



EXAMINER'S REPORT

MAY 2000

BEHAVIOURAL ASPECTS OF MARKETING

General Comments

This year an overall pass rate of 62% was recorded, the highest overall pass rate in many years. Of students sitting *Behavioural Aspects of Marketing*, 18% achieved higher grades (A and B), 18% achieved grade C, and 26% were awarded a D grade.

All of the questions on this paper (except Question 4) were explicit in their demands of students on issues which are recurrent i.e. Groups, Attitudes, Perception, Personality, Motivation, Learning and Demographics.

Improvement Strategies

Each year the examiner draws attention to strategies that if noted by students will improve the chances of their success. These strategies can be found across nearly all of the past BAM examiners reports.

- As usual many students do not read the questions properly and do not note the existence and/or meaning of key verbs such as Evaluate, Critically Assess etc.
- In far too many cases students obviously spent a considerable amount of time on roughwork for questions. Time management is a key factor in examination technique.
- On a minor impression-management point, it is worrying that many candidates could not spell the names of Freud, Herzberg and McClelland which are clearly printed on the examination paper in black, and many could not spell fundamental terms salient to BAM, such as psychology, sociology and demographics. The effective and literate presentation of responses must be considered by students and lecturers alike as a skill to be developed.

Positive Comments

The high percentage of students achieving higher grades (A and B) over the last number of years has continued to this year. Those who achieved such grades (18%) should be highly commended for their efforts. The trend in the use of labelled, explained and comprehensible diagrams and figures, remains a positive feature of the papers reviewed.

A significant decrease in student numbers attempting less than the mandatory 5 questions was noted. 11% attempted 4 or less this year, in comparison to 1999 where 26% attempted 4 or less and 19% in 1998. These figures represent a significant factor in the high overall success rate. It is continually worth mentioning that candidates who only attempt 4 or less questions are putting themselves at a serious risk of failing.

Question 1

A question which suffered more than most from candidate mis-reading. The number of discussions of Consistency Theories and how to change attitudes was a cause for concern. Students were required to discuss the sources of attitudes, such as family mass media, peers etc., and note the functions of

attitudes such as knowledge, adjustment etc. 77% of students attempted this question, of whom 61% passed.

Question 2

This direct question required students to discuss Selective Perception (Internal & External Factors), and to a lesser extent Selective Sensation (thresholds, JND's). This was not a question on Gestalt principles of Perceptual Organisation or solely on sensation. An apparent lack of understanding of the stages of the Perceptual Process and associated variables was frequently exhibited. 71% of students attempted this question, of whom 49% passed.

Question 3

It appeared to the examiner that considerable confusion existed between Herzberg's Motivator-Hygiene Theory and McGregor's Theory X-Theory Y, and in some cases students showed absolutely no knowledge of Herzberg at all. An all too substantial number of candidates chose to 'ignore' the key verbs of Compare and Contrast in the question. 50% of students attempted this question, of whom 61% passed.

Question 4

Many answers contained articulate discussions of the disciplines contributing to the behavioural science, the research methodologies and aims of and the contribution or potential contribution of Behavioural Science to the study and practice of marketing and the associated difficulties, such responses were rewarded. However, it appeared that this question was for some the last resort fifth question and contained rambling 'anecdotes' of how 'brilliant' Behavioural Science was. Such answers were waffle without substance. 55% of students attempting passed.

Question 5

This was not, as some candidates presumed, a question on Operant Conditioning, nor the elements of the cognitive approaches to understanding learning, nor a question which required students to compare and contrast the Behaviourist and Cognitive approaches. It was obvious that the distinction between Classical/Pavlovian and Operant Conditioning was completely lost on many. Where candidates did recognise the primary requirement of the question they then chose to omit any evaluation of same. This was the most popular question on the paper attempted by 85% of students, of whom 54% passed.

Question 6

Many candidates focused their approach to demography on immigration or economic boom as relevant current issues, and little attention was paid to other areas of demographic detail such as fertility, social mobility, mortality etc. The question contained the words 'twenty years' yet still many discussions of issues since the Famine abounded. 43% of students attempted this question, of whom 54% passed.

Question 7

This was **not** a question on the stages of group formation a la Tuckman, **nor** a question on the types of groups which may exist and **not** a question on the dynamics of group structure. This succinct unambiguous question required students to define groups and note the primary reasons why people join them. 74% of students attempted this question, of whom 70% passed.

Question 8

Overall, extremely well understood and articulated responses were found in this question. The use of clearly labelled and described diagrams and figures was extremely positive. However, all too many candidates sought to ignore the key verbs 'critically assess' and suffered accordingly. 68% of students attempted this question, of whom 78% passed.