Chapter 4: Issues and debates

Gender and culture in psychology: Gender bias

**Spot the gender bias**

**Activity type** Application

Students need to read the descriptions of psychological research on the handout and state whether the study shows alpha or beta bias. They then need to justify their choice and explain the implications of the bias.

**Practical use**

This activity can be used to check students' understanding of the concepts of alpha and beta bias. In addition to this it will get them to practise their skills of explaining why a research study shows a psychological concept. This will help with skills of analysis and using examples in essays.

As an alternative way to do this activity you could divide the class into six groups and give each group one of the descriptions and then get them to feedback as a class.

**Additional notes**

Suitable as a plenary after the topic has been covered or as a revision activity of this topic. Alternatively, it could be used as an extension task for students who need more challenge.

**Answers**

1. **Beta bias.** It ignores that there may be a difference in men and women and whether they show de-individuation in the same way, which would create problems with generalising results from women to men. This could therefore lead to inaccurate beliefs about male behaviour and gender bias.

2. **Alpha bias.** This undervalues women and suggests a real difference between males and females because of the difference in their hormones. This could lead to offering jobs more to men because men are seen as able to do the job better due to their inherited dominance. This therefore reinforces stereotypes.

3. **Alpha bias.** This undervalues women and their problems as being due to the difference in their hormones 'Is it your hormones, love?', which upholds stereotypical assumptions. This validates sex discrimination whilst ignoring social and environmental factors like violence, unpaid labour, etc.

4. **Alpha bias.** This suggests that females are not as moral as males, which reinforces the stereotype that women need men in order to make progression in their moral development.

5. **Beta bias.** It ignores a possible difference between the behaviour of males and females. It assumes that females will obey authority figures in the same way. Women may not show such a strong level of obedience to authority, which makes the research gender biased.

6. **Alpha bias.** This is regarded as a universal account of development whereas it is based on male experiences and, consequently, undervalues women as they are seen as only knowing themselves through their relationship with a man. Men on the other hand are seen as being able to develop themselves fully without a woman being in their life, which suggests that women need men in order to reach their potential.

**Gender bias word coil**

**Activity type** Consolidation

Answer the questions on handout 4.2b and put the answers in the grid on handout 4.2a.

Answers should be written in a clockwise direction round the grid, i.e. move across the top of the grid from left to right, then down the right-hand side to the bottom, then along the bottom and then up the left-hand side to the second line down and across as shown on the diagram on the next page. Continue to work around in a clockwise direction until you reach the middle (which is the last letter).

Questions are numbered and correspond to the start of the new answer word/s in the grid. For example, you write the answer to Question 1 across the top of the grid so that the first letter of the answer to Question 2 is the last letter of the answer to Question 1.

Answers to the questions are one word unless it states two words in brackets.

The last letter of one answer is always the first letter of the next answer.
When the grid is finished read the letters in the red squares and unscramble them to find the surname of a psychologist in the chapter. Do the same for blue squares.

**Practical use**
This could be completed independently or in groups or could be used as an extension task.

**Additional notes**
This could be set as a piece of homework at the end of gender bias or could be a tool used to check that students have revised the chapter in the textbook. Alternatively, you could put students into groups to complete the word coil and it could be the first team to finish would receive a prize.

**Answers**

```
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16
F R E U D E N M
A T E S C I E N T I A
R S P R I N G E N F R
E F E N T I A L E I K
G F S E A R C I R C O
G O S S E Y H S A A H
A G E E N R O T T R L
K E V R O L Y A I O B
E R I T A G E N O L E
R E P U S I R V A T R
U T A N A G I L L I G
```
Answers

1. Who saw femininity as an expression of failed masculinity? **Freud**
2. Who said psychology may be guilty of supporting a form of institutional sexism, which creates bias in theory and research? **Denmark**
3. Research was carried out using men. **Kohlberg**
4. Research was carried out using women. **Gilligan**
5. The sociobiological theory is based on the promiscuity in males, but females who act in the same way are said to be going against what? **Nature**
6. Psychological research that is affected by alpha bias overestimates and **exaggerates** the differences between the sexes. Fill in the missing word in this statement.
7. The laboratory experiment that may further disadvantage women is seen as the cornerstone of what kind of enquiry in psychology? **scientific**
8. When men set the standards for normalcy, who said ‘it is normal for women to feel abnormal’? (5, 6) **Carol Tavris**
9. Freudian theory says that, ‘girls are not under the same pressure as boys to form an identification with the same sex parent’. What did he say that girls can develop, a female what? **superego**

10 and 11. In part of Wilson’s ‘survival efficiency’ example, the best way for females to preserve their genes was to ensure healthy survival of relatively few **offspring**, which would also increase the chances of passing their genes on to the next **generation**.

12. What kind of stereotypes can gender-based research fail to challenge? This could deny females opportunities in the workplace. **negative**

13. ‘The gender difference in question is inevitable and fixed in nature.’ Many of the gender differences reported by psychologists over the years are based on what kind of perspective? **essentialist**

14. Who suggested that female biology had evolved over time to inhibit the fight and flight response? **Taylor**

15. What is the name given to systematic investigation to establish facts and reach new conclusions, e.g. this was done in 1930 and suggested that intellectual development of females would harm their chances of falling pregnant? **research**

16. Which psychologist argued that Freud overlooked the fact that men could get ‘womb envy’? **Horney**

The two psychologists

1. **DAMBRIN**

2. **NICOLSON**
Cultural bias dominoes

Activity type: Starter

Students should cut out each key term and their definition so that they have 10 separate ‘domino’ strips comprising both a key term and a definition.

The students then match the appropriate key term with its definition like they would do playing dominos. For example…

Alternatively, this can just be done as a ‘match them up’ activity.

Practical use

This is best done as a pairs activity as students could discuss which dominos go together. Alternatively, it could be done as a group activity where students stand in the centre of the room and each student is given a domino and then they have to find other students to match up with their domino.

Additional notes

A suitable extension task would involve students coming up with their own terms relating to cultural bias. For example, they could identify a study as a key term and then the definition could involve an explanation of how that study is culturally biased.

Answers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Ethnocentrism</td>
<td>K. A type of cultural bias that involves judging other cultures by the standards and values of one’s own culture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Cultural relativism</td>
<td>D. The idea that human behaviour can only be meaningful and understood within specific social and cultural contexts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Cultural bias</td>
<td>E. Overlooking cultural differences by looking at human behaviour from the perspective of your own culture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Etic approach</td>
<td>F. Studying behaviour across many cultures in order to find universal human behaviours.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Culture bound syndromes</td>
<td>H. Groups of syndromes classified as treatable illnesses in certain cultures that are not recognised as such in the West.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Emic approach</td>
<td>G. Studying cultures in isolation by identifying behaviours that are specific to that culture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Individualist culture</td>
<td>J. Refers to Western countries (like the US) that are thought to be more independent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Collectivist cultures</td>
<td>A. Refers to cultures such as India and China that are said to be more conformist and group-orientated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Imposed etic</td>
<td>C. A test, measure or theory devised in one culture that is used to explain behaviour in another culture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Research tradition</td>
<td>B. The familiarity a certain culture has with taking part in psychological investigations.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 4: Issues and debates

Gender and culture in psychology: Cultural bias

What do you think?

Activity type Idea

Put the number 1 at one side of the room and 10 at the other side.

Have students stand in the centre of the room and ask them their opinions on the extent to which psychological research is culturally biased. Tell them to quantify their view by giving themselves a number from 1 to 10 where 1 represents the view that research is not culturally biased at all and 10 that it is very biased.

Have them stand in a line that corresponds with their number.

Divide the group into two smaller groups that correspond to numbers 1 – 5 (less cultural bias) and numbers 6 – 10 (more cultural bias).

Tell each group of students to identify 5 reasons for their viewpoint and then elect one member to feed back the group views.

Write the answers on the board and add any other relevant points that you think are applicable to the discussion.

Practical use

This is best done as a whole group activity.

Additional notes

This is good to do at the start of the lesson as it helps students engage with the topic by getting them out of their seats and discussing their views with other students.

Cultural bias in psychological research

Activity type Application

Give students one of the following areas of psychology and ask them to provide descriptions that incorporate five key terms related to cultural bias (listed on handout: universal human behaviour, ethnocentric, cultural relativism, etic approach, emic approach)

- Milgram’s study of obedience
- The Strange Situation
- Classification systems (e.g. DSM)
- Research on intelligence tests
- Social exchange theory

Students then present their answers back to the rest of the class.

Afterwards the whole class can decide the extent to which the research is culturally biased by plotting the study on a continuum on the board. One end will have culturally biased, whilst the other will have culturally fair.

Practical use

This is best done as a group activity. Students can use the textbook or Internet to help them answer the questions although for some studies (e.g. Milgram) they will have to use their knowledge from AS to answer the questions.

Additional notes

Three extension criteria are provided on the handout. These are based on the evaluation points in the textbook.

Answers

See handout for model answer for Asch’s research into conformity.
Chapter 4: Issues and debates

98–99 Free will and determinism

Does free will exist?

Activity type: Starter

Students need to identify whether each example of behaviour on the handout is an example of free will or determinism and need to justify why in each case. If the behaviour is determinist, they need to state what the behaviour is determined by.

Practical use

This can be used as a starter to the free will-determinism debate.

As an alternative way of doing this activity, students can work in groups and then feedback their answers as a class. This can then be written on the board and be used as a discussion into whether free will exists.

Additional notes

Some students might want to argue the case for free will and so you could use these behaviours as a starting point for a class debate. For example – to what extent do I have free will in terms of choosing when I get out of bed?

Answers

There are lots of types of determinism that could be identified as the cause of each of the behaviours. The most likely are outlined here.

It is equally possible to argue that the decisions were made from free will.

Cleaning teeth – Determined by expectations of society that you clean your teeth or the norms learned in childhood that you clean your teeth (environmental).

Getting out of bed – Determined by a person’s body clock (biological) or determined by expectations of family or teachers to go to school (environmental).

What to wear – Determined by the weather (environmental).

What to have for lunch – Determined by hunger (biological) or what is seen as healthy (environmental).

Who is your partner – Determined by interests that are shared (environmental), hormonal influences (biological) or childhood experiences (psychic).

Relationship with family – Determined by childhood experience (psychic determinism).

How fast you drive – Determined by the law (environment), what you learn from parents about what is acceptable driving behaviour (environment).

Subjects studied at A level – Determined by expectations of family members (environmental).

Helping someone – Determined by feelings of guilt or morals learned in childhood (environmental).

Going to the gym – Determined by wanting to be thin because of society’s pressures to be a certain body shape (environmental).

Types of determinism

Activity type: Application

Students should read the examples of behaviour on the handout and decide whether they are examples of biological, environmental or psychic determinism.

Practical use

This can be used after teaching students the different types of determinism.

Additional notes

As an extension task, students can create examples of biological, environmental and psychic determinism from the topics that they have studied in Year 2 and can test each other out.
Chapter 4: Issues and debates

Answers

1. Clive keeps on stealing clothes from the shopping centre because he likes the compliments he gets from his friends about how fashionable he is.  
   Answer: Environmental

2. Javid has an excess of dopamine in the brain and is showing schizophrenic symptoms.  
   Answer: Biological

3. Bob has an overactive hypothalamus and so feels extremely aggressive.  
   Answer: Biological

4. Harry feels less aggressive after playing a game of rugby.  
   Answer: Psychic

5. Jeremy does his homework as soon as his father tells him. He does this because otherwise he knows he will not be allowed to go out with his friends.  
   Answer: Environmental

6. Sandra feels irritable and upset a few days before her period is due.  
   Answer: Biological

7. Zac sees his friend Billy get a sticker for the hard work that he has put into a picture he drew in art, so Zac puts more effort into his art work as he really wants a sticker.  
   Answer: Environmental

8. Claire is obsessively tidy and keeps all her clothes in the wardrobe by colour order.  
   Answer: Psychic

9. Debbie breaks a vase that her mother-in-law bought her.  
   Answer: Psychic

10. Brian goes to see his favourite football team Man United and shouts abuse with the crowd at the Liverpool fans.  
    Answer: Environmental

11. Daniel sees his friend Fred in the street and jumps out. Fred’s heart starts to race and he feels sweaty.  
    Answer: Biological

12. Annabel refers to her boss as coming from ‘hell’ rather than ‘Hull’ when she describes her to her friend.  
    Answer: Psychic

13. Felix meets his mum’s new boyfriend and says ‘pleased to beat you’.  
    Answer: Psychic

14. Sarah starts to smoke cigarettes because her friends smoke.  
    Answer: Environmental

15. Sam’s dad shouts at Sam for leaving his toys out so Sam now always tidies up when he has finished with them.  
    Answer: Environmental

16. Boris has trouble forming relationships with other people and can’t remember much about his childhood.  
    Answer: Psychic

17. Rachel goes to see her sister who has been put into jail for speeding. Rachel sees how unhappy she is. She drives really slowly whenever she drives now.  
    Answer: Environmental

18. William has been told the cause of his infertility is Klinefelter’s syndrome (he has an extra X chromosome).  
    Answer: Biological

True or false? Free will and determinism debate

Activity type: Consolidation

In this activity, students need to answer true or false to the questions about the free will/determinism debate. For the true answers, they then need to provide an explanation for them in the justification box. For the false answers, they should write in the correct answer to the question in the justification box.

Practical use

This can be used to test students’ understanding of free will/determinism and get them to practise their skills of explaining their points in preparation for writing an essay. Alternatively, it could be used as a test.

Additional notes

Lower ability students can use the textbook to answer the questions.
### Free Will and Determinism

**Answers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>True or False</th>
<th>Justification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>According to free will we are able to reject biological and environmental forces.</td>
<td>True</td>
<td>There are biological and environmental forces that exert an influence on our behaviour but we are able to reject them as we control our own destiny.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A hard determinism stance contrasts with the British legal system.</td>
<td>True</td>
<td>Offenders are held morally accountable for their actions and under rare circumstances are seen as not having free will, i.e., they are held responsible for their behaviour.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determinism is not consistent with science.</td>
<td>False</td>
<td>It is scientific as the biological and behaviourist approaches are determinist and the cause of the behaviour can be studied scientifically. Free will is not consistent with science.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soft determinism is where free will is not possible and behaviour is beyond our control.</td>
<td>False</td>
<td>In soft determinism, events have causes but behaviour is determined by our conscious choice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science emphasises causal explanations.</td>
<td>True</td>
<td>Every event in the universe is seen as having a cause so laws are created in relation to what caused behaviour.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People who have a high internal locus of control feel they have a high level of free will so they tend to suffer from psychological problems.</td>
<td>False</td>
<td>People with a high internal locus of control tend to have better mental health as they feel like they are in control of their lives so feel they are in control of their own behaviour so they won’t see the development of a psychological problem as out of control.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The lab experiment is the best way to establish what has caused behaviour.</td>
<td>True</td>
<td>The lab experiment allows us to remove extraneous variables so we are able to precisely control variables and show causal relationships.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determinism is falsifiable.</td>
<td>False</td>
<td>Determinism is unfalsifiable because the causes of behaviour may not have been found so it’s impossible to prove wrong.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free will is not a valid concept.</td>
<td>False</td>
<td>Free will has face validity as it makes cognitive sense as we are exercising choices on an everyday basis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People who believe in fatalism and think that their behaviour is out of their own control have a higher risk of depression.</td>
<td>True</td>
<td>Roberts <em>et al.</em> (2000) found adolescents with a strong belief in fatalism and who believed that their lives had already been decided were at a greater risk of depression.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanism is the approach in psychology that is most closely linked to determinism.</td>
<td>False</td>
<td>Humanism is the approach in psychology that is most closely linked to free will believing that people are masters of their own fate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The cognitive explanation is a soft determinist perspective.</td>
<td>True</td>
<td>We are determined by thought processes but we have a rational choice to choose whether we act upon them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neurological studies criticise the theory of free will.</td>
<td>True</td>
<td>Chun Siong Soon (2000) showed that brain activity that determines choices comes before we are conscious of making a decision.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skinner believes that free will is just an illusion.</td>
<td>True</td>
<td>He stated that all behaviour is determined by conditioning, and that choice is just the reinforcement contingencies that act upon our lives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People who suffer from mental illness can be used to support the concept of free will.</td>
<td>False</td>
<td>People would not choose to have a mental illness like schizophrenia so this casts a doubt over how free will can explain mental illness.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
WHAT ARE THE FACTS? THE NATURE–NURTURE DEBATE.

Activity type  Consolidation

Students read the questions on sheet 4.8a and either answer the questions in the answers column or ring the correct answer or fill in the missing words in the sentence. The task is worth 25 marks.

Practical use

It can be used as a plenary or it can be used to check understanding.

Students can self-assess the answers. There is a mark scheme available on sheet 4.8b.

Finally, they can write a self-assessment at the bottom of the quiz/test.

Additional notes

Students could do this in teams and the fastest team to complete the quiz/test is the winner.

Alternatively, students could complete this as an extension task.

Answers

1. Empiricists such as John Locke argued that the mind is like a what? (1 mark) Blank slate

2. a. What is the heritability coefficient for IQ? (1 mark) 0.5

   b. What does this suggest about intelligence? (1 mark) It suggests that both genetics and the environment influence our intelligence.

3. What does concordance mean? (1 mark)
   Consistency or similarity (1): More information: A measure of genetic similarity. In a sample of twin pairs, one twin of each pair has a disorder. The number of times their other twin also shows the disorder determines the concordance rate.

4. The interactionist approach believes that we should study how nature and nurture interact and influence us. (2 marks)

5. Environmental influences in psychology have been described as too broad. According to Lerner (1986) there are different levels of the environment. Give one example of these. (1 mark)
   One mark for one of the following:
   • The mother’s physical and psychological state during pregnancy.
   • Post-natal experiences that the child grows up in.
   • The cultural and historical context that the child is part of.

6. The interactionist approach can be supported by constructivism. What does constructivism mean? (2 marks)
   People create their own nurture (1) through seeking and creating environments that are suitable for their nature (1)

7. Epigenetics is a change in genetic activity without changing our genetic code. This is caused by an interaction with the environment. When we smoke or we are exposed to pollution, epigenetic marks are left on our DNA. These tell our bodies which genes to ignore and which to use and these can then be passed on to our children as well as their children. They are like bookmarks or highlighted text so the life experience of previous generations therefore affects us (8 marks). One mark for each word

8. According to the diathesis-stress model, psychopathology is caused by genetic vulnerability, which is only expressed when there is an environmental trigger.
   a. What group of adoptees did Tienari (2004) find would most likely develop schizophrenia? (1 mark)
      Those who had biological relatives with schizophrenia and lived in a dysfunctional adoptive family.
   b. Why does this support the diathesis-stress model? (2 marks)
      They had a genetic vulnerability (the diathesis) because they had relatives with schizophrenia (1 mark) but this only affected them when they also had poor relationships with their adoptive family where the stress from the environment triggered the schizophrenia. (1 mark)

9. Humanism/Behaviourism/Psychodynamic/Cognitive – Put each approach in the appropriate place on the continuum below (4 marks)
   Nature  Interactionist  Nurture
   Biological  Psychodynamic  Cognitive  Humanistic  Behaviourist

10. A strong belief in either nature or nurture is a belief in which type of determinism? (1 mark)
    Hard
**Which Side of the Debate?**

**Activity type** | Application
--- | ---
Students need to read the examples of research and decide which side of the nature–nurture debate they fall on (nature/nurture or interactionist).

Once they have done this, they can draw a continuum diagram on a piece of paper and plot where they think each piece of research will go. For example, research that suggests that behaviour is genetically determined will go on the nature side of the debate, whilst research that emphasises upbringing will go on the nurture side with research that emphasises both (interactionist) going closer to the middle. Students need to be prepared to justify their choices in each case.

**Practical use**

This activity can be used to get students to practise their skills of application and justification and to test their understanding of the debate. Alternatively, students could be put into pairs and each pair could be given one of the examples of research.

**Additional notes**

An extension activity students can write down other examples of nature, nurture and interactionism from the topics they have studied in Year 2 and explain why they are examples of each.

**Answers**

1. Nature
2. Interactionist
3. Nature
4. Nurture
5. Nurture
6. Interactionist
7. Nurture
8. Nature
9. Nurture
10. Nurture
11. Nature
12. Interactionist
Chapter 4: Issues and debates

Using Cake to Demonstrate Reductionism

Activity type: Idea

Project the definitions of holism and reductionism on the board.

Buy some fruit cakes and also buy the ingredients for a fruit cake: flour, eggs, butter, sugar, mixed fruit, milk and mixed spice.

Divide the students up into groups and give each group an ingredient of the fruit cake and a piece of fruit cake.

Ask students in their group to say what they have each got one by one and get the students to write on their mini whiteboards how this demonstrates reductionism and holism.

Practical use

Used as a starter to the holism and reductionism debate.

As an extension task, ask them to write down how reductionism and holism can be demonstrated using a watch and a car.

Evaluation Muddle

Activity type: Evaluation

Students need to read the evaluation points on the handout and then write them under the correct heading and explain why they support or challenge reductionism or holism. Encourage students to use the following phrases to help them elaborate on the last part of their points:

So this means that …
So therefore …
This is an issue because …
This is beneficial because …

Practical use

This activity can be used to practise explaining evaluation points and to ensure students understand the strengths and limitations of each side of the debate.

Additional notes

You could set this as a piece of homework or classwork. You can get students to peer assess each other’s answers to decide whether they have explained the points enough. Answers can then be shared as a class and students can amend what they have written in another coloured pen to help improve their evaluation.

Answers

For reductionism

- It is possible to break behaviour into its constituent parts and scientifically test them so this means that the cause of behaviours can be established more easily.
- Recognises the importance of biological explanations in human behaviour which is a positive as there is a lot of evidence for the influence of biology on behaviour.

Against reductionism

- May oversimplify behaviour so therefore other factors are not considered that could influence behaviour.
- Many different theories of cognitive functioning such as memory, perception and language have been created in psychology but little attempt has been made to combine the theories together which is an issue because behaviour is often the result of a combination of things together which means they don’t reflect real-life behaviours.

For holism

- Reminds us that the whole is not just the sum of the parts so it explains how the combination of factors together causes behaviour.
- Provides a more complete understanding of behaviour. This is beneficial because it is a lot more reflective of how humans behave.

Against holism

- Cannot be rigorously tested this means that reliable research can’t be gathered to support theories.
- It is difficult to establish how much each individual factor contributes to any particular behaviour so this means that explanations are unsatisfactory.
**WHAT AM I?**

**Activity type** Application

Students need to read the descriptions of research taken mainly from year 1 studies but some are year 2 or off-specification. It doesn’t matter if the research is unfamiliar as it is described on the handout.

**Practical use**

This can be used to practise the skills of application and to test students’ understanding of the concepts.

**Additional notes**

As an extension task, students can pick other examples from what they have studied in year 2 and explain whether they are idiographic or nomothetic approaches and why.

**Answers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Idiographic or nomothetic</th>
<th>Justification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. <em>Idiographic</em></td>
<td>The focus was on the experience of two individuals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. <em>Nomothetic</em></td>
<td>The basis of drug therapy is a general principle that reducing serotonin levels is the cause of depression so it should work the same way in all people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. <em>Nomothetic</em></td>
<td>The manual classifies people in exactly the same way with a specific set of symptom combinations needing to be shown to be diagnosed with a disorder such as phobias.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. <em>Idiographic</em></td>
<td>Each person is seen as moving up the hierarchy in a different way. There is no specific way that a person self-actualises, it is a different process in all people so no laws can be created.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. <em>Nomothetic</em></td>
<td>The way that people process information is the same and individual differences are therefore not considered.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. <em>Idiographic</em></td>
<td>The chimpanzee was studied as an individual; his behaviours were independent and specific to him.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. <em>Nomothetic</em></td>
<td>People’s personalities can be put into a specific category. There is no consideration of variations to these types – you are introvert or extrovert so a law has been created.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. <em>Nomothetic</em></td>
<td>Babies are all classed as the same and cry for the same reasons so a law has been created which does not consider individual differences.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Reference**


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**IDEOGRAPHIC AND NOMOTHETIC GAP FILL**

**Activity type** Consolidation

This activity is useful to consolidate knowledge about the idiographic and nomothetic debate. Students need to use the words at the top of the sheet to fill in the gaps.

**Practical use**

Useful as a piece of homework or as a plenary once the idiographic and nomothetic approaches have been taught. This is also a useful sheet to use when revising, for example before a test on the debate.
Additional notes

A suitable extension activity would be to have students think of their own studies and explain why they are socially sensitive.

References


Answers

An idiographic approach is one that studies people as unique individuals with the focus of the study being their subjective experiences, motivations and values. They don’t compare people against each other but instead describe the experiences of each individual to gain insight into their unique experiences. They produce qualitative rather than quantitative data so use self-report measures such as case studies and unstructured interviews.

**Humanistic** psychology is the best example of an idiographic approach, with the psychologists Maslow and Rogers taking a phenomenological approach where the conscious experience of the individual self is studied. The psychodynamic approach is also described as idiographic because it studies individuals and their unique lives. Freud used the case study method to study his patients but also identified laws related to the way that personality develops.

The idiographic approach is in depth and creates a complete and global account of the individual. This complements nomothetic approaches as single case studies can create hypotheses which can then be studied in a more nomothetic way.

Idiographic approaches, however, are restrictive because they are not very scientific as they rely on subjective interpretations, which means they are open to bias.

A nomothetic approach studies human behaviour through the development of general principles. Nomothetic approaches are often reductionist and determinist and are highly scientific because they use controlled experiments to study large groups of people. Behaviourist, cognitive and biological approaches are all nomothetic. They all study behaviour through creating hypotheses, analysing behaviour, statistically testing what is found and creating laws about why people behave the way they do.

A problem with a nomothetic approach, however, is that it often overlooks the richness of human experience because quantitative scores are often only focused on, rather than the actual individual because the subjective experience of the situation is ignored.

The focus on prediction and control in the nomothetic approach means that the whole person is often lost with just a focus on generalities.

Despite these problems, the nomothetic approach has enabled psychologists to establish norms of typical behaviours, which means that it has given psychology as a subject more scientific credibility. Its use of statistical analysis has allowed psychologists to infer things about a given sample or population so explanations of human behaviour are created which apply universally.
Chapter 4: Issues and debates

106–107 Ethical implications of research studies and theory

**Introduction to ethical implications**

**Activity type** Starter

This is an excellent demonstration of ethical issues displayed by Derren Brown. He explores de-individuation by manipulating an audience into making group decisions that ultimately lead to increasingly more severe negative consequences for the star contestant in a hoax gameshow in which they are participating. The anonymity of the audience is further increased by them making collective decisions whilst wearing masks that hide their faces. At the end of the show they are led to believe that they have contributed to the contestant’s potential death so there is an excellent opportunity to discuss the ethics of the show as well. The programme can be found on 4 On Demand under Derren Brown/the experiments/remote control (season one episode 2). It is 52 minutes long.

Before watching the programme, ask the students to identify all of the key ethical guidelines (i.e. deception, lack of informed consent, privacy, confidentiality, psychological harm).

After watching the programme, ask the students to write a comment underneath each heading as to how the study broke each of the guidelines. Also ask the students also consider the wider implications of results to society – e.g. positive and negative consequences of the results.

**Practical use**

This can be used as an introduction to socially sensitive research or a consolidation at the end of the topic.

**Additional notes**

A suitable follow-up activity would be to have the students practise their research methods skills by writing a debriefing statement for the study.

**Socially sensitive research**

**Activity type** Idea

Give the students a definition of socially sensitive research and then ask students to explain how the topic areas below are socially sensitive by focusing in particular on three factors:

(i) The implications for the groups of people the results represent.

(ii) What would the research be used for?

(iii) Potential issues with the validity of the research.

**Topic areas**

Research into homosexuality that classified it as a mental illness.

Research into the genetic basis of intelligence such as Sir Cyril Burt’s (1955) research which suggested that intelligence was hereditary.

Research into race differences in intelligence, e.g. Jensen’s (1969) finding that black people scored 10–15 points lower on IQ tests.

**Practical use**

This is best done as an introductory discussion activity. Students are given a topic area and then work in groups and explain how the research is socially sensitive.

**Additional notes**

A suitable extension activity would be to have students think of their own studies and explain why they are socially sensitive.

**References**


Answers

Homosexuals could be discriminated against as they are viewed as clinically abnormal. Results could be used by psychiatrists or homophobes to attempt to cure them through things like electric shock treatment. The research would lack temporal validity as it was based on previous versions of the classification systems.

The 11 plus test was devised to ascertain who was intelligent enough to go to grammar school. This test disadvantaged a generation of children and was based on flawed methods of assessment (IQ tests assess experience as much as intelligence and students can be trained to pass). The research lacked validity as Burt was found to have falsified his results.

This was used by racists to justify discrimination against black people in terms of jobs and education opportunities. There were other factors that could have explained their lower scores aside from genes, such as social disadvantages and cultural unfamiliarity with tests. Thus the scores lacked validity.

Where would we be if it weren’t for …?

Activity type Evaluation

Students work in groups to explain how society would have been different if one of the pieces of research on the accompanying handout had not been carried out. In order to do this, they need to think of both the positive and negative consequences on society that the research has produced. See model answers to the activity in the Answers section below for examples of how they would do this.

The students could also do the extension task to explain why the research would be classified as socially sensitive.

Practical use

This can be done as a group activity or as an individual or pairs activity where all of the questions on the handout are completed as opposed to just one.

Additional notes

This provides a good foundation to exam questions where students will have to discuss ethical implications of socially sensitive research. It provides a good counterpoint to the view that the research should not have been carried out given how unethical it was.

Students can find out a little more about Rosenhan’s research from this 7-minute clip www.youtube.com/watch?v=D8OxdGV_7lo and about Selye’s research on page 254.

Example answers

1. Bowlby’s maternal deprivation hypothesis – the idea that a child needs a continuous relationship with a mother figure in the first five years of life in order to develop normally. Disruption to this bond through separation from the mother figure can have a negative effect on later social, emotional and intellectual development.

   People would not have recognised the negative effects of hospitalisation on a child’s emotional well-being. Today parents stay in hospital with their child and this aids the child’s recovery.

   It challenged women’s emancipation because it suggests their place is in the home and they can’t have a career.

2. Milgram’s study of obedience – research found that under certain circumstances people will obey orders to cause someone else harm if instructed to by an authority figure.

   People would not have recognised how mindlessly obedient people can be. This has led to society having a different view about why genocide occurs as it not necessarily down to acts carried out by evil people but rather those who are just following orders.

   However, it perhaps has also led to people being less inclined to take responsibility for their own actions and instead, blaming those in authority who are responsible for them. For example, teachers receiving the blame when the results of their students are poor.

3. Loftus’s research on eyewitness testimony – research that found that people’s ability to recall crime events accurately was poorer than people thought and was also affected by leading questions and anxiety.

   More people would be wrongly convicted due to mistaken eyewitness testimony.
Chapter 4: Issues and debates

106 – 107

Ethical implications of research studies and theory

The research would have encouraged police forces to use other more reliable means of evidence such as DNA testing.

4. Rosenhan’s ‘sane in insane places’ study – research that found that a group of normal people who acted like they were mentally ill were all admitted to psychiatric institutions and were kept there from 19 to 52 days despite acting normally as soon as they were admitted.

The classification systems used to diagnose mental illness would not have been as extensively revised so that psychiatrists are now far more thorough when deciding whether somebody should be classified as being mentally ill.

A negative consequence would be that people are potentially less trusting of mental health professionals and are more likely to question the judgements they make.

5. Selye’s research on the General Adaptation Syndrome – research that found that rats exposed to stressful situations eventually became ill.

There is a greater recognition in society that stress can lead to illness so people are more likely to have medical check-ups if they do particularly stressful jobs.

A negative implication is that workplaces may experience more employee absence due to doctors signing people off work with stress.

6. The bobo doll study – Bandura found that children exposed to role models being aggressive to a bobo doll also became aggressive themselves.

People would not have recognised that exposure to violent images on TV/films/video games could encourage impressionable young people to imitate them. Nowadays there are age restrictions on aspects of the media that are deemed to have unsuitable content.

A negative consequence of this research is that people are less likely to take responsibility for their own actions if they perform an antisocial act – instead blaming the role models in their lives for acting in a way that could ‘lead them astray’.

Socially sensitive research ladder word

Activity type Consolidation

Students need to read the clues and work out what the missing word is or read the sentence and work out what word has been missed out from the sentence and then write the answers in the grid.

Practical use

This could be used as a plenary or as a revision exercise or could be set as a piece of homework. An alternative way you could use the sheet is to put the students into groups and get them to complete against each other with the winner being the group that finish the quickest.

Additional notes

This could be as an extension activity for students who have finished. Alternatively, you could have the students complete the activity in groups and get them to complete against each other with the winner being the group that finish it in the fastest time.

Answers

Across

1 Who made up the finding that when adverts for Coca-Cola, etc., were flashed up on cinema screens quickly, the sales increased significantly? (7 letters) **Packard**

4 Who was publically discredited for doing fraudulent research on IQ that influenced the 11+ exam being introduced? (4) **Burt**

6 What kind of testimony has social sensitive research helped by reducing the risk of a miscarriage of justice in the legal system? (10) **Eyewitness**

7 & 3 What two psychologists said social sensitive research is described as ‘studies in which there are potential consequences or implications either directly for the participants in the research or for the class of individuals represented by research’? (6, 7) **Sieber**

9 Who said that psychologists may have a social responsibility to carry out research that may be social sensitive? (7) **Aronson**

4.14 handout number
One of the criticisms of socially sensitive research is that has given ‘scientific’ credence to P_______ and D_________, e.g. examining racial basis of intelligence. (9,14) Prejudice

What two psychologists noted that research on ‘alternative relationships’ had been guilty of a form of heterosexual bias where relationships were compared and judged against heterosexual norms? (9,5) Kitzinger

See 11 across Coyle
See 7 across Stanley
Who was an advisor to the World Health Organisation who said in infants, mother love was as important in mental health, as vitamins are in physical health? (6) Bowlby
See 10 across Discrimination
In the race and IQ controversy, who criticised research on race and intelligence on account of its scientific racism? (5) Gould
**Sing, draw, mime or create me**  
**Activity type** Consolidation

Students need to get into teams of 3–5 and then send a member of their team to the front of the class to pick an activity from the activity cards pile and a key word from the key word pile. The activity card will inform them whether they have to sing, draw, mime or create a model out of plasticine to demonstrate the key word. If the students have to sing the key word, they cannot use the actual key word in their song. Also, if they are drawing the word then they cannot use any actual words or letters in their drawing. If the team members fail to guess the word then the first person from the other team to put their hand up and get the correct answer will win the key word card. Students need to take turns until all 20 key words have been demonstrated. The winning team is the group with the most key word cards.

**Practical use**
This can be used as a revision activity once the topic has been completed. You could make it more difficult by either allowing or not allowing the students to look up what the key concept means if they don’t know.

**Additional notes**
You will need to print out the resources onto card and laminate them. You will need some tubs of different coloured plasticine, a board to draw on and a timer.