

## HOW TO EVALUATE A THEORY OR STUDY

You should be able to evaluate studies whenever you are writing an essay response. In addition, you may be asked to discuss strengths and/or limitations of a study or theory as an SAQ. When discussing a study, you should always consider the aim, procedure, findings, and implications. In addition, you should be aware of the strengths and limitations of the study.

There are many ways that you can evaluate a study. Here is just a short list to get you started:

- Is there cross-cultural support for the study?
- Is there any gender bias?
- Is bidirectional ambiguity resolved?
- Does the study help to open up or extend debate?
- Are there other possible explanations that the study overlooks?
- What are the advantages/disadvantages of the research method used in the study?
- Is the sample representative? Are we able to criticize the choice of participants or sampling method? (Do not comment on sample size!)
- Is the study reliable? / Is the study supported by other research?
- Is the study ethical?
- Is the study ecologically valid? Is the procedure overly artificial?
- Are there any procedural issues which would make replication difficult?
- How were external variables controlled?
- Could there be observer bias? Could demand effects have affected the outcome?
- Is there inter-rater reliability?
- Is this a correlation, or can causation be determined?