

OCR Report to Centres

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This report on the examination provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding of the specification content, of the operation of the scheme of assessment and of the application of assessment criteria.

Reports should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and mark schemes for the examination.

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General Certificate of Secondary Education

Psychology (J611)

OCR REPORT TO CENTRES

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Overview

The entries were high for all three units this series, with the number of candidates being awarded an aggregated grade being similar to last summer. There was evidence of many centres taking advantage of the unitisation of the specification, with B542 being the most popular terminal unit. The majority of candidates came from KS4 with many following a two year course. Interestingly, a small number of Y9 students sat a unit this series.

The vast majority of centres are clearly acting on the outcomes and feedback from previous series' and prepared candidates well for the examinations. Performance across all three units showed a good level of consistency, and there was minimal evidence of candidates confusing topics.

As with the last series, many candidates demonstrated impressive knowledge of the core studies and knowledge of research skills was sound. Once again extended responses were of a high standard, but the advice is similar to last time: candidates should aim for top band scores by developing evaluative points and by improving their written communication skills. Some candidates still need be clearer on what is expected of them when they are specifically asked to evaluate. This was particularly problematic when a question required evaluation and nothing else.

Compared to previous series', there were fewer examples of candidates confusing studies and theories. Candidates performed better on questions focusing on applications but, overall, it is still an area of weakness when compared to the other themes which are assessed. More marks were awarded this time for application of knowledge of research skills so this is an area where candidates are making good progress.

B541 Studies and Applications in Psychology 1

General Comments:

Candidates' performance was commensurate with previous series therefore they continued to demonstrate a pleasing knowledge and understanding of the content of the specification as well as the ability to apply knowledge and evaluate studies and theories. Candidates' knowledge of core theories and core studies was particularly impressive, and there was a notable improvement in responses to questions that assessed their understanding of applications. Candidates were particularly strong when evaluating studies and it would be good to see similar levels of evaluation when applied to theories. Candidates continue to perform better on questions focusing on core theories as opposed to those focusing on alternative theories, so it is important for centres to emphasise that both groups of theories carry value as far as the specification is concerned. Examiners were struck this year by a significant minority of candidates who did not score on reasonably straightforward 'using the source' questions. Candidates need to be aware that, in many cases, answers can be and should be directly quoted from the source. Questions do clearly indicate when this is the case.

Comments on Individual Questions:

- Q1** Nearly every candidate scored both marks by matching the key concepts with the correct definition. Where candidates did not score both marks it was mainly due to matching the 'defiance' with a definition of denial of responsibility.
- Q2** Most candidates got all parts correct with (b) and (c) causing few problems. Responses to (a) were sometimes too generic, referring to a test of obedience rather than the more specific task. Responses to (d) were largely correct. Where candidates gave an incorrect answer to (d) there was no clear pattern of response – it was not obvious where guesses were coming from, with answers ranging from 1 to figures in the 100s.
- Q3** The majority of candidates scored 3 marks here indicating they could easily identify the limitations of Bickman's study.
- Q4** The most successful responses to this question tended to focus on a range of evaluation points and earn their 3 marks that way. Responses which focused on one criticism – most notably the fact that the theory of situational factors ignores dispositional factors – frequently did not take the point further. Responses that focused on methodological problems could gain credit and some candidates made a good effort to relate these explicitly back to the theory and therefore earn full marks. Responses that scored zero showed a common pattern – candidates were describing the theory rather than evaluating it.
- Q5** Most candidates gained some credit on this question showing sound knowledge of what is required from a question on applications. Candidates who chose to focus on the use of uniform as their chosen application tended to score well on this question as it allowed them to talk about both its effect on subordinates (e.g. prisoners or pupils) and its role for those in authority (e.g. prison guards or teachers). However, there were also some good responses focusing on applications such as use of punishment, control of consensus and establishing a hierarchy. Candidates need to think carefully about their chosen application when only one is required as it should be one where they have enough to describe for the marks available. A common problem with this question was for candidates to try to earn more marks by offering more than one application. In these circumstances, the examiner can only credit one, albeit the best one.

- Q6** This was well answered by the majority of candidates. Nearly everyone knew the ‘output’ was the last stage of information processing. A few candidates did not get ‘encoding’ right with ‘rehearsal’ being the most common replacement for it.
- Q7** Overall, candidates did well on this question. 7(b) was best answered and 7(c) was answered almost as well with ‘Fiona’ being offered instead of ‘Charlie’ on some occasions. 7(a) was answered the least well, either because candidates did not give the whole phrase or gave a phrase not in the source. Some candidates named a person from the source despite question 7(a) clearly asking for a phrase.
- Q8(a)** The majority of candidates scored marks on this question with two marks being the modal score. Good responses made a coherent link between issues such as limited time, lack of rehearsal, and the subsequent unavailability of information. Some candidates realised that they needed to use an alternative word to ‘decay’ in their answers to earn further marks, and terms such as ‘fade’ or ‘deteriorate’ were useful here. Candidates need to be more explicit about what happens to information after it has forgotten – for example, saying that it is ‘lost’ does not adequately convey the idea that it is unavailable.
- Q8(b)** Responses to 8(b) did not compare well with 8(a) suggesting that decay is better understood than displacement as an explanation of forgetting. Despite this, there were some good responses that made a coherent link between limited capacity, lack of space for new information, and the subsequent unavailability of older information. As with 8(b), some candidates realised that they needed to use an alternative word to ‘displacement’ in their answers to earn further marks, and a terms such as ‘shunted out’ or ‘pushed out’ were useful here. Even though candidates had given some good responses to 8(a), some confused decay and displacement on this question, giving descriptions that borrowed from both explanations. Another common error was describe retrieval failure suggesting candidates were mistaking displacement for misplacement.
- Q9** This question elicited the full range of marks and proved to be a good discriminator. Limitations associated the multi-store model ignoring individual differences and over-emphasising the role of rehearsal were both common and creditworthy. High scoring responses expanded well on these points (e.g. explaining how the model ignores individual differences, or drawing comparisons between the role of rehearsal and the role of meaning) whereas lower scoring responses were unable to go beyond the basic criticisms. Responses that failed to score tended to describe features of the model (e.g. it says the STM has a limited capacity) without identifying the problem, or made bland comments with justification (e.g. the LTM is oversimplified). Candidates should aim to distinguish between different criticisms of the multi-store model, and explain why or how they are criticisms.
- Q10** This question was well answered overall. Nearly all candidates were able to earn a mark on (a) by quoting directly from the source. Although part (b) also required a direct quote from the source, some candidates mistakenly gave their own masculine gender role with ‘aggression’ being a common incorrect answer.
- Q11** Many candidates scored full marks here. Unlike previous series, there was very little evidence of candidates confusing the sex chromosome patterns of males and females. If candidates missed one mark it tended to be because they were unable to give an appropriate label for testes and gonads. Although credit was given for alternative terms such as ‘sex organs’, it was expected that more candidates would know to use ‘gonads’ since this term is given on the specification.
- Q12** There were some good responses to this question and these tended to identify a key feature of the biological theory and then explain why this was a problematic feature e.g.

because it is contradicted by other evidence or is challenged by an alternative theory. Where candidates scored 1 it was generally because answers were valid but not elaborated, were detailed but confused, or were repetitive. Some responses scored zero. Interestingly, it was not because candidates completely misunderstood the question – many were attempting to offer a criticism – but was because answers lacked clarity or were not valid. On the latter point, many candidates mistakenly believed that the biological theory cannot explain atypical gender development. It is worth noting that this question has occurred in previous series in a similar format yet performance has not significantly improved.

- Q13** Candidates that focused clearly on the demands of the question were likely to score three marks here i.e. candidates who drew an explicit distinction between the two complexes as well as outlining the concepts separately from each other. Many candidates gave detailed accounts of the two complexes but were limited to two marks because it was not clear what the difference between them was. Weaker descriptions of the Oedipus complex did not emphasise the lust experienced by boys, preferring to underplay it with the terms such as 'love' or 'affection'. Weaker descriptions of the Electra complex did not emphasise that girls desire a penis (or baby), specifically focusing too generally on the desire for the father. A common error was to describe similarities between the complex (e.g. both take place in the phallic stage, both sexes identify with same sex parent to resolve the conflict) rather than the differences.
- Q14** Good responses identified at least one relevant research finding (e.g. females have superior verbal skills and males have superior visual-spatial skills) and then considered how this might be addressed through practice and policy – often in the context of educational opportunities. The best responses demonstrated sound knowledge of equal opportunities policies by including terms such as 'positive discrimination'. Overall, this was a challenging question for candidates and was designed to be. However, many candidates could not go beyond the research finding and, indeed, a number failed to score at all as they did not seem to anticipate this question or recognise what it was asking for. A common error was to offer a response which was more socio-political in its content rather than psychological. In addition, some responses mistakenly focused on how to treat the two sexes differently (e.g. direct them into different types of jobs) rather than focusing on equal opportunities.
- Q15** Nearly every candidate scored full marks by correctly identifying true and false statements thus demonstrating sound knowledge of the Hazen & Shaver study.
- Q16** Most candidates scored full marks here too, this time by offering a well detailed limitation of the Hazen & Shaver study. Some candidates did not elaborate on their chosen criticism enough to earn both marks, or chose a limitation which was difficult to elaborate on. Weaker responses were descriptive rather than evaluative – for example, stating that Hazen & Shaver used closed questions but not explaining why this might be problematic.
- Q17** Good responses to this question tended to focus on hospitals as an area where research into attachment is applied and then went on to outline a series of practices and policies employed by these institutions. The best responses expanded further to explain the reasoning behind practices such as flexible visiting hours for infant patients by relating them to stranger anxiety and separation protest. Some candidates overstated the reason behind such practices and referred to preventing deprivation or privation. Such candidates were unlikely to score full marks because of the need for accuracy at this level. Although candidates could refer to a number of areas of application e.g. hospitals, nursery care, parenting, those that did tended to offer responses that lacked detail or were repetitive.

- Q18** This was a well-answered question with many candidates scoring in the middle band or better. Descriptions of Bowlby's theory were generally well detailed and coherent, focusing on features such as instinct, monotropy and the critical period. However, candidates need to explain these concepts as part of their description if they are score well. Candidates who outlined what Bowlby believed to be the *effects* of deprivation and privation generally did gain credit whereas those candidates who simply defined the concepts scored nothing for this. Where candidates earned AO2 marks it was normally for two brief criticisms of the theory, which was completely acceptable. Most candidates knew to evaluate to earn marks in the top band but some points were quite obvious given their descriptions e.g. saying that Bowlby believed the effects of deprivation were irreversible and then suggesting that critics say they are not, does not necessarily have the substance for a top band mark. Better evaluation clearly went beyond bland criticisms of Bowlby's theory e.g. offering the idea of sensitive period as an alternative to the critical period. A few candidates described the work of Ainsworth in response to this question but this was less prolific than previous series.
- Q19** Most candidates scored all three marks here by correctly naming the three phobias. It was the answer to 19(b) – acrophobia – which was most likely to catch candidates out. Candidates should be encouraged to spell the phobias on the specification as accurately as possible because credit will not be given if a phobia is mis-spelt to the extent that it could be read as another e.g. agrophobia was commonly offered in response to (b) but could just as likely be 'agoraphobia' as 'acrophobia'.
- Q20** Although most candidates got full marks on this question, overall it elicited a range of responses. It appeared that some candidates knew and understood these classical conditioning terms well, whereas others were guessing which terms went with which definition. There was no obvious logic or pattern to incorrect responses, again suggesting candidates were guessing and getting it wrong rather demonstrating any particular misunderstanding.
- Q21** Most candidates were able to demonstrate some knowledge of this 'alternative' theory (evolutionary theory) with only a few describing the learning of phobias. The modal mark was two and for most candidates this was due to making some reference to phobias being instinctive, or similar, and making some reference to the need to survive/avoid threat, or similar. The best responses included a reference to the concept of preparedness – indeed this was necessary to be awarded full marks since the concept is explicitly referred to on the specification. Candidates who made reference to preparedness often recognised the need for an environmental trigger – another key part of this theory. A number of candidates needed to be more explicit about how phobias are passed on through generations – only those that made reference to genetic inheritance, or similar, were credited, otherwise 'passing on' could imply social learning. Many responses lost focus by outlining the kinds of things that people are or should be afraid of rather than *why* they are.
- Q22** Nearly every candidate attempted this question, and indeed many scored well on it, with marks in the middle band being very common. Candidates showed sound knowledge of the Watson & Rayner's study as evidenced by the large numbers that earned five AO1 marks for their description. Although there was some variation in the precision and clarity of these descriptions, this affected the overall banding rather than this particular set of marks. The evaluation allowed for more discrimination between candidates. The best evaluations raised a range of ethical and practical limitations that were elaborated on by explicit application back to the study itself. Most candidates could offer some level of evaluation but the tendency was to offer a list of statements with no real substance. The quality of written communication was generally of a decent standard and, although it sometimes prevented candidates scoring the top band, it rarely prevented them from scoring in the middle band.

B542 Studies and Applications in Psychology 2

General Comments:

Performance on this paper was commensurate with other series demonstrating that candidates continue to have a good knowledge and understanding of the topics occurring on this unit. Particular strengths are candidates' insight into core theories and their related concepts, their detailed knowledge of studies, and their ability to evaluate those studies. However, there is still some confusion between theories and studies so it is important that candidates are aware of this key distinction – especially as it impacts significantly on how they can perform in high tariff questions. Although candidates continue to improve in their grasp of applications and how they derive from research, some candidates need to develop a more detailed understanding so they can go beyond the basics and produce responses of more substance when questioned about them.

Comments on Individual Questions:

- Q1** This question was well answered with most candidates ticking the correct three boxes. There was no obvious pattern where responses scored two or fewer.
- Q2** Most candidates scored full marks here by correctly naming Piaget's second, third and fourth stages of cognitive development. Some candidates wrote in key concepts (e.g. conservation) for some or all of the stages. Candidates should be advised to use the full terms for each stage i.e. they should include the word 'operational' where appropriate.
- Q3** Good answers clearly identified a criticism of Piaget's theory and then elaborated on this – for example, through use of explanation, example or evidence. Some candidates did not make a clear enough link between different statements leaving their two marks in jeopardy. Other candidates offered more than one criticism, in which case the examiner credited the best one. A common error was to offer a criticism of Piaget's research rather than his theory.
- Q4** The vast majority of candidates demonstrated sound knowledge of these terms by correctly matching them with their definition. There was no obvious pattern to incorrect matches.
- Q5** This question elicited the full range of marks and proved to be a good discriminator with most candidates choosing to focus on the core study (i.e. Piaget's investigation of conservation of number). The best responses demonstrated coherency and detail – often identifying the sample, clearly describing the changes in variables, accurately outlining the measurement of participant response, and being specific about the findings. A number of responses were limited to three marks because, although they described enough features of their chosen study, accuracy and clarity was not evident enough. A common error was to detail the procedure but say nothing about the findings – this automatically limited these kind of responses to three marks as well. Most candidates demonstrated some knowledge of a relevant study but the weakest responses were vague and confused. A significant number of candidates scored zero because they described a theory (mainly Piaget's or Vygotsky's) rather than a study.
- Q6** A very well answered question with hardly any errors at all. Candidates found it easy to choose the terms to give an accurate outline of humanistic theory.
- Q7** It was anticipated that this would be a challenging question and this was reflected in candidates' responses. The very best responses made coherent links between genetics,

the biological basis of personality and how traits are therefore relatively fixed. The other main feature that gained credit was the idea that people are broadly similar and can be categorised by measuring the same traits. Only a few candidates focused on this latter feature. A common error was list (and sometimes define) the traits identified by Eysenck. Such responses gained no credit in themselves because they failed to explain the origin or significance of these traits.

- Q8** Most candidates demonstrated some knowledge of the Van Houtte & Jarvis study and there was a good focus on findings as required by the question. The standard of response was variable with the best responses making clear reference to the key measures of self concept, autonomy and self esteem, and drawing a conclusion that recognised that pets provide unconditional positive regard. Many candidates failed to make an explicit comparison between pet owners and non-pet owners in their description of the findings and limited their responses to two marks.
- Q9** This question produced a large number of good responses with many candidates scoring two. Full mark responses covered a range of limitations, but what they had in common was a clearly identifiable point which was then expanded upon. One mark answers either lacked this expansion, or were too confused. A common error was to describe a feature of the study (e.g. the study was carried out in the US) without explaining why it was problematic.
- Q10** There were some impressive responses to this question which went significantly beyond the four marks on offer. The weakest responses tended to focus primarily on client groups who might choose counselling and the outcomes in general (e.g. self actualisation). The best responses also included clear descriptions and/or explanations of the key features of counselling e.g. being genuine, being non-directive, being non-judgemental, etc. Some candidates scored zero because their descriptions of counselling were either based too much on common sense or were not distinguishable from other forms of therapy.
- Q11** The majority of candidates scored full marks by putting the tick in the right place on each row of the table suggesting they were able to distinguish clearly between the problems of defining crime and the problems of measuring crime. There was no pattern to those responses that scored two or fewer, possibly showing that some candidates were guessing the correct answer.
- Q12** This question was well answered overall, with slightly more correct responses to part (b) than part (a). On part(a), candidates were more likely to extract the wrong phrase from the source. However, some candidates did not go to the source at all for the answers (e.g. giving definition of vicarious reinforcement, or their own examples of role models) and inevitably scored zero.
- Q13** Some candidates offered an appropriate response and earned both marks. The majority of candidates earned one mark because they identified one or more relevant traits associated with the criminal personality but did not make it clear that this collection of traits makes an individual atypical/different from normal. Common errors – which all resulted in zero marks – were to give tautological answers, to try to explain the criminal personality rather than say what it was, or to list physical features associated with criminals.
- Q14** The best responses to this question earned their marks by offering a range of criticisms of the biological theory of crime, although some candidates were able to earn more than one mark for a well elaborated point. In general, the fewer points made, the lower the final score. A significant number of candidates failed to score any marks because they described the theory (in some detail in some cases) rather than following the command

to evaluate. Even candidates who did earn some AO2 marks often began with an outline of the theory. Candidates should be encouraged to focus straight on evaluation with questions like this because it is only evaluative commentary that is credited.

- Q15** Most candidates understood the demands of this question and offered relevant responses. The best responses usually focused on more than one area of application but still took the time to describe and explain their chosen practice/policy e.g. rehabilitation, intervention programmes, media censorship. A common error was for candidates to list a series of ways of reducing crime without describing any. Such responses were limited to one mark but the command word 'describe' requires some level of detail. It is also important that candidates demonstrate some level of psychological knowledge with questions like this as it is too easy to answer using common sense and therefore earn few or no marks.
- Q16** Overall this question was well answered, with parts (a) through to (d) causing few problems for candidates. Part (e) discriminated between candidates more. Most candidates understood that the use of evolutionary theory meant that they needed to make some reference to instinctive processes in their responses but a number wrongly identified one set of bars as showing innate behaviours while the other set showed learnt behaviours. Where candidates scored one it was often for making the link between the grey bars and reproductive behaviour rather than the link between the white bars and survival behaviour. Some candidates needed to be more precise when categorising the white bars with a number linking them to aggression specifically rather than defence more generally.
- Q17** This question elicited the full range of scores and this meant that most candidates scored something. The best responses identified three distinct and explicit limitations of the Yuki *et al* study with the artificiality of the emoticons, the age bias of the sample, and the simplicity of the rating scale being popular. Candidates who failed to score full marks often offered limitations that overlapped with one another, or offered limitations that were more descriptive than evaluative. A very common error was to suggest that the study was culturally biased.
- Q18** There were some excellent responses to this question which went beyond using more obvious terms and ideas, and included concepts such as identification, self-efficacy and internalisation. However, there were many good, full mark responses that only used the terms listed on the specification but that did so in a coherent and detailed way that demonstrated clear understanding of social learning theory as it applies to the development of non-verbal communication. It was also good to see that many candidates followed the command to describe only and that they were not tempted to offer any evaluation (as it would not have received credit in this instance). Some candidates limited themselves to four by not adequately contextualising their answer and using examples of how non-verbal communication is learned. Some candidates even used examples of other behaviours – most notably criminal behaviour and verbal behaviour – which were clearly not relevant to the question. A number of candidates were also limited to four marks because they listed and defined key terms – such as observation, imitation, role model, reinforcement – without explaining how they link to form the theory. Although it was appropriate to use examples of cultural variations in non-verbal communication as part of the description, candidates should be aware that it is important to refer explicitly to at least two cultures for credit (otherwise the variation is not demonstrated).
- Q19** Most candidates demonstrated their knowledge of applications effectively by correctly matching two pairs of boxes for two marks. Candidates were better at making the link between motivation and when to advertise food products than context and where to advertise cleaning products.

- Q20** Candidates scored well on the first part of each sub-section with most identifying shape and colour as their chosen constancies, although size was sometimes offered. Candidates were more challenged by the second part of each sub-section where they had to give an example of their chosen constancy. Most candidates demonstrated further knowledge of the constancy but many defined the constancy rather than giving a specific example of it, or those that did give an example were not explicit enough either about the apparent change or about the knowledge that a property stays the same. A significant minority of candidates offered depth cues in responses to this question which was surprising since that was what Q21 was obviously focusing on.
- Q21** Overall, candidates performed well on this question with many getting full marks. There was little difference between the performance on parts (a), (c) and (d). It was part (b)'s false statement about linear perspective that caught out candidates the most.
- Q22** The vast majority of candidates attempted this question and, indeed, many performed well on this with the modal mark being seven, and many marks being in the middle band generally. Candidates showed good knowledge of Haber & Levin's study and this was supported by the fact that many earned five AO1 marks for their description. Having said this, candidates need to be clearer on the set up of this experiment, and need to be more explicit about the dependent variable in some cases. However, this lack of precision and accuracy tended to affect the overall banding rather than the AO1 marks awarded. The evaluation allowed for more discrimination between candidates. The best evaluative commentary raised a range of different limitations which were then developed with explicit reference to the study itself. Most candidates could offer some level of evaluation but the tendency was to focus too much on the nature of the sample rather than consider the study more broadly. The quality of written communication was generally of a satisfactory standard and although it sometimes prevented candidates scoring the top band it rarely prevented them from scoring in the middle band.

B543 Research in Psychology

General Comments

Many candidates showed a good level of knowledge and understanding of conducting research in psychology.

A very high proportion attempted all the questions on the paper indicating that it was accessible to almost all candidates. It was pleasing to see a good level of psychological terminology in many responses. Candidates are nevertheless encouraged to pay particular attention to their use of psychological key words as these were sometimes confused, such as the names of experimental designs in section B, complex concepts such as validity and reliability and methods of investigations such as correlations, experiments, types of studies and hypotheses.

A key feature of this paper is application. Whilst the number of candidates successfully drawing information from the source material is high, there needs to be more contextualisation.

In section A, candidates are encouraged to utilise the source material effectively. Key features of the source can be used to illustrate responses and to demonstrate a good level of understanding throughout.

In section B, candidates are encouraged to contextualise their responses to their own research design as directed by the source material. When asked to evaluate the method of investigation, for example, the evaluation must be linked to features of their design to gain full marks. Candidates are also encouraged to avoid transference between questions when answering questions in this section of the paper.

Sections A and B are independent; as such candidates are encouraged to avoid transferring methods, concepts and designs across sections. The transference of the correlational method in section A to section B was a common error in this examination session.

Candidates are also encouraged to pay particular attention to the directive words in questions and go beyond the mere identification of a concept or evaluative point, where a description, a level of interpretation or explanation is required. Likewise the use of circular definitions should be avoided.

Comments on individual questions

- Q1** Almost all candidates scored full marks here, successfully identifying the aim of the study from the source material.
- Q2** Candidate responses varied on this question. Whilst a number of candidates scored full marks, correctly identifying the co-variables and that the null hypothesis predicts no correlation, some responses gave an alternate hypothesis or an aim, a statement or predicted no difference.
- Q3(a)** A well-answered question with the majority of candidates identifying the two variables in the study. Where errors were made, candidates referred to an independent and dependent variable or to alternative features from the source (such as the theme park rides).
- Q3(b)** Many candidates were able to identify the positive correlation shown in the scattergraph. Those that achieved full marks gave elaborated responses making reference to the relationship between both variables.

- Q4** A well-answered question with the majority of candidates identifying closed questions from the source material.
- Q5** A well-answered question with the majority of candidates identifying quantitative data from the source material.
- Q6** Many candidates were able to describe a weakness of using a questionnaire as a method for collecting data though fewer candidates were able to contextualise their answer to the study described in the source material. Those who achieved full marks went beyond the mere identification of a weaknesses and clearly placed the weakness in context of study.
- Q7(a)** Whilst many candidates could outline a key feature of random samples as everyone having an equal chance of becoming a participant, a minority of candidates encompassed the whole concept, with very few making reference to the target population in their responses. Responses describing how a random sample could be achieved as opposed to what it actually is were commonly seen.
- Q7(b)** Many candidates identified a strength of a random sample as providing a more representative sample, being less biased or possessing a greater generalisability of the findings. Fewer candidates could provide an elaborated response explaining how or why it was a strength. Definitions of random samples were commonly seen as was reference to obtaining a variety or range of people.
- Q8(a)** A well-answered question with the majority of candidates being able to state or give an example of an appropriate ethical issue arising from the source material. Where errors were seen, candidates confused ethical issues with ethnic groups.
- Q8(b)** Generally a well-answered question with many candidates being able to elaborate on their responses from Q8(a) and thus demonstrate a good understanding of how ethical issues can be overcome or dealt with. Repetitions were seen where candidates transferred their response from Q8(a) to Q8(b).
- Q9** Responses varied on this question. Whilst many candidates stated a feasible extraneous variable that could have occurred in the study described in the source, others offered extraneous variables not suitable for the study as they contradicted features of the study already present within the source (such as the type of ride, height of ride or speed of ride). Where full marks were achieved, candidates went beyond the mere identification of an extraneous variable, explaining the implication of the variable on the data collected in the study.
- Q10** This was one of the lowest achieving questions. Many candidates could identify a feature of longitudinal studies or a feature of cross-sectional studies but very few candidates could outline a comparison in either time or use of participants between both studies. The confusion between longitudinal and case studies was commonly seen where candidates described longitudinal studies as focussing on one participant or a small sample of participants.
- Q11** This was one of the lowest achieving questions with only the minority of responses encompassing the entire concept of validity. A number of candidates described ecological validity or offered responses relating to population validity. Many candidates referred to validity as relating to truthfulness or to results being correct or accurate in investigations. Candidates often confused validity with reliability, describing consistency of findings.

- Q12(a)** The majority of candidates could either demonstrate their understanding of the predictive nature of a hypothesis or could operationalise the variables of attention and number of tasks. Where errors were made, candidates stated null hypotheses, predicting a relationship between the variables or giving statements or aims.
- Q12(b)** This was a well-answered question with the majority of candidates identifying an appropriate target population for their investigation. Some confusion was seen between sampling methods, samples and target populations where candidates would state how they would obtain a sample or who they would use as their participants.
- Q12(c)** Responses to this question varied. A good number of candidates answered this question well by firstly identifying how attention could be measured in their investigation, also showing how the measurement could work. Equally, many candidates did not go beyond just identifying what was to be measured. Where errors were made, they referred to conducting data analysis on the results or describing how they would conduct an investigation; giving answers which were better suited to Q.12(d).
- Q12(d)** Despite there being some very good answers here, many candidates needed to show a better understanding of the experimental method. Responses referring to conducting a correlation; looking for a relationship between attention and number of tasks, carrying out covert / overt observations were frequently seen. Candidates need to be careful not to give details of the procedure that has been assessed in previous parts of the questions (i.e. measurement of attention in 12(c)) or to how their findings would be analysed (12(g)). Candidates often gave justifications for their procedure or identified experimental designs which did not reflect the design of their investigation. Candidates merely identifying experimental designs, sampling methods or ethical issues (often presented in lists) was common.
- Q12(e)** This was one of the lowest achieving questions in section B. Those candidates who achieved full marks demonstrated an accurate understanding of the concept of demand characteristics and explained how they could affect their investigation, fully contextualising their response. Candidates using a repeated measured design in their investigations often confused demand characteristics with practice or order effects. Likewise, a minority of candidates confused the concept with individual characteristics of participants. Candidates who had designed investigations based on observations in 12(d) often cited a change in participants' behaviour due to the observer effect and not to cues in the environment.
- Q12(f)** Many candidates identified a weakness of using an experiment. However, a significant number of candidates failed to contextualise their weakness to their investigation or to give an explanation of why it would be a weakness of the experimental method. Generic responses citing a lack of ecological validity were frequently seen. These isolated answers failed to achieve full marks as they did not meet the demands of the question.
- Q12(g)** A well-answered question with many candidates achieving full marks. Many candidates gave responses that went beyond the demands of the question providing detailed descriptions of the use of descriptive statistics and visual displays of data. Those candidates not achieving full marks tended merely to identify a way of analysing data (stating the use of a bar chart or drawing a comparison between the two conditions). The use of a scattergraph was frequently seen as were responses focussing on why the data would be analysed, as opposed to how.

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