Worksheet 6.2

Additional practice questions for Chapter 6

1 Discuss strategies to build resilience. [22 marks]
2 Discuss the formation and development of gender roles. [22 marks]
3 Discuss the relationship between physical change and development of identity during adolescence. [22 marks]

Answer guidelines

1 The command term discuss asks you to present a considered and balanced review that includes a range of arguments, factors or hypotheses. Opinions or conclusions should be presented clearly and supported by appropriate evidence.

Weigh up the strengths and limitations of the strategies needed to build resilience. You should begin with a paragraph detailing the sources of adversity:
- poverty and disadvantage
- social exclusion
- unemployment or low quality work.

Schoon and Bartley then put forward the following sources of resilience:
- academic competence
- an effective and supportive family life
- an effective social environment
- employment.

The strategies we looked at to build resilience are:
- home-visit programmes
- teen mother parent education
- Head Start and Early Head Start programmes
- after-school programmes in all high-risk communities.

We summarized as follows.
- The child should have a close relationship with at least one parent and even children who suffer from extreme early deprivation can be resilient as long as the rearing environment is loving and supportive.
- The temperament of the child and its ability to seek support when needed and be self-critical.
The child should have access to a well-rounded social and educational support network in the community.

2 The command term discuss asks you to present a considered and balanced review that includes a range of arguments, factors or hypotheses. Opinions or conclusions should be presented clearly and supported by appropriate evidence.

Weigh up the strengths and limitations of the explanations put forward to explain gender role development. You then discuss these in the context of each other.

You need to define gender (which can be seen as referring to a schema or a set of behaviours, rights, duties and obligations of being male or female) and then discuss the Social learning theory, cognitive and biological approaches to explaining it.

Social learning theory is illustrated by Archer and Lloyd (2002), Lamb and Roopnarine (1979), Leary et al. (1982) and Lewis (1972). Remember that these Western-centric studies have a degree of ecological validity as they were conducted as observations but they were made in a time when gender roles were more clearly defined than now. Caution is needed when contemporizing the results either to current Western society or to other cultures.


Biological explanations are illustrated by rough and tumble play, Beach (1974) and Young et al. (1964). Include animal research but use caution when generalizing findings from other species – they are still relevant and offer a valid way forward in considering gender role development.

3 The command term discuss asks you to present a considered and balanced review that includes a range of arguments, factors or hypotheses. Opinions or conclusions should be presented clearly and supported by appropriate evidence.

You would need to start with a definition of adolescence (usually, the transitional period between childhood and adulthood). Given the nature of the question, you may wish to have a physiological (physical) element and a cognitive (identity) element in the definition. Thus:

- A biological perspective would view adolescence as the period when there is a rapid increase in growth (known as the growth spurt) and redistribution of muscle tissue and body fat. The pituitary gland produces an influx of sex hormones in the bloodstream, so girls produce more oestrogen and boys more testosterone. The individual becomes capable – biologically at least – of producing and nurturing children. Boys start producing sperm (around the age of 15); girls start their menstrual cycle. This transition is typically known as puberty.

- A cognitive perspective would view adolescence as the period when the Piagetian notion of formal operational thought develops – this allows for the consideration of new beliefs and
Then you may wish to outline Erikson’s ideas: in the 1950s he put forward an assumption that adolescence is a period of stress and uncertainty brought about by intense physical change which causes a crisis in identity. He also put forward the notion of a psychosocial moratorium. This refers to a temporary suspension of activity during the period of identity formation when the adolescent is moving between childhood (when identity is clearer) and adulthood (when a new identity has to emerge). This is seen as the dominant task of this age group and its eventual resolution forms the basis of adult identity. You then need to briefly evaluate Erikson’s approach. You may wish to mention Marcia’s work which was an extension of Erikson’s and was an attempt to make it more empirically robust – the use of a semi-structured interview – and therefore more useful.

Your focus should be on physical change and the development of identity. Therefore, you need to introduce the concept of body image. According to Croll (2005), body image is the dynamic perception of one’s body – how it looks, feels, and moves. The notion of it being dynamic suggests it is constantly under review and is not fixed. It is therefore open to influence. The physical changes taking place during puberty represent constant challenges to a teenager’s self-image. Body image is shaped by perception, emotions, physical sensations, mood, physical experience, and environment. It is influenced strongly by self-esteem and self-evaluation, cultural messages, norms and societal standards of appearance and attractiveness. Croll (2005) argues puberty for boys brings characteristics typically admired by society – height, speed, broadness, and strength, whereas puberty for girls brings with it characteristics often perceived as less laudable – girls generally get rounder and have increased body fat. These changes can serve to further enhance dissatisfaction among girls going through puberty.