

## 6 Assess the ethical issues in psychological research using humans and animals.

(20)

ethical issues in psychology are an important consideration as research carried out on animals and humans should be conducted in a way to minimise any harm to the participant/animal. The ethical code of conduct by BPS covers important factors of consideration e.g. respect which psychologists need to be trained for and demonstrate before conducting any research on humans and animals. One ethical consideration for ethical research using humans is respect, this is where the psychologist should gain informed consent from the participant, preferably in a written form after telling them aspects of research like the procedure and what they'll be doing. Another ethical consideration by the BPS is responsibility, this means that researchers are responsible to keep participants out of harmful situations both in a mental and physical perspective, or, are required to minimise any harm that participants may face e.g. minimising the shock voltage when trying to study negative reinforcement in humans. HCPC guidelines also talk about the need to keep a confidential record of any clients and patients that may be used in studies by locking them away so no person unauthorised individual can access it e.g. a study or to allow how many people



from a specific ethnic group have a mental disorder, the information about the individuals and their disorders must be kept in confidential records. The BPS also mentions debriefing as part of the responsibility code, where participants who may have been involved in research that is potentially harmful or research that required deception are debriefed and provided with any further support e.g. therapy in order to minimise or remove negative emotion after the study has been completed.

Animal research contains ethical guidelines and also require the researcher to be qualified and show that they have the correct license to perform animal research e.g. a project license will be given to ~~start~~ projects e.g. Project to see if panic disorders are caused by a university. The researcher(s) will need to demonstrate that the benefits e.g. improvement of their research in psychological knowledge outweighs any potential harm to the animal e.g. stress.

Studies are often refined which means they are changed to provide an ethical environment for research on animals e.g. using water sprays instead of electric shocks.

animal studies should show replacement of self-aware

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Animals to those with a lower-order thinking to  
 minimise demand characteristics and harm e.g. <sup>replace monkey</sup> with rat  
 animal studies should also demonstrate reduction of  
 the number of animals tested so minimal effort  
 on the species of animals overall is conducted e.g.  
 only using 1 rat to study learning for operant  
 conditioning.

Research into psychology is unethical as it goes <sup>in humans</sup>  
 against various aspects of <sup>of the BPS code of</sup> ~~both countries~~ ethical  
 guidelines and often causes distress and harm to  
 participants which may have a long-term, negative  
 influence on their life. For example, Milgram conducted  
 a study on 40 men to check whether the presence of  
 an authority figure would <sup>result in</sup> ~~increase the~~ obedient  
 behaviour. Participants were asked to deliver  
 high voltage shocks to ~~the~~ confederate "learner"  
 and prods were provided to encourage participants  
 to carry on delivering shocks even when they  
 demonstrated signs of nervousness e.g. nervous  
 laughter and biting their nails. This research  
 goes against the responsibility code of psychologists  
 which suggests that we should minimise  
 harm and may cause long-term guilt and  
 distress to individuals knowing they would obey  
 an authority even if it was very dangerous.



to a second person. ~~Therefore~~

However, ethical ~~adherence to~~ guidelines have been followed more closely over the years, ~~and this can~~ <sup>this can</sup> be seen in psychological research into obedience as ~~part~~ studies try to protect participants as much as possible. Burger replicated Milgram's study to see whether obedience still stands a decade later and for scanned participants and removed those whom may show significant levels of distress and react negatively as a result of participation in the study before it was concluded. Therefore ~~Burger's~~ psychological research has become more ethical ~~over time~~ and does adhere to the ethical guidelines such as responsibility.

Therefore, although research previously strongly opposes our expectations of ethical research, this may no longer be an issue as research like Milgram's would not be allowed to be conducted today without refinements to make it more ethical.

Research ~~into~~ that uses animals is highly unethical as it does not consider the ill effects that animals may face as a result of harm or confinement. This may be due to the fact that humans cannot understand animals and their uses

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on feelings of stress which may provide researchers in  
 future to carry out humane research. Pavlov conducted  
 research on a confined dog who's salivary glands were  
 attached to a cannula in a confined room to learn classical  
 conditioning. Skinner's box study delivered shocks to the  
 test rodents to learn the effects of negative reinforcement. There  
 are 2 of many studies within learning psychology that  
 go against ethical considerations such as refinement and  
 replacement in research. Therefore learning psychology  
 concerned a lot of unethical research.

However, many may argue that although research on animals  
 is ethical, it would be worse or more unethical to conduct the  
 same research on humans as we have higher order-thinking and  
 self-awareness. Research on rats and other animals is therefore  
 more ethical than research on humans to test various sectors

of psychology like biological psychology which uses  
 the input of releasing areas of the brain like the  
 amygdala in rats (eggs and pups) on aggression and  
 impulse. Since humans have longer life spans and are  
 not as easily confined, therefore research like testing  
 a human brain would provide far more harm than  
 in animals. Therefore unethical research on animals is

justifiable in psychology and overall, as the new methods  
 and technology for research is invented, the amount of ethical  
 research conducted is increasing so it is not an issue in  
 psychology.

(Total for Question 6 = 20 marks)

TOTAL FOR SECTION C = 32 MARKS  
 TOTAL FOR PAPER = 80 MARKS

