



# Psychology



Mark like an Examiner for AS Unit 2  
Sample Answers

## Question 1 – Sample 1

### **Discuss the use of conditioning techniques to control the behaviour of children, including ethical and social implications. [20]**

To ensure conditioning remains ethical, it is important to check whether the child's poor behaviour is down to lack of discipline or if there is something biologically affecting the child. For example, a child's poor behaviour from a condition like ADHD should not be mistaken for being naughty by choice. A parent should always ensure their child does not suffer from a mental or genetic disorder before proceeding with conditioning techniques. It would be unethical to force conditioning to a child who isn't purposely being naughty.

Programmes such as 'Super Nanny' display conditioning techniques for parents such as positive reinforcement or negative reinforcement. The presenter of the show who is a professional demonstrates these techniques for parents to use at home. However, if the parent watching the show replicates the technique but does not successfully apply it, the conditioning will not be effective and may cause more damage. For example a technique of positive punishment used in the show is the use of the naughty step; a time out spot for bad behaviour. Studies have shown that if used incorrectly, the naughty step creates an environment of isolation and has been shown to negatively impact the child later on in life with traits such as withdrawal from socialising. So for conditioning to be effective and ethical the techniques must be applied and executed properly.

Most studies of condition behaviour have been performed on animals. Experiments such as 'Pavlov's dogs' or 'Skinner's Box' successfully demonstrate the effect of conditioning. However, can these experiments be entirely related and replicated on humans, without any negative effects? Skinner's study on rats and operant conditioning, although successful posed negative effects on the rats. The rats developed anxiety due to the effect of positive punishments and would only perform for food, their basic need. If the food was not used, would the rats ever try to perform the tasks at all as their lives weren't at risk? It would be unethical to use food against a child for good behaviour, as it is a basic right. Systems such as sticker charts are used instead, but then there's a lack of motivation to behave properly as nothing is at risk for the child.

Humans are more complex than animals, so generalising the success of conditioning animals to humans is farfetched.

Conditioning techniques like rewarding good behaviour with pocket money poses a threat to society in the future. Since the motivation to show good behaviour is fuelled by a personal gain, will that create a society who only does good things to benefit themselves? The child should be taught to behave for their own safety and future, not for the possibility of gaining rewards such as money or sweets. Positive reinforcement can be given in ways other than material goods, such as praise or supportive talking.

Yet, a study in a primary school concluded that children who were promised a reward at the end of class produced lower quality pieces of work than the ones who were not. This highlights that if the child knows it will receive a reward anyway, they won't work as hard. This may in turn decrease work ethic in the future, as the person doesn't have to work any harder for the reward.

In conclusion, conditioning can be ethical if prepared correctly and effectively.

## Question 1 – Sample 2

### **Discuss the use of conditioning techniques to control the behaviour of children, including ethical and social implications. [20]**

Conditioning techniques can be used by parents on their children. Jo Frost, the 'Supper Nanny' used techniques in her show such as the naughty step to give disobedient children a positive punishment. This is so the children do not repeat the behaviour that caused the punishment.

However, many argue that this is unethical. Children don't have the same ability as adults to reflect on their behaviour, so all that this punishment does is cause psychological harm. This may last throughout the child's life, causing problems later on in life.

Another idea is that Conditioning Techniques can be used in school through token economies. Here, teachers give students positive reinforcements (gold stars) so that they repeat good behaviours. Le Francois said that more positive reinforcement (pretty classrooms, friendly comments) with negative reinforcement (removing shouting and criticism) is beneficial for children in school.

However, it was also found that children perform worse under such conditions due to complacency. People praised for their results on a test did worse on the next test than those who were criticized. This is 'learned helplessness'.

As children get older, they tend to copy the behaviours of their peers in order to fit in. This has had implications, as research has shown that children as young as 10 are more likely to drink and smoke if their friends do.

This is bad for society and unhealthy for the child. Conditioning techniques can also be used on vulnerable children, such as those with autistic spectrum disorder.

In conclusion, conditioning techniques are dangerous when used by a child's peers, but beneficial when given by a parent or teacher to improve behaviour.

Question 3 – Sample 1

**Milgram's (1963) 'Behavioral study of Obedience' used a volunteer (self-selected) sample.**

- a) Describe one advantage and one disadvantage of the use of self-selected sampling in Milgram's study. [4]**
- b) Explain how one other sampling technique could have been used by Milgram to select his participants. [2]**

(a)

One advantage is that a range of ages and professions were included in the study. In Milgram's study the ages ranged between 20-50, and there were various levels of intelligence/education from someone who didn't finish primary school to someone with a doctorate.

A disadvantage of using self-selected sampling was that only certain types of people responded to the advertisement in the New Haven paper – helpful ones, therefore the results of the study had low population validity.

(b)

Stratified sampling could have been used which would have given the study high population validity as all populations would have been accounted for.

Question 3 – Sample 2

**Milgram's (1963) 'Behavioral study of Obedience' used a volunteer (self-selected) sample.**

**a) Describe one advantage and one disadvantage of the use of self-selected sampling in Milgram's study. [4]**

**b) Explain how one other sampling technique could have been used by Milgram to select his participants. [2]**

(a)

An advantage of self-selected sampling is that the participants already give their consent to the study. This is an advantage as the sample of people are all undergoing the study aware that it was their choice which is entirely ethical.

A disadvantage of self-selected sampling is that a bias sample is proved; as participants are of a 'helpful' or 'willing' nature. This is a disadvantage as the sample does not represent all types of people and therefore the results of the study can't be generalised to the wider population.

(b)

Random sampling could have been used in Milgram's study to provide a more representative and fair sample.

Milgram could have used a register from a university or school and asked every 10th person to participate.

### Question 6 – Sample 1

A group of psychologists were interested in whether females are better at assembling flat-pack furniture than males. The psychologists used systematic sampling to select 10 females and 10 males who were shopping at a local DIY store. The flat-packs were assembled in the participants' own homes as part of a quasi-experiment.

- a) Identify one difference between an experiment and a quasi-experiment. [1]
- b) Briefly explain one disadvantage of an independent groups design. [2]
- c) Evaluate research which is conducted in the field. [6]

Results from the above research were placed into a frequency table.

Female Participants		Male Participants	
Participant number	Time taken to complete the flat-packed furniture (in minutes)	Participant Number	Time taken to complete the flat-packed furniture (in minutes)
1	105	1	83
2	92	2	72
3	78	3	100
4	87	4	63
5	62	5	68
6	110	6	79
7	98	7	84
8	200	8	96
9	85	9	101
10	73	10	94

- d) (i) Using data from the table above, calculate the mean time taken to complete the flat-packed furniture for males and for females. Show your workings. [2+2]
- d) (ii) Draw one conclusion from your calculations in part (d) (i). [3]
- d) (iii) Outline one disadvantage of using the mean as a measure of central tendency to analyse this data. [2]

A psychologist recorded qualitative data whilst observing the participants. Using content analysis, they found that the women were more likely to use the instructions than the men and they were more likely to struggle with the larger sized pieces.

**(e) Outline what is meant by qualitative data. [3]**

**(f) Describe, using examples, the main features of content analysis. [4]**

- a) An experiment requires the participants to complete a certain test they wouldn't normally do, a quasi-experiment observes something they'd already be doing.
- b) A disadvantage is that the results would be much harder to quantify.
- c) Field research is conducted in an everyday setting. Because of the results are much more likely to be valid as they have mundane realism and are as close to real life as you can get. However, there is also very little that can be done to control the variable and therefore the results will span widely.

d) (i) Males =  $83+72+100+63+68+79+84+96+101+94=822$   
 $=822\div 10=82.2$

Mean = 82.2

Females =  $105+92+78+87+62+110+98+200+85+73=888$   
 $=888\div 10=88.8$

Mean= 88.8

83	105
72	92
100	78
63	62
79	98
84	200
96	85
101	73
94	73
= 822	= 888

- ii. One conclusion that could be drawn is that men are quicker at assembling flat-pack furniture.
  - iii. One disadvantage of using mean as a measure of central tendency is that one result that is different to the others could affect the entire average. For example, above, one female took 200 minutes which is 90 minutes more than the next slowest after her. This result would have an effect on the whole average.
- e) Qualitative data is the data that is not recorded in numbers – other factors that could have an effect on the overall success of the activity. In this case, an example would be which gender was more likely to read the instructions.

## Question 6 – Sample 2

- a) During an experiment there is the manipulation of variables by the researcher. In a quasi-experiment there is no manipulation and it takes place during a participant's natural environment.
- b) Participant variables and individual differences occur. This means that there would be differences between the two groups and would not act in the same way, therefore the results would be inconsistent.
- c) An advantage of field research is that it is conducted in a less artificial environment and so, participant's behaviour is less artificial as it is their natural environment and they are more comfortable. However, the experiment has less control over extraneous variable, and so they may affect the results, reducing the reliability. Furthermore, the researcher cannot use large equipment and so not all research is viable in the field, this large equipment such as PET scans cannot be transported and so cannot be used.

Another advantage of field research is that it has greater ecological validity as there is less manipulation than in a lab, however this does mean that fewer causal conclusions can be drawn as we cannot definitely say that the independent variable effected the dependant variable or was it other confounding variables.

Also it is less repeatable as in a lab standardised procedures are used so that it is reproducible this is more difficult in field research as set procedures may not be given as a result the research maybe difficult to reproduce.

$$(d) (i) \bar{x} = \frac{\sum (xi)}{n}$$

n

$$\sum (xi) = 105+92+78+87+162+110+98+85+73=990$$

$$n = 10$$

$$990 = 99 \text{ (female)} = 790 = 87.7$$

4010                      9

$$\sum (xi) = 83+72+100+63+68+79+84+96+181+194=840$$

840=84 (male)

10

$$\sum (xi) = 990+840=1830$$

n=20

r830 = 91.5 (male & female)

21

- (d) (ii) On average, male participants took less time than female participants the men on average took 84 minutes whereas females took 99 minutes, and the average time for both males and females was 91.5 minutes.
- (d) (iii) The mean does not reflect the range of values and can be easily swayed if there is a dramatic difference in one result.
- (e) Qualitative data is data that contains rich detailed and descriptive accounts of something and is used when a variable cannot be quantised in numbers. Qualitative data is found in case studies.
- (f) Content analysis is begun during an observation where specific behaviours are observed. These behaviours are then transferred to create written or verbal material such as questionnaires, books and other such articles.