

PSYCHOLOGY

GCE Advanced Subsidiary Level

Paper 8698/01

Core Studies

General comments

Candidates continue to impress with their efforts and yet again some excellent answers were marked. Candidates scoring the highest marks performed equally well on both sections of the paper, whilst those performing less well had an imbalance. There are two main areas that candidates continually fail to address. Firstly, a number of candidates spent too much time on their **Section A** answers which left enough time only to answer parts (a) and (b) of **Section B**, or they answered all parts of the **Section B** question but in far too little detail. Given the time allocation (90 minutes) and mark distribution (**Section A** is allocated 60 marks and **Section B** allocated 40 marks) no more than approximately 50 minutes should be spent on **Section A**.

Secondly, it is worth reminding candidates of the different nature of questions in **Section B** of Paper 1 from questions in **Section B** of Paper 2. There are a number of important differences:

- For Paper 1, the question in **Section B** (either **Question 16** or **Question 17**) requires consideration of **one** of the three studies listed, and not all three. The question states 'Choose any one of the studies listed below...'. For Paper 2, answers must be provided for **all four** studies listed. The question states 'What do these studies tell us about...'.
• Question part (c) for Paper 1 wants advantages/strengths and disadvantages/weaknesses related to the one chosen core study. The question states 'Using your chosen study as an example...'. Question part (b) for Paper 2 wants advantages/strengths and disadvantages/weaknesses but this time not related to any specific core study. Here, the question requires the problems **any** psychologist may have. As the mark schemes reflect these differences, candidates who take note of and act on these comments will have an advantage over those who do not.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Many candidates made comments from the study instead of those that could be drawn from the table itself. Such answers did not receive credit. When presented with a table and asked to draw conclusions, the most appropriate strategy is to make simple comments about the data presented. In this case, to state that the verb 'smashed' produced a mean estimate of speed of 40.8 mph would receive a maximum 2 marks out of 2, for example.

Question 2

Most candidates completed both parts of this question successfully by stating one difference in perceptual skills for part (a) (most commonly that there are 3D and 2D perceivers) and for part (b) (most commonly there may be ethnocentric bias) although any appropriate problem would receive credit.

Question 3

In part (a), theory of mind, in simple terms, is our ability to understand what is probably in the mind of another person. Most candidates correctly stated this or an equally acceptable version. For part (b), a variety of answers resulted, some more imaginative than others. Many answers referred to a problem with social functioning and answers stated simply that autistic children would not be able to answer the belief question correctly.

Question 4

Candidates were able to provide appropriate answers with ease in response to this question, most including suggestions such as the prestigious environment, the authority of the experimenter, that there were demand characteristics involved, and that participants felt obliged to continue as they were paid to participate.

Question 5

Two explanations for people helping someone of their own race in preference to one of another race include ethnocentrism, fear of people outside their own group, difficulty in interpreting out-group behaviour and social cohesion. Whilst most candidates could correctly identify one of these explanations, very few could provide two.

Question 6

According to Tajfel, the key features of ethnocentrism are in-group favouritism and out-group discrimination. For part (b), the minimum conditions for creating ethnocentrism is some form of categorisation and this can be on the basis of some simple and trivial division, such as students who sit on the left side of the classroom compared to those who sit on the right side.

Question 7

In part (a), most candidates were able to describe some details of one of the conservation tasks, such as the conservation of volume, but few gave sufficient detail to gain full marks. For question part (b), the most likely factor to improve performance was the asking of one question rather than two, but also creditable were answers such as age and using a different type of material.

Question 8

Many candidates did not provide an answer to this question, which required them to generalise from the Bandura study. In most cases, psychologically informed common-sense answers gain credit. For part (a), not all children imitated the aggression and children often distinguish between television and real life. For part (b) as children did imitate what they saw, they may go on to imitate what they see on television.

Question 9

This question required two explanations for the difference between the ex-institutional (adopted and restored) and the control group. It did not require the differences between adopted and restored as many candidates assumed and neither did it require a description of the differences (such as less likely to have a special friend).

Question 10

However tempted to do otherwise, candidates must provide answers in relation to the question set. To describe a placebo in terms of a sugar pill is correct (and 1 mark was given) but no sugar pill was given in this study. For this study, it is where candidates think they have received the same chemical (suproxin) via injection as all the other participants when they have not (this answer would earn full marks). For part (b), most candidates correctly outlined the effect of the placebo on the behaviour of the participants.

Question 11

For part (a) a participant would be able to name the pencil, as information from the right visual field is processed in the left (language) hemisphere. For part (b), a participant would draw the hamster, as information from the left visual field is processed in the right (non-language) hemisphere. And, by the way, the drawing is of a hamster, not a rat, rabbit or guinea pig! Note that it does not matter what the creature is, it is the concept of split style that is important.

Question 12

For this question, any problem involved in the interpretation of brain scans received credit, and relevant factors include susceptibility of equipment to external influences, difficulty in attributing localisation of function, interpretation of scans still in its infancy, difficulty in attributing cause and effect.

Question 13

The most common (and correct) answer was that the average mental age of the adult American was found to be 13. For part (b), correct answers could include any point related to problems with the administration of the test and problems with the test validity.

Question 14

Two explanations for the change in responses in 1969, compared to 1939 include a greater enfranchisement of Black people, the number of civil rights campaigns, successful role models, and increased visibility of equality, and any other similar response.

Question 15

Two features of life on the ward of the mental institutions observed by Rosenhan and colleagues could include the behaviour at meal times; the contact between patients and nurses, and patients and psychiatrists; the medication behaviour; the treatment of patients by the attendants; note-taking or writing behaviour. Description of any of these features would receive appropriate credit.

Section B

Question 16

- (a) Most candidates were able to outline some of the main findings of their chosen study whether it be Haney, Milgram or Piliavin. What distinguished the good from the very good answer was the range of findings and the detail included. Often answers were too brief.
- (b) In this part, candidates were often able to provide quite an impressive list of deceptions, the range offered for Milgram being significantly more than those for Haney and Piliavin.
- (c) Often this part caused most problems for candidates as the requirement was to consider both the arguments for **and** against the use of deception. The optimal strategy was to provide two arguments for and two arguments against.
- (d) All candidates made a reasonable suggestion for an alternative to using deception but the inclusion or absence of two features distinguished higher from lower marks: firstly, the more able candidates providing more detailed explanations of how their suggestion would work, and those who could not develop their suggestion beyond a few sentences or so; secondly, candidates who went on to answer the question fully by suggesting what effect the change would have on results, compared to those who appeared not to read the whole of the question.

Question 17

For this question, the vast majority of candidates chose Thigpen and Cleckley or Freud, with Gardner and Gardner appearing rarely.

- (a) This part was generally answered well, but the findings of Thigpen and Cleckley were far too brief in most answers.
- (b) Some excellent answers were produced for this question, with candidates being able to describe the case study method, and how it was used in the study in question, in some detail.
- (c) A consideration of both strengths and weaknesses of the method also produced some very good answers with candidates including a range of relevant points. As with **Question 16**, the optimal strategy was to provide two strengths and two weaknesses.

- (d) This question caused one or two problems for some candidates, but most were able to make appropriate suggestions of how an alternative method could be used. As with **Question 16**, it was insufficient to answer only half the question. The other half 'and say how this would affect the result of the study' carried 5 marks and so to ignore it was costly.

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Core Studies 2

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

There are a number of ways in which the Gardner and Gardner study is considered to be unethical. As most candidates correctly stated, Washoe was captured from a natural environment and did not give consent to it. Washoe was conditioned, also without consent. She was kept in a cage when not being trained. Any other appropriate suggestion would receive credit.

Question 2

- (a) In the Haney et. al. study, when the prisoners were taken to the parole board, they accepted the decision to be returned to their cells despite agreeing to forfeit all their money for taking part in the study.
- (b) The most likely answer (although other appropriate responses received credit) was that the prisoners had internalised the role of prisoner to the extent that they obeyed without question.

Question 3

Little Hans had many behaviours that might appear to be unusual and for this question, candidates were required to provide one example. Most candidates were able to do this successfully, with a fear of horses featuring more than others. For part (b), use of the term 'valid' appeared to confuse some candidates, as they could not explain why the example they gave in part (a) might not be what it appeared to be.

Question 4

This question on the sleep and dreaming study by Dement and Kleitman also gave candidates an opportunity to choose one answer from the range available. Most candidates provided correct answers, many stating that we alternate between periods of REM and NREM sleep. Most candidates also provided correct answers for part (b), making the point that the study was conducted in a laboratory where participants had electrodes attached to their head, whereas this would not be the case when they sleep at home.

Question 5

Many candidates were either confused by the terms or they did not know what they meant. Quantitative measures involve the use of numbers (in this case, the IQ tests, measured at 110 and 104), whereas qualitative measures (such as interviews) do not involve numbers and/or statistics.

Section B

Question 6

Candidates are always advised to read questions thoroughly before they start writing, and this question is an example of where that advice was not adhered to. Whereas candidates could answer question part (a) with little difficulty, they struggled with part (b). Without a doubt, to ask for the problems faced when investigating cognitive processes is challenging, and answering this should be attempted only with some knowledge of cognitive processes. It should not be attempted (as was the case here) by those who have a limited knowledge of cognitive processes. Answers to part (c) were also limited in their range and depth of answer.

Question 7

Questions in **Section B** are not concerned with the specifics of individual studies, but are concerned with the issues that arise from the studies.

- (a) In this instance, whereas this question asked what the named studies tell us about individual differences, candidates tended to ignore this and write about what the studies found instead, and so did not receive full marks.
- (b) Answers tended to focus on the problems found in specific studies, rather than the overall problems involved in studying individual differences.
- (c) This part produced quite an interesting range of answers, but often candidates did not develop their answers beyond one large paragraph.

Question 8

This was by far the most popular choice of question and one which was generally well done but, as with other answers in this section, the amount of detail presented was too brief. If one hour is allocated to **Section B**, then candidates should take the opportunity to write as much detail as they possibly can. It should not be seen as an extension of **Section A**, where short answers are the norm. Yet again, candidates misinterpreted part (b). In this part, the requirement was to write about any problem faced by any psychologist studying any child. So, to write 'it is difficult to study children because they may misunderstand what the experimenter wants' could be generalised to many studies and would receive credit. If an example from a psychological study was then quoted, and all of it was done in detail, then high marks would be awarded.