Strength of the behaviourist approach is that it is scientific. The approach uses scientific methods to carry out experiments in an objective way to explain behaviour and to establish cause and effect. An example of a scientific experiment conducted by cognitive psychologist is by Loftus and Palmer on eye-witness testimony. Loftus and Palmer demonstrated that leading questions can affect eyewitness testimony. This is strength because this experiment has improved the Criminal Justice System as it has been scientifically proven that leading questions can affect eye-witness testimony and we can’t convict someone of a crime based on eyewitness testimony.

Weaknesses of the cognitive approach

A weakness of the cognitive approach is that it compares the human minds to a computer. Cognitive psychologists have developed models to explain how the mind works. For example, Atkinson and Shiffrin built the Multi-store Model of Memory to explain how our mind works. This is a weakness as our mind is more sophisticated and more complicated than a computer. It ignores that the human mind can be influenced by our childhood experiences, hormones and emotions.

A weakness of the cognitive approach is that it is reductionist. The approach simplifies all behaviour down to a simple cause. The cognitive approach over simplifies all behaviour down to our mental processes such as thinking, memory, attention and perception. This is a weakness because it simplifies all behaviour down the environment and it ignores that gene, physiology and emotions can also a play a part in our behaviour.