



EXAMINER'S REPORT

MAY 2006

BEHAVIOURAL ASPECTS OF MARKETING

General Comments

This year a pass rate of 60% was recorded. 21% achieved higher grades (A and B), 17% achieved grade C, and 22% were awarded a D grade. Annually recurring themes are present such as: Attitudes Perception, Personality, Motivation Groups, and Irish Social Change. Issue dealt with on this paper has been examined both before and frequently. Although not a particularly challenging paper, typical issues were noted as contributing to poor results and failures:

- The essential textbook must be studied; it represents the backbone of this course, and the backbone of previous exam questions. It was painfully obvious this year that for a considerable number of candidates the essential textbook was not a source of information;
- Past papers and examiners reports must be reviewed; these indicate a broad framework of question style, format and clearly show recurrent examinable themes. Lecturers and tutors usually advise candidates to 'try out' past questions, this is valuable advice, it allows you to develop exam time-management skills as well as allowing self-assessment of knowledge;
- One third of candidates attempted less than the prescribed number of questions with a remarkable one in ten only attempting 3 or less questions. With such a strategy failure is inevitable;
- When answering questions, candidates should 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 every thing you know regarding motivation, irrelevant 'padding' does not gain marks. Note well the specific theories or approaches you are being asked to write on.

Question 1

The most popular question on the paper was attempted by 85% of candidates. This question required discussion of the variables inherent in the process of perception, such as sensation, selection interpretation. A time challenging and generally well answered question with 41% of those attempting achieving higher grades A or B. Overall 63% passed.

Question 2

An ineffectually dealt with question that is a frequent visitor to the Behavioural Aspects of Marketing 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, Mobility, Emigration, Immigration etc. Rambling discussions solely based on increasing diversity in food availability count for little. 73% passed with 50% netting higher grades.

Question 3

A straightforward explanation and evaluation of Universal Theories was required. However, it was patently obvious that the vast majority had no idea of even the most fundamental propositions put forward by Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs or Alderfer's ERG theory. Some wandering discussions of Expectancy Theory or Equity theory were outside the requirements of the question. Overall 75% passed and 45% with higher grades.

Question 4

A direct question which required candidates to express their understanding of the nature of the behavioural sciences. High quality answers commented directly on issues such as specialisation, a large community of experts, a communications system, and conventions such as systematic observation, research design recording, publishing findings etc. 61% passed and a noteworthy three quarters of those achieved higher grades.

Question 5

This direct question invited comment on the Nomothetic and Trait based approach to personality. Explanations of The big 5 and comments on reliability and validity served well. Explanations of the Psychodynamic approach were inappropriate and yielded very little. 50% passed.

Question 6

The third most popular question on the paper, attempted by 80% of candidates. This question did not directly invite students to write neither on the stages of group formation nor on group structure, which a great many did exclusively. Candidates were required to describe firstly the Asch experiments and then derive meaning and implication from them. All too often the most basic elements of the experiments were omitted. Very few higher grades were awarded (24%) and 47% passed.

Question 7

The least popular question on the paper was poorly answered and misunderstood. Only one in three candidates attempted this question and it was obvious that for many it was the 'last ditch' attempt at the fifth required question. The vast majority of responses simply and mistakenly presumed this question to require the exact same response as Question 2. Those whose responses detailed the key facets of Irish culture such as Catholicism, traditions, language, collectivism, connection to land etc fared well. Only 25% passed of those attempting.

Question 8

In far too few cases did candidates recognise that this was a question which required, for the most part, a description of the communication process and its inherent variables as a mechanism for attitude change. Discussion was required of Communicator Variables, Message Variables, Medium and Audience Variables. Only 56% of those who attempted this straightforward question passed.