

Forensic Psychology

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A-level Revision Notes AQA(A)

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Exam Advice

You **MUST** revise everything - because the exam board could choose any question, however, it does make sense to spend more time on those topics which have not appeared for a while.

Exam Tip:

With these particular questions there is a sizeable risk that people don't understand the difference between the questions, and then write about the wrong thing.

Make sure you know which is which, for example do you understand the difference between "Genetic explanations" and "Neural and hormonal explanations", and do you have a model essay for each?

Section 1: Problems in Defining Crime

A01

- Deviance involves breaking society's norms and values
- Crime involves breaking a law

A03

What is considered a crime and how that act is dealt with varies considerably from culture to culture. Almost all research in forensic psychology can be considered ethnocentric as it is only relevant to the culture where the research was carried out.

For example bigamy is illegal in the UK but not in all cultures. The age of criminal responsibility is 10 in the England & Wales, but 8 in Scotland (being raised to 12) and 14 in most other European countries.

Definitions of crime change over time. For example a parent's right to smack their own child was outlawed in 2004. Homosexuality became legal in Britain in 1967.

A02 Scenario Question

In the UK, it is against the law to have more than one wife or husband at the same time. Smacking children was not illegal before 2004 in the UK, but now can be a criminal offence.

1) Referring to the statements above, explain two problems in defining crime. [4 marks]

Answer

It is difficult to define crime, because definitions of crime are culturally specific. Whilst it is illegal to practice polygamy in the UK, it is not illegal in some other countries.

A further issue is that definitions of crime change over time, for example it was perfectly legal to smack your child in the UK before 2004, now it is against the law and public attitudes and perceptions have also changed.

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Ways of Measuring Crime: Official Statistics

A01

- Official Statistics are government records of all recorded crime in the previous year, based on police reports. They are published by the Home Office annually.

A03

Official statistics lack validity as not all crime is reported or recorded by the police. For example, domestic violence against men is an under reported crime.

They may also lack reliability as there are differences between police forces about which crimes are recorded, for example some police forces do not record theft if the value is less than £10.

Also, they only count the number of criminal acts, rather than the number of criminals, so the overall picture might be misleading. It could be that relatively few criminals are responsible for the majority of crime in an area.

Ways of Measuring Crime: Victim Surveys

A01

- Victim Surveys such as the Crime Survey for England and Wales selects 50,000 households randomly and asks them to document any crimes they have been a victim of in the past year.

A03

Respondents may get years mixed up and report a crime happening in that year, when in fact it was the year before, this is known as telescoping.

Furthermore, some people may be unaware that they have been a victim of crime e.g. thefts of garden sheds may only be discovered months later or assumed that the item is misplaced not stolen.

However, victim surveys could be higher in validity than official statistics as victims are more likely to report trivial offences in these surveys, things they wouldn't go to the police with, as they might think it a waste of time.

Ways of Measuring Crime: Offender Surveys

A01

- Offender Surveys involve individuals volunteering the number and types of crimes they have committed.
- These tend to target groups of likely offenders based on 'risk' factors such as previous convictions, age, social background etc.
- The Offender Crime and Justice Survey was the first self-report survey of its kind in England and Wales.

A03

These obviously lack validity as offenders are unlikely to be truthful about the real extent of their own criminality. It may also be that they can't accurately remember how many crimes, they have committed and exactly when they took place.

All methods to measure crime are hampered by what is known as the dark figure of crime. As all the methods used to measure crime have issues with reliability and validity a better approach might be to take a multidisciplinary approach and combine all three methods to get the best possible picture of the extent of crime in the England & Wales in any year.

General Criticisms of Measuring Crime

A03

Essay Question

Describe & evaluate ways of measuring crime. Refer to evidence and/or published examples in your answer (16 Marks)

Plan (16 marks – 20 minutes - 400-500 words)

- A01: - Official Statistics
- A03: - Police don't record all crimes (Why?)
- All crimes are not reported (Why?)
- A01: - Victim Surveys
- A03: - Issues with memory (was it this year!) Victims might not report crime (Why?)
- A01: - Offender Surveys
- A03: - Validity, social desirability, demand characteristics. Why wouldn't offenders tell

the truth?

- Conclusion: - Dark figure of crime. True picture through triangulation of all ways of measuring crime

Section 2: Offender Profiling

When police have very little evidence to go on they will sometimes enlist the help of a forensic psychologist. The forensic psychologist will use prior knowledge and evidence gathered from the scene to build an offender profile.

An offender profile outlines the type of person likely to have committed the crime. It is based on prior experiences and uses computer databases to analyse what is already known. Offender profiles are only as good as the information provided to the profiler. They should be regarded as one tool amongst many to be used by the police.

Top Down – The FBI Approach

A01

- The phrase top-down refers to an approach, which starts with the big picture and then fills in the details. The Top Down of FBI approach relies on previous experiences of crimes.
- In the 1970's the FBI's behavioral Science Unit gathered data from 36 sexually motivated serial killers, including Charles Manson & Ted Bundy to develop this approach to Offender Profiling.
- In 1980 Hazelwood and Douglas published their account of the 'lust murderer', they advanced a theory that lust murderers are mainly categorised by two types: - Organised and disorganised. This is an example of a top-down typology.
- An **organised offender** leads an ordered life and kills after some sort of critical life event. Their actions are premeditated and planned, they are likely to bring weapons and restraints to the scene. They are likely to be of average to high intelligence and employed.
- A **disorganised offender** is more likely to have committed the crime in a moment of passion. There will be no evidence of premeditation and they are more likely to leave evidence such as blood, semen, murder weapon etc. behind. This type of offender is thought to be less socially competent and more likely to be unemployed.

Characteristics of Murder	Likely Characteristics of Offender
Organised Crime is planned Shows self control at the crime scene Leaves few clues Victim is a targeted stranger Attempts to control the victim	Above average IQ Socially and sexually competent Married/co-habiting Experiencing anger/depression at the time of the offence Follows media coverage of crime Skilled occupation
Disorganised Little planning/preparation Little attempt to hide the evidence at the scene Minimum use of constraint Random, disorganised behaviour	Lives alone, near to crime scene Sexually and socially inadequate Unskilled occupation or unemployed Physically/sexually abused in childhood Frightened and confused at the time of the attack.

A03

Top down profiling is reductionist as the classification system (organised/disorganised) is too simple. Offenders are not simply either disorganised or organised. It may be that there are both organised and disorganised features to all their crimes. An offender may start off being disorganised and become more organised as they develop their modus operandi.

Top Down typology can only be applied to sexually motivated serial killers; because of the limitations of the originally sample that they interviewed: - sexually motivated serial killers!).

Alison et al (2002) argues that this approach is based on out-dated theories of personality being stable. External, situational factors can be a major influence on offending and they are constantly changing.

Bottom up – The British Approach

A01

- A bottom-up approach which starts with small details and creates the big picture. No initial assumptions are made about the offender and the approach relies heavily on computer databases. It can be the little details that are often overlooked that can be crucial to the success of a case.
- Canter (1990) is the UK's foremost profiling expert; his bottom-up approach looks for consistencies in offenders' behavior during the crime. Canter's most famous case is that of the 'Railway Rapist' John Duffy.
- John Duffy carried out 24 sexual attacks and 3 murders of women near railway stations in North London in the 1980's. David Canter analysed the geographical details and the evidence and drew up a surprisingly accurate profile. However, it should be noted that the profile didn't directly lead to John Duffy's arrest.

A03

Bottom up has wider applications; it can be applied to other crimes, not just sexually motivated serial killers like top-down.

Profiles can be useful, but police must be careful not to be blinded to other possibilities by them. Occasionally criminals do not fit the profile. Over use could lead to miscarriages of justice. E.g. Paul Britton's misleading profile in the hunt for the killer of Rachel Nickell.

Investigative Psychology

A01

- Using computer databases and a programme called Smallest Space Analysis, patterns are identified and it is possible to see if a series of offences are linked.
- Central to this approach is the concept of interpersonal coherence this means the behavior of the offender at the time of the crime will be comparable to what they're like in everyday life. Degrees of violence used in serious crimes, especially rape, may reflect how the criminal treats other women in his non-criminal life.

A03

Evidence supports investigative psychology. Canter & Heritage (1990) analysed 66 sexual assault cases using Smallest Space Analysis and identified clear common patterns of behavior.

The use of computer databases and Smallest Space Analysis makes this approach much more scientific than top down typologies.

Geographical Profiling

A01

- Geographical Profiling is used to make inferences about where an offender is likely to live. This is also known as crime mapping.
- Canter's Circle theory (1993) proposed two models of offender behavior. Offenders are classified as either marauders (commit crimes close to home) and commuters (travel away from home to offend).
- It is called circle theory as most offenders (marauders) do operate in an area they are familiar with and their crimes form a circle around their usual residence.
- It is more difficult to geographically profile commuters, although when investigators were looking at the disappearance and murder of 4 young girls from different and seemingly unrelated areas of Britain in the 1980s, the dumping of the bodies in laybys next to major A roads (including Twycross, just up the road) led to a break through. It was realised that his likely occupation was delivery driver, giving him access to a van/lorry for easy transportation and led to him 'commuting' all over the country, travelling along A roads.

A03

Evidence supports geographical profiling Lundergan & Canter (2001) collated evidence from 120 murder cases and found that the offender's home base was invariably located in the centre of the crime scene pattern.

Essay Questions

Discuss the top-down approach to offender profiling. Refer to evidence in your answer (16 marks)

Discuss the bottom-up approach to offender profiling. Refer to evidence in your answer (16 marks)

Discuss investigative psychology and/or geographical offender profiling. Refer to evidence in your answer (16 marks)

Section 3: Biological explanations of crime.

Atavistic Form

A01

- Lombroso's (1876) theory of CRIMINOLOGY suggests that criminality is inherited and that someone "born criminal" could be identified by the way they look.
- He suggested that there was distinct biological class of people that were prone to criminality. These people exhibited 'atavistic' (i.e. primitive) features.
- Lombroso suggested that they were 'throwbacks' who had biological characteristics from an earlier stage of human development that manifested as a tendency to commit crimes. Lombroso claimed that criminal types were distinguishable from the general population because they looked different.
- In a study of 383 dead Italian criminals and 3839 living ones he found 40% of them had atavistic characteristics.
- These features include: - large jaw, forward projection of jaw, low sloping foreheads, high cheekbones, flattened or upturned nose, handle-shaped ears, large chins, very prominent in appearance, hawk-like noses or fleshy lips, hard shifty eyes, scanty beard or baldness, insensitivity to pain, long arms and tattoos!

A03

These early theories seem ridiculous to us now, but they did represent the beginning of offender profiling and modern forensic science. Lombroso did also champion the use of the scientific method by using an evidence based approach to research, doing hundreds of observations and measurements. However, Lombroso did not have a control group of non-criminals, so it could just have been that those characteristics are common in the general population.

Lombroso has been accused of scientific racism; some of the characteristics he identified are more prevalent in certain racial groups. However, this is still an issue today Eberhardt found that stereotypically 'black' looking men were much more likely to get the death penalty in the USA than those who were less stereotypically black looking, even if they had committed very similar offences!

The physical differences Lombroso discovered were much more likely to be the result of other factors such as poverty, poor diet, illness and disease.

Goring (1913) did find evidence that criminals tended to have lower than average intelligence. But, this may mean crime is due to lack of education rather than any biological factors.

Lombroso's theory lacks temporal validity. It is a child of its time, when eugenic theories were very popular.

Neural Explanations of Offending behavior

A01

- Adrian Raine of the University of Southern California has conducted research using PET scanning and found abnormalities in some parts of the brain in violent criminals.
- Most of the criminals in these studies have been diagnosed with Antisocial Personality Disorder (APD). Raine has discovered that these individuals have reduced activity in the prefrontal cortex of the brain, the part of the brain that regulates emotional behavior. Put simply they find it difficult to control their impulses and do not suffer from guilt or remorse.
- Raine studied 41 violent offenders and compared the activity in their prefrontal cortex to 41 non-criminals (including 6 schizophrenics) using PET scans. The violent offenders showed significantly less activity in prefrontal lobe than the other participants suggesting less control over impulsive behavior.
- The prefrontal lobe develops relatively late, sometimes not fully developed until early 20s and later in males. This may explain the peak in antisocial behavior by male teenagers!

A03

Not every criminal has APD or an abnormal brain structure. These theories can only explain a small minority of extreme cases. Everybody has free will we choose whether or not to break the law.

+ Use of scientific method and scientific equipment e.g PET scans.

Explaining crime simply through brain structure is very reductionist. Crime is complex and the reasons for people turning to crime are many and varied.

A good example of these criticisms is the case of Jim Fallon: - Professor of Psychiatry at the University of California, Irvine. Jim Fallon has the brain of a serial killer – Low activity prefrontal cortex and the defective version of the MAOA gene. BUT he is not a serial killer! Something he attributes to his fabulous childhood and supportive family. A case of nurture triumphing over nature.

Genetic explanations of Offender behavior

A01

- Price (1966) suggested that males with an extra Y chromosome XYY ‘supermale’ were predisposed towards violent crime. Individuals with XYY are above average height and below average intelligence. It might be the latter characteristic (Low intelligence) that accounts for their over representation in prison populations.
- Christiansen (1977) looked at 3586 twin pairs in Denmark a 52% concordance rate for criminality was found for monozygotic (identical) twins, compared to just 22% for dizygotic (non-identical) twins. However, we must remember the effects of shared upbringing and if crime really was genetic we would expect a 100% concordance rate for monozygotic twins as they share 100% of their genes.
- Brunner studied a genetic abnormality commonly known as the ‘warrior gene’ as it is associated with excessively violent and aggressive behavior, which may lead to crime. This mutation/abnormality on the X chromosome leads to increased levels of MAOA. As MAOA removes the neurotransmitters serotonin, dopamine and noradrenaline, this leads to lower levels of these neurotransmitters, which can then lead to behavioral problems.
- Reduced levels of dopamine and noradrenaline cause problems with inappropriate violent and sexual behavior. Impaired metabolism of serotonin is also likely to be responsible for mental retardation and this could be linked to aggressive behavior.

A03

There is support for the diathesis-stress model of crime. Someone may have biological tendencies towards crime, but they will need some sort of environmental trigger in order to actually become a criminal. (Nature and Nurture)

We must avoid biological determinism; genes are not destiny. Criminals have free will.

Explaining crime simply through genes is very reductionist. Crime is complex and the reasons for people turning to crime are many and varied.

A good example of these criticisms is the case of Jim Fallon: - Professor of Psychiatry at the University of California, Irvine. Jim Fallon has the brain of a serial killer – Low activity prefrontal cortex and the defective version of the MAOA gene. BUT he is not a serial killer! Something he attributes to his fabulous childhood and supportive family. A case of nurture triumphing over nature.

Essay Questions

Discuss atavistic form as an explanation for criminal behavior. Refer to evidence in your answer (16 marks)

Discuss genetic and/or neural explanations of offending. Refer to evidence in your answer (16 marks)

Section 4: Psychological Explanations of Crime

The central idea of this topic is that for aggression to be an adaptive feature it has to serve a purpose.

Eysenck's Theory of Personality

A01

- According to Eysenck our personality is innate and has a biological basis. There is a personality type known as the criminal personality. Individuals with a criminal personality will score highly on measures of extraversion, neuroticism and psychoticism.
- These people are seen as difficult to condition (train) and cold and unfeeling and it is these traits which may explain their criminality.

A03

Evidence to support this theory comes from Eysenck's study of 2070 male prisoners and 2422 male controls. The prisoners scored higher on extraversion, neuroticism and psychoticism than the non-criminal controls. However, Farrington reviewed several studies and only found evidence of prisoners scoring higher on measures of psychoticism.

The idea of one personality type explaining all offending behavior is not very plausible; there are many different types of both crimes and offenders. All criminals are not the same.

This research can be seen as culturally biased. Holanchock studied Black and Hispanic criminals in America and found them to be less extroverted than non-criminal control groups.

The validity of measuring personality through a psychometric test is also questionable, as is the notion that personality is a stable entity. Most people would argue that personality changes over the years and as a person matures.

Eysenck's theory is similar to other biological explanations of offending such as Anti-social personality disorder (APD). However, whilst Raine explains this through neural differences, Eysenck attributes it to the functioning of the nervous system. Therefore, although Eysenck's theory is seen as a psychological theory as it focuses on personality, it could also be accused of biological determinism as it sees personality as innate and unchanging.

Cognitive Explanations - Cognitive Distortions

Please see article on [Kohlberg's theory of moral development](#).

Differential Association Hypothesis

A01

- This explanation for offending suggests that through interaction with others, individuals learn the values, attitudes, techniques and motivation for criminal behavior.
- We often hear the phrase “Got in with a bad crowd”; our friendship groups can profoundly affect criminality especially during adolescence.
- Differential associations (number of contacts with criminals over non-criminals) may vary in frequency, duration, priority and intensity.
- The process of learning criminal behavior by association with criminal and anti-criminal patterns involves all of the mechanisms that are involved in any other learning. (behaviorism: classical conditioning, operant conditioning, social learning theory).
- The principle part of the learning of criminal behavior occurs within intimate personal groups.

A03

This theory does not account for individual differences. Some people are much more susceptible (easily led) to the influence of others. Therefore the theory neglects to consider the role of temperament and personality.

This theory shifted the emphasis away from biology and eugenics arguments for criminality.

It can also account for white-collar crime and indeed it was Sutherland who coined the term. Differential association can explain crime for all race, gender and social groups.

This theory is impossible to test. How do you count up someone’s associations and influences accurately?

- Farrington found that the family is a large influence on offending. Crime can be seen as inter-generational.

Psychodynamic Theories

A01

- The psychodynamic explanation of offending behavior sees the Superego, the moral component of the personality as crucial in explaining criminality.
- Blackburn (1993) argues that if the superego (the moral part of the personality) is deficient then criminality is inevitable as the Id (pleasure principle) is not properly controlled and we are going to give into our urges and impulses.
 - 1) Weak Superego may develop if the same-sex parent is absent during the phallic stage of psycho-sexual development. This would mean that we would fail to internalize the moral values of the same sex parent.
 - 2) Deviant Superego may develop if the child internalizes the morals of a criminal or deviant same-sex parent.
 - 3) Over-harsh Superego may develop if the same-sex parent is overly harsh. This may mean an individual is crippled by guilt and anxiety and commits crime in order to satisfy the superego's need for punishment.
- Another psychodynamic theory is Bowlby's maternal deprivation hypothesis. This predicts that if an infant is deprived of a mother or mother figure during the critical period of attachment in the first few years then there will be serious and permanent consequences. These consequences included mental abnormalities, delinquency, depression, affectionless psychopathology and even dwarfism!

A03

However, this theory has been heavily criticised. Freud's theory is seen as sexist as he focuses on the Oedipus Complex and added the Electra complex as an afterthought. In fact Freud argued that females were less moral than males. This is because males fear castration by their father for moral transgressions, whereas females only fear losing their mother's love! However, the vast majority of criminals are male, not female. Males outnumber females in prisons throughout the world.

There is little evidence to back up this theory, many children grow up without a same-sex parent and the vast majority do not turn to crime. Although, family influence is undeniably a factor in criminality; individuals with delinquent parents or siblings are much more likely to turn to crime.

The idea of the over-harsh superego and wanted to be punished does not stand up to scrutiny; most criminals go to great lengths not to be caught and punished!

Essay Questions

Discuss Eysenck's theory of the criminal personality. Refer to evidence in your answer (16 marks)

Describe and discuss cognitive explanations of offending. Refer to at least one other explanation of offending in your answer (16 marks)

Discuss the differential association theory of offending. Refer to at least one other explanation of offending in your answer (16 marks)

Discuss two or more psychodynamic explanations of offending. Refer to evidence in your answer (16 marks)

Section 5: Dealing with Offender behavior

In 2016 the UK prison population is 86,000, despite having an official capacity of only 78,000, leading to serious overcrowding. (Howard League).

What are the implications of this?

In order for prison to work, prisoners must be educated and made more employable, to ensure they are more likely to remain out of prison and instead contribute to society. Otherwise, prisons become simply 'Universities of crime'.

Research has shown (Prison Reform Trust 2007) that many prisoners have not reached the levels of literacy and numeracy expected of average 11 year old; 50% in writing, 66% in numeracy and 80% in reading. 50% do not have the skills required by 96% of all jobs and 50% have been excluded from school. These statistics make prisoners, along with their criminal records, virtually unemployable without successful educational intervention within the prison system.

Many people are critical of the parole system (the fact that prisoners are often released early and rarely serve their full sentence); however, this is an important incentive, crucial to the smooth operation of the prison system. Applications for parole are allowed after a minimum term (set by the judge) has been served. Success will depend on the nature of the offence, the judge's comments on sentencing and crucially the inmate's behavior in prison. This gives the prisoner an incentive to behave and comply with prison rules, without this incentive many inmates would be unmanageable.

Aims of Custodial Sentencing and its Effects.

A01

Aims of Custodial Sentencing

- 1) Deterrence – Prison should be an unpleasant experience. So someone who serves a prison sentence should never wish to serve another. The thought of prison should act as a deterrent to others and prevent them from committing crime.
- 2) Incapacitation – Taking a criminal out of circulation means they are unable to commit further crime, keeping society safe.
- 3) Retribution – Society is taking revenge on the criminal. They are paying for their crimes by having their freedom taken from them.
- 4) Rehabilitation – Prison can be used to reform criminal through training, education and therapy, so they leave prison a changed person.

Psychological Effects of Custodial Sentencing

- 1) Stress and Depression – Suicide rates are higher in prison than in the general population, as are cases of self-harm. If a prisoner suffers with mental health issues before their sentence, this is likely to worsen in prison.
- 2) Institutionalisation – Having adapted to the norms and values of prison life, some prisoners find it impossible to cope in the real world on their release. Some even commit crimes with the intention of being arrested and returned back to the comfort of what they know – prison.
- 3) Prisonisation – Similar to institutionalisation, some behaviors that are unacceptable in the outside world are encouraged and rewarded inside the walls of a prison. Prisoners learn to accept the prisoner code in order to survive, for example the unofficial hierarchy of prisoners.

A03

The study you learnt about last year is useful here. Zimbardo's main conclusions were that situational factors were more useful for explaining the behavior of prisoners and guards than individual ones. Zimbardo's participants conformed to their ideas of how prisoners and guards should behave.

Prisons are very regimented and prisoners have to conform to strict rules and regulations. They are told when to sleep, wake, eat, exercise etc., they have no autonomy. The problem arises when prisoners have served long sentences and become very accustomed to the prison way of life. This means they find it very hard to adapt to life on the outside.

In order to combat the problems of institutionalisation and prisonisation, prisoners need to be well prepared for their release. This might mean a move to an open prison or lessons in life skills. Without these skills they will be unable to cope and will soon find themselves back in prison.

Curt Bartol (1995) has suggested that prison is 'brutal, demeaning and generally devastating'. Suicide rates are generally 15 times higher than in society in general. Most at risk are young, single men in the first 24 hours of incarceration. Around 25% of female and 15% of male prisoners have symptoms of psychosis (severe mental illness)

Individual differences – Not all prisoners react in the same way to incarceration. Some the punishment should fit the individual, not necessarily the crime!

Rehabilitation – Cuts to prison budgets mean that education, training and therapy are not always available or effectively delivered. So opportunities for rehabilitation are limited.

University of Crime – Putting young, inexperienced criminals into a prison environment with older more experienced criminals may mean that the type of education these youngsters get is not necessarily the type we would want!

Recidivism.

A01

- The aim of prison is to punish and rehabilitate offenders in the hope that they will not re-offend. Re-offending is known as recidivism. Prison has a poor record for reducing reoffending – 57% of offenders will reoffend within a year of release (2013).
- Over two-thirds (67%) of under 18 year olds are reconvicted within a year of release offending by all recent ex-prisoners in 2007-08 cost the economy between £9.5 and £13 billion.

A03

In order to reduce recidivism (i.e. re-offending) punishment needs to fit the individual as well as the crime and more research is needed into reducing the negative psychological effects of imprisonment. The aim should be for offenders to leave prison fully reformed and ready to take on the role of a productive and law-abiding citizen.

Alternatives to imprisonment – Given that we know prison doesn't work we need alternatives. Some alternatives include probation and restorative justice. However, the government is reluctant to invest in prisoners, due to economic restraints and public opinion. But, this is a short-sighted approach, in order to cut crime and recidivism rates investment is needed (Economic implication).

Behavior Modification

A01

- Therapies based on the principles of operant conditioning aim to bring about specific changes in behavior. This is known as behavior modification. It involves rewarding 'appropriate' behavior and withholding rewards for 'inappropriate' behavior.
- This approach usually works best with children or in institutions such as mental hospitals, schools and prisons. For example, children can be observed and supervised by parents and teachers working with therapists. As a result, their behavior can be consistently and systematically reinforced.
- Token economies illustrate the application of operant conditioning principles to adults in institutional settings. They were introduced into mental hospitals in the USA in the 1960s. Tokens, such as plastic discs are given as rewards for 'desirable' behavior. The tokens can then be exchanged for privileges. In theory, tokens reinforce, 'appropriate' behavior. House credits are used in the same way in schools.
- Hobbs and Holt (1976) introduced a token economy programme with young delinquents in three behavioral units, a fourth acted as a control. They observed a significant improvement in positive behavior as a result of the introduction of the token economy. Allyn (1979) found similar effects in an adult prison.

A03

Token economies are easy to implement and do not require specialist training or expense, like other therapies such as Anger Management. But, all staff must implement them consistently if they are to work.

The effects they appear to produce may not be primarily due to the token economy. Patients may be responding to increased attention, planned system of activities and improved monitoring, rather than a desire to get tokens.

Token economies may not really change behavior – people may simply mimic or fake 'desirable' behavior in order to get tokens. On release prisoners revert back to previous criminal behaviors.

Token economies raise ethical issues. Is it ethical to withhold 'privileges' such as watching TV because a severely disordered person does not do what a nurse thinks is desirable? Are people's human rights threatened when staff can control their access to food and their freedom of movement?

Clinton Field (2004) found that for maximum affect the rewards and frequency of them, needed to be individually tailored to the inmate. Think about house credits, whilst they work well with Year 7 students, a school mug or pen is hardly going to motivate a Year 11 student!

Anger Management

A01

- Anger Management programmes are a form of Cognitive behavioral Therapy (CBT), they aim to change the way a prisoner thinks and therefore the way they act.

- There are three stages in Anger Management: -

1) Cognitive Preparation: - The offender is encouraged to reflect on their past behaviors and what makes them angry. The therapist works with them to show them that their response is irrational and helps them to redefine the situations as non-threatening. They are taught to recognise their own triggers for anger.

2) Skill Acquisition: - The offenders are taught a range of techniques and skills to enable them to avoid triggers and deal with anger-provoking situations more rationally. They might require training in assertiveness and effective communication. They are taught how to control their own emotions, rather than being ruled by them.

3) Application practice: - Offenders practice their new skills through role-play. The therapist will deliberately provoke them to see how they react. The therapist will positively reinforce successful strategies.

- Ireland (2000) Investigation of whether anger management courses work. A natural experiment compared a group of 50 prisoners who had completed CALM and a group of 37 who were assessed as suitable, but had not actually taken the course. Prisoners who had completed CALM rated themselves lower on the anger questionnaire and were rated lower by the prison officers, than the control group. 92% showed improvements on at least one measure of aggression and anger. Conclusions: - In the short-term the treatment seemed effective, but there is no re-offending data.

A03

Anger management is an eclectic approach it uses a cognitive approach in stage 1, behavioral in stage 2 and social in stage 3. This recognises that offending behavior is the complex interaction between social and psychological factors.

Anger management is more likely to lead to a permanent change in behavior than behavior modification programmes (token economies) as it focuses on changing the way an offender both thinks and behaves.

Although, Anger Management works in the short-term, the lack of re-offending data means we don't know if the effects last. It is very different role-playing controlling anger to controlling anger once outside of prison.

Anger management is limited in its application as not all crime is motivated by anger. Crimes for financial gain for example, would not benefit from any form of CBT, as they are logical!

Anger Management is very expensive and time consuming as it required highly skilled therapists. Also, the prisoner must be motivated and want to change. (How many Psychiatrists does it take to change a light bulb? One – but the light bulb must really want to change!)

A01

- Restorative justice usually involves a supervised mediation meeting between the victim and the offender with a trained mediator. The victim is given the opportunity to confront the offender and explain the impact the crime has had on their life. The offender has to face up to the consequences of their actions and this starts the rehabilitation process.
- Restorative justice has to be voluntary for all parties and seeks a positive outcome. It is respectful and not degrading for either offender or victim.

Aims of Restorative Justice

- Rehabilitation of Offenders – Being punished is a passive process, restorative justice requires the offender to be an active participant in the process. It is tough for the offender they have to listen to the impact of their crimes on the victim and take full responsibility for their actions. The experience should reduce the likelihood of them reoffending.
- Atonement for Wrongdoing – Offenders may offer concrete compensation (money or unpaid work) or atone by showing genuine feelings of guilt and remorse.
- Victim's Perspective – Restorative justice restores power to the victim. Their voice is heard in the legal process and they feel that their feelings have been taken into account. Many who have been through the process report that it has reduced their feeling of being a 'victim' and helped them to feel safe again.

A03

Restorative justice is tough both for victims and offenders. For offenders they have to face up to the consequences of their actions, but for victims they may be forced to relive frightening and upsetting experiences.

The UK Restorative Justice Council (2015) reported 85% satisfaction from victims who had taken part in face-to-face restorative justice meetings.

Sherman & Strang (2007) reviewed 20 studies, involving 142 men convicted of violence and property offences, who had taken part in restorative justice, only 11% reoffended, compared to 37% of a matched control group. So it does work!

Cost – Shapland (2007) concluded that every £1 spent on restorative justice would save the government £8 through reduced reoffending. However, there are costs involved in training mediators and high dropout rates from offenders unable to face their victims, so it may not always be cost effective.

Remorse – Offenders must feel genuine remorse. Therefore, restorative justice is not suitable for all criminals or indeed all crimes. It only works where there is an obvious victim.

Soft Option – Public opinion may be against restorative justice, as it may be seen as 'getting off lightly'.

Feminist critique – Women’s Aid have called for a ban on the use of restorative justice in cases of domestic abuse, as they believe it is inappropriate.

First time offenders – Restorative justice is most effective with young, first time offenders. It provides a short, sharp shock and forces them to face up to the consequences of their actions.

Essay Questions

Discuss the psychological effects of custodial sentencing. Refer to evidence in your answer (16 marks)

Discuss behavior modification in custody. Refer to evidence in your answer (16 marks)

Discuss the use of anger management as a treatment for offenders. Refer to evidence in your answer (16 marks)

Discuss restorative justice as a way of dealing with offenders (16 marks)

About the Author

Deb Gajic is head of Psychology at The Polesworth School (an ‘outstanding’ school, where Deb is an ‘outstanding teacher!’), an Associate Fellow of the British Psychological Society (AFBPsS) and a Chartered Psychologist.

She has been a member of the ATP committee for many years and her latest role is Treasurer, previously having held the posts of Magazine Editor and Chair.

She is passionate about teaching and regularly runs training workshops for teachers of Psychology, recently for the ATP, Keynote Educational, the Higher Education Academy and Resourcd webinars. Deb is currently teaching the new AQA specification to her students.

Assessment Objectives

A01

Demonstrate knowledge

(a) demonstrate knowledge and understanding of scientific ideas, processes, techniques and procedures.

(b) show a knowledge and understanding of psychological theories, terminology, concepts, studies and methods.

A02

Application of knowledge

(a) apply knowledge and understanding of scientific ideas, processes, techniques and

procedures:

- in a theoretical context
- in a practical context
- when handling qualitative data
- when handling quantitative data

This skill area tests knowledge of research design and data analysis, and applying theoretical understanding of psychology to everyday/real-life examples.

A03

Analyse, interpret and evaluate

(a) analyse, interpret and evaluate scientific information, ideas and evidence, including in relation to issues, to:

- make judgements and reach conclusions
- develop and refine practical design and procedures.

Examples of how you can score A03 marks

Whether or not theories are supported or refuted by valid research evidence. After describing a theory go on to describe a piece of research evidence saying, 'X's study supports/refutes this theory...' and then describe the research study.

Contextualising how the topic in question relates to broader debates and approaches in Psychology.

For example, would they agree or disagree with a theory or the findings of the study?

Animal Research - This raises the issue of whether it's morally and/or scientifically right to use animals.

The main criterion is that benefits must outweigh costs.

Animal research also raises the issue of extrapolation. Can we generalize from studies on animals to humans as their anatomy & physiology is different from humans?

General criticisms and/or strengths of theories and studies.

E.g. 'Bandura's Bobo Doll studies are laboratory experiments and therefore criticisable on the grounds of lacking ecological validity'.

To gain marks for criticising study's methodologies the criticism must be contextualised: i.e. say why this is a problem in this particular study.

'Therefore, the violence the children witnessed was on television and was against a doll not a human'.