theories relating to a young boy experiencing the Oedipus complex (during the phallic stage of psychosexual development).
Question 6
From Bocchiaro et al’s study into disobedience and whistleblowing:
Outline how participants responded to an unethical request from the experimenter. [2]

Sample answer(s)
(a) Bocchiaro found that the majority of participants were obedient and complied with the unethical request of the experimenter.
(b) Bocchiaro found that only a minority of participants were prepared to become a ‘whistleblower’ by reporting the misconduct of the experimenter to higher authorities.
(c) Bocchiaro found that the majority of participants were compliant.

Examiner commentary
(a) A clear, contextualised (through the reference to an unethical request) outline of Bocchiaro’s findings is provided so the full 2 marks would be awarded.
(b) This response would also be awarded the full 2 marks. It is a clear, contextualised (through the references to ‘whistleblower’ and ‘the misconduct of the experimenter to higher authorities’) outline of how the participants responded.
(c) This is a vague/partial answer because it is not contextualised to the named study. 1 mark would be awarded.

How the answer could be improved/model answer
Bocchiaro found that whilst the majority of participants were prepared to obey the unethical request made by the experimenter, some participants were prepared to be either disobedient and not comply to the request and some were prepared to become ‘whistleblowers’ by reporting the experimenter’s misconduct to higher authorities.
Question 7
From Milgram’s study of obedience:

Describe two ways participants were deceived in this study. [4]

Sample answer(s)

(a) One way participants were deceived was over the purpose of the study. They believed it was concerned about memory and learning when it was really about obedience to authority. Another way they were deceived is that they thought they had an equal chance of being teacher or learner when, in reality, the lots were rigged so they were always the teacher.

(b) Participants were deceived because, at the beginning, they were given a sample shock so believed the shock machine was real, when in fact it was a fake. They were also deceived because they thought they had applied for an experiment into memory and learning.

(c) Participants were deceived over the purpose of the study. They were also deceived because they thought the shock machine was real.

Examiner commentary

(a) This is a clear and accurate description / explanation of two ways participants were deceived in Milgram’s study. The response would therefore be awarded 2+2=4 marks.

(b) The first suggestion is clearly identified and explains one way participants were deceived in the context of this study. The second suggestion is, however, a mere identification of another way participants were deceived i.e. there is no description / explanation of the deception in the context of this study. The response would therefore be awarded 2+1=3 marks.

(c) Two ways participants were deceived are merely identified. Neither has been explained. The response would be awarded 1+1=2 marks.

How the answer could be improved/ model answer

Participants were deceived because the advertisement asking for people to take part in the study said it would be about memory and learning whereas the study was, in fact, about obedience to an authority figure. Another way participants were deceived was that the appearance of the shock machine lead them to believe it was genuine when it was actually fake and did not administer any electrical shocks.
Question 8
Baron-Cohen et al's study into autism in adults gathered quantitative data.

Explain one strength of gathering this type of data in this study. [3]

Sample answer(s)

(a) Quantitative data is numerical data, so you can easily identify patterns of results. It is also easy to place that type of data into tables and graphs making analysis of this data easy compared to qualitative data. It was easy for Baron Cohen to place the scores for Eyes Task for the three groups of participants – normal, autistic and Tourettes – into a table and see that those with autism performed worse on the task than either the group of normal or the group of Tourettes participants.

(b) Gathering quantitative data allows for easy comparisons to be made between participants or groups of participants. It was easy to compare the results of the Eyes Task between the three groups of participants: normal, autistic/AS and Tourettes.

(c) Gathering quantitative data allows for easy comparisons to be made between participants or groups of participants.

Examiner commentary

(a) This is a clear, developed and fully contextualised suggestion so 3 marks would be awarded.

(b) This is a partial answer as there is no explanation as to why being able to compare the performance of the three groups using quantitative data is actually a strength. 2 marks would be awarded.

(c) This would be considered a vague answer as the response is not contextualised to the named study. 1 mark would be awarded.

How the answer could be improved/model answer

Gathering quantitative data allows for easy comparisons to be made between participants or groups of participants. For example, it was easy to compare the results of the Eyes Task between the three groups of participants: normal, autistic/AS and Tourettes to show that the autistic/AS participants performed worse on this task than either of the other two groups.
Section B: Answer all the questions in Section B

Question 9(a)
Outline how biological psychology explains behaviour. [2]

Sample answer(s)
(a) Biological psychology says that the brain, nervous system, neurotransmitters and genes all directly influence a person’s thoughts, feelings and behaviours.
(b) Biological psychology sees behaviour as having a physiological and genetic base.
(c) Biological psychology explains behaviour as being caused by a person’s biological make-up.

Examiner commentary
a) This is a clear and accurate description of biological psychology that refers to biological/physiological aspects of an individual that can have a direct influence on behaviour. The response would be awarded the full 2 marks.

(b) This would be considered a vague response as several more biological/physiological aspects that can influence an individual’s behaviour should be included to show full understanding. 1 mark would be awarded.

(c) This response would not be deemed creditworthy. No understanding is shown of the word ‘biological’ and the response really only repeats the question’s strap line. 0 marks would be awarded.

How the answer could be improved/model answer
Biological psychology sees the brain, nervous system, endocrine system, neurochemistry and genes as having a direct influence on an individual’s behaviour.

Question 9(b)
Suggest one strength of claiming that behaviour is only due to nature. Support your answer with evidence from one appropriate core study. [3]

Sample answer(s)
a) A strength of claiming that behaviour is due to nature is that it allows for the use of scientific and objective methods to be used which provide unbiased data. For example, Casey et al’s participants were, by nature, either a high delayer or a low delayer. This allowed the researchers to use a highly controlled, laboratory study in which participants completed ‘hot’ and ‘cold’ impulse control tasks, the results of which provided objective, quantitative data. The results of these tasks allowed Casey et al to suggest that low delayer individuals, who as a group, had more difficulty delaying gratification at 4 years of age showed more difficulty as adults suppressing responses to happy faces than the high delayers indicating that nature has a significant effect on behaviour.

(b) A strength of claiming that behaviour is due to nature is that it provides a reductionist explanation for behaviour. For example, Sperry was able to claim that the results of his study were only because his participants had undergone a split-brain operation to reduce their epilepsy.

(c) A strength is that it can help us know how to treat people with genetic problems.
Examiner commentary

(a) An appropriate strength of claiming behaviour is due to nature (allows the use of a highly controlled, laboratory studies which can provide objective, quantitative data) has been provided. The strength is supported by appropriate evidence from Casey et al’s study (participants completed ‘hot’ and ‘cold’ impulse control tasks the results of which allowed Casey et al to suggest that low delayer individuals, who as a group, had more difficulty delaying gratification at 4 years of age showed more difficulty as adults suppressing responses to happy faces than the high delayers indicating that nature has a significant effect on behaviour). The response would therefore be awarded the full 3 marks.

(b) An appropriate strength is provided (it provides a reductionist explanation for behaviour) but the strength is not explained and, although the evidence given illustrates reductionism, no clear link is made to the identified strength and the evidence has not been fully contextualised i.e. more details from the named study should be provided to support ‘the results of his study’. The response would therefore be considered vague and so would be awarded 2 marks.

(c) Although an appropriate strength is identified (it has useful applications for treatments, this rather vague and is not supported by any evidence so only 1 mark would be awarded.

How the answer could be improved/model answer

One strength of claiming that behaviour is due to nature is that it provides a reductionist explanation for behaviour so allows one to focus on one particular influence on human behaviour. For example Casey et al’s participants were, by nature, either a high delayer or a low delayer. By focussing on this natural predisposition, the researchers were able to conduct a highly controlled, laboratory study, the results of which suggested that individuals who, at the age of 4 years, had difficulty delaying gratification and who continued to show reduced self-control abilities had more difficulty as adults in suppressing responses to positive social cues than those who didn’t.

Question 9(c)
Suggest one weakness of claiming that behaviour is only due to nature. Support your answer with evidence from one appropriate core study.

Sample answer(s)

a) A weakness of claiming behaviour is due to nature is that it is a very reductionist view of behaviour as it only focuses on biological factors that can influence human behaviour. It ignores any social or environmental factors. For example, Casey et al’s study aimed to build on previous research to assess whether delay of gratification in childhood predicts impulse control abilities and sensitivity to alluring or social cues (happy faces) at the behavioural and neural level when participants are in their 40s i.e. adults, possibly suggesting that this aspect of behaviour is an inherent, predisposed personality trait. Taking this approach means little or no consideration was given to any socialisation processes the participants went through between their childhood and adult years which may have influenced their ability to delay gratification. For example, some of the participants who showed difficulty in delaying gratification in childhood may have been taught or conditioned to do so as they grew up.

(b) A weakness of claiming behaviour is due to nature may not be supported because research equipment used to support this claim may not be available and could need well trained staff to use it. For example, Sperry used a specially designed tachistoscope to flash images to either a patient’s right or left visual field.

(c) One weakness is that research into the claim that behaviour is due to nature often raises particular ethical issues, such as stress and invasion of privacy.
Examiner commentary

(a) An appropriate weakness of claiming behaviour is due to nature is identified (it is a very reductionist view of behaviour as it only focuses on biological factors that can influence human behaviour. It ignores any social or environmental factors). The weakness is supported by appropriate evidence from Casey et al’s study (the aim was to build on previous research to assess whether delay of gratification in childhood predicts impulse control abilities and sensitivity to alluring or social cues (happy faces) at the behavioural and neural level when participants are in their 40s i.e. adults, possibly suggesting that this aspect of behaviour is an inherent predisposed personality trait. Taking this approach means little or no consideration was given to any socialisation processes the participants went through between their childhood and adult years which may have influenced their ability to delay gratification. For example, some of the participants who showed difficulty in delaying gratification in childhood may have been taught or conditioned to do so as they grew up). The response would therefore be awarded the full 3 marks.

(b) An appropriate weakness is provided but although the evidence given illustrates issues with equipment, no clear link is made between the identified weakness and the claim that behaviour is due to nature, therefore be considered vague and so would be awarded 2 marks.

(c) This would be considered a partial answer. An appropriate weakness is identified (research into the claim that behaviour is due to nature often raises particular ethical issues, such as stress and invasion of privacy) but the response is not contextualised to the named study. 1 mark would be awarded.

How the answer could be improved/model answer

A weakness of claiming that behaviour is due to nature is that some research methods used to support the claim have low ecological validity and therefore findings may not reflect behaviour in real life. For example Casey et al used a highly controlled, laboratory study in which participants completed ‘hot’ and ‘cold’ impulse control tasks which involved either being presented with a ‘go’ or a ‘no-go’ stimulus to which they had to respond by pressing a button. The stimulus was a photograph of a face which appeared on a screen for a very short period of time. This procedure does not necessarily reflect how individuals would respond to environmental cues that relate to the ability to defer gratification in real life. In a natural situation individuals who, at the age of 4 years, have difficulty delaying gratification may not continue to show reduced self-control abilities as adults and be able to suppress responses to positive social cues equally as well as those who don’t.

Question 9(d)

Explain how any one core study can be considered to be located within the area of social psychology. [5]

Sample answer(s)

(a) The study by Milgram can be considered to be located within the area of social psychology because he was looking to see the extent to which the presence of an authority figure would influence whether or not participants would be obedient and social psychology looks to see the extent to which other people and the surrounding environment are major influences on an individual's behaviour, thought processes and emotions. Participants were told, by what appeared to be a legitimate authority figure, to administer what they believed to be genuine electric shocks, to a learner when they got an answer wrong in a paired word test. Not only did Milgram find that all participants were prepared to obey the authority figure up to 300 volts but that the majority of participants were actually prepared to obey up to the 450 volt level, which indicated they may have killed the learner in response to orders given by another person present in the participants’ immediate environment. Milgram also thought that the environment itself played a significant part in influencing obedience levels because he conducted his study at the prestigious Yale University which he suggested made participants believe in both the competence of the experimenter and the worthiness of the study.

(b) The study by Milgram can be considered to be located within the area of social psychology because he was looking to see the extent to which the presence of an authority figure would influence whether or not participants would be obedient and social psychology looks to see the extent to which other people and the surrounding environment are major influences on an individual's behaviour. Participants were told, by what appeared to be a legitimate authority figure, to administer what they believed to be genuine electric shocks, to a learner when they got an answer wrong in a paired word test. Not only did Milgram find that all participants were prepared to obey the authority figure up to 300 volts but that the majority of participants were actually prepared to obey up to the 450 volt level, which indicated they may have killed the learner in response to orders given by another person.
(c) The study by Milgram can be considered to be located within the area of social psychology because he was looking to see the extent to which the presence of an authority figure would influence whether or not participants would be obedient and administer what they believed to be genuine electric shocks to a learner when they got a question wrong. Shocks started at 15 volts and progressed at 15-volt increments up to 450 volts. Milgram found that all participants were prepared to obey the authority figure up to 300 volts and that the majority of participants were actually prepared to obey up to the 450 volt level, which indicated they may have killed the learner in response to orders given by another person.

Examiner commentary

a) This response shows good knowledge of Milgram’s study as there is accurate reference to the aim of the study, the purpose of the supposedly genuine authority figure, the findings of the study and possible conclusions of the study. There is also a good explanation of why Milgram’s study can be considered to be located within the area of social psychology with good links to both the influence of other people and the surrounding environment. The response would be placed in the third level and awarded the full 5 marks.

(b) This shows good knowledge of an appropriate psychological study as there is accurate reference to the purpose of the authority figure, the task undertaken, and the overall results of the study. The explanation of why Milgram’s study can be considered to be located within the area of social psychology should have been developed much further by both making it clear that it was the presence of the authority figure that influenced participants’ behaviour and citing Milgram’s suggestion that the environment itself may have also been a major influence on the participants’ behaviour. The response would therefore be placed within Level 2: 3-4 marks.

(c) This response shows good knowledge and understanding of one appropriate study but the explanation of why Milgram’s study can be considered to be located within the area of social psychology is extremely limited and shows little real understanding as it merely refers to the idea that the presence of an authority figure may influence obedience levels. The response would be placed in Level 1 and awarded 1-2 marks.

How the answer could be improved/model answer

(a) The social approach holds that other people and the surrounding environment are major influences on an individual’s behaviour, thought processes and emotions. In Milgram’s study of obedience, the presence of the supposedly legitimate authority figure influenced the participants’ behaviour as they believed him to be a trustworthy and knowledgeable individual who should be obeyed. All of the participants were therefore prepared to obey the orders given by the authority figure and administer what they believed to be genuine electric shocks of 300 volts to a learner when they got a question wrong and the majority (26/40) were even prepared to go up to 450 volts. Milgram’s study can also be considered to be located within the area of social psychology because the context of the situation impacted on participants’ behaviour. As suggested by Milgram himself, the prestigious environment of Yale University may have influenced participants as to the worthiness of the study and the competence of the experimenter, resulting in high levels of obedience which may not be found in a less prestigious setting.

(b) The study by Milgram can be considered to be located within the area of social psychology because the social approach holds that other people and the surrounding environment are major influences on an individual’s behaviour, thought processes and emotions. Milgram was looking to see the extent to which the presence of an authority figure would influence whether or not participants would be obedient in relation to commands that breach the moral code that an individual should not hurt another person against his or her will. Participants were told, by what appeared to be a legitimate authority figure, to administer what they believed to be genuine electric shocks, to a learner when they an answer wrong in a paired word test. Shocks started at 15 volts and progressed at 15-volt increments up to 450 volts. Not only did Milgram find that all participants were prepared to obey the authority figure and administer shocks up to 300 volts but that the majority (26/40) of participants were actually prepared to obey up to the 450 volt level. Milgram also suggested that the environment itself played a significant part in influencing participants’ obedience levels as he conducted his study at the prestigious Yale University which he suggested made participants believe in both the competence of the experimenter and the worthiness of the study.
Question 9(e)

Discuss the extent to which psychology can be viewed as a science. Support your answer with evidence from core studies.

Sample answer(s)

(a) Considering psychology as a science allows for objective, quantitative data to be gathered. This data is in numerical form and therefore less open than qualitative data to the influence of either researcher bias or researcher error. Quantitative data allows for easy comparison between individuals and/or groups of individuals. For example, Bandura gathered quantitative data which made it easy to compare the results of participants placed in the aggressive model, non-aggressive model and no model groups as well as differences between boys and girls in relation to the display of aggressive acts. He found that those children who witnessed aggressive acts by the model produced more aggressive acts on a subsequent occasion than children who either saw a non-aggressive model or no model at all. He also found that overall boys produced more imitative physical aggression than girls. This allowed Bandura to suggest that aggressive behaviour can be learned from observing significant others.

On the other hand, considering psychology as a science by gathering objective, quantitative data often leads to findings lacking qualitative data. Findings are therefore fairly superficial as researchers fail to get an in-depth understanding for why the behaviour occurred. Although Bandura gathered quantitative data he failed to find out from the children why they behaved the way they did. He merely presumed the aggressive acts were imitated because the children had watched an adult model behave aggressively and so the children had learnt to be aggressive, whereas, in fact, the children may have realised that a Bobo doll should be ‘bashed’ and were merely playing with the doll in an expected fashion. This may limit the usefulness of considering psychology as a science as without a full understanding for why behaviours occur one may draw inappropriate conclusions.

Considering psychology as a science allows for the use of laboratory experiments where IVs can be manipulated and cause and effect inferred. For example through the use of a laboratory experiment in which he manipulated the IV of whether the participant had a split brain or not (this control group was a hypothetical group because the functions and abilities of the visual fields and hemispheres of non split-brain individuals were already known), Sperry was able to show many visual and tactile limitations of split-brain patients. For example, if an image was flashed to the left visual field of a split-brain patient they insisted either that they did not see anything or that there was only a flash of light on the left side whereas a ‘normal’ individual would be able to name the object. This suggested that the inability of the split-brain patients to name in speech or writing an image flashed to their left visual field was due to having had their hemispheres deconnected.

However a problem of considering psychology as a science by using laboratory experiments means that studies lack ecological validity. Although Sperry was able to identify numerous visual and tactile limitations in split-brain patients, the study was conducted in an artificial, contrived environment with participants undertaking unrealistic tasks and so lacked realism. It is not realistic to sit an individual in front of a tachistoscope and flash an image to either their left or right visual fields for 1/10 second and expect them to be able to identify the image in speech and writing. This may limit the usefulness of considering psychology as a science as the way people behave in such artificial environments may not reflect they would behave in a real-life situation.

(b) Considering psychology as a science allows for objective, quantitative data to be gathered. Quantitative data allows for easy comparison between individuals and/or groups of individuals. Baron-Cohen gathered quantitative data which made it easy to compare the results on the Eyes Task between the three groups of participants: normal, autistic/AS and Tourettes and show that the group of autistic/AS participants, on average, performed worse than either of the other two groups. On the other hand, considering psychology as a science by gathering objective, quantitative data often leads to findings lacking qualitative data. Findings are therefore fairly superficial. Baron-Cohen did not find out why the autistic/AS participants performed badly on the Eyes Task. This may limit the usefulness of considering psychology as a science.

Considering psychology as a science allows for the use of laboratory experiments where IVs can be manipulated and cause and effect inferred. For example through the use of a laboratory experiment in which he manipulated the IV of whether the participant had a split brain or not, Sperry was able to show many visual and tactile limitations of split-brain patients. For example, if an image was flashed to the left visual field of a split-brain patient they insisted either that they did not see anything or that there was only a flash of light on the left side whereas a normal individual would be able to name the object. However a problem of considering psychology as a science by using laboratory experiments means that studies lack ecological validity. Sperry’s study was conducted in an artificial, environment where participants undertook prescribed tasks and so lacked ecological validity. For example participants sat in front of a tachistoscope and had images flashed to either their left or right visual fields for 1/10 second after which they were expected to identify the image in speech and writing. This may limit the usefulness of considering psychology as a science.
(c) Considering psychology as a science means laboratory studies can be conducted so quantitative data can be gathered. For example Milgram used a laboratory study to test how obedient participants would be to an authority figure. He set up a controlled environment with participants, given the role of ‘teacher’, sitting in one room in front of a pretend shock machine whilst a stooge ‘learner’ sat in a pretend electrical chair in another room. He measured how many electrical shocks participants were prepared to give when the learner got a question wrong and the authority figure encouraged them to give shocks of increasing intensity. A weakness of considering psychology as a science is that the use of laboratory studies means the studies lack ecological validity. Milgram’s study did not reflect real life.

A strength of considering psychology as a science is that specialised technical equipment can be used which means objective data, free from researcher bias can be gathered. However, a problem with considering psychology as a science means that if studies use highly technical and specialised equipment, they can be expensive and difficult to conduct. For example Sperry’s study involved participants responding to images flashed to either or both of their visual fields through the use of a tachistoscope, a very technical and complex piece of apparatus which was specially designed and cost a lot of money.

(d) A strength considering psychology as a science is that the researcher can conduct his study in a laboratory. Loftus and Palmer conducted a laboratory experiment. Laboratory experiments however lack ecological validity. Another strength of considering psychology as a science is that the scientific methods used mean quantitative data can be gathered which is easy to analyse so the researcher can make comparisons between individuals and groups. For example Loftus and Palmer gathered quantitative data in their study investigating the effect of leading questions on memory.

Examiner commentary

(a) This answer shows good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of viewing psychology as a science. Discussion demonstrates sound understanding, analysis and interpretation. The answer is well focused and shows coherent elaboration. Ideas are well structured and expressed clearly and fluently. There is a consistent use of psychological terminology. There is a well-developed line of reasoning which is clear and logically structured. The information presented is relevant and substantiated.

Two advantages are identified (allows for objective, quantitative data to be gathered; allows for the use of laboratory experiments), explained/justified (this data is in numerical form and therefore less open to the influence of either researcher bias or researcher error than qualitative data. Quantitative data allows for easy comparison between individuals and/or groups of individuals; IVs can be manipulated and cause and effect inferred) and supported by appropriate evidence from (a) Bandura and (b) Sperry. Likewise, two appropriate counter-arguments are provided (by gathering objective, quantitative data often leads to findings lacking qualitative data; studies lack ecological validity). However only the first counter argument is justified/explained (findings are therefore superficial) as there is no explanation/justification of the problems caused by studies lacking ecological validity. Supporting evidence from (a) Baron-Cohen and (b) Sperry, although appropriate should be linked more strongly/overtly to the identified advantage. Likewise, two appropriate counter-arguments are provided (by gathering objective, quantitative data often leads to findings lacking qualitative data; studies lack ecological validity). However only the first counter argument is justified/explained (findings are therefore superficial) as there is no explanation/justification of the problems caused by studies lacking ecological validity. Supporting evidence from (a) Baron-Cohen and (b) Sperry, although appropriate should be linked more strongly/overtly to the identified advantage. The response would be placed in Level 4 and awarded 10-12 marks.

(b) This answer shows a reasonable understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of viewing psychology as a science. Discussion shows reasonable understanding, analysis and interpretation. The answer is generally focused and shows a reasonable degree of elaboration. Most suggestions are appropriately structured and clearly expressed. There is an appropriate use of psychological terminology. A line of reasoning is present with some structure. The information presented is in the most-part relevant and supported by some evidence.

Two advantages are identified (allows for objective, quantitative data to be gathered; allows for the use of laboratory experiments), explained/justified (quantitative data allows for easy comparison between individuals and/or groups of individuals; IVs can be manipulated and cause and effect inferred) and supported by appropriate evidence from (a) Bandura and (b) Sperry. The response would be placed in Level 4 and awarded 10-12 marks.

(c) This response shows only limited knowledge and understanding of psychology as a science. Discussion is limited but shows some understanding. The answer has some focus and shows some evidence of elaboration though the expression of ideas lacks clarity. There is a limited use of both psychological terminology and appropriate supporting evidence. The information has some relevance and is presented with limited structure.

Two advantages of considering psychology as a science are identified (allows for laboratory studies to be conducted; specialised equipment can be used). Although the second advantage is justified/explained, the first advantage is not, however, explained/justified i.e. there is no explanation for why using a laboratory is either an advantage or makes the subject scientific. The first advantage is supported by appropriate evidence from Milgram (although this is generally considered a controlled observation, it was conducted in a laboratory – an artificial, controlled environment) but the second advantage is not supported by any evidence at all.
Two disadvantages of considering psychology as a science are identified (if considered as a science many studies take place in a laboratory and so lack ecological validity; if studies use highly technical and specialised equipment, they can be expensive and difficult to conduct). Neither disadvantage is explained / justified. Supporting evidence for the first disadvantage merely states that Milgram’s study lacked ecological validity though the evidence from Sperry for the second disadvantage is appropriate. The response would be placed in Level 1 and awarded 1-3 marks.

(d) This response shows a very limited knowledge and understanding of psychology as a science. Discussion is rudimentary, demonstrating very little understanding. The answer is weak, muddled and incomplete. Evidence is sparse and is mainly irrelevant. The information is basic and communicated in an unstructured way. The information is supported by limited evidence and the relationship to the evidence is not clear.

Two advantages of considering psychology as a science are identified (studies can be conducted in laboratories; quantitative data can be gathered) but neither is explained / justified and the evidence (although an appropriate study is referred to) shows no actual support for the advantages identified. One counter-argument is identified (laboratory experiments lack ecological validity) but this is not explained / justified and there is no supporting evidence. The response would be placed in Level 1 and awarded 1-3 marks.

**How the answer could be improved/ model answer**

Considering psychology as a science allows for objective, quantitative data to be gathered. This data is in numerical form and therefore less open than qualitative data to the influence of either researcher bias or researcher error. Quantitative data allows for easy comparison between individuals and/or groups of individuals. For example, Baron-Cohen gathered quantitative data which made it easy to compare the results of the Eyes Task between the three groups of participants: normal, autistic/AS and Tourettes and show that the group of autistic/AS participants, on average, performed worse than either the group of normal participants or the group of participants with Tourettes. This allowed Baron-Cohen to suggest that lacking an advanced theory of mind is a core cognitive deficit in adults with autism. On the other hand, considering psychology as a science by gathering objective, quantitative data often leads to findings lacking qualitative data. Findings are therefore fairly superficial as researchers fail to get an in-depth understanding for why the behaviour occurred. Although Baron-Cohen gathered quantitative data he failed to find out from the autistic/AS participants why they thought they had performed badly on the Eyes Task and merely presumed their poor performance was due to them not having an advanced theory of mind. This may limit the usefulness of considering psychology as a science as without a full understanding for why behaviours occur one may draw inappropriate conclusions.

Considering psychology as a science allows for the use of highly controlled laboratory experiments where IVs can be manipulated and cause and effect inferred. If the cause of a behaviour can be identified then appropriate measures can possibly be applied to either encourage desired behaviours or discourage undesired behaviours. For example through the use of a laboratory experiment in which he manipulated such features as the sex of the model, the sex of the child and whether or not the model displayed aggressive or non-aggressive behaviour, Bandura was able to show that children who are witnesses to aggressive behaviour are more likely to imitate aggressive acts on subsequent occasions than children who do not witness such acts. From his findings one can suggest that if society wishes to have a non-aggressive population, it must ensure that children are not exposed to opportunities where they can observe and then learn aggressive actions. However a problem of considering psychology as a science and therefore conducting research using laboratory experiments means that studies lack ecological validity and findings may not reflect how individuals would behave in a real-life, natural situation. Although Bandura found that children who are witnesses to aggressive behaviour are more likely to imitate aggressive acts on subsequent occasions than children who do not witness such acts, the study was conducted in an artificial, contrived environment with children witnessing unrealistic behaviour – it is not a natural occurrence to sit a child in one corner of a room to play with potato prints and picture stickers whilst an adult behaves verbally and physically towards a Bobo doll. This may limit the usefulness of considering psychology as a science. Although behaviour witnessed under such controlled conditions may well subsequently be imitated in a similar, controlled environment, participants may not imitate aggressive acts witnessed in real-life situations where other factors may influence behaviour.
Section C: Answer all the questions in Section C

A UK soldier accused of abusing civilians in Iraq is a war hero who had been obeying orders, a court has been told.

Soldier X denies several abuse charges at a court in Germany.

The soldier’s defence said orders given by commanding officers were to blame for the alleged abuse. The defence blamed a military plan known as Operation Ali Baba for the alleged offences. The court heard that the camp commander responsible for Operation Ali Baba told his troops to catch looters who had been stealing food and “work them hard”. The defence told the court: “The whole reason the soldier is in the dock is because he followed orders.”

Soldier X has entered a not guilty plea. The court case continues and is expected to last three to four weeks.

*Based on an article cited on news.bbc.co.uk (Wednesday, 19 January, 2005.)*

Question 10(a)

Explain why this article can be viewed as being relevant to social psychology.

Sample answer(s)

(a) The social area studies individuals in a social context and looks to see the extent to which behaviour is influenced by the actual, imagined or implied presence of others. This report can be viewed as being relevant to social psychology as it suggests that Soldier X’s behaviour was influenced by his commanding officers. The defence stated, “The whole reason the soldier is in the dock is because he followed orders.” The orders were given by commanding officers, legitimate authority figures whose orders should be obeyed by those of a lower rank.

(b) Social psychology looks at the way individuals are influenced by other people and their surrounding environment. This report can be viewed as being relevant to social psychology as it suggests that Soldier X was merely obeying orders given by others.

(c) This report can be seen as related to social psychology because it infers that other people in one’s immediate environment influence behaviour.

(d) This report can be seen as related to social psychology because Soldier X was merely obeying the orders given by the camp commander.

Examiner commentary

(a) This question requires students to apply their knowledge of psychology and identify the problem within the article. This response shows a good knowledge and understanding of the social area which is appropriately applied to explain why this report can be viewed as being relevant to social psychology. There is a clear link to the article through the cited evidence, “The whole reason the soldier is in the dock is because he followed orders” which supports the suggestion that an individual’s behaviour can be influenced by the actual, imagined or implied presence of others. The response would be placed in Level 2 and awarded 3-4 marks.

(b) This response shows a reasonable understanding of social psychology but the contextualisation is weak. The evidence from the source material should be described in more detail linked more clearly to the social approach. The response would be placed in Level 1 and awarded 1-2 marks.

(c) This response shows a reasonable understanding of social psychology but as it lacks any context it would be placed in Level 1 and awarded 1-2 marks.

(d) This response merely cites evidence from the article that illustrates how the article can be viewed as being relevant to social psychology. There is no evidence of any real knowledge or understanding of the social approach. The response would be placed in Level 1 and awarded 1-2 marks.
Question 10(b)

Briefly outline one core study and explain how it could relate to Soldier X’s obedience to authority. [5]

Sample answer(s)

(a) Milgram’s study of obedience investigated how far an individual would go in obeying an authority figure even when the commands breach the moral code that an individual should not hurt another person against his or her will. Participants were always given the role of ‘teacher’ and saw a ‘learner’ strapped into a chair with electrodes attached to his arms. The ‘teacher’ then conducted a paired word test and was told to administer what they believed to be genuine electric shocks every time the learner gave a wrong answer. Orders were given by a presumed legitimate authority figure. Shocks started at 15 volts and progressed at 15-volt increments up to 450 volts. If the ‘teacher’ showed unwillingness to continue, the authority figure used a series of four standardised prods e.g. ‘Please go on’, to encourage them to continue. Milgram found that all participants were prepared to obey the authority figure and administer shocks up to 300 volts and that the majority - 26/40 - of participants were actually prepared to obey up to the 450 volt level. The results indicated that people, will obey others who they consider legitimate authority figures even if what they are asked to do goes against their moral beliefs. Milgram’s study relates to Soldier X’s obedience to authority because Milgram found his participants, like Soldier X, were prepared to follow orders given by a legitimate authority figure even though the commands breached normal moral codes of conduct. The presence of another person influenced the behaviour of the both Milgram’s participants and Soldier X. In Milgram’s study it was the experimenter who influenced the behaviour of the ‘teacher’ participants whereas Soldier X’s behaviour was influenced by his commanding officers.

(b) Bocchiaro et al’s study into the dynamics of disobedience and whistleblowing used university students as participants. The students were told a cover story about a proposed piece of research into the negative effects of isolation. Participants were asked to write a statement to convince other students to participate in the proposed study. Bocchiaro found that although the majority of participants obeyed the experimenter, some disobeyed and some became whistleblowers. This study links to the article because it shows that people will obey authority figures even if the request is unjust.

(c) In Milgram’s study of obedience participants were always given the role of ‘teacher’ and the ‘learner’ was a confederate. The ‘teacher’ conducted a paired word test and administered electric shocks of every time the learner gave a wrong answer. Orders to continue were given by an authority figure. Milgram found that the majority of participants were prepared to obey up and give enough shocks to kill the ‘learner’. This study relates to Soldier X’s situation as both Milgram’s participants and Soldier X were obeying orders given by an authority figure.

Social psychology looks to see the extent to which other people and the surrounding environment are major influences on an individual’s behaviour, thought processes and emotions. This report can be seen as relevant to social psychology because it infers that other people - here the commanding officers – in Soldier X’s immediate environment, influenced his behaviour, making him abuse civilians in Iraq. Soldier X saw the commanding officers as legitimate authority figures whose orders should be obeyed even though they may have gone against his own moral and ethical beliefs.
Examiner commentary

This question requires students to apply their knowledge of psychology and identify the problem within the article.

(a) This response shows good knowledge and understanding of an appropriate core study (Milgram). The outline is accurate and some fine details are included e.g. shocks started at 15 volts and progressed at 15-volt increments up to 450 volts; 26/40 of participants were actually prepared to obey up to the 450 volt level. There is a good indication and understanding of why the study can be linked to the issue identified in the article. The response would be placed in Level 2 and awarded 3-5 marks.

(b) Good knowledge and understanding of an appropriate core study is shown (Bocchiaro et al). Some understanding is evident as to why this study can be linked to Soldier X’s obedience to authority though this needs further development both through a stronger link to the social approach and some actual evidence from the article. The response would be placed at the bottom of the Level 2 band and is awarded 3 marks.

(c) The outline is reasonable but lacks detail. No fine details are included. There is some indication of why the study can be linked to the issue identified in the article. The response would be placed in Level 1 and awarded 1-2 marks.

How the answer could be improved/model answer

Milgram conducted a controlled observation in a laboratory in Yale University which aimed to investigate the process of obedience by testing how far an individual would go in obeying an authority figure even when the commands breach the moral code that an individual should not hurt another person against his or her will. Participants (through a fixed lottery) were always given the role of ‘teacher’ and saw the ‘learner’ (a confederate) strapped into a chair with (non-active) electrodes attached to his arms. The ‘teacher’ then sat in front of an electric shock generator in an adjacent room. He conducted a paired word test on the learner and was told, by what appeared to be a legitimate authority figure, to administer what they believed to be genuine electric shocks of increasing intensity every time the learner gave a wrong answer. Shocks started at 15 volts and progressed at 15-volt increments up to 450 volts. If the ‘teacher’ turned to the experimenter for advice on whether to proceed, the experimenter responded with a series of four standardised prods e.g. ‘Please continue / Please go on’. Not only did Milgram find that all participants were prepared to obey the authority figure and administer shocks up to 300 volts but that the majority (26/40) of participants were actually prepared to obey up to the 450 volt level. The results indicated that people, will obey others who they consider legitimate authority figures even if what they are asked to do goes against their moral beliefs. This study relates to Soldier X’s obedience to authority because Milgram’s participants, like Soldier X were prepared to follow orders given by what was presumed a legitimate authority figure even though the commands they were given went against their moral code that an individual should not hurt another person against their will. The actual, imagined or implied presence of others had influenced the behaviour of the both Milgram’s participants and Soldier X. In Milgram’s study it was the experimenter who influenced the behaviour of the ‘teacher’ participants whereas Soldier X’s behaviour was influenced by his commanding officers.
Question 10(c)
Identify one psychological issue raised by the above article. Support your answer with evidence from the article.

Sample answer(s)
(a) One psychological issue raised by the article is that individuals in positions of authority can misuse their powers. Here senior military officers misused their positions of authority and ordered their soldiers to behave in unethical and immoral ways. The camp commander responsible for Operation Ali Baba told his troops to catch looters who had been stealing food and “work them hard”. In this case the ‘working hard’ involved Soldier X supposedly abusing civilians in Iraq. The camp commander had misused his powers of authority by giving inappropriate orders to encourage his subordinates to behave in an unacceptable way.

(b) One psychological issue raised by the article is that individuals in positions of authority can take their roles to extremes and misuse their powers. Here military officers misused their positions of authority and demanded that their soldiers behave in unethical and immoral ways.

(c) One psychological issue raised by the article is that subordinate individuals can show blind obedience to authority figures.

Examiner commentary
(a) This response shows a good understanding of an appropriate psychological issue (individuals in positions of authority can misuse their powers) which is well supported and explained through evidence from the given article. The response would be placed in Level 2 and awarded 3-4 marks.

(b) An appropriate psychological issue is identified (individuals in positions of authority can misuse their powers) but although this has been linked to the given article more detailed evidence and a more developed explanation are required to reach Level 2. Therefore the response shows a reasonable knowledge and understanding of an appropriate psychological issue which is loosely linked to the given article. The response would be placed in Level 1 and awarded 1-2 marks.

(c) This is merely an identification of an appropriate psychological issue with no contextualisation to the given article. The response would be placed in Level 1 and awarded 1-2 marks.

How the answer could be improved/model answer
(a) One psychological issue is that when given extreme commands by legitimate authority figures, subordinates adopt an agentic state where they become the instrument for carrying out other peoples’ wishes and put aside training in relation to moral or ethical codes of conduct. Here Soldier X, by supposedly abusing others was merely obeying orders, thus becoming an agent of the senior officer. He did not consider the consequences of his behaviour or whether the orders were appropriate.
Question 10(d)
Use your psychological knowledge to suggest a training programme to manage the issue you have identified in question 10(c). [6]

Sample answer(s)

(a) – relating to (a) above.
Officers should, as part of their training, watch films, take part in discussions and participate in scenarios etc. which model how to respond appropriately in extreme circumstances so that they do not abuse their powers and make unethical or immoral demands on subordinates. This could be done by devising a training programme based on Bandura’s social learning theory which holds that individuals learn their behaviour through the observation of significant others and that if this behaviour is reinforced in any way, when in similar situations they will imitate it. If officers watched film-clips showing how other officers on active duty in Iraq managed issues that arose during the conflict in a positive and moral way, they would have the opportunity to learn how to act in acceptable ways. If the positive behaviour demonstrated in the films is then seen to be reinforced by rewards such as being allowed home on leave early or gaining promotion, those watching will be encouraged to act in similar ways. The officers can then participate in simulations in which they have to manage situations in conflict areas. This would give them the opportunity to show how through social learning processes they have learnt not to misuse their powers but act in ethical and moral ways. They could be rewarded by being given extra rations whilst on exercise or being excused the following morning’s fitness session! If the officers behave appropriately in the scenarios then, hopefully, they will behave in a similar way in real-life situations.

(b) – relating to (b) above.
An appropriate training programme could be based on Bandura’s social learning theory. Officers could watch films of other military personnel acting in appropriate ways when trying to manage conflict situations. They would then learn how not to misuse their powers of authority and when in similar situations would behave in positive and ethical ways, not allowing or encouraging their subordinate soldiers to abuse others. This learning could be practised through the use of simulations in which the officers have to act out pretend conflict situations such as those in Iraq or Afghanistan which give them the opportunity to demonstrate that they have learned how to act in ethical ways.

(c) – relating to (c) above.
A training programme should be devised that teaches people to question and challenge those in authority who order them to behave in inappropriate, immoral ways. Through social learning processes the soldiers should be shown how to challenge orders in an acceptable manner so that the officers have the chance to think about what they have asked the soldiers to do, giving them the opportunity to modify their orders appropriately.

Examiner commentary

(a) This shows a good understanding of how the issue could be managed. An appropriate, staged training programme, based on the psychological knowledge they should have gained through studying the Bandura core study is proposed. The training programme is related to psychological theory throughout and is accurate with many details included. The response would be placed in Level 3 and awarded 5-6 marks.

(b) The response shows reasonable knowledge and understanding of how the identified issue could be managed through a programme based on psychological theory. The suggested programme is reasonably accurate and there are some links to the given article and the issue identified in 10(c). A more detailed training programme should be described, linked more clearly to both the identified issue and psychological theory. The response would be placed in Level 2 and awarded 3-4 marks.

(c) A little psychological knowledge is evident in relation to social learning theory and the application of this to the management of the issue identified in 10(c) is limited and mainly unclear. No details are provided about how the training programme would be organised or conducted. The response needs to be linked much more clearly to both the identified issue and the given article. The response would be placed in Level 1 and awarded 1-2 marks.
How the answer could be improved/ model answer

Officers in the military should, as part of their training, take part in lectures, films, discussions, scenarios etc. which model how to respond in extreme circumstances so that they do not abuse their power and make unethical/immoral demands on subordinates. In practice this might be developed through the application of both Skinner’s theory of operant conditioning and Bandura’s social learning theory. Potential and serving officers could be shown films of the military on deployment in such places as Iraq and Afghanistan where British military personnel are involved in managing situations of conflict. These films should show both appropriate and inappropriate behaviours by those in authority. After watching the films the soldiers should be involved in group discussions where they learn to apply Skinner’s theory: they would discuss how those who behaved appropriately in the films should be rewarded (positive consequences of behaviour) and how those who behaved inappropriately e.g. by encouraging their subordinates to abuse other people, should be punished (negative consequences of behaviour). They could then take part in scenarios in which they as potential and serving officers have to act out and manage conflict situations. Through the application of social learning theory, having previously observed others behave in appropriate/inappropriate ways and subsequently being rewarded/punished, they would have the opportunity to demonstrate that they have learned how to use their authority appropriately if placed in similar situations. Through participation in such a training process military personnel in positions of authority would have the opportunity to learn that, under no circumstances, would encouraging or ordering their subordinate soldiers to act in unethical or immoral ways be acceptable.

Sample answer(s)

(a) – relating to (a) above.

There may be ethical issues over showing films of military personnel behaving in immoral ways to other officers, especially if individuals in the films are known to any of the viewers as it may be extremely stressful to watch those known to you or even present or past colleagues behaving inappropriately. In addition it may be difficult, if not impossible for the people running military training programmes to get permission to use film footage that both shows unethical behaviour and puts members of the military in a ‘bad light’. However, the ‘powers that be’ may feel that the overall advantages of, hopefully, reducing the chances of officers misusing their powers, outweigh the disadvantages of showing film footage of former officers who have already behaved inappropriately. The programme I have suggested would mean time would need to be allocated to watch films and then take part in simulations. In addition, facilities for conducting the activities would have to be found e.g. somewhere to show the films; a place large enough to allow several small group discussions to take place at the same time. Furthermore, a special environment, simulating an area in possibly Iraq would need to be built so the scenarios had at least some realism. This could also very expensive as well as time-consuming. However such a programme as the one I have suggested could be linked to other training activities undertaken by soldiers as such as night-time and day-time exercises.

(b) – relating to (b) above.

The programme I have suggested would be time-consuming and expensive as time would need to be allocated to watch films and then take part in simulations. Also, facilities for conducting the activities would have to be found e.g. somewhere to show the films and a special environment, simulating a conflict area such as Iraq or Afghanistan would need to be built so the scenarios were realistic. However my suggested programme could be linked to other training activities undertaken by soldiers as such as night-time and day-time exercises.

(c) – relating to (c) above.

The programme I have suggested would be time-consuming as time would need to be allocated for the training to be conducted. The programme may also raise ethical issues as the officers asked to give immoral orders may not wish to do so and the soldiers who are asked to challenge the orders may feel stressed about being asked to question the behaviour if their superiors.
Examiner commentary

(a) The evaluation is appropriate and several details are included. Two limitations of the suggested programme are identified and explained in the context of the training programme suggested in 10(e): ethical issues may occur; time-consuming and expensive. Counter-arguments are provided for both limitations indicating that although the training programme may be difficult to implement, its advantages would outweigh its disadvantages. Understanding, expression and use of psychological terminology are good and there is a well developed line of reasoning which is clear and logically structured. The response would be placed in Level 3 and awarded 5-6 marks.

(b) The evaluation, though appropriate needs to be developed much further. Only one imitation of the suggested programme has been identified (time-consuming and expensive) but a suggestion is made for how to manage this limitation (build it into other existing training activities). Understanding, expression and use of psychological terminology are reasonable and there is some structure to the response. It would be placed in Level 2 and awarded 3-4 marks.

(c) This response identifies two basic limitations of the suggested training programme (time-consuming; ethical issues may be raised). Links to both the suggested programme and the given article are weak and little real understanding is evident. The use of psychological terminology is limited. The response would be placed in Level 1 and awarded 1-2 marks.

How the answer could be improved/model answer

There may be ethical issues over showing films of military personnel behaving in immoral ways to potential and serving officers, especially if individuals in the films are known to any of the viewers as it may be extremely stressful to watch those known to you or even present or past colleagues behaving inappropriately. Those shown in the films must also give their consent for their actions to be used for training purposes. In addition it may be difficult, if not impossible for the people running military training programmes do get permission to use film footage that both shows unethical behaviour and puts members of the military in a ‘bad light’. However, the ‘powers that be’ may feel that the overall advantages of, hopefully, reducing the chances of officers misusing their powers, outweigh the disadvantages of showing film footage of former officers who have already behaved inappropriately. The programme I have suggested would be fairly time-consuming and may be fairly difficult to build into a training schedule. Time would need to be allocated to watch films, have discussions and then take part in scenarios. In addition facilities for conducting the activities would have to be found e.g. somewhere to show the films; a place large enough to allow several small group discussions to take place at the same time. Furthermore, a special environment, simulating an area in possibly Iraq or Afghanistan would need to be built so the scenarios had at least some measure of realism. This could also prove very expensive. However such a programme as the one I have suggested could be built into already planned training programmes which include fitness training, night and day exercises and decision-making activities. I feel the overall gains would outweigh the losses as one must make every effort to minimise the risk of any authority figure misusing their powers.
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