8.10 Applying Issues and Debates to Memory and Eyewitness Testimony Research: Test Pack

AQA 7182 · about 20 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions.

1 Researchers use the multi-store model (MSM) as a framework when designing memory experiments. Identify one way the MSM is reductionist in its approach to human memory, as applied to laboratory memory research.

(Total for Question 1 is 2 marks)

2 A memory experiment reports that males and females differ slightly in accuracy for peripheral details only. Explain one way gender bias could affect the interpretation of this finding in eyewitness research, and outline one consequence for eyewitness testimony in court.

(Total for Question 2 is 3 marks)

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3 A laboratory memory experiment finds that participants recall words in a fixed order, suggesting deterministic stage-like processing. Explain how this result might be used to support cognitive determinism in eyewitness reliability debates.

(Total for Question 3 is 3 marks)

4 Consider a courtroom where expert testimony about the unreliability of memory is used. Give two distinct evaluation points that criticise applying laboratory memory research directly to courtroom practice, using issues and debates language, and suggest one implication or mitigation.

(Total for Question 4 is 6 marks)

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Mark scheme · 8.10 Applying Issues and Debates to Memory and Eyewitness Testimony Research: Test Pack

Question 1

identifies a reductionist feature, e.g. describing memory as separate stores (sensory register, STM, LTM) rather than as an integrated process oe **B1**

links to research context, e.g. experimental tasks isolate one store at a time, simplifying complex everyday memory oe **B1**

Answer: The MSM treats memory as separate stores such as STM and LTM; in experiments this leads to isolating one store at a time, simplifying the complex, interactive nature of real memory.

Question 2

identifies gender bias issue, e.g. researchers might overgeneralise small sample differences to claim innate gender differences in eyewitness reliability oe **M1**

explains why this is problematic, e.g. social roles, task type or sample imbalance could explain the difference rather than biology oe **A1**

applies to legal context, e.g. overstating gender effects could lead to unfair weighting of male or female testimony in court oe **A1**

Answer: Gender bias could lead researchers to overgeneralise a small difference into a claim of innate differences in reliability, ignoring social or methodological explanations; this could unfairly influence how courts weight male versus female eyewitness testimony.

Question 3

states link: stage-like or rule-based findings support determinism, the idea behaviour follows predictable cognitive laws oe **M1**

explains application to eyewitness reliability, e.g. if recall follows predictable cognitive processes, errors may be seen as caused by identifiable cognitive factors rather than free choice oe **A1**

gives consequence, e.g. this can inform legal practice by identifying predictable sources of error such as retroactive interference or leading questions oe **A1**

Answer: Stage-like recall supports cognitive determinism because it suggests memory errors follow predictable cognitive processes; therefore mistakes by witnesses may be attributed to identifiable factors like interference or encoding limits rather than to free will.

Question 4

identifies first criticism: low ecological validity of many lab studies oe **M1**

explains why this matters, e.g. controlled stimuli and brief delays may not reflect complex, emotional, long-term real-life event memory, so courtroom application can be misleading oe **A1**

identifies second criticism: cultural or sample bias in research used as evidence oe **M1**

explains why this matters, e.g. if studies use WEIRD samples results may not generalise to diverse juries and witnesses, risking unfair legal standards oe **A1**

offers implication or mitigation, e.g. experts should qualify applicability and suggest converging evidence from field studies or police-case reviews oe **M1**

explains mitigation, e.g. combining lab findings with observational and cross-cultural research provides a more balanced basis for courtroom recommendations oe **A1**

Answer: Criticism 1: many lab studies have low ecological validity, using controlled stimuli and short delays, so applying them directly to complex, emotional, long-term memories in court can be misleading. Criticism 2: sample and cultural bias in research (WEIRD samples) limit generalisability to diverse witnesses and juries, risking unfair standards. Mitigation: expert testimony should qualify applicability and draw on converging field and cross-cultural evidence.

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