

PSYCHOLOGY

Paper 9773/01
Key Studies and Theories

Key messages

It is evident that candidates have been exceptionally well prepared for this examination and both they and their centres are to be congratulated on an impressive performance. The only key message for centres would be to focus the same level of attention of **Section B** part (c) questions and encourage candidates to explain how they research they design would extend our understanding of the topic area.

General Comments

Overall the standard of answers was exceptionally high and candidates have obviously been extremely well prepared for this examination. The level of detail was impressive and candidates used a very wide range of well selected evaluation issues in their **Section B** answers. There were no specific questions that caused problems for any candidate although it should be noted that candidates sometimes give far more information than is required, seemingly struggling to select the appropriate key points.

No rubric errors were noted for this paper.

Readers of this report should note that the comments are based on a small group of candidates.

Section A

Question 1

This was generally answered very well by all candidates although a small minority did not make their answers relevant to eyewitness testimony and thus could not be awarded full marks.

Question 2

Candidates generally answered this well and most selected the allocation of additional foils as their focus.

Question 3

This question focuses on the background material that candidates should be familiar with in order to understand the key study. It was surprising therefore that not all candidates were able to answer this well. It was also noted that a small number of candidates gave details of more than the stage that had been asked for, leaving the Examiner to select out the appropriate material.

Question 4

Unfortunately, several candidates appeared to have misread this question and a surprising number of answers gave information justifying the viewpoint that Milgram's study was unethical. This question was asking for arguments that would justify the experiment being conducted, and there were some very well considered responses here.

Question 5

This was clearly a question that candidates were prepared to discuss at length as many gave answers which were well in excess of what was required (or expected) for full marks. Candidates clearly have a very good knowledge and understanding of this study.

Question 6

This question was also answered well with most candidates focusing on the potential danger / distress aspect of staging a cross-gender communication of this type.

Question 7

Part (a) appeared to be a straightforward question which the majority of candidates were able to answer correctly. Part (b) was also relatively straightforward although as noted in the mark scheme, simply offering 'small sample' as a weakness is not enough unless some explanation of why a small sample is a weakness is also given. Stronger answers focused on the narrow target population and the effects that this may have.

Question 8

As with the study by Haney, Banks and Zimbardo, candidates obviously know this study well and are able to write confidently about this. There was a range of excellent answers here.

Question 9

Candidates were all able to give a strength of the case study method in relation to the further research on gambling.

Question 10

Candidates were able to identify a number of differences found between the BDD sufferers and the controls.

Question 11

This was well understood and well explained by all candidates.

Question 12

Candidates were able to offer a number of good answers here to a relatively unexpected question. It would be expected that candidates should be able to identify a number of ways in which the study by Dement and Kleitman lacks ecological validity, but asking for ways in which it has ecological validity is a little more challenging. Candidates rose to the challenge and suggested that the normal bedtimes, sleeping in a bed and being woken by a doorbell all increased the ecological validity of the study.

Section B

Question 13 was a popular choice than **Question 14**. Readers are reminded that these comments are based on a small number of candidates.

Question 13

Candidates gave impressively detailed answers to part (a) of this question and the examining team were impressed by the depth and breadth of their knowledge and understanding. However, this was surpassed in many cases by their answers to part (b) which went far beyond the expectations of the Examiners. Candidates are evaluating in detail and across a wide range of carefully selected issues. Suggestions for part (c) were thoughtful and well explained and the only advice for improving answers would be to encourage candidates to offer an explanation of HOW this study would extend our understanding of this area.

Question 14

Answers to this question were as impressive as those offered in response to **Question 13**. A similar point could be made in terms of answers to part (c), the addition of a sentence or two explaining how this research would extend our understanding of the topic area would have moved many answers to full marks. It is evident, however, that candidates have been prepared exceptionally well for this examination and both they and their centres are to be congratulated.

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Paper 9773/02

Methods, Issues and Applications

General Comments

It was pleasing to see that the vast majority of candidates achieved highly in this examination and produced answers that fully showcased their knowledge and understanding. It was also very pleasing to see that candidates made use of research evidence that went beyond the 15 key studies of the Paper 1 to answer a number of questions on this paper.

The vast majority of candidates attempted to answer all questions on the paper and used their time effectively. There were no rubric errors although a very small number of candidates misinterpreted **Question 3(b)** and reiterated material provided in **3(a)**.

Candidates performed better in **Questions (1) and (3)** although as with previous examination sessions **Question 1(c)** proved challenging. **Questions 2(b) and 2(c)** were good discriminators and provided the opportunity for some candidates to provide some outstanding answers that allowed clear demonstration of what they had learnt throughout the 2 year course.

As with previous sessions some of the answers provided were not proportionate to the marks available with candidates providing either lengthy answers for questions that carried a few marks or not providing enough detail for answers with higher marks. This was especially the case with **Question 1(a)** and **Questions 1(c) and 2(c)**.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a) This question was answered very well by the majority of candidates. Most candidates were able to outline two findings from the study by Veale and Riley and either support these with data from the study or to further elaborate for full marks. Candidates are reminded that they are not required to provide lengthy answers to achieve all available marks. For example, stating that 'significantly more BDD patients had a "long session" in front of the mirror each day than control patients' and then supporting this finding with data from the study would be sufficient to achieve all the available marks.
- (b) Most candidates were able to identify two possible biases in the Veale and Riley study. The most commonly identified biases were those of demand characteristics and social desirability. However, the explanation of these biases was not always detailed and the links to the study were often weak. For example, simply stating that 'participants in the Veale and Riley study might have been embarrassed about their condition and as a result did not provide truthful answers' is not sufficient to achieve all marks unless evidence from the study is also provided to fully support this statement. Most candidates were also able to successfully identify ways to overcome the suggested biases and provided some creative and methodologically sound alternatives for their successful control.
- (c) This question proved challenging for some candidates. Most candidates were able to identify the limitations of snapshot studies and provide apposite research examples to support these limitations. However, candidates were less successful at identifying the strengths of this method, and when they did these were often not fully explained. Candidates are reminded that the research evidence suggested has to be closely linked to both elements of the question, in this case snapshot studies from the area of abnormality. Some candidates suggested evidence from snapshot studies that were not linked to abnormality and as a result were not awarded the full available marks. It is acceptable for candidates to use evidence from one study to support all of their strengths and weaknesses if this is appropriate.

Question 2

- (a) This question was answered very well. Most candidates were able to provide two assumptions of the developmental approach in psychology although these varied greatly in terms of accuracy and depth. Candidates used supporting examples from the area of developmental psychology effectively. The most common examples included the study by Freud and the study by Bandura.
- (b) This question was an excellent discriminator and allowed more able candidates to showcase their knowledge and understanding of the developmental and physiological approaches and apply this understanding on the ability to maintain friendships. It was common for candidates to refer to attachment in early childhood as an explanation of possible difficulties in maintaining friendships and also to the work of Bandura and social learning theory as a determinant of future friendship maintenance. Weaker candidates were able to provide a generic overview of the two approaches and received some marks but were not successful at making apposite comparisons and the application of their knowledge to this unfamiliar area was either absent or not fully coherent.
- (c) The vast majority of candidates were able to identify a range of problems that psychologists face when they study children. Most candidates made reference to ethical issues and discussed these in great depth using a range of research examples from various areas of the specification. It was pleasing to see that some candidates even went beyond their specification and demonstrated wider reading by using research evidence from the 'explore more' section but also other recent psychological research. Weaker candidates were able to identify some problems but their explanations often lacked detail and the use of research examples was sparse.

Question 3

- (a) This question was answered well by the majority of candidates. Most commonly cited research included the study by Baron-Cohen on autism, Piaget's research on cognitive development but also studies on personal space such as the study by Felipe and Sommer and studies on the effect of noise on behaviour such as the study by Donnerstein and Wilson. Candidates are reminded that this question requires the identification and detailed description of a range of relevant research rather than application of knowledge to the scenario which is the requirement of part (b).
- (b) More able candidates received excellent marks for the application of knowledge described in part (a) and were able to fully justify the reasons for Adam's behaviour by often combining evidence to provide thoughtful justifications. These candidates often fully synthesised the different events outlined in the scenario to reach more global explanations for Adam's behaviour. Weaker candidates made statements that lacked detail such as 'Adam was suffering from autism as he has difficulty with communication and social interaction' without elaborating any further. Some candidates simply reiterated the evidence provided in part (a) and as a result failed to achieve any marks.

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<p>Paper 9773/03 Key Applications</p>

Key messages

When candidates choose the key study question in **Section B** rather than the alternative (broader) question, some are tending to include background material or further research in their answer. Centres should ensure that candidates understand that they do not need to do this. Candidates were not penalised for including additional information but should be made clear that this is unnecessary.

Evaluation (particularly **Section B**, Part **(b)**) should also be linked explicitly to the material being evaluated.

General Comments

The overall standard of scripts this year was excellent and as in previous years, a significant number of candidates achieved close to full marks which is an impressive achievement on a three hour paper. Some answers were incredibly detailed (particularly **Section B**, part **(b)** answers) and often went far beyond what was required for full marks. Candidates and centres are to be commended for their hard work.

The entry this year was small and it is only possible to comment on two of the five options: Crime and Environment.

No rubric errors were noted this year.

Crime

Question 6

- (a) Candidates were generally able to answer this well with all opting to describe the case study of John Duffy by David Canter. Stronger answers focused on specific profiling aspects whilst weaker ones showed understanding of the case in more general terms.
- (b) Candidates were also able to answer this question well with all opting to describe the case study of the murder of Rachel Nickell and the subsequent wrongful arrest and trial of Colin Stagg due to the profile constructed by Britton. As with part **(a)**, stronger answers focused on specific details of the profile rather than generic information about the case.
- (c) This was well answered with candidates offering a number of interesting suggestions. Most common answers focused on the difference between the British and the US approach and/or the fact that Canter's profile was very specific whereas Britton's was more general and potentially fitted more people.

Question 7

- (a) Candidates showed detailed knowledge of how the telephone survey by Rubin was conducted and generally described this very well.
- (b) Candidates were mostly able to offer three well explained advantages of telephone interviews.
- (c) Candidates were generally able to offer a well explained disadvantage of telephone surveys and were able to illustrate this from the study.

Question 8

- (a) Fewer candidates chose this question than **Question 9** but the answers that were given here were generally detailed and showed good understanding. Candidates should be made clear that it is not necessary to include any information other than the details of the key study as they will not be awarded any marks for this information.
- (b) This was generally answered very well with candidates offering a wide range of often carefully chosen evaluation issues. Excellent preparation was obvious in these answers.

Question 9

- (a) This was the more popular question with some candidates offering impressive answers covering a wide range of punishments and treatments. As noted in the general comments (above) some answers were far in excess of the expectations of the examining team and the requirements for full marks.
- (b) As above, candidates offered some impressive answers covering a wide range of evaluation issues. As with part (a) many of these answers were far in excess of what is required for full marks and the examining team were impressed by both the quality and the quantity of the issues covered.

Question 10

- (a) Candidates offered a range of excellent suggestions for this investigation and answers demonstrated a good grasp of research methodology.
- (b) Candidates were generally able to describe relevant evidence here although the examining team would have liked to see links between the evidence selected and the study designed in part (a), made explicit.

ENVIRONMENT

Question 11

- (a) Candidates offered very clear answers here with many giving more detail than was required for full marks.
- (b) As with the previous question, candidates were well prepared for this question and provided detailed answers.
- (c) This was also well answered with most candidates able to focus on the dissolution / maintenance contrast.

Question 12

- (a) Most answers demonstrated good knowledge of this study and candidates gave clear and detailed answers in relation to spending on wine, most focusing on the unexpected finding that expenditure on wine did not increase when classical music was played.
- (b) Candidates gave good answers to this question, with most focussing on the fact that total 'bar' spending increased with classical music so that this may include spending on wine or with reference to previous research.
- (c) This was answered very well indeed with the most popular response focusing on Explanation 2 (increased liking) and discussing this in relation to the study conducted in a candidate cafeteria by Hargreaves.

Question 13

- (a) This was a more popular question than **Question 14** and as with the Crime section, the examining team were impressed by the quality and quantity of material that candidates were able to discuss. Although the key study was the obviously a main focus for all candidates, they were also able to include a range of background and additional research in excess of our expectations.

- (b) As with part (a), candidates produced impressive answers, covering a wide range of carefully selected issues. Significant preparation was once again evident and candidates are to be congratulated on their ability to evaluate theory and evidence. As with several other questions on this paper, candidates frequently produced far in excess of that required (or expected) for full marks.

Question 14

- (a) Although a smaller number of candidates chose this question, when it was selected it was answered extremely well and with significant attention to detail.
- (b) As with **Question 13b** candidates have clearly prepared very well indeed for this question and produced some impressively detailed answers.

Question 15

- (a) Candidates designed some innovative studies to test the relationship between systemising and map reading although it was slightly disappointing to note that not all candidates treated this as a correlational study. Those that did were more likely to score full marks.
- (b) As with **Question 10b** candidates were able to describe a range of appropriate evidence although clearer, more explicit links between the evidence and the study designed in part (a) would have improved these answers further.

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Paper 9773/04
Personal Investigation

General comments

Overall the quality of coursework produced this year was extremely high and the understanding of psychological methodology was evident throughout. A wide range of topics were selected and it was pleasing to see that many candidates went beyond the specification to investigate contemporary issues.

All investigations adhered to the ethical guidelines and there was clear evidence of the ethical treatment of participants throughout.

Centres are encouraged to use annotations as this adds clarity to the decisions made when awarding mark in different bands.

Comments on individual parts of the report

Abstract

All abstracts were concise and included all relevant aspects such as how the study was conducted, the findings and main conclusions reached. In the few cases where full marks were not awarded, this was due to lack of clarity in the way that the study was conducted.

Introduction

Introductions were very well structured and incorporated extensive research that was relevant to the research question. In some cases introductions also incorporated visual diagrams and photographs that promoted clarity.

Most reviews were concise and logically organised. Rationales were clear and in most cases logically followed from the described research. In a few cases rationales were not explicitly stated.

Hypotheses

All hypotheses were fully operationalised and included measurements of variables. A statement as to whether the hypothesis was one-tailed or two-tailed was included as was justification for this choice.

Design

Some designs were truly impressive. In these designs variables were not merely identified but fully described in detail and their choice justified. Equally the choice of controls was justified through reference to background research.

Experimental designs were always identified but justifications could have been further developed. For example, justifications tended to focus on definitions of experimental designs instead of explaining why a repeated measures design was preferable to an independent measures design.

Controls were always present but the steps taken to achieve full control were not always clearly outlined.

In most cases there was clear evidence that appropriate methodological terms and concepts had been applied and fully understood.

The Method: Participants and Apparatus

The target population was clearly identified including geographic location. The sample was almost always selected using opportunity sampling, however justification for the choice of the sampling technique was often thin. In some cases standardised instructions given to participants prior to selection were included in the appendices. Like previous examination series, full participant details such as number of participants, age range and background were clearly stated.

All materials and apparatus were fully described. Evidence in the form of photos, usb and cd roms was included in the appendices. As with previous sessions, the justification for the choice or the design of materials could have been further developed.

The Method: Procedure

Procedures were detailed and in most cases fully replicable. They were always supported by verbatim standardised instructions. It was pleasing to see that allocation to different conditions of the experiment was included in most personal investigations. However, reference to controls could have been clearer.

Ethical treatment was detailed and evidenced with the inclusion of consent forms and standardised instructions when consent was gained. Timings were not always clear.

The Method: Data Analysis

Better personal investigations included full justifications for the choice of descriptive statistics, visual displays and inferential statistics.

These do not need to be detailed but convey understanding as to why they were appropriate to use in the specific personal investigation.

Results

The standard of the results section was good this year. Most candidates used inferential statistics correctly and provided evidence of all their calculations in the appendices. However, descriptive statistics calculations need also to be included for full marks. Most visual displays were appropriate, fully labelled and clearly presented. Candidates were successful at reaching conclusions explicitly linked to the hypothesis of their investigation

Discussion

As with previous years the quality of the discussions was very high and candidates were able to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding throughout.

Evaluation of methodology was thorough and balanced; depth of argument reflected a high standard of analysis.

Suggestions for improvements and further research were appropriate, well explained and often showed insight.

Conduct, Presentation, References and Appendices

All reports stayed within the recommended word limit.

Communication skills (spelling, punctuation and grammar) are at a high standard and specialist terminology was evident throughout. References were successfully provided for all sources.