

Outline the cognitive approach. Compare the cognitive approach with the biological approach.

The cognitive approach considers the mind as mechanical and focuses on internal mental processes such as memory, thinking, language and perception. These mental processes are important when exploring human behaviour. One idea from the cognitive approach suggests we process information like a computer, taking information in as input, processing it and storing/ deleting the output. This assumes that mental processes are predictable and can help explain similarities between us. For example, the models of memory explain processes using this computer analogy, for instance, the linear model of the Multi-store Model of Memory by **Atkinson & Shiffrin (1968)**. Another suggestion is that experiences within our external environment can influence these mental processes. For example, research into reconstructive memory and schema theory have suggested how information processing can be altered or distorted. Schemas are mental representations held in memory that help organise information from the world around us, and we store schemas in our mind and use them when recalling information. The cognitive approach adopts a scientific view to studying human behaviour and often conducts research under controlled conditions in laboratory experiments. One similarity between the cognitive approach and the biological approach is they both aim to establish cause and effect, through direct manipulation in experimental research. For example, in cognitive studies on eyewitness testimony, such as **Loftus & Palmer (1974)**, the effect of leading questions on memory was manipulated by changing the verb in a question about a car crash. Similarly, in biological experiments like **Sperry (1968)** manipulation of visual or tactile tasks helped to explore the differences seen in split-brain patients. This method of investigation is reliable and allows for useful conclusions following empirical testing. Another similarity is both approaches adopt a reductionist view of behaviour, where they attempt to simplify behaviour down to single explanations. For example, the cognitive approach would use internal mental processes as an explanation for behaviour, particularly if there are deficits such as in those seen in the thinking and attention of individuals with OCD. Equally, the biological approach reduces behaviour down to simpler parts such as genetics or neurochemicals. Both approaches offer reductionist explanations for human behaviour which are useful. One difference between the cognitive approach and the biological approach is their view on practical applications to treatment for mental health conditions. For example, the cognitive approach uses therapies such as CBT which focus on challenging irrational thoughts and developing behavioural strategies to overcome issues or help manage symptoms. In contrast, the biological approach takes a physical view usually with medical interventions such as drug therapy. For example, a patient with schizophrenia would be given anti-psychotic drugs to help manage their symptoms. Both approaches have valuable contributions to treatment but take different perspectives

