# PSYCHOLOGY TZ1

(IBNA / IBLA)

## Overall grade boundaries

### Higher level

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Grade**: | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| **Mark range**: | 0 - 8 | 9 - 19 | 20 - 28 | 29 - 41 | 42 - 53 | 54 - 65 | 66 - 100 |

### Standard level

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Grade**: | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| **Mark range**: | 0 - 10 | 11 - 20 | 21 - 31 | 32 - 43 | 44 - 55 | 56 - 67 | 68 - 100 |

## Higher level internal assessment

### Component grade boundaries

### Higher level

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Grade**: | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| **Mark range**: | 0 - 2 | 3 - 5 | 6 - 8 | 9 - 11 | 12 - 15 | 16 - 18 | 19 - 25 |

## The range and suitability of the work submitted

The research topics were all related to cognitive psychology. In some cases the background research was very complicated and it was obvious that the candidates had not really understood what it was about. This affected their experiment negatively. There were many examples of superficial treatment of the background literature in the introduction. Introductions with the only relevant study were not an exception, together with those where several studies were cited, however, without an evident link to the topic. This did not allow for sufficient analysis so that the research hypothesis could be properly justified. This also had an effect of the discussion of results. The tendency to state null hypothesis as a negative formulation of experimental hypothesis remains as a shortcoming in quite a lot of works.

Candidates were aware of ethical issues and all candidates included a copy of informed consent in the appendices. There was generally not much description of ethical considerations in the design section but some included it in the procedure section and with a copy of the informed consent in the appendices there was evidence of ethical procedures. A few candidates used slight deception without addressing this in the design section.

# Candidate performance against each criterion

**Criteria A: Introduction**

The research question was not always clearly formulated in the introduction but most reports had aim of the study and this was accepted by this examiner. It was not always clear from the background readings in the intro why a particular research question was chosen. This year there was little reference to theoretical framework and the background studies were often analysed very superficially. In some papers it seemed as if the candidates did not really understand the background research and there were also misunderstandings of well-known studies. In some papers the hypotheses were not really clearly formulated and not justified properly.

**Criteria B: Method: Design**

Most candidates were aware of different designs but could not always properly justify their choice of design. The ethical guidelines were mostly addressed in the design section and all candidates included an informed consent from participants. Accurate operationalization of variables (mainly of an independent variable) was one of weakest parts of designs, apparently because the candidates rely on their procedure descriptions, where details about the steps in manipulations were presented. Ethical issues were considered in a disciplined way and consent forms were attached in a majority of works.

**Criteria C: Method: Participants**

The target population was mostly identified but there were not many relevant characteristics. All samples were based on a candidate population in the candidates own school. Sampling technique was in several cases identified as volunteer sample but most candidates used the terms opportunity sample or self-selected sample. Many candidates had justified their sampling method properly but in some cases this was ignored or vaguely worded. A few candidates claimed to have used random sampling but it appeared that they meant random allocation to experimental conditions.

**Criteria D: Method: Procedure**

There were quite often problems with the description of procedure in sufficient detail to replicate (especially with reference to material in the appendices). The problem persists with the criteria for selection of material, especially when verbal stimuli are used. Consequently, details concerning experimental manipulation just from the information given in attachment were quite difficult to be deciphered. Controls especially over verbal material were largely ignored.

**Criteria E: Results**

A few candidates did not describe the results in a narrative form in the result section and candidates from some schools had all the graphs placed in the appendices. Generally, the graphs were poorly labelled. Some reports did not include tables. A few candidates had individual scores in the result section and made a graph on that. Some candidates did not include their raw scores in the appendices so it was difficult to check accuracy of results. Many candidates used other tests than the ones mentioned in the guide and they did not always properly justify the use of the parametric tests.

**Criteria F: Discussion**

In this most demanding part of the study, some candidates showed high potential for insightful interpretations and critical considerations of both components of a discussion required for high score in IA HL. However, many discussions were based on commonsense rather than careful comparisons of candidate's findings to the studies presented in the introduction. Many papers had a very short and superficial discussion of own results in the light of previous research but a long description of strengths/limitations of own design. Many candidates had problems identifying relevant strengths and weaknesses and this affected the suggestions for modifications. Quite a few candidates had problems making a clear conclusion, which related to the research question.

**Criteria G: Presentation**

Neatly presented reports with all the required sections included were submitted from a majority of schools. The most common problem concerned referencing. Candidates did not always include all the references they referred to in the introduction in the reference section, probably because they came from a book or a site from the Internet. There are still problems with references from the internet as candidates tend to think that the site name is enough and sometimes the background study could not be found in the reference section. Marks were often reduced in G due to these factors. Generally the reports lived up to the format although some papers did not include a table of contents.

# Standard level internal assessment

## Component grade boundaries

## Standard level

| **Grade**: | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Mark range**: | 0 - 2 | 3 - 5 | 6 - 8 | 9 - 10 | 11 - 12 | 13 - 14 | 15 - 20 |

## The range and suitability of the work submitted

There was a varied and interesting range of work submitted. Experiments from Cognitive Psychology were the most popular choice. Most of the works submitted were doing a replication of studies in the range of perception, cognition and memory topics in psychology. It was interesting to note that more recent research is being replicated. In the majority of cases work submitted was suitable for Diploma level candidates studying Psychology at Standard Level and conducted with regard to ethical guidelines.

Most candidates selected appropriate studies, described them well and were able to link their own results to the original study in the Discussion section.

Candidates frequently scored full marks in Introduction. Design and Participant sections often did not include justifications and therefore could not be awarded full marks, Procedure and Results often lost a mark for lacking details and Discussion section was where many marks were lost due to lack of depth in discussion.

There were some examples of reports that did not meet the criterion for experimental work, but they were few.

## Candidate performance against each criterion

There were some very solid samples showing a high level of ability. At the lower end, it was apparent that some candidates were appropriately instructed but failed in putting an appropriate internal assessment together.

References proved to be difficult with a few samples. Candidates should be instructed that referencing should occur whenever a study/theory is described in the Introduction.

### Criterion A: Introduction

In the majority of cases Introductions were well written with most candidates clearly identifying and explaining the study for partial replication as well as presenting a clearly stated aim. However, some candidates attempted to describe more than was required. Although a simple description of the study being replicated was all that was needed, too often candidates included superfluous material and studies, subsequently failing to clearly identify the study they were replicating.

Another problem that was occasionally encountered was that the Introductions were often modelled on the HL requirement of a literature review, thereby reducing available word count for the detail needed to describe the original experiment.

### Criterion B: Methods design

Although identification of IV and DV was generally correct, including operationalization of both, the proper identification of the design itself was still problematic for candidates from many centres. Too many candidates vaguely identified the design as just "experimental". It seems that some candidates cannot distinguish the design from the method. Also, a number of candidates provided incorrect justifications or no justification for their choice of experimental design. In some cases the description of the IV and DV needs to be more clearly stated, they are often too vague and imprecise. In some cases only one condition (the experimental condition) was stated.

Many examiners were happy to notice that there has been noticeable improvement in the identification and discussion of ethical considerations (informed consent, debriefing, etc.).

### Criterion C: Methods participants

In many cases candidates presented a good description including appropriate target population characteristics and identifying their sampling technique. However many candidates did not justify the use of this sampling technique and therefore could not obtain full marks. The term "random" still tends to be a source of confusion reflected in the description of participant selection and allocation to conditions.

### Criterion D: Methods procedure

In the majority of cases procedures were relevant and clearly described, but in some cases materials referred to were not included in Appendices (e.g. standardized instructions, tests, questionnaires) which affected the replicability of the procedure. Although this section of the report was usually well done there is still some room for improvement. Also, complete and detailed debriefing was rarely present.

**Criterion E: Results**

Unfortunately the Results section seems to be a rather weak point within many reports. In many instances graphs were not labelled clearly enough for conditions to be recognised. Weaker candidates chose the wrong type of graph (histograms or pie charts to show differences between independent groups). In addition, a number of candidates presented their results in an unclear manner - they did not include percentages, measures of central tendency or dispersion. Some candidates provided several graphs in the Results section - presenting the data in a variety of ways, but often not reflecting the aim of their study. Also, occasionally there was incorrect application of statistics. For example, when ordinal levels of measurement were used, there were several candidates who found the mean score in spite of the fact that this is not an appropriate measure of central tendency for ordinal data.

In the Results section, candidates should ensure they provide table and figure headings and provide sufficient description of what these reflect. It is important that candidates specifically name their measures of central tendency; do these reflect mean, median, mode? Also, candidates should describe what these different scores for experimental and control groups reflect; and importantly what the SD or range imply.

Many candidates made the mistake of graphing raw data. Another common problem was that candidates did not fully interpret their descriptive statistics. Calculations (e.g. of mean) were sometimes inaccurate.

**Criterion F: Discussion**

As usual the quality of the Discussion section tended to vary. In this session examiners frequently reported that there seems to be an indication that discussions tended to follow the criteria for this section. Many more candidates are linking the discussion of strengths and weaknesses to the type of design chosen. Conclusions tend to be embedded within the discussion section instead of just added up at the very end. Unfortunately, those candidates who hadn't clearly described the study being replicated in the Introduction tended to have difficulty with the discussion section as well.

Some reports failed to achieve higher marks because strengths were often not addressed and suggestions for further research were often omitted.

**Criterion G: Presentation**

In general, reports were within the word limit (although occasionally candidates hadn't recorded the word count). In the majority of cases reports used the required format and references were provided. Full publication details of replicated study were often not given. Candidates should be encouraged to adhere to one standard referencing system. At times it seemed that some candidates finalized their reports in a hurry and therefore some items were omitted from Appendices (e.g. materials used, standardised instructions, consent form).

## Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

- Teachers must be clear on what the basic requirements of the IA are in regard to what topics/experiments are not appropriate for replication due to ethics so that they can guide candidates to make more appropriate choices.
- Choosing an experiment within their level of knowledge and limiting the aim to what is manageable within the assessment criteria is of vital importance.

- More instruction on the advantages and disadvantages of using various experimental designs & sampling techniques will help candidates justify the use of them in their reports.
- Variables should be limited to one independent and one dependent variable. An experimental study for SL should not have more than one variable for each.
- The results section should clearly provide descriptive statistics related to the aim of the study.
- Candidates should be encouraged to check all calculations and to include clear and precise labelling of tables and graphs.
- Some candidates conducted interesting and appropriate studies but they had difficulties in use of terminology or clear analysis of obtained results and this resulted in a loss of marks.
- more emphasis should be placed on the importance of a well balanced discussion that makes explicit connections between the methodology and the results of their study. Candidates must have a balanced explanation of what they felt were strengths and weaknesses.
- More guidance is necessary in relation to the expected format for the internal assessment (e.g. knowing where ethical considerations should be addressed, raw data presented, standardized instructions belong).
- More attention and guidance should be given to candidates about standard methods of referencing and the difference between references and a general bibliography.
- Candidates should be encouraged to proofread their reports before handing them in.
- Candidates often include elements of the HL IA; such as a hypothesis in the introduction and discuss significance in their results/discussion sections. Teachers should clearly inform candidates that these additions are unnecessary and often cause a potentially harmful increase in word count.

# Higher and standard level paper one

## Component grade boundaries

**Higher level**

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Grade**: | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| **Mark range**: | 0 - 4 | 5 - 9 | 10 - 13 | 14 - 19 | 20 - 24 | 25 - 30 | 31 - 52 |

**Standard level**

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Grade**: | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| **Mark range**: | 0 - 4 | 5 - 8 | 9 - 12 | 13 - 17 | 18 - 23 | 24 - 28 | 29 - 44 |

## General comments

Most candidates were well prepared to manage their time between questions and were able to complete the examination.

However, many candidates did not read the question in order to provide a coherent answer that addressed the points required. Candidates need to read the questions carefully. When it says “one” it is not to their advantage to write several examples. This is often done to the detriment of the overall quality of the response.

Moreover, many candidates wrote long introductions that served to give a history of the perspective and an overall discussion of the framework. Not only was this not relevant to the questions asked, but it also clearly used up valuable time on the exam, resulting in responses that were not as developed as they should have been.

## The areas of the programme and examination which appeared difficult for the candidates

A significant number of candidates did not appear to be well prepared in the curriculum with regard to reductionism and the language of the curriculum framework: scientific study of behaviour, key concepts, basic assumptions. Knowledge of research methods outside of experiments was also very limited. Understanding the demands of the question continues to be an issue with many candidates: they were not able to synthesize their knowledge and make meaning out of it to address the higher level skills need to earn top marks. Finally, there were a number of candidates who wrote answers in an informal, almost conversational style, which should be discouraged.

## The areas of the programme and examination in which the candidates appeared well prepared

Candidates, for the most part, have mastered the knowledge however they have not mastered evaluation, analysis and discussion of considerations in relation to the content they present.

The majority of candidates were able to provide descriptive responses for many questions, but few were able to critically evaluate the implications or discuss the contributions made to our understanding of behaviour.

Knowledge of biological and learning perspectives was better than knowledge of cognitive perspective. The use of empirical evidence (especially describing appropriate studies) was improved over past years.

## The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

### Section A

#### Biological Perspective

Most candidates demonstrated an understanding of reductionism and often offered appropriate knowledge from the perspective but failed to adequately address the controversial issue. Most candidates alluded to how it was controversial but only a few gave specific examples of how this was the case. Most candidates seemed to only see the negative aspects of reductionism.

A number of candidates had a narrow understanding of reductionism. Some thought it was the same as localization of function. Others confused reductionism with biological determinism: although these two concepts are related, there was often no understanding of the difference between them. Some candidates also stated that using animals in testing was a controversy, which is not relevant to reductionism, but to the biological perspective. Some did not adequately define it in relation to the biological perspective.

#### Cognitive Perspective

The identification of one key concept seemed difficult for many candidates: they chose broad key concepts like memory, language or perception which made it difficult to address the second part of the question. Most candidates did not make the link to the “understanding of behaviour” or the discussions were implicit: candidates were unable to clearly express the link between the key concept and what it means for our understanding of behaviour in a more general sense.

Some candidates only made reference to an assumption or described a study within the cognitive perspective without identifying the underlying concept. There were some prepared answers on Piaget’s stages of cognitive development, though none focused on any key concept such as assimilation, accommodation or egocentrism. Candidates who discussed cognitive dissonance, reconstructive memory or schema tented to write better responses.

#### Learning Perspective

There were some good explanations of contributions related to the scientific study of behaviour such as the introduction of laboratory experiments, focus on observable data, use of animals in research. However, many candidates seemed to focus on the words “learning perspective” rather than “scientific study” so they approached the answer from a less advantageous angle and only described a study or a theory from the learning perspective without addressing the contribution to the scientific study of behaviour.

### Humanistic Perspective (HL)

The most popular theories were Roger's self theory and congruence and Maslow's motivation theory, although many simply described the hierarchy of needs in great detail. While many candidates were able to describe a relevant theory from the humanistic perspective few were able to link it to an appropriately chosen basic assumption. Other candidates listed several assumptions for a single theory without developing a clear argument that met the demands of the question. Some candidates wrote about an application such as Client Centred Therapy rather than a theory.

## Section B

### Biological Perspective

This was a very popular question. A broad range of empirical studies was available: the most popular ones were Gage case study and Broca's, Sperry's, Raine's and Bouchard's studies. Candidates were able to describe a relevant study with varying degrees of accuracy but very few went beyond the description to discuss how the study has added to our understanding of behaviour.

### Cognitive Perspective

Few candidates chose this question and there were a very few excellent responses. Candidates often described a memory model without addressing the question of "to what extent" the model explains cognitive processes. Few candidates discussed strengths and limits of the model, indicating that they did not fully comprehend the demands of the question. Many candidates did not include any empirical research to support their argument and some described several models.

### Learning Perspective

Many candidates chose this question and the research methods selected were experiments and either observations or case studies. While most candidates were able to explain experiments done in the learning perspective with varying degrees of accuracy, a second research method was rarely correctly explained. Most candidates failed to provide accurate empirical examples for observations and/or case studies. Most of the responses were descriptive with few having the analysis of the methods and the studies tied together. Additionally, some candidates were unable to differentiate between the scientific method of observation and the concept of "observational learning". Some candidates reported studies but did not give any detail on methods.

### Humanistic Perspective (HL)

Few candidates chose this question. Most candidates identified a relevant psychological or social question, usually aggression, but many were not able to sufficiently discuss the effectiveness of the perspective in addressing the question. Candidates who wrote about motivation in sport or "how to improve our schools" gave better answers. Many candidates did not include any empirical research to support their argument.

## Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- Candidates should practice identifying command terms and what they require. They need to be better prepared to apply their knowledge in various contexts.
- Teachers need to help candidates focus on what the question asks. Long lead-in paragraphs of a general nature that do not add to the specific nature of questions should be avoided.
- Candidates should be advised that critical analysis and evaluation, especially in part B questions, are necessary for the highest marks. Candidates need to go beyond descriptions of studies and focus more on how they answer a question through the analysis, application and evaluation of the findings from them.
- Candidates appear to be quite familiar with the classic studies and research, and with computer access they should be encouraged to do independent research and share findings on new developments, research and/or controversies concerning the classic research.
- The command term *to what extent* is a prompt that needs to be addressed more carefully. *Scientific study* and *reductionism* may need clarification as well. Knowledge of *research methods* should be more developed.
- Teachers should explicitly tell candidates that P2 questions are not to be just descriptive tasks but evaluative and analytical ones. Evaluative comments are needed and candidates seem to need help in supplementing descriptive accounts with analytical and evaluative commentary. Candidates can access such discussion by considering the assumptions underlying concepts and theories as well as addressing methodology, ethics, culture and gender considerations. Class activities could be encouraged that tend to promote the development of skills of clear argumentation (this could include citing specific research as support rather than referencing generalizations).
- Evaluation was often laboured or repetitive. Emphasis should be given on making a point, supporting it and moving on to the next. This would lead to better evaluative skills. In addition, guidance in identifying strengths of theories and studies would improve evaluation skills.

# Higher and standard level paper two

## Component grade boundaries

**Higher level**

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Grade**: | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| **Mark range**: | 0 - 4 | 5 - 8 | 9 - 12 | 13 - 18 | 19 - 23 | 24 - 29 | 30 - 40 |

**Standard level**

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Grade**: | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| **Mark range**: | 0 - 2 | 3 - 4 | 5 - 6 | 7 - 9 | 10 - 11 | 12 - 14 | 15 - 20 |

## The areas of the program which proved difficult for candidates

Most candidates were prepared for the exam. Many candidates continue to be more descriptive rather than evaluative or analytical in their approach. In addition to this research cited is described rather than used as evidence in supporting a specific stance. Many times candidates do not attend well to the question at hand and, therefore, only partially address the question.
The most difficult questions seem to be those that ask for application or cultural and/or gender considerations.

Most of the candidates opted to answer questions from “Psychology of Dysfunctional Behaviour”, “Social Psychology” and “Psychodynamic Psychology”. The responses of candidates, who choose questions from Cultural Psychology and Lifespan Psychology were very superficial. This suggests that many candidates who chose these questions had little knowledge of the option.

Psychodynamic Psychology proved to be rather challenging for candidates this session. In the majority of responses, candidates wrote a general essay about Psychoanalytic theory rather than addressing the dictates of the question i.e. gender considerations, applications or the role of the unconscious and conscious mind in human behaviour. This seemed to be because they didn't know how to be selective with the knowledge they possessed.

## The levels of knowledge, understanding and skill demonstrated

Candidates were good at descriptive answers requiring focused knowledge on certain topics. Understanding beyond description was more challenging for candidates and even when they have provided some comments these comments were not always relevant for the question stated. Most examiners reported that candidates had essays with good structure or at least attempted a structure.

It was pleasing to see that many candidates showed detailed knowledge of research studies in all areas. It was particularly pleasing to see the number of recent (and less well-known studies) that were used in responses, especially in the area of Dysfunctional Psychology and Health Psychology.

Some candidates excelled in their treatment of the subject and gave responses which were really good. They have maintained the grip on the relevance of research and addressed the issues with clarity and precision.

Candidates displayed some good knowledge of research methodology, terminology (demand characteristics, control, etc.) and ethical considerations on the whole, showing skill in identifying strengths and weaknesses of various methods. However, candidates did not have a clear understanding of the concepts of reliability and validity, sometimes using these terms incorrectly and sometimes using them interchangeably.

However, the level of knowledge varied considerably between centres. It was also clear that knowledge and understanding were very different as in several cases the candidate clearly knew a lot about the subject, but did not understand it enough to be able to apply it with skill to the questions asked. This was the case with many questions where candidates wrote a great deal about the subject, but most of it was not relevant to the question.

There was a strong trend to choose a question from the following optional areas: Social Psychology, Psychology of dysfunctional behaviour and Psychodynamic Psychology, and these were the areas best addressed.

## The strengths and weaknesses of candidates in the treatment of individual questions

### Question 2

Candidates rarely made an attempt to answer this question. Most responses tended to be extremely superficial, which reflected that the candidates were not truly knowledgeable about the option but thought that they could apply their general knowledge of psychology to the questions.

### Cultural Psychology

### Question 4

A few candidates attempted this question. Although, the candidates attempted to define the term ‘culture’, most of them missed out the essential features of the term. Additionally, although the candidates were able to identify the studies in cultural psychology, they failed to give details of the study. The element of application was hardly focused on.

### Question 5

Most candidates provided a good description of two empirical studies from cultural psychology but many of them failed to provide a good and valid evaluation. Instead candidates often offered further descriptive detail or general and superficial evaluative points with no specific support from knowledge of the option.

### Question 6

Most candidates, who attempted this question did not have specific knowledge of the option.

## The Psychology of Dysfunctional Behaviour

### Question 7

Question 7 and 9 were the most popular question within the option. The most popular dysfunctional behaviours identified were schizophrenia, depression and phobias. The best answers identified a dysfunctional disorder and outlined the features of two different explanations and explained the etiology and treatment of the disorder. Discussion of the model was usually attempted by providing strengths and limitations of the models and supporting the argument with relevant empirical studies. Unfortunately many responses overly focused on description and explanations of models or theories and made a minimal effort to address the required discussion.

Responses which tended to get fewer marks were those that provided long and descriptive accounts of one dysfunctional behaviour with minimal reference to relevant models or theories. Many candidates struggled with the term 'model or theory' and wrote everything they knew about a specific dysfunctional behaviour. Some candidates chose two models/theories from the same perspective, e.g. neurotransmitters and genetics from the biological perspective. These answers tended to be poor.

### Question 8

While the other two questions in this option were more popular, the candidates who addressed this question well generally developed a sound argument and presented their views clearly and supported them with empirical evidence.

Generally, this question was not well analysed and presented. Unfortunately, many candidates who attempted this question had only a vague idea of what the question demanded. The majority of responses made no reference to different systems in operation, reliability, validity, research evidence (apart from Rosenhan), culturally specific vs. universal disorders, nor ethical considerations. Many candidates attempting evaluation tended to list unsupported limitations with no reference to the strengths of a classificatory system. Some candidates provided long descriptions of Rosenhan without clearly relating the findings to problems of classification.

Some answers provided many arguments against the system and offered no strengths at all – these responses did not demonstrate a balanced view or an appreciation of what using this system has achieved. Only a few candidates presented any knowledge about different classification systems available across cultures.

### Question 9

Question 9 was one of the most popular choices overall. Candidates displayed good knowledge and understanding of two etiologies, but the evaluation of the appropriate therapy often lacked sufficient specific evidence. Very few studies were cited.

Lower quality responses tended to reflect the following problems:

- In some cases the dysfunctional behaviour identified was a symptom rather than a dysfunctional behaviour.
- Candidates did not appear to understand what etiology meant and many listed symptoms and treatment or, in fact, anything they could think of that might be vaguely related.

- In some cases, the outline of the first etiology was more fully developed than the second one.
- Some candidates gave far too lengthy answers for part a) and then probably lacked enough time to fully answer part b).
- Some candidates answered part b) in a superficial way and did not demonstrate clear knowledge and understanding of the treatment they chose to evaluate.

**Health Psychology**

**Question 10**

Not many candidates made an attempt to address this question. Question ten was particularly difficult for most candidates, as they either misinterpreted the term "interpretation" or avoided this aspect of the question altogether.

**Question 11**

This question was quite poorly answered. The tendency was for candidates to give two examples of particular research studies without looking at the methodology itself - and there was little understanding shown of the command term ‘evaluate’.

**Question 12**

This question presented many good research findings. A good description was made and lots of information provided, but the application was weakly attempted or not addressed.

**Lifespan Psychology**

**Question 13**

This question was usually not well answered. Many responses provided a description of two theories – their first choice tended to be Erikson's theory which was made relevant to changes in identity. The second was normally not made relevant to that issue.

For example some candidates chose Freud as an appropriate theory making it difficult for them to look at the stage of adolescence.

**Question 14**

Responses to question 14 tended to be of lower quality. Most responses presented either general views of attachment or gave an account of specific studies of attachment with no reference to the "development across the lifespan."

**Question 15**

This question was the least popular within the option. Most candidates tended to provide a good description and a limited evaluation of two empirical studies related to socialization in lifespan psychology.

**Psychodynamic Psychology**

**Question 16**

Question 16, like question 10, presented difficulty for the candidates with the word "interpretation," as they either misinterpreted the term "interpretation" or avoided this aspect of the question altogether. Candidates did not appear to have to have detailed knowledge on this topic.

Types of problems encountered in lower quality responses:

- Many candidates simply explained two theories without looking particularly at gender considerations.
- Gender considerations were well discussed in context with one theory (Freud), but poorly in context with a second theory. Candidates developed some arguments centred around the Oedipus/Electra complex, but their references to other theorists lacked substance.

**Question 17**

This is a question where many failed to discuss applications. Many responses discussed just Freudian theory in general. Higher quality responses tended to choose therapy as an appropriate application. These responses reflected good knowledge and understanding of the option.

**Question 18**

Question 18 was a very popular choice within this option. Many candidates approaching this question gave a detailed description and explanation of much of Freud's theory without clearly focusing on the role of the unconscious or conscious mind. Also some candidates tended to give general evaluative remarks about psychodynamic psychology rather than referring to the role of the unconscious and conscious mind in human behaviour. Discussion of unconscious aspects of the mind was much better developed than conscious aspects. High quality responses were rather rare but these clearly reflected knowledge and understanding of the option and usually focused on Freud's topographical model.

**Social Psychology**

**Question 19**

There were many excellent responses of description and evaluation of different research methods; the most popular research method was experiments

However, quite often much effort was focused on the description and evaluation of specific studies with less focus on method. When evaluation of a research method was present it tended to lack depth.

**Question 20**

Question 20, although not frequently chosen, was dealt with more success than in previous sessions. Many candidates were able to describe and evaluate relevant research studies on reducing prejudice/discrimination. However some candidates still described studies about prejudice rather than those which focused on the reduction of prejudice.

**Question 21**

The responses were satisfactory but responses were overly descriptive of relevant cultural considerations with only limited discussion.

## The type of assistance and guidance the teachers should provide for future candidates

Candidates who had appropriate knowledge did not always do well because they were not always able to apply their knowledge as the question required. The following might help to address this:

- Essay structure - Many candidates wrote introductions of up to two pages. Practice in structuring a limited introduction (three sentences) would ensure that candidates go straight to the point and made better use of the time given. Also, some guidance is necessary for writing conclusions- rather than just repeating all the points made in the answer candidates should summarize the main ideas to improve essays.
- Teachers need to take candidates beyond the mere knowledge stage to the examination of theories, research in terms of strengths, weaknesses and applications.
- Candidates need to focus on what is meant by the key words and command terms such a 'discuss', 'application', 'methodology' and 'evaluate'.
- Also it is advisable to study two options in depth rather than look at more of them superficially.
- Teachers could provide a revision exercise in which candidates would look at previous exam papers and try to identify the question covered in class to avoid candidates attempting areas they have not studied. Candidates should avoid long winded introductions that do not relate to the question. When practising exam questions candidates should be advised to make sure all material is relevant and tailored to the questions.
- Teachers should explicitly tell candidates that P2 questions are not to be just descriptive tasks but evaluative and analytical ones. Evaluative comments are needed and candidates seem to need help in supplementing descriptive accounts with analytical and evaluative commentary. Candidates can access such discussion by considering the assumptions underlying concepts and theories as well as addressing methodology, ethics, culture and gender considerations. Class activities could be encouraged that promote the development of skills of clear argumentation (this could include citing specific research as support rather than referencing generalizations).
- Evaluation was often laboured or repetitive. Emphasis should be given on making a point, supporting it and moving on to the next. This would lead to better evaluative skills. In addition, guidance in identifying strengths of theories and studies would improve evaluation skills, making them more balanced.

# Higher level paper three

## Component grade boundaries

| **Grade**: | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Mark range**: | 0 - 2 | 3 - 5 | 6 - 8 | 9 - 11 | 12 - 15 | 16 - 18 | 19 - 30 |

## Areas of the programme which proved difficult for candidates

There was a considerable variation in the quality of answers between schools. Several candidates appeared insufficiently prepared for the examination and displayed a lack of knowledge that was clearly needed by the Paper Three syllabus. These candidates demonstrated difficulty in providing informed discussion or evaluation where it was explicitly required by the question. An area of confusion was created by candidates who failed to differentiate between quantitative and qualitative methods. The indiscriminate use of 'experimenter' and 'experiment' showed that candidates failed to appreciate the basic theoretical and philosophical differences between an experimental approach to psychological research and the very different approach taken by qualitative researchers.

Several examiners noted the respect given by candidates for studies that could be attributed to 'scientific' and 'medical' sources, when in fact these same studies had often been conducted by psychologists.

## Levels of knowledge understanding and skill demonstrated

Good knowledge, understanding and skills were frequently presented by candidates who had clearly familiarised themselves with broad concepts employed by the qualitative approach. It was evident that some schools had taught their candidates how to write essays under examination conditions. This approach paid dividends since examiners were able to identify that there was a consistency of higher marks from a school where this type of preparation had been implemented. Most candidates were able to write their answers in a systematic manner.

Examiners showed some concern for candidates who apparently had no opportunity to become actively engaged in performing their own simple research studies. This meant that they had to rely on examples from texts, but such examples were not always astutely chosen nor well understood. Where studies were chosen that were complicated to understand in a teaching situation then their use in an examination context often led to answers that were either not relevant or could not easily be recalled. Some candidates were able to memorise factual material from research findings, but this skill was not always sufficient where questions called for much more than a straightforward description of a particular study.

# Strengths and weaknesses of candidates in the treatment of individual questions

**Question 1**

For question 1 nearly all candidates displayed some knowledge of ethics and were able to apply this to an interview context. But there were occasions when the timing of information supplied to interviewees went astray. The wording of questions presents ethical issues and such wording has to be prepared and carefully considered well in advance of the interview. Similarly the place where the interview is to occur may well give cause for concern if an interviewer makes the assumption that a candidate's own room is an ethical choice for the interview. While nearly all candidates mentioned that a consent form was required, they did not always consider the many other facets of interview preparation that needed to be addressed.

It was apparent that candidates were unaware of ethical issues that could and do arise during interviews. Few mentioned that the well being and comfort of the respondent is paramount throughout the interview and that it is the task of the interviewer to be constantly sensitive to this. The interviewer should also remind interviewees of their right to refuse to answer particular questions and that they may leave the interview without feeling obliged to give reasons for their departure. Candidates seemed reluctant to concede any such power to the respondent and tended to regard ethics as an unfortunate necessity

Candidates were better at how they would resolve ethical issues after the interview.

There was a clear indication that thanks should be reiterated at this point and that the respondent's right to read the transcript or hear the recording of the interview should be a matter of course. Many candidates did not appear to know that the interviewee can insist on having alterations made even at this late stage. A debriefing is also necessary so that the interviewee is able to understanding clearly the relevance of the research and the contribution that it can make to the sum of human knowledge

**Question 2**

Question 2 Candidates explained researcher and participant expectancies but ignored the discussion part of the question. There was also a reluctance to discuss how expectancies could affect the validity of research, and how researchers should seek to avoid biases that could contaminate the research findings. Validity as a term was not well understood except in the context of ecological validity. There are other types of validity and these should be more clearly understood by candidates. In many cases the discussion offered by candidates was superficial. There was a tendency to suggest simply that expectancies can affect findings and that as a result these findings will not be valid.

**Question 3**

Question 3 Participant observations were not understood by a considerable number of candidates, and there was little indication that they were aware of covert and overt methods of participant observation. Such lack of knowledge impacted on differences between the recording problems that are raised by each of these two types of participant observation. It was noted that some candidates focused exclusively either on ways of recording behaviour or alternatively, on different methods of sampling techniques.

Relatively little was offered by way of evaluation and several examiners indicated that the topic of participant observation was not clear to candidates. Yet this technique is often employed by psychology researchers when it is shown to be the most effective way of gaining new knowledge and understanding about specific aspects of human behaviour.

## The type of assistance and guidance that teachers should provide for future candidates

Teachers should ensure that their candidates can do more than offer basic descriptions of research methods. Relevant practice in class enables candidates to understand the advantages and disadvantages of each research method and the decisions that must be made when engaging in practical qualitative research. It would help candidates to have a wide range of practical applications that are then subjected to rigorous evaluation. Small groups of say five or six candidates would make for a confidence boosting environment in which to challenge and exchange views.

Candidates should become aware of how their newly acquired knowledge and understanding of qualitative methods can permeate their psychology essays, including their extended essays. This is particularly noticeable where the more difficult requirements for evaluation are incorporated into IB marking schemes, as they are in both of these examples. No one research method is perfect; each can be legitimately subjected to evaluation. This finding applies to both quantitative and qualitative methods, and it extends well beyond the boundaries of psychology.