Q1.

Discuss the contribution of Pavlov's research to our understanding of human behaviour.

(Total 8 marks)

Q2.

Outline the behaviourist approach. Compare the behaviourist approach with the biological approach.

(Total 16 marks)

Q3.

Outline Skinner's research into reinforcement.

In his classic experiment with the rat in the box, Skinner sought to investigate whether consequences of behaviour can modify it. The rat was rewarded with food pellets upon pressing a lever. It then pressed the lever repeatedly, demonstrating that reinforcement encourages repetition of target behaviour.

(Total 3 marks)

Q4.

Explain how reinforcement might be used to encourage primary school children to pick up litter in the playground.

A token economy programme can be implemented. The children could be rewarded with tokens in the form of plastic chips for everyday that they picked up litter. Upon collection of ten such tokens, they could be rewarded with, say, a certificate of appreciation in exchange for the tokens.

(Total 3 marks)

Q5.

Samira and John are talking.

Samira says, 'Look at your little sister. She's pretending she's got a mobile phone like yours and is making a call.'

John replies, 'Yes. But when she saw me get told off for using my Dad's favourite pen, she never copied me doing that!'

Pavlov's research has contributed by providing an application in the form of treatment of phobias. Specifically, a treatment called systematic desensitisation is based on his classical conditioning theory. In this theory, using the principle of reciprocal determinism, a patient of phobia is taught to relax in response to phobic stimuli. This prevents fear in response to the stimuli, gradually breaking the association between fear and the stimulus; and building a new association between relaxation in the stimulus. Systematic desensitisation is the most popular behavioural treatment of phobias today that has been successfully used in the treatment of thousands of patients since several years.

One strength of Pavlov's contribution in the form of this treatment has been to present an ethical treatment for phobias. Unlike alternative treatments like flooding which can be traumatic to already fearful patients because of its intense nature, this treatment gradually reduces fear in a way that is manageable by the patient. Thus, it helps overcome phobia without causing any harm to the patient in the process.

One weakness is that this treatment makes for a reductionist therapy for phobia. Only behaviours of fear are targetted in it, ignoring other aspects that need to be addressed, such as biochemical problems in the brains of patients. Treatments like antianxiety medication that bring back levels of norepinephrine to normal can help address these issues better. Thus, Pavlov's contribution has resulted in an effective but partial treatment for phobia.