8.2 Applying Issues and Debates to Conformity and Obedience Research: 10-minute Pack

AQA 7182 · about 10 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

At least six answers must be written in full sentences. Total time suggested 10 minutes. The final 16-mark question must be answered in full sentences and structured paragraphs.

1 Explain one way Zimbardo's dual role as researcher and prison superintendent could be seen as an ethical problem in the context of the Stanford Prison Experiment.

(Total for Question 1 is 2 marks)

2 A university plans to repeat a Zimbardo-style study to investigate obedience to role demands. Identify one practical safeguard the ethics committee should require, and explain how it reduces risk in the simulated prison context.

(Total for Question 2 is 3 marks)

3 A policy maker quotes conformity research as showing 'people always obey authority'. Evaluate briefly whether this claim supports a deterministic view, using one psychological argument for and one against strong determinism in the context of conformity research.

(Total for Question 3 is 4 marks)

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Mark scheme · 8.2 Applying Issues and Debates to Conformity and Obedience Research: 10-minute Pack

Question 1

states the problem: conflict of interest or loss of objectivity when the researcher also acts as superintendent **M1**

explains consequence, e.g. delayed intervention to stop harm because the researcher became absorbed in the role rather than protecting participants **A1**

Answer: Zimbardo's dual role created a conflict of interest, reducing his objectivity and delaying intervention to stop harmful behaviour because he acted as superintendent rather than safeguarding participants.

Question 2

identifies a practical safeguard, e.g. independent observer with power to stop the study, clear stop signals, regular welfare checks, or full informed consent with withdrawal procedure **M1**

explains how it reduces risk, e.g. an independent observer can intervene when harmful behaviour appears, preventing prolonged distress **A1**

links to the simulated prison context, e.g. guards acting abusively would be checked and stopped promptly **A1**

Answer: Require an independent observer with the authority to stop the study; this reduces risk by allowing prompt intervention if guards become abusive, preventing prolonged psychological harm to prisoners.

Question 3

argument for determinism: situational findings, e.g. Asch and obedience studies show strong situational pressures that heavily influence behaviour **M1**

explains how this supports deterministic claim, e.g. behaviour appears caused by external factors rather than free choice **A1**

argument against strong determinism: evidence of individual differences and agency, e.g. some participants resist and do not conform or obey **M1**

explains why this challenges the claim, e.g. shows behaviour is not always determined and individuals can exercise moral choice **A1**

Answer: For determinism: situational research demonstrates that external pressures can strongly shape behaviour, supporting the idea that people are driven by situations. Against: individual differences and documented resistance show people do not always obey or conform, undermining the absolute claim that people always obey and supporting a role for agency.

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