

## PSYCHOLOGY

### Overall grade boundaries

#### Higher level

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0 - 9	10 - 21	22 - 30	31 - 42	43 - 55	56 - 67	68 - 100

#### Standard level

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0 - 11	12 - 22	23 - 33	34 - 44	45 - 57	58 - 68	69 - 100

### Higher level internal assessment

#### Component grade boundaries

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0 - 2	3 - 5	6 - 8	9 - 11	12 - 15	16 - 18	19 - 25

### The range and suitability of the work submitted

The most popular field within psychology investigated was cognitive psychology. This is very much in line with previous sessions. It was noted that there were relatively few cases in which candidates were not following the IB psychology ethical guidelines. Most work was clearly experimental, focused and ethical.

### Candidate performance against each criterion

#### Criterion A: Introduction

The background studies and theories included in the introduction sections were usually highly relevant and appropriate to the aim of the research. There were some difficulties in analysing the studies/theories. Candidates frequently only described the study/theory and did not make it relevant to, and thus justify, the prediction in the research hypothesis. Formulating an appropriately operationalized research hypothesis and clearly stated null hypothesis proved difficult.

#### Criterion B: Methods: Design

This section requires candidates to justify the design of the study rather than its method. The use of an experiment does not need to be justified as all candidates are required to do an experiment. They do need to justify the design they have chosen for their study – that is, the participant design (repeated measures, independent samples, *etc.*).

### **Criterion C: Methods: Participants**

Many candidates are not making comments about the allocation of participants to groups/conditions of the study. This is especially important if candidates have used an opportunity/convenience sample. Candidates can still attempt to randomly allocate the participants, even though their selection procedure was not truly random.

### **Criterion D: Methods: Procedure**

This section was rather well handled.

### **Criterion E: Results**

The results section should report a range of appropriate measures of both central tendency (*e.g.*, mean, median, mode) and dispersion (*e.g.*, standard deviation, range, variance). Many candidates reduced their data to nominal level when ordinal level would have been appropriate and would have permitted the use of more powerful inferential statistical tests.

### **Criterion F: Discussion**

Candidates must be sure to discuss their results in terms of the actual statistical results they reported. For example they may consider why there was a large difference between the standard deviations of the control group and the experimental group. This is frequently neglected.

### **Criterion G: Presentation**

References must be written in a consistent and standard manner. There are specific guidelines, such as APA or BPS, for all types of sources including Internet and online databases.

## **Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates**

Candidates should gain practice in elaborating on their own unique research study, rather than research methods in general. This is to say that candidates need to demonstrate their knowledge of the elements of research that are most relevant to their own studies. This is very important for the discussion section. Many problematic areas this session could be improved upon by making sure the candidates are fully aware of the exact requirements of each section and assessment criterion of the IA. The use of checklists is often helpful to candidates as for most of them this will be their first attempt at psychological research.

## **Standard level internal assessment**

### **Component grade boundaries**

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0 - 2	3 - 5	6 - 8	9 - 10	11 - 12	13 - 14	15 - 20

### **The range and suitability of the work submitted**

A substantial majority of reports of candidate experimental work were well done. This session there were many first class reports. These reports had the following characteristics:

- a clear, direct and concise explanation of a relevant study in the introduction;
- a clear, simple aim;
- a clearly presented summary of results

- a precise discussion that specifically related to issues and studies presented in the introduction.

On the other hand, there are still some reports that are done superficially and in a hurry. Candidates should be reminded to choose their descriptive statistics carefully and to interpret their results by specifically relating them to the aim stated in the introduction.

## **Candidate performance against each criterion**

### **Criterion A: Introduction**

While many candidates presented introductions that had clear explanation of relevant research, others did not. This often resulted in an unclear presentation of the design used in the original study and weak interpretation of findings.

### **Criterion B: Method - Design**

Some candidates did not demonstrate an understanding of research design as opposed to research methods; therefore they only identified and justified using an experimental method rather than addressing different types of designs (*e.g.*, repeated measures, independent samples, *etc.*). Criterion B is used to assess the candidate's justification of their choice of experimental design based on particular strengths of a design and how these best fit the aim. Also, ethical procedures need to be seriously considered. Candidates must demonstrate sound knowledge of ethical considerations and apply them specifically to their study. Obtaining informed consent is an important aspect of ethical procedures. Informed consent must be obtained from participants prior to conducting the experiment and it should be documented in the appendix. When writing an informed consent form, candidates need to include all relevant aspects of the experiment that might affect the participants' willingness to continue the experiment. It seems that some candidates still lack an understanding of the difference between consent forms and *informed* consent forms.

### **Criterion C: Method - Participants**

Not all candidates identified an appropriate target population from which they selected their sample. The target population has to be defined clearly (*e.g.*, 15 – 18 year old secondary school students in an urban school setting). This is especially relevant in cases where the characteristics of participants from the original study are different from the participants chosen by the candidate.

### **Criterion D: Method - Procedure**

The procedure section did not pose a major problem to the majority of candidates. Most provided relevant description of the procedures used; however, some reports only included a brief and incomplete listing of steps, which hampered the ability to replicate the study as it was written. Occasionally, standardized instructions or debriefing letters were mentioned in the procedure but were not documented in the appendix.

### **Criterion E – Results**

The results section varied considerably in quality of presentation and the information that could be obtained. In some reports the results section was both clear and informative, but there were occasions when raw data was presented or candidates gave such a paucity of information that they were hardly worth presenting. Tables and graphs often needed to be clearer so that the data would be readily understood by the reader. All tables and figures should be clearly numbered, titled and labelled. In addition figures should contain a legend and a full informative label for each axis.

Measures of central tendency were more often appropriately discussed than were measures of dispersion. For example, candidates might find two very different standard deviations for the findings of experimental and control groups and this could form a relevant part of the verbal interpretation of results and the later discussion, yet the difference was usually ignored.

### **Criterion F – Discussion**

This is the most important section where candidates should explain their own results and compare them to those of the replicated study. The quality of the discussion section is partially related to the quality of the introduction section as candidates should discuss the findings obtained in their experiment to findings of the study or studies explained in the introduction. Many candidates overlooked possible confounding variables that might have affected their study. Before writing the discussion section candidates should carefully examine procedural aspects, ethical considerations or sampling biases that might have affected the results obtained in their experiment. Candidates should clearly point out their own evaluation of their research along with suggestions for future research.

### **Criterion G – Presentation**

The presentation of the report was generally of good quality.

### **Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates**

- The introduction needs to be written carefully, providing some general background information, a review of the original experiment being replicated with an explanation of the design and findings, and it should include an explicit statement of an aim.
- Candidates should be reminded never to present tables of raw (un-summarised) data in the results section. The results section should include the following:
  - Clearly labelled and presented tables and graphs of summarised data. Usually the descriptive statistics chosen were mean, median, mode and range. It is highly recommended for candidates to choose only one measure of central tendency (the one which is appropriate for the level of measurement of the data collected). In addition, an appropriate measure of dispersion should be included.
  - Verbal comments – in which the candidate briefly explains his/her choice of measure of central value and measure of dispersion and provides a succinct, clear explanation of the most salient features of the results.
  - Candidates should also be reminded that there is no point in calculating measures of central value or dispersion unless they are used in the subsequent discussion.
- Candidates should carefully consider which variables might have affected their results. Providing a simplistic list of a series of possible shortcomings is not sufficient. Candidates should try to explain the exact way in which a problem with the way the experiment was executed could potentially affect the interpretation of results.
- Although the presentation of the report was generally of good quality, still some guidelines have not been followed by all candidates and therefore need to be repeated:
  - A word count should be included on the first page of the report.
  - Internet sources should be checked and cited properly in the text and in the reference section.
  - Candidates should make more use of psychological literature – It is not enough to state the reference at the end of the project. The reference should be clearly used by stating more than the aim and conclusion of the key study being replicated in the introduction. Many candidates failed to acknowledge their references in the introduction and discussion.

## Higher and standard level paper one

### Component grade boundaries

#### Higher level

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0 - 4	5 - 9	10 - 13	14 - 19	20 - 26	27 - 32	33 - 52

#### Standard level

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0 - 5	6 - 10	11 - 14	15 - 19	20 - 25	26 - 30	31 - 44

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

Section A questions appeared to present more problems for candidates than questions from section B. It appeared that a small number of candidates did not give sufficient time to reading the set questions, and consequently presented different material from that intended by the question. Given the relatively short time span in which candidates need to marshal their content for section A questions, it is important for them to be able to identify salient points to include in their answers. The cognitive question, related to cultural conditions, often tended to elicit purely descriptive responses rather than the more demanding *explanations* of conditions that gave rise to the cognitive perspective. Strengths and limitations of the research method chosen for the humanistic perspective proved elusive for some candidates.

Candidates should also realise that if just two marks are awarded for part (a) of a question they should not spend more than a quarter of their allocated time on this aspect of their answer. Some wrote paragraphs of considerable length that were simply not justified in terms of the maximum mark obtainable for part (a) of a two-part question.

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

Candidates showed considerable depth of understanding of concepts and assumptions related to both the biological and learning perspectives in each section of the paper. They were also generally well informed about ethical issues related to most aspects of psychology on which they chose to answer. The essays written in response to the more demanding questions showed a considerable depth of knowledge and understanding. This included evaluative skills that focused on methodology, cultural differences and interpretation of findings.

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

#### Section A

- Outline **one** key concept from the biological perspective. [2 marks]*
  - Explain assumptions on which the concept chosen in part (a) is based. [6 marks]*

Key concepts from the biological perspective were well known and there was a marked tendency to focus on genetic knowledge or cell activity within the brain. Many well-informed candidates presented good responses. Often part (a) responses were just as long as part (b), but this may have been an attempt to reduce anxiety by displaying fulsome knowledge for the first answer on the script.

**2. Explain *one* historical or cultural condition that gave rise to the cognitive perspective. [8 marks]**

Relationships between cultural conditions and the rise of the cognitive perspective seemed curiously elusive in some answers. Invention of the computer during World War II was identified and mention was made that it contributed to greater understanding of the brain, but little, if any, explanation was provided. It appeared that there was an acknowledgement that the two factors – computers and brain, were somehow similar, but quite how this similarity was justified was not explained. However there were some responses that showed a clear understanding of the link and these rightly focused on computer technology as offering a model for certain aspects of cognitive processing.

**3. (a) Outline *one* empirical research study from the learning perspective. [2 marks]**

*(b) Discuss **two** ethical controversies related to the empirical study described in part (a). [6 marks]*

Empirical studies offered in response to the learning perspective question understandably chose the experiments of Pavlov or Skinner. The ethical controversy, rather inevitably focused on cruelty to animals. Sometimes such criticism was offered in a rather simplistic way, for example “...the dogs did not choose to do Pavlov’s experiment, they did not give their informed consent, so it was wrong to use them.” There are of course well justified arguments of considerable depth against the use of animals in psychological research and in other cases these were well used by candidates.

**4. (a) Outline *one* research method (e.g. self-report, case study, Q-sort) used by humanistic psychologists. [2 marks]**

*(b) Explain **one** strength and **one** limitation of the research method outlined in part (a). [6 marks]*

Research methods for the humanistic perspective were identified in the question and candidates were usually well informed about these. While strengths of a specific method were known, the weaknesses presented more difficulty. The claim that case studies involve such small numbers that no finding can be generalised were superficial and erroneous. Where candidates were able to transfer their knowledge of case studies from HL paper 3, this mistaken claim was rightly criticised and dismissed.

**Section B**

Section B essays were often awarded proportionately more marks than questions from section A. This may have been because candidates had more time to develop their thoughts or because they had more knowledge and understanding of the area on which they chose to write.

**5. Use empirical studies to explain the extent to which determinism relates to the biological perspective. [20 marks]**

Determinism and its relationship to the biological perspective was a popular question and candidates showed that they understood many phenomena associated with this area. Although this perspective is probably the most positivistic and deterministic aspect of the syllabus it is quite possible to present contrary views, or to limit the claims of determinism. Some candidates were reluctant to challenge the assumptions made by determinists and so limited the range of their answer.

**6. (a) Describe a cognitive explanation of *one* psychological or social question. [10 marks]**

*(b) Evaluate the cognitive explanation described in part (a). [10 marks]*

Descriptions of cognitive explanations of psychological or social questions were nearly always confined to the former and focused on areas such as memory or attention. Adequate knowledge was shown but occasionally this lacked detail and had insufficient empirical evidence. This meant that the subsequent evaluation was limited and the potential for high marks was diminished.

7. *“Different perspectives tend to use a range of research methods (e.g. experiments, case studies, interviews) to obtain data about behaviour.”*

*To what extent are research methods used by the learning perspective similar to the research methods used by the biological perspective? [20 marks]*

Evidence advanced in response to this question was wide in its range and application. The evidence was supplied in some abundance but examiners were often led to infer the answer to that part of the question that asked “To what extent ...?” Candidates should have in mind that this is the key element of the question. Although they may well not have made such comparisons prior to the examination they are expected to be able to use the knowledge and understanding that they do have in order to address the question. There were some excellent responses, but it appears that there is a need for teachers to explore this type of question in preparation for future questions of this nature that may occur from time to time.

8. *Discuss contributions of the humanistic perspective to the study of behaviour. [20 marks]*

Many responses to this question argued that the humanistic perspective has made a substantial contribution to the study of behaviour and may be used as a counter to the positivistic and deterministic approach adopted by the other three perspectives. Many candidates were aware of this aspect of psychology but their essays sometimes appeared almost apologetic in presenting the case for the humanistic approach in this context. The work of Rogers and Maslow was cited clearly. It was frequently evaluated by an indication that their work could not be substantiated by the scientific method and should be judged as wanting in this respect. A more balanced answer presented a robust judgement of their contributions and the continuing need for their contributions to be considered.

## **Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates.**

Responses to the short answer questions in section A indicated a need for candidates to have more practise in producing salient responses. Key words in the question need to be identified and answers should reflect the intention of such command terms. For example, if an explanation is called for, candidates should do more than offer a description. “To what extent...?” questions imply that the candidate should offer a judgement about the level of success or failure that a particular theory, method or policy has met in its intended aims or objectives. The command terms used in psychology papers are defined in the back of the *psychology guide*.

Candidates are expected to include relevant empirical studies and theories in their responses. Without this knowledge and understanding there will be little opportunity for evaluation to be presented. There will be occasions when questions are set that require candidates to use their knowledge in novel situations, they have to “think on their feet”. An example occurred in the third question in section B where candidates were asked to consider the extent to which research methods used by the learning perspective are similar to those used in the biological perspective. This is a question that few may have considered previously and hence there were very few stereotypical answers.

Both the content and the style in which essays are written by candidates in some ways reflects whether they have experienced in-depth discussions as part of their preparation for the examination. The contribution that candidates make to discussion and the thinking that this promotes is undoubtedly of help to themselves and their peers. There is a greater propensity for candidates who have taken an active part in discussion, to express their own informed interpretation of studies and theories, rather than reproduce stereotyped comments from secondary sources.

## Higher and standard level paper two

### Component grade boundaries

#### Higher level

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0 - 4	5 - 9	10 - 13	14 - 18	19 - 24	25 - 29	30 - 40

#### Standard level

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0 - 2	3 - 4	5 - 6	7 - 8	9 - 11	12 - 13	14 - 20

### General comments

Due to a rather small number of candidates for the November session, some of the options were not represented in candidate responses. Comments in this report are confined to the options that attracted responses from candidates.

The overall quality of responses tended to be satisfactory but varied greatly from responses that presented detailed and organized knowledge and understanding of psychological terms and research to those responses offering ‘prepared answers’ for certain topics without referring to the specific question posed. The majority of answers tended to reflect good descriptive knowledge of the required option but failed to address the specific requirements of the question and present a clear argument.

Candidates should be continuously reminded that all questions included in paper 2 require demonstration of higher order skills – clear, detailed analysis and pertinent discussion of relevant topics. Therefore all attempts to present solely descriptive knowledge, however detailed, will result in awarding of marks in the middle of the range, at best.

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

The same comments made in psychology subject reports on paper 2 for many sessions must be repeated. Too many answers were descriptive, general or lacking exact focus. Many candidates failed to provide an answer which clearly addressed the question asked. For example, many responses provided long, detailed descriptions of Milgram’s experiment, Freud’s psychosexual stages of development and the case study of “Little Hans”. In most cases the material presented contained excessive background information with limited focus on the question asked.

Although popular choices, the psychology of dysfunctional behaviour and psychodynamic psychology questions appeared to present difficulties for some candidates. The psychodynamic psychology option was often limited simply to Freud’s theory and research. A weakness observed in many responses was students’ difficulty in writing a balanced evaluation. Evaluation, when present, was often skewed toward brief negative comments of a general nature.



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

Many candidates demonstrated good descriptive knowledge of psychological theories and research while some attempted general evaluation in their answers. Some candidates seemed to have been well prepared to respond to questions on psychodynamic psychology and health psychology. Higher scoring responses were characterized by good descriptive knowledge, good choice of relevant information and explanation of why the information selected was useful to answer the question.

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

Questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 were not answered by any of the candidates. This is probably good because it seems that the schools did not teach these two options and therefore none of the candidates made a wrong decision.

### The Psychology of Dysfunctional Behaviour

#### 7. *With reference to empirical studies, discuss diagnosis of dysfunctional behaviour. [20 marks]*

Not a very popular question. Overall, answers to this question can be categorized into two extremes: Weak answers, in which diagnosis was misinterpreted as models of how different perspectives view dysfunctional behaviour; and excellent answers that presented a detailed description of how classificatory systems, *e.g.*, DSM IV and ICD 10 are used in diagnosis. The best answers focused on the process of diagnosis described as a complex process involving many variables. These answers explained relevant studies on reliability and validity of diagnosis. They also discussed practical and ethical considerations, including criticism of diagnosis in its tendency to pigeonhole individuals into categories and the use of labels that may exacerbate dysfunctional behaviour.

#### 8. *“A basic assumption can be defined as a belief or idea that psychologists studying dysfunctional behaviour from a certain perspective hold in common.”*

*(a) Identify **one** specific dysfunctional behaviour and outline how **one** theory or model explains this dysfunctional behaviour. [4 marks]*

*(b) Describe **two** basic assumptions of the theory or model of dysfunctional behaviour outlined in part (a). [6 marks]*

*(c) Explain how the basic assumptions described in part (b) are reflected in the treatment of the dysfunctional behaviour identified in part (a). [10 marks]*

This was the most popular question on paper 2 although it was probably the most challenging. The fact that the markscheme was broken down into three parts seemed to benefit the candidates – the weakest answers tended to be awarded 6 marks.

Part (a) of the question was usually well addressed. Most candidates managed to get at least 2 to 3 marks. The most frequently identified dysfunctional behaviours in part (a) were schizophrenia, depression and phobias. The best answers identified a dysfunctional disorder (typically schizophrenia or depression) and outlined the features of the medical model that explain the disorder. Another successful choice was phobias, followed by an accurate description of the features of conditioning related to phobia acquisition (classical) and maintenance (operant).

Many candidates tended to describe the symptoms of the chosen disorder although this was not asked. Some candidates spent an inordinate amount of time on part (a) and therefore were short of time in responding to the second and third parts of the question that carried more marks.

Part (b) was a little more difficult: some candidates confused the term assumption with other terms and they tended to repeat material from part (a). The choice of assumption clearly influenced the outcome of question (c).

For question (c) many candidates merely presented a detailed description of treatment. When a link between the assumptions and the treatment was made, it was often superficial. Some candidates had problems in understanding certain parts of question (c) – “basic assumptions” was unfortunately sometimes read as “one assumption” and therefore only half of the marks could be awarded.

The term “treatment of dysfunctional behaviour” was sometimes interpreted very generally and in such cases candidates presented all different types of therapies and treatments (behavioural, cognitive, medical) or within a certain model (e.g. medical) different subtypes (drug therapy, ECT, surgery) – for these answers candidates usually only received 3 marks since their answers were purely descriptive.

In some cases candidates did not focus directly on the dysfunctional behaviour described in part (a). Some other responses focused on theories explaining the behaviour rather than treatment or therapy. Most of the responses provided a link between assumptions and therapy that was implicit rather than explicit. Such responses tended to attract lower marks, as they were overly descriptive accounts.

**9. Compare and contrast *two* classificatory systems used in the psychology of dysfunctional behaviour. [20 marks]**

Not a very popular question. Most candidates presented a detailed description of one classificatory system and a limited description of another classificatory system and then outlined some differences.

### **Health Psychology**

**10. Analyse the predictive value of *one* study when applied to an individual’s health related behaviour. [20 marks]**

Rather good answers were provided in which the predictive value of Friedman and Rosenhan’s study of stress was examined. Poor answers reflected an unclear understanding of the term “predictive”.

**11. Explain how gender considerations may affect the interpretation of behaviour in health psychology. [20 marks]**

Very few candidates responded to this question at HL or SL. However, when this question was attempted it seemed that it tended to attract the attention of unprepared candidates who provided a vague, general outline of gender differences in human behaviour. Most responses relevant to the option of health psychology tended to focus on topics such as stress and anorexia nervosa.

**12. Explain ethical considerations in the use of placebos in health psychology research. [20 marks]**

This was the most popular question in this option. There were some very good and interesting answers including examples of research studies and detailed analysis of physiological and psychological influences of placebos on participants. Weaker answers focused on placebo research instead of focusing on ethical considerations in the use of placebos.

### **Lifespan Psychology**

**13. Examine ways in which beginnings of development may have an impact throughout life. [20 marks]**

Very few responses addressed this question competently. In such cases a diversity of themes were developed into an argument as to how the beginnings of development had an impact throughout life. In weaker answers, candidates attempted a survey of a gamut of theories superficially described.

These descriptions of Piaget, Erikson and Freud's theories were often descriptive with minimal or no attempts to address the impact of the beginnings of development throughout life.

**14. Describe and evaluate psychological research related to gender role. [20 marks]**

None of the candidates answered this question.

**15. (a) Describe *one* theory of attachment related to lifespan psychology. [8 marks]**

**(b) Evaluate *one* empirical study investigating the theory of attachment presented in part (a). [12 marks]**

Relevant responses included accurate and detailed descriptions of Bowlby's, Ainsworth's and/or Harlow's theories. In weaker answers, Harlow's contact-comfort study was presented but with very little reference to attachment theory.

Part (b) often contained repetition of relevant facts from part (a). Better answers offered appropriate methodological evaluation on the limitations of Ainsworth's strange situation experiments or the validity of applying findings from animal studies to human behaviour.

**Psychodynamic Psychology**

**16. Explain how different research methodologies (e.g. case study, observation, interviews) used in psychodynamic psychology may affect the interpretation of behaviour. [20 marks]**

Not many candidates made an attempt to answer this question. Usually answers provided limited description and evaluation of research methods (case study, participant observation, observation) without providing examples or relating these methods in any way to psychodynamic psychology. Usually responses were awarded up to 7 marks. SL candidates seemed to have particular difficulty with this question. There was evidence of detailed descriptive knowledge of some relevant studies and methodologies used in psychodynamic psychology. However, there was limited understanding of qualitative methods evident in the evaluative comments provided in responses.

**17. "Whatever shortcomings there are in the theory and practice Freud gave us, elements of both his theory and his practice have penetrated deeply into our culture."**

*Discuss applications of research from psychodynamic psychology. [20 marks]*

Answers to this question tended to be rather vague and reflect poor knowledge of relevant material. In a number of cases candidates would present long descriptive answers of different key concepts such as psychosexual stages of development, psychosocial stages of development, types of defence mechanisms or archetypes. There were also descriptive answers of different research studies, e.g., "Little Hans", "Anna O." and the use of free analysis, etc.

Candidates tended to give general evaluative remarks about psychodynamic psychology rather than referring to applications of research findings and theory.

**18. Compare and contrast Freudian psychoanalytic theory with *one* neo-Freudian theory. [20 marks]**

This was the most popular question within the option and the third most popular question on paper 2.

This seemed to be a straightforward question that the candidates fully understood. Usually candidates gave good descriptions of Freudian theory and Erikson, Horney's or Jung's theory. Comparison tended to be given in a clear and organized manner although the evaluative part of the answer tended to have omissions and inaccuracies.

Unfortunately weaker answers presented long descriptions of psychosexual stages of development and structure of personality with no reference to comparison with a neo-Freudian theory.

## Social Psychology

19. *“Cultural and gender considerations may affect the interpretation of behaviour in social psychology.”*

*Discuss this statement in relation to obedience research. [20 marks]*

This was a rather popular question. Most answers tended to lack focus on the requirements of the question asked. Many answers provided overly long and descriptive accounts of Milgram’s research. The description included basically everything candidates knew about obedience including (but not focusing on) cultural, gender, methodological and ethical considerations. Weaker answers confused conformity and obedience studies. Too often candidates simply stated examples of research studies and evaluated them without focusing on the specifics of the question. Sometimes candidates would describe studies with different participants (research on males, research on females, research conducted in USA, research conducted in Australia, research conducted in Japan or Korea); however, candidates failed to discuss how findings from these studies with different samples had an impact on our understanding of obedience.

20. *Describe and evaluate applications of psychological research related to collective behaviour (e.g. crowds). [20 marks]*

Relatively few candidates attempted this question. The responses were rather rudimentary providing no more than a few relevant facts. Some responses demonstrated very limited understanding of “collective behaviour”, although the question attempted to lead in the appropriate direction by giving the term “crowds” as an example. Too often the term “collective” seemed to be interpreted to mean “any topic within social psychology”.

21. *With reference to research studies, describe and evaluate research methods (e.g. observation, simulation, experiment) used in social psychology. [20 marks]*

This was the most popular question within the option and the second most popular question on paper 2. Most responses tended to provide a long description of one research study accompanied by good description and evaluation of the research study used. However, the subsequent studies were described less thoroughly and with general evaluation of findings or research method. In most cases responses tended to put greater focus on description of relevant research studies than on different research methods and evaluating them.

## Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- Candidates must learn to read the questions thoroughly, choose the most appropriate question and answer it directly and fully. Omission of part of the question or lack of understanding of command terms or key words within the question can have serious consequences in the assessment of the response.
- The approach to answering comparison questions should be practised with clear and explicit identification of both similarities and differences.
- Topics within the option of social psychology should be clearly defined and explained to avoid misunderstanding and inability to discriminate between terms. Candidates are expected to be able to differentiate different types of influences in social psychology (e.g., conformity and obedience are two different types of social influences; collective behaviour should not be confused with “any group behaviour”).
- All questions require some form of evaluation. Therefore, when teaching options more emphasis should be given to relevant ethical, cross-cultural, methodological or other considerations. Arranging debates on certain issues within psychology or organizing group assignments in which students present critical commentaries of empirical research are possible activities that can encourage critical thought.

## Higher level paper three

### Component grade boundaries

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0 - 3	4 - 7	8 - 10	11 - 13	14 - 15	16 - 18	19 - 30

### General comments

The overall pattern of results for this session's paper 3 was a bimodal distribution. Many candidates performed very well on areas identified by the questions; they were very well informed and showed a degree of sophisticated understanding that has not always been present previously. There were other candidates that lacked knowledge of straightforward topics on the syllabus and their answers received few marks.

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

Sampling techniques were usually quite well known, but there was still a tendency to perceive qualitative methods as requiring the same approach to sampling as quantitative methodology. Random sampling is rarely required for qualitative methods since the need to apply statistical tests based upon random samples does not obtain in this case. Verbal protocol procedures were also generally well understood but some candidates, in their enthusiasm to explain their understanding, omitted to provide an example of either applying the research or giving an explanation for the method. Comprehension of the concept of triangulation was demonstrated by most candidates in the outline offered for each type. Evaluation of triangulation proved to be a more difficult aspect, although some answers demonstrated a critical and informed approach.

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

Random sampling is usually an inappropriate sampling method for qualitative research since its findings will not often be based on claims that apply to the parent population from which the sample was drawn. While convenience sampling may occasionally be used this also has its drawbacks. It is usually preferable to take a purposive sample, to choose people because they represent a case on which the research aim is focused. Sometimes stratified sampling technique is employed, providing that sufficient numbers and funding are available for the research strategies involved.

It appears that some candidates think that verbal protocols offer a simplistic methodology on which little discussion is possible. This is far from the case and its importance for several areas of the real world is manifest, particularly where the emergency services are concerned. Justification for its use lies not in recording a single use of a particular behaviour pattern by one individual, but in recording and analysing many examples of similar behaviour by many different people. The use of a defibrillator to ameliorate the effects of a heart attack is one such example. This crucial piece of equipment is becoming even more important as the proportion of older people in the population continues to increase, or where more obese people dominate the population. To ensure that most people can use the equipment, its use was trialled by employing verbal protocols. Using this methodology ensures that operating problems can be minimised for the increasing numbers that are being trained in its use.

Candidates were often beguiled by the appeal of triangulation to improve the reliability of findings by employing more than one method in the research process.