



EXAMINER'S REPORT

MAY 2001

BEHAVIOURAL ASPECTS OF MARKETING

General Comments

This year a very disappointing pass rate of 52% was recorded. 21% achieved higher grades (A and B), 12% achieved grade C, and 19% were awarded a D grade.

Annual themes are present in abundance such as: Attitudes Perception, Personality, Motivation and Irish Demography. Every issue dealt with on this paper has been examined both before and frequently. With this in mind, and the extraordinary failure rate this year, the examiner feels it necessary to offer guidance to potential candidates who want to pass BAM:

- You must review past papers. These indicate a broad framework of question style, format and clearly show recurrent examinable themes. Lecturers and tutors usually advise candidates to practise past questions. This is valuable advice. It allows you to develop exam time-management skills as well as allowing self-assessment of knowledge.
- When answering questions keep focused on the issues central to the questions being asked. The use of key verbs such as compare, contrast, evaluate, etc. are too frequently ignored.
- If the question contains the word *Motivation*; for example, this DOES NOT mean put pen to paper and write everything you know regarding motivation; irrelevant 'padding' does not gain marks. Note well the specific theories or approaches you are being asked to write on.
- You are required to answer 5 questions. If you do not fulfil this minimum requirement you are well on the road to failure This year nearly a quarter of all those sitting BAM attempted 4 or less questions, and a remarkable 1 in 10 attempted 3 or less. This is a significant deterioration on previous years and contributed directly to the higher failure rate.
- Finally, you must study your recommended textbook, it represents the backbone of this course, and the backbone of previous examine questions. It was painfully obvious this year that for a considerable number of candidates the textbook was not a source of information.

Positive Comments

Although there is little to be positive about this year, the numbers of students achieving higher grades (A and B) reached an all time high of 21%. Earnest congratulations to these candidates, your hard work has paid dividends.

Question 1

This second most popular question on the paper was attempted by two-thirds of candidates. This question required discussion of the variables inherent in the process of social perception, such as: characteristics of the person perceived; characteristics of the perceiver; characteristics of the situation; while referencing typical social perceptual errors, for example Halo effect and stereotyping. Generally well answered with 41% achieving higher grades A or B. However, a very surprising number of students appeared to believe that because the question contained the word 'perception' then

it must be a question on the entire perceptual process, which it was not. Nor was this question an invitation to discuss solely the process of sensation as some assumed, or hoped. Overall 54% passed.

Question 2

This specific question on attitudes was passed by nearly three-quarters of those attempting it. This was not a question directly on the tri-component structure of attitudes, the functions served by attitudes or a question on Fishbein/Fishbein & Ajzen models of attitudes. Description was required of Balance Theory, Cognitive Dissonance Theory and Congruity Theory.

Question 3

This most misread question on the paper was not designed to fool candidates. A straightforward explanation and evaluation of Equity Theory was required. However, it was patently obvious that the vast majority had no idea of even the most fundamental propositions put forward by Adams, such as equity/inequity being achieved by a process of social comparison of job related inputs and outcomes. Indeed some candidates were happier to outline Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, or any/every other motivation theory as if this would suffice, it did not. Just over one-third passed.

Question 4

This least popular question demanded explanation of the barriers to effective communication. All too rarely in attempts at this question were there any references to such barriers relating to sender variables, receiver variables, organisational variables or feedback.. More frequent were rambling discourses on the value of speech and hearing and where would we be without them. Less than one-third passed.

Question 5

A surprisingly poorly answered question that is a frequent visitor to the BAM paper. It seemed that some candidates have not even the most basic grasp of the recent evolution of this country, in terms of basic demographic or economic variables, such as Fertility, Mortality, Nuptuality, Mobility, Immigration etc. Others do not seem to understand what the term *decade* means. It is also worth noting here that a formal examination is not the place for racist innuendo or rhetoric, it will not be tolerated in any shape or form. 50% passed.

Question 6

The most popular question on the paper, attempted by 80% of candidates, is a direct question in two parts, the second of which was largely ignored by the majority. This question did not directly invite students to write on the stages of group formation nor on group structure, which a great many did exclusively. Candidates were required to note the primary reasons for joining groups, such as: Security, Affiliation, Goals & Activities, and the primary classifications of groups, such as: Reference, Aspirational, Acquired, Ascribed, etc. 53% passed.

Question 7

Explanations of the Idiographic approach tended to concentrate on Freud and the vast majority of these were concise and appropriate, noting the psychosexual stages of development, primary defence mechanisms, and the structure of the psyche. However, explanations of the Nomothetic approach i.e. Cattell's proposals on the structure and measurement of personality through the 16PF, went for the most part ignored, again leaving candidates only half potential marks. 64% passed.

Question 8

This is the area that candidates are usually exposed to first, and answers to this question seemed to suffer from this time lag. Little or no recognition was given to the goals of natural science (Description, Understanding, Prediction & Control) and comparisons to the behavioural sciences. However, explanations of behavioural science methodologies did attain some degree of respectability and marks, but generally, the question appeared to act a refuge for candidates searching vainly for a fifth, or in some cases a fourth and final question and contained unstructured, unprepared and irrelevant musings. One-third passed.