



Psychology



Mark like an Examiner for AS Unit 1
Sample Answers

Question 1 a

Using an example from psychology, describe the positive assumption of 'authenticity of goodness and excellence'. [4]

Sample 1

The assumption authenticity of goodness and excellence believes that positive emotions such as happiness and goodness are as authentic as negative ones. Traditional psychological discipline focuses mainly on treating disorders and negative emotions. Seligman (2003) noted that the belief that negative emotions and thoughts are more important than positive ones have been an obstacle in psychological research.

Sample 2

The positive assumption "authenticity of goodness and excellence" is a psychological assumption from the positive approach. It looks at the theory of happy people, discovering whether people are affected by money, age, gender or culture and whether it makes them more/less happy.

Question 1 b

Using an example from psychology, describe the positive assumption of 'focus on the good life'. [4]

Sample 1

A focus on the good life means to focus on the happier and more fulfilling aspects of life. Seligman described three positive ways of life.

1. The pleasant life, where happiness comes from positive recollections of the past, present and future.
2. The good life, where happiness comes from focusing on activities that we enjoy and fulfil us.
3. The meaningful life, where happiness comes from a deep sense of fulfilment.

The first stage is the pleasant life and the next is the good life, Seligman noted that to achieve the good life individuals need to focus on developing our strengths and virtues.

Sample 2

"Focus on the good life" is a positive assumption which looks at the meaningful life having a purpose for others as well as yourself. Pleasant focus on past, present and future and good life having activities which make you happy.

Question 2

Analyse the strengths and weaknesses of the psychodynamic approach. [10]

Sample 1

One strength of the psychodynamic approach is how it is interactionist. It recognises that behaviour comes not only from one side of the nature-nurture debate, but includes both sides with the nature side, the psychodynamic approach explains certain behaviour due to the mechanics of the mind in terms of the id, ego and superego. This tripartite personality controls the way we behave in everyday life whereas in terms of the nature side of the debate, Freud realised that early childhood experiences could influence and affect our adult personality (e.g. as seen in Bowlby's 44 Juvenile Thieves, long term separation from in a young age can cause an individual to have an affectionless adult character). Hence this psychodynamic approach is able to see both sides of the debate.

One weakness of the psychodynamic approach is how it is not scientific. The approach as a whole is very subjective (especially when it comes to dream analysis where everything is based off one's own interpretation) and as a whole not very scientific. This is the evidence of it having an id or superego, so it is questionable as to whether it really exists.

Another weakness of the psychodynamic approach is how it in the same ways can be considered reductionist. Some have said that the psychodynamic approach is mechanistically reductionist in terms of how it reduces all human behaviours down to the id, ego and superego, without talking into account other factors, such as biochemistry, hormones and genes. Because of this, it could be said that the psychodynamic approach reduces all human behaviour down to the mechanics of the mind.

In conclusion, the psychodynamic approach has its strengths and limitations where it can see both sides of the nature-nurture debate and take multiple things into account as an explanation for behaviours, however as a whole the approach is very subjective and can this be criticised for this.

Sample 2

One strength of the psychodynamic approach is that it considers both nature and nurture. This is strength because although it recognises biological components leading to changes in behaviour, it also considers the effect of the environment, meaning it acknowledges further explanations for impact on behaviour.

However, a weakness of the psychodynamic approach is that it is non-scientific. This can be seen in Bowlby's findings – his research was based on observation so there was no control, lacking reliability as investigator effects could be a contributor to findings and conclusions. This is a weakness as there is no scientific method backing up the approach, meaning a significant lack in evidence of the assumptions.

Another weakness of the psychodynamic approach is that it is reductionist. This means that although it considers nature and nurture, it reduces both elements down to its most basic components, ignoring the wider elements of both.

Overall, the psychodynamic approach has more weaknesses than strengths, making it very unreliable outlook in psychology.

Question 3

Describe the main components of cognitive behavioural therapy OR rational emotive behaviour therapy. [12]

Sample 1

One main component of rational emotive behaviour therapy (REBT) is the ABC model developed by Ellis. The ABC model works to explain how behaviour is formed, REBT adds in 'D&E' to this model. The A stands for activating event, for example, if a friend ignores you whilst walking past. The B stands for belief, which can either be rational or irrational. In the case of a person attending REBT, their belief would be natural e.g. "if they ignored me, I must have done something wrong to annoy them... I have no friends" etc. The C stands for consequence, in this particular example, a consequence could be the person avoiding social interactions as a result of their irrational belief. REBT disrupts the belief by challenging it.

The therapist asks the patient, whether the belief is realistic, whether there is evidence for it and if it's pragmatic. By doing this the therapist is forcing the patient to think about the reasons for their belief and turn their irrational belief into a rational one.

The E in this model stands for effect i.e. the effect that it would have on the person. For example, after the patient realises it was an irrational belief (after disputing it) they might decide to talk to their friend about it.

Another principal for REBT is mustabatory thinking. This thought process involves the individuals in thinking that they must be or do certain things in order to be happy. For example, "must succeed in this or my life is worthless" or " I must be liked by everyone to be happy". This type of thinking is disputed by the therapist.

Another principle of REBT is that the therapist must have unconditional positive regard towards the patient, in the sense that although they must be firm in disputing their beliefs, they must first form a relationship that is filled with trust.

Question 3 – Sample 2

The first main component of the REBT therapy is the ABC model of Ellis. The A is used for activating the event; B is the belief, whether it is rational or irrational. Finally, C which is the consequence of the belief.

Another main component is the 3 core beliefs. The first one is mustabatory thinking which is suggesting that everyone must love and must give that human attention. If they don't they are negatively affected by this. By replacing that 'must thinking' allows that person to cope with life much better? Another core belief is unconditional positive regard.

Question 4

Discuss one similarity and one difference between the biological and positive approaches. [4+4]

Sample 1

One similarity of both the biological and positive approaches is how they both are considered nomothetic. Both look at a small group of people who generalise their findings to the rest of society (for example, found that low levels of serotonin can cause depression, we can generalise this as to all). Inglehart (2000) found that age and gender are not related to happiness when conducting his survey, we can also generalise this to others. However, one difference between the biological and positive approach is how the biological approach is highly scientific in terms of its use of PET scans (Raine et. al.) and recognise biochemistry etc., whereas the positive approach is highly subjective. The whole positive approach is based off of happiness – something that itself is subjective and different for everyone. No real experiments can be done because of this, where the biological approach is objective (can do experiments) whereas the positive approach is subjective.

Question 4– Sample 2

One similarity between the biological and positive approaches is that they are both nomothetic. This means that they both rely on numerical and therefore quantifiable data to justify their research. This is a strength as nomothetic data can be generalised – qualities which both approaches share.

A difference between the two approaches is that the biological approach is determinist whereas the positive is free will. The biological supports the notion that our behaviour is genetically determined, and that we have little free will. Whereas the positive approach, being one of the only approaches to acknowledge free will recognises that we have the freedom to choose our behaviour and the way we respond to the world.

Question 5a

Using an example from psychology, describe one assumption of the cognitive approach. [4]

Sample 1

The concept of schemas is one of the most important introduced by the cognitive approach. Schemas are organised pockets of information that are built up through experience and stored in our long-term memory. Our dog schema (the pocket of information we have about dogs) may contain 'four legs' 'fur' 'bark' etc. Schemas are often derived from past experiences, but can be further refined through further interactions with people and the world around us. Schemas do not necessarily represent reality as they are often based on social interactions (conversations with others, media etc.) rather than personal experiences. Schemas can take on different forms. For example, we have event schemas which are known as 'scripts' (e.g. going to a restaurant) and role schemas which tell us about different roles (e.g. noise).

Sample 2

One assumption of the Cognitive approach is the Computers Analogy. This is based on the "multistore Model" a study used to show the inputs of information into our short-term and long-term memory.

Question 5b

Describe how one assumption from the cognitive approach can be applied to the formation of relationships. [4]

Sample 1

The concept of schemas can be used to explain how relationships are formed with some people and not others. Self-schemas are how we perceive ourselves and govern our self-concept. Self-schemas are important in the matching hypothesis explanation of relationship formation. The matching hypothesis states that how we perceive ourselves in terms of physical attractiveness can influence who we engage in relationships with. We are attracted to those we feel match us in terms of physical attractiveness. For example, if our self-concept is high and we believe we are 'highly attractive' we will 'try our luck' with highly attractive others. However, if we perceive ourselves as fairly 'unattractive' we will not 'try our luck' with highly attractive others in fear of rejection.

Sample 2

The assumption of "schemas" can be linked to how relationships are formed. For example, a study showed how "the halo effect" can cause us to believe that, not just because a person is good looking – we automatically believe they have a good personality. It is also believed that because we have a schema for ourselves we look for people with similar traits to our schemas (our equal).

Question 6

Describe the findings of Bowlby's (1944) research 'Forty-four juvenile thieves: Their characters and home-life'. [8]

Sample 1

In order to find out what experiences had caused the 44 thieves to resort to stealing Bowlby found that it was necessary to distinguish between the different personality types in his samples. He recognised that this was hard to do as children's personality have not yet developed, but his overall view was that there were 6 main personality types within his study. 2 children had a 'normal' personality and appeared fairly normal and stable. 9 children had a 'depressed' personality and had been unstable and were now in a more or less depressed state of mind. 13 had a 'hyperthermic' personality and were constantly over-active. 2 children had a circular personality and altered between depressed and overactive states 14 had an 'affectionless' personality and had a lack of affection, shame and sense of responsibility and 8 had a 'schizoid' personality and showed schizophrenic symptoms. 12 out of the 14 affectionless thieves had experienced prolonged separation from their mother. Of the 27 remaining thieves Bowlby found that 17 had mothers who expressed signs of unconscious hostility, and 45 out of the 27 had fathers who openly expressed their hatred towards them. However, these results were also noted by the non-delinquent group. Therefore, the results can be used to explain their emotional responses but not delinquency.

Sample 2

In Bowlby's (1944) research 'forty four juvenile thieves: Their characters and home life'. Bowlby tested 44 thieves who were separated from their mother's and had stolen against a control group of 44 children who were in the same clinic but hadn't stolen yet also were separated. Bowlby found that out of the 44 thieves 6 had become affectionless, 12 had previous mental problems, 8 were depressed, 8 were circular and the rest were a little more stable but still with issues. Comparing this to the control group where only 2 were affectionless. This shows that an early separation really does play a massive

role on how a child will grow up and be affected by separation. Also some of the group had abusive fathers who had shown they were unloved. Further affecting how a child will grow up.

Overall this research shows that early separation from a child and their mother may look to that child becoming a thief. But will almost definitely result in some mental disorder.

Question 7a

Describe the methodology of Watson and Rayner's (1920) research 'Conditioned emotional reactions'.

[4]

Sample 1

This study involved the controlled observation of an infant boy. It had no independent or dependent variable. It had no experimental design. The aims were to see whether phobias are learnt response.

Sample 2

The study involved one participant a male infant aged nine months, who later became known as little Albert. This study was not a case study as the focus was only on little Albert's response to conditioning. A case study would have involved a more in-depth analysis of the individual and aspects of their lives. This was also not an experiment as there was only one condition. Watson and Rayner called it an experiment; however the use of that term has become more restricted. The study could be described as a controlled observation. The study had controlled conditions – took place in a well-lit dark room. Albert was placed on a mattress on top of a table.

Question 7b

“Although there are ethical issues and methodological problems, the study of the conditioning of Little Albert is still an influential piece of research.”

With reference to the above statement, critically evaluate Watson and Rayner’s (1920) research ‘Conditioned emotional reactions’. [10]

Sample 1

One weakness of the study is that there was a lack of fully informed consent. This is because the baby is not old enough to know what the research entails. However, his parents gave consent for Albert to take part. Therefore, the research cannot be discredited so remains an influential piece of research.

Another weakness of the study is that it may have caused psychological harm to little Albert. Due to the fact that this study involved creating a fear response in Albert, it may have resulted in this phobia that he developed being long term. This therefore impacting negatively on his health. Therefore, it must be taken into consideration whether this research is valuable enough as it came at the cost of an infant's wellbeing.

One strength of this study is that it produced valuable results. We learned that phobias are a conditioned response. As a result, this has gone to help develop the therapy of systemic desensitisation as therapists work to build up tolerance to the object. Therefore, in this case, the study has played a part in helping many people, and so it is an influential piece of research.

In conclusion, although there are some ethical issues to consider, I believe that by considering the costs of the research and the benefits of it the overall benefit outweighs the costs. This is because this study has gone on for two greater good and helps people to deal with their fears.

Sample 2

Watson and Rayner's controlled observation lacked ecological validity, as the setting was artificial. Albert learned to fear the rat in a controlled artificial setting. Therefore, can the learning of a phobia be generalised from this unrealistic setting to a real-life environment? Another disadvantage of the study was that it lacked population validity. Although it was his intention to study more children, Watson did only study Albert. Therefore, the results are not a true representation of the target population and the results of the study cannot be generalised to all children. An advantage of this study, however, is that Albert's responses were recorded and so the research could be checked by others, reducing observation bias. Conditioning fear in a child can produce long-term lasting emotional effects of psychological harm. This is a disadvantage of this approach. This study is known as the most unethical study ever conducted. Watson was aware of the distress Albert was experiencing as he stated 'in order to not disturb the child too seriously no further tests were given for one week.' However, Watson believed that the 'rough and tumble' play of home was similar to the study and so the anxiety experienced was fairly normal. The BPS states that we should leave a study in the same frame of mind as it was entered. Albert left with a phobia and generalised his phobia to other furry objects – no counter-conditioning. Also, no permission (valid informed consent) was obtained from Albert's mother and no debrief was given. Furthermore, there was no confidentiality of data as Albert was recognisable – no anonymity! Overall, I think this study was highly unethical, and the research is not reliable as there was not enough people – population validity to support it.

Question 8

Evaluate drug therapy OR psychosurgery in terms of effectiveness and ethical considerations. [12]

Sample 1

Psychosurgery had many ethical issues. Participants would not have been able to give valid consent in the conditions they were in. Some participants would not have been able to process and understand what they were told about the study. A way to have avoided this would've been to also gain valid consent from a doctor or close relative. Another ethical issue would be that it is causing irreversible brain damage. This means that once it has been done, there is nothing that can be done in an attempt to resolve it. With this issue of valid consent, it could be fatal for the patient.

Sample 2

One strength of drug therapy effectiveness is that it can be applied to a wide range of disorders. With the categories of drug medication including anti-depressants, anti-anxieties and anti-psychotics, drug therapy can be applied to a number of mental health problems, including depression, anxiety and schizophrenia (Soomro et al and Cole et al) conducted studies in drug and therapy effectiveness. They found that these types of medication were more effective than placebos in reducing outward symptoms of illness.

However, a weakness in terms of the effectiveness of drug therapy is that it only treats the symptoms of the mental health problem. This means that for someone suffering from depression it only works as a way to reduce the feelings of loneliness, rather than addressing the underlying cause that could never change.

Yet, drug therapy proves its effectiveness in patient involvement. This is strength to the therapy as it's not as long a process, such in the therapy of SD, to achieve the desired results of change in behaviour.

An ethical strength of drug therapy is that there is a permanent right to withdraw. This means that the ppts aren't obligated to take the medication at

all times e.g. if it's making them drowsy in the day they can just take it at nights. However, drug therapy can cause severe side effects, some of the worst may come from anti-depressants, as the initial signs of response to the medication is feeling worse. This encounters the ethical issue of protection from harm as many clients taking the drugs will find this distressing.

Another ethical issue of drug therapy is informed consent. This is when the client is aware what they are getting themselves into. This may be a problem with a patient suffering from psychosis, as they have a false sense of the world and therefore won't be aware of what they're being prescribed. However, you could argue that walked themselves to the doctors and allowed the doctor to give them a diagnosis, so they may have partial understanding.

Overall I think drug therapy has more weaknesses than strengths, however, the positive implications of the therapy offer an appropriate short-term solution for those seeking immediate medical attention, in comparison to other therapies that require intense patient involvement. Therefore, I think it is effective, but not necessarily the most ethical.