PSYCHOLOGY

Paper 9990/12
Approaches, Issues and Debates

Key messages

Candidates need to know all components of the study as listed in the syllabus. Questions can be asked about any part of a study.

Candidates need to read the whole question carefully to ensure that their responses are fulfilling the demands of the questions. For example, the question may require data or a named issue to be included. To achieve full marks these need to be correctly presented in responses. The essay (final question) requires four evaluation points to be presented in depth (two strengths and two weaknesses) with at last one of these about the named issue. Credit is limited if the named issue is omitted. In addition, if the candidate is required to outline a debate, each side requires explicit labelling by them to be able to access the full range of marks available.

Candidates need to be careful about how they are presenting the results of studies. For example, they need to know if the results are about how many participants performed a task correctly or on how many trials the participant was correct. This can have a large impact on the interpretation of results and whether a response can gain credit or not.

Candidates need to know the difference the characteristics of a sample (e.g. demographics; participant variables) and the features of a sample (e.g. anything about the sample including demographics and how the sample was chosen).

Candidates also need to engage with any stimulus material presented in a question (e.g. a novel situation) to ensure they can access all available marks. In addition, when a question refers to 'in this study' the answer requires contextualisation.

There is enough time for answers to be planned to ensure that the response given by a candidate is focused on the demands of each question.

General comments

The marks achieved by the candidates sitting this examination covered a wide spread of possible marks. Some candidates provided a range of excellent answers to many of the questions and could explain psychological terminology well, providing evidence that they were prepared for the examination. There is evidence that candidates have learned the new studies that form the 9990 syllabus. This was also evidenced by very few blanks answers.

Successful responses followed the demands of each question with explicit use of psychological terminology and logical, well planned answers with evidence. Appropriate examples were used from studies when the question expected it and there was evidence of candidates being able to apply their knowledge of studies to novel situations, for example, giving advice to people in novel situations.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

(a) (i) Many candidates were able to give the correct answer of 15 volts. However, many responses gave incorrect increments or gave the range of voltage from smallest to largest.

(ii) Many candidates could not identify the label used for that portion of the generator. Some responses had words that did not appear on the generator or gave a label from a different voltage range.

(iii) Successful responses could give the correct answer of 26. However, there were a variety of incorrect from responses based on the percentage of participants who pressed the maximum, which is not what the question was asking.

(b) More successful responses could clearly outline a conclusion from the study with an explicit example. Weaker responses tended to be brief or just mention that people are obedient without explaining the context.

Question 2

(a) Responses to this question were varied. Successful responses could clearly outline what participants were **told** about their injection. However, less successful responses tended to focus on the fact that participants were **not told** or that a different condition was told about their injection. It is important for candidates to focus on what the question is asking for, in this case what participants were **told** rather than what they were **not told**.

(b) Reponses to this question were varied. Successful responses could clearly identify which group scored higher and what that meant. Few responses presented correct data or any data at all. It was clear from the majority of responses to this question that candidates easily confuse the conditions of the Schachter and Singer study.

Question 3

(a) There were many successful responses to this question. Candidates clearly knew what the aim of the study was, beyond a brief answer of investigating a phobia of buttons.

(b) Responses to this question were varied. Successful responses could clearly describe what a strength was, giving a contextualised example. Some responses tended to be a generic answer about a methodological strength and gained partial credit. Candidates need to be able to focus on the demands of the question in terms of giving an example from the study to show why it was a strength.

Question 4

Successful responses could readily describe the procedure asked for in the question. These responses showed clear logical progression, describing exactly what a participant was expected to do during the Aggression Arousal part of the study. Less successful responses tended to be generic or focus on the part of the procedure when the participants were observed with a Bobo Doll. Candidates can improve their answers to this type of question by focusing on what a participant *actually* experienced in different stages of a study.

Question 5

(a) Candidates can improve their answers to this style of question by understanding the difference between characteristics and features of a sample (the difference is highlighted in the beginning of this report). Successful answers could readily identify two characteristics with popular choices being age and sex. Less successful responses gave features including being given course credits or sample size.

(b) Many responses could identify one validity problem of the Restaurant questionnaire. Successful responses could then explain *why* it was a problem using an example from the test itself. Less succesful responses tended to repeat the problem or state that it reduced validity/accuracy but this was in the question itself. Candidates can improve their answers here by explaining why a problem is a problem rather than just stating ‘it reduces validity’, for example, without telling the examiner why, especially if a concept already appears in the question.

Question 6

Reponses to this question were very varied. Successful responses gave clear advice including the use of setting up scenarios where help is needed or teaching children to always ask for help. Many responses focused on explaining *why* the advice had been given. This was not the focus of the question. The scenario had already set up a novel situation and told candidates about the Yamamoto *et al.* study. Therefore, candidates can improve their answers to this style of question by giving the advice based on the Yamamoto *et al.* study and not explaining why they have given that advice.

Question 7

Candidates can improve their answers to questions like this by focusing on the rules of the question. In this case, data had to be used in one of the answers. Many responses did not include data or when it did, the interpretation of the given data was incorrect. For example, it was on 29 per cent **of pictures** that were rated zero for emotional intensity. However, many responses claimed that it was 29 per cent **of participants** who rated the pictures as zero so could not gain credit. Some stronger responses could clearly give a result that had a comparison for both parts of the question using correct data to exemplify this.

Question 8

(a) Candidates can improve their answers to questions outlining a debate by explicitly stating each side of the debate. Less successful responses described nature and nurture but did not label which was which. Examiners cannot award credit for implicit answers. Successful responses could clearly describe both sides of the debate explicitly.

(b) Successful responses could use evidence effectively to highlight why Duncan was correct in his assumption about the Pepperberg study. Popular choices of evidence included being trained to understand same/different, being taught the label for colours and using behavioural techniques based on reward to learn the different behaviours. Less successful responses tended to describe the procedure of the Pepperberg study. Also, some responses did not use evidence so could only receive partial credit as evidence was asked for.

Question 9

(a) Reponses to this question were varied. Popular strong responses tended to focus on the type of victim and the race of victim with clear operationalisation. Less succesful responses claimed that the race of the model, the time of day or the location were independent variables which are all incorrect. Candidates can improve their answers to questions like this by identifying the independent variable and then operationalising them clearly. For example, type of victim (identification), drunk and ill (operationalisation).

(b) Responses to this question varied for a variety of reasons. Successful candidates could *explain* whether the guideline had been broken or not using specific examples from the study itself. This was more evident for deception and protection. There were too many responses that were tautological. For example, candidates claimed that material was kept confidential or that participants were not debriefed. Both of these examples could not gain credit as confidentiality and debriefing were listed in the question and defining a word using that word cannot gain credit.

Question 10

The most successful responses evaluated the Andrade study in depth and in terms of two strengths and two weaknesses with at least one of these points covering the named issue of quantitative data. Common choices included generalisability, reliability and quantitative data. These strong responses could explain why an element of the study was a strength or a weakness using specific examples from the Andrade study explicitly to support their point. These answers tended to score Level 4 marks. Candidates need to ensure that they follow the demands of the question, covering two strengths and two weaknesses all in equal depth. Some responses did cover the four evaluation points but were brief or did not use the Andrade study as examples which meant the response scored in the lower bands. Other responses included three evaluation points that were thorough, logical and well argued with a fourth point that was brief which meant the response did not reach the top band in the main. Candidates need to know that any description of the study does not gain credit in these type of questions as it is testing their evaluation skills *only*.

In addition, it was noted that in this series more candidates were following a GRAVE approach to this question (Generalisability, Reliability, Application, Validity, Ethics). Therefore, some candidates were producing prepared essays for Andrade without one of their points being about quantitative data. Any responses that fails to have one evaluation point about the named issue can only score Level 3 (6 marks) maximum.

PSYCHOLOGY

Paper 9990/22
Research Methods

Key messages

- This is a question paper about research methods, which requires candidates to answer a range of question types, including ones about the core studies in relation to research methods, terms and concepts used to describe or evaluate research methodology, and application of this knowledge to both familiar and unfamiliar contexts. Some flaws were evident in each of these skills in many candidates. It is therefore essential that candidates are prepared for the skills of recalling concepts and of using this knowledge.
- Practising how to apply ideas to novel scenarios is important to succeed on this paper. This could have helped candidates in two ways:
    - Candidates needed to be able to apply research methods terms and concepts to scenarios presented in questions. These can include, for example, planning, criticising or developing designs or analysing data.
    - Candidates must take note of questions which indicate the need for a link. When a question says 'in this study', or makes direct reference to the scenario, responses must go beyond simply describing or evaluating, they must contextualise the answer in a relevant way. Candidates therefore need to be prepared for questions using this format and practice can help them to learn both how to extract relevant ideas and how to make novel suggestions based on scenarios.
- **Question 10** in this paper requires candidates to produce an original design for a novel research question; this 'creative' process requires practice. Furthermore, to learn to identify flaws in a design (whether their own, as in **Question 10**, or one from a novel scenario for example in ***Section B***) also relies on having had experience of practical problems in conducting studies. This is a high-level skill, and can be developed through practical work with designing and conducting small studies in class or through the discussion of novel scenarios. The overall format of **Question 10(a)**, and the nature of the mark scheme, is consistent between papers and years. Therefore, it is helpful to prepare candidates with an overall structure, which can be closely tailored to the requirements of an individual question, such as the required research method and the scenario.

General comments

In general, candidates were able to access marks across the whole paper. However, very few were consistently able to access the additional marks for linking their response to the scenarios, thus limiting performance as a whole. Nevertheless, some candidates demonstrated a good grasp of definitions for a range of psychological concepts and so were able to access the basic marks with these.

Candidates across the ability range were able to demonstrate some knowledge of a range of aspects of research methods in this paper. Success was greater on more straightforward questions, such as **Questions 1(a)**, **1(b)**, **2(a)**, **2(b)**, **2(c)** and **4(b)**, than on more demanding ones, such as **Questions 7(a)**, **7(c)**, **7(d)(i)**, **7(d)(ii)** and **8(b)**. This examination tested a cross-section of psychology skills and, on some questions, candidates showed limited recall of facts, such as in **Questions 4(a)(i)**, **4(a)(ii)**, **5** and **8(a)**. Note especially that the limited success on **Question 7** and **8(b)** was largely attributable to difficulties with application to the scenario.

Question 10 was sometimes well-answered although responses often lacked one of the necessary key details for a laboratory experiment.

Although some candidates left some answer spaces blank, there was no observable pattern in questions that were left unanswered on this paper. Furthermore, candidates appeared to make appropriate use of

additional paper for extended answers and some used the blank pages 11 and 12 to continue writing responses - which is acceptable. Whenever an answer is continued is it advisable to indicate this and to clearly label additional content with the correct question number and part, something that most candidates are already doing.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

(a) This question part was generally answered well. Answers which did not earn credit for 'explaining' tended to make some reference to causality in the description, but nevertheless many of these were able to offer a correct example. In other words, they could identify the study-specific correlation but could not give a general definition of a positive correlation. An explanation needs to be independent of the term itself, hence where there was simply a direct repetition of words in the question, such as in 'a positive correlation is when two variables positively correlate' no mark could be awarded.

(b) Again, this question part was generally answered well. Where candidates did not earn full marks, this was often because they had not followed the 'more' command in the question, i.e. they did not compare the two measures.

Question 2

(a) It was rare that candidates could not answer with the appropriate features. However, some confused the name of the university, providing examples of Yale, Cambridge and Harvard in place of Stanford. Where full marks were not gained, candidates had sometimes referred to sampling techniques rather than the sample itself.

(b) Responses to this question part were again very good. The majority of candidates referred to either the sample size or the use of boys and girls. Some candidates gave more detail in their responses than was necessary for full marks, e.g. mentioning the use of both a large sample and both genders.

(c) The final part of this question was also answered well. The most common answer was that the sample came from same nursery school, with some candidates giving a fuller answer explaining why, in this case, this could be problematic. However, a common problem was to give generic answers, e.g. simply making reference to all the children being from 'the same place'. As the question made specific reference to 'in this study', such responses were not creditworthy.

Question 3

(a) Many responses to this question part earned partial marks – either by referring to consistency of procedure, or that replication would yield similar results. Some candidates missed achieving the mark by referring to replicability only. Fewer responses provided an example from the study, but the most common example was that chimps were presented with the same tools in each trial. Two fairly common errors were a confusion between validity and reliability, and where the definition given was circular.

(b) Many responses did not earn marks. This was due to either discussing validity (often that the chimps had been part of experimental studies in the past) or generalisability (these chimps do not represent wild ones). A common incorrect assumption was that individual differences caused a lack of reliability. This is not, however, the case. Individual differences per se are not a reliability issue. Indeed, the DV is designed to measure individual differences, albeit ones caused by the IV, and other individual differences may have a damaging effect via their influence on validity.

Question 4

(a) (i) This question was not answered well, with candidates offering either muddled definitions or referring to social desirability. Demand characteristics are the features of the research situation (the characteristics) which indicate to the participants the intentions of the research (the demands), thus affecting the participants' behaviour.

(ii) Although many responses referred to validity, they were often ineffective because of the weak answers to **part (a)(i)**. To earn credit, the problem given needed to identify how the effect of demand characteristics on behaviour means that the DV is no longer measuring (only) the effect of the IV.

(b) Many responses to this question part earned no marks as they were generic points, e.g. 'deceiving the participants' or 'hiding the aim' and the question asked for a content-specific answer. The majority of correct answers suggested the inclusion of filler questions in the questionnaire.

Question 5

Although many responses were awarded the one possible mark for this question, the majority were imperfect answers. The most common answer was a simplistic statement along the lines of 'the mean takes all scores into account'. Few responses were truly accurate as strictly speaking all of the three measures of tendency use all the scores. The precise difference is that in the calculation of the mean, the *values* of all the scores are used. In addition to this imprecision, few responses provided an explicit contrast with the mode. However, on the positive side, the majority of candidates did attempt to answer the question set so there were very few inappropriate responses that described how the mean was calculated.

Question 6

This question was often answered very well. The mark scheme required a balance but nevertheless allowed full marks to be achieved in a variety of different ways, e.g. through more detail or more examples. Milgram was the most frequently used example for both right to withdraw and deception. Schacter and Singer, Piliavin et al. and Laney et al. were also all used effectively showing that candidates had put a lot of effort into answering this question. Many candidates repeated the terms 'withdraw' and 'deception' in their answers without describing the guidelines themselves but gave good detail and examples so could still achieve moderately good marks. A common error was to simply give the name of researcher/study as without clearly linking details of its procedure to the guideline to provide an example. There were very few responses which suggested that the candidates did not understand the question, and when this happened they tended to list the different ethical guidelines only.

Section B

Question 7

(a) This question part was not answered well for the 3 marks available. Many candidates gained credit for an appropriate identification of a technique - most common response was random sampling - but few went on to give details of how this might be done or why it would achieve a random sample. Even fewer candidates could provide the context in relation to the study, i.e. by making reference to emotions or leisure pursuits, which was an important element of the answer.

(b) Here candidates typically provided a response in question format and used 'Describe' and 'How do you feel when…'. Most candidates achieved this mark. A minority of responses gave a closed question, either with or without option choices. A closed question is one with a limited range of possible answers, whereas an open question allows the participant complete freedom to answer in any way they want. Note, for example, that 'Do you feel exited on a fairground ride?' is a closed question because it does not give the respondent any freedom as it implies only two possible answers, 'yes' or 'no'. However, in an examination where a closed question was asked for, such a response would have to explicitly include those answer options in order to be creditworthy. A small number of candidates gave an open question that was not related to the topic of emotions.

(c) Many responses referred to qualitative data being difficult to analyse/compare or the subjectivity of interpretation. However, many of these did not earn the second mark as they as they did not relate their answer to emotion.

(d) (i) When candidates achieved the full 2 marks available on this question, it was when they referred to the amygdala in their response, and they clearly understood the question. However, most candidates only achieved 1 mark for referring to objectivity without providing the link to the investigation. This was often the case even though they had underlined the word 'emotion' in the question.

(ii) This question part was also only partially answered by candidates. There were many good answers that discussed how subjective emotions cannot be effectively measured in an objective way but they typically did not provide information relating this to the use of the scanner or what participants would have to do whilst being scanned. There was also occasional confusion with other studies using scanning and/or EEG equipment such as Canli et al. and Dement and Kleitman.

Question 8

(a) This question received mixed responses with some candidates clearly able to respond appropriately with the idea that the participants' environment was not manipulated/controlled by the researchers. However, many candidates just stated that a naturalistic observation is when the research takes place in a natural environment, which did not receive credit.

(b) Few candidates earned both marks on this question. Although there were lots of responses referring to the difficulty in controlling extraneous variables, this was the limit of most answers. We used the context of the study to provide an example of the extraneous variable. Where marks were not gained, ahis tended to be because they had discussed problems with other aspects of the observational method, e.g. covert methods, rather than focusing on the naturalistic element.

(c) The question asked 'how', but most candidates focused on 'who', i.e. teachers/parents with limited focus on the how and on 'why' - as children cannot consent for themselves. A limited number of candidates used presumptive consent as part of their answer and when they did, they clearly understood the concept.

(d) This question part was not answered successfully with candidates often showing a lack of understanding of what operationalisation means. Very few responses achieved two marks. Many earned a serendipitous one mark for mentioning a ball, swing**,** hop scotch, playing with toys, using slides etc. somewhere in the response.

(e) The majority of candidates gave good responses to this question part, with candidates clearly understanding what is meant by covert observation with use of CCTV, one-way mirror and various disguises. Alternatively, candidates earned one mark for referring to the children being unaware of the observation. A minority of responses focused, incorrectly, on a participant observation.

Question 9

(a) Very few candidates achieved two marks – those who wrote creditworthy hypotheses often failed to include any operationalisation so just achieved one mark. There were many responses that included the first part of a one-tailed hypothesis but did not then provide the two levels of the IV, such as, 'Teenagers play internet games the most', or 'young people play games on-line more than others' so could not gain credit.

(b) In contrast to **part (a)**, this question part was well-answered with many candidates achieving two marks by referring to age range and internet users or identifying the need for a wide age spread and the specifying ages.

Section C

Question 10

(a) A range of marks was achieved on this question. Candidates differed widely in terms of how aware they were of an effective style of response to this question, so there were often major omissions. Others were able to produce a response with a clear structure and often achieved higher marks. The overall format of **Question 10(a)**, and the nature of the mark scheme, is consistent between papers and years. Therefore, it is helpful to prepare candidates with an overall structure, which can be closely tailored to the requirements of an individual question, such as the required research method and the scenario.

A fairly common omission was to not write about shapes, when in fact at the very least a comparison had to be made back to the original group. In addition, there were many responses with no application of ethics for working with animals or with no operationalisation.

In the L1 band, most often candidates achieved either two marks for an impossible procedure, or four because they had sometimes written an excellent detailed procedure but had a major omission. Most often that was only mentioning one level of the IV (sounds) or omitting controls and less often because they had only referred to 'asking the parrots questions about sounds/shapes' rather than operationalising the DV. The majority of answers achieved in the L2 band, usually not getting into the L3 band because they had not operationalised the sounds and or the shapes condition, or had only implicit controls.

A minority of responses were just a repetition of what the candidate had learned and appeared to understand about the Pepperberg study whilst others spent the majority of the answer discussing the procedure at length, but leaving out critical references to the IV, DV, controls, which are central features of a laboratory experiment.

(b) There were many successful answers to this question part, with examples of different designs, operationalisation of variables, controls, inter-rater reliability and practice/order effects. There was, however, evidence that some candidates had either not read the question properly or did not understand the ideas of non-human animal ethics or sampling in particular, as they provided responses based on animal ethics, distress and not having consent, and issues of generalisability and individual differences in parrots. When ecological validity was provided, candidates often didn't make appropriate suggestions of what could be heard/seen in the wild.

In other instances, candidates tried to give an improvement that was not related to the procedure they had described in **10(a)**, and they did so, they generally used generic improvements relating to changing repeated measures to independent measures, or vice versa, without linking to their own study.

PSYCHOLOGY

Paper 9990/32
Specialist Options: Theory

Key messages

Questions 1(a), 3(a), 5(a) and 7(a)

It is important that candidates are made aware of the terminology/concept identified in the syllabus as well as key terms used in named theories and studies as some were unable to identify and/or define the terms given in these type of questions. Creating a glossary of key terms, revision of terminology using flash cards and class quizzes on terminology could prove useful. Where the response gave an example to help define the term this often achieved full marks. These questions are worth two marks and a brief response is appropriate.

Questions 1(b), 3(b), 5(b) and 7(b)

These questions could ask the candidate to describe a theory, study or technique such as a self-report used by psychologists that is named in the syllabus or identified in one of the studies or theories named in the syllabus. These questions could also ask the candidate to describe a part of one of the named studies from the syllabus or a summary of the key features of the study. This question is worth four marks and the candidates should write a more extended answer. An error shown by some candidates was to describe a theory or technique that was from the incorrect part of the syllabus. There were a small number of general responses that were not specifically directed at the question.

Questions 1(c), 3(c), 5(c) and 7(c)

These questions could require the candidate to explain two strengths or weaknesses of what they have described in the **part (b)** of the question. The question could also ask the candidates to make a comparison or to evaluate using a specific issue, although this type of question was not asked for this exam. This question is worth six marks so the candidate should write a more extended answer for each issue raised. Some responses were very detailed for one issue but then only briefly discussed the second issue. In addition, many of the responses were general and not specific to the theory, technique or study named in the question. To improve, responses should give specific examples to achieve the top band.

Questions 2(a), 4(a), 6(a) and 8(a)

This question will always come from one of the bullet points in the syllabus. Candidates could describe the three or four studies, theories or techniques identified in the specification under the appropriate bullet point. For this exam, some of the answers did not give all of the studies/theories under the bullet point, used the incorrect bullet point or the description was brief. It is possible for the responses to achieve full marks by describing at least two of the studies, theories or techniques but this would need to be a very detailed description. Ideally, the response would describe three of the bullet points in detail with excellent understanding and good use of terminology throughout. These type of responses often achieved the top band. It is also important that the descriptions are linked to the topic area named in the syllabus. It could be useful for candidates to do revision notes with the title of each bullet point as the header in their notes.

Questions 2(b), 4(b), 6(b) and 8(b)

This question will always ask the candidate to evaluate the theories, studies and/or techniques described in **part (a)** of the question. The response must include at least two evaluation issues, including the named issue, in order to be considered to have presented a range of issues to achieve the top band. However, most responses that evaluated two issues in this exam, achieved in the lower bands due to the response being superficial and often with little analysis. Some responses that considered at least three issues tended to achieve higher marks as these responses were able to demonstrate comprehensive understanding with

good supporting examples from the theories, studies and techniques described in the **part (a)** of the answer. The candidate must also provide some form of analysis. This could be done by discussing the strengths and weaknesses of the issue being considered, presenting a counter-argument to the issue under discussion or comparing the issue between two studies and/or theories. A conclusion at the end of each issue would be helpful in order to show excellent understanding of the issue under discussion. In order to achieve the requirements of the Level 3 and 4 band descriptors it would be best if the response was structured by issue rather than by study and/or theory. It would also be ideal for the response to start with the named issue to make sure the answer covers this requirement of the question.

Many of the responses either covered just the named issue and no other or covered other issues rather than the one named in the question. Quite a few of the answers were structured by study/theory rather than by the issue, which often led the response to be quite superficial and repetitive. A number of the responses did do analysis. Candidates should be aware this question is worth 10 marks and attempt to include an appropriate amount of information.

General comments

Many of the candidates were very well prepared for the exam and showed good knowledge, understanding and evaluation throughout their responses. Some candidates were not as well prepared and showed limited knowledge and understanding with brief and/or superficial responses. These candidates often had limited evaluation skills.

Time management for this paper was good for the majority candidates and most attempted all questions that were required. A number of candidates did not respond to one or more of the questions asked in the option area. A few of the candidates attempted to respond to more than two topic areas but often did not attempt all of the questions for each option chosen. These responses achieved at the lower end of the mark band.

The questions on abnormality and health were the more popular choice of questions.

Comments on specific questions

Psychology and Abnormality

Question 1

(a) Most responses addressed the question and were able to achieve one mark by outlining how dopamine can cause impulse control disorder. A significant number of responses gave very detailed descriptions of the 'reward deficiency syndrome' and had good knowledge of how dopamine can be lower in those with impulse control disorder as the disorder develops. Some responses were too lengthy for a two mark question.

(b) Most responses were detailed with good descriptions given of the Kleptomania Symptom Assessment Scale (K-SAS). For example, many referred to the 11/12 items, 0–4 and 0–5 rating scales, and examples of some of the questions asked in the inventory. Weak responses included giving incorrect details of the inventory or stated that the scale measured the symptoms with no other details. A small minority of responses evaluated the scale, which was not creditworthy. Most responses were of an appropriate length for a four mark question.

(c) Many responses gave both a strength and a weakness of the K-SAS. Most were able to achieve in Level 1 or Level 2 by identifying an issue and giving some development of this point. The vast majority of responses did not make the strength or weakness specific to the scale or kleptomania, although a few did give very developed responses. Many responses gave a number of strengths and weaknesses and were credited with the best point given. These type of responses often achieved Level 1 as although the response was of an appropriate length only one of the strengths and one of the weaknesses given was creditworthy. Popular points included strengths and weaknesses of quantitative data, applications of everyday life and issues with reliability and validity.

Question 2

(a) Many responses were detailed, accurate and coherent with a good use of psychological terminology. Most referred to SSRIs, cognitive treatments and exposure response prevention. Many also gave details of research studies that investigated these treatments for obsessive-compulsive and related disorders. Weaker responses were often very brief with limited details given of the treatment and/or relevant study. For example, suggesting patients could take drugs without referring to suitable drugs. There were other generic responses to changing the way people think. A few responses gave descriptions of treatments and studies for schizophrenia and impulse control disorder rather than obsessive-compulsive disorders, which was only creditworthy if directly linked to OCD.

(b) The responses to this question covered the full range of the mark band. Better responses used the issues as a starting point and compared the treatments that had been described in **part (a)**. The vast majority addressed the named issue of validity. Some did provide analysis of this issue and made comparisons of the validity of the treatments and/or studies described in **part (a)**. Weaker responses tended to state that the studies were valid or not without any discussion given. A range of other evaluation points were considered including usefulness, determinism, ethics and an evaluation of the methodology used in the studies described in **part (a)**. Weaker responses often evaluated the treatments in turn with few examples to back up their points and little analysis given. Some responses continued to describe the treatments from **part (a)** which was not creditworthy.

Psychology and Consumer Behaviour

Question 3

(a) There were a number of good descriptions of prospect theory in consumer decision making. Many candidates achieved one mark by stating that the theory refers to value and endowment. A significant number of responses did achieve full marks by giving an example of how prospect theory might apply to a consumer when making a decision to purchase a product or explained that it is where the consumer might value an item more when they own it as opposed to it being owned by someone else. A minority of responses were left blank or the responses gave an explanation of a different model of consumer decision making such as utility theory.

(b) Some responses were able to describe two variables that were measured in the Braun-LaTour et al. study on advertising. Popular responses included referring to whether the participant noticed that Bugs Bunny did not belong in the advertisement, reference to previous visits to Disneyland and rating the likelihood of visiting Disneyland in the future. Many of the responses referred to the various conditions of the studies conducted which was not creditworthy as these were not measured variables. There was also some confusion about the study where some responses described the variables measured in the Auty and Lewis study on product placement in films. This was also not creditworthy.

(c) For those candidates who gave a good response to **part (b)**, many were able to achieve at least Level 2 and some Level 3 for their response to this question. Those that gave confused or incorrect responses to **part (b)** often achieved in Level 1 or gave no response to this question. Popular strengths included strengths of laboratory experiments and the generalisability of the study. Some responses incorrectly stated the study was done in the field or done on children, which was not creditworthy.

Question 4

(a) Most responses achieved at least Level 2 for this question. Responses were taken from a variety of sections of the syllabus as many of the theories and studies are concerned with how the psychological environment influences consumers. Some responses did describe the three studies by Mackay and Olshavsky, Machleit and Gil et al. and some of these were very detailed and achieved in the Level 3 or 4 mark band. A significant number of candidates described studies from the physical environment but if these responses were linked to the psychological effect on consumers then the response did receive credit.

(b) The majority of the responses to this question were evaluative although some responses described more studies related to how the psychological environment influences consumers. Those responses that were evaluative tended to structure their response by study rather than by issue. Most attempted to discuss the named issue of determinism although this was often done in a superficial way. Many responses stated that the studies were useful to retailers without giving any examples or analysis of their point. Some responses attempted to discuss other issues and raised points such as validity, usefulness and an evaluation of a study that had been described in **part (a)**.

Psychology and Health

Question 5

(a) This was often well answered by a number of candidates with many achieving full marks. Some gave a general definition of how imagery can be used to treat stress whereas others gave an example. Both types of responses were creditworthy. Popular examples included thinking of a beach or forest. Responses then went onto explain that imagery can help to distract from stress. Weak responses included mentioning that imagery was thinking of a peaceful scene without linking this to stress reduction. In addition, some candidates described a therapist showing a picture of a peaceful scene, which was incorrect. There was some reference to the Bridge study but many of the responses that did this did not explain imagery as a method to manage stress and therefore were not creditworthy.

(b) There were some strong responses to this question with some identifying two drugs that can be prescribed for stress. Some also went onto briefly explain how the drug manages stress with identification of reduction in blood pressure or an increase in serotonin levels. Popular drugs identified included SSRIs, benzodiazepine and beta-blockers. However, some responses identified paracetamol and anti-acids. While these drugs do reduce some of the side effects of stress such as headaches and indigestion, their primary purpose is not to manage stress. A number of responses identified the drug but did not give any explanation as to how the drug manages stress or the explanation was incorrect. These type of responses generally achieved one or two marks.

(c) Most responses did explain both a strength and a weakness of the use of prescribed drugs for managing stress. Common strengths included effectiveness and the ease of use. The most common weakness was side effects with many responses giving a more detailed explanation of the various side effects caused by prescribed drugs. Most responses achieved Level 2 mark band by providing a brief, but good explanation of the strength and the weakness. Weaker responses often identified many strengths and weaknesses and were credited with the best attempt.

Question 6

(a) This was generally a well answered question where responses showed that the candidates had been well-prepared. The majority described what psychologists have discovered about health promotion in schools, worksites and communities by giving details of the Tapper et al., Fox et al. and Farquhar et al. study. Tapper et al. was described in the most depth with some responses giving impressive details of this study. Fox et al. was often well described but responses usually gave a very brief or sometimes confused description of the Farquhar et al study. Other studies such as the Janis and Feshbach study were also creditworthy and responses often gave clear descriptions of this study. Weaker responses tended to be brief or described one or two of the studies in a little bit of detail. A minority of responses did not describe any studies but instead gave an anecdotal description of how health promotion could be done in schools, worksites and communities. These type of responses received very limited credit.

(b) A significant number of responses structured their answer by addressing each issue in term. Most responses considered the named issue of generalisability and applied this issue to each study in turn. Some responses did provide analysis either by discussing the advantages and disadvantages of generalisability or by comparing the generalisability of each study and providing a conclusion regarding which study was the most generalisability compared to the others. Other issues included ecological validity, ethics and usefulness. Some responses achieved in the lower levels of the mark band due to giving very brief responses or structuring their response by study which meant these type of answers were often repetitive and superficial. Those that had provided anecdotal responses to **part (a)** were unable to do any evaluation for this question and often received no credit or Level 1 by providing definitions of some evaluation issues.

Psychology and Organisations

Question 7

(a) There were many very good responses to this question and most wrote an appropriate amount for a two mark question. Most responses could identify two causes of group conflict within an organisation. There were a variety of types of conflict given in the responses including personality clashes and conflict over roles and responsibilities.

(b) Most responses were able to attempt a description of the Belbin team inventory. Some responses described the self-report and were aware that there was also an observation done of employees. However, the vast majority of responses just described the roles that were identified by Belbin. Some of these responses were very long and received minimal credit for this question.

(c) Although many responses achieved in Level 1 for **part (b)** of this question, many were able to provide a strength and a weakness of the inventory by considering the application of the findings from the Belbin team inventory within an organisation. Many explained how the inventory could be used within an organisation by identifying which role would be most suitable for each employee. In addition, the most common weakness was to identify the difficulty that smaller organisations might have as Belbin did identify nine roles. Some responses were aware that Belbin has taken this into account and made recommendations for organisations with fewer than nine employees. Most responses achieved in Level 2 as they were either a bit brief or gave a number of different strengths and weaknesses and were only credited for the best of these.

Question 8

(a) There were many good, well developed responses to this question. Most responses described theories of leadership styles and a wide variety of theories were given in the responses. The most popular was to describe Fielder's contingency theory, Hershey and Blanchard's situational leadership and Muczyk and Reimann's styles of leadership behaviour. Some responses were from other parts of the syllabus but were creditworthy if the response was linked to leadership styles such as adaptive leadership by Heifetz. Weaker responses tended to be brief or a superficial description of the relevant theories. Some responses were anecdotal with the response describing what would make a good leader.

(b) Most responses were structured by evaluation issue with many of them beginning with the named issue of individual versus situational explanations. Some responses did do some analysis of their evaluation points by providing strengths and weaknesses of the issue under discussion or making a comparison between the theories that had been described in **part (a)**. Popular evaluation issues included cultural bias and applications to everyday life. A significant number of weaker responses evaluated the theories from **part (a)** in turn and gave more superficial and repetitive responses.

PSYCHOLOGY

Paper 9990/42
Specialist Options: Application

Key messages

- What has been learned from the AS component of the syllabus should be transferred to the A2 component. For example, at AS candidates learn about methodology, such as experiments, which also apply to A2.
- Questions should be read carefully ensuring that the focus is on what the question asks rather than what is hoped that the question asks.
- All components of the question should be included in answers. For example, **Question part (d)** for **Questions 1**, **2**, **3** and **4** required advantages and disadvantages (plurals) *and* a conclusion.
- In ***Section B***, **Questions 5**, **6**, **7** and **8**, methodological knowledge must be evident and detailed for top marks to be accessed. The procedure, however detailed is just one methodological aspect. For top marks answers must explain methodology rather than merely identify it.
- In ***Section C***, **Questions 9**, **10**, **11** and **12**, to access top marks answers must include a debate which has two sides, such as strengths/advantages and weaknesses/disadvantages. Supporting evidence should also be provided.
- Psychological knowledge should be applied wherever possible. Anecdotal and common-sense answers will never achieve top marks.

General comments

Section A

(i) Candidates often did not address the 'stem' of the question in ***Section A*** when this is crucial to answering each question part that follows.

(ii) Answers must refer to the study the question is about. Many answers made general comments showing they knew nothing about the study itself (see specific questions below for examples).

(iii) Many answers correctly included advantages and disadvantages but many did not relate these to the question and so restricting marks. For example, to score one mark answers must include an advantage and this must be related to the question.

(iv) Many conclusions merely repeated what had already been written, and such *summaries* scored no marks. A conclusion is a 'decision reached by reasoning' and so as the reasoning has been done through the advantages and disadvantages, a final decision/conclusion needs to be drawn.

(v) Candidates should *think* about what the question requires rather than automatically writing pre-prepared answers. Many questions will test the ability to *apply* knowledge from one thing to another, particularly methodological knowledge.

(vi) Candidates should always provide sufficient detail to score all the available marks. A single sentence is more likely to score one mark rather than two marks, so a little elaboration, explanation or example that goes beyond the basic sentence is always recommended. Candidates should always try to impress the examiner with their psychological knowledge.

Section B

Answers to **part (a)** questions in this section should include an appropriate design, have applied a range (four or five) relevant methodological design features, each of which *should be explained fully*, showing good understanding. Many answers listed features such as 'I would have a random sample' and 'It would be an independent measures design' without explanation of why it would be a random sample, or how this would be obtained.

In **part (b)**, answers should *explain* the methodological decisions on which their **part (a)** design is based and also *explain* the psychological evidence on which their design is based. Merely *describing* a relevant piece of research from the topic area is insufficient and scores no marks. The links between the research and how it informed the design must be shown. Further, there is no need for a name (date) to be quoted for each sentence, with some candidates writing 'I chose a self-selecting sample because Milgram (1963) did' for example. This just *identifies* a study using that technique. It does not *explain* the choice of sampling technique.

Section C

It is essential that answers focus on the question that is set. Every question in this section invites candidates to consider the extent to which they agree or disagree with the statement. It does not ask candidates to describe everything they know about that topic area, and answers that fail to address the question will only achieve minimal marks. To score marks at the top end of the mark range answers must focus on arguments both for and against the statement, answers must the use appropriate evidence to support the argument, and at the very top of the mark range answers should show awareness of wider issues and evidence that is relevant.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

(a) Many answers scored no marks at all because the question was answered incorrectly with many answers describing the GAD-7 assessment, rather than explaining what generalised anxiety actually is. Candidates should always read and think about questions carefully before beginning their answer. Some candidates incorrectly suggested that 'it is anxiety that can be generalised'. Generalised anxiety disorder is where there is no specific object or situation (like a phobia), just general things with the associated symptoms of anxiety.

(b) Many candidates answered the question fully and scored full marks. However, many candidates only provided partial answers because although two advantages were provided, these were not always related to assessing anxiety. A further problem is that many candidates assumed that quantitative data is automatically objective. It is not; whether a number is objective (or subjective) is determined by its source. Objective data results from a measure that cannot be influenced, such as a physiological measure, whereas a subjective measure is where a false response can be given (for various reasons). The quantitative data from any questionnaire is therefore subjective.

(c) Two advantages of the sample were required. The first was the sampling techniques was random. Identifying this, along with the number was given one partial mark, but for the second mark a clear advantage was needed. A random sample does not automatically make the sample representative because the target population may be restricted. The main advantage is that there is no selection bias by the researcher. A second advantage was the sample size, and it was assumed by many that this automatically means it can be generalised. It cannot; the ability to generalize depends on whether the sample is representative. To illustrate, if Milgram had 4000 participants it would not be assumed that the sample could be generalised.

(d) Many answers included two advantages and two disadvantages and a conclusion, but only scored partial marks because there was no mention at all of assessing anxiety as the question required. A second flaw common in answers was the assumption that this was a study with a researcher telephoning healthy participants. The question was about using the telephone for a therapist to assess people with anxiety. This means that the potential patient is highly unlikely to give socially desirable answers or lie to the therapist because they want to get better; to resolve their anxiety problem.

Question 2

(a) Many answers scored one mark because often no reference was made to the data presented in table 2.1. The Question states 'Explain what the results in table 2.1 tell us' and so answers should have referred to data in the table. For example, 'high self-monitors prefer Irish mocha mint coffee (7.4) and so do low self-monitors (6.08)' would score full marks.

(b) Two differences were required, and answers including only one difference were restricted to two marks. Many candidates did not know the hard and soft sell terms and so guessed. Some candidates knew the terms but got them the wrong way around. In general, soft-sell refers to the image of the product, the image that it creates its packaging, its desirability. Hard-sell on the other hand it all about the product. Its quality, its functional value. Commonly stated is that 'it is the matter, not the manner'. For example, hard sell is how good something tastes; soft-sell is about the people who eat the product.

(c) Very few candidates answered this question correctly. Candidates frequently write in answers 'it is valid' but do not know what this actually means, and crucially for this question how validity is assessed. Assessing validity is raised in the Baron-Cohen et al. study in year 1 where judges are used to assess the pictures of eyes. The same applies in this study where judges were asked about the different sets of advertisements and if all ten agreed then the advertisement was judged as being valid and so used in the study.

(d) Many answers included two advantages and two disadvantages but often focused exclusively on students with no mention of consumer behaviour at all. To score full marks advantages and disadvantages must be related to the study or topic in question, i.e. consumer behaviour. Sometimes relevant conclusions were provided, but often a summary was provided instead and summaries score no marks. Some candidates interpreted students as children. In this instance, credit was given for the ambiguity, but in general children are under 16 years (and cannot give informed consent) and students are over 16, usually up to around 21 years of age.

Question 3

(a) Most answers scored full marks by stating that 'appraisal delay is the time from the noticing of symptoms to the conclusion that the person is ill'. Some answers incorrectly thought that appraisal delay was because the person concluded that they were *not* ill.

(b) Many answers scored zero marks because they showed no knowledge at all about the study by Safer et al. Some candidates made general comments that could be applied to any study such as 'one limitation is that it is reductionist' without any elaboration and scored no marks. To be awarded full marks any answer must make reference to the study that is being asked about. For example, many candidates stated that it was not possible to generalise from the restricted sample because there were only 93 participants and because they were all from four clinics in the same hospital. Answers like this scored full marks because there is a limitation that is based directly on the study in question.

(c) Many answers suggested the health belief model (because it is a model as the question required) and often received full credit when relating many of the features of the model to the question. Some answers mentioned the health belief model, but restricted their marks by referring to nothing more than costs and benefits. Other candidates scored partial marks by referring correct reasons but which were not part of a model, such as 'costs and benefits', and although sometimes these answers referred to the Bulpitt study, marks were restricted because the Bulpitt study is not a model.

(d) This question asked for advantages and disadvantages of conducting interviews in a practitioner's waiting room. There were many different interpretations of what the question actually required, such as the assumption that the interview was part of the person's medical assessment, whereas others assumed that it could be a study on something else, such as adherence. Credit was given to both these and any other approach taken. What determined marks was whether the interpretation taken was related to the advantages and disadvantages.

Question 4

(a) Many candidates failed to score marks because they merely re-wrote the question 'organisational commitment is commitment to the Organisation' and to score both available marks there needed to an attempt to 'Explain what is meant by…'. Candidates could have referred to acceptance of the Organisation's needs and goals, a willingness to put in extra effort to support the Organisation, to show loyalty toward it, for example.

(b) To be consistent with questions in other options, to score full marks candidates needed to give two advantages of using a 7-point scale and relate each to the OCQ. Some candidates did this successfully and scored full marks, but other candidates gave two advantages with no mention of the OCQ at all.

(c) The sample for the Organisational Commitment Questionnaire was representative for two reasons, claim Mowday et al. Firstly, the sample size was large with 2563 employees but more importantly, the sample were from nine different work organisations. Many candidates falsely assumed that a large sample automatically makes a sample representative. It does not. Secondly, the sample included workers from a wide range of occupations and included scientists and retail manager trainees. Whilst many candidates knew both these features and scored full marks, there were many others who stated nothing more than 'a large sample', 'included both males and females', guessing at the answer rather than showing relevant psychological knowledge from the study itself.

(d) All **part (d)** questions in ***Section A*** require a discussion of advantages and disadvantages and this question part was no exception. The question required a discussion of the usefulness of the OCQ. There were some excellent answers which followed a formula (which could apply to any question **part (d)** in this ***Section A***): advantage plus example; advantage plus example. Disadvantage plus example; disadvantage plus example. Conclusion (not a summary).

Section B

Question 5

(a) There were many designs proposed to answer this question and some were successful whilst others were not. The successful answers were coherent in that the design 'made sense' all the way through with all aspects being logical and showing that some thought had gone into planning the answer. Some answers were incoherent because they did not address the question or because the design contradicted itself. Some designs were unethical when forcing participants with an animal phobia to be in the same room with that animal. Unethical designs are unacceptable.

(b) A number of candidates took the opportunity to write all they knew about phobias, mentioning the work of Watson and Rayner and even of Freud. The former might be relevant to *developing* a phobia, but the psychological evidence included here should focus specifically on explaining the basis of the **part (a)** design. If a study has not informed the design in **part (a)** then it should not be included. In relation to methodological evidence, many answers included a *list* of features without pausing to *explain* any in detail and so scoring partial marks. Many answers gave general statements that showed little understanding. For example, 'I would have a large sample and this makes the study reliable and valid' when a large sample does not make anything valid or reliable. Candidates are advised to focus on a few design decisions, rather than a long list of meaningless statements, making sure they are done correctly.

Question 6

(a) Investigations of this question had to be a field experiment. This meant that common features of IV, DV, controls and experimental design should have been included and explained in detail. Some answers did not have an IV, and some got the IV and DV the wrong way around. Better answers had an IV of three or more different odours and one candidate had a 'fish smell' as a control. Better answers explained how data could be gathered on the effect of the odours on customer behaviour with questionnaires and observations being used. Often the data gathered was amount of money spent; length of time spent in the store, or just 'positive feelings of ambience'.

(b) In relation to methodological decisions, answers were generally coherent because candidates know the features of an experiment. What was often lacking was explanation of why three different IV odours were chosen, rather than two or four or more, or why certain odours were chosen. Similarly, there was very little explanation of why the DV was chosen. Psychological knowledge in the better answers showed a good understanding of the study by Chebat and Michon because answers in **part (a)** were often informed by this study. For example, they used a citrus smell, and that is why many candidates chose to use a citrus smell in their study. For one candidate rather than three pleasant odours, or a no-odour control, the fish smell was used because it 'should be clearly negative and so provide a good comparison'. This is very good technique: explaining the reasons underlying the design in **part (a)**.

Question 7

(a) This question required candidates to use an interview. Whereas some candidates knew about the various features of interviews and applied them to the question successfully, some candidates did not refer to an interview at all, or confused terms or made incorrect assumptions, such as structured interviews only produce quantitative data. Some candidates were unclear of what was meant by phantom limb pain (and so perhaps should have chosen the question from their other option). Some candidates compared current pain with future pain after receiving treatment. This approach was also incorrect because the question required a comparison of previous pain with current pain.

(b) In relation to methodology, candidates should have explained why they chose a structured interview over a semi- or unstructured interview; explained why they asked some of the questions they did; or explained the time period between gathering data on previous pain with data on current pain. Some candidates did this, but many did not. Some focused on the details of incorrect designs (e.g. current versus future) and some wrote about a range of different techniques to measure pain, such as the UAB, when the question was about interviews. Psychological knowledge should have focused on phantom limb pain. In many instances it did, but others incorrectly wrote about how to treat pain or about different measures.

Question 8

(a) Candidates had a free choice of method here, and the best answers chose an experiment, logically because they knew more terminology, although an interview or questionnaire would have been equally acceptable. Better designs compared one IV group with intrinsic motivation compared with another with extrinsic motivation, controlled various extraneous variables and then measured the DV, usually through a questionnaire or interview. Weaker answers were often missing knowledge of what intrinsic motivation actually is, with answers referring to nothing more than 'this group gets intrinsic motivation' when it should be a central component.

(b) As mentioned above, a knowledge of intrinsic motivation should inform the design in **part (a)**. For example, here there should be an explanation of what specifically the 'intrinsic motivation given to the group' is and it was chosen. Many candidates decided to write about Maslow and his hierarchy of needs without any reference at all to the question. Doing this scored no marks at all because it is description of information, it isn't applying knowledge to a question. The former is a relatively simple skill assessed elsewhere; the latter is more complex and what is always assessed in these ***Section B*** methodology questions.

Section C

Question 9

Many candidates failed to score high marks because they did not answer the question set. The focus of the question was on reductionism and so the answer should have been based on the advantages and disadvantages of reductionism with the cognitive approach of depression used to illustrate. Many candidates read the question as a 'write all you know about depression' and so achieved no more than bottom band marks. This is an applications paper, so questions will focus on how knowledge (in this instance 'depression') apply to an issue (in this instance 'reductionism'). Also noteworthy is that many candidates appear to know nothing more than the words 'this is reductionist' and often show no understanding about issue itself. Further, many candidates think that reductionism is negative. It is not; it is a fundamental component of the experimental method and is the way research is conducted.

Question 10

There were some excellent answers which included an impressive range of examples of situational factors. Included were the studies by Finlay, Turley and Milliman and many others from a wide range of different sub-topics. Knowledge, description and detail was often very impressive. However, marks were restricted because such answers failed to consider how individual factors affect behaviour in retail environments. Sometimes individual factors were not mentioned at all; sometimes nothing more than a sentence. These ***Section C*** questions always require consideration of two opposing viewpoints and if only one is considered then only half marks can be awarded, and if there is an imbalance marks will also be restricted.

Question 11

Like other answers for different options in this section many candidates described what they knew, such as different measure of pain in this instance, rather than organising and using information to address the question. Some candidates adopted the correct approach with a consideration of the advantages and disadvantages of a clinical interview, often making good points in favour of it, with supporting examples, and then stating why it is better than alternative measures, before going on to consider its weaknesses and how other measures could fill the gaps the interview leaves out. This question requires candidates to think and give their views; the question does ask 'to what extent do you agree…' which does require a different format or approach from merely describing information.

Question 12

Two components should have been involved in this answer: the use of questionnaires and the application, or use of them to measure sabotage. Three types of answer were evident: answers which largely described the study by Giacolone and Rosenfeld; answers which largely described the advantages and disadvantages of questionnaires, and those which applied the advantages and disadvantages to what they knew about sabotage and the study by Giacolone and Rosenfeld. The latter type of answer was by far the most successful approach.