

PSYCHOLOGY

<p>Paper 9773/01 Key Studies and Theories</p>

Key messages

It is evident that candidates had prepared very well for this examination. The only key message for centres would be to focus the same level of attention of **Section B Part (c)** questions.

General comments

The quality of scripts received this year ranged from excellent, with some candidates achieving close to full marks, to those who demonstrated only basic knowledge of the syllabus. Most candidates achieved marks in most of the **Section A** questions but there was some evidence in **Section B** that candidates had very little knowledge of either the background material or the further research. Background material is usually crucial for an understanding of the Key Study, such as basic knowledge of social learning theory in order to understand the Key Study by Bandura, Ross and Ross. Centres are reminded that candidates do not need to know the further research studies in the same detail as the Key Studies, but should have a broad understanding of them. In most cases, the abstract will provide sufficient information. The level of detail provided in some answers was impressive and most candidates used a wide range of well selected evaluation issues in their **Section B** answers, although there were some scripts that relied too heavily on a very narrow range of evaluation issues. There were no specific questions that caused problems for candidates, although it should be noted that candidates sometimes give far more information than is required, seemingly struggling to select the appropriate key points. For **Section B, Part (c)** questions, candidates should be encouraged to explain how the research they design would extend our understanding of the topic area.

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

Generally, answered well. Most candidates were able to explain that participants in this study became more certain of their identification having been given confirming feedback.

Question 2

- (a) This was not answered very well, with many candidates confusing this with egocentrism, and not being able to see things from another's perspective. Answers often described theory of mind in terms of a lack of theory of mind even when they had the correct concepts, describing this as the 'inability to...'.
(b) Most candidates were able to describe the finding that participants with autism did less well on the eyes test but not all made it explicit why this was evidence for people with autism lacking a theory of mind.

Question 3

Several candidates confused the term 'variables' with 'conditions'. Hence they explained one condition of a variable, such as saying 'the one-question condition' rather than explaining that one variable was the 'type of questioning' (or the type of materials, or the age of the children) and then outlining the different conditions of this variable.

Question 4

This was very well answered with the majority of candidates providing two clear differences. The most frequently described differences were the real life/virtual reality aspect and the fact that Milgram's learner was male and Slater's learner was female.

Question 5

This was also well answered, with most candidates having a clear understanding of the findings of this study, with a very small majority confusing this with the Stanford Prison Experiment. A few candidates also offered very broad conclusions with no reference to findings.

Question 6

This was poorly answered. There were a surprising number of candidates who did not refer to imitation, modelling, role models etc. at all in their answers – instead simply saying that this was learning based on classical and operant conditioning. This theory is listed as 'background' in the specification and candidates should be able to offer a brief explanation.

Question 7

This was generally well answered with candidates showing good understanding of the key results from the further research, most commonly outlining the revised attachment types or explaining the relationship between attachments to peers and attachment to family members.

Question 8

A number of candidates misinterpreted the question and gave two reasons why the study was unethical. Those that answered this correctly gave a variety of answers, both justifying the need to conduct a study into the validity of diagnosis and also into conditions in psychiatric institutions of the time, as well as arguments outlining the need to break ethical guidelines in order to conduct the study.

Question 9

This was well answered with most candidates tending to use the frustration–aggression hypothesis as an explanation for the aggressive behaviour.

Question 10

Most candidates were able to identify one of the goals set by Veale and Riley, with the most commonly chosen goal 'to use mirrors only for their agreed function' or 'to delay using a mirror for as long as possible'. No marks were awarded for answers which simply suggested that people with BDD should stop looking in mirrors.

Question 11

- (a) Most candidates suggested that the aim of this study was to consider the effectiveness of CBT although the study also identifies 'describing the components of CBT for PTSD and considering recent advances in early intervention in the treatment of PTSD'.
- (b) The key conclusion to this study is that 'randomised controlled trials of CBT for PTSD must be conducted with enhanced methodological rigour and public health relevance' although most candidates simply stated that CBT is an effective treatment for PTSD.

Question 12

Most candidates answered this well, with the majority of answers focussing on the size of the sample. To be awarded both marks, candidates needed to elaborate on what the weakness of a small sample is rather than just state this.

Section B

Question 13

This was the more popular question. For **Part (a)**, candidates were generally able to demonstrate an excellent knowledge of the Little Hans study, although many candidates simply described this study rather than including some background (such as a brief outline of psychodynamic theory), details of the further research, or the 'explore more' material. In **Part (b)**, even where the broader topic of psychosexual development had been addressed in **Part (a)**, it was noticeable that candidates often only evaluated the key study. Often this evaluation was generic, with candidates outlining the strengths or weaknesses of case studies, for example, but not with any explicit links to the Little Hans study. Stronger answers showed evidence of organisation of issues and an ability to evaluate the research described in **Part (a)** within the context of the wider topic area. For **Part (c)**, the most common approach was to suggest studying large groups of children but candidates often failed to make explicit how this would 'extend our understanding of psychosexual development'. Misunderstandings were evident in some scripts, such as discussing the Oedipus complex in relation to girls, as were spelling mistakes that led to a change in meaning, such as conscience/conscious.

Question 14

Candidates who chose this question (biological attraction) tended to provide detailed answers to **Part (a)** which included more than just the key study and showed good understanding of the evolutionary perspective and the importance of facial symmetry. **Part (b)** answers showed some evidence of generic evaluation (such as strengths and weaknesses of experiments but with no explicit links to the experiment/s described in **Part (a)**) and stronger answers discussed issues across the whole topic area rather than just in relation to the Key Study. For **Part (c)**, examining cultural differences was the most common approach and candidates were able to give some information to explain how this would extend our understanding of biological attraction.

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<p>Paper 9773/02 Methods, Issues and Applications</p>

General comments

The overall standard of performance this year was good and most candidates were well prepared for the questions on the whole.

Candidates attempted all questions and there was no evidence that they had run out of time. Even when answers were brief, they were still relevant, which suggests that candidates understood the questions/rubric.

A problem in some candidates' performance was not writing answers proportionate to the marks available. This issue was observed at both ends of the spectrum with candidates providing either lengthy answers for questions that carried few marks or not providing enough detail when required for answers with higher marks.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a) Although this was a relatively straightforward question, it proved challenging for a number of candidates. The most common error was the presentation of findings instead of conclusions.
- (b) Most candidates were able to identify appropriate ways in which the dependent variable was measured and the most popular options included saliva samples right after the subjects entered the MR scanner and self-reports on the levels of effort, frustration and task difficulty after the low-and high stress tasks. Candidates, however, found it more challenging to suggest an alternative way of measuring the dependent variable. Some candidates provided a number of alternative ways instead of fully elaborating on one way as per the question. A common error was to suggest ways already mentioned in the study, such as the measurement of heart rate. Candidates are reminded that are required to expand on the how the alternative way will be carried out in order to achieve full marks.
- (c) This question was generally answered well. Most candidates referred to the collection of objective data, the increase in reliability and possible lack of ecological validity. However, candidates are reminded that research evidence has to be closely linked to both parts of the question, that is, both scientific equipment and the investigation of stress. For example, although the study by Dement and Kleitman is relevant to the use of scientific equipment, it is not relevant to the investigation of stress and therefore not creditworthy. It is acceptable for candidates to use evidence from one study to support all of their points where appropriate.

Question 2

- (a) Stronger candidates were able to provide good descriptions of two assumptions of the behaviourist perspective and support these with evidence. However, a large number of candidates provided assumptions that either overlapped or were more appropriate to the social approach than the behaviourist perspective. Furthermore, the evidence used to illustrate the assumptions was often not appropriate or not explained sufficiently to show how it related to the described assumptions.

- (b) Many candidates provided insightful responses as to how the use of children compares to the use of animals when investigating problem solving. Comparisons were often focused on the differences in ethical treatment and also difficulties in generalising results from animals to human participants. Weaker candidates often made generic comments in relation to animals and children and received limited credit, but were not always successful at applying these comparisons to problem solving.
- (c) This question was answered well by the majority of candidates. Most candidates made reference to the issues of determinism and reductionism but also the use of the experimental method to measure cause and effect. As with part (a) some candidates confused the behaviourist perspective with the social approach and this was evident in the choice of evidence used to support the points made.

Question 3

- (a) This question was not answered well. Candidates often described the studies by Loftus and Palmer on eyewitness testimony, Piliavin et al. on bystander behaviour and theories of cost-benefit analysis, diffusion of responsibility and pluralistic ignorance. Candidates also referred to the psychoanalytic theory of repression and causes and symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder. However, descriptions were often very brief and did not always demonstrate good understanding of the issues described. Candidates are also reminded that although the scenarios in this section will lend themselves to the key studies, all relevant research and/or theory is creditworthy.
- (b) This question was answered well. More able candidates were able to apply the theories and studies described in part (a) to explain the events in the scenario. Weaker candidates made less effective links and just reiterated the research outlined in (a) without elaborating any further.

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

Key messages

Section B questions that ask for a description/evaluation of a topic area require more than a description/evaluation of the Key Study. For part (a), candidates could also include details from *background*, *further research* or *explore more* (there is no requirement to include information from all of these areas). Candidates should be encouraged to select appropriate evaluation issues for the Section B, part (b) questions and to apply these issues explicitly to the research that is being evaluated.

General comments

Please note that this report is based on a small number of candidates. There were no responses for the Psychology and Health or Psychology and Sport options. There were no rubric errors. Overall candidates appear to have been very well prepared although there was a wide range of responses with some evidence of under-preparation, especially in the longer answers.

Comments on specific questions

Psychology and Abnormality

Candidates showed understanding of the seven point scale used by Ahn et al. and most were able to suggest an advantage of this, either the range of choice offered by such a scale, the ease of analysing this sort of data or the inclusion of a mid-point for those respondents who are generally unsure. Despite the use of the phrase 'forced-choice' in **Question 1(b)**, not all candidates were able to answer this question appropriately. Stronger answers focused on the removal of the neutral mid-point and the consequent 'forcing' of the respondent to commit to one side or another. **Question 1(c)** was not well answered, with no candidates being able to correctly identify three of the unfamiliar disorders used as stimuli in this study. **Question 2(b)** was generally well answered, although some candidates offered information about treatment and results rather than the 'presenting features' of the case. **Question 2(b)** and **2(c)** were well answered with candidates showing good understanding of the diagnostic criteria for kleptomania and good understanding of the disadvantages of the case study method, although this was not always explicitly applied to the Kohn and Antonuccio study.

Both part (b) questions were equally popular, but many candidates' answers simply described the Key Study rather than explaining the disorder clearly or including explanations or treatments. Any appropriate information on schizophrenia/depression could have been credited and the broader the answer to part (a), the more scope the candidate has to develop their evaluation in part (b). A focus on one study for part (a) meant that these candidates tended to simply evaluate the study in methodological terms rather than evaluating 'what psychologists have learned about' the disorder. Widening the scope for part (a) would have allowed candidates to evaluate theoretical approaches to the chosen disorder as well as including discussion of issues and debates such as nature-nurture.

Part (c) was generally well answered, although candidates could be encouraged to use terminology a little more effectively, for example by clearly defining their independent and dependent variables.

Psychology and Crime

Section A questions were generally answered very well and candidates had prepared well. Most candidates demonstrated excellent knowledge of interrogation tactics and were able to compare interrogation to a police interview. Most candidates were able to identify three types of false confession. Candidates were able to identify three reasons for imprisonment and gave some thoughtful responses to the question asking them to debate that imprisonment should rehabilitate rather than punish, and to the question asking them to suggest reasons why prison does not work. Answers were generally clear and well-constructed although some candidates wrote far more information than was required for 3 marks.

In Section B, **Question 8** on the psychological effects of crime was more popular than **Question 9** on the psychology of the jury. Whichever question was selected, some candidates gave an impressive amount of detail for part (a) and were well prepared. However, some candidates simply described the Key Study only. Part (b) (evaluation) produced a range of answers. There were some highly impressive answers which showed an excellent grasp of a range of themes and issues and a marked ability to select and apply highly apposite issues. However, there were also answers which were far more generic and did not show the same careful application of the chosen theme/issue to the material selected in part (a). There were also answers which considered a narrow range of evaluation issues (for example, laboratory methods, quantitative data and control) which were dealt with relatively superficially, and there were answers where a range of material had been included in part (a) but only the Key Study had been evaluated in part (b).

Answers to Section C, part (a) tended to focus on broad suggestions relating to the need to punish/reward children, although stronger answers developed these ideas and gave details of how this could be incorporated into a parent training programme. Part (b) answers gave details of classical and operant conditioning, social learning theory and the study by Farrington et al.

Psychology and Environment

Answers to Section A were clear and detailed, and candidates had prepared well. Candidates were able to explain the concepts of individuation and deindividuation and to contrast these. Most chose the laboratory study by Zimbardo for **Question 11(b)** and, in some cases, gave more detail than was required for 3 marks. Answers to **Question 11(c)** were generally excellent which most candidates selecting CCTV as a technique for increasing individuation in real life. Candidates also showed a good grasp of the different types of sketch maps produced by participants in the Aginsky et al. study and offered excellent discussions of the value of sketch maps when researching environmental cognition. Finally, most candidates offered elements of sketch maps outlined by Lynch including paths, edges, districts, nodes and landmarks.

Question 13 on the Key Study by Drury et al. on emergency behaviour was more popular than **Question 14** on theory and applications of the positive benefits of music. In general terms, part (a) answers were detailed and accurate and some part (b) answers were excellent, showing a very good grasp of a range of evaluation issues which were applied effectively to the topics. There were some answers to part (b) which did not do this effectively or which focused on an overly narrow range of issues. However, some answers to **Question 14(a)** also included a great deal of irrelevant information on negative effects of noise demonstrating an inability to select the appropriate material for the question.

Responses to Section C could have been improved. It was rare for candidates to operationalise 'danger', with many choosing to simply to measure stress levels. It was also rare for candidates to design the required field experiment, with most offering naturally occurring variables (such as where people get on the train) rather than manipulated variables. However, candidates were able to describe a range of appropriate evidence for part (b).

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<p>Paper 9773/04 Personal Investigations</p>
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General comments

Candidates investigated a wide range of topics from various parts of the syllabus. The quality of coursework produced in this examination series was variable.

All investigations adhered to the ethical guidelines and there was clear evidence that participants were treated ethically. Evidence of ethical treatment was in most cases included in the Appendices of the reports. All titles were submitted to Cambridge for approval before work had commenced, to ensure compliance with ethical regulations. Centres are reminded that if candidates choose to investigate participants under the age of 16, they will need to make sure that written parental consent has been obtained and that evidence of this is included in the investigation but without infringing confidentiality.

Not all reports stayed within the recommended word limit. When the word limit was not adhered to, it was because either the introductions and/or the discussions were too long or candidates investigated more than one hypothesis.

Comments on specific parts of the report

Abstract

The majority of Abstracts were concise and clear and included all necessary elements. Centres are reminded that candidates must comment on the inferential statistics when reaching a conclusion and not the descriptive statistics.

Introduction

Most Introductions included a range of appropriate and relevant research. There were some instances, however, where the review presented was only marginally relevant to the research question. Furthermore, Centres are advised that there must be a clear rationale and a logical progression from the review to the research question. It must be clear how previous research in the area informed the investigation.

In a few cases, the requirement for the review to be 'concisely described' was not met, with candidates presenting excessive research material that was not always relevant. These research projects tended also to struggle to stay within the recommended word limit.

Hypotheses

In many cases both the alternative and null hypotheses were clear, concise and included all relevant aspects. Centres are reminded that hypotheses need to be fully operationalised, so the dependant variable is measurable and the independent variable includes both conditions. Centres are advised to refrain from investigating more than one hypothesis as this will compromise the word limit and could lead to complicated results that are often not presented adequately.

Design

The majority of candidates correctly stated both the independent and dependent variables but the dependent variable was not always fully operationalised.

In almost all cases, candidates correctly identified two extraneous variables and attempted to show how these would be controlled. Centres are reminded that information on the control of extraneous variables must also be presented in the procedure where appropriate.

Candidates are required to fully justify the chosen design and the justifications need to be detailed for understanding to be fully evident.

Method: Participants and Apparatus

The characteristics of the target population were not always identified and did not always include the geographical location. The sample was almost always selected using an appropriate method but justifications were either absent or very brief. Full participant details such as number of participants, age range and background were almost always clearly stated.

The list of apparatus used was detailed but not always justified. In a few cases, evidence was not included in the Appendices. Candidates are reminded that the absence of materials in the Appendices can deem the investigation non-replicable and compromise the marks awarded both in this section and the procedure.

Method: Procedure

Procedures were generally very good and allowed full replication. There was clear evidence that participants have been treated ethically and anonymised consent forms and debriefing forms were often included in the Appendices. In almost all cases, verbatim standardised instructions were also provided. Centres are reminded that the procedure needs to incorporate all information stated in the design section where appropriate, such as the controls used.

Method: Data Analysis

This section was generally answered well and descriptive statistics, visual displays and inferential statistics were appropriately selected and justified.

Centres are reminded that full marks cannot be awarded here in the absence of clear statements that explain the choice of statistics and visual displays. This section assesses candidates understanding in selecting appropriate statistics rather than simply presenting them and carrying out correct calculations which is the aim of the Results section.

It should also be noted that in some cases, such as when a correlation has been chosen as a method of investigation, descriptive statistics might not be suitable. In this case justifying why certain statistics were not selected is enough to achieve the full available marks.

Results

Most candidates used inferential and descriptive statistics correctly and provided all their calculations in the Appendices.

Candidates are reminded that visual displays must be fully labelled and that headings making reference to conditions A and B are not acceptable unless a key is available that clearly outlines what these conditions are. Candidates are reminded that presentation of raw data does not constitute analysis of results.

Further, the results must relate to the hypothesis being tested. There were instances where the independent variable identified in the hypothesis did not match the results provided.

Discussion

The quality of discussions was good. There was often an appropriate explanation of the results although candidates are reminded that there is no need to include statistics here. Furthermore, candidates are reminded that reference to descriptive statistics is not appropriate when coming to a conclusion as to the significance of the results as this does not demonstrate full understanding.

The quality of background research presented will inevitably affect this section. Candidates are required to comment on whether the findings from their investigation are comparable to previous research findings and explain any differences. Candidates often find it difficult to do so if the findings of their background research are not presented in the Introduction.

Furthermore, evaluation and suggestions for improvement must be fully contextualised and explicitly related to the aim of the study.

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

Some discussions tended to be overly long. Candidates are reminded to present information concisely.

Conduct, Presentation, References and Appendices

This section was well attempted by most candidates.

Communication skills were very good and the standard referencing format was followed. Appropriate appendices were almost always included.

Please note that if the Appendices are incomplete, such as missing calculations and lack of standardised instructions, then candidates cannot be awarded marks in the top band. Furthermore, candidates must correctly use a standard style of referencing, such as presenting sources in alphabetical order, to achieve marks in the top band.