

PSYCHOLOGY

Paper 9773/01
Key Studies and Theories

Key Messages

It is evident that candidates have been well prepared for this examination and both they and their centres are to be congratulated on their performance. The key message for centres this year repeats the key message from last year: candidates need to focus the same level of attention of Section B part (c) questions and clearly explain how the research they design would extend our understanding of the topic area. In addition, for the first time this year, there was evidence of candidates not answering the questions directly. Candidates should be encouraged to read questions carefully and give the precise information that has been requested. See comments on specific questions for further guidance on this.

General Comments

Overall the standard of answers was good and candidates have clearly been well prepared for this examination. 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.

Comments on Specific Questions

Section A

Question 1

This was generally well answered although some candidates offered overly general answers to this question suggesting that 'smashed' sounds like broken glass but going no further than this.

Question 2

This was also well answered although for part (a) several candidates described different conditions of the experiment with the variable being implicitly given rather than identifying variables as requested by the question. Part (b) was answered well with candidates displaying good understanding of this study, although candidates who selected age as the variable often went no further than saying that age increases ability to pass the tests rather than making any explicit reference to the development of cognitive skills or to stages of cognitive development.

Question 3

This was answered well by some candidates although a surprising number responded to this as if they had been asked to describe one problem with the sample of this study rather than one problem with the way that the sample had been selected. The better answers considered the implications of recruiting a volunteer sample through a newspaper and the ways in which a sample of volunteers may differ from the target population as a whole.

Question 4

This question produced lengthy answers which tended to give information about the procedure of the study (such as the initial arrest and processing), often without a specific link to evidence that supported the conclusion that the participants believed in the reality of the situation they were in.

Question 5

There were some excellent answers to this question with most candidates choosing to interpret location as 'on a non-stop train' but there were also some interesting answers which focussed on New York as the location of this study and the implications of this for explaining the results.

Question 6

This was generally well answered and candidates demonstrated a good grasp of the strengths and weaknesses of the way that data was collected in this study.

Question 7

This was generally answered well with candidates being able to give clear and concise aims for this study.

Question 8

This was not well understood. The syllabus clearly requires candidates to have studied 'Definitions of abnormality including deviation from the norm and deviation from ideal mental health'. This was all that was required for this question but it was evident that not all candidates had been prepared for this question. Centres are reminded that questions can come from the 'background theory' stated on the syllabus.

Question 9

Most candidates simply identified the fact that this was a case study and difficult to generalise from. For full marks, it was necessary to make some reference to the topic area of gambling rather than simply giving a generic weakness of a case study.

Question 10

This was well answered and candidates showed excellent understanding of this study.

Question 11

This was generally well answered although some responses lacked clarity.

Question 12

This was well answered and candidates showed excellent understanding of this study.

Section B

Question 14 was probably more popular than **Question 13** but as the numbers are so small these questions will be dealt with together. Part **(a)** produced some very good answers although there was evidence of less preparation than in previous years. Part **(b)** produced some excellent answers although the range of responses was much greater than in previous years and there was evidence of candidates using either a smaller number of evaluation issues or issues that had not been carefully selected for the topic. Part **(c)** was an excellent discriminator with some candidates displaying an excellent grasp of research methods as well as some original and carefully thought through ideas for extending our understanding of the topic area. Centres are reminded that candidates must describe their study and explain how this would extend our understanding of the topic area.

PSYCHOLOGY

Paper 9773/02

Methods, Issues and Applications

General Comments

The overall standard of performance this year was high and candidates were well prepared for the examination. It was also very positive to see that candidates continued to make use of research evidence that went beyond the 15 key studies of Paper 1. The best candidates demonstrated excellent knowledge of psychological evidence and were able to utilise these effectively to support points made.

It is important that candidates are reminded to read each question carefully. Some responses suggested that some candidates had not carefully followed the requirements of a question. This was true of **Question 1(b)** in which some candidates offered answers in relation to the experimental method in general without commenting on the experimental design used in the study. It was also true of **Question 3(b)** in which candidates described psychological evidence instead of applying their knowledge to the scenario provided. There was no evidence that candidates had run out of time and there were no rubric errors, although as a very small number of candidates misinterpreted **Question 3(b)** and repeated material provided in **Question 3(a)**.

As with previous sessions some of the answers provided were not proportionate to the marks available: either candidates provided lengthy answers for questions that carried a few marks or did not provide enough detail for answers with higher marks.

Comments on Specific Questions

Question 1

- (a) This question was answered well by the majority of candidates. Most were able to describe the independent variable and dependent variable in experiment 2 by Loftus and Palmer. In some cases, candidates did not fully operationalise the dependent variable by clearly showing how this was measured. Similarly, in some cases, it was not clear how the independent variable was manipulated. For example, it is not sufficient to say that the independent variable was the verb used in the leading question. For full marks, the three conditions of the independent variable had to be clearly stated.
- (b) The question required candidates to describe the way that the experimental design was used in experiments 1 and 2, that is, the way that participants were allocated to the conditions of the two experiments. Candidates often made reference to lab experiments and the controls that were put in place in the Loftus and Palmer study, with no consideration of participant allocation. They then went on to suggest the use of a field experiment as an alternative design. These answers could not be credited. Some other candidates correctly identified that the independent measures design was used in both experiment 1 and 2 of this study but did not elaborate further by offering a description of the different conditions of both experiments.
- (c) This question was answered to a good standard. Most candidates debated well the use of controls when investigating eyewitness testimony. Most referred to the ability to infer cause and effect and the loss of ecological validity when employing controls. The choice of research evidence was not always as effective. It was not always clear how the evidence related to the general point made and elaboration was not always sufficient to show understanding. As with previous years, candidates are reminded that research evidence has to be closely linked to both elements of the question, in this case both controls and eyewitness testimony. 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) Most students could explain what is meant by ethnocentrism and many referred to culturally biased samples, but the explanations and the evidence used to illustrate these reasons were either not always effective or were absent.
- (b) This question allowed candidates to showcase their knowledge of the approaches and apply it to explain insomnia. Many candidates focused on the methods widely used by the two approaches, for example the use of EEGs, measurement of cortisol levels to investigate sleeping patterns, or the use of therapy. Weaker candidates were often able to provide a generic overview of the two approaches and received some marks but were not successful at making apposite comparisons or fully explaining how the two approaches can explain insomnia.
- (c) This question was answered well by the majority of candidates. Most were able to discuss the strengths of the physiological approach and utilise evidence effectively to support their points. They made reference to the use of objective methods to gather data, the high reliability but also the many useful applications. Some candidates went beyond their syllabus and demonstrated wider reading by using research evidence from the 'explore more' section as well as other recent psychological research.

Question 3

- (a) This question was answered particularly well. Most commonly cited research included the studies by Hazan and Shaver and by Veale and Riley. Candidates utilised research and theories from other parts of the syllabus and they did not limit themselves to the content of the key studies. Candidates are reminded that although the scenarios in this section will lend themselves to the content of the key studies, all relevant research and/or theory is creditworthy. Candidates are also 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). Candidates can receive full marks in this question by demonstrating either depth or breadth.
- (b) A number of candidates were able to apply psychological knowledge to explain Richard's behaviour. Some of explanations were thoughtful, detailed and demonstrated understanding throughout. Weaker candidates made less effective links and reiterated the research outlined in (a) without elaborating any further. However, even weaker candidates were able to score significantly higher in this question than in other questions on this paper.

PSYCHOLOGY

Paper 9773/03
Key Applications

Key Messages

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 and so it very difficult to make general comments on candidate performance. There were no responses for *Psychology and Abnormality* or *Psychology and Sport* and only a small number of responses for the other options. There were no rubric errors. Overall candidates have been very well prepared although there was a wider range of responses this session with some evidence of under-preparation.

Comments on Specific Questions

Psychology and Crime

Section A questions were generally answered very well and candidates seemed to have been very well prepared for this section. They demonstrated excellent knowledge of both the British and the FBI approach to offender profiling as well as the study by Rubin et al. Answers were generally clear and well-constructed. In **Section B**, **Question 8** on Farrington and criminal careers was much more popular than **Question 9** on the psychology of investigation. Whichever question was selected, candidates gave an impressive amount of detail for part (a) and clearly had prepared this material well. Part (b) (evaluation) showed more of a range of answers. There were the usual, highly impressive answers which showed an excellent grasp of a range of themes and issues and a marked ability to select highly apposite issues to use. However, we did also see 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).

Answers to **Section C** displayed good understanding of research methods as well as understanding of the evidence of which studies were based. This was primarily Kassin and Sommers, although stronger answers also made reference to other studies.

Psychology and Environment

Answers to **Section A** were clear and detailed and candidates had clearly been well prepared for this section. Candidates were able to display detailed knowledge of both the study by Lundberg and the study by Aginsky et al.

Both questions in **Section B** were popular and candidates had also been well prepared for answering questions on both behaviour in emergency situations and the study by North on the effect of musical style on restaurant customers' spending. 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. As with the *Psychology and Crime* option, there were some answers to part (b) which did not do this effectively. Responses to **Section C** were very good with candidates suggesting some excellent field experiments to investigate the effect of mobile phone use on personal space distance.

Psychology and Health

Only a very small number of candidates answered questions from this option so it is not possible to comment in any detail, however candidates selecting this option had clearly been well prepared for this examination and were able to demonstrate good knowledge of both the case study of Munchausen syndrome presented by Aleem and Ajarim as well as the study by Citron et al. on patient controlled analgesia, the study by Tapper et al. and psychological research into substances. Candidates displayed good research design skills in their responses to **Section C** questions.

PSYCHOLOGY

Paper 9773/04
Personal Investigation

There were too few candidates for us to be able to produce a meaningful report.