

PSYCHOLOGY

Paper 9773/01 Key Studies and Theories

Key Messages

- Extended answers to questions asking for a description of a key study should focus on that study. There is no need for candidates to provide background material or additional studies in such answers.
- Evaluation should always be explicitly linked to the material (theories and/or research).

General Comments

Overall the standard of answers was extremely good and candidates have clearly been very well prepared for this examination. The level of detail provided was consistently impressive and candidates were able to use a wide range of evaluation issues in **Section B**. No questions appeared to cause problems although candidates do sometimes struggle to select the correct information giving more information than is required. This was particularly evident in **Section B** answers.

Some rubric errors were evident for the first time. A very small number of candidates attempted both **Section B** questions. The higher scoring answer was credited but candidates will undoubtedly have disadvantaged themselves in terms of the time that they were able to spend on each question. Centres are advised to ensure that candidates are familiar with the demands of the question paper.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

The majority of candidates answered **Question 1** very well with most focusing on the fact that the participants were all candidates and therefore not representative of the wider population due to limited driving experience and increased familiarity with learning/testing. A minority of candidates gave answers that did not explicitly outline a weakness and simply identified a feature of the sample.

Question 2 was generally not well answered. The further research by Golan et al concluded that within the AS/HFA (Asperger's Syndrome/High Functioning Autism) females performed worse than males on the 'reading the mind in the voice' task. Many candidates responded that males performed worse than females.

In **Question 3** most candidates appeared to know which the fixed array condition was for part **(a)** but the quality of the answers varied. Stronger candidates made it clear that the children did not see the transformation and were only asked the question once. Weaker candidates did not make this explicitly clear. The answer to part **(b)** was that the fixed array condition was included as a control to check whether the children who could conserve in the other two conditions were doing so because they were bringing information over from the pre-transformation display. Candidates who simply said 'as a control' were awarded 1 mark.

Some very good answers were seen to **Question 4**. Stronger candidates made explicit reference to the study by Haney, Banks and Zimbardo as well as contrasting the dispositional hypothesis with the situational hypothesis although full marks were awarded for a clear description of the dispositional hypothesis in isolation.

In **Question 5** most candidates answered part **(a)** well and most focused on the issue of informed consent although the issue of potential distress was also common. In part **(b)** most candidates answered this well and most agreed that the researchers were justified in conducting the study in the way that they did due to the demand characteristics that would have been present had the participants known that they were taking part in a study.

Generally **Question 6** was well answered with inter-rater reliability the most commonly offered strength and ethical issues the most commonly offered weakness.

Question 7 was generally well answered with candidates offering a range of valid answers.

A range of answers was seen to **Question 8**. The two more obvious pieces of evidence are the father – grandfather fantasy and the fantasy about the plumber. The first suggests a more ‘satisfactory’ solution than getting rid of his father and the second suggests Hans identifying with his father and wishing to become more like him. However it is possible to interpret other aspects of the study as providing evidence for the resolution of the Oedipus complex and any answer which explained how this related to the resolution of the Oedipus complex was credited.

Some very good answers were seen to **Question 9** showing good understanding of this study. A few candidates offered the interpretations made by other patients. This was not credited.

Some good answers were seen to **Question 10**, focusing on the minimisation of demand characteristics.

Most candidates gave the correct answer to **Question 11** although there were a few incorrect answers giving the opposite effects.

There were some good answers to **Question 12** and any appropriate conclusion from the study was credited.

Section B

Question 13

Only a very small number of candidates chose **Question 13** (Dement and Kleitman). These tended to be excellent answers showing an impressive grasp of this topic area.

Question 14

The vast majority of candidates chose this question.

- (a) As might be expected, answers to part (a) were generally very good with most candidates being able to provide a great deal of information about the key study by Milgram.
- (b) Answers to this part were also very good with candidates discussing a wide range of issues raised by this study.
- (c) These answers tended to score a little lower with this part providing good discrimination. Centres are reminded to examine the mark scheme for this part which explicitly requires an ‘explanation of how this would extend our understanding’. Candidates have a tendency to suggest an alternative with little attention paid to the second part of the question.

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Paper 9773/02 Methods, Issues and Applications
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Key Message

- This paper gives the opportunity to give examples of research from other parts of the syllabus or the 'explore more' section. Most candidates limited themselves to the 15 key studies of Paper 1.

General Comments

Candidates performed very well throughout this paper, producing answers that allowed them to showcase not only their in-depth knowledge and understanding but also their skills in the application of psychology to everyday life.

As with previous examination series, candidates answered **Questions 3(a) and 3(b)** very well. **Questions 1(c) and 2(c)** proved to be challenging but were very good differentiators of performance. Most candidates limited themselves to the 15 key studies of Paper 1 and there were few examples of research from other parts of the syllabus or the 'explore more' section.

All questions were attempted and there were no timing issues or rubric errors. Even in cases where answers were brief, they were still relevant suggesting that candidates understood what was required.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a) This question was answered very well by the majority of candidates. Most candidates provided two findings that were well described and supported with data from the table displayed on the examination paper.
- (b) Most candidates were able to identify two ways in which Bandura's study lacked ecological validity. Commonly cited explanations included the use of the Bobo doll instead of a real person and the use of the lab environment, which did not reflect everyday life. The majority of candidates made appropriate suggestions to explain how the ecological validity of the study could be improved. Weaker candidates tended to just identify rather than provide a detailed explanation of the lack of validity.
- (c) As with previous years, candidates found this question challenging. A large number of candidates described strengths and weaknesses of the observational method without providing supporting examples from any research. Many did not link their answers to learned behaviour, providing generic examples from research that made use of the observational method but were not always relevant to learned behaviour. Better candidates were able carefully to select examples of research that were apposite to the observation of learned behaviour, such as the studies by Bandura and Watson. Candidates are reminded that given the synoptic nature of this paper, examples can come from any area of the syllabus and not only the 15 key studies. This can allow candidates to utilise a vast amount of research and showcase their knowledge and understanding.

Question 2

- (a) Candidates were required to outline the reductionism and holism debate in psychology using examples from any research. As with previous years, research could have come from any area of the syllabus and the 'explore more' section. It was surprising, therefore, that most candidates limited themselves to the 15 key studies of Paper 1, choosing very few examples from other areas of the syllabus. The majority of candidates showed a good understanding of the general debate and were able to outline it eloquently. Some needed to offer research examples that were more appropriate or were better explained to show how they related to the reductionism/holism debate. This was particularly the case with research examples in regard to holism – a consequence of only focusing on the restrictive content of Paper 1.
- (b) The majority of candidates were able to answer this question well applying their understanding of reductionism and holism to explain emotion. Weaker candidates produced more basic answers by simply reiterating what they had already described in part (a), showing little understanding as to how reductionists or holists think when looking at emotions. Centres are reminded that this question will always require candidates to apply their general knowledge of approaches/debates to an unfamiliar topic. This is to test candidates' understanding that goes beyond rote learning.
- (c) Stronger candidates provided some outstanding answers here but a significant number were unable to provide suitable examples from research that were apposite to the reductionist approach. Research examples tended to be chosen again from the 15 key studies, with few candidates choosing examples from other areas of the syllabus.

Question 3

- (a) This question was answered very well, with many candidates achieving full marks and producing some detailed answers. A number of relevant and appropriate research examples were described, with the most commonly cited being Bowlby's theory of maternal deprivation, Ainsworth's attachment styles, Freud's theory of the Oedipus complex, and Hazan and Shaver's study on romantic love as an attachment. As with previous sections, very few candidates utilised research or theories from other parts of the syllabus and they limited themselves to the content of Paper 1. Although all scenarios lend themselves to the content of Paper 1, candidates should be reminded that given the synoptic nature of this paper all relevant research and/or theory is creditworthy. Candidates are also reminded that in this part question they are only required to describe research and theories, not link these to the scenario – as this is a requirement of part (b).
- (b) Again, as with previous examination series, this question was answered very well by all candidates, with the most able providing some outstanding answers that showed understanding throughout. Even weaker candidates were able to use theories and research described in part (a) to explain Ben's behaviour, scoring significantly higher than other questions on the examination paper.

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Paper 9773/03 Key Applications

Key Messages

- It is noted that candidates tend to choose the key study question in **Section B** rather than the alternative broader question. Extended answers to questions asking for a description of a key study (**Section B**, part **(a)**) should focus on that study. There is no need for candidates to provide background material or additional studies in such answers. Candidates are not penalised for including such information but should be advised that this is unnecessary.
- Evaluation (particularly **Section B**, part **(b)**) should always be explicitly linked to the material (theories and/or research) being evaluated rather than a broad discussion of generic evaluation issued.

General Comments

The overall standard of scripts was once again very good and a significant number of candidates achieved close to full marks. An impressive level of detail was provided by some candidates across all questions. In several questions, but most notably in **Section B**, part **(b)** questions, the responses produced by some candidates far exceeded both the expectations of the examining team and the requirements for full marks. Centres are to be congratulated on the performance of their candidates. The overall range of marks was much broader than in previous years.

The total entry is still relatively small and whilst it is now possible to comment on four of the five options (no candidates answered questions from the Sport option) the small number of candidates answering questions from the Abnormal Psychology and Health Psychology options means that it is difficult to draw general conclusions on performance from these.

For the first time the examining team noted rubric errors. In particular this was where weaker candidates answered questions from more than two options or attempted to answer both **Section B** questions. In these situations all answers are marked and the best possible combination calculated for this candidate. However it is inevitable that candidates are disadvantaged by these errors in terms of time spent on additional questions for which they will not be credited.

Comments on specific questions

Psychology and Abnormality

Please note that these comments are based on a very small number of candidates.

Question 1

Candidates generally had a very good understanding of one somatic therapy and the problems associated with this. Some candidates struggled to give three assumptions in part **(c)** although most were able to give two.

Question 2

Candidates generally gave clear answers to these questions although many omitted the name of the theory they had chosen, both to describe in part **(a)** and to contrast in part **(b)**. It was sometimes difficult to identify which theory candidates were describing.

Question 3

This was the least popular of the optional questions although the candidates who selected this question answered it very well, including a range of material in part **(a)** and discussing a carefully selected range of issues in part **(b)**.

Question 4

This was the most popular question in **Section B** and most candidates showed a very impressive knowledge of this study and appropriate evaluation issues.

Question 5

Most candidates designed prospective treatment studies and gave a reasonable amount of detail in relation to this. A range of well selected evidence was offered by most candidates for part **(b)**.

Psychology and Crime

Question 6

Candidates clearly have a good understanding of this study and most chose to describe the inadmissible/due-process condition. Results were generally described in impressive detail with many candidates giving full details of percentages. Interestingly part **(c)** was not always answered to the same high standard with some candidates appearing to miss the word 'mock' in the question and simply discussing issues such as 'every trial is different'. Stronger candidates focused on issues such as the lack of consequences of any decisions made by mock juries and the effects of knowing that they are taking part in research.

Question 7

Again, candidates appear to have a very detailed understanding of this study with some excellent answers to all three parts of this.

Question 8

The majority of candidates chose this question rather than **Question 9**. There were some excellent answers to part **(a)** with some candidates clearly having a very detailed knowledge of this study. The strongest answers gave details of findings and conclusions as well as the way in which the study was conducted. Part **(b)** answers were also very good with stronger candidates focusing on a wide range of focused evaluation issues. Some answers here were slightly more generic in terms of the evaluation but nonetheless good.

Question 9

Very few candidates answered this question but there were some very good answers including a wide range of material.

Question 10

As with other **Section C** questions, this proved to be the most challenging part of the paper. This question proved more of a challenge to candidates who sometimes focused on offender profiling rather than geographical profiling and sometimes struggled to design a study which explicitly tested the effectiveness of geographical profiling. However, when candidates grasped the demands in the question, they were able to produce some excellent answers. Answers to part **(b)** were generally good and covered a range of studies.

Psychology and Environment

Question 11

There was a wide range of responses to this question. Candidates were required to explain both why an independent measures design was used and how it was implemented. Several answers were fairly basic and failed to answer both parts of this question. In part **(b)** there were some weaker candidates who clearly did not have an understanding of research methods sufficient to grasp what this question was asking. This is surprising at this level of study. Stronger candidates explained how the study could have been conducted

using a repeated measures design and tended to choose advantages related to the removal of the problem of individual differences. Answers to part **(c)** ranged from the very basic (play classical music in posh restaurants) to those that explored the issue of types of music in relation to type of business and even those that suggested possible solutions to the recession.

Question 12

Candidates have a very detailed understanding of this study and gave very good answers to this question. Parts **(a)** and **(b)** tended to be answered in considerable detail and most candidates were able to give one, if not both, conclusions in part **(c)**.

Question 13

This was the most popular question in this section with candidates able to provide an impressive amount of material. Most achieved high marks for both parts of this question with a range of focused evaluation issues covered.

Question 14

Fewer candidates chose this question. Answers were very good with candidates producing a range of theory and research in their answers to part **(a)** and a range of focused evaluation issues in part **(b)**.

Question 15

Again, **Section C**, particularly part **(a)** seems to challenge candidates. Here, they tended to give a great deal of detail about a situation or simulation in which behaviour could be studied, but less information about how the study would actually be conducted. Part **(b)** answers tended to be good with a range of appropriate research described.

Psychology and Health

Please note that these comments are based on a very small number of candidates.

Question 16

Candidates clearly have a good understanding of this study and gave good answers to parts **(a)** and **(b)**. Part **(c)** was more challenging and it is surprising that so few candidates are able to discuss type 1 errors in relation to a piece of psychological research.

Question 17

A range of answers was given here especially to part **(a)** with a number of procedures mentioned by weaker candidates which did not appear in the study. However stronger candidates clearly have a good understanding of this study and are able to provide good answers to both parts **(a)** and **(b)**. Well argued responses to part **(c)** were generally seen.

Question 18

Roughly half the candidates chose this question in **Section B** and were able to give a great deal of information about this study. Focused evaluation issues were evident in stronger answers.

Question 19

Roughly half the candidates chose this question and gave a range of material on both theory and research on health promotion with well selected evaluation issues in part **(b)**.

Question 20

Candidates suggested some well designed studies, generally to compare the effectiveness of PSST with another treatment for stress. As PSST is not a real treatment, candidates tended to focus on aspects of the research design and techniques for measuring stress and generally achieved high marks. Part **(c)** answers were detailed and covered a range of appropriate evidence.

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Paper 9773/04 Personal Investigation

The standard of coursework produced in this examination series was again very high but more variable compared to last year. Some excellent coursework was produced that demonstrated originality, independence and psychological imagination. A wide range of topics were selected that in many cases went beyond the syllabus.

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

As with previous examination series, new Centres are reminded that all titles should be submitted to Cambridge for approval before any work can begin, so as to ensure that each Personal Investigation complies with the regulations and meets the criteria for internal assessment.

The majority of reports stayed within the recommended word limit and followed the standard format of presentation. When the word limit was not adhered to it was because the introductions and/or discussion were excessively long.

The majority of Centres provided helpful annotations that allowed Moderators to identify the rationale behind the application of the mark scheme.

Comments on individual parts of the report

Abstracts were clear and well written and in most cases candidates were awarded full marks. Information on the aims, method, results and conclusions was presented concisely.

Introductions were relevant and contained carefully selected material. They were coherent and logically organised and the review of literature included a range of appropriate research. The research question was almost always clearly stated.

It was pleasing to see that in this examination series rationales followed logically, and the link between them and the reviewed research literature was explicit in the majority of candidates' coursework.

In a few cases the criteria for 'concisely describe' were not always met, with candidates presenting excessive research material that sometimes was only peripherally relevant. These research projects tended also to struggle to stay within the recommended word limit.

Hypotheses were mostly clear, concise and included most relevant aspects. Centres are reminded that in order for candidates to receive full marks here they need to describe clear and concise hypotheses (both null and alternative) in which both variables are clearly operationalised. In addition, the direction of these hypotheses (one/two tailed) should also be identified. When candidates have carried out a correlation, the hypothesis should denote a relationship rather than cause and effect. In a few cases marks were awarded when hypotheses were not clearly described and a number of the above requirements were absent.

The **Method: Design** section was attempted very well by the majority of candidates. Most candidates identified and operationalised the independent and dependent variables in their investigations, identified extraneous variables and suggested how these could be appropriately controlled. In addition, the experimental designs employed were successfully identified and justified.

In some cases candidates were awarded full marks when the IV and DV were not fully operationalised. In some other cases, although extraneous variables had been identified it was not always clear how the candidate ensured that they were controlled. For example, statements such as 'I made sure that the noise was controlled' does not show how control was achieved.

The experimental design needs to be clearly identified whenever appropriate. Justification is also required, that is, why the design has been chosen instead of another. Statements such as 'to avoid order effects' or to 'control for individual differences' are creditworthy as long as they are fully contextualised and relevant to the overall coursework.

The **Method: Participants and Apparatus** section was well answered by most candidates. As with previous examination series, Centres are reminded that the description of participant details and the identification of the characteristics of the target population are two distinct criteria: both need to be addressed for full marks in this section.

In a number of cases, the reason why materials and apparatus were chosen was absent. Centres are reminded that this requirement needs to be met in order for full marks to be awarded.

In most cases all materials were presented in the appendices of the report. This is crucial as absence of materials will compromise the overall replicability of the study.

Most **Procedures** were detailed, well described, and allowed full replication. There was always clear evidence that participants had been treated ethically. Standardised instructions and all relevant consent and debriefing forms were almost always present in the appendices.

As with the last examination series there were a few cases where full marks were awarded despite a number of omissions that rendered the procedure non-replicable. For example, the absence of evidence of materials in the Method/Apparatus section cannot allow for full replication of the procedure. As in previous examination series, when the identified controls in the Method: Design part of the report relate to the procedure, these need to be mentioned in this section to allow for full replication.

The **Method: Data Analysis** section saw some variability in performance. The majority of Centres selected and justified appropriate descriptive statistics, inferential statistics and visual displays. Some other Centres considered this section to be identical to the Results section and were unable to offer suitable justifications.

Centres are reminded that marks cannot be awarded here if clear statements that explain the choice of statistics and visual displays are missing. This section assesses candidates' understanding in selecting appropriate statistics, rather than simply their presentation of them and the carrying out of 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.

The **Results** section was generally well answered. The majority of candidates presented descriptive and inferential statistics that were appropriate, clearly stated and correct. Visual displays were usually appropriate, clearly presented and labelled.

In a few cases candidates presented raw data in their visual displays and these cannot be deemed appropriate. As with previous series, there were a few instances where tables and visual displays were not fully labelled and headings were not always informative. For example, merely stating that this is 'a table of the mean score of the two conditions' is not sufficient.

As with previous examinations, candidates are reminded that if evidence of calculations is absent, it is hard to judge whether the results provided are correct and thus the full marks available cannot be awarded.

When calculations were incorrect or when the statistical test chosen was inappropriate, this had an effect on the discussion section of the report as incorrect calculations lead to incorrect conclusions.

The **Discussion** section was answered very well by the majority of candidates. Stronger candidates were able to demonstrate good understanding, insight and a thorough knowledge of methodology. They explained their results thoroughly, clearly relating these to their introductions. Weaker candidates simply restated their background research and/or introduced new material rather than discussing the results of their investigations.

Evaluation of methodology was generally thorough, reflecting a high standard of analysis. The ability to contextualise their evaluations distinguished the strong from the weaker candidates. Suggestions for

improvement and further research usually showed very good understanding and were thoroughly explained in the light of the discussion and evaluation. Weaker candidates needed to provide suggestions that showed deep understanding, instead of making simplistic suggestions that were not always appropriate to their overall discussion.

The **Conduct, Presentation, References and Appendices** section was very well attempted by most candidates. The majority of reports followed the correct format and stayed within the recommended word limit. Communication skills were of a high level and the standard referencing format was followed. Appropriate appendices were included at the back of the report. As with previous examinations, Centres are reminded that candidates are required to include all references in alphabetical order, not just a bibliography. The source of their statistical test or the computer program used needs also to be referenced.